



Economic Development Policy Analysis

For Todd, Morrison, Cass, Crow Wing, and Wadena Counties

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Region Five Photos at <http://s1184.photobucket.com/home/mnregionfive>

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Introduction

The following document analyzes Todd, Morrison, Cass, Crow Wing, and Wadena County policies relating to economic development. This document is one piece of a larger analysis that addresses the five counties' policies regarding topics of land use, transportation, housing, economic development, parks, trails, open space, and recreation, water and natural resources, intergovernmental coordination, and healthcare. To ensure clarity, each topic is analyzed separately in its own document. Research and analysis was undertaken to provide the Region Five Development Consortium with a clearer understanding of how current policies relate and differ from each other across counties. The following analysis will be helpful for workgroups to develop regional policies and recommendations, which will be adopted by the full consortium to guide the future growth and development of Region Five in a sustainable manner.

Methodology

The following policies were taken from Todd, Morrison, Cass, Crow Wing, and Wadena County's most recent Comprehensive Plans. This document addresses the similarities, differences, and potential conflicts between county policies regarding economic development. Due to the uniqueness of each plan, not all counties addressed similar issues around the topic at hand. For this reason, policies were only included if at least two of the five counties addressed the issue. To see what county policies were included or dismissed in this analysis please refer to Appendix A (separate document). Additionally, each county's policies are written at a different level of specificity making it difficult to compare/contrast a detailed policy with a vague policy. For the purpose of this analysis, policies were considered similar to each other even when they differ on the level of detail.

For this analysis, sub-topics were created to guide the reader throughout the document. For example, this document contains sub-topics of employment, job education/training, tourism, development/expansion of business, and so forth. Under each sub-topic, similarities, differences, and conflicts between county policies on an issue were analyzed and grouped into categories. Categories are listed as follows: Very Similar, Similar, Somewhat Similar, Unique/Potentially Conflicting, and Unique. Policies in the Very Similar category are ones that relate to each other at a clear level of specificity; policies under the Similar category are ones that relate in vision but not in detail; policies under the Somewhat Similar category relate to each other more similarly than uniquely; policies under Unique/Potentially Conflicting category are in potential disagreement with other policies pertaining to the same issue; and policies that are considered unique have some relationship to the issue at hand but are not similar to each other. Due to policies relating to more than one sub-topic, it is possible that the same policy will be included across sub-topics and categories. It is also possible that not all categories were used in this document, depending on how county policies relate to each other.

All counties, with the exception of Cass County, included an economic development section in their comprehensive plan. Information regarding economic development for Cass County was taken from their Private Land Use Plan section in their comprehensive plan. For more information as to where policies were taken from each counties' comprehensive plan please refer to Appendix A.

To make it clear to understand, each policy has been assigned a color that corresponds with a county. The county color code can be seen in the footer of each page. Additionally, text that is bolded and highlighted signifies the relationship between policies under a category. Furthermore, a sources list is included below in this methodology section to provide readers with links to each county's most updated comprehensive plan.

Sources

1) Todd County 2030 Comprehensive Plan:

http://www.co.todd.mn.us/HTML_Files/Departments/Documentation/ToddCounty2030ComprehensivePlan.pdf

2) Morrison County Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2005):

<http://morrisonmn.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7BC8FCCAFF-AECD-45DC-91B1-016A998EB4A8%7D/uploads/%7B77B3A859-82C4-4E06-AC2D-04350EE16357%7D.PDF>

3) Cass County Comprehensive Plan (2008-2012):

http://www.co.cass.mn.us/esd/pdfs/comp_plan.pdf

4) Crow Wing County Comprehensive Plan (2003-2023):

http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/planning_zoning/ordinances/docs/2004_COMPREHENSIVE_PLAN.pdf

5) Wadena County Comprehensive Plan (1999):

<https://r5dcscrp.basecamphq.com/projects/7032816/file/85211367/WadenaCountyCompPlan.pdf>

