

The purpose of the Sherburne County EDA is to support entrepreneurship, advocate for existing businesses, mitigate barriers to economic development, and continually work towards economic resilience and diversification.



SHERBURNE

Economic Development

5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2028





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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION STATEMENT

It is the goal of the Sherburne County Economic Development Authority (EDA) to foster economic development activities in a way that positions Sherburne County to be the county of choice for both residents and businesses. The Sherburne County EDA will be the primary resource for the business community by facilitating access to business incentives, capital, and growth tools for all stages of business. The Sherburne County EDA will be a community partner in the development and implementation of innovative economic development and marketing strategies that will drive the attraction of new people, cultivate business growth, create jobs, and expand the county's business base.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Sherburne County EDA is to support entrepreneurship, advocate for existing businesses, mitigate barriers to economic development, and continually work towards economic resilience and diversification. Through the work of the EDA, entrepreneurs will have access to the tools and supports needed to launch, grow, and have a successful business in Sherburne County. The intent of the EDA is that businesses will know their value and will choose Sherburne County because we are ready for their development and growth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

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 nine strategic plan objectives. The County's investment in economic development will:

- 1. Market Sherburne County to be the County of Choice for businesses and residents**
- 2. Utilize financial incentives and other development tools efficiently**
- 3. Distribute the County's economic development fund and resources in a strategic and successful manner**
- 4. Allow the County to be a partner with other public agencies and private sector stakeholders**
- 5. Enhance the quality of life for all of residents to promote resident retention**
- 6. Create and sustain living wage jobs**
- 7. Expand and diversify the county's commercial tax base to help offset residential taxes**
- 8. Maximize the value of Public Facilities**
- 9. Allocate resources to transportation and technology infrastructure**

AREAS OF FOCUS

The Strategic Plan provides a realistic and practical *roadmap* for the Sherburne County Economic Development Authority (EDA). The Areas of Focus provide specific direction to the EDA and allow them to focus on the most important economic development priorities.



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The following **AREAS OF FOCUS** are identified by the Sherburne County EDA:

1. **Business Retention and Expansion**
2. **Workforce**
3. **Housing**
4. **Policy Review & Updates**
5. **Broadband**
6. **Childcare**
7. **Federal Regional Economic Development District Designation**
8. **Transportation**
9. **Marketing**

AREA OF FOCUS: BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of expanding and diversifying the county’s commercial tax base to help offset residential taxes and positioning Sherburne County to be the County of Choice for businesses. The business retention and expansion program will enable the County to reach out and respond to the needs of its existing businesses, help address barriers to growth, and foster an environment that is conducive to economic success.

Business Retention & Expansion Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Implement a cohesive Countywide business retention & expansion program that is a collaborative approach between County, City, & Township economic development organizations & professionals that conducts 50 BRE visits per year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDA will provide a BRE software that is shared across the County. Community & Economic Development Professionals will log BRE visits to build a Countywide database. 	<p>Estimates \$8,500 initial software build.</p> <p>Ongoing annual cost of \$1,800</p>	Jessica Barthel	Annual Review
2. Develop a deep understanding of what drives private enterprise investment decisions. 3. Develop an action plan to make Sherburne County more competitive compared to its peers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data on enterprise investment decisions at BRE visits. • Conduct a competitive analysis on Sherburne County vs. other counties to measure competitiveness. 			
4. Organize Quarterly meetings with City & County Community & Economic Development Staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meetings will be held to discuss BRE visits and set goals for the program. 	Time	Jessica Barthel	On-Going



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AREA OF FOCUS: WORKFORCE

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of creating and sustaining living wage jobs, expanding, and diversifying the county’s commercial tax base to help offset residential taxes, and allowing the County to be a partner with other public agencies and private sector stakeholders. It is imperative the Sherburne County EDA channel resources and support into the development and growth of a healthy workforce pipeline to ensure businesses have an adequate supply of workers to support their growth, which in-turn adds jobs back to the local economy along with additional tax dollars.

