

Chapter 6: Economic Development

Introduction

Dane County has a vibrant and diverse economy. The county enjoys a high quality of life and one of the state's lowest unemployment rates, as well as highest median incomes. Dane County has one of the nation's highest ratios of business incubators per capita. At the same time, county trends reflect growing poverty and school dropout rates, pending labor shortages due to the aging demographic, increasing global competition for our core industries and reliance on advanced telecommunications. Combined, these issues present both serious challenges and tremendous opportunities for the county, local governments and regional partners.

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to promote and support a robust, sustainable county economy in order to ensure:

- the stabilization, retention and expansion of Dane County's economic base, and;
- quality employment opportunities for all its residents.

Chapter Six focuses on the following:

- Identifying strengths and weaknesses attracting and retaining business and industry;
- Protecting economically productive areas including farmland and forests;

- Providing information on economic development programs;
- Helping to build capacity for technical assistance in Dane County communities;
- Identifying and supporting new types of businesses;
- Locating jobs near housing and transit;
- Help to coordinate economic development and employment growth with efficient land use;
- Promote a range of employment options;
- Evaluating and promoting the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses;
- Expanding technical assistance for Dane County communities interested in pursuing economic development;
- Identifying an adequate number of sites for business and industry;
- Promoting quality employment opportunities;
- Developing strategies in cooperation with all relevant planning areas as well as the *Dane County Consolidated Plan*;
- Revitalizing downtown and main street areas and promoting design standards, and;
- Planning for labor shortages, through strategic training of minorities and the underemployed.

Key Issues

What should Dane County do to:

- Improve capacity to partner and support local and regional economic development initiatives?
- Promote collaboration between communities for the purpose of economic development?
- Assist communities in planning and building organizational capacity for economic development?
- Integrate and promote opportunities for minorities in economic development, and employer recruitment strategies to increase minority participation?
- Encourage participation between the public and private sectors to promote economic development?
- Encourage siting and development of worksites that are adjacent to existing employment centers?
- Work to ensure a well trained and educated labor supply to keep pace with the demands of industry?

Stakeholders

The Housing and Economic Development work group (HED) developed the goals, objectives and policies for this chapter. HED members and regular participants included representatives from major employers, organized labor, community development organizations, municipal officials, advocacy groups, landowners, arts advocates, and economic development consultants. Other contributors to this chapter included: regional demographic agencies, energy companies, state economic development and labor agencies, and research centers of the University of Wisconsin.

Survey Results

Strong majorities of respondents to the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan Survey* said Dane County should pay “more” or “considerably more” attention to the following economic development issues:

- Keeping established businesses and industries in Dane County (89%);
- Promoting a strong economy that enhances quality of life (80%);
- Attracting new businesses to Dane County (80%), and;
- Creating quality employment and business-ownership opportunities (79%).

Overall, town residents (49%) were more likely than city residents (38%) to want considerably more attention placed on promoting a strong economy that enhances the quality of life.

When asked to rank the importance of “limiting and controlling economic growth to certain areas” on a scale of 1 to 10, the response indicated it was a moderately important issue for *all* residents (average score of 7.1) but the average importance score for homeowners (7.3) was higher than that of renters (6.5). When asked whether “commercial and industrial growth be concentrated in the Madison area or promoted in all of the cities and villages?” eighty percent of respondents said that it should be promoted in all of the cities and villages.

Respondents selected the following as the most important roles Dane County could play in attracting, retaining, and growing business in Dane County. (Percentages of respondents selecting this role as most important shown in parentheses.)

- Help build cooperative relationships between businesses and governments (49%).
- Offer incentives, like tax breaks, to business and industry (14%).
- Improve business regulation (11%).
- Educate the public on economic and business issues (9%).

Background and Orientation

Dane County has a long history of supporting economic development through its funding for the Alliant Energy Center, Dane County Job Center, the Dane County Regional Airport, Vilas Zoo, natural resource protection and road and highway improvements, as well as other initiatives. The county operates a number of grant and loan programs for communities and businesses in Dane County including:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs;
- Revolving Loan programs;
- Commercial Revitalization Loan program, and;
- Better Urban Infill Development program (BUILD).

County government also provides technical assistance to businesses and communities who are interested in pursuing economic development opportunities. The *Dane County Comprehensive Plan* incorporates by reference, and builds upon the most current version of the *Dane County Consolidated Plan (2004-2008)*. However, there are numerous opportunities for Dane County to become a more active partner and resource to surrounding communities, organizations and initiatives.

