



Resilient Region Plan *Mission*

The mission of the R5DC Central Minnesota Sustainable Development Planning Project is To create a Community driven - University assisted partnership around planning sustainable regions that integrates the disciplines of housing, transportation, natural

environment (land use) and economic development (including energy and local foods); and that encompasses in-reach strategies through HIGHLY involved civic engagement in efforts to build an inclusive region that will provide opportunities, be free from discrimination and improve the quality of life of ALL residents.

“Community” is defined as multitude of private, public and non-profit agencies as well as the citizens of the region. “Region” is defined as; Crow Wing, Cass, Morrison, Todd and Wadena Counties located in central Minnesota.

HUD/DOT/EPA Livability Principles

1. Provide more transportation choices.
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.
3. Enhance economic competitiveness.
4. Support existing communities.
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investments.
6. Value communities and neighborhoods.

Region’s Guiding Principles

1. Think regionally and inclusively.
2. Consolidation of effective data.
3. Capitalize on assets, current plans and work in progress.
4. Balance redevelopment / development preservation opportunities through effective land-use planning.
5. Consider regionalization of services (BMPs or our region, drive opportunities)
6. Connect more people to:
 - well-paid jobs
 - active living opportunities
 - broadband technology.

Vision & Values

Vision

The Five County Resilient Region Vision is to provide everyone opportunity through ownership and stewardship by preservation and enhancement of our assets, natural resources and talented people who are here for a day or a lifetime. The Region's primary goals are to nurture innovation, boost philanthropic engagement, foster responsibility and to allocate investments toward growth initiatives that will drive long-term resilience.

Primary Value – Sustainability

Meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Value Statements

The Five County Vision is to be a Resilient Region; to create a community where people thrive.

The Five County Resilient Region is committed to these values.

Growth

Through a balance of economic and environmental vivacity, our region will see continued growth.

Natural Resources

Maintain our natural resource assets and water quality for the benefit of all.

Success

Infuse and energize the region, enhancing the lives of those who live, work and play here; ultimately generating a High Quality of Life. "Life is good here"

Stewardship

Coordinate policies, sustain, leverage and reinvest in our region, local communities and neighborhoods by wisely managing our assets, resources and tax dollars.

Unsurpassed Collaboration

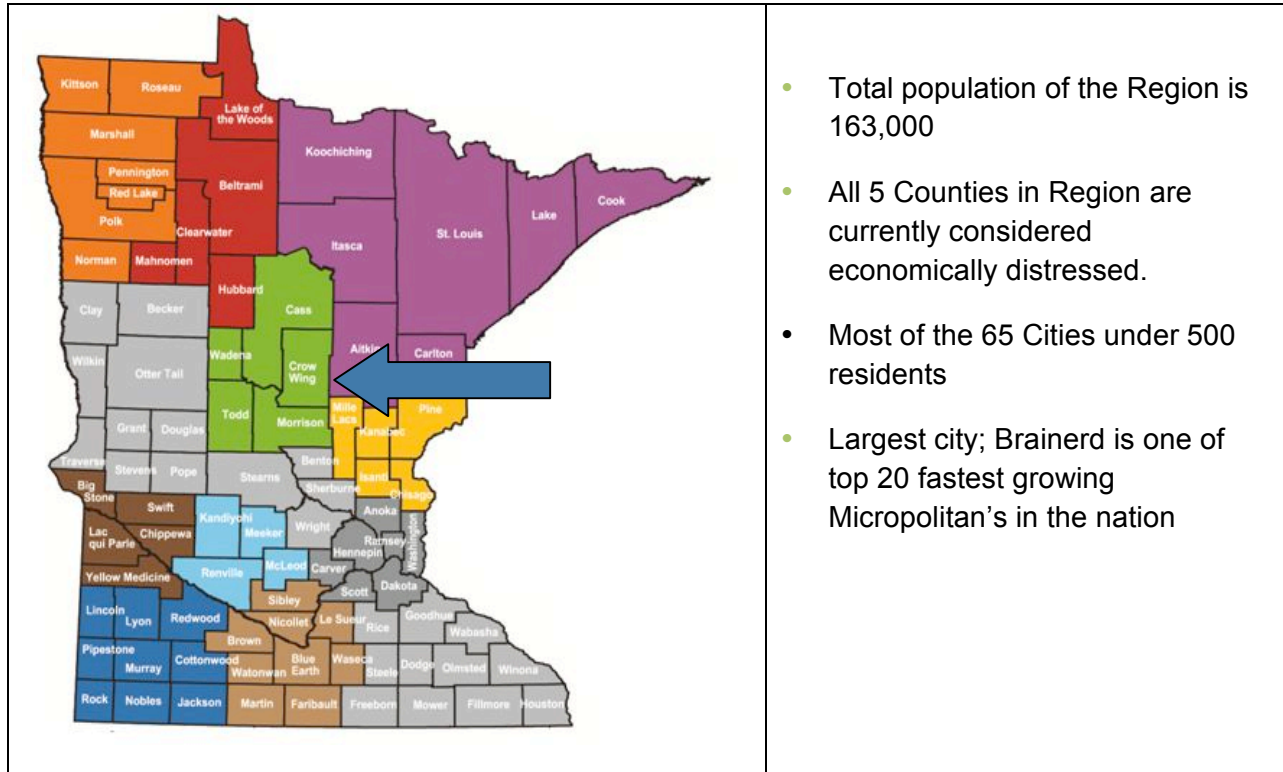
While supporting and valuing existing communities and neighborhoods, blend the skills and assets of the area thereby establishing a regional identity through cooperative teamwork, interdependency and reduction of duplication.

Community

Create a healthy community incorporating an effective transportation system, equitable housing options, access to broadband and ample healthcare choices.

Economic Vitality

Foster a progressive driving force of economic competitiveness and community development for the Five County Region to provide opportunity to everyone



Sustainable Development in action will satisfy three guiding principles of: economic prosperity, ecological stewardship and community livability.

By definition, sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Resilient Region Plan

Themes, Issues, Goals, Recommendations and Action Steps

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The Themes document cross referenced with the HUD/DOT/EPA Livability Principles; Regional Guiding Principles; Workgroups of Land Use “L”, Transportation “T”, Housing “H”, and Economic Development “E”; the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS); and the 26 Activities is available under “Resources”.

Infrastructure – Housing

Housing Issue I (HI)

Building standards: Encourage local units of government to voluntarily coordinate, develop and implement conforming technical guidelines, planning and zoning standards and ordinances.

The issue includes the promotion of green building standards such as the [Minnesota Green Housing Criteria Overlay](#). Educating community members, particularly architects and contractors, on the benefits and best practices of green construction is integral to establishing and achieving cutting-edge building standards goals.

The issue also seeks to acknowledge the importance of local agriculture, the preservation of small farms and community supported agriculture (CSA) as it concerns policies such as zoning, agriculture-appropriate real estate taxation and development.

Housing Issue I Goal

Coordination of ordinances and standards: Review and coordination of existing ordinances and standards. Identify and catalog similarities and differences. Adoption of coordinated ordinances and standards by local units of government.

HI Recommendation H1

Housing performance standard: Achieve a higher performance standard for all housing in the region by 2035.

Action Step H1A

Build to last: Build all housing to last at least 100 years because a longer usable life is more cost effective. Local planning and zoning offices could offer potential permit applicants a cost comparison information sheet showing examples of cost recovery estimates and useful life of project using various construction materials/methods.

Action Step H1B

Building standards: Make building standards and permitting more uniform and more stringent to achieve all aspects of new housing and rehabilitation goals.

Action Step H1C

Subdivision ordinances: Create or update local subdivision ordinances to include a baseline standard.

Action Step H1D

Blight reduction: Examine existing blight ordinances and rental codes, amend/revise as needed. Enforce blight ordinances and rental codes and promote broader use. Identify Federal and State funding opportunities.

Action Step H1E

Resale standards: Require homes on the market to meet minimum standards before transfer of title. Possibly add to realtor checklist to ensure improvement is completed. Secure funds for this effort.

Action Step H1F

Neighborhood standards: Adopt neighborhood aesthetic standards to build the sense of character and identity.

Action Step H1G

Life-cycle housing: Rehabilitate houses to accommodate a variety of age groups and needs. Recommend that HUD set standards for new construction and rehabilitation of homes that use state/federal funding.

Action Step H1H

Safety: Include children's safety and storm shelter access as safety aspects in rehabilitation.

Action Step H1I

Rehabilitation: Increase local community organization efforts to rehabilitate older housing stock.

Infrastructure – Housing

HI Recommendation H2

Education on codes and standards: Focus on education to promote standardized building codes, alternatives for green energy, and sustainable planning for housing.

