

Economic Development

6

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INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development element establishes a policy framework for City government to help foster a diverse, stable, local economy. The strategies found within the City of Sun Prairie 2009 Strategic Business Development Plan are intended to create a range of job opportunities by promoting the current economic base, actively recruiting high wage jobs and encouraging economic activity that provides value added service to the community.

Volume 1 of this plan element contains background information related to Sun Prairie’s past and current economic development efforts and landscape, including an excerpt from the ad hoc Committee for Economic Development report and recommended economic development strategy that identifies issues, trends and observations about Sun Prairie’s economic position and outlook.

Much of the content in this chapter was derived from the Economic Development Committee’s strategic planning effort. As a result, the recommended strategies listed below differ in terms of their appearance and format from the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations contained in the other plan element chapters of Volume 2. Nevertheless, these strategies, created to guide future actions and decisions to promote and support economic development activities in Sun Prairie, are consistent with the scope and direction provided by the balance of the plan.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The following strategies and tactics were developed by the ad hoc Committee for Economic Development as a result of its strategic planning process in 2008, and are intended to guide the City's future actions and decisions related to the promotion of, and support of, economic development activities in Sun Prairie. A summary matrix of the recommended prioritization of strategies is included as Appendix M.

STRATEGY 1

Identify and Prioritize Specific Target Business Sectors

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- A. Identify growing business sectors (e.g. sectors likely to be successful in Sun Prairie).
Status: Completed
- B. Prepare an analysis of the overall compatibility of appropriate sectors.
Status: Completed
- C. Develop and prioritize sector targets for retention and recruitment based on competitive factors.
Status: Completed
- D. Identify specific supporting industries and partners by sector.
Status: Completed

ACTION A: Identify growing business sectors

INITIAL SECTOR IDENTIFICATION

Based on what was already present in the community, as well as the three known sectors being targeted by the eight-county THRIVE region, the following sectors were identified as the preliminary list of sectors to be further considered by the Committee. Category descriptions were based on definitions from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Finance and Insurance

The finance and insurance sector consists of establishments primarily engaged in financial transactions (transactions involving the creation, liquidation, or change in ownership of financial assets) and/or in facilitating financial transactions. Three principal types of activities are identified:

- Raising funds by taking deposits and/or issuing securities and, in the process, incurring liabilities. Establishments engaged in this activity use raised funds to acquire financial assets by making loans and/or purchasing securities. Putting themselves at risk, they channel funds from lenders to borrowers and transform or repackage the funds with respect to maturity, scale, and risk. This activity is known as financial intermediation.
- Pooling of risk by underwriting insurance and annuities. Establishments engaged in this activity collect fees, insurance premiums, or annuity considerations; build up reserves; invest those reserves; and make contractual payments. Fees are based on the expected incidence of the insured risk and the expected return on investment.
- Providing specialized services facilitating or supporting financial intermediation, insurance, and employee benefit programs.

In addition, monetary authorities charged with monetary control are included in this sector.

Light Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products. Establishments in the Manufacturing sector are often described as plants, factories, or mills and characteristically use power-driven machines and materials-handling equipment. However, establishments that transform materials or substances into new products by hand or in the worker's home and those engaged in selling to the general public products made on the same premises from which they are sold, such as bakeries, candy stores, and custom tailors, may also be included in this sector. Manufacturing establishments may process materials or may contract with other establishments to process their materials for them. Both types of establishments are included in manufacturing. (Note: the term Light Manufacturing refers to lesser impacts to the civic infrastructure, the environment, and has an overall better compatibility with other land uses.)

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**Office and Retail**

There technically is not an Office sector identified by NAICS. The definition of Professional, Technical and Scientific sector is thought to be a compatible definition for terms of this planning effort.

The professional, scientific, and technical services sector is comprised of establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific, and technical activities for others. These activities require a high degree of expertise and training. The establishments in this sector specialize according to expertise and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: legal advice and representation; accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll services; architectural, engineering, and specialized design services; computer services; consulting services; research services; advertising services; photographic services; translation and interpretation services; veterinary services; and other professional, scientific, and technical services.

The Retail Trade sector comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. The retailing process is the final step in the distribution of merchandise; retailers are, therefore, organized to sell merchandise in small quantities to the general public. This sector comprises two main types of retailers: store and nonstore retailers.