The *Dane County Comprehensive Plan* includes the HED Work Group members’ recommendations for a broad spectrum of programs, policies and initiatives that increase Dane County’s current economic develop-

ment efforts. This chapter also highlights the need for increased partnership and capacity on both a local and regional level, as well as exploring ways that Dane County can become more entrepreneurial and identify new enterprise opportunities to increase revenue and promote regional economic development.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

Business and Economic Competitiveness

Goals

1. *Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.*
2. *Dane County will help to build and promote a robust, sustainable economy that enhances Dane County's quality of life for all residents.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Increase Dane County's capacity to promote and support economic development, so that:
 - (1) Dane County can better serve as a resource;
 - (2) Dane County can be a more effective partner;
 - (3) Dane County can continue to identify and pursue new strategic opportunities for economic development, and;



- (4) Dane County can increase its presence, both inside and outside of Dane County, and signal to the business community that the county actively supports business development and job creation.
- B. Encourage collaboration between communities within Dane County for the purpose of economic development.
- C. Assist communities in planning and building organizational capacity for economic development.
- D. Work with economic development initiatives, for example the Collaboration Council Initiative, regional partners, organizations, and surrounding counties to create and promote a shared vision for regional growth.
- E. Integrate and promote opportunities for minorities in economic development and employer recruitment strategies, to increase minority participation.
- F. Encourage the cooperation and collaboration between private and public sectors to promote economic development.
- G. Utilize committees and/or subcommittees of the County Board that focus on economic development to:
 - (1) Serve as the mechanism for bringing economic development opportunities and initiatives to the Dane County Board of Supervisors, and;
 - (2) Help promote the economic development goals, objectives and policy recommendations of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*.
- H. Work with the economic development initiatives, for example the Collaboration Council initiative, and other Dane County organizations and communities to:
 - (1) Implement the economic development portions of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*, and;
 - (2) Reduce duplicative efforts and streamline the delivery of services.

- I. Encourage businesses to locate and expand in a manner that makes efficient use of land and transportation routes with the minimum impact on the natural and cultural environment.
 - J. Encourage siting and development of worksites that are adjacent to existing employment centers.
 - K. Encourage the use and adaptive reuse of historic and under utilized buildings for economic development.
 - L. Encourage land use and development practices that protect and preserve Dane County's watersheds and natural resources.
 - M. Promote the expansion and creation of sustainable business and industry.
3. *Support the creation of a range of quality employment and business ownership opportunities.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Encourage communities to seek businesses that provide a range of goods, services, and employment options to meet the needs of residents.
 - B. Encourage entrepreneurial activity, training and development, especially targeting economically disadvantaged areas and groups including minorities, immigrants, and people with disabilities.
 - C. Explore revenue sharing agreement opportunities, as well as appropriate public participation protocols, with Dane County communities.
4. *Support the creation, retention, attraction, expansion, and incubation of business industry and agriculture that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Dane County Comprehensive Plan.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Encourage the identification of an adequate number of developable sites for locating business and industry.
- B. Identify and enhance existing and potential sectors that drive Dane County's economy.

- C. Promote economic development that recognizes the assets and attributes of each community.
- D. Identify and pursue inter-county regional economic development opportunities and collaboration.
- E. Encourage intergovernmental agreements between Dane County municipalities to leverage resources, reduce costs and maximize benefits.

5. *Promote workforce development that maximizes benefits to the workforce, business and industry.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Work with Dane County Job Center, UW Center on Wisconsin Strategy, Jobs with a Future, school districts, technical colleges, City of Madison and the Workforce Development Board to:
 - (1) Identify and help provide educational and training opportunities for residents of Dane County so they can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the local economy;
 - (2) In conjunction with workforce agencies and educational institutions, work with area employers to better understand how to develop, train, and re-tool employees and future employees to increase worker readiness and help build a stronger workforce, and;
 - (3) Identify, maintain and enhance factors that keep and attract talent and skills to Dane County.



- B. Encourage workforce development efforts that meet the needs of industry and employers.
- C. Work with economic development initiatives, for example the Collaboration Council Initiative, surrounding counties and organizations to explore opportunities for regional workforce development and job creation.

