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## Economic Development

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## CHAPTER 13: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development involves every facet of the community, from parks and trails, to technology infrastructure, to strong leadership. Howard must attend to all these facets in order to support existing businesses, maintain a quality workforce, and foster new economic ventures. The previous chapters of this plan have outlined strategies for accommodating growth, preserving natural resources, maintaining a diverse transportation network, providing quality recreational opportunities and public facilities, supporting a reliable infrastructure system, revitalizing existing neighborhoods, and developing land efficiently, profitably, and responsibly. All of these pieces fit together to form a path that will support a vibrant, enduring economy. These strategies contribute to the declared economic development goals of Howard outlined in the 2008 strategic plan, and support the economic goals of the greater region. While a focused economic development plan is outside the scope of the comprehensive plan, this chapter summarizes the goals of existing economic development documents, then comments on the economic implications of various components of this comprehensive plan, as they relate to these goals.

### 2008 STRATEGIC PLAN - HOWARD'S ECONOMIC GOALS

The 2008 Strategic plan outlines a number of objectives and actions related to economic development. The first strategic goal of the plan is to create a "strong, balanced economy." The plan proposes to do this through the following objectives and action steps:

#### Objective 1: Reconstruct & Redevelop Velp Avenue

##### Action Steps:

- Aesthetically Enhance Velp Avenue Corridor
- Improve Safety Along Velp Avenue Corridor
- Encourage Multi-Modal Transportation in the Velp Avenue Corridor

A redevelopment concept for the Velp corridor is presented in chapter 10 of this document, and addresses the issues listed above.

#### Objective 2: Redevelop US 41/STH 29 Corridor

##### Action Steps:

- Attract Regional Businesses
- Address Sanimax & Samuels
- Create an alternate truck route through US 41/STH 29 Corridor

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is updating a 200-mile stretch of US 41 which includes a number of Howard interchanges, including the Wisconsin 29 interchange at the southeast corner of Howard. The details of the project are described in the transportation chapter of this document.

The reconstruction of this interchange has important economic development implications. The Community Development Authority of the Village of Howard created a redevelopment plan for the area encompassing the planned interchange construction project. The majority of the area was classified as blighted, and the plan describes the likely impacts of the reconstruction project on these blighted properties. As traffic flow is improved at this interchange, development pressure is likely to increase, which can help drive the aforementioned goal to attract regional businesses.

The DOT is working on a number of other major projects along US-41, including the Velp Avenue/US 141 interchange, the I-43 interchange, and the Lineville Road interchange. These projects will enhance transportation access to Howard, which will in turn make it a more attractive site for business. The plans for these projects are described in detail in the transportation chapter.

In addition to the two goals detailed above, the 2008 strategic plan for Howard also presented the following goals related to creating a “strong, balanced local economy”:

- Retain and expand current business within the Village
- Attract new, targeted businesses – ranging from office to retail to light industrial
- Create a business-friendly environment for local businesses
- Encourage balanced residential growth, especially in areas that will support additional commercial growth

The sections below describe several strategies that the Village of Howard is employing to fulfill the first three goals. The last goal of encouraging balanced residential growth is embodied in the development concept in chapter 9 of this document.

## REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES

### Community Development Authority

The Village of Howard recently formed a Community Development Authority (CDA) to review project plans for various developments, create redevelopment plans for targeted “renewal” areas, purchase and sell property, and exercise eminent domain if/when necessary. The CDA is comprised of 7 members - two (2) Village Trustees and five (5) citizen members.

### Financial Incentives

Many villages and cities use financial incentive tools to attract certain types of desirable businesses. The Village of Howard also offers a revolving loan fund program and a zero-interest Small Business Improvement Loan program for eligible businesses wishing to expand or locate in Howard. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is used to encourage development in targeted areas of town, by providing assistance to businesses within the pre-determined TIF district. Figure 13.1 shows the five ac-

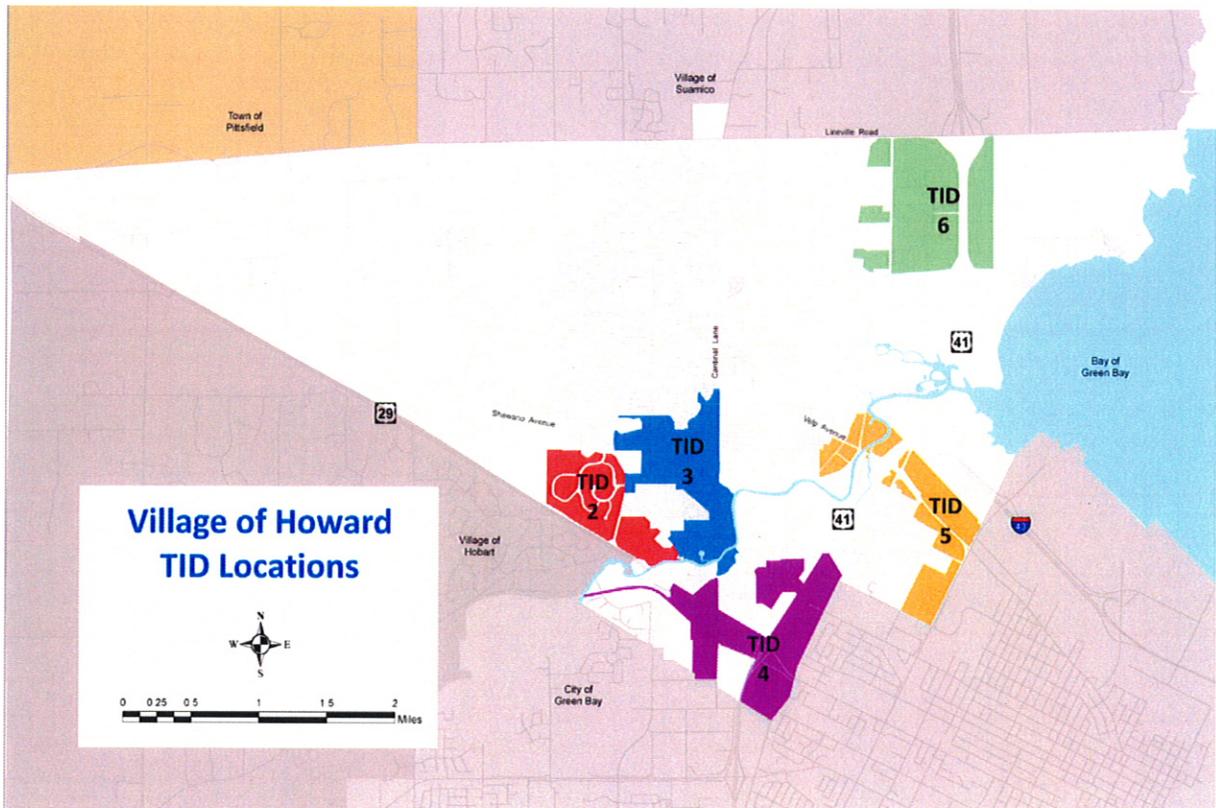


Figure 13.1 – Village of Howard Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts.  
 Source: Village of Howard

tive TIF districts in Howard, including Lancaster Business Park (#2 in Figure 13.1), Village Center (#3), STH 29/US 41 (#4), STH 141/US 41 (Velp Avenue) (#5) and CTH M/US 41 (#6).

Two TIF districts, #4 and #5, overlap with areas that will be affected by planned DOT reconstruction projects (see chapter 11). The combination of improved transportation access and TIF incentives should make the properties in these areas more attractive for investment, which would help Village achieve its goal to expand existing and attract new businesses.

**Other Assistance**

Advance, the economic development arm of the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, provides services to help support business development in the region, including site selection assistance, demographic data, a microloan program, business consulting, and a business incubator. Advance also releases a “fact book” that provides detailed information on quality of life indicators, demographics, workforce, economic growth, infrastructure, and incentives available in the Green Bay region. The Village of Howard supports an online site selection tool through the Village website.

## SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The remainder of this chapter discusses the economic development implications of this comprehensive plan, grouped by issue area:

### **Preserving Natural Amenities: Greenways and Parks**

The Howard development concept is centered around the preservation of natural areas, and the stewardship of critical resources such as water. Greenways are preserved to avoid development in wetlands or floodplains, and to allow for more natural management of stormwater. These provisions carry important economic benefits for Howard.

A prominent economic benefit of natural resource protection is the reduction of property damage due to flash flooding. Greenways and stormwater management facilities give excess water a place to go, thus reducing the likelihood of flooding. Development in a floodplain, floodway, or wetland areas, particularly that which involves high proportions of impervious surfaces, has the potential to both hinder floodplain functions and suffer water damage in years of high rainfall. The development concept avoids potentially costly damage by directing development out of the floodplain areas.

Greenway preservation also helps to maintain a cleaner water supply, by providing a natural filtration system for stormwater runoff, thus reducing groundwater contamination. A clean, reliable water supply is important for attracting residents, recreational tourists, and certain types of industry.

Greenway planning contributes to an extensive open space and park system, a valuable community amenity that attracts residents - particularly young adults, families with children, and retirees. Proximity to natural areas makes land more attractive and homes more valuable. Greenways can also buffer houses from the sights and sounds of neighboring industrial or commercial areas.

### **Providing Quality Neighborhoods**

Quality neighborhoods attract new residents and help keep existing residents, ensuring a steady workforce and patronage for local businesses. Good neighborhoods require certain amenities, such as accessibility to parks, schools, and jobs, protection from flooding or other damages, and a diverse range of affordable housing options. The paragraphs below describe how the development concept allows for the provision of these amenities, thereby securing a critical piece of Howard's economic development.

The development concept aims to fulfill the accessibility need in two ways. First, the concept outlines an interconnected multi-modal transportation network, including trails, well connected roads, and bikeways. Secondly, residential growth areas are located adjacent to existing development, with access to community facilities.

To support the provision of diverse housing, the development concept provides space for both single family residential and medium density multi-family homes. New housing types can be kept more affordable by expanding in areas where infrastructure provision is cost efficient, as the development concept encourages. A range of housing is critical to supporting a diverse workforce for Howard businesses and industry.

### Commercial and Industrial Growth and Infill

The development concept in chapter 9 shows a variety of commercial types, ranging from neighborhood commercial areas throughout the Village, to regional commercial at the new Marley Street/WIS 29 interchange. Commercial diversity encourages citizens to shop within Howard, by providing a range of shopping and service options, whether they're looking for small stores walking distance from home, or regionally-sized stores a short drive away. Regional commercial developments give an economic boost by attracting spending from neighboring towns. The development concept also makes room for a ~~36-acre light~~ **an 80-acre** industrial site north-east of Marley Street and the proposed circulator loop. **The village is going through the certified site process with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.**

Infill areas such as the Quarry development area (chapter 10) can strengthen the economic vitality of existing neighborhoods by providing focal points of activity and easily accessible shopping for daily needs. The primary focus of the Quarry development plan is economic development. Similarly, the Village Center plan (chapter 10), can bolster the economic health of Howard's core.

### Efficient Infrastructure: Streets, Water and Sewer

Proposed street extensions for new residential areas promote interconnectivity, while street enhancements encourage multi-use, "complete" streets. These strategies prevent overloading existing streets with traffic, which can be a deterrent to businesses and the prospective residents.

Infill development, also encouraged in the development concept, is typically the most cost effective development solution in terms of infrastructure, since it makes use of existing systems. Lower cost infrastructure minimizes expense to taxpayers and frees up government funds for services which benefit both citizens and businesses, such as schools to educate the future workforce, parks to attract residents and visitors, and hi-tech infrastructure that can support local entrepreneurs. Lowered development costs also lead to properties that are more affordable for prospective businesses or home-owners. Affordable land prices can help make Howard more competitive in the regional market.