

Quarterly Update, May 2011

This is the quarterly update on the efforts of the Unified Economic Development, Land Use and Transportation Plan Technical Team. This Team is comprised of staff members from each city and Scott County.

Economic Development Strategy:

The Economic Development Strategy Group is comprised of representatives from TED, brokers/developers, the business community, St. Francis Regional Medical Center, and school districts. The group began meeting in April, and is working to create recommendations for a coordinated economic development vision and strategy. To date, the group has heard presentations regarding SCALE, the Unified Plan Charter and Work Plan, demographics, Grow MN!, the Ordinance review process, local economic development tools, the Scott County real estate market, regional and local employment trends, the fiber ring, experiences in marketing Scott County, and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community's development plans. On April 26, the Group members discussed Scott County's strengths and weaknesses in detail. At the May 10 meeting, the members will begin to discuss specific economic development strategies. The group's facilitator, Michele Foster, expects to have a written strategy completed and approved by the Group by June 7.

Work Plan:

The first major activity under Phase II began this month when a technical review team (commercial developers, real estate brokers, site selectors, planners, engineers, and community development directors) toured the County's top economic development corridors in Shakopee and Prior Lake. On April 22, the 15-member team toured the 101, 83 and 169 corridors as well as the 169/69 intersection area in Shakopee; along with the 42 corridor in Prior Lake. For each of these corridors, the team reviewed and critiqued existing and planned roads and utilities, infrastructure staging and sequencing, development constraints, site amenities, access, parcel readiness, and marketability. The team will conduct similar "truth test" tours of planned economic development corridors in Elko New Market and Belle Plaine on May 13, followed by tours in Jordan, New Prague and rural Scott County later this year. Findings from all of these corridor reviews will be summarized in a future report to SCALE.

Ordinance and Statute:

In January the committee developed the 2011 work program and work products.

At the February meeting the committee reviewed and refined the 2011 work program and work products. Updates were provided on the variance amendment and the Planning Statutes consolidation discussion that is taking place by Association of Minnesota Counties, Minnesota Association of County Planning and Zoning Administrators, and Minnesota American Planning Association. Shawn Dahl provided an overview of how Special Improvement Districts are used in Utah and Colorado.

At the April meeting there was a discussion on developing an Economic Development Strategy Group that would serve as a taskforce to the committee. Other topics included:
Interchange preservation alternatives white paper: downzoning, transfer of density ordinance,

interim use permit, official mapping, orderly annexation agreements, and overlay ordinance. Discussion on the engineers and planners lunch agenda and topics.

Education:

The third annual SCALE Education Workshops are underway. Workshops in previous years have focused on underlying transportation and land use planning principles and how transportation and land use planning need to work together to achieve high quality, long term economic development. Yes, we even used Lego's in the workshops! This year's SCALE Education Workshops are focusing on how transportation and land use support business location decisions, and thereby economic development. 2011 workshops have been held for newly elected and appointed Officials and individually for the City Council/Planning/Economic Development Commissions of Belle Plaine, Prior Lake, Jordan, Shakopee and New Prague. Workshops are scheduled for Savage (May 23), County Board/Townships (June 13) and Elko New Market (June 22).

The Workshops have been well attended and small group/hands-on parts of the Workshops have included new learning experiences for elected and appointed leaders in their communities. Comments received from attendees about the workshops so far have included "Good information in manageable parts," helps "impress upon decision makers the importance of long term planning related to transportation & development," I am now "better equipped to discern the most effective way to plan and develop roadways and commerce," and we need to "promote & inform local governments on SCALE Economic Development goals."

The SCALE Education program will continue to build on the role each of us play in implementing the SCALE Unified Plan for Economic Development.

Broadband:

Broadband Gap Analysis. The overarching initial step of our broadband development activity is focused on a comparison of Scott County's actual and potential performance in the broadband arena. Naturally, such a comparison gets at the questions of "what is?" and "what could be?" The gap analysis process draws upon information collected on two fronts: a summary of current conditions in Scott County; and a review of best practices and existing literature.

Current Conditions:

The current conditions report reflects findings from individual meetings with Scott County communities and school districts, including SCALE member experiences with the Scott County Fiber Network, opportunities for "next phase" fiber deployment, shared services and collaboration, as well as impressions of availability of high-speed internet connectivity in individual communities. The report identifies three overarching themes and ten key takeaways from the outreach activity. Thus far, such outreach has included individual meetings with: cities of Belle Plaine, Elko New Market, Jordan, New Prague, Prior Lake, Savage and Shakopee; Belle Plaine, New Prague, Prior Lake-Savage, and Shakopee school districts; and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

Best Practices. The best practices report draws upon examples and insight from projects focused on municipal fiber builds, "Intelligent Community" applications, and ARRA broadband grants, among

others. Related findings have been captured in a draft report – which will be shared with SCALE members as we move forward in discussing existing opportunities and potential next steps.

Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) Recognition:

Outreach to Scott County communities and school districts identified a number of interesting and important approaches that could be useful in telling Scott County’s story as an “Intelligent Community” applicant. Significant research has been completed to describe ICF and its application process, to outline requirements necessary for ICF recognition, to identify successful elements of past ICF applications, and to recommend a path for a future SCALE ICF application. A memo detailing successful approaches to ICF applications and including strategic recommendations for SCALE will be forthcoming in May 2011.