

**CITY OF RUSH CITY / RUSH CITY EDA
2019 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

RUSH CITY



Up North Starts Here

City of Rush City / Rush City EDA 2019 Economic Development Strategic Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background:

In late 2018 the City of Rush City's Economic Development Authority (EDA) began discussions on creating an economic development strategic plan to help them focus their economic development efforts and guide them down this path. In early 2019 the City of Rush City contracted with the East Central Regional Development Commission to help facilitate this project.

The Plan

In formulating a plan for this project, the Rush City EDA identified 9 key areas to focus on with this plan. The City of Rush City EDA held a Kick Off Meeting on Monday, May 20th at 5:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The purpose of this meeting was to inform attendees about the 2019 Economic Development Strategic Plan project, as well as garner their input on these topic areas for inclusion in this plan. Details on this Kick Off Meeting as well as input gathered are included with this document as Appendix A.

The sections of the Economic Development Strategic Plan focus on specific planning topics including:

- Specific geographic business areas
 - o Downtown Area
 - o Highway Business (Chisago Co. Road 30 / Old Highway 61 Corridor)
 - o Highway Business (Interstate 35 Corridor)
 - o Industrial
- Redevelopment
- Workforce
- Housing
- Childcare
- Tourism



Plan Setting

Rush City is a community of about 3,156 persons (2017 estimate) covering approximately 4.32 square miles. The City of Rush City is located along Interstate 35 in Northwest Chisago County, approximately 50 miles north of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The area prospers from local business, a federal correctional facility located in the community, agriculture, forestry, service professions, and governmental occupations. Rush City's proximity to the Twin Cities Metro Area also provides employment opportunities for residents. Natural resources such as the nearby Rush Lake and numerous parks and trails contribute to the unique character attracting visitors and residents to the Rush City community.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND STATISTICS

The identification of trends in population and other statistical and demographic data is an important part of the planning process. It can provide clues to future growth patterns and indicate what types of housing, public facilities, and other attributes may be needed in the future. For example, an increase in young couples with children would require starter housing, new parks and schools, and new or upgraded community facilities; whereas, an increase in the elderly population would lessen the need for schools and increase the need for specialized housing. This section of the Economic Development Strategic Plan contains information on Rush City's population and household characteristics.

Table 1
Historical Population Trends – City of Rush City

Year	Population	Change
1950	1175	0.152
1960	1108	-5.7%
1970	1130	0.02
1980	1198	0.06
1990	1497	0.25
2000	2112	0.411
2010	3079	0.458
2017	3156	0.025

Source: American Community Survey / US Census / MN Demographics Center.

Table 2
Breakdown of Population Ages – City of Rush City

Age	Number	Percentage
Under 5 years	153	4.90%
5 to 9 years	91	2.90%
10 to 14 years	163	5.20%
15 to 19 years	114	3.70%
20 to 24 years	336	10.80%
25 to 34 years	699	22.50%
35 to 44 years	513	16.50%
45 to 54 years	358	11.50%
55 to 59 years	165	5.30%
60 to 64 years	67	2.20%
65 to 74 years	264	8.50%
75 to 84 years	123	4.00%
85 years and over	60	1.90%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census / MN Demographics Center.

Table 3
Educational Attainment (residents aged 25 years and older)

Population 25 years and over	2249	(X)
Less than 9th grade	51	0.023
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	227	0.101
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1228	0.546
Some college, no degree	351	0.156
Associate's degree	175	0.078
Bachelor's degree	143	0.064
Graduate or professional degree	74	0.033

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 4
Housing Occupancy

HOUSING OCCUPANCY	Number	Percent
Total housing units	970	
Occupied housing units	930	95.90%
Vacant housing units	40	4.10%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 5
Number of Units in Structure

UNITS IN STRUCTURE	Number	Percent
Total housing units	970	
1-unit, detached	541	55.80%
1-unit, attached	123	12.70%
2 units	52	5.40%
3 or 4 units	40	4.10%
5 to 9 units	20	2.10%
10 to 19 units	30	3.10%
20 or more units	93	9.60%
Mobile home	71	7.30%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.00%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census



