

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

OVERVIEW

This appendix summarizes the public comments received during two rounds of public and stakeholder involvement for the 2021-2025 CEDS.

Comments from the first round focused on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and were obtained at an interactive virtual stakeholder meeting held on October 26, 2020, and through an online survey available from October 9 through November 2. Participants were first asked to review the SWOTs provided in the 2015-2020 CEDS and indicate whether they agreed that they are still SWOTs. Participants were then asked to provide additional SWOTs they feel apply to the Region.

[to be completed following the second round of stakeholder and public input]

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in-person public meetings were held, and all comments were received either at the virtual meetings or through the surveys.

PART 1: ROUND 1 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Part 1 of this appendix summarizes the input received through the SWOT exercise and was used to identify the SWOTs that are included in the 2021-2025 CEDS. The first section under each SWOT category provides the 2015-2020 SWOTs and the percentage of poll respondents who agreed that they are still SWOTs for the Region. The second section provides a list of the comments suggesting additional SWOTs that were received through the virtual meeting and online survey.

STRENGTHS

Existing Strengths From 2015-2020 CEDS

Percent of respondents who agree this is still a Strength is noted in parentheses

- Strong university and technical college systems (88%)
- Good regional and international airport access within 2-hour radius of Region (77%)
- Strong clusters in advanced manufacturing and power, energy, and controls, food and beverage, water technology, financial services, information technology and medical technology (65%)
- Leading manufacturing region in the U.S., robust university research and engineering programs, and high concentration of manufacturing employees across various skill levels (64%)
- Availability of utilities at a moderate cost (electricity, natural gas, and water) (64%)
- Numerous major corporate headquarters across several industries (51%)
- Lower-cost industrial real estate than many other U.S. regions (49%)

Comments Suggesting Additional Strengths (43 Total Comments)

Note: some comments appear in multiple categories

Quality of Life (9 Comments)

- Quality of life in the region attracts new talent
- Low cost of living
- Walkability and bike-ability
- Excellent parks/ cultural resources
- Connection to the Arts
- Relatively low-cost of living among peer cities
- Design (architecture/arts/engineering)
- Arts & entertainment, museums, zoo
- Professional sport and entertainment of much larger city

Natural Resources (6 Comments)

- Access to Lake Michigan
- Absence of serious natural disaster risks -- hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes
- Beautiful, accessible lakefront
- Location in the relatively safe Midwest
- Location on a great lake
- Access to fresh water for use and entertainment

Workforce (5 Comments)

- Midwest work ethic
- Qualified workforce
- Diverse workforce
- Loyalty of employee base
- More transitional jobs

Education (4 Comments)

- K-12 Schools
- K-12 education working better with business sectors
- Universities within 90 miles of MKE from which we can pull in talent
- Relatively high concentration of students in colleges and universities here

Governance (4 Comments)

- Long term vs. transactional relationships across all parties in the regional
- Collaborative mind set
- Financial strength of the state makes lower risk of high taxes
- Most of the local government entities are able to cooperate and work together regarding economic development

Industries (3 Comments)

- State of Regional Manufacturing economy
- Regional economic strength
- ...we continue to stand out as a US leader in advanced manufacturing, bolstered by a decade of successful attraction and expansion projects

Supply Chain (3 Comments)

- Please add "strong supply chain"
- Supply chain advantages
- Physical geography which is centrally located in the country esp. for supply chains

Transportation (2 Comments)

- Shorter commute time
- Multimodal logistics

Attraction (1 Comment)

- Alumni network for those who no longer live here (ie grew up, college, work, etc), but want to give back
- Quality of life in the region attracts new talent

Other (1 Comment)

- Strong foodshed to support food and beverage industrial commerce; local and regional interest in sustainable agriculture practices.

