

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING
MINUTES
May 13, 2021
Board Room, Heritage Bank, Willmar and via Zoom Video Conference

Present: Abdullahi Awale (via Zoom), Art Benson (via Zoom), Rollie Boll, Donna Boonstra, Les Heitke and Kelly TerWisscha

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director, Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager and Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager

Excused: Julie Asmus and David Ramstad

Media: Linda Vanderwerf, West Central Tribune

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

President Kelly TerWisscha called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00 a.m. and declared a quorum was present.

AGENDA—Added to the Consent Agenda under Accept was item 5, addition of George “Corky” Berg to the Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee. Added under New Business was the annual review of the Executive Director and removed from the Consent Agenda under Accept, was item 1, Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve the revised Agenda and revised Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA—

Approve: 1. Minutes of April 8, 2021 meeting
2. Financial reports as of April 30, 2021
3. Payment of Invoice No. 20-195-3.3 in the amount of \$2,531.25 to Achieve TFC

Accept: Committee/Subcommittee Minutes
1. Broadband and Advanced Technology 4/5/2021
2. Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment 4/2/2021
3. Marketing and Public Relations 2/22/2021
4. Resignation of Ranae Rahn from the Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE) Committee
5. Addition of George “Corky” Berg to the BRE Committee

MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EDC 2021 Planning Session. Aaron Backman reviewed portions of the Kandiyohi County EDC Strategic Planning 2021 Summary Report April 2021 (see attached). Almost 30 individuals attended the planning session; 29 responded to the survey and 87% were extremely or very satisfied with EDC outcomes achieved in the past 12 months. The most pressing issues were broadband, workforce, housing, childcare and COVID recovery with broadband being ranked as the highest priority. The report includes a review of the EDC's financials from 2013-2020 and a comparison of loan receivables. Backman believes the EDC's budget is over \$1.4 million in 2021 and may be more than \$1 million in 2022 as well.

[Abdullahi Awale joined the meeting via Zoom.]

Facilitator Cheryl Glaeser suggested possible changes to the EDC's committee structure, which received some push back from the committees. Some committees may decide to meet less often or as needed. President TerWisscha stated the BRE Committee discussed having more subcommittees to address specific tasks/goals, which may accomplish more. Les Heitke recommended the EDC include other organizations, such as the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) and local cities to share work. Connie Schmoll stated the EDC does collaborate with other organizations when necessary, noting the WLACC assisted with the most recent business survey. Schmoll noted WLACC has an Agri-Business Committee, but it is quite different from the EDC's Ag Committee.

Schmoll reviewed the Broadband Action Plan (see attached). Larry Kleindl, Kandiyohi County Administrator, has indicated he would like the county to use its American Rescue Plan Act funds for broadband to meet the goal in the Action Plan to provide broadband services to the entire county. Schmoll has held discussions with Vibrant Broadband, Hanson Communications and Arvig about other projects. Federal RDOF (Rural Digital Opportunity Fund) funds have been awarded for parts of Kandiyohi County to LTD Broadband, but it leaves islands of non-service throughout the county. Although LTD Broadband was awarded the RDOF auction, it has never before done fiber. The EDC's current project is in Arctander, Dovre, Mamre and St. Johns Townships. Norway Lake, Lake Andrew and Colfax Townships are interested in a future project. Township attorney Robert Ruppe attended a meeting with the townships on how to vote on the resolutions and the funding process. Minnesota is proposing \$30 million for its border-to-border broadband grant program with the possibility of including federal funds.

Business Support. Backman reviewed the Business Support Action Plan (see attached), including the potential objectives and expected outcomes.

Workforce Development Action Plan. The board reviewed the Workforce Development Action Plan (see attached). President TerWisscha voiced a concern as to whether or not the county has enough potential employees to fill available jobs and questioned how to attract people to increase our workforce.

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Director Annual Review. Backman noted his annual review is past due. Nancy Birkeland stated a survey will be sent to the boards. The annual review is typically performed by the chair/president and vice chair/vice president of each board. Donna Boonstra recommended the boards discuss succession planning for the Executive Director position in anticipation of Backman's eventual

retirement. President TerWisscha recommended a succession plan be incorporated into the annual review process. Backman shared he was contacted by a head hunter yesterday, but informed them he was happy in his current position.

REPORTS

Actions Approved by the Joint Powers Board. Backman reviewed the changes adopted by the Joint Powers Board at its April 22nd meeting relative to portions of the Policies & Procedures Manual and the Employee Handbook (see attached).

Willmar Child Care Center. Backman informed the board that the Finance Committee passed a motion to use funds remaining in the Immigrant Business Disaster Relief Grant (IBDRG) Program for the Willmar Child Care Center (the Center). Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) provided the funds for the IBDRG Program and Scott Marquardt of SWIF approved the use of those funds for the Center. The Joint Powers Board also approved use of \$6,000 from the IBDRG Program and this week the EDC disbursed \$6,000 on behalf of the Center to cover unpaid invoices with Willmar Municipal Utilities, CenterPoint Energy and Engan Associates. The lenders have had multiple meetings relative to their loans to the Center. The Center's renovations are completed, it is licensed with the state of Minnesota and it is waiting for families to sign up for its services. In order to receive financial assistance from Kandiyohi County for childcare, families must work at least 20 hours. The EDC has been informed that the Small Business Administration is providing some funds to the Center. The owner is being encouraged to become more engaged with the business. The EDC and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission has been assisting the Center with marketing and obtaining clients. Schmoll reported she participated in a workshop last week held by First Children's Finance relative to childcare issues.