Table 6
Year Housing Structure was Built

YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT		
Total housing units	Number	Percent
Built 2014 or later	0	0.00%
Built 2010 to 2013	39	4.00%
Built 2000 to 2009	250	25.80%
Built 1990 to 1999	107	11.00%
Built 1980 to 1989	121	12.50%
Built 1970 to 1979	103	10.60%
Built 1960 to 1969	60	6.20%
Built 1950 to 1959	69	7.10%
Built 1940 to 1949	57	5.90%
Built 1939 or earlier	164	16.90%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 7
Number of Bedrooms

BEDROOMS	Number	Percentage
Total housing units	970	X
No bedroom	10	1.00%
1 bedroom	174	17.90%
2 bedrooms	362	37.30%
3 bedrooms	250	25.80%
4 bedrooms	148	15.30%
5 or more bedrooms	26	2.70%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 8
Average Number of Occupants

Unit	Number
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.52
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	1.84

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 9
Year of Occupancy

YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT	Column1	Column2
Occupied housing units	930	930
Moved in 2015 or later	146	15.70%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	287	30.90%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	345	37.10%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	81	8.70%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	17	1.80%
Moved in 1979 and earlier	54	5.80%

Table 10
Employment Status

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Column1	Column2
Population 16 years and over	2681	2681
In labor force	1077	40.20%
Civilian labor force	1077	40.20%
Employed	1011	37.70%
Unemployed	66	2.50%
Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Not in labor force	1604	59.80%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 11
Occupation

OCCUPATION	Column1	Column2
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1011	1011
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	242	23.90%
Service occupations	256	25.30%
Sales and office occupations	198	19.60%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	104	10.30%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	211	20.90%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 12
Industry of Employment

INDUSTRY	Column 1	Column 2
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1011	1011
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	11	1.10%
Construction	52	5.10%
Manufacturing	174	17.20%
Wholesale trade	25	2.50%
Retail trade	103	10.20%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	80	7.90%
Information	0	0.00%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	13	1.30%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	14	1.40%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	384	38.00%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	90	8.90%
Other services, except public administration	13	1.30%
Public administration	52	5.10%

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Table 13
Income

INCOME AND BENEFITS (IN 2017 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)	Column1	Column2
Total households	930	930
Less than \$10,000	53	5.70%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	67	7.20%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	133	14.30%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	135	14.50%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	150	16.10%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	130	14.00%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	147	15.80%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	95	10.20%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4	0.40%
\$200,000 or more	16	1.70%
Median household income (dollars)	44605	(X)
Mean household income (dollars)	56380	(X)

Source: American Community Survey / US Census.

Figure 1 Average Daily Traffic Counts

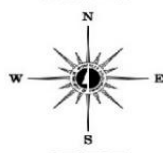
VOLUMES PREPARED BY
THE OFFICE OF
TRANSPORTATION DATA & ANALYSIS

NUMERALS INDICATE AVERAGE DAILY
TRAFFIC VOLUMES ON DESIGNATED ROADS.

PREPARED BY THE
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION DATA & ANALYSIS
IN COOPERATION WITH
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

