



GRAND RAPIDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, March 14, 2024
4:00 PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority will be held in the City Council Chambers in the Grand Rapids City Hall, 420 North Pokegama Avenue, in Grand Rapids, Minnesota on Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 4:00 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

CALL OF ROLL

SETTING OF THE REGULAR AGENDA - *This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented, or to add/delete an agenda item by a majority vote of the Commissioners present .*

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Consider approval of minutes from the February 22, 2024 regular meeting.

APPROVE CLAIMS

2. Consider approval of claims in the amount of \$9,286.39

BUSINESS

3. HWY 35 Project Update – Jack Mitchell and John Hyduke
4. Discuss GREDA website update
5. Consider approval of the proposal for tree clearing and grubbing of City parcel 91-033-1406 and authorize payment in the amount of \$28,710.00.
6. Review and consider forwarding to the City Council the GREDA 2023 Annual Report

UPDATES

ADJOURN

MEMBERS & TERMS

Tom Sutherland - 12/31/2024 Council Representative

Molly MacGregor - 12/31/2024 Council Representative

Wayne Bruns - 3/1/25

Sholom Blake - 3/1/25

Al Hodnik - 3/1/27

Bill Martinetto - 3/1/27



GRAND RAPIDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 22, 2024
4:00 PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority will be held in the City Council Chambers in the Grand Rapids City Hall, 420 North Pokegama Avenue, in Grand Rapids, Minnesota on Thursday, February 22nd, 2024 at 4:00 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

CALL OF ROLL

PRESENT

Commissioner Al Hodnik
Commissioner Mike Korte
President Sholom Blake
Commissioner Wayne Bruns
Commissioner Tom Sutherland
Commissioner Bill Martinetto

ABSENT

Commissioner Molly MacGregor

SETTING OF THE REGULAR AGENDA - *This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented, or to add/delete an agenda item by a majority vote of the Commissioners present .*

The Commissioners moved the Business Item 4 before Public Hearing item 3.

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Consider approval of the February 8th, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Bruns, second by Commissioner Martinetto to approve the minutes from the February 8th, 2024 regular meeting. The following voted in favor thereof: Hodnik, Bruns, Blake, Martinetto, Korte, Sutherland. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

APPROVE CLAIMS

2. Consider approval of claims in the amount of \$3,200.00

Motion by Commissioner Hodnik, second by Commissioner Sutherland to approve claims in the amount of \$3,200.00. The following voted in favor thereof: Sutherland, Korte, Martinetto, Blake, Bruns, Hodnik. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

BUSINESS

3. Itasca County YMCA - Childcare - Joni Namyst, Executive Director

Staff from the YMCA provided a handout highlighting the accomplishments of this last year and also the growth of the childcare program. They were awarded a 1.4 million dollar grant over the next 3 years from the Blandin Foundation. This helped provide for 64 new childcare spots along with the addition of teachers as well as start a locker room renovation project.

PUBLIC HEARING

4. Conduct a public hearing to consider the conveyance of certain real property to Free Range Food Cooperative.

Community Development Director Mattei provided a power point presentation outlining the scope of the project.

President Blake stated the public hearing this afternoon is to consider the conveyance of parcels 91-415-3630 and 91-41-0610 to the Free-Range Food Cooperative. Recorder Groom noted all notices required by law had been met and no correspondence has been received.

Motion by Commissioner Martinetto, second by Commissioner Sutherland to open the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Hodnik, Bruns, Blake, Martinetto, Korte, Sutherland. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

Brandon Otway, 20176 Carol Street, Grand Rapids provided information on the proposed project.

Becky LaPlant, 502 Hale Lake Lane, Grand Rapids stated we have a need in our community for a food cooperative and supports the proposed project.

Ellen Smilanich, 803 NW 6th Avenue, Grand Rapids supports the proposed project.

Motion by Commissioner Bruns, second by Commissioner Martinetto to close the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Sutherland, Korte, Martinetto, Blake, Bruns, Hodnik. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

UPDATES

Hwy 2 W corridor- Staff met with the State Aid District Engineers today and expressed concerns regarding the Hwy 2 W corridor and they were very receptive to the input provided.

Oppidan- Mr. Mattei is still working on the MFHA workforce housing development grant which is due in April.

Blocks 20&21- The developer has hired an architect to put together a concept for the project.

Downtown project planning- Staff is working on lining up the stops for the tour.

ADJOURN

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

MEMBERS & TERMS

Tom Sutherland - 12/31/2024 Council Representative

Molly MacGregor - 12/31/2024 Council Representative

Mike Korte - 3/1/24

Wayne Bruns - 3/1/25

Sholom Blake - 3/1/25

Al Hodnik - 3/1/27

Bill Martinetto - 3/1/27

DATE: 03/07/2024
 TIME: 09:55:35
 ID: AP443GR0.WOW

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
 DEPARTMENT SUMMARY REPORT

PAGE: 1

INVOICES DUE ON/BEFORE 03/14/2024

VENDOR #	NAME	AMOUNT DUE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY		
0718010	CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS	29.00
2018225	TREASURE BAY PRINTING	19.50
TOTAL		48.50
EDA - CAPITAL PROJECTS		
AIRPORT SOUTH INDUSTRIAL PARKS		
0315455	COLE HARDWARE INC	25.97
0718010	CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS	1,361.00
1415511	NORTHERN STAR COOPERATIVE SERV	485.78
TOTAL AIRPORT SOUTH INDUSTRIAL PARKS		1,872.75
GREAT RIVER ACRES DEV		
0508450	EHLERS AND ASSOCIATES INC	638.75
1105530	KENNEDY & GRAVEN, CHARTERED	105.75
TOTAL GREAT RIVER ACRES DEV		744.50
BLK 36 DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT		
0718060	GRAND RAPIDS HERALD REVIEW	86.89
1105530	KENNEDY & GRAVEN, CHARTERED	1,782.50
TOTAL BLK 36 DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT		1,869.39
L&M DISTRIBUTION CENTER		
1105530	KENNEDY & GRAVEN, CHARTERED	545.75
TOTAL L&M DISTRIBUTION CENTER		545.75
TOTAL UNPAID TO BE APPROVED IN THE SUM OF:		\$5,080.89
CHECKS ISSUED-PRIOR APPROVAL		
PRIOR APPROVAL		
0815500	HOME DEPOT CREDIT SERVICES	2,997.00
1309170	MN DEED	1,000.00
1621130	P.U.C.	108.51
2209665	VISA	99.99
TOTAL PRIOR APPROVAL ALLOWED IN THE SUM OF:		\$4,205.50
TOTAL ALL DEPARTMENTS		\$9,286.39



REQUEST FOR GRAND RAPIDS EDA ACTION

AGENDA DATE: March 14, 2024

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: HWY 35 Project Update – Jack Mitchell and John Hyduke

PREPARED BY: Rob Mattei, Executive Director

BACKGROUND:

Jack Mitchell and John Hyduke, principals of HWY 35, LLC, will be present to provide an update on the status of their redevelopment of the former Ainsworth site as a cannabis grow and manufacturing facility.

REQUIRED ACTION: None required.



REQUEST FOR GRAND RAPIDS EDA ACTION

AGENDA DATE: March 14, 2024

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: Discuss GREDA website update

PREPARED BY: Rob Mattei, Executive Director

BACKGROUND:

A project to comprehensively update GREDA's website has been a carry-over task on the Work Plan for three years. The current website, which was designed and launched in 2011, utilizes an open-source content management system that requires staff resources to become proficient with it and make edits and updates to the site's content, which has fallen behind over the years.

Other deficiencies with the current site include:

- Current site isn't Search Engine Optimized
- Main landing page is extremely text heavy
- Current site has broken and/or expired links
- Current site isn't a responsive design, so it doesn't adjust to mobile device screen sizes
- Current site is very slow to load some pages
- No social media integration (this really hurts your search engine rankings)
- Site is hosted on an outdated platform which is a security risk as well as making it difficult to update and integrate 3rd party tools.

Prior to developing the site in 2011, GREDA considered their limited budget for marketing and considered a website as the most cost-effective/impactful approach. This was informed by a review of a periodically updated publication of *Winning Strategies in Economic Development Marketing, A View from Corporate America*, (2023 version attached). The publication is study is based upon a survey of corporate executives, and site advisors with location decision responsibilities about how they gather information about potential sites and what information is most important to them.

To initiate the process of updating/modernizing the site, staff has reviewed several EDO websites designed and managed by Golden Shovel Agency. We've met with Golden Shovel regarding our project and they have provided the attached proposal, which we'd like to discuss with the Board for input/reaction.

BEST MARKETING TECHNIQUES FROM THE CUSTOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

DCI asks respondents to gauge the effectiveness of 10 conventional marketing techniques used by economic development groups. Until 2020, respondents rated eight techniques (*advertising, direct mail, internet/website, media relations/publicity, hosting special events, planned visits to corporate executives, trade shows and telemarketing*). In 2020, again to reflect new trends and opportunities, DCI adapted this list and added *E-newsletters/E-marketing* and *social media*. Additionally, *telemarketing* was changed to *telephone outreach* and *direct mail* was changed to *physical mail*. Respondents were asked to rate each technique on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Chart C shows the percentage of respondents who provided a score of “4” or “5” on the rating scale for each technique.

For the fourth time, having an *internet/website* presence rates as the most-effective marketing technique, followed by *planned visits to corporate executives*. *Media relations/publicity* and *hosting special events* tied for third just as they did in 2017 and 2020.

Despite being on the list for the first time in 2020, *social media* was considered to be a highly effective marketing technique—and rising in importance—by 51 percent of respondents, a 5 percent increase over 2020 results.

The perceived value of having a well-designed internet/website presence is at the highest rate recorded with 76 percent of respondents seeing

CHART C: MOST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TECHNIQUES
(percentage rating 4 or 5 on a five-point scale)



2023

Winning Strategies *in Economic Development* Marketing

A View from Corporate America



2023
Winning Strategies
in Economic Development
Marketing

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1996, the Dow Jones industrial average opened the year at 5,177, the minimum hourly wage was raised to \$5.15, Abercrombie & Fitch had its initial public offering, and DCI released the first edition of *A View from Corporate America: Winning Strategies in Economic Development Marketing*. Initially intended to provide economic development professionals with a unique opportunity—to hear directly from their “customers” through a comprehensive survey of corporate executives and their advisors, the study has withstood the test time. Now in its 10th edition, *Winning Strategies* continues to be a valued resource for economic developers to better understand what—and how—to market to C-suite executives with location decision-making responsibilities, as well as to their location advisors. Through the survey and analysis, DCI provides insights into current best practices in marketing places and how these practices have changed over time. It also sheds light on how current events are impacting location decisions.

The last edition of the study, conducted in 2020, occurred at a unique point in history. The world was amid a global pandemic, a U.S. presidential election and the world was grappling with increased scrutiny on a host of social and political equity policies. Three years later, the next edition of the study helps confirm whether some of the variations we saw in 2020 were permanent or simply a temporary phenomenon due to largely extenuating and unusual global conditions. While economic and political instability remains high,

2023 data show a return to some pre-2020 conditions as they relate to location decisions. In other cases, it does indeed appear that the economic development marketing landscape has changed permanently.

In honor of the 10th anniversary of *Winning Strategies*, 10 key findings from the 2023 edition are provided below.





1. **Economic development remains a relationship-based industry.** Dialogue with industry peers, as it has been since the first edition of the study, continues to be the top source of information about an area, followed by business travel and articles in newspapers and magazines.
2. **Social media continues to rise in influence.** When social media was first added to the responses in 2011, no respondents believed it influenced perceptions of place. In 2023, 19 percent of respondents cite social media as a leading source of information influencing perceptions of an area's business climate, up from 16 percent in 2020. The percentage of respondents who do not use social media for business purposes continues to decline—4 percent of respondents versus 8 percent of respondents in 2020 versus 11 percent in 2017. LinkedIn continues to be the top platform used by 72 percent of respondents.
3. **Broadcast is up and business travel is down.** Continuing a trend seen in 2020, the number of respondents choosing TV/ radio newscasts/shows as influencing their perceptions of a place more than doubled from the percentage in 2017 and continues to rise. Initially presumed to be an outcome of the pandemic and quarantining, this trend appears to have staying power. Meanwhile, business travel has shown a decline in importance as it relates to influencing perceptions since 1996.
4. **The New York Times rises in the ranks.** In order, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Fox News* rank as the top news sources for executives and their advisors—a reshuffling from previous years.
5. **Your digital front door is important.** For the fourth time, an *internet/website presence* rates as the most-effective marketing technique, followed by *planned visits to corporate executives, media relations/ publicity* and *hosting special events*. Nearly three quarters (73 percent) of respondents reported a strong likelihood that they would visit an economic development organization's website during the next site search.
6. **Customized content is critical.** With labor shortages dominating the headlines and talent attraction and retention top of mind for employers and consultants, access to comprehensive workforce statistics has surpassed incentive information as the most

useful feature on an EDO's website, however, it differs by audience. Since 2008, location advisors said *staff contact information* and *incentive information* are the most useful features of an economic development organization's website. In contrast, corporate executives that may not have access to the same resources internally cite *workforce statistics* and *demographic information* as the most useful features of an economic development organization's website.

7. **The outlook for projects is strong and third-party support is valued.** Fifty-six percent of corporate executives anticipate making a location decision in the next 24 months, and of those, 66 percent will outsource a portion of the project. Among those that plan to outsource a portion of their next location search, executives report they are most likely to use site selection consultants (47 percent) and the percentage continues to increase (32 percent in 2020).
8. **The C-Suite leads location decisions.** The top executives within a company, such as the chairman/CEO/president, are the most likely to lead location decisions (38 percent), followed by the COO (27 percent).
9. **Texas continues to dominate.** For the ninth time, Texas was selected as the state with the most-favorable business climate, followed by Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina.

10. **Site selection and economic development will continue to evolve.** Executives and their advisors agree that generative AI will play a role in location decisions moving forward. However, there was also agreement that there are currently too many risks or unknowns for generative AI in its current state to be used as a trusted input.

As projects continue at unprecedented rates—and with increasing complexity—it is critical for locations to understand how to best market to corporate executives and the consultants that advise them. The primary focus of *Winning Strategies* since 1996 has been on best practices in attracting corporate investment and helping economic development organizations navigate this ever-changing landscape. DCI looks forward to continuing to monitor these trends and providing insight into *Winning Strategies in Economic Development Marketing* for another 10 editions.



INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study and all nine preceding *Winning Strategies* surveys are studies of perceptions. A perception is an attitude, belief or impression and not necessarily a reflection of reality. Business executives have certain identifiable opinions and beliefs about doing business in the United States and throughout the world. Some of these perceptions might be accurate; some might be genuine misperceptions.

Every three years since 1996, DCI has conducted this comprehensive survey of corporate executives with site-selection responsibilities to determine the “customer’s perspective” on the most-effective strategies and techniques in economic development marketing. Now in its 10th iteration, *Winning Strategies* continues to document changes in the perceptions of corporate decision makers in the United States. The survey has been conducted online since 2008, and participants are incentivized for their participation via one of six digital gift cards.

The survey audience consists of executives at a random selection of U.S.-based companies with direct site-selection responsibilities and is heavily weighted toward the following titles: CEO, president, CFO, COO and senior/vice president. The distribution list was augmented with the addition of more than 400 location advisors/consultants, a similarly influential group providing guidance and counsel to corporate executives nationwide.



DCI received 306 responses. The survey—which includes multiple-choice, close-ended and open-ended questions—contains a series of classification questions to categorize responses into large-company executives (more than \$100 million in revenue), midsize-company executives (less than \$100 million in revenue) and location advisors, as well as into select demographic categories. The report contains data presented by the various classification categories (in Appendix D) or as trend data over time. The responses to open-ended questions were edited for completeness and coded into thematic groupings.

INFLUENCING EXECUTIVE PERCEPTIONS: LEADING SOURCES OF INFORMATION

How are perceptions of a location's business climate formed? How can an economic development organization promote a favorable perception of its community among corporate decision makers? The answer to these questions reinforces how relationship-based the economic development industry continues to be.

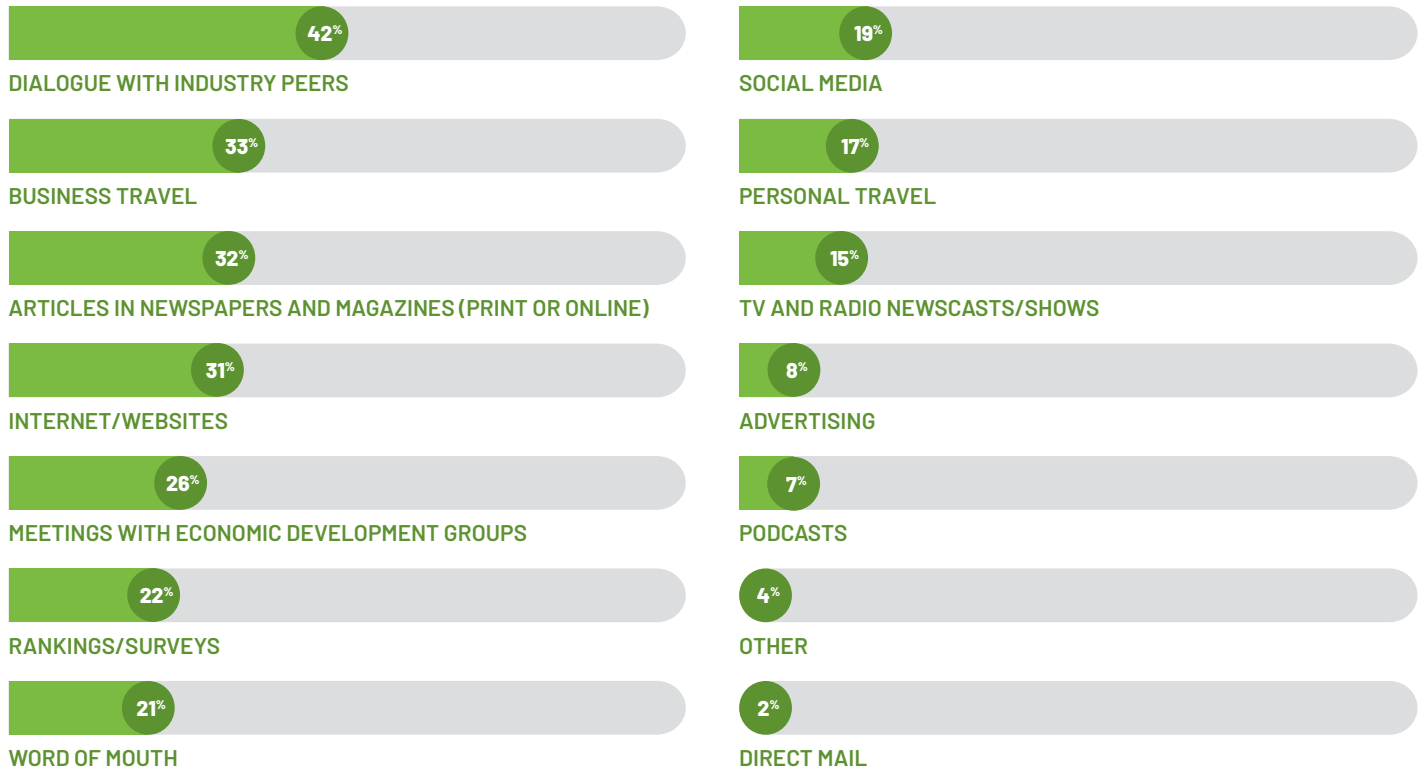
Since the inaugural study in 1996, respondents have been asked to select the leading information sources influencing executive perceptions of an area's business climate. Respondents can choose up to three of the 13 provided responses. Over time, to reflect changing trends, responses have been added or slightly altered. For instance, in 2020, *articles in newspapers and magazines* was edited to include both *print and online sources* and *online sources* (added in 1999) was changed to *internet/websites*. Other changes in previous editions include *advertising* (which prior to 2017 had consisted of two separate categories—*print advertising* and *TV/radio advertising*), *rankings/surveys* (previously called *national surveys*), and *social media* (added in 2011).

