



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

2019 Strategic Planning Session Summary

March 14, 2019

Kandiyohi Power Cooperative Community Room

Background

The mission of the **Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC)** is to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area. The EDC develops organizational priorities on an annual basis by engaging staff, board members, committee chairs and other key stakeholders in fact-finding efforts to identify trends, challenges and opportunities. The EDC holds a strategic planning retreat to prioritize short- and long-term goals with strategic objectives.

Process

The EDC engaged a third-party consultant, Cheryl K. Glaeser with Achieve TFC, LLC, to design a process and facilitate a strategic planning retreat with the outcome of developing a shared vision of success and key strategies that will guide the work of the EDC throughout 2019, recognizing the past goal areas and considering the changing demographics and trends impacting the EDC service area.

Advance Interviews

To ensure that the process designed would lead to desired results, 11 representatives from the EDC boards, staff and committees were interviewed. These phone interviews provided a basis of understanding of current activities, influential trends, challenges and opportunities.

The interviews exposed areas of appreciation, key concerns and potential actions for the future.

Appreciations:

- significant appreciation for the passion and commitment of the EDC staff and the impact realized through their efforts
- excitement around specific efforts pertaining to the Highway 23 Coalition, the child care initiative, the diverse workforce initiative in partnership with Ridgewater College and CLUES, broadband and support for existing businesses
- appreciation for the collaborative nature of the EDC and its work

Concerns:

- responding to the volatility of the economy, particularly in the agriculture sector
- being proactive in addressing changing demographics, such as aging population, diversity and workforce availability
- ensuring that we are not spreading EDC staff resources too thin
- balancing the support for existing businesses with new business recruitment

Advance Survey

In addition, EDC staff, Joint Powers and Joint Operations Board members, committee members from the Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development, Broadband and Advanced Technology, Business Retention & Expansion/Recruitment, Finance and Marketing and Public Relations Committees, and other key stakeholders were invited to provide insights about current trends and goals by participating in a survey developed by Glaeser [Appendix D: EDC 2019 Planning Survey]. A large number of respondents pointed to the strong leadership and dedication of the EDC staff. It is clear that currently engaged board members and other invited participants appreciate the knowledge and energy of the staff.

Trends and Influential Factors

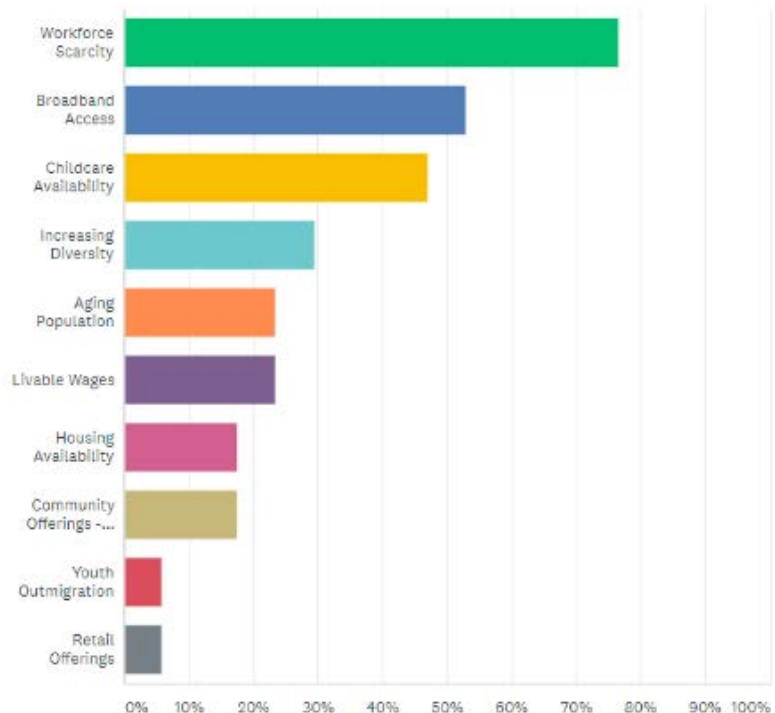
When asked to consider several trends, survey participants indicated the trends most likely to influence the direction of the EDC are:

- Workforce scarcity (76.47%)
- Broadband access (52.94%)
- Childcare availability (47.06%)
- Increasing diversity (29.41%)

Future Actions

When asked what near-term actions would have the greatest impact for Kandiyohi County, several themes emerged with the greatest number of survey participants indicating actions related to these top four areas:

1. Workforce (31%),
2. Childcare (25%),
3. Broadband (19%)
4. Business Recruitment (19%)



Key Challenges

- Changing demographics
- Capacity to support existing businesses; meeting their needs
- Volatility of our economy—downturns in certain sectors (e.g. agriculture) and unforeseen business loss

EDC Vision of Success

When asked what will be different in Kandiyohi County if the EDC is successful in reaching its goals, several themes emerged, including:

- A thriving economy that is more diverse and steadily growing
- New businesses/employers, including successful startups and larger employers in the area
- Childcare shortage no longer a barrier for working families
- High-speed broadband attracts new businesses and residents
- Recognition of Willmar as an up and coming regional center
- A skilled workforce meets employer needs and increases income opportunities for families

These insights from interviews and the survey were used to determine the focus for the Strategic Planning Retreat on March 14, 2019. Insights also guided the materials to be made available to planning participants prior to and during the session. Demographics and information on trends were provided in advance to attendees in areas, including Diversity and Population, Workforce, Child Care, Broadband and Retail/Taxable Sales. [Appendix A: Trends-Demographics Dashboards.]

Strategic Planning Retreat

EDC staff, Joint Powers and Operations Board members, committee members from the Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development, Broadband and Advanced Technology, Business Retention & Expansion/Recruitment, Finance and Marketing and Public Relations Committees, and other key stakeholders met on March 14, 2019 for a full-day retreat.

Planning Retreat Outcomes

- Shared understanding of the vision of impact we seek through the work of the EDC
- Development of organizational priorities—overarching goals; short- and long-term objectives
- Exploration of how to reach objectives and what resources may be required
- Strengthened cohesion and common purpose among board, staff and other key stakeholders

Mission and Vision

The group began by reviewing the EDC's existing Mission and Vision Statements. Together they explored the EDC's purpose, using Simon Sinek's concept that "People don't buy what you do, they buy WHY you do it," to help them consider strategic priorities grounded in purpose and their vision of the impact they seek. Group thoughts on the EDC's purpose focused largely on the EDC being **a visionary organization that works toward community betterment and economic growth through collaborative efforts that build on past success and truly value and support all people and businesses.**

MISSION: To be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County Area.