Action Step H2A

Building codes: Identify opportunities to standardize rehabilitation/building codes for green technologies for all types of housing including multifamily, mobile homes, conventionally built homes, and manufactured homes.

Action Step H2B

Zoning for green housing: Incorporate Minnesota Green Housing Criteria Overlay concepts in zoning codes and building codes (www.mnhousing.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/document/mhfa_006584.pdf).

Action Step H2C

Education: Educate architects, planning and zoning staff, code enforcers, contractors and builders in green technology for all types of construction and rehabilitation.

Action Step H2D

Jobs: Identify jobs related to emerging technologies in residential construction.

Infrastructure – Housing

Housing Issue II (HII)

Infrastructure to support housing: The availability of suitable infrastructure is critical for communities and businesses. Many towns throughout the region face the financial burden of replacing sewer and water lines and/or wastewater treatment facilities. For many small towns with aging populations the cost is prohibitive. Seeking assistance from State and Federal sources is one possible avenue open to them.

Housing Issue II Goal

Drinking water and wastewater infrastructure: All housing is served by clean, safe drinking water and a functioning wastewater treatment system.

HII Recommendation H3

Infrastructure planning: Plan for maintenance, upgrading, and eventual replacement of drinking water and wastewater systems throughout the region. Investigate innovative technologies for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

Action Step H3A

Funding: Secure funding for maintenance, upgrading, and replacement of water and wastewater infrastructure including septic systems and wells.

Action Step H3B

Efficiency: Maximize existing capacity before expanding or creating new water and wastewater infrastructure. Consider cluster/small distributed systems for environmental concerns or cost considerations.

Action Step H3C

Infrastructure expansion: Consider expanding new and existing highway, sewer, and water, prioritizing community and regional impacts.

Infrastructure – Housing

Housing Issue III (HIII)

Location and type of housing: Promote land use policies that create affordable, intergenerational, active living, housing opportunities. Such housing should be located near goods and services, public green space and transportation infrastructure.

Housing Issue III Goal A

Growth patterns: 12,000 new homes across the region from a population increase of 8% with an average household size of 2.4 persons. People retire here and want to live near amenities so there is moderate lake shore development. There is an increase in affordable housing and jobs so young people return. People live near jobs so big towns grow some and small towns hold steady.

Housing Issue III Goal B

Redevelopment (infill/reuse): Increase of new housing units or commercial space built in previously developed spaces.

HIII Recommendation H4

Planning and zoning: Create neighborhood and communitywide plans that account for the location of infrastructure. Use zoning to encourage efficient and functional development and locate all housing near amenities such as; schools, shopping, medical facilities, recreational opportunities, jobs, lakes, utilities etc.

Action Step H4A

Zoning techniques for efficiency: Reduce infrastructure costs and allow for varied income housing by encouraging cluster, conservation design, and mixed use development.

Action Step H4B

Create neighborhoods: For new housing, especially in larger communities, develop houses in neighborhood clusters with varied housing types or mixed use of buildings.

Action Step H4C

Protection of natural resources: Protect the region's natural environment and improve access to public waters by developing incentives to use conservation design over traditional lot-block developments, especially in shoreland areas.

Action Step H4D

Farmland protection: Local governments should designate growth areas and protect the region's prime farmland by directing/steering future development to identified growth areas.

Action Step H4E

Solar access: Design and position new home construction to maximize use of solar energy. Homeowners will have the opportunity to access solar/thermal resources which will lower utility costs to the home and lower traditional energy consumption.

Action Step H4F

Senior housing: Encourage more housing development and redevelopment opportunities in downtown areas by creating tax-free or low-tax housing zones. Develop an affordable, senior citizen property tax.

HIII Recommendation H5

Social services: Provide links to social services for residents receiving housing assistance.

Infrastructure – Housing

Housing Issue IV (HIV)

Housing rehabilitation: Rehabilitation of housing focuses on current housing stock. Seniors with a fixed income may find it very costly to rehabilitate their home when necessary, so a “Continuum of Care” model should be adopted to accommodate seniors and their housing needs. Rehabilitation efforts should also focus on the significant foreclosed housing stock, which may be sold back to homebuyers at an affordable price with an affordable financing. Green technology relating to housing methods can play a role in this key issue.

HIV Recommendation H6

Support rehabilitation efforts: Support efforts to rehabilitate housing in the region, particularly for vacant homes, foreclosures and low-income homes, through establishing standards, providing incentives and resources, and education.

Action Step H6A

Rehabilitation standards: Have funds available for housing rehabilitation, including the addition of green technology to existing homes. Make housing suitable for families and individuals.

Action Step H6B

Foreclosures: Prioritize rehabilitation of foreclosed homes. Create an incentive program for new homebuyers to purchase homes with a match or amount they have been paying for rent.

Action Step H6C

Incentives: Provide government incentives to developers for improving housing and establishing infrastructure that supports a broader vision for housing in each community.

Action Step H6D

Standards: Promote individual investment development coupled with quality standards.

Action Step H6E

Rental rehabilitation: Set up programs to help low-income homeowners rehabilitate their homes to create a rental apartment.

Action Step H6F

Funding: Create a variety of funding options for rehabilitation, especially for the elderly and low-income population.

Action Step H6G

Database for rehabilitation: Develop “Angie’s List”-style databases of rental property energy ratings for tenants to use and reliable rehabilitation contractors. Help reliable contractors get on the list.

Action Step H6H

Use volunteers: Find groups of contractors that are willing to volunteer or help at cost.

Action Step H6I

Resource guide: Have a resource guide to inform property owners of programs.

Action Step H6J

Funding guidance: Work with contractors, non-profits, and educational trainers and direct them to funding sources.

Action Step H6K

Evaluation: Develop an evaluation process to determine whether or not a foreclosed home is a good candidate for rehabilitation.

Action Step H6L

Educate contractors: Educate contractors regarding housing rehabilitation.

Action Step H6M

Rehabilitation jobs: Use workforce housing programs to put the unemployed to work on rehabilitation.

Action Step H6N

Elderly and single parent homes: Create a group (or recruit those in transitional/emergency housing programs) to rehabilitate homes for elderly or single parent homes.

Infrastructure – Housing

HIV Recommendation H7

Energy rehabilitation: Help families finance energy savings and improvements, including green technology, as well as understanding the payback from these improvements. Provide more energy efficient low interest loans.

Action Step H7A

Promote existing programs: Allow existing rehabilitation and weatherizing programs to do more. Require the use of appropriate green technology and promote peak-month savings.

Action Step H7B

Standards: Rehabilitated homes must meet a minimum standard of green technology and energy efficiency.

Action Step H7C

Loans and incentives: Encourage government-recommended loans, technical assistance and incentives for rehabilitating homes of a certain square footage. This should include green requirements and the use of alternative energy technologies.

HIV Recommendation H8

Rehabilitation standards and rules: Simplify rules regarding rehabilitation. Return more power to the local government to oversee and set standards for their area.

Action Step H8A

Funding: Work to fund building standard mandates with local money. Collaborate with local governments to levy taxes for cost-saving projects.

Action Step H8B

Maintenance standards: Establish minimum neighborhood standards for preventing deterioration and maintaining reasonable levels of cleanliness.

Action Step H8C

Community standards: When rehabilitating homes, consider the community and home's aesthetics and attractiveness.

HIV Recommendation H9

Affordable housing: Strongly prioritize small towns and rural areas in the effort to continue preserving affordable housing in Greater Minnesota.

Action Step H9A

Rehabilitate foreclosed homes: Enable rehabilitation of foreclosed properties to provide affordable housing for seniors, families, and group facilities.

Infrastructure –

Connectivity Issue I (CI)

Connectivity: Extending high-speed internet access to the entire region increases telecommuting opportunities, provides greater access to customers and markets for businesses, and allows all residents access to civic resources and commerce.

Connectivity Issue I Goal

Connectivity: The number of households in the region served by high-speed internet services rises from the current level of 40% to 95% served. The (region/rural areas) community is willing to invest to increase coverage. This will include both public and private investment in service.

CI Recommendation C1

Access across the region: Ensure all households in the region have high-speed internet access which meets common state standards.

Action Step C1A

Access: Promote, support and develop high-speed internet access throughout region for telecommuting, educational benefits, and supporting business activity.

CI Recommendation C2

Efficiency: Local units of governments will work across political boundaries to share equipment costs/facilities for more efficient delivery of high-speed internet.

Action Step C2A

Efficiency in installation: Lay conduit for fiber optics when upgrading sewer and water or digging trench.

CI Recommendation C3

Access for entrepreneurs: Provide access to technology needs and support to retain businesses and encourage potential entrepreneurs.

