CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING COMMUNICATION

ITEM: Approval of Economic Development Action Plan **DATE:** July 24, 2017

RESOLUTION: Approval of 2017 Economic Development Action Plan

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Unknown at this time.

SYNOPSIS: At the May 31, 2016 City Council meeting, the Council expressed concerns about the City's Economic Development program. The Plan that staff was working under was prepared by Angelou Economics and it was approved in 2009. Since that time the "Great Recession" has occurred and the local and national economies have undergone drastic transformations.

On June 13, 2016, the City Council authorized staff to retain Angelou Economics to prepare an update of the 2009 Plan. Working with an appointed advisory committee and many hours of one on one interviews as well as focus group the consultant prepared the attached updated plan. The Plan was also reviewed by members of the WestLAB committee and their recommendations were incorporated into the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council pass a resolution approving the 2017 Economic Development Action Plan.

Lead Staff Member: Clyde Evans, AICP, Director of Community and Economic Development

STAFF REVIEWS

Department Director	Clyde Evans, Community and Economic Development Director CEE
Appropriations/Finance	
Legal	RTS
Agenda Acceptance	RTJ

PUBLICATION(S) (if applicable)

Published In	N/A
Date(s) Published	
Letter sent to surrounding property owners	

SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW (if applicable)

Committee	N/A		
Date Reviewed			
Recommendation	Yes ☐	No ☐	Split ☐

Attachments:

Exhibit I - 2017 Economic Development Action Plan.
Exhibit II Resolution

EXHIBIT I

City of West Des Moines
Economic Development Strategy

Prepared by AngelouEconomics for the City of West Des Moines, Iowa

June 14, 2017

angeloueconomics

EXHIBIT I

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Preface

The West Des Moines 2017 Economic Development Strategy meets the community with a similar circumstance to that of the 2009 Strategy, with the community making good pace in economic growth and with a dedicated team of economic developers to undertake the efforts to sustain it.

This Strategy is a product of stakeholder involvement, analysis of the local business climate, and identification of the assets and challenges that exist in West Des Moines today. While the previous strategy focused the community's efforts on a multitude of recommendations, this current strategy attempts to bring focus to the economic development vision of West Des Moines and precision to the efforts to meet the community's economic development goals.

Engaged leadership from elected officials, business leaders, and community advocates is the key to implementing the recommendations found in this strategy. It is only through collective action that great accomplishments like attracting new jobs and investment, strengthening the local workforce, and increasing the quality of life can be realized.

Thus, this strategy does not only contain recommendations for the economic development team, but for the community of West Des Moines as a whole. Progress on the economic development goals featured in this strategy will be achieved through consistent and well-planned efforts by the entire community.

> "Continue recruiting and enticing the right type of businesses who employ educated workers - they in turn bring the employees and families that buy homes and add to quality of brain trust in the city."
>
> ***-Local Stakeholder***

> "[West Des Moines] is a suburb that allows easy living for families, young professionals, and retirees. The community has great schools, plenty of restaurants and shopping..."
>
> ***-Local Stakeholder***

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Strategy is part of a four phase process of stakeholder engagement, market assessment, target industry analysis, and strategic recommendations. Each phase has informed the recommendations made throughout this document, in particular the engagement with the community. West Des Moines has the capacity to build a stronger and more sustainable economy by putting their full support into economic development efforts and working together for the common goal of retaining and attracting businesses and investment.

In the document that follows, the first three phases of the planning process are detailed and the findings that they produced is presented to provide a greater sense of the challenges this Strategy is set to meet and the local assets the community needs to leverage in order to continue its success.

The steering committee, the economic development team, and City officials have been vital to the process of developing this strategy. We now call on business and community leaders to work in coordination with these groups to ensure that implementation of this strategy is efficient and timely. It is only through collaboration that economic development planning efforts can be successful.

Executive Summary: Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Introduction

The economic development planning process began with a series of interviews and focus groups centering on business climate and quality of life issues. Over 120 individuals participated in interviews and focus groups. Following these meetings, an online survey of residents and business owners garnered over 175 responses.

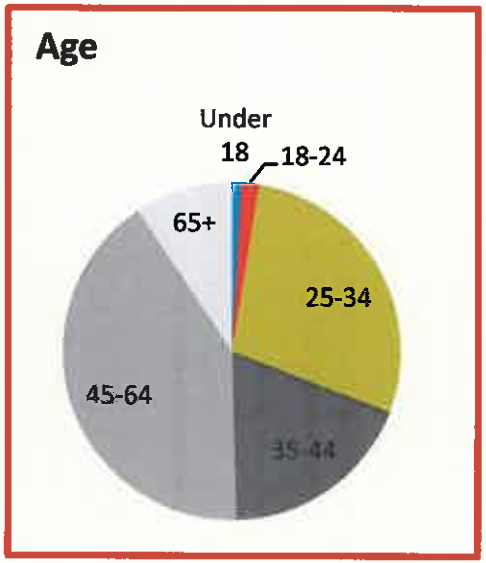
The feedback received from the community was essential for each of the following phases of the plan. In particular, the stakeholder engagement process highlighted the changes in the community since the previous economic development plan and the developing vision for growth. Overall, the stakeholder engagement process, along with the project steering committee, was an important part of building grassroots support for economic development in West Des Moines.

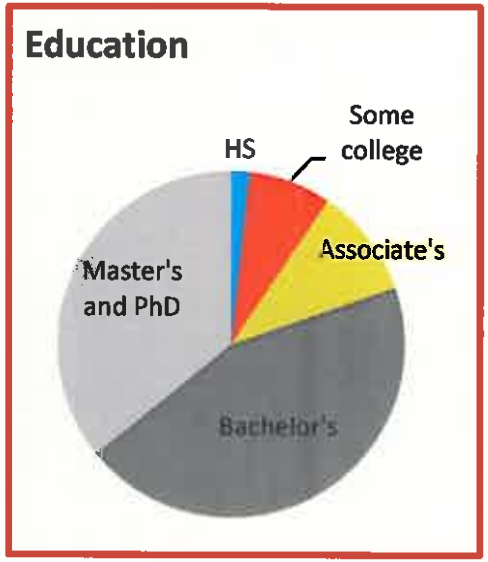
Resident Feedback

When asked what are the most significant challenges facing West Des Moines today, residents identified local property taxes, cost of living, and mobility as the areas of greatest concern. Residents were also asked to compare a variety of factors based on their perceived important and their satisfaction of the factor as witnessed in the local community. Schools, community appearance, and cost of living topped the list in terms of importance. Some of the top factors did not rate quite as highly in terms of satisfaction, however. The chart to the right displays the difference.

Resident Comparison of Importance vs. Satisfaction

	Importance (1 - 5)	Satisfaction (1 - 5)	Difference
Quality of public schools	4.51	3.78	0.73
Community appearance	4.50	4.13	0.37
Cost of living	4.43	3.19	1.24
Affordable healthcare	4.36	3.23	1.13
Parks and resources for recreation	4.33	3.94	0.39
Local property taxes	4.31	2.88	1.43
Affordable housing	4.30	3.15	1.15
City infrastructure	4.30	3.72	0.58
Available jobs	4.25	3.6	0.65





Executive Summary: Stakeholder Engagement

Business Feedback

Business owners and managers identified different challenges for the community. The top three challenges they identified were the available talent pool, resources for business support, and access to capital. Business survey respondents were also asked to rate a variety of factors for community success. They identified access to customers, quality of life, and the ability to attract and retain skilled employees as the most important. Unlike the resident respondents, there was generally a smaller gap between the importance and satisfaction of each factor. Business owners rated the local quality of life and quality of public schools particularly high.

Responses came from a variety of industries, as displayed to the right, but many were from the service sector. For most of them, the primary reasons that they had decided to establish their business in West Des Moines center on the quality of life and their ties to the community.

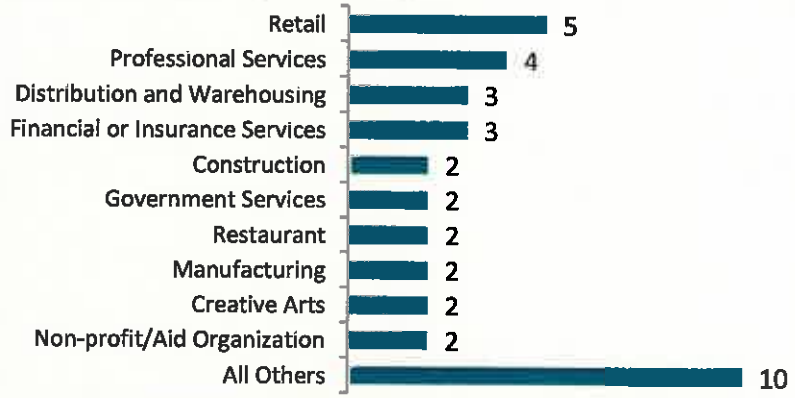
Summary

Respondents to the online survey efforts, like the focus group participants, were generally optimistic about the future of the community and the quality of life they would be able to have. Workforce attraction was a clear challenge that business owners saw for the current or near term. However, business owners too had great optimism about West Des Moines and the overall climate for growth.

Business Comparison of Importance vs. Satisfaction

	Importance (1 - 5)	Satisfaction (1 - 5)	Difference
Access to customers	4.27	3.41	0.86
Quality of life	4.18	4.19	-0.01
Ability to attract and retain skilled employees	4.14	3.27	0.87
Branding/image	4.14	3.32	0.82
Aesthetics/appearance	4.09	3.59	0.5
Tax climate	3.91	3	0.91
Entrepreneurial environment	3.86	3.14	0.72
Ability to take an active role in the community	3.77	3.77	0
Utilities and infrastructure	3.77	3.52	0.25
Operating costs	3.68	3.33	0.35
Quality of public schools	3.68	3.95	-0.27

Respondents by Industry



Executive Summary: Market Assessment

Market Assessment Introduction

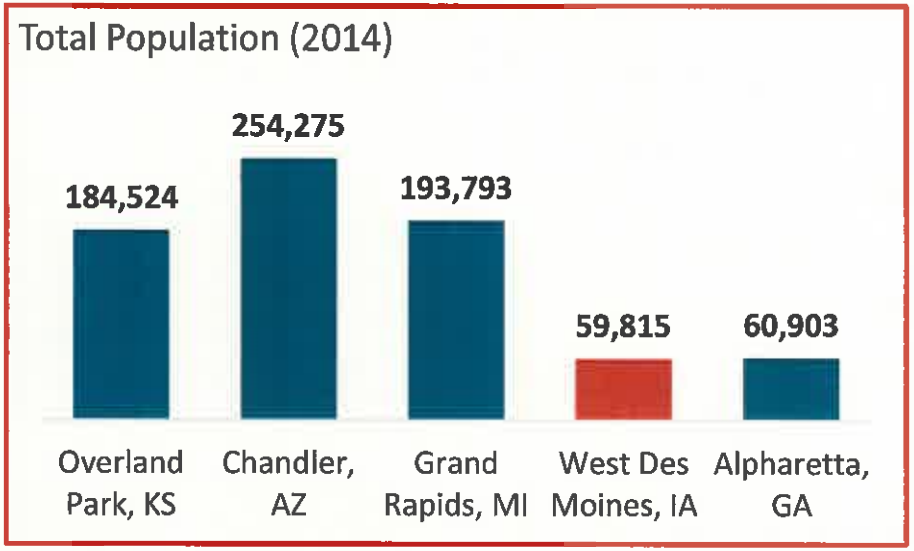
The goal of a market assessment is to gain a better understanding of how a local economy works and identify the potential for economic development. Through our assessment of West Des Moines, we have distilled a discussion of this potential, through current **assets to leverage** and **challenges to overcome**. The best visioning of economic development policy is to understand that local or regional resources are limited and attempts to channel efforts into specific areas of strength for the community. Thus, identifying the assets and challenges allows for a more actionable economic development strategy for the community.

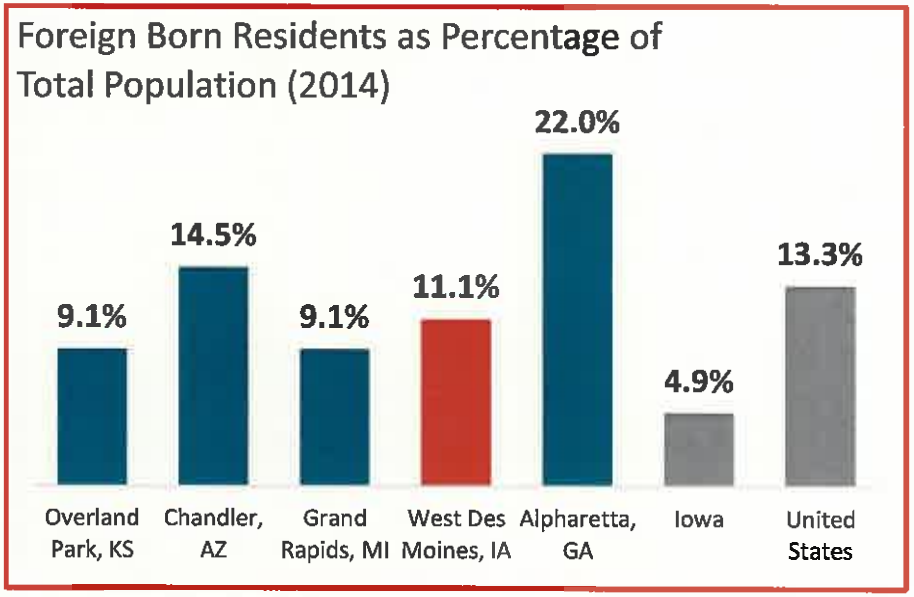
Throughout this market assessment, West Des Moines is benchmarked against four competitor communities.

Current Economic Climate

To give a sense of the size of the other communities, West Des Moines is the smallest, as well as the least dense. While there is ample room for growth within the community, being able to offer a dense, walkable community will allow West Des Moines to remain a competitive destination for young professionals.

The city has more than double the share of foreign born residents than does Iowa, but is still lower than the US average and two of the benchmarks. Foreign born residents are more likely to start a business. As such, this measure is not just a way of measuring local diversity, but of measuring the capacity for small business development.