- Store retailers operate fixed point-of-sale locations, located and designed to attract a high volume of walk-in customers. In general, retail stores have extensive displays of merchandise and use mass-media advertising to attract customers. They typically sell merchandise to the general public for personal or household consumption, but some also serve business and institutional clients. In addition to retailing merchandise, some types of store retailers are also engaged in the provision of after-sales services, such as repair and installation.
- Non-store retailers, like store retailers, are organized to serve the general public, but their retailing methods differ. The establishments of this sub-sector reach customers and market merchandise with methods, such as the broadcasting of "infomercials," the broadcasting and publishing of direct-response advertising, the publishing of paper and electronic catalogs, door-to-door solicitation, in-home demonstration, selling from portable stalls (street vendors, except food), and distribution through vending machines.

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**Warehousing and Distribution**

The Transportation and Warehousing sector includes industries providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities related to modes of transportation.

Printing, Publishing and Graphics

Industries in the printing and related support activities sub-sector print products, such as newspapers, books, labels, business cards, stationery, business forms, and other materials, and perform support activities, such as data imaging, plate making services, and bookbinding. The support activities included here are an integral part of the printing industry, and a product (a printing plate, a bound book, or a computer disk or file) that is an integral part of the printing industry is almost always provided by these operations.

Biotechnology

Biotechnology includes the broader use of biological processes, organisms or systems to manufacture products intended to improve the quality of human life.

Healthcare

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector is comprised of establishments providing health care and social assistance for individuals. The sector includes both health care and social assistance because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of these two activities. The industries in this sector are arranged on a continuum starting with those establishments providing medical care exclusively, continuing with those providing health care and social assistance, and finally finishing with those providing only social assistance. The services provided by establishments in this sector are delivered by trained professionals. All industries in the sector share this commonality of process, namely, labor inputs of health practitioners or social workers with the requisite expertise. Many of the industries in the sector are defined based on the educational degree held by the practitioners included in the industry.

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**Agriculture**

The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector is made up of establishments primarily engaged in growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats. The establishments in this sector are often described as farms, ranches, dairies, greenhouses, nurseries, orchards, or hatcheries. A farm may consist of a single tract of land or a number of separate tracts which may be held under different tenures. For example, one tract may be owned by the farm operator and another rented. It may be operated by the operator alone or with the assistance of members of the household or hired employees, or it may be operated by a partnership, corporation, or other type of organization. When a landowner has one or more tenants, renters, croppers, or managers, the land operated by each is considered a farm.

Agriculture Technology

As an urban area, traditional agriculture (i.e. production based agriculture) as defined above has limited application within a City's municipal boundary. Thus, specific aspects of agriculture as an economic sector were further refined to more accurately represent those types of supporting industry or other related uses that would in fact thrive within an urbanized city. It is anticipated that these uses would function as successful economic sectors on their own, while they would also support traditional agriculture in surrounding areas. These could include but are not limited to:

- Manufacturing of modern agricultural harvesting, processing, transport and storage equipment;
- Processing and refinement of agricultural food products;
- Research and testing of agricultural products, chemicals, and genetics;
- Support services for commercialization of local agricultural food products; and facilities designed to get those agricultural products into to local retail markets.

(Note: Sector definitions are from the North American Industry Classification System on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website, except for Biotechnology which came from THRIVE, and Agriculture Technology which was developed by the City.)

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**ACTION B: Prepare an analysis of the overall compatibility of appropriate sectors****COMPATIBILITY CRITERIA**

A sector was deemed compatible with the City's objectives if it generally met the following criteria:

- 1 A substantial amount of the jobs in the sector required a higher degree of skill, education, or training.
- 2 A substantial amount of the jobs in the sector provided a substantial wage and benefits program for employees.
- 3 The operations of businesses in the sector would not generate excessive demands on utilities, roads or public services.
- 4 The facilities related with businesses in the sector would generate a positive impact to the tax base.
- 5 The operations of businesses in this sector would not create hazards to public health or the environment.

Out of the original sectors identified, it was clarified that large-scale heavy manufacturing was not thought to be compatible with the overall development plans for the City, as opposed to light manufacturing which is prevalent in parts of the City. Production agriculture was also eliminated from consideration due to the rural nature of the use. The remaining sectors identified were as a general rule considered to be compatible with overall development plans for the City.

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**ACTION C: Develop and prioritize sector targets for retention and recruitment based on competitive factors**

In an evaluation of perceived competitiveness, these sectors were ranked according to multiple categories and reviewed by the Committee. The results are reported in Table 6-1.