Willmar/Willmar Industrial Park. Backman reported a \$10 million project is planned by Lumber One for Block 25 in downtown Willmar. Backman showed an exterior concept of the four-level multi-family housing building that will have 57 units and a site concept (see attached). The Willmar Planning Commission approved the use of Block 25 and it was forwarded to the Willmar City Council for consideration. Sarah Swedburg noted Youth For Christ, which is in the same area, will be adding green space to its lot. Backman reported CBRE, a site selector, submitted a letter of intent to the city of Willmar for a large distribution center being considered for the Willmar Industrial Park Fourth Addition. The end user would like to purchase the property by June. The Willmar City Council will meet in a closed session to consider the sale of 11 lots (24.84 acres) for the project. The city will be asked to vacate 32nd Street SW and make it a private road and to install a traffic signal on Trott Avenue. Backman provided information on the proposed contractor and building size with the possibility of 200 employees. Backman has also been working with a site selector on a bioenergy project for 80 acres in the Willmar Industrial Park. The project needs a rail spur and will tie into the Wye project. The company may employ approximately 50 full-time employees, but it will have a large capital investment.

Elevate Business Academy. Schmoll reported the group started class 9 on record keeping. Five participants have attended all of the classes, except one missed last night's class. The participants are behind on their homework. Schmoll has had one-on-one sessions with all participants as to their goals and objectives; all have written goals. Professional photos will be taken of each participant and they will be working on their business summary. Schmoll invited the board to attend the June 16th graduation

ceremony where people from the community will also be invited. The EDC would like to hold classes each spring and fall and will be seeking financial supporters, who will also be invited to the graduation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance. Schmoll reported one of the participants of the Elevate Business Academy Hte Rue and her husband, Ya Chaw, will be opening an Asian market in Willmar's Renaissance Zone. Pastor Ron Snyder introduced the couple to the EDC. SWIF is also providing financing to the business.

IT WAS MOVED BY Jesse Gislason, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to approve a five-year \$19,500.00 loan to Hteh H. Rue and Ya Chaw, doing business as Chaw's Asian Market, under the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Microenterprise Loan Fund Program at 4.25% interest with a second security position in equipment contingent upon the business receiving a loan from Southwest Initiative Foundation. MOTION CARRIED.

Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development. Schmoll reported the Ag Committee does not usually meet in May, but will meet next Thursday to meet Swedburg while Schmoll is still at the EDC. The Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee just met and decided to meet more than quarterly. Schmoll met with U.S. Representative Michelle Fischbach's staff about legislative issues related to growing and processing industrial hemp; banking regulations may be changing. Schmoll invited the board to attend the Partners in Ag Innovation Conference July 29 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. The committee has been invited to tour Simply Shrimp.

Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment. Backman reported the BRE Committee met on May 7th and discussed the results from the planning session. Boonstra reported the Highway 23 Coalition will hold a hybrid annual meeting on May 14th from Heritage Bank. One highway sign was installed near Roscoe and the Coalition's board approved ordering five more signs from Action Manufacturing in Marshall that will be installed along the corridor. The guest speaker will be U.S. Representative Fischbach. The board has made presentations to staff of U.S. Representatives Pete Stauber, Tom Emmer and Fischbach. U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar is looking for a highway project for which the Coalition will apply. Backman invited the board to attend the Coalition's annual meeting.

Marketing and Public Relations. Backman reported the Marketing and Public Relations Committee will be updating the EDC's marketing materials to include Swedburg.

Leisure Travel. Art Benson reported venues are starting to reopen and conventions are starting to look at holding events in Willmar. Rob Baumgarn spoke about the Willmar Civic Center and the Invest in Willmar funds. Backman spoke with Beth Fischer about local lodging tax, which is down 40% from pre-pandemic levels. Some hotels are having higher occupancy than others.

WHAT'S UP? Gislason stated there are several groups holding a special meeting tonight in Spicer about housing. June 5th Alley on Ash will have its fifth anniversary and will hold a customer appreciation event. Heitke reported the Willmar Area Lakes Association met this week and approved contracts for the treatment of curly pondweed. Heitke reported The Oaks has had a wonderful opening compared to last year and opened an indoor simulated driving range. Boonstra reported her business continues to

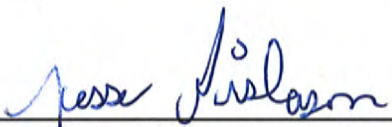
this year. President TerWisscha agreed construction prices are increasing, contractors are busy and employees are hard to find. Some material quotes are only good for eight hours and some steel deliveries are quoted when delivered; material availability is difficult. Benson reported he is still selling products and working on sound systems.

NEXT MEETING—The next board meeting is **11:00 a.m., Thursday, June 10, 2021** at the Heritage Bank Board Room.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,


IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:48 p.m.



Jesse Gislason, Secretary

APPROVED: 6/10/2021:



Kelly TerWisscha, President



Kandiyohi County EDC Strategic Planning 2021 Summary Report April 2021

PLANNING PROCESS

The EDC engaged a third-party consultant, Cheryl K. Glaeser with Achieve Consulting, to design a process and facilitate a strategic planning retreat on April 14, 2021. Nearly 30 participants gathered to review and revise goals and strategies that will guide the work of the Commission throughout 2021, recognizing changing demographics and trends impacting the EDC service area. In light of the potential for unforeseen impact from COVID-19 the planning session focused on specific strategies for the next 12-18 months rather than a long-term strategic plan.