WEAKNESSES

Existing Weaknesses from 2015-2020 CEDS

Percent of respondents who agree this is still a Weakness is noted in parentheses

- Educational attainment, while relatively high overall, remains highly variable throughout the Region (74%)
- The Region performs near or below average on many indicators of innovation and entrepreneurship (73%)
- Higher taxes, and limited economic incentives, compared with many U.S. regions (42%)
- Limited availability of large, shovel-ready industrial sites (31%)
- Ability to exploit operating cost advantages compared to other U.S. regions (26%)

Comments Suggesting Additional Weaknesses (85 Total Comments)

Note: some comments appear in multiple categories

Disparities (16 Comments)

- Racial inequalities
- Lack of diversity in workforce, regional transportation options, stark disparities between POC and white households across the board
- Limited educational, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities for people of color
- Inability to address historic racial disparities
- Racial segregation makes region unattractive to new talent
- Unprecedented historical and current racial and economic segregation
- Milwaukee's inner city is ranked 7th most depressed area in the country
- Lack of employment opportunities and community support for people returning from prison, where people of color are disproportionately represented

- Diversity, Equality & Inclusiveness, Lack of modern regional transportation alternatives, Life-cycle housing, NIMBYism
- Disparities in K-12 education
- Poor K-12 education systems in areas densely populated with non-white
- Significant racial disparities and high eviction rates
- Lack of widespread home access to high-speed broadband due to income disparities
- Disparities in internship and workforce opportunities for POC
- Indicators of “innovation and entrepreneurship” are being conflated with other regional challenges that hold us back. This community and region stifles entrepreneurs of color and women and fails to support innovation when it is fledging regardless of the innovator’s background. The skills and ideas are out there, but the lack of startup support and unimaginative and paternalistic focus of many “support” organizations is in the way. I would add business lending redlining to this list and mark it as a Strongly Agree. Shovel ready sites are available, but the regional transportation infrastructure to connect workers to them, and a strong regional outlook are also lacking.

Governance (14 Comments)

- Lack of political will or support to invest in a regional transportation system
- Over dependency on property tax to fund local and state government
- Unwillingness for cooperation between various units of government
- Lack of state funding for public universities in region
- Policy disparities between communities
- Tribal power mentality
- Multiple layers of government that can lead to delays in a variety of approvals and the viability of initiatives and project success
- Outstate disdain for Milwaukee results in inadequate funding by state
- Lack of political cohesion to focus on particular growth industries
- Too many local government entities
- Lack of long-term vision
- One of Wisconsin’s greatest current weaknesses is the prohibition on cannabis. That is making our state and region less competitive and limiting opportunities for innovation and progress in this growing sector.
- Toxic political environment leads to lack of support for universities and cities
- Indicators of “innovation and entrepreneurship” are being conflated with other regional challenges that hold us back. This community and region stifles entrepreneurs of color and women and fails to

support innovation when it is fledging regardless of the innovator's background. The skills and ideas are out there, but the lack of startup support and unimaginative and paternalistic focus of many "support" organizations is in the way. I would add business lending redlining to this list and mark it as a Strongly Agree. Shovel ready sites are available, but the regional transportation infrastructure to connect workers to them, and a strong regional outlook are also lacking.

Education (11 Comments)

- The whole public-school system needs to be revamped. Greater emphasis should be placed on basic curriculum and skills, basic math, reading, traditional history and geography.
- K-12 was listed as a strength...not in MPS or Racine Unified our two largest population areas
- Quality of k-12 education in central city
- High school graduation rates
- Lack of state funding for public universities in region
- Lack of district and state investment in Career and Technical Education Programs in K-12 schools
- Lack of commercialization of research from our educational institutions
- Disparities in K-12 education
- Poor K-12 education systems in areas densely populated with non-white residents
- My thoughts on this are that although the region has many good institutes of higher learning, the talent coming out of those institutions is not staying in the area. We need to give incentives to graduating students to stay, live, and work in WI.
- Toxic political environment leads to lack of support for universities and cities

Transportation (11 Comments)

- Diversity, Equality & Inclusiveness, Lack of modern regional transportation alternatives, Life-cycle housing, NIMBYism
- Historic and current underfunding of public transit, leading to limited job access for minority and low-income communities
- Ease of transit for workers to get to jobs
- Antiquated and sometimes nonexistent public transit limits attractiveness of the region to younger workers
- Regional air transportation out of MKE
- Cost of transportation to major ports on East and West Coast
- No Metro service train from MKE/Racine to Chicago
- Lack of mass transit outside of Milwaukee, especially to educational institutions

- Employment transportation for low-income workers outside of urban areas
- Lost opportunity of regional light rail
- Indicators of “innovation and entrepreneurship” are being conflated with other regional challenges that hold us back. This community and region stifles entrepreneurs of color and women and fails to support innovation when it is fledging regardless of the innovator’s background. The skills and ideas are out there, but the lack of startup support and unimaginative and paternalistic focus of many “support” organizations is in the way. I would add business lending redlining to this list and mark it as a Strongly Agree. Shovel ready sites are available, but the regional transportation infrastructure to connect workers to them, and a strong regional outlook are also lacking.