Action Step C3A

Economic development: Determine the compatibility and interface between communications, smart grid technologies, and internet systems. Develop a recruiting initiative encouraging technology-oriented companies to explore opportunities offered in non-urban spaces.

infrastructure in housing so residents may work from home.

Action Step C3C

Map of access sites: Develop map or list of accessible sites within region to conduct web-type meetings, free Wi-Fi etc.

Action Step C3B

Telecommuting: Create a business plan that facilitates legitimate telecommuting jobs and promotes high-speed internet connection in the region. Upgrade and expand high-speed internet

Infrastructure – Connectivity

CI Recommendation C4

Access for children: All school aged children will have access to a computer with high-speed internet capabilities.

Action Step C4A

Support sites: Make available sites providing educational, internet, support, financial resources, etc.

CI Recommendation C5

Funding: Identify and pursue state, federal, and philanthropic grants to fund connectivity recommendations.

Infrastructure – Energy

Energy Issue I (EI)

Energy in our region: Not all of the jobs that were lost in the past ten years were to developing countries with lax regulatory oversight and low wages, many jobs were lost to advancements in technology and related productivity gains. Because the region has many companies that are working within energy related fields, developing breakthrough technology in energy production will be critical for advancing the industry cluster and the region.

Energy Issue I Goal

Increase energy efficiency: Create a more energy efficient region through working with utilities and emphasizing energy efficiency. Employ education and outreach to capitalize on technological advancements in energy including smart grid technologies and renewable energy conducive to our region such as geothermal, solar, wind, biomass, energy storage and hydro power.

EI Recommendation E1

Public/private collaboration: Increase collaboration between public and private sectors to implement new energy technologies, including state and federal financing for private/public partnerships.

Action Step E1A

Partnerships: Work with Habitat for Humanity to build additional energy efficient homes and work with Community Action Partnership (CAP) agencies to weatherize homes.

Action Step E1B

Priorities: Target group homes and programs serving the low-income, senior, and disabled populations.

Action Step E1C

Information sharing: Add utilities to email notification for agendas of city/county/Region 5 Development Commission's EDA/HRA/Planning Commissions, etc. so the utilities can review for possible projects. EDA to send email to utilities with prospects/commercial building projects.

Action Step E1D

Seek out information: Utilities regularly ask EDAs for information about possible commercial building opportunities.

Action Step E1E

Identify contacts: Create a contact list of utility personnel that all the utilities can refer to regionally.

Action Step E1F

Rebate information: Post utility rebates on the new Resilient Region website and link to utility websites.

Action Step E1G

Coordinate between utilities: Set up a regular schedule for utilities to meet on the issues of energy efficiency and low-income programs.

Action Step E1H

Utility contact information: Inventory regional utilities and post a regional utility map and contacts on the Resilient Region website.

Action Step E1I

Policy change: Collectively address the policy issue of inequity between credits for BTUs and/or KWHs saved. Ask for support from energy advocate agencies and local governments.

Action Step E1J

Educating farmers: Support energy efficiency in agriculture. Plan a statewide conference for the agriculture industry and farmers focusing on energy efficiency. Support the Minnesota Project's Dairy Initiative on energy efficiency.

Action Step E1K

Educate commercial and industrial: Campaign for commercial and industrial efficiency.

Infrastructure – Energy

EI Recommendation E2

Support renewable energy requirements: Energy users support utility companies in meeting renewable energy requirements.

Action Step E2A

Standardize rebates: Standardize rebates across utilities.

Action Step E2B

Neighborhood energy use: Work with Center for Energy and the Environment (CEE) to conduct neighborhood energy challenges. Educate residential consumers.

Action Step E2C

Consumer energy use: Use existing software (MyMeter) to encourage customers to manage usage.

Action Step E2D

Case studies: Publicize case studies of families that have utilized programs that save energy.

Action Step E2E

Publicize programs: Encourage utilities to list programs available for low-income residents.

Action Step E2F

Low-income focus: Encourage utilities to lead discussions around low-income gaps.

Action Step E2G

Coordination and promotion: Coordinate and promote existing efficiency programs.

Infrastructure – Energy

EI Recommendation E3

Conservation and renewable technologies: Encourage and teach conservation and advance practical renewable energy technologies that have a reasonable return on investment. Teach people how to conserve energy, manage energy demand, and about new technologies – without bias as to type of energy source. Focus on conservation. Discuss/teach how energy sources contribute to pollution.

Action Step E3A

Economic development: Create an energy incubator campus, leverage existing expertise, and create target incentives to advance the commercialization of clean, green, sustainable enterprises.

Action Step E3B

Solar access: Ensure access to solar energy for all housing.

Action Step E3C

Equipment: Help finance energy efficient business equipment for commercial, industrial and agricultural enterprises.

Action Step E3D

Policy: Incentivize energy conservation through such actions as tax incentives for home owners and businesses that utilize solar, wind, etc. Reduce regulations that impede renewable energy production. Promote policy that supports decentralized energy production. Provide incentives such as cost share incentives and rebates to help energy users adopt renewable energy technologies.

Action Step E3E

Energy production: Focus on small scale energy production. Cultivate the hazardous energy sources like nuclear. Focus on research not production.

Action Step E3F

Research: Support research on conservation and renewable technologies.

Action Step E3G

Waste to energy: Support opportunities to turn waste into energy.

Action Step E3H

Service delivery planning: Engage in planning for brown-out/black-out times when utility companies are not able to operate.

Action Step E3I

Infrastructure: Pursue solutions to building local renewable energy infrastructure (i.e. electric car stations).

Action Step E3J

Education: Utility companies should partner with schools to provide classroom-based education on renewable energy.

Natural Resources and Development Patterns

Natural Resources Issue I (NRI)

Environment and economics in the region: Our five-county region is defined by its rich and diverse natural resources. Healthy forests and lakes drive regional economic engines like the tourism and forest products industries. Other parts of the region are used primarily for agricultural purposes, providing an opportunity to take advantage of the growing local foods movement and energy-related crop cultivation. This wide range of opportunities, along with an ample supply of clean, fresh water, attracts people to live, work, and recreate in the region. It is imperative to realize that economic development and natural resources are not opposing worlds; in fact, the two are closely related. The region's economic vitality will be directly impacted by the preservation and utilization of the region's land, water, and cultural assets. We must look beyond short-sighted visions leading to sprawl, environmental degradation, and infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs burdening taxpayers with continuing financial obligations. Instead, we can improve our environmental and economic outlook by promoting land use plans addressing and balancing long-term economic and environmental needs.

Natural Resources Issue I Goal 1

Natural resources: Achieve balance by creating healthy, livable affordable communities for humans that are also healthy, livable spaces for other plant and animal life.

Natural Resources Issue I Goal 2

Water quality: Water quality/lake clarity improves significantly because the region invests in our lakes. The region needs good water quality to maintain lakeshore property values and to attract tourism.

NRI Recommendation NR1

Balancing development and natural resources: All development in the region should meet rigorous standards for natural resources protection, not only recognizing the economic value that natural resources provide, but also affirming the innate aesthetic value of a healthy environment. A healthy green infrastructure is just as important to a community as their built infrastructure of roads, sewer and water pipes. Green infrastructure includes a network of wildlife travel corridors, greenways, wetlands, agricultural lands, and unfragmented open spaces.

Action Step NR1A

Natural resource information and development decisions: Guide future development location with the use of scientific data, including, but not limited to, natural resource inventory, land cover, groundwater, and climate projection maps. Local governments should work closely with state agencies, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and conservation nonprofits to obtain the best available scientific data in order to make informed decisions about where and how to grow.

Action Step NR1B

Community planning and development decisions: Communities in the region must respect their vision outlined by local and regional comprehensive plans. Those plans, sound scientific data, and a commitment to long-term

fiscal and environmental responsibility should drive future development and protection plans.

Action Step NR1C

Plan regionally: Communities should collaborate to create a regional comprehensive plan. This plan should promote a shared vision, regional cooperation, and sustainability.

Action Step NR1D

Define and measure regional sustainability: Create a regional definition for "sustainable land use" across jurisdictional boundaries. Adopt the [Green Step Cities](#) scorecard to measure progress toward land use sustainability.

Action Step NR1E

Collaborative dialogue: Facilitate a regular, on-going dialogue between community members and

leaders about collaboratively defining and achieving sustainable development.

Action Steps continue on the following page

Action Step NR1F

Sustainability in ordinances: Communities should update their land use ordinances to reflect their desire to embrace the principles of sustainability. The “SmartCode” (<http://www.smartcodecentral.org/>) is one

NRI Recommendation NR2

Shift development patterns: To shift current development patterns away from sprawl and automobile-centric designs, the region should embrace and implement fiscally, socially and environmentally sound land-use decisions. This type of development will provide residents with environmental, economic, social, cultural, and civic benefits that are in agreement with the desires and visions that communities express in their comprehensive plans.

