



Appendix F

Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT)

Results for City of Holyoke, MA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL
RESULTS FOR THE CITY OF HOLYOKE, MA
AS OF MARCH 31, 2011

**NATIONAL
LEAGUE
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Northeastern University
*Dukakis Center for Urban
and Regional Policy*

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	5
Project Overview	5
Methodology	5
Summary and Organization of Relative Strengths and Weaknesses.....	6
Strengths or Potential “Deal Makers”	7
Weaknesses or Potential “Deal Breakers”	8
Detailed Section Analysis	11
Section 1. Access to Customers/Markets	11
Section 2. Agglomeration	13
Section 3. Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit).....	15
Section 4. Labor	17
Section 5. Municipal Process	19
Section 6. Quality of Life (Community).....	21
Section 7. Quality of Life (Site).....	22
Section 8. Business Incentives	22
Section 9. Tax Rates	23
Section 10. Access to Information	24
EDSAT Questionnaire Results for Holyoke, Massachusetts	25

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Executive Summary

A robust and adaptable local economy depends greatly on municipal officials taking the lead on formulating and implementing an economic development strategy. This includes understanding what it is that businesses are looking for, what local and regional resources are available, what advantages their municipality has to offer, and what weaknesses they must overcome. This report contains an assessment of the responses provided by the City of Holyoke to questions in the Economic Development Self Assessment Tool (EDSAT.) On the whole, Holyoke is forward looking and proactive in its approach to economic development. One of Holyoke's greatest strengths is its municipal permitting process. On the other hand, significant weaknesses include a higher proportion of older commercial/industrial and office space and the potential for a workforce that is insufficiently trained in mid-level and technical skills.

The EDSAT and accompanying analysis are part of an ongoing partnership between Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban Research and Policy (Dukakis Center) and the National League of Cities (NLC). EDSAT is a benchmarking analysis of a municipality's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to attracting new businesses and grow existing ones by identifying the potential "deal makers" and "deal breakers." The foundation for the over 250 questions that make up the EDSAT questionnaire was established when the Dukakis Center surveyed a large group of members from the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) and CoreNet Global, the professional association representing in-house location experts. The relevance of the location factors were ranked as Very Important, Important, and Less Important by these experts.

To identify Holyoke's strengths and weaknesses, the city's responses to the EDSAT questions were compared to all other municipalities that have participated in EDSAT. These comparison group municipalities (CGM) range in population and demographics. Among the CGM are such municipalities as Granby, Ludlow, Pittsfield, Framingham, Lowell, and Andover. "Deal makers" were identified when Holyoke has a comparative advantage over the typical CGM in a Very Important location factor and "deal breakers" were identified when Holyoke has a comparative disadvantage in a Very Important factor.

Holyoke compares favorably overall against the CGM. Holyoke's biggest strengths include its efficient municipal permitting system, pursuit of on site parking solutions, and professional workforce. An efficient permitting system is one of the most important processes a city can have in place to create a business friendly environment. Holyoke should endeavor to maintain and even improved on this efficiency. One improvement is to create a process where an applicant makes a single presentation to all entities with authority over permitting. On-site parking is another Very Important location factor and Holyoke has less of it than the typical CGM. The city is already aware of this constraint and its pursuit of parking solutions is a strength. The city's workforce is another factor that is both a strength and weakness. Holyoke has a larger proportion of Professional workers in its workforce than the typical CGM, but it also has a larger proportion of workers who may not have adequate mid-level or technical skills. The city is actively collaborating with local businesses, technical schools, and Holyoke Community College to address workforce training needs.

Holyoke's biggest weaknesses include less on-site parking, the potential for an insufficient supply of workers with mid-level and technical skills, higher rents, and dilapidated commercial/industrial buildings. Holyoke faces some challenges with its commercial and industrial space. The buildings tend to be older or dilapidated and vacant. While a large amount of older, vacant buildings is a sign of a weak economy, Holyoke can turn them into assets by strategically attracting the types of industries and land uses that can benefit from this type of space. Office space is another challenge for Holyoke because there is proportionally too little Class A office space and too much Class C office space. Rent for Class A office space tend to be higher than the typical CGM and rent for retail and manufacturing space also tends to be higher. By renovating and rehabilitating some of these buildings, Holyoke would be better able to market them and relieve some of the pressure on rent.

For a slightly more detailed, but still abbreviated discussion of all the strengths and weaknesses for Holyoke among the Very Important, Important, and Less Important location factors, please see pages six to 11 of this report. For color coded tables, which can be read at a glance, of all the EDSAT questions and comparisons, please turn to page 25.

Introduction

A robust and adaptable local economy depends greatly on municipal officials taking the lead on formulating and implementing an economic development strategy. This includes understanding what it is that businesses are looking for, what local and regional resources are available, what advantages their municipality has to offer, and what weaknesses they must overcome. The Economic Development Self Assessment Tool (EDSAT) is an important step municipal officials can undertake in assessing their municipality's strengths and weaknesses for sustaining and expanding economic growth. Municipal officials and leaders who come together as a team for self assessment also benefit from an integrated view of how various departments and stakeholders affect economic development and their roles in creating a business friendly environment.

By participating in this self assessment, Holyoke is on its way to better understanding the assets it has for economic development and addressing the challenges working against it. This report contains an assessment of the responses provided by Holyoke to questions in EDSAT. The analysis includes comparisons between the responses from Holyoke and responses from all of the other jurisdictions that have completed the self assessment as of March 31, 2011. These jurisdictions will be referred to as the comparison group municipalities (CGM) and are viewed as representing Holyoke's competitors for private investment. The comparisons indicate where Holyoke is particularly strong relative to the CGM and where there may be areas of improvement to enhance the city's economic development potential. Holyoke participated in an initial self assessment in 2006 and any changes between the 2006 and 2011 assessments will be discussed in a separate report. All responses and results will be kept strictly confidential.

Project Overview

The EDSAT and accompanying analysis are part of an ongoing partnership between Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban Research and Policy (Dukakis Center) and the National League of Cities (NLC). The larger economic development efforts between the Dukakis Center and the NLC include an Economic Development Toolkit of which EDSAT is the first tool. Since 2005, the Dukakis Center has sought to identify the "deal breakers" impeding private investment in local jurisdictions. Based on research on the rebirth of older industrial cities, the Dukakis Center has studied and identified what municipalities can do to respond to changing market forces and highlighted strategic opportunities for other key actors including state government, regional agencies, the private sector, and academic institutions. The result has been the development of EDSAT and the creation of an analytical framework for providing practical feedback to municipalities that take part in the self assessment.

Methodology

The EDSAT questionnaire is the product of a rigorous and interactive process involving the research team, partners in the development community, and communities that have participated in the self assessment. The foundation for the over 250 questions that make up the EDSAT questionnaire was established when the Dukakis Center surveyed a large group of members from the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) and CoreNet Global, the professional association representing in-house location experts. They were asked to identify those themes that are most important to businesses when evaluating locations. That process generated a set of 38 broad themes relevant to economic growth and development. Examples of

themes are highway access, capacity of infrastructure, and the timeliness of permit approvals. The location experts ranked the themes as “Very Important,” “Important,” or “Less Important” to companies and developers when evaluating locations.

Each question in EDSAT addresses a location factor within a theme. The response provided by Holyoke to a question is compared to the median or majority response of the CGM. Depending on Holyoke’s response in light of the CGM, EDSAT assigns a color code to the comparison, indicating Holyoke’s relative strength in that location factor. Green indicates a municipality is stronger than the median or majority response in the comparison group; yellow indicates the response equals the median or majority response or is qualitatively similar and; red indicates a municipality is weaker than the median or majority response. The interaction between the importance of a location factor and Holyoke’s relative strength in that factor yields the most telling information. A comparison yielding “red” for a Very Important factor represents the potential for a “deal breaker,” while a comparison resulting in “green” for a Very Important factor represents the likelihood of a “deal maker.”

Interpretation of some comparisons and color assignments may depend on the individual circumstances of the municipality answering the question and its objectives for economic development. For example, if a municipality has many more square feet of vacant warehouse space than the median number for the CGM, EDSAT assigns “red” because large amounts of warehouse space could indicate out dated facilities in an industry experiencing stagnant economic activity; a weakness if all else were equal. However, the empty space may actually be an asset if the municipality is focusing on attracting businesses that would benefit from such large spaces, such as a distribution center, manufacturing, or creative mixed use projects. For some questions, the red and green color assignments serve to flag the response for further consideration within the context of the municipality’s objectives and circumstances.

Summary and Organization of Relative Strengths and Weaknesses

This section highlights Holyoke’s primary strengths and weaknesses for economic development relative to the CGM. EDSAT does not provide an overall grade for a municipality. Each municipality has its unique set of strengths, weaknesses, and economic development objectives, thus it would not be relevant to the process to assign an overall ranking among the CGM. Instead, the Dukakis Center staff creates a list of “deal makers” and “deal breakers” for each of the Very Important, Important, and Less Important location factors. The lists of “deal makers” are not organized in any particular order. Dukakis Center staff suggest that municipalities review the lists and use them to highlight and enhance strengths.