Workforce (8 Comments)

- Low attraction rates of skilled workers moving into WI
- Disparities in internship and workforce opportunities for POC
- Lack of interest in hiring entry level talent which is more accessible than mid-level talent
- Limited population growth (retention & attraction)
- My thoughts on this are that although the region has many good institutes of higher learning, the talent coming out of those institutions is not staying in the area. We need to give incentives to graduating students to stay, live, and work in WI.
- Many times there are not the skilled workers available for jobs.
- Ability to keep new higher education graduates and a reduction in the overall population.

Entrepreneurship (6 Comments)

- Lack of a serial entrepreneurship talent. Talent is what attracts funding, not the ideas alone
- Low entrepreneurship
- Lack of integration of young entrepreneurs into traditional business
- Lack of understanding and innovative solutions to jumpstart entrepreneurship for minority pop
- Several ecosystems of innovation and entrepreneurship are coming together but need better support and coordination with all stakeholders. MKETEK is a great start.
- Indicators of "innovation and entrepreneurship" are being conflated with other regional challenges that hold us back. This community and region stifles entrepreneurs of color and women and fails to support innovation when it is fledging regardless of the innovator’s background. The skills and ideas are out there, but the lack of startup support and unimaginative and paternalistic focus of many "support" organizations is in the way. I would add business lending redlining to this list and mark it

as a Strongly Agree. Shovel ready sites are available, but the regional transportation infrastructure to connect workers to them, and a strong regional outlook are also lacking.

Housing (4 Comments)

- High cost of housing
- Significant racial disparities and high eviction rates
- Lack of affordable workforce housing and starter homes
- Diversity, Equality & Inclusiveness, Lack of modern regional transportation alternatives, Life-cycle housing, NIMBYism

Infrastructure (4 Comments)

- Aging infrastructure
- Underutilized port
- Lack of widespread home access to high-speed broadband due to income disparities
- Aging public infrastructure with no means to fund in a sustainable manner

Other (4 Comments)

- Lack of Sustainability by a majority of businesses and communities
- Incidence of broken families
- History of many industries paying lower wages for workers, especially tech workers, than the national median, making it very hard for employers to compete. Cost of health care and health insurance is higher here than elsewhere. Very slow or no net growth in the workforce-age population, making it very hard to grow an economy. Large number of persons in poverty in the region's cities
- I recall reading that our utility costs are significantly higher due to We Energies' monopoly. We are also dependent on non-renewable sources such as gas, oil, coal, etc. which will be increasingly undesirable in the future. We also should not be allowing companies to play off areas against each other in a bidding war. That is how we got stuck with the disastrous FoxConn deal, and that is how communities suffer when another community offers incentives. Our political climate in Wisconsin is also a disaster. Ideology should not trump over science, and our current status as a top hotspot cannot be creating a good impression on businesses. If we can't get our act together on this, how can we on other issues the business community may be concerned about?

Attraction (2 Comments)

- Lack of image of the region for business (beyond beer, brats, and Packers)

- Low attraction rates of skilled workers moving into WI

Industries (2 Comments)

- Lack of recognition of the tech industry as a critical and growing industry in the state
- We are strong in all clusters besides information technology. I have done a lot of research on our tech cluster and we don't have a particular strength in it compared to other regions.

Quality of Life (1 Comment)

- Residents deprecating area because of our winter
- Lack of dedicated funding to invest in aging public infrastructure

OPPORTUNITIES

Existing Opportunities from 2015-2020 CEDS

Percent of respondents who agree this is still an Opportunity is noted in parentheses

- Continued cluster development in the water technology; food and beverage manufacturing; power, energy and controls; advanced manufacturing; and medical technology sectors (93%)
- Collaboration with inter-regional, regional, and state economic development organizations to more effectively promote the Region and align resources (86%)
- Potential clusters in financial services, and smaller sub-clusters in industrial/manufacturing design (73%)
- Recruiting Northern Illinois companies based on the Region's competitive value proposition and Illinois' recent corporate and personal tax rate increases (65%)
- Improvement in entrepreneurial climate through the continued growth of BizStarts Milwaukee (54%)
- Growth of Venture Debt Program for revenue generating early-stage companies (52%)
- Foreign direct investment in Europe, building on four Spanish companies that have recently established operations in the Region (37%)
- Expansion of Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) and EB-5 Foreign Investment Zone programs (27%)

