

## CHAPTER 8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Economic Development chapter of the comprehensive plan is to promote the stabilization, retention and expansion of the economic base, and quality employment opportunities. Economic development refers to the sustained actions of elected and appointed officials, generally in partnership with the private sector, intended to promote the standard of living and economic health of a community. Economic development can also be referred to as the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy over time. Such actions can involve multiple areas including development of human capital (through higher education and job training), critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and health and safety, among others.

Some of the keys to successful local economic development efforts include:

- Strong collaboration between the public and private sectors oriented around agreed-upon goals.
- A common vision within the general public about what a community should be and where it wants to go.
- Resilience, or the ability of the community to adapt quickly to change based on regional, national, and global economic conditions.
- Cooperation, not competition, between neighboring municipalities.

This chapter includes descriptions of the current economy of the Town and Village of Black Creek, options for future economic development within the two communities, and a list of tools that can aid in achieving future goals.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

The Village of Black Creek is an important economic activity center in northern Outagamie County. It offers a mixture of local businesses (i.e. hardware, grocery, laundromat, professional services), restaurants, industrial park development, and businesses catering to motorists. By 2035, will expand its commercial and light industrial sectors to provide employment opportunities for its own residents and those of nearby communities. Coordination between the Village and the Black Creek Business Association has enhanced the appearance of the downtown to create a safe, attractive, and vibrant business district.

By 2035, farming and agriculture-related services continue to be the largest industry sectors, with limited commercial and light industrial development located along STH 47 near the Village. Town businesses do not require municipal water or sewer systems. All economic development is in harmony with the Town's natural environment and residential areas; this includes farming operations of all scales.

### WHAT TYPE OF ECONOMY?

Two questions communities must ask themselves when preparing an economic development plan:

1. What kind of economic development do we have now?



2. What type of development do we want in the future?

The first is the easier of the two to answer.

What Kind of Economic Development Do We Have Now?

In general, there are five types of economies typically found in a small community<sup>1</sup>. They include:

- **Resource-Based** - This type of economy is characterized by geographic isolation, as they are typically far away from larger cities/metro areas and have limited interstate access. These communities often have an aging population base and lack of opportunities for higher education and local employment.
- **Industrial Economy** - This type of economy is characterized by dependence on yesterday's economic base. Often a community of this type has a single manufacturing or industrial operation that sustains the vast majority of residents.
- **Metropolitanizing Economy** - These communities are experiencing a high amount of residential development which causes concern about decreasing land supplies, loss of community identity, maintaining small town character, and avoiding becoming a "bedroom community."
- **Dependent Economy** - Usually an unincorporated (i.e. township) area outside of the suburban ring of development. The economic vitality of this community depends on the economic success of the larger adjacent/nearby community. The primary challenge is handling local residential development pressure.
- **Lifestyle Economy** - These communities include university towns, small communities with military bases, and tourist destinations. Residents enjoy their small community setting and quality of living, but are concerned about their long-term dependency on a single economic source.

The Town of Black Creek can best be characterized as a hybrid of the Resource-Based and Dependent communities. Given its proximity to the Village of Black Creek and the Fox Cities and Green Bay metropolitan regions it is unlikely that the community will compete for conventional retail development or large-scale industry. However, opportunities exist for additional agricultural-related growth and agri-tourism, with limited commercial and light industrial catering to local users. See Chapter 7: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources for other options related to farming.

The Village of Black Creek comfortably fits within the confines of an Industrial Economy, with some aspects of a Resource-Based economy present within the community. Opportunities exist to create industry clusters and the core elements of a Lifestyle economy, particularly along Main Street.

What Type of Development Do We Want in the Future?

The second question requires more careful consideration on the part of elected and appointed officials, local businesses, and the general population. Shall we stay the course, with minor market-based additions and enhancements? Do we play to our strengths and seek industry clusters that further our brand? Or,

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<sup>1</sup> Randall Gross, Embracing Change in Small Communities, APA National Conference, March 2005.

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should we aggressively change direction and solicit development from industry sectors not currently present within the communities? These questions will be considered throughout the Economic Development chapter.

Additional information related to the economies of the Town and Village is presented in *Chapter 3: Community Profile*.

### ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

*Chapter 3: Community Profile* provides an analysis of the local economy and labor force. Highlights from that chapter include:

- Local workers are very mobile. Residents take advantage of the communities' proximity to nearby employment centers (particularly the Fox Cities and Green Bay, for employment, shipping, dining, and recreation).
- Median incomes are rising, though slower than the historic rate.
- The Town and Village are emerging from the effects of the 2007-10 Great Recession, with improving economies, employment, and home values.

With an economy primarily focused on agricultural activities, the Town of Black Creek possesses a relatively limited commercial and industrial base. With the Village of Black Creek wholly enclosed within its boundaries there is little need within the Town for the types of economic development more commonly associated with incorporated communities. Essentially, the Village's downtown, STH 47 and 54 corridors, and industrial development near the rail line function as the economic core for both communities.

### HISTORIC VILLAGE DOWNTOWN

The Village of Black Creek's Historic Downtown is the heart of the community (both communities, in fact). It extends along Main Street (STH 47) between STH 54 and Pine Street. The area has an urban character created by its dense mix of historic buildings with minimal setbacks. Parallel on-street parking is provided on the Main Street and along several side streets in the vicinity. Sidewalks are provided throughout this area which makes it possible to park in one location and walk to several businesses in close proximity. Most of the historic structures are located between STH 54 and Burdick Street. Wagner's Market, a vegetable market on the corner of STH 47 and STH 54, brings many visitors to the community on weekends. The new trail corridor also has potential to bring visitors to the area.



Historic Structures in the Village of Black Creek



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As is common with many small, rural villages, the Village has experienced the ebb and flow of the state and regional economy. A number of small businesses have shuttered during the past decade with more being added. The goal of the Village is to sustain a strong, vibrant downtown providing residents and visitors with necessary amenities and services.

### STH 47 & STH 54 CORRIDORS

STH 47 is Main Street as it passes through the Village. Near the southern limits of the Village, development along the corridor is very much auto-oriented. South of the Village limits, there are a couple businesses located in the Town. The most notable of which is Black Creek Garden and Gifts. Given access limitations enforced by WisDOT, future business locations along STH 47 in the Town should be located adjacent to intersecting Town and County Roads and provide access from the intersecting streets as opposed to the highway. STH 54 is a smaller business corridor with potential for growth during the coming decades.

### VILLAGE INDUSTRIAL AREA

Industrial development in the Village is concentrated along the Canadian Central Limited Railroad Corridor, WEST of STH 47 and south of STH 54. Opportunities exist for new development, the expansion of existing operations, and industry clusters based upon those operations.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Town and Village of Black Creek desire new business development that enhances quality of life and employs the local workforce. Businesses and industries should:

- Provide living wages.
- Be respectful of the cultural history and natural environment of the area.
- Be committed to the long-term success of the two communities.

### ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Though the population of the Town exceeds the population of the Village, the primary center for the area's business community and cultural opportunities is the Village of Black Creek. As such, the Village represents the Smart Growth area of this Comprehensive Plan. This is appropriate and consistent with the Comprehensive Planning Law because:

- The Village of Black Creek is committed to redevelopment and infill.
- The area is a walkable environment with sidewalks and pedestrian crossings in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, schools, churches and medical facilities.
- The Village of Black Creek has sewer and water capacity to accommodate growth.
- The Village of Black Creek wishes to enhance its downtown to better serve residents.

The Town and Village of Black Creek have several positive attributes to offer potential businesses, including:

- An affordable tax rate.

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- A rural setting.
- A great location - central to Green Bay and the Fox Cities.
- Safe community atmosphere.
- A quality school district.
- Affordable housing to accommodate local workers.

While Black Creek certainly enjoys its share of advantages, there are several challenges that the community must contend with when seeking to attract new businesses and industry. In particular:

- Residents are very mobile and can easily drive to nearby communities to purchase services and products.
- There is currently a lack of variety of businesses to meet people's everyday needs, so residents shop elsewhere.
- Poor utilization of downtown parking creates shortages in some areas.

The Village recognizes the need to revitalize its downtown so it can retain its status as a rural destination point. The Village understands that in a successful downtown, historic preservation plays an important role, along with sound urban design principles (e.g., streetscaping, walkability, etc.).

