

The Supply and Demand of Job Opportunities Regarding Redevelopment Plans for 444 Hebron Road

Introduction

As of 2019, the state of Ohio has the seventh-biggest economy in the United States with a GDP of approximately 656 billion dollars (Kiprop, 2019). Thus, job opportunities has allowed many people from all over the world to move to the Buckeye State. Industries such as Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace and Aviation, Automotive, Food and Agribusiness, Healthcare, and Technology are just a few that are constantly growing and are in high supply and demand in many areas of Ohio (Ohio Economic Development, n.d). Licking County, in particular, has been one of many counties throughout Ohio to expand exponentially in economic growth, via its capability of job attraction. Indeed, it has become a place to live and thrive.

However, in September 2015, the Heath Plant— located on 444 Hebron Rd. in Heath, OH— and owned by Meritor, Inc. officially shut down. The closing of this Meritor site left over a couple thousand employees without a job— affecting many Ohio residents, especially those from Licking County. More specifically, the closure of the Meritor plant has had the greatest effect on Heath's economy as a whole. The city is then forced to act fast to determine how they'll fill the void of these displaced workers. There have been redevelopment plans for this site: 1) a designated visitor's center for the Newark Earthworks located across the street from the closed Heath plant, and 2) a solar manufacturing plant. The purpose of this paper is to provide stakeholders involved with the demolition of the Meritor plant with insight on how the redevelopment of this site

will be prosperous from a job development/ opportunity perspective. More specifically, my analysis will provide stakeholders with information pertaining to the supply of jobs that can be created through the Earthworks destination and industrial (solar manufacturing plant) developments.

Summary of Development Plans

The destination development for the Newark Earthworks intends to utilize the current Meritor's site for multipurpose usages. This plan will include a new Earthworks museum, alongside a souvenir shop and Native American restaurant. The purpose of this plan will be to engage visitors with the cultural significance of Native American history. While the primary plan of this redevelopment plan isn't to create jobs, jobs will be produced indirectly through security, restaurants, and museum employees, in addition to contractors.

The industrial development plan for a solar manufacturing plant intends to develop a solar market in Licking County that'll increase manufacturing competition in Ohio, and provide local jobs for Licking County residents. The proposal suggests that there will be approximately 375 job openings as a result of this development plan. Potential jobs this proposal can create will consist of manufacturing technicians and professional engineers, and other related jobs of that nature.

Debrief on Development Plans

While both development plans will greatly benefit the City of Heath, one of the main questions that both plans fail to answer is: beyond creating jobs, what are some grants and funding that can be supplied—particularly for job opportunities and/or job

development? This is an important question to be answered and considered because as mentioned before, many skillful Meritor employees lost their jobs. So, how can we combat some of the lost or unused skills of ex-Meritor workers? Would ex-Meritor workers be accepting of learning new skills that would contribute to a different type of plant? Would Heath residents support and recognize Newark Earthworks' prospective UNESCO World Heritage site, and the jobs that would come with it? And, most importantly, which development plan will have the greater impact on the City of Heath from an economic standpoint? This paper attempts to answer these questions and provide a different perspective towards the pre-existing development proposals for the site on 444 Hebron Rd.

Methodology

The structure of this paper aims to discuss and analyze the city of Heath's jobs/industries that are in demand, and depict what type of jobs/industries would greatly benefit from the location of the redevelopment sites. With much consideration, we can decide which development plan significantly favors the job demands of this particular site. We can then figure out in what ways can those prospective jobs be supplied. In doing this, we can choose which development plan best fits Heath from an economic standpoint, and as an indicator of satisfaction for unemployed or qualified residents for jobs/industries that will be created prospectively. Statistics used in this paper will be contributed from 2017 provided by Data USA and Census Bureau.

Jobs in Demand within Heath

The most widely recognized occupations, by number of individuals living in Heath, are Office & Administrative Support Occupations (854 people), Production Occupations (691 people), and Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations (447 people) (Data USA, n.d). However, Heath also has a great number of specialized occupations as well. Heath has a strangely high number of people working as Production Occupations (2.25 times higher than expected), Architecture & Engineering Occupations (1.7 times), and Material Moving Occupations (1.62 times) contrasted with different areas (Data USA, n.d). More specifically, the most popular specialized occupations (including Production Occupation) located in Heath are Architecture & Engineering Occupations (166 people), Material Moving Occupations (225 people), Food preparation & Serving related Occupations (447 people), and Building/Grounds/Cleaning/Maintenance Occupations (274 people) (Data USA, n.d). But, if we solidify these occupations (both common and specialized) into specific industries, we gain more information on what type of jobs, collectively, that residents of Heath are working in, in comparison to their respective industry. Primary employment sectors for those who live in Heath were Retail Trade (848 people), Manufacturing (809 people), and Health Care & Social Assistance (692 people) (Data USA, n.d).

Additionally, per average, employees in Heath have shorter drive times to work (18.6 minutes) when compared to the typical US employee (25.1 minutes)(Data USA, n.d). This information could also suggest that residents of Heath tend to work locally. Therefore, with the assumption that most residents of Heath work locally, both development proposals would greatly benefit the individuals that are looking for a job.

