

Carver County CDA Community Development Strategy

Adopted January 16, 2020

Introduction

Carver County has seen unprecedented growth since 2000—both in population and jobs, and because of this it is consistently one of the fastest growing counties in Minnesota. Since 2000, the population has increased by 51% and jobs have increased by 40%. Over the next 20 years, it is anticipated that this growth will continue, and the population will increase by another 52% and jobs another 32%.

Because of this growth, the Carver County Community Development Agency (CDA) saw the need to support cities and their community development efforts. The purpose of this strategy is to set a roadmap of goals, strategic directions and action steps to guide the CDA on community and economic development activities to benefit the cities, businesses and residents of Carver County. Because these needs are constantly changing, the intention is that this plan is not static, but is reviewed semiannually with the CDA's Board of Commissioners and annually with all stakeholders. It will be during this annual review that any changes will be made.

Background

The 2019-2021 Carver County Community Development Agency's Strategic Plan is the basis for this Community Development Strategy. The following is an overview of the CDA's Strategic Plan.

CDA Mission

"The Carver County Community Development Agency provides affordable housing opportunities and fosters economic and community development in Carver County."

CDA Vision

"To be an innovative leader in creating housing and economic opportunities to create 'Communities for a Lifetime' in Carver County."

2019-2021 CDA Strategic Plan Goals

1. Housing: Increase affordable housing choices for low- and moderate-income households.
2. Community Partnerships/Marketing: Build relations with city staff, elected officials and various civic groups to building "Communities for a lifetime".
3. Community and Economic Development: Be the catalyst for new development/redevelopment within the cities of Carver County.
4. Information Technology: Continue to make our technology useful to increase operational effectiveness and client/community information.
5. Administration: Continue to create capacity in the finance and staffing areas.

Process

The work on this strategy began in the second half of 2019, with completion by the end of the year and ready for implementation in 2020. The CDA's Strategic Plan provided a starting point for this process. Additionally, since the CDA does not have land use authority, nor is usually the first contact on community and economic development matters, it was important the process included key stakeholders throughout the strategy's development to ensure the work going forward meets the goals and needs of these organizations who are on the front lines.



Stakeholders included city and chamber of commerce staff from throughout Carver County. Engagement with these groups included one on one interviews as well as an online survey about community and economic development topics. These stakeholders were then brought together in November 2019 for a facilitated session where goals, strategic directions and action steps were discussed. The work conducted at this session provided the foundation for the strategy.

Moving forward, the strategy will be reviewed on a biannual basis with the CDA's Board of Directors. On an annual basis, the strategy will be reviewed more comprehensively to review successes and determine which, if any, strategic directions need to be modified. Additionally, this will also be done with the action steps—looking at ones that have been met, need to be changed, or if any new steps need to be added.

Community Development Strategy

Goal

Work in collaboration to maintain and enhance community and economic development efforts in Carver County.

Strategic Directions

A total of six strategic directions have been developed. These directions are broad, and to narrow down each, a series of activities are identified, followed by action steps for each activity. It is these activities and action steps which will guide the CDA's work in community and economic development in 2020. Appendix A provides a consolidated summary of the strategy.

Strategic Direction #1: Support existing businesses and be prepared for new opportunities

Strategic Direction #1 focuses on business retention, expansion and attraction with attention in 2020 on existing businesses.

Activity 1: Assist start-ups and small businesses

Action Step: Continue support of the Open to Business program. This program is run by the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers who provides progress to the CDA on a quarterly basis. Since 2012, the Carver County CDA has provided funding to sponsor the program for residents and businesses in the county. The program, which provides both technical assistance and small loans for emerging and established small businesses, has seen continued increases in program usage over the years.

Action Step: Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the Open to Business program. In discussions with city staff, it became apparent that there are still many businesses that could benefit from Open to Business' services hence the need for additional marketing of the program.

Action Step: Explore the idea of a business forum to showcase resources available to small businesses from multiple agencies. There are many programs and resources available for entrepreneurs and small businesses and understanding them all can be confusing. This action would bring together multiple agencies that have programs and services available to emerging and small businesses and provide businesses with a one-stop opportunity to learn about them.