VISION: To provide visionary economic development leadership creating growth, prosperity, innovation, international competitiveness, and enhanced quality of life.

Trends and Influential Factors

Together, participants explored the ways in which key economic, social, political and technological trends might affect the work of the EDC in the coming year. Referring back to the Planning Retreat Survey and the trends identified by the group (See Image 1.1), the group discussed what stood out for them, what trends might be missing, and how they might impact our work moving forward.

COUNTY PROFILE

Kandiyohi Co.

LABOR FORCE

Image 3.1

Table 10. Employment Characteristics, 2017

	Kandiyohi Co.			Minnesota	
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Black or African American	531	50.7%	12.6%	69.8%	11.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native	125	84.5%	0.0%	58.6%	13.3%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	162	63.3%	0.0%	71.1%	5.2%
Some Other Race	967	69.0%	8.9%	77.2%	7.5%
Two or More Races	247	72.9%	0.4%	72.5%	9.1%
Hispanic or Latino	2,228	71.4%	9.1%	76.2%	7.2%

When asked what stood out for them, participants noted the following:

- Kandiyohi labor force gains—growing faster than our overall population; commuting from outside the county; people are rejoining the workforce
- Incongruent conversation about immigration—cannot meet workforce needs without input and involvement from diverse populations
- Aging population—the benefit of wisdom and experience and how we might capture this as an opportunity
- A lot of retirement is coming, function of money, not age; the services needed for aging population is an economic issue
- All areas need to be addressed—How do we balance/prioritize/intertwine our efforts?

The group identified the following as potential trends that may be missing in our considerations:

- **Education**—Reassessing where education fits into the workforce—needs to be more about skills and the person, pursuing specific types of education rather than degrees—misaligned right now and creating concerns with student debt (MN average student debt of \$31,915 is 5th highest in U.S.)
- **Technological Changes**—Rapid changes and how to balance being visionary yet reactive; balancing immediate needs with future change
- **Global Economy**—Living in a global economy and competitors are now across the world

Analysis of Trends

To further ensure common understanding of key trends and how they might influence the work of the EDC, participants worked in small groups, selecting their top interest trends to complete a scan of the strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats related to each. The trends explored included: Childcare, Diversity, Education, Technology/Globalization and Workforce. [Appendix B: Trend Analysis]

Progress on Current Goals

Interviews and survey results indicated that the EDC is starting from a place of strength when considering its efforts toward existing goals. Aaron Backman, EDC Executive Director, briefly reviewed the current goals of the EDC and noted milestones/accomplishments that have been reached thus far. [Appendix C: 2018 Goals Review]. Working in small groups, participants explored the lessons learned over the past 12 months.

Key Lessons Learned

- Partnerships/collaborations are very important
- Address items before they become an issue
- There is power in story telling
- Select achievable goals
- Consider staff capacity

"If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together."

African Proverb

Opportunities for Growth

- Better utilize the talent and expertise of committee members/volunteers
- Consider refocusing the BRE Committee to workforce or create separate committee
- Ag is still a predominant sector; understand better how it impacts the region and economy
- Explore the role of EDC as leader vs. supportive for various initiatives

Priorities—KEEP/CHANGE/ADD

The group considered what areas of current goals should be kept, which areas should be kept but changed, and what new areas we might consider adopting. Below is a chart of the priority areas that received the greatest number of votes during discussion.

KEEP—(# stars)

Business Retention & Expansion (5)
Agriculture (3)
Childcare Collaboration (3)
Entrepreneur Support (3)

CHANGE—(# stars)

Broadband (7)
Marketing (7)
Diverse Business Initiative (3)

ADD—(# stars)

Workforce Development (4)
Ag Support (3)
Marketing (3)—new focus

Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission

2019 Strategic Priority Areas

EDC boards and committee members and other participants explored and considered several potential priority areas for the EDC, including Agriculture, Broadband, Business Retention & Expansion, Business Visits, Childcare, Diverse Workforce Training, Energy, Entrepreneur Support, Marketing, Opportunity Zones, Retail Service/Amenity Recruitment, Ridgewater College Enrollment, Transportation and Workforce Development. A key to success is collaboration, which the group feels is a strength of the EDC. Following small group discussion and various voting methods, the group narrowed the focus to five major areas (listed as ranked by the group):

1. **Workforce Development:** Develop and expand workforce availability and skills to support the growth and expansion of businesses.

Potential Objectives:

- Establish a workforce development committee
- Expand diverse workforce training, building on the success of CLUES
- Work with Ridgewater College to improve enrollment and student success
- Support a Teachers of Color Pipeline Initiative in partnership with K12 and Ridgewater College
- Bring like-type industries together (focus groups by industry sector) to discuss workforce needs and explore additional employer-driven initiatives, such as MAP that might be supported/started
- Create a video highlighting Kandiyohi County businesses and the workforce skills/needs; host on the EDC website and promote via social media
- Develop a “Bring Them Back Campaign” with positive messaging of opportunities in the area and telling the stories of why they should want to return

Vision of Success:

Skill enhancement of potential labor market tied to local needs. Higher levels of people gaining greater employment and entering pathways that lead to careers with greater earning potential.

2. **Business Support:** Building relationships with area business, with a key intent to inform them of available resources through the EDC, better understand their challenges/needs and help them share their successes.

Potential Objectives:

- Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform them of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have
- Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses*” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs;” consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within past five years and those in the retail sector
- Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and share business needs
- Develop a “community” marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area

Vision of Success:

Businesses owners are able to streamline operations and resolve barriers they may have and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.

*Note: There was mention of global marketing too, however, not sure where/how it fits with local business support. The group discussed creating a marketing piece/video about the area’s quality of life and drawing in businesses by redefining demographics and information as a regional draw for national businesses.

3. **Childcare:** Continue efforts of the Kandiyohi County Rural Childcare Innovation Program designed to develop right-sized solutions to address the challenges of early care and education in the area.

Potential Objectives:

- Increase the number of childcare options, including diverse childcare choices, available for the workforce in Kandiyohi County and in the region
- Secure sustainable solutions for existing and new childcare centers and family childcare providers, including diverse childcare by streamlining professional development opportunities, increasing network opportunities for childcare providers, developing new funding sources for childcare capital projects, increasing financial supports for childcare operations, identifying space for potential programs and promoting use of resources that are currently available to childcare providers.