SURVEY INSIGHTS

In advance of the planning session, EDC Board members and constituents were asked to complete a survey to gather insights on current goals and economic development trends. Below is a summary of key findings and insights based on 29 survey respondents from various sectors including business, government, economic development, education, and community-based organizations.

87% of respondents were extremely or very satisfied with EDC outcomes achieved in the past 12 months

When asked what the most pressing economic development issues or opportunities may be for the next 12 to 18 months, the following rose to the top:

- Broadband
- Workforce
- Housing
- Child Care
- COVID Recovery (related to business support)



In a similar question, respondents indicated that broadband access (21), housing availability (13), workforce development (12), business recruitment (12), child care availability (9), and business support/financing (9) are most critical to the economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area. Other areas receiving more than one vote were community offerings and agricultural innovation.

In an effort to help identify prioritized work for the EDC, survey respondents were then asked to rank specific areas from most essential (1) to least essential (7) when describing the essential work of the EDC over the next 12 to 18 months. While all areas were noted as important, broadband, workforce development and business support, and housing rose to the top.

PRIORITIES

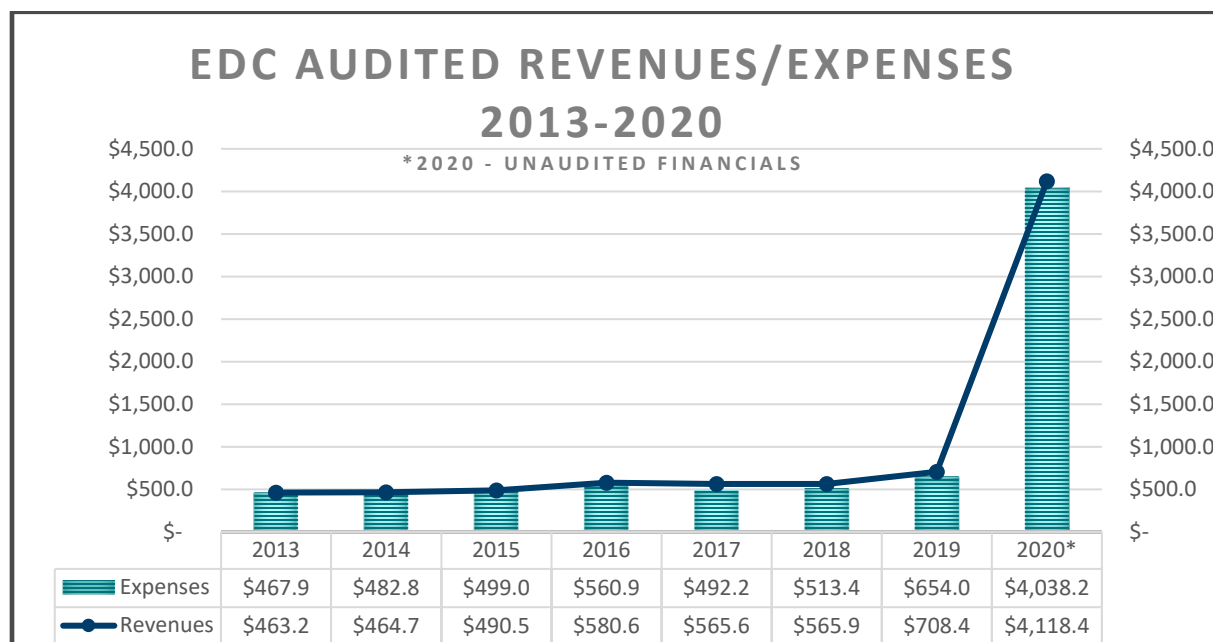
BROADBAND – Many survey comments indicated a strong interest in prioritized efforts to capitalize on current awareness of and availability of resources related to securing broadband services throughout Kandiyohi County. Broadband services were noted as key to providing equitable business and education opportunities. Broadband was further emphasized as a priority during the planning session.

Please rank the items below (from 1 as most essential to 7 as least essential) when describing the essential work of the EDC in the next 12-18 months?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Score
BROADBAND	31.03%	27.59%	13.79%	3.45%	10.34%	6.90%	6.90%	29	5.17
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	24.14%	17.24%	17.24%	6.90%	20.69%	6.90%	6.90%	29	4.69
BUSINESS SUPPORT	17.24%	24.14%	6.90%	13.79%	20.69%	13.79%	3.45%	29	4.48
HOUSING	17.24%	13.79%	13.79%	20.69%	10.34%	13.79%	10.34%	29	4.24
CHILD CARE	3.45%	10.34%	31.03%	20.69%	10.34%	13.79%	10.34%	29	3.93
AGRICULTURE	6.90%	3.45%	13.79%	10.34%	24.14%	20.69%	20.69%	29	3.14
MARKETING	0.00%	3.45%	3.45%	24.14%	3.45%	24.14%	41.38%	29	2.34
								Answered	29

Reviewing EDC Financials, 2020 Accomplishments and Current Trends

Backman reviewed the EDC financials. The EDC's assets have seen a 48% increase from \$750,500 in 2016 to \$1,114,900 in 2020, due to the WAMS asset acquisition, new programs and financial management. Since 2016, the EDC has had more revenues than expenditures and has seen an increase in the number of loans provided while loan guarantees have decreased. Currently the EDC has 44 loans and zero loan guarantees. Loan receivables in 2020 were \$355,400 compared to \$75,800 in 2011. Backman reminded participants that the EDC is not judged by the assets we have accumulated but by what we have done with the resources, specifically in technical and financial assistance.



