

**MARKET ST**



**LIVE WORK GROW**

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## **LIVE WORK GROW**

*Market Street* brings original insights and clarity to the evaluation and revitalization of the places where people live, work, and grow. Through honest and informed assessments, *Market Street* can equip you with the tools to create meaningful change. Our solutions successfully merge our experience and expertise with the economic and social realities of our clients. *Market Street's* community clients are successful at creating stronger programs, increasing operational budgets, and creating new quality jobs that improve the quality of life in their communities.

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The *Economic Development Strategy* is the fourth phase of the **Future Sioux Falls** process. This *Strategy* contains objectives and tactics that will direct Greater Sioux Falls' economic development activities in the upcoming years. This document is part of a comprehensive effort designed to enable the Sioux Falls Area to continue the enhancement of its competitiveness and livability for businesses and individuals. As such, Forward Sioux Falls, the City of Sioux Falls, Minnehaha and Lincoln counties, the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation, and the Sioux Empire United Way have retained *Market Street Services*, a national economic and workforce development consulting firm based in Atlanta, Georgia, to facilitate the creation of a new strategy that will enhance the economic and community development activities and programs in the Sioux Falls Area.

The process of creating an economic development strategy involves months of community input and research which is then crafted into a creative and realistic plan that can affect meaningful, sustainable change. It is a highly interactive process that allows multiple stakeholder groups to voice their opinions and, at the same time, takes into account previous planning and visioning processes. *Market Street* served as the facilitator in the process of crafting this *Strategy*. The end result is truly a product of the Sioux Falls community, representing the creative thought and vision of local residents, businesses, and civic leaders.

The components of the **Future Sioux Falls** process are outlined below. Additional details related to this planning process can be found at the project website, [FutureSiouxFalls.com](http://FutureSiouxFalls.com).

- **Competitive Assessment:** This report presents a breadth of research to demonstrate the Sioux Falls Area's competitive position to accommodate "visionary" growth and development. A combination of factors that determine the community's strengths as a place to live, work, and do business were assessed, including indicators related to education and workforce development, infrastructure and land use, business costs, and quality of life.
- **Target Business Analysis:** This report builds on the extensive research and data analysis from the *Competitive Assessment*. The *Target Business Analysis* is a blend of quantitative and qualitative research with significant technical information including location quotients, economic base analysis, and business sector-by-occupation employment data. This deliverable provides a short list of clearly defined target sectors and the opportunities and challenges involved in effectively growing them.
- **Marketing Review:** The next step in the process focused on marketing activities through a review and assessment of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation's

and Chamber of Commerce's marketing efforts to determine if they reflect best practice methods for increasing awareness and investment in the area. Current internal and external program tools are reviewed, including the Foundation's website, advertising and collateral materials, inbound/outbound marketing events, public relations, trade shows, site selection professional visits, branding and identity efforts, and sites and buildings.

- **Future Sioux Falls Strategy:** This *Strategy* represents the culmination of all research completed and presents action items geared toward addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities for visionary growth. The *Strategy* will serve as a tool to unify the Sioux Falls area's public and private leadership behind a consensus blueprint for the community's future. The final *Strategy* will include best practices as well as benchmarks and performance measures.
- **Implementation Plan:** While the *Strategy* represents "what" the Sioux Falls Area needs to do to achieve its preferred future, the *Implementation Plan* will determine "how" that will be done. This report will include a capacity assessment, a first-year action plan, a five year action plan, and will determine which organization(s) should lead plan implementation efforts.

At the end of the **Future Sioux Falls** process, the Sioux Falls Area will have a comprehensive regional strategy uniting local governments and constituencies in support of positive community and economic change. The implementation of this *Strategy* will bring together Sioux Falls' economic development players for many years to come.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Future Sioux Falls** was established to provide guidance and leadership over the strategic planning process. These leaders represent a diverse array of organizations from both public and private sectors of the Greater Sioux Falls area. The group's oversight ensured that the development of research reports and the *Strategy* itself was reflective of the area's true competitive issues and opportunities.

### **Future Sioux Falls Chair**

Dana Dykhouse

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*Market Street* would like to acknowledge and thank Slater Barr and Mary Medema of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, Evan Nolte of the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, and Carolyn Winchell of Forward Sioux Falls who provided valuable support and coordination during the **Future Sioux Falls** process.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The economic development marketplace has changed significantly over the past thirty years, and the traditional approach of relying exclusively on large manufacturers and industrial recruitment to sustain local economic health is no longer viable. Today, more and more economic development practitioners have recognized the new reality that to foster sustainable, long-term job growth, they must pursue an equally-committed three-way agenda: (1) generate and support a healthy entrepreneurial climate; (2) foster existing business retention and expansion; and (3) pursue recruitment activities focused on regional economic strengths, competitive advantages, and national trends.

Bucking many national trends, the Sioux Falls Area has experienced dramatic growth in its population and economy in recent years. Likewise, those residents and businesses already located in the region are overwhelmingly positive about the area's amenities, quality of life, business climate, and other local benefits. In order to ensure that the Sioux Falls region continues its enviable growth trajectory, regional public and private officials must continue to aggressively focus on making the community as competitive as possible for business and talent.

With the competition in the economic development marketplace stronger than ever, Sioux Falls cannot afford to rest on its laurels. Regional leadership must acknowledge that enhanced programs and resources will be necessary to maintain previous levels of success. A true public-private partnership effort must be fostered to build the resources and capacity necessary to be effective. The region's history in this regard is strong; this history must continue to evolve in order to ensure that future generations can speak of Sioux Falls with the same joy and passion as today's.

## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Strategy* creation process began with three significant research components which included quantitative and qualitative inputs. Many people in the metro Sioux Falls area have contributed to this *Strategy*. What follows reflects the combination of the research and guidance from the Steering Committee.

Economic development in today's world is a very competitive business. It is also a complicated process. Whether it is growing small businesses, expanding existing firms, or recruiting new companies, the basic components of successful community and economic development are the same.

This is a comprehensive *Strategy* with a long-term goal of making the Sioux Falls Area a more prosperous place with greater opportunity for all of its citizens. It is important to remember that this is not a *Strategy* for an organization, it is for the region.

This process has revealed a “**Five in Five**” approach to this *Strategy*, identifying five priority goal areas for the Sioux Falls region over the next five years. They are:

- ✓ **Workforce Pipeline**
- ✓ **Innovation and Entrepreneurship**
- ✓ **Quality Growth**
- ✓ **Visitors and Events**
- ✓ **Marketing**

They are of equal importance. One is no more critical than the others. They are interdependent and success depends on each one being advanced. Each goal has several objectives and under each objective, there are action steps.

This *Strategy* will require the cooperation of numerous organizations and individuals. This *Strategy* is the “what,” not the “how.” The *Implementation Plan* will address the form needed to accomplish the *Strategy*. New partnerships and cooperation will be needed to ensure success.

Finally, it is important to remember that this *Strategy* is a multi-year plan. It cannot be done all at once. There will be priorities and a sequence established in the first year plan, followed by another three or four years of work. These details will be outlined in the *Implementation Plan*.

The Sioux Falls region is ready to go to the next level. This *Strategy* is the road map for action. It is a living document that will be amended and updated as time passes.

## **GOAL: WORKFORCE PIPELINE**

*Leverage and expand existing resources to create a skilled workforce pipeline for the Sioux Falls Area's diverse business sectors.*

The quality and availability of a skilled workforce is the most critical issue in economic development today. Companies will not be able to expand, nor will they be interested in metro Sioux Falls if they do not feel they can find the workers they need to succeed. To provide these necessary skilled workers, the region will have to optimize its Pre-K–16 pipeline to local companies, particularly those in priority target business sectors. This goal focuses on the workforce development needs of Greater Sioux Falls, from its public and private school systems to two- and four-year degree programs and beyond.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE THAT K–12 SCHOOLS SUCCESSFULLY PREPARE STUDENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE.**

No factor is more critical to workforce development than public school performance and the quality of high school graduates. Therefore, public school systems can enhance the economic development efforts of the entire community. Having strong public school systems not only improves the quality of the local workforce, but also makes communities more attractive places for families to choose to live. Thus, in order to have a healthy, growing community and tax base, it is critical that the region maintains the high quality of its urban and suburban school districts.

## **Performance**

*Action 1: Provide area students with the skills necessary to succeed in school and beyond.*

- ✓ Continue to focus school district strategies on optimal student performance.
  - Ensure efforts related to STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) curricula development are a consistent focus for improvement and expansion, such as the robotics curriculum.
  - Provide effective group-learning experiences to encourage students to collaborate and develop practical problem-solving skills.

- ✓ Work to consistently offer teachers opportunities for knowledge and skill advancement through formal and informal engagement.
  - Continue to ensure teachers are fully certified.
  - Through Connecting Educators to the Workplace, Educators in Industry, and other programs, work with private companies to bring teachers on site to demonstrate applied-learning opportunities for skill sets in the Sioux Falls Area’s targeted businesses.
  - Continue training teachers in project-based learning for incorporation of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills in classroom instruction.
- ✓ Ensure that the region’s students have access to state-of-the-art technology.
  - Leverage the region’s private and institutional sectors to determine the potential to acquire new and (if possible) discounted technology for local classrooms.
- ✓ Provide all support necessary to ensure that regional school districts offer multiple programs and pathways to educate each student to succeed in a changing world.
  - Programmatic components will enable local graduates to thrive in work, life, and additional schooling, if pursued.

*“Commitment from the heart is there, but not backed by a commitment from the wallet. We clearly know what we need, but do not have the mechanism to fund it. This is a state as well as a local issue.”*

- Online survey participant

## ***Action 2: Expand the availability and capacity of Pre-K and early childhood programs.***

- ✓ Assess the current Pre-K offerings in the Sioux Falls region and the geographic areas with the highest need for existing or increased Pre-K services.
  - Ensure Pre-K programs are available to all local children considered “at risk.”
  - Determine potential sources to mitigate funding gaps, if necessary.
- ✓ Based on the assessment of current programs, expand the availability and capacity of the region’s existing programs for early learners as necessary.
  - Leverage the Sioux Empire United Way to continue to expand the successful Starting Strong pre-kindergarten program.
  - Financially support the expansion of Sioux Falls School District’s Head Start, the community-based Sioux Falls Head Start programs,

- Title I preschools, and the Early Childhood Special Education and Birth to Three programs.
- Provide full business community support to advocate for the expansion and funding of these existing and future programs.
- ✓ Ensure all parents in the Sioux Falls Area are educated about Pre-K opportunities and accessibility.
  - Promote the programs in at-risk and high-need areas of the region.

*Action 3: Continue to enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) and diversity programs and capacity.*

- ✓ Continue efforts to create and optimize language-immersion programs in Sioux Falls schools.
- ✓ Create proactive outreach programs in schools to build better communication and relationships with non-English speaking and immigrant parents of K–12 students.
  - Utilize ESL providers and community groups such as LSS’s Community Interpreter Services, the Multi-Cultural Center, and the Spanish Speaking Community Association.

## **Matriculation**

*Action 1: Effectively coordinate between K–12 systems and the region’s two-year and four-year colleges and universities.*

- ✓ Work to formalize a true K-16 system among Greater Sioux Falls educational institutions.
  - Consider the potential formation of a Sioux Falls Area Education Council as a resource for stakeholders at all levels to meet and collaborate on workforce development issues.
    - Leverage the Council to optimize coordination and communication between all regional K–12 public school districts and private schools.
    - Use the Council as a tool to enhance substantive dialogue and coordination between the South Dakota Board of Regents and public and private Sioux Falls Area higher education institutions.
  - Facilitate relationships and develop K-16 processes between administrators and educators at every educational level.
- ✓ Ensure that high school students are prepared to best matriculate into local and regional colleges and succeed once there.