To better capitalize on the tourist traffic that passes along STH 47, visiting residents from nearby communities seeking rural businesses services, as well as, the new trail access from the abandoned railroad corridor, historic streetscaping is recommended. Streetscaping can enhance the historic character of the area, making the Village's Downtown a destination point for economic activity and an attractive area for residents to enjoy. Streetscaping improvements would include:

- Sidewalk enhancements like colored and stamped concrete and bumpouts to improve crosswalk visibility and invite pedestrians to use the area.
- Character signage (including incentives for business owners to provide such signage to create a theme for the corridor).
- Building façade improvements (e.g. materials, awnings, etc.).
- Landscaping, including street trees and planters.
- Historic lampposts and banners.

### ECONOMIC GARDENING

Economic gardening is an entrepreneurial approach to economic development that seeks to grow the local economy from within. Its premise is that local entrepreneurs create the companies that bring new wealth and economic growth to a community in the form of jobs, tax revenues, per capita income, and a vibrant local business sector. Economic gardening seeks to focus on growing and nurturing local businesses rather than focusing on business relocation as a development strategy.

The focus of a municipal economic gardening plan is on providing accurate, timely and relevant information to local entrepreneurs about key areas such as their competitors, customers, markets, and industry trends. Armed with this kind of information, a small business owner can make better strategic decisions, avoid costly mistakes, and successfully grow his or her enterprise. Economic gardening strategies help local small businesses discover how to reach markets outside the region. In turn, these exporting growth-oriented companies can spur the formation of local business suppliers and service firms



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to support them. More and better-paid workers also increase the demand for local goods and services, recirculating wealth throughout the local and regional economy.<sup>2</sup>

The basic elements of economic gardening include:

- Providing critical information needed by businesses to survive and thrive.
- Developing and cultivating an infrastructure that goes beyond basic physical infrastructure and includes quality of life, a culture that embraces growth and change, and access to intellectual resources, including qualified and talented employees.
- Developing connections between businesses and the people and organizations that can help take them to the next level - business associations, universities, roundtable groups, service providers and more.<sup>3</sup>

### BUSINESS INCUBATOR

The primary goal of a business incubator is to produce successful businesses that are able to operate independently, are financially viable, and provide new jobs and tax revenue within the community. Many entrepreneurs do not possess the capital necessary to acquire adequate facilities for their start-ups. Finding space, whether purchased or rented, can be financially overwhelming and energy draining at a time when resources are most needed for development of the business itself. Business incubators are designed to help start-up firms. They typically provide:

- Flexible space and leases, many times at very low rates.
- Fee-based business support services, such as telephone answering, bookkeeping, secretarial, fax and copy machine access, libraries, and meeting rooms.
- Group rates for health, life, and other insurance plans.
- Business and technical assistance either on site or through a community referral system.
- Assistance in obtaining funding.
- Networking with other entrepreneurs.

The Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (WEN) provides entrepreneurs with access to a statewide network of resources and expertise, identifies high-potential entrepreneurs and helps move their businesses forward, facilitates collaboration between entrepreneurs and between organizations that assist entrepreneurs, and helps create and grow minority-owned businesses.<sup>4</sup>

The Wisconsin Business Incubation Association (WBIA) also provides assistance to local communities interested in starting an incubator. The WBIA is a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation founded in 1998. The organization sponsors comprehensive surveys of Wisconsin's incubation programs and state entrepreneurship/incubation conferences. Business incubators are located throughout the state of Wisconsin...from Racine to Ashland to La Crosse to Milwaukee and communities in between. Many of these incubators are mixed-use while others have targeted programs. Most incubators have a facility while

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from "Economic Gardening," Growing Local Economies, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Excerpted from "Second Stage Entrepreneurs: Economic Gardening," PEERspectives, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Excerpted from Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network website, <http://www.wenportal.org/About.htm>, 2011.

others are incubators "without walls". Additionally there are a number of agencies throughout Wisconsin that support entrepreneurship and foster business incubation.<sup>5</sup>