Source: US Census Bureau

Executive Summary: Market Assessment

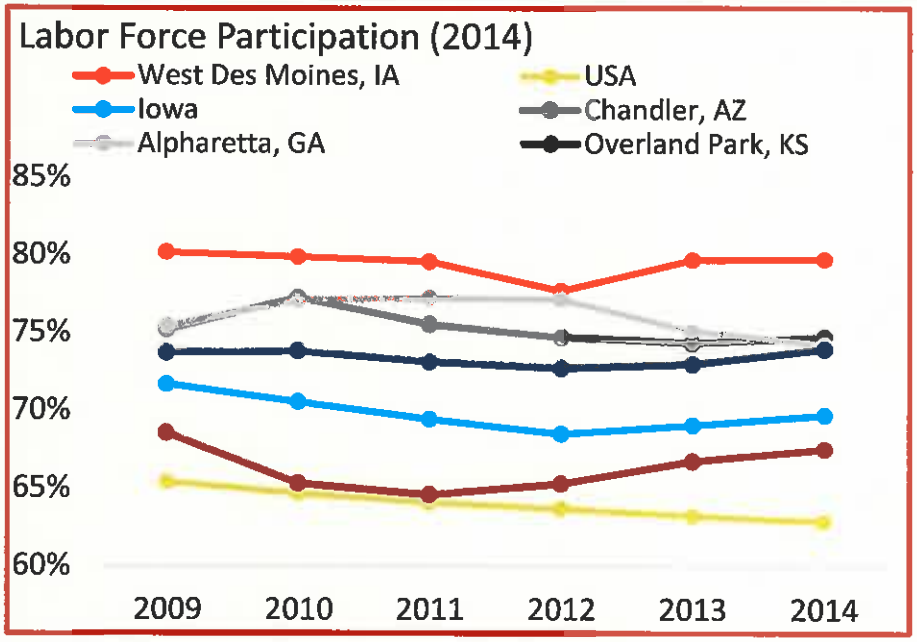
Current Economic Climate

The labor force is composed of both those who are employed and those who are looking for work. The ratio of the labor force to the overall population is one indicator of the overall health of a local economy. However, if participation is high and unemployment is low, employers may find it hard to fill certain positions because of the low supply of talent or individuals who could be encouraged to enter the labor force.

West Des Moines has the highest labor force participation rate in comparison to the benchmarks. Participation is considerably higher than what is seen nationally. While exhibiting some of the gradual decline that the state of Iowa and the US overall saw just after the recession, participation rates are nearing pre-recession levels. This indicates that both the local economy is relatively productive and that it may be hard for some employers to find talent.

New business formation is another key figure for determining local economic health. Over time, business establishments will enter and exit a local market. The net change is what can tell us the most about how the local economy grew.

At the regional level, over 1,200 establishments were created and about 970 exited in the Des Moines metro in 2014. In summary, the Des Moines metro gained 243 new business establishments. This represents a 1.8% increase from the previous year.



New Business Formation (2014)

	Establishments	Entries	Exits	Net	Change from Past Year
Atlanta MSA	116,898	13,766	11,262	2,504	2.2%
Des Moines MSA	13,763	1,216	973	243	1.8%
Grand Rapids MSA	16,457	1,321	1,162	159	1.0%
Kansas City MSA	46,616	5,238	3,742	1,496	3.3%
Phoenix MSA	78,796	9,242	7,501	1,741	2.2%

Sources: US Census Bureau, AngelouEconomics

Executive Summary: Market Assessment

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
High quality educational system	Lack of demographic diversity
Strong insurance and finance sectors	Public transit system lacks integration
Family friendly city, High quality of life	Tough to recruit talent for certain industries
Expanding employer base	Most of city lacks a "sense of place"
Attractive retail offerings, modern infrastructure	Lack of consistent image of city to broader region
High household income	
Interstate highway connectivity	

Opportunities	Threats
Leverage top-rated local educational institutions	Increased congestion from residents commuting outside West Des Moines to work
Becoming a hub for data centers to build a stronger technology cluster	Lack of connectivity and "sense of place" within community might hinder young talent from residing in WDM
Leverage family friendly, suburban atmosphere, and affordable housing to attract talent	Spatial mismatch of jobs/residents
Expanding entrepreneurial activity from growing talent pool	
Reinvestment in Historic West Des Moines/Valley Junction	

Executive Summary: Market Assessment

Assets to Leverage

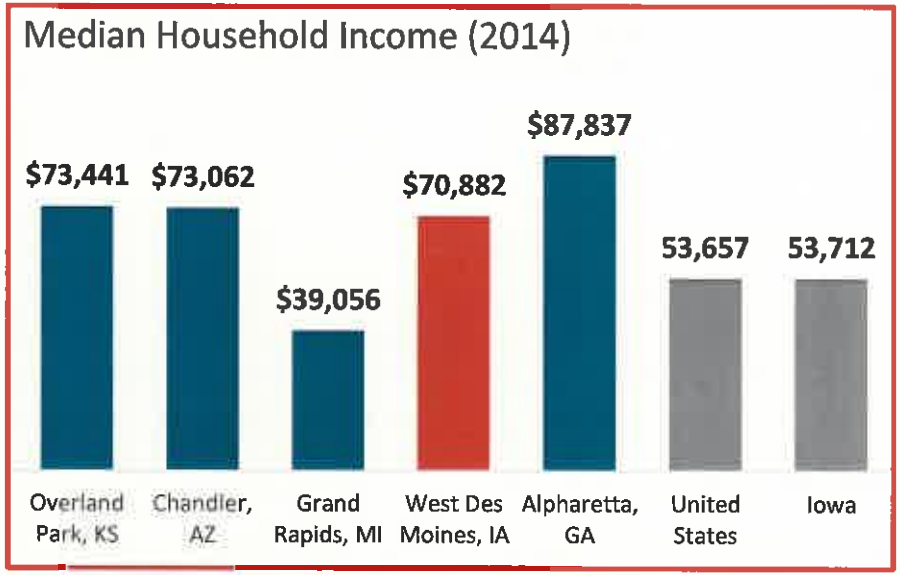
High standard of living

At just over $70,000, West Des Moines has a higher median household income than both the US and the rest of Iowa. Compared to the benchmark communities, household incomes near those in Overland Park and Chandler.

While a few of the benchmarks may have higher median incomes, West Des Moines has the second lowest cost of living. Taken at the Metropolitan level, this index shows that incomes in West Des Moines go farther than they do within the other high income benchmark communities (in particular Chandler). Thus, households in West Des Moines making the median income can afford a higher standard of living than in these competitor communities. This assessment is supported by the feedback received from residents.

Strong public schools

The quality of public schools in West Des Moines is a strong asset for workforce and business attraction. Graduation rates and standardized test scores are above state averages, which are already higher than the nation at large. West Des Moines Community School's 4 year graduation rates between 2014 and 2015 were at 94%, which comes in as the second highest among the benchmark cities. The performance of local schools can also be a positive sign for the local talent pipeline and the potential for advanced training programs.



Cost of Living Index (2016)*

	Composite	Housing	Utilities	Transportation	Health Care
West Des Moines	89.9	81.3	98.1	101.7	98.5
Alpharetta	98	86.2	105.2	102.3	107.5
Chandler	95.9	96	95.1	100.5	99.6
Grand Rapids	88.5	78.3	90.6	94.1	88.8
Overland Park	92.3	78.1	83.8	93.6	98

*Index provided at MSA level

Sources: US Census Bureau, C2ER

Executive Summary: Market Assessment

Assets to Leverage

Proactive economic development

West Des Moines has been successful at attracting companies and expanding targeted industries due to the work of the economic development team and the winning messaging they have created. Their efforts have led to stronger clusters in Information Technology and Finance & Insurance, amongst other industries.

This kind of proactive economic development is not something to take for granted, but is something to be leveraged for additional attraction and expansion opportunities. Being able to market success and provide testimonials of businesses who have found success in West Des Moines is the next step.

Regional cooperation

Through the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the region has been able to work together and prove that economic development is more than a zero-sum game. This is an important sign for business owners and site location consultants when they look to relocate or expand.

When a region is organized around common economic development goals, businesses can expect that they will have a committed team devoted to their success and connection to community resources when they may be looking to expand. A multitude of other regional organizations and service providers, like the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau and Des Moines Area Community College, provide platforms for bettering business support in the wider metro area.

Recent Expansions/Relocations

Company/Project Name
HyVee Corporation
Business Solvers
INTL FCStone
ePATHUSA
Innovative Injection Technology
IMT
FunnelWise
Microsoft Project Osmium
Microsoft Project Alluvion

> "We have enjoyed the proximity to city life, while West Des Moines maintains the small town feel to it. Would really like to see them continue...to make West Des Moines not only a great place to raise a family, but a great small town feel to it."
>
> ***-Local Stakeholder***

Assets to Leverage

Historic West Des Moines

The Historic West Des Moines commercial district is a unique cultural asset for the city. It is home to unique local businesses and the gather place for community events. Historic downtowns and Main Streets are community assets that can serve to support small business development, talent attraction, and community engagement.

The surrounding neighborhood offers housing products and lot sizes not seen in other areas of the city. The walkability of this neighborhood and the connection to the Valley Junction commercial district offers a desirable area of town for new families, small business owners, and retirees.

> "[A sustainable economy includes] Mixed zoning: many young people want to live, work, and shop within walking distance. Public private partnerships that allow for this will put WDM ahead of other suburbs in the area."
>
> ***-Local Stakeholder***

Low utility costs

Low utility costs have allowed West Des Moines to stay competitive for a number of different industries. The data center industry has taken notice of this competitive advantage. West Des Moines is particularly competitive on electric rates in comparison to the benchmarks. Statewide policies to target the data center industry have also allowed Iowa, and thereby West Des Moines, to remain particularly competitive. Leverage this competitive advantage for other industries will be important for diversification efforts.

Average Electric Rates (2015), cents per kWh

	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
West Des Moines	9.21	7.24	4.68
Alpharetta	12.37	10.22	6.48
Chandler	11.32	9.06	6.29
Grand Rapids	14.58	10.48	7.52
Overland Park	11.67	9.61	8.85

Source: Energy Information Agency

Challenges to Overcome

Workforce attraction/skills gap

Workforce attraction is a challenge for many cities in the region, as well as for the Midwest as a whole. West Des Moines may be fairing better than other cities within its Iowa Workforce Development region (which includes the counties designated to the right), but overall trends will have an impact on West Des Moines over time. Within the region, sales, office support, and computer science positions see the most vacancies. West Des Moines is home to many businesses that require these occupations and will need to monitor vacancies closely to ensure that employers are finding the workers they need.

Lacking a "sense of place"

Not including Historic West Des Moines, much of West Des Moines suffers from a lack of aesthetically interesting architecture or natural features. This is not true over every area of the city, but general lack of cohesion of the built environment leaves visitors less able to recall the overall image of West Des Moines. This contributes to a diminished "sense of place," and ultimately a weaker sense of community.

Local mobility

Residents of West Des Moines primarily rely on their vehicles for commuting to work. As the surveys indicate, residents are already concerned with mobility. Over time, this pattern may lead to increasingly congested roadways. The spatial mismatch of jobs/residents will compound this problem.

Current Vacancies by Occupational Category*

	Percent of Total Vacancies	Average Vacancies per Day
Sales & Related	14.3%	1,094
Office & Administrative Support	13.3%	1,019
Computer & Mathematical Science	8.6%	661
Transportation & Material Moving	8.1%	622
Food Preparation & Serving Related	7.4%	566

*Vacancies reported as of July 2014 to 2015 for Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marshall, Polk, Poweshiek, Story, and Warren Counties.

Means of Commuting to Work (2014)

	WDM	Iowa	US
Drove alone	86.9%	80.8%	76.5%
Carpooled	7.4%	8.6%	9.2%
Public Transit	0.7%	1.0%	5.2%
Walked	0.8%	3.4%	2.7%
Other means	0.5%	1.4%	1.9%
Worked at Home	3.5%	4.8%	4.5%

Sources: Iowa Workforce Development, *Workforce Needs Assessment*; US Census Bureau

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Target Industry Introduction

The target industry analysis serves as a means for providing focus to the business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts. The process of selection helps to ensure that the industries selected meet the goals of the community, have seen regional or national growth, or that local assets will be particularly helpful in attraction efforts.

Selection Process

Step 1: Identifying Local Clusters

Most who are employed in West Des Moines live outside of the city. Likewise, the majority of residents do not work within the city. If we look at Polk County, which is the employment center of the region, we can identify five significant clusters (as determined by the location quotient, described to the right). Those clusters include Finance & Insurance, Management, Wholesale Trade, Construction, and Information.

Finance & Insurance is a particularly significant part of the local economy and for the region. Alone it accounts for over 36,000 jobs and is three times more concentrated in Polk County than would be expected based on the industries extent nationally.

Information, while making up a much smaller share of the economy than Finance & Insurance, is particularly important because this sector contains data service and data center companies that have seen recent growth in West Des Moines.

Local Clusters		
Sector	Polk LQ	Polk Employment
Finance & Insurance	3.04	36,274
Management	1.70	7,731
Wholesale Trade	1.31	15,981
Construction	1.10	14,980
Information	1.03	6,183

Location Quotient (LQ)
A calculated ratio between the local economy and the national economy that indicates industry concentration.
LQ = 1.0 indicates average concentration
LQ > 2.0 indicates a strong cluster
LQ < 0.5 indicates a weak cluster

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, AngelouEconomics

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Step 2: Measuring Opportunity for Growth

Growth is also a consideration for targeting industries. Health Care, Professional Services, Management, and Accommodation & Food are the sectors that have seen significant national growth. Each of these sectors also have a presence in West Des Moines. A more detailed look at these trends is found in the appendix.

Step 3: Cataloging the Regional Asset Base

Assets within the region should also be considered when targeting industries. West Des Moines, in particular, benefits from a growing employer base and high quality of life. Proactive economic development and a business friendly environment provide benefit for recruiting new businesses and helping current ones expand.