Comments Suggesting Additional Opportunities (73 Total Comments)

Note: some comments appear in multiple categories

Industries (11 Comments)

- Recognize the depth of tech in our region (albeit embedded in historical companies) and leverage for growth of the sector

- Promote careers in manufacturing and the trades
- Capitalize on the "onshoring" trend to do micro manufacturing regionally
- Industry 4.0 adoption
- Utilize technology to make manufacturing more efficient
- Power, controls, water technology cluster
- Green economy
- Investment in renewable and sustainable economy
- Many companies from Germany, should that be an international investment attraction focus? Medical Innovation, Capitalize on the IQ corridor for collaboration & innovation between Madison & Milwaukee Higher educational institutions
- Need to look at integrating STEM students into the clusters with better designed internships, apprenticeships and other programs to keep vibrant. Medical Research Cluster needs to be highlighted as well. Automation trends, 3-D printing manufacturing, utilization of state's natural resources, beyond water, could also provide opportunities for innovation, keeping and attracting more young workers. Huge opportunity to test retraining of older workers in updated technology skills should be looked at, especially in Milwaukee and reentry from state prisons.
- No more Foxconn

Education (9 Comments)

- Attract research dollars to our universities and commercialize for growth
- Improvement of high school graduation rates
- Enhance Medical Research programs between Universities, Tech colleges, and High schools
- Fix transportation and K-12 education and many other problems with the region will be minimized
- Opportunity to enlarge the workforce by reducing discrimination and improving education
- Greater career path exploration & skill development opportunities in high school students
- Many companies from Germany, should that be an international investment attraction focus? Medical Innovation, Capitalize on the IQ corridor for collaboration & innovation between Madison & Milwaukee Higher educational institutions
- Need to look at integrating STEM students into the clusters with better designed internships, apprenticeships and other programs to keep vibrant. Medical Research Cluster needs to be highlighted as well. Automation trends, 3-D printing manufacturing, utilization of state's natural resources, beyond water, could also provide opportunities for innovation, keeping and attracting more young workers. Huge opportunity to test retraining of older workers in updated technology skills should be looked at, especially in Milwaukee and reentry from state prisons.

- The region needs many more organizations than just BizStarts to generate more entrepreneurs and successful entrepreneurs. Given a high number of college and university students in the region, we need to work much harder to get them to commit to live in the region upon graduation by linking them with opportunities throughout their college/university careers.

Workforce (8 Comments)

- Educating and utilizing prison and jail population in the workforce
- Engage in stronger internships and expand apprenticeships programs
- Engage boomers to stay in the workforce
- Gain real understanding of the discrepancy between workforce available and the gap which is not just transportation
- Move to more virtual work reduces cost of investment in workforce expansion in region
- Opportunity to enlarge the workforce by reducing discrimination and improving education
- Need to look at integrating STEM students into the clusters with better designed internships, apprenticeships and other programs to keep vibrant. Medical Research Cluster needs to be highlighted as well. Automation trends, 3-D printing manufacturing, utilization of state's natural resources, beyond water, could also provide opportunities for innovation, keeping and attracting more young workers. Huge opportunity to test retraining of older workers in updated technology skills should be looked at, especially in Milwaukee and reentry from state prisons.
- The region needs many more organizations than just BizStarts to generate more entrepreneurs and successful entrepreneurs. Given a high number of college and university students in the region, we need to work much harder to get them to commit to live in the region upon graduation by linking them with opportunities throughout their college/university careers.

Transportation (7 Comments)

- Fix transportation and K-12 education and many other problems with the region will be minimized
- Opportunity to implement a regional opportunity to implement a regional opportunity to implement a regional transportation system
- Plan and invest in a multi-modal transportation plan for the region and develop associated funding plan
- Chicago mega region collaboration
- There are great opportunities in investing in public infrastructure including parks, public transit and broadband in order to make the region more attractive to talent and suitable for Dispersed teams

- I would like the RED LINE extension completed: Route 12 from Elkhorn to White Water. This should have been completed long ago!!! Route 12 four lane ends in Elkhorn in the 60's!! Let's get this completed!!!!
- As previously mentioned, I'm not in favor of offering tax and financial incentives - that's a race to the bottom. We should be attracting businesses with our strong infrastructure, our excellent transportation options, and our people.

