GOAL 1:
Create a Resilient Regional Economy

A healthy economy provides the foundation upon which a more sustainable future can be constructed. Economic analysis shows that the existing regional economy is overly dependent on a limited number of economic sectors, making it more vulnerable in the long term.

Another pillar of a healthy economy is an educated workforce. Residents must also have access to the places they live, work, learn, and play. Everyone who wants to live in Greater Des Moines should have access to a good job, be able to live affordably, and enjoy a high quality of life.
**Strategy 1A**

**Develop a system of vibrant, walkable employment and residential nodes dispersed throughout Greater Des Moines and connected to one another by multimodal corridors**

The Greater Des Moines region reflects a commitment to support and strengthen the character and resilience of existing communities and neighborhoods. Developing nodes can increase employment opportunities, housing options, and overall community health and services near key neighborhoods while leaving neighborhood character intact. Over the last few decades, development in the region has been predominantly auto-oriented. This has resulted in a transportation system that has benefited the region through reduced congestion and travel times. However, this development has limited choices in the way we live. Projections show a population of approximately 750,000 people in Greater Des Moines by the year 2050. This means that around 250,000 additional people will call the region home over the next forty years and that Greater Des Moines will need nearly 150,000 new housing units by 2050, as shown in Strategy 3A.1

Anticipated changes in the demographics of the region also show that future residents will demand a greater range of living options resulting from both different lifestyle preferences and the escalating costs of private automobile travel. How the region grows to accommodate these additional people will be a major factor in the future success of the region’s economic, environmental, and social characteristics.

Focusing redevelopment in certain areas and connecting those areas furthers all aspects of sustainability:

- Targeting specific nodes throughout the region allows developers and local governments to use existing infrastructure, thereby reducing the need for costly infrastructure expansion and minimizing the costs to taxpayers that growth often creates;

- Developing mixed-use, mid-rise (two to five story) buildings at targeted nodes and corridors substantially increases the tax base of local communities;2

- Building mixed-use, mid-rise developments helps support the maintenance of aging infrastructure through increased revenue;3

- Creating a mixed-use, walkable environment at nodes and along corridors helps reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improves air quality, and supports lifestyles that are more active. Use of these nodes and corridors allows existing residential neighborhoods to remain relatively unchanged while increasing the diversity of housing options across the region;

- Focusing these nodes and corridors on employment, commercial uses, and residential activity makes it easier for DART and others to provide multimodal transportation options.; and,

- Increasing fuel/transportation costs will make these nodes and corridors increasingly attractive over the coming decades and will help promote the region’s competitive edge.

Redeveloped nodes should include a mix of retail and other services, commercial and light industrial employment opportunities, and a diversity of housing types, including apartments above shops, live-work units, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and mansion-apartments. These housing types should be available at a variety of price points, and a percentage of the total units should be affordable to low income families. The provision of workforce housing within the identified nodes will ensure a high level of access to service sector jobs, reduce transportation costs, and promote an active lifestyle.

Ideal candidates for targeted redevelopment include locations with under-used infrastructure capacity or aging facilities in need of renovation or replacement:

- Old town centers, such as the Highland Park Neighborhood in northeast Des Moines or Valley Junction in West Des Moines, that already exhibit pedestrian-oriented characteristics;

- Auto-oriented shopping centers that have reached the end of their life cycle and present a prime redevelopment opportunity, such as Southridge Mall;

- Strip shopping centers along identified corridors that can be redeveloped to bring buildings to the street and create a pedestrian-oriented environment; and,

- Existing developments that can be easily retrofitted to be more pedestrian-oriented.

Implementing the following actions can help achieve this strategy:

- Work with communities to identify areas that are potential candidates for development/redevelopment as walkable nodes and corridors.

- Educate banks, developers, real estate professionals, and appraisers about nodes and infill opportunities.

- Adopt a strategy that focuses half of future development within the identified nodes to promote the efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
FORM-BASED CODES

For the past half century, land use regulations have focused more on controlling land uses than on the physical form of development. Form-based codes reverse this emphasis by better directing the physical form of development while allowing for a greater mix of uses.

Zoning that aims to separate land uses originates from a desire to keep incompatible uses, like factories and homes, apart from each other. While some uses should, in fact, be separated, others have been needlessly segregated, like grocery stores and residential neighborhoods. This use-based zoning leads to excessive reliance on automobiles for unnecessarily far daily trips. It also leads to segregation by income and the absence of vibrant, mixed-use downtowns.