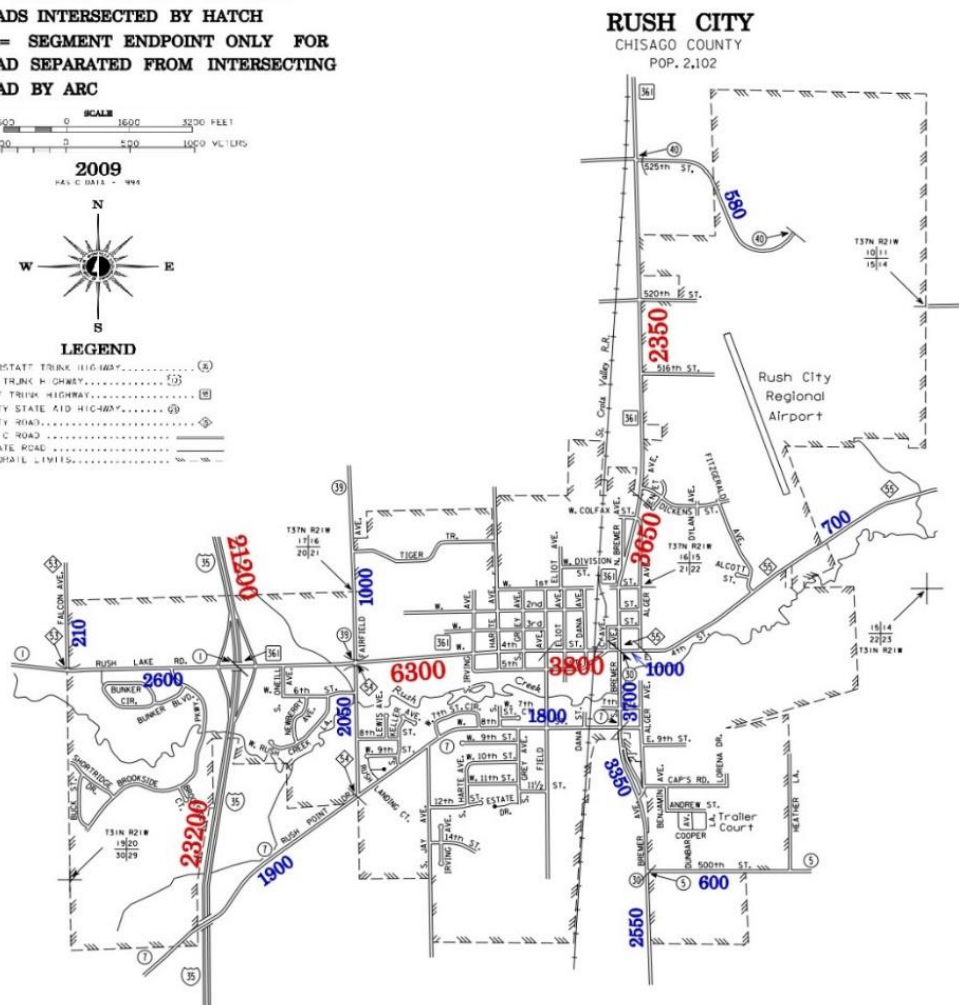
TRUNK HIGHWAY ROUTES ARE 2009 A.A.D.T. VOLUMES
COUNTY SYSTEM ROADS ARE 2009 A.A.D.T. VOLUMES

FOR DESIGNATED ROADS :
/ = SEGMENT ENDPOINT FOR ALL
ROADS INTERSECTED BY HATCH
(= SEGMENT ENDPOINT ONLY FOR
ROAD SEPARATED FROM INTERSECTING
ROAD BY ARC



LEGEND

INTERSTATE TRUNK HIGHWAY..... (E)
U.S. TRUNK HIGHWAY..... (D)
STATE TRUNK HIGHWAY..... (B)
COUNTY STATE AID HIGHWAY..... (C)
COUNTY ROAD..... (A)
FEDERAL ROAD.....
PRIVATE ROAD.....
CORPORATE LIMITS..... No. - No.



TRAFFIC VOLUMES ARE SUBJECT TO
VARIABILITY AND CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Planning Assumptions

There are many assumptions in the goals formulation process and it is necessary that they be articulated. This Economic Development Strategic Plan attempts to, at least generally, take into account all possible factors affecting future development. There are a number of things, however, which cannot be known and certain assumptions need to be made in order to qualify the basis on which planning proposals are made.

Every plan conceived is based on both implicit and explicit assumptions. An implicit assumption, for example, would be that there will be no war or other catastrophe which precludes effective planning for the future. A number of similar assumptions could be stated, but they should not be belabored. There is, however, a need to express the explicit assumptions on which this plan is based. These assumptions need to be carefully reviewed from time to time, in order to test their validity in the light of future events and experience.