Step 4: Aligning with the Community Vision

Finally, the community's vision for local economic development must be taken into consideration when targeting industries. Through the stakeholder engagement process, residents and business owners highlighted tech-related businesses and professional services as industries that would be the right fit for West Des Moines.

Competitive Industry Assets

- Growing Employer Base
- Regional Economic Development Cooperation
- Quality Schools
- High Standard of Living
- Historic West Des Moines/Valley Junction
- Proactive Economic Development
- Business Friendly

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Industries Selected

The industries found in the chart below are the results of the process previously described. Each industry has a number of niches that are either mature clusters found in the local area currently, or are more specific targets for diversification and attraction/business development efforts.

Economic Development Activities	Finance & Insurance	Information Technology Services	Life Sciences	Professional Business Services
Core Targets • Retention • Expansion	Insurance Carriers Mortgage Brokers	Data Centers	Ambulatory Health Care	Engineering Services Legal Services
Diversification Targets • Attraction • Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	Big Data Analytics	Web App Development Cyber Security	Biotechnology	Marketing Consulting Supply Chain Management
Emerging Targets • Expansion • Attraction • Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	Insurance Platform Development Predictive Analytics	Custom Computer Programming Telematics	Home Health Services Precision Agriculture	Co-working Spaces

Finance & Insurance

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Rationale

Finance & Insurance is a significant part of West Des Moines' economy. Within Polk and Dallas Counties there are approximately 48,000 persons employed in the industry and 1,400 business establishments. Many parts of the industry have seen growth over the last five or ten years. Dallas County has seen a significant increase in employment since 2014. Employment has remained steady in Polk County since the end of the recession.

The region has built at strong workforce for Finance & Insurance, which is a key component to the industry's local success. There is appropriate infrastructure and support from educational institutions to lay the platform for future growth. The trends of this industry point to greater reliance on data science and product customization, meaning that West Des Moines should focus on being able to attract talent to support these local businesses.

Combined County Snapshot*

2015 Employees: 48,000
2015 Total Payroll: $4 B
2015 Establishments: 1,400

Industry Criteria:

- ✓ Skilled workforce
- ✓ Proximity to client businesses
- ✓ Telecommunications infrastructure
- ✓ Proximity to colleges and universities
- ✓ International airport access

Areas of Growth

Industry Component	Combined County 5 yr*	Combined County 10 yr*	US 5 yr	US 10 yr
Financial Services	X	X	X	
Insurance	X	X	X	X
Funds & Financial Vehicles	ND	ND		

*Data combined for Polk and Dallas Counties

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, AngelouEconomics; ND = No data available

Info. Tech. Services

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Rationale

Information Technology Services include both telecommunications and data hosting services, along with computer systems design and related services. This industry, while relatively small within the region, has seen local growth due to the expansion of the data centers. Within the last few years, employment has climbed back to pre-recession levels. Between 2013 and 2014, employment grew by 12%, which was the largest period of growth in the last 10 years.

This sector can benefit from the low utility costs of West Des Moines and the presence of a business incubator, particularly for applications development and programming startups. Coordinating efforts with local colleges and universities is key, both for developing the industry's talent pipeline and for development of entrepreneurs.

Combined County Snapshot*

2015 Employees: 7,800
2015 Total Payroll: $596 M
2015 Establishments: 1,100

Industry Criteria:

- ✓ Skilled workforce
- ✓ Proximity to client businesses
- ✓ Telecommunications infrastructure
- ✓ Proximity to colleges and universities
- ✓ Business incubator or accelerators
- ✓ Low utility costs

Areas of Growth

Industry Component	Combined County 5 yr*	Combined County 10 yr*	US 5 yr	US 10 yr
Telecommunications				
Data Processing & Hosting		X	X	
Computer Systems Design	X	X	X	X

*Data combined for Polk and Dallas Counties

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, AngelouEconomics; ND = No data available

Life Sciences

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Rationale

Life Sciences encompasses health care, biotechnology, and medical equipment manufacturing Segments of the health care sector have seen drops in employment, which may explain the declines seen in the industry overall. Health Care and biosciences have witnessed impressive growth nationally. As indicated below, nearly all components of this industry have seen both local and national growth over the past 10 years.

For health care, the expanding market of West Des Moines is a big factor for the growth of the industry. There already exists a healthy presence of employers and institutions in the city and the wider region. Maintaining a talent pipeline is important for expansion. One area for diversification could be in biotechnology or the precision agriculture fields.

Combined County Snapshot*

2015 Employees: 18,000
2015 Total Payroll: $1.2 B
2015 Establishments: 1,400

Industry Criteria:

- ✓ Access to sizeable market
- ✓ Existing medical industry presence
- ✓ Proximity to universities and colleges
- ✓ Skilled workforce
- ✓ Proximity to research institutions

Areas of Growth

Industry Component	Combined County 5 yr*	Combined County 10 yr*	US 5 yr	US 10 yr
Support Activities for Agriculture	X	X	X	X
Medical Equipment Manufacturing			X	X
Ambulatory Health Care	X	X	X	X
Hospitals	X	X	X	X
Nursing and Residential Care	X	X	X	X

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, AngelouEconomics; ND = No data available

*Data combined for Polk and Dallas Counties

Prof. Business Services

Executive Summary: Target Industry Analysis

Rationale

Professional Business Services include technical, scientific, and specialized service providers to West Des Moines other sectors. This industry has seen a steady increase since the recession, with annual growth above 4% since 2012. In 2015, combined employment in Polk and Dallas County reached the highest point in 11 years.

Again, West Des Moines current workforce is highly skilled and business have access to a variety of customers. Infrastructure for telecommunications is strong, while the number of business incubators, accelerators, or co-working spaces could grow to support entrepreneurship. The major areas for growth include services that provide support for the Finance & Insurance and Information Technology industries.

Combined County Snapshot*

2015 Employees: 19,000
2015 Total Payroll: $1.4 B
2015 Establishments: 2,800

Industry Criteria:

- ✓ Skilled workforce
- ✓ Proximity to client businesses
- ✓ Telecommunications infrastructure
- ✓ Proximity to colleges and universities
- ✓ Business incubator or accelerators

Areas of Growth

Industry Component	Combined County 5 yr*	Combined County 10 yr*	US 5 yr	US 10 yr
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	X	X	X	X
Business Support Services			X	X

*Data combined for Polk and Dallas Counties

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, AngelouEconomics; ND = No data available

Executive Summary: Strategic Recommendations

Building a Path to Prosperity

Many of the fundamentals for economic development are in great shape in West Des Moines. There is a **high standard of living, quality public schools, a proactive economic development team, and regional cooperation.** Additionally, West Des Moines has **Historic Valley Junction and low utility rates** to offer. Yet, there are challenges that the community faces. These include **workforce attraction, developing a "sense of place," and mobility for residents and workers.**

These findings, and the feedback received from the community, has allowed for the creation of four overarching goals of economic development efforts in West Des Moines. They include:

Continued Success in Job & Investment Attraction Efforts:
Leveraging and marketing recent successes to diversify and solidify the local economy

Strengthen Business Retention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship:
Increasing the ability of existing businesses and talent to succeed

Become a Premiere Destination for Technology Workers & Startups:
Strengthening the pipeline of talent and innovation

Nurture Quality of Place Assets:
Ensuring that community engagement and livability remain high

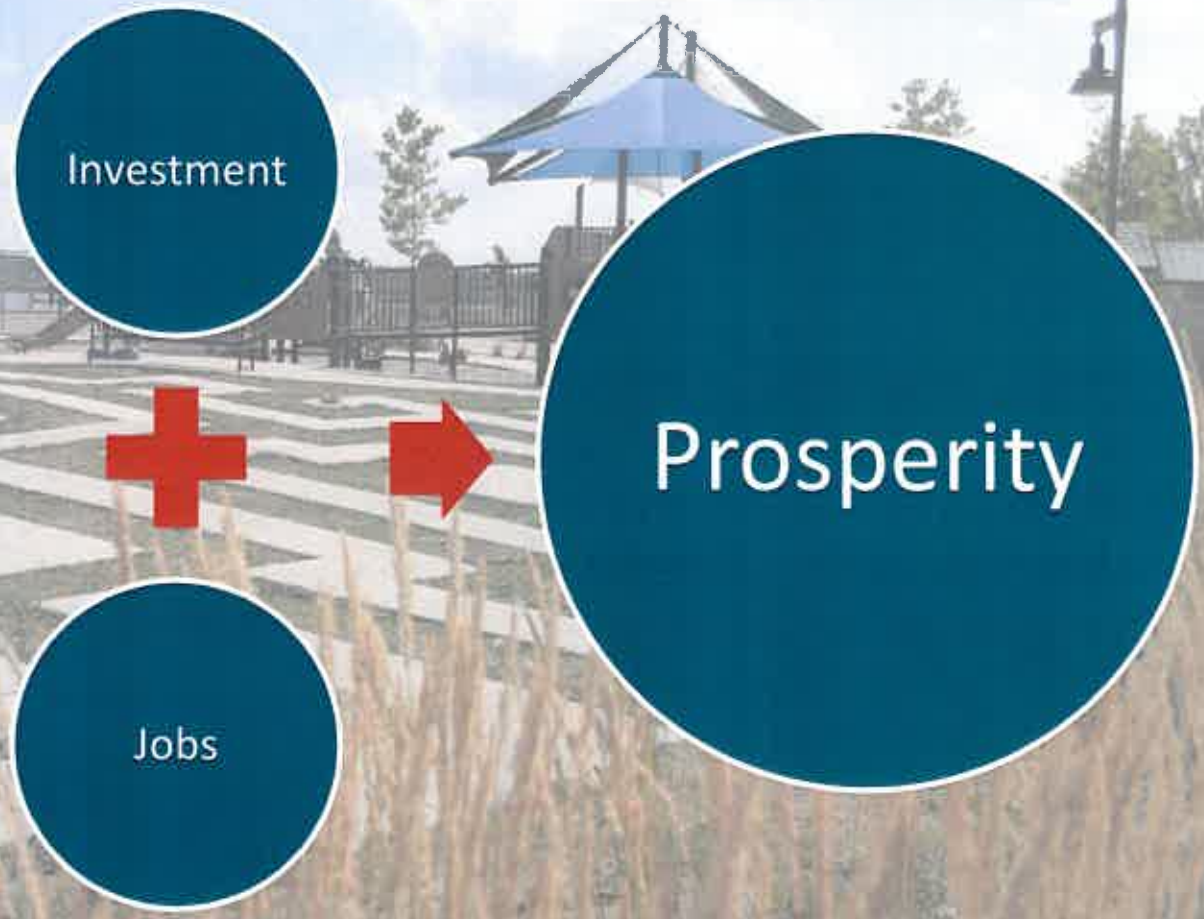
Some of the key action items from the recommendation include:

1. **Continued Success in Job & Investment Attraction Efforts**
    a. Develop testimonial campaign for highlighting business climate of West Des Moines
    b. Build a new website
    c. In the long term, consider growing economic development into a public-private partnership
2. **Strengthen Business Retention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship**
    a. Ensure adequate support for retention and expansion activities
    b. Fund and staff incubator/maker space for success
    c. Consider establishing an international business plan competition
    d. Look into demand for co-working spaces/maker space
3. **Become a Premiere Destination for Technology Workers & Startups:**
    a. Encourage employers to utilize skills-based training platforms
    b. Consider pursuing a "seamless" degree for Finance & Insurance and Information Technology careers
4. **Nurture Quality of Place Assets**
    a. Ensure continued progress on Historic West Des Moines Plan goals
    b. Continue to support public events and art
    c. Organize an annual "exemplary employer" award
    d. Create funding sources to help with specific housing needs

Working toward these goals is an investment in the success of the entire community and will ensure the economic sustainability of West Des Moines

Strategic Recommendations

The vision for economic development in West Des Moines sees building greater avenues for investment and increasing access to jobs and training as a path to prosperity.



Strategic Recommendations

Introduction

Economic development success for West Des Moines means continuing to be proactive on attraction and expansion efforts, while being able to make the necessary investments and improvements in entrepreneurship, business retention, and workforce development. Four overarching goals refine these keys to success:

1. **Continued Success in Job & Investment Attraction Efforts**
   Leveraging and marketing recent successes to diversify and solidify the local economy
2. **Strengthen Business Retention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship**
   Increasing the ability of existing businesses and talent to succeed
3. **Become a Premiere Destination for Technology Workers & Startups**
   Strengthening the pipeline of talent and innovation
4. **Nurture Quality of Place Assets**
   Ensuring that community engagement and livability remain high

Public policies to support these goals are presented in the following section. The City and the broader community all have roles to play in implementing these strategies and realizing these goals. For each group involved, it is important to understand these economic development goals can only be achieved when we all make investment in the community's success.

GOAL 1: Continued Success in Job & Investment Attraction Efforts

Job and investment attraction has been incredibly successful in West Des Moines. Without any significant changes to economic development practices and policies, it is still likely that West Des Moines will see job growth and increased investments. The city has witnessed residential growth and new business investments that are sure to keep it on the path for success. However, there is more that can be done to market the successes of West Des Moines and the local business climate. This can be accomplished through engaging the business community as partners in business attraction efforts.

Continued success also depends on further developing ties in the economic development and site selection community and through an expanded online presence. Making West Des Moines, and the success the city has had, at the forefront of the marketing strategy marketing strategy is key.

Goal 1: Strategies & Actions

1. **Market successes of West Des Moines**
   - Build a "SWAT" team of community and business leaders
   - Conduct marketing trips as a city
   - Develop testimonial campaign for highlighting business climate of West Des Moines
2. **Continue to establish economic development industry ties**
   - Attend site location and economic development conferences
   - Attend trade shows and industry conferences
   - Continue to utilize regional approach to site selection
3. **Develop online presence aimed at site selectors**
   - Build a new website
   - Develop marketing materials highlighting industry assets
   - Connect online visitors to development opportunities
4. **Strengthen private sector engagement in economic development**
   - Hold semi-annual developer meetings with development community
   - In the long term, consider growing economic development into a public-private partnership

Goal 1 Strategy 1: Market successes of West Des Moines

Marketing your community should not just include the economic development team, or just City leadership, but should enlist the business leaders who can provide authentic assessments of the local business climate and offer to prospective employers the reasons why they have decided to build their business in West Des Moines.

