

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

September 2017



## Chisago County Comprehensive Plan 2017

## Economic Development

### Introduction

A strong, healthy business community is critical to the long-term well-being of Chisago County. Business is one of the key foundations to the high quality of life experienced in the county – both directly in the jobs it generates for the residents and indirectly through a diversified tax base that provides necessary resources. A healthy economy promotes the expansion and retention of existing businesses. It also encourages new business to consider locating in Chisago County. This, in turn, provides county residents with increased job opportunities and more buying power to support local businesses. It is essential the County establish and maintain economic and redevelopment strategies that are continually reviewed and modified to reflect changes in market conditions, service demands, resource allocation and current opportunities.

Chisago County's economic base, like its land use, changes dramatically from one part of the County to the other. The County's economic roots in agricultural production are quite evident over much of the area, where agriculture still plays a primary economic role as it has for more than a century. The County's urban areas have, over the last 30 years, transformed from small towns and cities with strong agricultural ties to a more diverse economy that is closely linked to the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Chisago County, when considered as a single entity, demonstrates diversity in its economic base. A diverse economic base lowers the risk of economic difficulty by distributing the effects of industry-specific cycle across the broader range of industries. This element examines the diversity of the County's economic base and the trends occurring in the County as a whole. The economic base is examined from the perspective of:

- The kinds of jobs located in the County;
- The wages paid by businesses located in the County;
- The businesses sales or value of products and services offered by businesses in the County.

Viewing the County as a single, unified economic entity does not reflect, however, the shape and reach of markets that drive the economic base of its distinct sub-areas. The county's geographic size also limits the usefulness of using County-wide statistics for many of the policy discussion that must occur within the Comprehensive Plan update process.

The County's demographic trends reflect the changes of the County's economic base. The economically transformative decades were between 1960 and 2000, when many agricultural areas saw steady transformation with a decreasing number of farms and the towns and cities saw population growth. Much of this increasing population was due to the burgeoning relationship between the County and the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

### **What is Economic Development?**

Economic development has different meanings to different people. The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) definition of economic development fits Chisago County's unique mix of social, geographic, political and economic qualities:

No single definition incorporates all of the different strands of economic development. Typically, economic development can be described in terms of objectives. These are most commonly described as the creation of jobs and wealth and the improvement of the quality of life. Economic development also can be described as a process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community.

The primary goal of economic development is to improve the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic development, there is no single strategy, policy or program for achieving successful economic development in Chisago County. The role of government in economic development must be viewed in both a short and long-term perspective. That is, with any economic development plan or strategy, the focus is on short-term actions that support and sustain a long-term investment.

Economic development is carried out by organizations such as economic development authorities (EDA's), cities, port authorities, industry associations, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), nonprofits, counties, chambers of commerce and businesses. Economic development includes many functions and disciplines – business development, marketing, infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, and fiber), real estate/ land use and finance.

### **Why is Economic Development Important?**

Counties are responsible for providing core services, such as human services, criminal justice, public welfare and infrastructure. To ensure the delivery of these essential services, support job growth and maintain a healthy revenue base, Chisago County and all counties invest in economic development activities. Counties with strong economies have the financial resources necessary to support the services their residents need and desire. County economic development initiatives capitalize on the networks of public, nonprofit and private partners for successful economic development. The dynamics within the County economy affect the capacity of the County government to deliver services. County resiliency is based on the strength of the County economy. The ability of the County to thrive through changing physical, social and economic conditions depends on the prosperity of county residents, the success of local businesses and the availability of financial resources.

Economic development cannot be done in a vacuum – it is based on relationship building, partnerships and collaboration. Chisago County's and Minnesota's economic development and growth depend upon the independent actions of many players, the overwhelming majority of whom operate in the private sector. Yet government also

plays a vital role as a strategic investor. Local government plays an essential role in local economic development. While the government does not create private-sector jobs, it can create an environment that encourages economic and job growth. The County can encourage economic growth by supporting the efforts of local communities, building programs and providing tools to compete for quality jobs, leveraging programs offered by partners and building strong relationships and coalitions with organizations that support economic improvements and overall County vision.

Public sector involvement in economic development arises from concerns about positive and negative spillover effects of development, failures in the information marketplace, existing but underused public infrastructure and private resources, the social impacts of growth and development and the political impacts of economic stagnation or decline. Chisago County recognizes the need to encourage continued investment into its economy. A strong business base supports the residential, retail and commercial sectors. Companies that require skilled workers pay a living wage (the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs to maintain a safe, decent standard of living), attracting local residents. These residents, in turn, support the commercial and retail businesses within the County by spending their payroll in Chisago County. They also contribute their time to other community activities through volunteerism. Businesses that pay livable wages allow Chisago county residents with the time and the economic resources to invest in their homes and their community.

At its heart, economic development is about building healthy economies in order to have healthy communities. The following are just a few of the ways that economic development helps communities:

**Increased tax base:** The additional revenue provided by economic development supports, maintains and improves local infrastructure, such as roads, parks, libraries and emergency services.