**Seven Components of a Successful Business Incubator<sup>6</sup>**

1. **Clear and Well Communicated Goals** - Government's reasons for starting incubators vary, but can include jump-starting the economy, job creation, sector development, etc. Other communities may chose to create an incubator to fill a missing piece of the economic mix whether it is a retail, office or light industrial incubator. Regardless, it is important to determine whether the goal is simply filling the incubator or graduate tenants to larger, market rate spaces in the downtown. Other goals may include developing a complementary mix of retail and service business, a revitalized downtown, a specific level of job creation, promoting entrepreneurship within the community and increasing earnings among residents. Determining specific goals is essential to developing the application process and communicating the benefits of locating within the incubator to potential tenants.
2. **Incubator Manager** - An incubator manager is involved in tenant selection, day-to-day operations and coordination and facilitation of business services. The manager would be responsible for all the key components of an incubator and will serve as a facilitator, mentor, coordinator and colleague of all the incubator tenants.
3. **Business Services** - Below are some services that may be important for tenants, potential tenants or other entrepreneurs who may not locate their business in the incubator, but pay a membership fee to use the facilities and services:
  - Business Plan Development
  - Promotional Assistance
  - Business Network
  - Technical Support
  - Funding for Startup and Maintenance
  - Customer Service
  - Hiring and Managing Employees
  - Accounting and Finance
4. **Shared Resources** - Shared services can include: duplicating and faxing, answering service, secretarial/receptionist services, conference rooms, shipping and receiving, warehousing, computer support, insurance, joint purchasing agreements, incubator manager or staff, an integrated sound, alarm and music system, credit reports, joint marketing and promotional assistance, high speed Internet service and an e-commerce website.
5. **Physical Space** - Space needs will vary with the focus of the incubator. Flexible layout and size will encourage the longevity of the incubator as will the ability for tenants to grow by occupying a larger space or by expanding their current site.
6. **Financing** - The incubator manager or incubator support team should work to gain access to capital for tenants by developing partnerships and pursuing grants and other funding

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from Wisconsin Business Incubation Association website, <http://www.wbiastate.org/>, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpted from "Seven Component of a Successful Business Incubator," UW-Extension, 2011.



opportunities. Support for tenants seeking capital in the form of resource lists and contact information is essential. While access to capital might not be an initial part of the incubator project, developing a Micro Loan Program or other long-standing fund may be best suited for a long-term project such as the business incubator. An ongoing fund can assist with entrepreneurial training and financial support. Access to information and practices on accounting and maintaining cash flow will also be essential for many tenants.

7. Application and Acceptance Process - The goals of the incubator will help determine the application and acceptance process. The criteria selected should provide room for flexibility and creativity. The idea-oriented entrepreneur may not be able to put together the plan, while the detailed businessperson may be able to run a shop but not come up with the exciting product or service to market. Understanding that each entrepreneur will have a different skill set and that all ideas will be at various levels of development will allow the incubator manager or support team to match potential tenants with appropriate business services.

### MARKET TRADE ANALYSIS

A Market Trade Analysis (MTA) is a study undertaken by a municipality to better understand its local economy and to identify ways in which it can more effectively compete in the regional marketplace. It is intended to provide a framework for long-term economic sustainability. The MTA provides elected officials, current and future business owners, and residents with a fundamental description of the industry sectors that are prospering, struggling, or non-existent within a given community. Once completed, the MTA will serve as a roadmap for identifying market-based opportunities for future economic development.

The local marketplace is divided into the elements of supply and demand. Opportunities for business development arise when there is a mismatch between the products and services consumers are demanding and those that suppliers are producing or providing... both today and into the future. The MTA provides a tool to evaluate existing industry sectors and identify product and service supply gaps and surpluses.

Beyond the boundaries of the reference community, the regional market provides competition for goods and services similar to that of the local marketplace. When a product or service is not available at the local level, or is available but at a lower cost or at higher quality in a nearby community, consumers will travel outside the local market to transact business. In order to effectively evaluate the economic environment of the Town and Village of Black Creek and to identify opportunities for future economic development, the MTA incorporates a number of *cohort communities* into the analysis. Cohorts are communities of similar size, demographic composition, economic diversity, and/or geographic location that will serve as bases of comparison for the reference community at the center of the MTA.

### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) allows communities to undertake a public project to stimulate beneficial development or redevelopment that would not otherwise occur. It is a mechanism for financing local economic development projects in underdeveloped and blighted areas. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for land acquisition or needed public works. In the past, the Village created a TIF district to finance the development of an industrial park (that was subsequently redeveloped into a residential subdivision). An opportunity exists to establish a TIF to support redevelopment (e.g. streetscaping, etc.) of Main Street.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

Through its Capital Improvements Program (CIP), the Town is able to responsibly plan for future improvements. The Village does not currently utilize this tool. As is recommended in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element of this Plan, the Village should consider developing a CIP to aid in planning for improvements that can support additional development.