To this end, West Des Moines should put together a "SWAT" team of leaders from the business community that can join the economic development team on marketing trips. These volunteers should be briefed and trained prior to the marketing trips.

West Des Moines should conduct its own marketing trips. Marketing trips should have a geographic or target industry focus. Candidates for marketing could include areas that have a significant pool of businesses and talent for West Des Moines targeted industries, or places home to parent companies or those that supply West Des Moines businesses.

Marketing collateral should be developed through a new campaign of highlighting business climate assets of West Des Moines and presenting testimonials from local business owners.

Follow-up by phone and through a economic development newsletter can be made with contacts made during these trips. Familiarization tours can also help contacts get a first-hand view of West Des Moines.

Key Actions:

- **Build "SWAT" team of community and business leaders**
- **Conduct marketing trips as a city**
- **Develop testimonial campaign for highlighting business climate of West Des Moines**

Best Practice

Conduct Marketing Tours

- Identify industries and geographic areas to target
- Develop tour marketing collateral
- Build a team of private industry leaders, government officials and university leaders to attend tours
- Select tour dates
- Arrange meetings
- Post visit follow up & thank you
- Add tour contacts to newsletter distribution list
- Follow-up periodically by phone
- Invite top potential contacts to FAM (familiarization) visit

Goal 1 Strategy 2: Continue to establish economic development industry ties

Another means of continuing business attraction success is through furthering the ties within the site selection and economic development community. The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the Site Selectors Guild are two primary organizations that offer substantial networking, marketing, and lead generation opportunities. It is recommended that the economic development team continue to attend conferences for these and other organizations. More specifically, however, West Des Moines should represent itself at these events, instead of relying on regional or statewide entities to develop connections.

Trade shows and industry conferences can also lead to networking and marketing opportunities. Taking a regional approach to economic development is the best approach for building a presence in the site selection community and for responding to potential projects. West Des Moines should continue to utilize its regional partners in these efforts.

Key Actions:

- **Attend site location and economic development conferences**
- **Attend trade shows and industry conferences**
- **Continue to utilize regional approach to site selection**

Goal 1 Strategy 3: Develop online presence aimed at site selectors

Lastly, an engaging and informative online presence is more important today than it has ever been in marketing your community to employers and investors. Effective websites for economic development are typically separate from a City's main webpage and will have a clean and inviting look. Charleston Regional Development Alliance (www.crda.org) and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce (www.austinchamber.com) serve as best practices for effective and attractive websites.

It is important to highlight the chosen target industries and to feature local employment and establishment data, regional assets that support the industry's growth, key employers, and any incentives that projects may be qualified for. A profile of the community and the quality of life assets is also important for those making site location decisions.

Once reviewing the website, visitors can also be offered stand-alone material that they can download that can summarize the assets of West Des Moines and the success in business attraction and growth that the community has seen. Additionally, a newsletter for site selectors can be offered.

West Des Moines online presence should also be able to connect site location consultants and developers with available properties for sale or for lease within the city. This can be achieved by hosting an interactive map and listing of these properties, along with current zoning type. The economic development team should work with the real estate community to keep this listing up to date.

Key Actions:

- **Build new website**
- **Develop marketing materials highlighting industry assets**
- **Connect online visitors to development opportunities**

Best Practice

Economic Development Marketing Collateral

The Lincoln Partnership's two methods of marketing collateral, "First Impressions" and "What Others are Saying," are excellent examples of what economic development marketing collateral should resemble. The **"First Impression Piece"** provides a brief snapshot of Lincoln above-and-beyond the numbers. The goal of the piece, which led to a complete campaign, which informed people to why doing business in Lincoln is better. This goal was accomplished through a piece that focused on four core areas of strengths: workforce, technology & innovation, business costs, and quality of life. These were then backed with tangible items that could be measured. Next, success stories were gathered for each of the four core areas of strength. These stories not only showed the diversity of business but a diversity of people.

The Lincoln rankings brochure, **"What Others are Saying,"** is a tri-fold piece to showcase Lincoln's top rankings. Due to the sweeping of multiple national rankings, the brochure categorizes Lincoln's rankings into three separate sections; Lincoln works for business, Lincoln builds on people; and Lincoln builds on quality. Within the brochure is a multitude of rankings from various credible publications including MSNBC, Forbes, and ABC News. All rankings within the brochure are continually updated and date no later than two years to show Lincoln is constantly at the top of its rankings.

For more information visit:
http://www.selectlincoln.org/publications

Goal 1 Strategy 4: Strengthen private sector engagement in economic development

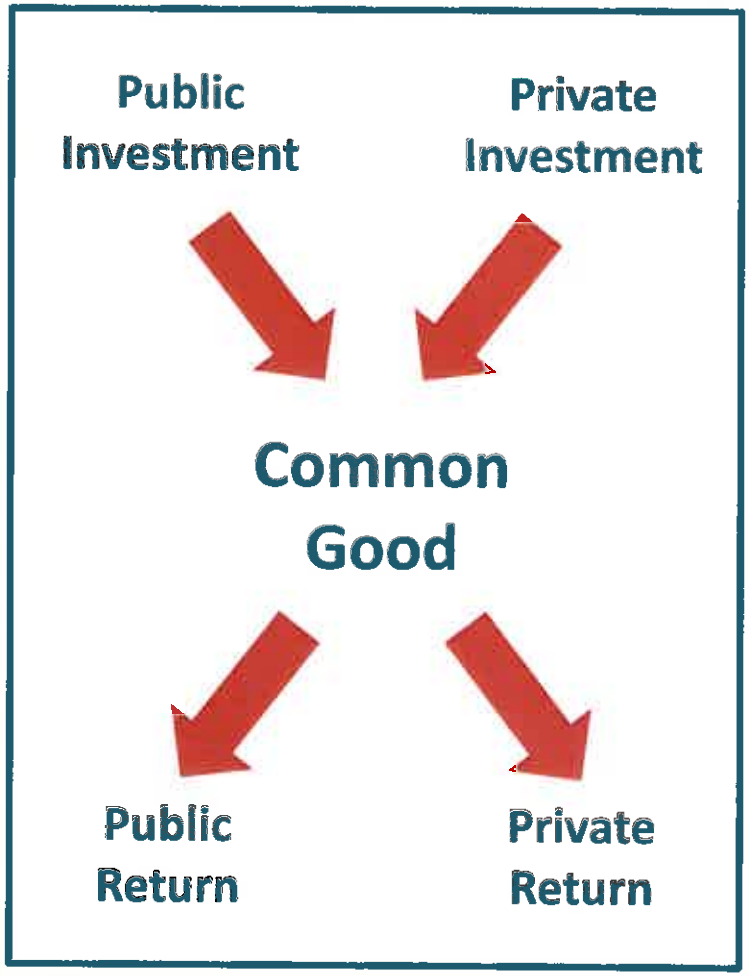
Beyond involving the private sector in marketing and promotion of West Des Moines, the City should find more ways to encourage the private sector to be engaged in economic development. This includes both employers and the development community.

In order to build greater trust and understanding of the development process, the City can hold semi-annual developer meetings to inform developers and contractors on any changes to the development process or any issues that have surfaced with regard to development plans.

The City should also consider growing the economic development department into a public-private partnership that is funded by both the public and private sectors. Understanding how to best structure this organization is important, but the main goal is to develop an additional avenue for the private sector to invest in the economic development capacity of West Des Moines.

Key Actions:

- **Hold semi-annual developer meetings with development community**
- **In the long term, consider growing economic development into a public-private partnership**



GOAL 2: Strengthen Business Retention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship Efforts

Business retention efforts are built around developing relationships with business owners, connecting them to business support providers, and finding ways to help them expand their operations. Each business will have specific needs, which is why much of the work around business retention is understanding those needs and finding ways to help address them.

Entrepreneurship is another key component of economic development. Too many communities rely on business attraction efforts to sustain economic growth, but small business and entrepreneurial development is one of the best ways to ensure a healthy business climate and to ensure long-term economic success.

Incubators and accelerators are keys to building an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Learning from industry-wide best practices is the best way support these efforts.

Finally, progress toward this goal, as well as the others, need to be supported by the City by appropriate funding and staffing. By bringing on new economic development professionals to the economic development team, West Des Moines can begin to strengthen local business retention, expansion, workforce, and entrepreneurship efforts.

Goal 2: Strategies & Actions

1. **Increase business retention and expansion efforts**
   - Consider hiring business and workforce retention specialist
   - Ensure adequate support for retention and expansion activities
   - Survey business community on an annual basis
   - Keep track of jobs created and retained
2. **Properly support incubator/maker space and entrepreneurs**
   - Identify partners to help lead incubator/maker space efforts
   - Investigate best practices for organization of incubator/maker space
   - Look to collaborate with partner organization to manage incubator/maker space
   - Consider establishing an international business plan competition
   - Create a "one-stop-shop" for entrepreneurs
   - Hire an entrepreneurship specialist to coordinate City's efforts
3. **Develop additional spaces for entrepreneurs**
   - Look into demand for co-working spaces and a maker space
   - Attract entrepreneurs from state, national and international markets

Goal 2 Strategy 1: Increase business retention and expansion efforts

Increasing business retention efforts starts with appropriately funding a position for a Business and Workforce Retention Specialist. A strong background in economic development is needed for success in this position. The anticipated cost for hiring a qualified candidate would be approximately $110,000.

As the name of the position makes clear, an additional duty of this position will be to coordinate workforce development and retention efforts as well. Recruiting and retaining workers is imperative to the economic development success of West Des Moines. This position will then also entail connecting the business community to the support programs made available by workforce development agencies.

Along with this, there will need to be adequate support and resources for conducting surveys and visits and for analyzing and prioritizing the findings of the business surveys. Surveys done in person through individual interviews with business owners are more likely to provide greater value and insight for the economic development team.

It is also important to track the outcomes of the business retention and expansion efforts by aggregating the total number of jobs created and retained. Any success found in these efforts is also likely to be of use in business attraction.

Key Actions:

- **Consider hiring business and workforce retention specialist**
- **Ensure adequate support for retention and expansion activities**
- **Survey business community on an annual basis**
- **Keep track of jobs created and retained**

Goal 2 Strategy 2: Properly support incubator/maker space and entrepreneurs

Incubators and accelerators are important cornerstones in any entrepreneurial ecosystem. While the results are often hard to see in the short term, business incubators contribute to the long term success of a local economy by opening the door to more effective start-up development and helping to encourage an entrepreneurial mindset throughout the community. Thus, it is important that the West Des Moines Business Incubator is adequately funded and staffed to maximize the potential for start-up success. The City should first, identify partnering organizations with the ability to lead this broader strategy of increasing the capacity of the Incubator and local entrepreneurs.

The City and partner organizations should investigate organizational best practices for the Incubator, including the sort of start-ups that are recruited. A description of the Austin Technology Incubator, a best practice offered for incubator programs, can be found to the right.

There is also the potential to build in additional programs into the Incubator, such as partnering with a maker space. Furthermore, encouraging private sector companies to invest in the funding of start-ups can help to make the Incubator become more of a public-private partnership and may help to strengthen local funding networks.

Beyond running a well organized incubator or maker space, finding ways to market West Des Moines as an entrepreneurial community is key. Look into establishing an international business plan competition, perhaps focused in the Finance & Insurance or Information Technology Services industries. This can help to bring entrepreneurs and startups to West Des Moines and give them a glimpse of what the community has to offer.

Best Practice

Austin Technology Incubator

Founded in 1989, the Austin Technology Incubator (ATI) partners with the IC2 Institute at UT-Austin to promote growth in technology businesses. Since its inception, ATI has worked with more than 200 companies and has helped those companies to raise more than $750 million in capital investment. In the past three years, ATI has counseled more than 50 companies, helping them to acquire more than $50 million in exit value. Additionally, ATI leverages connections with local and state governments to secure funding for many of its member companies.

Member companies receive counsel from ATI's core team of advisors as well as from UT-Austin faculty and students. Companies benefit from strategy sessions, in which external advisors weigh in on the key issues facing each specific member company. Members also benefit from ATI's extensive professional network, which is designed to provide budding companies with cost-efficient counsel from professionals in a variety of industries.

ATI's partnership with UT-Austin is a key component of their mission. By putting students in direct contact with local entrepreneurs, ATI has created a "teaching laboratory in applied entrepreneurship." Internship programs are open to undergraduate and graduate students from all areas of study. These students go on to work for major corporations and consulting firms, and an increasing number of alumni start their own companies.

Goal 2 Strategy 2: Properly support incubator/maker space and entrepreneurs

Many with great business ideas often lack the information and support necessary to get their business of the ground. This is why incubators and accelerators are such a necessary part of any entrepreneurial ecosystem. However, the City can also make progress on reducing the barriers to starting a business by offering a "one-stop-shop" for entrepreneurs. This would be a single location (either virtual or physical) where entrepreneurs could seek help with permitting and meeting City regulation for businesses, along with information on programs that offer assistance to start-ups and how to best find qualified employees. This one-stop-shop could be supported by a local group of mentors and help to make connections to local and regional Angel investor networks.

Finally, an experienced "Entrepreneurship Specialist" should be hired to support the "one-stop-shop," coordinate the development of an entrepreneurial support network, and serve as the City's liaison to Incubator.

Key Actions:

- **Identify partners to help lead incubator/maker space efforts**
- **Investigate best practices for organization of incubator/maker space**
- **Look to collaborate with partner organization to manage incubator/maker space**
- **Consider establishing an international business plan competition**
- **Create a "one-stop-shop" for entrepreneurs**
- **Hire an entrepreneurship specialist to coordinate City's efforts**

Goal 2 Strategy 3: Develop additional spaces for entrepreneurs

Apart from incubators and accelerators, there are other sorts of developments that are key to the physical infrastructure supporting entrepreneurs. They include co-working spaces and maker's spaces.