- ✓ As necessary, coordinate the entrance requirements at regional colleges and universities with the graduation and testing protocols at Sioux Falls Area public and private high schools.

## *Action 2: Improve the affordability and accessibility of higher education in the Sioux Falls region.*

- ✓ Ensure students in need have options for assistance in applying for financial aid.
  - Consider the potential to leverage private-sector volunteers to assist high school juniors and seniors and their parents in applying for scholarships, grants, and loans and in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form.
  - Coordinate and promote monthly or quarterly events oriented around this purpose.
- ✓ Consider development of a tuition-reimbursement program for high school seniors that matriculate to regional colleges.
  - Pattern the program after successful efforts such as the Learners to Leaders program funded by Smithfield Foods at Southeast Technical Institute.
  - Incent grant recipients to stay at local colleges for a set period of time and work in the Sioux Falls Area after graduation.
- ✓ Initiate and/or increase local funding commitments to area colleges and universities.
  - Assess current funding commitments and endowments of regional foundations and non-profit entities.
  - Based on the assessment, leverage the Sioux Falls Educational Foundation, the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation, Sioux Empire United Way, and other civic and philanthropic groups to significantly supplement public monies for education.

## **Career Education**

### *Action 1: Fully leverage efforts to expose Sioux Falls Area students to, and prepare them for, locally-available jobs.*

- ✓ Continue efforts to introduce local students to various business sectors in the Sioux Falls Area.
  - Ensure enough slots are available in “personal learning plans” offered in middle-school to expose students to locally available careers.
  - Work to provide additional career-focused opportunities such as career days, internships, job shadowing and “career camps” in the summer months.

- ✓ Fund and coordinate a regional skills-gap analysis to determine if high school graduates are being provided the tools to fulfill local employers' expectations.
  - Partner with business-focused and economic development organizations, workforce-development entities, and regional schools systems to identify needed job skills and competencies of recent graduates.
  
- ✓ Promote training modules in high schools for skills gaps identified in the analysis.
  - Emphasize target sectors in the Sioux Falls Education Foundation's Community Connections program and build relationships between students and target businesses.
  - Leverage the learning plans and implementation framework of the South Dakota Department of Education's High School 2025 initiative.
  
- ✓ Enhance programs such as Interns in Industry and Shadow Ed to reach more Sioux Falls high school students and to focus on target sectors in shadowing, internship, and classroom experiences.
  - Promote and expand the Connecting Educators program to increase educator experiences with target sectors that can be applied to students' classroom time.
  
- ✓ Continue to expand and promote career and technology education (CTE) and joint-enrollment programs for high school students.
  - Take full advantage of the new Career and Technical Education Academy to pursue unique collaborations between local schools and businesses.
  - Work closely with Southeast Technical Institute to ensure that students interested in graduating directly into careers are directed towards positions in need.
  - Provide flexible and cost-competitive "2+2" programs for students to receive college-level credit towards a future technical career while still in high school.

*"We are pretty proud of our relationship with K-12 schools. The Career and Technical Education Academy opening this fall will be another good avenue for business to collaborate in a unique way in an environment totally focused on careers."*

- Online survey participant

### *Action 2: Effectively communicate the value of career-based and technical education to the general public.*

- ✓ Ensure that local school boards are educated about the benefits of career-based programs and are publicly supportive.

- ✓ Coordinate an outreach program among Sioux Falls Area public schools to craft a marketing message towards the promotion of CTE successes and their value to students and the local economy.
  - Partner with regional media to receive donated or in-kind airtime or advertising space to promote the message touting CTE benefits.
  - Ensure that all claims are supported by comprehensive and defensible data.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: OPTIMIZE THE CAPACITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO POSITIVELY IMPACT THE LOCAL ECONOMY.**

Compared to many U.S. regions, the Sioux Falls Area is at a disadvantage relative to public higher education capacity. The lack of a public, four-year university in the state’s most populous and fastest-growing region continues to serve as a competitive deficit in the retention and attraction of top young talent.

While community input participants were pleased with the quality of the region’s K–12 public schools, they expressed concern that Sioux Fall is losing its “best and brightest” high school seniors to colleges in neighboring regions and states.

To compete for 21<sup>st</sup>-century jobs, Sioux Falls must have more to offer than low-cost labor – the region needs a skilled home-grown workforce with the skills necessary to succeed in the New Economy.

### **Two-Year Colleges**

*Action 1: Effectively link two-year colleges’ programming with regional economic development efforts.*

- ✓ Ensure that student training reflects current and projected local employment needs.
  - Continue to leverage internal marketing (see last goal, “Marketing”) visits with existing businesses to identify skill sets in greatest demand.
  - Coordinate two-year colleges’ programmatic planning and budgeting with regional economic development organizations’ primary target business sectors.

*“To raise our intellectual capital we need programs that help everyone succeed in their education and career opportunities through growth and economic expansion. We must always align education with business workforce needs in our community and economic development opportunities.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

- Seek funding partnerships and grants to facilitate training for key targeted occupations with strong projected near-term demand.
- ✓ Ensure the South Dakota Department of Labor's regional Sioux Falls office is a partner in all key development efforts.
  - Continue to strive to eliminate any redundancies or overlaps between state workforce support programs and local efforts.

*Action 2: Continue to promote the availability and attainment of work-ready certificate programs in the Sioux Falls region.*

- ✓ Widely promote the WorkKeys training and the National Career Readiness Certificate programs to all regional adults and businesses.
  - Work to increase certificate attainment in occupations for identified target business sectors.
- ✓ Ensure STI has the capacity to meet the needs of work-ready certificate seekers as a KeyTrain provider.

*Action 3: Ensure that degrees attained from regional two-year colleges are recognized by four-year institutions and employers.*

- ✓ Better coordinate coursework and degree-credit requirements for admission into Sioux Falls Area colleges and universities to ensure that student work is transferrable.
  - Provide information on websites, brochures and other tools to clarify admissions requirements at regional institutions and coursework that is transferrable from school to school.
- ✓ Work with two-year colleges and employers to ensure that businesses in the Sioux Falls Area are familiar with Associate and certificate programs and curricula.
  - Retool programs as necessary to provide students the reassurance that their studies will lead to quality employment upon graduation.

*Action 4: Consider the provision of workforce training as an economic development incentive.*

- ✓ Determine the need to more formally link two-year colleges in South Dakota in order to leverage local training as a relocation or expansion incentive.
- ✓ Provide state-level oversight and coordination of a program that will custom-tailor rapid-response job training at local two-year colleges for external and

internal prospect companies considering major relocations or expansions in South Dakota.

- Pattern the program after successful efforts such as QuickStart in Georgia.

## **Four-Year Colleges and Universities**

*Action 1: Work to ensure that the South Dakota Public Universities and Research Center (University Center) becomes a transformational resource for the Sioux Falls Area.*

- ✓ Reduce average tuitions and expand programmatic capacity by augmenting the University Center’s funding allotments.
  - Commission a regional task force to explore potential funding mechanisms for the University Center to supplement student tuitions.
    - Consider the option of creating a “Benefits District” applied to the Center where local appropriations would fund the development of workforce-serving degree programs at all levels.
      - Explore opportunities to leverage SFDF-owned acreage adjacent to the University Center as a component of the Benefits District.
    - Ensure that the state Board of Regents is a party to discussions and determinations of effective methods to provide public support to the Center.
- ✓ Leverage additional resource capacity at the University Center to effectively serve local adults seeking advanced career training.
  - Ensure that Sioux Falls Area employers, governments, and key stakeholders are participants in dialogues related to the University Center’s optimal programmatic impact on the community and local economy.
    - Effectively link new programmatic development at all degree levels with the Sioux Falls Area’s priority target business sectors.
    - Explore the possibility of creating “centers” or “institutes” at the University Center supporting the region’s most competitive employment sectors.
      - The centers would leverage qualified professionals as instructors and liaisons between the training community and local employers.
  - Collaborate with regional two-year colleges to ensure programming is complementary and coordinated with University Center offerings.

- Leverage additional capacity to increase the variety and flexibility of graduate programs offered in Sioux Falls that accommodate working adults and parents.
  - Explore increased express-track degrees, night and evening classes, and online courses.
  - Encourage the University Center’s new MBA program in partnership with Dakota State University to offer such flexible options.

*“Development of the University Center is so critically important... We need a clear strategy and vision for what this is going to be.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

***Action 2: Integrate the region’s private universities into comprehensive talent-development processes.***

- ✓ Leverage the proposed Sioux Falls Area Education Council as a mechanism to incorporate the University of Sioux Falls (USF) and Augustana College into discussions related to degree development to support growing local occupations.<sup>1</sup>
  - Ensure public and private degree programs are complementary, to the degree possible.
- ✓ Work with top officials from USF and Augustana to continue to provide subsidies to enable local youth to attend these institutions, if so desired.
  - Partner with the schools to consider prioritizing scholarship awards for regional students.

***Action 3: Develop effective partnerships with state and local higher education institutions to best support Sioux Falls Area employers.***

- ✓ Formalize a system whereby students and graduates of South Dakota universities can be made aware of Sioux Falls Area internships and employment opportunities.
  - Consider establishing a password-protected website and database for South Dakota college and university students and alumni to access listings of available internships and job openings in the Sioux Falls Area.
  - Actively promote the website to students and graduates through alumni newsletters, e-mail distribution lists, job-placement offices and other means.

<sup>1</sup> Greater Sioux Falls is also home to a number of for-profit college branches that maybe leveraged in regional talent-development efforts as well. These for-profit institutions include National American University–Sioux Falls, Colorado Technical University, and Globe University.

## *Action 4: Assess the need for a stand-alone public institution or branch campus of an existing South Dakota public university in the Sioux Falls Area.*

- ✓ Commission a neutral party to engage in a detailed study on the costs and benefits of developing a “legacy” four-year public university or branch campus in the region.
  - Ensure the transparency of the process and actively pursue engagement in the study by the state Board of Regents and public university officials.
- ✓ Based on the results of the independent study, proceed with discussions on future development efforts, if so recommended.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE AND ENHANCE REGIONAL TALENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS.**

While many major national employers have been attracted to Sioux Falls because of its low labor costs, these comparatively low wages can also serve as a deterrent to top talent considering Sioux Falls as a residential or employment location versus regions such as Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, and Chicago. Providing the necessary support to expand the diversity of the local labor market ensures that working-age residents are able to find employment that raises their incomes and offers advancement possibilities. Thus, Sioux Falls must be a competitive region not just for firms but for workers. As adjacent rural communities continue to decline in population, broadening the scope of the region’s labor draw will be necessary to support longer-term economic growth.

*“It’s hard to keep up. Growth has been driven by emptying out of South Dakota’s small towns. What’s next? Where are our future workers going to come from when that trend slows?”*

- Stakeholder input participant

## *Action 1: Strengthen locally-managed talent attraction and retention programs.*

- ✓ Partner with top Greater Sioux Falls companies in target business sectors to advance talent-recruitment efforts.
  - Seek corporate partners to accompany SFDF officials on external talent-recruitment trips. Work with large regional firms to identify specific job openings that could be advertised to talent-relocation prospects online or at out-of-market events.
    - Leverage local executives to make direct contact with promising relocation prospects to promote top job opportunities.