Findings

I. Economy

Morrison, Cass, and Crow Wing County all have similar policies regarding economic diversity. Although worded differently, these three counties encourage economic diversity or a diverse business mix that will meet the needs of county residents. Please refer to IA1 below for policy details. Similarly, Wadena County has a policy that states that employment and business opportunities that meet the current needs of county residents are encouraged. However, they do not say that a diversity of employment or business opportunities should be encouraged as the other three counties do. Uniquely, Crow Wing County states that a diverse business mix should provide livable wage employment opportunities for all-socioeconomic factions of the labor force. It is also stated that tourism and the quality of life for residents should be enhanced (please refer to IA3 below). Todd County does not address this issue.

II. Business Development and Expansion

Todd, Crow Wing, and Wadena County all have similar, but vague, policies regarding the development and expansion of existing business and industry. They all would like to retain and support existing business. Crow Wing and Wadena County also state they would like to retain and support existing industries. Todd County does not explicitly say they support existing industries but do state that they support existing agriculture. Additionally, Crow Wing County's policy states that existing business and industries should be assisted with expansion.

Uniquely, Todd County says that required infrastructure should be in place to promote, protect, and support existing business and agriculture. Morrison County has many unique policies regarding the issue. One policy states that opportunities for expansion of business and industry should be explored. Another policy says that expansion should be provided for all commercial centers without adversely impacting residential open space districts. They go on to say how commercial areas should be developed according to function. Another policy says they should provide for manufacturing operations with the resultant employment and tax benefits in a manner that is compatible with other land uses. Morrison County also encourages the location of manufacturing and light industrial concerns. Crow Wing County would like to redevelop vacant and abandoned commercial and industrial lots in cities and along growth corridors. Additionally, they discourage commercial and industrial uses in rural townships without adequate infrastructure. Crow Wing County also encourages new businesses and industries to protect and enhance valued scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources. For more information on policies that are unique and relating to the development and expansion of existing business and industry please refer to IIA2 below. Cass County does not address this issue.

III. Location of Commercial Development

Cass and Crow Wing County both have similar policies regarding the location of commercial development. Cass County encourages the location of commercial businesses at or near major transportation intersections. Crow Wing County encourages the location of additional commercial development to discrete nodes along growth corridors on trunk highways. Crow Wing County also has a policy that is unique/potentially conflicting with Cass County's policy regarding this issue. They say that they discourage commercial and industrial uses in rural townships without adequate infrastructure. Since Cass County does not specify that commercial development should be encouraged at major intersections only if there is adequate infrastructure these policies potentially conflict. It is possible that major transportation intersections might occur in rural townships that do not have adequate infrastructure to support such commercial development. Todd, Morrison, and Wadena County do not address this issue.

IV. Agricultural Business

Morrison and Wadena County have very similar policies regarding the development and expansion of agriculture and related business. They both support and encourage the expansion and development of manufacturing and agriculturally related business and industry. Both these policies are worded exactly the same. Similarly, Todd County has a policy that states they would like to promote, protect, and support existing business and agriculture. Uniquely, Todd County has a policy that says they would like to search for methods to help develop agricultural businesses that can benefit from being in an agricultural production area.

Morrison and Wadena County also have very similar policies regarding the processing of agricultural products. They both encourage the processing of agricultural products within their county. Cass and Crow Wing County do not address this issue.

V. Tourism

Regarding the existing tourism industry, Morrison and Crow Wing County have similar policies. They both promote the current and prospective tourism industry in their counties. Crow Wing County's policy is a little more detailed and states they would like to retain existing resorts and assist them with expansion and improvement to allow them to meet growing needs. Morrison County just says they promote tourism as an important industry, both current and prospective. They do not explicitly state they should assist tourism-related businesses with expansion and improvement as Crow Wing County says. Somewhat similarly, Wadena County encourages the development of a county-wide tourism plan. Uniquely, Wadena County would like to create a County Tourism Advisory Group and to research grant opportunities or funding of a tourism plan.