Co-working offer entrepreneurs, self-employed professionals, and freelancers a place to work without having to rent a specific office or building. They also offer the amenity of working around other like-minded individuals and encourage the sharing of ideas and networking.

A maker space, on the other hand, provides tools, equipment, and prototyping services to entrepreneurs and inventors. Having access to a 3D printer or wood working equipment can be helpful for artisans or engineers who might otherwise find access to these technologies too expensive. Many successful maker's spaces also offer classes on how to use the various kinds of equipment the make available.

Key Actions:

- **Look into demand for co-working spaces and a maker space**
- **Attract entrepreneurs from state, national and international markets**

Best Practice

WeWork

WeWork designs and builds physical and virtual communities which provides shared work space and services for entrepreneurs, freelancers, startups and small businesses. Its mission is "to create a world where people work to make a life, not just a living." Founded in 2010 by Miguel McKelvey, Adam Neumann, and Rebecca Neumann, WeWork is headquartered in New York City. Its core values focus on inspiration, tenacity, entrepreneurship, gratefulness, authenticity, and togetherness.

The 30,000+ members of WeWork have access to health insurance, an internal social network, social events and workshops, and an annual summer retreat. As of December 2015, WeWork had 54 coworking locations in across the U.S., Europe and Israel –twice as many as it had at the end of 2014with plans to expand to reach every continent (except Antarctica) by 2017.A $400 million funding round this summer from Fidelity, J.P. Morgan and other major investors brought the company's total funding to an estimated $1 billion and raised its valuation to $10 billion—double its $5 billion last December. WeWork was named among the "most innovative companies" of 2015 by Fast Company magazine.

For more information, visit: https://www.wework.com

GOAL 3: Become a Premiere Destination for Technology Workers

Workforce attraction is a key component to growing the economy of West Des Moines. Like many Midwestern states, it is becoming harder and harder to attract talent from outside who may not know of the quality of life found in West Des Moines or successful business culture the community and the Greater Des Moines region has been able to cultivate. The quality of life found in West Des Moines has the potential to appeal to both higher and lower skilled workers alike. Yet, the City should also seek to diversify the local workforce through programs that bring individuals and families from outside of the region. Doing so will allow for a greater sense of inclusion to newcomers to West Des Moines and also help to strengthen the talent pipeline for local companies.

One of the best ways to meet the challenge of workforce attraction and development is by making it easier for workers to develop new skills and find employment in technology-focused sectors. Online platforms can make skills development and training more accessible. Thinking out of the box about these workforce development issues can help West Des Moines stand out to workers in this in-demand industry.

Goal 3: Strategies & Actions

1. **Encourage skills development**
   - Work to connect local businesses with training programs at local colleges and universities
   - Encourage employers to utilize skills-based training platforms
   - Build local platform for internship/apprenticeship opportunities
   - Push for online education in high schools and colleges
   - Consider pursuing a "seamless" degree for Finance & Insurance and Information Technology careers

2. **Address skills gaps in tech-related sectors**
   - In coordination with workforce development professionals, survey local employers to understand talent gap in local and regional tech sector
   - Convene task force with local tech industry leaders, workforce development professionals, and educators on how to best create local policies to build tech sector pipeline
   - Build relationship with AIESEC to help fill tech-related positions in the short term
   - Use online labor training platforms to recruit new talent

Goal 3

Strategy 1: Encourage skills development

Skills development is key to both increasing a pipeline of workers and to helping make businesses more productive. Working with regional workforce development professionals is key to the success of this initiative. The first way to address the issue of skills development is by connecting local businesses with training programs at local colleges and universities.

Most times, business are unaware of the opportunity for gaining additional training for their employees and local residents at large. Officials at educational institutions and workforce development professionals can help to refer employers to specific programs, or work with employers to see how they can tailor training to their needs.

Another way to encourage skills development is to promote the use of online skills-based training platforms that either offer courses designed by approved instructors, or by developing customize training modules. These platforms can be a good means of offering onboarding training for new employees.

Internships and apprenticeships offer gateways to entry-level positions for many students and recent graduates. West Des Moines can help to inform its residents about these opportunities by building a online posting platform and encouraging local businesses to participate. Local workforce development professionals can be brought in to help lead these efforts.

Best Practice

City-Wide Internship Program

Intern To Earn is a regional program supported by HIRE (an alliance of colleges and universities in the Greater Louisville region), and the Greater Louisville Inc. Thirty-one regional colleges and universities participate in the program, as do a number of regional employers.

The program is not only an asset for interns, but is extremely beneficial to regional companies as well. It helps them find top young talent, get to know the next generation of local workers and customers, and acts as a local workforce recruitment and retention tool.

For more information, visit: http://www.interntoearn.com/

Goal 3 Strategy 1: Encourage skills development

Offering online education is important for added flexibility to skills development. West Des Moines should push for greater online offerings at the high school and college levels. Greater flexibility will allow for a more diverse set of individuals to be workforce-ready or allow them to upgrade their current skill sets.

To strengthen the pipeline of workers in certain industries, it is also important to ensure that there is a "seamless" process to getting a degree in that field. From high school to community college or university, make sure that curriculum is giving students the tools they need to develop their talents. West Des Moines should consider pursing a "seamless" degree path for both the Finance & Insurance and Information Technology careers paths.

Key Actions:

- **Work to connect local businesses with training programs at local colleges and universities**
- **Encourage employers to utilize skills-based training platforms**
- **Build local platform for internship/apprenticeship opportunities**
- **Push for online education in high schools and colleges**
- **Consider pursuing a "seamless" degree for Finance & Insurance and Information Technology careers**

Best Practice

SchooX

SchooX is an online education platform used by colleges, universities, and a wide range of private sector companies. It is a succinct and simplified platform to provide classes or courses.

SchooX advantage over other MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), is the courses and course material can be flexible. Users do not have to virtually attend a class on a weekly basis. They are allowed to move through materials at their own pace, which enables them flexibility and the chance to adjust the materials to their own schedules. It comes equipped with message boards, "Facebook style, real time notifications," and group libraries. https://www.schoox.com/

Goal 3 Strategy 2: Address skills gap in tech-related sectors

Employers in West Des Moines find that the hardest positions to fill are the jobs with the greatest amount of specialization, with many of these positions being found in tech-related sectors. To help alleviate these employment challenges it is recommended that West Des Moines survey local employers in the tech sector to better understand the specific skills gaps they experience and the positions that they have the hardest time trying to fill. To do this, West Des Moines should strengthen the current efforts to used to identify gaps and support an increased focus on tech-related industries.

Local tech sector leaders, workforce development professionals, and educators can lead a task force that can develop actionable policies and initiatives that can help secure the talent pipeline for tech-related businesses. The economic development team can convene this effort and help to implement any proposed strategy. In the short term, West Des Moines can look to programs like AIESEC that offer global internship opportunities. This program can be a way for some companies to fill short term skills gaps and to increase local workforce diversity.

At the same time, as employers begin to utilize online training platforms to help their workers gain new skills, these platforms can also be used to screen new talent for local companies or to help ease on-boarding.

Key Actions:

- **In coordination with workforce development professionals, survey local employers to understand talent gap in local and regional tech sector**
- **Convene task force with local tech industry leaders, workforce development professionals, and educators on how to best create local policies to build tech sector pipeline**
- **Build relationship with AIESEC to help fill tech-related positions in the short term**
- **Use online labor training platforms to recruit new talent**

Best Practice

AIESEC

AIESEC was officially founded in 1948 after World War II with the mission "to expand the understanding of a nation by expanding the understanding of individuals, changing the world one person at a time." Since then, AIESEC has grown into 124 countries and territories, enabling over 26,000 international placements coordinated by over 70,000 AIESECers. The AIESEC network is the largest youth-run organization in the world, united with the mission statement: "What we Envision: peace and fulfillment of humankind's potential."

AIESEC has various programs that students from various universities and colleges around the world can get involved in. Global Talent is an AIESEC program which offers paid management, technical and education internships, which usually runs for a duration of 3 to 18 months. Global Volunteer is an AIESEC program which offers voluntary internships that focus on short-term projects involving teaching, promoting HIV/AID awareness, working in human rights, environmental sustainability, leadership development and more.

For more information, see: www.aiesec.org

GOAL 4: Nurture Quality of Place Assets

Quality of place is a measure of how inviting, memorable, and vibrant a place is for residents and visitors. Quality of place, much like the quality of life, is a factor in how successful communities are at retaining and attracting new residents and, thereby, businesses and investments.

One way to improve quality of place in a community is to not just beautify local buildings and streetscapes, but to encourage and support community activities, public spaces, and art. These are things that can make a community unique and can help residents develop their own testimonials for why West Des Moines is a great place to live and work.

Goal 4: Strategies & Actions

1. **Provide support for Historic West Des Moines**
   - Ensure continued progress on Historic West Des Moines Plan goals
   - Find ways to lower business costs for Historic West Des Moines business and redevelopment opportunities
2. **Encourage walkable and bike able roadways**
   - Push to connect biking and walking trails to promote use
   - Where applicable, look to ensure new development allows for alternative modes of transportation
3. **Promote public events and community involvement**
   - Continue to support public events and art
   - Connect business community to arts community and events
   - Organize an annual "exemplary employer" award
4. **Ensure availability of affordable housing**
   - Measure housing need
   - Set local goals for housing based on data
   - Preserve current stock of affordable housing
   - Consider adopting form-based code
   - Allow for expedited permitting to lower cost of development
   - Create funding sources to help with specific housing needs
   - Continue to utilize housing trust funds to deal with longer term housing needs

Goal 4 Strategy 1: Provide support for Historic West Des Moines

Historic West Des Moines is a true landmark for the city. The commercial district and surrounding neighborhood are assets for growing a base of young professionals, of hosting unique small businesses, and offering an attainable housing option for young families and retirees. These potential benefits are important to the overall economic development potential for West Des Moines.

The recently approved Historic West Des Moines Plan sets out an actionable strategy for continuing the success of the district and increasing its vibrancy. Most importantly, the plan provides recommendations on how to incentivize rehabilitation of building and utilize upper story space within the downtown. These are goals that this plan supports and the community should continue to push for their implementation.

Additionally, the recommendations to attract restaurants with outdoor dining and the ability to create additional opportunities for outdoor seating are important to increasing the vibrancy and appeal of the district. Widening sidewalks is one way to achieve this. Downtown McKinney, TX serves as a best practice for this.

One challenge for West Des Moines is to better understand the true costs of opening a business or redeveloping structures in Historic West Des Moines. Anecdotally, there may be ordinances or building codes that increase costs for business owners and developers. It is recommended that the City look into ways to lower costs for starting a business in Historic West Des Moines to ensure that the district is able to expand its commercial activity.

Key Actions:

- **Ensure continued progress on Historic West Des Moines Plan goals**
- **Find ways to lower business costs for Historic West Des Moines business and redevelopment opportunities**

Best Practice

City of Winter Garden, FL

The small city of Winter Garden began land banking property in its declining downtown area, to plan & create a vibrant historic district for arts, entertainment & culture that powered new interest in the city and relocation by entrepreneurs, innovation companies and young professionals. The city partners with The Winter Garden Arts Association and the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation to grow and improve the area, offering incentives to businesses that renovate old buildings and locate in the district and building parking facilities to handle large crowds.

The city initially purchased and spurred renovation of a historic theater that now operates as an independent public organization. Active city staff aggressively pursued and established numerous large festivals that take place in the district each year, including a popular visual arts festival, Music Fest and Culture Fest, which includes a film festival. The district has been so successful, it operates at 100% business occupancy and the city has begun to develop and adjacent area of abandoned warehouses into a separate and permanent arts district.

For more information, visit: http://www.cwgdn.com/

Goal 4

Strategy 2: Encourage walkable and bike able roadways

Walking and biking down streets and trails is one of the most engaging and memorable ways to experience a city. Cities that have sufficient and well-designed path and trail systems are often better at attracting young families and professionals. This is important for both improving the local quality of place and the ability of West Des Moines to attract talent.

Ensuring that trails and sidewalks are connected helps encourage their use by not leaving user without a safe path. Thus, it is important to push for improvements in infrastructure that connect trails, sidewalks, and other paths (such as bike lanes) and create a more comprehensive and less scattered system.

New development should also look to incorporating alternative modes of transportation (like walking and biking) and connecting them to existing trails where feasible. Complete streets policies serve as best practices to this end. Omaha, NE, South Bend, IN, and Austin, TX serve as models for building an effective policy for both new development and redevelopment.

Key Actions:

- **Push to connect biking and walking trails to promote use**
- **Where applicable, look to ensure new development allows for alternative modes of transportation**

Goal 4

Strategy 3: Promote public events and community involvement

Public arts and public events and festivals can help communities stand out. Being able to point to these short of events and amenities is an important part of marketing West Des Moines to outsiders. These amenities appeal to younger workers and help to create a more lasting image of West Des Moines for visitors.

The City should support and promote public events and festivals, as well as encourage art in public spaces. They can be communicated through the typical channels utilized by the City, as well as through the public school systems. Working with community groups in Historic West Des Moines will be key, as the districts public spaces offer an inviting and historic atmosphere for events.

It is also encouraged to connect the wider business community to the arts and cultural community, to help build relationships, market events to employees, and to promote sponsorship of these events. Building these connections can help to sustain public art and events and help to create demand for new ones.

Involvement in community initiatives can be encouraged and championed through an annual event that recognizes the major contributions of the business community.

Key Actions:

- **Continue to support public events and art**
- **Connect business community to arts community and events**
- **Organize an annual "exemplary employer" award**

Best Practice

Public Art Saint Paul

In 2009, the City of Saint Paul enacted a Public Art Ordinance, drafted by Public Art Saint Paul at the request of the City Council. Public Art Saint Paul's projects arise from City Artist, Creative Grounds and Stewardship programs. They are produced by Public Art Saint Paul in partnership with the City of Saint Paul and a host of artistic and organizational partners. Projects play out citywide over an extended arc of time; they span the breadth of contemporary public art practice, coming forth in multiple media as temporary installations, permanent works, and art events.

