



Cleveland
TEXAS
Economic Development Corporation

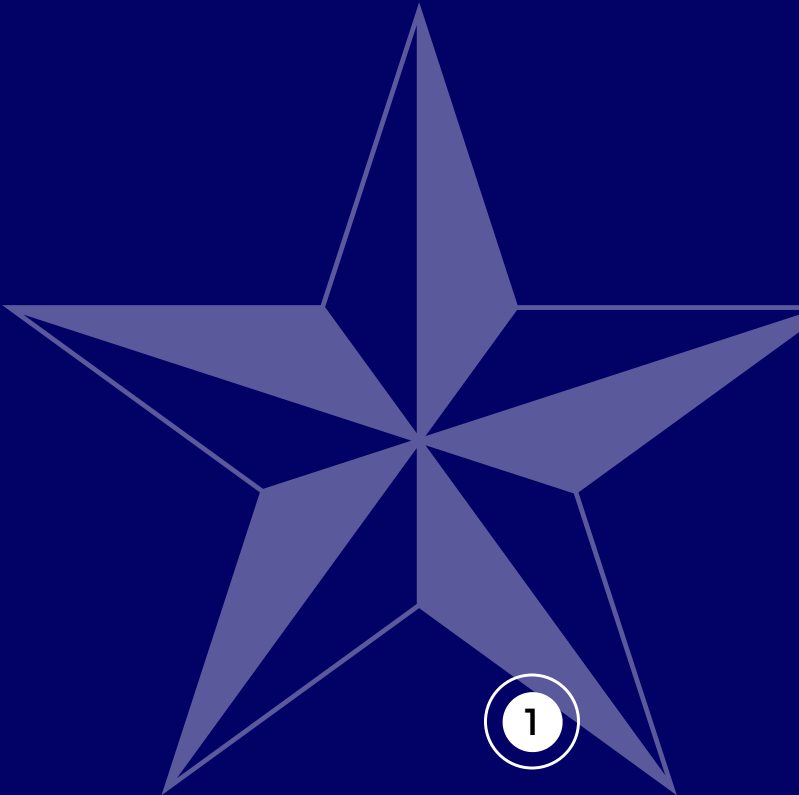
2024

ANNUAL REPORT

EDCCLEVELANDTEXAS.COM

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EDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

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EDC Treasurer.....Chuck Thompson
Director.....Michael Buckley
Director.....Michele Wyatt
Director.....Dr. Tonya Clark

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Economic Development Coordinator.....Heidi Soles
Marketing & Communications Coordinator.....Vacant
City Manager.....Lee Tipton
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A Letter from the President

John Williams

EDC President, 2024-2025

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable strides made by the Cleveland Economic Development Corporation (EDC). It has truly been a year of transformational progress, marked by strategic investments that are reshaping the perception of our beloved city and positioning Cleveland as a thriving destination for strategic investment. A cornerstone of our progress has been the Gateway & Wayfinding Signage Master Plan. This project not only spurred our comprehensive rebranding effort but also reinforces our commitment to an enduring, positive self-image for Cleveland and its residents.



One of the most significant milestones of 2024 was the launch of the Community Rebranding Project, funded wholly by the EDC. This bold initiative is setting the stage for completely revitalizing Cleveland's reputation, elevating our profile, and highlighting our competitive advantages as a community poised for growth. This project, coupled with targeted investments in merchandise and promotional campaigns—including the popular Rock-N-Ride fanny packs, the impactful "Shop Local" and "Cocoa Crawl" signage in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, and strategic advertisements in community publications—has amplified our message that Cleveland is a city on the rise.

This year, we also embarked on the most ambitious parks and beautification campaign Cleveland has seen in decades. The completion of the Old Fire Station Pavilion in the Downtown Plaza Area has created a vibrant community gathering space. The Skate Park at Campbell Park, born out of overwhelming community demand, now serves as a beloved destination for our community. Meanwhile, the installation of the new fencing at Austin Memorial Library has unlocked limitless programming possibilities, enhancing the cultural fabric of our city. Yet, this is only the beginning. Even more exciting park and City-facility improvements are planned for the coming year, further enriching our community's quality of life.