- Request that Greater Sioux Falls corporate officials reference the region’s talent-recruitment programs during appropriate speaking opportunities, conferences, interviews with the media, and other forums.
- ✓ Provide partners in talent-attraction and retention efforts with training to formalize the message to be communicated to prospective talent.
  - Consider the potential development of a collateral piece detailing talking points for local partners when speaking with talent retention and/or attraction prospects.
- ✓ Leverage the existing capacities of Opportunity Sioux Falls, the Sioux Falls Recruiting Cooperative, and the “Sioux Falls: Stay Close. Go Far” campaign to promote regional job opportunities.
  - Program these websites with state-of-the-art Web 2.0 technology, interactive design, and consistently updated content, while striving to always integrate best-practice elements from other successful talent-recruitment websites.
  - Link the websites to key resources including Sioux Falls Young Professionals, entertainment amenities, relocation-assistance sites, colleges and universities, the South Dakota Association of College Career Centers, the Sioux Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau, arts and culture groups, local blogs, and other compelling websites.
  - Utilize Facebook, Twitter, and other social media to help identify Greater Sioux Falls expatriates
- ✓ Build a professional mentoring and internship program to expose local students to Sioux Falls Area professional opportunities.
  - Reach out to key partners in the private business sector for involvement and leadership.
  - Leverage SFDF and Chamber officials to lead the program, recruiting potential mentors and linking them to interested students.
  - Leverage Dakota Seeds and other state and local internship programs.
  - Partner with the region’s higher educational institutions to possibly include internships as credits in curricula.

*“Sioux Falls needs to take the next step and capitalize on opportunities to become a nationally and internationally-recognized leader...The community needs to be a high value, not just low cost, destination for these and other high skill, high wage activities and industries.”*

- Online survey participant

*Action 2: Build diverse marketing strategies focusing talent recruitment on former Sioux Falls residents, graduates, and young professionals.*

- ✓ Partner with the state to develop and promote a “Come Home” marketing tour and database linking expatriates interested in returning to Sioux Falls with locally-available job opportunities.
  - Consider the development and management of on-site talent-recruitment events in priority markets.
    - Base the determination of markets on core skill sets in the targeted regions that correspond with the Sioux Falls region’s workforce needs.
  - Organize specific external events as “reunions” for Sioux Falls expatriates who have relocated to other communities.
    - Create a program to demonstrate to the attendees the changes that have occurred in Metro Sioux Falls and local employment opportunities currently available.
  - Involve members of the Sioux Falls Young Professionals Network and Sioux Falls Synergy in talent recruitment efforts.
  
- ✓ Consider the potential to leverage or develop a component of visitor-focused marketing on talent attraction.
  - Ensure the Sioux Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has access to all current recruitment materials and knowledge of talent recruitment efforts.
  - Link all regional talent recruitment websites on the CVB website.
  
- ✓ Work with state and regional colleges and universities to access alumni who have left the region.
  - Partner with Sioux Falls Area public and private higher education institutions to provide lists of their non-local alumni.
    - Assemble the lists in a database to serve as a contact base for talent-recruitment marketing materials and out-of-market events.
    - Provide the colleges and universities the flexibility to contact alumni themselves to maintain the confidentiality of proprietary alumni rosters.
  - Partner with South Dakota’s colleges universities to access alumni lists for the attraction program.

*“All Sioux Falls institutions should be actively recruiting young members to belong and assume leadership positions... Without leadership opportunities, ambitious young professionals will leave Sioux Falls for more progressive communities.”*  
 - Online survey participant

## OBJECTIVE 4: ENABLE REGIONAL ADULTS TO ACCESS TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT.

There are many ways a community can help its adult population obtain the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. Often, however, simply accessing training or employment is difficult due to a limited availability of transportation or child care options. In addition to addressing these issues, this objective also focuses on efforts related to job-placement assistance and effectively engaging Sioux Falls' immigrant population in the local workforce.

### *Action 1: Continue efforts to provide job-placement assistance for regional adults.*

- ✓ Ensure effective coordination among public and private partners.
  - Leverage private placement services, the Department of Labor Career Center, and the Sioux Falls Development Foundation's member partners to offer the information necessary for adults to access employment.
  - Provide cross-references between partners when applicable; for example, to source opportunities for "trailing" spouses, transitioning military, non-native speakers and other constituents.
  
- ✓ Take advantage of existing-business programs to formalize linkages between companies and job-placement entities and services.

*"The key is using and challenging local talent to do more than they dreamed with the opportunities that local businesses and government create."*

- Online survey participant

### *Action 2: Ensure Greater Sioux Falls' immigrant and refugee populations are engaged in the workforce and prepared for quality jobs.*

- ✓ Partner with the Multi-Cultural Center (MCC) of Sioux Falls, Lutheran Social Services, and other active organizations to implement best practice workforce training programs targeted at the community's immigrant and refugee populations.
  - Leverage existing programs and augment them with other regional and state workforce training programs, including:
    - Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of South Dakota's Refugee and Immigrant Center
    - Spanish Speaking Community Association
    - Floyd Career Learning Center (Volunteers of America)
    - Southeast Technical Institute
    - University Center
    - South Dakota Department of Labor-Sioux Falls

- ✓ Partner with the aforementioned organizations to identify the skills and language gaps of relocated immigrants and work to create and promote programmatic solutions.
  - Engage the New Horizons Computer Learning Center, STI, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the University Center, Kilian Community College, the SD Department of Labor–Sioux Falls, and local ESL programs to create holistic, accessible training programs to close skills and language gaps.
- ✓ Working with SD Department of Labor, utilize LSS’s Community Interpreter Services, the Multi-Cultural Center, the Spanish Speaking Community Association, and other organizations to ensure all groups are aware of career training opportunities available in Greater Sioux Falls.

*“Leaders need to spend time in communities that they view as model cities and take the best things from there and apply them here.”*  
 - Online survey participant

***Action 3: Determine ways to enhance transit capacity to ensure Sioux Falls’ workers can access employment and training.***

- ✓ Evaluate potential capacity-enhancement scenarios.
  - Partner with employers, training institutions, and social service providers to assess the needs of the community’s transit-dependent population.
  - Based on the assessment, consider strategies to build capacity through the provision of paratransit services, vanpools, company shuttles, and the fostering of jitney companies.
    - Seek all available funding options, including federal stimulus monies, Department of Transportation grants, workforce grants, and other sources.
  - Work with regional companies to pool resources to offer shuttle services for second- and third-shift production staff working off-peak and graveyard shifts.
- ✓ Consistently engage regional communities and governments to pursue transit connectivity – as required – between Sioux Falls Area commercial, institutional, and employment centers.
  - Fully leverage the City of Sioux Falls’ Transportation Coordination Committee to facilitate local and regional solutions to job-site and training access.

- Utilize the Committee as a potential coordinator of efforts involving all regional partners, including businesses, social services entities and neighborhood groups.

*Action 4: Increase child care offerings to ensure all residents of Sioux Falls are able to work.*

- ✓ Assess current licensed child care facilities in the Sioux Falls Area and their locations relative to employment and residential hubs.
  - Consider launching a Child Care Task Force in the region to identify potential child care capacity improvements and design programs to effectively impact the issue.
    - Actively involve existing efforts and officials from South Dakota Voices for Children, the Business, Education and Civic Leadership Group (BECL), the Sioux Empire United Way and other stakeholder entities.
      - Determine the potential for one of these groups (with membership adjusted accordingly) to serve as a *de facto* Child Care Task Force.
  - Pursue funding and partnerships to develop additional government-funded, subsidized child care centers.
  - Work with large regional employers to determine the potential to provide on-site child care for employees with small children.
    - Provide services as needed during peak shifts, both day and evening.
  - Ensure child care is offered during night-shift and weekend hours for Sioux Falls' manufacturing-based firms.
- ✓ Consider the potential to incorporate the inclusion of child care facilities into the planning of future Sioux Falls Development Foundation industrial parks.
  - On-site facilities would be available on a cooperative basis for park tenants participating in the funding of the child care program.
  - Partner with the Sioux Empire United Way to potentially provide the Starting Strong in the Sioux Empire early-education program on-site at the facility.
- ✓ Ensure the state's licensing and the City of Sioux Falls' child care registration processes are effective and time-sensitive.
  - Promote National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation among existing child care providers.
  - Promote the HelpLine Center's web database of registered, licensed, and accredited child care centers (ChildCare HelpLine) so employed parents may easily locate qualified centers near their places of residence or employment.

**GOAL: INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

*Maximize the economic impact of small businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators in Greater Sioux Falls.*

From small computer businesses started in a garage and a dorm room that became, respectively, Apple and Dell to any number of young businesses that grow to employ hundreds of local workers, the support of entrepreneurs and innovative small businesses is critical to any regional economic development program. Greater Sioux Falls has a number of key assets supporting enterprise creation, but more must be done to ensure that companies are effectively “seeded” and grown in the region. Likewise, the tremendous investments being made in regional research can potentially become dynamic job generators through targeted-assistance programs.

**OBJECTIVE 1: EFFECTIVELY LEVERAGE AND SUPPORT REGIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY.**

Metro Sioux Falls’ higher education institutions lack the current research and commercialization capacity to make significant impacts on job creation. However, private sector research efforts can potentially provide strong opportunities for Greater Sioux Falls to increase its innovation output and commercialization potential. Private sector research plays an especially important role in the fields of medical science and alternative energy.

**Sioux Falls Area**

*Action 1: Best assist the South Dakota Technology Business Center (SDTBC) in its planning, development, and partnership goals.*

- ✓ Support SDTBC staff in their provision of value-added services to incubator tenants and graduates.
  - Ensure development of SDTBC programs related to entrepreneurial networking, mentorship, leadership training, and linkages to specialized services such as intellectual property (IP) attorneys are successful and coordinated with other regional efforts.
- ✓ Work to apply a seed capital fund directly to the SDTBC’s clients, as viable.

- Alternatively, consider the potential to dedicate a component of a comprehensive seed fund specifically to the SDTBC (see Objective 2 of this goal area).
- ✓ Actively support the SDTBC's role in facilitating the creation of a Knowledge Community clustered around Southeast Technical Institute and University Center.
  - Direct focused collaboration with Southeast Technical Institute, the University Center, and other partners in this endeavor.
  - Ensure the regional and state economic development community contributes resources to the development and funding of the knowledge cluster.
  - Leverage grant-writing capacity at partner entities to source funds to design, build, staff, and operate a technology and/or research park, second-stage incubator for SDTBC graduates, and the Center for Graduate Education and Applied Research.

*Action 2: Ensure the University Center's Research Center component is an effective economic development tool.*

- ✓ Work to align the University Center's research focus with Sioux Falls Area target sectors and economic development focus areas.
  - Market the University Center's research campus to employment prospects and research organizations/institutions potentially interested in locating in Sioux Falls.
  - Consider the potential to leverage University Center leadership on external marketing visitations and meetings.
  - Integrate information on the University Center and its research campus into all target-sector-focused marketing materials and media.
- ✓ Develop and implement a strategy to pursue sponsored research for location at the UC campus.
  - Consider developing an incentive package to attract research activities aligned with local business clusters and identified target industries.

*Action 3: Partner with Sanford Research to best support its efforts and leverage them for regional benefit.*

- ✓ Ensure regional economic development officials engage Sanford Research leadership in relationship-building efforts to source potential funding opportunities for Sanford and provide economic developers with prospects for attraction to the Sioux Falls Area.
  - Consider initiating discussions with Sanford leadership to leverage the health system's recent merger with MeritCare and new executive

presence in Fargo to engage the Sioux Falls Area with the Red River Valley Research Corridor in North Dakota.

- Potential research areas of synergy include: agriculture; biosciences, including medicine; energy and the environment; and healthy foods and human health.
- ✓ Work closely with Sanford Health’s Office of Commercialization to provide any necessary support for technology transfer and job-creation efforts related to Sanford research.
  - Build synergies between Sanford Research and the South Dakota Technology Business Center to potentially locate new enterprises at the SDTBC or at a proposed Knowledge Community facility.
- ✓ Market the presence and capacity of Sanford Research to recruitment prospects with significant R&D efforts and research institutes that would benefit from co-location with Sanford centers.
  - Work closely with Sanford’s development team on these efforts.
- ✓ Integrate into state and federal lobbying efforts a component advocating for the priority funding and development of an interchange at Interstate 29 and 85<sup>th</sup> Street to facilitate the build-out of Sanford’s proposed 185-acre business park.
- ✓ Partner with Sanford Research to assist with the recruitment of high-profile researchers to the Sioux Falls campus.
  - Leverage economic development marketing capacity to tailor specific recruitment campaigns for research talent with potential transformative benefits for the regional economy.
  - Consider the potential to negotiate agreements with research talent that they commit time and effort to local-serving activities such as networking, mentoring, and marketing of the Sioux Falls Areas to corporate relocation prospects.