**TABLE 6-1
BUSINESS SECTOR COMPETITIVENESS MATRIX**

Business Sector	Ability to Attract and Retain Workforce	Availability of Sites & Buildings Meeting Physical Requirements	Development Costs (Land, Lease Rates, Utility Costs, Const. Costs, etc.)	Growth Potential in Local Market	Local/ State Regulatory and Tax Climate	Average Score
Warehousing and Distribution	4	4	4	4	3	3.80
Retail and Office	3	5	4	3	3	3.60
Printing, Publishing and Graphics	3	4	4	4	3	3.60
Light Manufacturing	3	4	4	4	3	3.60
Finance and Insurance	3	3	4	4	3	3.40
Healthcare	3	3	4	4	3	3.40
Information Technology	2	3	4	4	3	3.20
Agriculture	2	3	3	4	3	3.00
Biotechnology	2	2	4	3	3	2.80
Average Score	2.78	3.44	3.89	3.78	3.00	

Source: City of Sun Prairie Economic Development Department

TABLE 6-1 KEY

- 1 = Competitive disadvantage that cannot be mitigated
- 2 = Does not meet all needs without significant improvement
- 3 = Meets most needs, but could be improved
- 4 = Meets all needs, some exceed minimum standards providing some competitive advantage
- 5 = Exceeds all minimum standards and provides a clear competitive advantage

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**FINAL RECOMMENDED LIST OF TARGET SECTORS**

After reviewing all sector profiles, focus group summaries, and the competitiveness matrix, the Committee recommended the following assignment of target sectors to be the basis of any proposed marketing efforts for either retention or recruitment, as reported in Table 6-2. Immediate sectors are those which are prime candidates for expansion as well as new growth, while emerging sectors are thought to be those that will be increasing their role in our local economy over the next five to ten years.

TABLE 6-2
RECOMMENDED TARGET SECTORS

Immediate Sectors	Emerging Sectors
Finance and Insurance	Healthcare
Information Technology	Biotechnology
Light Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing, Publishing and Graphics • Metal Fabrication • Customized Product Design 	Agricultural Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment Design and Manufacturing • Research • Product Processing
Warehousing and Distribution	Renewable Energy
Food and Beverage Processing	Continuing Education
	Hospitality and Tourism

Source: City of Sun Prairie 2009 Strategic Business Development Plan

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED**ACTION D: Identify specific supporting industries and partners by sector**

- Marketing efforts for both retention and recruitment should target customers and suppliers for existing businesses and desired businesses. Supporting businesses that could help create a more efficient and more competitive environment for particular sectors should also be targeted.
- As a part of the development of marketing plans for each sector, identification of specific businesses in direct or supporting relationship to each sector should be done to the maximum level of detail possible – even to the point of identifying specific companies by name or by geographic market if possible.

Proposed Tasks

- 1 A formal marketing plan will need to be coordinated with willing partners throughout the City, and the development of this plan should begin immediately. A plan for retention efforts with identified target sectors should be prepared.
- 2 A plan for recruitment efforts with identified target sectors should be prepared.

Responsible Parties

- City staff, with input from partnering organizations (e.g. Economic Development Council (EDC), Sun Prairie Industrial Development Corporation (SPIDC), Chamber of Commerce (Chamber))

STRATEGY 2

Develop a Specific Brand Positioning and Marketing Plan for the City

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- A. Demonstrate the need for formally defining or identifying the City's identity or brand.
- B. Develop a single, clear positioning for the City.
- C. Develop a common, standardized community profile to be used by all partners.
- D. Develop a portfolio of marketing materials driven by brand positioning and City assets.
- E. Improve the City's online presence and propagate a common marketing presence across all stakeholder sites.
- F. Develop a plan for ongoing research and tracking to ensure appropriate relevance of marketing efforts.

ACTION A: Demonstrate the need for formally defining or identifying the City's identity or brand

- Establishing a brand provides the basis for defining what the community is and what it wants to become.
- The City's brand will differentiate the City of Sun Prairie from other communities in the greater Madison region and will clearly define the City's competitive advantages.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A facilitated discussion should occur (probably three to five meetings) to explore what process the City and its partners would like to undergo to define a brand.
- 2 Resources need to be allocated to support the branding and marketing efforts to ensure that this effort proceeds in a positive manner and in a timely fashion.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- The Economic Development Council (EDC) is the recommended organization to facilitate this discussion, however the City will need to play a primary role in achieving this task.
- This effort should include representatives from all partnering organizations. The Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and Sun Prairie Industrial Development Corporation (SPIDC) are also thought to have a key role because of their inherent marketing responsibilities.