Many factors influence awareness of a location for investment purposes, however ***dialogue with industry peers, as it has been since 1996, continues to be the top influencer on perceptions*** of an area, followed by *business travel* and *articles in newspapers and magazines*.

General internet searches and websites are close behind *articles in newspapers and magazines* and for the first time since this category was included in 1999, are perceived to be more influential than *meetings with economic development groups*.



CHART A: LEADING SOURCES OF INFORMATION INFLUENCING EXECUTIVE PERCEPTIONS OF AN AREA'S BUSINESS CLIMATE



Comparing the data over time reveals some notable trends.

- *Social media* continues to rise in influence. When added to the responses in 2011, no respondents considered it to be influential. In 2023, 19 percent of respondents cite *social media* as a leading source of information influencing perceptions of business climates.
- *Word of mouth* has once again risen in importance and was seen as a leading source of information among 21 percent of respondents—closely aligned with 2017 and 2014 results.
- *Direct mail* continues to be the least influential source of information.
- The number of respondents choosing *TV/radio newscasts/shows* more than doubled from the percentage in 2017 and is up by one percentage point from 2020. While in 2020, this growth was presumed to be an outcome of the pandemic and quarantining, coupled with news coverage on the presidential election, this trend appears to have staying power.
- *Business travel* has shown a decline in importance since 1996—with the exception of 2011. As business travel was limited during the pandemic and yet to fully recover, executives and advisors carefully consider whether a trip is warranted.

TABLE A: LEADING SOURCES OF INFORMATION INFLUENCING EXECUTIVE PERCEPTIONS OF AN AREA'S BUSINESS CLIMATE, RESPONSES OVER TIME

SOURCES	2023	2020	2017	2014	2011	2008	2005	2002	1999	1996
Dialogue with industry peers	42%	48%	46%	55%	50%	61%	54%	56%	71%	68%
Business travel	33%	37%	42%	37%	27%	42%	45%	47%	45%	52%
Articles in newspapers and magazines (print and online)	32%	32%	34%	44%	46%	53%	45%	62%	61%	60%
Internet/websites	31%	26%	27%	22%	20%	28%	22%	9%	9%	•
Meetings with economic development organizations	26%	30%	33%	31%	28%	32%	33%	21%	27%	24%
Rankings/surveys	22%	25%	21%	24%	36%	22%	17%	23%	31%	34%
Word of mouth	21%	17%	22%	21%	19%	19%	16%	29%	21%	24%
Social media	19%	16%	11%	2%	0%	•	•	•	•	•
Personal travel	17%	15%	17%	13%	9%	14%	13%	14%	8%	21%
TV/radio newscasts/shows	15%	13%	6%	9%	14%	7%	5%	14%	7%	4%
Advertising	8%	10%	9%	4%	3%	•	•	•	•	•
Podcasts	7%	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Other	4%	7%	8%	12%	13%	10%	14%	14%	8%	15%
Direct mail	2%	4%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%

“

...Send me an email with a title that is sharp and compelling as to why I should care, include fact-based content that illustrates why it is obvious my company should consider your locale as a HQ or hub location for our business, along with testimonials from existing businesses and finally how I can learn more and who to get in touch with to explore more...”

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE, SERVICE SECTOR

LEADING SOURCES OF INFORMATION: CORPORATE EXECUTIVES VS. LOCATION ADVISORS

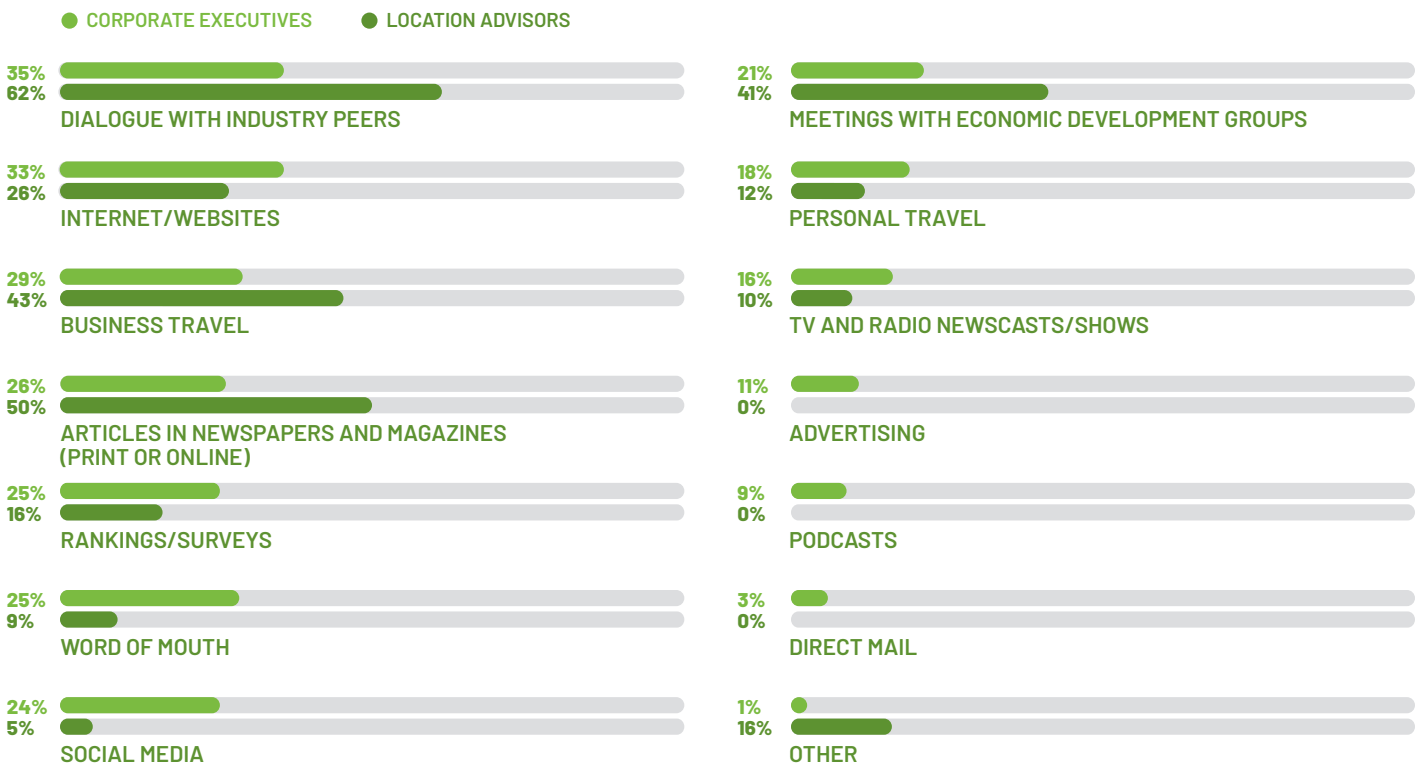
There are differences in how perceptions are formed among corporate executives compared to location advisors and the degree to which different information sources are relied on. The following chart illustrates the differences between the two subgroups and what each audience perceives to be most influential.

As Chart B shows, there is considerably less variation in the information used by corporate executives compared to location advisors, which has historically been the case. Executives rely on *dialogue with industry peers*—almost on par with *general internet research/websites*—as leading sources of information, followed by *business*

travel. Location advisors also rely heavily on *dialogue with industry peers* but also place significant weight on *articles in newspapers and magazines (print or online)*, *business travel* and information gleaned from *meetings with economic development groups*. Corporate executives value *meetings with economic development groups* at nearly half the rate reported by location advisors (21 percent versus 41 percent).

The decline in the value of business travel among location advisors in 2020 appears to have been a temporary phenomenon due to the pandemic and has jumped back up to 43 percent in 2023 compared to only 26 percent in 2020.

CHART B: LEADING SOURCES OF INFORMATION INFLUENCING EXECUTIVE PERCEPTIONS OF AN AREA'S BUSINESS CLIMATE, BY RESPONDENT TYPE





Location decision makers have changed how they consume their news since DCI's first report in 1996, and it is important for economic development organizations to know how and from where decision makers read their news. For respondents who selected *articles in newspapers and magazines* or *rankings/surveys* as influential sources of information, DCI asked follow-up questions to determine the specific media used to consume news. This year, DCI asked respondents to include both print and online newspapers and magazines when providing the names of specific media.

Displacing *The Wall Street Journal*, this year *The New York Times* took the top rank in the list of most-read print publications in the newspapers and magazines category. Several online news outlets rose to the top this year including *CNN*, *Fox News* and *MSN*.

WHERE DO EXECUTIVES GET THEIR NEWS?

<i>The New York Times</i>	24%
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	22%
<i>Fox News</i>	10%
<i>CNN</i>	9%
<i>The Economist</i>	7%
<i>Bloomberg</i>	6%
<i>Local business journals</i>	6%
<i>MSN</i>	6%
<i>Forbes</i>	4%
<i>Washington Post</i>	4%



BEST MARKETING TECHNIQUES FROM THE CUSTOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

DCI asks respondents to gauge the effectiveness of 10 conventional marketing techniques used by economic development groups. Until 2020, respondents rated eight techniques (*advertising, direct mail, internet/website, media relations/publicity, hosting special events, planned visits to corporate executives, trade shows and telemarketing*). In 2020, again to reflect new trends and opportunities, DCI adapted this list and added *E-newsletters/E-marketing* and *social media*. Additionally, *telemarketing* was changed to *telephone outreach* and *direct mail* was changed to *physical mail*. Respondents were asked to rate each technique on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Chart C shows the percentage of respondents who provided a score of “4” or “5” on the rating scale for each technique.

For the fourth time, having an *internet/website* presence rates as the most-effective marketing technique, followed by *planned visits to corporate executives*. *Media relations/publicity* and *hosting special events* tied for third just as they did in 2017 and 2020.

Despite being on the list for the first time in 2020, *social media* was considered to be a highly effective marketing technique—and rising in importance—by 51 percent of respondents, a 5 percent increase over 2020 results.

The perceived value of having a well-designed internet/website presence is at the highest rate recorded with 76 percent of respondents seeing

CHART C: MOST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TECHNIQUES
(percentage rating 4 or 5 on a five-point scale)



this as a highly effective marketing technique. Also, a consistent, perceived value exists in face-to-face contact, evidenced by the ranking of *planned visits to corporate executives* as one of the top-two-rated techniques since the first edition of the survey.

In 2020, corporate executives and their advisors had a significantly higher perception of *telephone outreach* compared to *telemarketing* as it had been referred to in previous years and while the effectiveness of *telephone outreach*

declined slightly from 2020 to 2023, it is still seen as an effective marketing tool by 28 percent of respondents.

The marketing techniques that saw an increase in effectiveness were focused on digital tools and include having an internet/website presence and social media, media relations/public relations and those techniques that are “relationship-builders” such as planned visits to corporate executives and hosting special events.

TABLE B: MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TECHNIQUES, RESPONSES OVER TIME
(percentage rating 4 or 5 on five-point scale)

TECHNIQUE	2023	2020	2017	2014	2011	2008	2005	2002	1999	1996
Internet/website	76%	62%	74%	67%	55%	56%	53%	34%	37%	18%
Planned visits to corporate executives	62%	58%	66%	64%	57%	54%	55%	53%	46%	53%
Media relations/publicity	61%	54%	51%	48%	33%	52%	50%	40%	38%	39%
Hosting special events	55%	54%	51%	46%	35%	45%	49%	37%	42%	39%
Social media	51%	46%	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
E-newsletters/E-marketing	46%	48%	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Advertising	40%	42%	32%	17%	16%	15%	20%	21%	19%	19%
Trade shows	39%	43%	39%	38%	35%	.	33%	32%	45%	39%
Physical mail (brochures/gift boxes)(formerly “direct mail”)	33%	33%	23%	14%	15%	19%	23%	33%	25%	25%
Telephone outreach (formerly “telemarketing”)	28%	35%	17%	6%	4%	4%	6%	4%	6%	7%

“

Be direct and concise. Make an effort to connect and understand our business needs...be as industry specific as possible...”

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE, SERVICES INDUSTRY

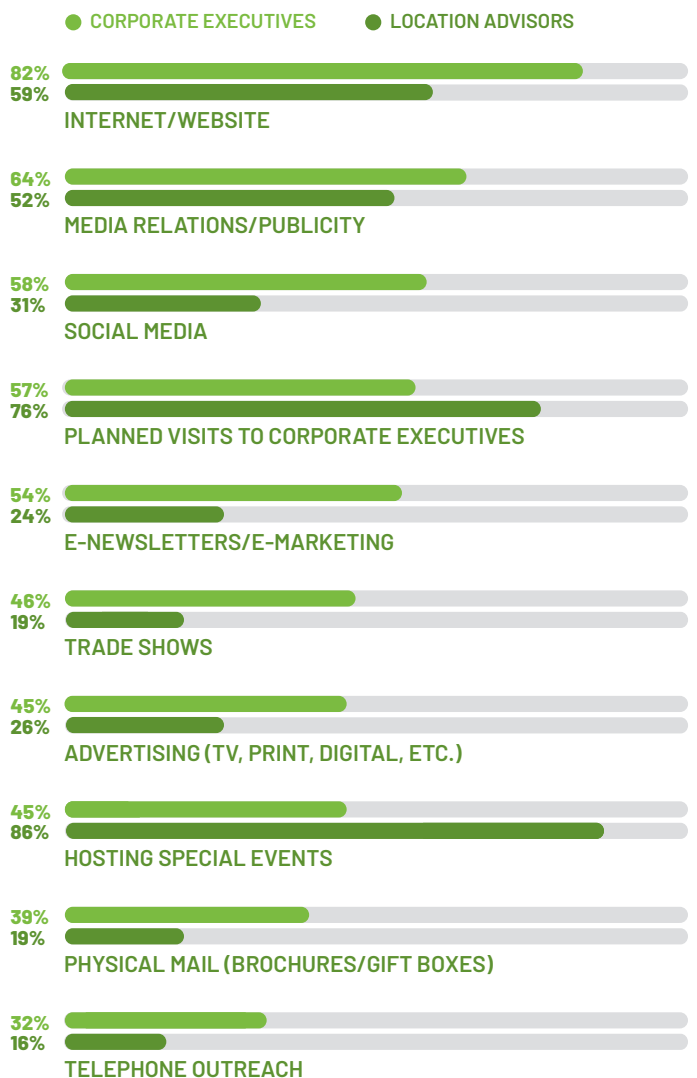


Considering the technique by audience, location advisors have stronger preferences for marketing techniques focused on in-person relationship building, namely *planned visits* and *special events*. Following the in-person opportunities, the *internet/websites* are powerful tools among this influential group.

Corporate executives place a greater weight on the importance of all marketing techniques (with the exception of *planned visits to corporate executives*) but view *internet/websites* and *media relations/publicity* as the most effective marketing techniques.

Telephone outreach is identified as the least effective marketing tool by both audiences.

CHART D: MOST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TECHNIQUES, BY RESPONDENT TYPE
(percentage rating 4 or 5 on a five-point scale)



DIGITAL MEDIA AND THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

With the increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that social media influences their perceptions of a location's business climate and that it is an effective marketing technique, it is critical to know which platforms are most utilized.

Starting in 2011, *Winning Strategies* asked location advisors and corporate executives which social media channels they most use for business purposes. As has been the case for the past five editions, LinkedIn (72 percent) is the No. 1 social media outlet for business, beating out other options such as Facebook, Twitter (now known as X), Blogs, YouTube, Instagram and other social media channels. Simultaneously, the percentage of respondents who report they do not use social media for business purposes continues to decline and is at its lowest level to date—4 percent in 2023 versus 8 percent of respondents in 2020 versus 11 percent of respondents in 2017 and 21 percent in 2014.

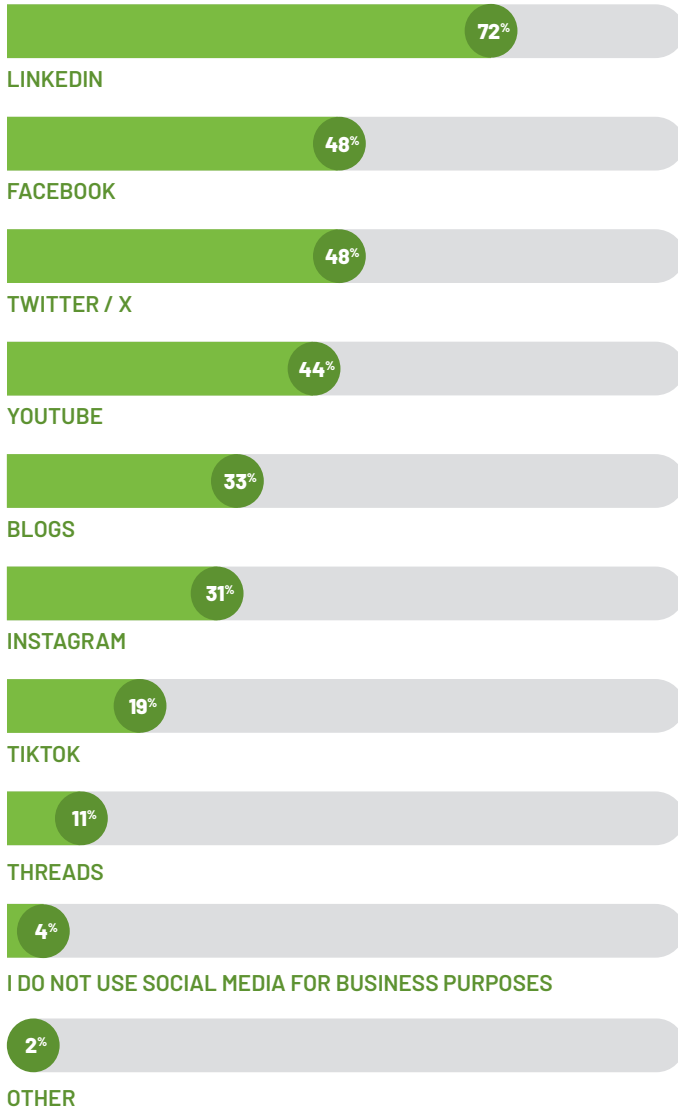
In 2020, we saw an increase in the percentage reporting podcasts (23 percent versus 17 percent) and Instagram (33 percent versus 18 percent). The percentage of respondents who report they do not use social media for business purposes continues to decline—8 percent of respondents in 2020 versus 11 percent of respondents in 2017 and 21 percent in 2014.