Regarding tourism-related natural resources, both Morrison and Crow Wing County have similar policies. Morrison County would like to preserve tourism-related natural resources from future development to maintain their value and integrity while Crow Wing County says that resorts should be expanded and improved in a manner that doesn't degrade natural resources. Todd and Cass County do not address this issue.

VI. Land Use Conflict Mitigation

Morrison and Crow Wing County have similar policies regarding the impacts that commercial and industrial uses might have on other land uses. They both state that commercial and industrial uses should not negatively impact surrounding land uses. Morrison County also states the residential development should not negatively affect commercial or industrial uses.

Uniquely, Morrison County has policies regarding commercial and residential impact on surrounding land uses. Again, they would like to minimize or eliminate negative impacts. Crow Wing County states that an impact analysis should be conducted on all proposed commercial and industrial developments. For more information on these policies please refer to VIA2 below.

VII. Job Education/Training

Todd and Morrison County both have similar policies regarding educational and training programs for youth. They both agree that opportunities for youth to get educated and trained for work should be created and/or expanded.

Uniquely, Todd County has a policy to educate and inform the public that agricultural businesses have the same, if not greater potential, than other industries. Crow Wing County says that livable wage jobs that meet the education and skill level of the current labor force should be attracted. Cass and Wadena County do not address this issue.

VIII. Infrastructure

No counties have similar policies regarding economic infrastructure. For information on Todd, Cass, and Crow Wing County policies that are unique regarding economic infrastructure please refer to VIII1 below. Morrison and Wadena County do not address this issue.

IX. Business Attraction

No counties have similar policies regarding the attraction of business. For information on Todd and Morrison County policies that are unique regarding the attraction of business please refer to IX1 below. Cass, Crow Wing, and Wadena County do not address this issue.

X. Employment

Both Morrison and Crow Wing County have similar policies regarding employment. Although worded much differently, they both agree that the provision of employment should meet the capabilities of the present work force. For more detail as to how these policies compare to one another as well as unique policies regarding this issue please refer to XA1 and XA2 below. Todd and Cass County do not address this issue.

XI. Intergovernmental Coordination

Cass and Wadena County both have similar policies regarding the coordination of local governments relating to economic development. They both agree that local governments should be included to help develop the county economically. However, the cooperation between local governments and other agencies/institutions differs. For example, Cass County says that efforts between the County, municipalities, state and federal agencies, and tribal government should be coordinated to assure economic development. Wadena County says that they support regional cooperation between local governments, educational institutions, and businesses to create high skill living wage jobs. Please refer to XIA1 and XIA2 below for more detail. Todd, Morrison, and Crow Wing County do not address this issue.

Policy Analysis

I. Economy

A. Economic Diversity

1. Similar

- a) **The County should promote economic diversification which will provide for continued employment opportunities and reasonable access to a broad range of goods and services for community residents.**
- b) **Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Cass**

County residents and visitors for employment and services.

- c) **Encourage a diverse business mix that provides livable wage employment opportunities** for all socio-economic factions of the labor force and enhances tourism and the quality of life for residents.

2. Similar to Above (A1)

- a) Encourage economic development activity appropriate to Wadena County which **creates employment and business opportunities to meet County residents current and future economic needs.**

3. Unique

- a) Encourage a diverse business mix that **provides livable wage employment opportunities for all socio-economic factions of the labor force and enhances tourism and the quality of life for residents.**

II. Business Development and Expansion

A. Development and Expansion of Existing Business/Industry

1. Very Similar

- a) **Promote, protect and support existing business** and agriculture.
- b) **Retain existing business and industries** and assist them with expansion.
- c) Encourage stable economic growth and steady development of new jobs and **recognize and support the business and industrial activities that already exist.**

2. Unique

- a) Ensure that any required infrastructure is in place (to promote, protect and support existing business and agriculture).
- b) The development of opportunities for expansion of existing commercial businesses and industries should be explored.
- c) Expansion should be provided for all commercial centers without adversely impacting residential open space districts.

