

REPORT:
West Des Moines: Economic Development Strategic Plan



 **AngelouEconomics**
GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In West Des Moines, much has changed since the city undertook its 2003 economic development strategic plan. The city has grown tremendously, with nearly 11,000 more residents, 20,000 new jobs, and, in Wells Fargo, Aviva, Mercy Medical Center West Lakes and Methodist West among others, a number of new major corporate operations. The \$200 million Jordan Creek Town Center, opened in 2004, has helped bolster West Des Moines' reputation as a regional-wide retail destination and now it has the state's highest retail sales per capita. In 2008, CNNmoney.com named West Des Moines as one of the 100 Best Places to live and launch a business – further proof that the city's status is now more than a simple bedroom community of Des Moines but a significant employment center in its own right. Even in the face of the current economic recession, West Des Moines, and the larger region, have fared relatively well with no significant layoffs and an unemployment rate of consistently less than half of that of the rest of the nation.

This growth and economic development success can be attributed to a number of factors including a superior location along two major interstates, available land, an affordable and attractive place to reside, and strong city leadership in providing infrastructure and an environment that is highly conducive to business. The city now benefits from high incomes, a very educated workforce, and a significant young professional population all of which will be critical to maintaining this economic growth in the future.

This planning effort presents an opportunity for the community, amidst this growth, to reassess its environment, and plan for how that economic development growth will occur most effectively in the future. This is particularly critical today given the current economic recession that has created an increasingly more competitive landscape nationally that requires municipalities to do more with fewer resources. Economic development success now, for West Des Moines, will be measured on how well it competes not just within the region but how it leverages key regional assets (e.g. Iowa-5 Corridor, Iowa State University, etc.) to compete globally for both talent and high-growth businesses.

This strategic plan also addresses some of the pointed economic development challenges West Des Moines' faces. Even with strong recent performances, income levels in the area are not rising as fast as competitor cities, an indication that more strategic, aggressive, collaborative, and targeted economic development efforts will be required in the years to come to maintain the city's competitive advantage. This planning effort also serves to help West Des Moines achieve a critical objective – economic diversification. This plan lays out steps necessary for West Des Moines to create sustainable high-wage jobs in a mix of profitable industry sectors that leverage the city's current set of assets. This diversification will help the city move beyond a reliance on just the retail and financial services industries for jobs and tax revenue and, thus, mitigate the susceptibility to future economic shocks.

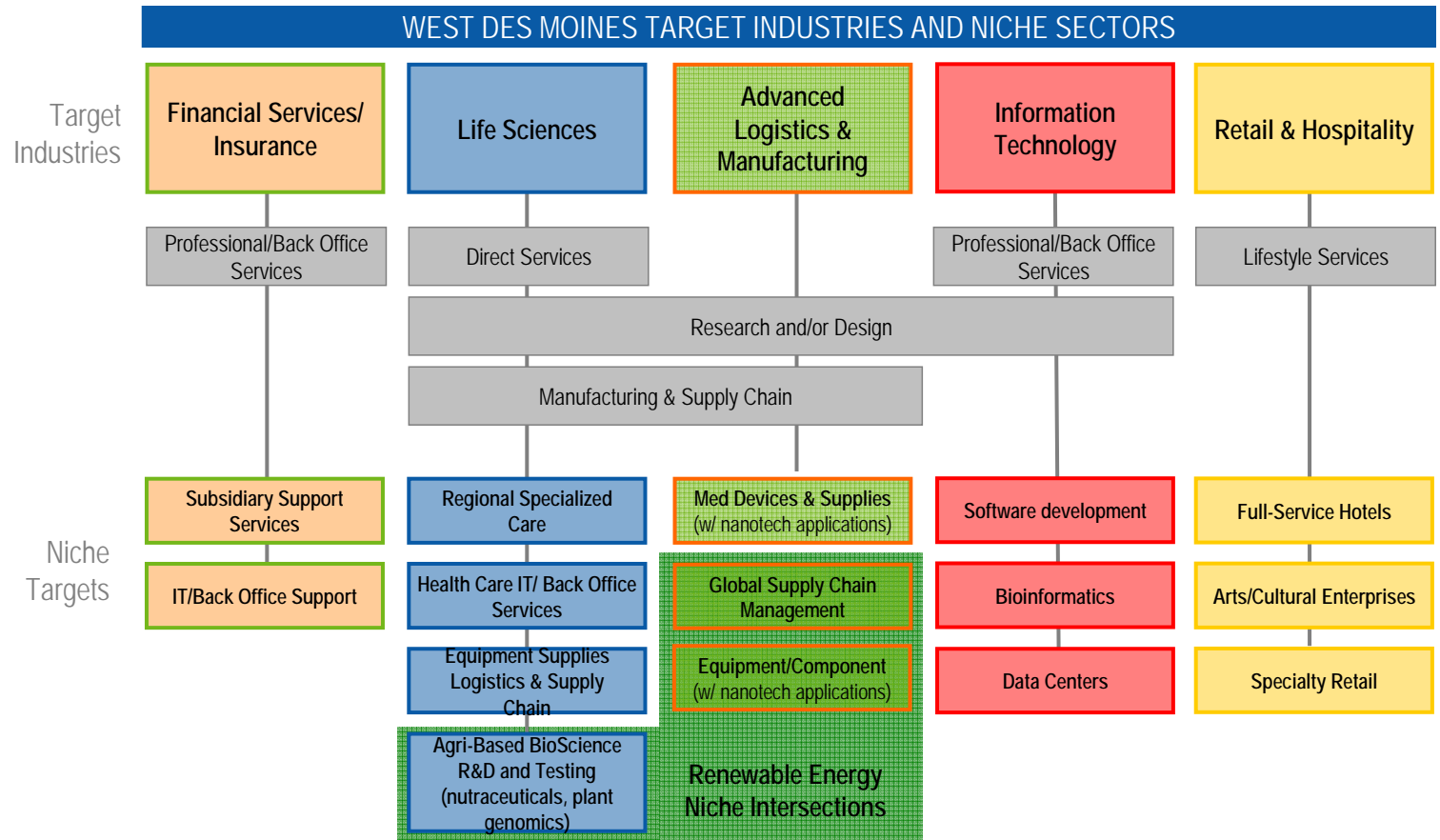
PROJECT RECAP

WEST DES MOINES' TARGET INDUSTRIES: PROJECT RECAP

Prior to developing this strategic plan, AngelouEconomics (AE) examined a variety of factors to assess which industries should be critical targets for West Des Moines's future economic development efforts. We reviewed West Des Moines's current industry mix, emerging and growing industries in the area and nationally, and the city's current key assets (e.g., advantageous location near a major metro area, a well-educated professional workforce, high-quality infrastructure, etc). Our assessment revealed a diverse but interrelated mix of five industries upon which West Des Moines should focus future business attraction and retention efforts (see graphic):

These industries represent a mix of export-oriented and local-serving sectors, all of which support primary wealth creation in the region. Focusing on these five industries plays to the strengths of West Des Moines, not just from a traditional economic standpoint, but also from the perspective of moving from what is achievable in each industry today to what can be achieved in five, ten, fifteen years and beyond.

Following are a brief description of West Des Moines' target industries. *See Report #2 for additional details.*



PROJECT RECAP

Financial Services

With Wells Fargo, Farm Bureau Insurance & Financial, Guide One Insurance, MetLife and Aviva, to name a few, financial services and insurance are a major part of the local economy of West Des Moines and the greater region. More than 100 insurance companies have either their corporate headquarters in the region or a regional or state operation. Five of the ten largest employers in West Des Moines are financial services/insurance companies and about one third of the jobs in the city are in this industry.

As competition for new business locates (across industries) has become tighter nationally, West Des Moines continues to land new projects including two completed Wells Fargo campuses (in home mortgage and card services), accounting for over 4,500 jobs and an Aviva site, future home of 1,500 employees. As the industry, nationally, continues to experience consolidation activities, West Des Moines will likely benefit from its competitive cost structure. Focus for West Des Moines' economic development efforts within this industry include ensuring the necessary 'climate' and support structures (e.g. capital, workforce development, infrastructure, quality of life) are in place to continue to make the city a desirable location for the major corporate operations, while at the same time seeking to facilitate spin-off small business and entrepreneurial activities that support the sector (i.e. financial service back office, IT, etc).

Life Sciences

For West Des Moines' purposes, the "life sciences" industry is defined as two components: 1) direct patient care (hospitals, nursing facilities, medical centers); and 2) the designers and manufacturers of medical/veterinary products and institutions involved with primarily animal and plant science research (i.e. biotechnology). West Des Moines' rapidly growing population, high median income, proximity to downtown Des Moines, network of airport/transportation throughways, and available land, give it a distinct regional advantage for *health service* firms. Two new hospitals means that the city can benefit not just from the larger health services industry, but can leverage its other assets (transportation-related, strong young professional population) to attract specific niche sectors within the industry including medical supply manufacturing and administration and back office support.

In addition, with Iowa State University's life science research and a growing base of plant science companies in the region, West Des Moines provides excellent nearby value for accelerating startup companies in emerging plant genomics or biologistics opportunities as a *biotechnology/life sciences* tie to the logistics assets.

Advanced Logistics/Manufacturing

With its technically-skilled workforce and superior location at the cross-section of three interstates along with the I-5 corridor providing a direct connection to the Des Moines International Airport, West Des Moines provides significant value for advanced logistics firms (freight forwarders,

PROJECT RECAP

logistics systems design/supply chain management companies) and small, higher-tech manufacturing firms that are seeking smaller parcels of land, access to national and international markets, and an educated workforce.

Information Technology

A base of smaller IT firms performing project management, web development, and quality assurance for the financial services and health care sectors is currently concentrated in West Des Moines. As the digitizing of health care and financial services and insurance industries continues, West Des Moines can further strengthen its niche. DMACC West, with its IT focus, and the city's existing office space and room for build out along I-5 and the Grand Technology Gateway provide additional assets for the community and provide a foundation to create a future tech corridor, including smaller data centers and software/gaming niche industry sectors.