Form-based codes, on the other hand, regulate the forms of buildings and the space around them, and allow for a greater mix of uses that can occupy these forms. These regulations control things like how far a building can be from the street, where parking can be placed, how high a structure can be in relation to street width, and how much window area a façade must have. These are not guidelines but actually regulations that can lead to more diverse and physically desirable forms of development.

EXAMPLE FORM-BASED CODE FROM TROY, MICHIGAN

Source: http://www.troymi.gov/Portals/0/Files/Planning/AdoptedTroyZoningOrdinance04282011.pdf
- Identify ways to remove the barriers that currently prevent nodes from being developed or redeveloped.

- Target street improvements at identified nodes/corridors to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment. These improvements can include narrowing travel lanes, reducing speed limits, installing planted medians, adding on-street parking, widening sidewalks, and planting street trees along medians and sidewalk.

- Develop a planning strategy that anticipates future market demand and guides building construction to create thriving, vibrant nodes that promote accessibility, provide a sense of community, and enhance overall health.

- Provide incentives for development at nodes. See Strategy 4D for more information.

- Develop model form-based code and transit-oriented development overlays for the proposed nodes and corridors to make sure communities achieve vibrant, mixed-use, walkable environments.

STRATEGY 1A
POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS:
Communities
DART
Greater Des Moines Partnership (and other chambers)
Developers
In today’s strained financial climate, local governments must consider the impact of different development patterns on their revenue streams. A Sonoran Institute-commissioned study outlines the differences in revenue generation between auto-oriented and pedestrian-oriented development. The study analyzes property tax revenue for nine communities in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The study points out that, when cities are considering different development options, a major factor in their decision should be the potential tax revenue the development will produce. The problem with this approach is that the total annual tax revenue per development generally provides the basis for the decision. This would be like comparing farmland productivity by yield per farm. In actuality, farmers use yield per acre to compare farmland. Perhaps we can make development decisions in the same fashion by comparing revenue per acre.

A comparison of two different development types in the City of West Des Moines demonstrates this concept. The first site is a Super Target located at 5405 Mills Civic Parkway, which brings in a total of $468,742 in annual property tax revenue. The second site is located at 138 5th Street in Valley Junction and brings in modest property tax revenues of $13,418 annually. On total tax revenue per year, the decision is clear; the large big box development brings in substantially more revenue than the smaller development in Valley Junction. However, when comparing these two sites by revenue per acre, the results change. The 16.6-acre Super Target results in $28,237 per year, while the 0.064-acre site in Valley Junction results in $209,656 — a difference seven times greater. If developed in the style of Valley Junction, the 16-acre Target site could bring in over $3 million annually.

By using revenue profiles, local governments can make decisions that are more efficient when it comes to the type of development patterns they promote in their communities. Focusing economic development in areas with existing infrastructure could increase the amount of revenue collected by local governments. Increased revenues could help meet the long-term liabilities of the existing infrastructure, thus making our cities more financially viable over time.
and gives non-drivers a feasible way to move through the region.
The goal of reprioritizing transportation funding is to ensure that
time in the region remain at or near current levels and
population growth doesn’t lead to increased traffic.

**Leverage the investment in public transportation and in the bicycle and pedestrian networks by co-locating land uses and making these modes user friendly.**

Transportation and land use directly affect one another; the placement of a roadway has implications for the adjacent land uses and vice versa. The same is true for other modes, including public transportation, biking, and walking. As we move toward 2050, we have the opportunity to take advantage of this relationship.

The DART Forward 2035 Plan recommends route alignments based on existing and planned densities of residents and employees. Matching transit service with where people live and work is the best way to maximize access and to operate a system most efficiently. It is also important that the transit stops are accessible by bicycle and on foot. In both the short- and long-term, the geography of future development across the region should align with the region’s transit routes, and it should be linked to the bicycle and pedestrian networks. To accomplish these aims, Greater Des Moines should:

- Promote employment and residential infrastructure along transit corridors to ensure a critical mass of riders.
- Increase transit service as density increases.
- Reduce municipal parking requirements as transit service schedules increase.
- Promote regional equity through increased access to public transportation and multimodal options in neighborhoods where automobile ownership is at reduced levels.
- Acquire the old Rock Island Railroad Depot for use as a passenger rail station.