**Job development:** Economic development provides better wages, benefits and opportunities for advancement.

**Business retention:** Businesses feel appreciated by the community and, in turn, are more likely to stay in town, contributing to the economy.

**Economic Diversification:** A diversified economic base helps expand the local economy and reduces a community's vulnerability to a single business sector.

**Self-sufficiency:** A stronger economic base means public services are less dependent on intergovernmental influences and alliances that can change with each election.

**Productive Use of Property:** Property used for its "highest and best use" maximizes the value of that property.

**Improved Quality of Life:** More local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the entire community, including the overall standard of living for residents.

**Recognition of Local Products:** Successful economic development often occurs when local residents and businesses buy and consume locally produced goods and products in the local market to a greater degree.

### **Why are local economic development benefits important?**

First, local economic development benefits are important for political reasons. For cities, counties and states, advancing their own economic development is of central importance as local governments are primarily interested in maintaining the economic vitality of the area for which they are responsible. Secondly, local economic development offers a benefit that is quite valuable to local residents – more and better job opportunities in their home community. Most Americans have strong ties to the familiar places and people of their home community. Some people will of course move if needed to attain greater economic success. Providing more or better jobs in the home community, however, allows local residents to attain greater earning while preserving their valuable ties to their home community.

As explained by economist Roger Bolton, “A sense of place is a concept widely used by geographers, architects and planners. It refers to a complex of intangible characteristics of a place that makes it attractive to actual and potential residents. The returns to the sense-of-place asset are a general measure of security – security of stable expectations and security of being able to operate in a familiar environment and to trust other citizens, merchants, workers, etc. There also is a basic feeling of pleasure at living in a community that has been created by a combination of social interactions in a particular setting. Creating more jobs and better jobs in a local community allows more local residents to stay and economically prosper while preserving and enhancing this important component of human well-being, a strong “sense of place”.

### **Chisago County Economic Development Guiding Principles:**

Market forces are the dominant drivers of the economy. Public policies influence economic development and growth, but they cannot supplant the private sector, nor should they try. Put another way, the private sector is the lead that drives the economy. As such, the County needs to work in partnership with the private sector.

The County should not duplicate or replace the work of cities and other public agencies. To this end, the County will work in collaboration with cities and public agencies and will provide leadership where the County can make the most difference.

The County supports a strong collaborative approach to economic development. No matter the location, new and growing economic development is a benefit to the entire county. Similarly, it is preferable if one city in the county does not steal or cause an existing business to relocate from another city within Chisago County.

The diversity of the County requires an adaptable and open-minded approach to economic development. The distinctive qualities of Chisago County require flexibility.

The County should pursue economic development strategies that take aim at the drivers of economic growth. Smart approaches to economic development will:

- Boost the productivity of key county and regional industries;
- Improve the quality of life to keep and attract talent;

- Encourage entrepreneurship;
- Encourage home-based businesses and rural tourism;
- Expand tourism and recreational activities throughout the County;
- Allow and encourage business market segments that help expand the County's economic base without expanding associated services:
- Focus on industries and occupations that provide high quality, good-paying jobs; and
- Pay attention to industries and businesses whose sales bring new dollars into the County, retain dollars within the region, or otherwise strengthen the County's internal economic connections.

Several entities promote economic development in Chisago County or conduct studies on a regional basis relating to economic development and housing. The following provides a brief summary of the major organizations and their roles.

### **Chisago County Housing and Redevelopment Authority – Economic Development Authority (HRA-EDA)**

The Chisago County HRA-EDA was formed in 1988 and offers a range of resources to public and private sector clients. These resources include:

1. Community Development: including securing and administering local, state and federal grants and loans, project planning, and program implementation;
2. Economic Development: including providing assistance to local units of government in Chisago County by financing the acquisition of commercial/industrial land, providing tax increment financing and tax abatement assistance and offering incentives to business looking to expand in or relocate to Chisago County;
3. Housing Development and Rehabilitation: including administering rehabilitation programs for multi-family and single family rehabilitation, multi-family and single family housing development and construction, and home purchase assistance; and
4. SBDC Services: The HRA - EDA is a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) satellite office. They provide free and confidential consulting services to business and those thinking of going into business. Services provided include: Access to capital and loan packaging; financial analysis and assessment; cash flow management; business plan development; general marketing; start up assistance; expansion assistance and relocation assistance.

The Chisago County HRA-EDA has a full-time Director that administers the programs for a five-member board and two County Commissioners serving as liaisons. In 2002, the HRA-EDA began using its levy authority for ongoing operations of the HRA-EDA and for the business development land acquisition program. Some incentives now offered by the EDA for development include: tax increment financing, employee and management training programs, revolving loan funds, programs available through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and SBA financing.

### **East Central Regional Development Commission**

The East Central Regional Development Commission was organized by petition of local units of government in the year 1973. Formation of regional development commissions - RDCs - is authorized under the Regional Development Act of 1969. The Minnesota Legislature passed an updated Regional Development Act in 1997. There are 13 development regions in the State of Minnesota. Twelve of the development regions were created by executive order of the Governor in 1969.