In 2020, the following goal areas were identified as top priorities: **Business Support, Workforce Development, Child Care, and Broadband**. Additional work was undertaken related to Agriculture Innovation, Opportunity/Renaissance Zones, and Housing/Infrastructure. Key accomplishments for these goal areas and other important actions of the EDC throughout 2020 were reviewed and discussed by planning session participants. A full description of these accomplishments can be viewed at <http://kandiyohi.com/your-team/>.

The EDC elevated its business support role and ability to collaborate with Kandiyohi County and other entities throughout 2020 and into 2021 to deploy much-needed resources and support during the pandemic. Over 400 businesses and nonprofits were provided with \$4.5 million in grants and loans through the COBAL, Cares Pandemic Relief and Minnesota Pandemic Relief programs (funded through federal CARES Act dollars and the State of Minnesota.)

"Kandiyohi County is better off than most of the region, thanks to the efforts of the EDC."
Planning Session Participant

The EDC worked with **61 different** immigrant business owners in 2020.

Over **85% of the businesses** that received CPR or MPR grants were businesses the EDC had not previously worked with.

Planning session participants noted that the EDC's ability to adapt and respond to business needs during the pandemic. Through the CPR and MPR grant programs, the EDC gained experience and rapport with significantly more businesses in the County.

Insights and Recommendations for 2021

2021 Priorities – Overarching Goals and Key Strategies

Planning session participants noted that broadband, housing, and childcare form the foundation for strong economic opportunities in the County while business support and workforce development are key to continued growth. The group affirmed that the top priorities for 2021 should be efforts related to broadband, workforce development, and business support. It was noted how intertwined broadband, housing, and childcare are for Kandiyohi County's economic growth and success. As such, housing and childcare will continue to be addressed by the EDC through ongoing involvement in these areas as part of their typical economic development role in the County.

2021 TOP PRIORITIES

- BROADBAND
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- BUSINESS SUPPORT

Participants identified the role that marketing and communications plays in each of the 2021 priority areas. While marketing the County as a whole is important, paying specific attention to the priority areas may lead to innovative approaches for messaging about local opportunities.

Participants divided into groups to discuss the strategies that the EDC might use to address these priorities. The strategies and expected outcomes for the goals on the next page can be found at <http://kandiyohi.com/your-team/>.

2021 EDC GOALS (Drafted 4-14-2021)

Broadband: *The EDC provides leadership in building coalitions that educate, collaborate, and lobby for improvements in broadband services so that broadband build out happens faster and opportunities increase for Kandiyohi County residents.* Goal will be measured by: increased speeds/map percentage; equal access to education, healthcare, and spiritual support; business expansion; and workforce attraction.

Workforce Development: *The EDC builds a base of support and helps implement innovative strategies to build a skilled workforce that meets the needs of our local economy.* Goal will be measured by the identification of current workforce challenges and best practices; the engagement of students, educators, and businesses in exposure to career opportunities; and the marketing of Kandiyohi County workforce opportunities.

Business Support: *The EDC continues to build repour with existing businesses and potential new entrepreneurs by providing awareness of and access to available resources that support business health and growth.* Goal will be measured by the numbers of businesses reached and supported through EDC and other available resources.

Additional Work: *The EDC will continue to support specific initiatives in the County that lead to economic growth.* This includes supporting child care efforts, housing development projects, growth in Opportunity and Renaissance Zones, and agricultural innovation opportunities.

Consultant Reflections

The Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission, its staff, Board, and committee members hold pride in the ability of the EDC to respond and react quickly to support businesses in their time of need throughout the past year. Their efforts expanded the awareness of the EDC's services which may lead to heightened use their services in the coming year. To aide staff capacity and the ability to focus on key goals, the EDC may benefit from changes to the current committee structure. Staff may still participate in ongoing committees but would not take a lead role in coordinating additional meetings. You may also consider adding staff capacity in marketing/communications to gain messaging insights from the various committees that the EDC has traditionally participated in. One approach to committee structure might be as follows:

BUSINESS FINANCE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP (Combine portion of BR&E and Finance Committees)– This committee would focus on providing leadership to the financing and technical assistance services the EDC provides to existing businesses, emerging entrepreneurs, and efforts to attract new businesses.

BUSINESS SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE (Replace Broadband) This committee would focus on foundational issues and opportunities such as broadband, child care, housing, and infrastructure. The focus may change as project needs change within the County, addressing what emerges as most needed for economic growth. For the next 12 months a key focus would be broadband.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – (Branches off from BR&E) This committee would focus on efforts to attract and retain the people and jobs needed to support the local economy. In light of expected labor force decline from 2020 to 2030 and the extremely tight labor market currently, this is an area that may need more focused attention over the next few years.