Activity 2: Support second stage companies

Action Step: Research participation in the CEO Next Program—a program for rapidly growing businesses. Most business programs tend to focus on the emerging business or the larger, well established businesses with hundreds of jobs. There are fewer programs available to help smaller established, yet rapidly growing businesses, who are the backbone of our economy. This action will seek to determine if investment in such a program is valuable for Carver County businesses.

Activity 3: Understand business needs throughout the county

Action Step: Develop and execute a county-wide business survey. While some cities and chambers in the county have a well-established relationship with their businesses and understand their needs, there is not an overall picture of what existing businesses

are looking for or what their needs are throughout the entire county. A business survey would help to shed some light on this and may help guide future actions of the CDA and cities.

Action Step: Work with cities and chambers to participate in or share the results of business visits. Many agencies are seeking to know more about the businesses in the community—and some of these agencies overlap (cities, CDA, chambers, others). In order to avoid duplication of business visits, sharing results from such visits are encouraged so all interested parties understand issues and challenges, as well as successes, shared by our local businesses.

Strategic Direction #2: Tell our story to those within and outside the county

This strategic direction is about marketing Carver County, its cities, and its business and development opportunities, as well as to be ready to act when opportunities arise.

Activity 1: Create an up-to-date listing of land and building opportunities

Action Step: Work with each city to update the Location One listings for their community. Location One, a system through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, provides listings of buildings and land for sale and for lease. There is currently data in the system for sites throughout Carver County; however, it is outdated and current opportunities are not listed.

Action Step: Set up a system for regular updates to the listings and implement. Once the Location One site is updated, making sure that the listings in Location One are taken off when they are no longer available or added to when something new is offered will be important to continue to make sure brokers and others are aware of opportunities.

Activity 2: Tell our story

Action Step: Develop a marketing plan for promotion of Carver County development opportunities. Throughout the region, counties and cities are proactively marketing their locations, sites and development opportunities. This action will create a plan to let our partners and others know about the opportunities that exist in Carver County.

Action Step: Create a series of success story articles that can be shared or used in promotional efforts. There are many community and economic development success stories in Carver County. It is important to capture some of these stories to use not only to document the great things happening here, but also to use as a marketing tool.

Activity 3: Obtain data to monitor and inform our activities

Action Step: Gather data to generate community specific profiles for responses to developers, brokers, RFIs or others. Understanding what is happening in our county and cities is important when it comes to marketing our communities. There was a strong desire by cities to have data available in order to respond in a timely manner to different requests.

Action Step: Research the opportunity to incorporate community and economic development information in the county GIS program. Several cities partner with Carver County for GIS services. This action step will explore how to incorporate community and economic development information in order to gain a better of understanding of what's happening in our communities.

Strategic Direction #3: Maintain and enhance partnerships to benefit community and economic development in Carver County

The Carver County CDA does not have land use authority and most of the time is not the first agency engaged in a conversation around community and economic development; however, the CDA is a convener and a partner and can assist in various efforts.

Activity 1: Partner with Carver County cities and chambers

Action Step: Implement a quarterly community development roundtable. The purpose of the roundtable will be to bring cities and the chambers together on a regular basis to hear about what is happening as well as bring in guest speakers to discuss relevant topics.

Action Step: Create a monthly email to report on region-wide opportunities and other timely information. Between quarterly roundtables, regular communication with our partners will be developed to inform them of upcoming opportunities and to share in successes.

Activity 2: Be a regional partner

Action Step: Actively participate in regional community and economic development activities. Not only is it important to develop local relationships with our cities and chambers, it is important to participate and develop partnerships with those working on community and economic development activities as a region.

Activity 3: Cultivate new partnerships

Action Step: Explore opportunities for new partnerships. There are many organizations already providing resources and programming that may fit the changing needs of our communities, businesses and residents; therefore, developing new partnerships so that we are not duplicating services and making sure they are known about is critical.

Strategic Direction #4: Help coordinate a county-wide tourism effort

Without a county-wide convention and visitor's bureau, promoting all that Carver County has to offer visitors has relied on individual efforts. Strategic Direction #4 focuses on a county-wide tourism effort that all agencies can participate in.

Activity 1: Develop and promote a county-wide tourism website

Action Step: In coordination with chambers and cities, develop a county-wide tourism website. The first step in promoting tourism activities is in an online presence. The website will be developed with input from cities and chambers who are experts about what is happening in their communities.