Retail & Hospitality

With Jordan Creek Town Center shopping mall, Valley West Mall, West Glen, and an array of business-class hotels, West Des Moines is now serving a substantially diverse local, regional and even national market (the latter of which is primarily tied to the growth of the financial services sectors). Intra-regionally, West Des Moines dominates the western suburbs submarket in retail space inventory. Given the rising population and very high median income levels in the region, this industry will continue to thrive serving as both a quality of life enhancement as well as a critical contributor to the city's tax base. Once the economy rebounds, the city can consider filling industry 'gap areas' such as "full-service hotels," and "specialty retail" stores.

PROJECT RECAP

WEST DES MOINES STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES: PROJECT RECAP

As the City positions itself to take advantage of these industry opportunities, foster innovation, and build a pipeline of skilled workers, it must leverage its strengths and address critical issues. See Reports #1 and #2 for more detailed information.

ASSETS & STRENGTHS

- Superior location at cross-section of I-80, I-35, and I-235 providing ease of mobility and access.
- Excellent retail and hospitality amenities.
- I-5 corridor – and its connection to the Des Moines International Airport – is a crucial asset toward developing a more “global” industry presence for the city.
- Available land and very strong real estate market (especially in office and retail space), even in the down economy.
- Top high school graduation rates and skilled workforce with a very strong work ethic.
- The DMACC-West campus and its focus on technology simulation programming.
- Drake University (with particularly strong business programs) and Iowa State University (with more than \$210 million in R&D dollars annually) offer great opportunities to build a skilled workforce and tap into more “innovation-based” industries.
- New major corporate locates/expansions including Aviva, Wells Fargo, Iowa Clinic, Mercy West Lakes and Methodist West hospitals, dynamic private sector “assets” within global companies.
- Reputation as having a very strong business climate and efficient city regulatory processes.
- Compared nationally, business costs in the city are favorable.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Ensuring that as the city continues to grow, the necessary water, electricity, and gas infrastructure exists to meet industry demand.
- Growing demand for increased cultural and quality of life offerings that will both attract more visitors and create a unique “sense of place” for current residents.
- Growing West Des Moines’ businesses (e.g. new hospitals, IT firms, etc) that will require a number of highly skilled professionals.
- “Innovation” indicators – measures for how well a location is developing and commercializing new technologies – for region are weak. Region has few patents issued each year, and while a significant amount of R&D is occurring at universities nearby it has not benefited the city in terms of commercialized technology or business spin-offs.
- Compared regionally, City faces higher land costs that make it less attractive to larger industrial and warehousing firms that are sensitive to site costs.
- Incumbent business stakeholders report that business retention and expansion efforts with smaller, locally-owned companies may be less of a priority for the city.
- Limited financial supporting tools for existing businesses seeking to expand within the city limits.
- City economic development marketing message not refined

STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION

West Des Moines' extraordinary growth rate over the past two decades has dramatically altered the dynamics of the city and has precipitated the need for a clear vision and effective strategies that foster a more economically competitive environment predicated on developing high-skilled, high wage jobs. Given the city's transformation to a thriving community, the economic development strategies outlined here define how to harness this progression and lay out the type of business growth and jobs that are desired.

The bottom line is this: over the past decade, the City has done an outstanding job in staying ahead of growth and creating economic opportunities. Now, the city must enhance and refine what the city *has already been doing well* (providing infrastructure, supporting small business, etc.), while simultaneously *capturing new economic development opportunities* (pursuing logistics and life science firms, building relationships with Iowa State University, DMACC, etc) that have not been core focuses for the city up until now.

The plan is built around a common vision predicated on where the city is on the economic development spectrum: having moved beyond a bedroom community, into a major employment center – and now seeking to establish a more global presence (all within the context of a down economy).

The Strategic Plan comprises a set of strategies that supports this transition, advances these concepts, and ultimately makes the city more competitive. This plan provides the city an ambitious strategic roadmap to implement **over the next 3-5 years**. It represents achievable options for the city that are designed to be led primarily by City's Community & Economic Development Department (although several organizations including the Dallas County Development Alliance, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, among others will also be critical).

West Des Moines Economic Development Strategic Plan Themes	
West Des Moines Before...	West Des Moines Now & Going Forward
Bedroom community capitalizing on regional financial services growth	Significant employment center
Economic development focus on any number of industry clusters	Targeted business attraction/retention
Emphasize business attraction/retention as the critical strategy	Emphasize business attraction/retention, talent development, quality of life, and entrepreneurship
Vying for regional or national firms	Plan and market within regional and global context
Developing economic development marketing messaging and thinking "WDM-centric"	Refining messaging, more aggressive outreach , and stronger regional partnerships

STRATEGIC PLAN

WEST DES MOINES' ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN: 2010-2015

The plan identifies six key goals and twenty-six underlying strategies. It also includes four recommendations regarding implementation of the plan.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
GOAL 1: IMPLEMENT A TARGETED MARKETING AND BUSINESS ATTRACTION CAMPAIGN IN CONJUNCTION WITH REGIONAL ALLIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 1.1: Focus attraction efforts on the targeted industries of Advanced Logistics/Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Information Technology, Financial Services, and Retail/Leisure/Hospitality • Strategy 1.2: Establish Target Industry Advisory Team to guide future industry cluster development • Strategy 1.3: Strengthen the economic development section of the City of West Des Moines website • Strategy 1.4: Promote and leverage recent economic development success through the development of a brief annual report and enhanced collateral
GOAL 2: ENHANCE BUSINESS RETENTION AND SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 2.1: Establish an Economic Development Strategic Projects Fund to be used as an incentive tool to retain, expand and recruit strategically important businesses • Strategy 2.2: Expand outreach to existing industries through a coordinated Executive Call and survey program • Strategy 2.3: Leverage the Executive Call and survey program to identify strategic issues and develop deeper relationships with businesses • Strategy 2.4: Increase recognition of local business success stories
GOAL 3: ENSURE APPROPRIATE REAL ESTATE OPTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARE IN PLACE TO MEET INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 3.1: Ensure appropriate mix of Class A and B office, R&D/flex, and light industrial space is designated • Strategy 3.2: Building upon the strong relationships that exist with the commercial real estate community, develop an annual market update event program to the Des Moines regional commercial real estate community • Strategy 3.3: Support redevelopment and revitalization activities in key locations through a strategic plan • Strategy 3.4: Continue to aggressively push for construction of Grand Technology Corridor • Strategy 3.5: Actively engage in strategic regional transportation and infrastructure improvement initiatives including enhancing air service
GOAL 4: ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAPTURE INNOVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 4.1: Enhance networking and training opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners • Strategy 4.2: Create Incubator Task Force and continue to develop incubator space in West Des Moines • Strategy 4.3: Strengthen relationship with Iowa State tech transfer efforts • Strategy 4.4: Incorporate more entrepreneurship programs in K-12 systems
GOAL 5: ALIGN WORKFORCE SYSTEMS SO THAT TRAINING PROGRAMS MATCH THE HIGH-GROWTH INDUSTRY SKILL AND OCCUPATION DEMAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 5.1: Facilitate the development of new/expanded post-secondary programs for nurse practitioners, IT specialists, and financial service fields • Strategy 5.2: Facilitate relationship with Iowa State and University of Iowa to connect around internship/career placement opportunities • Strategy 5.3: Become the leader on new Central Iowa Works retail sector boards developing new career pathways • Strategy 5.4: Create career academy around IT, retail/leisure, financial services, and/or entrepreneurship cluster • Strategy 5.5: Ensure WDM industry representation on Regional Workforce Investment Board • Strategy 5.6: Support GDMP's Talent Attraction efforts
GOAL 6: ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 6.1: Focus on events/draws that target young professionals • Strategy 6.2: Enhance support for locally-owned operations and artists • Strategy 6.3: Get Young Professionals group more engaged in city-specific economic development efforts

STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL 1: IMPLEMENT A TARGETED MARKETING AND BUSINESS ATTRACTION CAMPAIGN IN CONJUNCTION WITH REGIONAL ALLIES

In this time of fierce global economic competition and very limited economic development activity, coordinated business attraction and marketing efforts are of paramount importance for the city. While the Greater Des Moines Partnership (GDMP) leads marketing and business attraction efforts for the entire region, the City can tighten its city-specific messaging and get more engaged in regional collaborative marketing efforts. West Des Moines' city staff must be active participants in prioritized events to help generate leads and gain crucial expertise on certain targeted industries.

Strategy 1.1: Focus attraction efforts on the targeted industries of Advanced Logistics/Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Information Technology, Financial Services, and Retail/Leisure/Hospitality

West Des Moines' business attraction and marketing actions should support and be done in conjunction with GDMP's efforts. External marketing efforts should include participation at selected target industry association events, and specialized trade shows, symposiums or events to personally promote the area to prospects and site selectors. City staff should also participate, where appropriate, in planned prospecting missions to areas where target companies reside. The city should also join appropriate industry organizations and attend industry events supported by targeted decision-makers. In addition, the City should continue to build upon relationships with site selection consultants. These executives are valuable partners when conducting business attraction activities.

Action Items:

- In conjunction with GDMP and other regional partners, identify and participate in selected target industry conferences and tradeshows such as the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), CORENET, Renewable Energy World Conference & Expo, Medical Design and Manufacturing, and BIO.
- Participate with GDMP in key sales trips to meet with company executives in targeted clusters.
- Continue successful relationship building activities with key site selection consultants. Host function in conjunction with GDMP to showcase City. Send periodic email updates of West Des Moines development to targeted consultants.
- Update collateral materials and develop succinct pieces on advantages West Des Moines offers for companies within the respective target clusters.
- Ask business leaders to share "success stories" of how their location in West Des Moines has enhanced their business' competitiveness.
- Send direct mail to companies within target industries (using the AE Target Prospect List as a starting point).