Assumptions

The explicit assumptions made for this Plan include the following:

1. Rush City's long-term position in the region will continue to be an agriculture / recreational / commuter trade area as well as a "balanced, full-service community" providing housing and employment opportunities for an expanding local labor force.
2. By attracting new industries, its geographic location along Interstate 35 and Highway 30, demographics, and proximity to the Twin Cities Metro Area and other regional centers, Rush City' population and economic standing will slowly rise within the County and region.
3. The basic life style and housing tastes of the general population will slowly change including acceptance of higher density of living. Social attitudes regarding family size, consumption of goods and energy will continue to change to reflect an awareness of and a concern for the natural environment.

4. Any dramatic technological changes during the next decade are not expected to fundamentally change or influence the land use pattern or life style of Rush City residents.
5. The prime means of transportation will continue to be the automobile for at least the next 10 + years.

Planning Goals and Policies

Formulating goals and action items involves a significant thought process for any planning study. These goals and policies were produced by the Rush City Economic Development Authority (EDA) to provide the foundation to guide economic development and planning decisions.



The goals are broad general statements of value concerning the long-range future of the community. Goals are the desired objectives as expressed by the planning participants. They are meant to describe the kind of living, working and playing environments desired by the residents of the community. The primary goal of this planning process is to create a quality environment that will enhance the quality of life of city residents.

The action items are the best estimates by the EDA on how to achieve the goals at the present time. Situations will change, opportunities will avail themselves, priorities may change, and resources will always remain tight. It is not realistic to assume that the EDA will be able to implement all the action items listed – this is simply the best guess at how to achieve our goals in our current situation. The action items listed are prioritized with the highest priorities being listed first, and the lower priorities being listed later.

Goals and policies must be considered collectively. While an individual goal or policy may dictate a course, it is more likely that several policies should be considered in determining a course of action.

The Goals, Policies and Action Items from this process are as follows:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The vitality of the business community is tied directly to the vitality of a community. Not only do businesses provide jobs to residents of Rush City, residents also purchase goods and services from businesses – a complementary cycle of business growth.

A vibrant business community selling their numerous goods and services will not only aid in retaining residents in Rush City, but also aid in attracting new ones. The jobs these businesses provide will also aid in growing Rush City's population base.

Statistics show that many residents leave the City for employment. One could reasonably draw the conclusion that recruiting new and expanding existing businesses in Rush City to employ those leaving the community to work could be a win-win proposition for businesses and potential employees. Businesses would find a skilled, experienced and educated workforce, and workers could lessen commuting costs and times by working in Rush City.

This section of the economic development strategic plan is carved into four distinct geographic areas: Downtown, Highway Business (Chisago County Road 30 Corridor), Highway Business (Interstate 35 Corridor) and Industrial.

DOWNTOWN AREA

Goals:

Revitalize, grow and diversify Rush City's downtown / central business district.

Find ways to encourage new private development in the Downtown area.



Capitalize on opportunities provided by being located on the Interstate 35 / Old Highway 61 / corridors.

Market available properties and opportunities for new / relocating businesses in Rush City.

Short Term Action Items

Consider obtaining the assistance of the Minnesota Design Team or other similar organizations in an effort to obtain new ideas and perspectives on downtown revitalization.

Explore downtown marketing and promotion opportunities and ideas with organizations such as the Minnesota Chamber, Explore Minnesota Tourism and other organizations.

Consider establishing loan and / or grant programs for the downtown area to spur new business development and help upgrade existing businesses.

Work to create a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation and attraction. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, TIF and Tax Abatement, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.

Establish a committee of organizations such as the Rush City Chamber, Rush City EDA, City of Rush City, Chisago County HRA/EDA, and others for the purposes of maintaining communication regarding the status of the downtown area, and connections to resources and ideas.

Undertake a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program in the downtown area in an effort to improve communications with businesses, identify their concerns and needs, and find ways to assist them grow.

Encourage and support downtown events such as block parties, crazy days and others in an effort to drive traffic to the downtown area and businesses.

Prepare an inventory of available properties for development / redevelopment and marketing purposes in the downtown area. Help market them through a variety of ways including LOIS and other site selector portals, RFPs for city owned property, and other ways.