DRAFT - EDC Action Planning - BROADBAND

UPDATED 5/03/21



Priority Area	Broadband
Priority Summary	Educate, collaborate and lobby to secure future-proof broadband services throughout Kandiyohi County
Project Coordinator: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Connie Schmoll, Independent Contractor for Broadband Assistance
Phone/Email:	320-522-1805 Connie@kandiyohi.com

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	EDC provides leadership in building coalitions that educate, collaborate, and lobby for improvements in broadband services so that broadband build out happens faster and opportunities increase for Kandiyohi County residents.	
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC provides visionary leadership that increases the quality of life and allows Kandiyohi County to grow, prosper and compete on an international scale.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	1. Educate: Supply elected officials with talking points that reflect the needs/stories of businesses and citizens of the County (gathered through listening sessions, testimonial letters and community conversations)	Committee members, educational materials
	2. Collaborate to gain buy-in from residents, providers, and financial supporters and to take advantage of funding opportunities that are available. Use the 4-township project as a springboard.	Committee members, local government leaders, educational materials
	3. Lobby for broadband resources working with local townships, cities, county, and state representatives. Support statewide lobbying efforts that enhance policies for broadband expansion.	Marketing Committee, MN Governor's Taskforce for Broadband Development, MN Rural Broadband Coalition
Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed maps reflect 50% of Kandiyohi County at 100 mbps down and 20 mbps up in 2 years /100% in 5 years Equal access to educational opportunities Equal access to healthcare Businesses expand and are able to attract the needed workforce The spiritual needs of the community members can be met remotely Increased property values due to broadband access Broadband is accessible to all just as is electric services 	

Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

NAME	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Connie Schmoll	Contracted services to lead efforts	connie@kandiyohi.com	320-522-1805
Mark Boesch	Committee Chair	mark@firebytes.com	320-212-3125
Michelle Marotzke	Committee Vice-chair	Michelle.marotzke@mmrdc.org	320-287-1737
David Sisser	Committee Member	daves@wccwireless.com	320-235-0811
Dean Bouta	Committee Member	dbouta@bennettoffice.com	320-222-6103
Donna Boonstra	Committee Member	Donnaboo47@msn.com	320-295-3134
Kevin Beyer	Broadband Provider	Kevin.beyer@aciracoop.net	320-287-1490

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment of Broadband Committee members • Skilled/experienced provider • Citizens' interest and demand • New awareness of need due to pandemic 	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time/deployment cost constraints • Provider competition • Many personalities and agendas • Some people already receiving adequate service for current usage • Population density • Topography
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Committee • Border to border grants • Provider interest • Working with unserved and underserved • Education in the community 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law/current language • Inaccurate maps • Federal funding allows sub-standard projects • Incumbent telco's

OTHER NOTES:

- People are moving to where broadband is to commute to work
- Broadband supports farmers, workforce development, and computer literacy
- Important to reach out to community – listening sessions/community conversations
- It will take approximately \$60,000,000 to deploy fiber throughout County
- Focus on rural and service in cities will increase also because the market will force it
- We must change the speed maps for Kandiyohi County!
- Need to act now; don't wait for new technology
- Imperative to get the real story out about speeds/access

EDC Business Support Action Plan

BUSINESS SUPPORT (Retention/Recruitment/Expansion)



Priority Area	Business Support (Retention/Recruitment/Expansion)
Priority Summary	Supporting existing businesses and new business opportunities by providing awareness of and offering the EDC's services.
Project Coordinator: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Aaron Backman, Executive Director, EDC Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager, EDC; Other??
Phone/Email:	320-235-7370

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	<i>The EDC continues to build rapport with existing businesses and potential new entrepreneurs by providing awareness of and access to available resources that support business health and growth.</i>		
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC catalyzes economic growth by supporting existing businesses and reaching out to new entrepreneurs so that they can prosper, innovate and be competitive.		
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives		Resources Needed
	1. Continue building rapport with businesses who received support via CPR/MPR programs through one-on-one visits and streamlined assistance for challenges post-COVID		EDC Staff; Committee
	2. Continue focused support for emerging entrepreneurs and diverse businesses through technical assistance and programs such as Elevate Academy for those wanting to start a business or operate an existing business		Scott Marquardt, SWIF; Salaam Hirs, Elevate; Rising Tide Capital; EDC Staff; SWIF; Community Integration Ctr.
	3. Encourage business growth, expansion, and attraction opportunities utilizing Opportunity/Renaissance zones		EDC Staff; Committee
	4. Research the lifecycles of businesses and the ways in which they might provide opportunities in new areas.		EDC Staff
Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Businesses owners that are able to streamline challenges they may have and learn from each other’s successes and challenges.• Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.• Entrepreneurs that are prepared for successful business start-ups.		

Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

NAME	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Jesse Gislason	Business support	jessegislason@gmail.com	320.295.6938
Art Benson	Joint Ops Board	art@soundimagewillmar.com	320-220-1513
Abdullahi Awale	Joint Ops Board	Awale11@icloud.com	320-493-7032
Abdirahin Hussen	African Dev. Center	ahussen@adcmnnesota.org	612-481-4577
Fowzi Ismail	C.I.C.	communityintegrationcentre@gmail.com	612-817-7238

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDC Marketing Committee • EDC Staff • Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) • Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) • Rising Tide Capital Curriculum 	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many businesses are not aware of what the EDC has to offer • Amount of businesses to reach
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down barriers with other groups • Programs like SCORE, One Million Cups • Mentoring/coaching arrangements • Elevate Academy for entrepreneurs 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate time/capacity • Pandemic continues to affect sales for certain businesses (e.g. hotels)

OTHER NOTES:

- There are intertwined needs between Workforce Development, Childcare, Housing, and Business Support.
- How might COVID impacts continue to be a challenge for some of our businesses?
- Might we attract new entrepreneurs/businesses through creative structures, downtown renovation?
- Might we help existing businesses grow by looking at new/renovated locations within communities (Willmar - opportunity/renaissance zones)?