Additionally, our commitment to building a strong foundation for growth is evident in our infrastructure investments, including the BuzzyBee Water Line Extension. We are also refining our Economic Development Strategy by partnering with professional consultants on a Target Industrial Analysis. This initiative will sharpen our focus on key industry clusters and bolster our efforts in industrial attraction, business development, and lead generation. Additionally, our collaboration with Retail Strategies is set to elevate Cleveland's retail landscape by identifying prime opportunities for investment and revitalization.



Our success is rooted in strong partnerships. This year, we renewed strategic discussions with the Greater Houston Partnership, ensuring Cleveland remains an integral player in regional economic development. Our collaboration with Entergy Texas continues to identify new investment opportunities. Most notably, our partnership with the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce has transformed the way we work together. The monumental success of the inaugural Downtown Cocoa Crawl stands as a testament to the power of collaboration. As we look ahead, we recognize the need for continued financial support to strengthen this vital alliance, empowering us to achieve even greater success.

Looking forward, I am filled with boundless optimism for the future of the Cleveland EDC. With an exceptional Board of Directors guiding our vision and a dedicated Director of Community Development at the helm, we are poised for unprecedented growth. As the EDC invests in expanding our team, we are equipping ourselves with the talent and resources necessary to reach new heights and realize unimaginable possibilities.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our Board, the City of Cleveland City Council, our beloved out-going City Manager, Scott Swigert, our community partners, and every stakeholder who has contributed to our shared success. The momentum we have built is just the beginning. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for Cleveland—one of opportunity, prosperity, and pride.

Here's to the exciting journey ahead.

Sincerely,

John Williams
President, 2024-2025



Investment Attraction Efforts

Through collaboration with the Governor's Office for Economic Development and Tourism and the Greater Houston Partnership (GHP), which serves as the regional Economic Development Organization (EDO), Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), and International Trade Agency for the greater Houston area, the EDC was able to seek significant unprecedented levels of investment on behalf of the community, both in terms of proposed capital expenditures and potential primary job creation represented in the figures displayed on the right. These figures represent at least 8 vetted and realistic target projects that Cleveland met the site selection criteria for. The firms and companies that comprise this impressive pool of projects represents a wide-spectrum of industry sectors that are experiencing explosive growth, like advanced manufacturing operations, research and development facilities, and data centers.

A common denominator amongst these projects was the clear demand and preference for pre-existing buildings or sites with pre-determined or available infrastructure and/or expedited and tailored build-to-suite capabilities. The EDC will consider how to meet these market demands in the future.

Looking ahead

With the investment authorized to fund a full-time Economic Development Coordinator, the EDC's ability to seek even more substantial investments and even proactively seek opportunities outside of conventional Request for Information (RFI's) will greatly increase, allowing the EDC to be more aggressive with our investment attraction and industrial recruitment efforts.

1

**\$950,500,000
in private
investments
sought**

Representing a diverse cross-section of major target industry sectors, from advanced manufacturing to research and development facilities, with demand for both greenfield sites and existing facilities.

2

**815 Potential
Primary Jobs**

Quality, high-paying jobs that would completely transform the way money circulates through our local economy, providing a cascading effect that would begin to elevate our community's quality of life and local amenities. From blue collar to white collar, and the emerging "grey collar" wages, these jobs would pay well above Liberty County's prevailing minimum wage.