West Des Moines' Business Attraction Targets

While West Des Moines should focus its business attraction efforts at targeted industry areas, these sectors are particularly critical – as they are not currently a target of the larger Greater Des Moines Partnership:

- Health Services IT/Back Office
- Retail (Specialty Retail)
- Retail (Full-service Hotels)
- Retail (Arts/Cultural Enterprises)

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategy 1.2: Establish Target Industry Advisory Team to guide future industry cluster development

As outlined within this report, AE has developed and outlined specific target industries for the region to focus economic development efforts. To become most effective in attracting and building these clusters, AE recommends tapping into the vast knowledge and resources of regional business and other leaders to help identify opportunities and further define specific messages and activities that could attract these industries. The Team would have no formal decision-making authority. Rather, it would be an informal group of industry/issue “experts” that can support the City in a number of different business expansion and retention tasks.

Action Items:

- Engage business leaders representing the target industries whose main purpose is to supply trend information, identify possible target companies, develop strategies for attracting industry, and develop key messages concerning each industry.
- The Team should meet quarterly to discuss industry strategies while focusing on specific outcomes for targeted industry initiatives, value chain opportunities and other industry intelligence.
- This Team can also serve as a “Prospect Unit” meeting with companies being recruited to West Des Moines – providing prospects with solid evidence of public-private cooperation in key economic development areas.
- Existing members of the West Des Moines Development Corporation could make up part of the Advisory Team (with others deemed appropriate).

Strategy 1.3: Strengthen the economic development section of the City of West Des Moines website

Businesses consult websites more than any other source of site selection information. An upgrade to the City of West Des Moines’ Economic and Community Development website is recommended, ensuring the most up-to-date data is available and easily accessible in a user-friendly format. In addition, webpages should include more “marketing” language highlighting the assets that the City and region bring to bear and its attractiveness as a place to live and conduct business.

Action Items:

- Create one direct “Economic Development” link on the City’s homepage.
- “Economic Development” home- and welcome-pages should articulate the Community and Economic Development’s Department’s mission and include a condensed list of easily navigable links to the different service offerings of the Department. The site should also include:
 - Information specifically pertaining to the identified target industries, including a list of local companies within those sectors.
 - Marketing language/descriptions demonstrating the benefits of business location within West Des Moines.
 - Commercial real estate land and building options with maps.
 - Updated demographic and labor market data.
 - Easy-to-understand incentives summaries

STRATEGIC PLAN

- Links to GDMP, Dallas County Development Alliance, and state economic development organizations.
- A “site selectors” tab/section with specific information that pertains to target industries and site selector needs (e.g. workforce data, key sites/buildings, etc.).
- Business endorsements, quotes, and testimonials from businesses that have successfully located/expanded in West Des Moines
- Ensure that URLs and web links for City of West Des Moines economic development sites are featured prominently in all marketing materials.
- Consider consolidating/integrating with the West Des Moines Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce’s websites which includes much of the same information.
- Review “best practice” economic development websites of similar sized communities. Award winning website examples include: www.pearland.com; <http://invest.georgetown.org/>; and <http://www.waterlooida.org/home>.

Strategy 1.4: Promote and leverage recent economic development success through the development of a brief annual report and enhanced collateral.

The City has had an outstanding track record of economic development success over the past 6-10 years, recruiting and expanding major corporate operations, growing the city’s household income rates, and staying ahead (through infrastructure provision) of growth. In addition, the city has received national recognition as a place to launch a business and business leaders repeatedly pointed to a very friendly business climate within West Des Moines. Yet, for those who live outside of the Des Moines region, these accolades are not particularly well known. The City can enhance efforts to market its successes – ensuring that site selectors and others are aware of the assets in the city.

Action Items:

- Develop 1-2 page quarterly “Economic Development Update” highlighting City Community and Economic Development Department accomplishments. Send electronically to list of prospective businesses, site consultants, and tenant representative brokers.
- Include an introductory chapter to the annual Development Retrospective describing economic development highlights from the previous year (a mix of data trends and narrative example descriptions):
 - New businesses/projects
 - Expansions
 - Profiles of businesses otherwise successfully served by the City
- Collaborate with GDMP, Dallas County Development Alliance, and state economic development groups to more aggressively publicize economic success stories and assets. Send through local news outlets, regional blogs, and other vehicles.

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GOAL 2: ENHANCE BUSINESS RETENTION & SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

One of the most critical opportunities as identified by survey respondents and community leaders through this initiative was for increased support (e.g. financial and other) for existing businesses. This becomes an increasingly important sub-group in a down economy, as attracting “new” business locates becomes even more competitive. While dealing with tough economic times and increasingly fierce competition for jobs, investment, and tax base, West Des Moines must ensure that its business climate remains as sharp as possible and that its business contact and support programs be elevated.

Strategy 2.1: Establish an Economic Development Strategic Projects Fund to be used as an incentive tool to retain, expand and recruit strategically important businesses *(See Appendix A: Incentives Analysis for more information)*

In recent years, the use of incentives to attract jobs and investment has become widespread throughout the country. While companies base their relocation and expansion decisions on the underlying characteristics of the site and the surrounding workforce, the competitiveness of an incentive package will often be the decisive factor, taking a community from the “short list” to the final target in a firm’s site selection process. While West Des Moines has a number of incentive tools in its “tool box,” there is still a gap – these programs are not yet strongly tied to the attraction and *retention* efforts of small and medium-sized businesses (especially those not currently in a TIF district). We recommend the development of an Economic Development Strategic Projects Fund – a revolving loan fund – to finance attraction or existing business expansion projects, especially for those in the City’s ‘new’ target industry areas.

Economic Development Strategic Projects Fund

Goals:

- Retain the commercial, industrial, and office base.
- Promote new economic development
- Encourage investment to maintain properties

- **Types of Loans/Uses:**
 - Attraction (machinery/equipment, fixed assets, and to serve as capital for a “closing fund” to complement existing incentive monies).
 - Expansion/retention (machinery/equipment, facility improvements/expansion).
- **Available Loan Amounts:**
 - Eligible applicants may request loan amounts to a maximum of \$250,000.
 - City should consider a low-interest loan at 50% of prime over 5 years.
- **Eligibility/Priorities:**
 - Businesses/tenants within target industries
 - Projects deemed “strategically important” by City
 - Project needs to be tied to economic impact analysis (tax generation, etc). Return of Investment should exceed 2:1 (city tax revenues vs. incentive cost).
 - Project creates or retains desirable jobs (e.g. 100% of county Median Household Income)

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- Loan can be forgivable for select strategic projects provided company meets performance measures including job projections (created/retained), average salary, and/or for investment.
- Claw back provisions should be incorporated within the program framework to help ensure accountability of expenditures.
- Initial funding can come from a portion of the city's hotel/motel tax or the general fund. We recommend an initial capitalization of at least \$500,000.

Strategy 2.2: Expand outreach to existing industries through a coordinated Executive Call and survey program

Important business visit or Executive Call efforts can be more aggressively and consistently performed by the City. While useful employer data (e.g. perceptions of regional workforce quality, expansion needs, technology requirements, etc.) is gleaned from survey information and business calls and visits, only a limited number of employers are met with yearly. In large part, this is a capacity issue – very limited staff from the City and Dallas County Development Alliance can devote appropriate time to these important actions. However, using resources wisely, the City can enhance its Executive Call efforts to reach more of the *right* businesses. The state's new push for coordinated use of the Synchronist surveying tool will also be helpful as the City enhances its efforts.

Action Items:

- Increase annual number of Executive Call visits to 100.
- Visits should continue to be led by the Dallas County Development Alliance
- Because of the heavy concentration of retail businesses in the city, the City should invest in and utilize Synchronist Convention Retail Tourism and Service surveying software (beyond the current Synchronist tool that is aimed at non-retail/tourism firms).
- Ensure that all necessary pre-visit work is performed.
- Initial outreach should be made using consistent language with a clear "value proposition" for the company.
- Business visits should continue to be coordinated with GDMP and include a small number of public personnel (3 maximum).
- The City should prioritize business visits based on target industry areas and those firms that are considered "high growth."
- Utilize survey during Executive Call visits as a face-to-face "tool" capturing data as you conduct the meeting.

Strategy 2.3: Leverage the Executive Call and survey programs to identify strategic issues and develop deeper relationships with businesses

In addition to collecting more data from businesses through its Executive Call program, the City should further build the relationship building aspect of the program and enhance efforts to share analyzed trends with a wider regional audience to ensure common business concerns are addressed strategically. Information gleaned from Executive Calls must be reviewed and red flags areas/trends identified so that city staff can follow up with the appropriate assistance.

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Action Items:

- Further develop summaries of meetings with incumbent companies.
- Ensure conversations with representatives lead to action-items.
- Assign staff to conduct appropriate follow up and track larger business “trends” and red flags across visits.
- Develop brief annual “BRE Update” report that identifies common trends (e.g. increasing concerns about traffic patterns, more assistance needed around specific job training programs, etc.) and disseminate to GDMP and city council.
- Ensure staff (whether Dallas County or City) conducting Executive Calls program receives appropriate Synchronist training on conducting visits, follow up, and report creation and analysis.
- Consider taking staff to communities with more established Executive Call/BRE programs. See IDED’s Business Expansion and Strategic Trends (BEST) for in-state examples: <http://www.iowalifechanging.com/toolbox/best.aspx>.
- Use the program not only to inform companies of city/regional/state programs (e.g. job training, etc.) but to identify interested parties for membership on Target Industry Advisory Team.

Strategy 2.4: Increase recognition of local business success stories

Positive recognition of worthy endeavors is particularly important during periods of economic turbulence. Recognition helps restore faith in the future and provides role models for other businesses. It also confirms the genuine interest of local governments in business support.