Riding transit should be easy for everyone to figure out. In the short-term, schedules and maps should be available at all stops, online, via phone, and in hard copy at prominent locations like libraries. In the longer-term, employers, residential brokers, and building managers/superintendents should provide schedules and maps to new employees and new residents. Material should be available in all of the major languages spoken in the region. Anyone who moves to Greater Des Moines should be able to understand the system on his or her first day.

Greater Des Moines has already made significant investments in its bicycle and pedestrian networks. The region should build upon this base in order to enhance its multimodal transportation options. Linking these networks with public transit will also ensure that these facilities serve as viable commuting options in addition to being recreation outlets. Greater Des Moines should:

- Ensure the presence of sidewalks on both sides of existing and future roadways.
- Identify, complete gaps, and make connections within the regional bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- Explore bicycle and pedestrian network management options and promotion that support year-round use.
- Offer a share-the-road educational series as part of a larger marketing campaign.

**Enhance the region’s freight network to support goods movement and economic development.**

The freight and goods movement network within Greater Des Moines should be safe, reliable, and efficient. Freight is critical to the success of the economy of Greater Des Moines and of the State of Iowa. Greater Des Moines sits at a crossroads of North American freight traffic through the intersection of Interstates 80 and 35. The area’s freight network includes an inland port, four Class 1 railroads, and cargo operations at the Des Moines International Airport, and four Class 1 railroads, which are large freight railroad companies, as classified based on operating revenue. Currently, those revenues must be $250 million or more after adjusting for inflation using a Railroad Freight Price Index developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Freight systems need to efficiently move both import and export goods. Greater Des Moines exported approximately $2.5 billion in goods and services in 2012, making it the 82nd largest exporter region in the United States. Greater Des Moines’s export growth rate is a high 10.7 percent, giving it the 51st highest growth rate in the nation and indicating a need for continued support of goods movement. Providing the freight industry with a safe, reliable, and efficient freight network can keep Greater Des Moines on a path of economic viability. To achieve these aims, Greater Des Moines should:

**STRATEGY 1B**

**POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS:**

DART
Des Moines Bicycle Collective
Downtown Community Alliance
Communities
Promote air, rail, and truck freight options, and explore the
development of an inland port where goods can transfer among
modes.

Work with the freight industry to reduce regional impediments
to freight and goods movement.

Maximize the efficiency of goods movement in Greater Des
Moines.

Identify opportunities to expand the goods movement system.

Prepare for changes in the transportation system
The Tomorrow Plan looks nearly forty years into the future. Much
can change in that time. We are potentially at the cusp of major
transportation shifts — in terms of what the system looks like and
how it is powered. The Greater Des Moines region must be able to
adapt to these changes by tracking shifts in technology and related
trends and by forming teams to address future infrastructure
needs.

“My generation wants the freedom
to move about our community
without having to be tied down to
an automobile. We want to be able
to have the flexibility to travel and
engage with people without being
locked in a solitary, metal tube
shooting around the city on four
wheels. This is much more than a
‘green’ thing, it’s a freedom
thing.”

Alexander Grgurich
TEDxDesMoines organizer +
DART Transit Riders
Advisory Committee member
“The Innovation Core encompasses entrepreneurs, large corporations, educational institutions, and government to create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem across biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and information technology...

The innovation core creates a ‘creative commons’ where innovators in different sectors can create, meet, and collaborate on new products and companies that leverage uniquely Iowan skills and areas of expertise.”

Christian Renaud
Principal at StartupCity Des Moines
To break down the silos between the state’s three target clusters, to leverage opportunities in their overlapping areas, and to facilitate knowledge exchange among industry experts, Greater Des Moines should take the following actions:

- Develop a cluster of hybrid biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and IT incubators in the region. This collaborative cooperative — the innovation core — would be a place where entrepreneurs could grow, sharpen ideas, and leverage existing equipment from, for example, Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). The incubators would apply world-class research at regional educational institutions; provide outsourced/locally sourced products, research, and development for regional companies (i.e., large businesses could look to local startups first); and, create opportunities at the intersection of biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and IT.

- Connect local startups with large businesses in Greater Des Moines to promote local sourcing of goods and services.

