



REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL LAND INVENTORY

Presented by Todd Graham and Corrin Wendell

Thursday, February 23, 2017

12:00 – 1:00 PM

Webinar Summary: Manufacturing and other export industries may not be the most visible employers in today's economy. But these remain crucial for regional economic prosperity. Planners need to consider manufacturing's real estate needs, how industrial use fits with neighboring land uses, and the benefits of industrial land preservation. An Industrial Land Inventory, demonstrated in this webinar, is a first step toward understanding the regional geography of industrial land. While not every community has industrial land, economic activities on industrial sites often have transportation and workforce demand implications that cut across city lines.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. What can be done to communicate with industrial business owners within my community to facilitate the preservation process of their industrial land?

As discussed earlier in the preservation of industrial lands, one of the areas that can help a community communicate with its business owners, is to go through a BR&E program. You can look through the tools that are offered through a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. This can be used as an economic development strategy as well as a mechanism to really get to know the needs of your businesses. It's important to know how they want to stay in your community, how they want to grow, how to expand, and how the city can be a proponent of these businesses who would like to stay in the communities, and how they could be better supported. So, I would say a BR&E program would help in that communication with the business owners.

2. Where can I get more information on BR&E, Business Retention, and Expansion, either informational or educational?

A great resource is through the University of Minnesota Extension. They do offer a certificate program through that extension program, so BR&E is very important to their learning and education component. Thus, a lot of resources can be found through them.

Along with that, there are consultants who specialize in Economic Development Strategy and BR&E. Those can be identified through the EDAM, the Economic Development Association of Minnesota.

3. Is freight rail access really that important anymore?

Well, yes. This is one of the things mentioned in the middle of the webinar. There are industries present in the Twin Cities that are involved in the production or movement of large, bulk shipments. These tend to be agriculture, food manufacturing industries, wood products industries, and natural resource industries such as sand and aggregate. These commodities are being moved in large shipments. You can't do all of that economically with just trucks. For those industries, we need either river ports or rail.

4. What types of elements within the Economic Development Chapter of our Comprehensive Plan Update would help in the preserving of industrial land?

If your community is thinking about developing an economic development chapter for your Comprehensive Plan, there are many elements that can be included, and we have a list here. Starting



with identifying economic development policies and goals, either through your economic development authority, city council, or both. Within the plan, you would want to do some assessment of what is economy and employment in your jurisdiction, including describing the city's employment base and resident workforce. Also, the industrial land inventory that we've discussed in this webinar becomes an important component for knowing what goes where. If you have small area, downtown, or neighborhood plans, those can be brought into for consideration. You'll want to highlight any business assistance programs that you have and any business retention expansion that you are involved in. Also, discuss how the industrial zones or industrial parks of the city relate the rest of what is going on, and relate to the freight network.

In looking at the example from Rosemount, they really have a great framework for what they included in their Economic Development Chapter, which has proven to be successful to them, in looking at the work that they have done. All the elements that Todd mentioned are instrumental in making sure the chapter is well-rounded and relates to the other areas within your comprehensive plan, whether than be land use or transportation, so that they all speak to one another. The addition of that chapter will help with the development efforts of any city.

5. Do you have a suggestion or resources for evaluating the suitability for existing industrial areas for new industrial development? Some older areas may have small lot sizes, poor transportation access, or obsolete buildings and may need re-positioning.

In the question, the person asking has identified some of the factors, and other factors were listed in the middle of the webinar. We talked about our analysis of what factors led to the greater probability of new industrial development. It includes: location, location, location! Are you along a freight corridor? Do you have large parcels or assemblable multiple parcels? Is there workforce in the immediate area? And then also the market characteristics like cost of real estate or land in those areas. They are all things that are going to contribute to the marketability.

6. What are some examples of the way manufacturing will look like in the future?

From some of the information that is seen in today's type of manufacturing, it really depends. Like Todd mentioned, there will be smaller sites, larger sites—it really depends on their location, their access. Certain area we see, there is a different type of demand for housing and distribution. There may be larger facilities on the periphery of the Twin Cities, and there may be smaller facilities in the core. We are also seeing faster production and delivery needs. Those have been around for quite some time, but they are changing. Wholesalers and online retailers have a different range of facility needs in today's market than we've seen before. Some of the areas could be smaller that focus on more flexible spaces, and are more helpful to enable faster delivery. But I think that looking at the land inventory tool will be instrumental in figuring out when businesses come into your community or whether the businesses want to expand already within your community. What land will be useful for them and in coordination with that, development, and redevelopment. It will depend on the nature of the work being done.

Please send additional questions or comments to todd.graham@metc.state.mn.us, corrin.hoegenwendell@metc.state.mn.us, or to angela.torres@metc.state.mn.us.