The lists of “deal breakers” on the other hand are prioritized for municipal leaders to consider mitigating or eliminating. Within each of the three “deal breaker” lists, the tasks are ordered according to what the Dukakis Center staff considers more feasible and within the control of the municipality. For example, if a municipality has limited highway access, building a new highway interchange or connector would neither be a task that can be finished quickly nor would it likely be an efficient use of resources. However, streamlining the municipality’s permitting process and making that information easily accessible to location experts and businesses is a task that could be accomplished with modest investments in time and resources. Location experts rank both highway access and the timeliness of permitting as Very Important. In the prioritized list of

potential “deal breakers,” the permitting process would be listed higher than the highway interchange because streamlining the permitting process is considered in the control of municipalities.

It is suggested that Holyoke review the prioritized lists and the more detailed narrative about all the location factors, while keeping in mind its economic development objectives and the resources available for addressing “deal breakers.” This is an opportunity for informed dialogue among colleagues and a roadmap for action towards turning “deal breakers” into “deal makers.”

At the end of each list of “deal breakers” is a list of on par comparisons between Holyoke and the CGM. On par comparisons indicate that neither Holyoke nor the majority of CGM undertakes these activities or are quantitatively or qualitatively different. The Dukakis Center staff included these with the weakness to draw attention to them. These activities tend to be within reach from the perspectives of implementation and municipal control. If Holyoke initiated some of these activities, then the city would differentiate itself from the CGM, rather than simply being on par with them.

Strengths or Potential “Deal Makers”

These are the location factors in which Holyoke has strengths relative to the CGM. These are the economic development assets of the city. Holyoke should build upon them in economic development strategies and highlight them to potential businesses and developers. Please note that strengths are not listed in any particular order within the three lists.

Strength among Very Important Location Factors

- Holyoke offers parking facilities near development sites and takes greater advantage of state and federal grants to improving parking than the CGM. This is critical for Holyoke because it tends to have less on-site parking than the CGM.
- Holyoke has a larger proportion of Professionals in its workforce than the CGM.
- Holyoke is faster than the median duration of approvals among the CGM for six of ten municipal review processes and on par for the remaining four.

Strength among Important Location Factors

- Holyoke has better public transit service at its available manufacturing and general office space sites. Additionally, the city includes transit oriented development in its plans for attracting new firms.
- Holyoke works harder at maintaining public spaces and enforcing nuisance code violations than the CGM; and monitors follow up on maintenance needs.
- The city works with the arts community to design open spaces and has a higher proportion of land reserved for open space than the CGM.
- The city works with resident firms to assist in attracting new businesses. Resident firms can provide firsthand knowledge of doing business in Holyoke and of the current business needs of its industry.

- The city has a policy to stay in contact with existing firms about their satisfaction in doing business in Holyoke. The city has a formal procedure for intervening when a business expresses dissatisfaction.
- Holyoke has more greenfield sites than the CGM. In the case of brownfields, the city has more experience with redevelopment than the median level of experience among the CGM.
- The city has a strategy to engage ethnic groups and unique businesses to attract regional niche shopping. The city also has a strategy for marketing locally made products in regional markets.
- The city maintains a complete list of sites that are available for development and provides handbooks and flowcharts of its permitting process for prospective applicants. While these seem like common sense lists to prepare, the majority of the CGM do not.
- Holyoke uses overlay districts to expedite permitting and markets “fast track” permitting options available for developers and firms.
- Holyoke is on par with the CGM for offering cultural and recreational amenities with the addition of major museums and classical musical and dance.
- Single family house prices and rental rates tend to be lower in Holyoke.
- The city’s proactive treatment of tax delinquent properties is a strength for Holyoke. By giving tax delinquent properties timely attention and clearing tax liens, the city is clearing the way for future streams of tax revenues.
- There tends to be more amenities such as dining and daycares near development sites.

Strength among Less Important Location Factors

- There is a regional airport that is closer to Holyoke than the median distance between a typical CGM and the nearest regional airport.
- Holyoke has ten four-year colleges within ten miles of its boundaries. This contributes to workforce development and support for technology and research based industries.
- The chief executive in Holyoke plays a significant role in ensuring an efficient permitting process; and there is an established economic development training program for staff.
- Holyoke offers more information on its website that is relevant to developers and businesses than the CGM.

Weaknesses or Potential “Deal Breakers”

These are the location factors with which Holyoke is experiencing some challenges. The factors in the Very Important group are the ones the municipality should consider addressing first because they are the most critical “deal breakers” that could be turned into vital “deal makers” if appropriate action is taken. Next, the city should consider those in the Important group and finally the Less Important group. Note that there is a list of on par comparisons between Holyoke and the CGM within each group. The Dukakis Center staff included these with the weaknesses to draw attention to them. These activities tend to be within reach from the perspectives of

implementation and municipal control, therefore if Holyoke were to pursue them, it would pull ahead of the CGM, rather than being on par with them.

Weakness among Very Important Location Factors

- Fewer manufacturing and general office sites have on site parking. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking in Holyoke tends to be more expensive than the CGM. Parking is one of the most important location factors cited by location experts.
- Rents for Class A office space in Holyoke's highway district (e.g., Ingleside and People's Bank building) and central district (e.g., downtown, city hall, and courthouse) tend to be higher than among the CGM. Rent for retail and manufacturing space also tends to be higher. The relatively small supply of Class A space affects its price as much as its desirable locations in the city.
- Holyoke has a much higher proportion of Class C office space than Class B or Class A. Not only does this reflect the supply of older buildings in Holyoke, Class C space is more expensive to renovate, especially if infrastructure improvements are needed.
- Holyoke has a lower proportion of its residents age 25 or older with at least a high school diploma and it has a lower proportion with at least a Bachelor's degree. This is an indication that mid-level and technical skills may not be sufficient among the city's workforce.
- Holyoke has more English Language Learners within its workforce than in CGM. This may be less of a weakness if the workers have skills companies demand.

On Par Comparisons among Very Important Location Factors

- The efficiency of the municipal permitting process is perhaps the most important location factor for developers and businesses. Holyoke's permitting process is faster than the median duration among the CGM for most approval processes. Holyoke is on par with the CGM for the appeals processes for new projects and existing structures. The duration is five to eight weeks and if Holyoke can reduce this time, it would further improve the efficiency of its permitting.

Weakness among Important Location Factors

- A larger proportion of residential housing stocks is considered dilapidated in Holyoke than among the CGM. More commercial buildings are closed down and a higher percentage of them are vacant.
- The city has fewer vacant developable sites zoned for commercial/industrial uses than the CGM. While the city may have fewer vacant sites, remaining flexible to zoning changes and redevelopment options will keep Holyoke responsive to business needs.
- Holyoke has nearly seven times more office space in commercial/industrial buildings than the median amount among the CGM. This amount of space and its likelihood of being Class C office space can be a negative indicator of economic health to a prospective developer or business. However, if the city actively plans for and promotes appropriate uses of the space, it can be turned into an asset.

- Holyoke’s commercial/industrial property tax rate and residential tax rate are higher than the median rates among the CGM that also have a split tax rate.
- The city has more tax delinquent and tax defaulted properties than the CGM.
- The crime rate for burglaries, auto theft, robberies, and homicides is notably higher in Holyoke than the median rates among the CGM.
- A smaller percent of high school students are proficient in English and Mathematics; a smaller percent of graduating seniors attend a four year college; and some schools in Holyoke have been deemed underachieving. Overall, these indicate that Holyoke’s public schools would not be a quality of life factor that is a draw.
- The rate of homeownership is lower and there tends to be larger percentages of homes for sale and vacant rental property in Holyoke.

On Par Comparisons among Important Location Factors

- While Holyoke’s municipal permitting process is faster than most CGM, the city could still benefit from implementing a single presentation format to further expedite the process for applicants because each presentation represents expenditures in terms of time and costs.
- Holyoke should consider establishing a procedure to de-brief firms that have expressed an interest in locating in the city. Whether the firm decides to locate in Holyoke or not, de-briefing can lend valuable insights into the reasons the firm made the decision it did and adjust its economic development strategies accordingly.
- Holyoke should consider collaborating with industrial or location specialists on any marketing programs. They would be able to provide industry specific information that would help the city focus its marketing and recruiting efforts and better leverage existing industry collaborations.
- Holyoke could benefit from offering some additional local incentives to build an advantage over the CGM. Examples of such incentives include loan guarantees, revenue bonds, equity participation, or business district group loans. Because these incentives require larger capital investments or administrative costs, Holyoke could consider partnering with a regional or state economic development entity that offers these programs already.
- Holyoke currently does not have a technology or business incubator. Such a resource would complement the High Performance Computing Center and its plans for an innovation based business district.
- Holyoke does not have a strategy to reclaim abandoned or underutilized shopping centers. However, the city has very little abandoned or underutilized space of this type. If the situation changes in the future, Holyoke is aware of the benefits of such a plan.

Weakness among Less Important Location Factors

- There were no significant weaknesses among the Less Important location factors.

On Par Comparisons among Very Important Location Factors

- Holyoke offers economic development training to staff, but not to other municipal leaders. Training for boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials helps give them the tools and information to take the lead on addressing the latest developments in business to accommodate the changing needs of global and local firms.