Chisago County is part of the East Central Regional Development Commission along with the counties of Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine. The mission of this commission is to provide leadership and direction through creative problem solving by initiating projects and programs that lead to creative solutions to regional problems, by providing technical assistance and by identifying and developing available resources. The East Central Regional Development Commission provides a leadership role as an advocate for East Central Minnesota to bring about positive change.

Besides economic development technical assistance, the ECRDC has a gap lending loan program and a micro lending loan program for business expansion. The ECRDC also has a direct link to the Federal Economic Development Administrations (EDA) grant programs that assist communities attract and retain businesses.

### **Initiative Foundation**

A network of regional non-profit foundations was established in the mid-1980s across the State of Minnesota. The general mission of these foundations is to strengthen the communities and the people that live there through leadership training, grant making and business development. The Initiative Foundation, formerly the Central Minnesota Initiative Fund, was formed in 1986 and it serves 14-county area in central Minnesota including Chisago County. A board of directors governs the group and its main office is in Little Falls.

In 1995, the Initiative Foundation prepared a regional economic development strategy and overall vision. The vision developed for the region was to:

*“Build on its many strengths in order to address concerns related to wages and opportunities, education and job skills, enterprise development, sustainable development and quality of life and physical infrastructure. Specifically, the region hopes to improve wages and job skills; increase job opportunities through business development, expansion, and attraction; and address physical infrastructure concerns that hinder economic development. The vision will be achieved through partnerships and cooperation.”*

According to their website, the Initiative Foundation works daily to strengthen the economy and communities of Central Minnesota through:

- Loans and financing, we invest in businesses that create quality jobs.
- Grants and programs, we invest in organization that make our society strong.
- Donor services and charitable funds, we help people invest in their communities.

The Initiative Foundation originally developed several specific actions aimed at helping the region attain the above vision including the following:

- Develop a program that encourages the development, attraction and expansion of firms that provide living wages.
- Make seed capital and equity for starting and expanding businesses more widely available.
- Target gap lending to areas of high unemployment and low income.
- Increase competition for workers by encouraging high skill/high wage industries to locate, develop or expand in the region.
- Develop a strategy that maximizes the region's comparative advantage, a program that strengthens industries in which the region has a comparative advantage.

For 2017 – 2019, the Initiative Foundation has set the following work priorities:

- Support and grow existing for-profit and nonprofit businesses.
- Help new entrepreneurs and the start-up of businesses and social enterprise ventures.
- Improve the economic status of financially disadvantaged people.
- Enhance kindergarten readiness for children (ages 0-5) living in poverty.
- Cultivate the next generation of leaders (ages 40 and under) working and living in our region.

### **GPS 45:93**

GPS 45:93 is the new name of the organization formally known as Northern Technology Initiative (NTI). GPS 45:95 is a non-profit organization dedicated to growing and attracting businesses with high paying jobs to the 5-County (Chisago, Pine, Kanabec, Isanti and Mille Lacs) region of East Central Minnesota. They are a regional economic development consortium strategically located along Interstate 35 between Minneapolis/St. Paul and Duluth. This makes it an ideal location for those companies serving the Twin Cities and Duluth areas.

The Mission Statement of GPS 45:93 is “Collaborate to strengthen the regional economy by:

- Providing a regional approach to workforce development, business attraction, retention and expansion.
- Acting as a conduit for members and the region to access resources and educational opportunities.”

### **GREATER MSP**

In 2011, Greater MSP was created to provide a regional approach to economic development. Greater MSP (Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership) is a private, non-profit (501c3) organization dedicated to providing public and private sector leadership, coordination and engagement to grow the economy of the 16-county MSP region, including Chisago County. Greater MSP's mission is to

accelerate job growth and capital investment in the 16-county region. Working with a broad array of partners and investors, the Greater MSP staff, Board and Partner Advisory Council have developed the region's first Regional Economic Development Strategy, based on three key pillars: 1) *Telling "Our Region's Story."* 2) *Retaining and attracting key talent with the launch of Make It. MSP,* and 3) *Building our "Sectors of Strength" for global leadership.*

The Greater Minneapolis Saint Paul Region is positioned to lead the world in solving its most important challenges, now and in the future. Safe and abundant food, clean water and health solutions will drive the global economy in the coming years. As a leader in these technologies and industries, the region has the R&D, financial and business service infrastructure to support them. Our highly educated and culturally connected workforce will create and contribute to businesses' success. Our quality of life and commitment to community will sustain that success. Businesses prosper here — because people prosper here.

### **City Economic Development Programs**

Several communities in Chisago County have economic development or housing and redevelopment programs. North Branch, Wyoming, Chisago City, Rush City and Lindstrom all have an Economic Development Authority. Taylors Falls has an Economic Development Commission.