Also of note in the 2023 results is:

- YouTube continues to be adopted at an increasing rate with 44 percent of respondents reporting they use the platform specifically for business purposes..
- Twitter/X continues to maintain a significant share of users with 48 percent reporting they use the channel for business purposes. It is tied with Facebook.
- For the first time in 2023, TikTok was included in the list of digital media channels used for business and a respectable 19 percent of respondents report it is used for business purposes.



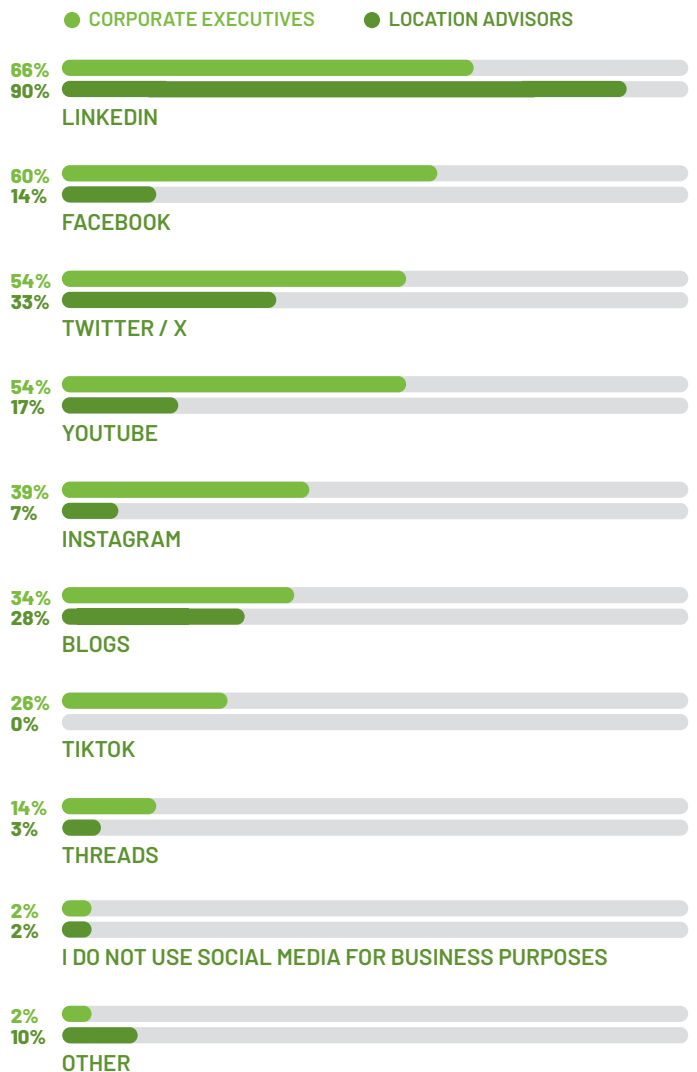
CHART E: DIGITAL MEDIA CHANNELS USED FOR BUSINESS



Corporate executives continue to rely on social media channels at greater rates than location advisors. Both audiences are most likely to use LinkedIn as the preferred channel for business purposes with Facebook coming in second among executives (60 percent) followed by Twitter/X at 54 percent. Location advisors report that Twitter/X is the second highest utilized channel (33 percent).



CHART F: DIGITAL MEDIA CHANNELS USED FOR BUSINESS, BY RESPONDENT TYPE

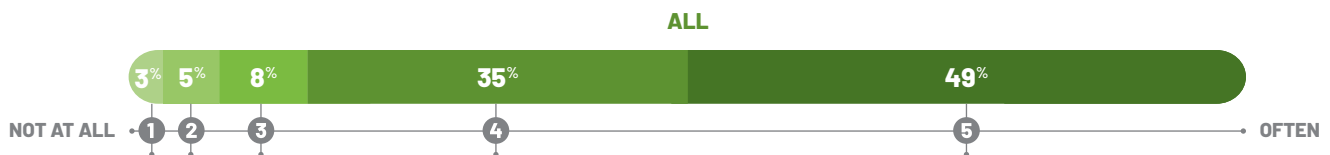


LOCATION DECISIONS AND THE INTERNET

Considering the importance of—and perceived effectiveness of—digital marketing and communication tools, the frequency of using the internet during location searches continues to rise. In fact, the reliance on the internet and digital media has likely been enhanced due to the acceptance of alternative workplace models (i.e., remote work) and the realization that meetings can often take place just as effectively online as in-person. As a result, when respondents were asked to rate how often they used the internet during their last location search, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (often), 84 percent of respondents report a score of “4” or “5,” an increase from 80 percent in 2020 and notably, 65 percent in 2017.



CHART G: FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE IN MOST RECENT SITE-LOCATION SEARCH
(on a scale from 1 [not at all] to 5 [often])



For the first time since this question was added in 2011, we found location advisors using the internet slightly less during site selection searches compared to corporate executives. Overall, both groups use the internet frequently. However, usage among site selections consultants declined to 78 percent (rating their

usage as a “4” or “5”) compared to 82 percent in 2020. Meanwhile, the percentage of corporate executives rating their usage as a “4” or “5” increased from 79 percent in 2020 to 86 percent in 2023, the highest level ever reported.

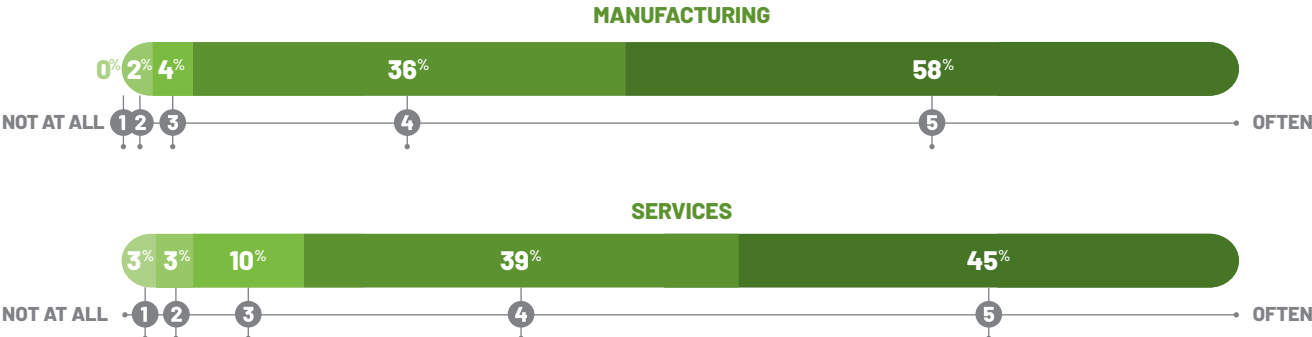
CHART H: FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE IN MOST RECENT SITE-LOCATION SEARCH, BY RESPONDENT TYPE
 (on a scale from 1 [not at all] to 5 [often])



DCI compared internet use in site location searches among decision makers who classified their establishments as manufacturing versus services and found that the use increased significantly among both sectors compared to the last study. Of those classifying themselves

as a manufacturing organization, 94 percent report their usage as a “4” or “5” while 84 percent of service organizations rate their usage as a “4” or “5”.

CHART I: FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE IN MOST RECENT SITE-LOCATION SEARCH, BY RESPONDENT TYPE
 (on a scale from 1 [not at all] to 5 [often])



Often viewed as the “digital front door” of an organization, a well-designed website is critical for economic development organizations. While down slightly from 2020, 73 percent of respondents are likely or very likely to visit an EDO’s website during their next location search.

An EDO’s website is a particularly utilized source of information for location advisors with 84 percent reporting they are likely or very likely to visit an economic development organization’s website during their next client project. Sixty-nine percent of corporate executives report they will likely or very likely visit a website.

CHART J: LIKELIHOOD OF VISITING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS’ WEBSITES DURING NEXT SITE LOCATION SEARCH
(on a scale from 1 [not at all likely] to 5 [very likely])

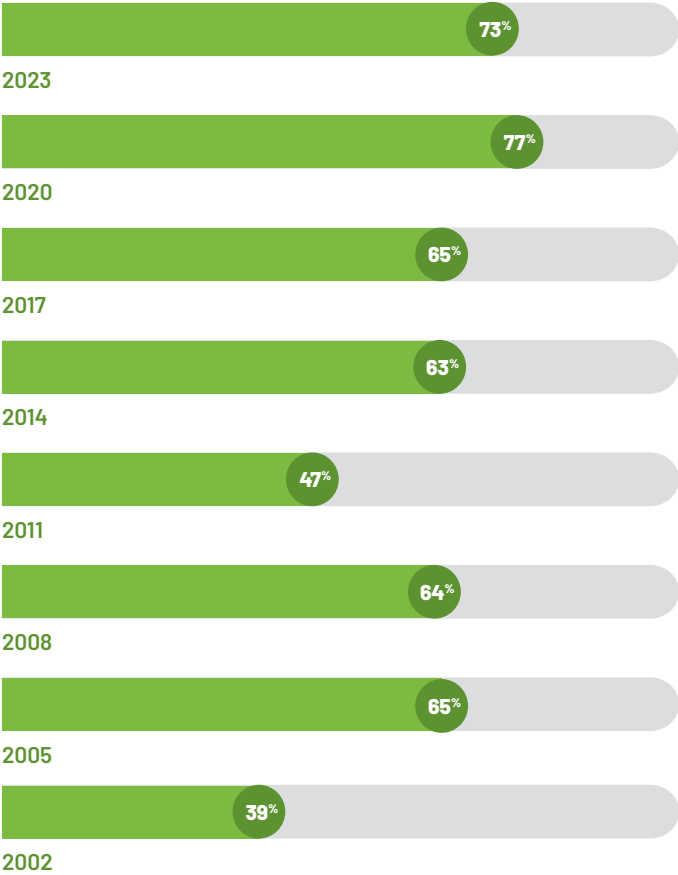
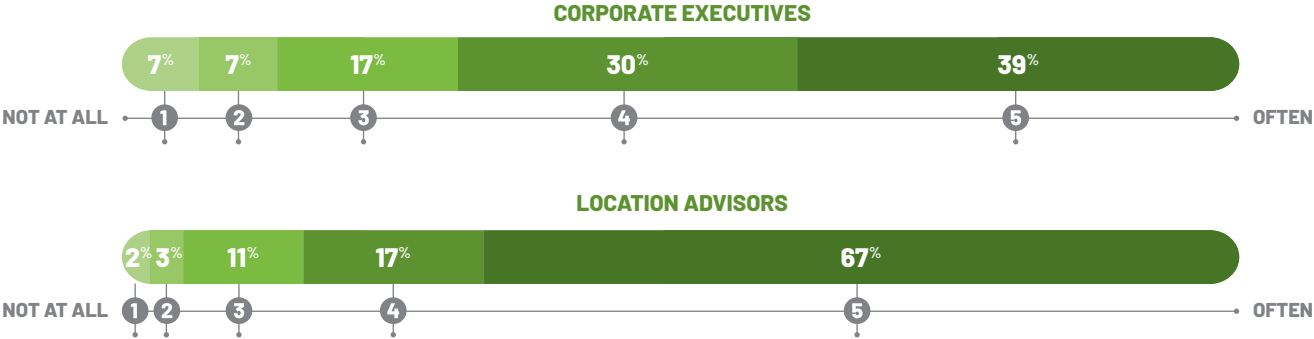


CHART K: LIKELIHOOD OF VISITING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS' WEBSITES DURING NEXT SITE-LOCATION SEARCH, BY RESPONDENT TYPE
(on a scale from 1 [not at all likely] to 5 [very likely])



Consistent with the 2020 results, the 2023 data show that organizations classifying themselves as manufacturing operations are more likely to visit an economic development organization’s website during their next site location search compared to those classifying

themselves as a services operation. While the percentage from both company types is high, 85 percent of manufacturing operations are highly likely (rated a 4 or 5) to visit an EDOs website compared to 63 percent of organizations in the services sector.



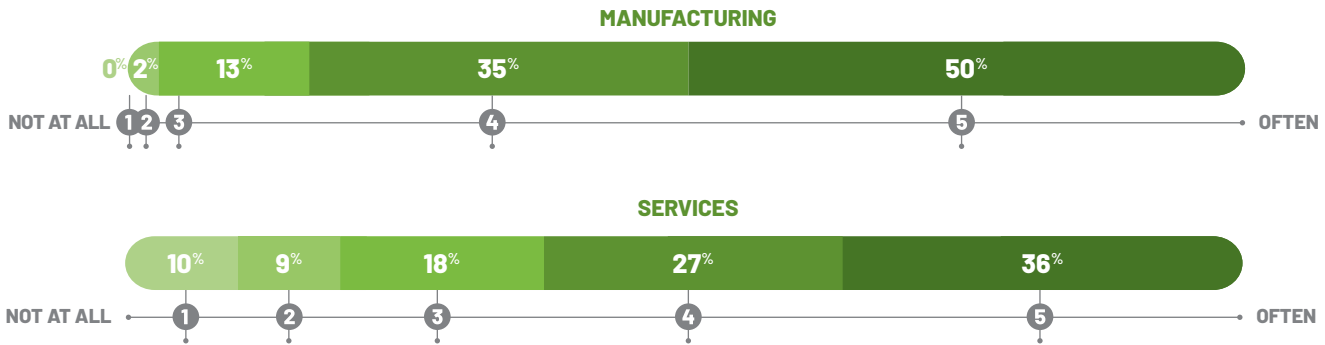
“

Provide a sound data-driven analysis...with data about the workforce and talent pipeline, access to incentive programs and tax climate... and what are the overall operating advantages decision-makers need to know.”

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE, SERVICE SECTOR



CHART L: LIKELIHOOD OF VISITING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS' WEBSITES DURING NEXT SITE-LOCATION SEARCH, BY COMPANY TYPE
(on a scale from 1 [not at all likely] to 5 [very likely])



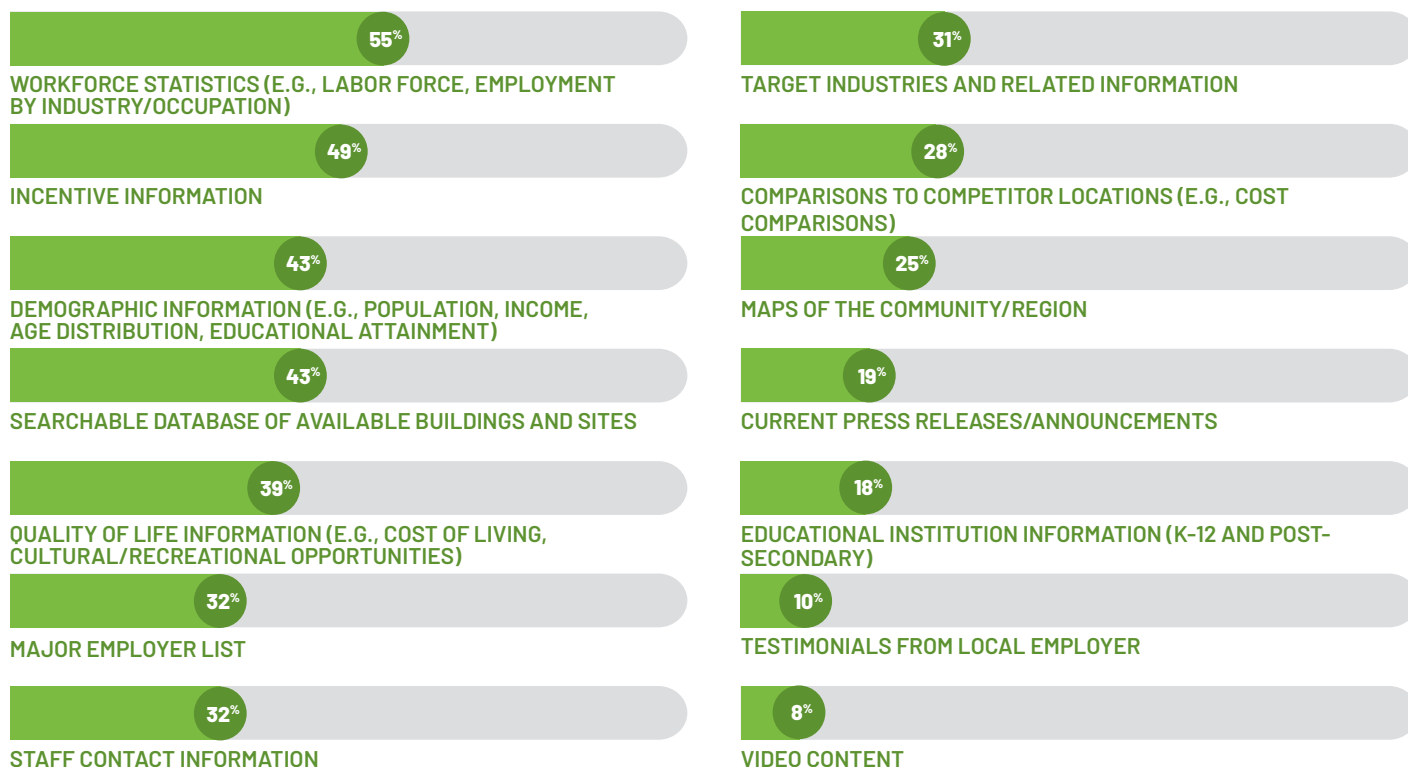
It is critical to tailor an economic development organization’s website to meet the needs of corporate executives and location advisors, particularly as the reliance on digital tools continues to increase. DCI asked respondents to rate those features that are the most useful, and respondents were able to select up to five of the 15 offered features most typically included in an economic development website.

With labor shortages dominating the headlines and talent attraction and retention top of mind for employers and consultants, access to comprehensive and accurate workforce

statistics has surpassed incentive information as the most useful feature on an EDO’s website. Incentive information has been the most useful feature of an EDO’s website since 2008, and this shift underscores the importance of labor in location decisions. With workforce metrics complicated by remote and hybrid workplace models, an accurate picture of an area’s labor force can be hard to come by and those EDOs that can provide up-to-date and accurate labor force statistics may have a competitive advantage in location decisions.