Work with MNDOT, Chisago County and others to find ways to try to funnel a manageable amount of traffic through the downtown area.



Consider implementing a building façade / design ordinance to maintain the consistent historic downtown feel of the downtown area.

Add a Chamber report to the EDA agenda, and submit an EDA report to the Chamber. Look for opportunities to partner.

Put a monthly list of happenings / plans for the next few months in the Industrial, Downtown, 35 Commercial & Hwy 30 corridors on the EDA agenda and share / engage Rush City Chamber, Rush City EDA, City of Rush City, Chisago County HRA/EDA, and others for the purposes of maintaining communication regarding the status of the downtown area, and connections to resources and ideas.

Develop a plan to assist businesses with ownership transition and succession planning in an effort to help retain businesses in Rush City as well as promote continued local ownership of businesses.

Work with likeminded organizations to hold career fairs for help connect businesses and local job seekers.

Work with likeminded organizations to hold entrepreneur fairs to help connect would-be entrepreneurs to resources that can assist them (Rush City EDA, MN Small Business

Development Center, SCORE, Chisago County HRA/EDA and others) to promote new business startups and opportunities in Rush City.

Actively work to redevelop blighted properties in the downtown area.

Long Term Action Items

Consider undertaking a Downtown Master Plan to help establish a long-term focus on the downtown area.

HIGHWAY BUSINESS (CHISAGO COUNTY ROAD 30 CORRIDOR)

Goals

Use new development and / or redevelopment as a catalyst for job creation and retention, new dollars being brought into the community, and the expansion of tax base.

Embrace redevelopment of underused and underdeveloped properties.

Use redevelopment as a tool to eliminate instances of substandard and blighted properties.

Use development and redevelopment as a tool to find the highest and best use for properties, employing their full potential.

Short Term Action Items

Prepare an inventory of available properties for development / redevelopment and marketing purposes. Help market it through a variety of ways including LOIS and other site selector portals, RFPs for city owned property, etc.

Work to create a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation and attraction. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, TIF and Tax Abatement, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.

Develop a marketing plan to find ways to market available properties and opportunities in Rush City to entrepreneurs, developers and others in an effort to stimulate growth.

Promote available properties that have rail access, partnering with the St. Croix Valley Railroad, to utilize this rare attribute for the benefit of business attraction, creation and retention.

Prepare a Redevelopment / Fill – In Plan for under developed and underutilized properties, seeking to find the highest and best use of these properties.

Explore opportunities for the development of additional retail areas in this area.



Undertake a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program in this area in an effort to improve communications with businesses, identify their concerns and needs, and find ways to assist them grow.

Develop a plan to assist businesses with ownership transition and succession planning in an effort to help retain businesses in Rush City as well as promote continued local ownership of businesses.

Long Term Action Items

Work with MNDOT, Chisago County and others stakeholders on planning for future access and transportation needs for roads

HIGHWAY BUSINESS (INTERSTATE 35 CORRIDOR)

Goals

Use new development as a catalyst for job creation and retention, new dollars being brought into the community, and the expansion of tax base.

Embrace redevelopment of underused and underdeveloped properties.

Use redevelopment as a tool to eliminate instances of substandard and blighted properties.

Use development and redevelopment as a tool to find the highest and best use for properties, employing their full potential.



Short Term Action Items

Prepare an inventory of available properties for development / redevelopment and marketing purposes. Help market it through a variety of ways including LOIS and other site selector portals, RFPs for city owned property, etc.

Work to create a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation and attraction. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, TIF and Tax Abatement, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.

Develop a marketing plan to find ways to market available properties and opportunities in Rush City to entrepreneurs, developers and others in an effort to stimulate growth.

Create a marketing plan for City-owned properties in an effort to market them for the highest and best use to the private sector for development.

Explore opportunities for the development of additional retail areas in this area.

Undertake a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program in this area in an effort to improve communications with businesses, identify their concerns and needs, and find ways to assist them grow.

Develop a plan to assist businesses with ownership transition and succession planning in an effort to help retain businesses in Rush City as well as promote continued local ownership of businesses.

