



Sherburne County, Minnesota

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Three Year Plan: 2018 - 2020

Economic Development: the main goal of economic development is to enhance the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, property tax base enhancements and improvements to the quality of life. There is no single definition for economic development and no single strategy, policy or program for achieving successful economic development is available or desirable. This document outlines the plan for Sherburne County, Minnesota. Strategic plans vary in their timing and impact – for Sherburne County, this provides a three-year perspective.

Economic Development Policy and Objectives

The mission of Sherburne County is: "To provide the necessary services in a cost effective manner to support quality of life for Sherburne County citizens." The economic development strategic plan is one supporting activity which allows the County Board and staff, cities, townships, public agencies, and the business and agricultural community to pursue the mission, achieve the vision and accomplish the goals.

It is the policy of the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners to advance the County's role and increase its participation in economic development. The County will invest staff time and financial resources in a strategic manner and will engage in a collaborative approach to pursue countywide economic development goals. The County's actions will be guided by six policy outcomes. The County's investment in economic development will:

1. Enhance the quality of life for all of residents
2. Create and sustain living wage jobs
3. Expand the County's property tax base
4. Allow the County to be a partner with other public agencies and private sector stakeholders
5. Allocate County staff time efficiently and effectively
6. Distribute the County's economic development fund in a strategic and successful manner



Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan provides a realistic and practical *road map* for the County. It guides the county leaders and allows them to focus on the most important economic development priorities. Furthermore, it directs staff time and financial commitments to those activities that support the County’s mission, vision, and goals. Ultimately when the plan is underway and the County has a solid foundation, it will improve accountability and the capacity to measure the outcomes of your investment.

The following six strategies are presented for Sherburne County:

1. ***Collaboration with Public Agencies and Private Partners***
2. ***Invest in Transportation and Technology Infrastructure***
3. ***Determine Role in Marketing***
4. ***Allocation of County Resources***
5. ***Efficient Use of Financial Incentives and Tools***
6. ***Maximize Value of Public Facilities***

Strategy: Collaboration with Public Agencies and Private Partners

Partnering and working with area townships, cities, regional and state agencies are a priority. The County’s plan is to complement the work of other agencies invested in economic development pursuits. This principle is consistent with previous economic development efforts of the County.

Work plan

Goals	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Continue quarterly committee meetings consisting of community leaders, economic development staff, any interested township officials and regional chamber of commerce staff.	Dan Weber	On-Going
2. Attempt to standardize policies and forms between entities.	Dan Weber & City ED Staff	On-Going
3. Continue to make workforce development and training a priority.	Dan Weber, City ED Staff & CMJTS	On-Going
4. Participate in the Regional Airport Study Advisory Committee and explore ways to expand utilization of the St. Cloud Airport	Dan Weber & Airport	2018



	Study Advisory Committee	
5. Continue to work towards the creation of an Economic Development District with Benton, Stearns and Wright Counties.	Dan Weber, 7W Neighboring Counties, CMJTS	2018

Strategy: Invest in Transportation and Technology Infrastructure

Technology is quickly becoming the second infrastructure and competition for business and economic growth is truly dependent upon having access to both transportation and technology. Financial resources are needed in both areas for the County to be successful in its economic development role.

Work plan

Goals	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Continue to explore partnerships to bring expanded broadband infrastructure to the Sherburne County Region.	S. Taylor, B. Kamman & Dan Weber	On-Going
2. Pursue multi-modal transportation, rail-park, bridge expansion and transit opportunities.	S. Taylor, A. Witter & D. Weber	On-Going
3. Continue to foster working relationship with BNSF.	S. Taylor, A. Witter & D. Weber	On-Going

Strategy: Determine Role in Marketing

Competition in economic development is intense and a variety of comments reflected the need for the Sherburne community to promote, market and brand itself. There is a consensus that the community must *tell its story* better and promote the assets and strengths it offers.

Work plan



Goals	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Expand utilization of County Economic Development Website.	Dan Weber	Q2 2018
2. Develop and distribute a Quarterly Economic Development Newsletter Highlighting new & expanding businesses as well as community events	Dan Weber & D. Unze	On-Going
3. Partner and cost share marketing efforts with local communities.	Dan Weber	On-Going
4. Continue to utilize local Chambers of Commerce, the SBDC, and Regional Economic Partners to highlight Sherburne County Programs.	Dan Weber & D. Unze	On-Going

Strategy: Allocation of County Resources

Public entities that seek to maximize their value and contributions to a public policy objective must be ready to contribute both time and money to the effort. Discussions underway on the role of the County's EDA will continue and be important in the planning process. Sherburne County will have a variety of considerations to make when it comes to allocating resources.

Work plan

Goals	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Utilize and seek available grants opportunities.	Dan Weber, CMJTS, Local City Staff	On- Going
2. Site selection conferences/manufacturing tours/regional membership meetings – partner with local cities on a project by project basis.	DEED, Greater MSP, Local Cities and Chambers	On-Going
3. Prepare and present consistent County Board workshop or Commissioner memos to update the Board on economic development programs and activities.	Dan Weber	Q2 & Q4 each year
4. Explore the Creation of a Countywide Community Development Agency	S. Taylor & D. Weber	Q2 2018



Strategy: Efficient Use of Financial Incentives and Tools

In Minnesota public agencies have statutory powers to support economic development in certain ways. Traditional powers and funding sources have emanated from city government, but counties are expanding their powers and authority in these areas.

Work plan

Goals	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Utilize existing grant programs from DEED, USDA, Blandin Foundation, BNSF and other local agencies	Dan Weber	On-Going
2. Market and utilize existing Revolving Loan Fund.	Dan Weber, EDA & CMDC	On-Going
3. Utilize and update the County Tax Abatement Financing policy as necessary.	Dan Weber, EDA & County Board	Q2 2018
4. Develop an additional in-house revolving loan fund for smaller projects \$2,000 - \$25,000	Dan Weber & EDA	Q3 2018
5. Explore Implementation of the “Open to Business” Program	Dan Weber & Steve Taylor	Q2 2018

Strategy: Maximize Value of Public Facilities

Conventional wisdom and data suggests that the best place to focus economic development efforts is on your existing businesses. Although no economic development program is complete without a new business development strategy, growing and expanding your existing businesses is the best way to create new jobs and expand your tax base. Ensuring that there is adequate space to grow and expand is an important economic development objective.



Work plan

Goals	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Ensure an adequate inventory of shovel-ready land that is available for development. Work on marketing plan to develop existing lots.	Dan Weber, City ED Staff	On-Going
2. Develop an inventory of existing available land and buildings that will be available on the County Economic Development Website.	Dan Weber	Q1 2018
3. Highlight and market existing regional public institutions and programs through the Quarterly Community Partner Meetings.	Dan Weber	On-Going

Implementation Ideas

Strategic plans are only as effective as the commitment made by all parties to follow-through. This plan is both comprehensive yet realistic. The plan provides the County with four distinct benefits:

- A decision-making tool to assist in making policy decisions
- A leadership tool to assist in identifying and establishing goals
- A management tool to assist in operationalizing plans and determining accountabilities
- A communication tool to inform partners and stakeholders about the plans

To move the plan into action the County Board will:

- Champion the process
- Identify clear expectations for staff
- Allocate financial resources
- Commit to implementation
- Determine reporting levels and timely update schedules
- Bi-Annually update the plan