- In conjunction with the Chamber and West Des Moines Development Corporation, improve upon the “business recognition program” to include greater number of businesses.
- Conduct on a quarterly basis through a nomination process. City should be proactive in nominating businesses with which it is familiar.
- Publicize recipients through City magazine and the website.
- Spotlight companies that receive recognition within their industry.

STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL THREE: ENSURE APPROPRIATE REAL ESTATE OPTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARE IN PLACE TO MEET INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

There is no doubt that investments in basic infrastructure components such as rail and highways, as well as communication infrastructure such as broadband and wireless, are critical to addressing complicated local and regional economic development challenges. Technology companies and professional services firms (highly prevalent in West Des Moines) look for high quality buildings in office parks that provide a high level of infrastructure and service. The city has an exceptional reputation for being out in front on utilities and infrastructure development and for its efficient city regulatory processes – all of which have supported a historically strong office market. As the city continues to grow, however, (in population, square miles, and in new/expanded businesses) and build out the city, increased coordination will be critical. This is especially true for strategic areas like the I-5 corridor, Grand Technology Corridor, and the additional office and industrial opportunities that it provides.

Strategy 3.1: Ensure appropriate mix of Class A and B office, R&D/flex, and light industrial space is designated

Ensuring adequate land use designations for target industries will be critical. It appears that the City's new comprehensive plan provides an appropriate mix and AE does not see any issues in the near term. Obviously, continued focus upon industrial (scarcity has been particularly acute historically) and medical/R&D space will be critical to diversifying into smaller advanced manufacturing, logistics, and life science clusters, respectively. Most critically, the City needs to continue to coordinate economic development and land use efforts especially around the I-5 Corridor and the "Grand Technology Corridor," key sub-areas for the city's entrée into a more global market. While office vacancy rates continue to climb in the city, we do not believe this is a major concern – more of a reflection of the economic recession. Historically, the city has been very strong in this market. The City's job will continue to be facilitating private brokers' abilities to fill space through information sharing, aggressive marketing and existing financial incentive programs where appropriate.

Ensuring Real Estate Planning Aligns with Target Industries

- Protect Business Park, light industrial, R&D and logistics-related development along Highway 5 (all with direct access to the airport).
- Ensure enough mixed-use flex space and light industrial space along Highway 5 running east and west.
- Ensure office space is concentrated west of I-35.
- Commercial retail/hospitality space will continue to be integral around Jordan Creek Town Center off of interstate; and/or near major power centers and existing large financial service operations.
- Designate office, medical and R&D space within "Grand Technology Corridor" along 105th Street, running from south of Raccoon River Rd., intersecting I-80.

Action Items:

- Brief real estate community and utility representatives on the city's new comp plan and target industry areas.

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- Maintain an active inventory (e.g. LOIS) of industrial, office, and retail space. Utilize/integrate data and pictures from West Des Moines Development Corporation (see website) and Dallas County Alliance online inventory.
- Continuously monitor real estate requirements of prospective companies and communicate gaps to regional real estate community (See Strategy 3.2).
- Include highlights of this information in marketing materials (see Goal 1 and Strategies).
- Annually assess infrastructure capacity, determine priority projects, and brief out on projected upcoming needs.

Strategy 3.2: Building upon the strong relationships that exist with the commercial real estate community, develop an annual market update event program to the Des Moines regional commercial real estate community

Continuing to develop a deep relationship with regional and local real estate stakeholders can provide additional leads for the City while maintaining a deep understanding of trends within the regional real estate market. While the City actively reaches out to this audience currently, it can enhance its efforts by focusing on 1) communicating target industries and real estate requirements; and 2) sharing information about specific shovel-ready sites. While the City historically has communicated well with these stakeholders and utility representatives, it should hold more formalized annual meetings with regional/local developers and the commercial real estate community, working to understand market trends of who is leasing space and what types of product companies desire, all of which can help the City address gaps in market knowledge. This becomes a critical feedback mechanism for the City.

Action Items:

- Using inventory, showcase regional sites and buildings to elevate familiarity with inventory.
- Incorporate panels of commercial real estate experts on key trends.
- Jointly probe solutions to community real estate needs.
- Consider using the West Des Moines Development Corp. as a lead in hosting the event (and securing private sponsorships for support).

Strategy 3.3. Support redevelopment and revitalization activities in key locations through the development of a strategic plan

Redevelopment and revitalization of older commercial areas is an important component of the city's economic development efforts, especially as a tool to promote small businesses and attract young professionals, all of whom identified an interest in seeing additional locally-owned and "unique" stores and restaurants within the city limits. As the City continues to support and promote Valley Junction as a major destination for the region, other sites, such as Clock Tower Square and Governors Square can also ultimately be an important part of the City's efforts.

Action Items:

- Develop a detailed commercial redevelopment plan. The plan should identify sub-areas (e.g. Grand Technology Corridor, Railroad Avenue, 22nd St, etc.) and specific centers that should be considered for redevelopment (e.g. along transportation corridors, highly visible, etc).

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- Working with the regional real estate and planning community, local neighborhood groups, and others, the plan should inventory and prioritize sites at these strategic locations.
- Once sites are prioritized, work with a commercial broker/master planner to identify design guidelines and desired specific facility improvements and future tenants.
- Other components of the redevelopment plan can look at:
 - Feasibility of city offering incentives such as tax abatement to encourage owners to incorporate certain façade/design criteria.
 - Development of a small business loan/grant program for facility enhancements (can also include tie to new incentives fund – Strategy 2.1).
 - Incorporating mixed-use and transportation mobility options linking key sub-areas areas and downtown Des Moines destinations.
 - “Best practice” revitalization efforts in other same sized cities to see what worked, what is working, lessons learned, etc.
- Enhance marketing of these sites. Create an information packet, including an inventory of priority sites, to provide to commercial brokers, retail site consultants, and franchises (tie to Strategies 3.1 and 3.2). Include redevelopment opportunity sites in marketing materials.

Strategy 3.4: Continue to aggressively push for construction of Grand Technology Corridor and 105th St to Grand Avenue

Several infrastructure improvement projects will be critical to West Des Moines' economic development future. In particular, the full construction of the Grand Technology Corridor will help position the City (and the region) to capitalize on future high technology companies seeking close proximity to Microsoft and existing infrastructure. The development of this corridor will also be critical to the City's larger efforts to market the community (with its new incubator, DMACC West's technology simulation programming, etc.) as a high-tech hotbed.

Action Items:

- Continue to monitor and push for grant funding for full interchange improvements.
- Attempt to accelerate completion and raise awareness to ensure public commitment.
- Meet periodically with other regional city/county economic development entities to ensure region maintains united front.

Strategy 3.5: Actively engage in strategic regional transportation and infrastructure improvement initiatives including enhancing air service

One of the biggest concerns from the business community was the limited number of destinations and frequency of direct flights from Des Moines International Airport. (DMIA). If West Des Moines is going to continue to be successful in attracting “high value” target industry firms with traveling executives it will need to help address this issue – along with other infrastructure projects. The City must be active participants in regional planning and capital improvement efforts to ensure its economic development objectives are addressed.

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Action Items:

- Support GDMP in their current efforts to increase air service at DMIA. WDM can support GDMP's efforts by identifying business leaders who can act as advocates for this air service change and who can provide evidence of expected demand for more service. Share information with GDMP.
- Help to mobilize surrounding communities to support GDMP's DMIA efforts through marketing or even through the development of a regional incentives fund for airlines.
- With regional transportation groups, explore expanded bus service to West Des Moines retail centers. This was identified as a significant issue for the City's hospitality/retail network.
- Help to mobilize public awareness and support for these initiatives.

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GOAL 4: ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAPTURE INNOVATION

A critical aspect of sustainable economic competitiveness for West Des Moines is building a strong support structure that encourages innovation through the development of entrepreneurship. Future efforts must focus on identifying capital and resource opportunities to assist these emerging, high impact opportunities. Regional progress has been made, but mainstream support is needed to improve success. The incubator concept that the city is exploring may be an important strategic component of a larger entrepreneurship plan that positions West Des Moines to create specific collaborative opportunities between entrepreneurs, small businesses, and medical, life science, and other researchers to spur the commercialization of bio- and other technology applications that can define the region.

All of these strategies will help develop a strong entrepreneurship initiative in West Des Moines and better establish it as a regional entrepreneurial hot spot.

Strategy 4.1: Enhance networking and training opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners

Building off of SBDC sessions already planned by the City, WDM should host a series of networking and technical assistance events for regional entrepreneurs and new business start-ups. In addition to networking with potential investors and/or panel discussions, effective entrepreneurial events such as these also include brief specialized one-on-one business counseling to determine “common needs” to be communicated to local service providers in an effort to provide customized assistance. The City should also engage in and promote entrepreneurial support tools already developed in the state and which show real promise.

Action Items:

- Reach out to Iowa State/SBDC/Pappajohn Center and GDMP to secure/develop an inventory of existing entrepreneurial assets (venture capital firms, SBDCs, technology alliances, training programs, loan programs, funding sources, etc.) within the region.
- Work with GDMP to develop a master calendar of city and regional entrepreneurship events and promote/distribute through existing Young Professionals group and on the City's website.
- Officially join the University of Northern Iowa's (UNI) statewide entrepreneurial web portal initiative (www.my.entre.net). This is a free statewide online networking tool to connect grassroots entrepreneurial clubs and provide up-to-date entrepreneurial finance/mentoring resource information.

Best Practice: Iowa's Entre-Bashes

Across Iowa, economic development corporations have teamed up with the University of Northern Iowa to host “EntreBashes” networking events. These are more than just meet and greets but organized opportunities for small-business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to showcase their business/propositions and speak directly with trained business advisors. Advisors will provide referrals to individuals and organizations for assistance with obtaining financing, increasing sales, doing business on the Web, market research, finding new markets and other business services. The events are organized in a way to serve both ‘interested entrepreneurs’ who have an idea but no business plan and ‘later-stage entrepreneurs’ who need financing and critical exposure.