- Leverage Greater Des Moines Partnership studies on biotechnology and advanced manufacturing incubators to inform the development of the innovation core.

- Provide support to communities and startups through technical assistance and relationship building.

- Identify cluster sites around Greater Des Moines. Early sites could benefit from proximity to StartupCity Des Moines or the bioeconomy corridor stretching between Greater Des Moines and Iowa State University.

- Connect local startups with Iowa State University, DMACC, Drake University, Des Moines University, Grand View University, and Simpson College so these schools serve as academic feeders for the innovation core.

### POTENTIAL INNOVATION CORE INDUSTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIOTECHNOLOGY: INFORMATICS/GREEN/RED/WHITE</th>
<th>ADVANCED MANUFACTURING: MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURE</th>
<th>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: TECHNOLOGY AS PLATFORM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bioinformatics (Proteomics, Functional, Structural Genomics)</td>
<td>Nanoscale Manufacturing</td>
<td>Internet of Devices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Biotechnology</td>
<td>Composites Development</td>
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<td>Biomedical Devices, Pharma</td>
<td>Bespoke Prototyping/3D Printing</td>
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<td>Industrial Bio, Bioremediation</td>
<td>Industrial Bio, Bioremediation Robotics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Green Manufacture (Process/Field)</td>
<td>Quantum Computing</td>
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**STRATEGY 1C**

**POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS:**
- StartupCity Des Moines
- Higher education institutions
- Greater Des Moines Partnership and other chambers
- Iowa Economic Development Authority

- Leverage existing equipment from institutions and industry that results in pop-up shops for biotechnology and advanced manufacturing.

- Provide the complete package of amenities, including varied transportation options, cultural opportunities, retail services, parking, and market rate housing, in the innovation core.

Even with the success of StartupCity and other entrepreneurial activity taking place in the region, moving the needle of the entrepreneurial community in Greater Des Moines has proven a challenge. Only about one in 100 people in Greater Des Moines identifies as being an entrepreneur. Creating an “innovation-friendly” environment — an environment emphasizing trust; mentorship; the sharing of ideas and services; and, a willingness to risk, fail, and try again — requires attention to business culture, social networks, quality of life, and more.

Prerequisites for attracting the talented labor on which innovative firms depend include maintaining the existing environmentally friendliness, safety, fun, and increasing accessibility of the region. In this case, accessibility includes air travel, private vehicles,
public transportation, biking, and walking. Additionally, a key element to being “innovation-friendly” is developing a culture of collaboration that still benefits from the expertise of existing regional industries. This culture is about accepting and supporting startups while recognizing the benefits that well-established banking and insurance industries can provide in terms of expertise and professional services. Well-established service providers know how to evaluate the factors that make new businesses more likely to survive and grow. They have experience judging the quality of human capital, the visions of the founders and executive management team, the competition within the industry, the business models and strategies employed, the legal framework, and the financing.
CROSS-POLLINATION IN THE CORE

Much advanced manufacturing work takes place in front of a computer, including 3D printing, which further supports the idea of a hybrid incubator and of co-locating advanced manufacturing and IT. This hybrid model would promote cross-pollination between the two sectors. It would provide:

- **Mentoring** — Leveraging the best minds from the academic and private sector would help young companies succeed and grow.

- **Education** — Relevant, topical spot education would support projects currently under development.

- **Community** — Providing a nexus for entrepreneurs, educators, the private sector, and public sectors to coalesce around would move innovation forward.

- **Space** — Flexible operating space (e.g., fabrication or laboratory) would be used by incubator companies as well as select private firms.

The existence of approximately 2,200 comparable incubators throughout the country and 12,000 worldwide proves the strength of this hybrid approach. Dominant hybrid models are often housed in university annexes or are driven by economic development initiatives. Greater Des Moines could leverage the numerous biotechnology firms located in the region as well as programs such as the World Food Prize.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danforth Center- Kansas City</th>
<th>Helix Center- St. Louis</th>
<th>Advance- Green Bay</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Green Biotechnology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Green Biotechnology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Advanced Manufacturing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monsanto Partnership</td>
<td>Monsanto Partnership</td>
<td>Economic Development (Wisconsin) + University</td>
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<td>$60M gift from Danforth Fdn, $50M Monsanto</td>
<td>$20M received EDA</td>
<td>$2.5M/yr x 7 years (so far)</td>
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<td>$25M tax credit allocation State of Missouri</td>
<td>Subsidized lab space and offices</td>
<td>Subsidized offices and manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Sciences and Biofuels</td>
<td>Donated initial equipment by Monsanto</td>
<td>No equipment on site until recent additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New IBRG annex to provide incubation</td>
<td>Mentoring and Training onsite</td>
<td>Hybrid of general and manufacturing space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 1D

