

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: December 21, 2015

Subject: Regional Economic Competitiveness and Comprehensive Planning

District(s), Members: All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. § 473.867

Staff Prepared/Presented: Ryan Garcia, AICP, Senior Planner (651) 602-1832

Division/Department: Community Development/Local Planning Assistance

Proposed Action

Information item only.

Background

Regional economic competitiveness can be defined as the ability of a region to compete effectively and to prosper in the global economy. *Thrive MSP 2040* states that our region's prosperity is embodied in successfully attracting and retaining successful businesses and a talented workforce, thereby sustaining, growing, and distributing the region's shared sociocultural, intellectual, environmental, and economic wealth throughout the region for this and future generations. *Thrive* acknowledges the role played by the Council in advancing our region's economic competitiveness through providing "technical assistance to help local communities to better understand their contributions to the regional economy" as well as providing information, research, and analysis on economic competitiveness. .

Following the adoption of *Thrive*, the Council accelerated its efforts to elevate awareness and consideration of regional economic competitiveness in our work. For the Community Development Division, this effort included a focus on our role to provide resources and technical assistance to communities as they progress with the decennial update of their local comprehensive plans. As the Community Development Committee (CDC) is aware, the 2018 local comprehensive planning cycle effectively began with the September 2015 issuance of system statements, and will continue through the end of 2018. To that end, much of staff's focus in 2015 has been on strengthening the linkage between local comprehensive planning and issues of regional economic competitiveness through leading and sharing research on the economy with our traditional partners in local comprehensive planning, while at the same time fostering and growing partnerships with other actors engaged in regional economic competitiveness and economic development.

This presentation will summarize the key tasks staff accomplished as related to economic competitiveness resources and technical assistance for comprehensive plan updates in 2015, introduce planned areas of focus for 2016, and showcase one example of the economic competitiveness resources staff is developing – "Core Industry Cluster Profiles."

2015 – Notable Achievements

- Developed content and supplemental resource materials for the "[Economic Competitiveness](#)" [section of the Local Planning Handbook](#).
- Conducted extensive primary research aimed at identifying the motivating factors in real estate decisions for the region's seven "Core Industry Clusters," through a series of interviews and the administration of a site selection survey with site selection professionals across the public and

private sectors. These efforts inform two of the elements of the 2015 research agenda¹: “Real Estate Requirements of Core Industry Clusters” and “Sites for Economic Growth”.

- Conducted Focus Sessions with Local staff in Spring 2015 to consider Council-produced research products in the “Core Industry Clusters” and “Occupations” research elements and their applicability to comprehensive planning.
- Coordinated with economic development and planning staff in Ramsey County to develop a GIS-based methodology for identifying opportunity sites for long-term economic growth. This project was recognized by the Saint Paul Chamber with a “Leaders in Local Government” award in 2015, and will continue to evolve in 2016.

2016 – Planned Areas of Focus

- In order to support those communities that seek to integrate economic competitiveness more fully into their local plans, the Local Planning Handbook will continue to be supplemented with additional resources, as outlined below:
 - **Cluster Profiles** – Cluster Profiles, which will be introduced in “Draft” form at the Council Meeting, can be used by local communities as they consider how to plan for growing and/or supporting our region’s Core Industry Clusters. Cluster Profiles provide key data about the cluster’s employment trends, concentration, average wage, leading occupations, current geographic distribution, site selection considerations, and more.
 - **Mapping/GIS** – Through each community’s online “Community Page”, we’ll supplement the solid foundation of geographic layers and map products developed for *Thrive* in order to detail, and as appropriate to localize, geographic phenomena that influence, and are influenced by, local and regional economic competitiveness.
 - **Fact Sheets** – Fact Sheets provide communities with important context, background, and data related to the region’s economic competitiveness, that each community can use as a springboard to further analysis and study at a local level.
 - **Best Practices/Plan Examples** – These resources will serve to catalog economic competitiveness practices employed by peer communities and regions, and share pertinent findings that communities might use for inspiration and comparison in their local planning process.
- Continue collaboration with partners in Ramsey County to refine and share methodology for identifying opportunity sites. Integrate this approach into the Local Planning Handbook for use in the local Comprehensive planning process.
- Additional focus on workforce origin-destination analysis and commute sheds for communities, with data from the Census’ “Local Employment Dynamics” dataset integrated into [Community Profiles](#), linked from each [Community Page](#) on the Local Planning Handbook.

¹The six elements of the 2015 research agenda are: 1) core industry clusters; 2) real estate requirements of core industry clusters; 3) sites for economic growth; 4) freight and logistics; 5) occupations; 6) access to jobs.