Vision of Success: The supply of high quality, affordable childcare in the Kandiyohi County area is sufficient for all workforce. Childcare businesses are profitable.

4. **Agricultural Innovation:** Understanding and responding to the ever-changing food and agriculture sectors

Potential Objectives:

- Collaborate with other agriculture and producer groups to host community conversations and/or educational forums that support producers and dispel myths around agriculture
- Recruit additional value-added agriculture processors, businesses and markets
- Create a local vision statement for agriculture as an economic driver in Kandiyohi County and share vision broadly
- Revisit the Ag BR&E results and respond with training, workshops and education

Vision of Success:

Agriculture is recognized as a healthy, strong and vibrant industry that strengthens our area. Producer living wages improve and they feel valued and supported.

5. **Broadband:** Lobby—Collaborate—Educate to provide broadband access throughout Kandiyohi County

Potential Objectives:

- Identify specific people in government to lobby for statutory changes that enable grants for rural Kandiyohi County
- Develop a coalition of Kandiyohi County townships willing to facilitate the investment of broadband for the benefit of their residents
- Increase our involvement in the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition to bring more awareness to Kandiyohi County's challenges (get the real story out about speeds/access) and increase opportunities for faster buildout of broadband services

Vision of Success:

Businesses are able to have employees work remotely from their homes, entrepreneurs have more opportunities to expand their businesses, students are able to do homework from home, seniors can take advantage of telemedicine healthcare, and house values increase.

Strategic Planning Session – 2019 Closing Summary

EDC staff, Joint Powers and Operations Board members, committee members from the Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development, Broadband and Advanced Technology, Business Retention & Expansion/Recruitment, Finance, and Marketing and Public Relations Committees, along with additional key stakeholders participated in the 2019 Strategic Planning Session.


Together, participants explored and discussed potential strategic priorities for the next 12 to 18 months, grounded in the framework of the EDC's mission and vision as well as the trends and influential factors that might affect their work. The trends identified as most likely to influence the work of the EDC included workforce scarcity, broadband access challenges, the lack of available/affordable child care, and changing population demographics. The group also discussed the need for aligning education, workforce needs and individual skills and interests.

Following a review of progress toward current goals and the lessons learned in the past year, the group reached consensus on five priority areas focusing on workforce development, business support, child care availability/affordability, agricultural innovation, and broadband access. The group identified potential objectives and desired outcomes for each of these priorities. The objectives within each of these areas may need to be further prioritized according to the EDC's capacity and available resources.

The EDC prides itself on being purposeful in working toward community betterment and economic growth through collaborative efforts.

This Strategic Planning Summary and the accompanying documentation will serve as a guide for the EDC Staff, Board and Committees as they strive to fulfill their mission of catalyzing economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County Area.

Aaron Backman, Executive Director of the EDC, expresses his appreciation for the 24 attendees dedicating the better part of a day to focus on the EDC's goals, acknowledges the EDC staff's contributions in pulling the event together, recognizes the participation of our strategic partners in this planning process, and thanks Cheryl Glaeser, Achieve TFC, for being the facilitator for the EDC's 2019 Planning Session.



As a new participant in the EDC planning process, I was very impressed with the high degree of active participation and thoughtful engagement by community members as part of the planning process. The day's activities produced a clear set of goals for the upcoming year that were derived from a well-documented discussion and feedback process. I am confident that our time was well-spent and we were able to contribute to the development of a strategic plan that will be a good tool to guide the work of the EDC staff.

Craig Johnson, President of Ridgewater College

Appendix A: Trends-Demographics Dashboards

DIVERSITY & POPULATION

Across the state, a once homogeneous population is becoming increasingly multiracial and multicultural. A diverse array of communities of color are driving population growth, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. In 1980, only 4 percent of Minnesotans were people of color. Today, that figure is 19 percent, and by 2040 it is projected to be 29 percent.

Willmar is a diverse community with a large Latino and Somali/East African population that is increasingly represented in the business world. Members of these communities own and operate approximately 12% of businesses in Willmar, as evidenced by a recent Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Survey of diverse businesses undertaken by the EDC.

Kandiyohi County – Population Percentage, Rank among MN Counties (2013)		
Origin	%	RANK - MN
Hispanic or Latino	11.4%	3*
Black or African American	3.3%	10**
*Nobles # 1 – 25.3%; Watonwan #2 – 22.3%		
** Nobles # 7 – 4%; Stearns #9 – 3.6%		

County Profile	Kandiyohi County				Updated: 2/1/2019	
Table 4. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2017	Kandiyohi Co.				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2017		Percent	Change from 2000-2017
			Numeric	Percent		
Total	42,577	100.0%	1,374	3.3%	100.0%	11.6%
White	37,521	88.1%	-1,055	-2.7%	83.7%	4.5%
Black or African American	1,846	4.3%	1,637	783.3%	6.0%	90.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native	168	0.4%	30	21.7%	1.0%	4.7%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	347	0.8%	162	87.6%	4.7%	79.2%
Some Other Race	2,089	4.9%	370	21.5%	1.7%	45.3%
Two or More Races	606	1.4%	230	61.2%	2.8%	86.7%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	5,061	11.9%	1,766	53.6%	5.2%	98.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2017 American Community Survey

Labor Force	County Profile	Kandiyohi Co.				
Table 10. Employment Characteristics, 2017		Kandiyohi Co.			Minnesota	
		In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin						
White		20,505	67.9%	2.5%	69.7%	3.6%
Black or African American		531	50.7%	12.6%	69.8%	11.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native		125	84.5%	0.0%	58.6%	13.3%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander		162	63.3%	0.0%	71.1%	5.2%
Some Other Race		967	69.0%	8.9%	77.2%	7.5%
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Hispanic or Latino Origin		2,228	71.4%	9.1%	76.2%	7.2%

The EDC identified 31 East African businesses, 27 Latino businesses and at least 8 Asian businesses in Willmar. Fully 13 businesses or 48% of the Latino businesses have been operating for more than ten years. And five or 19% of the Latino businesses have been started within the last two years. Businesses created by the Somali population are more recent. Most are less than 12 years in operation, and 9 companies or 29% have been operating for over 10 years. And 10 or 32% of the Somali businesses have been started in the last two years.

Source: MN Department of Employment and Economic Development

WORKFORCE

As the economy has recovered and added jobs, the labor market in the region has been getting tighter. During second quarter of 2018, there were 0.6 unemployed job seekers for each job vacancy in Minnesota indicating an extremely tight labor market. In Region 6E there are 0.7

unemployed job seekers for each job vacancy.