STRATEGY 2 CONTINUED**ACTION B: Develop a common, standardized community profile to be used by all partners**

- A base packet of demographics, economic data, and resource information should be developed in a format that can be used by community organizations to supplement their marketing and informational materials.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Correspondence requesting feedback from partnering organizations as to what information they deem most important, as well as the preferred format, should be sent. A response from partnering organizations should also be requested.
- 2 A recommended draft of a standard community profile should be prepared.
- 3 A final version should be available to community partners, and should also be made available through the City website.
- 4 Partnering organizations should utilize this profile with their materials.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should prepare a community profile as described.
- Staff should coordinate with partnering organizations to ensure the presented information, format, and schedule are appropriate for their purposes.
- Staff will contact partnering organizations to determine interest in utilizing the standard profile with their materials.

STRATEGY 2 CONTINUED**ACTION C: Develop a single, clear positioning for the City**

- A brand position will provide cohesiveness between marketing efforts, ensuring that there is a common message and a common goal to those efforts.
- A brand position will focus marketing efforts onto desired targets, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of those marketing efforts.
- An effective brand position helps all partnering organizations—not just the City—to promote a consistent message about the community, and therefore these partners need to be involved in its development.
- This brand position will serve as a standard by which marketing and economic development efforts can be evaluated. (i.e. Does a prospect, project or program match the intentions of the brand position?)

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A short-term position statement on the City's economic development efforts should be developed for purposes of immediate marketing.
- 2 An evaluation of compatibility of target sectors with the identified position statement should be undertaken.
- 3 This statement should be refined as the City undergoes a formal branding process.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should be tasked with preparing a short-term position statement, which will serve as a guide until a more formal position statement can be created and adopted by the community.
- The EDC is the recommended organization to facilitate this discussion, however the City will need to play a primary role in achieving this task.
- This effort should include representatives from all partnering organizations. The Chamber and SPIDC are also thought to have a key role because of their inherent marketing responsibilities.

STRATEGY 2 CONTINUED**ACTION D: Develop a portfolio of marketing materials driven by brand positioning and City assets**

- A comprehensive program of printed materials, internet materials, and other media will be necessary to help reinforce the City's brand position once it is created.
- These materials need to be maintained and updated as current information becomes available.
- This may or may not include a coordinated logo, slogan or other identifying symbology to reinforce the common economic development message and adopted brand position.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Short-term general marketing materials should be completed.
- 2 Recommendations for short-term marketing and public relations opportunities are needed that will include but not be limited to:
 - » Media Relations Plan
 - » Local and Regional Advertising Opportunities (i.e. In Business Supplement)
 - » Website Improvements
 - » Maintenance of Economic Development News Blog
 - » Targeted Direct Contact Opportunities (Mail, E-mail, Phone, etc.)
 - » Target Company/Industry Visits
 - » Targeted Geographies for Recruitment Efforts
 - » Recommendations on how to target marketing efforts for selected sectors in the Milwaukee market
 - » Conduct a feasibility study for office or lab incubator space
 - » Initiate steps to create a lower restriction industrial park
 - » Provide support to partnering organizations for events consistent with plan strategies
 - » Identify two to three advertising or public relations activities to increase awareness of Sun Prairie in the greater Madison region
- 3 Materials should be reviewed quarterly (at a minimum) and updated accordingly

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff will generate recommendations for media and materials to be utilized.
- Staff should coordinate with partners to increase exposure, combine resources where feasible, and maximize effectiveness of appropriate efforts.

STRATEGY 2 CONTINUED**ACTION E: Improve the City's online presence and propagate a common marketing presence across all stakeholder sites**

- The City's website is the most critical component of any proposed marketing efforts, as it is the most cost effective, the easiest to keep current, and is accessible 24-hours per day.
- The current content management system for the City's website is outdated which prevents maximum utility and flexibility in posting information, formatting, and tracking of use.
- While some partner sites are current and well-maintained, some are in need of being updated or having content and links improved.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Complete an informal evaluation of the websites of the City and its partners and provide a report. (This may include an informal request to partners to conduct a voluntary self-evaluation of their sites.)
- 2 Prepare a recommendation as to what information needs to be on the City website.
- 3 Ensure that the City and all partnering organizations have current links to one another.
- 4 Encourage the City to update its content management software to allow for tracking of hits and easier posting and updating of information.
- 5 Incorporate some form of hit tracking on key webpages in a timely manner.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff will conduct an informal evaluation of the City's economic development presence on the City's website and provide a report to the Common Council focusing on both content and limitations of the current content management system. (An objective outside source may be used to conduct this evaluation.)
- Staff will conduct an informal evaluation of partnering websites and provide a report to the Common Council and individual partners.