Demands of Development Plans

Based on the occupations and industries that are in demand with the City of Heath, it's evident that the Manufacturing industry has a significant number of employees (Figure 1). According to the Destination development plan and its mixed use premise, the industries that would primarily fall under this category would be Food Preparation & Serving (558 people), Retail Trade (848 people), and Educational Services (248). This will equate to about 1.6 thousand Heath residents having the opportunity to work under the Destination development proposal if they wish to. Because the plan includes jobs already located in Heath, it'll be relatively easy to attract workers for this site, especially since most of these common jobs don't require special skills. Contrastly, the industrial development plan would require the following industries: Manufacturing (809 people), Wholesale Trade (134 people), Transportation & Warehousing (151 people), and Administrative/Support/Waste Management Services (221 people). In this case, this would equate to approx. 1.3 thousand Heath residents also having the opportunity to work under the industrial development plan.

While broadly looking into the ideas of each plan, ideally, the destination redevelopment plan will employ less than 100 jobs, while the solar manufacturing plant will employ a bit over 300 jobs. The argument here will then be the following: which plan will have a greater economic impact? And which plan will be easy to attract employees? Both plans have a combination of industries that will make an impact on the city of Heath. Now it's just a matter of figuring out which plan will hold more power and be accepted by residents of Heath.



Figure 1: Employment of 5,290 employees by Industry in Heath, OH of 2017. Source: Data USA 2017

Supply of jobs in Heath

While there has been a brief analysis of what jobs/occupations/industries are offered in Heath, it is also imperative that the supply of these subjects be taken into consideration as well. I'll be assessing the supply of jobs in terms of potential grants and programs that can be allocated to the creation of job opportunities. In turn, this might help solidify what types of jobs can gain more attraction than others, while considering skills, degree requirements, and training that come with certain development plans. The JobsOhio nonprofit organization has supplied me with some programs that will potentially benefit both development plans. Two are essential: 1) The JobsOhio Economic Development Grant and, 2) The JobsOhio Workforce Grant. The Economic Development Grant is made to advance monetary improvement, business development,

and occupation creation by financing qualified activities in the State of Ohio (Economic Development Incentives, n.d.). The JobsOhio Workforce Grant is made to advance monetary improvement, business extension, and employment creation by giving funding to the improvement of worker skills and capacities in the State of Ohio (Economic Development Incentives, n.d.).

The JobsOhio Economic Development Grant and The JobsOhio Workforce Grant both requires the formation of jobs within a predetermined time frame and may consider the measure of proceeds per job created. JobsOhio may consider assisting qualified projects that improve operational production development, alongside the retention of jobs (Economic Development Incentives, n.d.). The JobsOhio Economic Development Grant is centered around fixed-resource and infrastructure assistance by companies, which may incorporate the accompanying: engineering services, site development, machinery and equipment, and other related things (Economic Development Incentives, n.d.). The JobsOhio Workforce Grant is centered around a company's training costs, which may incorporate the accompanying: information technology, leadership skills, product knowledge, quality management and processes, safety training (industry specific), technical training, on-the-Job training, equipment, and travel costs (domestic and international), and other related things (Economic Development Incentives, n.d.).

Both grants will greatly impact the industrial development plan. Having a Solar Manufacturing Plant on 444 Hebron Rd. will call for specific employees that possess certain skills and experience. However, with both grants related for job enhancement,

prospective employees will have the opportunity to get trained and be made aware of their responsibilities via the help of these grants. Therefore, this will make jobs under this plan more accessible and attainable to and for everyone. In terms of the Destination plan, the JobsOhio Workforce Grant will be beneficial for information technology and product knowledge pertaining to the museum. However, a program that might greatly benefit the Destination plan alongside the JobsOhio Workforce Grant, will be the InvestOhio program. The InvestOhio program gives a non-refundable income tax credit to investors who give money to Ohio independent companies to get a stake in the company. This can be considered for the small restaurants that will be connected around the museum. Ultimately, through all of these grants and potential investments, more jobs will be created and, most importantly, more jobs will be fulfilled.

Conclusion

I found that one of the highest volume industries located in Heath, OH in 2017 was manufacturing. While there is a time gap as to when this data was collected, there's an assumption that bringing more manufacturing jobs into the City of Heath won't be a bad consideration even today. A solar manufacturing plant can potentially supply more workers from all walks of life and be able to get more adequate job opportunities for its prospective employees than the Destination proposal will. Jobs are imperative to making an economy soar. Thus, it'll be more sustainable for the City of Heath to adopt the industrial development plan under the circumstances that it'll produce more jobs, have more job attraction, and be more feasible moving forward.

References

Data USA. (n.d.). “Heath, OH”. Retrieved from

<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/heath-oh>. Assessed on Dec. 12, 2019.

Economic Development Incentives: Tax Incentive: Grants: Tax Credit. (n.d.). Retrieved

from <https://www.jobsohio.com/why-ohio/incentives/>. Assessed on Dec. 12, 2019.

Grow Licking County. (n.d.) “Major employers”. Retrieved from

<https://growlickingcounty.org/why-licking-county/major-employers>. Assessed on Dec. 12, 2019.

Kiprop, Victor. (2019, October 1). What Are The Biggest Industries In Ohio? Retrieved from

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-biggest-industries-in-ohio.html>. Assessed on Dec. 12, 2019.

Ohio Economic Development. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.jobsohio.com/>.

Assessed on Dec. 12, 2019.