CHART M: MOST USEFUL FEATURES OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION'S WEBSITE

(percentage rating 4 or 5 on a five-point scale)



In 2023, *workforce statistics*, cited by 55 percent of respondents, is ranked as the most useful feature of an economic development organization's website, followed by *incentive information* (49 percent). A *searchable database of available buildings and sites* (43 percent) is tied for the third most useful feature with *demographic information* (43%).

Decision makers place continue to place less weight on testimonials from local employers and virtual community tours, which were

selected by 10 percent and 8 percent of the respondents, respectively but represent an increase from 8 percent and 4 percent in 2020.

“

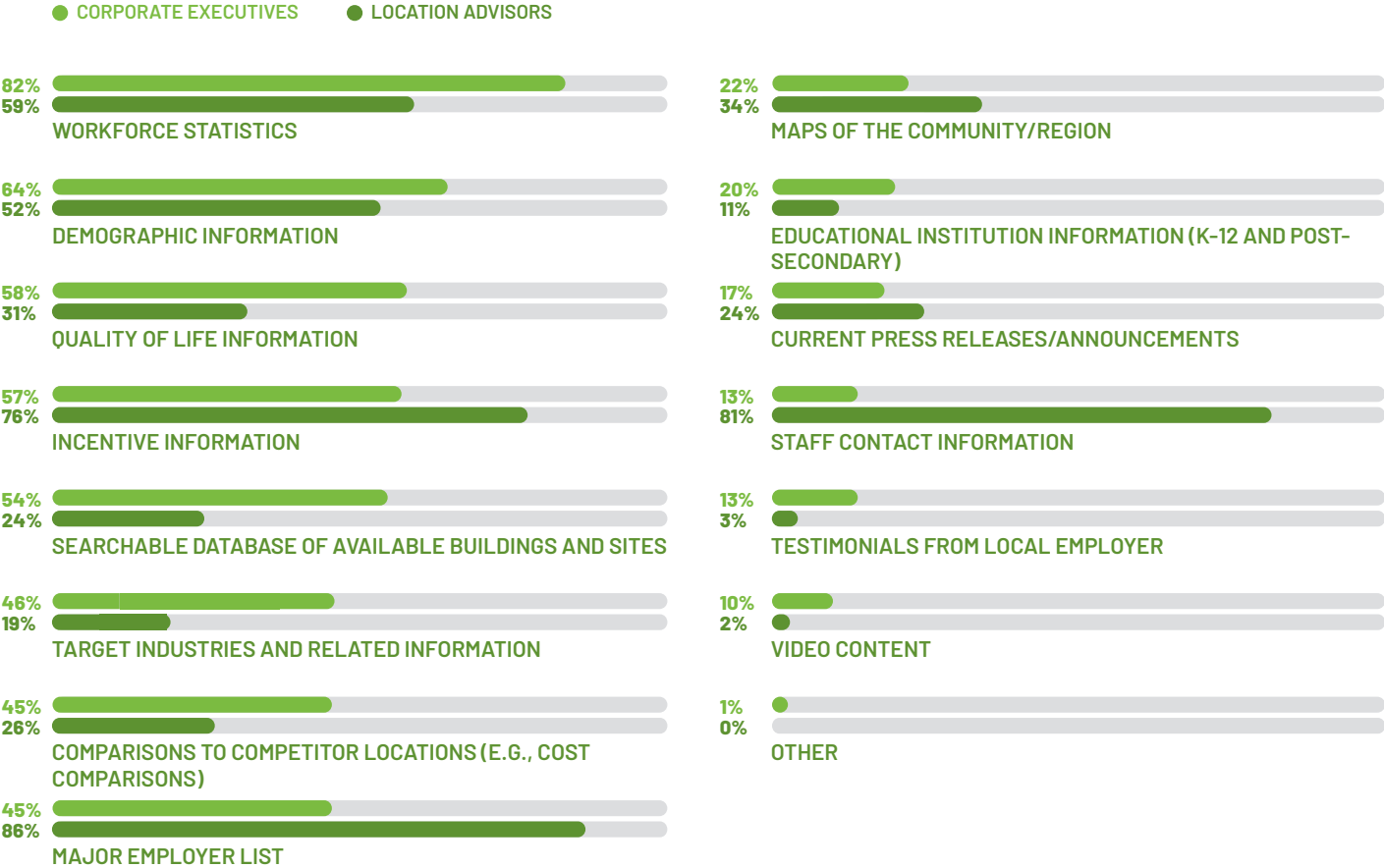
Economic incentives are helpful but do not drive critical location decisions...

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE,
MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Location advisors, who have proprietary databases for standardized assessments, continue to rate highly customized information including *staff contact information* (81 percent) as the most useful information on an economic development organization’s website followed by *incentive information* (73 percent). In contrast, corporate executives that may not have access

to the same resources internally find *workforce statistics* (58 percent), *demographic information* (48 percent) and *quality of life* information (47 percent)—presumably as it will impact the ability to attract and retain talent—as the most useful features of an economic development organization’s website.

CHART N: MOST USEFUL FEATURES OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION’S WEBSITE, BY RESPONDENT TYPE (percentage rating 4 or 5 on a five-point scale)

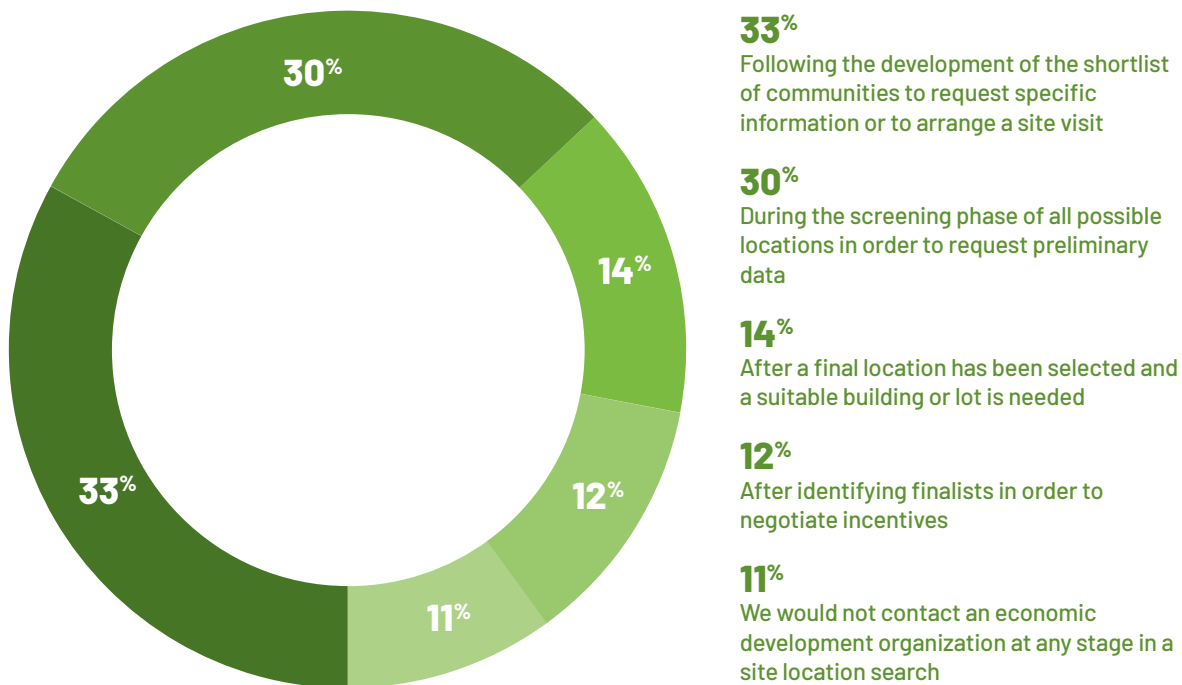


FIRST CONTACT: WHEN AND HOW DECISION MAKERS APPROACH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Executives and their advisors contact economic development organizations at different stages across the life of a location decision. As seen in Chart O, the highest percentage of respondents report reaching out *following the development of a short list of communities to request specific information or to arrange a site visit*, with 33 percent of respondents selecting this option (a decline from 42 percent reported in 2020.)

Importantly, 11 percent of respondents report they would never contact an economic development organization indicating that there is likely a greater reliance on third-party sources for information (i.e., dialogue with colleagues; earned media; websites etc.), as well as an independent review of a community's product.

CHART O: FIRST CONTACT WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS



Since 2005, corporate decision makers and location advisors are most likely to contact an economic development organization after a short list of potential communities has been developed, to request data or arrange site

visits. As noted, 11 percent of respondents report that they would not contact an economic development organization at any stage during a site-location search, a reversal of trends from a low of 8 percent in 2020.

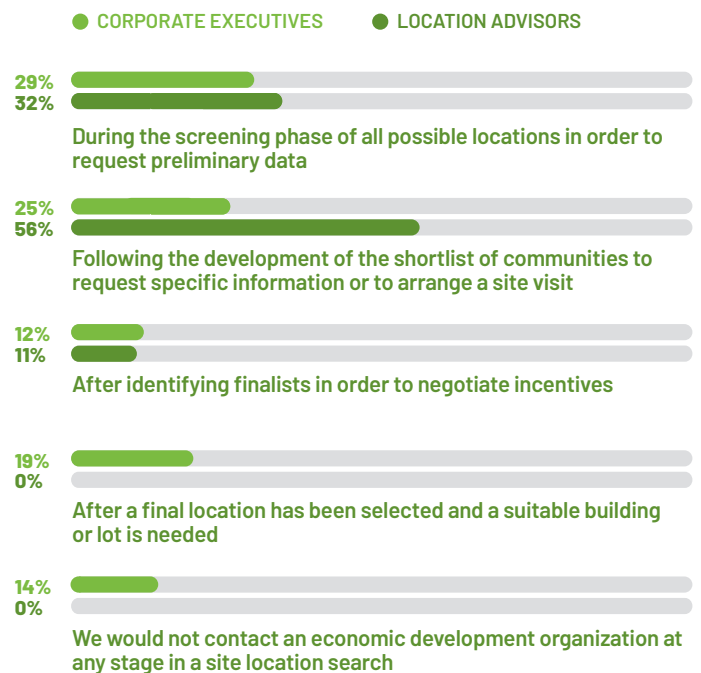
TABLE C: FIRST CONTACT WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS, RESPONSES OVER TIME

STAGE	2023	2020	2017	2014	2011	2008	2005
During the screening phase of all possible locations in order to request preliminary data	30%	35%	30%	25%	24%	29%	27%
Following the development of the shortlist of communities to request specific information or to arrange a site visit	33%	42%	42%	41%	40%	40%	48%
After identifying finalists in order to negotiate incentives	12%	11%	11%	15%	13%	18%	15%
After a final location has been selected and a suitable building or lot is needed	15%	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%	2%
We would not contact an economic development organization at any stage in a site location search.	11%	8%	12%	16%	17%	8%	8%

Location advisors continue to be more likely than corporate executives to rely on the services of economic development organizations. As shown in Chart P, location advisors will always contact an economic development organization during the site-selection process and often earlier in the process than corporate executives. Fourteen percent of corporate executives would not contact an economic development organization at any stage during a site-location search, and 19 percent will contact an organization only after a location has been selected, for assistance in identifying a suitable building/lot.

Location advisors report that there is an increasing level of due diligence required by clients and they understand that the local knowledge, data and relationships that site selectors offer is required to meet the increased scrutiny clients are mandating before a location decision is made.

CHART P: FIRST CONTACT WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS, BY RESPONDENT TYPE





For the third time, *Winning Strategies* provided a list of eight executive titles and asked respondents who is most likely to lead corporate location projects. Respondents report that top executives—chairman/CEO/president (38 percent) followed by chief operating officer (27 percent)—were most likely to lead a location decision.

CHART Q: EXECUTIVES MOST LIKELY TO LEAD LOCATION DECISIONS



BEST AND WORST PLACES FOR BUSINESS

Every edition of *Winning Strategies* has asked respondents to identify the states that are perceived favorably for their business climate and this edition is no exception.

Corporate executive and location advisors were asked to list the top three states that they perceive to have the most-favorable business climates and the rationale behind their selections through an open-ended question. This year, respondents rate Texas (54 percent) as No. 1, followed by Florida (33 percent), Georgia (30 percent), North Carolina (29 percent) and South Carolina (20 percent).

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. | Texas | 54% |
| 2. | Florida | 33% |
| 3. | Georgia | 30% |
| 4. | North Carolina | 29% |
| 5. | South Carolina | 20% |

The top states share several common characteristics. The top business-related assets in Texas are a *favorable tax climate* (49 percent), an *overall pro-business regulatory environment* (36 percent) and access to *talent* (10 percent). Again in fourth place, *incentives* have not been in the top three for Texas since the 2014 edition of *Winning Strategies*.

Respondents who cited Florida called out overwhelmingly the *favorable tax climate* (58 percent) followed by its *pro-business climate* (22 percent).



Georgia was noted specifically for its *pro-business climate* (33 percent), its *workforce* (21 percent) and *incentives* (21 percent). The overall cooperation and collaboration among all public and private stakeholders were also noted as strengths (15 percent).

Texas has been the top-rated state for nine consecutive editions of *Winning Strategies*, and since the survey was first conducted in 1996, the top five states have been fairly consistent. Florida moved up in the rankings this year into the second-place position after being ranked fourth in 2020. Georgia held on to the third-place ranking, North Carolina dropped one position and South Carolina moved back into the top five after being bumped out by Tennessee in 2020.

TABLE D: MOST FAVORABLE BUSINESS CLIMATE, RESPONSES OVER TIME

2023	2020	2017	2014	2011	2008	2005	2002	1999	1996
Texas 54%	Texas 48%	Texas 42%	Texas 50%	Texas 49%	Texas 41%	Texas 33%	Texas 25%	Texas 30%	North Carolina 33%
Florida 33%	Georgia 25%	Florida 22%	Florida 18%	North Carolina 27%	North Carolina 30%	North Carolina 26%	North Carolina 20%	California 22%	Texas 28%
Georgia 30%	North Carolina 22%	Georgia 20%	Georgia/ North Carolina 17% (tie)	South Carolina 14%	Georgia 20%	South Carolina 20%	South Carolina 18%	North Carolina 20%	Georgia 27%
North Carolina 29%	Florida 18%	South Carolina 16%	South Carolina 12%	Tennessee 14%	Florida/ Tennessee 15% (tie)	Georgia 18%	Florida 18%	Georgia 17%	South Carolina 21%
South Carolina 20%	Tennessee 13%	North Carolina 15%	Tennessee 11%	Florida 14%	Nevada 14%	Nevada 16%	Georgia 15%	Florida 14%	Tennessee 20%



States with the Worst Business Climates

Winning Strategies also reveals the states that are perceived to have the least favorable business climates. California has held the distinction of being the least-favorable state for the past eight editions of the survey; although the percentage of respondents selecting California fell by ten percentage points from 2020 to 2023. New York, Illinois and New Jersey also retain the dubious distinction of being in the top five for the last five editions of the report. For the second year in a row, Florida again appears on both the “best” and “worst” lists.

While Florida’s inclusion in the 2020 list was entirely attributable to the pandemic, there are now new concerns. Through the open-ended question on why states are perceived to have the worst business climates, Florida’s political climate and resulting instability is the primary rationale for inclusion on the worst list and cited by 66 percent of respondents.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| 1. California | 53% |
| 2. New York | 38% |
| 3. Florida | 24% |
| 4. Illinois | 21% |
| 5. New Jersey | 15% |

California was noted for an unfavorable tax climate (42 percent), high overall operating costs (40 percent) and having a challenging/burdensome regulatory environment (30 percent)

Those respondents selecting New York base it almost entirely on cost-related factors including an unfavorable tax climate (50 percent) and high overall operating costs (30 percent).

With the exception of Florida, the least-favorable states have remained very consistent over the years with California holding the top spot since 2002.


TABLE E: LEAST FAVORABLE BUSINESS CLIMATE, RESPONSES OVER TIME

2023	2020	2017	2014	2011	2008	2005	2002	1999	1996
California 53%	California 63%	California 57%	California 74%	California 71%	California 72%	California 66%	California 57%	New York 29%	New York 55%
New York 38%	New York 33%	New York 40%	New York 42%	New York 47%	New York 42%	New York 34%	New York 36%	California 25%	California 47%
Florida 24%	Illinois 32%	Illinois 29%	Illinois 34%	Illinois 24%	Michigan 17%	Massachusetts 22%	Massachusetts 18%	Massachusetts 19%	New Jersey 20%
Illinois 21%	New Jersey 14%	New Jersey 16%	New Jersey 16%	New Jersey 23%	New Jersey 14%	New Jersey 21%	New Jersey 15%	New Jersey 14%	Massachusetts 19%
New Jersey 15%	Florida 12%	Connecticut 10%	Massachusetts 11%	Michigan 16%	Massachusetts 12%	Illinois 13%	Florida 10%	Connecticut 10%	Connecticut 9%

THE CONSULTANTS SPEAK

Location advisors work with economic development organizations nationwide and tend to have greater interaction with these groups than corporate executives do, which allows them to compare and contrast the effectiveness of each organization and provide

an unbiased assessment of which regional and statewide organizations are “best in class.” In the survey for this year’s edition of *Winning Strategies*, consultants listed 68 unique regional organizations, with the Greater Phoenix Economic Council claiming the top spot.

Best in Class: Regional or Community Economic Development Organizations

1  Greater Phoenix Economic Council

2  AREA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  METRO ATLANTA CHAMBER

3  CHARLOTTE REGIONAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE

4  ONE1 COLUMBUS Partners for Regional Growth & Prosperity  NASHVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

5  DRC DALLAS REGIONAL CHAMBER



Location advisors also provided input on “best in class” state economic development organizations, with a total of 29 different state economic development agencies making their way on the list. The top responses are:

Best in Class: State Economic Development Organizations

-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP of NORTH CAROLINA
-  Georgia[®] USA  JobsOhio
-  South Carolina Department of Commerce Just right for business.  TN Department of Economic & Community Development
-  MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
-  VEDP Virginia Economic Development Partnership



AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE— AI AND THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

There are several industries that were early adopters of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies—creative industries, healthcare and ecommerce to name a few—and a number of other industries that could be disrupted by it in the future. *Winning Strategies* probed respondents on how they see AI impacting site selection searches into the future and while there was strong agreement that AI will play a role in

location decisions moving forward, there was also agreement that there are currently too many risks or unknowns for generative AI in its current state to be used as a trusted input. However, 50 percent of location advisors and 62 percent of corporate executives ultimately agree with the statement “Generative AI will increasingly be incorporated into location decision models over the next five years.”



CHART R: OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE OF AI IN THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

(on a scale from 1 [don't agree at all] to 5 [highly agree])

LOCATION ADVISORS



There are too many risks associated with generative AI in its current state for it to be used as an input during the site selection process.