EDC Workforce Development Action Plan

Updated 4/13/2021 (Blue areas are from 2020 Plan)



Priority Area	Workforce Development
Priority Summary	Help build a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy in order to grow and support businesses.
Project Coordinators: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Sam Bowen, Dean of Customized Training, Ridgewater College Aaron Backman, Executive Director, EDC
Phone/Email:	320-905-2269 (Sam); 320-235-7370 (Aaron)

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	Building a base of support and implementing innovative strategies that expand opportunities for building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of our local economy and helps businesses grow.	
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC would be a catalyst, providing leadership for workforce growth which increases potential for prosperity, international competitiveness and enhanced quality of life.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	1. Research and development of data that identifies best practices for workforce training and determines Kandiyohi County's workforce advantages/disadvantages.	EDC Staff, Committee
	2. Build an Employment/Workforce Resource webpage that showcases workforce advantages in Kandiyohi County such as cost of living, and other data discovered through above research.	Marketing Committee; REDstar or other
	3. Expose 200 High School students to different businesses (e.g. DI Labs, West Central Steel, etc.)	Willmar H.S., Committee, Local businesses
	4. Hold a Workforce Summit with workforce partners and businesses to explore best practices, identify true workforce challenges, and work together on solutions.	Nova-Tech Eng.?, CMJTS & workforce partners, W.D. Committee
OTHER NOTES	Insights from planning session (some may become tasks under the above objectives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attraction: Who do we attract? What attracts them? What/who makes up the 9% of population growth over the past 20 years? • Attraction: activity for young people; infrastructure support; transfer of degrees from other countries • Marketing: tell the story of the opportunity for people to live here; highlight business opportunities and online education options; promote the County as place for external businesses to find remote employees; build strategies that attract target markets (i.e. younger people) • Capitalize on stable economics of Willmar region • Develop an identity/brand for Kandiyohi County • Increase partnerships between business & education (of all levels) • Distribute MMP info on www.JoinUsMN.com to site selectors 	

Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	<p>These efforts will help grow and support businesses by addressing a major need in our regional economy – skilled workers. We will develop and implement innovative recruiting and training strategies that will set our region apart as a workforce development leader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill enhancement of potential labor market • Higher levels of people gaining greater employment • People entering pathways that lead them to careers with greater earning potential • Helping to fulfill local job market needs
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Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

NAME	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Craig Johnson, Pres-Ridgewater	Higher Ed	Craig.johnson@ridgewater.edu	320.222.5202
Sam Bowen – Ridgewater	Higher Ed	sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu	320.222.5206
Dayna Latham – Ridgewater	Higher Ed	dayna.latham@ridgewater.edu	320.894.5169
Jennifer Mendoza – CLUES	Adult Training /Diverse	jmendoza@clues.org	320-455-5465
Jason Duinick – Duinick Inc.	Funding	jasond@duinick.com	320.212.9330
Bridget Paulson, CMJTS	Adult Training	bpaulson@cmjts.org	320-290-7685

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridgewater College • Kandiyohi County labor force growing faster than the region • Immigration/New Diverse Populations • Short-term growth of HS class sizes • Diverse economic landscape 	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to work post-pandemic • Language barriers – comprehension and fluency • Labor market participation rates less than state average for some populations • Skills gap
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrant workforce • Growth of labor force participation rate for some populations • Seniors/Retirees opportunities for additional careers/skills • ARP funding for small businesses due to COVID-19 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation, technology and robotics may eliminate some jobs and increase skills sets needed for new jobs • State/National policy decisions • Cultural norms related to Higher Ed/Post-Secondary • Lack of diversity in immigrant careers; lack of aspirations for different careers

Changes to the EDC's Policies and Procedures Manual adopted by the Joint Powers Board 4/22/2021:

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

E. GOALS.

1. **Five-Two to Three-Year.** ~~Five~~**Two to three**-year goals shall be established or reviewed at an **annual** planning session of the EDC boards ~~at least every five years.~~ (see Appendix C)
2. **Annual.** Annual goals shall be established at a planning session each calendar year. (see Appendix D)

IV. OTHER POLICIES

C. **APPROVAL OF BUDGETED EXPENDITURES.** Budgeted expenditures that do not exceed \$~~1,000~~**2,500** accumulative in one month may be paid without prior approval of the board, but a list of these bills paid will be presented to the board at each meeting.

V. PROGRAMS

F. **MICROENTERPRISE LOAN FUND.**

1. **Operation.** The Microenterprise Loan Fund should be operated in accordance with the Manual adopted by the EDC Finance Committee on 11/20/2019 and the Joint Operations Board on 12/12/2019 and ratified by the Joint Powers Board on 1/23/2020 (see Appendix P).
2. **Transfer from Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center.** The EDC Joint Powers Board approved receiving the transfer of the Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center's Microenterprise Loan Fund at its July 26, 2018 meeting and officially received the transfer by a Bill of Sale dated November 2, 2018.