*“It is important that we showcase the potential of the Sanford Research Park for economic development. How many communities can say they have a major employer ready to build a research facility if the necessary infrastructure is provided?”*

- Stakeholder input participant

***Action 4: Effectively support the Avera Research Institute’s mission and vision.***

- ✓ Partner with the University Center, private Sioux Falls colleges and universities, and state higher educational institutions to direct master’s-degree recipients to Avera in support of Ph.D. research efforts.

- ✓ Fully leverage the Avera Reaching Kids initiative and its Institute for Human Behavioral Genetics component in economic development and talent-marketing efforts.
  - Ensure that target-marketing efforts related to the Medical Services and Research Science sector reference the genomic and personalized medicine niches of the Institute to companies and institutions in this research space.
  - Highlight the initiative in talent-recruitment efforts as an example of the Sioux Falls Area’s commitment to child health and welfare.

***Action 5: Capitalize on alternative energy research and development at POET for growth in the Sioux Falls Area’s Renewable Energy Technology target.***

- ✓ Leverage business retention and expansion visits to determine the optimal means for regional economic development entities to support POET’s R&D efforts.
- ✓ Prominently feature POET’s role in the region’s alternative energy cluster in all target-specific marketing including print and electronic media.
- ✓ Assist POET as necessary to source and secure federal grants for alternative energy-focused research and development projects.
- ✓ Effectively integrate POET researchers in relationship building and networking efforts related to the Sioux Falls Area’s research community.

*“One of the keys to success over the years has been the broad base of support economic development has enjoyed in Sioux Falls. I hope that can continue by finding creative ways of involving everyone to create a culture of success in Sioux Falls. Since resources are limited with varying degrees of state support, we must be efficient and not duplicate efforts. A major part of all this is to clearly understand who is doing what and make sure we are all coordinated.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

## Statewide

***Action 1: Take a leadership position in the development of a statewide research consortium.***

- ✓ Reach out to South Dakota research institutions, incubators, technology transfer efforts, and technology parks to create a formal partnership entity.

- Develop memoranda of understanding between partners on the purpose, mission, and potential programming opportunities of the consortium.
- Ensure that Sioux Falls Area leaders assume prominent roles in the planning, design and operation of the consortium.
- ✓ Explore research, innovation development, and technology commercialization synergies between consortium partners.
  - Pursue joint grant proposals from the federal government, foundations, and philanthropists.
  - Determine the efficacy of leveraging the consortium in efforts to build linkages between eastern South Dakota and the Red River Valley Research Corridor in North Dakota.
- ✓ Consider the development and hosting of an annual meeting of the consortium featuring programs, lectures, and networking sessions.
- ✓ Determine the potential to create affiliated marketing, websites, and promotional materials and publications affiliated with the consortium.

*“I think collaboration with other communities around the state and the governor and legislature are going to be key to our success in Sioux Falls both with legislation and financial resources needed. People have to be educated on how helping us ultimately helps them as well.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

***Action 2: Leverage the consortium to lobby state elected and appointed officials for enhancement of South Dakota’s competitive climate for research and development.***

- ✓ Secure commitments for significant increases in state funding for local research activities.
  - Focus state investment on innovation capacity and capital formation resources.
  - Consider contracting for a cost-benefit analysis and economic impact study related to increased levels of state funding for research, innovation, and technology commercialization.
- ✓ Utilize consortium partners to advocate for the creation of a suite of state incentives for the attraction, retention, and expansion of high-value research-focused companies and institutions.
  - Focus incentives on business sectors with the greatest potential for success in the Sioux Falls Area and statewide.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: PROVIDE SUFFICIENT CAPITAL FOR START-UP AND EARLY-STAGE ENTERPRISES.**

Entrepreneurs, researchers, and nascent companies often require initial capital assistance to launch enterprises and later-stage capital infusions to remain operational until they become profitable. As a smaller market, there are fewer venture, angel, and seed-capital resources in Greater Sioux Falls than in top U.S. innovation hotbeds. Therefore, it is contingent on Sioux Falls Area leadership to commit resources to capital-formation strategies.

### *Action: Seek to enhance regional capital-formation resources.*

- ✓ Consider the development of a professionally-managed seed- and bridge-capital fund for entrepreneurs and early-stage enterprises in Greater Sioux Falls.
  - Determine the viability of sourcing investments for the fund from local companies, governments, institutions, the federal Small Business Administration, foundations, and individual angel investors.
  - Assess whether to formalize subsidiary funds linked directly to local entities such as the South Dakota Technology Business Center.
  
- ✓ Work to significantly broaden the availability of venture capital in Greater Sioux Falls through outreach efforts.
  - Publicize and promote regional investment opportunities to both nationally-prominent and regional venture capital firms.
  - Consider recruiting regional offices of these top national firms to Sioux Falls.
  - Focus outreach on venture funds with expertise in the Sioux Falls Area's target business sectors.
  
- ✓ Help existing angel-investor networks grow their funds, assess prospects, and manage investments.
  - Partner with Prairie Winds Capital and RAIN Source Capital's Sioux Falls fund to determine the processes necessary for the funds to be more effective.
  - Source the capacity and expertise to provide Sioux Falls' angel networks with assistance vetting funding prospects, managing current investments, and sourcing additional investment partners.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: STRIVE TO DEVELOP A "CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP" IN THE SIOUX FALLS AREA.**

Like many communities, Sioux Falls has a base of support programs and personnel for small business people and entrepreneurs. Often, the resources available for

individuals interested in starting or growing businesses are not effectively coordinated to the extent that there is no single “go-to” resource for small business people in the community. An entity designated as the “lead” reference for those seeking assistance can work to leverage all existing local partners, streamline support systems, reduce redundancies, and build additional capacity, as needed. Bureaucracy will be lessened for the end user and the program-delivery system will be optimized through this more centralized coordination structure. This strategy and others help to build a community’s culture of entrepreneurship and meaningfully engage those interested in launching a small business.

***Action 1: Effectively coordinate assistance services to best support fledgling entrepreneurs.***

- ✓ Designate a lead entity responsible for identifying, updating, and “connecting the dots” between the individuals, agencies, and organizations providing small-business support in the Sioux Falls Area.
  - Consider the potential to brand this assistance network to better communicate and market regional services to potential clients.
    - Engage all partners in the design and development of the network.
      - Partners include the South Dakota Technology Business Center, SD Small Business Development Center, the Enterprise Institute, the Procurement and Technical Assistance Program, the SD Small Business Innovation Research Program, SCORE, the Small Business Administration District Office, the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, and the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.
    - Ensure there is sufficient staff capacity to effectively meet demand for small-business assistance services.
  - Continue to co-locate personnel and programs to the extent possible at the South Dakota Technology Business Center to offer the most transparent, seamless service experience to clients.
  - Work to catalogue and record the region’s small-business-serving entities into a master referral database.

*“Our inherent strength in this downturn is not an accident. What, in that strength, positions us well for the future? What else can we leverage to make us even stronger?”*  
 - Online survey participant

- Leverage professional staff to manage the database and serve as a point-of-first-contact for individuals seeking assistance.
  - Consider patterning the program after the Kauffman Foundation’s successful SourceLink model.
- ✓ Promote participation in the South Dakota Small Business Administration District Office’s training program for Greater Sioux Falls’ banks, lenders, and financial services providers regarding the U.S. Small Business Administration’s guaranteed loan programs to encourage local bank investment in entrepreneurship.

***Action 2: Provide educational resources to local adults interested in starting a small business.***

- ✓ Identify all existing printed and electronic support materials.
  - Enable clients to access all information from a single location for entrepreneur assistant services.
    - Aggregate printed assistance books, manuals, and guides at a small business development library.
- ✓ Develop and maintain a step-by-step, interactive web-based “how to” guide for starting a business in Greater Sioux Falls.
  - Provide direct links to regulatory offices and service provider websites necessary for launching a small business.
  - Ensure information is provided on the state and federal programs and resources available to small businesses and entrepreneurs.
  - Offer access to the online support database at the small business “one-stop” center.
  - Promote the online small business resource through various marketing channels and resources of community partners.
- ✓ Support Innovation Expo, an annual entrepreneur resource fair, for entrepreneurs, potential entrepreneurs, and business owners.
  - Encourage sponsorship and partnership support for the event from South Dakota’s related state agencies, colleges and universities, and regional private, public, and non-profit entities.
  - Support the inclusion of information sessions, networking opportunities, and talks from state and federal small-business-assistance experts.

***Action 3: Introduce the region’s students to the dynamics of small-business development.***

- ✓ Leverage South Dakota’s existing youth entrepreneurship programs and resources.

- Continue active business-community partnerships with Junior Achievement (JA) of South Dakota to ensure that JA programs are offered to all eligible regional youth.
- Support the continued offering of the N2TEC Accelerator Program in Greater Sioux Falls.
- Partner with the statewide Youth Business Adventure (YBA)<sup>2</sup> program to supplement local efforts to engage Sioux Falls Area students in business-focused learning opportunities.
- ✓ Create youth entrepreneurship initiatives in the Sioux Falls region's elementary, middle, and high schools.
  - Convene an annual Youth Entrepreneurship Summit for area school superintendents, administrators, educators in related disciplines, after-school program organizers, and other interested parties to learn and discuss the choices available in order to expand entrepreneur education in Sioux Falls' public schools.
  - Consider launching an annual regional high school Business Idea Competition as a component of the Enterprise Institute's Innovation Expo and, if possible, in alignment with the South Dakota Governor's Giant Vision Awards student competition.
  - Encourage Greater Sioux Falls' K-12 schools and non-profit agencies serving area youth to include private sector feedback in their entrepreneur education program design.
- ✓ Create or enhance entrepreneurship studies programs at Sioux Falls' two- and four-year colleges.
  - Leverage the entrepreneurship program at University of Sioux Falls, Colorado Technical University's Entrepreneurship Conference, and the University Center's entrepreneurship courses.
    - Consider the launch of an annual business-development competition for area students with a cash prize awarded to the winner.
  - Ensure dedicated private sector support in entrepreneur education curriculum design.
  - Explore the possibility with Sioux Falls' four-year colleges to establish an MBA program with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.

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<sup>2</sup> YBA helps South Dakota high school students and teachers better understand the American private enterprise system and how business operates within it.

**GOAL: QUALITY GROWTH**

*Develop the policies, infrastructure, and amenities necessary to ensure the Sioux Falls Area grows effectively and sustainably.*

The Sioux Falls Area has grown quickly in recent years. In many ways, growth is straining the region's existing communities and can potentially limit future development if capacity is not created to accommodate new businesses and residents. Experience in other regions has shown that growth can be effectively managed through coordinated efforts among local public and private partners. By engaging in smart planning – on both the community and economic fronts – the Sioux Falls Area will ensure that the dynamic quality of life and business climate that have fueled its growth are maintained and enhanced.

**OBJECTIVE 1: BUILD THE CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY ADVOCATE FOR ISSUES OF CONCERN IN GREATER SIOUX FALLS.**

Constituency-building and collective advocacy at the state and federal level will be critical to ensuring that the Sioux Falls region is able to grow in a managed, sustainable way. Because so much of what affects regions – transportation policy and funding, tax and incentive policy, etc. – is dictated at the state and federal level, speaking with “one voice” to elected officials provides the greatest impact for regional stakeholders.