Long Term Action Items

Work with MNDOT, Chisago County and others stakeholders on planning for future access and transportation needs for roads by Interstate 35.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial Area Goals:

Understand that industrial and manufacturing businesses provide good paying jobs

Capitalize on opportunities provided by being located on the Interstate 35 / Chisago County Road 30 corridors.

Encourage a steady rate of industrial growth providing employment opportunities for a broad range of skills.

Promote the growth and diversification of Rush City's economy ensuring it is a "full service" community with a broad economic base.

Promote Rush City as a thriving community actively seeking to partner with business and industry seeking new sites and stressing the natural amenities of the Rush City area to attract a wide range of industries in a small-town environment.

Encourage new private development.

Prepare a community inventory for development and marketing purposes. Consider using the options / RFP method of attracting amenities deemed crucial by the community.



Short Term Action Items:

Seek partnerships with other local units of government and organizations on economic development efforts for the City of Rush City that will focus on developing and strengthening existing businesses in Rush City, as well as recruiting new businesses to the community.

Work to create a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation and attraction. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, TIF and Tax Abatement, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.

Prepare an inventory of available industrial properties for development / redevelopment and marketing purposes. Help market it through a variety of ways including LOIS and other site selector portals, RFPs for city owned property, etc.

Consider creating a business incubator and / or a “makers space” to help nurture new businesses.

Promote rail based available industrial areas

Market available properties and opportunities for new / relocating businesses in Rush City.

Develop a plan to assist businesses with ownership transition and succession planning in an effort to help retain businesses in Rush City as well as promote continued local ownership of businesses.



Revisit Rush City’s zoning ordinances, districts and maps as well as commercial and industrial land use ordinances on a regular basis to ensure that future development is compatible with neighboring uses and that they promote healthy growth of the community.

Encourage the Rush City Economic Development Authority in an effort to assist businesses by capitalizing on local business community technical skills, local colleges, Chamber, etc.

Explore opportunities for the development of additional Industrial areas in Rush City.

Leveraging existing transportation network to grow existing and attract new businesses.

Expand industrial property – infrastructure, etc.

Undertake a University of Minnesota Extension Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program in an effort to assist in growing local businesses and create new jobs.

Convene local and regional telecommunication players and advocates in an effort to promote the strengthening of local broadband internet. Explore grant opportunities to this end from the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) Office of Broadband, and others.

Work with likeminded organizations to hold career fairs for help connect businesses and local job seekers.

Work with likeminded organizations to hold entrepreneur fairs for help connect would-be entrepreneurs to resources that can assist them (Rush City EDA, MN Small Business Development Center, SCORE, Chisago County HRA/EDA and others) to promote new business startups and opportunities in Rush City.

Create a local manufactures association in an effort to foster networking amongst local businesses, as well as connect them to resources and assistance to help them grow and excel.

Promote manufacturing month (October) and hold events around it. Connect manufacturing to schools in an effort to help develop future workforce.

Work to create a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation and attraction. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, TIF and Tax Abatement, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.

Connect businesses and consumers by taking advantage of Rush City’s transportation & geographic attributes.

Capitalize on the area’s abundance of natural resources and agriculture products.

Promote industrial / manufacturing businesses as a source of good paying jobs

Work to promote and grow existing businesses in Rush City’s industrial areas.

Promote development that will strengthen the sustainability of the community over the long term through tax base, jobs, and new dollars brought into the community.

Partner with local and regional business development organizations such as the University of MN Extension Business/Retention & Expansion Program, the Initiative Foundation, East Central Regional Development Commission, the MN Small Business Development Center, and others to explore new business assistance programs and learn from best practices.

Long Term Action Items:

Work to have new industrial areas certified as “shovel ready” for future development.



REDEVELOPMENT

Available, undeveloped land in certain areas of Rush City can be scarce or unavailable, and redevelopment of underutilized land may be the only option available. While infill and redevelopment may have points of hardship, there are also many benefits.



Goals

Use redevelopment as a catalyst for job creation and retention, new dollars being brought into the community, and the expansion of tax base.