Detailed Section Analysis

The following is a section by section analysis of the EDSAT results comparing Holyoke and the CGM. Within each section are several related themes, where the symbols ●, ◐, and ○ indicate the relative importance of the theme to developers and businesses, as ranked by NAIOP and CoreNet Global location experts. The shaded circle (●) denotes a Very Important factor, the half-shaded circle (◐) denotes an Important factor, and the unshaded circle (○) denotes a Less Important factor.

Section 1. Access to Customers/Markets

In order to minimize transportation costs and time to market, businesses, customers, and employees would want adequate access to highway corridors that have the least amount of congestion. Highway access, congestion, and parking are Very Important factors in location decisions. Public transportation is Important, while proximity to rail and airports are Less Important. The overall physical attractiveness of the public spaces, enforcement of codes, and condition of housing and commercial real estate is Important, as they are indications of general economic health and quality of life in Holyoke.

A. Highway Access ●

Holyoke has among the highest levels of access to highway corridors with 75% or greater of its available sites for retail trade, manufacturing, and general office space within two miles of a major limited access highway. Interstate 91 and US Routes 5 and 202 are within the city boundaries. This level of highway access puts Holyoke on par with the median level of access among the CGM.

Like the majority of the CGM, Holyoke also imposes weight restrictions on streets and access roads. This can have a negative impact on certain businesses that require heavy trucks as part of their operations by limiting traffic flow and raising costs through the need for additional smaller vehicles or through fines for overweight vehicles.

B. Public Transit ◐

Overall Holyoke has better public transit access to its development sites than the CGM and is ahead of the majority of the CGM by incorporating transit into economic development plans. The city has a transit oriented development (TOD) component in its plans for attracting new businesses. The city is on par with the CGM with 75% or greater of its available retail sites within one quarter mile of bus transit. A higher percentage (75% or greater) of the city's

available manufacturing and general office sites have access to bus transit than the CGM (50% to 74%). Holyoke, like the majority of the CGM, is serviced by public transit on nights and weekends.

Holyoke offers shuttle services to public commuting stations, while the majority of the CGM do not. The city has commuter rail or bus service within five miles of its boundary, as do the majority of the CGM.

C. Parking ●

On-site parking appears to be more constrained in Holyoke than among the CGM in terms of space and costs. The same percentage (75% or greater) of available retail sites in Holyoke and the CGM have on-site parking. However, only 50% to 74% of available manufacturing and general office space have on-site parking in Holyoke as compared to 75% or greater of these types of sites having on-site parking among the CGM. Parking fees in Holyoke tend to be slightly higher than the median fee among the CGM. Hourly fees are similar at \$0.25, while the daily fee in Holyoke is about \$0.50 higher at \$2.50 per day and the monthly fee is about \$6.00 higher at \$30 per month.

Holyoke is more active than the majority of the CGM in offering parking facilities near development sites and using state or federal grants to improve parking. The city is on par with the majority of the CGM in terms of not employing tax abatements or other financial incentives to local businesses to provide off-site parking. Parking is one of the most important location factors to businesses and Holyoke is doing better than the CGM at retail sites. The city would benefit from exploring alternatives to on-site parking or incentives for businesses to provide solutions at manufacturing and general office sites.

D. Traffic ●

Daily traffic conditions and requirements to manage project related traffic in Holyoke are very similar to the CGM. The typical level of rush hour congestion is “moderately congested” in Holyoke, which is the same as the reported median level among the CGM. Like the majority of the CGM, Holyoke requires a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects. The city also requires firms or developers to provide traffic mitigation, such as signals or metering, beyond streets adjacent to the site. However, the city and the majority of the CGM do not require firms or developers to provide traffic control during employee arrival and departure times.

In terms of traffic planning resources, Holyoke has regular access to a traffic engineer or transportation planner, which is an advantage for the city because the majority of the CGM do not. Holyoke and the majority of the CGM do routinely use the services of a transportation consultant and have access to traffic count data for major roadways.

E. Airport ○

For airport access, Holyoke has the advantage of a regional airport that is closer (6 to 10 miles) than the median distance reported by the CGM (11 to 20 miles). For other airport related factors, Holyoke is on par with the CGM. Holyoke and the majority of CGM do not have a general aviation airport within their jurisdictions; and Holyoke and the typical CGM are within 20 to 30 miles of the closest major/international airport. However, the major

airport is not accessible from Holyoke by public transportation, while there is public transportation to the major airport in the majority of the CGM.

F. Rail ○

Holyoke has freight rail service within its jurisdiction, as do the majority of the CGM. Holyoke does not have commuter rail or intercity/interstate rail service within its jurisdiction, which is also similar to the majority of the CGM.

G. Physical Attractiveness ●

Holyoke is more intent on enforcing regulations related to nuisance code enforcement and maintenance than the typical CGM. The city “vigorously” enforces codes and regulations on abandoned properties and trash disposal, while the median effort among the CGM is “moderately.” Another advantage for the city is that it has a hotline for reporting code violations and maintenance needs as well as a system for monitoring responses, while the majority of the CGM do not have these systems in place.

Holyoke is on par with the CGM for “vigorously” maintaining public spaces such as streets and parks. However, the city is only “moderately” maintaining public properties near available development sites, while the majority of the CGM responded they do so “vigorously.”

One aspect of physical attractiveness that is a significant challenge for Holyoke is a higher percent of its residential and commercial buildings are in poor condition. Compared to the median responses from the CGM, the city has about 5% more of its housing stock considered dilapidated; about 10% more of its commercial buildings are boarded up or closed down, and about 5% more of its commercial and industrial spaces are vacant.

Though the city has structures in poorer or vacant conditions, Holyoke involves the arts community in designing open spaces, while the CGM tend not to. The city has a larger percentage (20% or greater) of acreage reserved for parks than the median percentage (6% to 10%) among the CGM.

Section 2. Agglomeration

Agglomeration refers to the number of complementary and supplemental services and related firms, including academic institutions that are available within a jurisdiction to support new or existing companies. A concentration of similar or supporting companies helps create a critical mass of businesses within an industry, making it easier for that industry to thrive in the municipality or regionally. The level of agglomeration within a jurisdiction can be enhanced by the intensity of its plans to attract companies, coordination of marketing plans with regional or state efforts, cross marketing among organizations, and follow up with existing and potential firms.

A. Complementary/Supplemental Business Services ●

Holyoke is on par with the CGM in terms of the location factors under the business services theme. The Chamber of Commerce is “moderately” active in the economic development activities in Holyoke and the city has an active volunteer development committee.

Regarding professional services, Holyoke has financial services and business advisory firms, law firms specializing in commercial and intellectual property, and major commercial banks. These firms are “moderately capable” of working with emerging technology and scientific firms, such as the Life Sciences/Biotechnology, Information Technology, and Alternative Energy companies the city is considering attracting.

Holyoke reported that it does not have a business incubator or other sort of cooperative and supportive space for start up businesses. The majority of the CGM do not have these initiatives either. However, it would be to Holyoke’s advantage to consider such capacity, especially since an incubator could take advantage of the planned technology district that will be anchored by the High-Performance Computing Center and it would likely support Life Sciences/Biotechnology, Information Technology, and Alternative Energy start up companies as well.

B. Critical Mass Firms ◀

Holyoke implements its own and participates in regional economic development plans. The city has an overall economic development plan (OEDP) and is part of a regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The majority of the CGM also have OEDP or CEDS, putting Holyoke on par with them. Where Holyoke is stronger is in having an industrial attraction policy that is “vigorous” as compared to the CGM, which have a median level of “moderate.”

Holyoke identified several industries that it is targeting locally or is being targeted regionally. The industries are Healthcare, Life Sciences/Biotechnology, Traditional Manufacturing, Information Technology, Travel and Tourism, and Alternative Energy. The majority of the CGM are also targeting Healthcare, Life Sciences/Biotechnology, and Traditional Manufacturing, therefore increasing the competition for these types of firms. The majority of the CGM are not targeting Information Technology, Travel and Tourism, and Alternative Energy, and thus there may be reduced competition for these sectors.

Both Holyoke and the majority of the CGM have development specialists available to assist in interpreting the locational needs of the industries they are looking to attract.

C. Cross Marketing ◀

In terms of cross marketing with existing businesses and regional or state agencies, Holyoke is better than or on par with the CGM. Holyoke enlists firms already located in the city to attract new firms, while the majority of the CGM do not. This is an effective means to attracting new business because the existing firms have first hand knowledge about what its industry needs to grow and can speak to others directly about the advantages of doing business in Holyoke. Both Holyoke and the majority of the CGM engage local and regional business organizations, regional planning or development organizations, and state agencies to market the city to potential developers and businesses.

D. Marketing Follow-up ◀

Holyoke informally follows up with firms that have expressed an interest in locating in the city, whether or not they actually do. This is a step in the right direction because the majority of CGM do not conduct any follow up. With a formal follow up procedure, Holyoke would

ensure it obtains the valuable information about firms' decisions if the municipality met with firms about the reasoning behind their decisions. The information gained would be first hand and up to the minute. Holyoke could use this information to adjust its attraction strategy accordingly and it would be possible to conduct follow up with few additional resources.

Holyoke has formal procedures for contacting existing firms about their satisfaction with doing business in the city and for intervening early when a firm expresses dissatisfaction with the city. These are two advantages that the majority of the CGM do not have.