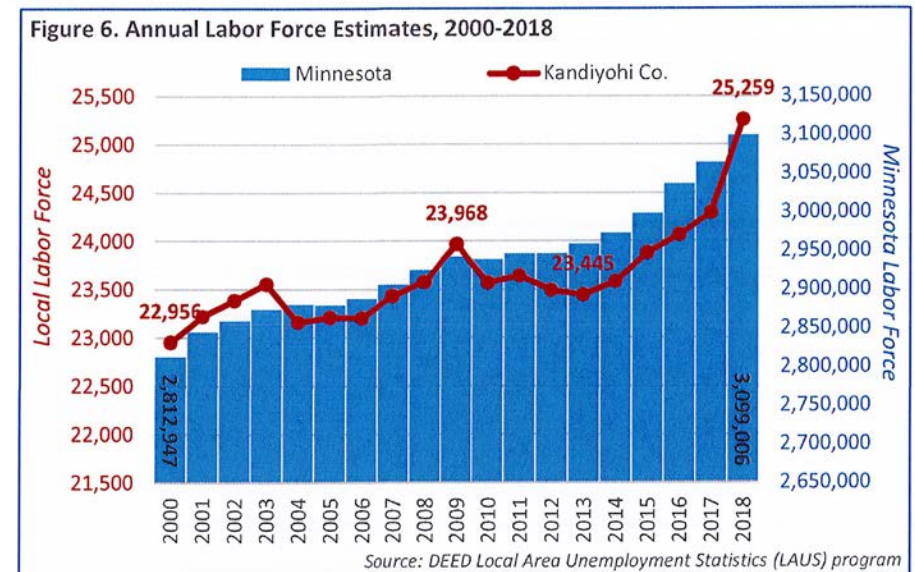
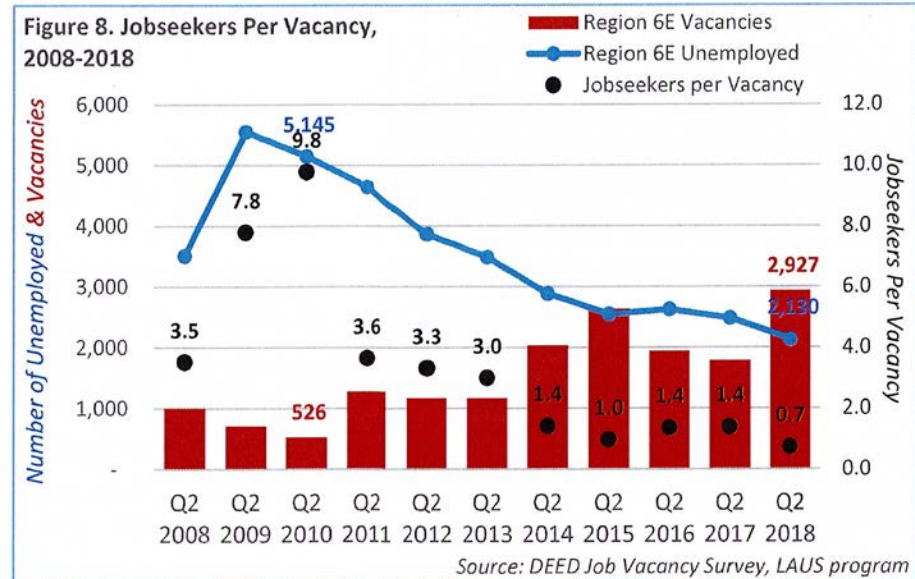
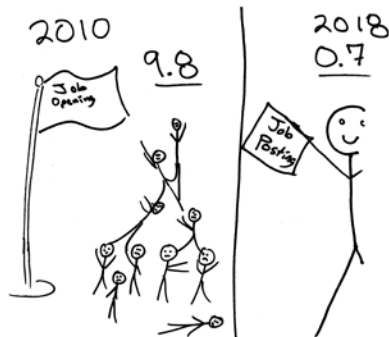
Increasingly tight labor markets and a scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of Region 6E's most pressing concerns for future economic growth.

Though the size of the regional labor force is expected to decline,

the age composition of the workforce will see a significant shift over time, with a steady gain in the number of workers aged 20 to 44 years and gains in workers aged 65 years and over against huge declines in the number of workers aged 45 to 64 years. The region may lose about 4,350 workers in the 45 to 64-year-old age group as the Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid. The 25 to 54-year-old age group will still be the largest part of the labor force, accounting for 58 percent of the total. This will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability.

In the face of these constraints, it has become evident that a more diverse workforce in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and immigration has been and will continue to be a vital source of the workers that employers need to succeed. As the Caucasian workforce continues to age, younger workers of different races or from different countries will comprise the fastest growing segment of the labor force.

Sources of information: MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development; Luke Greiner, Regional Labor Analyst and Minnesota's Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model, a report by PolicyLink.



CHILD CARE

The majority of the growth in center-based care occurred in the Twin Cities Metro. The increase in metro center-based capacity was enough to cover the losses of in-home spaces. However, there was no such surge in Greater Minnesota, where communities are experiencing a net loss of more than 15,000 spaces.

	Child Care	Child Care	
Greater MN	-20,416	5,039	-15,377
Twin Cities	-16,125	19,049	+3,284
The change in the number of spaces in in-home family child care and center-based child care between 2006 and 2015 (MN Dept. of Human Services).			

"A crisis has been quietly brewing throughout Minnesota and the nation for many years now. People have been getting out of the in-home family child care business at a disturbing rate, creating a severe shortage over most of the state. And while statewide data makes it appear that growth in child care center is picking up the slack, that is not the case in much of Greater Minnesota." Werner