Action Step: After completion of the website, develop a promotional plan with partners. In discussions, having a website is important, but promotion of that website within the community as well as outside of the community is vital in making sure the site is utilized.

Activity 2: Understand funding for tourism efforts

Action Step: Research funding available for tourism promotion. In early research, most funding appears only available to visitor and convention bureaus or chambers of commerce. Understanding what funding sources are available, who can apply, and what funding can be used for is needed in order to expand tourism marketing efforts.

Strategic Direction #5: Assist cities and projects by providing or connecting to resources to advance community and economic development efforts

As a partner, it is important that as the CDA we are able to connect cities and their projects with the resources they need.

Activity 1: Develop a resource toolkit

Action Step: Develop and maintain a toolkit of local and state resources. As programs change, staying on top of what is available, their rules and contacts can help bring valuable resources into the community.

Activity 2: Enhance our online presence

Action Step: Explore development of a new website or enhancement of the current site. The first stop for most developers, brokers and others is online. Having current information available at one's fingertips is essential to staying competitive.

Activity 3: Ensure policies/ordinances are relevant

Action Step: Review policies and ordinances related to community and economic development and update if necessary. Development can be stalled or taken elsewhere with out of date policies and ordinances. Keeping these updated can help projects advance quickly.

Strategic Direction #6: Sustain and improve community livability for current and future residents and businesses

Continuing to make Carver County a place that is desirable in which to live and work is necessary for ongoing success.

Activity 1: Provide funding through the Community Growth Partnership Initiative

Action Step: Continue the Community Growth Partnership Initiative program. This program, established in 2016, provides small grants to cities for pre-development and development efforts. The program should be reviewed periodically to make sure it remains relevant and utilized.

Action Step: Work with cities to encourage applications. To date, only a small proportion of the county's cities have utilized the program. CDA staff will work with cities to discuss possible projects and encourage applications to get full utilization of the program.

Activity 2: Encourage development of affordable and workforce housing

Action Step: Continue support of existing homeownership programs and explore best practices to fill gaps in affordable homeownership opportunities. The CDA already provides some homeownership programs; however, gaps exist. Understanding the gaps and how to fill them is needed to continue the development of affordable and workforce housing.

Action Step: Develop educational materials on affordable/workforce housing and share success stories. There has been and continues to be misperceptions about affordable and workforce housing needs in our communities. Educational materials, coupled with success stories, will be developed to help tell the story of the importance of a diverse housing stock.

Activity 3: Improve access through infrastructure improvements

Action Step: Develop a partnership with county transportation staff and understand how they prioritize projects. Since roadways and access points can be crucial to the location of businesses and development of a community, understanding how partner agencies view and prioritize projects can be important when working with businesses. Having a strong relationship with these agencies can help when projects are being proposed.

Action Step: Assist cities and projects in accessing funding for critical improvements. The CDA will act as a resource for cities and others when critical infrastructure improvements are needed.

Summary

The CDA's Community Development Strategy will be an ongoing effort that is regularly evaluated and updated. There is no one strategy that will guarantee success in our community and economic development efforts, but rather it will take many small efforts over time with multiple partners participating in the efforts.

Contributors

The following people assisted in the development of this plan:

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Appendices

Appendix A—Community Development Strategy Summary
Appendix B—Community and Economic Profile

Appendix A Community Development Strategy Summary

Goal

Work in collaboration to maintain and enhance community and economic development efforts in Carver County

Strategic Direction 1: Support existing businesses and be prepared for new opportunities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
Assist start-ups and small businesses	Continue support of the Open to Business program
	Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the Open to Business program
	Explore the idea of a business forum to showcase resources available from multiple agencies
Support second stage companies	Research participation in the CEO Next program—a program for rapidly growing businesses
Understand business needs throughout the county	Develop and execute a county-wide business survey
	Work with cities and chambers to participate in or share the results of business visits

Strategic Direction 2: Tell our story to those within and outside the county

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
Create an up-to-date listing of land and building opportunities	Work with each city to update the Location One listings for their community
	Set up a system for regular updates to the listings and implement
Tell our story	Develop a marketing plan for promotion of Carver County development opportunities
	Create a series of success story articles that can be shared or used in promotional efforts
Obtain data to monitor and inform our activities	Gather data to generate community specific profiles for responses to developers, brokers, RFIs or others
	Research the opportunity to incorporate community and economic development information in the county GIS program