*Action 1: Consider the design and launch of a formal marketing and outreach effort communicating the statewide benefits of Sioux Falls Area growth.*

- ✓ Craft a message aimed at improving the “us versus them” attitude prevalent at the state legislature and in certain South Dakota communities.
- ✓ Conduct and promote research demonstrating the impact of Sioux Falls Area business and commercial activity on South Dakota's economy and tax base.
  - Create “what if” scenarios detailing the adverse effect on statewide programmatic capacity if the Sioux Falls regional economy were to decline.

***Action 2: Identify and consistently advocate at the federal, state, and regional level for enhancement of the Sioux Falls Area’s key infrastructure assets.***

- ✓ Effectively influence policy decision-making through a unified partnership for regional advocacy.
  - Include in the partnership representatives from local government, economic development organizations, major employers, firms in target business sectors, educational institutions, civic leaders, major non-profit and philanthropic agencies, and minority leadership.
    - Consider the leveraging of Forward Sioux Falls as lynchpin of the partnership.
    - Communicate the partnership’s purpose and membership to the elected state representatives from each of the Sioux Falls region’s ten legislative districts.
  
- ✓ Collaborate on the development of an annual list of priority infrastructure development projects.
  - Complete the list to coincide with the start of the current legislative session.
  - Effectively leverage Forward Sioux Falls’ full-time and contract lobbyists to advance the region’s legislative priorities in Pierre.
    - Ensure that regional partners are consistently updated on the progress of state and federal advocacy and lobbying efforts.
  
- ✓ Enhance air service to/from the Sioux Falls Area Regional Airport.
  - Create an Air Service Action Committee from the membership of the Sioux Falls Area Chamber’s Business Transportation Committee to develop and advocate for solutions to the region’s passenger air service issues.

*“Sioux Falls has become a shining gem in the region if not the upper Midwest. We cannot, however, stand forever on the shoulders that brought us to this point. We cannot continue to survive just doing more of what we’ve always done.”*

- Online survey participant

***Action 3: Redouble efforts to win state approval for legislation enabling South Dakota municipalities and regions to tax themselves for local projects and efforts.***

- ✓ Broaden the Sioux Falls Area legislative partnership as necessary to other South Dakota regions and communities to help advance the legislation.

**OBJECTIVE 2: PLAN FOR AND DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED FOR SUSTAINABLE, QUALITY GROWTH IN THE SIOUX FALLS REGION.**

Despite the current challenging funding environment, the Sioux Falls Area must succeed in funding and developing the infrastructure that will enable it to continue its growth trajectory into the short- and near-term future. It is critical that development of infrastructure be planned and coordinated with regional partners to ensure that growth is sustainable and maintains the region’s enviable quality of life assets.

*Action 1: Coordinate local comprehensive planning and infrastructure development with regional modeling.*

- ✓ Engage in ongoing growth planning and holistic regional policymaking.
  - Remain engaged in the ongoing comprehensive planning process focused on shaping land use, transportation, housing, utilities, recreation and culture amenities, and other key growth dynamics impacting Greater Sioux Falls’ short-and long-term future.
  - Ensure that the implementation of the city’s Shape Sioux Falls 2035 comprehensive plan supports the quality of life and quality of place priorities of the region’s existing and future generations of young professionals and skilled workers.
    - Regularly assess the goals and success of the City’s 2035 Growth Management Plan to ensure the plan reflects the region’s current infrastructure needs.
    - Focus attention, as necessary, on issues related to the continuing vitality of the City of Sioux Falls’ “first-ring” suburbs.
      - Leverage the wealth of recent research from the Brookings Institution on strategies to best support the health of these suburbs.
  - Partner with the South Eastern Council of Governments (SECOG) to ensure better coordinated regional development to reflect sustainable growth patterns, congestion-management efforts, balancing of commercial development types across governmental boundaries, and environmental sustainability mandates.
    - Determine the potential eligibility of Sioux Falls Area rural communities for state and federal grants that could supplement local monies for regional planning and quality-growth efforts.
  - Engage local government leadership in ongoing dialogues related to the dynamics of regional development, sales-tax requirements, coordination of attractions, and other issues.
    - Ensure that dialogues lead to tangible program efforts to lessen intra-regional competition and improve Greater Sioux

Falls' coordinated outreach to target businesses, developers, and other key investors.

- ✓ Leverage the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to build consensus around coordinated long-term transportation infrastructure strategies and the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Area Long-Range Transportation Plan.
  - Engage the MPO's Citizens Advisory Committee to provide regular input for necessary infrastructure development.
  - Work with SECOG in multi-county planning of resources and transportation.
  - Regularly update the City of Sioux Falls' Transportation Research Study to ensure that transportation provisions are meeting the needs of residents.
  
- ✓ Identify and capture all potential state, federal, institutional, and foundation funding for priority projects.
  - Leverage the regional legislative coalition and contract lobbyist to forward these efforts.



***Action 2: Prioritize infrastructure projects with the greatest beneficial impact for the Sioux Falls region.***

- ✓ Advocate for the funding and construction of the Highway 100 beltway around the City of Sioux Falls.
  - Engage in proactive and comprehensive planning to ensure development adjacent to Highway 100 is consistent with regional goals.
  
- ✓ Based on comprehensive planning mandates, fund and develop utilities infrastructure to support sustainable housing, commercial, and industrial development.
  - Coordinate with local government and economic development partners to ensure that infrastructure development is consistent with identified near-term land uses and priority development parcels.
  
- ✓ Work to provide high bandwidth, redundant broadband wireline, and wireless communication infrastructure.
  - Work through the Minnehaha County Economic Development Association, the Lincoln County Economic Development Association, and rural partners to facilitate the development of high-capacity internet access to all key Sioux Falls Area sites and parcels.

*Action 3: Optimize target-sector competitiveness through priority infrastructure project development and maintenance.*

- ✓ **Medical Services and Research Science**
  - I-29 interchange to enable construction of Sanford Research Park
  - Enhanced linkages to – and marketing of – the National LambdaRail high-speed internet system for Sioux Falls Area businesses and non-profit institutions
    - Expanded usage would potentially spur increased economic development activities.
- ✓ **Corporate and Data Services**
  - Maintain reliable, low-cost power capacity
  - Class A office space
- ✓ **Renewable Energy Technology**
  - Smart-grid utility infrastructure
  - Sufficient land with rail sidings
- ✓ **Warehousing and Distribution**
  - Enhanced airport cargo capacity
  - Competitive road and highway network
  - Marketing of spec distribution centers
  - Utilities infrastructure to rural sites
  - Insurance that ample development sites are available in the rural Sioux Falls region
  - Sufficient land with rail sidings

*Action 4: Ensure that community and recreational infrastructure development is concurrent with growth demand.*

- ✓ Work with government, planning agencies, and intra-governmental agencies to ensure that the supply of police and fire stations, schools, emergency services facilities, libraries, social service offices, and other community-serving infrastructure meets residents' and businesses' needs.
- ✓ Continue to develop parks and recreation facilities to serve the Sioux Falls Area's growing population.
  - Prioritize the development of indoor facilities to provide residents' with year-round recreation opportunities.
  - Assist the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department in achieving their goal of developing parks within a half-mile radius of all residences.

## *Action 5: Promote homeownership for the region's residents of all income levels.*

- ✓ Encourage and incentivize residential developers to diversify quality workforce housing offerings.
  - Ensure a range of housing sizes and prices in downtown development and elsewhere in the region through zoning codes.
  - Identify potential favorable loan and other programs area leaders can use to incentivize desired housing developments.
  - Incorporate findings from the upcoming Sioux Empire Housing Partnership's affordable housing survey to inform affordable-housing development programs.
  
- ✓ Promote first-time homebuyer programs to ensure all of the region's residents are aware of these initiatives.
  - Programs include the City of Sioux Falls Homebuyers Assistance Program, the Sioux Empire Housing Partnership, the South Dakota Housing Authority's Governor's House Program, South Eastern Development Foundation (SEDF)'s revolving home loan fund, and Consumer Credit Counseling Service's homebuyer education and housing counseling through Lutheran Social Services.
  
- ✓ Ensure that, in accordance with the City of Sioux Falls 2035 Growth Management Plan, zoning ordinances and related regulations accommodate and encourage development of the most in-demand forms of housing.
  - Update the Growth Management Plan to identify the most urgent housing needs and projections.

*"To solve the affordable housing issue in Sioux Falls will take a coordinated plan orchestrated across the region's many stakeholder groups."*

- Online survey participant

## **OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY PROCESSES AND POLICIES TO BEST FACILITATE ECONOMIC GROWTH.**

In order to do business profitably, companies rely on government to create an environment that allows them to grow effectively, yet responsibly. Development controls, permitting systems, tax and regulatory climates, and other factors under government's purview affect how firms compete in the Sioux Falls region. By continuing to focus on creating a business climate conducive to corporate growth and development, local governments can demonstrate their commitment to the region's successful future.

***Action 1: Ensure that each of the Sioux Falls region’s municipal governments’ development policies and processes are cost-effective for business while still protecting the public interest.***

- ✓ Continue to approve building permits within a reasonable timeframe.
  - Consistently survey the development community to ensure that city review processes are responsive to business concerns.
- ✓ Proceed with City of Sioux Falls efforts to examine government controls on redevelopment projects to ensure permitting is transparent, timely, and cost-competitive.
- ✓ Leverage the Shape Sioux Falls plan and its implementation to optimize development processes in the City of Sioux Falls, update the City’s zoning ordinances, and provide more developer flexibility to plan and construct projects consistent with Shape Sioux Falls guidelines.
- ✓ Leverage newly-developed technology tools in administering municipal services and processes in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness as well as measure improvement in services.
  - Research and model best practices in local government services administration that utilize affordable technology tools.
    - Examples include the City of Austin, Texas’ building inspections process that uses UPS technology.

*“One thing that keeps me in Sioux Falls is the prospect of watching it grow. I’m encouraged by the efforts of the City, Chamber, and the Downtown groups.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

***Action 2: Research and identify additional potential mechanisms to fund the development of public infrastructure.***

- ✓ Conduct an analysis of developer fees in the City of Sioux Falls compared to peer cities both within and outside of South Dakota to determine if Sioux Falls’ costs are out of alignment with competitor communities.
- ✓ Consistently explore alternative funding tools to facilitate infrastructure development, including tax-increment financing (TIF), quality of life bonds, user fees, federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus grants, and other options.

*Action 3: Provide competitive state and local incentives for the expansion and relocation of high-value employers.*

- ✓ Leverage Forward Sioux Falls lobbying efforts to secure legislative approval for the provision of incentives tools commensurate with neighboring states.
- ✓ Assess the potential to identify funding sources to provide local incentives focused on the Sioux Falls Area’s target business sectors.
  - Research national best-practice programs for application in Sioux Falls; examples include: a local economic development tax; provision of land and/or infrastructure for quality projects; no-cost, subsidized training programs; and others.

**OBJECTIVE 4: EMBRACE AND LEVERAGE SIOUX FALLS’ COMMUNITY DIVERSITY.**

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the Sioux Falls metro demonstrate that the region is changing rapidly not just in size but in diversity. Minority residents make up just 10 percent of the area’s population but accounted for 22 percent of its growth this decade. Sioux Falls’ leaders must be proactive in embracing this changing population and take advantage of the opportunity to bring new voices and experiences to the table when determining the community’s future.

*Action 1: Best support existing diversity-related entities and efforts.*

- ✓ Work to optimize the awareness and impact of the Sioux Falls Diversity Council and its programs.
  - Contribute the public and private support necessary to ensure that the Council’s community stakeholder meetings, annual Sioux Falls Diversity Conference, and business-development efforts are successful.
  - Partner with Council members to develop additional programmatic and operational capacity, as needed.
    - This includes the potential to dedicate full-time staff to the Council in the future.
- ✓ Work with the Sioux Empire Society for Human Resource Management (SESHRM) on its diversity efforts in the Sioux Falls region.