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- Invite UNI program representatives to conduct a program training session with city staff and other interested parties.
- Work with UNI representatives – through the “my.entre.net” initiative – to annually pull data on entrepreneurial activity specific to West Des Moines. This can help West Des Moines track its entrepreneurial “success” over time. The program has this capability.
- Host one city-wide “Entre-bash” and subsequently evaluate for future sessions.
- Beyond Entre-bashes, ensure future incubator tenants and other would-be city entrepreneurs are exposed to networking sessions and VC opportunities by communicating events and reaching out to known small businesses/entrepreneurs.
- Ensure city staff who organize/facilitate these events understand entrepreneurship issues and challenges. Consider sending key staff to entrepreneurship “basics” training workshops administered by IEDC or Iowa’s Department of Economic Development.
- Become more familiar with and disseminate information of regional/state entrepreneurship financing tools (See action items within Strategy 4.2). In the longer-term, explore the establishment/enhancement of a regional financing consortia for Stage 1 and Stage 2 businesses through an angel capital network.

Strategy 4.2: Create Incubator Task Force and continue to develop WDM incubator space in West Des Moines

West Des Moines has identified a 16,000 square foot incubator space to be operated by the regional Small Business Development Center. This facility is an important opportunity for the City as it positions itself as an entrepreneurial hub. The group is an official legal entity and the design and groundwork phases are beginning.

Action Items:

- Identify members for the incubator board of directors, responsible for defining the policies of the facility, strategic planning; and other design aspects. Select broad array of knowledgeable stakeholder representatives, including partners included in the incubator, organizations that provide the financial and material resources as well as:
 - Industry leads (tied to target industry areas of the incubator)
 - GDMP
 - Service providers (i.e. small business, workforce development, etc.)
 - City leaders (e.g. city council, other)
 - Iowa State University rep
 - DMACC
- Establish a clear mission, statute and internal procedures (length of stay, flexibility of facility to adapt to the changing environment surrounding high-growth, early- and later-stage ventures, etc.).
- Consider focusing incubator on target industry areas of health services, health/financial service IT, or other higher-technology applications that do not require significant lab space.

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- Ensure that, beyond space, the facility incorporates the appropriate level of business, legal, and mentoring support services. Ensure these services are also available to entrepreneurs who are not existing tenants as well.
- Similar to action step in previous strategy, ensure City economic development staff responsible for organizing this incubator project receives appropriate training in entrepreneurship practices.
- Research and utilize best practices to inform design stage.
- Use the incubator project as an opportunity to expand the City's small business information sharing efforts. Specifically, the City should disseminate, where appropriate, capital and resource opportunities (Grow Iowa Values Fund, state R&D Tax credits, etc.) to assist emerging enterprises. Reference www.my.entre.net's Money Map as a source.

Strategy 4.3: Strengthen relationship with Iowa State technology transfer efforts

West Des Moines' relationship with higher education institutions, especially Iowa State University, will be critical to the city's economic future. With \$217 million of R&D funding and scientific breakthroughs in disciplines such as plant and animal science, the University provides a great regional asset with which to leverage via technology transfer opportunities, supplier relationships, and workforce development. The City already has some firms that may be able to take advantage of university research for their own product development but they are simply not aware of the university's capabilities. As the city becomes more viable for R&D firms, through its target industry attraction efforts, it will need to be aware of critical research being conducted at all of the state universities and facilitate relationships between these institutions and West Des Moines existing businesses where appropriate connections can be made.

Action Items:

- Establish close relationships with regional university technology transfer administrators. Inform them of City's target industry areas.
- Through its Business Retention/Expansion efforts, the City should continue to probe existing manufacturing and high-tech firms for their specific technology needs. Where appropriate reach out to university technology transfer office to see if a "match" could be made (where research projects support existing businesses product lines/process).
- Facilitate "field trips" (with targeted city business representatives) to Iowa State University Virtual Reality Applications Center (and other research labs) where engineers are developing some of the most advanced software prototypes. Iowa State, in particular, is developing a number of medical and IT-related innovations (e.g. enhanced automated colonoscopy products, etc) that could have real applications for West Des Moines' new hospitals.
- Where appropriate, city staff should attend university symposium on industry/research opportunities specific to WDM target clusters.

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Strategy 4.4: Incorporate more entrepreneurship programs in K-12 systems

Seven out of ten high school students want to start their own businesses, according to a Gallup Poll on entrepreneurship education commissioned by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. This statistic illustrates why it is important to encourage and nurture innovative entrepreneurial ideas from a young age. The West Des Moines' Chamber of Commerce can also play a key role in this strategy.

Action Items:

- Use new incubator as a “platform” to convene city/regional K-12 system administrators/teachers to explore expanding K-12 engagement in entrepreneurship activities. Coordinate with GDMP. Initiative could include middle and high schools training curriculum initiatives such as Junior Achievement, Jumpstart or FastTrac.
- Better leverage Drake University's Pappajohn Center and Entrepreneurial Program.
 - Educate program administrators on West Des Moines' target industries and incumbent company tech/business management needs (as identified through the City's BRE program) to see if university students may assist as part of a class project.
 - Encourage Drake faculty to better engage with area high schools (e.g. promoting the Program, fielding student questions, etc.)
 - Promote entrepreneurial summer teacher training programs to K-12 schools. Program provides teachers with tools they can use in their own classrooms to encourage students with interesting business ideas.
- Continue city's annual business plan competition with financial/capital awards. Consider connecting event with the development of programs/technologies that grow the city's target industry clusters.

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GOAL 5: ALIGN WORKFORCE AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS SO THAT TRAINING PROGRAMS MATCH THE HIGH-GROWTH INDUSTRY SKILL AND OCCUPATION DEMAND

In the past eight years West Des Moines has created over 20,000 jobs in industries that require a mix of highly skilled workers. With two new hospitals, expansions in the finance industry and the prospect of a Microsoft data center in the city, West Des Moines should be proactive in ensuring that its workforce has the skills and competencies to take advantage of these job opportunities. As the Greater Des Moines Partnership, DMACC, and other area institutions continue to assess specific occupational demand for these industries and identify potential program enhancements, West Des Moines must be an active regional player to ensure that its own employers can find qualified workers within the local region. Jobs such as nurse practitioners, physicians, risk management officers, financial managers, systems architects, and database engineers were all mentioned by West Des Moines employers as occupations that are growing and difficult to fill locally.

Strategy 5.1: Facilitate the development of new/expanded post-secondary programs for nurse practitioners, IT specialists, and financial service fields.

Employer surveys and focus groups identified significant current and future occupational shortages in West Des Moines including licensed nurses, risk management officers, financial managers, systems architects, and database engineers. In addition, as the city further builds out its industry clusters, it will need a workforce trained in health technology applications and retail/hospitality management in particular.

Action Items:

- Create a Workforce Development Task Force starting with city staff, key business leaders, and DMACC administrators. Share Synchronist data and new/expected community college programs in development to identify where tasks can be better supported. Meetings can also be used to discuss DMACC West master planning efforts and development needs (i.e. DMACC currently has \$2.8 million set aside for West campus expansion and is seeking input from regional leaders on uses). Consider expanding task force to other area colleges once 'core' team is set.
- Work with DMACC West administrators to ensure that new CNA and Health Information Technology programs that are planned for 2010 rollout are on track.
- Utilizing business relationships and workforce data from Synchronist (i.e. Business Retention) program, identify other future training program areas for development
- Where appropriate help DMACC secure access to key industry representatives (human resource staff typically) from new/existing hospitals, Microsoft, and other growing companies to ensure critical skill needs/curriculum is being developed.
- Work with the Chamber and West Des Moines Development Corporation to promote new DMACC (and other area postsecondary schools) programs in high school and other areas. Steps should include:
 - Activities to go into high schools to promote new/existing programs.

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- Activities to promote these programs on city/regional websites.
- Activities to promote these programs through YP networks.

Strategy 5.2: Facilitate relationship with Iowa State and University of Iowa to connect around internship/career placement opportunities

One concern identified by financial service, health service and advanced manufacturing firms in the region is a lack of awareness, on the part of high school and college students, of West Des Moines' firms and specific career opportunities within the region.

Action Items:

- The City can be more proactive in reaching out to Des Moines University, Grand View College, Simpson College, Drake University, Iowa State, and University of Iowa, (career service offices in particular), and explore how to get specific West Des Moines internship/job opening opportunities on the University/alumni networks.
- Educate career service advisors throughout the region on target industries and specific career opportunities as a means of steering student academic focus to target industry areas.
- Support GDMP in its efforts in establishing physical presences at regional university career events on campuses.

Strategy 5.3: Become the leader on new Central Iowa Works retail sector board developing new career pathways

One of the best ways to ensure a strong workforce is to cultivate this talent from an early age – ensuring that K-12 students in the region are aware of job opportunities that exist today but “paths” they need to take to follow a career. Central Iowa Works is developing career pathways now (a series of connected education and training programs and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in a demand industry or occupation). A new “Retail” sector board is just developing that will be designing programs to ensure that regional retail employers have the trained workforce they need in the upcoming years. Given the retail presence in the city, the City should be a leader in this initiative identifying appropriate industry representatives to sit on the board and attending working group sessions.

Action Items:

- Identify interested retail industry leaders in the City.
- Work with Central Iowa Works to position industry representatives to lead Retail Sector Board.
- City staff should periodically participate in sector board meetings to learn about regional workforce issues and ensure issues affecting West Des Moines businesses are being addressed.
- Once career pathways are developed, City staff should work with DMACC/Central Iowa Works to promote these programs to regional high schools to generate interest in existing 2- and 4-year higher education programs in these areas.

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- Increased communication of these opportunities to area high schools to generate interest is also an important step toward sparking interest in already-existing higher education programs (that may receive little student interest).
- In addition to leading Retail Sector Board, City should ensure other key target industry firms in West Des Moines (mostly financial services, IT and health services) continue to be represented on their appropriate sector boards.