### **America's Best Cities (ABC) Competition**

In addition to the cities and their programs listed above, the cities of Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City, Shafer and Taylors Falls, along with nearby townships and the Chisago Lakes School District, all started working together in 2015 as one community in the America's Best Communities (ABC) competition. The contest, sponsored by Frontier Communications, Dish, CoBank and The Weather Channel, has involved several steps, objective and goal development and plan creation to show how this one "community" is one of the best communities in all of the United States. To show how the Chisago Lakes area is one of the best communities in the United States, the group has been focusing its efforts on how the community continues to prosper by focusing on economic opportunity, community collaboration and a rich quality of life. Through these efforts, the group identified several outcomes or long-term goals they integrated across four focus areas including:

- Arts, Culture and Tourism
- Broadband
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life

The group developed plans with action steps and activities for implementing each of these focus areas. For economic development, the group's economic revitalization plan (dated November 2015) lists the following desired outcomes:

- Stimulate new, high quality job opportunities
- Attract people and investment to Chisago Lakes
- Beautify Highway 8 and fill vacant storefronts

Through the group's hard work and dedication, the Chisago Lakes area made it through several rounds of the ABC competition. The competition started with 350 cities, was narrowed by the judges to a top 50 (which earned the group \$50,000 for use toward further developing their plans). In January 2016, Chisago Lakes area was named one of 15 semi-finalists and in April 2016 they were named as one of the eight national finalists (which earned the group another \$100,000). Since earning that prize, the collaboration used the money toward implementing the goals and objectives in their economic revitalization plan. As one of the eight finalists, they competed in April 2017 for the top prize of \$3,000,000 to use toward further implementation of their economic revitalization goals and plans for the Chisago Lakes area. Unfortunately, the collaboration found out in April 2017 that they did not win one of the three top prizes in the competition.

## Overall Economic Development Issues & Baseline Information

### Employment Conditions & Workforce:

Employment conditions in the Chisago County area are favorable for expanding employers. Businesses can count on a growing workforce with a Chisago County location. The population of Chisago County is expected to increase 25% between 2015 and 2030 (from 54,293 to 68,071). In addition, Chisago County is easily accessible to the Twin Cities and to the highly skilled and educated workforce in the Twin Cities Area.

### Labor and Employment Characteristics – 2014

#### Chisago County

#### Minnesota

	<b>In Labor Force</b>	<b>Labor Force Partic. Rate</b>	<b>Unemploy. Rate</b>	<b>Labor Force Partic. Rate</b>	<b>Unemploy. Rate</b>
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	29,213	69.2%	6.0%	70.1%	6.5%

Source: 2010 – 2014 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

### Chisago County Labor Force Projections – 2015-2025

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2015 – 2025 Change (Numeric)</b>	<b>2015 – 2025 Change (Percent)</b>
	<b>Labor Force Projection</b>	<b>Labor Force Projection</b>		
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	32,515	33,804	1,289	4.0%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

### Chisago County Total Available Labor Force and Population Estimates

Year	Total Annual Average Number in Labor Force	County Population
2000	23,250	41,101
2010	29,314	53,887
2015	28,963	54,293

Source: Deed Laus Program and US Census

**Annual Unemployment Rates**

	<b><u>Chisago County</u></b>	<b><u>Minnesota</u></b>
2000 Annual Average	3.7	3.2
2010 Annual Average	8.9	7.4
2015 Annual Average	4.2	3.7

Source: Deed Laus Program

**Chisago Industry Employment Statistics – 2015**

	<b>2015 Annual Data</b>	<b>2015 Annual Data</b>	<b>2010 - 2015</b>	<b>2010 - 2015</b>
	<b>Number of Firms</b>	<b>Number of Jobs</b>	<b>Change in Jobs</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	1,060	14,855	1,477	11.0%
<b>Construction</b>	181	860	176	25.7%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	90	2,777	962	53.0%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	143	1,688	178	11.9%
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	86	3,637	91	2.6%
<b>Educational Services</b>	17	1,341	19	1.4%
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>	73	1,124	-27	-2.3%
<b>Other Services</b>	107	389	36	10.2%
<b>Public Administration</b>	38	1,047	50	5.0%

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program

In 2014, about 77 percent of Chisago County's working residents commuted outside of the area to work everyday. Due to great transportation access, residents of Chisago County enjoy both the atmosphere of a smaller community and the resources of a metropolitan area.

2014 Commute Shed (Counties where  
Chisago County workers are employed)2014 Labor Shed (Counties where  
workers in Chisago County live)

<b>Commute to:</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Chisago County, MN	23.4%
Ramsey County, MN	18.9%
Hennepin County, MN	18.1%
Washington County, MN	10.0 %
Anoka County, MN	9.4%
Isanti County, MN	4.5%
Dakota County, MN	3.2%
Polk County, MN	1.7%
Pine County, MN	1.6%

<b>Commute From:</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Chisago County, MN	50%
Ramsey County, MN	2.8%
Hennepin County, MN	2.1%
Washington County, MN	7.5%
Anoka County, MN	9.9%
Isanti County, MN	7.8%
Dakota County, MN	0.7%
Polk County, MN	4.1%
Pine County, MN	5.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

**Commercial/Industrial Tax Base**

Maintaining a healthy tax base is an important function of government.