Changes to the Employee Handbook adopted by the Joint Powers Board 4/22/2021:

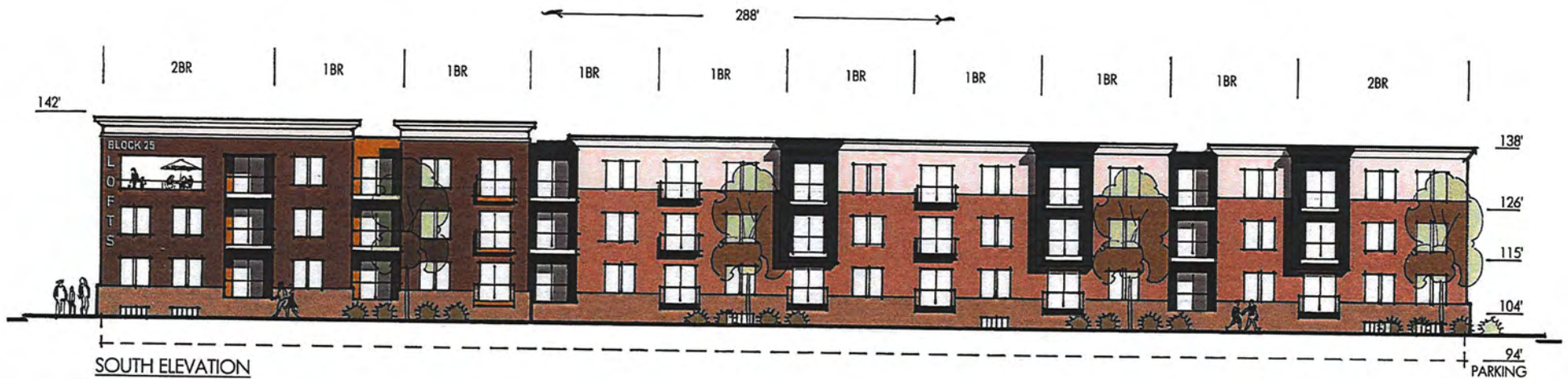
IV. PERSONNEL

I. EMPLOYEE INSURANCE.

1. Employees working 40 hours or more per week shall be provided group medical insurance. The EDC will pay ~~the full~~ **a percentage of the** premium for single coverage for the employee **as determined annually**. An employee may at his/her option purchase additional or dependent coverage through payroll deductions. Temporary full-time employees shall not receive health coverage.