E. Proximity to Universities & Research ○

Holyoke does not have a four year college within its boundaries, while the median number among the CGM is one. However, Holyoke has many more four year colleges (ten colleges) within a ten mile radius than the median for the CGM (two colleges).

The city is on par with the CGM in terms of having one community college and one vocational/technical school in its jurisdiction. Holyoke actively collaborates with the Holyoke Community College and local industries to align curriculum with the skills needed by local firms. This is an important pursuit that can affect Holyoke's future workforce in a positive way. While the location of schools is less important to businesses, the presence of an appropriately and adequately trained workforce in a municipality is very important, as will be discussed in Section 4.

Section 3. Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)

The cost of land to a firm includes two Very Important factors: infrastructure and rent. Updating civil, utility, and telecommunications infrastructure can create significant expenses for a firm to incur and therefore, if a municipality does not have adequate capacity in place, a potential firm could decide the location is not suitable. Rents are Very Important because they contribute to operating expenses. Location experts consider the quality of available space and amount of available land for development Important factors.

A. Infrastructure ●

The capacity for all water, wastewater, natural gas, electricity, and data/telecommunications (land lines, cellular, and fiber optic/cable/DSL) infrastructure in Holyoke is "sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service." This is also the median level of capacity among the CGM.

B. Rents ●

The triple net rent per square foot tends to be higher in Holyoke than the median levels among the CGM for retail space and manufacturing space; and higher for Class A office space in the central business district (e.g., the downtown city hall and courthouse areas) and in the highway district (e.g., the People's Bank building and Ingleside). Triple net rents for Class B office space in both the central and highway districts are essentially on par with the CGM and lower for Class C office space. Rent for retail space in the central district tends to be lower in Holyoke than in the CGM. The differences in rents are summarized in Table 1.

The ratio of Classes A, B, and C office space is unbalanced in Holyoke, reflecting the supply of older or blighted buildings. Five percent of Holyoke's office space is considered Class A,

25% is Class B, and 70% is Class C, as compared to the median levels of 20%, 40%, and 40% respectively among the CGM. The restricted supply of Class A office space will contribute to keeping those rents high. The relatively larger amount of Class C space will raise costs for businesses because of renovations. In either case, costs go up for businesses, putting Holyoke is at a disadvantage compared to the CGM.

Table 1. Comparison of Triple Net Lease Rents between Holyoke and the CGM

Type of Facility	Average Rent per Square Foot in Holyoke	Median Rent per Square Foot among the CGM	Difference (\$) and Percent Difference
Retail Space in Central Business District	\$8	\$11	\$3 or 28% lower
Retail Space in Highway Business District	\$14	\$12	\$2 or 17% higher
Manufacturing Space	Ingleside: \$10 Other: \$6	\$5.50	Ingleside: \$4.50 or 82% higher Other: \$0.50 9% higher
Class A Office Space in Central Business District	\$18	\$15	\$3 or 20% higher
Class B Office Space in Central Business District	\$12	\$12	No difference
Class C Office Space in Central Business District	\$5	\$10	\$5 or 50% lower
Class A Office Space in Highway Business District	\$16	\$13	\$3 or 23% higher
Class B Office Space in Highway Business District	\$10	\$10-\$13	No difference or slightly lower
Class C Office Space in Highway Business District	\$6	\$8	\$2 or 25% lower

C. Quality of Available Space

The quality of development sites in Holyoke is somewhat of a mixed bag. Holyoke is on par with the median range among the CGM for percent of sites considered brownfields (0% to 10%), but Holyoke has “considerable” experience redeveloping brownfields as compared to the CGM, which tend to have “limited” experience. Having more experience, Holyoke would be better equipped to facilitate development of its remaining brownfields than other municipalities with less expertise.

Holyoke has the same proportion (0% to 10%) of its development sites identified as abandoned or underutilized shopping centers as the median range among the CGM.

Holyoke has an advantage over the CGM because it has a higher proportion of sites considered greenfields. Holyoke reported 11% to 20%, while the median range among the CGM is 0% to 10%.

D. Land (space)

Like the quality of available space for development, the amount of space in Holyoke paints a mixed picture. There are fewer acres (84) of vacant developable space in Holyoke as compared to the median number vacant acres in the CGM (150).

Holyoke has about six times more vacant, usable industrial or warehouse space as the median level among the CGM. EDSAT flagged its comparison as green and indeed this large amount of useable industrial or warehouse space can be an asset if the city targets industries or creative mixed uses that can take advantage of it. Similarly, Holyoke has about seven times more useable office space in existing commercial/industrial buildings than the median amount among the CGM. EDSAT flagged this as red, but how Holyoke strategically treats this space will determine if it is an asset or liability. Convention would indicate that an excessive amount of vacant space would be a negative indicator to potential businesses, but strategic marketing and creative planning can overcome this.

A similar proportion of parcels (11% to 20%) are available for industrial or large scale commercial development exists in Holyoke and the CGM. These parcels are five acres or more, giving municipalities more flexibility in the types of industries or businesses it can attract.

There are currently no acres in Holyoke that are under consideration for being rezoned to commercial/industrial from residential or vice versa. However, it is important for the municipality to remain open to rezoning opportunities when it balances economic development with the overall land use objectives of the city.

Section 4. Labor

The effect of labor factors on location decisions runs somewhat contrary to popular belief. An available labor force that is adequately trained (Workforce Composition) is a Very Important factor, while the cost of labor is Important and the presence of strong unions is Less Important. Conventional wisdom often tells municipalities that higher labor costs and unions negatively impact a firm’s decision to consider a location because they raise the cost for labor. This is less of a “deal breaker” than previously thought, if the workforce is adequately skilled. Workforce

training resources is Less Important relative to other location factors. However, having a technically trained workforce whose skills align with the industries a municipality wants to attract is a valuable selling point.

A. Labor Costs ◐

Labor costs in Holyoke are similar to those in the CGM. The prevailing hourly wage rates in Holyoke for semi-skilled manufacturing workers and mid-level clerical workers (\$12.51 to \$20) are in the same range as the median prevailing hourly rates among the CGM. Holyoke's prevailing average annual salary for high school teachers (\$45,000 to \$54,000) is on par with the median among the CGM. Additionally, there is no minimum or living wage statute in Holyoke, which is also the case in the majority of the CGM.

B. Workforce Composition ●

The distribution of unskilled, semi-skilled, technically skilled, and managerial workers within Holyoke's workforce is even at 1% to 25% for each skill level. This is similar to the distribution among the CGM. Holyoke has a higher percentage of Professionals in its workforce at 26% to 49%, as compared to the CGM, which has a median range of 1% to 25%.

Holyoke reported a higher percentage of its workforce being English Language Learners (21% to 35%) than the median range among the CGM (0% to 10%). While this may be a potential weakness, if the workers have skills that are compatible with the industries Holyoke is trying to attract, then the language related impacts would be lessened.

C. Unions ○

The effect of unions in Holyoke is on par with that among the CGM. There have been no major strikes or work stoppages in the last three years, there have been no major union organizing drives in the last three years, and unions have a "somewhat" significant presence in the labor market.

D. Labor (available) ●

A smaller percentage of Holyoke's residents age 25 or older have at least a high school diploma (66% to 84%), as compared the median range among the CGM (85% or greater.) Similarly, a smaller percentage of the city's residents age 25 or older have at least a bachelor's degree (11% to 20%), relative to the median range among the CGM (21% to 35%). It appears that Holyoke's workforce falls into two categories, one representing professional level skills and the other representing unskilled and mid-level skills. This may be a serious potential weakness for Holyoke if the supply of workers with mid-level and technical skills needed by the types of businesses the city is looking to attract is insufficient.

E. Workforce Training ○

Holyoke and the majority of the CGM are on par with each other for workforce training resources. All interact with regional or state employment services, high school, vocational-technical schools, and community colleges. Holyoke also works with human service or non-profit career training centers, while the majority of the CGM do not. Both Holyoke and the majority of the CGM support public-private partnerships providing workforce training and have adult education programs readily available within their jurisdictions.

Section 5. Municipal Process

The municipal process section covers several themes of marketing and permitting. When it comes to marketing themselves, jurisdictions that are aggressive and collaborate with firms already located in their municipality may have an upper hand at attracting new investment. Those firms can speak about first hand experiences and market conditions to interested companies and investors. Likewise, they can advise municipal leaders about industries they are intimately familiar with. Once the marketing efforts pay off, a municipality then needs to have a transparent and efficient permitting process to minimize time and costs for the new businesses to open their doors. Among the factors examined in this theme, the timeliness of approvals is Very Important to location experts and the remaining themes are Important with the exception of the Permitting Ombudsman, which is Less Important.

A. Industrial Sensitivity ◀

Holyoke is much more proactive than the majority of the CGM in collaborating with local businesses/spokespersons and ethnic groups, and in marketing its core strengths, industries, and local products. The city also has a quick response team available to address any negative data, incidents, or news about the city, while the majority of the CGM do not.

Holyoke and the majority of the CGM do not have a marketing program that is based on needs identified by industrial or location specialists. While this puts Holyoke on par with the CGM, the city could benefit from working with these specialists. They would be able to provide industry specific information that would help the city focus its marketing and recruiting efforts and better leverage existing industry collaborations.

