

CITY OF BENSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CITY VISION STATEMENT

Serving the people of Benson by effectively planning for growth, providing a safe environment, quality transportation, reliable utilities, enhanced recreation opportunities, competent administration, a healthy business climate, a positive self image, and cooperation with other levels of government while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is a process for creating employment opportunities for individuals, growth opportunities for enterprises thereby raising residents' standard of living.

GOALS:

Goal A: Economic Vitality Department

The elected officials provide the leadership and direction for the City's Economic future. The City Manager is responsible for coordinating and implementing the City's economic development efforts. This is accomplished with assistance from various departments. In order to focus on all of the overarching strategies of Economic Development, the City Manager must provide guidance and ensure that proper resources are available. Therefore, the City shall develop adequate human resources to ensure Economic Vitality and focus on general economic development, tourism, revitalization, and business services.

A1: Improved partnerships: a regional approach

The City will foster cooperative relationships with neighboring communities, school districts, utility providers, and other agencies in order to ensure that the community understands the City's interests, and that the City understands community interests.

A2: Established Data Base of Shovel Ready Property

The City will provide a GIS mapping for shovel ready property including the availability of utilities.

Goal B: Business Development

Economic Development efforts will focus attraction and expansion efforts on small to mid-sized companies that generate high wages and provide minimal negative community impacts. This will also assist new employers with the City's development review processes (such as zoning, design review, building permits, business licenses).

B1: Regional Airport Industrial and Commercial Area (Target Cluster Employment)

The City will plan the development of the airport to maximize the draw of commercial and industrial users while protecting the long term viability of the airport.

B2: Union Pacific Holdings

Benson recognizes the Union Pacific rail spur is an ideal location for industrial development and distribution warehouses.

Goal C: Tourism

The City plans to enhance the economic well-being and quality of life of the community and its residents by strengthening the local tourism industry through a comprehensive tourism development program. The program will consist of tourism research, destination marketing and promotion, support of special events, and the development of destination attractions and tourism infrastructure.

C1: Event Retention and Development

The City will continue to identify new event opportunities and evaluate the expansion of existing successful events which have the potential to grow and attract regional or national audiences.

Goal D: Business Services

The City will enhance the economic well-being and quality of life of the community and its residents by assisting in the retention and expansion of the existing business base, preserving employment, maintaining and expanding the tax base, and reinforcing the positive economic environment of Benson.

D1: Small Business Information

The City's website will include information on both planned and operating businesses. The City will also provide assistance to start up businesses, including identification of applicable regulations, where to obtain business counseling, and other agencies they need to work with.

Conclusion: Monitoring the Plan

The Economic Development Sub Committee will be responsible for analyzing and evaluating the progress of the plan.

The City enjoys robust tourism, welcomes its winter visitors, and serves as a hub for the surrounding communities. Additionally, Benson's Mayor and Council are committed to increasing that quality of life for the City residents and visitors.

The community leaders recognize that environmental protection and responsible development are important components of building a community. This plan identifies the resources it will take to build a competitive economy.