Strategic Direction 3: Maintain and enhance partnerships to benefit community and economic development in Carver County

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
Partner with Carver County cities and chambers	Implement a quarterly community development roundtable
	Create a monthly email to report on region-wide opportunities and other timely information
	Be available for technical assistance or support on projects
Be a regional partner	Actively participate in regional community and economic development activities
Cultivate new partnerships	Explore opportunities for new partnerships

Strategic Direction 4: Help coordinate a county-wide tourism effort

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
Develop and promote a county-wide tourism website	In coordination with the chambers and cities, develop a county-wide tourism website
	After completion of the website, develop a promotional plan with partners
Understand funding for tourism efforts	Research funding available for tourism promotion

Strategic Direction 5: Assist cities and projects by providing or connecting to resources to advance community and economic development efforts

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
Develop a resource toolkit	Develop and keep up to date a toolkit of local and state resources
Enhance our online presence	Explore development of a new website or enhancement of the current site
Ensure policies/ordinances are relevant	Review policies and ordinances related to community and economic development and update if necessary

Strategic Direction 6: Sustain and improve community livability for current and future residents and businesses

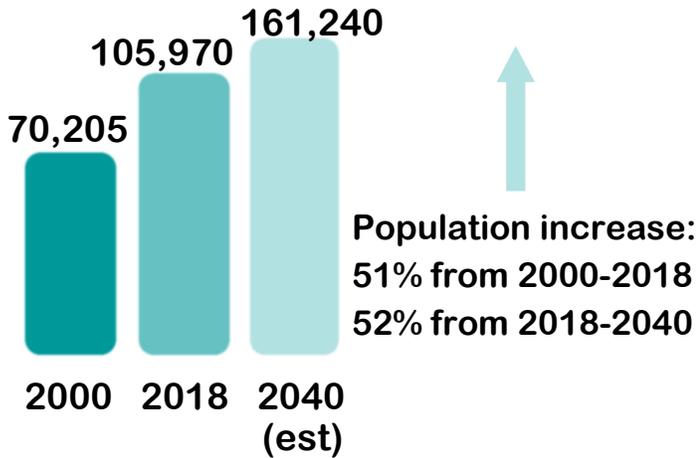
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
Provide funding through the Community Growth Partnership Initiative	Continue the Community Growth Partnership Initiative program
	Work with cities to encourage applications
Affordable/workforce housing	Continue support of existing homeownership programs and explore best practices to fill gaps in affordable homeownership opportunities
	Develop educational materials on affordable/workforce housing and share success stories
Improve access through infrastructure improvements	Develop a partnership with county transportation staff and understand how they prioritize projects
	Assist cities and projects in accessing funding for critical improvements