Strategy 5.4: Create career academy around IT, retail/leisure, financial services, and/or entrepreneurship cluster

Career academies offer high school students experiential learning opportunities through a specific curriculum that ties K-12 systems to post-secondary education and into high-wage careers. While several academies exist within the larger Des Moines region, none exist in the western portion and a real need may exist – especially if an academy is aligned to West Des Moines’ target industries. Engaging DMACC and regional K-12 system administrators for an effort such as this is essential.

Action Items:

- Identify appropriate stakeholder groups/contacts (include members of K-12 school districts, DMACC administrators, key employers, GDMP, and other city/county EDOs where necessary).
- Utilize Workforce Development Task Force (See Strategy 5.1) as a starting point and facilitate “Career Academy” working meetings.
- Identify academy “industry focus” and identify sequential courses of study and skill standards.
- Work to develop articulation agreements where needed.

Strategy 5.5: Ensure West Des Moines industry representation on the Central Iowa Works Regional Workforce Investment Board

The Des Moines area’s Regional Workforce Investment Board is responsible for designing important regional job training programs and allocating federal and state training dollars to companies. The Board is currently being re-shaped and the City should ensure that there is West Des Moines industry representation on this board at all times.

Best Practice: The Entrepreneurship Academy Program (Lincoln, NE)

The E-Ship Academy is an experiential learning opportunity for southeast Nebraska sophomores, juniors, and seniors. A partnership with the Lincoln business community, Southeast Community College, and the University of Nebraska, the program allows students to experience an interdisciplinary high school curriculum with a distinct emphasis on personal skill development and entrepreneurship. Some classes are eligible for dual credit through Southeast Community College. Students are immersed in an environment utilizing community businesses and connections, speakers’ series, business plan development, student competitions and student-directed learning.

The E-ship program is located in the Southeast Community College building that houses multiple entrepreneurial resources for Lincoln and the surrounding area.

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As federal (e.g. U.S. Department of Labor) and state (Iowa Workforce Development) job training grant funding sources increasingly require communities to demonstrate regionally collaborative community college/university/economic development organization/industry relationships, the City of West Des Moines must provide its businesses the opportunity to secure these regional training dollars.

Action Items:

- Identify business leads that have interest in strategic workforce development planning (paying special attention to city's target industries in financial services and health care).
- In addition to the "big" employers identify critical smaller businesses (IT, manufacturing) as well.
- Work with DMAACC (current operator of the Board) to engage in nomination process.

Strategy 5.6: Support GDMP's Talent Attraction efforts

Communities including Austin and Boise have successfully led campaigns to recruit young professionals and entrepreneurs from higher cost locations, particularly those on the West Coast. While West Des Moines needs to continue to focus on enhancing certain quality of life amenities to make the City more attractive to young professionals, the area's lower cost of living and steady performance in the midst of the current national recession should be attractive to workers in higher cost locations and those in communities with unemployment rates above 10 percent. GDMP has developed a Talent Attraction program for the region attending and disseminating promotional material at statewide and out-of-market college/job fairs, festivals, and young professional network sessions. West Des Moines should actively support this campaign and share with GDMP specific City information.

Action Items:

- Develop WDM-specific collateral to be disseminated at events.
- Connect regularly with GDMP program managers to remain aware of campaign events and schedules.
- Provide GDMP with information on new target industries and up-to-date information on specific employment opportunities. Relay specific workforce need information (gleaned from Executive Call visits/surveys).
- Partner with regional business leaders and universities to leverage professional and alumni networks in the talent recruitment process.
- Use the Des Moines Young Professionals group to host and recruit priority prospects for employers.
- City/Chamber of Commerce should create a regional economic development Facebook page designed to highlight key cultural events and new firm expansions and openings.

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GOAL 6: ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES

Livability issues are those tangible and intangible features and characteristics that make people decide they want to live in a particular community and make them commit to staying. Relatedly, the location decisions of firms are increasingly driven by a community's "quality of place" (in addition to land costs, labor costs, and access to materials and markets) because "quality of place" attracts well-educated work forces. In short, communities that offer cultural and recreational amenities have competitive advantages over those that do not.

As the City continues to support and promote Valley Junction as a major destination for the region, other sites, such as Clock Tower Square, Governors Square and other older commercial areas, can also ultimately be an important part of the city's efforts. Similarly, many community stakeholders identified a strong need for additional cultural facilities (e.g. performing arts center, convention center) that can create a strong draw and "sense of place" for the community. Additional promotion of these factors – especially tying them to more mixed-use development, can be important to draw additional outside visitors as well as ensure a more dynamic work/live/play quality emerges.

The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce plays a key role in many of these activities as well.

Strategy 6.1: Help to sponsor events/draws that target young professionals

While the city hosts Valley Junction music events, a farmers market, Jordan Creek shopping center concerts, and recreational events like the Hy-vee Triathlon, it can create more events that draw residents from the surrounding region – while providing the cultural aspects so critical to attracting younger professionals to the city on a more permanent basis.

Action Items:

- Work with Valley Junction Foundation, Chamber, Young Professional Group, and others to identify specific potential activities/events that could be held in West Des Moines including an art fair, concerts, and/or festivals.
- Prioritize list and, with Chamber, seek public (city) and private (hotels, restaurants, other) sources of funding.
- Work with GDMP and other downtown groups to identify ways to better coordinate existing events.

Strategy 6.2: Enhance support for locally-owned/unique operations and artists

Despite the wealth of retail offerings, community stakeholders spoke overwhelmingly about the need for more arts and cultural opportunities in the city as a means of attracting more young adult residents. While West Des Moines should not "compete" with downtown Des Moines for certain cultural activities, the City may wish to consider a performing arts center, a mix of more unique retail offerings, and more support for the arts.

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Action Items:

- Re-establish plans for a cultural/arts center located in the city, placing more focus on identifying private sector financing options. The City engaged in a preliminary analysis of the development of a cultural center to be developed near city hall. The effort stalled, in part, because the price tag was too high.
- Work with area Community Development Corporations to better promote microfinance, financial literacy training, and individual artist grants and loans directed at local artists.
- Consider scattered-site, mixed-use properties as a strategy for revitalization of older commercial corridors in the city (see Strategy 3.3). Artists' studios and living spaces along these corridors could be one of the few suitable uses for spaces no longer appropriate for most modern retail.
- Encourage the arts in community plans. City leadership should support for the existing West Des Moines Public Art Plan. One of the most concrete strategies for longer-term support of artist space development is to encourage inclusion of arts and cultural elements in future West Des Moines community/neighborhood plans.
- Periodically convene the current artist organization (that meets in Valley Junction) to identify better ways the City can support their objectives. Also consider inviting representatives from Des Moines Social Club, the Metro Arts Alliance, and Bravo Greater Des Moines.
- Encourage more public displays for local art work (Valley Junction, City Hall, Historic City Hall, etc.).
- Local designers/artists could be engaged by the City to create artwork for light posts, banners, publications

Strategy 6.3: Enhance Chamber/shopping center promotional efforts and explore the creation of retail center “trolley”

With such a strong commercial foundation, the City, through the Chamber of Commerce, may wish to do more to strategically connect shopping centers through enhanced transit and promotion.

Action Items:

- The City could benefit from a leisure/hospitality-specific strategy that identifies ways to better connect all of its retail and hospitality companies.
- Consider cross-promotional (promoting all of West Des Moines shopping options together) efforts. This effort could also include a West Des Moines retail/leisure “branding” initiative.
- Through Chamber sponsorship, conduct feasibility study of public transit (i.e. bus or trolley) with a route connecting all existing retail centers.

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Strategy 6.4: Get Young Professionals more engaged in city-specific economic development efforts

West Des Moines' twenty-somethings reported that their involvement in economic development (and other city planning) efforts was minimal. The City should take greater advantage of the strong networked regional Young Professionals group to lend a true, meaningful voice to the area's economic development efforts.

Action Items:

- Make a concerted effort to reach out/engage YP group members to sit on various task forces identified through this strategic plan.
- Sponsor YP group meetings at West Des Moines venues.
- Arm YP group leaders with WDM marketing materials highlighting the unique quality-of-life aspects West Des Moines has to offer. YP members can use this information when engaging with regional or statewide students and other professional network groups.

IMPLEMENTATION

FUTURE OF WEST DES MOINES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

As the City assesses different options for which organizations should be playing a part in West Des Moines' economic development efforts, AngelouEconomics has provided some preliminary thoughts on the different roles of five key organizations¹ (based on their existing strengths and known capabilities) going forward. Critical to all of this is a strong collaborative effort across organizations. *Of note: this should be considered a general recommendation – a thorough analysis of each organization was not conducted.*

Entity	Analysis of Strengths	Proposed Future Role in WDM E/D
Greater Des Moines Partnership	Very strong business marketing/ development expertise. Deep relationships with federal/state economic development personnel. Regional outlook.	<i>Same as current role with more communication with City</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to lead Business Attraction efforts for region, coordinating more closely w/ City. • Support Dallas County/City on some BRE visits. • Continue to facilitate regional efforts around entrepreneurship, workforce development, downtown revitalization, etc.
WDM Community and Economic Development Department	City staff are very competent and have close working relationships with City government, regional workforce, entrepreneurship, other groups, real estate community, and individual businesses. They are most familiar with City-specific policies and most accountable to City for economic development "outcomes." They have the strongest ability to act quickly with regard to needed economic development services to businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business attraction (generating leads, attending trade shows/site visits with GDMP) • Support Dallas County Development Alliance in BRE (Executive Call, survey) efforts • Lead/coordinator of site-specific infrastructure provision and incentive package development • Organize/facilitate other economic development initiatives (entrepreneurship, workforce development, quality of life, etc.) • Respond to GDMP calls for building/site availability (in conjunction with DCDA).
Dallas County Development Alliance	Strong working relationships with GDMP and state economic and workforce development players. They also have deep knowledge of statewide business assistance programs/resources (i.e. job training) making them a key part of city's BRE program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business retention lead • Facilitate/develop grants for businesses • Respond to GDMP calls for building/site availability
West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce	Strong relationship with city industry leads. Competencies in marketing and promoting West Des Moines as a place to live and conduct business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support development of city marketing/promotional material • Solicit support for private-sector funding for various "quality of life" events and host events
West Des Moines Development Corporation	Knowledge of local real estate community and interest in promoting West Des Moines as a place to conduct business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with website/marketing collateral development • Members part of Target Industry Advisory Team • Host different economic development events (i.e. annual real estate event, business recognition program, etc.)