Embrace redevelopment of underused and underdeveloped properties.

Use redevelopment as a tool to eliminate instances of substandard and blighted properties.

Use redevelopment as a tool to find the highest and best use for properties, employing their full potential.

Realize that redevelopment of property is necessary not only for health and safety reasons, but also a that land is scarce in specific areas.

See redevelopment as a catalyst for further development.

Short Term Action Items

Prepare an inventory of available properties for redevelopment and marketing purposes. Help market it through a variety of ways including LOIS and other site selector portals, RFPs for city owned property, etc.

Develop a marketing plan to find ways to market available properties and opportunities in Rush City to entrepreneurs, developers and others in an effort to stimulate growth.

Create a marketing plan for City-owned properties in an effort to market them for the highest and best use to the private sector for development.

Work to create a “toolbox” of tools to assist with redevelopment. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, TIF and Tax Abatement, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.

Consider creating a demolition / blighted property remediation loan / grant fund.

Convene partners such as the City of Rush City, Rush City EDA, Chisago County, Chisago County HRA/EDA, MN DEED, the Initiative Foundation, East Central Regional Development Commission and others to identify resources and programs to assist with redevelopment.

Prepare a Redevelopment / Fill – In Plan for under development and underutilized properties, seeking to find the highest and best use of these properties.

Long Term Action Items

Consider undertaking a Downtown Master Plan.

Make redevelopment a component of the Rush City Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

WORKFORCE

The availability of a ready and skilled workforce is vital for the expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses into the community.

Goals

See that a skilled and available workforce is a key component of business retention, attraction and recruitment in Rush City.

Know that workforce, housing, childcare and business are integral and interdependent on each other for the success of Rush City.

Short Term Action Items

Partner with private industry, Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services, Inc., Pine Technical & Community College, Anoka Ramsey College, Chisago County HRA/EDA, GPS::45::93, the Initiative Foundation, the East Central Regional Development Commission, and other organizations to connect with resources to upgrade the skills of our existing workforce, and attract new people to the Rush City workforce.

Picking up where the public sector leaves off, partner with the private sector and philanthropists and philanthropic organizations to undertake career training and workforce development initiatives.

Connect businesses to workforce recruitment and development resources.

Long Term Action Items

Undertake a workforce strategic plan to identify needs and opportunities for workforce development.



Housing

Having an adequate supply of housing, in all types and price points is crucial to the survivability of any community, not to mention its ability to grow. Housing must be responsive to the needs of the community – from affordable starter homes all the way through to accessible, single story and assisted living to promote lifelong livability in Rush City. Without a reasonable supply of available housing options, potential new residents, and for that matter, existing residents looking for a change will be forced to look elsewhere.

Goals

Embrace the further development of housing as a tool of growth for the City of Rush City.

See housing as a way to attract workforce, which will spur new business development and growth.

Maintain and enhance existing residential areas and encourage new residential development.

Use housing to encourage life-long residency in the City of Rush City. This includes encouraging the development of apartments and assisted living facilities to allow longtime residents to remain in the community while at the same time keeping their independence and quality of life, and freeing up their previous housing for new residency.



Short Term Action Items:

Promote the recently completed housing study as a catalyst for new development, and actively seek to implement its action items.

Prepare a database of available housing – both properties that are for sale and for rent. Consider creating a centralized website portal for this to assist people with finding housing as a tool for community growth.

Actively market the community to housing developers – single family homes, condos, apartments, etc.

Ensure a safe and neat community by enforcing zoning controls mitigating occurrences of blight within the City.

Develop a toolbox of programs and incentives to encourage new single family and multifamily housing development.

Upgrade older residential areas by eliminating substandard housing and conditions of blight.

Protect residential areas from industrial encroachment and other incompatible land uses.

Garner input from, and be responsive to the private sector (home builders / owners) in regard to future planning and zoning controls.

Consider applying for “Small Cities Housing Grant” from the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development to assist homeowners with energy efficiency costs.

Plan adequate and appropriate areas for residential land uses to insure the economical extension of public utilities.