The table below shows data from the League of Minnesota Cities for tax base composition of each city comparing the years 2000 and 2016.

**Existing Tax Base Composition, Percent Market Value Commercial/Industrial**

<b>City</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>% change 2000-2016</b>
Harris	5.05%	10.12%	+5.07
Center City	6.61%	12.17%	+5.56
Taylor's Falls	8.00%	7.84%	-0.16
Lindstrom	9.38%	8.16%	-1.22
Chisago City	9.92%	8.02%	-1.90
North Branch	11.8%	16.25%	+4.45
Wyoming	14.26%	16.84%	+2.58
Stacy	17.42%	24.35%	+6.93
<b>Statewide Ave.</b>	<b>19.85%</b>	<b>18.65%</b>	<b>-1.2</b>
Shafer	21.20%	12.62%	-8.58
Rush City	22.26%	27.50%	+5.24

Source: League of Minnesota Cities

### Existing Tax Base Composition, Percent Market Value Commercial/Industrial

	2002	2016	% change 2002-2016
Chisago County	5.33%	8.0%	+2.67
Statewide Ave.	15.31%	12.75%	-2.56
Metro Counties Ave.	19.81%	15.01%	-4.80
Non-Metro Counties Ave.	8.94%		

Source: Minnesota Department of Revenue

With the commercial/industrial tax base of Chisago County being only 5.33% in 2000, there was concern that with the addition of the rapidly expanding residential development, steps needed to be taken to maintain a healthy balance to ensure an acceptable residential tax rate. As noted above, by 2016, the commercial/industrial tax base in Chisago County had grown to 8 percent of the market value – an increase of 2.67 percent from 2000. While this increase is a good trend, Chisago County needs to analyze and develop an optimum goal for maintaining a healthy balance in tax base. In any case, it is evident an increase in the commercial/industrial development (to 13 – 18 percent of the County’s market value) is necessary in Chisago County. Chisago County would like to see the majority of new commercial/industrial development occur within municipalities where adequate transportation facilities and public water and sewer services are available. Other options should also be looked at including potential commercial/industrial development along I-35 at activity and/or transit centers, and establishment of mixed-use rural village centers at historical unincorporated villages.

In July 2014, Greater MSP released the results of a Business Retention Study of businesses in Chisago County. They received 116 survey responses from businesses located throughout Chisago County. The largest number of survey responses came from businesses in retail trade (29%), manufacturing (22%), other services (10%), health care/social assistance (9%) and financial/insurance (6%).

The surveys reported:

65 businesses had about the same number of jobs and 41 had increased the number of jobs over the past year.

60 businesses expected to keep their number of jobs about the same and 38 expected to increase their number of jobs.

39 businesses had no plans to make major investments, 35 had plans to renovate or expand their current facilities and 34 said they were planning on making major equipment purchases.

61 businesses reported increased sales over the past year and 32 said their sales had been relatively stable over the past year.

54 percent said that their primary market was local, 17 percent said their primary market was the Midwest (including Minnesota) and 11 percent said their primary market was Minnesota.

For community rankings and amenities, those responding indicated that recreational opportunities, K-12 education, crime rate, social organizations and networks and electric reliability were the five highest-rated amenities or attributes for doing business in Chisago County. These are amenities and features of life in Chisago County the County and cities should promote as strong points or reasons to do business in Chisago County.

The surveys also showed local taxes, public transportation, telecommunications/broadband service and rates and customized training programs were the five lowest ranked amenities or attributes of doing business in Chisago County. These are issues the County and cities should work to improve to better life for residents and improve the business climate in Chisago County.

The number of businesses in Chisago County is growing. Businesses in Chisago County benefit from the advantages insofar as suppliers, distributors and services in the Twin Cities are only minutes away. In addition, Chisago County itself has businesses that can provide the services a company might need. There are 21 computer systems design and related services firms, 18 scientific and technical consulting services firms, as well as 11 engineering and R&D services firms in Chisago County. In the last couple of years, there have been large expansions at Polaris Industries, Rosenbauer Minnesota and Hazelden. A large expansion for Premier Marine also was anticipated for 2017.

### **Current Commercial and Industrial Sites and Future Needs**

The map on page 6-18 shows the land that as of 2017 was zoned commercial/industrial throughout the County. The total amount of land currently zoned commercial or industrial is approximately 5653 acres. This includes both land in municipalities and land in unincorporated areas.

There are sites currently available in Chisago County that are suitable for commercial/industrial development that have the necessary infrastructure in place. Currently there are approximately 310 acres of land available for commercial and industrial sites.

Chisago County is rich with a variety of industrial sites throughout the county. There are ten industrial parks of which seven have available sites for new development.

### **Available Industrial Properties:**

#### **Center City** – County Seat Business Park – Per Road

There are six sites available totaling approximately 20 acres. All utilities are available to the site. Uniqueness of this site is it has two internet providers and two energy providers.