Workforce Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support workforce development and training initiatives across the County. 2. Identify partnership opportunities between local employers and trade schools to lessen the challenge of finding trained workers. 3. Increase local employer knowledge of school district CTE programs, internships, and job shadow opportunities. 4. Suggest employee retention workshops for Business Lab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with higher education institutes, local school districts, local Chambers of Commerce & GSDC workforce resources to support their workforce development programs. • Serve as a conduit of resources, information, opportunities & issues between public & private entities and education institutions. 	Time	Jessica Barthel	On-going

AREA OF FOCUS: HOUSING

This area of focus supports the strategic objectives of expanding and diversifying the county’s commercial tax base to help offset residential taxes and utilization of financial incentives and other development tools efficiently. In order to facilitate orderly growth, an adequate and diverse housing stock must be available for the residents for Sherburne County. The investment of EDA time and resources to create partnerships and develop solutions to the housing shortage, including the utilization of financial incentives and other development tools efficiently, is imperative to continued growth for Sherburne County.

Housing Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Update Housing Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxfield Research & Consulting to update the County housing study to reflect effects of the pandemic. 	Need Quote	Jessica Barthel & Dan Weber	2024
2. Attract housing developers to increase all housing options in the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Along with an updated housing study, the utilization of financial 	Project dependent	EDA	Ongoing



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	<p>incentives to attract development is a necessary strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with developers to learn what their barriers to development are. • Look at what other counties are doing to attract development/what Sherburne does better. 			
3. Build relationship with HHS & learn their work in the Housing sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite Lori Irwin from HHS for annual update to EDA with an eye to output and actions. 	Time	Jessica Barthel	Annual & Ongoing
4. Develop an inventory of raw land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Planning & Zoning, Cities, and Townships to create an inventory. 			
5. Gauge Township interest in a partnership with County regarding joint land acquisition to help get businesses out of homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite Townships to EDA meetings for discussion. 		EDA	
6. Facilitate the development of one acre lots for senior housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Planning & Zoning on home size ordinance and other considerations. 		EDA	
7. Explore Housing Land Trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and educate what a Housing Land Trust is. 		Jessica Barthel	

AREA OF FOCUS: POLICY REVIEW & UPDATES

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of allocating staff time efficiently and effectively and being a County of Choice for businesses and residents. The purpose of the goals in this section are to foster efficient communication between EDA, EDA staff, and the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners along with intentional review and updates to policies and procedures that impact the efficiency of economic development in the County.

Policy Review & Updates Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Communicate economic development programs, updates, and activities to the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and present workshops or memos for the Commissioners from the EDA. 	Time	Jessica Barthel & Dan Weber	Semi-annually or as needed



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Board of Commissioners, Cities, and Townships.	Disseminate relevant information to Cities & Townships.			
2. Improve communication in regard to Permits & Zoning as it relates to economic development activities in the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite Zoning to EDA to update on permits for projects in townships. • Have a voice in establishing the 2023-2033 CLUP. 	Time	Jessica Barthel & Dan Weber	Annually
3. Ensure the Tax Abatement Financing Policy requirements are in alignment with the desired outcomes of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the County Tax Abatement Financing Policy. 	Time	Dan Weber, EDA & County Board	2023
4. EDA actively participate in its budget development to help ensure strategic plan initiatives are reasonably funded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate goal setting meetings and subsequent budget requests to submit to the Board of Commissioners. 		EDA, Dan Weber	Annually

AREA OF FOCUS: BROADBAND

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of allocating resources to transportation and technology infrastructure, enhancing the quality of life for all residents and expanding the County’s property tax base. Technology is quickly becoming the second infrastructure and competition for residents, businesses, and economic growth is truly dependent upon having access to technology.

Broadband Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Ensure broadband installation is strategic, in growth areas, and will impact the most people and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnerships that bring expanded broadband infrastructure to the Sherburne County Region. 	Depends on individual project	Dan Weber	On-Going
2. Refresh Broadband Study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out and apply for available grant opportunities. 			

AREA OF FOCUS: CHILDCARE

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objective of being a County of Choice for businesses and residents. Supporting the development of childcare options are crucial to attracting businesses.

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Businesses need workers and workers are unable to work if they cannot find childcare. Adequate childcare capacity ensures workers have a place for their children to attend during their workday.

Childcare Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Build relationship with HHS & learn their work in the Childcare sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with & support HHS on Childcare initiatives. Invite HHS- Gina Anderson for annual update to EDA. 	Time	Jessica Barthel	Annual & Ongoing
2. Determine Childcare slot deficit. Summer care as a subset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a Childcare Needs study. 	TBD		
3. Attract new Childcare providers and retain existing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BRE visits targeted to Childcare providers. Childcare appreciation event. 			
4. Create local partnerships to identify & address Childcare issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate meetings with School Districts, YMCA and other agencies to knowledge share & problem solve. 			