Attraction (6 Comments)

- Attract virtual workers to the region to infuse talent/change demographics, based on quality of life
- Organizations like MVP and Harbor District with strong branding and placemaking projects
- Ask for engagement by successful WI alumni to invest in the region
- Be a welcoming location for immigrants
- Many companies from Germany, should that be an international investment attraction focus? Medical Innovation, Capitalize on the IQ corridor for collaboration & innovation between Madison & Milwaukee Higher educational institutions
- As previously mentioned, I'm not in favor of offering tax and financial incentives - that's a race to the bottom. We should be attracting businesses with our strong infrastructure, our excellent transportation options, and our people.

Development (6 Comments)

- Opportunity for development in the Menomonee Valley
- Opportunity for development in the 30th Street Corridor
- Opportunity for development in the Harbor District
- Development in 30th Street Industrial Corridor
- Leverage local investment to attract outside investment
- Redevelopment of underutilized or vacant retail (big box)

Governance (5 Comments)

- Build on collaboration that occurred during pandemic between a wide variety of public and private organizations
- Strengthen the regional collaboration with Madison area
- Increase penalties for repeated drunk driving laws
- Broaden local and state revenue sources (i.e. local sales tax) to fund investments
- Chicago mega region collaboration

Disparities (5 Comments)

- Local municipal investment in programs fighting racial & economic disparities
- Systemic Racism being addressed by non-profit groups - ie: WISDOM/MICAH
- Opportunity to enlarge the workforce by reducing discrimination and improving education
- To create holistic human-centered approach with comprehensive network of supports to help level racial disparities. Supports working together through serving those in need of work from family development, job advancement by referring to state and federal programs, to transportation, childcare, credit building, financial classes.... Please reach out to me if you like
- Recognizes that the diversity within the region is also both a strength and opportunity

Infrastructure (5 Comments)

- Support 5G networks throughout the region, broadband infrastructure investment
- Leverage Port Milwaukee to access global markets
- There's great opportunities in investing in public infrastructure including parks, public transit and broadband in order to make the region more attractive to talent and suitable for Dispersed teams
- I would like the RED LINE extension completed: Route 12 from Elkhorn to White Water. This should have been completed long ago!!! Route 12 four lane ends in Elkhorn in the 60's!! Let's get this completed!!!!
- As previously mentioned, I'm not in favor of offering tax and financial incentives - that's a race to the bottom. We should be attracting businesses with our strong infrastructure, our excellent transportation options, and our people.

Entrepreneurship (4 Comments)

- Work with other partners to promote entrepreneurship amongst minority entrepreneurs, not just BizStarts
- Leverage our large orgs as "first customers" for entrepreneurs
- Gener8tor is the most successful, based on results, in the early stage funding and start up. We should tap their insights into what's needed. What growth has come from "water technology" segment in this region?
- The region needs many more organizations than just BizStarts to generate more entrepreneurs and successful entrepreneurs. Given a high number of college and university students in the region, we need to work much harder to get them to commit to live in the region upon graduation by linking them with opportunities throughout their college/university careers.

Natural Resources (3 Comments)

- Capitalize on freshwater availability on the 3rd coast
- Utilize government and non-profit sectors to hold industry accountable for the miss use of natural resources - particularly water
- Need to look at integrating STEM students into the clusters with better designed internships, apprenticeships and other programs to keep vibrant. Medical Research Cluster needs to be highlighted as well. Automation trends, 3-D printing manufacturing, utilization of state's natural resources, beyond water, could also provide opportunities for innovation, keeping and attracting more young workers. Huge opportunity to test retraining of older workers in updated technology skills should be looked at, especially in Milwaukee and reentry from state prisons.

Quality of Life (2 Comments)

- Attract virtual workers to the region to infuse talent/change demographics, based on quality of life
- Use COVID-19 company reactions to recruit them to the M7 region due to our strengths (low cost of living, high QOL, etc.)

Housing (1 Comment)

- Support workforce housing developments across the region

Other (1 Comment)

- None of this is good if it leaves any member of our community behind.

