

Economic Development

1. Introduction

According to the Smart Growth Law, the purpose of the Economic Development Element is to promote the stabilization, retention, and expansion of the economic base, and quality employment opportunities. To address this element, this chapter includes:



- Highlights of the labor force information from Chapter 3;
- An assessment of strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry;
- An overview of programs that deal with environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses; and
- A list of organizations (and contact information) providing economic development programs at the county, regional, state, and federal levels.

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2. Labor Force and Economic Base

The Community Profile Chapter (chapter 3) provides a detailed analysis of the local and county economy as well as the labor force. Highlights from that chapter include:

- Local workers are very mobile. Residents take advantage of highway access to commute to nearby employment centers.
- Resident per capita, family, and household incomes compare very favorably to nearby communities. In fact, in several of these statistics, Richfield has the highest income compared to nearby communities.
- Village residents have a very high education attainment.
- Management, professional, and related occupations employed 37.7 percent of Village residents according to 2000 Census information.
- Nearly a quarter of the Village’s residents (24.45%) identified themselves as having sales and office occupations in the 2000 Census.
- 2000 Census data reveals occupations of Village residents include production, transportation, and material moving occupations (17.0%), construction, extraction and maintenance (11.4%), and service occupations (8.9%).
- Commercial and business land uses represent a very small fraction of the community (Table 8-

Want to Learn More?

For more related information about economic development, also see these chapters:

- The Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter discusses water and wastewater issues.
- The Future Land Use Chapter identifies locations for business development and discusses development regulations like zoning and community design.
- The Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Element includes information about the soils and development limitations in the area. This chapter also describes the importance of groundwater considerations in development approvals.

Table 8-1. Assessed Values: 2013

Property Type	Number of Parcels with Improvements	Assessed Value	Percent of Total Assessed Value[1]
Residential	4,316	\$1,324,052,500	91.14%
Agricultural	47	\$20,247,100	1.39%
Commercial	110	\$108,374,100	7.46%
Non-Profit	28	NA	
Totals:	4,501	\$1,452,673,700	100[1]

Source: Associated Appraisals, Village Contracted Assessor

Notes:

1. Percent may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
2. Agricultural land included all rural farmland and woods, sans personal property.

1). In fact, only 224.1 acres are classified as commercial or industrial. With respect to the tax base, only approximately 7.5% percent of the Village's assessed valuation is from commercial uses.

3. Current Business Inventory and Business Environments

In order to prevent the plan from becoming quickly outdated, a list of existing businesses is not provided here. Rather, businesses are reviewed in more general terms.

There are few businesses located in the Village. Residents regularly travel to larger communities in the region to purchase needed goods and services. Historically, economic activity in the Village was closely tied to the land (e.g., farming, recreation).

Essentially three business types are found in Richfield: home occupations, basic services, and recreation. Home occupations include the professional services of accountants, architects, software designers, photographers, as well as, services like roofers, builders, and cabinetmakers. Some of these uses have relocated from homes to commercial building spaces available in the hamlet areas. Basic services include businesses like banks, gas stations, grocery stores, automobile repair, childcare, and drycleaners. Recreation uses include restaurants, bars, golf courses, movie rental stores, and similar uses.

As has been previously discussed in this plan, there are several hamlet areas in the Village. The hamlets of Plat, Lake Five, Pleasant Hill, and Colgate are remnants of historic settlements. Today these areas offer limited neighborhood services (e.g., post office, gas station). They are used primarily by residents of the immediate area. Expansion of these areas to accommodate additional commercial and industrial development is not preferred.

Richfield's commercial activity center is found primarily along the STH 175 corridor. Businesses are concentrated in the historic hamlet of Richfield (north of STH 167 and south of Pleasant Hill Road) and the shopping areas concentrated around the intersection of STH 175 and Hubertus Road. The hamlet of Hubertus (located on Hubertus Road near the intersection with Scenic Road) is a smaller local commercial activity center.