Policies and Programs

1. Use county resources to leverage other resources in order to attract, grow, expand, and retain desirable business and industry.
 - A. Provide incentives for businesses to locate in areas served by existing, or future, regional transit to make jobs more accessible to workers.
 - B. Support investment and incentives for business expansion that benefits the local and regional economy.
2. Maintain and expand the capacity of the Department of Planning and Development to provide economic development, land use planning and technical assistance services to towns, villages and cities in Dane County to facilitate sensible and efficient growth. *(See details in Chapter 8: Land Use.)*
3. Streamline and update permitting and regulatory processes for Dane County businesses and communities without compromising environmental protection, and the health, safety and welfare of Dane County residents. *(See details in Chapter 8: Land Use.)*
4. Develop outreach and education programs to promote sound economic development practices.
 - A. Establish a business-to-business mentor program that targets minority businesses and entrepreneurs.
 - B. Develop and promote policies and practices that ensure an open and respectful environment for all minorities pursuing or engaged in economic development activities in Dane County.
- C. Promote the expansion of knowledge-based service, research, and manufacturing businesses.
- D. Develop and promote a collaborative approach between the public sector and residential and commercial real estate developers and management.
- E. Promote mentorship programs between businesses to encourage the sharing of effective business and financial practices.
- F. Promote entrepreneurship and small business ownership through education, training and private/public partnerships.
- G. Educate Dane County residents in order to promote the creation of high quality, livable communities.
- H. Encourage the participation of under represented populations and communities throughout Dane County in all aspects of economic development.
5. Encourage the preparation of impact studies for major industrial development proposals that identify positive and negative economic effects.
6. Create measures to evaluate economic development incentives to ensure that policies promote economic stability, increase employment, and improve incomes.
7. Support the development of industrial parks that are compatible with adjacent and surrounding land uses, in order to promote expansion of existing industries and to attract new industries.
8. Promote the development of desirable, attractive, compact, and convenient neighborhood or local shopping and commercial areas that are assets to the region.
9. Actively market Dane County as a place to locate research and manufacturing operations at events such as the international BIO conference, and the Wisconsin Biomedical Devices Association trade show.
10. Dane County should promote energy conservation and conservation practices to reduce greenhouse gases and reduce impacts on energy demand.



Community Investment

Goals

1. *Pursue economic development policies that generate and re-circulate wealth in Dane County.*
2. *Identify and promote “buy local” policies used by local governments and other public institutions to help strengthen local businesses.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Assist communities in developing well designed commercial and industrial areas by creating a database of economic development activities, policies, standards, tools and best practices.
- B. Provide technical and other assistance to communities developing commercial and industrial areas.
- C. Ensure continued funding for Dane County programs and agencies that provide opportunities for economic growth and workforce development.
- D. Identify, maintain and work to enhance factors that keep and attract investment in Dane County.
- E. Continue to provide technical assistance to Dane County communities pursuing economic development.
- F. Promote the protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forestry.

- G. Encourage and monitor the development and use of business retention and marketing strategies in Dane County communities.

Policies and Programs

1. Maintain support for Dane County programs, and key agencies and organizations that promote economic development.
 - A. Expand the BUILD program and prioritize high-need areas for commercial development and revitalization.
 - B. Promote increased funding for small business financing in Dane County.
 - C. Promote loan programs that provide low interest and gap financing to small, minority, women and worker owned businesses in Dane County.
 - D. Promote the increased participation of minority and women owned business in pursuing county contracts and Requests for Proposals (RFPs).
 - E. Continue to provide technical assistance to small businesses and minority businesses.
 - F. Designate economic development assistance priority to companies that pay above average wages.
2. Develop a strategic plan that would instruct communities how best to deal with competition from big box development while maintaining the viability of small businesses.
3. Explore county purchasing policies with the goal of increasing sourcing from local suppliers, and to promote business retention, expansion, entrepreneurial activity, and job creation.

Industry-Specific Initiatives

Agriculture and Related Industries

Goals

(See also Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.)

1. *Ensure that farming remains a viable business/industry.*
2. *Support and promote the development of community, regional, national and international markets for agricultural products in order to promote and preserve the county's agricultural industry.*
3. *Support the creation of conventional, organic and sustainable agricultural enterprises in Dane County.*



Policies and Programs

1. Support and promote, using targeted investments of public funds where necessary, infrastructure and organizational capacity that serves agriculture and related enterprises.
 - A. Support and encourage the development of regional agricultural enterprise including:
 - (1) agricultural cooperatives;
 - (2) manufacturing to process soy beans, produce and other farm products, and;
 - (3) new agricultural technologies.
 - B. Promote agricultural commerce by strengthening transportation infrastructure such as rail transit and roads. *(See Chapter 2: Transportation.)*
 - C. Explore the possibility of establishing a Dane County agricultural enterprise development center to:
 - (1) Support and incubate the development of local food products and agricultural businesses;
 - (2) Develop new markets for Dane County products;
 - (3) Research value-added opportunities for Dane County farmers;
 - (4) Attract agricultural processing and service facilities to the area;
 - (5) Coordinate activities with adjacent South-Central and Southwestern Agriculture Development Zones, and;
 - (6) Pursue private and/or other public sector or nonprofit funds and gradually diminish dependence on county funds.
 - D. Promote the development of organic processing facilities to process organic farm products.
 - E. Explore the feasibility of a self-supporting Central Agriculture and Food Facility (CAFF) that could provide processing, storage, marketing and office spaces for organizations and individuals involved in local food processing.