Action Step NR2A

Multi-benefit land use: Incentivize transit-oriented development, pedestrian-friendly development, mixed-use development, the inclusion of public green space in all developments, and projects that promote multi-generational and multi-family housing opportunities in all residential zones, especially where we have medical and social services, cultural amenities, retail, and community gathering places.

Action Step NR2B

Sustainable zoning: Communities should look beyond merely dividing municipalities into geographic districts (Euclidean zoning) and consider more creative zoning approaches. This could include using performance-based zoning (also referred to as outcome-based zoning), form-based zoning, and a public values-driven collaborative process. These alternatives will give local governments, landowners, and developers the flexibility they need to work together and maximize the public value of private development.

Action Step NR2C

Incentivize sustainable development: Adopt a land use decision process that incentivizes sustainable development and regional collaboration.

Action Step NR2D

Standard definitions: Communities throughout the region should standardize land use terms and definitions.

example of how a community can transition to regulations that foster sustainable land-use.

Action Step NR1G

Sustainability and elected officials:

Communities should make sustainability an election-worthy issue. Voters should support candidates who promise to embrace and implement the Resilient Region Plan for economic and environmental vitality.

Action Step NR2E

Training for land use decision makers: Require and provide quality training for all planning commission and board of adjustment members. Educating these community leaders will help them better understand their job, limitations, and responsibilities. Additionally, they should be regularly trained on innovations in sustainable development and Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Action Step NR2F

Active citizens: Educate citizens on sustainable development so they can be more active and influential in their community’s land use decisions.

Action Step NR2G

Balance development and community needs: Communities should promote alternative development options that take into account profitability for the developer as well as tangible public benefits and advanced natural resource protections.

Action Step NR2H

Technology in development: Communities within the region should create a completely on-line, standardized development application process.

Action Step NR2I

Design review teams: Communities with planning and zoning responsibilities should incorporate Design Review Teams (DRTs) to help guide developers toward desirable designs, locations, and densities before major design costs are incurred.

Action Steps continue on the following page

Action Step NR2J

Lighting: Implement stronger regulations on nighttime illumination, especially for commercial and industrial businesses. This will not only protect the integrity of the night sky, but also promotes energy conservation.

Action Step NR2K

Variances: Allowing landowners to break the established rules of development is known as the variance process. This process should require a quid pro quo policy providing some public benefit for all granted variances.

NRI Recommendation NR3

Water quality protection: Healthy lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands contribute to a healthy regional economy, and communities with a clean, abundant supply of fresh water will always attract people to live, work and recreate. In addition, millions of people downstream in St. Cloud and the Twin Cities depend on the Mississippi River for their drinking water. Therefore, this region must protect its surface and subsurface water quality for both its own future viability and for those living outside the region that depend on a stable source of clean drinking water.

Action Step NR3A

Stormwater and wetlands: Require or incentivize the incorporation of stormwater management and wetland protection Best Management Practices (BMPs) into the development process. Such BMPs include, but are not limited to, Low-Impact Development (LID), Minimal Impact Development Standards (MIDS), shoreland and wetland buffers, rain gardens, etc.

Action Step NR3B

Watershed planning: Develop comprehensive watershed management plans throughout the region. These plans must require consistency of county water plans with applicable watershed plans. Direct funding to implement only county water plans that are consistent with applicable watershed plans.

Action Step NR3C

Wellhead protection: Set strict zoning requirements to keep potentially harmful development away from designated wellhead protection zones.

Action Step NR3D

Wastewater and drinking water systems: Explore more affordable options for effective wastewater and drinking water systems. Cluster septic systems, regional wastewater treatment plants, regular cost-effective septic inspection and maintenance, reduced well water quality testing rates, and incentivizing consolidation and infill where there is existing infrastructure should all be considered.

Action Step NR2L

Conservation design: Communities should highly incentivize conservation design developments as the preferred alternative to traditional, suburban-style, lot-block subdivisions.

Action Step NR2M

Discourage inefficient sprawl: Sprawl is fiscally and environmentally irresponsible. In order to discourage sprawl, communities should incentivize infill, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development opportunities in urban cores.

Action Step NR3E

Public beach access: To improve beach access for all, locate and record where current public beaches are in the region. Work to increase equitable access to the abundance of public waters in the region, which will improve the quality of life for all community members.

Action Step NR3F

Shoreland protection: Meet or exceed the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' recommended minimum shoreland standards throughout the region. Consider adopting the alternative shoreland standards.

Action Step NR3G

Invasive species: Invasive species are infesting our lakes. To protect our region's water resources, focus efforts on working with the state to aggressively contain and limit the further spread of invasive species to lakes which have not yet been infested.

Action Step NR3H

Water education: Keep community members informed by adequately funding and coordinating effective water education programs for the general public.

Action Step NR3I

Enforcement of regulations: Effectively enforce laws, rules, and regulations that protect water quality.

Action Steps continue on the following page

Action Step NR3J

Sustainable water treatment technology: Encourage further research and development (R&D) in sustainable drinking water and wastewater systems. Create flexibility in regulations to allow for cutting-edge water, septic, energy, wastewater, and technology options that may lead to increased sustainability and long-term cost savings for homeowners.

Education and Workforce Development

Education and Workforce Development Issue I (EWI)

Educating and retaining workforce: Facets of this issue include; understanding the demographic and skill make-up of the people in the region's major employment sectors. Other key components of this issue include lifelong learning aspects: how to keep young workers in the region, how to attract & retain talent, and how to best utilize an older workforce. Collaboration between private/public/non-profit sectors is of paramount importance for recommendations and actions to be successful under this theme.

Education and Workforce Development Issue I Goal

Educated workforce: Our region provides affordable and multiple educational opportunities to effectively employ the current and future workforce, and to improve our knowledge of how to live a sustainable life as individuals and as a community at large.

EWI Recommendation EW1

Lifelong learning: Prioritize and promote lifelong learning for all residents of the region.

Action Step EW1A

Workforce training: Create a WPA-like (aka transitional jobs) workforce training effort.

Action Step EW1B

Early childhood education: Prioritize early childhood education and maintain consistent educational pathway options.

Action Step EW1C

Education resource center: Consider developing a one-stop shop and education center site where people can learn about resources and how they can be a part of the solution.

Education and Workforce Development

EWI Recommendation EW2

Educational system improvements: Improve the educational system to provide a well-qualified future workforce.

Action Step EW2A

Experiential learning: Foster advanced placement opportunities, promote entrepreneurial skills, and involve students in hands-on work experience, on-the-job training and paid internships. Expand upon the “Bridges Academy” initiative administered by the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce.

Action Step EW2B

Assessment: Create a technical assessment of interests and skills.

Action Step EW2C

Connect students and employers: Promote the skills that employers are looking for and where the jobs opportunities are to high school and college-aged students.

Action Step EW2D

Critical thinking skills: Teach critical thinking skills.

Action Step EW2E

4-year degrees: Seek to have four-year college degrees delivered from within the region.

Action Step EW2F

Various types of degrees: Create areas of excellence but allow for a broad range of learning opportunities (liberal arts as well as engineering). Allow for flexibility of learning when needed.

Action Step EW2G

Teacher engagement and accountability: Teachers often have excellent ideas of how to improve performance, allow for 180-degree evaluations that come from colleagues, students and parents. Let performance be evaluated, not length of employment. Set higher standards and give higher pay for exceptional performance. Keep practices and ideas that are working.

Action Step EW2H

Home schooling: Expand upon and grow homeschooling and social networks of homeschooling locations.

Action Step EW2I

Charter schools: Expand charter school options as an additional option to delivery of education.

Education and Workforce Development

EWI Recommendation EW3

Non-college pathways: Promote options in addition to college for pursuing education, job advancement, and higher pay. This may include additional workplace training, achieving advanced certifications and licenses, or seeking other non-traditional pathways to climb the ladder of success.

Action Step EW3A

Senior workforce: Retool and engage the senior workforce. Access retired talent as educators. Encourage seniors to maintain competency with emerging technologies. Capitalize on experienced professionals to mentor others. Encourage employers to recruit across the experience spectrum. Create distance at-home learning opportunities while allowing experienced workers to “test out” of training modules.

EWI Recommendation EW4

Role of business in workforce development: The business sector should be proactive in preparing the region’s future workforce.

Action Step EW4A

Hire locally: Encourage employers to hire locally.

Action Step EW4B

Welcome teachers: Create open doors to teachers in the workplace.