**North Branch** – Interstate Business Park – Located on County Road 30 and exposure to I-35. It is the largest certified “Shovel Ready” industrial park in the State of Minnesota. There are approximately 200 acres available for development. This industrial park also has rail access on the St. Croix Valley Shortline Railroad.

**North Branch** – North Branch Industrial Park – Located a few blocks off County Road 30 is the first industrial park in the city. There is one remaining lot available that is nine acres in size. The park is fully served with public utilities.

**Rush City** – In 2015, Rush City purchased land along County Road 30 and abutting the railroad for a new industrial park. There are three parcels equaling about 35 acres. This industrial park is served by the St. Croix Valley Short Line railroad.

**Stacy** – Stacy Ponds is accessed off County Road 30. 17 lots range from just under one acre to just under two acres in size. Lots may be combined for larger parcels. The park has all utilities and is ready for development. The business park sits between County Road 30 and the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area.

**Taylors Falls** – The city of Taylors Falls has a ten-acre business park located on County Road 37. The park has full utilities and is parceled into six sites. The city recently received special legislation to provide grants to businesses that develop in the park. The lots go for \$1 as it was funded through tax abatements.

**Wyoming** – The city of Wyoming and the HRA-EDA jointly own a 14-acre parcel that is currently available for light industrial development. It is accessed from County Road 30 but also fronts Interstate Highway I-35. The park is fully serviced with public utilities.

### **Other Industrial Sites:**

**Chisago City** – The Chisago City Industrial Park (located on Liberty, west of Lofton Avenue) is currently full. Properties near the park not owned by the city are often considered for future industrial development.

**Lindstrom** – The City of Lindstrom is in the process of redeveloping a site in their industrial park (on the northwest corner of Newlander Avenue and Akerson Street) that has an old, dilapidated building on it. It is planned to be demolished in first quarter of 2017 that would provide about a total of five acres for industrial development.

**Wyoming** – Wyoming’s older industrial park (along Fallbrook Avenue, south of Viking Boulevard) has very little land for new development. Mr. Hallberg of Hallberg Marine has developed much of the park. This park has been a location for existing buildings for businesses to consider.

### **Rural retail tourism and commercial recreation in Chisago County**

In 2010 and 2011, the County Planning Commission reviewed and discussed how to best accommodate the growing and changing types of rural retail tourism and commercial recreation businesses wanting to locate in Chisago County. Through several meetings and reviews, the County eventually adopted changes to the Zoning Code on September 21, 2011 that set standards for rural retail tourism businesses. The purpose of the new code (Section 4.15 of the Zoning Code), as stated in the ordinance, are to:

Preserve and celebrate Chisago County’s archaeological properties, rural and agricultural heritage and historical landscapes;

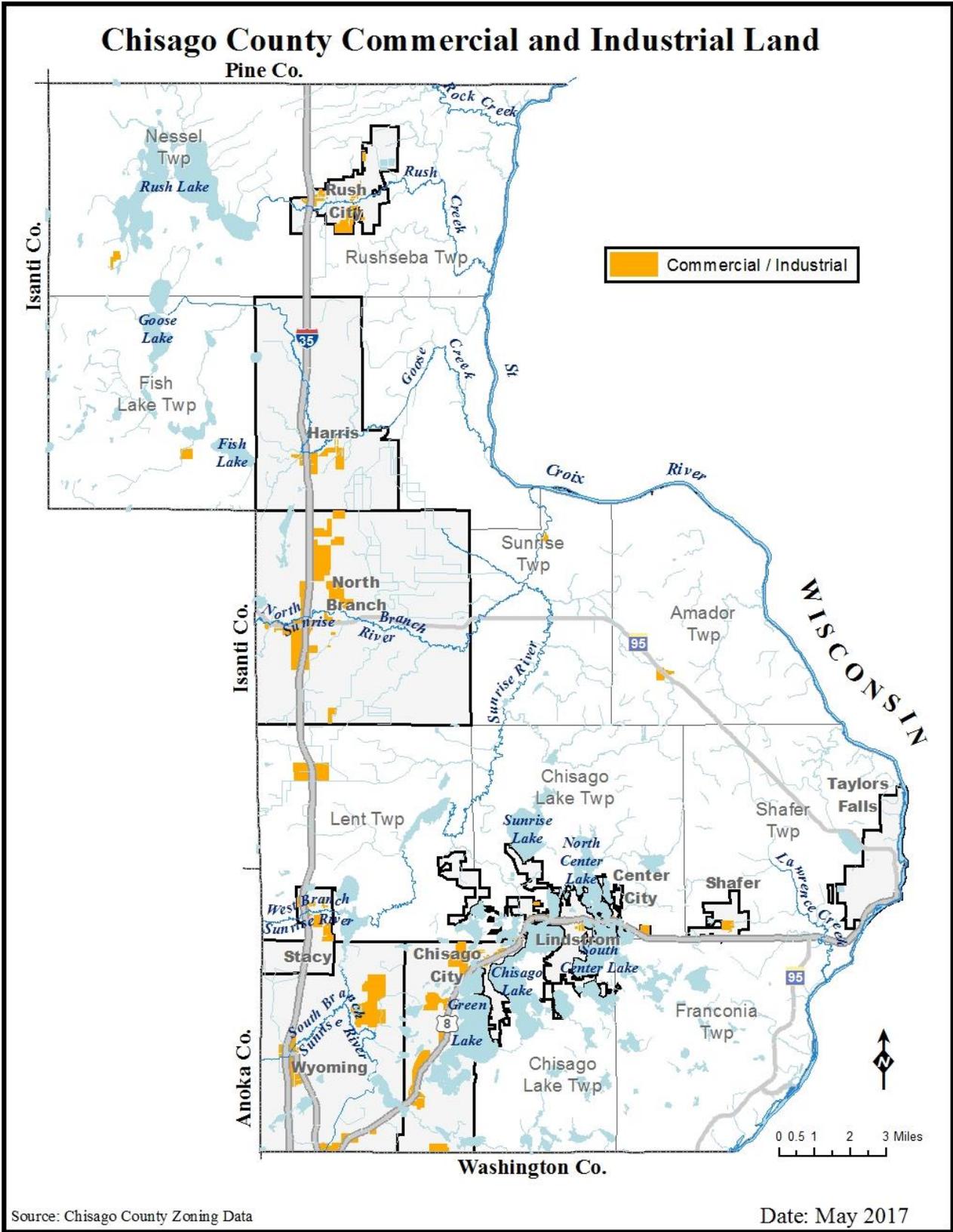
Recognize Chisago county’s scenic features, exceptional rural ambience and historic sites as desirable local amenities that will draw outside revenue from visitors that is vital to the local economy;