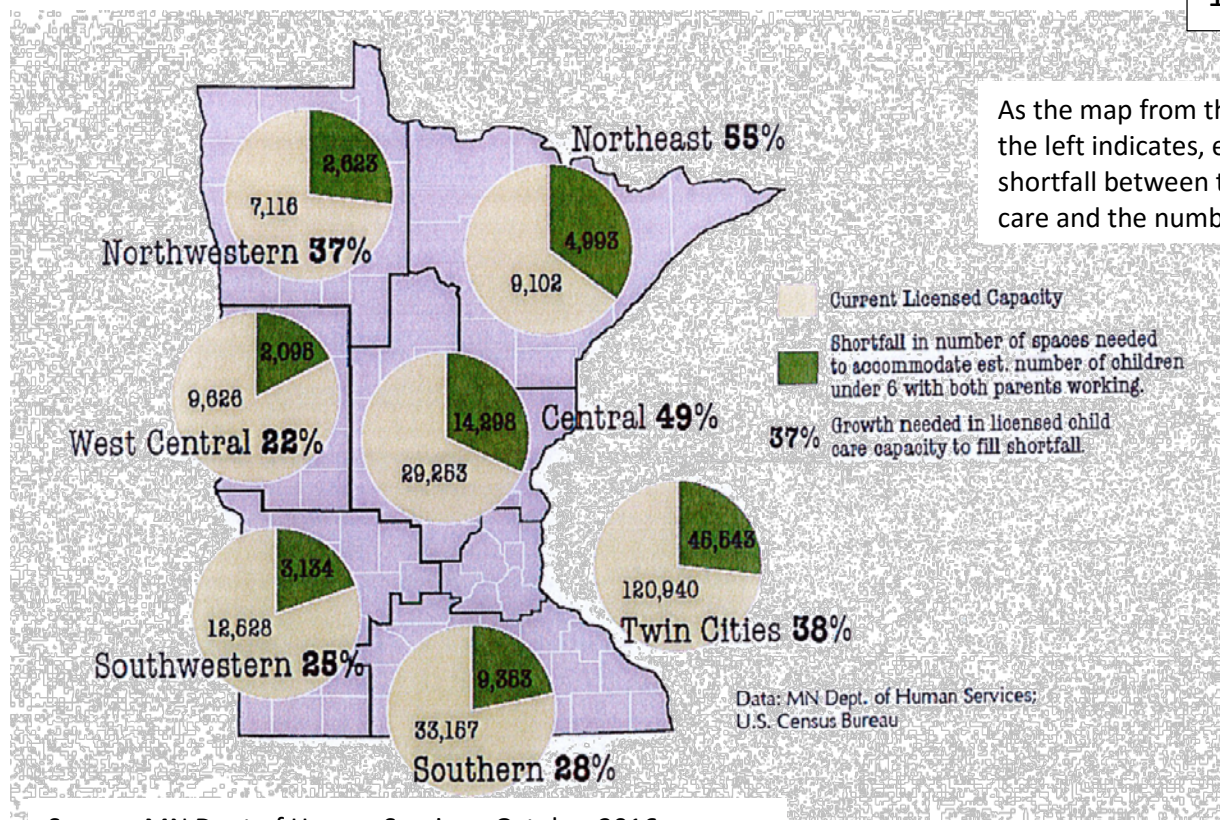
West Central MN:

(According to LIS, 2005 to 2015)

555 Programs

8,390 Capacity

17% Decrease in Capacity



Why Are They Leaving?

- Providers are of retirement age
- Subsequent generations choosing other options
- Providers transition into fields that are more profitable and less demanding – they simply cannot make a living in the industry
- Regulations have been tightened in the last several years, including increased training/paperwork
- Regulatory enforcement by county licensors can sometime be inconsistent and punitive.

Source: MN Dept of Human Services, October 2016

BROADBAND

As of 2018, 74.11 percent of households and businesses had access to service that meets or exceeds the state of Minnesota's speed goal for 2026, which is 100 Mbps download by 20 Mbps upload from at least one provider. When looking at just non-metro areas, that number drops to 60.05 percent, and for Kandiyohi County, the number drops to 10.64%. Communities (such as Kandiyohi and others) are on the ground doing public education and encouraging action and adoption. We are leaders – and that means we learn from our own lessons to stay ahead of the pack.

Minnesota Speed Goals for Border to Border Broadband

25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up by 2022
100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up by 2026

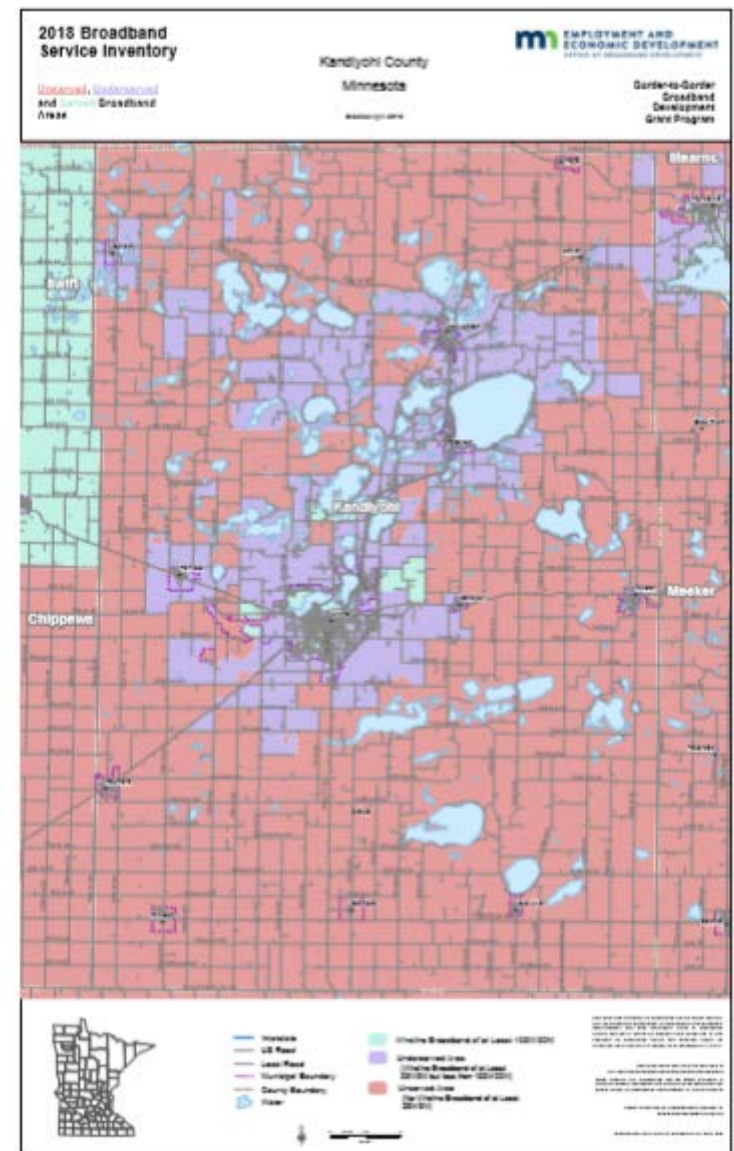
Access as of October 2018*

<u>Speeds</u>	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>MN Rural</u>	<u>Kandiyohi County</u>
25/3	91.13%	80.07%	77.20%
100/20	74.11%	60.05%	10.64%

*Connect America and MN DEED mapping according to census blocks (If one person in a census block has access to the advertised speed, all are counted as served at that speed. Local reports show access is less.)