Generative AI will increasingly be incorporated into location decision models over the next five years.



Generative AI can successfully be used as one input to the site selection process.



Generative AI can be a trusted source of information during a site selection process.

● AGREE ● NEUTRAL ● DISAGREE

CHART S: OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE OF AI IN THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

(on a scale from 1 [don't agree at all] to 5 [highly agree])

CORPORATE EXECUTIVES



There are too many risks (e.g., security, liability, etc.) associated with generative AI in its current state for it to be used as an input during the site selection process.



Generative AI will increasingly be incorporated into location decision models over the next five years.



Generative AI can successfully be used as one input to the site selection process.

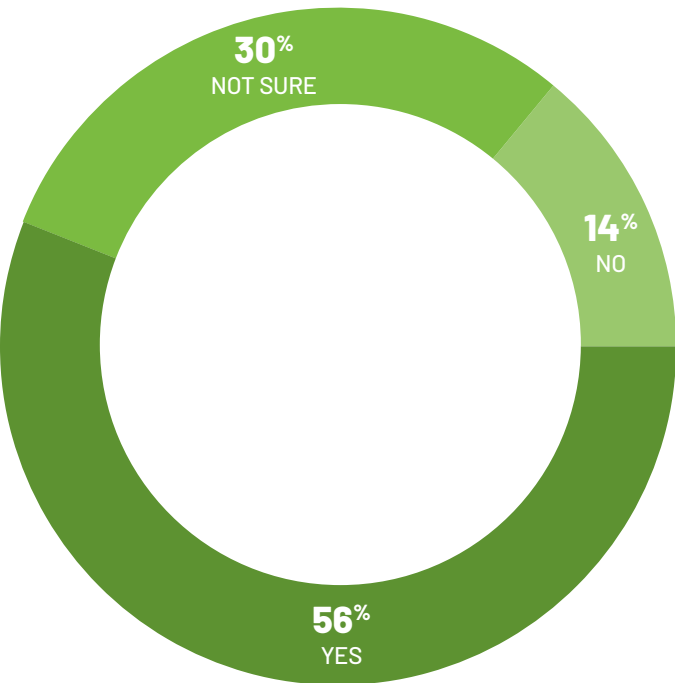


Generative AI can be a trusted source of information during a site selection process.

● AGREE ● NEUTRAL ● DISAGREE

Every edition of *Winning Strategies* has asked executives about future location decisions. The 2023 results show that corporate executives are optimistic about investment plans during the next two years, with 56 percent reporting that their company will make a location decision (such as move, expand or consolidate) during the next 24 months—one percentage point up from 2020. About 30 percent report that they are *not sure* if their company will make a location decision during the next 24 months (the same percentage that reported in 2017) and 14 percent reported that their company would make no location decision during the next 24 months, remaining stable from 2020.

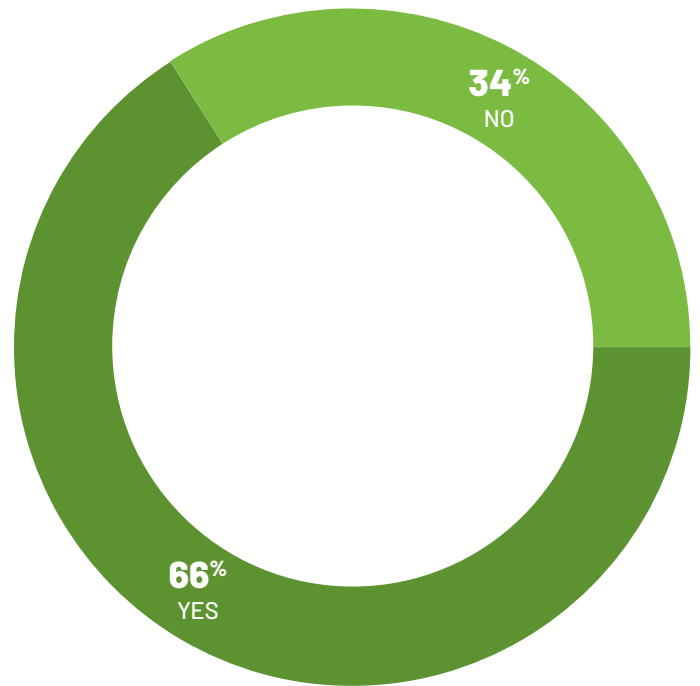
CHART T: PROJECTED LOCATION DECISION DURING THE NEXT 24 MONTHS



TOP FACTORS IN CORPORATE LOCATION DECISIONS

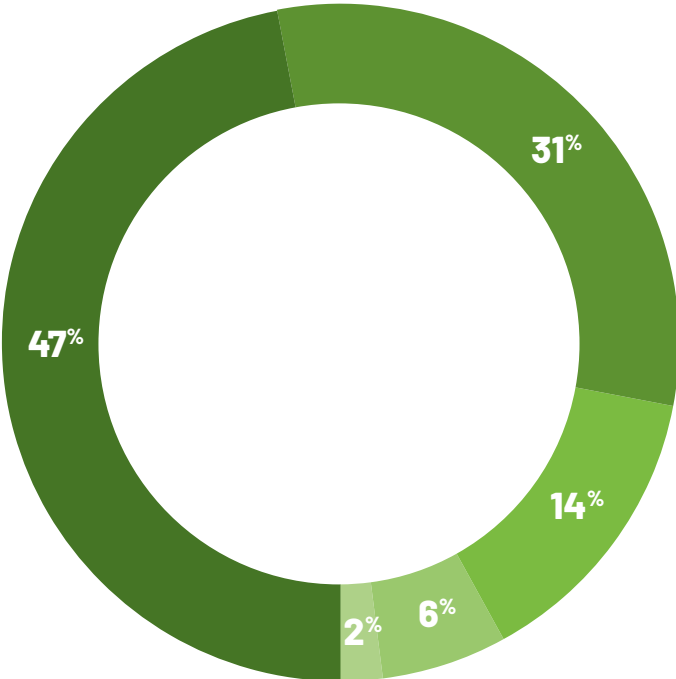


CHART U: PLANS TO OUTSOURCE A PORTION OF THE SITE-SELECTION PROCESS (CORPORATE EXECUTIVES)



When asked about plans to outsource a portion—or all phases—of their next location decision, the answer was a resounding “yes” among executives. Showing an increase from 2020 (64 percent), 2023 results show that 66 percent answered “yes,” they would outsource some or all of the site-selection process.

CHART V: PROFESSIONAL LIKELY TO ASSIST WITH SITE LOCATION SEARCH (CORPORATE EXECUTIVES)



- 47%**
SITE SELECTION CONSULTANT
- 31%**
REAL ESTATE BROKER
- 14%**
LAWYER
- 6%**
ACCOUNTANT
- 2%**
OTHER

Chart V shows the individual/organizations that are most likely to assist with domestic or international location site-selection searches. Among those that plan to outsource a portion of their next location search, executives report they are most likely to use *site selection consultants* (47 percent) and the percentage continues to increase (32 percent in 2020) followed by *real estate brokers* (31 percent). As site selection projects become increasingly complex and as executives try to mitigate as much risk as possible, they are recognizing the value of an independent advisor to guide them through these decisions.



A WORD ABOUT DCI

DCI is the leader in marketing places. Since 1960, we have helped more than 500 cities, regions, provinces, states and countries attract investors and visitors. We specialize exclusively in all phases of economic development and tourism marketing.

Our areas of expertise include:

- Editorial placement and media relations
- Lead generation
- Location advisor relationship building
- Perception studies (corporate executives/ location advisors and consultants)
- Social/digital media
- Media training
- Talent attraction programs
- Special events
- Marketing strategies
- Website development
- Tourism development
- Crisis communications
- Place branding

DCI has worked with more economic development groups than all other marketing agencies combined. The firm also has formed alliances with local advertising, public relations and marketing agencies to provide specialized economic development input.



Interested
in learning more?
We'd love to explore
how we might assist
your community.

Julie Curtin

President, Economic Development
Development Counsellors International
215 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003
Phone: 303-627-0272

Appendix

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

First Name,

It will take you less than eight minutes to complete the attached survey. **But your comments will be of enormous help to the nation's economic development professionals in better understanding the site selection needs of companies like yours.**

Would you be kind enough to give us your opinions by clicking on the below link and answering this brief survey by August 15th?

[Link](#)

The survey's findings will be presented in September at the International Economic Development Council's 2023 Annual Conference. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

P.S. We will gladly send qualified respondents who complete the survey their choice of one of six \$20 e-gift cards for your participation. Once you submit the survey, you will be directed to a new window where you will select your gift card. We'll also be pleased to share an executive summary of the findings when reported in September.

Sincerely,

Julie Curtin

President, Economic Development

DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL

The Leader in Marketing Places

New York | Denver | Los Angeles | Toronto

julie.curtin@aboutdci.com

Corporate Executive Questionnaire

1. Are you involved in the decision to relocate, expand, consolidate or build new facilities for your company?

- Yes (Continue)
- No (Please forward to the appropriate person in your organization) **(end of the survey)**

2. In your next location search, do you anticipate outsourcing a portion of the site selection responsibilities?

- Yes **(2a)**
- No

2a. What type of individual/organization is likely to assist you with the search?

- Accountant
- Lawyer
- Site Selection Consultant
- Real Estate Broker
- Other (please specify)

3. In general, at what stage in a site selection search do you **FIRST** contact economic development organizations?

- During the screening phase of all possible locations in order to request preliminary data
- Following the development of the shortlist of communities to request specific information or to arrange a site visit
- After identifying finalists in order to negotiate incentives
- After a final location has been selected and a suitable building or lot is needed
- We would not contact an economic development organization at any stage in a site location search

4. Please indicate the three U.S. states with business climates you perceive as **MOST FAVORABLE**, and then briefly indicate why.

- State #1
- Reason for State #1
- State #2
- Reason for State #2
- State #3
- Reason for State #3

5. Please indicate the three U.S. states with business climates you perceive as **LEAST FAVORABLE**, and then briefly indicate why.

- State #1
- Reason for State #1
- State #2
- Reason for State #2
- State #3
- Reason for State #3

Questionnaire /continued

6. In light of your responses to the previous questions, what are the three leading sources of information influencing your perceptions of an area's business climate?

- Advertising **(6a)**
- Articles in newspapers and magazines (print or online) **(6b)**
- Business travel
- Dialogue with industry peers
- Direct mail
- Meetings with economic development groups
- Rankings / surveys **(6c)**
- Internet/Websites
- Personal travel
- Podcasts
- Social media
- TV and radio newscasts / shows
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

6a. What type of advertising do you view as the most effective?

- Digital
- Print
- Radio
- Television

6b. What news sources (print or online) do you read most frequently?

6c. What specific rankings / surveys do you pay the most attention to?

7. Please check all digital media channels that you currently use for business purposes. (choose all that apply)

- Blogs
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Threads
- TikTok
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Other (please specify)
- I do NOT use social media for business purposes

Questionnaire /continued

8. In your most recent site location search, how often did you use the Internet as a source of community information? (1=not at all, 5=often)

- 1 (Not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Often)

9. What is the likelihood that you will visit an economic development organization's website during your next site location search? (1=not likely, 5=extremely likely)

- 1 (Not likely)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Extremely likely)

10. Which of the following features do you consider most important to the utility of an economic development organization's website? (Please select up to five responses)

- Comparisons to competitor locations (e.g. cost comparisons)
- Searchable database of available buildings and sites
- Demographic information (e.g. population, income, age distribution, educational attainment)
- Incentive information
- Major employer list
- Educational institution information (K-12 and post-secondary)
- Maps of the community/region
- Current press releases/announcements
- Quality of life information (e.g. cost of living, cultural/recreational opportunities)
- Staff contact information
- Target industries and related information
- Testimonials from local employer
- Video content
- Workforce statistics (e.g. labor force, employment by industry/occupation)

11. Within your organization, who is most likely to LEAD corporate location decisions?

- Chairman/CEO/President
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Financial Officer

Questionnaire /continued

- Vice President/Director of Corporate Real Estate
- Vice President/Director of Human Resources
- Vice President of Manufacturing
- Vice President/Director of Strategic Planning
- Other Vice President/Director (please specify)

12. Understanding that each project is different, please select the top three factors in your location decisions:

- Available sites/buildings
- Availability of skilled workers
- Competitive labor costs
- Availability of worker training programs
- Presence of post-secondary institutions
- Efficient transportation systems (highway, air, rail, port)
- Favorable environment for business continuity (in light of natural or manmade disruptions)
- Business-friendly government
- Competitive incentives
- Competitive corporate tax structure
- Low occupancy costs
- Strong quality of life
- Diverse population/inclusivity
- Availability of good K-12 education
- Low overall operating costs
- Presence of company's business cluster

13. Please rate the effectiveness of the following marketing techniques as a means of influencing your opinion when considering a new location. (1=not effective, 5=highly effective)

- Advertising (TV, Print, Digital, etc.)
- Physical mail (brochures/gift boxes)
- Internet/website
- Media relations/publicity
- Hosting special events
- Planned visits to corporate executives
- Telephone outreach
- Trade shows
- Social media
- E-Newsletters/E-marketing

14. In 25 words or less, what advice would you give to an economic development corporation trying to reach you?

Questionnaire /continued

15. What are the primary reasons your company is moving forward with location decisions (i.e., expansions, new facilities, consolidations etc.) or likely to move forward with location decisions in the next 12 months? (Select up to three)

- Access to new talent
- Increase access to customers/suppliers
- Increase access to natural resources
- Increase access to new markets
- Increase redundancy of existing operations
- Reduce costs
- Reduce overall risk
- Reduce your organization's existing footprint
- We are not planning to move forward with any location decisions in the next 12 months
- Other (please specify)

16. Has your organization used generative AI (i.e., ChatGPT, Jasper, Scribe etc.) to assist with a site location search?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

16a. (If yes to Q16) Did generative AI add value to your site selection project?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

16b. (If yes to 16) On a scale from 1 (don't agree at all) to 5 (highly agree), how much do you agree with the following statement?

- I trust the results generated by the generative AI platform used during our most recent site selection project.

17. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1=don't agree at all/3=don't agree or disagree/5=highly agree)

- Generative AI can successfully be used as one input to the site selection process.
- Generative AI will increasingly be incorporated into location decision models over the next five years.
- There are too many risks (i.e., security, liability etc.) associated with generative AI in its current state for it to be used as an input during the site selection process.
- Generative AI can be a trusted source of information during a site selection process.

Questionnaire /continued

Business Classification: The last few questions will help classify your business. All data will be confidential.

C1. Which of the following best describes your primary business?

- Manufacturing
- Services

C2. What was the gross revenue last year for your company, including all plants, divisions, branches and subsidiaries?

- Less than \$25 million
- \$25- \$49 million
- \$50 - \$99 million
- \$100 - \$249 million
- \$250 - \$499 million
- \$500 million and higher

C3. Will your company make a location decision (move, expansion, consolidation, etc.) in the next 24 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/third gender
- Prefer not to say

Site Selection Consultant Questionnaire

1. In general, at what stage in the site selection search do you first contact economic development organizations?

- During the screening phase of all possible locations in order to request preliminary data
- Following the development of a shortlist of communities to request specific information or to arrange a site visit
- After identifying finalists in order to negotiate incentives
- After a final location has been selected and a suitable building or lot is needed
- We would not contact an economic development organization at any stage in a site location search

2. In your most recent site location search for a client, how often did you use the internet as a source of community information?

- 1 (Not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Often)

3. What is the likelihood that you will visit an economic development organization's website during your next site location search?

- 1 (Not likely)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Extremely likely)

Questionnaire /continued

4. Which of the following features do you consider most important to the utility of an economic development organization's website? (Please select up to five responses)

- Comparisons to competitor locations (e.g. cost comparisons)
- Searchable database of available buildings and sites
- Demographic information (e.g. population, income, age distribution, educational attainment)
- Incentive information
- Major employer list
- Educational institution information (K-12 and post-secondary)
- Maps of the community / region
- Current press releases / announcements
- Quality of life information (e.g. cost of living, cultural / recreational opportunities)
- Staff contact information
- Target industries and related information
- Testimonials from local employer
- Video content
- Workforce statistics (e.g. labor force, employment by industry / occupation)

5. Please indicate the three U.S. states with business climates you perceive as MOST FAVORABLE and then briefly indicate why.

- State #1
- Reason for State #1
- State #2
- Reason for State #2
- State #3
- Reason for State #3

6. Please indicate the three U.S. states with business climates you perceive as LEAST FAVORABLE and then briefly indicate why.

- State #1
- Reason for State #1
- State #2
- Reason for State #2
- State #3
- Reason for State #3

Questionnaire /continued

7. In light of your responses to the previous questions, what are the three leading sources of information influencing your perceptions of an area's business climate?

- Advertising **(7a)**
- Articles in newspapers and magazines (print or online) **(7b)**
- Business travel
- Dialogue with industry peers
- Direct mail
- Meetings with economic development groups
- Rankings/surveys **(7c)**
- Internet/Websites
- Personal travel
- Podcasts
- Social media
- TV and radio newscasts/shows
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

7a. What type of advertising do you view as the most effective?

- Digital
- Print
- Radio
- Television

7b. What news sources (print or online) do you read most frequently?

7c. What specific rankings / surveys do you pay the most attention to?

Questionnaire /continued

8. Please check all social media channels that you currently use for business purposes.

- Blogs
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Threads
- TikTok
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Other (please specify)
- I do NOT use social media for business purposes

9. Based on your experience as a location advisor, please rate the effectiveness of the following marketing techniques as a means of influencing corporate executives when considering a new location. (1=not effective, 5=highly effective)

- Advertising (TV, Print, Digital, etc.)
- Physical mail (brochures/gift boxes)
- Internet/website
- Media relations/publicity
- Hosting special events
- Planned visits to corporate executives
- Telephone outreach
- Trade shows
- Social media
- E-Newsletters/E-marketing

10. Understanding every project is different, who is most likely to LEAD corporate location decisions?

- Chairman/CEO/President
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Vice President/Director of Corporate Real Estate
- Vice President/Director of Human Resources
- Vice President of Manufacturing
- Vice President/Director of Strategic Planning
- Other Vice President/Director (please specify)

Questionnaire /continued

Thinking about economic development organizations both domestically and internationally, who would you consider "best in class?" As with all questions in the survey, your responses to the questions below will be kept confidential.