Cabela's, located in the northeast corner of the Village, is the largest private-sector employer in Richfield

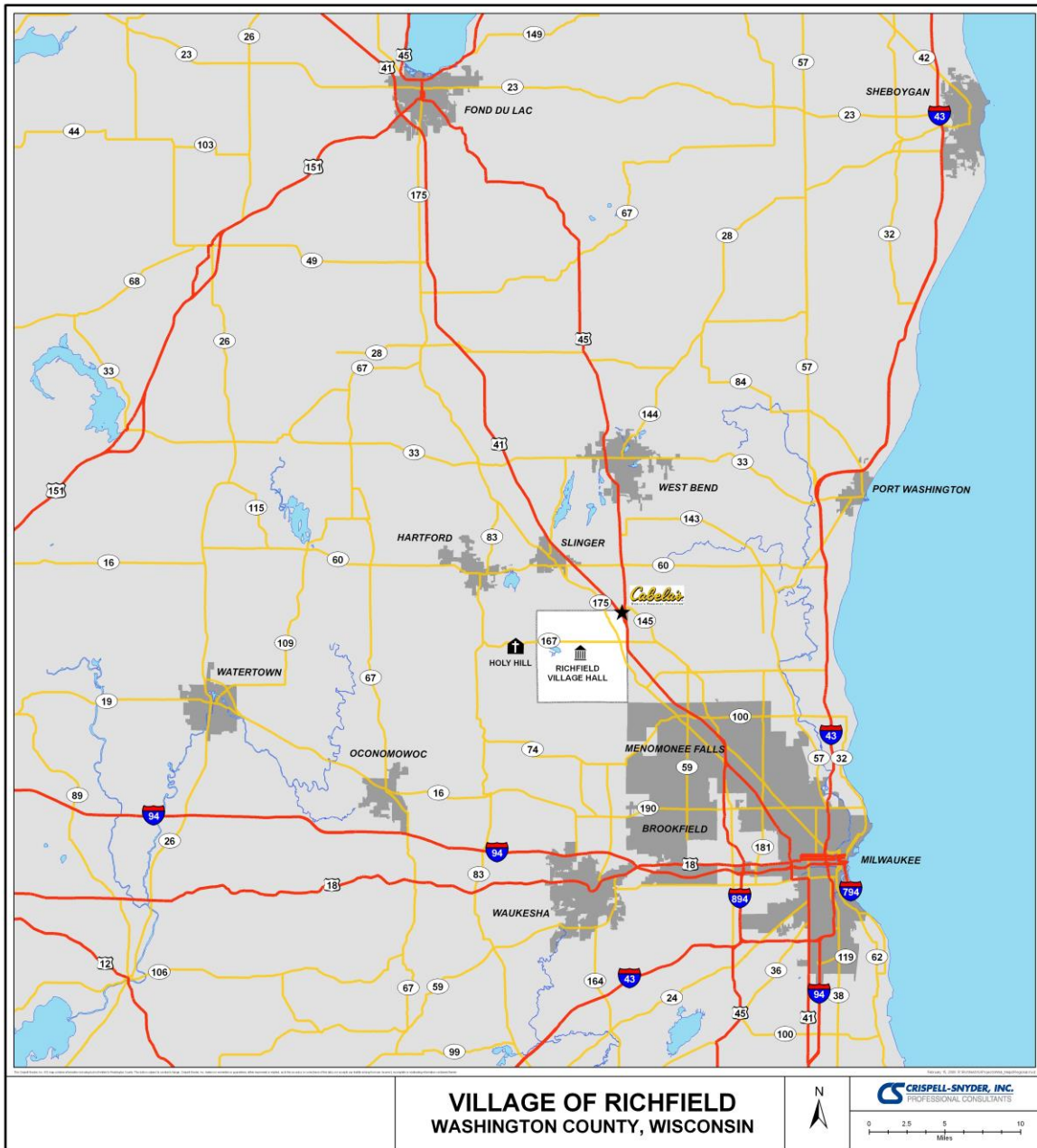


4. Costs, Benefits, Advantages & Disadvantages of Economic Development

During the workshops held back in 2004, the overwhelming response from residents was that Richfield should remain a 'Bedroom Community'. During those meetings, participants used maps to point out where development could take place without harming the rural community character. Areas that were frequently selected as areas appropriate for potential development were areas adjacent to STH 175 and USH 41/45. Additionally, participants were asked what they consider the benefits and costs of local economic development.