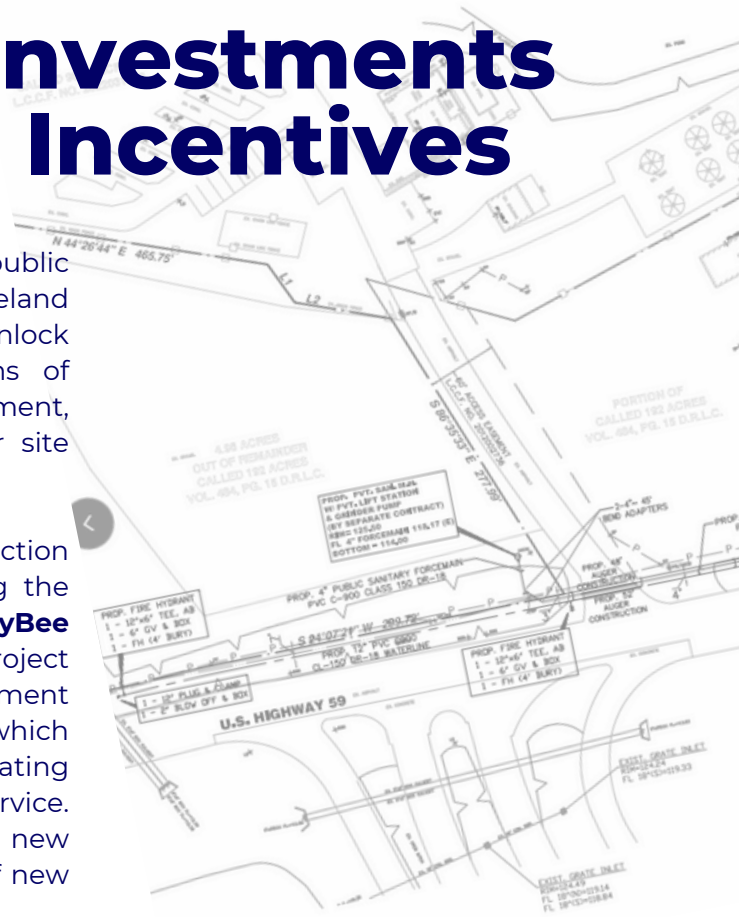
Infrastructure Investments and Economic Incentives

The past year saw many investments in Cleveland's public infrastructure, many initiated by the City of Cleveland through State-administered federal grants that will unlock enormous potential for the community in terms of industrial and commercial growth and development, because infrastructure is such a leading driver for site selection decision-making.

The EDC played a crucial role in unlocking a key section along the South I-59 Frontage Corridor by funding the **water line upsizing improvements for the BuzzyBee Travel Center** from a 3" line up to a 12" line. This project provides additional utility capacity for future development along this 3,160-linear foot stretch of water line, which opens the door to creating new tax-generating development and future rate-payers for water service. Granting this incentive not only garnered the City new infrastructure, but it also provided for the creation of new jobs in retail and food-service.

Major industries and large-scale infrastructure is not the sole focus or work that the EDC pursues. The EDC had made significant investments in **supporting local Small Businesses** through the **Facade Improvement Grant Program, providing over \$6,500** in local economic development incentives to support local businesses like **Fat Floyd's BBQ, Health Center of Southeast Texas, and The Flower Shop** with Sign Grants to help promote their businesses.

The EDC was also successful in reinvigorating previous discussions concerning a proposed Metal Recycling and Manufacturing Facility and Solar Panel Production Facility, estimated to provide upwards of \$335,000,000 and create well over 300 jobs. While the solar portion of the project was lost to a neighboring municipality due to prior inaction of the previous administration, the current EDC was victorious in negotiating tentative terms to secure the investment in the recycling and manufacturing facility that will **provide over \$100,000,000 in new investment** and **create about 150 new, well-paying primary jobs**.



Enhancing our Strategic Alliances

As mentioned in the Investment Attraction Efforts portion of the report, the enhanced collaboration and response to the pipeline of projects from the Greater Houston Partnership cannot be understated as a key appendage to future success of the EDC and City of Cleveland. EDC Staff regularly attends the GHP's Houston Region Economic Development Alliance (HREDA) monthly luncheons to learn more about trends and project pipelines, regional success stories, available tools and incentives, and professional best-practices. EDC and City staff had the great pleasure of attending the GHP's Annual Meeting in January that recapped the success of 2024 for the GHP and staff participated in some of the Partnership Week programming that followed the annual meeting.



GHP Annual Meeting



Entergy BNSF Site Drone Filming

Another key and invaluable relationship for the EDC is its strong partnership with Entergy Texas. Entergy has provided great access to their personnel and resources, and our continued strategic collaboration will provide tangible results on transformational projects, chief among them being their recently announced Power Generation Plant slated for the Cleveland Area, and of course their dedication towards promoting the BNSF North Houston Logistics Center at Cleveland, ensuring that BNSF's project is poised for great success.