- d) To the extent possible, commercial areas should be developed according to function; the indiscriminate mixing of retail, business services, personal services and other types of commercial activity shall be discouraged.
- e) The County should encourage the location of manufacturing and light industrial concerns in Morrison County.
- f) The County should provide for manufacturing operations in the County with the resultant employment and tax benefits in a manner that is compatible with other land uses in the County.
- g) Redevelop vacant and abandoned commercial and industrial lots in cities and along growth corridors.
- h) Discourage commercial and industrial uses in rural townships without adequate infrastructure to support such high-impact development.
- i) Encourage new businesses and industries to protect and enhance valued scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources through the use tools such as dedications, clustering, natural buffers/screening, and impervious surface limits.

III. Location of Commercial Development

A. Location of Commercial Development

1. Similar

- a) Encourage location of commercial businesses at or near major transportation intersections.
- b) Encourage the location of additional commercial development to existing cities and discrete nodes along growth corridors on trunk highways.

2. Unique/Potentially Conflicting (to A1a)

- a) Discourage commercial and industrial uses in rural townships without adequate infrastructure to support such high-impact development.

IV. Agricultural Business

A. Expansion and Development Agriculture/Related Business

1. Very Similar

- a) The County should support and encourage expansion and development of manufacturing and agriculturally related business and industry.
- b) Support and encourage expansion and development of manufacturing and agriculturally related business and industry.

2. Similar to Above (A1)

- a) Promote, protect and support existing business and agriculture.

B. Processing of Agricultural Products

1. Very Similar

- a) Local processing of agricultural products should be encouraged.
- b) Encourage the development of businesses that process agricultural products.

2. Unique

- a) Search for methods to help develop agricultural businesses and businesses that can benefit from being in an agricultural production area.

V. Tourism

A. Existing Tourism Industry

1. Similar

- a) Promote tourism as an important industry within Morrison County, both current and prospective, and preserve tourism-related natural resources from future development to maintain their value and integrity.

- b) **Retain existing resorts; assist them with expansion & improvement to allow them to meet growing needs** in a manner that doesn't degrade natural resources.

2. Somewhat Similar to Above (A1)

- a) **Encourage development of a county-wide tourism plan** to incorporate the municipal tourism efforts with the county recreation areas.

B. Preserve Tourism-Related Natural Resources

1. Similar

- a) Promote tourism as an important industry within Morrison County, both current and prospective, and **preserve tourism-related natural resources** from future development to maintain their value and integrity.
- b) Retain existing resorts; assist them with expansion & improvement to allow them to meet growing needs in a manner that **doesn't degrade natural resources.**

2. Unique

- a) Create a Wadena County Tourism Advisory Group.
- b) Research grant opportunities or funding of this plan with the Minnesota Office of Tourism.

VI. Land Use Conflict Mitigation

A. Commercial, Industrial, and Residential Impacts

1. Similar

- a) Increase the use of buffering or similar practices to **minimize the impacts of residential development on commercial and industrial use, and commercial and industrial use on residential development.**
- b) Re-examine the current zoning ordinance to **ensure that commercial and industrial uses do not cause negative impacts on surrounding land uses** or on the natural beauty of the County.

2. Unique

- a) Expansion should be provided for all commercial centers without adversely impacting residential open space districts.
- b) Home occupations should be regulated so as to minimize or eliminate their adverse effect on neighboring residential properties.
- c) Commercial establishments will be expected to maintain a high standard of maintenance and repairs. The storage of trash, parking of junk cars, burning, yard maintenance, noise and light generation and many other factors should be controlled in accordance with recognized standards and procedures.
- d) Conduct an impact analysis on all proposed commercial and industrial developments.

