



Foster public-private partnerships to leverage resources, knowledge & innovation.

Public and private leadership needs to foster partnerships and collaboration that maximize the effectiveness of limited economic development resources.

CHAPTER 8

A Path Forward

8.1 Introduction

Growing Prosperity outlines 47 action items across 12 strategies that will build upon the community's many existing assets, and help the City of Milwaukee and its partners move toward greater economic prosperity for all its residents.

Chapters 1-3 discussed Milwaukee's "big picture" vision, goals and principles, and its evolving role in the regional, U.S. and global economy.

Chapter 4 identified ways to address obstacles and leverage the city's land and infrastructure assets in ways that support the region's key asset industry clusters, benefit local entrepreneurs, and advocate for policies that promote improved public transportation and anticipate future infrastructure needs.

Chapter 5 offered strategies aimed at preparing more of the city's residents for successful employment by partnering with local industry and educational institutions to develop programs that train workers in the skills needed to be successful now and in the future. It also identifies ways to support segments of the population that may have fallen through the cracks, either because they have a criminal record, a skills gap, a language deficiency, or because they lack a valid driver's license.

Chapter 6 developed actions that will support the city's entrepreneurs and small business owners, ease the regulatory path for start-ups, nurture new segments of the city's economy with a fresh focus on artists, inventors, innovators and

creative entrepreneurs, and effectively unleash the city's "creative spark."

Chapter 7 identified ways in which Milwaukee can build on its quality of life and place, capitalize on its many physical, social and cultural assets and market itself effectively.

The action items in this plan include both incremental and pivotal initiatives. Combined they will make a positive impact on the city's economic landscape and better position Milwaukee and its residents for future success.

8.2 The Need for Coordinated Action

In 2011, the Public Policy Forum released a report on the state of economic development in the city, and found among other things that key actions and initiatives were fragmented among the various actors in the economic development sphere.¹ Indeed, serious coordination between all the actors—local and regional government, workforce development agencies, educational institutions, local companies, foundations, community and neighborhood organizations, affinity groups, and others—is fundamental to successfully implementing the strategies outlined in *Growing Prosperity* and moving the City of Milwaukee forward.

Some of the actions set forth in this plan are aimed specifically at increasing coordination; for example, regularly communicating with the Milwaukee 7 (M7) and cluster organizations to

support key asset industries, or outstationing City staff in small business and entrepreneur support organizations to increase the level of coordination between City government and outside organizations key to economic development. Other action items may focus on more specific organizations or elements. All strategies, however, will require close collaboration among the different players in Milwaukee’s economic development arena.

Particularly important is coordination between City government and the M7, because the city exists within a regional context. Throughout the development of this Action Agenda, City officials and M7 have worked closely to develop city and regional strategies that ensure proper alignment. Figure 8.1 shows the ways in which strategies and action items in *Growing Prosperity* dovetail with the *M7 Framework for Economic Growth*.

City priorities and actions naturally are better served whenever they align with regional goals.

8.3 Key Partners

The City of Milwaukee, and specifically the Department of City Development, is the agency charged to lead implementation of many of the strategies and action items contained in this document. The City, however, cannot do all these things alone. Many of the strategies and action items will require close coordination—across various city departments, local organizations and businesses, and other stakeholders. Each action item identifies key partners required to successfully implement that action. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and the City recognizes that key partners may evolve over time.

The overarching goals will need all the economic development actors, funders and organizations in Milwaukee to be actively involved and working together as a unit, operating as a team. The following are some agencies and organizations the City will need to engage at a higher level in order to implement *Growing Prosperity* so that it can fully benefit all residents.

Figure 8.1: Points of Alignment Between M7 Framework & Growing Prosperity

Regional Framework for Economic Growth Strategies	Growing Prosperity Action Items
Become a leading innovator, producer and exporter of products and services related to energy, power and controls	4.1.1; 4.2.1
Become a global hub for innovation and start-up activity in water technology	4.1.1; 4.2.1; 7.4.1
Leverage the region’s geographic, supply chain and human capital advantages to grow the food and beverage cluster	4.1.1; 4.2.1; 4.2.2
Enhance the export capacity and capability of the region’s firms, focusing on small- and medium-sized enterprises	4.2.5
Align workforce development with growth opportunities in targeted, high-potential industry clusters	5.1.1; 5.1.2
Foster a dynamic, richly networked innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, building on existing nascent, but fragmented activities	6.2.1; 6.3.1; 6.3.2; 6.3.3; 6.3.4
Catalyze “economic place-making” in the region’s core cities and strategic locations throughout the region	7.1.1; 7.1.2; 7.1.4; 7.1.5; 7.3.1
Modernize regional infrastructure to enhance efficiency, cost-effectiveness and connectivity	4.2.4; 4.2.5; 5.2.4
Enhance institutional cooperation and collaboration for economic growth	5.1.2; 6.1.3; 6.1.4; 6.2.2; 6.2.3; 7.1.1; 7.3.2