An underlying principle in the Public Art Ordinance holds that artists should be involved from the earliest stages of conceptual planning, and continue through project design and implementation. Through the Ordinance artists add their perspectives and insights to the City's plans and capital project designs, as well as create public art for capital projects. The Ordinance encourages performances, installations, events and other temporary works. It also embraces Public Art Saint Paul's privately-funded City Artist Program, with City Artists curating major projects that play out citywide over a long arc of time.

After its adoption and with grant support from Saint Paul Cultural STAR and others, Public Art Saint Paul worked with a City staff working group to develop Guidelines and a Technical Manual to guide Ordinance implementation.

For more information, visit:
http://publicartstpaul.org/projects/

Goal 4

Strategy 4: Ensure availability of affordable housing

Being able to meet demand for housing has been critical to West Des Moines growth. Yet, as cities grow and diversify the types of housing they offer must begin to meet changing demands. Thus, in order for West Des Moines to continue to offer a high quality of life, and to remain competitive with the city's peers, West Des Moines should work to ensure that anyone who has the opportunity to be employed in West Des Moines or the drive to start a business in the city.

There are key ways the city can meet with the housing challenges that it faces. First, it is important to measure the need for housing and to set locals goals for the city's housing stock based on the information gathered. Preserving current stock of affordable housing is key, which should be reflected in the land use planning done by the City. Each of these items (housing demand, housing gaps, and current stock of affordable housing) should be frequently updated to keep the City and the development community informed.

West Des Moines should also do more to ensure that a variety of housing options can be viable inside the city. First, the City should consider adopting form-based code to help ensure that the scale and types of new development and redevelopment coheres with the current build environment of the city. Form-based codes regulate the building and street types that a city would like to see in a give area of town, rather than merely specifying densities, setbacks, floor area ratios, or other development parameters.

Second, the City can offer expedited permitting to qualified housing development projects to lower the cost of these developments. This can be offered to projects that meet certain affordability or density qualifications, or offer affordable housing products to designed focus areas within West Des Moines.

Goal 4 Strategy 4: Ensure availability of affordable housing

Once West Des Moines is able to identify specific housing needs, the City should look to create funding sources tied to those specific needs. This can be done through tax abatements for qualified projects, use of tax increment financing for focus areas, or through bonds to support the development of workforce housing.

In the longer term, the City should continue to utilize housing trust funds for Polk and Dallas counties to ensure that the supply of affordable housing in West Des Moines is able to meet the needs of the community. These funds provide long-term loans to developers building or rehabilitating affordable housing units.

Key Actions:

- **Measure housing need**
- **Set local goals for housing based on data**
- **Preserve current stock of affordable housing**
- **Consider adopting form-based code**
- **Allow for expedited permitting to lower cost of development**
- **Create funding sources to help with specific housing needs**
- **Continue to utilize housing trust funds to deal with longer term housing needs**

APPENDIX

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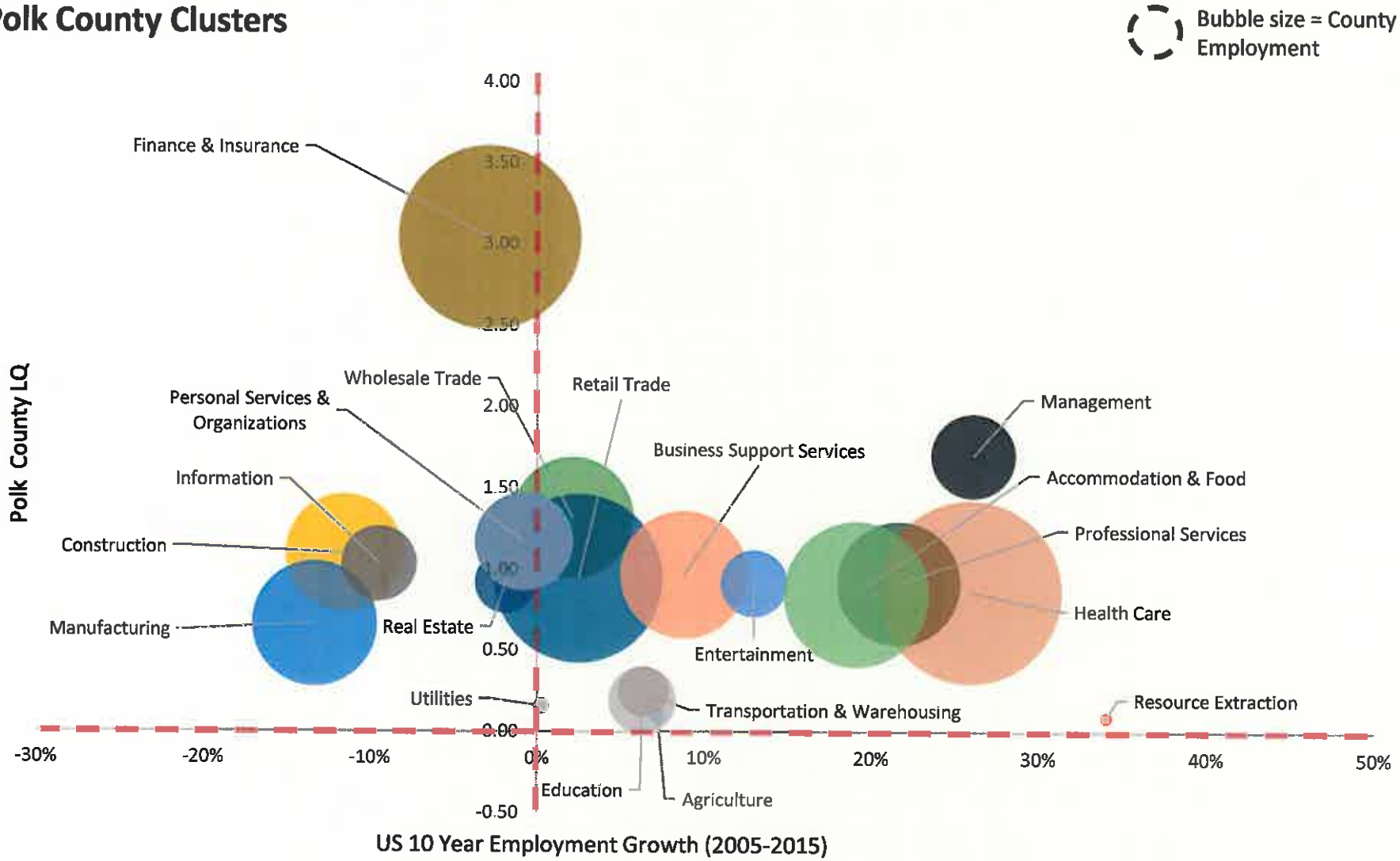
Target Industry Trends: Local Clusters and National Growth

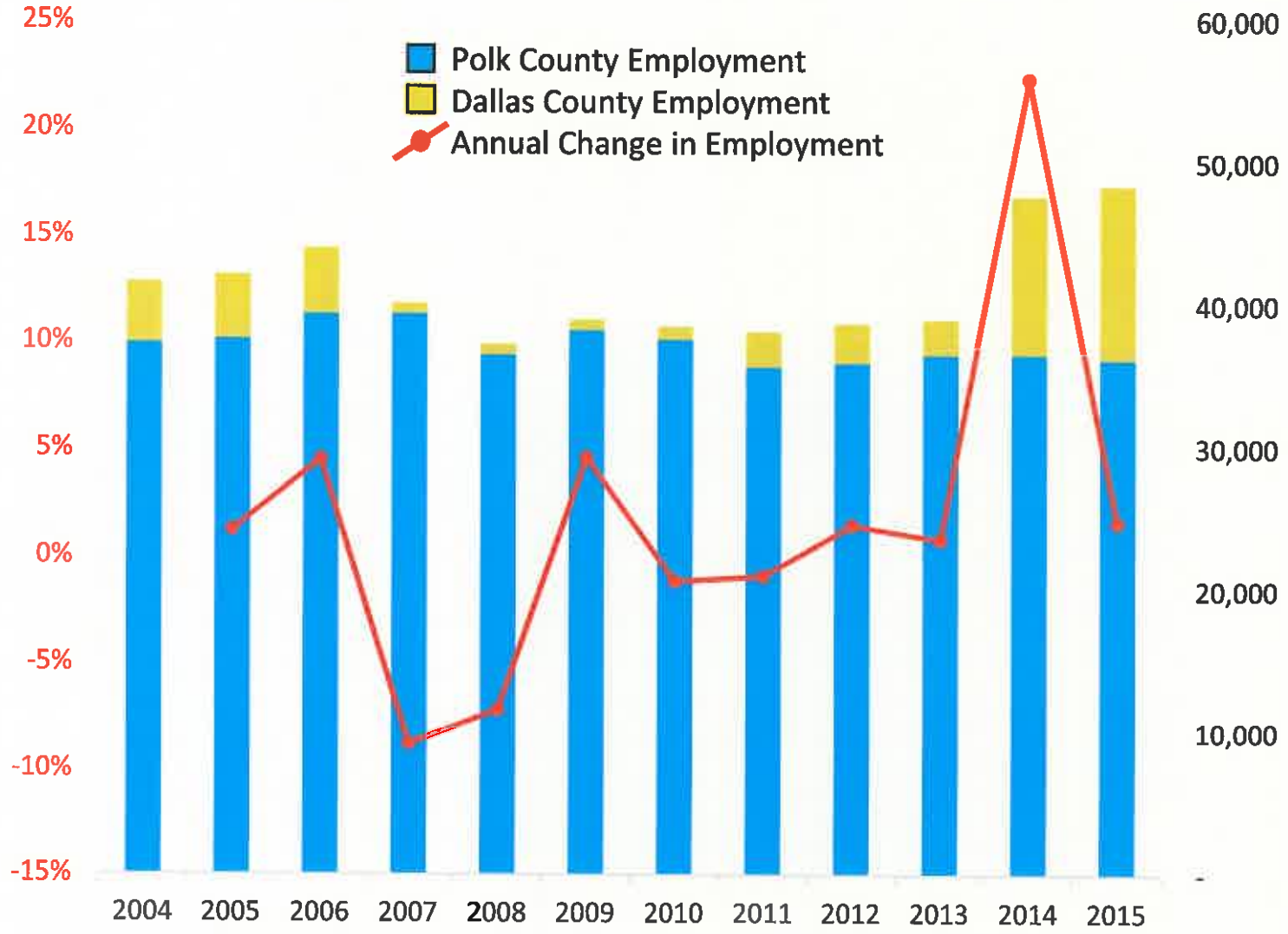
Polk County Clusters



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Finance & Insurance

Finance & Insurance Employment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Finance & Insurance

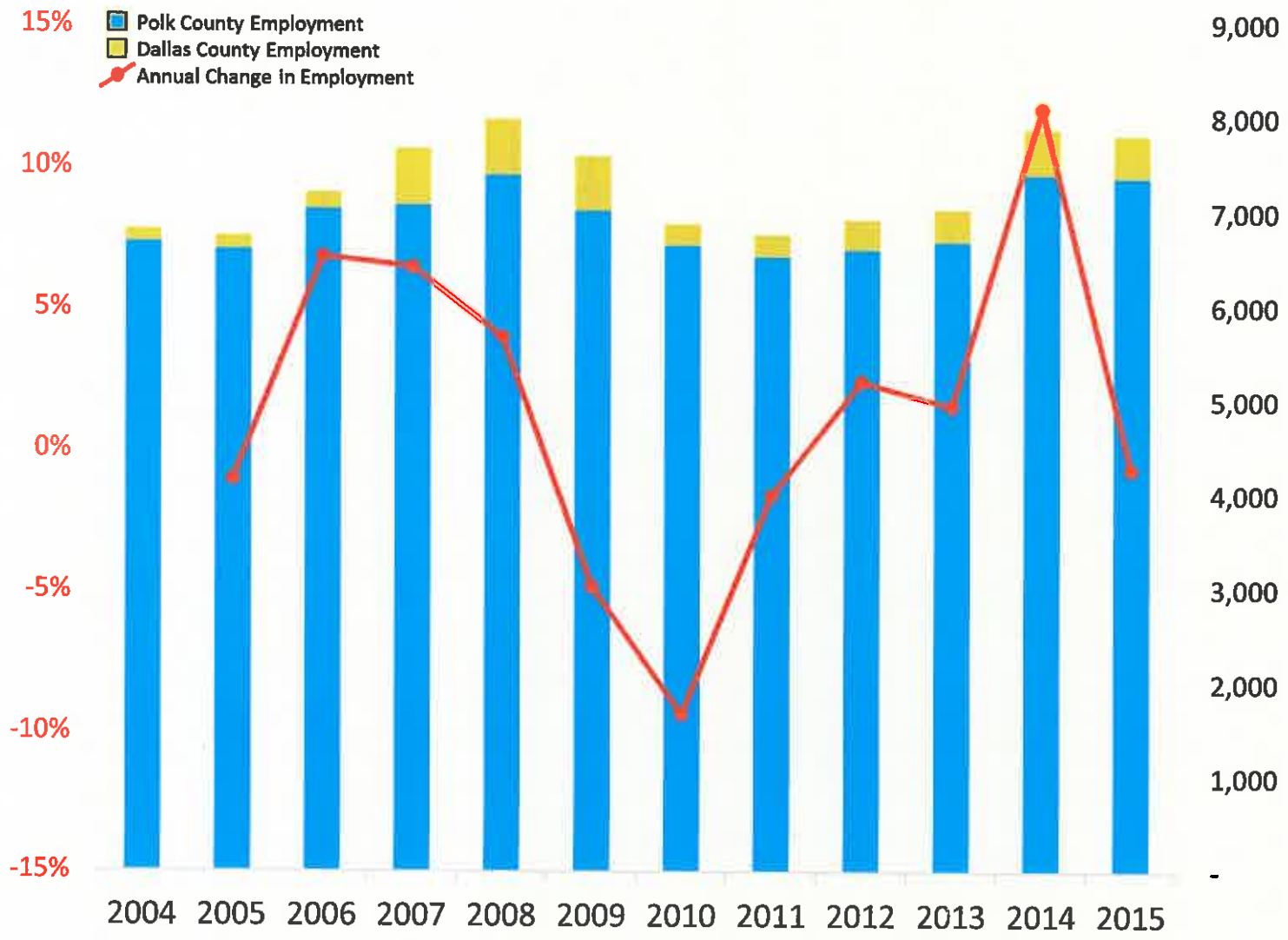
Key Occupations in the Industry

Occupation	MSA Employment	MSA LQ	10-year U.S. Growth Projection (%)	United States Salary	MSA Salary Index	Education Needed
Insurance Sales Agents	2,100	1.12	21.90	$64,790	0.82	High school diploma or equivalent
Insurance Underwriters	890	2.03	5.90	$72,650	0.88	Bachelor's degree
Personal Financial Advisors	880	0.91	32.10	$118,050	0.62	Bachelor's degree
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	1,890	1.47	8.70	$39,560	0.99	High school diploma or equivalent
Loan Officers	2,280	1.54	14.20	$75,170	0.84	High school diploma or equivalent
Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	1,580	1.19	3.00	$64,300	0.89	High school diploma or equivalent
Actuaries	240	2.49	26.70	$110,560	0.88	Bachelor's degree
Financial Managers	2,950	1.14	8.80	$134,330	0.93	Bachelor's degree
Credit Counselors	170	1.14	20.30	$49,310	0.90	Bachelor's degree
Customer Service Representatives	8,800	0.70	15.50	$34,560	1.05	High school diploma or equivalent