STRATEGY 2 CONTINUED**ACTION F: Develop a plan for ongoing research and tracking to ensure appropriate relevance of marketing efforts**

- All marketing efforts, general inquiries, and prospect contacts need to be documented and evaluated and documented for their effectiveness.
- Specific alternations to marketing efforts should be based on the results of this monitoring.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Formally track the source of economic development related inquiries received at the City (i.e. City website, partner website, direct call, referral from partner, general web search, etc.), as well as for prospects.
- 2 Utilize designated follow-up measures to ensure appropriateness of requests for service or data on a timely basis.
- 3 Utilize technology to track source data through the City website, news blog, and partnering websites.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff will begin tracking inquiries by recording each instance in a database by date and nature of the call.
- Staff will prepare a report on responses and progress made on inquiries on a monthly basis.
- Staff will evaluate the online tracking capabilities of the City's website and provide a recommendation to the Common Council.
- If successful, staff may work with partnering organizations to implement similar measures to even further track economic development contacts across all partners.

STRATEGY 3

Develop a plan for increasing the knowledge and skills of the available workforce

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- A. Increase and enhance local training opportunities that are relevant to the existing employment base, including an increase in the number of local skilled, licensed commercial truck drivers.
- B. Develop training modules using company specific software and personnel that will improve hiring effectiveness for local employers.
- C. Encourage the development of a post secondary educational institution in Sun Prairie as a high-priority item.
- D. Encourage coordination between teachers and employers to match educational programming to the needs of local employers.
- E. Develop and improve access to technical and mechanical training opportunities based on the needs of local employers.
- F. Develop programs targeted towards increasing financial literacy, information technology, and general business acumen.
- G. Communicate opportunities for accessing additional workforce due to employment changes in the region
- H. Define career opportunities in target sectors for area students.

STRATEGY 3 CONTINUED**ACTION A: Increase and enhance local training opportunities that are relevant to the existing employment base, including an increase in the number of local skilled, licensed commercial truck drivers**

- Access to skilled and qualified workers was identified as an issue in each sector focus group.
- Information on available training programs is not readily available, nor are the procedures or contacts to access these programs.
- There is no known evaluation process for determining if existing programs are meeting the needs of local employers, or if there are other programs that would be more useful to local employers in meeting their training needs.
- To the extent that the City intends to market itself to the warehousing and distribution sector, training and licensing opportunities to provide skilled commercial truck drivers would be an asset.
- Efforts should be made to coordinate communication and establish stronger ties between the Diesel Truck Driving School in the Town of Bristol and local companies.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A comprehensive listing of available training programs, resources, and designated contacts should be assembled and posted on the City's economic development website.
- 2 A survey of local human resource professionals should be conducted to evaluate how effectively they are meeting their own training needs.
- 3 A formal profile of necessary training and licensing for commercial truck drivers should be assembled.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should coordinate with Madison Area Technical College (MATC), Sun Prairie Area School District (SPASD), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SBA and other training providers to document what programs are available.
- Staff should create and administer the survey, and provide a summary of results to the Common Council, partnering organizations, and training organizations.
- Staff should meet with MATC, the Diesel Truck Driving School, and area warehousing companies to discuss how to best train and attract qualified employees.

STRATEGY 3 CONTINUED**ACTION B: Develop training modules using company specific software and personnel that will improve hiring effectiveness for local employers**

- Training programs utilizing customized, company-specific software improves the ability for new employees to be an effective hire at a considerably faster rate.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A model program with QBE (formerly General Casualty) should be created.
- 2 If successful, additional opportunities will be sought.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should coordinate with QBE management to determine if this program would be beneficial.

ACTION C: Encourage the development of a post-secondary educational institution in Sun Prairie as a high-priority item

- Most training facilities are located within the City of Madison.
- A post-high school facility focusing on programs ranging from basic business fundamentals to sector and industry specific skills would be an asset to the local economy.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A meeting with the proper staff at MATC, or other designated institutions, regarding their future facility needs should be held.
- 2 Alternate organizations with training resources should be identified.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should coordinate this effort by either hosting a meeting of regional training providers, or conduct one-on-one visits with appropriate staff. Local employers should be strongly encouraged to attend and participate.

STRATEGY 3 CONTINUED**ACTION D: Encourage coordination between teachers and employers to match educational programming to the needs of local employers**

- Maximizing communication between teachers and employers increases the knowledge of the employer about what the local schools can offer, and the educators get a first hand understanding of the needs of local employers.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 At least two events should be held to help facilitate this discussion each year, once in spring and once in fall.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Several community organizations are already positioned to address this task, and may already have events hosted that meet this need, including the SPASD, the Sun Prairie Business and Education Partnership (BEP), and the Sun Prairie Educational Foundation.
- City staff should be prepared to offer to support to programmed activities.