11. Please list up to three "best in class" REGIONAL OR COMMUNITY economic development organizations.

- Regional or Community EDO #1
- Regional or Community EDO #2
- Regional or Community EDO #3

12. Please list up to three "best in class" STATE economic development organizations.

- State EDO #1
- State EDO #2
- State EDO #3

13. Please list up to three "best in class" INTERNATIONAL investment promotion agencies (IPAs).

- Investment Promotion Agency #1
- Investment Promotion Agency #2
- Investment Promotion Agency #3

14. What are the primary reasons your clients are moving forward with location decisions (i.e., expansions, new facilities, consolidations etc.) or likely to move forward with location decisions in the next 12 months? (Select up to three)

- Access to new talent
- Increase access to customers/suppliers
- Increase access to natural resources
- Increase access to new markets
- Increase redundancy of existing operations
- Reduce costs
- Reduce overall risk
- Reduce organization's existing footprint
- Other (please specify)

Questionnaire /continued

15. Have you used generative AI (i.e., ChatGPT, Jasper, Scribe etc.) to assist with a client's location search?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

15a. (If yes to Q15) Did generative AI add value to your site selection project?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

15b. (If yes to 15) On a scale from 1 (don't agree at all) to 5 (highly agree), how much do you agree with the following statement?

- I trust the results generated by the generative AI platform used during our most recent site selection project.

16. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1=don't agree at all/3=don't agree or disagree/5=highly agree)

- Generative AI can successfully be used as one input to the site selection process.
- Generative AI will increasingly be incorporated into location decision models over the next five years.
- There are too many risks (i.e., security, liability etc.) associated with generative AI in its current state for it to be used as an input during the site selection process.
- Generative AI can be a trusted source of information during a site selection process.

Questionnaire /continued

Business Classification: The last few questions will help classify your business. All data will be confidential.

C1. Please indicate the size of your firm.

- I am a single practitioner
- 1-25 employees
- 25+ employees

C2. Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/third gender
- Prefer not to say

Appendix B: Most-Favorable Business Climate Rankings for All States

STATE	%	STATE	%	STATE	%
Texas	54%	Pennsylvania	4%	Iowa	1%
Florida	33%	Massachusetts	3%	Maryland	1%
Georgia	30%	Missouri	3%	Mississippi	1%
North Carolina	29%	Utah	3%	Alaska	0.4%
South Carolina	20%	Washington	3%	District of Columbia	0.4%
Tennessee	19%	Arkansas	3%	Hawaii	0.4%
Ohio	16%	New Jersey	3%	Nebraska	0.4%
California	15%	New Mexico	3%	New Hampshire	0.4%
New York	14%	Wisconsin	3%	North Dakota	0.4%
Arizona	13%	Idaho	2%	Vermont	0.4%
Indiana	13%	Wyoming	2%	West Virginia	0.4%
Colorado	8%	Maine	2%		
Illinois	7%	Minnesota	2%		
Virginia	7%	Montana	2%		
Alabama	6%	Oklahoma	2%		
Nevada	5%	Oregon	2%		
Kentucky	5%	Kansas	1%		
Michigan	5%	Louisiana	1%		
Delaware	4%	Connecticut	1%		

Appendix C: Least-Favorable Business Climate Rankings for All States

STATE	%	STATE	%	STATE	%
California	53%	Minnesota	2%	Wisconsin	1%
New York	38%	Tennessee	2%	Delaware	1%
Florida	24%	Wyoming	2%	District of Columbia	1%
Illinois	21%	Georgia	2%	Idaho	1%
New Jersey	15%	Louisiana	2%	Missouri	1%
Texas	14%	Maryland	2%	New Hampshire	1%
Washington	10%	Nevada	2%	South Dakota	1%
Alaska	7%	New Mexico	2%	Indiana	0.4%
Mississippi	6%	North Dakota	2%	Iowa	0.4%
Hawaii	5%	Oklahoma	2%	Kansas	0.4%
Oregon	5%	Pennsylvania	2%	Nebraska	0.4%
Alabama	4%	Utah	2%	Ohio	0.4%
Massachusetts	4%	Vermont	2%	Virginia	0.4%
Michigan	4%	Arizona	1%		
Maine	3%	Colorado	1%		
Montana	3%	Kentucky	1%		
West Virginia	3%	North Carolina	1%		
Arkansas	2%	Rhode Island	1%		
Connecticut	2%	South Carolina	1%		

Appendix D: Demographic Profile of Respondents

C-level Corporate Executives	75%
Location Advisors/Consultants	25%

Gender

Female	18%
Male	80%
Prefer not to say	2%

Industry

Manufacturing	32%
Services	68%

Gross Revenue

Less than \$25 million	24%
\$25 - \$49 million	11%
\$50 - \$99 million	14%
\$100 - \$249 million	22%
\$250 - \$499 million	13%
\$500 million and higher	16%

Location Advisors Only: Size of Company

1-25 employees	30%
25+ employees	66%
I am a single practitioner	4%





RESUME

ATTRACT BUSINESS & TALENT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

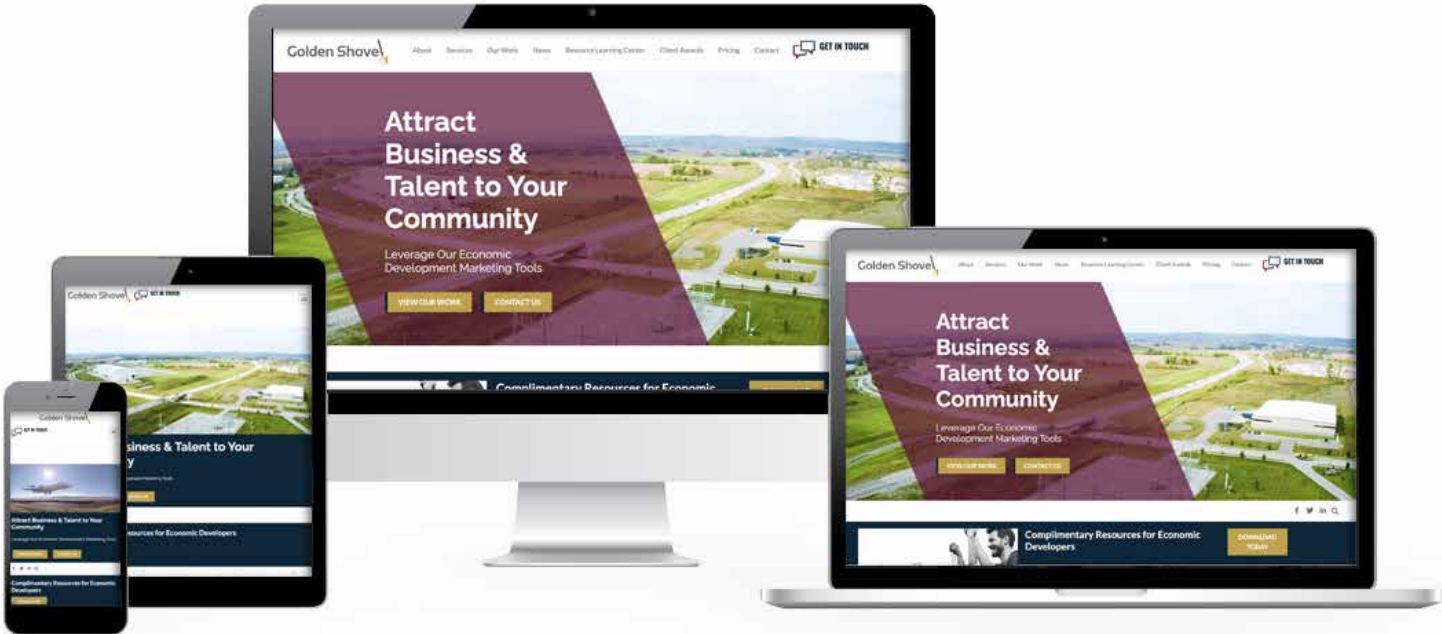


COMPANY RESUME

WHO WE ARE

At Golden Shovel Agency, we know economic development is a mission-driven endeavor. Since it is so critical for communities and regions to attract and retain businesses, we exclusively focus on helping organizations, cities, counties, regions, and states to elevate both their economic development communications and their marketing strategies. We bring a combined knowledge of strategy, marketing, website technology, and graphic design expertise. This allows us to collaborate with our clients and present communities in their best light.

We are a multi-discipline communications firm. Great marketing happens when appealing content finds the right audience. Whether attracting a business within a target industry or a desired type of worker, we create custom content tailored for economic development audiences and accurately target and measure the results through multiple online communication channels.



COMPANY RESUME

WHAT WE DO

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Our award-winning economic development websites make it easy for economic developers to reach multiple decision-makers with their value proposition while providing site selectors with the essential tools, data, resources, and site information that they need to make strong client recommendations.

Designed for local and regional organizations, our Economic Gateway has proven to be a powerful tool for creating best-in-class, custom-designed economic development websites. Complete with the resources needed to best present communities to business owners, talent, and other stakeholders, each website is developed with access to our entire suite of economic development modules. Clients find our websites easy to use, even without programming experience, as admin functions are streamlined without unnecessary functionality.

Golden Shovel Agency hosts and maintains all of our clients' economic development websites. Our Economic Gateway is continuously improving and expanding to deliver best-in-class tools to clients (at no additional cost). Our platform and websites are hosted through Rackspace, a leader in high-quality hosting. Additionally, clients will have peace of mind knowing that their website information is permanently backed up to prevent any loss of data.

Unique client perk - a complete website redesign is provided to our clients after every third year of services. This perk ensures that your organization's website continues to be fresh and modern as the years go by.

CONTENT CREATION

Your organization will have the Golden Shovel content creation team available to uncover the unique story of your region. Our custom content work will differentiate you from other communities by focusing on what makes you unique and how your assets can meet the needs of the industry and workforce that you are trying to recruit. Through expert storytelling and compelling content, we help you build a bridge between your community and your target audience so that you can make meaningful connections.

COMPANY RESUME

MARKETING

Our marketing services allow your community to become part of the conversation. Whether you are looking to attract more workers, businesses, or gain national recognition, our marketing strategies and solutions will position you for success. Our economic development-focused team will perform in-depth research to develop detailed marketing plans. Inbound marketing solutions and public relations strategies are tailored to your community's unique strengths to increase lead generation.

When it comes to digital ads, we start with research. Who are you trying to reach? What platforms are they most likely to use? And what keywords are they typing into a search when looking for information or solutions? With data analytics in hand, our team will craft dynamic digital ads that are eye-catching, intriguing, and designed to initiate action. We manage all aspects of design, implementation, and campaign monitoring to ensure that your economic development organization gets the attention of your target audience. Best of all, we can review who has clicked on the ads and determine best practices for further outreach.

STRATEGY

A customized economic development strategy is critical to understanding where your community wants to go and what it will take to get there. Without a plan to solve fundamental challenges like workforce, housing, and attraction, your community may find itself headed in an unknown direction. While economic developers know all about the act of strategic planning, it is still time-consuming and can be overwhelming. This can lead some to skip the planning process altogether. Golden Shovel can facilitate the strategic planning process so that you can better manage your daily task list.

Our strategy services identify your community's unique attributes, opportunities, programs, and features and tie them to your organization's strategic goals. The Golden Shovel Agency team of expert marketers and experienced economic development personnel will create the key messaging necessary to resonate with the defined audience.

Specific economic development strategies range from attracting traditional commercial and manufacturing businesses, including office, retail, and R&D, to focusing on global export/import businesses. Golden Shovel Agency will work with key local stakeholders to develop customized strategies based on your needs and budget requirements for the defined targets of your community. The underlying strength of those strategies will be the unique community development goals and competitive advantages that ultimately will help diversify the local economy and drive growth.

COMPANY RESUME

ONGOING SUPPORT (GATEKEEPER SERVICE)

Economic development is a continuous process that is constantly adapting to the needs of a community. Golden Shovel's GateKeeper Service provides ongoing support in the form of an all-access pass to a team of professional marketers, designers, content writers, and strategists.

Once you become a client, your GateKeeper will meet with you monthly and gain an intimate understanding of your strategic goals and objectives. They will become a trusted part of your team and can pull additional resources as needed. Whether that involves identifying the right talent to make design changes, bringing in a copywriter to create custom content, or having our marketing specialists run an outbound marketing campaign for you, the GateKeeper understands the strengths of each Golden Shovel team member and will ensure the right talent is matched with your immediate and long-term needs. In short, your GateKeeper will pull it all together, serving as your account and project manager to ensure that your communication and marketing needs are met monthly.

BRANDING

As an economic development organization, the brand you promote will craft your community's identity. What do you want to convey to people at the local coffee shop or the potential companies with a global presence? Our creative team of experts in economic development can analyze your existing brand or start fresh to identify the key personality you wish to convey.

We can help with logo iterations, provide supporting elements and demonstrate how you should use the brand across various applications. Custom style guides can also be created to map out a consistent set of guidelines that uphold your brand.

OPPORTUNITY ZONE STRATEGY

Marketing your community's Opportunity Zone requires research, strategy, and execution to be seriously considered among the 8,764 federally designated tracts. Opportunity Zones are unique investment vehicles that you can highlight in several ways. Creating a focused digital prospectus is an ideal way to "speak the language" of investors and can also be used to strategically market the non-opportunity zone areas as well.

COMPANY RESUME

VIDEO & VR SERVICES

A picture is worth a thousand words. Golden Shovel's video and imagery team can speak volumes about your community! PlaceVR, Golden Shovel's video division, was the industry pioneer in developing virtual reality FAM tours for business attraction, workforce attraction, and tourism.

Imagine being at a trade show and letting a business prospect "step into your community" and experience what it has to offer. It's now possible with our virtual reality video work. Our talented film crew tells the story of your region and makes it come to life for the audience. We also use the latest technology to create 3D modeling of buildings, and 3D facility tours - ideal for showcasing shovel-ready sites and redevelopment opportunities. Our team produces videos in the following formats:

- Immersive 360° Virtual Reality Videos
- Immersive Renderings (Virtual Buildings, Etc.)
- Existing Facility 3D Tours/Mapping
- Aerial/Drone & Traditional Video Formats



COMPANY RESUME

WHY PARTNER WITH US

OUR KNOWLEDGE BECOMES YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

Our team members attend state and national economic development conferences to stay current on best practices and network with site selectors. Below are some of the conferences we have attended:

American Public Power Association

California Association for Local
Economic Development

Economic Development Association of Minnesota

Economic Development Association
of North Dakota

Idaho Economic Development Association

Industrial Asset Management Council

International Council of Shopping Centers

International Economic Development Council

Kansas Economic Development Alliance

Kentucky Association for Economic Development

Leadership Summit (IEDC)

Mid-America Economic Development Council

Mississippi Economic Development Council

Montana Economic Development Council

National Association of Development
Organizations

National Rural Economic Developers Association

Nebraska Economic Developers Association

Ohio Economic Development Association

Oklahoma Professional Economic
Development Council

Professional Developers of Iowa

South Dakota Governor's Office of
Economic Development

Southeast Economic Development Council

Southern Economic Development Council

SelectUSA

Tennessee Economic Development Council

Texas Economic Development Council

Utah Alliance for Economic Development

Utility Economic Development Association

Wisconsin Economic Development Association

Wyoming Economic Development Association

When your organization chooses Golden Shovel Agency to develop and implement your marketing strategy, we become an extension of your team. Golden Shovel Agency understands that website's play a vital role in economic development. Our ever-evolving platform allows us to build highly customized websites that follow industry best practices. One of our long-standing goals is to ensure our clients are never alone, but always supported by a talented team of economic development professionals.

COMPANY RESUME

OUR CLIENTS



[City of Wilmington \(DE\) Office of Economic Development](#)



[Washington County \(MN\) Community Development Agency](#)



[Tulsa \(OK\) Regional Chamber Economic Development](#)



[Greater Fremont \(NE\) Development Council](#)



[Sherman \(TX\) Economic Development Corporation](#)



[Greater Columbus \(GA\) Chamber Economic Development](#)



[Brookings \(SD\) Economic Development Corporation](#)



[Four Corners \(NM\) Economic Development](#)

COMPANY RESUME

TESTIMONIALS



Amy Madison
Pflugerville Community
Development Corporation



Horton Hobbs
Greater Springfield Partnership



Steven Jones
Grapevine Economic Development



Bruce Saylor
Minnesota Technology Corridor





OVERVIEW OF WEBSITE SERVICES & PRICING

AT GOLDEN SHOVEL, WE BELIEVE THAT THRIVING COMMUNITIES IMPROVE EVERYONE'S LIVES. EVERYTHING WE DO CONNECTS BUSINESSES AND TALENT WITH COMMUNITIES THAT THEY'LL THRIVE IN. WE DO THIS BY EMPOWERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS THROUGH GROUNDBREAKING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SOFTWARE TOOLS.

CUSTOM WEBSITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Golden Shovel understands the vital role your organization's website plays. Sending the right impression is critical, and it requires a thorough understanding of what you have to offer and what makes you unique. We will take the information we gather from specific economic development research to build a stand-alone website that you can leverage daily. The website will highlight the strengths of your community, focus on your target audiences, and ensure that you have a strong digital first impression.

Our services include website set up, custom design, Content Management System (CMS), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Google Analytics, content population and training, as well as over 20 customizable modules that are specific to economic development. These insights and experiences enable us to build a dynamic website that effectively supports your organization's digital needs and makes you stand out amongst your competitors.

GATEKEEPER SERVICE

Our staff works as an extension of your organization's content and marketing division. We create key messaging, content, articles, a content strategy document, and post new content to the website and social media accounts every week. The writers will develop up-to-date posts and articles that resonate with business owners and individuals in the defined target audiences. We will meet with the appropriate personnel monthly to train, coordinate content, and maximize outreach. A complimentary website redesign will also be available to you at no cost at the conclusion of every 3rd year of service. This ensures that your website is always fresh and modern.



OVERVIEW OF WEBSITE SERVICES

HOSTING, MAINTENANCE, & TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Golden Shovel will host and maintain your website online. Our customized Economic Gateway platform gives you ongoing updates and tool expansions as Golden Shovel develops them, all at no additional cost. Our maintenance and hosting model will provide your staff with all the necessary support and assistance for content changes, technical issues, and any other support requests related to the website's performance. Our customer support specialists will make sure that your website is accurate and that we are responding to your requests in a timely manner so that your website never gets behind.

WEBSITE COPYWRITING

Golden Shovel's content team works directly with clients to craft messages that are on-point and relevant to target audiences. This messaging will be incorporated throughout the website content to ensure consistency and to promote brand development. In addition, Golden Shovel will create quality content within your website for the best SEO results. We ensure the content aligns with your organization's identity, goals, and initiatives to produce the most effective results. Content will be populated to your site prior to the live launch.

WEBSITE LEAD GENERATION & TRACKING

Golden Shovel has developed a strategic partnership with Lead Forensics which generates a real-time online dashboard report that tracks who is visiting, how often, how they found you, and what content they are viewing. Through this report, you will generate leads you didn't know you had and maximize the performance of your website.

MICROSITE UPGRADE

A site used by an existing Economic Gateway client to promote content which they need to isolate such as a target industry or separate entity within the region (usually for promotional or organizational purposes, or when they're obligated to provide some expertise for an underfunded organization within their community). Uses the client's existing design and hides anything in the template that isn't compatible with whatever organization/content the microsite is promoting. Data and information can be shared between the main site and the microsite.



