

Oakland First

Oakland needs a clear and concise plan to bring more businesses into the city, including incentives for large and small businesses to move here. The city's leaders should take proactive steps to encourage business growth in Oakland. The plan should be an integral part of Oakland's master plan on how the city will redefine itself as a center for urban living, business and culture well into the 21st Century.

Although the US economy is in a period of restriction right now with companies downsizing or closing their doors for good, it also represents an opportunity for Oakland to take innovative steps to reposition itself as a center for business growth. The hundreds of thousands of people who are being laid off by large companies still have to find a way to earn income. Since most large companies are not hiring in this current economic climate, these highly skilled workers either have to find employment with smaller businesses or to strike out on their own and start their own businesses. This is a historical phenomena and is similar to what happened in the early 1990's when large corporations flatten their organizational structure by laying off thousands of middle managers. Many of these laid off workers started their own businesses. Many became consultants or independent contractors who used their expertise and skills in another venue.

With the high number of highly skilled workers joining the lines of the unemployed, wouldn't it make sense to develop programs to encourage and assist them to set up their own businesses? Doing things the old way doesn't work anymore. Instead of waiting for large businesses to come back and maybe open up an office in Oakland, we should take proactive steps to grow new businesses that will be part of our community for years to come.