ACTION E: Develop and improve access to technical and mechanical training opportunities based on the needs of local employers

- Both traditional and advanced manufacturing skills are needed by local employers, and there are fewer and fewer programs available or even efforts to make potential employees aware of these career options.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 An inventory/survey of manufacturers in the City should be completed.
- 2 A job fair or similar event for manufacturers should be held sometime soon.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should complete the inventory and survey on manufacturers
- Staff should coordinate with SPASD and MATC as to what would be the most effective format.

STRATEGY 3 CONTINUED**ACTION F: Develop programs targeted towards increasing financial literacy, information technology, and general business acumen**

- Employers in all sectors are seeking employees who not only have skills in their designated trade, but also understand the nature of running a business.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A formal stand-alone business course or seminar should be introduced at the middle school or high school level to teach business finance, accounting, and general business acumen (as opposed to being a part of another course) no later than the 2010 -2011 school year.
- 2 Work with the school district to ensure that an “Introduction to Information Technology” course is regularly offered at the high school level that focuses on how information technology impacts the operation of a business.
- 3 Additional business groups and clubs for students should be encouraged.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should approach SPASD to discuss if either of these is a viable course offering, and to see if the BEP would be interested in assisting with these programs.

ACTION G: Communicate opportunities for accessing additional workforce due to employment changes in the region

- Employment cuts in targeted sectors in other regions of Wisconsin should be approached as an opportunity to recruit skilled employees to local businesses.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A formal process to notify human resources managers for potentially benefiting local employers of available workers should be established.
- 2 A formal process to communicate with the Department of Workforce Development and to inform their personnel about target sectors in the City should be established.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should assemble all necessary contacts for this task.

STRATEGY 3 CONTINUED**ACTION H: Define career opportunities in target sectors for area students**

- Sectors being targeted by the City need to be communicated to SPASD so that career guidance can reflect what job opportunities are most likely to be available in the City.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Coordinate and support SPASD on their current career counseling activities so that target sectors are formally incorporated into their programming by the 2010-2011 school year.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should coordinate and support the continuing efforts being made by the SPASD.

STRATEGY 4

Develop a plan for governmental support of local business sectors through improved policy and infrastructure decisions

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- A. Ensure efficiency, thoroughness, and predictability of the development review process.
- B. Improve thoroughness on calculating relevant development fees by geography.
- C. Ensure public safety.
- D. Strive to have a stable, predictable property tax structure, and to demonstrate value commensurate with rates and assessments.
- E. Evaluate transportation alternatives as employment and commercial centers develop.
- F. Expand the number and effectiveness of economic development programs and financial assistance programs offered by the City to help encourage investment and reinvestment in the community.
- G. Consider the creation of a response team to assess and act upon possible economic development opportunities in a timely fashion as they may arise from time to time.

STRATEGY 4 CONTINUED**ACTION A: Ensure efficiency, thoroughness, and predictability of the development review process**

- One of the primary attractors to doing business in the City has been the consistency of the development review process.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Ensure consistent application of policies and procedures across all development projects each year by annually reviewing the status of each project that comes in for up to a year after construction and assembling a report summarizing the process for each development.
- 2 Evaluate and update the City zoning and related ordinances as necessary to implement this plan.
- 3 Reinforce the policy that staff encourages resolution of project related issues five to seven days prior to scheduled review meetings.
- 4 Reinforce the policy that staff encourages resolution of development issues in the planned development process at the general development plan (GDP) level prior to adoption to allow for easier precise implementation plan (PIP) approvals.
- 5 Encourage frequent, thorough communication between staff and elected officials on development issues prior to approval meetings.
- 6 Develop clear criteria for when an accelerated review process is warranted.
- 7 Monitor development projects as construction is completed to ensure follow-through and full implementation of approved development plans.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff should offer direct recommendations to the Common Council for consideration and approval, recalling that only the Council may make changes to matters of ordinance.

STRATEGY 4 CONTINUED**ACTION B: Improve thoroughness on calculating relevant development fees by geography**

- The calculation of development related fees for a particular location in the City is difficult at best because of the various areas where certain fees apply.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 A means to monitor, estimate or provide the actual development fees for a particular parcel need to be incorporated into the City's Graphic Information System (GIS).
- 2 Research procedures on how to make related development fees more affordable.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff from appropriate departments including Administration, IT (GIS), Finance, Planning, the City Attorney, and the Economic Development Coordinator will review alternatives as to how to accomplish these tasks.