Cluster Organizations

As Chapter 4 demonstrates, concentrated support of the key asset industry clusters identified by the M7 *Framework for Economic Growth* is essential to ensuring the city and its residents benefit from the anticipated growth in these clusters. In order to gain a share of future asset industry development, the City will need to coordinate more closely with the cluster organizations that support these industries: FaB Wisconsin, M-WERC, and the Water Council. The City will make an effort to engage regularly with representatives from these organizations, understand and respond to their needs, and keep city sites on the radar as potential locations for future development and expansion.

State Government

A number of action items in this document will require close coordination with State agencies, particularly around infrastructure and transportation improvements. The State plays a pivotal role in shaping and directing transportation and infrastructure investments and is often the intermediary between the city and federal funds, grants and programs for infrastructure in all its forms: road, rail, bridge, airport and port improvements; underground cable and pipeline extension, networks for television and high-speed broadband Internet service. All of these infrastructure elements affect Milwaukee's connectivity and ability to compete.

State transportation investments focus primarily on expansion and maintenance of the Interstate highway system. Less attention has been paid to public transportation systems, impeding Milwaukee's and Southeast Wisconsin's ability to compete regionally and globally. These are the kind of investments that pay the taxpayer back with interest—in jobs, regional income, and long-term economic prosperity.

Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

The Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) is another key partner that will be essential to successfully implement the workforce development strategies outlined in

chapter 5. MAWIB functions as a “one-stop center” for low-income individuals seeking employment and training services.

MAWIB has instituted a number of initiatives to assist populations with special needs, such as ex-offenders, to expand training and employment opportunities in specific sectors, such as green jobs and hospitality, and to respond to employer needs for particular skills, such as welding. MAWIB also undertakes workforce research and facilitates youth employment and job preparedness programs.

MAWIB will be a critical player in helping Milwaukee residents to become competitive for jobs in regional growth industries. A 2012 report by the Public Policy Forum identified a variety of opportunities for additional coordination with local employers, educational institutions and workforce development agencies.²

Business Support Organizations

Business support organizations like BizStarts, the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, chambers of commerce, and the city's many business improvement districts serve at the front lines of small business and entrepreneur development and support. The City must take a more active role in engaging these organizations and supporting their missions.

Several of the action items, particularly in Chapter 6, require deep coordination between the City and business support organizations. Improving connections between the City and these actors will help to improve responsiveness and customer service, and will help the City identify ways to ease the path for start-ups, small businesses and entrepreneurs alike.

8.4 A Baseline & Metrics

Developing work plans, establishing a baseline and defining metrics are essential to measuring the success of the city’s and the region’s economic development efforts. *Growing Prosperity* identifies a series of metrics aimed at measuring citywide economic success on a macro level; taken together, these metrics describe how the city and its population are doing overall.

The path forward is an iterative process. *Growing Prosperity* sets the direction and goals of economic development in the city; the next steps include:

1. developing work plans for all action items: internally for city-led actions and in close collaboration with outside organizations for non-city-led initiatives;
2. defining metrics and sources;
3. establishing baseline data for metrics;
4. reporting regularly to elected officials and the community;
5. reviewing and adjusting work plans and direction based on performance to-date.

Each action item proposed has a time frame, lead actor, and one or more supporting partners identified. Some actions are already in progress and have management and funding frameworks in place; these can be undertaken immediately. Others, however, need more groundwork to be developed before they can move forward. Short, medium, and long-term action items will generally fall along an implementation spectrum of 10 years, as shown in Figure 8.2

Work Plan Development

Roughly half of the action items in *Growing Prosperity* are identified as being led by City government; the other half requires leadership

Figure 8.2: Implementation Timeline for Action Items



from outside organizations. The Department of City Development will work internally to develop work plans for those action items to be City-led and will interface directly with those organizations identified to lead the non-city efforts. Work plans for which outside organizations are to take the lead must be developed in close coordination with these organizations; without buy-in, these action items may not succeed.