AREA OF FOCUS: FEDERAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT DESIGNATION

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of allocating County staff time efficiently and effectively and distributing the County's economic development fund in a strategic and successful manner. Sherburne County's economic impact reaches far beyond county lines. A regional emphasis on economic development is recognized at the Federal level as a best practice. The development of a Regional Economic Development District Designation will bring more Federal funding opportunities to Sherburne County and allow the regional planning efforts to be share equally across the region and facilitated by a third party, making the use of county staff time more efficient.

Federal Regional EDD Designation Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Work towards the creation of an Economic Development District with Benton, Stearns, and Wright Counties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Regional EDD Task Force. Communicate with the Federal EDA on requirements. Explore the creation of a Regional Economic Development Agency. 	Time	Jessica Barthel, Dan Weber, Region 7W Counties	2025



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore grant opportunities for a Feasibility Study. 			
2. Make annual adjustments to Region 7W CEDS Alternative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate semi-annual review & update meetings for Region 7W CEDS. 	Time	Jessica Barthel & Dan Weber	Q2 & Q4 Annually & Ongoing
3. Create a network of support for Region 7W development efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate an annual meeting with regional economic development directors & EDA Members. 	Space Rental & Snacks	Jessica Barthel & Dan Weber	Annually

AREA OF FOCUS: TRANSPORTATION

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of enhancing the quality of life for all residents and expand and diversify the county’s commercial tax base to help offset residential taxes. Sherburne County is uniquely positioned with a wide variety of modes of transportation including railroad, river, highways, and airports. By capitalizing on the diverse modes of transportation and aligning economic development goals with projected population and business growth will allow the County to be forward thinking and prepared for new development.

Transportation Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Pursue multi-model transportation, rail-park, bridge expansion and transit opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support & Communicate with CMRP 	\$25,000	Jessica Barthel, Dan Weber, Marc Schneider, Andrew Witter	On-Going
3. Foster working relationship with BNSF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual meetings 	Time	Dan Weber	On-Going
4. Evaluate commuter opportunities which may or may not include NorthStar Commuter Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive updates from Commissioners as needed. 	Time	Jessica Barthel	2024

AREA OF FOCUS: MARKETING

This area of focus supports the strategic plan objectives of allowing the County to be a partner with other public agencies and private sector stakeholders, distribute the County’s economic development fund in a strategic & successful manner, and support Sherburne being the County of Choice. If Sherburne County

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doesn't tell its story- nobody will. The EDA will take the position of serving as the central marketing point for activities relating to economic development across the County.

Marketing Goals	Strategy	Investment	Assigned	Completion Date
1. Ensure visibility of adequate inventory of shovel-ready land that is available for development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on marketing plan to develop existing lots. • Support city marketing efforts. 		Jessica Barthel & Dan Weber	2024 On-going
2. Highlight and market existing regional public institutions and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate quarterly Community Partner Meetings. • Utilize the County ED Webpage & LinkedIn to communicate regional events and programs. 	Space rental	Jessica Barthel, Dan Weber, Dave Unze	Quarterly On-going
3. Bring a Sherburne County Presence and availability to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend site selection conferences, manufacturing tours, & regional membership meetings. • Expand involvement and communication with City & Township officials. 	Admission & Registration fees	Jessica Barthel	On-going
4. Expand utilization of County Economic Development Website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly update content. • Drive users to ED Webpage through LinkedIn. • Measure increased hits. • Look at SEO marketing for EDA section of County website. 		Dan Weber	On-going
5. Highlighting new & expanding businesses as well as community events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add an Economic Development Corner to countywide newspaper. • Highlight on County ED webpage. • LinkedIn 		Jessica Barthel & D. Unze	2023 On-going
6. Market & highlight Sherburne County Programs such as RLF & Business Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend local Chamber events. • Attend local ribbon-cuttings • Utilize local Chambers of Commerce, the 	Time & Registration Fees	Jessica Barthel	On-going



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	SBDC, GSDC, and Regional Economic Partners to share information. • Build relationships with local Commercial Lenders			
7. Utilize LinkedIn to communicate Economic Development activities and opportunities to the public.	• Post 1-2 times per week to create engagement.	Time	Jessica Barthel	On-going
8. Explore the creation of a Countywide Community Development Agency.	• Review Legislation	Time	Jessica Barthel, Dan Weber, EDA	2023

IMPLEMENTATION

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.