Action Step EW4C

Engineering and agricultural careers: Develop more educational opportunities for engineering and agriculture careers.

Action Step EW4D

STEM: Focus on Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) training.

Action Step EW4E

Focus economic effort: Concentrate on a specific economic cluster for the region such as creating a hub for agriculture or a green job training center.

Action Step EW4F

Employer/student correlation study: Complete a study on which employers are hiring and correlate the findings with information on students taking classes, going to college, or graduating from high school in the state. Consider instituting programs where employers pay for relevant certifications.

Action Step EW4G

Employer/worker correlation study: A survey should be sent out to all employers in the region to find out where job opportunities may be as a result of people retiring, future business expansion, etc. and this information should be shared with citizens seeking employment.

Action Step EW4H

Educational pathways: Develop an educational pathway for varied stages of business development with associated resources.

Action Step EW4I

Training and technical assistance for businesses and entrepreneurs: Expand business training and technical assistance. Offer workshops and other technical assistance to educate prospective and current entrepreneurs on how to locate and apply for loans for new or expanding businesses. Assist in educating people in finding capital.

Education and Workforce Development

EWI Recommendation EW5

Affordable workforce education: Reform our education and workforce development systems by making education affordable for all learners.

Action Step EW5A

Build on current efforts: Build on existing education and workforce development collaborations such as the Public Work Force Development System, MnSCU, and Adult Basic Education.

Action Step EW5B

Agricultural workforce: Emphasize and promote agricultural education along with gardening.

Action Step EW5C

Training: Combine the concepts of on-the-job training (training at the work site) and lateral training (career path – next level of training). Institute additional apprenticeships that will enhance job creation and enhance skills.

Action Step EW5D

Skills assessment: Conduct an assessment of the demographic and skills makeup/aptitudes in the region's major employment sectors, including incumbent workforce sectors and the unemployed and underemployed workforce. Use this information to identify gaps and gain a better understanding of what education is needed to fill these gaps. Assess and improve soft skills.

Action Step EW5E

Skills assessment connected to education: Inventory existing skills, compare these to needed skills in key industries, and address the gaps. Focus on evaluating skill sets of high growth industries to determine which incumbent workforce sectors may be transitioned into higher growth industries. Develop core educational disciplines at basic levels to provide greater flexibility for workers throughout their career.

Action Step EW5F

Distance learning: Promote community-based distance learning via global interconnectivity. For example, integrate home-based learners at the community level for social activity along with an advanced online learning experience.

Action Step EW5G

Work-at-home: Provide more work-at-home employment opportunities. This can be accomplished through the expansion of telework and home-based services and businesses.

Action Step EW5H

Affordable, accessible training: Provide affordable and accessible training in promising fields. For example, online courses are more accessible for people without transportation options.

Education and Workforce Development

EWI Recommendation EW6

Coordination of economic development efforts: Businesses and government should work closely with local economic development and community development agencies to attract new employers and small businesses to the area.

Action Step EW6A

Livable wage jobs: Focus efforts on attracting employers that will provide a variety of jobs that pay livable wages.

Action Step EW6B

Minimum wage jobs: Discuss minimum wage standards and area jobs in our community with state government and public officials.

Infrastructure – Transportation

Transportation Issue I (TI)

Public transit: To improve public transit in the region, we need to answer the following questions: 1) How can regional public transit be a viable alternative to cars for commuters and for both the young and the elderly? 2) What opportunities are there for transit partnerships? 3) Where does it make sense to focus on public transit? and 4) In what ways might the private sector be involved as the need grows?

Transportation Issue I Goal

Transportation: The goals of our transportation system should be: 1) to get products to markets by focusing on rail and improving/maintaining our main roads; 2) to respect tighter public budgets by prioritizing which roads should be maintained and which ones should be abandoned; and 3) improving transit options to affordably get people to where the jobs are.

TI Recommendation T1

Public transit network: Establish a connected region-wide public transportation network.

Action Step T1A

Study and improve: Map existing public transit routes, increase county-wide service, and provide additional transit services for regional hubs. Identify current corridors with the most transit use and promote and plan transit oriented development along those corridors.

Action Step T1B

Role of business: Work with local businesses and industries to allow employees flexible start and end times. This could encourage using transit, biking, or other transportation alternatives for commuting.

Action Step T1C

Connect downtowns and colleges: Make stronger connections between downtown areas and colleges (Staples – Central Lakes College and Brainerd - Central Lakes College).

TI Recommendation T2

Rail and economic development: Consider additional rail spurs and light rail passenger trains as an economic tool that could link major economic centers in the region.

Action Step T1D

Land use choices support transit: Provide vibrant corridors that include adequate and affordable housing, multiple transportation options, and easily accessible public green spaces.

Action Step T1E

Increase mobility options: Link mobility in transit planning by incorporating bike options, expanded bus routes and regional needs.

Action Step T1F

Rail transit: Extend Northstar commuter rail to Camp Ripley.

Infrastructure – Transportation

Transportation Issue II (TII)

Highways: How can our highway system and corridors serve the region’s mobility, land use, and economic development needs in a safe manner while linking the other pieces of our transportation system?

TII Recommendation T3

Mobility and safety: Evaluate the current road system to ensure mobility and safety needs are met.

Action Step T3A

Regional plan: Develop a regional transportation plan at least to the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) level.

Action Step T3B

Complete connections: Look to connect and complete existing roadways to improve the mobility through the region.

Action Step T3C

Interregional corridors: Work to improve interregional highway corridors through the region.

Action Step T3D

Heavy haul corridors: Utilize heavy highway haul corridors (10 ton roadways) to transport larger loads (weights) for maximum efficiency.

Action Step T3E

Maintenance: Explore and use new roadway surface materials to reduce maintenance time and costs.

Action Step T3F

Abandonment: Consider roadway abandonment or lower classification for segments with low use as a cost-saving action.

Infrastructure – Transportation

TII Recommendation T4

Technology: Explore roadway technology and digital communication to ensure the movement of traffic.

Action Step T4A

Logistics: Assess the potential for state-of-the-art logistics technologies to improve the efficient transportation of goods and people.

TII Recommendation T5

Transportation impacts of development choices: Reduce the number of vehicle trips while building a transportation system to serve future population.

Action Step T5A

Local jobs: Provide incentive to keep jobs in region to make transportation easier.

Action Step T5B

Housing near jobs: Provide incentives for workers to live close to their jobs and employers to hire locally.

Action Step T5C

Plan transportation system: Rather than reacting to developer's plans, communities should first lay out future road locations that will promote adequate transportation corridors and resource protection, and will be financially affordable to maintain in the long term.

Infrastructure – Transportation

Transportation Issue III (TIII)

Alternative transportation: How do we implement “alternative transportation technologies” such as increasing broadband access throughout the region, which would increase the opportunities for telecommuting and provide an economic benefit for businesses, and promoting alternative-fuel vehicles, which are closer or further from reality, so they serve our region’s needs to provide efficiency, safety, cost savings, and economic development? (Broadband recommendations are included under the “Connectivity” theme.)

TIII Recommendation T6

Alternative transportation: Increase opportunities for residents to choose alternative transportation to provide efficiency, increase safety and cost savings, support economic development, and reduce environmental impacts.

Action Step T6A

Invest in alternative transportation: Invest in alternative transportation opportunities that provide seven-day-a-week access to work and recreation. These might include ride sharing, rail, bus shuttles, dial-a-ride, non-motorized options, and affordable air travel.

Action Step T6B

Promotion and incentives: Promote the use of high miles-per-gallon (MPG) transportation vehicles. Provide incentives like less highway taxes, cheaper tabs, and sales tax reductions or deductions for high miles per gallon (MPT) transportation vehicles.

Action Step T6C

Safety and education: Promote safety and driver education especially to the senior population through outreach and workshops.

TIII Recommendation T7

Funding: Collect tax on various items (e.g. cigarettes) to be spent on transportation needs.

Infrastructure – Transportation

Transportation Issue IV (TIV)

Walking and biking: Adopting and implementing Complete Streets to promote walking, biking, trail use as a transportation option while increasing health and wellness. Developing bike lanes and routes on existing roads where appropriate would encourage biking. Can the region build/invest in a walkable/bikable system that promotes and addresses health needs while acting as an economic development driver, all while enhancing our regional transportation system?

TIV Recommendation T8

Plan for multiple modes: Plan multi-modal options (biking, walking, and autos) on projects where it makes sense.

Action Step T8A

Complete Streets: Incorporate Complete Street design where biking and walking populations support that cause.

Action Step T8B

Bike trails/lanes and support bike services: Leverage current efforts to promote bike trails/lanes. Provide more transportation amenities including bike racks in towns and on buses, bike rental services, bike lanes, and signage.