*“The community is embracing diversity in much better ways than they used to. Most folks think that we’re better because of it.”*

- Online survey participant

- ✓ Ensure that the Sioux Falls Human Relations Diversity Calendar is consistently updated and promoted to all regional constituencies.
- ✓ Conduct outreach to Sioux Falls Area businesses and organizations to catalogue their diversity-related efforts.
  - Identify specific programs and their company and organizational representatives.
  - Work with representatives to best support, promote and enhance local diversity efforts.

***Action 2: Engage immigrant communities and their representatives in key decision-making processes.***

- ✓ Partner with the Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls, Lutheran Social Services, and other organizations working directly with immigrant populations to ensure that group representatives are appointed to panels such as the Event Center Task Force and others.
  - Effectively communicate to immigrant-support organizations the progress in negotiations and initiatives that impact Sioux Falls' minority communities.
  - Work with the Center and others to consistently engage minority representatives in public processes.
- ✓ Involve minority communities in decision-making related to Greater Sioux Falls' growth-management efforts.

*“I believe the business community here believes and understands that multiculturalism is good for Sioux Falls in terms of workforce competitiveness and conveying the message that we are an ‘open’ community that welcomes newcomers.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

***Action 3: Ensure that diversity is a consideration in the make-up of boards of directors, governmental elected bodies, and other leadership groups.***

- ✓ Work with regional public and private organizations to compel them to nominate and select for leadership groups individuals that reflect Greater Sioux Falls' diversity.
- ✓ Promote the Young Professional and Leadership Sioux Falls programs to underrepresented communities.
- ✓ Partner with the MCC, the City of Sioux Falls, the private sector, and public-private organizations to develop an outreach program with the goal of recruiting more immigrant and minority candidates for elected office.

- Engage in concurrent efforts to increase voter-participation rates among legal immigrants.

*Action 4: Consider the development of support capacity for recent Sioux Falls Area in-migrants from rural communities in South Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota.*

- ✓ Work with school systems, social service providers, and governments to identify new residents in need of assistance to find quality residences, training, and employment.
- ✓ Determine the City of Sioux Falls' eligibility for state, federal, and foundation assistance grants to best support rural in-migrants' assimilation into urban and suburban life.

## **GOAL: VISITORS AND EVENTS**

*Enhance the Sioux Falls region's capacity to benefit visitors and residents through the hosting of a diverse variety of events, conferences, and conventions.*

The Sioux Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has done an effective job of growing the area's visitor sector and marketing the region at home and abroad. However, the Sioux Falls Area must focus on maintaining its existing assets and enhancing the community's competitiveness for destination and visitor business and events through the ongoing development of related infrastructure. Expanded hotel capacity, continued downtown revitalization, additional convention center space, a new events center, more direct and affordable flights to and from Sioux Falls and other local enhancements – coupled with targeted outreach to recreation visitors – will ensure that visitors continue to support the regional economy.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: ENHANCE THE SIOUX FALLS AREA'S CAPACITY TO ATTRACT VISITORS, CONVENTIONS, AND EVENTS TO THE REGION.**

In recent years, the Sioux Falls Area has seen a notable increase in its offerings for visitors to the region. New special events, performance spaces, hotels, restaurants, cultural programs, and other amenities have the real potential of making the Sioux Falls region a more dynamic visitor destination and a draw for regional visitors. However, the area's capacity to enhance these resources and effectively market them has not kept pace with peer communities. In order to maximize the potential of its visitor economy, the Sioux Falls Area must increase its ability to manage, enhance, and market its visitor resources.

*Action 1: Ensure that the Sioux Falls Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) has a resource base consistent with its peer regions.*

- ✓ Partner with the Sioux Falls CVB to conduct a Sioux Falls Visitor Development Plan that includes a strategic assessment of current capacity, potential programming, and a CVB organizational plan.
  - Benchmark the Sioux Falls CVB against comparable peer communities to determine the organization's current resource and personnel gaps.

- Work to formalize a strategic plan that recommends optimal CVB staffing and funding levels to effectively implement the recommendations in the Visitor Development Plan.
  - Propose a program-development scenario that reflects the visitor resources and amenities of best-practice communities.
  - Detail step-by-step implementation activities to best direct the CVB to realize its preferred future.
  - Ensure that robust yet achievable benchmarks and performance metrics inform the implementation of the Sioux Falls Visitor Development Plan.
- ✓ As a component of the visitor strategy, identify potential new funding models for the CVB.
  - Proceed with efforts to implement a \$2 dollar per night room tax in the City of Sioux Falls.
    - Determine the efficacy of pursuing similar strategies in all regional cities and counties.
  - Consider additional revenue-generating activities such as creating a business improvement district (BID) or building a membership model for the CVB with increased emphasis on recruiting new members.
  - Partner with local and regional officials and economic development organizations to determine the optimal public-private model for providing sufficient capacity to the CVB.

*“We are a hidden gem. Many things are happening here, especially culturally speaking, that are surprising to visitors.”*  
- Online survey participant

***Action 2: Refine the Sioux Falls Area’s destination marketing program to align with the recommendations of the Visitor Development Plan.***

- ✓ Ensure that visitor messaging is consistent with the external marketing efforts of the Sioux Falls Chamber and Sioux Falls Development Foundation, as applicable.
  - Partner with Greater Sioux Falls’ businesses to integrate the hospitality sector into regional marketing materials and programs.
- ✓ Consider the development of a niche marketing effort touting a revitalized Downtown Sioux Falls to regional and state-wide audiences.
  - Highlight Downtown Sioux Falls’ impressive supply of buildings on the national historic register.
  - Continue aggressive promotion of the downtown greenway as a key asset for visitor attraction.

- ✓ Ensure that Sioux Falls' CTE Academy high school students in the Hospitality and Visitors track are taught from a curriculum that incorporates the tenets of the Visitor Development Plan and the occupational growth it supports.
- ✓ Move forward with initial City discussions related to the development of enhanced gateways to improve visitors' first impressions of Sioux Falls.
  - Consider the development of visitor-focused signage, graphics, and distribution materials at the Sioux Falls Regional Airport.
  - Proceed with nascent efforts to assess the aesthetics of road and highway gateways to the City of Sioux Falls as a component of the Shape Sioux Falls Corridor Development Plan.
    - Determine the need to design and develop a streetscape-beautification program between the Sioux Falls Regional Airport and the city center.

*Action 3: Leverage the visitor and cultural potential of the Blood Run National Historic Landmark site and state park.*

- ✓ Facilitate the purchase of the remaining privately-owned land for the South Dakota portion of the Blood Run National Historic Landmark site.
  - Work to fast track purchase of the site under the state's current two-year option.
    - Partner with the State of South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Commission and the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation to raise remaining funds.
  - Ensure funds meet eligibility requirements for federal matching monies from the National Parks Service.
- ✓ Fulfill one of the management strategy options established in the National Parks Service's 2000 Special Resource Study to meet criteria for inclusion in the national parks system.
  - Work to efficiently develop the site for optimal use as a premier state park.
  - Advocate for legislative approval for the Blood Run site to gain state park designation.
  - Once the site is developed, partner with the State of Iowa to meet suitability standards for the site to be included in the national park system.

**OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THAT INCREASE THE REGION'S CAPACITY TO HOST EVENTS.**

While Greater Sioux Falls has a lot to offer visitors, its capacity to host events could be increased. This includes not only event space, hotel rooms, and facilities, but also efforts to enhance Downtown Sioux Falls. A thriving downtown with dining,

shopping, and recreational options leaves a lasting impression on the minds of visitors, whether they come for business, leisure, or other reasons. In this regard, enhancing the community’s overall “product” will make it easier to sell Greater Sioux Falls as a destination for visitors. These developments also provide benefits for existing residents, benefitting efforts to better retain and attract talent to the region.

***Action 1: Continue efforts to enhance Downtown Sioux Falls’ position as a regional employment, residential, and hospitality center.***

- ✓ As a component of the Sioux Falls Visitor Development Plan, assess existing hotel and private event space capacity and project short- and long-term development demand.
  - Based on the capacity assessment, amend or rework downtown planning and regulatory efforts to reflect land-use and development projections.
  
- ✓ Optimize policies and processes to best facilitate Downtown Sioux Falls development and redevelopment.
  - Partner with the City of Sioux Falls to most effectively support downtown commercial and residential development.
    - Ensure that development in Downtown Sioux Falls is cost-competitive with suburban districts for high-profile employers and projects.
      - Leverage existing tools such as TIF financing to incentivize new development and the funding of utilities and parking infrastructure to enable high-value corporate expansions and relocations.
      - Consider the need for additional downtown-support tools such as a discretionary incentives fund to allay employer and developer costs when investing in the downtown district.
      - Assess and discuss the need to capitalize a staffed Downtown Development Authority in the City of Sioux Falls.
  - Ensure Downtown businesses’ infrastructure demands (such as parking and utilities) are met as the district develops.
    - Ensure that recommendations from the City’s completed Downtown parking assessment are effectively implemented.
  - Determine the value of encouraging and expanding Downtown Sioux Falls amenities such as public gardens and farmers markets.

*“We need better collaboration with other communities in our MSA so that we are effectively building partnerships and lifestyle choices for residents.”*  
 - Stakeholder input participant

- Consider launching an aggressive retail-recruitment strategy to attract (and potentially incentivize) the Downtown location of produce and sundry markets, restaurants at multiple price points, dry cleaners, coffee houses, gyms, and other amenities.
  - If pursued, leverage the strategy to attract amenities that serve downtown residents (i.e., grocery stores, laundromats, pet stores, etc.) in addition to retailers that cater to the visitor market.
- ✓ Provide resources that improve the visitor experience to Downtown Sioux Falls.
  - Ensure new attractions and developments are reflected in Downtown wayfinding programs.
    - Provide more pedestrian-focused amenities such as detailed Downtown map kiosks and informational displays.
  - Assess the need to create and staff a “Downtown ambassador corps” managed by Downtown Sioux Falls to serve as guides, safeguards of public safety, clean-up crews, and visible symbols of the Downtown district.

*“Sioux Falls doesn’t do a great job of welcoming people to our community through major thoroughfares. When we talk with visiting friends and family, they often point out how many vacant and rundown buildings there are on the way into downtown...This may sound superficial, but people notice these things – first impressions are incredibly important.”*

- Online survey participant

***Action 2: Augment and actively promote the region’s quality of life and visitor amenities.***

- ✓ Prominently feature pending and future hospitality-serving development in marketing and outreach materials through the SFDF, Chamber, CVB, City, counties, and other entities.
- ✓ Enhance arts and culture amenities and events through a unified approach.
  - Engage in key efforts the Sioux Empire Arts Council, the Dakota Academy of Performing Arts, Washington Pavilion’s Husby Performing Arts Center, the Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls, and the fine arts and performing arts departments of the region’s colleges and universities.
  - Promote Sioux Falls’ position and amenities on the South Dakota I-29 Cultural Corridor.
  - Ensure arts and creative businesses are engaged in SFDF and Chamber boards and activities.
  - Consider development of additional public events in Downtown Sioux Falls, potentially focused on Falls Park.

- ✓ Leverage existing opportunities to promote Greater Sioux Falls to recreational visitors.
  - Market the wide range of hunting and recreational activities available in Greater Sioux Falls.
    - Create pheasant hunting travel packages and other consolidated visitor amenities related to specialized recreation visitors.
  - Enhance the promotion of the region's golfing amenities.
  - Complete acquisition and development of the Blood Run site. (See Objective 1, Action 3.)
- ✓ Implement priority projects identified during the City of Sioux Falls assessment of recreational facility needs.
  - Ensure that all regional communities engage in recreation planning and development processes.
    - Leverage efforts at the City to inform regional capacity enhancement, as necessary.