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Information Technology Services

Information Technology Services Employment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

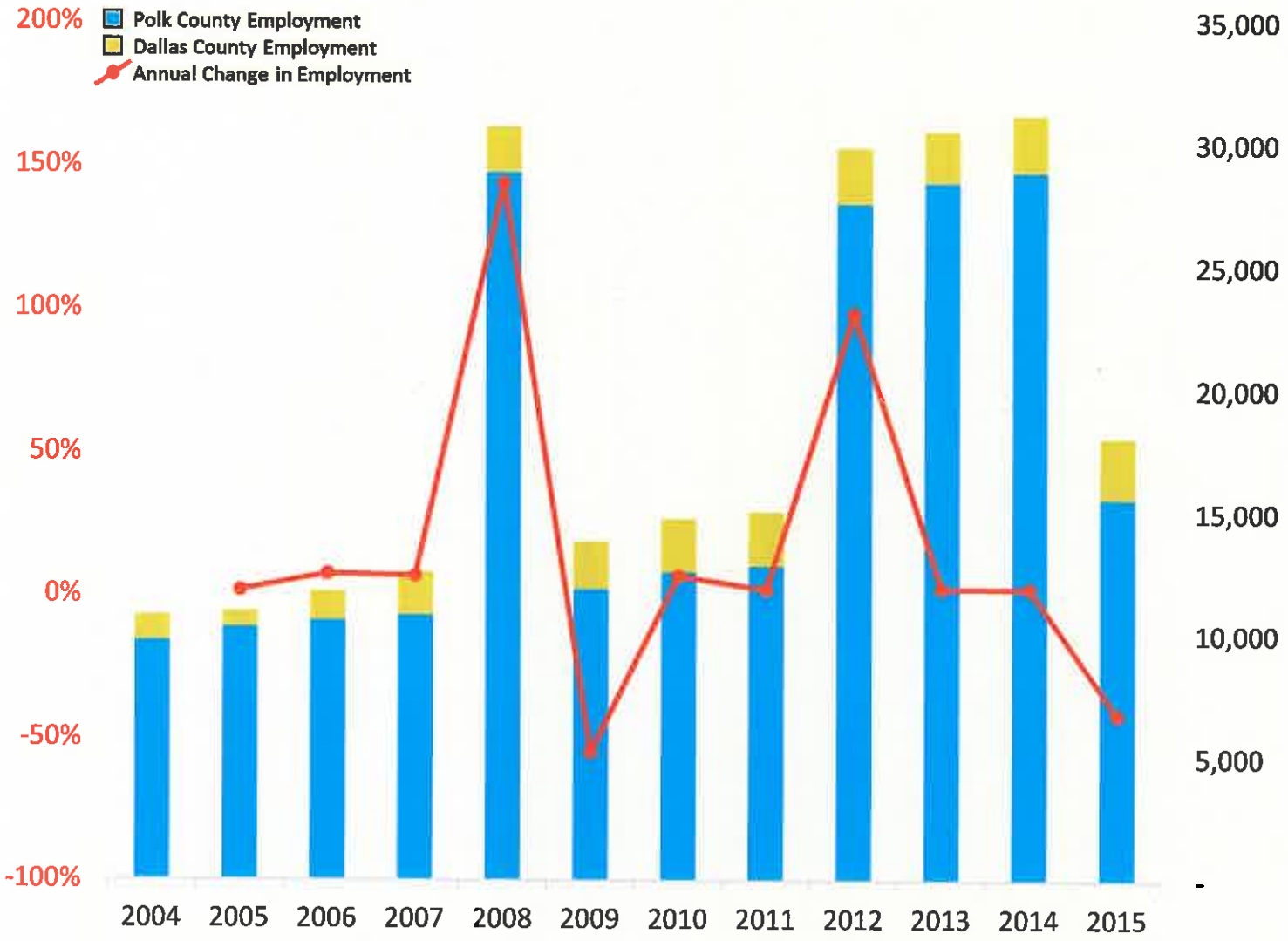
Target Industry Trends: Information Technology Services

Key Occupations in the Industry						
Occupation	MSA Employment	MSA LQ	10-year U.S. Growth Projection (%)	U.S. Salary	MSA Salary Index	Education Needed
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	800	1.46	14.60	$54,510	1.10	Postsecondary non-degree award
Statistical Assistants	70	2.07	6.00	$44,220	1.29	Bachelor's degree
Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	180	0.68	13.60	$54,200	0.70	High school diploma or equivalent
Database Administrators	390	1.37	30.60	$84,250	1.04	Bachelor's degree
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	1,090	1.16	27.80	$82,200	0.91	Bachelor's degree
Software Developers, Systems Software	870	0.89	32.40	$108,760	0.84	Bachelor's degree
Computer Systems Analysts	2,610	1.87	22.10	$90,180	0.92	Bachelor's degree
Computer and Information Systems Managers	890	1.04	18.10	$141,000	0.88	Bachelor's degree
Software Developers, Applications	2,720	1.45	27.60	$102,160	0.85	Bachelor's degree
Computer Programmers	520	0.72	12.00	$84,360	0.88	Bachelor's degree

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Life Sciences

Life Sciences Employment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Life Sciences

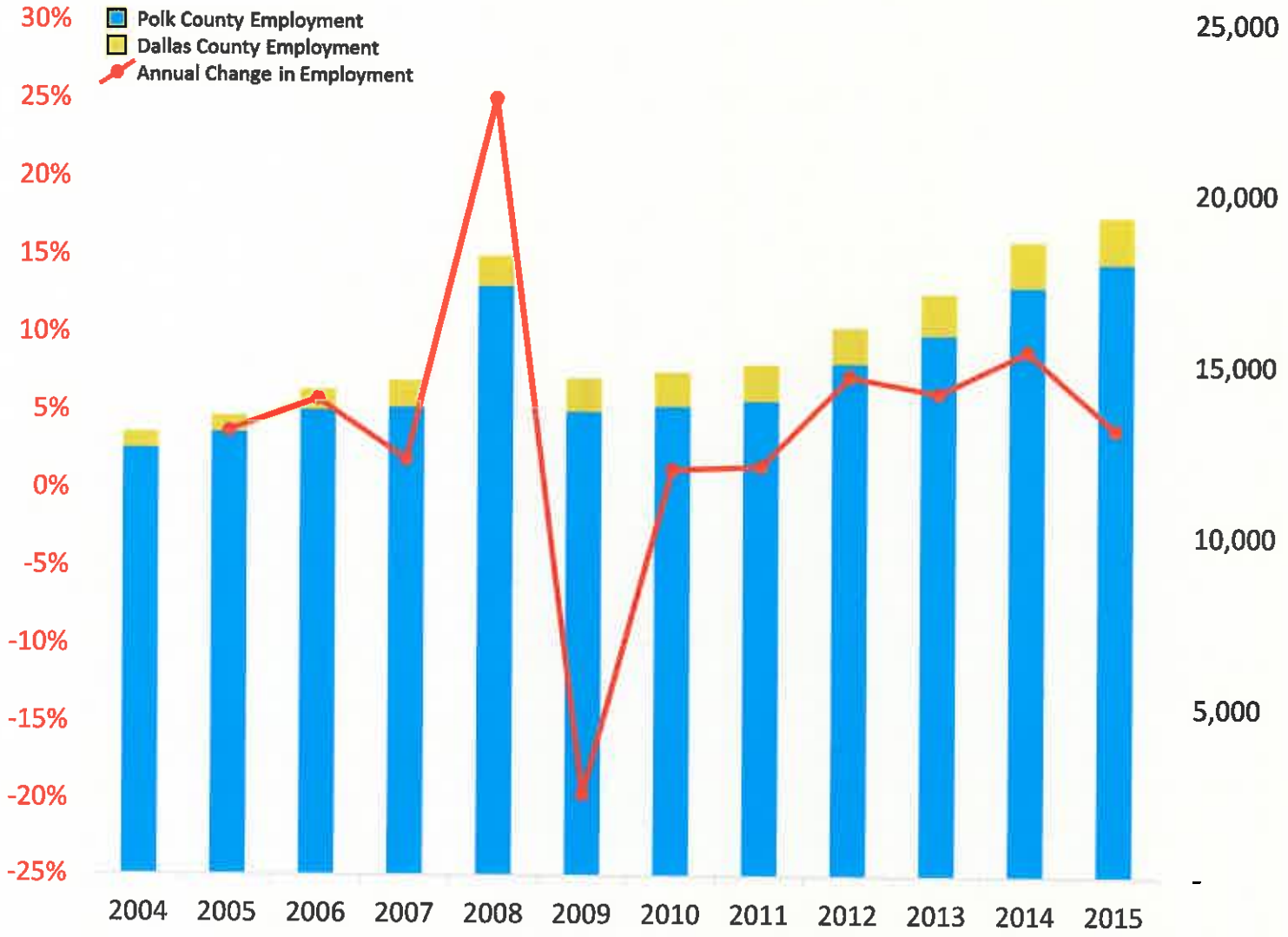
Key Occupations in the Industry

Occupation	MSA Employment	MSA LQ	10-year U.S. Growth Projection (%)	United States Salary	MSA Salary Index	Education Needed
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	190	1.24	43.50	$70,880	0.90	Associate's degree
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	60	0.47	29.30	$56,100	0.82	Associate's degree
Physical Therapist Assistants	160	0.79	45.70	$55,250	0.87	Associate's degree
Medical Assistants	1,050	0.70	30.90	$31,910	1.21	High school diploma or equivalent
Medical Secretaries	1,300	0.98	41.30	$34,330	0.98	High school diploma or equivalent
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	240	0.59	11.30	$61,860	0.92	Bachelor's degree
Medical and Health Services Managers	1,130	1.43	22.40	$106,070	0.78	Bachelor's degree
Home Health Aides	1,030	0.50	69.40	$22,870	1.10	Less than high school
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	380	0.80	21.00	$40,430	1.00	Postsecondary non-degree award
Medical Equipment Repairers	190	1.85	31.50	$49,400	0.87	Associate's degree

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Professional Business Services

Professional Business Services Employment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Target Industry Trends: Professional Business Services

Key Occupations in the Industry

Occupation	MSA Employment	MSA LQ	10-year U.S. Growth Projection (%)	United States Salary	MSA Salary Index	Education Needed
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	300	1.28	24.50	$82,850	0.84	Bachelor's degree
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	830	1.22	18.30	$52,390	0.95	Associate's degree
Surveyors	80	0.74	25.40	$61,880	0.80	Bachelor's degree
Landscape Architects	90	1.81	16.00	$68,600	0.82	Bachelor's degree
Civil Engineers	660	0.96	19.40	$87,940	0.91	Bachelor's degree
Civil Engineering Technicians	190	1.06	12.00	$51,330	1.02	Associate's degree
Technical Writers	90	0.72	17.20	$73,350	0.69	Bachelor's degree
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	240	1.10	18.70	$73,930	0.86	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	1,660	1.31	41.20	$70,030	0.97	Bachelor's degree
Public Relations Specialists	650	1.19	22.50	$65,830	0.96	Bachelor's degree

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Key Performance Metrics

Key performance metrics, such as those listed here, provide any economic development team with the hard data to better understand their own local economy and their efforts. Many of these items are also the kinds of information that site location consultants would need to have to help inform a business' site location decision.

West Des Moines should work to keep track of these metrics and consider reporting on a number of them on an annual or quarterly basis to the public (with a report posted online). Not all information will be specific to the City of West Des Moines, but having an understanding or county-wide or regional performance can also be informative.