THREATS

Existing Threats from 2015-2020 CEDS

Percent of respondents who agree this is still a Threat is noted in parentheses

- Aging population and workforce (93%)
- Manufacturing dependence (73%)
- Talent shortage and misaligned workforce without the skills to meet the needs of employers, especially in the manufacturing sector (72%)
- Brain drain of local college graduates (72%)
- Other states and regions with stronger economic incentives and lower taxes (45%)

Comments Suggesting Additional Threats (70 Total Comments)

Note: some comments appear in multiple categories

Governance (17 Comments)

- Excessive partisanship/division statewide causes paralysis and prevents reforms
- Lower State income and corporate tax revenue due to COVID
- Inability to fund long term new initiatives
- Limited ability of government to function due to political divide
- Lack of cooperation by state legislature to help in the SE Wisconsin area, especially in the area with people of color
- Continued political divisiveness
- Failure for State to recognize that a strong Milwaukee (and SE WI region) is necessary for a competitive state
- Public/private stakeholder inability to work together
- Excessive role of money in politics
- Lack of regional vision by those not engaged in this process. Too much parochialism between regional counties and cities/towns
- Inability to find lowest common denominator in region or state, so to be able to focus recruitment efforts (business and people) outward
- The state government undermines the cities in the region while taking the tax revenue from the region and spending it elsewhere in the state. The continued favored notion that business attraction is the best source of new jobs. We need to start and grow our own.
- Greatest threat to region is current political climate. GOP policies and inaction have been very harmful to entrepreneurs and attracting younger talent. With an increase in dispersed working the region has to become a great place to live and give people a reason to live here. Tax incentives for businesses won't cut it. We must invest in infrastructure and remove blocks to progressive initiatives. Climate change also a huge threat, we must become a state that leads in green technology & manufacturing
- Our dysfunctional political system is a threat. While Milwaukee County will remain relatively young compared to surrounding counties and the state, there will be other cities and regions with younger workforce. Our birth rate is not high - we need immigration to continue to grow, so we need to be seen as a good destination for foreign immigrants from other countries. But our current political climate discourages immigration. While we have a good transportation network, lack of funding threatens it, particularly at the local level.

- Racism. In hiring, in advancement, in lending, in public services, across the board. I would also identify the current legislative climate in Madison as a threat. Milwaukee (City and County) has been pitted against the rest of the state, including its immediate neighbors, for resources and legislative support.
- Obvious one is declining state and public funding for education and services. This was evident pre-COVID and has been exacerbated recently.
- Frozen state transit funding

Workforce (10 Comments)

- Continued demonization of immigrants will have hi-tech talent going to more welcoming locations to start businesses
- Workforce's digital skills not positioned for future industries
- COVID-19's impact on women in the workforce
- Lack of upward mobility
- State DWD is not structured to invest in highest growth industries
- Lack of attraction for POC to relocate to such a segregated city. Stifling any effort for a diverse workforce
- Lack of data to show the skills for the future at a granular level to allow purposeful investment in skills
- One of the biggest threats is the lack of diversity in our workforce compared to the diversity in our communities. Going from 34% people of color to 51% over the next 15 years in metro Milwaukee without a change in engagement in our respective workforce will be opportunity lost. Just in education alone, percentage of adult population with a 4-year degree or better: AA/15%, HL/14%, W43%. This gap needs to be closed.
- Our biggest challenge is upskilling, reskilling, and producing the talent to keep [advanced manufacturing] a strength for the region.
- Our dysfunctional political system is a threat. While Milwaukee County will remain relatively young compared to surrounding counties and the state, there will be other cities and regions with younger workforce. Our birth rate is not high - we need immigration to continue to grow, so we need to be seen as a good destination for foreign immigrants from other countries. But our current political climate discourages immigration. While we have a good transportation network, lack of funding threatens it, particularly at the local level.

Attraction (10 Comments)

- Economic incentives/taxes not structured to attract the industries of the future (tech)