### **ADDITIONAL LOCAL RETAIL CHOICES**

To be successful, these ventures will require a unique merchandise selection based on local market demand. Otherwise, potential customers will continue to patronize choices available in nearby communities, including “big box” discount retail stores. Since families and homeowners dominate the local market, potential business may include: bookstores, music stores, furniture stores, craft/quilt shops, hardware stores, etc. To expand the potential customer base, local retail establishments will also need to market to the small surrounding communities (e.g. Shiocton, Seymour, Nichols) and capitalize on the potential the Internet provides.

#### **General Procedure for Establishing a TIF**

The Village may define a TIF district. It may range in size from a single Village block to the entire Downtown area. Under a TIF:

- Tax assessments for the district are frozen at their current value.
- The Village, through its tax-increment finance authority, can acquire land and make capital improvements in the district (e.g. streets, lighting, landscaping, etc.) to make it more desirable to developers.
- When development occurs, the value of the land in the district increases. This increased value is taxed, but for a period of time while the TIF district is in effect, the additional tax revenues go to the TIF.
- This additional tax revenue is used to pay off the expenses incurred by the Village in land acquisition and installation of capital improvements.

More information about establishing a TIF is available in Wis. Stats. Ch. 66.1105(5)(g).

### **SERVICE BUSINESSES**

Service businesses (e.g. restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream parlor, grocery stores, and real estate office development) are also desired in the downtown. These businesses, like retail choices, should seek to capitalize on the local family market and high percentage of homeowners. Potential businesses might include food for the home businesses (i.e. bakery, winery, pizzeria) movie theaters and movie rental stores, interior decorators, and the like.

### **EXPANDED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Industries are needed to provide quality jobs to local residents. Ideally, industries would capitalize on Black Creek’s central location and available infrastructure.

A limited amount of commercial and light industrial development is recommended within the Town in order to retain its rural character. Future commercial and light-industrial development lining the STH 47 corridor through the Town is not desired. New development along STH 47 must not interfere with the traffic flow along the highways. Therefore, development in an industrial or business park is preferred with access provided from intersecting streets rather than direct access driveways along STH 47. The opportunity exists to extend water and sewer from the Village to portions of the Town to accommodate development. Through an intergovernmental agreement, both communities could share the tax benefits of new development.



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An opportunity exists for expanded industrial development on the west side of the Village near STH 54. This area could be organized as an industrial / business park.

### HOME OCCUPATIONS

Home occupations of a professional nature to take advantage of the Internet and other technologies that permit people to work from the privacy of their homes are desired in Black Creek. Such uses can be compatible in both the Town and the Village.

### NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Within new residential subdivisions in the Village, the potential exists to establish areas for neighborhood commercial development (e.g. daycare centers, convenience stores, dentist offices, etc.) that would contribute to the creation of walkable neighborhoods. Some neighborhood commercial development exists today (e.g. library and medical clinic).

### SPECIALTY FARMING

As is discussed in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter, there is an opportunity to promote specialty farming in the Town to ensure that farming can remain a productive part of the Town's future. Opportunities in this market include: organic farming, wineries, orchards, aquaculture, tree farms, and horse farms (offering boarding, riding, etc.)

### TOURISM

As specialty farming is pursued and as the trail is completed along the abandoned railroad corridor the potential increases for tourists to travel to Black Creek. To capitalize on this opportunity, the Village should pursue the following:

- Establishment of a farmers market specializing in organics.
- Development of a park & ride lot to provide additional downtown parking, a lot for resident commuters to utilize, and if located appropriately, a lot for cyclists to use who are accessing the new trail.
- Expanded festivals and events to draw visitors to the community.
- Eco-tourism (e.g. biking, hiking, horseback riding) and supporting businesses (e.g. bike shops, etc.).

STH 47 is also an important north-south travel route through northeast Wisconsin. This route is used by weekend travelers and other tourists as a means to get "up north" via STH 29. This traffic supports local tourist business opportunities catering to these motorists (e.g. food, gas).