TIV Recommendation T9

Reconstruction: When streets are reconstructed, connect areas with walking/biking trails for safe travel.

Infrastructure – Transportation

TIV Recommendation T10

Coordinate with MnDOT plan: Tie regional transportation efforts to the Minnesota Department of Transportation Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan 6 objectives and strategies: Accountability, Transparency and Communication; Transportation in Context; Critical Connections; Asset Management; Traveler Safety; and System Security.

Action Step T10A

Accountability, transparency and communication: Educate stakeholders on system-wide and project-specific transportation issues through workshops provided throughout the region.

Action Step T10B

Transportation context: Support the development of land use policies that minimize long-term costs by taking advantage of investments made in existing infrastructure through *IPlaces* scenario building software. Work together to improve accessibility and safety for everyone traveling on, along and across roads through promotion of “Complete Streets”.

Action Step T10C

Critical connections: Continue the work to improve the connections between transit and rail services to provide greater transportation options for travel within and between cities.

Action Step T10D

Asset management: Prioritize maintaining and operation assets on identified priority networks through ATP and TAC.

Action Step T10E

Traveler safety: Develop and share critical safety information and support educational initiatives through our active transportation work and prioritize safety through active transportation grants. Implement strategic and sustainable engineering solutions to improve traveler safety through prioritization of STIP projects.

Action Step T10F

System security: Expand emergency communications infrastructure across the state through the county Hazard Mitigation plans.

Economic Engines

Economic Engines Issue I (ECI)

Financing: This issue involves the availability of capital to new and expanding businesses in the region, in today's credit market, accessing capital can be a challenge for businesses, especially entrepreneurs and companies in research and development stages. Alternative Financing mechanisms should be created to fill this void, such as microenterprise loan funds or local venture capital financing.

Economic Engines Issue I Goal

Economic engines: The region focuses on exporting manufactured goods and agricultural products in order to bring dollars into the regional economy. The region also focuses on tourism and the arts which bring dollars into the regional economy from outside the region. The health care sector increases to provide a high quality of life. The education sector adapts to training residents for jobs in the region. Government employment decreases.

ECI Recommendation EC1

Financing for economic development: Ensure capital is readily available for new and expanding businesses in the region.

Action Step EC1A

Pilot programs: Promote "pilot programs" to try out new financing options. Give preferred grant points to education and training programs that have multi-discipline impacts.

Action Step EC1B

Incentives: Provide tax benefits for businesses that promote a balanced approach of environmental, economic and social vitality. Create incentives, like tax credits or licensure requirements, for telecommunication providers to strategically expand broadband access in rural/remote geographical locations. Create more financial incentives for businesses and individuals that protect the environment and/or use alternative energy.

Action Step EC1C

Revolving loan funds: Foster more regional and sophisticated Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) sources (Re: gap financing). These sources should have access to better resources, lending expertise, funding sources, and technical assistance. This will create better financing and lending to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Consider using RLFs for broadband and energy-related development.

Action Step EC1D

Angel investors: Develop angel investor pools and other financial resources that would serve a variety of business startup and expansion needs at different levels of risk. Engage existing and new sources of capital.

Action Step EC1E

Data and measurement: Provide more and better ED/GIS data to expand the knowledge base, improving community and individual economic decisions and impacts.

Action Step EC1F

Entrepreneurs: Provide low-interest economic development loans for entrepreneurs and additional entrepreneurial training opportunities.

Economic Engines

Economic Engines Issue II (ECII)

Agriculture CSAs: We must protect our region’s agricultural heritage and support smaller-scale efforts like Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). We should focus on developing a land use plan that keeps our prime farmlands in production rather than fragmenting and converting them to subdivisions. CSAs and local farmer’s markets are excellent ways to promote local agriculture and affordable local food production.

ECII Recommendation EC2

Local foods: Promote and support the expansion of the local food economic sector.

Action Step EC2A

Incentives for agricultural use: Current tax codes that encourage low-density residential development, taking farm and forest land out of production. Instead, pursue tax changes that incentivize innovative small-scale agricultural use on small tracts of land and leaving forests in production. Focus on natural resources and crop diversification.

Action Step EC2B

Distribution systems: Develop local foods opportunities, including community gardens and local producer and distribution networks. The goal is to make local foods more accessible to residential and commercial consumers, such as schools, hospitals, and local grocery stores. Continue to move forward on local food education, production, processing, distribution, and purchasing at the regional level.

Action Step EC2C

Value added: Explore options, including regulations and incentives, for adding value to locally grown agriculture and setting new, regional regulatory standards that encourage local food production, processing and distribution. These new standards must still meet federal and state regulations that ensure the health, safety and welfare of the purchasing public.

Action Step EC2D

Training and education: Focus on enhancing small farm training and increasing agriculture education in schools, including home processing, food preparation, and seed storage. Increase agricultural awareness through public education, using a “cradle to grave” approach.

Action Step EC2E

Grow the demand: Increase demand from citizens, institutions, and businesses for locally produced goods. Make local foods more accessible by increasing transportation options for seniors and low-income populations. Create a distribution and marketing network which could improve transportation of bulk local food goods to stores.

Action Step EC2F

Packaging: Teach and encourage local producers and distributors to use sustainable practices such as the use of recyclable and reusable containers for packaging.

Economic Engines

Economic Engines Issue III (ECIII)

Arts and culture: A unique arts and cultural environment in our region is a potential economic driver as well as the ongoing trend in ethnic diversity. How the region chooses to preserve its land and cultural traditions and make use of these assets in the future will have a direct impact on its economic vitality.

ECIII Recommendation EC3

Value cultural differences: Address and embrace the various geographic and cultural differences of people in the five-county area. Fund and value arts and cultural preservation efforts for all arts, including culinary, visual, and others.

Action Step EC3A

Collaborations: Develop collaborations that use and enhance local culture, such as collaboration between mental health care professionals, artists, and local food producers.

Action Step EC3B

Identify key technology areas that directly impact economic competitiveness: Advance manufacturing, broadband verticals communication, and value-added processing. Concentrate resources in technology and virtual cluster areas. Work to improve technologies for base load energy and help local energy-related startup businesses become successful.

Economic Engines

Economic Engines Issue IV (ECIV)

Economic engines: Prioritization of economic engines that the region will focus on in efforts to enhance economic vitality.

ECIV Recommendation EC4

Economic engines: As a first tier of priority, the region will focus efforts on the following economic engines:

- Entrepreneurs - Develop and expand entrepreneurship and small, home-based businesses
- Agriculture – Promote the agricultural sector with an emphasis on local foods
- Renewable energy - Support renewable energy businesses already located within the region
- Technology – Expand the technology sector including software design and development, use of innovative technologies in agriculture, financial services, and delivery of health care
- Eco-tourism - Promote our region to seasonal visitors and worldwide that our region is an eco-friendly location in which to spend time to renew and regenerate
- Education - Develop and expand new approaches to education including high-tech tools, virtual and online, to address the high-tech skill development needed for the region
- Healthcare - Expand the use of telemedicine to deliver health care in patients' homes and to address the need for specialty health care

As a second tier of priority, the region will focus efforts on the following economic engines:

- Manufacturing - Continue to support regional manufacturing businesses with nation-wide and global markets
- Retail - Continue to support our local businesses with online tools to promote their products beyond the five-county borders
- Transportation - Continue to support and promote the regional rail and trail system
- Mining - Continue to support the Emily manganese mining operation as long as it is compatible with maintaining environmental quality
- Financial Services – Continue to support this under-the-radar regional economic engine
- Camp Ripley – Seek collaborative public/private efforts that leverage the governmental investment in Camp Ripley

Action Step EC4A

Training and planning: Provide business training and planning for companies of all size.

Action Step EC4B

Free market: While pursuit of economic engines and their supply chains as a cluster development approach to economic development is valued, this should be done while maintaining a diverse economy that is driven by the free market.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Health Care

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Health Care Issue I (HCI)

Health care: A healthy workforce is important to future regional success. Healthy workers are more productive and lead to lower health care costs for workers and employers. Health care services must be accessible and

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Health Care Issue I Goal I

Health care: The number of primary care physicians and nurse practitioners per 1,000 people in the region increases slightly from 1.6/1000 (current trend) to 1.8/1000. The number increases because we invest in our local

HCI Recommendation HC1

Active living: Encourage a more active lifestyle by developing and promoting safe walking and biking options in the region; like Safe Routes to School. Develop and promote more trails/path connections between/within communities using white lines, sidewalks and signage.

Action Step HC1A

Map trails: Map and identify gaps in the region's existing and planned trails and paths.