- Continued demonization of immigrants will have hi-tech talent going to more welcoming locations to start businesses
- WI's conservative/humble nature makes us reluctant to share our successes and capabilities
- New comfort with virtual workforce may move jobs to the most cost-effective and easiest area to do business
- Lack of knowledge of persons outside area to understand how well we produce even during bad weather
- Lack of attraction for POC to relocate to such a segregated city. Stifling any effort for a diverse workforce
- Inability to find lowest common denominator in region or state, so to be able to focus recruitment efforts (business and people) outward
- The state government undermines the cities in the region while taking the tax revenue from the region and spending it elsewhere in the state. The continued favored notion that business attraction is the best source of new jobs. We need to start and grow our own.
- Greatest threat to region is current political climate. GOP policies and inaction have been very harmful to entrepreneurs and attracting younger talent. With an increase in dispersed working the region has to become a great place to live and give people a reason to live here. Tax incentives for businesses won't cut it. We must invest in infrastructure and remove blocks to progressive initiatives. Climate change also a huge threat, we must become a state that leads in green technology & manufacturing
- Lack of affordable life cycle housing. Need incentives to compete as a Mid-West destination and national player
- Lack of investment due to extreme conservative nature

Disparities (9 Comments)

- Identified as racially unfriendly region
- Racial inequality
- Segregation, health disparities, educational disparities, lack of mobility represent an existential obstacle to progress
- Current racial disparities ignored
- Racism throughout region
- Systemic racism
- Inability to understand or deal with race disparities in the public and private sectors will result in worse socio-economic conditions for everyone

- One of the biggest threats is the lack of diversity in our workforce compared to the diversity in our communities. Going from 34% people of color to 51% over the next 15 years in metro Milwaukee without a change in engagement in our respective workforce will be opportunity lost. Just in education alone, percentage of adult population with a 4-year degree or better: AA/15%, HL/14%, W43%. This gap needs to be closed.
- Racism. In hiring, in advancement, in lending, in public services, across the board. I would also identify the current legislative climate in Madison as a threat. Milwaukee (City and County) has been pitted against the rest of the state, including its immediate neighbors, for resources and legislative support.

Other (5 Comments)

- A lot of the opportunities are also threats if not implemented
- Civil unrest across the nation
- Use of drugs throughout the Region harming workforce, families and increasing costs to local governments.
- Violent Crime in certain sectors of the region
- Encourage families to increase the birth rate. Look what has been done in Hungary. People are workers and consumers of goods.

Industries (5 Comments)

- Economic incentives/taxes not structured to attract the industries of the future (tech)
- Workforce's digital skills not positioned for future industries
- Lack of knowledge of the opportunities provided in Manufacturing
- Not understanding that Manufacturing is high Tech sector
- Lack of recognition of tech as a sector makes it unlikely to attract external investment

Natural Resources (4 Comments)

- Lake Michigan high water levels
- Human & economic impact of climate change
- Not recognizing that our water resources are delicate and finite
- I think that Water is becoming more of an issue in WI in general. Our lakes, rivers, and streams are becoming more polluted. With the reductions in federal protections and the weakening of the Clean Water Act regulations under the trump administration, WI needs to be vigilant about its precious waterways.

Education (2 Comments)

- Obvious one is declining state and public funding for education and services. This was evident pre-COVID and has been exacerbated recently
- One of the biggest threats is the lack of diversity in our workforce compared to the diversity in our communities. Going from 34% people of color to 51% over the next 15 years in metro Milwaukee without a change in engagement in our respective workforce will be opportunity lost. Just in education alone, percentage of adult population with a 4-year degree or better: AA/15%, HL/14%, W43%. This gap needs to be closed.

Infrastructure (2 Comments)

- Lack of vision for long term infrastructure needs
- Greatest threat to region is current political climate. GOP policies and inaction have been very harmful to entrepreneurs and attracting younger talent. With an increase in dispersed working the region has to become a great place to live and give people a reason to live here. Tax incentives for businesses won't cut it. We must invest in infrastructure and remove blocks to progressive initiatives. Climate change also a huge threat, we must become a state that leads in green technology & manufacturing

Transportation (2 Comments)

- Lack of access/investment in public transit
- Frozen state transit funding

Entrepreneurship (1 Comment)

- Greatest threat to region is current political climate. GOP policies and inaction have been very harmful to entrepreneurs and attracting younger talent. With an increase in dispersed working the region has to become a great place to live and give people a reason to live here. Tax incentives for businesses won't cut it. We must invest in infrastructure and remove blocks to progressive initiatives. Climate change also a huge threat, we must become a state that leads in green technology & manufacturing

Housing (1 Comment)

- Lack of affordable life cycle housing. Need incentives to compete as a Mid-West destination and national player

Quality of Life (1 Comment)

- Lack of vibrancy during winter months

PART 2: ROUND 2 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

[to be completed following the second round of stakeholder and public input]