Promote sustainable housing opportunities within the community through grant opportunities for housing rehabilitation, foreclosure prevention, and first time home owner programs, etc.

Promote environmentally sustainable & energy efficient construction and rehabilitation practices.

Collaborate with community partners in working towards common housing related goals.

Revisit the City’s ordinances related to subdivisions and planned unit developments on a regular basis.

Make referrals to organizations that promote sustainable housing options. Organizations such as the Minnesota Home Ownership Center, Central Minnesota Housing Partnership and others are available to assist in counseling would-be homeowners, and struggling homeowners.

Long Term Action Items:

Update the housing study as needed.

CHILDCARE

The availability of ample and quality childcare is crucial to a business looking to recruit new employees. Without a safe near-by place for their children to be while employees are at work, businesses will have difficulties securing a workforce.



Goals

Recognize that childcare is a vital component of workforce availability.

Work to expand the availability of quality childcare in Rush City.

Understand that availability of childcare is a contributing factor to residential growth, and ultimately workforce and business growth.

Short Term Action Items

Conduct a childcare study that identifies the true need in Rush City and outlines a plan to meet the need and connects to resources to assist.

Convene resource providers such as the Initiative Foundation, Child Care Aware at Pine Technical and Community College, DEED, Chisago County Childcare Licensing, Chisago

County HRA/EDA, City & EDA, ECRDC, First Children's Finance, private business, the Faith Community and others to discuss childcare related issues and assistance resources.

Long Term Action Items

Use childcare availability as an attraction tool for businesses and residents.

TOURISM

Tourism in Rush City and the surrounding area has been identified as an area of potential growth for the community. With our proximity to the Twin Cities Metro Area, our location on major transportation routes, and the abundance of nearby natural resources, Rush City has much untapped potential.

Goals

Capitalize on the amount of traffic that goes through the community on a daily basis

Capitalize on the area's amenities and natural resources

Short Term Action Items

Consider undertaking a Hotel Study. Seek out hotel developers and offer financing mechanisms and incentives to attract lodging development.

Convene partners like the Highway 61 Coalition, Explore Minnesota Tourism, the Rush City Chamber, The Rush City EDA, Initiative Foundation, ECRDC, neighboring local units of government and similar organizations to find ways to work together to market Rush City and the surrounding area for tourism purposes.

Create Rush City tourism and marketing plan.





Long Term Action Items

Implementation

Use and flexibility is required for an economic development strategic plan to be an effective tool. Things will no doubt change dramatically in the City of Rush City over the next 5 + years. This plan will need to have flexibility to react to these changes.

Providing suggested implementation strategies / action items is one of the best ways to implement an economic development plan. Focusing on these action items allow the use of many tools over time to achieve your desired results and outcomes. The methods and ways of today may be outdated in ten years. Elected officials, appointed Commission members and City staff will need a current

working knowledge of all of the means in which the goals, policies and action items presented in the plan can be attained.

This plan lists a number of strategies that, when combined, have the potential to positively impact the future of Rush City. The City's resources are typically scarce, so it is not realistic to assume that Rush City can implement all of them at once. Therefore, it's necessary to focus the City's resources on those that have the most potential to have the biggest impact.

Review and Revision

Economic development strategic planning is a continuous process and thus this plan should be monitored and updated when necessary. The EDA Board should carefully review proposed changes and their implications and actively seek input from residents and businesses on such proposals. In addition, every year the entire economic development strategic plan should be reviewed and modified to ensure that it is an up-to-date expression of community goals and intentions.

Implementation Steps

- Each year, City staff should brief the EDA on the "state of the Economic Development Strategic Plan." This briefing should reacquaint the EDA Board Members with the content of the Plan, discuss emerging facts that have a bearing on the accuracy of the Plan projections, discuss new, expanded, relocated and closed businesses, along with other changes and activities within the last year and those on the docket for the upcoming year, and suggest an annual agenda of planning activities to assist in the implementation of the Plan.
- Review the Plan in three years and again in five years to determine whether the Plan recommendations are still current. Revise those sections that are determined to be in need of an update.