Action Step HC1B

Collaboration: Work with local organizations to connect gaps in the region's trails and paths.

Action Step HC1C

Funding: Identify funding and resources to build needed trails and paths within region.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Health Care

HCI Recommendation HC2

Access to affordable health care: Improve availability and access to affordable health care services throughout the region.

Action Step HC2A

Mobile clinics: Explore the feasibility of mobile clinics where permanent clinics are not feasible.

Action Step HC2B

Use emerging technologies: Identify the emerging systems like Health Partner's VirtuWell that allows online access to health care providers.

Action Step HC2C

Care for vulnerable populations: Research, understand, educate on the availability of health care services for early childhood development, senior health and Senior Living, the vulnerable, the mentally challenged and the mentally/behaviorally ill.

Action Step HC2D

Map services: Compile and map existing and planned health care services within the region, including clinics, service providers, home health care, meals on wheels and others.

Action Step HC2E

Identify gaps: Identify gaps in the region's health care services, programs, affordability, and geographic location.

Action Step HC2F

Collaboration: Work with local health care organizations to come to consensus on how to fill gaps in services in each area of the region.

Action Step HC2G

Affordable Care Act: Research, understand, and educate the public on how the Affordable Care Act will impact and/or improve health and health care in rural Minnesota.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Health Care

HCI Recommendation HC3

Public health: Respond to public health issues specific to the region, including smoking, farm safety, hazardous materials, and environmental health concerns. Nutrition is a key factor that directly impacts healthy living.

Action Step HC3A

Collaborative study and solutions: Pursue collaborative participation in rural health studies with organization like the Institute of Rural Health on issues like diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular health, etc. Find more effective ways of identifying, tracking, and addressing trends (positive or negative).

Action Step HC3B

Education: Use various media, schools, work places, and public policy to create and promote positive community health norms and affirm positive health choices (food choices, active life style). Continue to educate on activities that diminish health (food choices, smoking, etc.).

Action Step HC3C

Identify and remediate risks: Use data to identify significant risks to public health. Keep Hazard Mitigation Plans current and submit applications annually for remediation of risks.

Action Step HC3D

Best practices: Research models used by others to address the region's specific public health concerns. Select the best practices that apply to our local situation.

Action Step HC3E

Collaboration: Gain support for mitigating the identified health risks from those best suited to take action.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Changing Populations

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Changing Populations Issue I (CPI)

Changing populations: As our future workforce shrinks and ages, it is important that every citizen has the skills necessary to be productive, valued, and self-reliant, rather than dependent on society. Ethnic diversity will continue to grow and expand from existing clusters that are now mostly associated with areas of food processing jobs and will be an important source of future workforce growth. The region's aging population impacts every area for which we are planning. Housing, transportation, land use, and the current and future workforce will all be affected by the age of our population.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Changing Populations Issue I Goal I

Changing populations: As the region's population changes, make adjustments to meet the need and seize the opportunities these changes present.

CPI Recommendation CP1

Public transit: Focus on developing low-cost, reasonable access to transit service for communities, specifically to serve the aging population.

Action Step CP1A

Map transit system and identify gaps: Examine current data to map the region's existing and planned public transit system. Identify gaps in the systems and seek opportunities to provide appropriate forms of public transit for the region's existing density pattern and that will support independence and self-reliance to the extent possible.

Action Step CP1B

Funding: Work with county, state and federal transportation organizations to pursue funding for Public Transit and get regional needs on their plans. Consider the ability of some parts of the aging population to contribute toward the cost of these systems as they utilize them.

CPI Recommendation CP2

Housing support services: Provide housing support services to the elderly and mentally ill that would allow them the option of remaining as independent as possible under their circumstances.

Action Step CP2A

Map services and identify gaps: Map existing services for elderly and mentally ill individuals throughout the region. Identify any gaps in housing support services for the elderly and mentally ill populations.

Action Step CP2B

Collaborate: Bring together organizations with an interest in these areas to collectively plan how to meet identified support service needs.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Changing Populations

CPI Recommendation CP3

Diverse workforce: As our population becomes more diverse and the need for new workers increases, the region must offer services and opportunities to welcome newcomers into our communities and workforce.

Action Step CP3A

Identify changes: Use data to track and identify areas in the region where newcomers are commonly locating.

Action Step CP3B

Map services: Research and map existing and planned services for newcomers in areas where they live and/or tend to be locating.

Action Step CP3C

Identify and address service gaps: Collaborate with local governments, schools, nonprofits, churches, and local businesses to identify and address gaps in services needed to incorporate newcomers into the social and work fabric of the region.

CPI Recommendation CP4

Older workers: As the workforce in the region grows and many older workers need to continue working longer for financial reasons, or for personal satisfaction, the region will need to offer opportunities and services to update the skills of older workers.

Action Step CP4A

Identify and address skills gaps: Work with local and regional businesses to identify the gaps between the existing skills of older workers and the skills they will need to be productive workers in today's world. Support the efforts of local and regional educational organizations and businesses as they work together to address older workers' skill gaps in a way that is effective and timely.

Action Step CP4B

Funding: Gain and coordinate local support and advocate with federal elected officials to increase funding levels for effective programs for older workers.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Efficiency and Effectiveness

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Efficiency and Effectiveness Issue I (EEI)

Tighter resources; efficiency and effectiveness: Both public and private institutions are trying to do more with fewer resources. Solutions to our region’s issues must be innovative, not dependent on increased spending from traditional sources.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Efficiency and Effectiveness Issue I Goal

Growth patterns: 12,000 new homes across the region from a population increase of 8% with an average household size of 2.4 persons. People retire here and want to live near amenities so there is moderate lake shore development. There is an increase in affordable housing and jobs so young people return. People live near jobs so big towns grow some and small towns hold steady.

EEI Recommendation EE1

Leverage roadway resources: Local government should dedicate funds for sustainable roadway projects that can leverage additional federal or state funds.

Action Step EE1A

Jobs/roadways connection: Use data from the Regional Transportation Plan and relate it to the area’s most likely to see job growth. Prioritize roadways in these areas for improvement as needed to accommodate expected growth.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Efficiency and Effectiveness

EEI Recommendation EE2

Housing efficiency: Provide more efficient housing in the region in all areas where housing needs to be maintained by considering higher density infill development, or expanding when necessary.

Action Step EE2A

Efficiency in development design: Adopt conservation design principles to more efficiently use infrastructure investments and other community resources.

Action Step EE2B

Housing performance data: Log data of existing and future housing performance and make this information available.

Action Step EE2C

Housing rehabilitation: Rehabilitate homes to suit a younger generation that may look to occupy them. This could mean improving their efficiency.

Action Step EE2D

Housing rehabilitation – energy efficiency: Any new or rehabilitated affordable rental/single family housing would be required to use appropriate green technologies to minimize heat and utility use.

Action Step EE2E

Rental vouchers for energy efficiency: Provide energy efficiency vouchers for low income renters as incentives for landlords receiving HUD vouchers.

Action Step EE2F

Housing costs: Include life cycle energy costs and waste of retrofits into the housing cost equation.

Action Step EE2G

Housing costs: Include life cycle energy costs and waste of retrofits into the housing cost equation.

EEI Recommendation EE3

Collaboration between local governments: Encourage partnerships between local governmental units and organizations that will lead to lowered costs and improved services, such as mass transit, police, fire, etc.

Action Step EE3A

Regular discussion: Hold regular meetings with governmental units to share information, explore best practices, and provide an opportunity to explore potential partnerships; and stress the importance of civic engagement, and community volunteers, as the key mechanism to facilitating and prioritizing change.

Action Step EE3B

Funding: Work with funders and other partners to provide seed money for more cost effective intergovernmental partnerships that maintain or improve services.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Efficiency and Effectiveness

EEI Recommendation EE4

Cost of development: While the role of government includes providing infrastructure, local governments must provide infrastructure that meets strict, long-term financial criterion (i.e. full cost accounting). Communities must be assured that they will not be burdened with rising property taxes to cover infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs, or the costs to fix potential long-term environmental degradation.

Action Step EE4A

Prioritize infill: Infill development, which is a relatively cost effective way to develop, should be a priority.

Action Step EE4B

Brownfields: Brownfield redevelopment is a cost effective infill approach as the infrastructure is typically in place. Consider brownfield redevelopment as a first priority to infill and government financed development.

Action Step EE4C

Best practices: Collect best practices and tools that will help local governments make good decisions regarding long-term development costs.

Action Step EE4D

Policies and ordinances: Create policies and zoning ordinances that support accounting for all costs of development.

Action Step EE4E

Share information: Share information with local governments through workshops, emails and other new and existing venues.