OVERVIEW OF WEBSITE SERVICES

INVESTMENT OVERVIEW

Website Design & Setup

Customized Website Development & Launch	\$18,500 (one-time fee)
GateKeeper Services, Ongoing Training, Hosting, Maintenance, & Technical Support <i>(Note: Includes an annual Secure Sockets Layer (SSL))</i>	\$11,350/year
Total Investment (one-year)	\$29,850
Optional Recommended Services	
Website Copywriting	\$6,500 (one-time fee)
Website Lead Generation & Tracking	\$4,500/year



REQUEST FOR GRAND RAPIDS EDA ACTION

AGENDA DATE: March 14, 2024

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: Consider approval of the proposal for tree clearing and grubbing of City parcel 91-033-1406 and authorize payment in the amount of \$28,710.00.

PREPARED BY: Rob Mattei, Executive Director

BACKGROUND:

With FAA action to release the portion of this City parcel from grant obligations still in process and with L&M Supply needing to access the property to remove the required trees, the City Council has already approved a Right of Entry Agreement for that access. We've come to recently learn, however, that lenders and title agents working on construction financing for the project have concerns with an L&M contractor doing this work on land not yet owned by L&M.

L&M needs to remove the trees on the site during a window of time that ends at the end of this month, to avoid federal environmental concerns over a protected species of bat. They have asked GREDA to separately hire their subcontractor, Casper Construction, to remove the 3.3 acres of trees on the City property. In turn, L&M (aka SE Seventh Ave. Distribution) agrees to reimburse GREDA through an equal increase in purchase price when the sale from GREDA to them is cleared by the FAA.

RECOMMENDATION:

Make a motion to approve the proposal for tree clearing and grubbing of City parcel 91-033-1406 and authorize payment in the amount of \$28,710.00 to Casper Construction.

REQUIRED ACTION:

March 8, 2024

Rob Mattei
Director of Community Development
Grand Rapids Economic Development Agency
420 N. Pokegama Ave
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

RE: Clearing of Parcel ID: 91-033-1406

Dear Rob:

Due to the need to remove trees before the March 31st deadline due to the protected bat concern on the property on which we will be constructing our new distribution center, and in order to not cause title concerns with the 4th parcel we will be acquiring from GREDA, I'd like to ask that GREDA contracts to have the trees removed before March 31st, and before SE 7th Ave Distribution LLC closes on the 4th parcel, which cannot happen until the FAA encumbrance is removed from the property.

SE 7th Ave Distribution LLC would then agree to increase the purchase agreement price of the 4th parcel to account for the cost of the tree removal that would be done by GREDA.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this matter.

All the best-



Dave Cowan
Executive Vice President
L&M Supply, Inc.



PO Box 480
 212 SE 10th Street
 Grand Rapids, MN 55744
 Phone: (218) 326-9637
 Fax: (218) 326-9638
 Email: estimates@caspercon.com

Date: 03/08/2024

CUSTOMER	JOB
GRED 420 N Pokegama Ave Grand Rapids, MN 55744	L&M Distribution Center Clearing & Grubbing

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
	Clearing and Grubbing	3.3	ACRE	\$8,700.00	\$28,710.00
				LUMP SUM	\$28,710.00

Dan Watkins

Senior Estimator / Project Manager





REQUEST FOR GRAND RAPIDS EDA ACTION

AGENDA DATE: March 14, 2024

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: Review and consider forwarding to the City Council the GREDA 2023 Annual Report

PREPARED BY: Rob Mattei, Executive Director

BACKGROUND:

The Bylaws of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority echo Minnesota Statute 469.100 by requiring that: “GREDA shall prepare an annual report describing its activities and providing an accurate statement of its financial condition, together with additional matters and recommendations it deems advisable for the economic development of the City of Grand Rapids.”

RECOMMENDATION:

REQUIRED ACTION: Pass a motion forwarding to the City Council the GREDA 2023 Annual Report.

Grand **R**apids **E**conomic **D**evelopment **A**uthority

2023 Annual Report



Prepared by:

Rob Mattei
Director of Community Development
GREDA Executive Director

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Mission

The Mission of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority (GREDA) is to advance the growth of our local economy through efforts focused on business recruitment, retention, and expansion.

As the City of Grand Rapids' economic development agent, GREDA strives to provide a high level of service, to encourage economic investment and prosperity in the City and surrounding region. GREDA works closely with businesses to identify creative solutions to challenging problems, generate enhanced opportunities for growth, and help them achieve their short and long-term goals.

Governance

The Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority is a public body governed by Minnesota Statute chapter 469, and Enabling Resolutions enacted by the City Council of the City of Grand Rapids.

The management of all the affairs, property and business of GREDA is vested in a Board of Commissioners consisting of 7 members, 2 of which must be members of the City Council. GREDA annually elects its President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer. Staff support is provided to GREDA primarily through the Community Development Department, with the Director of Community Development acting as the GREDA Executive Director, and with the Community Development Administrative Assistant acting as the Recorder.

The GREDA Board of Commissioners includes the following volunteers:

Member	Position	Affiliation/Occupation	Term Expires
Sholom Blake	President	Private Business Owner/CPA	3/1/25
Molly MacGregor	Commissioner	City Council/Student Support Specialist	12/31/26 Concurrent with Council Term
Wayne Bruns	Commissioner	Banking Executive	3/1/25
Al Hodnik	Vice President	Ret. Business Executive	3/1/27
Bill Martinetto	Commissioner	Business Financial Officer	3/1/27
Vacant	Commissioner		3/1/30
Tom Sutherland	Commissioner	City Council/Conservation Officer	12/31/26 Concurrent with Council Term

*The Director of City Finance serves as the Asst. Treasurer

Also providing valued service to the GREDA during 2023 was City Council Member Tasha Connelly and Mike Korte.

Article VII, Section 1, of the Bylaws of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority establishes that: "GREDA shall prepare an annual report describing its activities and providing an accurate statement of its financial condition, together with additional matters and recommendations it deems advisable for the economic development of the City of Grand Rapids."

This report summarizes GREDA's activities and financial condition for the year ending December 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Sholom Blake, Grand Rapids EDA President



Development Property and Leasable Assets

Beginning in 1969, GREDA and its predecessor organization, the Grand Rapids Industrial Park Commission, have invested in the creation of four industrial park areas in Grand Rapids. Those industrial parks have become the home for 24 businesses, providing over 1,000 jobs in our community.

The attraction of industrial business to our community is pursued by GREDA within a competitive environment. Communities in the Arrowhead Region, including Grand Rapids, have had to counterbalance weaknesses, such as our distance from major market areas, by providing incentives to businesses for locating in our community. A primary means of providing that incentive involves providing development sites for business at a competitive rate, most often below actual cost.

GREDA has also actively pursued the development of underutilized properties in the Downtown and Mississippi Riverfront areas. As examples, the GREDA has sold land, which led to the development of the Glorvigen office building, KAXE Northern Public Radio station, and the Rapids Brewing project. The GREDA also exercised their authority to purchase and sell lands in support of the private redevelopment of Block 37, located at the corner of TH 2 and TH 169. GREDA currently owns property in Blocks 20 & 21, immediately north of the library, which they continue to market to developers interested in creating professional office, residential and other compatible uses. GREDA also owns and markets for sale and development the former North Country Recycling property, a site referred to as the Block 5 Site. More recently, GREDA acquired the VFW/Rose properties within Block 18 downtown, following the fire that destroyed those buildings in March of 2020.

Land Inventory Summary:

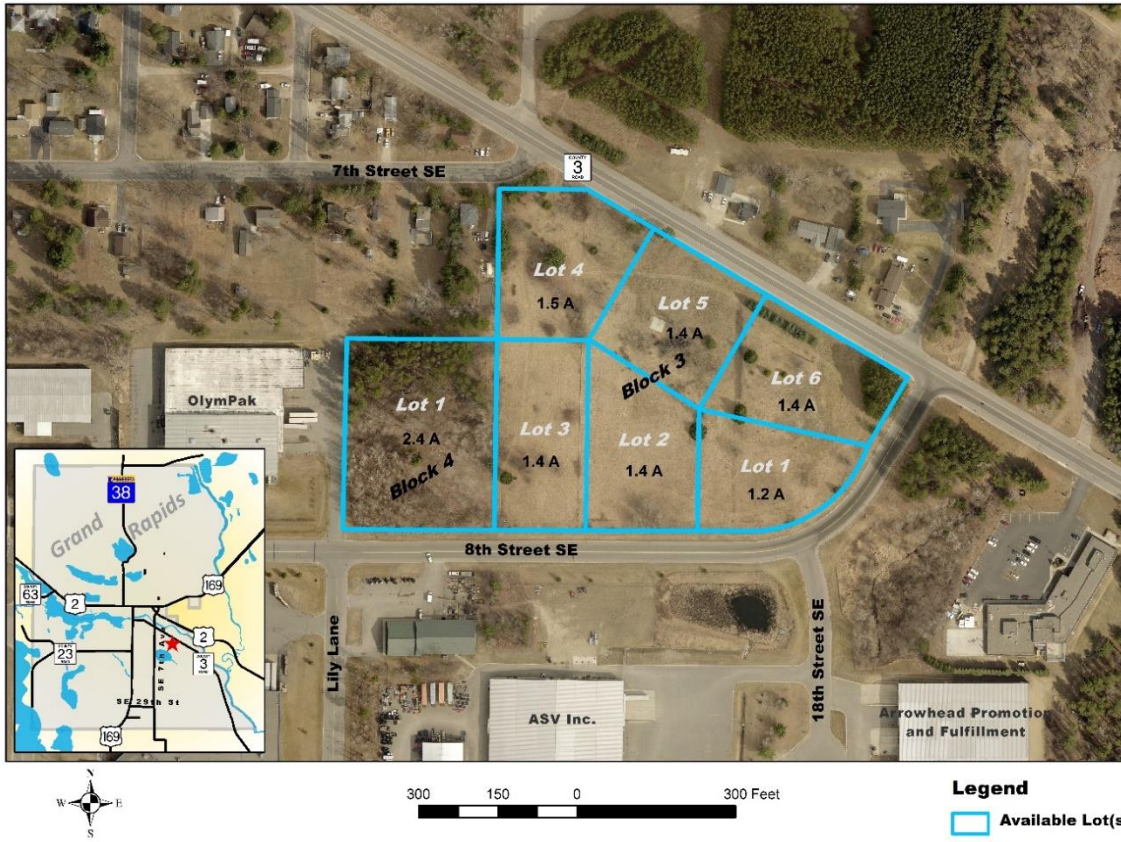
Site Description	Number of Developable Lots (GREDA Owned)	<u>Acreage Total</u>
Industrial Park Two	1	2.38
Industrial Park East	6	8.30
Airport South Industrial Park — Phase 1 & 2	11	17.61
Airport Property (unplatted)	1	22.5
Blocks 20 & 21 Riverfront Dev. Site	1	1.46
Block 5 Riverfront Dev. Site	1	1.8
Block 23 — Third Division Commercial Site	1	0.57
Block 18 — Downtown Site	1	0.16
Totals:	23	54.78

Central School:

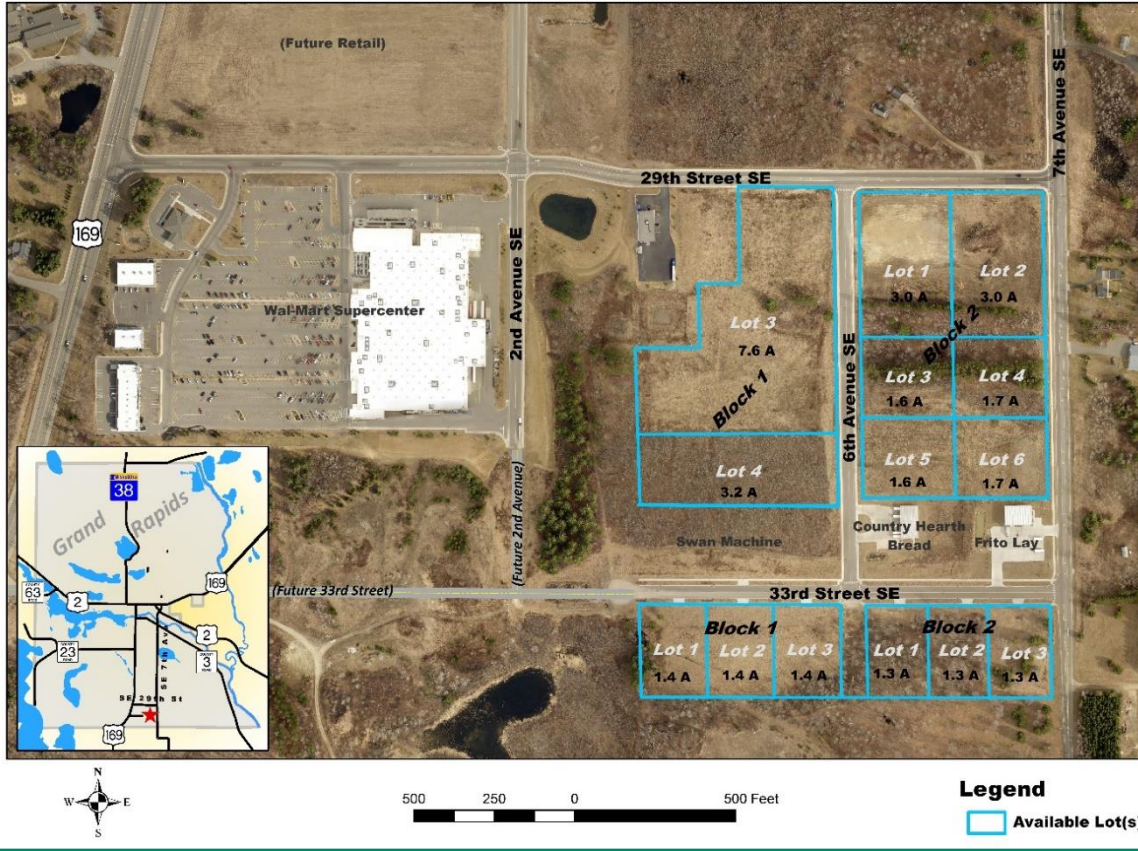
The City redeveloped Central School in 1983 and has since operated it as a multi-tenant leased space for a mixture of commercial retail and office uses. Central School contains 15 suites totaling 10,250 square feet of leasable space. In 2014, the City Council tasked GREDA with the management of leasing. At the time of this report, 64% of the Central School space is occupied.



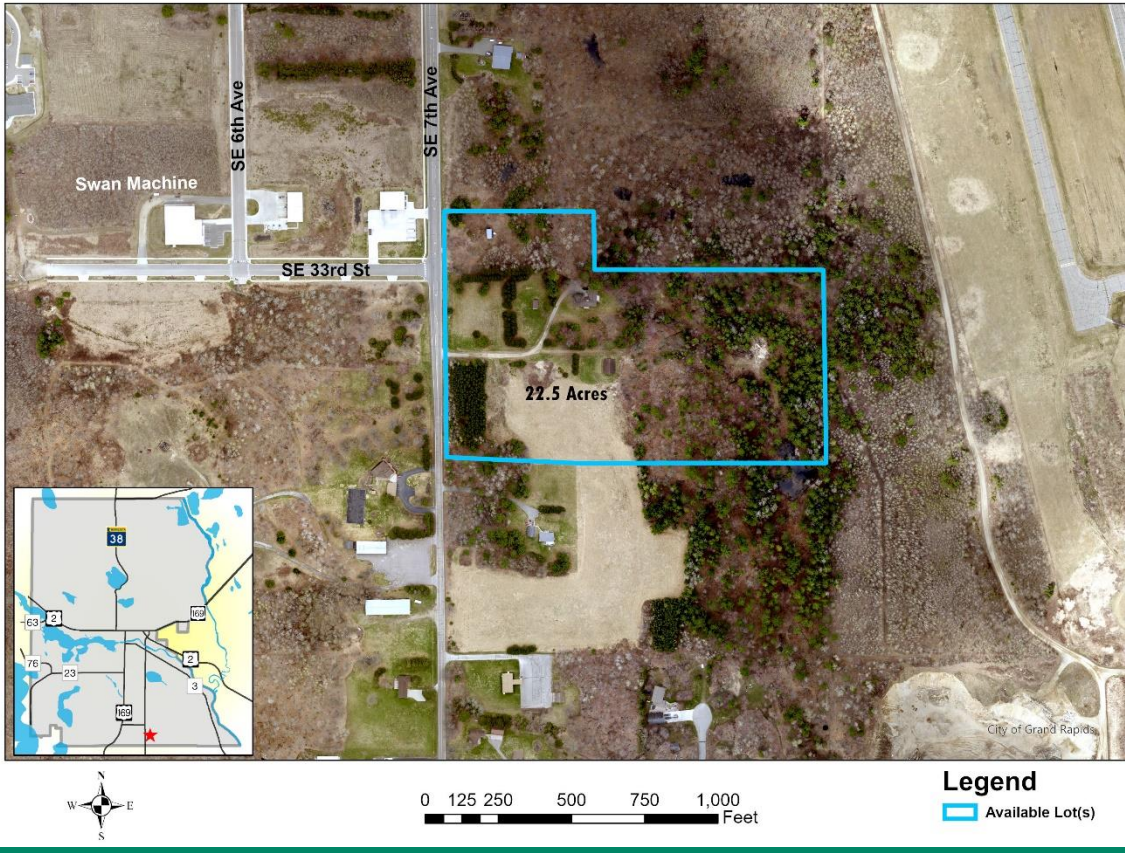
Grand Rapids Industrial Park East



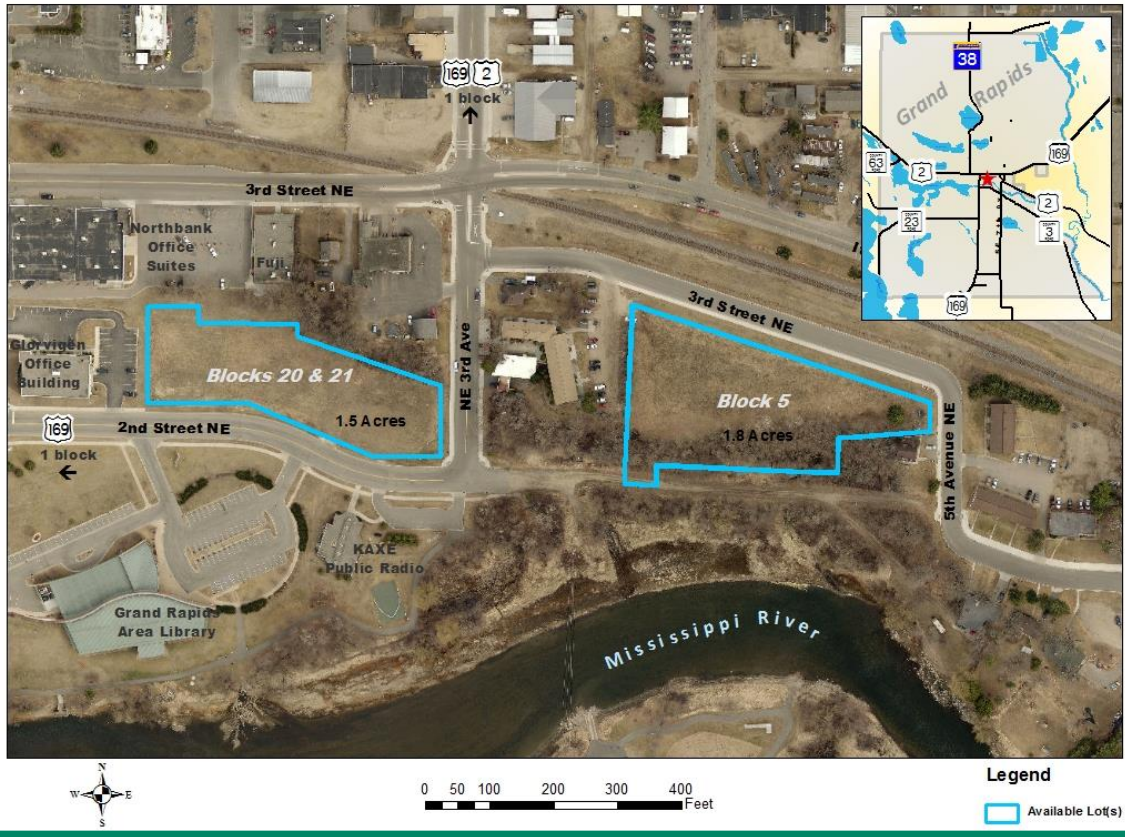
Grand Rapids Airport South Industrial Park: Phases I & II