Enhance the digital infrastructure of Greater Des Moines

Telecommunication infrastructure affects the connectivity of individuals, firms, and institutions to the global marketplace and with one another. A significant volume of commerce, collaboration, and learning already occurs digitally. A positive relationship exists between broadband infrastructure investment and economic growth. Additionally, a digitally skilled workforce is becoming a prerequisite to attract and retain industries and employers that face national and global competition. The importance of broadband infrastructure and the quality of service in Greater Des Moines will likely intensify as the global economy evolves and as society makes further advances in technology. Simultaneously, competitive broadband infrastructure enhances quality of life by improving the delivery of healthcare services, the provision of emergency services, access to educational opportunities, and even the efficiency of the existing electrical grid.

Greater Des Moines connects globally through its core industries, which include major agricultural-related firms, biotechnology corporations, and financial service providers; examples include Kemin Industries, DuPont Pioneer, Wells Fargo, John Deere Financial, and Principal Financial Group. Improvements to the region’s broadband infrastructure would support these existing industries as their telecommunication and data transmission needs change. Improvements should also position the region as a suitable, digitally connected location that meets the requirements of emerging IT-intensive activities. Tier 7 broadband service, with maximum download/data transfer speeds of 10 to 25 megabits per second, serves most of Greater Des Moines.15

- Work with municipalities and the RICC to remove barriers to local rights-of-way (ROW) access and to help streamline the deployment process.
- Connect broadband deployment with other public infrastructure, especially in new growth areas. Leverage fiber optic expansion with the development of other public infrastructure through the RICC to maximize development potential and to minimize cost.
- Foster cooperative relationships with broadband vendors to expand the regional fiber optic network in concert with the planning and development of other infrastructure. Look at the partnership between the City of West Des Moines and Iowa Network Services (INS) as a model to complete an expansion of the fiber optic network.
- Complete a cost-benefit analysis on endowing or directing investments in fiber optic infrastructure expansion. Consider public investment in areas underserved or completely lacking broadband and where it is not feasible for private telecommunication providers to install or upgrade infrastructure due to a high fixed cost.
- Support existing initiatives, such as Connect Iowa, to expand broadband access and quality throughout the region.

STRATEGY 1D
POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS:
Iowa Network Services
Connect Iowa

- Monitor the telecommunication needs of businesses and collectively address broadband and fiber optic expansion as part of comprehensive planning for growth and infrastructure development through the Regional Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (RICC). Goal 4 provides more information about the RICC. This will help the region achieve economies of scale and improve the efficiency of any public investment in broadband infrastructure.

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**Strategy 1E**

**Encourage the growth and retention of existing companies**

Traditional economic development efforts by local, county, and state governments tend to employ tax and financial incentives and usually include marketing efforts that try to recruit existing businesses from other regions. While it is important to bring in new businesses to the region, this approach has the tendency of providing subsidies to firms that do not derive inherent competitive advantages from being in Greater Des Moines. As a result, they tend not to grow as quickly or stay as rooted as firms that do benefit from the location.

The Tomorrow Plan recommends a strategy to identify and support existing industries that derive benefits from the region. Firms that benefit from industry agglomeration in the region include the insurance and financial sectors. The Tomorrow Plan recommends policies and government programs that encourage existing firm growth and retention. The recommendations do so primarily by ensuring that the civic, social, and physical infrastructure conditions help local industries adapt and remain successful.

Most firms cannot afford to make location decisions based purely on historic precedence or civic loyalty. Instead, they must select locations where they can be most productive and innovative. The globalization of markets exerts pressure on regions and the firms and industries within them because globalization eliminates the relative protection of competing primarily with only other firms in the region. As a result, it is more effective to focus economic development on non-land based factors, such as:

- The quality of the labor base;
- Transportation linkages;
- Cost and quality of needed infrastructure and services;
- A positive business climate; and,
- The public and private sectors’ ability to adapt to changing technologies.