- F. Support local efforts to create public markets that would provide year-round venues for farmer's markets and additional market opportunities for Dane County farmers.
2. Enhance the economic viability of retaining land in agricultural use through creative and flexible regulation, as well as incentives. (*See Chapter 8: Land Use.*)
3. Support farm marketing programs in order to promote Dane County agriculture and help farmers improve their profitability.
 - A. Identify and help develop new markets for production agriculture, biotechnology, value-added processing and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).
 - B. Help to foster the formation of cooperative marketing approaches for farmers to coordinate product delivery.
 - C. Promote and support initiatives, such as a "Buy Dane County" campaign, to market and expand opportunities for food products grown and made in Dane County.
 - (1) Develop a Dane County logo to enable farmers to foster local marketing efforts.
 - (2) Work with local ad agencies on a campaign for Dane County grown products.
 - (3) Start a pilot project that tests the feasibility of selling Dane County food products, including local institutional markets, grocery stores and restaurants.
 - (4) Create an electronic web site to market Dane County products over the web.
 - (5) Enlist restaurants and grocery stores to showcase county products – establish a government-sponsored council to promote goals.
4. Enhance technical assistance to agriculture related businesses. (*See Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.*)
5. Pursue institutional food purchasing policies that provide new markets for area farmers.
 - A. Promote the purchase and consumption of locally grown and organic farm products in all Dane County facilities and those organizations and entities receiving financial assistance from Dane County.
 - B. Establish procurement policies that require 10 percent of food purchases by Dane County to be from locally grown or organic farm sources.
 - C. Support initiatives to create the Courthouse Catering enterprise, which proposes to source 75% of food locally for a cafeteria in the new courthouse.
6. Work to protect forests and the timber industry in Dane County.



Recreational, Cultural and Historical Tourism

Policies and Programs

1. Work with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau as well as communities and organizations to inventory, promote, facilitate and market: recreational tourism; cultural tourism; agricultural tourism; historical and architectural tourism, and; overnight accommodation opportunities in Dane County, outside of the City of Madison.

2. Support changes to county zoning and other ordinances to support mixed-use residential and live-work units that combine studios, galleries, and artisan shops. *(See Chapter 8: Land Use.)*
3. Promote the renovation and preservation of historic buildings. *(See details in Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.)*
4. Identify potential areas for arts districts for the purpose of focusing resources and promoting cultural opportunities.
5. Promote and support the arts, artists and cultural planning throughout Dane County, and with adjoining counties, as a means to identify, celebrate and honor our culture and heritage, and promote economic development.
6. Continue support for recreational resources such as the Dane County Park System. *(See details in Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.)*
7. Work to protect Dane County lakes, streams, and other natural resources to preserve the viability of our recreation and tourist industry. *(See details in Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.)*

Workforce Development and Training

General Workforce Development

Policies and Programs

1. Promote family supporting jobs and employment to reduce the number of children in poverty.
 - A. Promote higher minimum wage in Dane County as well as surrounding counties.
 - B. County will provide economic development assistance to enterprises that pay the Dane County living wage or above.
2. Recognize the regional nature of the labor supply.
 - A. Work with the City of Madison to reach employment targets defined by the *Isthmus 2020 Plan*.
3. Dane County should become more active in workforce training and development.
 - A. Promote workforce development that assures Dane County residents can be employed by industry and business.
 - B. Strengthen Dane County's support for workforce development and job training, especially for smaller communities.
 - C. Work with Dane County school districts to promote their use of existing Department of Commerce funding for school to work programs to help students become employed.
 - D. Work with the labor unions, business trades and area schools to expand and develop apprenticeship programs, and target minorities.
 - E. Promote a diversity of employment opportunities through a variety of industries, professional trades, and cooperative business enterprises.
 - F. Work with existing businesses to explore ways to bring more high wage jobs to Dane County for unskilled or low-skilled workers.
4. Promote programs to increase participation of minorities, disabled, youth and the elderly in the workforce.
 - A. Promote programs that educate young people about financial management and life skills.
 - B. Work with the business, non-profit, education, and the financial organizations and industry to expand personal savings program opportunities, as well as financial literacy programs to increase financial management among youth.