Business Climate

Permitting

- Number of commercial/residential permits issued annually
- Average duration of commercial/residential permitting process
- Percentage of permitting completed online
- Ratings of permitting process through post-permitting survey

EDO

- Deal conversion rate (rate of prospects into projects)
- Number of prospect inquiries
- Number of prospect visits
- Number of annual BR&E visits
- Percentage of businesses surveyed and profiled
- Ratings of overall business climate through BR&E survey

Marketing and Branding

- Website visitor engagements
    - Average number of clickthroughs on website
    - Average number of page views by visitors
    - Average time spent on website
- Number of social media followers (twitter, linkedin, facebook, etc.)
- Number of social media shares (re-tweets, likes, etc.)
- Number of subscribers to content (newsletter)
- BR&E survey

Key Performance Metrics

Economy

- Average wage
- Total wages and percent change
- Per capita income
- Public vs. private sector income
- Total new jobs
- Average wages for new jobs
- GDP growth
- Population/ demographic changes
- Higher degree attainment of 25-44 demographic
- Local new job listings
- Unemployment rate

Quality of Life

- High school graduation rates
- Average commute times
- Regional cost of living
- Housing prices
- Rent as a proportion of household income
- Health care coverage
- Property crime rates
- Violent crime rates
- Civic engagement

Entrepreneurial Metrics

Business Creation

- New business starts (incorporations)
- Number of incubated businesses

Capital and R&D Activity

- Angel and venture funding
- R&D spending
- ROI of private investment to public investment (annual)

Infrastructure

Residential

- Average price of multi family rent
- Average price of housing sales
- Average price of new homes
- No. of months in single family inventory

Commercial

- Office, industrial absorption/vacancy
- Office, industrial price/square feet
- Average no. of days to issue development permits

Transportation

- Average commute time
- Average speed on major roadways, including highway

Target Industries

Growth

- Jobs created/lost related to target industries
- Number of total firm expansions/relocations
- Total capital investment
- ROI of ED budget to total new jobs and income (annual)

Target Industry Talent Pool

- Total number of annual higher degree graduates
- Percentage of annual STEM related graduates vs. non-STEM graduates
- Number of high school graduates
- Percent of high school graduates enrolling in college/technical school
- Number awarded certificates via workforce development programs

International

- Foreign direct investment
- Number of international inquiries
- Number of qualified leads

Implementation Matrix

To guide implementation of this strategy, a document (referred to as the implementation matrix) designating timeline and responsibilities for each action has been developed. The implementation matrix is provided as an editable excel document separate from the body of this report.

Economic Development		Implementation Timeline			Implementation Partners							
		Short Term (1 Year)	Mid Term (2-3 Years)	Long Term (3 Years+)	Community & Economic Development Department	City Government	Public Schools	Local Utilities	Workforce Development Entities	Private Sector Leaders	Chamber of Commerce	Greater Des Moines Partnership
Goal 1	**Continued Success in Job & Investment Attraction Efforts**											
I.	**Market successes of West Des Moines**											
1	Build a "SWAT" team of community and business leaders	X			1	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2	Conduct marketing trips as a city	X			1	X				X		
3	Develop testimonial based campaign highlighting business climate of West Des Moines		X		1	X		X		X	X	
II.	**Continue to establish economic development industry ties**											
1	Attend site location and economic development conferences		X		1							
2	Attend trade shows and industry conferences		X		1							
3	Continue to utilize regional approach to site selection			X	X							1
III.	**Develop online presence aimed at site selectors**											
1	Build a new website	X			1	X						
2	Develop marketing materials highlighting industry assets	X			1			X		X	X	
3	Connect online visitors to development opportunities		X		1	X		X			X	
IV.	**Strengthen private sector engagement in economic development**											
1	Hold semi-annual developer meetings with development community	X			1	X				X		
2	In the long term, consider growing economic development into a public-private partnership		X		1	X		X		X	X	
Goal 2	**Strengthen Business Retention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship Efforts**											
I.	**Increase business retention and expansion efforts**											
1	Consider hiring business and workforce retention specialist	X			1	X						
2	Ensure adequate support for retention and expansion activities	X			1	X						
3	Survey business community on an annual basis	X			1				X	X	X	
4	Keep track of jobs created and retained	X			1					X	X	
II.	**Properly support incubator/maker space and entrepreneurs**											
1	Identify partners to help lead incubator/maker space efforts	X			X	1					X	
2	Investigate best practices for organization of incubator/maker space	X			1	X					X	
3	Look to collaborate with partner organization to manage incubator/maker space		X		X	1					X	
4	Consider establishing an international business plan competition		X		1	X	X			X	X	X
5	Create a "one-stop-shop" for entrepreneurs		X		X	1				X	X	
6	Hire an entrepreneurship specialist to coordinate City's efforts	X			1	X						
III.	**Develop additional spaces for entrepreneurs**											
1	Look into demand for co-working space and a maker space		X		1					X	X	
2	Attract entrepreneurs from state, national, and international markets			X	1		X			X		

Implementation Matrix

Economic Development		Implementation Timeline			Implementation Partners							
		Short Term (1 Year)	Mid Term (2-3 Years)	Long Term (5 years)	Community & Economic Development Department	City Government	Public Schools	Local Institutions	Workforce Development Entities	Private Sector Leaders	Chamber of Commerce	Greater Des Moines Partnership
Goal 3	**Become a Premiere Destination for Technology Workers**											
I.	**Encourage skills development**											
1	Work to connect local businesses with training programs at local colleges and universities	X			1		X		X	X	X	X
2	Encourage employers to utilize skills-based training platforms	X			1		X		X	X	X	X
3	Build local platforms for internship/apprenticeship opportunities		X		1	X	X		X	X		X
4	Push for online education in high schools and colleges			X	1		X		X	X		X
5	Consider pursuing a "seamless" degree for Finance & Insurance and Information Technology careers			X	1		X		X	X		X
II.	**Address skills gaps in tech-related sectors**											
1	In coordination with workforce development professionals, survey local employers to understand talent gap in local and regional tech sector	X			1				X	X	X	
2	Convene task force with local tech industry leaders, workforce development professionals, and educators on how to best create local policies to build tech sector pipeline	X			1		X		X	X		X
3	Build relationship with AIESEC to help fill tech-related positions in the short term	X			1				X	X		
4	Use online labor training platforms to recruit new talent		X		1				X	X		
Goal 4	**Nurture Quality of Place Assets**											
I.	**Provide support for Historic West Des Moines**											
1	Ensure continued progress on Historic West Des Moines Plan goals			X	X	1				X	X	
2	Find ways to lower business costs for Historic West Des Moines business and redevelopmnt opportunities		X		1	X		X				
II.	**Encourage walkable and bike able roadways**											
1	Push to connect biking and walking trails to promote use			X	X	1						
2	Where applicable, look to ensure new development allows for alternative modes of transportation			X	X	1						
III.	**Promote public events and community involvement**											
1	Continue to support public events and art	X			1	X						
2	Connect business community to arts community and events	X			1	X	X			X	X	
3	Organize an annual "exemplary employer" award	X			X	X	X	X		X	1	
III.	**Ensure availability of affordable housing**											
1	Measure housing need	X			1	X						
2	Set local goals for housing based on data	X			1	X						
3	Preserve current stock of affordable housing			X	X	1						
4	Consider adopting form-based code			X	X	1						
5	Allow for expedited permitting to lower cost of development	X			X	1						
6	Create funding sources to help with specific housing needs			X	X	1						
7	Continue to utilize housing trust funds to deal with longer term housing needs	X			X	1						

1 Denotes the primary organization responsible for implementation
X Denotes any and all partner organizations

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Industrial Asset Management Council (IAMC)

Founded in 2002, the IAMC describes itself as "the leading association of industrial asset management and corporate real estate executives, their suppliers and service providers, and economic developers."

Membership in the IAMC provides access to the organization's bi-annual meetings. These meetings provide high-quality education and networking opportunities in a low-key, professional environment.

For more information, visit:
https://www.iamc.org/

American Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AmChams)

Organized under the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's International Division, AmChams are organizations of business leaders that represent U.S. business interests to the government, business leaders, and communities of the host countries. Currently, there are 116 AmChams representing U.S. business interests in 103 countries worldwide. Membership in AmChams not only provides networking opportunities and business leads, but also access to publications, libraries, and consolidated information on business climate's and regulations.

For more information, visit:
http://www.amchamsineurope.com/
https://www.uschamber.com/international/directory
http://www.aaccla.org/amchams/

SelectUSA

Created by the Federal Government under the Department of Commerce, SelectUSA was created to showcase the United States as a prime location for business. To this end, SelectUSA provides both industry profiles and a searchable guide on Federal grants, loans, loan guarantees, and tax incentives. SelectUSA also provides Economic Organization Development Counseling to state, regional, and local organizations. This counseling includes best practices, outreach methods, and marketing strategies.

For more information, visit:
http://selectusa.commerce.gov/

Site Selector's Guild

The Site Selector's Guild is the most prestigious professional organization for corporate site selectors in the world. Founded in 2010, the Guild maintains the highest standards of membership, with demonstrated site selection experience and peer vetting both requirements for membership.

The Site Selector's Guild seeks to push professional site selection to the forefront of corporate location decisions through collaboration between site selectors, corporate customers, and economic development organization. The Guild also seeks to create the future of professional site selection through education opportunities and mentorship of the next generation of site

For more information, visit:
http://www.siteselectorsguild.com/

About AngelouEconomics

AngelouEconomics partners with client communities and regions across the United States and abroad to candidly assess current economic development realities and identify opportunities.

Our goal is to leverage the unique strengths of each region to provide new, strategic direction for economic development.

As a result, AngelouEconomics' clients are able to diversify their economies, expand job opportunities and investment, foster entrepreneurial growth, better prepare their workforce, and attract 'new economy' companies.

To learn more, visit www.angeloueconomics.com

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Economic Development

Implementation Timeline

Implementation Partners

Goal 1	**Continued Success in Job & Investment Attraction Efforts**															
I.	**Market Successes of West Des Moines**															
1	Build a SWAT team of companies and business leaders				X				X		X					
2	Conduct marketing trips as a city	X			1	X					X					
3	Develop testimonial based campaign highlighting homegrown success of West Des Moines				X						X					
II.	**Continue to establish economic development industry ties**															
1	Attend site location and economic development conferences		X		1											
2	Attend trade shows and industry conferences		X		1											
3	Continue to utilize regional approach to site selection		X		1											
III.	**Develop online presence aimed at site selectors**															
1	Build a new website	X			1											
2	Develop marketing materials highlighting industry assets	X			1			X			X	X				
3	Connect online visitors to development opportunities		X		1	X		X								
IV	**Strengthen private sector engagement in economic development**															
1	Hold semi-annual developer meetings with development community	X			1	X					X					
2	In the long term, consider growing economic development into a public-private partnership		X		1	X		X			X	X				
Goal 2	**Strengthen Business Retention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship Efforts**															
I.	**Increase business retention and expansion efforts**															
1	Consider hiring business and entrepreneurship specialist															
2	Ensure adequate support for retention and expansion activities	X			1	X										
3	Survey business community on business pain	X							X		X	X				
4	Keep track of jobs created and retained	X			1						X	X				
II.	**Properly support incubator/maker space and entrepreneurs**															
1	Identify partners to help lead the charge on maker space efforts				1							X				
2	Investigate best practices for organization of incubator/maker space	X			1	X						X				
3	Look to collaborate with partner organizations to manage incubator/maker space		X		1	1						X				
4	Consider establishing an international business plan competition		X		1	X	X				X	X	X			
5	Create a "safe zone" for entrepreneurs		X								X	X				
6	Hire an entrepreneurship specialist to coordinate City's efforts	X			1	X										
III.	**Develop additional spaces for entrepreneurs**															
1	Look into demand for co-working space and creative space										X	X				
2	Attract entrepreneurs from state, national, and international markets			X	1		X				X					
Goal 3	**Become a Premiere Destination for Technology Workers**															
I.	**Encourage skills development**															
1	Work to connect local businesses with training programs at local colleges and universities	X			1		X		X		X	X				
2	Encourage employers to utilize skill-based training platforms	X			1		X		X		X	X				
3	Build local platforms for alternative/non-traditional opportunities		X		1	X	X		X		X	X				
4	Push for online education in high schools and colleges			X	1		X		X		X					
5	Consider pursuing a "co-op/internship" program for finance & insurance and information technology careers			X	1		X		X		X					
II.	**Address skills gaps in tech-related sectors**															
1	In coordination with workforce development professionals, survey local employers to understand talent gaps in local and regional tech sector	X			1				X		X	X				
2	Convene task force with local tech industry leaders, workforce development professionals, and educators on how to best create local policies to build tech sector pipeline	X			1		X		X		X		X			
3	Build relationships with ASSEC to help fill tech-related gaps and talent pipeline	X			1				X		X					
4	Use online labor training platforms to recruit new talent		X		1				X		X					
Goal 4	**Nurture Quality of Place Assets**															
I.	**Provide support for Historic West Des Moines**															
1	Ensure continued progress on Historic West Des Moines Plan goals			X	X	X					X	X				
2	Find ways to lower business costs for Historic West Des Moines business and redevelopment opportunities		X		1	X		X								
II.	**Encourage walkable and bike able roadways**															
1	Publish complete street and walking trails to promote use			X	X	1										
2	Where applicable, look to ensure new development allows for alternative modes of transportation			X	X	1										
III.	**Promote public events and community involvement**															
1	Continue to support public events and arts	X			1	X										
2	Connect business community to arts community and events	X			1	X	X				X	X				
3	Create an annual "Summer Festival"	X			X	X	X	X			X	X				
III.	**Ensure availability of affordable housing**															
1	Market housing data				1	X										
2	Set local goals for housing based on data	X			1	X										
3	Preserve current stock of affordable housing				X	1										

4	Consider adopting form-based code			X	X	1
5	Allow for expedited permitting to lower cost of development				X	1
6	Create funding sources to help with specific housing needs			X	X	1
7	Continue to utilize housing trust funds to deal with longer term housing needs	X			X	1

1 Denotes the primary organization responsible for implementation
X Denotes any and all partner organizations

Prepared by: Clyde Evans, Community & Economic Development, PO Box 65320, W.D.M., IA 50265-0320, 515-273-0770
When Recorded, Return to: City Clerk, City of West Des Moines, PO Box 65320, West Des Moines, IA 50265-0320

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, IOWA APPROVING THE 2017 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of West Des Moines, Iowa wishes to promote economic development within the City of West Des Moines;

WHEREAS, the original Economic Development Action Plan was developed in 2009, prior to the Great Recession, and on June 13, 2016, the City Council authorized staff to retain the contract with Angelou Economics to prepare an update of the 2009 Plan;

WHEREAS, the purpose of the 2017 Economic Development Action Plan is to identify opportunities for the City and the community to meet the community's economic development goals;

WHEREAS, the Plan was developed using feedback from citizens, the business community and analysis of the current West Des Moines economic climate;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, IOWA HEREBY ADOPTS THIS 2017 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN.

Passed and approved by the City Council on the 24th day of July, 2017

_____
Steven K. Gaer, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Ryan T. Jacobson, City Clerk