



## **Redwood County Board of Commissioners Economic Development Strategic Plan January 2016**

### **I. Introduction**

The Redwood County Board, to better plan for the future of the Redwood community, initiated a strategic planning process. The intent was to create a five-year planning document so that the annual operating budget dedicated to Economic Development efforts and any possible public private joint ventures work within a framework of strategic priorities.

Following Board adoption, all legislative action and resources will support the strategic initiatives. Alignment of resources will make the County more efficient and successful in accomplishing the goals identified.

The Strategic Plan was created using the many insights of citizen stakeholders and professional staff; the Board is committed to using this road map for future action. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and revised no less frequently than once a year. Staff will provide Board updates on a regular basis to track progress against metrics.

### **II. Terms and Definitions**

#### **Vision**

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An outcome: a result and an ideal to strive for over a period of time. Potential to quantify, but does not have to be measureable. A destination: a long-term community commitment.

#### **Strategy**

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A critical public policy priority which defines the vision and organizes the goals. Typically a three to five year timeframe; strategies should not change often if at all.

#### **Goal**

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A measurable and desired activity, project or purpose that requires resources. Length varies, but can be very short or defined within a one to two year commitment (or more).

## Action Steps

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Individual actions necessary to implement a goal. Immediate; evolve and change often.

## Economic Development

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Economic development has different meanings to different people. The County Board believes the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) definition is appropriate for Redwood County's unique mix of social, geographic, political and economic qualities:

No single definition incorporates all of the different strands of economic development. Typically economic development can be described in terms of objectives. These are most commonly described as the creation of jobs and wealth, and the improvement of the quality of life. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community.

The main goal of economic development is to improve the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic development, there is no single strategy, policy or program for achieving successful economic development in Redwood County.

## III. County Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

The economic development philosophy, policies and plan are derived from the County's overall Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles.

### Mission

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- Committed to stewardship, respect and shared responsibility in providing improved cost-efficient services to all.

### Vision

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- Be recognized as a great place to live, work and raise a family while preserving and enhancing the county's unique historic and natural environment.

### Economic Development Guiding Principles

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It is the policy of the Redwood County Board of Commissioners to strengthen the County's role and increase its support of economic development in the County. The County will invest staff time and financial resources in a planned, coordinated and strategic manner and will engage in a collaborative approach to economic development. The County's policies and actions will be guided by five principles.

- **The private sector is the lead that drives the economy**

- The County will work in partnership with the private sector
- **The County will not duplicate or replace the work of cities and other public agencies**
  - The County will work in collaboration with cities and public agencies and will provide leadership where the County can make the most difference
- **The County supports a strong collaborative approach to economic development**
  - No matter the location, economic development is a benefit to the entire county
  - Support efforts to ensure a highly skilled workforce and adequate workforce housing
- **Business retention is an essential policy objective**
  - Business attraction continues to be important but opportunities are more variable
- **A deliberate, purposeful and strategic plan is required**
  - The County will take careful and prudent risks to pursue its objectives guided by clear outcomes, and consensus-based policies

## IV. Strategies

Four strategies provide the foundation as the County Board allocates resources toward their Economic Development Vision. A commitment to each over time will ensure that the County Board apportions financial resources to the highest priorities within the community.

- I. **Workforce:** *Support the development of a trained, healthy and stable workforce.*
- II. **Connections:** *Enhance transportation and communication connections to serve the community into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*
- III. **Collaboration and Organization:** *Efficient allocation of staff and resources to encourage and support business growth.*
- IV. **Leadership and Culture:** *Streamline regulations and fund professional services necessary for steady sustainable population growth, workforce development and a diversified employment and business base.*
- V. **Recreation and Tourism:** *Promote efforts to maximize culturally historic and natural resources of Redwood County developing a “recreation industry” to attract visitors and encourage workers and families to relocate to Redwood County.*

## V. Work Plan - Goals/Outcomes Action Steps

<b>Strategy I – Workforce:</b> Support the development of a trained, healthy and stable workforce.			
<b>GOALS/OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Housing choice availability</li> <li>2. Continue to convene workforce training opportunities</li> <li>3. Encourage daycare service availability</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Support reasonable developer requests for development financing of workforce housing.</li> <li>2 Pursue workforce training in Redwood Falls</li> <li>3 Explore the possibility of more coordination of workforce development with Veterans Services Department.</li> <li>4 Explore possibility where County could facilitate the availability of more daycare services</li> </ol>		
<b>Strategy II – Connections:</b> Enhance transportation and communication connections to serve the community into the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.			
<b>GOALS/OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain and expand county road system to support growth</li> <li>2. County wide high speed internet access</li> <li>3. Maximize development capacity of the MVRRA</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In addition to planned road expansions and improvements, be flexible to respond to major employer expansions or attractions by use of economic development financial tools.</li> <li>2. Pursue public/private financing plan for county wide broadband.</li> <li>3. Continue to market the MVRRA as a regional asset for industries reliant on rail transport and encourage those industries to expand in the service area.</li> </ol>		
<b>Strategy III – Collaboration and Organization:</b> Efficient allocation of staff and resources to encourage and support business growth.			
<b>GOALS/OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear roles and responsibilities for the various entities engaged in Economic Development</li> <li>2. Avoid overlap and duplication without leaving gaps in services</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss possible partnership with local lenders to deploy Revolving Loan Program</li> <li>2. Take lead role in feasibility analysis and financial plan or public/private partnership in implementing county wide broadband</li> </ol>		

<b>Strategy IV – Leadership and Culture:</b> Streamline regulations and fund professional services necessary for steady sustainable population growth, workforce development and a diversified employment and business base			
<b>GOALS/OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure private business investors understand and can conform to County regulations.</li> <li>2. Support Business Retention efforts</li> <li>3. Be the champion at the legislature for economic development initiatives throughout the county.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiate a review of County rules and regulations to streamline process.</li> <li>2. Seek advice of businesses affected by regulations direct appropriate county employees to recommend possible changes.</li> <li>3. Continue to collaborate and be aware of existing business needs.</li> </ol>		
<b>Strategy V – Recreation and Tourism:</b> Promote efforts to maximize culturally historic and natural resources of Redwood County developing a “recreation industry” to attract visitors and encourage workers and families to relocate to Redwood County.			
<b>GOALS/OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Preserve attractive and unique natural amenities.</li> <li>5. Preserve and market historic landmarks.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Continue to enhance historic and natural resources.</li> <li>5. Financially support County wide marketing efforts targeting visitor attractions</li> </ol>		

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