### COMMUNITY IDENTITY: GATEWAYS FEATURES AND IMAGE CORRIDORS

An image corridor gateway, in conjunction with a wayfinding system and landscaping theme, can be a major identifying element for the Town and Village of Black Creek. Gateway features provide a visual sense of place and are often related to a community's natural resources, existing architecture, or local cultural heritage. Wayfinding systems allow residents and visitors to easily navigate to key destination points within the community.



Thematic landscaping, or landscaping utilizing a consistent design and species mix, when located at entry points and along major transportation routes, provides an effective means of enhancing local identity. This may be particularly important at the periphery of the Town, where an identifiable landscape would aid in informing residents and visitors that they are entering Black Creek. A unifying landscape theme, particularly one based upon regionally native species, will provide one component of an identifiable and inexpensive gateway features for the Town.

As the primary ingress and egress routes through the two communities, highways 47 and 54 may serve as scenic, visually appealing entrances or run-of-the-mill transportation corridor. The commercial development patterns associated with conventional highway corridors would conflict with the scenic agricultural beauty of the area. This type of development, referred to as corridor creep, results in linear development patterns that dramatically reduce views of surrounding agricultural lands and open spaces. An alternative to corridor creep is commercial node development. With node development, commercial and residential land uses are concentrated and accessible by limited ingress/egress, thereby preserving view sheds and scenic views of surrounding landscapes.

Within an image corridor, standards are set regarding signage, landscaping, open space preservation, and building design and spacing, among others, to ensure that future development occurs consistent with the community's goal of preserving and enhancing rural character. Image corridors are typically implemented through the use of a zoning overlay.

### ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES

Development efforts can sometimes encounter the challenge of potentially contaminated properties, which are commonly referred to as brownfield sites. Brownfield sites vary in size, location, age, and past use. A brownfield site can be a former corner gas station or an empty manufacturing plant. There are an estimated 10,000 brownfields across Wisconsin. These sites pose a number of problems for communities, including:

- Neighborhood deterioration and community blight.
- Potential harm to human health and the environment.
- Reduced tax revenue and economic growth.
- Attraction for vandalism, open dumping and other illegal activity.

The term "brownfield" was first used to distinguish developed land from unused suburban and rural land, referred to as "greenfield" sites. The EPA, states, and municipalities believe that choosing brownfield redevelopment over greenfield development yields several benefits for communities and for commerce. Brownfield redevelopment encourages the cleanup of contaminated sites. This is the major goal of most modern environmental regulations. The fewer the number of contaminated sites, the less the cumulative impact to the environment. Another benefit of brownfield redevelopment is that it revitalizes urban areas. (Many brownfields are centrally located in urban areas.) This leads to another perceived benefit -- the minimization of green space development. When brownfields are redeveloped or revitalized in urban areas, less farmland on the urban fringe is developed, maintaining green space and reducing the need for expanding infrastructure and utilities. Finally, when brownfields are redeveloped and new businesses begin operating, these properties return tax base and provide jobs. This is a major financial incentive for municipalities to develop and encourage programs for brownfield redevelopment.

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Using one of several databases, interested residents can search for properties in Black Creek that have been impacted by environmental contamination (and have been reported). The WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Internet web site tracking list is one such database. This database tracks identified sites from first reporting through closure or no further action. Records are kept in perpetuity regardless of whether or not contamination was actually found, the size of the incidence, and whether or not the site has been cleaned.

Governments at all levels have recognized that brownfield redevelopment is an important issue. Numerous programs have been created to encourage brownfield redevelopment including grants, loans, and tax incentives. In the future, the Town and Village will encourage landowners to pursue the clean up and redevelopment of any contaminated or brownfield site. Likewise, to minimize future environmental impacts, the Town and Village will encourage environmentally friendly business development that is properly permitted and regulated to protect the Town and Village's natural environment.

### DESIGN STANDARDS ORDINANCE

The Village does not currently have a design standards ordinance to provide specific standards for signage, lighting, and façade improvements (including building materials, colors, and decorative elements like awnings) to enhance the historical integrity of the area. As a result, development designs have been approved that are not in character with the historic structures along Main Street. Development of a design standards ordinance must be coordinated with local business owners and interest groups.