¹ Madison County and Warren County are also important to the City's economic development efforts. Coordination around infrastructure, recruitment, retention, and other areas will be critical going forward.

IMPLEMENTATION

FUTURE OF WEST DES MOINES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATING THE PLAN

This 3-5 year strategic plan outlines an ambitious but achievable road map. However, the implementation of this strategic plan will not occur without dependable financial resources and critical staff time for the City's Community and Economic Development Department. AE recommends the following **four (4) actions** to ensure the plan moves forward:

Implementation Recommendation 1: Ensure economic development activities are a consistent line item in the budget

Most of the economic development activities identified in this strategic plan require a dedicated source of funding and staffing. A consistent budget for economic development will allow the Department to plan for and engage in these efforts.

Implementation Recommendation 2: Hire one (1) additional full-time staff person to the Community and Economic Development Department to join the existing three staff people with responsibility for economic development.

This Strategic Plan highlights the need for 3 FTEs focusing *exclusively* on Economic Development initiatives for the City. However, taking into account the other activities that the Community and Economic Development Department is responsible for (planning, special projects, land use, etc.) additional support is necessary. *See more information on this on page 34.*

Implementation Recommendation 3: Better coordinate existing organizational efforts and seek additional economic development resources

Although the current City economic development staff is highly productive, the critical importance of growing the economy and tax base and the range of tasks to be carried out necessitates the dedication of additional resources.

- Identify, inventory and pursue federal sources of funding (e.g. Economic Development Agency's natural disaster emergency grants, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, etc) to accelerate growth of West Des Moines' target sectors. Federal funding priorities include advancing technology transfer from research institutions to the marketplace; bolstering transportation and communications infrastructures; constructing facilities and research equipment; and education of math and science students.
- Ensure stronger coordination between the West Des Moines Development Corporation, the Chamber, the Dallas County Development Alliance, and the City Community and Economic Development Department. The City may also consider using of retired volunteers or loaned executives with industry experience to bolster marketing efforts (with the appropriate training).

Implementation Recommendation 4: Ensure City staff takes advantage of professional development opportunities in economic development

Additional training/certifications for staff on economic development tools and programs will be critical to the execution of many of the strategies outlined in this plan. Critical areas include: economic development marketing; and entrepreneurial and small business development; business retention/expansion; and workforce development. Staff should pursue IEDC courses/certifications and also take advantage of various U.S. EDA and IDED webinars and symposiums.

IMPLEMENTATION

FUTURE OF WEST DES MOINES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: ESTIMATED BUDGET

The following is an estimated budget for economic development activities stemming from this strategic plan. It includes *major* products, events, materials, and travel associated with action items from the plan. It also includes the strategy number these items align with and estimated costs over a three-year period.

Estimated Budget for Economic Development Program Activities					
Item	Strategy Reference	Estimated Cost			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Website Redevelopment	Strategy 1.3	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	
Collateral/Marketing Materials (for all 5 target sectors)	Strategies 1.1; 1,4; etc.	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
Conferences & trade shows (ICSC, CORENET, etc) (3/yr)*	Strategy 1.1	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	
Sales Trips (2/yr)*	Strategy 1.1	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	
Conference Exhibit Development	Strategy 1.1	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ -	
Annual Report/Newsletter	Strategy 1.4	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	
Contract w Dallas County (including enhanced services!)	Strategies 2.2-2.4	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	
Annual Real Estate Event	Strategy 3.2	0**	\$ -	\$ -	
Iowa State Tech Transfer activities	Strategies 4.3	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
Staff Professional Development (training, memberships, etc)	Various	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	
Sponsorship of Entrepreneurship, VJ and other events	Strategies 4.1; 6.1-6.4	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
Regional Board Membership: Greater Des Moines Partnership	NA	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	
Regional Board Membership: Warren Cty Economic Development	NA	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
Regional Board Membership: Madison Cty Economic Development	NA	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	
<i>Seeding Loan Fund</i>	<i>Strategy 2.1</i>	<i>\$500000***</i>	<i>\$500000***</i>	<i>\$500000***</i>	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$ 197,250	\$ 177,250	\$ 177,250	

*In conjunction with GDMP

**Can be supported through sponsorship

***Not included in Total Expenditures

IMPLEMENTATION

FUTURE OF WEST DES MOINES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: RECOMMENDED STAFFING

The following is an estimation of the level-of-effort required by the City's Community and Economic Development Department to complete the action items in the strategic plan. It includes *major* action items from the plan that would likely be led by Department staff (although other organizations could lead some of these efforts). "Level-of-effort" generally defines a junior to senior level individual.

The plan highlights the **need for 3 FTEs** focusing *exclusively* on Economic Development initiatives for the City. While current staff at the City's Community and Economic Development Department is extremely competent and responsive, they are also responsible for leading many other initiatives outside of "economic development" (planning, special projects, land use, etc.²). Therefore, we are recommending additional support.

RECOMMENDATION: The city should hire 1 additional full-time staff person to join the existing three staff people with responsibility for economic development.

Given the existing strengths of staff and key action areas that will be enhanced through the plan, we recommend this new hire have competencies in the following areas (in order of priority):

- Small business/entrepreneurship support
- Economic development marketing
- Workforce development
- Economic development financing

This additional hire would give the Community and Economic Development Department 6.5 FTEs, of which approximately 3 should be devoted to carrying out this economic development plan.

² Outside of true "economic development" activities, the Department is scheduled to lead all annexation, comp planning, Valley Junction marketing and other studies, TIF planning, etc.

Proposed Staffing for Economic Development Strategies	
Goal/Strategy Reference	Level of Effort (for 3+ years)
Goal 1: Business Attraction	0.5 FTE
Marketing to companies, site selectors, etc	
Attend events	
Support Advisory Team	
Develop marketing material	
Develop website content	
Develop annual report	
Goal 2: Business Retention	1.00 FTE
Attend Exec Call visits	
Support post-Call summary write ups	
Analyze incentive fund requests	
Develop success story materials	
Goal 3: Real Estate/Infrastructure	0.5 FTE
Support annual event	
Maintain inventory of real estate sites	
Conduct annual review of infrastructure needs	
Advocate for infrastructure/ transportation needs	
Staff regional infrastructure/transportation task forces	
Goal 4: Entrepreneurship	0.5 FTE
Organize SBDC/entrepreneurship seminars and events	
Work with UNI and other regional partners on developing resource inventory and calendar	
Staff incubator task force	
Support incubator tasks (e.g. identifying best practices, etc.)	
Outreach to ISU; facilitating research partnerships	
Support outreach for K-12 entrepreneurial events	
Goal 5: Workforce Development	0.25 FTE
Additional outreach to DMACC	
Support promotion of existing programs in K-12 school systems	
Additional outreach to ISU, Drake, and other institutions	
Provide support for Central Iowa Works Sector Boards)	
Identify/nominate industry reps for Regional Workforce Board	
Develop career academy concept	
Support development of Talent Attraction materials	
Goal 6: Quality of Life	0.25 FTE
Support community-wide strategic planning	
Limited staff time supporting city artist groups	
Support materials development for YPs	
3.0 FTEs	

APPENDIX: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS ANALYSIS

CURRENT CONTEXT & THEMES

In recent years, the use of incentives to attract jobs and investment has become widespread throughout the country. While companies base their relocation and expansion decisions primarily on the underlying characteristics of the site and the surrounding workforce, the competitiveness of an incentive package will often be the decisive factor, taking a community from the “short list” to the final target in a firm’s site selection process. Over the past 18 months, many localities have become more aggressive in their use of incentives due to the overall slowdown in activity.

National Trends

Several economic development incentive “best practice themes” are becoming commonplace (or emerging in response to this current recession) at the local level. These have been identified through a literature review and telephone interviews of economic development entities within mid to large size communities across the United States. Communities interviewed included those within the metro areas of San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, Jacksonville, Nashville, Raleigh, Denver, and Houston.

- More and more communities are offering a **combination** of tax programs (i.e. property tax abatements, job creation credits) and non-tax programs (grants, loans, infrastructure subsidies).
- Increased use of **targeted industry** tax refund programs. Tax credits aimed specifically at data centers, clean energy, and life science companies in particular.
- **Land donation** or reduced land costs is more prevalent.
- Crafting incentive policies that provide the **flexibility to work with smaller existing** firms with retention and expansion needs (e.g. equipment and fixed assets).
- **Up front cash** (often referred to as “closing costs”).
- Outside of hard financial assistance, cities are exploring **improving approval processes and timing for permitting (or even the offering of incentives themselves)**. Communities that can provide commitment letters prior to official action by a City Council have a distinct advantage over communities that must hold public meetings and adopt official approval of a project.