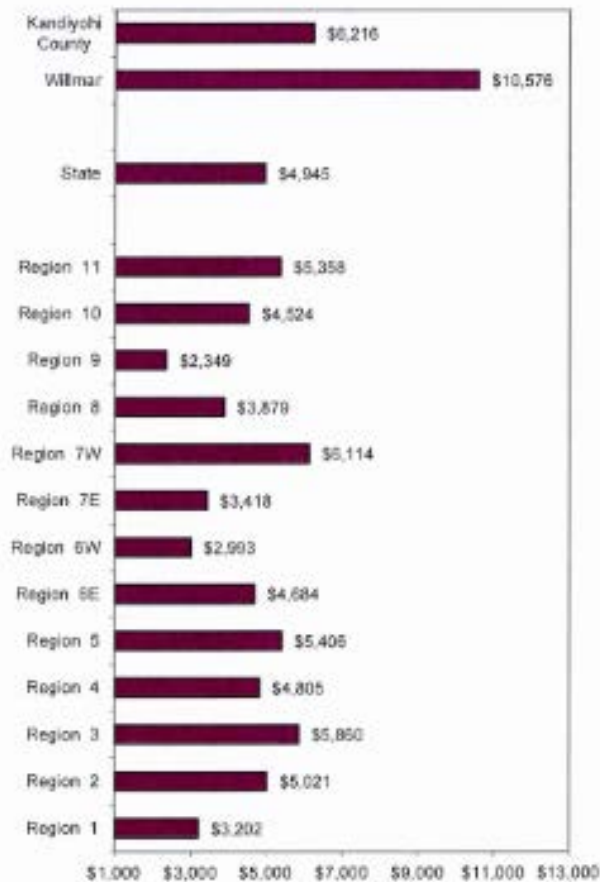
Rural Challenges:

- **Inaccurate maps** – The basic data about where we have coverage and where we don't may not be accurate according to residents
- **Deployment costs** – Costs of serving rural areas is higher because of population density, distance, terrain. ROI is lower because of lower potential volume compared to more densely populated areas. These make securing a provider more difficult.
- **Provider Competition** – Existing providers compete with slight improvements at just the right time to potentially interfere with projects yet may not collaborate to deploy 100/20 to all residents in area



RETAIL/TAXABLE SALES

2016 Retail Sales per capita

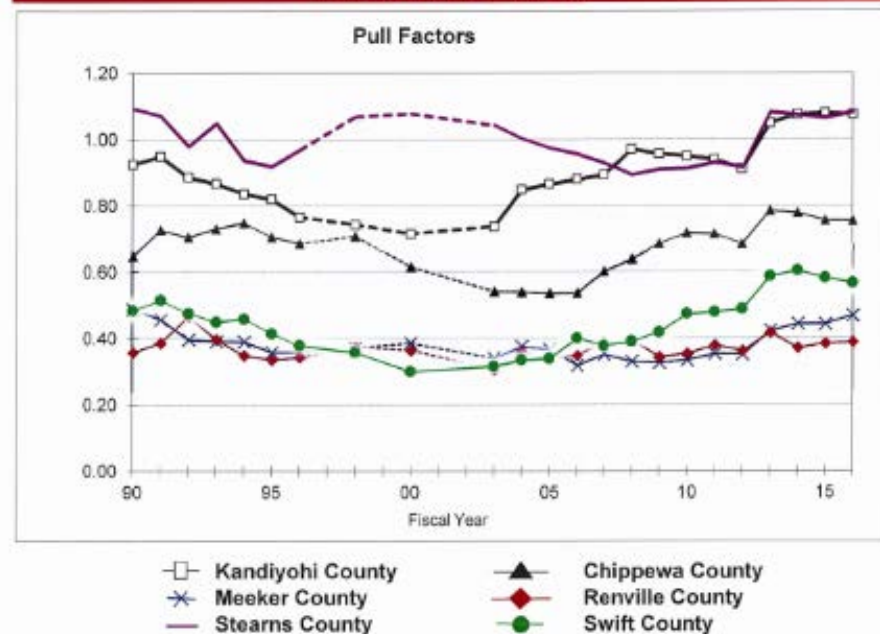


Comparison with Nearby Trade Centers
Pull Factor

Willmar	1.73
Marshall	1.51
Hutchinson	1.46
New Ulm	1.34
Litchfield	.91

University of MN Extension, 2016.

Comparison with Neighboring Counties
Kandiyohi County



Comparison with Neighboring Counties, 2016

County	Population	Gross Sales (\$millions)	Taxable Sales (\$millions)	Number of Firms	Per Capita Taxable Sales	Pull Factor (Taxable Sales)
Kandiyohi County	42,481	\$ 1,274.38	\$ 414.84	1,006	\$ 9,765	1.07
Chippewa County	12,122	\$ 210.08	\$ 82.54	310	\$ 6,840	0.75
Meeker County	23,109	\$ 256.78	\$ 92.06	470	\$ 4,246	0.47
Renville County	14,719	\$ 156.57	\$ 51.72	319	\$ 3,507	0.39
Stearns County	155,732	\$ 4,355.96	\$ 1,484.34	3,530	\$ 9,821	1.08
Swift County	9,384	\$ 146.25	\$ 49.10	222	\$ 5,140	0.57

Trend Analysis

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC
Strategic Planning Session March 14, 2019

CHILD CARE	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recognized need/demand for childcare services • Quality of existing childcare options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of openings with existing childcare providers • Regulations and food services • Costs and available space
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for adding jobs and/or filling existing jobs • Having access can increase family income • Potential for larger organizations to sponsor or open childcare centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations—licensing and other changing regulations • Healthcare providers for childcare • Economics

DIVERSITY	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant portion of our population • Filling vacant storefronts • Positive narrative (KARE 11 story) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers • Stresses on education • Time consumption • Lack of workforce skills
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My City Academy—education for new Americans; conversations • Willmar Main Street • Healthy Together Willmar • Changing community conversations; more of a world view • ADC/CIC and educational programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstanding • Negative stories that create divide