By focusing on creating conditions that help local businesses derive advantages from the locality, inter-firm linkages are strengthened and greater multiplier effects result. In addition, growing evidence suggests that, over the long run, policies aimed at enhancing the economic environment spur the formation of

“**I opened RAYGUN as a one-man outfit in 2005. Since then, RAYGUN has added 23 full time positions, reached sales of $3 million annually, and expanded its brand well beyond Des Moines and Iowa. During that same period, Urban Outfitters was brandished about as a company we really need in our city, but it has created zero jobs in Des Moines and sold $0 annually in Des Moines. Of our 23 employees, 20 were born and raised in Iowa. We have the talent and potential here and now. There is no way to be a great city or great economy without growing and nurturing existing companies.**”

Mike Draper
RAYGUN founder
more new businesses and bigger growth of existing businesses than incentives to recruit businesses from outside the relevant market area do. As a result, Greater Des Moines should:

- Commit to a regional economic development strategy. Competition to attract new firms — or the expansion and relocation of existing firms to specific jurisdictions within a region — can lead to inefficient policy decisions. An example of counterproductive intraregional competition is when communities in the same region each offer property tax abatements or other financial incentives to induce companies to select their jurisdiction. Such intraregional competition between neighboring communities may lead to a reduction in communication and cooperation among communities. Despite this intraregional competition, the region as a whole still faces even greater competition from other regions, states, and countries, and this type of tax abatement war tends to lead to a zero-sum game or “race to the bottom” between players. Such outcomes ignore the regional nature of economies and can result in the shifting of jobs and other resources within the region rather than the creation of new jobs and growth of assets in the region.

### STRATEGY 1E

**POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS:**

- Communities
- Developers
- Greater Des Moines Partnership (and other chambers)

- Support existing small businesses in leveraging resources targeted at small businesses.
- Create the kind of built environment required for firms to remain competitive and to attract and retain the talented labor on which they depend.
- Support the creation of a versatile, well-skilled labor force through educational policies and resources that include retraining and continual, life-long learning.
- Create a diverse mix of appropriately priced housing options and provide the community amenities and services that attract

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**STEM + ART = STEAM**

Following the Great Recession, the country is turning to innovation as a route to a prosperous future. In the past, innovation focused on the STEM subjects — science, technology, engineering, and math. Art and design, though, are poised to transform our economy in the 21st century just as science and technology did in the last century. We need to transform STEM into STEAM.16

The objectives of the STEAM movement are to:

- Transform research policy to place art and design at the center of STEM;
- Encourage the integration of art and design into K-20 education; and,
- Influence employers to hire artists and designers to drive innovation.

STEAM is already finding an outlet through cooperative fabrication studios, such as NextFab Studio in Philadelphia (images at right).
and retain the talented labor on which innovative, growing industries depend. Increasing the diversity of the housing stock will help preserve property values at all price points and will provide advantages in attracting and retaining businesses in an era of intense inter-jurisdictional competition for economic development.

- Encourage mixed-use developments that can enhance productivity more than conventional, single-use, stand-alone, corporate sites do.

- Remove any constraints that prevent a variety of housing and mixed-use developments from being built. For example, communities could implement objective review standards, revise parking requirements to allow for shared parking opportunities, and reduce setback and buffering requirements in exchange for greater pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

- Encourage communities to review comprehensive plans and smaller area plans, along with zoning regulations and capital improvement plans, to ensure that they facilitate the provision and maintenance of a competitively priced, diverse housing stock, as well as mixed-use activity centers served by technology and civic, social, and physical infrastructure. Providing this infrastructure will help local firms create and sustain their competitive advantages.

- Ensure the proper policies are in place to enhance private sector capabilities and opportunities. The wave of change produced by globalization and the technological revolution is just beginning. To navigate through this transition successfully, the public and private sectors in Greater Des Moines must collaborate on creating economic development policies and actions that enhance private sector capabilities and opportunities.