*Action 3: Develop a greatly-enhanced capacity to host conventions, meetings, and events in the City of Sioux Falls.*

- ✓ Reassess facility-development recommendations from the local Events Center Task Force in light of the legislative defeat of its primary identified funding mechanism.
  - Engage local leadership – including Events Center Task Force members and key public and private stakeholders – in discussions about alternative development opportunities to fulfill the mission of the proposed Events Center.
    - These may include the consideration of a Downtown Sioux Falls location for a future events center and convention complex with the existing arena site redeveloped into a sports and athletic complex.
    - Include in discussions the potential to move forward with the existing Task Force recommendations.
  - Actively pursue alternative funding sources to support event and meeting facility development.
    - Research financing tools and methods from localities in South Dakota and across the nation.
    - Ensure the chosen funding mechanism is supported by an objective and defensible feasibility study.

## GOAL: MARKETING

*Aggressively promote the Sioux Falls Area as a competitive location for business to both internal and external audiences.*

Economic development entails both capacity building and marketing. The strongest economic development efforts leverage all community partners to improve the local “product,” while the economic development organization builds awareness of the community’s assets in local stakeholders and the outside world. It is critical to understand that a complete campaign is comprised of two distinct marketing strategies. The first directs the marketing of the community to external audiences. The second, of equal importance, guides the promotion of the economic development organization within the community to improve local attitudes about the area’s growth potential and motivate stakeholder to become strong advocates for the region. It should be acknowledged that building trust and buy-in to an economic development organization takes time, communication, and visionary leadership.

## Internal

### OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE THAT EXISTING SIOUX FALLS AREA BUSINESSES ARE EFFECTIVELY RETAINED AND EXPANDED AND SERVE AS KEY ADVOCATES FOR THE REGION.

While external recruitment can produce “big hits” in terms of successful relocations, the vast majority of a community’s new jobs are created through the growth of incumbent companies. Therefore, it is essential that these companies receive the attention they need to grow jobs and keep existing jobs in Greater Sioux Falls. Traditionally, there are four objectives of a best-practice business retention and expansion program. It should:

1. Identify and facilitate the resolution of any problems that can interfere with the retention and expansion of existing businesses;
2. Address any identified gaps in services and programs in partnership with other local economic development organizations and local governments;

*“We need to broaden the geographic reach of attraction efforts...Focus on the issues that change the landscape of attraction.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

3. Generate leads and positive testimonials, and communicate the specific information to the recruitment efforts; and
4. Expand businesses' market reach through the promotion of international trade and the creation of a buyer-supplier match program.

There is also the strong potential to leverage existing businesses for identification of valuable relocation prospects, either in their buyer/supplier chains or through other affiliations.

***Action 1: Establish a formal business retention and expansion (BRE) program to support the growth of existing businesses and leverage them for prospect development.***

- ✓ In cooperation with partner organizations, including the Governor's Office of Economic Development, create a formal BRE visitation program centered around Greater Sioux Falls' target business sectors.
  - Create a tiered visitation schedule based on company size, level of local investment, and growth dynamics.
  - Work with visited companies to identify key competitive issues such as city permitting processes, talent attraction, and others, and formalize a "follow-up protocol" to address the issue.
    - Develop a "business intelligence system" with the City of Sioux Falls and the four counties in the MSA that gives the municipalities notice on how they can mitigate issues that might lead to a specific company leaving the community.
    - Identify representatives of the City of Sioux Falls, other regional cities, and the counties that could also serve as partners in the proactive retention of regional businesses.
  - Encourage representatives of visited companies to make introductions to local firms and business leaders to help identify new opportunities.
    - Leverage business leadership to share specialized sector knowledge as well as association, alumni, and other business sector databases to help identify and contact companies for business development efforts.
  
- ✓ Utilize a software tool to optimize pre- and post-visit research and database-building processes.

*"Remember that most jobs will come from our own internal growth of local companies. Other companies will see that and follow."*

- Stakeholder input participant

- Determine a uniform set of easily-individualized follow-up actions for prospects and ensure these steps are taken in every prospect case through a database.
- ✓ Leverage SFDF and Chamber contacts to provide import/export assistance, as necessary, to existing firms with overseas ambitions.
  - Work through the marketing director of the South Dakota International Port and Great Plains International Trade Association to leverage BRE visits to expand import/export traffic in Greater Sioux Falls.

***Action 2: Tailor components of the Sioux Falls Area existing business program around the region's target sectors.***

- ✓ Develop Sector Leadership Councils corresponding to the Sioux Falls Area target sectors of Medical Services and Research Science, Corporate and Data Services, Renewable Energy Technologies, and Warehousing and Distribution.
  - Staff the councils with SFDF officials in facilitated dialogues related to expansion/retention and target-development opportunities.
  - Ensure that business council membership is also inclusive of representatives from supportive entities such as research institutions, government, educational organizations, training providers, and others.
  - Establish the frequency of meetings based on the preferences of council members.
  - Leverage the region's talent recruitment initiatives such as Opportunity SF and the Sioux Falls Recruiting Cooperative to source human resource executives who can host internal focus groups with young employees and participate in council meetings to share their recruiting and retention experiences.
- ✓ **Medical Services and Research Science**
  - Leverage the Regional Leadership Council to address competitive concerns and opportunities related to the health care services and research niches.
  - Capitalize on efforts previously recommended in this *Strategy* to assist research institutions with recruitment of top talent.
  - Determine the potential to assist research entities with sourcing state, federal, and foundation funding.
  - Work closely with sector companies and training partners to ensure a competitive capacity of degree programs and graduates in high-demand skill sets.
    - Lobby the Board of Regents and local school boards as necessary to develop programmatic capacity for key degrees.

- Strive to engage sector companies and institutions in the development of a “bench to bedside” pipeline of pharmaceutical and treatment protocols administered in regional health care facilities.
- ✓ **Corporate and Data Services**
  - Work closely with the Leadership Council to identify and address state and federal legislation with the potential to cost the Sioux Falls area jobs in this sector.
    - Leverage economic development-led lobbying efforts to positively affect policy decisions as feasible.
  - Develop a formal contingency strategy to assist potentially displaced financial service employees in finding comparable jobs or start their own companies.
    - Ensure that research on the Sioux Falls Area financial services workforce is consistently updated and catalogued through BRE visits.
    - Provide this information to employment prospects seeking a large, available, skilled financial services workforce.
    - Partner with regional, state, and federal workforce agencies to provide financial and personal support for displaced workers, if necessary.
  - Ensure that regional utility companies are responsive to the cost competitiveness of high-volume users like information assurance centers.
  - Maintain up-to-date inventories of the region’s Class A, B, and C office capacity and “boutique” spaces in Downtown Sioux Falls that can accommodate small technology and creative-services firms.
    - Cultivate relationships between the development community and Corporate and Data Services companies potentially interested in build-to-suit development projects.
- ✓ **Renewable Energy Technology**
  - Leverage the Leadership Council in this sector to discuss, identify and address competitive trends and issues.
    - Issues may include: cap-and-trade legislation; federal subsidies for renewable energy; research and development incentives; linking raw materials producers to regional clean energy refineries; etc.

*“The right ingredients are in place to maintain the growth curve, but it comes with responsibilities to continue the development of infrastructure.”*  
 - Stakeholder input participant

- Utilize BRE visits to gauge the support necessary for regional researchers to develop and commercialize renewable energy technologies.
    - Connect researchers with providers of capital or renewable energy product end-users.
  - Work with Sioux Falls Area utilities to pursue strategies related to development of smart-grid infrastructure.
  - Advocate against pending state legislation to eliminate incentives and funding for wind energy and smart grid development.
- ✓ **Warehousing and Distribution**
- Leverage the representation in the Great Plains International Trade Association to inform policy and program development impacting the Warehousing and Distribution sector.
  - Use BRE visits to identify priority infrastructure projects to best support the growth of Sioux Falls Area Warehousing and Distribution companies.
    - Integrate these priorities into the list of annual legislative priorities to be advocated for in Pierre and Washington, D.C.
  - Ensure that a competitive supply of shovel-ready distribution sites is provided across the region.
  - Work through the South Dakota International Port staff to source opportunities for high-value development projects oriented around the movement of goods within, into, and out of the Sioux Falls region.
- “There should also be an emphasis on increasing markets and careers that can take advantage of our location and transportation assets.”*  
- Stakeholder input participant
- ✓ Consider developing an Opportunity Fund<sup>3</sup> to be used to attract businesses in these target industry sectors.
- Ensure the fund has the flexibility to be used as a direct incentive, loan or investment.
  - Develop the capacity to determine the costs and benefits of funding a project through the use of economic impact modeling.

***Action 3: Partner with private-sector executives and senior corporate staff in the Sioux Falls Area to serve as regional ambassadors.***

- ✓ Recruit a core group of 20 to 25 top executives to begin the program.

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<sup>3</sup> A portion of this fund could be designated as the seed fund identified in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Goal area.

- Work with selected executives to determine the extent to which the ambassador effort is a formalized program.
- ✓ Create an ambassador-education process to inform key regional leaders on the Sioux Falls region’s top “selling points.”
- ✓ Ensure that Sioux Falls’ ambassador program reflects components of best-practice models. These include leveraging ambassadors to:
  - Facilitate conversations with external prospects and/or site-selection professionals on the Sioux Falls Area’s benefits as a location for business.
  - Utilize their companies’ offices and facilities as sites for hosting relocation prospects and as destinations for inbound marketing events.
  - Capture quotes, comments, and stories for incorporation into external marketing materials and website content.
  - Leverage their ambassador training to advocate for the Sioux Falls region as a desirable business destination when talking with peers, vendors, and clients.
  - Represent the region on marketing missions in other cities and countries as a speaker.
  - Include information and slides about doing business in the Sioux Falls Area when speaking on the conference and lecture circuit.
  - Share success stories about business innovations or accomplishments that Sioux Falls economic development organizations can market.
- ✓ Work to capture the stories of companies that have recently moved to, or expanded in, the Sioux Falls Area.
  - Ensure that representatives of these companies are vocal and visible advocates for the benefits of the Sioux Falls region.

*“We are good at identifying the things we need to do in Sioux Falls but we don’t sell it. This is why things take so long.”*

- Stakeholder input participant

***Action 4: Ensure intra-regional communications keep local stakeholders engaged in Sioux Falls Area economic development efforts.***

- ✓ Consistently focus on efforts to coordinate the messaging, website appearance and linkages, and marketing materials of the region’s economic development organizations and subsidiaries.

- Continue to broadcast these collective initiatives through local radio spots, quarterly newsletters, an annual meeting, and direct visits to investors, expanding efforts as necessary.
- ✓ Update the Chamber, Forward Sioux Falls, and SiouxFalls.com websites to reflect the new style of the SFDF website.
  - Consider all opportunities to pool resources related to intra-regional marketing efforts.
- ✓ Continue to increase the level and breadth of community buy-in for **Future Sioux Falls**' efforts.
  - Use local media and events to demonstrate the return on investment from the process.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: POSITIVELY INFLUENCE BUSINESS PROSPECTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DECISION MAKERS THROUGH INBOUND AND VISITOR MARKETING EFFORTS.**

“In-bound” marketing events describe any activity that invites target audiences to the Sioux Falls Area so that they may learn more about the region and its business environment. For many regions, in-bound events have served as a cornerstone of marketing activities. They are beneficial because they allow guests to experience the community in person and result in strong relationship building. Although in-bound marketing forums often require more staff time and resources to organize, for participants they can be rich experiences that build lasting relationships. Unlike trade shows and marketing missions, these familiarization tours allow prospects to see the Sioux Falls region in person. Likewise, blending economic development marketing with visitor promotion can create quality opportunities to turn regional visitors into future investors in the Sioux Falls Area.