EDUCATION	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12, Ridgewater and U of M Extension • Ridgewater Continuing & Customized Training • KCEO Program and MAP initiative • Alumni base of Ridgewater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student debt; costs of higher education • Relationships between Ridgewater and high schools • Skepticism of value of education for careers (credentials)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site -focused college programs • More 4-year programs at 2-year sites • Employer willingness to partner with education • Building relationships between faculty at high schools and Ridgewater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative control of funding • Impact of Ag economy

TECHNOLOGY AND GLOBALIZATION	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional technologies—agriculture; MinnWest Technology Campus • Work ethic • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining high-speed data (broadband) • Shifting revenue sources • Decreased physical footprint • Advancement in technology • Retail changes
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atmosphere • Way of life • Trends toward outdoors • Tapping into global markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster-changing technology • Transportation • Infrastructure

WORKFORCE	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridgewater College • Labor force growing faster than the state • Immigration/new diverse populations • Short-term growth of high school class sizes • Diverse economic landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight labor market (.7 person available for each job vacancy) • Language barriers—comprehension and fluency • Labor market participation rates less than state average for some populations • Skills gap
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrant workforce • Growth of labor force participation rate for some populations • Seniors/Retirees opportunities for additional careers/skills 	<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 education/post-secondary • Lack of diversity in immigrant careers; lack of aspirations for different careers

2018 GOALS REVIEW

CHILDCARE	
2018 GOALS	Milestones/Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability childcare options, including diverse childcare options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 240 new childcare spaces planned • Childcare provider appreciation event—85% of providers attended • Assessment of needs—gap of 776 spaces in county; 1200 community surveys; 90 participants in community conversation • Awareness/Education—MN Counties Workforce Symposium; MAPCED; State Senators Delegation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure sustainable solutions for existing and new childcare centers and family childcare providers, including diverse childcare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with United Community Action Partnership • Receipt of Rural Child Care Innovation Program Technical Assistance Grant • Four broad goals selected for completion in next 24 months
DIVERSE BUSINESS INITIATIVE	
2018 GOALS	Milestones/Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Business Retention Expansion (BRE) Phase II Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to research potential partners (e.g. Neighborhood Development Center) • Seeking funding for a Diverse Entrepreneurship Program. SWIF is engaging with state legislators that could provide funding for such a program in communities, such as Willmar and Worthington • Establishing such a program could involve hiring a person under contract
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center (WAM-BC) loan portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following extensive discussions, EDC formally approved assisting in the dissolution of WAM-BC, acquiring the loan portfolio, and transferring the WAM-BC assets to the EDC (est. \$101,315) • EDC incorporated seven loans from WAM-BC; including five loans in good standing (two now paid off) and two non-performing loans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish diverse workforce training program in partnership with Ridgewater College, CLUES and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse training programs have moved ahead. CLUES and Ridgewater College have now held five cohorts of participants—three diverse CNA sessions and two diverse welding sessions • 63 people have participated in this training: 28 certified for CNA and 11 certified for welding • Average wages for participants have gone up significantly; in most cases by 50% or more
OPPORTUNITY ZONES	
2018 GOALS	Milestones/Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate Opportunity Zones for one to three tracts in Kandiyohi County in low- to moderate-income areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tract, including downtown Willmar, south to Monongalia and east along Highway 12 has received designation as an Opportunity Zone

