



THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, OHIO

GREEN ENTERPRISE ZONE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Green Enterprise Zone?

The City of Wilmington Green Enterprise Zone (GEZ) is an innovative policy tool that seeks to spur green business and job creation in Wilmington by bringing about a convergence of two keys areas of economic development: local capacity building and targeted financial incentives.

Building capacity and stimulating green investments in Wilmington will not only bring new businesses and jobs to the local economy, but will provide our community with a competitive advantage in the implementation and understanding of emerging technologies and industries of the 21st century.

What is the vision for the Green Enterprise Zone?

The Green Enterprise Zone (GEZ) seeks to promote research and development, advanced manufacturing, and energy efficient construction, as well as services that have a direct positive impact on increasing energy and material efficiency as well as the economic sustainability of the city by:

- (1) promoting the retrofitting of businesses to promote sustainability and energy efficiency;
- (2) attracting green-collar jobs in research and sustainable renewable energy production and services;
- (3) and assisting citizens, businesses, secondary schools, universities, and community organizations in green training for the purpose of economic development and professional growth for the City and its citizens.

What is provided by the Green Enterprise Zone?

Building capacity to facilitate green economic development

The GEZ establishes a “Green Enterprise Zone Development Council” (GEZDC), which will promote green development in Wilmington by administering local GEZ incentives and facilitate the establishment of a local strategies and programs related to green development. The GEZDC will also facilitate the development and advancement of new projects and businesses by serving as an consultant to parties seeking resources at the local, state, and federal levels. The GEZDC will provide an annual report on regarding the activity and agreements within the GEZ and advise the Mayor of Wilmington and Wilmington City Council on green development issues.

Green Enterprise Grant (GEG) Program

The City of Wilmington will provide Green Enterprise Grants (GEG) for qualifying projects that improve material and energy efficiency or deploy advanced energy technologies for new or existing businesses. In cases where the business is located in a qualifying building but the applicant does not own the building, the grant may be spent on “green” business development such as business fixtures or business development (e.g. workforce development and training) that meet criteria set forth by the GEZDC.

Applicants for GEG funds for projects to be completed in commercial buildings built in 1950 or before or that have been vacant for six (6) months must provide 25% matching funds for the GEG-funded projects. All others must provide 50% matching funds for GEG-funded projects in their buildings or on their properties.

Promoting Green Buildings

- Completed building projects registered with the US Green Building Council as LEED Certified qualify for up to 75% reduction in building and permit fees.
- Projects involving the installation of advanced electric generation equipment intended primarily for residential or agricultural use that have a generating capacity of no greater than 60,000 watts are eligible for a seventy five percent (75%) reduction in building and permit fees.
- Existing residential and commercial properties may be eligible for a reduction by fifty percent (50%) of building and other permit fees associated with “green” projects as determined by the GEZDC.
- A “Green Assessment” will be required for all new city building projects prior to funding. The assessment will include a cost-benefit analysis for new construction to achieve LEED certification.

What is a “green” project?

The City of Wilmington GEZ ordinance states that: “Green projects will be those that reduce dependency on fossil fuels and reduce the carbon footprint of a building. Qualifying projects will typically involve increasing energy efficiency, improved weatherization, the use of clean energy technologies or projects that maintain or increase the use of organic materials or live green plants on the property. Typical projects would include: the retrofit/installation of energy efficiency improvements such as installing class A roof assembly, residential cool roofs, garden roofs, insulation above minimum energy code standards, renewable energy heating systems, biomass, wind turbines, geothermal heat pumps, co-generation fuel cells, solar panels, skylights, tankless water heaters, grey water systems, high performance windows and doors, high efficiency HVAC systems, and other green installations or innovations. Typical projects could also include installing organically or sustainably grown building materials, the planting of trees or shrubs (preferably where none existed before), the installation of storm water gardens, urban gardens, the restoration of wetland features on a property, and similar projects that contribute to reducing carbon emissions.”

What are the boundaries of the GEZ?

All real property within the municipal boundaries of the City of Wilmington are the boundaries designated by the Green Enterprise Zone (GEZ).

Who is on the GEZDC?

The GEZDC will have seven (7) members with terms of two (2) years, consisting of:

- Two (2) appointees of the Mayor of Wilmington,
- Executive Director of the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission,
- One (1) appointee by the President of City Council,
- One (1) appointee of the Downtown Wilmington Community Improvement Corporation (“DWCIC”) as appointed by the DWCIC;
- One (1) appointee of the Wilmington Community Improvement Corporation (“CIC”) as appointed by the CIC;
- One (1) member of the Clinton County Green Alliance as appointed by the Alliance.

What will the GEZDC do?

The primary responsibilities of the GEZDC will be to:

- Seek and actively assist commercial and residential property owners and business owners to access available federal and state incentives to expand, retrofit, rehabilitate or integrate new advanced energy technology and building methods.
- Recommend to the Mayor and City Council ways to facilitate “green collar” job training and attract “green” employers to the City by making periodic reports to Council.
- Allocate GEZ grants and rebates
- Determine and/or apply accepted standards for green economic development, green building practices, and define what qualifies as a green employer, green building practice or green economic development practice.
- Serve as an advisor to businesses regarding any federal or state incentives available that promote green energy and economic development opportunities.
- Negotiate GEZ agreements with qualifying businesses or landowners and recommend said agreements for Council’s approval with qualifying businesses for GEZ grants and incentives.
- Ensure that any agreements contain the information required in the Ohio Revised Code, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and any other applicable Federal or State code, grant, or incentives and provisions available to promote green energy and economic development opportunities.
- Encourage the community to retrofit existing residential and commercial properties to be more energy and material efficient.
- Recommend to the Policy Committee and Council an annual budget for GEGs or other incentives

How will the GEZ be funded?

The GEZ will be funded as a line item on the City of Wilmington budget. The level of funding will be set by City Council annually based on recommendations from the GEZDC and the City of Wilmington Policy Council (composed of the Wilmington Mayor, Auditor, and Treasurer).

As in line item on the city budget, funding for the program can be allocated directly from the city General Fund, as well as grant, stimulus, and other monies related to green infrastructure and workforce development. City Council will have the opportunity to increase funding for the GEZ at any time through its supplemental budgeting process.

Why is capacity building important for green development?

The America Recovery and Reinvestment Act has committed more than \$60 billion to green development projects, and the state of Ohio has instituted a competitive incentive structure for green investments and has begun implementing the Ohio Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard which will drive green development in Ohio through 2025. The flood of new policies, incentives, technologies, and businesses within the green economy requires the identification of assets and developing technical, policy, community development and workforce expertise to effectively facilitate development.

Through the establishment of the Green Enterprise Zone Development Council (GEZDC), Wilmington will be able to provide critical resources which assist new and existing businesses in identifying effective state and federal incentives. By building the capacity and expertise required to facilitate the development of new industries, businesses, and technologies, Wilmington will be better positioned to not only capitalize on state and federal incentives, but also to attract new businesses which are seeking a community with the vision and expertise for green development.

Who developed the GEZ?

The Wilmington Green Enterprise Zone was developed through a collaboration of Energize Clinton County, the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission, the City of Wilmington, and Pure Blue Energy.

Questions?

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