B. Sites Available ◀

Holyoke is proactive in marketing and managing available development sites. Specifically, the city maintains a complete list of available development sites and has an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent properties while the majority of the CGM do not.

Holyoke is on par with the majority of the CGM for marketing sites owned by the city, maintaining active relationships with commercial real estate professionals and developers, and for using regulations to protect industrial land uses from encroachment by incompatible uses. The city is on par with the majority of the CGM in terms of not having a strategy for reclaiming abandoned or underutilized shopping plazas. At this time, the city does not have a significant amount of abandoned or underutilized shopping plazas, but if in the future this occurs, the city is aware of the importance of having a strategy to redevelop them.

C. Timeliness of Approvals ●

The timeliness of permit approvals is one of the most often cited location factors that are critical to businesses and developers. Holyoke is faster than the median duration of approvals among the CGM for six of the ten review processes included in EDSAT and on par for the remaining. Holyoke's approvals for site plan reviews, zoning variances, and special permits for both new projects and existing structures are about four weeks faster than the median duration among the CGM. The city is on par with the median duration among the CGM for building permits and appeals for both new projects and existing structures.

D. Predictable Permits ◐

Holyoke tends to provide more information in the form of permitting flowcharts and development handbooks to businesses and developers than the majority of the CGM. This is important because these resources help make the permitting process more transparent and increase streamlining. Both Holyoke and the majority of the CGM provide permitting checklists. However, Holyoke and the majority of the CGM do not offer a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with authority in the permitting process.

While Holyoke already has relatively faster permitting processes, the city would still benefit in terms of further streamlining its permitting process. The city currently offers joint presentations to the planning department and the conservation commission, which is a move in the right direction and a practice to build upon. The ideal permitting process is a single presentation format where an applicant presents to all municipal entities with authority in permitting at one time. A single presentation format is most efficient for the applicant because it saves time and financial resources.

E. Fast Track Permits ◐

Holyoke is ahead of the majority of the CGM in expediting permits in its overlay districts and for marketing fast track permitting to potential companies and developers. The city is on par with the majority of the CGM for not pre-permitting certain districts and for not expediting permitting for publicly or cooperatively owned industrial parks. Holyoke would benefit from additional pre-permitting and expedited permits and would further distinguish itself from the CGM.

F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process ◐

Participation by citizens and elected officials in the project review process in Holyoke is similar to that within the majority of the CGM. Abutters and neighborhood groups each slow the permitting process “somewhat.” Interested parties have a specific time frame and procedure for comment at the initial stages of a project and get multiple opportunities for review and comment during various stages of the review process. With formalized involvement by abutters and neighborhood groups, Holyoke would involve residents in the economic development process, create a common vision, and create a more business friendly environment.

An advantage that Holyoke has had in the last five years is that no abutter or neighborhood opposition has stopped a development proposal, while a majority of the CGM have experienced such events. Elected officials have not had to intervene to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by an abutter or neighborhood opposition in the last five years either. Holyoke’s officials could help maintain this trend by including the community to a greater extent than “very little” through dialogue with community groups.

G. Permitting Ombudsman ○

Holyoke is ahead of the majority of the CGM in that the chief executive officer and other local officials have significant roles in ensuring the efficiency of the local permitting process. The chief executive officers of most CGM do not have such a role. Holyoke offers an established training program for development staff allowing them to learn about critical

adjustments that are needed to accommodate firms in a timely fashion. The majority of the CGM do not offer such training. Holyoke does not currently offer training to boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials. Doing so would put the city at a greater advantage over the CGM because the majority of the CGM do not offer training to these individuals. More importantly, Holyoke's leaders would have greater access to the most up to the moment needs and trends of businesses and the most recent best practices for economic development.

On par with the majority of the CGM, Holyoke requires local licenses for specific businesses or industries and takes approximately less than a week to four weeks for the licensing process. The city is involved in the process for businesses requiring state or federal licensing and permitting and provides technical assistance. This is the case among the majority of the CGM.

Section 6. Quality of Life (Community)

The quality of life within the community is Important in location decisions because companies want to be able to offer its employees a safe community with affordable housing, good schools, and a rich selection of cultural and recreational opportunities.

A. Cultural and Recreational Amenities

Holyoke offers similar cultural and recreational activities as the majority of the CGM. Specifically, Holyoke has a golf course and boating facilities within five miles of the city; Holyoke does not have a professional sports team, repertory theater company, civic center, arena, or concert hall. Two amenities that are in Holyoke but are not in the majority of the CGM are major art, science, or historic museums and a symphony orchestra, opera, or ballet company.

B. Crime

The crime rate in Holyoke is markedly higher per 100,000 residents than the median rate among the CGM. Residential burglaries are 4.5 times higher; auto thefts 4.4 times higher; robberies 6.5 times higher; and homicides 3.3 times higher. Such notable differences to the median rates represent a significant challenge to Holyoke in terms of how potential companies and developers perceive quality of life in the city.

C. Housing

The median sale price of a single family house and the median rent for a two bedroom apartment in Holyoke are lower than the median ranges among the CGM. The market rates for a single family house is about \$100,000 less and rent for a two bedroom apartment is about \$200 lower.

While housing is more affordable in Holyoke, the home ownership rate is lower (34% to 50%) than the median ownership rate in the CGM (66% to 75%); and a higher percentage of houses are for sale, 3% to 5% versus less than 3% among the CGM. The vacancy rate of rental housing is higher in Holyoke too at 10% or more versus 3% to 5% among the CGM.

It appears as if the housing stock in Holyoke is more dilapidated (see Section 1G) and less desirable. This is also reflected in the lower median sale price and the lower proportion

(“few”) of major officers of firms located in the city living within the community, as compared to the median proportion among the CGM (“some”).

D. Local Schools ◀

Several aspects of Holyoke’s public schools are on par with the CGM. The average K-12 student expenditure annually is greater than \$8,501; average combined verbal and math SAT score is 976 to 1050; the percentage of high school seniors graduating last year was greater than 75%; and Holyoke and the majority of the CGM have parochial schools, but not non-sectarian or boarding schools. Holyoke has charter schools, while the majority of the CGM do not.

On the other side of the coin, there are several aspects of Holyoke’s schools that are weaker than the CGM. Holyoke has smaller proportions of students testing proficient in English and Mathematics (51% to 65% in both subjects) than the median range among the CGM (66% to 80%). Holyoke has under performing schools while the majority of the CGM do not. A smaller proportion of high school seniors from last year’s class attended a four year college (1% to 25%) than the median proportion among the CGM (50% to 74%). A larger proportion of K-12 students in Holyoke qualifies for free or reduced cost lunch last year (50% to 74%) than among the CGM (1%-25%), indicating families in Holyoke tend to be lower income.

Overall, the performance of Holyoke’s public schools may be another challenge to marketing the city as having a high level of quality of life.

Section 7. Quality of Life (Site)

This section looks at the amenities and services available within one mile of existing development sites. Having a variety of amenities and services near employment centers makes it more pleasant and convenient for employees to work in a location. It becomes easier to find places to eat lunch or meet friends and family for dinner or to run errands before or after work.

A. Amenities ◀

Amenities within one mile of existing development sites in Holyoke tend to be more abundant than the median availability among the CGM. “All” sites are within 1 mile of fast food restaurants versus “most” among the CGM. “Most” sites are for fine dining, versus “some” among the CGM. “All” sites are for day cares, while “some” are among the CGM. Holyoke and the CGM are on par for having “most” sites within one mile of retail shops.

Section 8. Business Incentives

Business incentives are Important considerations for location experts as they consider candidate communities, however, incentives are not at the highest level of importance or the first factors a potential investor looks at. This is contrary to popular belief. Factors like infrastructure, workforce composition, and the timeliness of permitting are at the highest levels of importance and “deal breakers” a municipality must clear before an interested developer or company will advance negotiations with such inquires as tax incentives. Therefore, providing a broader portfolio of business incentives to offer potential investors is valuable as “deal closers.”

A. State ◀

Holyoke is better than or on par with utilizing state business incentives than the typical CGM. Holyoke is “very much” actively taking advantage of special state incentives, while the median reported level is “somewhat” among the CGM. Both Holyoke and the majority of CGM report that their businesses are eligible for special state tax incentives and that their states allow priority funding for distressed economic areas.

B. Local ◀

Holyoke and most CGM are on par for providing local tax or other financial incentives. Holyoke offers a revolving loan fund, while most CGM do not. Neither Holyoke nor the majority of the CGM offer loan guarantees, revenue bonds, equity participation, or business district group loans. Holyoke could benefit from offering some additional incentives and build an advantage over the CGM in this regard. For the incentives that require larger capital investments or administrative costs, Holyoke could consider partnering with a regional or state economic development entity. An example of this type of strategy is Holyoke’s participation in a regional brownfield revolving loan fund.

Holyoke actively tries to attract local, state, and federal facilities to its jurisdiction, while the majority of the CGM do not. Such public facilities can act as focal points or anchors in a development district that spurs and facilitates growth.