Appendix B

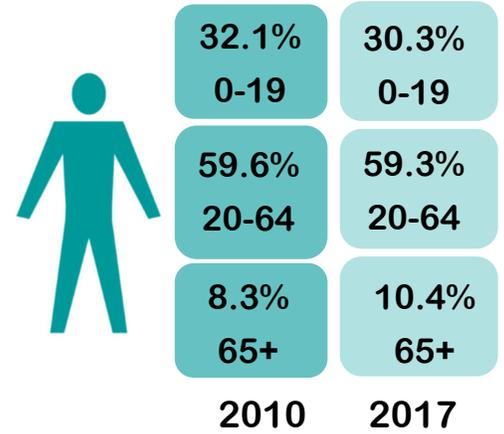
Community and Economic Profile

DEMOGRAPHICS

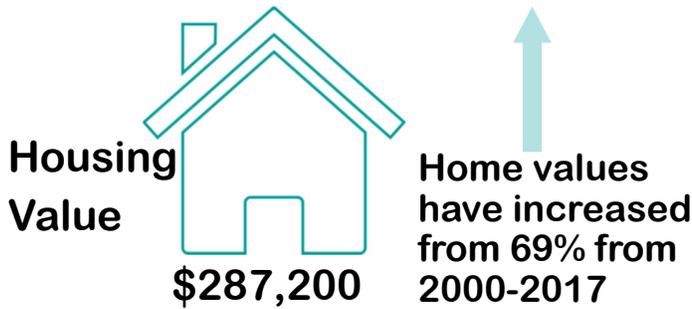
POPULATION



AGE DISTRIBUTION



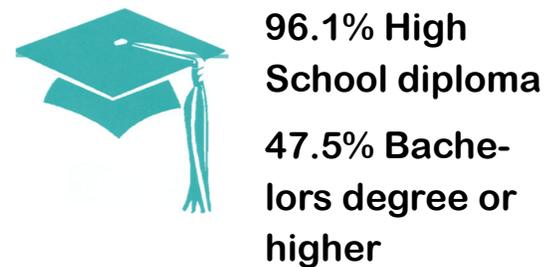
MEDIAN HOUSING VALUES



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

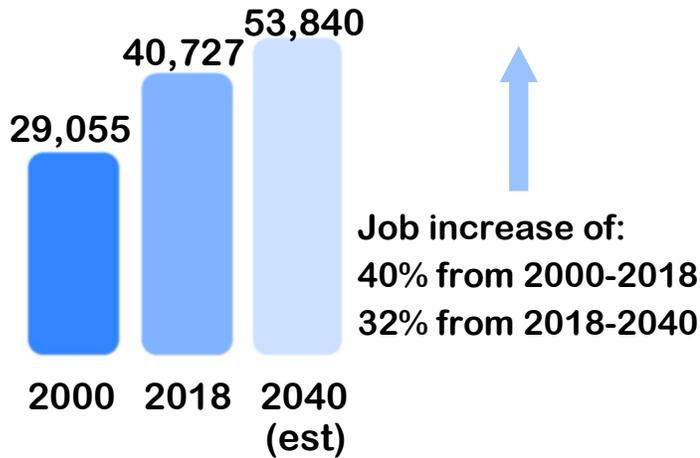


EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



BUSINESS & JOBS

JOBS



UNEMPLOYMENT



AVERAGE WAGES



MAJOR INDUSTRIES (by number of employees)

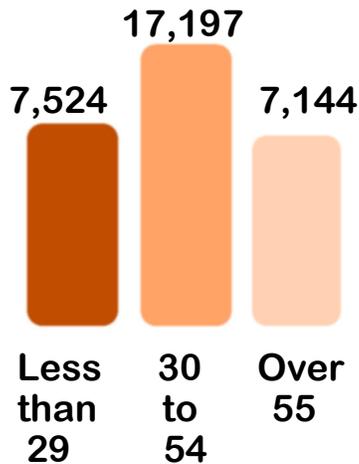
Manufacturing	10,723
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,610
Retail Trade	3,734
Accommodation and Food Service	3,371
Wholesale Trade	2,474

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

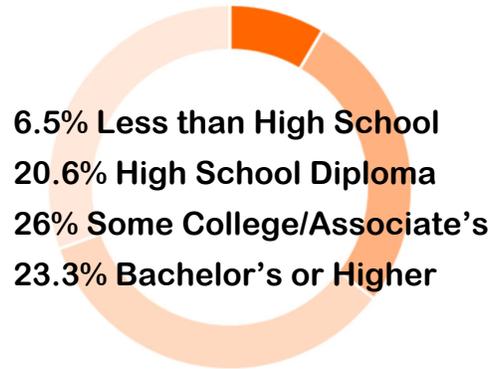
Ridgeview Medical	1,500
Lifetime Fitness	1,464
ISD 112	1,200
Instant Web Co.	1,157
Rosemount Inc.	1,067

WORKFORCE

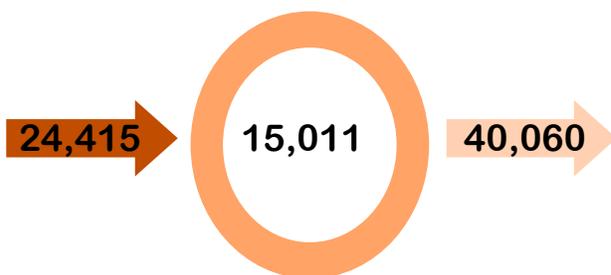
WORKER AGE



WORKER EDUCATION



COMMUTING PATTERNS



- 24,415 employed in Carver County but live outside
- 15,011 employed and live in Carver County
- 40,060 live in Carver County but employed outside

EARNINGS