ACTION C: ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY

- The maintenance of a safe community is critical to economic development efforts.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Update the designation and enforcement of heavy traffic/truck routes.
- 2 Maintain adequate public safety personnel on the streets to the extent feasible effective immediately.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Staff from appropriate departments (i.e. Public Works, Police, Fire, EMS)

STRATEGY 4 CONTINUED**ACTION D: Strive to have a stable, predictable Property tax structure, and to demonstrate value commensurate with rates and assessments**

- While the overall amount of taxes is always of concern, the potential for drastic changes (especially increases) makes it difficult for businesses to plan appropriately.
- Overall level of service and quality of life should be reflective of the taxes and fees paid to the City.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 The City should attempt to control the budget, and exercise considerable restraint when determining whether or not to increase taxes or fees on an annual basis—perhaps considering a policy to attempt not to increase the budget beyond a predetermined percentage.
- 2 Efforts should be made to document the level of service here in the City compared to the amount of taxes and fees paid each year.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Mayor and Administration present the budget, Common Council adopts.
- Staff from appropriate department should document and report on their levels of service and provide comparisons to other communities in Dane County as needed.

ACTION E: Evaluate transportation alternatives as employment and commercial centers develop

- Should a critical mass of employers or commercial uses locate in a particular area of the City, it may become necessary to evaluate whether or not some form of transit will be required (or at least beneficial) in the future.
- At some point the population and level of activity in Sun Prairie employment and commercial nodes may justify an investment in public transit.
- See the Transportation chapter for additional information and specific recommendations regarding public transit.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Beginning in 2009, the City should continue to participate in discussions regarding regional transit alternatives to ensure that whatever project is proposed is an asset to the City.
- 2 Efforts should be made to document the level of service in Sun Prairie compared to the amount of taxes and fees paid each year.
- 3 Local alternatives to regional public transportation programs should continue to be explored, such as a rideshare program for employees of the Sun Prairie Business Park, and the need and feasibility of public transit in the City should continue to be monitored.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Common Council and designated staff (e.g. Planning, Engineering, etc.)

STRATEGY 4 CONTINUED

ACTION F: Expand the number and effectiveness of economic development programs and financial assistance programs offered by the City to help encourage investment and reinvestment in the community

- Other than tax increment financing, which is not always practical or workable, there are relatively few options currently open to the City to assist and encourage development and redevelopment when warranted.
- There are no procedures or established criteria to help guide decisions related to requests for, or efforts to provide, direct financial assistance to a development or redevelopment project.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Identify and develop guidelines for new programs aimed at encouraging development and redevelopment that provides significant benefits to the community in terms of employment and tax base.
- 2 Consider alternative methods for collecting building permit and development fees, such as stepped fees paid over multiple years, that make it easier to establish a business in the City.
- 3 Establish basic criteria for evaluating economic development opportunities, such as giving priority to those that would achieve a high property tax base; that would create a significant number of high-wage jobs; that would provide a value-added service to the community and local economy; that represent sustainable long-term development; and that are compatible with surrounding development and the City's plans for a specific area.
- 4 Explore opportunities for potential eligible improvements outside of, but within a half-mile of, designated tax incremental financing (TIF) districts as an alternative means of financing such improvements, if determined to be feasible and appropriate.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Prepared by designated staff (e.g. Administration, Economic Development, Planning, etc.) and approved by Common Council

STRATEGY 4 CONTINUED**ACTION G: Consider the creation of a response team to assess and act upon possible economic development opportunities in a timely fashion as they may arise from time to time**

- Currently there is no formal process for discussing, evaluating, and quickly responding to inquiries about land availability, economic development assistance, or other questions that may be raised when potentially significant economic development opportunities are identified.
- A response team would need to be able to meet in a timely fashion as needed and have the expertise to be able to assess the potential value of economic opportunities and assemble appropriate information as needed to respond to such requests.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Identify the appropriate individuals/positions that would make up the response team. Appropriate staff members such as the Economic Development Coordinator, City Planning, and City Administration; elected officials, and members of the business community should be considered.
- 2 Draft policies or guidelines that would assist such a team in evaluating opportunities.
- 3 Establish basic criteria for evaluating economic development opportunities, such as those recommended in Strategy 4, Action F.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Prepared by designated staff (e.g. administration, economic development, planning, etc.) and approved by Common Council.