Initial work plans will follow the template in Appendix F and will identify partners, required resources and implementation steps, define the reason or impetus for the action item, and state the desired outcome. Work plans will also indicate priority—a combination of both time frame and overall priority, for example “short-term high priority” or “medium-term low priority.” Where *Growing Prosperity* aims to provide a more general direction for city economic development efforts, the work plans will provide greater specificity and focus.

An initial measure of success is whether the City and its partners effectively organize and begin implementation of the strategies and action items detailed in this document. That said, getting these action items “up and running” is just a starting point. Lasting and sustainable success comes when these strategies actually move the needle on macro indicators of the city’s economic health. Accordingly, the City has identified 10 key metrics it will use to tangibly measure the impact *Growing Prosperity* has on various measures of city economic health.

Baseline & Metrics

Establishing a baseline and defining metrics are the first steps in measuring the success of the City’s economic development efforts. These baseline measures will offer a clear point in time against which to compare future progress.

Figure 8.3: Metrics & Targeted Trends

Metric	Relevant Chapter(s)	Desired Trend Over Time	
Population change citywide and in central city neighborhoods	LO, HC, QL	↑	Increase
Acres of developable industrial land available, redeveloped; non-residential vacancy rates	LO	↔	100 ac. shovel-ready 500 ac. over 10 years
Workforce participation rate by race/ethnicity, education	LO, HC	↑	Increase
Percent of workforce employed in manufacturing or “family-supporting” jobs by race/ethnicity, education	LO, HC	↑	Increase
Percent of workforce employed in asset industry clusters by race/ethnicity, education	LO, HC	↑	Increase
Poverty rate for city and as a share of MSA by race/ethnicity, education	HC, QL	↓	Decrease
Business starts & closures	EI	↑	Increase
Median household income by race/ethnicity, educational	QL	↑	Increase
Educational attainment; residents 25+ with bachelor’s degree or higher	HC, EI, QL	↑	Increase
Neighborhood market conditions	QL	↑	Stabilize or improve

LO = Location-based Opportunities; HC = Human Capital; EI = Entrepreneurship & Innovation; QL = Quality of Life & Place

Growing Prosperity is roughly envisioned as a 10-year document and as such recommends reexamining the baseline and metrics at a midpoint (five years) and again at its completion in 10 years as new or more nuanced metrics may be needed as economic development priorities evolve within the city, the Milwaukee 7 region, and key asset industry clusters. Just as the economy is dynamic and ever-changing, so too must City government and its partners be prepared to adapt and update priorities for economic growth in the city.

Metrics will be collected at least annually, based on the schedule shown in Appendix G, and reported to the Mayor’s Office and Common Council in an annual dashboard, which will also be published online. The dashboard will present baseline values for the city, values for the current and previous years, and percent change between the current year and the previous year, as well as between the current year and the baseline. Metrics will be reported at the citywide level, but where relevant, datasets will be disaggregated

to show differences among race and ethnic groups, gender, age, or other breakouts as appropriate. These metrics are shown in Figure 8.3. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, a strong region is one in which the central city is growing, workforce participation is high, poverty is low, and more importantly well-distributed spatially, neighborhood market conditions are strong and median household income is growing.

Population Change

A stable and growing city population is a strong indicator of economic prosperity: evidence shows that cities with growing populations are more economically vibrant and successful, while cities losing residents struggle with the challenges of disinvestment. The annual dashboard will include a metric on population change citywide and in central city neighborhoods in particular. The goal is to see overall population increase and central city population—which has been declining over time—to stabilize.

Acres of Developable Land

Recognizing Milwaukee’s history as a manufacturing powerhouse, four metrics focus specifically on the manufacturing health of the city. Milwaukee’s economic health can be measured in part by the number of residents working in manufacturing jobs that offer family-supporting wages, the number of residents working in the key asset industry clusters in particular, overall workforce participation rate disaggregated by race/ethnicity and by educational attainment, and the acres of industrially-zoned land available and redeveloped.

A constant supply of developable land is essential to attracting new industries, retaining expanding ones, and properly supporting key asset clusters. The City will report annually on how many acres of developable land are remediated and ready for redevelopment, and how many acres of land have been redeveloped to-date. The target for this metric is to maintain 100 acres of industrial land for development annually, and over 10 years to convert 500 acres of currently underutilized land back to productive industrial use.

In addition, the City will also report on vacancy rates of both land and property within business districts in order to inform leadership of which districts are performing well and which may need subsequent investment and attention.

Workforce Participation Rates

The City will report on three measures of workforce participation: overall workforce participation rate, disaggregated by race and ethnicity and educational attainment; workforce participation within asset industry clusters; and workers employed in manufacturing jobs. Each provides a different view of the health of Milwaukee’s workforce and how well efforts to employ Milwaukee residents are working. The goal of *Growing Prosperity* is to increase workforce participation across the board, but particularly among the city’s minority and harder to employ populations.