CONTEXT IMAGES

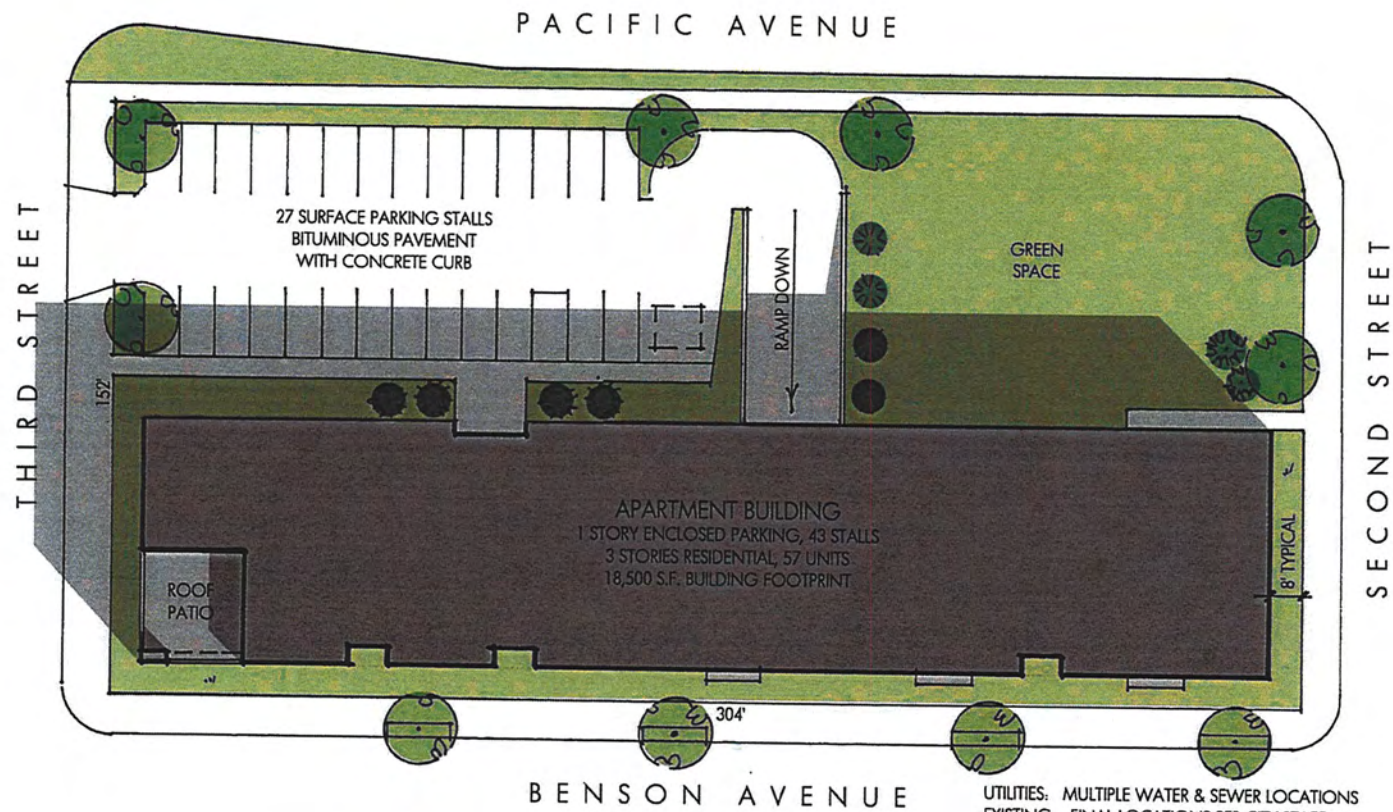


BLOCK 25 LOFTS

EXTERIOR CONCEPT

APRIL 30, 2021 | JLG 21168 | © 2021 JLG ARCHITECTS





BLOCK 25 LOFTS SITE CONCEPT

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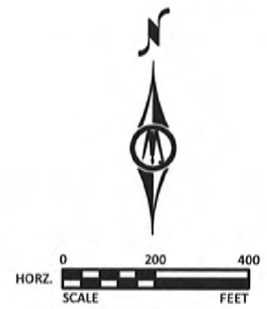
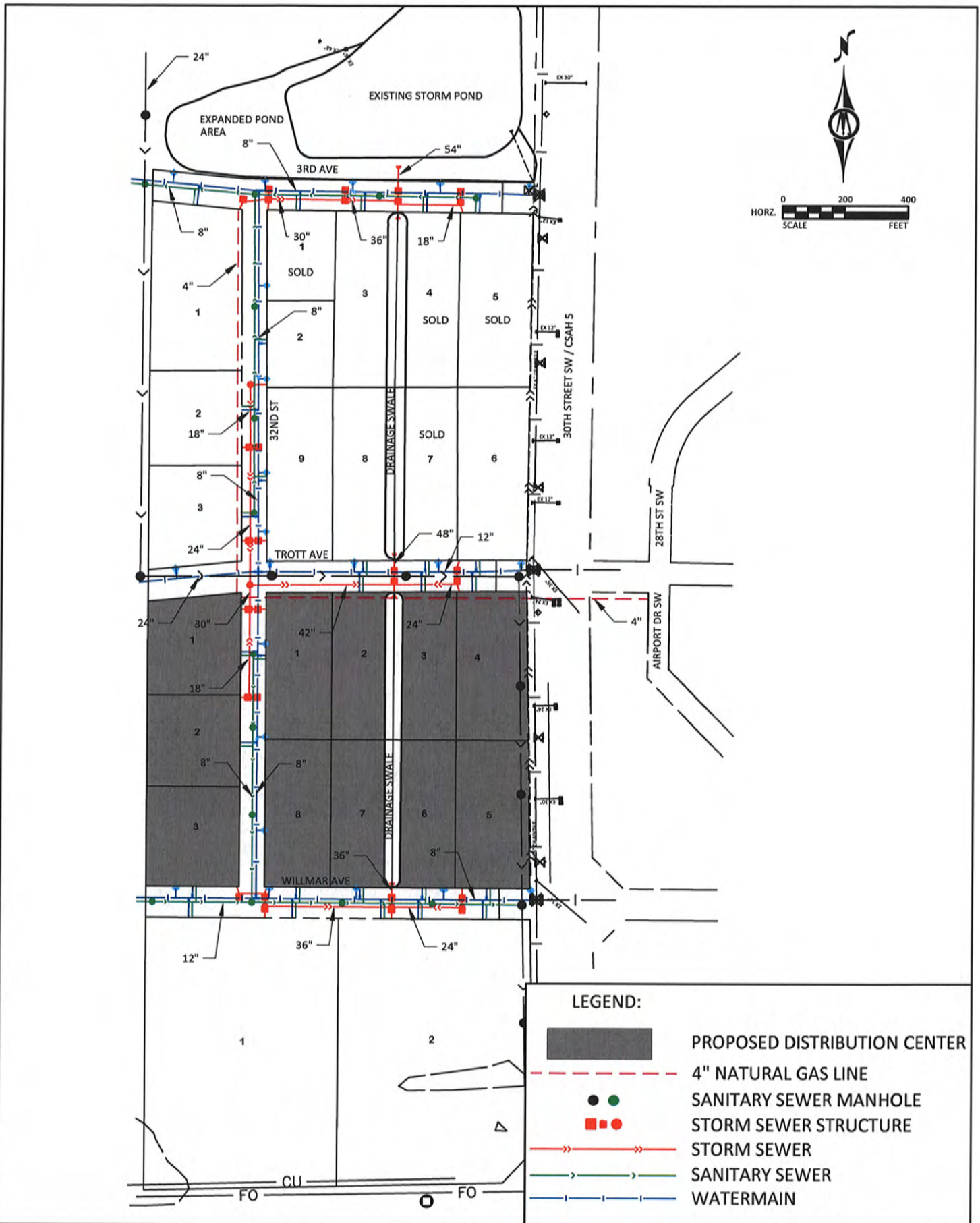


Industrial Park 4th Addition








City of Willmar, Minnesota

Figure 1

February 2021



LEGEND:

-  PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION CENTER
-  4" NATURAL GAS LINE
-  SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE
-  STORM SEWER STRUCTURE
-  STORM SEWER
-  SANITARY SEWER
-  WATERMAIN