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Tecumseh prepares for economic recovery by launching business and technology campus

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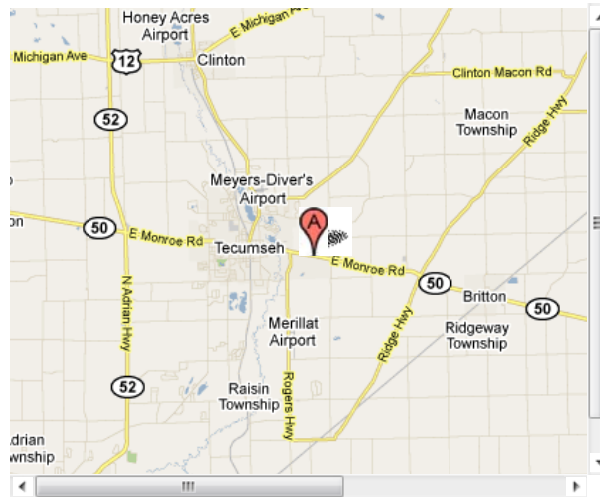
Tecumseh isn't standing still, waiting for economic recovery. The city is preparing for the turnaround now.

Tecumseh is completing the first phase of its 158-acre **Business & Technology Campus**, a project city officials hope will lure tech-minded companies to an area accessible to both Toledo and Detroit.

The city purchased the land for \$2 million in 2004, and has spent another \$1.2 million - supplemented by a matching grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration - preparing streets and utilities.

An interested company could purchase a lot and break ground by the end of summer, said Paula Holtz, economic development director for Tecumseh.

"We're prepared to be really aggressive," she said. "We want to be well placed when the economy turns around. I think we're rebounding, and we want to be in position to take advantage of opportunities when they're available."



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Tecumseh, located about 17 miles southwest of Saline, purchased the land intending to create an industrial park. But a 2007 feasibility study indicated there was an opportunity to pursue a different niche.

"We're imagining second-stage companies that might be looking for growth — research and development, light manufacturing, companies related to some of the green technologies," Holtz said.

Part of the feasibility study also encouraged building connections to the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University in Washtenaw County.

The city has plans for three phases, pending demand for lots. In the first phase, there are 11 lots ranging from \$160,000 to \$523,125. While the city has had discussions with several interested companies, none have been ready to jump on board.

"Some of the companies we've been talking to are high-risk startup companies that may not be in a position to break ground on a building," she said. "Sometimes capital can be a real challenge for folks. We don't have anyone who's been committed to the site at this point."



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It's not an ideal time to open such a project, said Dave Hamilton of [Swisher Commercial](#), the real estate agent handling the lots. But it soon could be, he added.

"If you had a perfect scenario, you might not pick today," Hamilton said. "However, the planning that goes into these things is enormous. It's not the best economy, but they're ahead because nobody else is doing this. They're going to be in the forefront."

The park also has one asset that many industrial parks lack — fiber optics. "It wasn't available when most were built," Hamilton said.

In better times, Hamilton said, a park like this could be filled in three years. That's not out of the realm of possibility now, he said.

"This is not a fast-moving project," he said. "For Tecumseh, they're looking for long-term economic gain, building a tax base and bringing jobs."

That's the idea, Holtz said.

"We're certainly in this for the long haul," Holtz said. "We're prepared to be patient. There are large numbers of existing buildings on the market already. We certainly realize that is going to be attractive to a lot of folks, because they can get really good deals on existing buildings.

"We're in the mindset that there are going to be companies looking at needs that existing facilities can't fulfill — like labs that need to be built in certain ways. (In those cases), it's pretty attractive to build something from the ground up."

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