WHO IS THE CREATIVE CLASS?
The creative class contributes to the development of innovative new technologies, services, and products and helps companies maintain their competitive advantages. The highly skilled individuals who comprise the creative class are not as compelled to relocate to follow jobs, and knowledge-based companies will tend to consider where creative class workers prefer. These individuals prefer distinctive housing types that accommodate a variety of household compositions, that develop organically, and that are close to retail and entertainment outlets.
Expand and enhance preparation for the world of work across all age ranges

The Tomorrow Plan envisions the continuing growth of jobs in the financial and insurance sectors while also working to develop entrepreneurship and attract new businesses in sectors of anticipated growth such as healthcare, biotechnology/life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and technology. These are four of six clusters of job growth identified through a gap analysis conducted with the business community. Increasingly, students pursue studies that do not directly link with job opportunities, and this results in debt, frustration, and under-employment, all while excellent jobs needing specific skill sets go unfilled. This is a story told across the country, and this region is no exception.

Greater Des Moines needs to prepare a work force that meets the demands of current and future jobs, but this preparation will not happen through curriculum adjustments alone. Success will depend on continuing the rich partnerships among government, educational institutions, libraries, and businesses. Besides developing and executing a high-level curriculum, the region needs to coordinate, share resources, and build a strategic infrastructure. To accomplish these aims, Greater Des Moines should:

- Collaborate with local schools to provide more extensive focus on the STEAM subjects: science, technology, engineering, art, and math. With mandates to boost school test scores in subjects like reading and math, schools dedicate less time to science, history, art, and even physical education. However, research shows that the arts and music complement and strengthen students’ ability to absorb everything from math to science to history. Teaching the arts alongside the other STEAM fields emphasizes the creativity inherent in scientific discovery and the rigor of the creative process. Further, a study by the National Endowment for the Arts shows that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who actively participate in the arts tend to score better in science and writing and were more likely to aspire to go to college.

- Leverage existing resources such as the Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families and Central Iowa Works to strengthen the workforce, especially in terms of soft skills – those personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that make someone a good employee.

- Partner with local libraries to further education focused on the STEAM subjects through programming.

“A high quality education is the prerequisite to a viable and productive future for all. Investments in the public schools, as well as increased focus beyond high school, will yield a brighter and more bountiful future for our rapidly diversifying population of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren coming to Iowa from all around the world.”

Bobbretta Brewton
Adjunct Instructor at Des Moines Area Community College
DMACC CAMPUSES IN RELATION TO JOBS AND TRANSIT

Sources: DART, DMACC, Iowa Workforce Development
Develop high-level coordination for effective work preparation approaches. Historically, one of the key barriers to effective work preparation in Greater Des Moines has been the lack of meaningful coordination. One of the biggest obstacles is scheduling. For the business community to connect to the education world, it needs access to students beyond one short class period at a single school.

Explore sharing resources across school districts. Currently, dollars follow students, often creating duplicative or exclusionary facilities that are really best handled on a regional scale. Education professionals and decision makers should develop tools to share resources that would help them achieve regional workplace education goals.

- Grow mentoring and job shadowing opportunities throughout Greater Des Moines.
- Support accessible skilled trade sites. Currently, the region has two skilled trade sites for middle and high school students — Des Moines Public Schools’ Central Campus and a facility through Urbandale Public Schools. Central Campus serves the region, though it poses a transportation challenge in regard to timing and access for students who participate. Urbandale’s facility has primarily accommodated Urbandale students so far. The Tomorrow Plan pictures four to six such sites strategically located throughout the region that support regular and affordable transportation. Tapping into the expanding distribution of DMACC campuses could help with identifying ideal locations and transportation mechanisms.
- Support accessible professional education sites. Blue Valley School in Overland Park, Kansas, enhances STEAM education through a professional education program. Direct involvement of the business community incorporates internships, shadowing, mentoring, and other practicum/education opportunities. A similar collaboration with the business community and the identification of a discreet number of sites could create a similar professional-approach curriculum in Greater Des Moines.
- Leverage libraries and the access they offer to technology for educational purposes.
- Continue research on the role of technology in education and expand its use as appropriate. Doing so will benefit students by not only educating them in technology but also by using technology for education. Physically moving students from point A to point B as part of their school day can constitute a meaningful challenge to connect them to the world of work. Technological enhancements might substitute for that physical connection. At the same time, technology continues to develop as a growth field for jobs, and our curricula and infrastructure must deliver that education.

**STRATEGY 1F**

**POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS:**

- Local school districts
- Area education agencies
- Higher education institutions

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