- The Village of Richfield has several positive attributes to offer potential businesses.
- A great location that is accessible to nearby employment centers
- Properties with USH 41/45 frontage
- An educated local workforce
- An attractive and safe community atmosphere that provides for a high quality of living
- High quality, progressive school districts

- High household, family and per capita income levels (e.g., people have money to spend)



While the Village certainly enjoys its share of advantages, there are several challenges that the Village must contend with when seeking to attract new businesses and industry. In particular:

- Residents can easily drive to nearby communities to purchase services and products
- There is currently a lack of variety of businesses to meet people’s everyday needs
- There is no local water and sewer infrastructure available
- Competition from existing development centers in nearby communities
- The possibility of annexation by neighboring communities (no longer a concern when the Town incorporated as a Village in 2008)

5. Environmentally Contaminated Sites

Development efforts can sometimes encounter the challenge of potentially contaminated properties, which are commonly referred to as brownfield sites (see box at right). Brownfield sites vary in size, location, age, and past use. A brownfield site can be a former gas station or an empty manufacturing plant. There are an estimated 10,000 brownfields across Wisconsin. In Richfield, there were 41 sites in the State database in 2013, most of which have been closed. These sites can cause problems for communities, including:

- Neighborhood deterioration and community blight
- Potential harm to human health and the environment
- Reduced tax revenue and economic growth
- Attraction for vandalism, open dumping, and other illegal activity

The term "brownfield" was first used to distinguish developed land from unused suburban and rural land, referred to as "greenfield" sites. The EPA, states, and municipalities believe that choosing brownfield redevelopment over greenfield development yields several benefits for communities and for commerce. Brownfield redevelopment encourages the cleanup of contaminated sites. Finally, when brownfields are redeveloped and new businesses begin operating, these properties return to the tax base and provide jobs. This is a major financial incentive for municipalities to develop and encourage programs for brownfield redevelopment.

Using one of several databases, interested residents can search for properties in Richfield that have been impacted by environmental contamination (and have been reported). The WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Internet website tracking list is one such database. This database tracks identified sites from first reporting through closure or no further action. Records are kept in perpetuity regardless of whether or not contamination was actually found, the size of the incidence, and whether or not the site has been cleaned. Governments at all levels have recognized that brownfield redevelopment is an important issue. Numerous programs have been created to encourage brownfield redevelopment including grants, loans, and tax incentives. In 2014, the Village partnered with Washington County and a coalition of surrounding municipalities to apply for a Brownfield Assessment Grant worth approximately \$600,000. The grant, if awarded, will support funding for site revitalization, planning, environmental assessments, and community outreach.

What is a Brownfield?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as (with certain legal exclusions and additions) real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.



Tax Incremental Financing

Tax incremental financing (TIF) allows communities to undertake a public project to stimulate beneficial development or redevelopment that would not otherwise occur. It is a mechanism for financing local economic development projects in underdeveloped and blighted areas. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for land acquisition or needed public works. There are no TIF districts in Richfield.

Design Standards Ordinance

During the bedroom community workshops, a prevailing theme to the discussions focused on controlling economic development in order to sustain Richfield's character. To achieve this, design guidelines and farm/open space preservation are critical. Suggestions such as design review boards to control the architectural character of future development emerged. Participants recognized that sign and light ordinances can further control the quality of development while preserving the rural character of Richfield. Moreover, interest was expressed in impact fees as a means to help supplement the cost of installing, maintaining, and upgrading infrastructure associated with development. The Village adopted design standards and created an Architectural Review Board to review and make recommendations to the Plan Commission. An outdoor lighting and sign ordinance were subsequently adopted.

Richfield's Hamlet areas are community focal points important to the area residents. The most historic portions of these hamlets were established at a time when development was designed with pedestrians, not vehicles in mind. Modern parking and setback requirements contained in the Village's zoning ordinance result in developments that are

well setback from adjacent roadways, often surrounded by parking lots. For example, the size, scale, height, and setback of businesses located in the historic areas of the Richfield Hamlet (north of STH 167) are much different than the design, scale, height and setback of businesses at the intersection of STH 175 and Hubertus Road.

To maintain the historic character of the area, design guidelines can be developed and incorporated into the zoning code. These would include provisions for a building line (versus a minimum setback, relaxed parking standards when shared parking and other arrangements can be made, and design elements that respect the historic character and country atmosphere). If the Village were to adopt a design ordinance, in addition to the basic zoning of a property (e.g., permitted uses), the requirements described in the design standards ordinance would also apply as an overlay. It is anticipated that different design requirements would be enforced in different areas of the Village (e.g., separate requirements for highway commercial areas, historic areas, residential subdivisions).

The development of design standards must occur with input from local business owners and interest groups (e.g., focus groups, historical society, chamber of commerce). Ideally, these same stakeholders would participate on any design review board established by the Village.

Financing for Business Improvements

In conjunction with any approved design standards ordinance, the Village could consider establishing a revolving loan fund or façade improvement grant program to help support improvements by local businesses. Alliances with local banks will be important in this effort.

Market Analysis

A market analysis is a comprehensive study that provides details about a business district's current conditions, explores changes occurring in the marketplace, verifies consumer wants, needs, and spending habits from that district, discovers what the market will support, and provides the foundation for a business development strategy creation.

The market analysis report defines potential market needs to capitalize upon locally. Furthermore, it provides a foundation for understanding the larger customer base and ways to compete with nearby business centers. The Village may want to consider a market analysis for the STH 175 and USH 41/45 corridors as an implementation tool for local economic development.



Any recommendations included in a market analysis should be implemented in conjunction with this plan to ensure that the economic development opportunities desired are being realized. This will require coordination with utilities and community facilities and transportation improvements identified in previous chapters. The recommendations of any market analysis should be reviewed every 5 years to measure progress and identify additional objectives.

Internet Marketing

The Village has a community website that includes a business directory. The site also includes a link to the Village's code of ordinances and meeting agendas and minutes.

An opportunity exists to use the website more effectively as a marketing tool by making a commitment to keeping the pages updated and including additional links to community services, programs, organizations and businesses. The site should also include information about available commercial and industrial development sites and important contacts. More importantly, the site should provide information about the development process, including printable permit applications, meeting schedules and contact information. Information included in this plan should also be available on the website, especially information about local strengths, values and visions. This will make the website a valuable resource to marketing professionals seeking development locations.

Washington County

Since the late 1980s, the Economic Development Division of the Washington County Planning & Parks Department has been the primary party responsible for countywide economic development initiatives. The division maintains an inventory of available building sites and infrastructure for prospective developers as well as demographic data important to marketing professionals and entrepreneurs. The Washington County Economic Development Division offers an array of services to both small and large companies, new companies and expanding businesses, including roundtable events that offer education and collaboration between businesses in the county.

In 2000, the Economic Development Division began the process of crafting a strategy for economic development. The outcome of that effort is that Washington County concentrate on three critical economic clusters:

- Agribusiness
- Health Services
- Advanced Manufacturing

These clusters are working to target economic development in Washington County. The Village considers the Washington County Economic Development Division an important partner in local economic activity, particularly development near the USH 41/45 corridor.



Regional Economic Development

SEWRPC staff perform a large variety of planning-related work, including: community assistance, transportation, land use, and environmental planning; economic development assistance; cartographic work; economic, demographic, and public financial resource studies; and census tract coordination. Through its planning, SEWRPC seeks to build a consensus among public and private interests to resolve area-wide developmental and environmental problems. In addition, SEWRPC, through its planning efforts for infrastructure (particularly the highway corridors and sanitary sewer service areas) helps to support economic development in the region.

