

Economic Development

Top Issues & Opportunities

- Attracting Workforce
- Attracting & Retaining Businesses
- Room for Growth
- Retail Volatility

Voices from the Community

Incentives - The Community Survey asked people if they believe the City should direct more local tax dollars, through marketing, incentives, etc., to help spur job growth. Of those with an opinion, over two-thirds (68%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with directing more money toward job growth. When asked if the City should support start-up facilities to foster entrepreneurship, 71% of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" those opportunities should be increased.

A Good Place for Business - Focus group discussions on economic development identified Fond du Lac as a good place for business because the City:

- *Is centrally located to major business centers*
- *Has a strong and collaborative education system*
- *Is in a prime location near a major transportation network*
- *Strong sense of local community*

Challenges - Focus group discussions and the Community Survey identified conditions that impact business growth (some are current challenges, some are future concerns):

- *Downtown feels like it is struggling*
- *Zoning code needs flexibility to respond to development needs*
- *Long permitting and public engagement processes*
- *Workers struggle with mobility, transportation, and childcare*
- *Attracting and maintaining a diverse workforce*
- *Civic and community identity/pride*
- *Big-box vacancy/volatility; consumers go elsewhere*

Goal 1: City residents will have the skills to achieve personal success and financial stability, and employers will have access to skilled staff to maintain and expand businesses development initiatives.

POLICIES

#1: Support proactive communication between educational institutions and area employers in determining and filling appropriate local skills and needs.

#2: Residents will have access to a variety of training and support resources to support employment skills and job preparedness.

#3: Employers will be actively engaged in career-advancement and workforce development efforts including internships, apprenticeships and workshops.

#4: The City will work together with the Fond du Lac School District, Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, Envision Greater Fond du Lac, post-secondary educational institutions and other entities to ensure job skills training is provided to prepare students for careers in Fond du Lac.

ACTIONS

#1: Work with Envision Greater Fond du Lac to review and update on an annual basis a comprehensive list of skills and training resources available through all community partners and programs, and host this list prominently on the City's website. (Responsibility: Envision)

#2: Encourage Envision Greater Fond du Lac to conduct an annual survey of employers and entrepreneurs to identify hiring and retention needs as well as business support needs. The City will identify areas to provide assistance, including sharing this information with the community and support/training institutions.

#3: Consider supporting Fond du Lac Works in expansion of the annual job fair that focuses on employment for residents without a post-secondary education. Encourage partnerships with new employers, and integrate educational opportunities on resume creation, interview skills and other job skills that benefit all community members.

#4: Facilitate enhanced partnerships between Envision Greater Fond du Lac and the Fond du Lac School District to coordinate activities in support of the local economy, including:

- a) Ensure that courses in computer science, information technology, entrepreneurship and financial literacy are regularly offered at the middle school and high school levels. Consider adding INCubatorEDU curriculum – North Fond du Lac School District initiated this program in 2018.
- b) Incorporate into the curriculum skills and information specifically pertinent to the City's target employment sectors.
- c) Hold at least two events each year to help facilitate a discussion between teachers and employers about local hiring needs and skill requirements.
- d) Encourage and support student involvement in the IGNITE! Youth Idea Challenge.
- e) Form and support student business groups and clubs.

(CALL OUT BOX) INCubatorEDU — a national program that provides a specialized curriculum to hundreds of member schools in over a dozen states — will provide online instruction materials, consultation on how the classroom is designed, a coaching and mentoring framework, and professional development resources for the year-long course.

Goal 2: The City will attract, expand and diversify the local economy.

POLICIES

#5: The City should have a supply of development and redevelopment sites ready for new business investment. This should include infill sites that have been cleared and cleaned (if necessary) and growth area sites that are already served with public utilities.

#6: Continue to develop and manage the City's industrial and business parks to promote employer retention and expansion, as well as provide opportunities for new development.

#7: The City of Fond du Lac, in reviewing development projects, will seek to maintain a balance between the needs of the community and the needs of the developer.

#8: Support locally-owned businesses, small-/micro-businesses and start-up businesses.

#9: Promote programs and initiatives that support entrepreneurship and remote/freelance employment (e.g, home-based businesses, co-working spaces, business incubators, business accelerators and makerspaces), such as IGNITE! Business Success.