Statewide and Regional Trends

In Iowa and the Des Moines region, specifically, mid- to larger communities are offering the following tools (see page 39):

- Use of **industrial tax abatements** (ranging from 5-10 years) for construction of new industrial and light-industrial facilities and utilization of TIF for public infrastructure.
- City-specific **low-interest/forgivable/revolving loans** tied to capital investments and/or the creation/retention of jobs.
- City-specific **“Special” projects funds** (most often grants) with flexible use (e.g. environmental studies, small business formation, land acquisition)

WEST DES MOINES CURRENT INCENTIVES PORTFOLIO AND GAPS

West Des Moines' has as many tools in its incentives toolbox as other communities its size. The summary "gap" area includes:

- The existence of a flexible city-specific grant/loan program to supplement existing tools that can increase competitiveness for new and expanding small and medium-sized businesses (especially those not currently in a TIF district) – and to serve as a match for state incentive programs. This grant/loan program can serve as a flexible "cash support" mechanism in conjunction, where necessary, with tax abatement tools.
- The following are WDM-specific policies (and does not include statewide incentive policies that the City often utilizes).

WDM Policy	Summary	Specific Proposed Changes	Summary of Overall Gaps
Tax rebate for office projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax rebate for new office building construction with a minimum assessed total valuation of \$20 million for a single user. • Based on a five year sliding scale with the first year of the incentive being a 75% rebate of the tax increment revenues generated by the agreed upon improvements, the second year a 60% rebate, the third year a 45% rebate, the fourth year a 30% rebate, and the fifth year a 15% rebate with all rebates being subject to a non-appropriation in any given year. • The employer must guarantee the retention/creation of 500 FTE's at the West Des Moines site during the life of the rebate. • The incentive will only be given on new office building construction within an active or proposed urban renewal area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce threshold for FTEs (future target industries include IT/support services that will require smaller numbers of FTEs) • Include "quality job" FTE threshold (i.e. majority of jobs must be 100% of county Median Household Income, etc.) 	<p>Reviewing competitor communities it's clear that West Des Moines' has as many tools in its incentives toolbox as other localities its size. The "gap" is in a couple areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives focused on retaining/expanding companies (not just for those new companies creating new jobs) • Flexible city-specific grant/loan program (cash) to supplement existing tools
Tax rebate for data centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax rebate for companies that fit within certain "data center" classifications. • 5-year sliding scale. • Companies must create or retain 20 FTEs during the life of the rebate and construct 40,000 sq ft of new property taxable valuation. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives that are focused specifically on West Des Moines' 'new' targeted industry areas (e.g. life sciences/R&D and flex space)
Tax rebates for projects within Industrial Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-year sliding scale property tax rebate • Company must be permitted in the Business Park, Light Industrial, General Industrial, Valley Junction Light Industrial, and Warehouse Retail zoning districts. • Incentive given on new taxable building valuation attributable to new construction. Must have a minimum value of \$250,000 of new property taxable value. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, the city might consider other "softer" incentive programs such as expedited permitting and plan reviews, relocation assistance, provision of temporary space

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend 5 incentive strategies for West Des Moines:

1) Establish an Economic Development Strategic Projects Fund to be used as an incentive tool to retain, expand and recruit strategically important businesses (See Strategy 2.1 in the Strategic Plan for more details)

- **Types of Loans/Uses:**
 - Attraction (machinery/equipment, fixed assets, and to serve as capital for a “closing fund” to complement existing incentive monies).
 - Expansion/retention (machinery/equipment, facility improvements/expansion).
- **Available Loan Amounts:**
 - Eligible applicants may request loan amounts to a maximum of \$250,000.
 - City should consider a low-interest loan at 50% of prime over 5 years.
- **Eligibility/Priorities:**
 - Businesses/tenants within target industries
 - Projects deemed “strategically important” by City
 - Project needs to be tied to economic impact analysis (tax generation, etc). Return of Investment should exceed 2:1 (city tax revenues vs. incentive cost).
 - Project creates or retains desirable jobs (e.g. 100% of county Median Household Income)
- Loan can be forgivable for select strategic projects provided company meets performance measures including job projections (created/retained), average salary, and/or for investment.
- Claw back provisions should be incorporated within the program framework to help ensure accountability of expenditures.
- Initial funding can come from a portion of the city’s hotel/motel tax or the general fund. We recommend an initial capitalization of at least \$500,000.

2) Refine workforce threshold for office rebate projects

As West Des Moines pursues more office-type projects (see West Des Moines’ target industries that are heavily concentrated in companies that are class A and B office users) it will want to ensure that it can capture some of the smaller projects (less than 500 FTEs) that are not covered in the current policies. It will also want to ensure that a majority of these jobs are “quality jobs” (i.e. at 100% of county median household income). The policies should stipulate this.

3) Develop a city-wide redevelopment plan (See Strategy 3.3 in the Strategic Plan for more details)

The redevelopment and revitalization of older commercial areas within the city should be a critical component of a comprehensive economic development plan. We recommend that the city inventory and prioritize these sites and then assess the feasibility of offering incentives such as tax abatements to encourage owners to incorporate certain façade/design criteria and building enhancements. The development of a small business loan/grant program for facility enhancements can also include a tie to the new Strategic Projects Fund.

4) Consider instituting “softer” incentive programs such as expedited permitting and plan reviews, relocation assistance, provision of temporary space

As the city budget tightens, West Des Moines should explore other creative one-time solutions to business relocation or expansion challenges. Expedited permitting or assistance with relocation, for example, can be important factors in helping small business needs, especially.

5) Market the programs

In addition to creating an effective set of incentives – it is also critical to appropriately market these programs. In reviewing many of the Iowa communities’ economic development websites and collateral, some do an excellent job in promoting these programs and clearly articulating the programs’ guidelines and benefits to employers. West Des Moines needs to enhance its incentives marketing efforts.

5) Track outcomes and revisit in three years

The only way to know whether West Des Moines’ incentives toolbox is truly working is to periodically assess the return on investment from existing deals; and track the projects that were lost following up with companies to determine how the city’s assistance package was a determining factor in location. We would recommend that West Des Moines establish the Strategic Projects Fund and, with its other tools, evaluate the impact in three years to determine what, if any, new tools it may wish to develop or refine.

Overall, the city must continue to take a “nimble” approach to its incentives program – assessing its portfolio every several years and refining it as necessary. This flexibility will allow the City to respond swiftly to a rapidly changing market.

Review of incentive programs

This matrix looks at 6 other Iowa communities and West Des Moines. This list is not meant to be exhaustive³ but provides a quick reference point of how competitor communities are focusing incentive programs.

	Tax Abatement	Revolving Loan Fund	Reduced Land Costs	Low-Interest/ Forgivable Loan	Enterprise Zone	Other
Ankeny	Industrial Tax Abatement	Provides loans (up to \$100K to local business within city limits). Eligible projects include inventory, machinery and equipment, building or land purchase, building renovations or expansions and working capital				Special Projects Fund provides source of funding to ensure businesses can get info they need to evaluate a location in Ankeny (traffic studies, etc.) Grant awards up to \$1,500 per new job created based on combination of wage level and business' capital investment in Ankeny. For Target Industries Ten-year package of tax exemptions/rebates for construction of industrial buildings (requirement that the building constructed is at least 50,000 square feet) .
Waterloo	Consolidated Urban Revitalization Area (CURA) for property improvements Industrial Tax Abatement		Grants equivalent of "free land" through tax rebates for development occurring on private land within business parks	3 rd party low interest loan program administered and granted locally, rate varies. Loan monies use include: land, building, machinery and equipment. Qualifications: Project cost, historical & pro forma financials. Enterprise Zone	Downtown Economic Revitalization	One-stop Permitting Center
Sioux City		Loan fund providing \$100,000 or 25% of total project costs, whichever is less. Proceeds can be used for capital or fixed assets. Project must create/retain jobs. Separate revolving loan fund that provides \$10,000 or 50% of project costs as gap financing to businesses located within downtown district.		Portion of City's 1% local option sales tax is committed to E.D. programs. City uses these funds to provide direct loans to businesses based on job creation or gap financing needs for the project. Per job created and/or retained.	Available to tenants/owners of businesses and properties within downtown district who plan and complete permanent storefront and building exterior improvements in partnership with Downtown Committee.	Urban Renewal program gives City power to acquire private property through condemnation and sell property to a private redeveloper. City will many times use program in conjunction with TIF to clear slum properties.
Dubuque		Targeted primarily toward purchase of equipment (below-market interest rates and can provide gap financing)	City provides land discount for city-owned property if business commits to certain job creation	For building improvements if a qualified project locates within certain areas of city.		
Des Moines	Commercial and Industrial Tax Abatement	Loans to provide short-term financing for fixed assets, inventory and working capital to new or existing companies within the City. Max loan is \$50,000 or 50% of total project costs, whichever is greater.		Des Moines Action Loan Fund provides long-term financing for industrial and commercial expansion that creates jobs. Max amount is \$200,000, not to exceed 20% of total project costs. Up to 20-year loan term. Must create or retain one job for each \$5,000 loaned.	Enterprise Zone Incentives for Business Expansion provides tax benefits to promote econ devt and attract investment in distressed areas. Company must create at least 10 full time positions and maintain them for 10 yrs. Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization provides low-interest loans for property and site improvements. Loan is 50% of total costs, not to exceed \$15,000/project at 3% interest.	MicroLoan program used for business start-up, existing business expansion or relocation costs. Max amount is \$10,000. SBA 504 to assist small business formation and expansion, thereby creating new jobs. Loan is 40% of project cost; \$1,000,000 max.
Urbandale	Available to new or expanding industries. Under program, value added to industrial real estate is eligible for partial exemption from property taxation for five years	Provides low-interest loans to businesses that plan to make a capital investment and create new jobs opportunities and/or retain existing jobs in the city. Assistance provided to encourage new business startups, expansion/retention of existing businesses, or recruitment of out-of-state businesses .				
WEST DES MOINES	Industrial Tax Abatement (5 year sliding scale property tax abatement; eligibility – new construction in classified "industrial real estate" Limited tax abatement program for data centers	Dallas County Revolving Loan Fund providing gap financing to create capital investment in the county (rarely utilized)				Tax rebate for office projects New tax rebate for projects within "Industrial Districts". Other small Valley Junction-specific grants and assistance

³ Matrix doesn't include TIF as all cities utilize it.