Holyoke and the majority of the CGM actively pursue federal and/or state programs to attract and retain businesses and use tax increment financing (TIF) or related programs to provide tax incentives. Holyoke and the majority of the CGM also assist in securing financing for businesses through commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms.

Section 9. Tax Rates

Tax rates are another cost factor that has traditionally been thought of as a “deal breaker” for businesses. Municipalities have often thought that if tax rates are too high, then they will have a hard time attracting businesses. Like financial incentives, the tax rate is not one of the Very Important factors identified by location experts. If the Very Important factors are satisfied, then a potential developer or firm will likely ask for a more favorable tax rate as a part of later stage negotiations. However, negotiations are unlikely to get to this point if the More Important location factors have not been satisfied.

A. Local ◀

Holyoke and the majority of the CGM collect local property taxes to pay for services, but do not collect local sales tax or income tax. Holyoke taxes commercial and industrial property at a different rate than residential property. The commercial/industrial rate is \$37.08/\$1000 and the residential rate is \$15.78/\$1000. Both these rates are higher than the corresponding median commercial/industrial rate (\$19.68/\$1000) and residential rate (\$11.25/\$1000) among the CGM that have split tax rates. This has the potential to raise the cost of property taxes for businesses, taking any tax incentives into consideration.

Because of the higher commercial/industrial tax rate, the proportion of tax revenue derived from industrial, commercial, and residential is spread more evenly across all property types. In Holyoke, 7% of the tax revenue comes from industrial property, 38% comes from

commercial property, and 49% comes from residential property. EDSAT flagged this distribution as green because the tax burden is shared and does not primarily rest on residential property.

Both Holyoke and the majority of the CGM have different revenue sources to pay for K-12 education and do not impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development.

B. Tax Delinquency ◀

Holyoke has more properties that are more than one year tax delinquent (200-300) than the median number (100-200) among the CGM. Similarly, more properties are tax defaulted (200-300) than the median (0-50) among the CGM. Holyoke and the typical CGM auction tax title properties within one to five years and have organized and defined processes for successful auctions.

Holyoke is more proactive than the majority of the CGM in removing tax related impediments to development. The city auctions the right to foreclose on tax delinquent properties, clears tax liens for new owners, and gives special attention to tax delinquent properties if they impede development. This is a strength for Holyoke because by giving tax delinquent properties timely attention and clearing tax liens, the city is also clearing the way for future streams of tax revenues.

Section 10. Access to Information

A town's website could be the first impression for location experts researching potential candidates. In this information age, a location expert could use a municipality's website to gather initial information and if it is not available, easy to find, and easy to understand, the researcher may reject the town as a potential location without further consideration. While a town's website may rank as Less Important in terms of decision making, it can be that initial source of information that entices a location expert to probe deeper and contact a municipality to seek additional information. At that point, the municipality's economic development leader or permitting ombudsman has an opportunity to step in and develop one-on-one rapport with the developer or company representative.

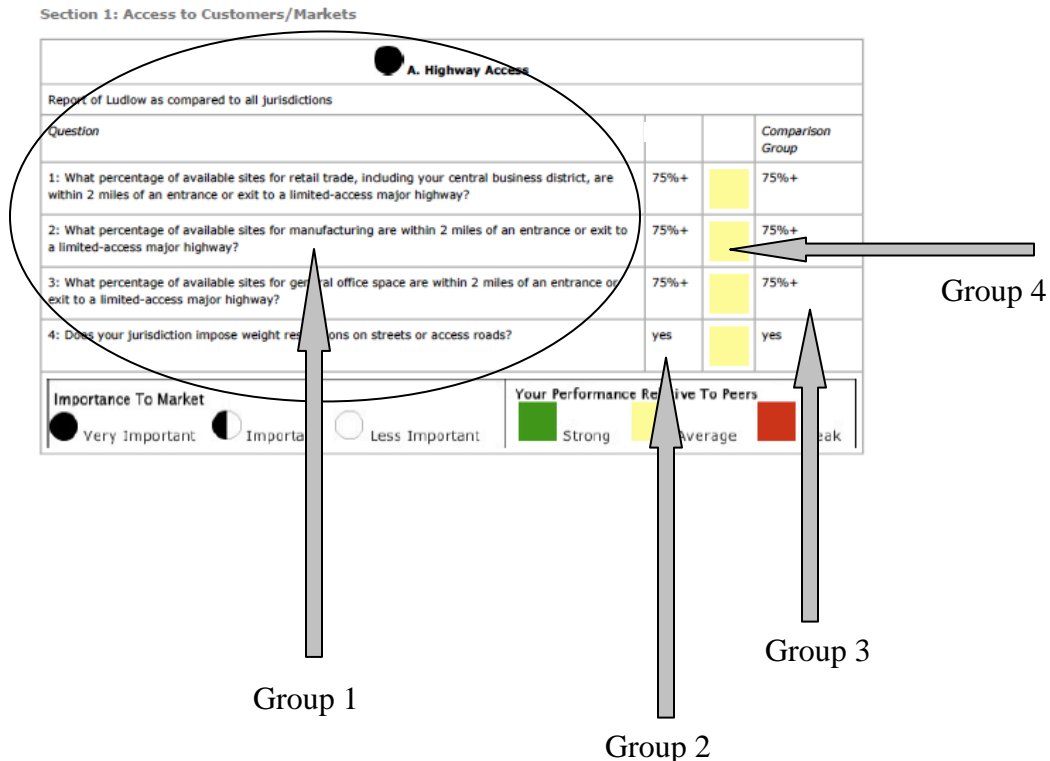
A. Website ○

Holyoke disseminates more information relevant to economic development through its website than most of the CGM. Among the most important types of information are local development policies and procedures, an economic development tool for businesses and developers, online submission of permit applications, parcel specific characteristics, and links to other economic development resources such as regional and state entities and chambers of commerce.

EDSAT Questionnaire Results for Holyoke, Massachusetts

This section of the report presents a tabular printout from the EDSAT. The results are displayed in four primary groupings of information:

- Group 1 identifies location themes, such as Highway Access, and questions about specific location factors related to that theme. At the top of each table is a circle that represents the relative importance of a theme to location experts and businesses. A filled circle (●) indicates “Very Important,” a half-filled circle (◐) indicates “Important,” and an unfilled circle (○) indicates “Less Important.”
- Group 2 shows Holyoke’s responses to the EDSAT questions.
- Group 3 is the median or majority (for yes/no questions) response of all the other jurisdictions (the comparison group municipalities or CGM) that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire.
- Group 4 is a series of green, yellow, or red blocks indicating how Holyoke compares to the CGM. There is a built-in function in EDSAT that allows a municipality to compare itself against a subset of the CGM by other criteria such as population, median income, or size of operating budget. For purposes of this analysis, Holyoke is compared with all the CGM.



Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool

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Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University
 and the National League of Cities Center for Research and Innovation

March 31, 2011






Comparison of Holyoke with:







[Run Report](#)









Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets







SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Holyoke MA

 A. Highway Access			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Holyoke		Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes		yes

Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak

 B. Public Transit			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
5: What percentage of available sites for retail trade are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		75% or greater
6: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		50-74%
7: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		50-74%
8: Is there a transit-oriented development strategy in your plans for attracting new firms?	yes		no
9: Is there a commuter rail or bus stop within 5 miles of your jurisdiction's boundaries?	yes		yes
10: Do you offer any shuttle services to other public commuting stations?	yes		no
11: Is public transit service available on nights and weekends?	yes		yes





Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak

 C. Parking			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What percentage of available sites for retail trade have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
13: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing have on-site parking?	50-74%		75% or greater
14: What percentage of available sites for general office space have on-site parking?	50-74%		75% or greater
15: Does your jurisdiction offer parking facilities near development sites?	yes		no
16: Have you employed tax abatements or other financial incentives to local businesses to provide off-site parking?	no		no
17: Have you used state or federal infrastructure grants to improve parking in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
18: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$ Hourly	.25		.25
19: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$ Daily	2.5		2
20: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$ Monthly	30		between 20-25 and 24




Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 D. Traffic			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
21: Do you have regular access to a traffic engineer or transportation planner, such as one who is on staff or with a regional organization to which your jurisdiction is a member?	yes		no
22: Do you routinely use the services of a transportation consultant?	yes		yes
23: Do you have access to traffic count data for the major roadways in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
24: Do you require firms or developers to provide traffic mitigation beyond the streets adjacent to the site? (e.g. installing traffic signals, metering flow)	yes		yes
25: Do you require firms or developers to provide traffic personnel to control employee arrival and departure flows?	no		no
26: How would you rate traffic into and out of your jurisdiction during a typical weekday rush hour?	Moderately congested		Moderately congested
27: Do you require a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects?	yes		yes







<p>Importance To Market</p> <p>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p>  Strong  Average  Weak </p>
--	--

<input type="radio"/> E. Airports			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
28: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	no		no
29: The closest regional airport is how many miles away?	6-10 miles		11-20 miles
30: The closest major/international airport is how many miles away?	20-30 miles		20-30 miles
31: Is the major/international airport accessible by public transportation?	no		yes









Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak






<input type="radio"/> F. Rail			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
32: Do you have rail freight service available?	yes		yes
33: Do you have intercity passenger rail service? Check all that apply.			
- Commuter	no		no
- Intercity/Interstate(Amtrak)	no		no
Importance To Market		Your Performance Relative To Peers	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak


 G. Physical Attractiveness			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
34: To what extent do you enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties / abandoned vehicles / trash and rubbish disposal within your jurisdiction?	Vigorously		Moderately
35: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain streets, sidewalks, parks, etc., near available development sites?	Vigorously		Vigorously
36: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain publicly owned properties near available development sites?	Moderately		Vigorously
37: Is there a hotline available for reporting code violations and maintenance needs within your jurisdiction?	yes		no
38: Is there a system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction?	yes		no
39: Do you involve the arts community in the design of open space (street furniture, murals, etc.)?	yes		no
40: What percentage of the acreage within your jurisdiction is reserved for parks?	20% or greater		6-10%
41: What percentage of your housing stock is considered dilapidated?	6-10%		0-5%
42: What percentage of your commercial buildings are boarded up or closed down?	11-15%		0-5%
43: What percentage of commercial and industrial space is presently vacant?	11-15%		6-10%







Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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Section 2: Agglomeration







 A. Complementary/Supplemental Business Services			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Is your local chamber of commerce or business association actively involved in the economic development activities of your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
2: Does your jurisdiction have an active volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit center for economic development?	yes		yes
3: Is there an incubator or other form of cooperative and supportive space for start-up businesses in your jurisdiction?	no		no
4: Are there CPA, business advisory and financial services firms in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
5: Are there law firms in your jurisdiction specializing in commercial law, intellectual property rights, and patents?	yes		yes
6: Are there branches of major commercial banks in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
7: To what extent are the business services (e.g. venture capital, business planning, specialized recruiting, etc.) in your jurisdiction capable of working with emerging technical and scientific firms?	Moderately capable		Moderately capable






Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 B. Critical Mass Firms			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
8: Does your jurisdiction have a development strategy, overall economic development plan (OEDP), or an economic development plan within your community master plan?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
9: Is your jurisdiction part of a county or regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
10: Does your state have a development strategy or economic development plan?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
11: If yes, are there firms within specific industry types or sectors that are targeted in your jurisdiction's, your county's or your state's development strategy?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
12: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted in your jurisdiction's or your state's development strategy? (Check all that apply)			
- Health care	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
- Other life sciences, including Bio-tech	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
- Traditional manufacturing	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
- Financial services	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Information technology	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Travel and tourism	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Alternative energy	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
13: Does your jurisdiction or your state have development specialists available to assist in interpreting the needs of these clusters?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
14: How aggressive is your industrial attraction policy?	Vigorous	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderate

<p>Importance To Market</p> <p> Very Important  Important  Less Important</p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p> Strong  Average  Weak</p>
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 C. Cross Marketing			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
15: Do you actively enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms?	yes		no
16: Do you engage local and regional business organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
17: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
18: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes




Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak

 D. Marketing Follow-Up			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
19: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
20: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose <u>not</u> to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
21: Do you have a formal procedure for contacting existing local firms about their satisfaction with your jurisdiction?	yes		no
22: Do you have a formal procedure for intervening when early news surfaces about firm dissatisfaction with your jurisdiction?	yes		no

<p>Importance To Market</p> <p>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p>  Strong  Average  Weak </p>
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E. Proximity to Universities & Research

Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
23: How many major public or private four-year college or universities are located within your jurisdiction?	0		1
24: How many major public or private four-year college or universities are located within 10 miles of your jurisdiction?	10		2
25: How many community colleges are located within your jurisdiction?	1		1
26: How many vocational/technical schools are located within your jurisdiction?	1		1










Importance To Market







 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important














Your Performance Relative To Peers







 Strong
  Average
  Weak






Section 3: Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)







 A. Infrastructure			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Are there significant limitations to any of your existing infrastructure systems? - Water Supply	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
2: Public Sewer	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
4: Natural Gas	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
5: Electric Power	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
6: Data/Telecommunications - Land Lines	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
7: Data/Telecommunications - Cellular	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
8: Data/Telecommunications - Fiber optic / Cable / DSL	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service






Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 B. Rents			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
9: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	8		11
10: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	14		between 11 and 12
11: What is the current average square foot cost for existing manufacturing space (Triple Net/Lease)?	Ingleside \$10; other \$6		5.50
12: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS A	18		15
13: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS B	12		12.00
14: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS C	5		between 8 and 8-12
15: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS A	16		between 12 and 13
16: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS B	10		between 10 and 10-15
17: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS C	6		between 7.50 and 8
18: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS A	5		20
19: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS B	25		40
20: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS C	70		40

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 C. Quality of Available Space			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
21: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered contaminated or brownfield sites?	0-10%		0-10%
22: What experience does your jurisdiction have with the redevelopment of contaminated or brownfield sites?	Considerable		Limited
23: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered abandoned or underutilized shopping centers?	0-10%		0-10%
24: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered unused open land or greenfield sites?	11-20%		0-10%







Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 D. Land (space)			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
25: Approximately how much vacant developable land in your jurisdiction is currently zoned for commercial/industrial uses?	84		150
26: Approximately how much vacant useable industrial or warehouse space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1,131,406		between 157,000 and 200,000
27: Approximately how much vacant useable office space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	483,314		70,000
28: Approximately how much land, if any, currently zoned for other uses, is currently under serious consideration for rezoning for commercial/industrial development? (if none, enter 0)	0		
29: Approximately how much land, if any, currently zoned for industrial development, is currently under consideration for rezoning to non-industrial use? (if none, enter 0)	0		
30: What proportion of the parcels available for industrial development or large scale commercial development are of 5 acres or more?	11-20%		between 11-20% and 21-35%







Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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Section 4: Labor







 A. Labor Cost			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for semi-skilled, blue-collar manufacturing workers?	\$12.51-\$20		\$12.51-\$20
2: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for mid-level clerical workers?	\$12.51-\$20		\$12.51-\$20
3: What is the prevailing average annual salary for public high school teachers?	\$45,000-\$54,000		\$45,000-\$54,000
4: Is there a local minimum or living wage statute?	no		no




Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak







 B. Workforce Composition			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
5: What percentage of your workforce is Unskilled?	1-25%		1-25%
6: What percentage of your workforce is Semi-skilled	1-25%		between 1-25% and 26-49%
7: What percentage of your workforce is Technically skilled	1-25%		between 1-25% and 26-49%
8: What percentage of your workforce is Managerial	1-25%		1-25%
9: What percentage of your workforce is Professional	26-49%		1-25%
10: What percentage of your workforce are English language learners?	21-35%		0-10%







Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak




<input type="radio"/> C. Unions			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
11: Have any employers in your jurisdiction had a major strike or work stoppage within the last three years?	no		no
12: Has there been a major union organizing drive among public or private workers in the last 3 years?	no		no
13: Do labor unions have a significant presence in the labor market of your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 D. Labor (available)			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
14: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a high school diploma?	66-84%		85% or greater
15: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a bachelor's degree?	11-20%		21-35%







Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak




<input type="radio"/> E. Workforce Training			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
16: Which of the following workforce training resources do you interact with to respond to skill development needs of firms?			
- Regional employment board or state employment services department	yes		yes
- Area High schools	yes		yes
- Voc-tech schools or community colleges	yes		yes
- Human service or nonprofit career training centers	yes		no
17: Do you support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training?	yes		yes
18: Is there an adult education program readily available to residents of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes





Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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Section 5: Local Process

 A. Industry Sensitivity			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on the needs identified by industrial or office location specialists?	no		no
2: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, or industry concentrations?	yes		no
3: Do you have a quick response team available when negative data, stories, or incidents about your jurisdiction make the news?	yes		no
4: Do you actively engage local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of your jurisdiction?	yes		no
5: Do you have a strategy for engaging your jurisdiction's racial or ethnic populations in unique businesses, festivals, etc., as a way to attract regional niche shopping?	yes		no
6: Do you have a strategy for taking locally developed products and bringing them into regional markets?	yes		no






Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak







 B. Sites Available			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
7: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	yes		yes
8: Do you maintain a complete list of sites that are available for development in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
9: Do you maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, or agents with sites in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
10: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses?	yes		yes
11: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties?	yes		no
12: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming abandoned or underutilized shopping plazas?	no		no






Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak







 C. Timeliness of Approvals			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
13: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Site plan review	0-4 weeks		5-8 weeks
14: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Zoning variance	0-4 weeks		5-8 weeks
15: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Special permit	5-8 weeks		9-12 weeks
16: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
17: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Site plan review	0-4 weeks		5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Zoning variance	0-4 weeks		5-8 weeks
20: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Special permit	0-4 weeks		9-12 weeks
21: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
22: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks









Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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 D. Predicable Permits			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
23: Do you provide a checklist of permitting requirements to prospective developers?	yes		yes
24: Do you provide a flowchart of the permitting process to prospective developers?	yes		no
25: Do you provide a development handbook to prospective developers?	yes		no
26: Do you allow for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority?	no		no








<p>Importance To Market</p> <p>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p>  Strong  Average  Weak </p>
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 E. Fast Track Permits			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
27: Do you pre-permit development in certain districts?	no		no
28: Are there any publicly or cooperatively owned industrial parks in your jurisdiction that have their own expedited permitting authority?	no		no
29: Do you have an "overlay" district that allows expedited permitting of certain uses?	yes		no
30: Do you market "fast track" permitting to potential developers or firms?	yes		no

Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak















 F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
31: To what extent do abutters slow the permitting process in your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat
32: To what extent do organized neighborhood groups slow the permitting process?	Somewhat		Somewhat
33: To what extent do elected officials in your jurisdiction expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups?	Very little		Very little
34: Do you establish a specific time frame and procedure for abutter or neighborhood response in the initial stage of the process?	yes		yes
35: Do interested parties get multiple opportunities for review and comment during the various development review processes?	yes		yes
36: Has a development proposal in your jurisdiction been stopped by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the past 5 years?	no		yes
37: Have officials from your jurisdiction intervened to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the last 5 years?	no		no






Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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<input type="radio"/> G. Permitting Ombudsman			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
38: Does the chief executive officer of your jurisdiction play a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		no
39: Are there other local officials empowered to ensure the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		yes
40: Is there a "development cabinet" that is convened to review major developments?	yes		yes
41: Do you have an established training program for development staff that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	yes		no
42: Do you have an established training program for boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
43: Does your jurisdiction require any local licenses for specific businesses or industries?	yes		yes
44: If yes, approximately how long (in weeks) is your local licensing process for businesses?	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
45: Is your jurisdiction involved in the process for businesses that require state or federal permitting or licensing?	yes		yes
46: Do you provide technical assistance for businesses in the state or federal permit or license application process?	yes		yes








Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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Section 6: Quality of Life (Community)















 A. Cultural and Recreational Amenities			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Is there a professional sports team resident within your jurisdiction?	no		no
2: Is there a major art, science or historical museum?	yes		no
3: Is there a professional repertory theater company?	no		no
4: Is there a civic center, arena or major concert hall?	no		no
5: Is there a golf course within your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
6: Is there a symphony orchestra, opera, or ballet company?	yes		no
7: Are there public beaches or boating activities within 5 miles of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important		Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak	









 B. Crime			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
8: What was the residential burglary rate per 100,000 last year in your jurisdiction?	1335		between 277 and 300
9: What was the auto theft rate per 100,000 last year?	525		113
10: What was the robbery rate per 100,000 last year?	242		36
11: What was the homicide rate per 100,000 last year?	10		3

Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak






 C. Housing			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What was the median sale price of a single family home in your jurisdiction last year?	\$151,000-\$250,000		\$251,000-\$350,000
13: What was the median rent for a two bedroom apartment in your jurisdiction last year?	\$601-\$800		\$801-\$1000
14: What is the home ownership rate?	34-50%		66-75%
15: What is the vacancy rate for rental housing?	10% or greater		3-5%
16: What percent of homes are for sale?	3-5%		Less than 3%
17: Approximately what proportion of the major officers of firms located in your jurisdiction live in the community?	Few		Some







Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak

 D. Local Schools			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$8,501 or greater		\$8,501 or greater
19: Does your state mandate an assessment or proficiency test as a prerequisite for high school graduation?	yes		yes
20: If yes, what percentage tested as proficient English?	51-65%		66-80%
21: If yes, what percentage tested as proficient in Mathematics?	51-65%		66-80%
22: If yes, are the tests used as a measure of performance within your local school district for teacher assessments or teacher evaluations?	no		no
23: What percentage of your jurisdiction's K-12 students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch last year?	50-74%		1-25%
24: What is the average combined SAT score (Verbal and Math) for college-bound seniors from your jurisdiction last year?	976-1050		976-1050
25: What percentage of high school seniors from your jurisdiction graduated last year?	75% or greater		75% or greater
26: What is the high school drop out rate last year?	1-25%		1-25%
27: Are there any schools in your jurisdiction that are currently deemed "underachieving?"	yes		no
28: What percentage of high school seniors from last year's class went on to a four-year college?	1-25%		50-74%
29: Are there any charter schools in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
30: What types of private schools are there in your jurisdiction?			
- Parochial	yes		yes





- Non-sectarian	no		no
- Boarding	no		no
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important			
Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak			







Section 7: Quality of Life (site)


 A. Amenities			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fast food restaurant	All		Most
2: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fine dining	Most		Some
3: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Day care	All		Some
4: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Retail shops	Most		Most

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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Section 8: Business Incentives



















 A. State			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Are businesses in your jurisdiction eligible for any special state tax incentives?	yes		yes
2: To what extent does your jurisdiction actively take advantage of any special state business incentives?	Very much		Somewhat
3: Does your state allow for priority funding for distressed economic areas?	yes		yes









Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average  Weak







 B. Local			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
4: Does your jurisdiction provide any additional tax or other financial incentives to local businesses?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
5: Does your jurisdiction offer any of the following incentives for businesses to locate in your jurisdiction? (Check all that apply)			
- Revolving loan fund	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Loan guarantees	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Revenue bonds	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Equity participation	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Business district group loans	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
6: Does your jurisdiction actively pursue federal and/or state programs designed to assist in attracting and retaining businesses?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
7: Does your jurisdiction use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other programs to provide tax breaks to businesses?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
8: Does your jurisdiction grant TIFs for retail development?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
9: Who negotiates the tax abatement?	Legislative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legislative
10: Does your jurisdiction assist in securing financing for businesses with commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
11: Do you actively try to attract local, state, and federal facilities, including post offices, to your jurisdiction?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
12: Is any part of your jurisdiction in a designated Enterprise Zone?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no

13: Do you participate in a regional brownfield revolving loan fund or offer your own?	Regional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional
Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important		Your Performance Relative To Peers <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak	

Section 9: Tax Rates

 A. Local			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Holyoke		Comparison Group
1: What types of taxes are collected by your jurisdiction to pay for local services?			
- Property tax	yes		yes
- Local sales tax	no		no
- Local income tax	no		no
2: Are there different revenues sources to pay for K-12 education?			
	yes		yes
3: Does your jurisdiction tax property in industrial or commercial uses at a different rate than residential properties?			
	yes		yes
4: If yes, what is the tax rate on industrial/commercial property? \$ /\$1,000			
	37.08		between 19.37 and 19.68
5: If yes, what is the tax rate on residential property? \$ /\$1,000			
	15.78		between 10.77 and 11.25
6: If no, what is the tax rate on all property?			
			12.57
7: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Industrial %			
	7		5.62
8: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Commercial %			
	38		12
9: What % of your tax revenue is derived from : Residential %			
	49		between 75 and 75+
10: Does your jurisdiction impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development?			
	no		no
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important		Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak	





















 B. Tax Delinquency			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
11: How many properties in your jurisdiction are more than one year delinquent in taxes?	200-300		100-200
12: How many properties are tax defaulted or subject to the power of sale?	200-300		0-50
13: When do you choose to auction tax title properties?	1-5 years		1-5 years
14: Do you have an organized and defined process for conducting such auctions and ensuring that they are successful?	yes		yes
15: Do you auction the "right to foreclose" on tax delinquent properties?	yes		no
16: Do you seek tax abatement on tax title properties to allow the liens to clear for new owners?	yes		no
17: If a tax delinquent or tax title property serves as an impediment to development, does the property receive special attention?	yes		no

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
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Section 10: Access to Information

○ A. Website			
Report of Holyoke as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Holyoke</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	yes		no
2: Does your website have contact information for key officials?	yes		yes
3: Does your website have general information about your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
4: How frequently is your website updated?	Weekly		Weekly
5: Does your website include an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers?	yes		no
6: Is there a development permit checklist or flow chart on the website?	yes		no
7: Are permit applications available for downloading on the website?	yes		yes
8: Are applications and other forms date certified to ensure that they are the most recent versions (i.e. the same versions that you would get in person)?	no		no
9: Is it possible to file a permit application electronically?	yes		no
10: Is there a list of available land and building sites on the website?	yes		no
11: If yes, check the types of information available about each site. (Check all that apply)			
- :Owner	no		no
- Square footage of vacant land	yes		no
- Square footage and quality of existing buildings and structures	yes		no

- Abutters	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Zoning	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Assessed value	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Tax rate	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Current tax status (e.g. paid up, delinquent)	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Contamination	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Aerial photos	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- GIS links	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
12: Other, please specify		<input type="checkbox"/>	
13: Is there a posting of current hearings available on the website?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
14: Is there a posing of pending applications available on the website?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
15: Is there a listing of current members of development review boards and staff contact information?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
16: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)			
- State finance agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- State permitting agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional planning agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no

- Regional development organizations	no		no		
- Workforce training organizations	yes		no		
- Local public or quasi-public financing resources	no		no		
- Demographic information	yes		yes		
- Economic development agencies	yes		no		
17: Other, please specify					
18: Are there links to other locally-based private or non-profit organizations?					
- Colleges and universities	no		no		
- Chambers of Commerce	yes		yes		
- Community development corporations	no		no		
- Arts and cultural organizations	no		no		
- Sports and recreation venues	no		no		
- Convention and tourist organization	no		no		
19: Other, please specify	Municipal utility		between Civic organizations and		
20: Is there a designated webmaster or staff person responsible for maintaining the website?	yes		yes		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important </td> <td> Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak </td> </tr> </table>				Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak				