

East Grand Forks Economic Development Priorities and Work Plan



March 2024

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to provide direction for the EDA, the City Council, and other City departments while allowing flexibility to adjust to changed conditions. This strategic plan comprises two parts: 1) cross-cutting priorities that impact all of the City's and EDA's efforts and 2) set of core work areas that define economic development in East Grand Forks. This framework was created with input from local businesses, staff, EDA Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Council.

*The **mission** of the Economic Development Authority is to maintain and improve the economic vitality of East Grand Forks by doing the following:*

- *By retaining & growing local businesses*
- *By creating & supporting investment & growth opportunities for commercial activities*
- *By creating & supporting opportunities for residential growth, including workforce housing*
- *By working to develop a workforce capable of meeting current & future needs of local employers.*

Economic Development Strategic Priorities

1. Place highest priority on helping existing businesses grow.
2. Increase commercial real estate space and development sites.
3. Increase marketing and communications efforts for East Grand Forks.
4. Create explicit mechanisms to engage and cooperate with the local business community.
5. Continue to facilitate housing development in the city but discontinue direct land development projects by the EDA and devote capacity to other efforts. Current City-owned lots should be sold organically over time until stock is exhausted.
6. For the next EDA Executive Director, prioritize communication, coalition-building, and sales skills.

Core Work Areas

The EDA's economic development work is defined by four key work areas:

1. Local business development
2. New business development
3. Connect / Convene / Communicate
4. Land and Site Development

Local
Business
Development

New Business
Development

Connect
Convene
Communicate

Land and Site
Development

Local Business Development

Support for existing businesses in East Grand Forks.

- Local Business Retention / Expansion (including regular local business visits)
- Administer and Coordinate Assistance Programs
- Support Existing Retail

EDA Specific Actions

1. Continue explicit business retention and expansion (BRE) visits and the new regular business needs meetings. Goal: at least two business contacts per month.
2. Continue targeted business financing programs and grants.

City Specific Actions (EDA Support)

1. Create and support opportunities to draw customers to town, including events, governor's fishing opener, concerts, youth sports tournaments, etc.
2. Support facilities – including sports – that host events and draw new customers to town
3. Leverage service clubs for events and outreach
4. Recommend signage and wayfinding for the city

New Business Development

Support for businesses new to East Grand Forks.

- Business Attraction
- Identify and Support Entrepreneurs
- Continue advocacy and “sales” role, specifically targeting businesses in agriculture, UAS, medical, and retail sectors.

EDA Specific Actions

1. Maintain a strong relationship with Grand Forks Region EDC and the Chamber of Commerce.
2. Assess factors why businesses choose North Dakota over Minnesota and create a strategy to address what is possible to change.
3. Collaborate with DEED to coordinate economic development opportunities.

City Specific Actions (EDA Support)

1. Funnel economic development requests to the EDA.

Connect / Convene / Communicate

Play a coordination and capacity-building role to further important issues in East Grand Forks

- Marketing Campaigns
- Communications / Facilitation
- Quality of Life Efforts
- Maintain workforce partnerships and information

EDA Specific Actions

1. Create a specific regular opportunity for EDA engagement with local businesses, such as a larger advisory committee.
2. Create a strategy to incentivize businesses to improve aesthetics.
3. Create a strategy to improve aesthetics for entrances to the city.
4. Identify outside resources to support City beautification efforts and other quality of life initiatives.

City Specific Actions (EDA Support)

1. Assess marketing activities across City departments and coordinate where appropriate to maximize resources.
2. Play supporting role in City activities that support quality of life to retain existing and attract new residents.
3. Continue specific outreach regarding sales tax costs and benefits.
4. Support code enforcement activities.
5. Support adequate childcare availability in the community.

Land and Site Development

Facilitate development of critical real estate in East Grand Forks

- Commercial and industrial land development
- Housing development
- Infrastructure planning and investment
- City development policies and processes
- City-owned land sales and disposition policies and processes

EDA Specific Actions

1. Work to increase land available for industrial development.
2. Sell the existing residential lots held by the City.

City Specific Actions (EDA Support)

1. Support the creation of a strategy for infrastructure assessment and development.
3. Support improvements to the City's development agreement and land development processes and improve business friendliness where possible. Refine standards to reduce costs without reducing quality.
4. Assess access to utilities and services in industrial development areas:
 - a. Power
 - b. Natural gas
 - c. Water
 - d. Broadband and telecommunications
 - e. Sanitary and storm sewer
5. Investigate partnerships to promote development of workforce housing, including home ownership and larger units for New American larger families.