Action Step EE4F

Impacts on natural resources: Consider the impact on the environment for each decision made, especially in light of tighter resources. Don't compromise the integrity of the environment for short-term economic solutions that will adversely affect both the environment and the regional economy in the long term.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing Issue I (AHI)

Affordable housing: This key issue includes rental and single-family housing: the need for physical development of affordable rental housing and affordable pricing and/or financing of single-family housing. Building design and green technology can play a major role in reaching these affordable housing goals. Homeless emergency shelters are a vital component of affordable housing, including the need for such a shelter to cover The region. Developing affordable senior housing is also a priority for

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing Issue I Goal

Affordable housing: Develop affordable housing that meets the needs of individuals and families. This includes the need for stability and proximity to employment and community amenities, like schools, health care, and recreation. The percentage of lower income households spending 30% or more of their income on housing decreases from the current level of 45% to 33%. This decrease occurs because the region is willing to invest in affordable housing and because incomes increase due to better paying local

AHI Recommendation AH1

Program funding: Recognize the value of programs that have been very effective in providing affordable housing, such as rural rental housing (Rural Development USDA Sec. 515 program and Section 8 voucher program) and senior and disable persons housing (HUD 202, and Section 811 programs). Seek to sincerely reinvigorate these programs, rather than simply provide minimal levels of funding.

Action Step AH1A

Collaboration: Gain and coordinate local support and advocate with federal elected officials to increase funding levels for these effective programs.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing

AHI Recommendation AH2

Multi-generational neighborhoods: Encourage life-cycle, multi-generational neighborhoods with affordable housing integrated into all neighborhoods.

Action Step AH2A

Affordable housing location: Access funding and encourage local governments to provide incentives to expand affordable housing developments within a 30-minute commute to economic employment centers.

Action Step AH2B

Workforce housing location: Workforce housing is a supply and demand issue. Educate employers on housing availability in the area and educate business leaders on housing costs and affordability gaps.

Action Step AH2C

Universal design: Incorporate handicapped accessible units into new and existing multifamily rental housing where there are vacancies to support the aging and population with disabilities.

Action Step AH2D

Collaboration: Create a collaborative effort to encourage and promote multi-generational neighborhoods throughout the region.

Action Step AH2E

Best practices: Explore other models, like co-housing, and identify best practices that will work within the region.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing

AHI Recommendation AH3

Address affordable housing needs: Recognize and address the extent of poverty in the region and the need for a comprehensive affordable housing plan.

Action Step AH3A

Plan: Develop a Regional Affordable Housing Plan that builds on limited existing plans and addresses demographic changes within the region. Identify partners within the Plan.

Action Step AH3B

Identify wage needs: Identify community wage levels needed to buy an average home or rent an average apartment.

Action Step AH3C

Identify housing needs: Identify needed rental and single-family housing in communities that is currently available, vacant, or can be produced or preserved. The housing should be within a range of affordability (e.g. 30% of income, subsidized, etc.). Identify developers and program administrators.

Action Step AH3D

Funding: Identify funding sources that are affordable or can be matched by owners and/or others. Focus on exploring and developing funding sources for low-income and elderly populations to gain access to affordable housing.

Action Step AH3E

Funding: Funding sources should recognize and research rural and small-town models with a focus on green standards and strategies. These sources should avoid applying urban-based standards in our rural region while still recognizing the need to be close to available transportation and services.

Action Step AH3F

Incentives: Include affordable housing incentives directed toward local banks working with low income populations that require homebuyer education.

Action Step AH3G

Housing information: Promote and make available existing information of affordable housing.

Action Step AH3H

Housing and jobs: Survey where people who work for large employers live and identify gaps.

Action Step AH3I

Collaborative funding: Create a collaborative effort to recruit regional funders for rehabilitation of foreclosed homes.

Action Step AH3J

Foreclosure solutions: Develop more affordable rental housing to meet the needs of those who lost their homes through foreclosure.

Action Step AH3K

Educate about need and funding: Continue to market and spread the word about possible funds and ways to obtain affordable housing, owned and rental, including among the business community.

Action Step AH3L

Housing partners: Increase the capacity of Habitat for Humanity to create more single-family homes in the region.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing

AHI Recommendation AH4

Homelessness: Address the temporary and permanent housing needs of the homeless in the region.

Action Step AH4A

Homeless shelters: Find groups and funds to create a homeless shelter in the region.

Action Step AH4B

Homeless family support: Create a support network to help homeless families develop a plan and get back on their feet.

Action Step AH4C

Transitional housing: Develop transitional housing in Staples or communities serving Morrison, Wadena, Todd, Crow Wing, and Cass counties because of close proximity.

Action Step AH4D

Expand successful model: Expand or identify additional funding sources that house more families locally such as program like the Interfaith Hospitality Model, which creates homeless shelters in local churches or apartment buildings.

Action Step AH4E

Location: Strategically place accessible homeless shelters and senior living quarters throughout the region.

Action Step AH4F

Supportive housing: Develop permanent supportive housing projects within the region to stabilize homeless individuals and families.

Valuing Interdependent Communities and Neighborhoods – Affordable Housing

AHI Recommendation AH5

Policy recommendations: Make policy recommendations that will address fair housing issues for protected classes in the region.

Action Step AH5A

Housing equity: Raise the issue of whether everyone has the right to safe, affordable housing.

Action Step AH5B

Federal funding prioritization: Encourage funding sources to formally buy into the Sustainable Communities process. This means prioritizing participation in SC when making funding awards, such as with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and other housing and community development programs.

AHI Recommendation AH6

Fair Housing Equity Analysis (FHEA): Continue to work with Happy Dancing Turtle (non-profit) and Habitat for Humanity to address the housing needs of Native Americans in upper Cass County.

AHI Recommendation AH7

Fair Housing Equity Analysis (FHEA): Continue to work with the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to address jobs and housing need of the Hispanic population in Todd County.

Resilient Region Plan

Policy Toolkit

The University of Minnesota Law School students focused on creating model policies and ordinance language to implement each of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities' six Livability Principles at the large city, small city, and county level. The model ordinance language included in this document was created through extensive research of approaches adopted by other communities.

William Mitchell College of Law students produced two model comprehensive plan and model ordinance documents. "Comprehensive Plan and Model Ordinances for Natural Resource Protection in Region Five" is divided into four categories: Water, Land, Wildlife Habitat Protection, and Air. The document addresses issues such as stormwater management, preserving agricultural land, and preserving forests. "Affordable forms of Housing for Region 5" encourages affordable housing throughout the region by developing model ordinance language. The document includes several objectives, ranging from minimizing the need for parking to encouraging energy efficiency in affordable housing units.

Inside...

Model Policies and Ordinance Language to Implement the Livability Principles (University of Minnesota Law School)

- Introduction

- Livability Principle I: Provide More Transportation Options

- Livability Principle II: Promote Equitable, Affordable Housing

- Livability Principle III: Enhance Economic Competitiveness

- Livability Principle IV: Support Existing Communities

- Livability Principle V: Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investments

- Livability Principle VI: Value Communities and Neighborhoods

Comprehensive Plan and Model Ordinances for Natural Resource Protection in Region Five (William Mitchell College of Law)

- Introduction

- Water

- Land

- Wildlife Habitat Protection

- Air

Affordable Forms of Housing for Region 5 (William Mitchell College of Law)

- Land Use

- Design and Dimensional Standards

- Administration

- Financing

The Policy Toolkit is available on the Resilient Region website under resources

Appendices & Supporting Resources

(Coming soon to: www.resilientregion.org)

Our Story:

- Community-Driven, University Assisted Partnership
- Step-by-Step
- Policy Toolkit
- Resources Leveraged for the Work
- Theme Champions and Resource Organizations
- Project Update on 26 Activities (June 30, 2012)
- University of Minnesota Student Reviews of Region's Comp.Plans
- Scenarios: The Process, The Scenarios, The Model
- Evaluation Tools: Healthy Development Measurement Tool (http://www.thehdm.org/use_tool.php), the Consideration Design Score Card (<http://www.1000fom.org/growing/lakes/conservation-design-scorecard>) and Green Step Cities Score Card (<http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/bestPractices.cfm>)

Housing

- Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA)
- St. Cloud Regional Housing Dialogue
- Home Stretch
- FHEA Housing Model

Economic Development

- CEDS
- Vital Projects
- Project Ideas
- Fire District Project
- RREAL Feasibility Study

Transportation

- Transportation Appendix
- Public Transportation Services
- Complete Streets
- Minnesota Go

Land Use

- Land Use Appendix
- Low Impact Design Score Card
- Green Step Cities Program
- DNR Shoreline Standards
- Hazard Mitigation Plans