The Milwaukee 7 (M7), launched in September 2005, and was formed to create a regional, cooperative economic development platform for the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin: Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha. Its mission is to attract, retain and develop diverse businesses and talent. SEWRPC provides support to M7 and the County economic development corporations (ie: EDWC) to assist with economic development planning and programs in the region.

State Agencies/Programs

- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation– This department is the state's primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses.

- Wisconsin Department of Transportation – The Office of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs encourages firms owned by disadvantaged individuals to participate in all federal and state transportation facility contracts.
- Forward Wisconsin – Forward Wisconsin markets outside Wisconsin to attract new businesses, jobs, and increase state economic activity.
- Department of Workforce Development – This department builds and strengthens Wisconsin’s workforce by providing job services, training and employment assistance, and helping employers find necessary workers.
- Wisconsin Small Business Development Centers – These centers help ensure the state’s economic health and stability. They offer formative business education, counseling, and technology training.

Federal Agencies/Programs

- Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration
- US Small Business Administration – provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their businesses.
- US Department of Commerce
- US Department of Transportation

6. Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements

Economic development in Richfield directly affects all other elements of this comprehensive plan. Specifically, the Economic Development Element impacts the Land Use, Transportation, Housing, and Utilities and Community Facilities Elements. Therefore, it is important that the elements are consistent and support one another.

Land Use Element

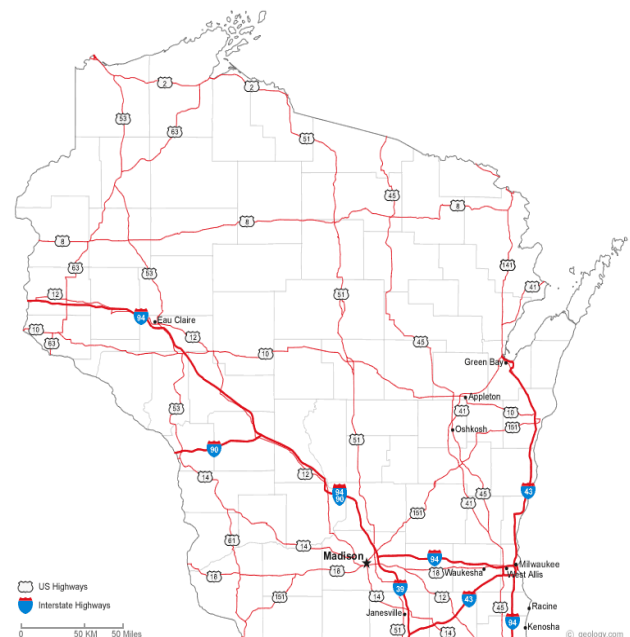
New commercial and industrial development must be located in areas that the market will support. Furthermore, new commercial and industrial development should not create a nuisance for neighboring properties or natural resources. As such, new development should have a minimal environmental impact and be located in areas that have access to needed infrastructure. These concerns were carefully considered during the development of the future land use maps.

Transportation Element

Additional economic development may result in increased truck traffic for deliveries and more local traffic from customers frequenting businesses. The Village must work with the County and WisDOT to monitor traffic flows to ensure that new development is appropriately planned and sited to minimize its impact on adjacent roadways. This may periodically require traffic studies to understand the impacts of proposed developments. Pedestrian and bicycle access must also be considered, particularly in terms of access to business destinations. Furthermore, parking must be considered in non-traditional ways (e.g., on-street, shared, rear access) to accommodate development in the hamlet areas that is of a scale similar to existing development.

Housing Element

New economic development can bring visitors to the community that may decide its country setting is an ideal location to live. Economic development can also result in jobs that bring people to the community looking for places to live near their place of employment. Accordingly, areas for additional housing development are provided on the future land use maps.



Utilities & Community Facilities

To support economic development, infrastructure (transportation, electricity, communication, public safety) must be available to meet the needs of businesses. The Utilities and Community Facilities Element discusses several planned capacity improvements to better serve the needs of the community, including economic interests.