- C. Promote the employment of minorities in commercial and residential building construction.
 - D. Promote and expand partnerships with area employers to strengthen welfare to work programs and increase employment opportunities for youth and Dane County residents, and persons with disabilities.
 - E. Support agencies that work to assist the returning prison population in finding employment and integrating into the workforce.
5. Encourage the state to create a program for employers that provide employees with educational opportunities and childcare.
- A. Support skills training, services, and increased assistance to the unemployed who are looking for employment.
 - B. Work with the private sector, high schools, and MATC to create business internships and mentor programs that help youth and minorities make a successful transition into the workforce.
 - C. Promote and support entrepreneurship and financial literacy programs that integrate youth and minorities through mentoring programs, apprenticeships, and adopt-a-class private/public partnership models.

Job Quality and Employment

Policies and Programs

1. Promote policies that increase healthcare coverage to Dane County residents.
2. Encourage employers to accommodate employees' needs for day care, transportation, and other family care needs.
 - A. Incorporate child care availability and incentives into workforce development programs.
 - B. Promote the availability of early childhood education as part of the Dane County's workforce development strategy.
3. Encourage the development of jobs for workers with special needs, older workers and persons with disabilities.
 - A. Encourage employers to accommodate the needs of older workers, persons with disabilities, and those with special needs.
4. Increase accessibility of support services for job placement and employment to Dane County communities, especially high needs communities.
 - A. Increase access to the Dane County Job Center and its services to Dane County residents including youth.

Public Investment and Infrastructure

Organizational Capacity and Technical Support

Policies and Programs

1. Develop a more user-friendly interface between Dane County and the public.
 - A. Develop and maintain a Dane County website with economic development resources including resources and information for business development, retention and expansion.
 - B. Work to create a culture of inclusiveness, as well as criteria, to better integrate minorities in economic development.
2. Ensure appropriate level of staffing to support and help implement the economic development policies.
3. Encourage the development of programs to provide and promote basic financial literacy for residents of Dane County.
4. Expand technical assistance to communities throughout Dane County:

- A. To provide economic development education;
 - B. To help them plan and develop strategies to attract and retain downtown businesses;
 - C. To support commercial revitalization that redevelops under utilized and unused parcels, and;
 - D. Provide information and educational opportunities about tax increment financing to the towns.
5. Include workforce development agencies and training entities in community and economic development planning.
 6. Develop programs and opportunities to promote regional economic development cooperation within and outside Dane County's borders. (*See Chapter 7: Intergovernmental Cooperation.*)

Public, Utility and Transportation Infrastructure

Policies and Programs

1. Promote a countywide multi-modal transportation and transit system that links neighborhoods, communities, services and employment, and provides for efficient and safe commuting, business travel and freight transport. (*See Chapter 3: Transportation.*)
 2. Foster the provision of reliable electric transmission in Dane County to satisfy the economic needs of existing and future business and industry, including the needs for the growth of the high-tech sector. (*See Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities.*)
 3. Explore, encourage, help develop and invest in a countywide wireless internet(WI-FI) telecommunications system to improve business opportunities, and keep business and the private sector competitive.
 4. Encourage communities to provide adequate public infrastructure to enable businesses to operate successfully.
5. Promote sufficient and sustainable power generation and transmission to meet the needs of the people of Dane County, for the present and into the future. (*See Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities.*)

Revenue

Policies and Programs

1. Explore and identify new sources of revenue and enterprise opportunities for Dane County to promote economic development.
 - A. Continue to pursue and maximize methane processing and other production opportunities from county landfills.
 - B. Explore the use of a vehicle registration fee, excluding farm vehicles, registered in Dane County to help offset the costs of providing transportation upgrades, maintenance, and new roads in Dane County.
 - C. Explore fee for service opportunities for providing housing and economic development technical assistance to communities in Dane County.
 - D. Pursue grant, loan and foundation opportunities to assist in promoting economic development in Dane County.
2. Work with the private sector to identify opportunities that promote Dane County businesses and cluster industries.
 - A. Support private sector efforts to cultivate angel and venture capital investment networks.
 - B. Identify policies that would keep dollars in Dane County, as well as promote the re-circulation of those dollars.
 - C. Partner with technical transfer offices to ensure high tech startups remain in or are drawn to the Dane County region.