Entergy Site Selection Center Training

On track with BNSF

The partnership and collaboration with BNSF has been one of great strides and is well positioned to aid BNSF with making their endeavor in Cleveland a national success story. The partnership has blossomed into the production of several RFI responses mentioned in the early portion of the report, with many interested parties approaching BNSF and the EDC with follow-up inquiries.

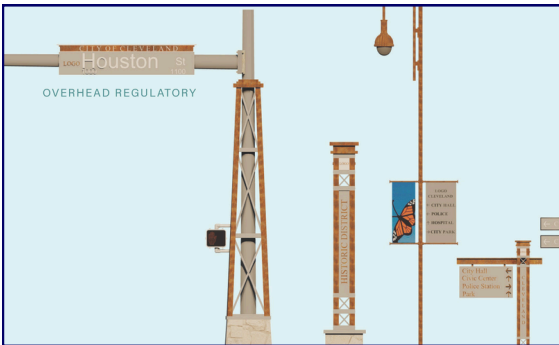
EDC Staff, BNSF, and Entergy Texas have all been in discussions concerning strategies to promote the North Houston Logistics Center site as a strategic regional asset and hub for logistics and freight-rail-oriented industry.

BNSF has been committed to being an engaged stakeholder as well, participating in EDC studies and initiatives, as well as donating to the City's employee appreciation functions.

Promoting our assets and raising Cleveland's Profile



An early concept from Rebranding Project



An rendering from the Gateway Project



CISD Magazine Ad

2024 shaped up to be a productive year for promoting the Cleveland's assets and demonstrating that our community is a prime venue for investment and strategic growth. Chief among these transformational projects the Community Rebranding Project, spurred by the EDC's investment in Cleveland's Gateway & Wayfinding Master Plan. The rebranding project is taking much needed stock of Cleveland's past, present and future, and engaging a wide cross-sections of stakeholders to help craft a cohesive, strategic, and authentic brand strategies that resonate with the community and the key target audiences, especially as it relates to economic development.

We're eagerly awaiting the completion of the Rebranding Project so that we can resume and finalize the much anticipated Gateway & Wayfinding Master Plan project. This project was put on a brief pause to allow time for the rebranding material to be fully thought out and developed. This project also involved many stakeholders and a steering committee was formed to provide critical input and direction to ensure that the project advanced forward with community-centric perspectives and voices at the heart of the plan.

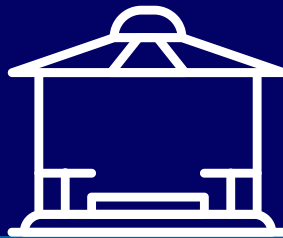
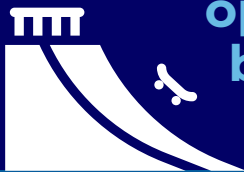
Additionally, EDC staff engaged in a variety of marketing and promotional activities, from sourcing EDC-branded fanny packs for the Rock-N-Ride, to crafting some tailored advertisements to promote recent quality of life investments in community publications. The addition of a new Marketing & Communications Coordinator will allow the EDC and City to greatly elevate the quality of marketing material, reach our audiences with greater efficiency, and engage on more platforms with more meaningful content. We're excited to have the full range of talents of Xochitl Perez on display and we look forward to the progress he'll make in better-telling our stories.

Quality of Life Investments

This past year represented one of the largest capital investment campaigns in quality of life improvements in recent decades. These investments were made due to overwhelming demand for more improved public spaces and the need to overhaul the community's aesthetics. The EDC's response has yielded much fanfare and has demonstrated the value of investing in our parks and community gathering spaces.

2025 will bring even more improvements and ideas to enhance the public domain for the betterment of the citizens and visitors of Cleveland.

Over \$82,000
invested in parks,
open space and
beautification
initiatives



Old Fire Station Pavilion



Campbell Park Skate Park Dedication Event



Historical Society Museum Mural

THANK
YOU



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