### STREETSCAPE PLAN

A traditional streetscape offers safety, comfort, beauty, and a lasting image of a vibrant and dynamic community. It extends outward from the street itself over adjoining properties, both public and private. As a result, a streetscape plan requires broad community consensus to be fully implemented. A well-designed streetscape, particularly within a core area, serves as a magnet attracting new residents, visitors, and businesses. Elements of streetscaping include:

- Sidewalk enhancements like colored and stamped concrete and bumpouts to improve crosswalk visibility and invite pedestrians to use the area.
- Character signage (including incentives for business owners to provide such signage to create a theme for the corridor).
- Building façade improvements (e.g. materials, awnings, etc.).
- Public gathering spaces.
- Landscaping, including street trees and planters.
- Historic lampposts and banners.
- Focusing on node-style development and avoiding "corridor creep," wherein linear development patterns spread outwards from the community center along roads and highways.

### FAÇADE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The purpose of a Façade Enhancement Program (FED) is to encourage visual improvements to commercial façades in order to improve the physical appearance and economic marketability of downtown Black Creek. The development of a FED typically requires the creation of a local financial assistance program to provide incentives to business owners to make improvements within the streetscape environment. Under such a program, the Town would partner with property owners and businesses to



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‘spruce up’ their exteriors in order to become more inviting to customers and residents. Eligible businesses must be located within a defined area (the town core, for instance).

FED programs are often implemented by Business Improvement Districts that are responsible for creating an evaluation process to ensure that all applicants are evaluated based upon consistent and pre-approved criteria. Grants and no-interest or low-interest loans are then made available to selected businesses to help fund desired improvements. Projects eligible for funding under a conventional FED include:

- Masonry cleaning.
- Work on cornices, gutters and downspouts.
- Exterior siding repair or replacement.
- Exterior painting.
- Accessibility improvements.
- Repair, removal or installation of canopies or awnings.
- Window repair or replacement.
- Signage.
- Structural Upgrades.

Projects typically ineligible for FED funding include:

- Refinancing of existing debt.
- Interior improvements.
- Non-permanent fixtures.
- Security systems.
- Sidewalk or parking improvements.
- Installation of bike racks or fences.
- Previously completed design or construction work.
- Properties for residential use, unless it is a mixed-use development.

### MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION

In 2014 Taylor Polenske, a student in the Department of Landscape Architecture College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, completed a Capstone project entitled “Bringing Back the Pulse: A Main Street Revitalization.” The project entailed the creation of a master plan for the Village of Black Creek downtown. The report included many of the elements of described in this section of the chapter aimed at enhancing the Village core. It should serve a useful guide for any future efforts to reinvigorate the community.

For an electronic copy of “Bringing Back the Pulse: A Main Street Revitalization”, please contact the Village Clerk.



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

### **STATE AGENCIES/PROGRAMS**

- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (formerly Department of Commerce) –This department is the state’s primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses.
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation – The Office of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs encourages firms owned by disadvantaged individuals to participate in all federal and state transportation facility contracts.
- Forward Wisconsin – Forward Wisconsin markets outside Wisconsin to attract new businesses, jobs, and increase state economic activity.
- Department of Workforce Development – This department builds and strengthens Wisconsin’s workforce by providing job services, training and employment assistance, and helping employers find necessary workers.
- Wisconsin Small Business Development Centers – These centers help ensure the state’s economic health and stability. They offer formative business education, counseling, and technology training.

### **FEDERAL AGENCIES/PROGRAMS**

- Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration
- US Small Business Administration
- US Department of Commerce
- US Department of Transportation

### **NEW NORTH<sup>7</sup>**

New North, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, regional marketing and economic development organization fostering collaboration among private and public sector leaders throughout the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, known as the New North region. New North is a regional partner to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the State of Wisconsin, as well as local economic development partners, and represents more than 100 private investors.

The New North brand unites the region both internally and externally around talent development, brand promotion and business development, signifying the collective economic power behind our 18 counties. The counties include Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Waupaca, Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Marinette, Door, Kewaunee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Florence, Menominee and Waushara.

The Six Key Initiatives of the organization are to:

- Attract, develop and retain diverse talent
- Foster targeted industry clusters and new markets
- Support an entrepreneurial climate and small business
- Encourage educational attainment
- Elevate sustainability as an economic driver

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<sup>7</sup> Excerpted from NEW North website, 2015.

- Promote the regional brand

### **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

Economic development goals, objectives, and policies can be found in Chapter 12: Implementation.