Enhance Chisago County’s appeal to visitors who are drawn to its rural atmosphere:

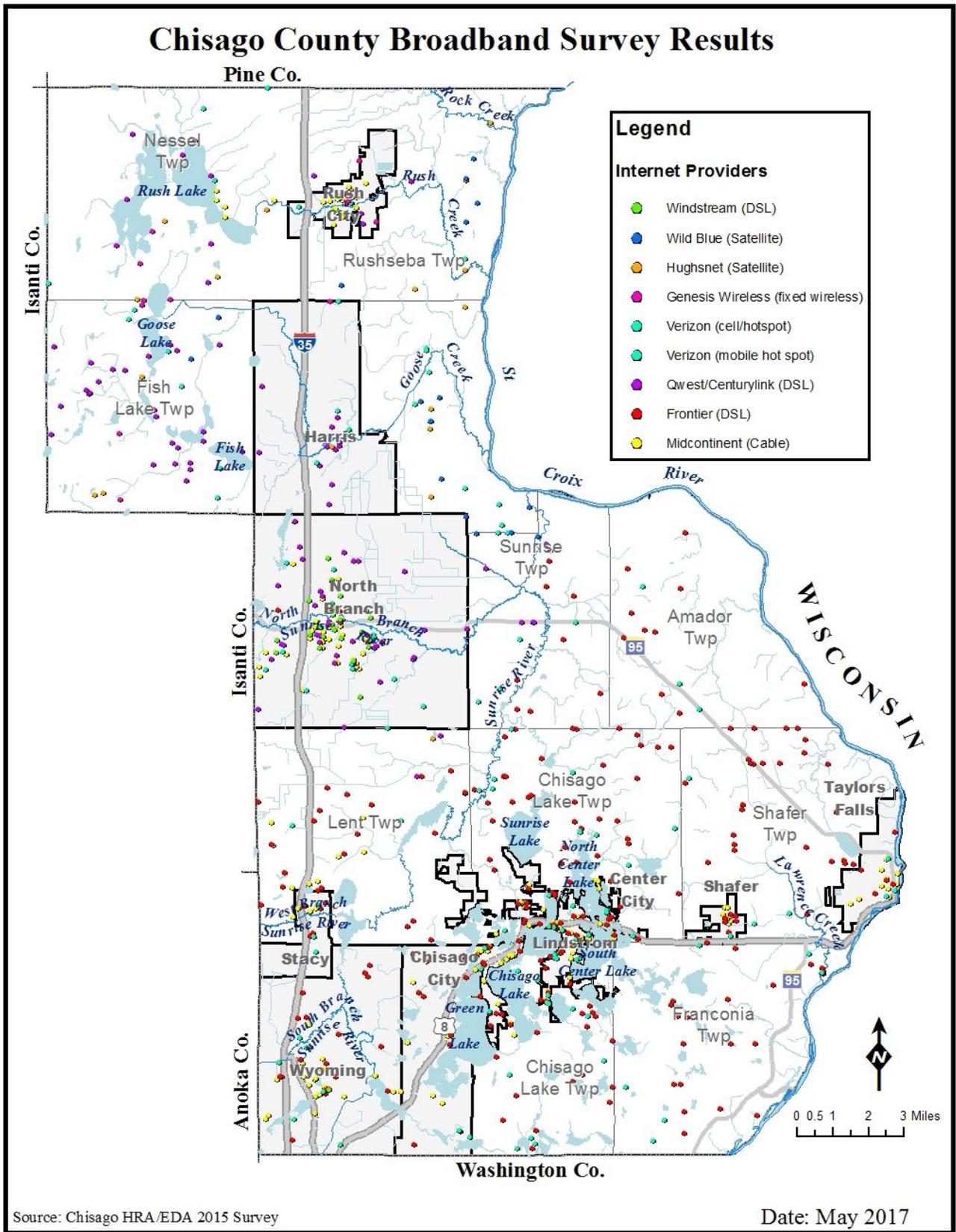
Provide opportunities for new economic growth through Rural Retail Tourism businesses: and