#10: The City's identity and positioning within the region will be consistent, clearly defined and marketed to promote local economic development initiatives.

#11: The City will be an active partner with regional economic development entities, especially Envision Fond du Lac, with particular focus on workforce training initiatives and efforts to help local employers gain access to new markets.

#12: Promote the City's natural resource advantages (e.g., Lake Winnebago) to promote tourist spending and business attraction within the region.

(CALL OUT BOX) IGNITE! Business Success connects aspiring, emerging and established businesses in Fond du Lac County to a robust network of entrepreneur resource providers who can help with business planning, capital resources or financing, entrepreneurial training, market research services, access to peer networks and mentors, and much more.

ACTIONS

#5: Collaborate with Envision Greater Fond du Lac to proactively communicate, discuss needs and receive feedback from area businesses. Use these conversations to continually refine services and resource referrals.

#6: Create and maintain an inventory of available sites for development and redevelopment, updated on a biannual basis.

#7: Coordinate with Envision Greater Fond du Lac to provide annually updated community data that can be used in marketing toward target businesses that provide living-wage employment opportunity.

#8: Co-host with Envision Greater Fond du Lac an annual business workshop for local business leaders, employers, entrepreneurs, economic development professionals, and City staff to discuss current issues. Work to be inclusive of all business and economic development stakeholders of the community.

#9: Conduct an incubator feasibility study that will determine potential use of a facility, likely locations for a facility, and whether the facility should cater to a specific industry sector.

Goal 3: Business investment will support the health and vitality of the Fond du Lac community.

POLICIES

#13: Support business development initiatives that increase diversity of entrepreneurs, business types and the workforce, as well including access to culturally-specific needs.

#14: Encourage new business development within areas easily accessible by the City's transportation network, including considerations of public transit access.

#15: Attract, support and retain businesses that fill and/or redevelops vacant properties in the downtown and key corridors.

#16: The City, through the Redevelopment Authority, may acquire property in order to control and accelerate redevelopment of key sites.

#17: Where necessary to advance redevelopment initiatives, the City may actively facilitate and consider funding assistance to help relocate a willing business to a more suitable location within the City.

#18: The City will support new office and industrial development by expanding and extending access to utility and transportation infrastructure, where needed.

#19: Financial incentives for business development will support one or more of the following criteria:

- Increases the tax base without adding significant service costs.
- Improves existing neighborhoods through redevelopment and/or expanded access to employment and services.
- Adds affordable and workforce housing units.
- Creates new living-wage jobs at or above MIT's living wage calculation for the Fond du Lac Metropolitan Area.
- Supports small businesses.
- Improves conditions that will attract future quality development, such as a catalytic project in a new redevelopment area.
- Provides public amenities in a relevant location, such as pocket parks not otherwise required, etc.

#20: Support affordable and workforce housing initiatives that expand economic opportunities for City residents of all income levels, especially income-limited individuals/families.

#21: Support childcare and after-school/summer programming that meets the needs of income-limited employees.

#22: The City will actively support festivals, recreational and community events that attract visitors and spending at local businesses.

(CALL OUT BOX) Living Wage –The living wage identifies the necessary income (minus payroll taxes) to cover an individual's or family's likely food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation and other basic

necessities (e.g. clothing, personal care items, etc.). Based on MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Fond du Lac's 2019 annual living wages are shown below.

Fond du Lac, WI 2019 # of Kids	1 ADULT				2 ADULTS (BOTH WORKING)			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Living Wage	\$11.17	\$24.10	\$28.75	\$35.58	\$8.84	\$13.23	\$15.75	\$18.20

<https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/22540>

ACTIONS

#10: Review and revise Tax Increment Finance policy to prioritize business attraction, retention and expansion that is consistent with Policy 19.

#11: Collaborate with Envision Greater Fond du Lac to conduct a biennial survey of large employers to determine trends in housing and transportation need that support a growing workforce.

#12: Continue to implement plans that further economic and neighborhood vitality consistent with the City's vision, including the Downtown Market Study & Plan, Downtown Exploratory Committee Report, Placemaking Strategy, and other relevant plans and documents.