Poverty Rate

Poverty is disproportionately concentrated within the city limits, and disproportionately affects the city’s minority populations. Successful economic development efforts will help to address this imbalance by helping to improve workforce participation in minority communities and among the harder to employ. While outside of the scope of this plan, the provision of affordable housing in Milwaukee’s suburbs would also help to reduce the city’s poverty rate.

The City will report annually the poverty rate for the city overall and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and educational attainment. Poverty in smaller geographies within the city may also be reported where appropriate. Additionally, the ratio of poverty between the city and suburbs will be measured as an indicator of just how concentrated poverty is within the region. The targeted trends for these metrics are overall reductions of poverty rate and the concentration of poverty in the city.

Business Start-Ups & Closures

Most start-ups eventually fail; however, the number of business starts in a region is a strong indicator of economic health. It is no coincidence that metro areas in the U.S. with the highest levels of business start-up activity—those regions in which individuals feel inspired and supported to take the risk of starting a new business—are also the fastest growing and healthiest. Therefore, tracking the number of business start-ups in the city and region is another important metric.

Along with number of business start-ups, staff will track how many businesses within the city close their doors. Tracking trends in both business start-ups and closures and in which sectors both are occurring will help the City to identify trends within the local business market and help City government decide where to focus future support and investment. The desired trend over time is to see the number of business start-ups increase and the ratio of start-ups to closures to be greater than one (that is, the number of start-ups to exceed the number of closures).

Median Household Income

Standing at \$34,042 in 2012, the median household income in the City of Milwaukee falls nearly 37% below the value for the region as a whole.³ It is not enough for residents to be employed; they must also be earning family-sustaining incomes. The City will report on median household income citywide and also disaggregated by race/ethnicity and educational attainment to identify where additional focus is needed, with the goal of closing the gap between city and regional median incomes.

Educational Attainment

Educated residents are essential to a healthy city economy. Workers educated in STEM skills are better prepared to find employment and excel in key asset industry clusters, and higher levels of education are correlated generally with higher earning potential. The City will report on educational attainment, focusing in particular on the percent of residents aged 25 or older with bachelor's degrees or higher; and the general trends in income migration (used as a proxy for education), to identify whether the city is net gaining or losing workers with higher levels of education (brain gain/drain). The desired trends over time would be for the percent of residents with higher education credentials to increase, and the loss of college-educated residents to other cities or markets to decrease.

Neighborhood Market Conditions

The Market Value Analysis conducted in 2013 sets a baseline for neighborhood market conditions within the city. This baseline analysis, conducted and refreshed periodically, will allow City government and its partners to measure the effectiveness of intervention strategies aimed at neighborhood revitalization and compare changes in the housing market over time.

Just as strategies and action items in this document may evolve over time, so too might the metrics change as new goals are defined and new indicators identified. The metrics in Figure 8.3 are only a starting point for a data-driven approach to economic development in the city.

8.5 Concluding Thoughts

At this critical juncture, *Growing Prosperity* defines a path forward, one that aims to support key asset industry clusters as they develop and evolve, prepare city residents for success in the workplace, augment innovation and creativity in our community by encouraging entrepreneurs and easing the path to business establishment, and preserving and growing our city's remarkable quality of life and community assets.

Growing Prosperity, however, is just a starting point in this process. Success requires a renewed focus and increased coordination between City government and the various organizations and stakeholders working on the ground every day to improve the future for the city and its residents. Success will not be achieved by City government alone; nor is it solely a private-sector function. All stakeholders—City government, nonprofit organizations, business partners, developers, residents, and others—must together declare a positive vision for Milwaukee and work together to achieve lasting progress. This document is a first step, but bold action is required to carry it forward.

The City of Milwaukee will take the lead in growing prosperity for city residents and businesses by pursuing the strategies and action items that have been outlined in the preceding pages of this Action Agenda, and will continue to coordinate with important partners in taking the necessary steps to implement them.

Endnotes for Chapter 8

1. Helpap, David, Rob Henken and Joe Peterangelo. "Assembling the Parts: An Examination of Milwaukee's Economic Development Landscape." Public Policy Forum, November 2011.
2. Peterangelo, Joe, Rob Henken and David Helpap. "Pathways to Employment: Exploring the Activities and Resources of Milwaukee's Workforce Development System." Public Policy Forum, December 2012.
3. 2012 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.