STRATEGY 5

Develop a plan for improved coordination and communication with local economic development groups and area businesses that includes a focus on business retention

- In order to maximize effectiveness and efficiency while avoiding unnecessary duplication, specific protocols on how partnering groups interact with the public as well as one another are strongly encouraged.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Work with the Economic Development Council (EDC) or other community-wide economic development group to mobilize and champion appropriate elements of the City's 2009 Strategic Business Development Plan.
- 2 Coordinate with local partners to evaluate their communication protocols to ensure lines of communication to the private sector remain viable and continue to improve.
- 3 Create a directory of local economic development partners. (Completed)
- 4 Establish, adopt and implement specific communication protocols between local partners.
- 5 Formalize prospect handling and information sharing protocols with the Sun Prairie Industrial Development Corporation (SPIDC) and other private developers.
- 6 Utilize the City's Economic Development Department as a central point of contact for development inquiries.
- 7 Encourage the University of Wisconsin and Madison Area Technical College (MATC) to establish training facilities in the City by January 1, 2014.
- 8 Utilize local partners to facilitate and implement retention efforts and programs.
- 9 Develop a targeted means of communicating with local commercial Realtors.
- 10 Develop a protocol to help establish, improve and maintain active relationships and communication with executives of major area employers.
- 11 Improve online access to relevant economic information.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- The EDC or other community-wide economic development group should be the primary organization to convene all partners (through its membership) when deemed appropriate.
- Staff shall facilitate all efforts related to these tasks with partners as appropriate.

STRATEGY 6

Develop a business development plan for targeted geographic areas within the community

ACTION A: Identify areas in the City within which to target economic development efforts, programs and activities

- Establish a vision and implementation strategy for greenfield sites and targeted brownfield areas.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Establish a plan and timetable to formally control areas for the expansion of the Sun Prairie Business Park (i.e. options, zoning, etc.).
- 2 Develop a preferred use plan for the Reiner Road/CTH C corridor to help market the City's TIF-9 lots as well as lands to the south (Capitol Drive, Suchomel Farm, etc.).
- 3 Designate preferred areas for potential use as office parks, and determined best alternatives to control uses in these areas.
- 4 Designate areas for a future industrial park area that can accommodate uses that do not fit the profile of the Sun Prairie Business Park due to outdoor storage needs, building and site aesthetics, etc.
- 5 Develop a preferred use plan for the W. Main Street corridor—specifically determine how much area will remain in commercial land use over time.
- 6 Work with property owners to develop site specific redevelopment plans for targeted parcels on Main Street.
- 7 Develop specific strategies to fill vacancies in downtown area.
- 8 Work with local developers to develop quality commercial uses within their respective developments where appropriate.
- 9 Work with developers to get S. Bristol Street redevelopment underway.
- 10 Consider the possibility of additional commercial uses along CTH N near new high school.
- 11 Develop and evaluate land use alternatives as well as a marketing plan for the TIF-6 area.
- 12 Develop and evaluate redevelopment alternatives for the STH 19/US 151 area, including the retail commercial district east of the interchange, as well as the vacant land and buildings in the Communications Drive area west of the interchange.
- 13 Begin to plan for the eventual redevelopment of the O’Keeffe/McCoy Road site.
- 14 Evaluate the potential for expanded industrial use of the existing rail line.
- 15 Encourage development of business incubators to assist with new business start-ups, which could include, but are not limited to: an office-oriented incubator in the Downtown; a technology-oriented incubator in the business park or future Westside office parks; light industrial and/or flex space buildings in other industrial districts; and/or commercial kitchen space.

STRATEGY 6 CONTINUED

ACTION B: Encourage the development of unique retail, restaurant and entertainment uses that help to create an attractive environment for commercial businesses and provide added value for our residents, our economy, and our quality of life

- The economic development strategy contained herein specifically does not contain strategies for financial incentives aimed at retail uses because it is felt to be unnecessary except in rare circumstances for exceptional projects.
- If quality of life issues and the expansion of the City's employment base are improved, residential and retail development will follow without significant local government intervention.
- The City may consider incentives if the proposed use:
 - » Significantly increases the City's tax base
 - » Provides significant job creation in segments of the local economy where such jobs are needed
 - » Creates a positive impact on the City's ability to attract other quality retail uses, or some other competitive development advantage
 - » Helps create an overall development unique to other retail shopping areas in our region
 - » Exceeds and advances appropriate City plans and policies for the relevant geography and standards for that area
- Plans for future retail development on the Westside will significantly increase the overall retail floor area available in the City, particularly in the grocery store sub-category, which could have impacts on the viability of existing retail uses in the City.

PROPOSED TASKS

- 1 Encourage the expansion and development of new greenfield retail uses via means that do not involve financial assistance, except in truly exceptional situations where such assistance is deemed necessary or advantageous for the City.
- 2 Continue to monitor vacancy rates in established commercial areas as new areas build out.
- 3 Continue to support existing commercial districts by encouraging reinvestment and redevelopment where appropriate, and continued maintenance and improvements to infrastructure serving these areas.
- 4 Work with area developers, property owners, and real estate professionals to define and communicate the types of retail development that are desired by the City in specific geographies.

WILLOW BROOK