VII. Job Education/Training

A. Youth Education and Training Opportunities

1. Similar

- a) Create opportunities for youth to grow up, get educated and work with a high quality of life in Todd County.
- b) Educational and training programs, particularly for the County's young people should be expanded.

2. Unique

- a) Educate and inform the public that agricultural businesses have the same, if not greater potential, than other industries.
- b) Attract livable wage jobs that meet the education and skill level of the current County labor force.

VIII. Economic Infrastructure

A. Economic Infrastructure

1. Unique

- a) Keep infrastructure levels reasonably ahead of needs so that when opportunities arise the County is able to take advantage of them.
- b) Ensure that any required infrastructure is in place (to promote, protect and support existing business and agriculture).
- c) Businesses requiring subsidies should be located in areas that provide the appropriate public infrastructure.
- d) Business subsidies are not available from the County in any unincorporated area (outside of a city).
- e) Refer industrial use issues to municipalities and economic development authorities.
- f) Continue to regulate new extractive uses and require existing extractive use operations to file a reclamation plan and financial assurance for reclamation.
- g) Locate heavy commercial or industrial uses in existing industrial parks or in nodes along growth corridors that have adequate infrastructure.
- h) Discourage commercial and industrial uses in rural townships without adequate infrastructure to support such high-impact development.
- i) Do not allow commercial and industrial development in areas lacking the necessary supporting infrastructure.

IX. Business Attraction

A. Business Attraction

1. Unique

- a) Presume that future economic growth will come from businesses that currently exist.
- b) Position the County to develop in such a way that synergy between existing and future businesses creates a greater level of opportunity.
- c) Look to local options first but do not become isolationist.

- i. Create opportunities for youth to grow up, get educated and work with a high quality of life in Todd County.
 - ii. Work on local investing options so that local businesses can get connected to local investors before looking for non-local capital and investment options.
 - iii. Recognize that bringing resources in from outside of the County might be the only way for significant growth to happen and support the search for reasonable opportunities.
 - iv. Actively market Todd County.
- d) Utilize economic development tools such as Job Opportunity Building Zones, and similar programs to attract businesses to Morrison County's communities.
 - e) The development of opportunities for establishing new commercial businesses and industries should be explored.
 - f) Continue to maintain consistent communication and cooperation with the Morrison County Community Development Corporation, local chambers of commerce, the Region Five Development Commission, State and Federal economic development agencies, and similar programs and entities to attract business to Morrison County.
 - g) Call attention to Morrison County's physical and human resources as a business attraction tool to promote Morrison County and its communities as a desirable County for business start-up and relocation.

X. Employment

A. Employment

1. Similar

- a) **The provision of employment that will match the capabilities and interests of the present work force** and that will provide potential for growth in skill development for that work force should be encouraged.
- b) **Attract livable wage jobs that meet the education and skill level of the current County labor force.**

2. Unique

- a) The provision of employment which will provide the highest possible incomes to all work classifications should be encouraged.
- b) The provision of employment that will enhance both the economic and human qualities of life of individuals and families in Morrison County should be encouraged.
- c) The County should encourage its young people to remain in farming.
- d) Encourage entrepreneurship and maintain a highly trained and skilled labor force in Crow Wing County.
- e) Encourage the use of well planned public and private financing partnerships to enhance economic development.

XI. Intergovernmental Coordination

A. Coordination Among Local Governments

1. Somewhat Similar

- a) **Coordinate efforts between the County, municipalities, townships, state and federal agencies, and tribal government to assure wise land use, economic development,** and the protection of natural resources.
- b) **Support regional cooperation between local governments,** educational institutions, and businesses **to create high skill living wage jobs.**

2. Unique

- a) Refer industrial use issues to municipalities and economic development authorities.
- b) **Coordinate efforts between the County, municipalities, townships, state and federal agencies, and tribal government** to assure wise land use, economic development, and the protection of natural resources.
- c) **Support regional** cooperation between local governments, **educational institutions, and businesses** to create high skill living wage jobs.