

General Overview

This section documents the Town's approach, in broad terms, to economic development. Although this section is limited in scope, it does not diminish the importance of an organized approach to future economic development that fits within the general comprehensive plan for the Town.

In the Town of Union, economic development is inherently tied to the relationship with land use. The focus is on what types of economic activity are compatible with the long-term vision of the town. This section also identifies the town's strengths and weaknesses in attracting and encouraging existing and new businesses in the Town as well as incentives for future economic development.

Purpose of the Economic Development Element

The purpose of this element is to present background information about the local economy and its relationship to the region. It is helpful to understand the Town's strengths and weaknesses in sustaining existing businesses and/or attracting new businesses. This element also identifies desirable types of businesses. Residents' attitudes to economic development are also presented.

Basic Objectives of the Economic Development Element

Desirable Businesses

The Town has a vision for businesses that will fit into the existing land use without being disruptive to the rural character of the town. These include specific types of enterprises as well as broad classes of businesses. The Town is interested in a variety of different business types. However, many of the types of business in which the Town is interested are related to agricultural production - the Town's current primary existing business.

Examples as supported in the Union Survey of Households:

Nursery and plant production/sales

Farming (small tract farms, truck farms, sod farms, organic growers)

Intensive agriculture (as a conditional use) Ex. Large-scale dairy farms, livestock operations

Horse stables and boarding

Agricultural support services such as equipment, feed mills, etc.

Other possibilities could include:

Owner-operated contractor yards

Aquaculture

Home occupations

Business park for light industrial

Business park for professional services

Research and development facilities

Retail/commercial, but not “big box” entities

Recreational facilities (campground, etc.)

Service businesses adjacent to corridors

Telemarketing businesses (hook into existing fiber optics lines)

Storage facilities using existing buildings (saving old barns/sheds)

Tourism – (Bed & Breakfast facilities, Country Club, etc.)

Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses in Economic Development

Strengths (What will draw/keep desirable businesses here?)

Multiple Class A Roads (Hwy. 14, 59, Cty. M, C)

Transportation Access

Proximity to Population Centers (Evansville, Brooklyn, Madison, Janesville)

Public Transportation Corridor (train tracks)

Customer base for services

Weaknesses (What is keeping desirable businesses from coming?)

Lack of water/sewer service.

Limited public works including fire protection.

No economic development committee/promotion providing incentives (TIF, land, financial incentives) (reactive rather than proactive approach).

County Programs Offer Support to Businesses

The Town works in conjunction with Rock County Planning, Economic and Community Development Agency to balance the interests of both business and the environment. The Agency provides a variety of services to businesses seeking to expand, relocate or start-up operations. The Agency can offer direct support and/or provide referrals for any one of the following types of business services: planning, financing, buildings and site searches, operations and regulations. These services are available through the year, with costs ranging from free to discounted fee structures.

Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal: To strengthen and diversify the economy of the area.

Objective: To identify potential commercial development areas.

Action: Designate areas for commercial development on the Future Land Use Map.

Objective: To identify potential industrial development areas.

Action: Designate areas for industrial development on the Future Land Use Map.

Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements

Economic Development impacts all of the other elements addressed in this *Comprehensive Plan*. Because of this impact, it is important that these elements are consistent in their approach and support one another. The Union Smart Growth Committee considered this interaction as it developed the goals and objectives related to the Economic Development Element.

Related Maps

Map #1: Current Land Use

Map #2: Transportation

Map #19: Future Land Use

Town of Union Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Economic Development

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Town of Union Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: October 5, 2006

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Town of Union Comprehensive Plan

Economic Development

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SURVEY RESULT

A majority of survey respondents supported:

- Retail development, i.e. pharmacy, clothing store.
- Research & Development businesses, i.e. software.
- Professional office park, i.e. Law offices, financial services.
- Health care facilities, i.e. clinics, nursing homes.

To understand the economic base of the Town and trends affecting the township and region.

To assess the Town's strengths and weaknesses relative to supporting businesses.

To identify desirable businesses compatible with the residents' preferences and the Town's goals and unique characteristics.

SURVEY RESULT

Almost three-quarters of the respondents supported development for:

- Small-scale industry, i.e. Harvard Corporation.
- Small businesses, i.e. dry cleaners, restaurants.
- Agribusiness, i.e. Landmark Coop, Worthington.
- Farms less than 250 acres.
- Produce farms, greenhouses or truck farms.