### ***Action 1: Develop in-bound marketing events and “fam” (familiarization) tours in the Sioux Falls Area.***

- ✓ See that in-bound events are sufficiently funded, coordinated, and promoted to achieve success.
  - Initiate planning for in-bound marketing events begin at least six months prior to the event.
  - Schedule in-bound marketing activities around unique local events, such as the state’s annual Pheasant Hunt.
  - Involve local executives and high-ranking elected officials with guest interactions.
  - Ensure that the ratio of SFDF representatives to guests (typically between five and fifteen) does not exceed a one-to-one ratio.

- Pay for all travel and accommodation expenses for guests and their spouses.
- Showcase Sioux Falls' assets by choosing strategic traffic routes, restaurants, hotels, and other venues that allow hosts to point out key qualities along the way.
- Consider offsetting costs by engaging area utility companies and real estate firms as sponsors.
- ✓ Consider hosting a “fam” tour for one or more influential national site-selection professionals.
  - As with in-bound marketing efforts, attempt to coordinate fam tours around prominent local events such as the annual Pheasant Hunt.
  - Ensure that site consultants are introduced to Sioux Falls Area properties, companies, research facilities, and training institutions.

### *Action 2: Market the Sioux Falls Area to influential visitors to the community.*

- ✓ Develop visitor marketing tools specifically targeted at leisure travelers.
  - Ensure that existing visitor marketing fully leverages Sioux Falls' assets.
  - Distribute marketing materials at mid- to high-end hotels in the region, hunting resorts, shopping centers, golf clubs, and other tourist destinations.
  - Focus tourist-based marketing messages on Greater Sioux Falls as a prime location for entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Have a visible presence at industry events hosted in Sioux Falls.
  - Host a reception, exhibit, or invite top industry executives to stay an additional evening to explore the region and build relationships with SFDF staff and board members.

## External

### **OBJECTIVE 3: OPTIMIZE EXTERNAL MARKETING, ATTRACTION, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS.**

External marketing includes all activities directed at informing target audiences about the community's competitive advantages. An external marketing or sales plan describes the campaign's objectives and the ideal marketing mix needed to access audiences. Greater Sioux Falls has found success positioning itself as a lower-cost alternative to the Twin Cities and Minnesota markets. Recruitment efforts from this market have brought valuable jobs and capital investments to the community and have helped to grow and diversify its economy. However, as rapid growth and existing efforts continue to enhance Greater Sioux Falls' competitive capacity at the regional and national levels, marketing efforts must be retooled and expanded to best

communicate this message. Thus, benefit will be gained by expanding the reach of promotional efforts beyond the Twin Cities and Minnesota markets to other high-value national markets where metro Sioux Falls has competitive advantages in its target sectors. These target sectors must be the focus of all external marketing programs.

***Action 1: Revisit the Sioux Falls Area’s primary external messaging campaign and target markets to reflect the region’s evolution as a top location for business.***

- ✓ Based on the needs of the identified target business sectors, customize the SFDF’s message to external prospects and markets to focus on providing “high value.”
  - Craft a refreshed messaging campaign for the Sioux Falls region.
  - Assess Greater Sioux Falls’ key assets and resources to support business growth and tailor them for high-value external markets.
    - These include the aggressive marketing of the region’s private and non-profit research capacity and the potential relocation benefit for prospects in related fields.
  - Expand the breadth of the Sioux Falls Area external marketing efforts to additional regional markets beyond the Twin Cities and Minnesota markets.
  - Focus a component of BRE discussions on top regional markets for Greater Sioux Falls’ incumbent companies.
    - Further refine the market-selection process through data analysis focused on competitive dynamics between the Sioux Falls Area and potential target markets such as Chicago, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, or Denver.
    - Ensure that the selected target markets provide value for the development of the Sioux Falls Area’s target business sectors.
    - Use data matrices and defensible criteria in the selection of new regional target markets.
  - Continue to work closely with the state’s Office of Economic Development to create compelling radio advertisements and place them in key regional programming.

*“Sioux Falls needs an attitude...a rallying point around which locals can agree and young professionals can identify back to the city. Not talking ‘cheap workforce’ here – talking ‘the city where everything is within reach.’”*

- Online survey participant

- Ensure that all media affiliated with the campaign are consistent with the aggressive messaging of the ads, are more clearly oriented towards target audiences, and are consistent with the design of the SFDF's new online presence.

***Action 2: Greatly enhance the Sioux Falls Area's external marketing missions based on the identification of key prospects in the region's target sectors.***

- ✓ Continue with plans to engage in regular marketing missions focused on target-sector opportunities.
- ✓ Leverage pre-research to arrange meetings with industry executives in a handful of targeted companies.
  - Focus on prospect lists comprised of contacts generated from area businesses during BRE calls and from Forward Sioux Falls investors.
- ✓ Consider the eventual investment in a research tool that allows regional economic developers to fine-tune prospect lists initially generated from existing businesses.
  - Sort companies using a number of search criteria, including NAICS employment code, location of headquarters and regional offices, affiliation of top executives and other factors.
  - Hoovers is a widely used database for this purpose. As an alternative to Hoovers, consider engaging a call agency that specializes in economic development sales.

*"We are effective at marketing to young professionals within a 150-mile radius of here. We need better national recognition to be able to compete for young talent on a broader level."*  
 - Stakeholder input participant

***Action 3: Attend only the highest-value business sector events.***

- ✓ Based on the Sioux Falls Area target sectors, identify one to two priority marketing opportunities for attendance.
  - Ensure the events are small in scale and focused on a niche segment of the target sector.
  - Do not attend events where more than five percent of exhibitors are other economic development organizations.
  - Always attend events in partnership with other area organizations, educators, and companies.
    - Share costs and contacts with these partners.

*Action 4: Refocus site-location studies contracted from the Boyd Company on the Sioux Falls Area’s target business sectors.*

- ✓ Ensure that research is based proactively on opportunities identified in the **Future Sioux Falls Target Business Analysis**.
- ✓ Integrate the Boyd studies’ findings into the SFDF’s marketing materials to a greater degree.
  - Broaden the key takeaways from the studies from a “low-cost” sales point to a “high value” comprehensive presentation of the Sioux Falls Area’s workforce-skills capacity, quality of life amenities, and other assets.
- ✓ Evaluate and determine best practices and methods to maximize public relations impact of research findings.
  - Focus public relations efforts on the Sioux Falls Area’s competitive business climate, workforce, and quality of life.
  - Should marketing resources increase, consider engaging in a national public relations campaign to generate media stories on a wide range of business topics.
    - Consider focusing additional public relations efforts on one or more of the Sioux Falls Area’s target business sectors.

**OBJECTIVE 4: LEVERAGE DYNAMIC MARKETING TOOLS THAT EFFECTIVELY CONVEY THE SIOUX FALLS AREA MESSAGE.**

Once a compelling message, design scheme, and narrative have been identified, the tools available to an economic development organization (EDO) to convey these elements to targeted markets and audiences are critical. A website is an EDO’s most important weapon in the fight for new jobs and investment. Surveys of site consultants routinely show that these professionals visit a community’s website first to access information and data before ever contacting the state or region itself. Often, communities are taken off a prospect’s list before they even knew they were being considered. In addition to websites, collateral materials – though not as critical as they once were – are nevertheless still effective marketing tools when used creatively.

*Action 1: Optimize the Sioux Falls Development Foundation’s website<sup>4</sup> along with affiliated regional economic development web portals.*

- ✓ Upgrade the SFDF website’s marketing mission, interactivity, content quality, visual appeal, navigation, and overall functionality.

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<sup>4</sup> Note: These recommendations are based on the existing SFDF website. *Market Street* understands that a new site is under development. As such, the actions in this *Strategy* should be applied to the new site as applicable.

- ✓ Distribute relevant information about the Sioux Falls region to clearly identified target audiences.
- ✓ Update the site's appearance and streamline heavy written copy that interferes with visitors' access to key information.
- ✓ Ensure that website data and content are as current as possible with demographic and economic data consistently kept up-to-date.
- ✓ De-clutter the website's homepage and ensure it conveys a clear message to visitors.
  - Keep page content as minimal as possible while presenting a concise statement of the SFDF's mission, purpose, and services.
  - Consider including a map of the Sioux Falls region placed within South Dakota and neighboring states.
- ✓ Populate every page of the website with contact information on the SFDF, formatted as a staff person's e-mail address rather than an "info@" e-mail address.
- ✓ Develop a maps library that is easy to locate from the homepage.
- ✓ Improve the website's information request form by adding fields and automating the page so that visitors can generate their own customized reports in real time without contacting the SFDF.
- ✓ Reduce written copy by 50 percent or more.
  - Utilize pull quotes, bullet points, and graphics to convey marketing points.
- ✓ Refer to the new website as a style guide for all future marketing materials.
  - Ensure all web and printed collateral appears uniform.
  - Work to best assimilate all Sioux Falls marketing and economic development websites to the best extent possible.
    - Do periodic test-searches on top reference websites to determine the Sioux Falls sites that are prioritized; ensure that these sites are fundamentally consistent.

*"We have to somehow get the story out. This is what will carry the day. We have to articulate our message – we can't play the 'incentives game.'"*

- Stakeholder input participant

*Action 2: Design and produce collateral materials that best support the Sioux Falls Area's messaging program.*

- ✓ Reduce the overall number of collateral materials while providing consistency among the publications' graphic styles.
  - Place key information online as much as possible.
  - Eliminate the printed Business Directory and replace it with a web-based searchable business directory.
- ✓ Build microsites<sup>5</sup> to replace regional marketing and target industry brochures.
- ✓ Consider implementing an e-newsletter.

*Action 3: Utilize social media tools to supplement more traditional economic development marketing channels.*

- ✓ Consider the use of custom-designed entries, pages, feeds, and channels on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to diversify the Sioux Falls Area's external marketing efforts.
  - Provide content directed at young professionals and other prime users of social media sites.
- ✓ Continue efforts to pursue a webinar-based campaign offering an information-rich presentation of business costs for specific industries.
  - Present a brief marketing message and then a showcase for the Boyd Company's benchmarking analyses.
  - Maintain consistency through the quarterly hosting of webinars with updated information and trends on regional target sectors.

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<sup>5</sup> Microsites (or weblets) are individual web pages or clusters of pages meant to function as an auxiliary supplement to a primary website. A microsite's main landing page most likely has its own domain name or subdomain.

## CONCLUSION

The **Future Sioux Falls Strategy** contains dozens of strategies to enhance the region's competitiveness as a location to do business, live, work, and visit. Associated with those strategies are still more action steps and sub-actions. The five goals of the strategy – Workforce Pipeline, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Quality Growth, Visitors and Events, and Marketing – must be implemented as a comprehensive program to take the Sioux Falls region to the next level of its evolution as a community of choice for residents and businesses. Failure to do so will threaten the recent success Sioux Falls has enjoyed related to population and economic growth.

Indeed, the Sioux Falls Area is at a critical juncture in its history. In-migration of new residents from surrounding rural areas will likely decrease as these communities gradually empty out of those populations that can or will consider relocation. Strategies to target Minneapolis-St. Paul as the principal source of new companies will also become more difficult as Sioux Falls continues to evolve from a low-cost location to one that provides higher-value employment for regional adults. A typically “urban” confluence of increasing big-city amenities coupled with rising poverty, crime, social-services needs, and other issues will further challenge local leadership to manage the impacts of growth with the need to plan sustainably and respond to residents' needs.

The **Future Sioux Falls Strategy** can serve as the start of the next chapter in the region's history – an acknowledged, proactive next step in the evolution of a once-small community into a new player on the national scene. Sioux Falls has demonstrated that it can experience growth without sacrificing quality of life and community pride. Effective implementation of **Future Sioux Falls** can ensure that these trends continue unabated for many years to come.