

## The Akron Biomedical Corridor: Future Home To Healthcare Technology Companies

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On January 16, 2007, Akron, Ohio Mayor Donald Plusquellic spoke on the City's plan to promote health care innovation and technology. The project, named the "Akron Biomedical Corridor," will be a new home for domestic and foreign medical technology companies. Mayor Plusquellic first announced the plan in July 2006 and continues to speak on the benefits of bringing biomedical businesses to the City of Akron. According to the Mayor, Akron General Medical Center, Akron Children's Hospital, and Akron City Hospital will be the "three anchors" of the biomedical corridor.

Currently, the three hospitals are separate entities run by their own boards of directors. Although the hospitals will remain separate, under this project the hospitals cooperate to promote development in the new biomedical corridor. The three medical systems employ more than 11,000 professionals and about 1,000 physicians. The combined outpatient visits total more than 1.5 million each year with over 80,000 patients admitted yearly. The total number of patients from the three hospitals actually places Akron ahead of the Cleveland Clinic. The success of the Akron hospitals has spurred Mayor Plusquellic to invest more of Akron's resources into developing the area between the hospitals.

The City of Akron applied for a \$5 million grant to support the project through the Ohio Job Ready Sites Program. Akron has already begun implementing the project by buying land along the biomedical corridor. The Akron Beacon Journal reports that Akron's budget for 2007 includes "\$750,000 set aside for land purchases as opportunities arise in the new biomedical corridor." Mayor Plusquellic plans to either buy more land or use the City's power of eminent domain to pave the way for the biomedical corridor. Akron wants to attract businesses that would provide materials and services to the hospitals, and offer medical product research, development, and manufacturing. The biomedical corridor would also include housing and amenities for people who work in the hospitals. The medical centers would drive the economic development of the biomedical corridor and provide new jobs in the Northeast Ohio region.

The goals of the program are to utilize underdeveloped land in the downtown area, attract new business in the area of biomedical technology, and promote economic growth in the Akron area. The revitalization of this corridor will benefit both the hospitals and Akron's economy. Mayor Plusquellic has high hopes that this project will lead to growth in the overall Northeast Ohio region, benefiting the economies of both Akron and Cleveland. A linked [map](#) shows the proposed area for the Akron Biomedical Corridor, which will run from the west end of State Route 59 at the Akron General Medical Center to the east end of Market Street at the Akron City Hospital, with Akron Children's Hospital toward the middle.

Akron currently offers many services to small businesses that may be accessed from the Akron Small Business Development Center website at <http://www.akronsbdc.org/>. The Ohio Business Development Center at the Summit Medina Business Alliance offers workshops for individuals interested in starting their own business. The Akron Industrial Incubator also offers a variety of professional support services and expert technical assistance to small businesses. For more information on the services available please visit <http://www.ci.akron.oh.us/ed/startup.htm>.

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