Assist the County’s citizens in transition from primarily agricultural land uses to an expanded variety of rural business opportunities as active family farming continues to diminish in Chisago County.

From 2010 – 2013, the County approved eight new or amended commercial recreation conditional use permits. As for rural retail tourism, the county approved 16 new or amended conditional use permits between April 2012 and December 2015 for such activities.



# Chisago County Broadband Survey Results



Source: Chisago HRA/EDA 2015 Survey

Date: May 2017

The Chisago County HRA-EDA has its own separate Board that approves the goals, policies and work plan of the organization. However, the goals and policies set by this agency should be incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the two are working together.

**Chisago County HRA-EDA Economic Development Goals and Work plan (below) takes a targeted, proactive approach to business recruitment based on the county's advantages.**

- A. Build relationships with commercial and industrial realtors locally and from the Twin Cities market.
  - a. Attend real estate events to grow relationships and market the county's industrial sites and buildings.
  - b. Determine which realtors and associations to work with the targeted businesses and provide them with information about development opportunities.
- B. Develop a focused marketing program, providing industry specific information to prospects.
- C. Maintain a listing of sites and buildings available by working with communities and realtors and have the sites listed on LOIS that will be provided by DEED, GreaterMSP and MNCAR.
- D. Utilize the tagline "A Natural Resource for Business" to target potential business.
- E. Work with legislators to create legislation so the county would be able to compete better with Wisconsin for business development.
- F. Meet with the Saint Croix Valley Short-line Rail to discuss targeted business.
- G. Work with area developers for potential speculative building options.

**Assist communities with redevelopment and filling vacant buildings.**

- A. Maintain an inventory of buildings and vacant sites on the various databases.
- B. Promote commercial sites/buildings to destination type businesses.
- C. Assist existing businesses with their expansion needs.
- D. Create and promote incentive programs to fill the vacant buildings.
- E. Work with communities and developers to remove/redevelop blighted buildings.

- F. Work with legislators to support funding for the DEED's Redevelopment programs.

**Provide financial and technical assistance to businesses located or locating in Chisago County.**

- A. Continue to provide Small Business Development Center (SBDC) services as a satellite office through the Central Lakes Community College.
- B. Stay informed of resources for businesses and shares those programs with new and expanding businesses.
- C. Support a regional job fair with DEED.
- D. Work with chambers and communities in business retention and expansion (BRE) visits. Create a rotating schedule of visits.
- E. Use the data provided from the *Sales Force* database to enhance the economic climate of Chisago County.
- F. Use the Shovel Ready criteria in preparation for a timely response to developers, realtors and prospects.
- G. Work with DEED's Labor Force Analyst to be prepared with pertinent information about the labor force and promote programs for workforce recruitment and retention.
- H. Provide and market training opportunities for businesses such as: employment law, lending programs and workforce training opportunities.

## **Additional County Economic Development Goals & Policies**

***Goal: Provide for a range of economic diversity and development opportunities to maintain and strengthen the County's economy.***

**Policies:**

1. Promote natural amenities in the County as assets to economic development and business opportunity.
2. Acknowledge tourism's economic value and the contribution of this industry to both the diversity of the County economic base and the potential for growth.
3. Promote tourism and commercial recreation as expanding opportunities for employment and tax base.
4. Encourage the development and installation of high-speed infrastructure to promote and assist telecommuting and E-business in Chisago County.
5. Encourage new commercial and industrial development within existing communities where adequate infrastructure is available, including redevelopment of existing sites and filling of industrial and business parks.
6. Options for potential commercial/industrial development shall be explored along I-35 at activity and/or transit centers.
7. Continue to use and promote the rural village center zoning district established for the historical unincorporated villages to allow for mixed-use development.
8. The County will continue to allow and encourage Home occupations in all zoning districts if performance standards are met.
9. Promote agricultural operations in areas with highest-valued agricultural land or with economically viable animal operations.
10. The County should continue to allow agricultural activities and related agribusinesses in the Agricultural zoning district.
11. The County should promote and support locally produced and sourced agricultural products and businesses.
12. The County should review and modify its economic and redevelopment strategies on a regular basis to reflect changes in market conditions, service demands, resource allocation and current opportunities.
13. Consider zoning ordinance changes that encourage commercial and industrial development while protecting existing residential properties and rural lifestyles in Chisago County.