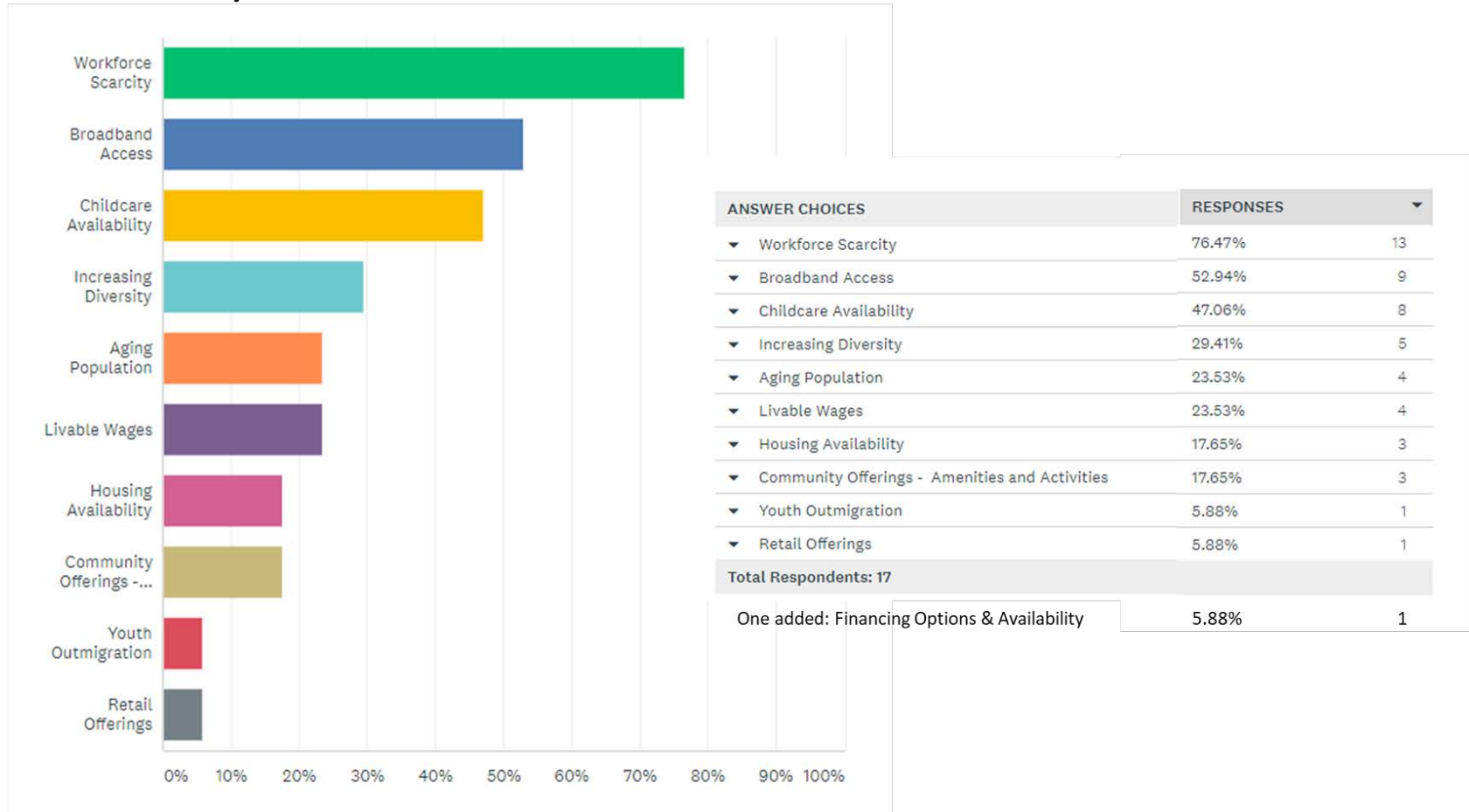
APPENDIX C: 2018 GOALS REVIEW

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage investment for new commercial and housing projects in designated Opportunity Zones in Kandiyohi County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites inside of Opportunity Zone have been provided to housing developers for consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and secure new commercial and housing projects in Kandiyohi County Opportunity Zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDC staff met w/experienced Sioux Falls housing developer interested in constructing a mixed-use development in the City's Opportunity Zone
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	
2018 GOALS	Milestones/Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willmar Railroad Wye project; bypassing the downtown and installation of rail spur to Willmar Rail Park by 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations with BNSF, MnDOT, Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar took longer than anticipated (lost one construction cycle) • Partner Master Agreements signed on 1/17/2019 • Construction contract for Highway 12 component awarded to Hoffman Construction team • Contract approved on 2/22/2019 and Notice to Proceed expected shortly • Road construction beginning in 2019 • Railroad construction beginning in 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Highway 23 four-lane corridor between Willmar and I-94, including the two gaps north and south of Paynesville by 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor's Fishing Opener on Green Lake was beneficial for Highway 23 funding (fishing guide Kelly Morrell) • Highway 23 Coalition successfully lobbied for \$105 million in Corridors of Commerce funding for the two four-lane gaps • MnDOT District 8 is the lead entity for both gaps (even though one is located in District 3) • District 8 recently hired Isthmus Engineering to provide final design, public engagement and other services for the north gap • First gap construction expected to begin in 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the County Road 5/55 bridge over railroad tracks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kandiyohi County is seeking \$3.9 million in state bonding funds for project and will provide local matching funds • Highway 23 Coalition has adopted the CSAH 55 overpass project as one of its top four priority projects for 2019 legislative session • Project presented to MN House Transportation Committee in St. Cloud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase operations at Willmar Municipal Airport by 25% by 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oasis Aero, the new FBO since beginning of 2017, has had a positive impact on operations • 2018 fuel sales are up 10+% over 2017 and are the most ever (including during ND oil boom) • 2018 operations, including plane repairs, are up over 10% as well

Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC

Pre-Strategic Planning Survey
Results Summary
March 2019

Considering the following trends, please select the 3 that you feel are most likely to influence the direction of the EDC



What truly inspires and excites you about the work of the EDC?

EDC & ITS PEOPLE

- Informed and engaged staff
- Providing leadership; forward-thinking
- Reputable presence
- Willingness to partner with others
- Desire to make the area prosperous
- Passion and commitment of EDC Staff, Committees and Boards
- Stronger engagement through committees

BUSINESSES

- Assisting established businesses
- Success of current businesses
- New businesses – attracting/starting
- Proactive outreach

GROWTH

- The growth of area communities
- Opportunities for growth/success
- Growth and expansion of new/local businesses
- A vibrant/growing economy
- Willmar as a central hub

SUCCESS

- Successful efforts; positive momentum
- Results of priorities/goals

RESOURCES

- Opportunities – using available resources
- Leveraging and connecting people to resources

What actions, if begun in the near future, would have the greatest impact for the communities/region the EDC serves?



What are some concerns, challenges, or opportunities for improvement?

Changing demographics – cultural and age

- Have to figure out how to move ahead; cannot live in the past
- Way we address now will impact the next generation
- Stay positive and focus on successes; don't give voice/power to those who are negative/nay-sayers

Support for Existing Businesses

- Small independent existing businesses need more of our focus
- Balancing support for existing businesses with new, diverse, other priorities

EDC Internal

- EDC meeting structure – less time on reports; use the talent to help staff with carrying out plans; less meetings overall
- How to juggle all the committees/work
- Working to see that our Strategic plan intersects with committee work
- Retaining EDC staff
- Succession planning

Things we can't control –

- Volatility of regional/national economy
- Ag Industry – downturn creates broad challenges
- Mall – changes in ownership and loss of businesses
- An unforeseen major closing/layoff

What will be different in the Kandiyohi County area if the EDC is successful in reaching its goals?

NEW BUSINESSES

- New/Additional Industry/Businesses/Employers
- Successful startups
- Job growth
- Larger employers

IMAGE

- Better image of the area
- Recognition as up and coming regional center
- Better community acceptance of our similarities
- EDC as a go-to resource

NEEDS ADDRESSED

- Childcare shortage improved
- Childcare providers compensated properly
- Adequate communication technology
- High-speed Broadband attracts businesses/residents
- Adequate roads

WORKFORCE

- Increased migration to area; filling workforce needs
- More career opportunities with increased income
- People moving to town to work in created jobs
- Businesses have adequate workforce
- Lower turnover rates

THRIVING ECONOMY

- Overall boost in local economy
- Better place to live and work
- Steady growth – housing, businesses, jobs, economy
- Vibrant economy (Mall/Downtown)
- More diverse/thriving economy

The EDC engages a broad mix of constituents that reflect the communities they serve in their work. (Indicate your level of agreement with this statement.)

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO OPINION OR UNSURE
5.88% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	47.06% 8	47.06% 8	0.00% 0

Who might we serve in better ways in the future? How?

WHO	HOW
All businesses that want to improve/grow (starts, diverse, youth, new, existing)	Personal visits; access to incumbent/new training and mentor opportunities
Small Entrepreneur & existing businesses that want to expand	Permit, finance, planning assistance
The Aspiring Entrepreneur	Cultivate and learn to recognize; future is small business
Existing and new businesses	Help grow workforce = competitive
New Start-up Businesses	More advocacy/support
New businesses	Training program being offered currently
Young people	Expose them to opportunities in region; Retain our best & brightest; find career direction before college debt
Diverse community	Continued growth through representation
Kandi Mall	Assist in attracting stable tenants
Retailers	Concentrate on those here; entice more to locate in County
New childcare providers	Forgivable start-up loans