Grand Rapids Airport Property (unplatted)



Grand Rapids "Blocks 20 & 21" and "Block 5" Commercial Sites

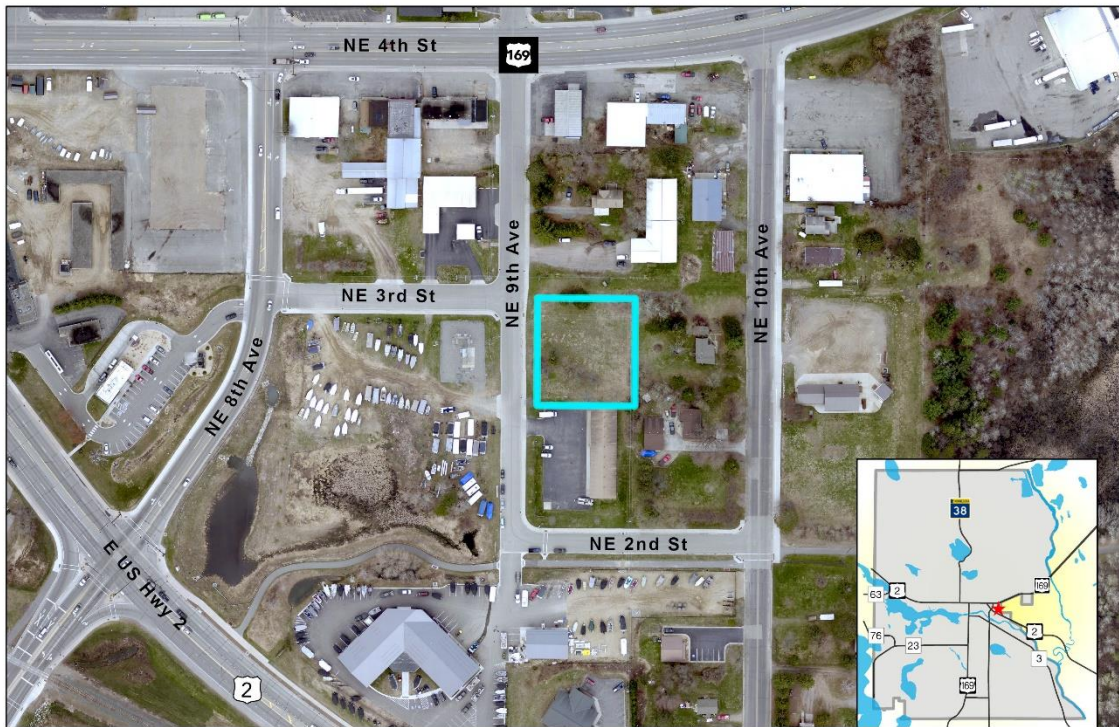


Grand Rapids "Downtown Block 18"



Legend
Available Lot(s)

Block 23 Third Division



Legend
Available Lot(s)



To advance their economic development goals, GREDA pools their resources together with those of other local, state and federal economic development agencies. Examples of those business assistance programs are listed in the following table:

Source	Program
Federal EDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Works Grant Economic Adjustment Grant Economic Development Planning Grant
Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Redevelopment Program Development Infrastructure Program Business Financing
Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Development Public Infrastructure Grant Minnesota Investment Fund Small Cities Development Program Job Creation Fund Redevelopment Grant Program Contamination Investigation and Cleanup Job Skills Partnership Program
Itasca Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Development Loan Program
City of Grand Rapids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax Increment Financing Tax Abatement

Commercial Building Improvement Loan (CBIL) Program - In certain situations, the underwriting standards used by private financial institutions would constrain their willingness or ability to provide a complete, attractive, financing package to a small business seeking to invest in property improvements. GREDA has created and maintains a revolving loan fund, named the Commercial Building Improvement Loan (CBIL) Program, which is intended to leverage private sector investment. The GREDA CBIL Program fills this capital market void by providing below market rate financing to eligible commercial enterprises within the City of Grand Rapids.

The CBIL is intended primarily to help building owners and tenants improve the appearance and function of their existing buildings. Secondary benefits of the CBIL program include: the removal of blight, increased competitiveness, strengthening of the tax base and improved viability of small businesses in the Grand Rapids commercial districts.

Eligible improvements to any retail/commercial building or site are qualified for consideration under the CBIL, within the following business zones: (LB, GB, CBD, SGB, SLB, I-1, SI-1). Program funds may be used for: building construction and expansion, building renovation and remodeling, landscaping and parking lot improvements and signage.

The Commercial Building Improvement Loan Program funds may finance up to 75% of the project cost, or \$40,000, which ever may be less. The interest rate for improvement loans is currently set at two percent (2%), with a maximum term of 5 years. Loans are amortized over a twenty-year period with a balloon payment due at the end of the term, and no penalty for early repayment.

There currently is a portfolio of nineteen loans with a combined principal loan amount of \$613,693.



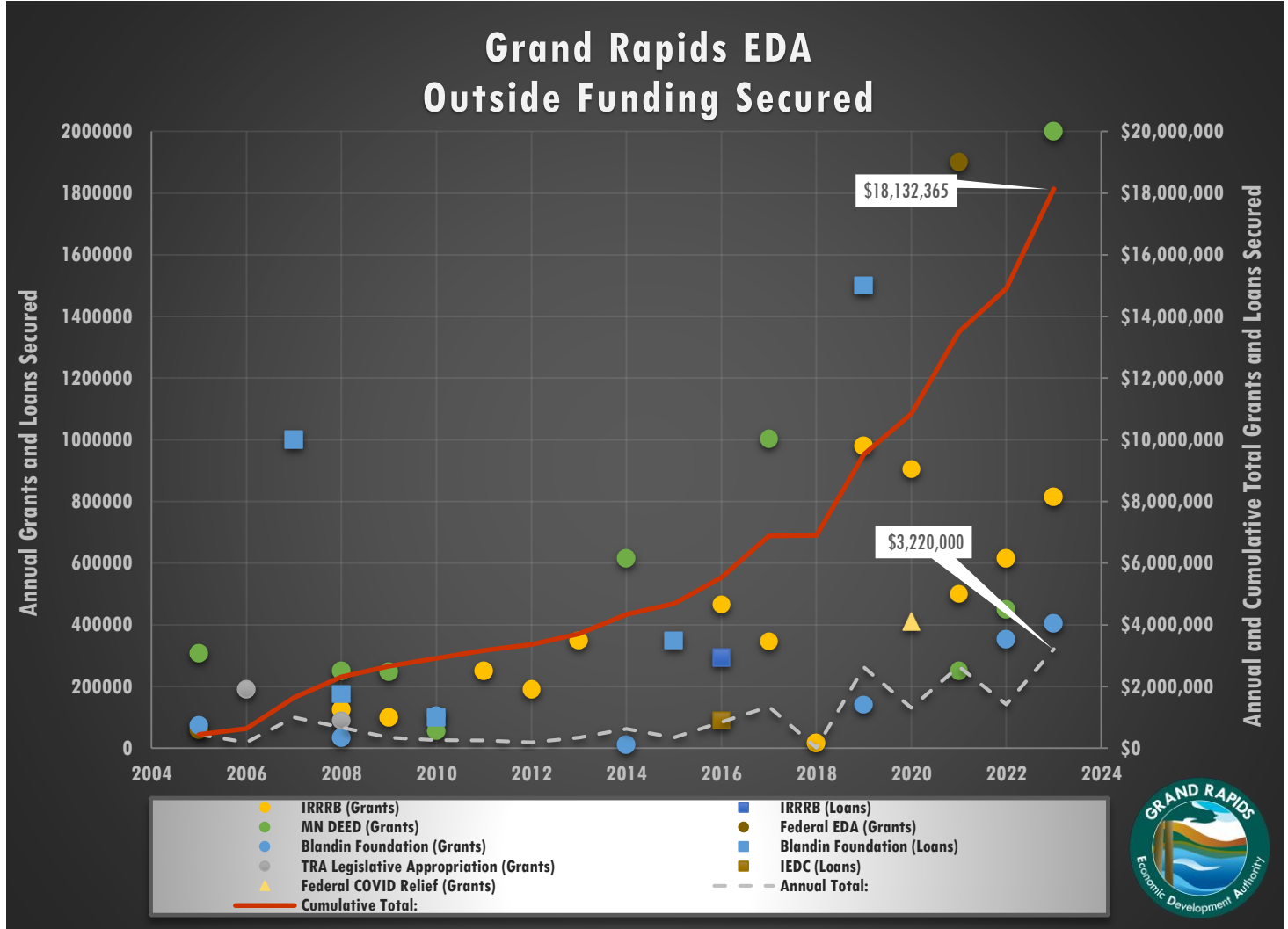
Downtown Mandated Building Improvement Loan (MBIL) Program – With a grant provided by the Blandin Foundation in 2023, GREDA has established a loan program to assist entrepreneurs with funds for additional improvements mandated by the Minnesota State Building Code. These additional required improvements, such as to address handicapped accessibility, are more common in older buildings. The costs of these improvements are often unanticipated by entrepreneurs and tend to limit or stifle investment in and new uses of these buildings. Downtown MBIL Program funds may finance up to \$50,000 of these costs. The interest rate for MBIL loans is currently set at one percent (1%), with a term of 10 years.

Repayment of principal and interest is deferred during the 10-year term, with 10% of the principal balance forgiven each year the building owner maintains ownership.

There currently is a portfolio of one loan with a in the principal loan amount of \$50,000.



The following chart provides a eighteen year history of the outside funding secured by GREDA:



Summary of 2023 Funding Represented Above

Source	Project	Grant/Loan	Amount
Minnesota IRRR	Oppidan Workforce Housing	Grant	\$200,000
	Downtown Organization Project	Grant	\$15,000
	KOOTASCA Early Childhood Hub	Grant	\$300,000
	Forest Lake Addition Utilities	Grant	\$300,000
Minnesota DEED	L&M Distribution Center MIF Loan	Grant	\$2,000,000
Blandin Foundation	Downtown Mandated Improvement Loan Program	Grant	\$350,000
	Downtown Organization Project	Grant	\$55,000
Total:			\$3,220,000



2023 Project Funding Not Represented in the Previous Chart

Item 6.

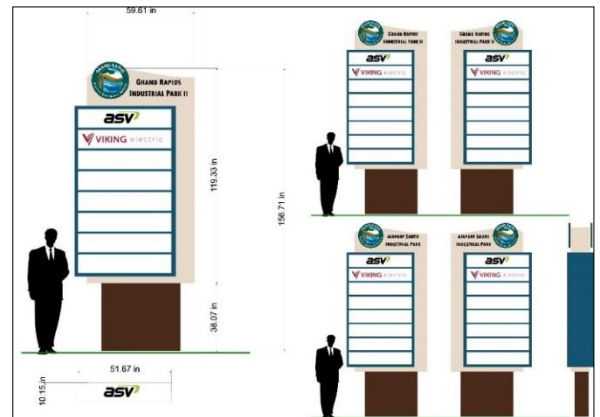
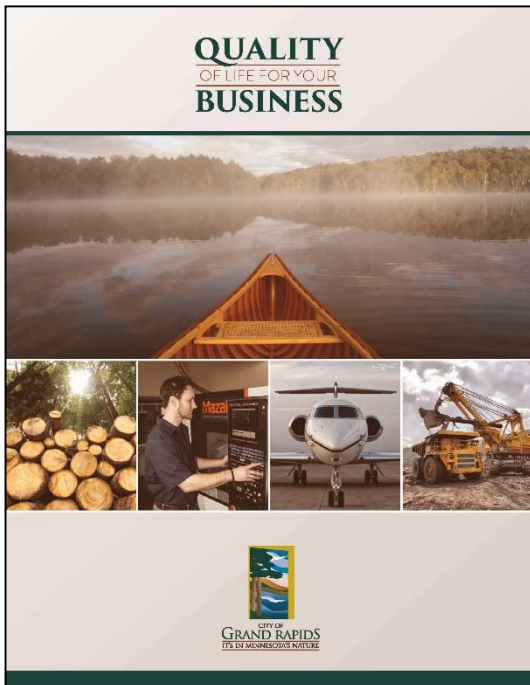
Source	Project	Grant/Loan	Amount
Minnesota IRRR	HWY 35 Project	Business Loan	\$10,000,000
	L&M Distribution Center Project	Business Loan	\$2,500,000
Minnesota DEED	HWY 35 Project	Business Loan	\$10,000,000
Total:			\$22,500,000

Business Retention, Attraction and Marketing

GREDA views regular interaction with resident companies, such as through a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program of structured interviews, as an important component of the Grand Rapids area economic development action plan. The importance of BRE is highlighted by a well-known statistic: “up to 80 percent of new jobs and capital investment in any community is generated by existing businesses”.

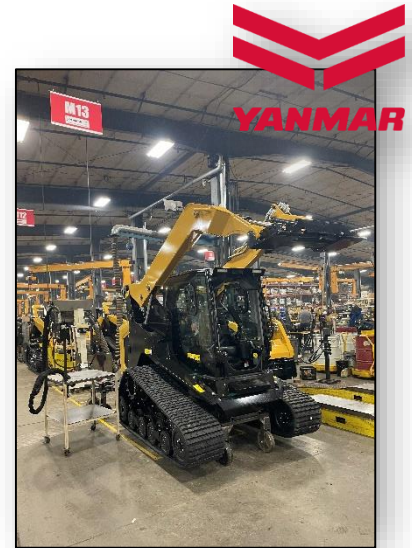
This is not to say, however, that GREDA disregards the value of business attraction efforts, as evidenced by their expanding industrial park areas. With a well-rounded inventory of sites to offer, GREDA has begun to dedicate additional resources to their marketing efforts, including:

- ❖ Updated electronic and printed brochures featuring their property.
- ❖ An increased presence on the *northlandconnection.com* regional business portal
- ❖ The GREDA website launched in September 2011 at www.grandrapidseda.com with updated property listing/mapping functions added in 2018.
- ❖ GREDA twitter account launched October 2012: @GR_EconDevAuth
- ❖ Industrial Park entrance signs, completed in 2022.



Yanmar Expansion Project

- ❖ On June 2, 2023, Yanmar Compact Equipment North America broke ground for their 32,000 s.f. expansion to provide new/upgraded painting capacity.
- ❖ GREDA assistance to this project involved:
 - \$350,000 grant received from MN IRRR for site development.
 - \$450,000 grant from MN DEED, which GREDA used to provide an equipment loan with forgivable terms.
 - GREDA also coordinated the review and consideration of a \$234,000 City Tax Abatement and worked with Itasca County in their consideration of a \$196,000 Tax Abatement.
- ❖ The expansion project is substantially complete, and a certificate of occupancy has been issued.
- ❖ In 2023 the project added 49 of the 300+ direct jobs it is estimated to add, in total, over the next four years.



Grand Rapids/Cohasset Industrial Park Infrastructure Project

- ❖ This infrastructure project, to serve the former Ainsworth Industrial Site with sanitary sewer and water, which was funded with contributions from the Federal Economic Development Administration, MN DEED, MN IRRR, GRPUC, GREDA, City of Grand Rapids, City of Cohasset and IEDC, is now complete.
- ❖ The project final construction cost came in at \$4,566,590, which was \$131,000 under the original bid contract.
- ❖ All sources of funding have been claimed and received in full, except for the final 10% disbursement of funds from the Federal EDA, which is in process.
- ❖ This infrastructure has already proven to be an important asset, as it was a required feature of the site for the proposed HWY 35 Cannabis Grow & Manufacturing project, featured later in this report.

GREDA Commercial Building Improvement Loan Program

- ❖ The objective of the CBIL is to fill the financing gap between project costs and private debt financing and private equity by making direct, below market interest, loans to building owners and leaseholders improve the appearance and function of their buildings.
- ❖ Since the restructuring of the program in 2006, GREDA has provided \$1,016,000 in loans to 34 projects.
- ❖ The CBIL program can provide up to \$40,000 per project. Loans are amortized over 20 years at an interest rate of 2%, with a 5-year balloon.
- ❖ In 2023, GREDA provided one \$40K loan to Kreklow Dental for interior renovations and accessibility improvements.



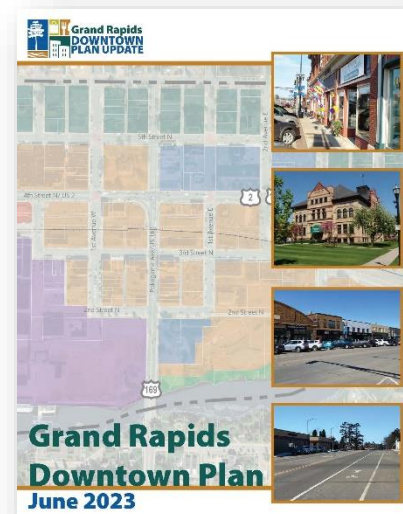
GREDA Downtown Mandated Building Improvement Loan Program

Item 6.

- ❖ GREDA applied for and received a \$350,000 grant from the Blandin Foundation to establish a loan program with forgivable terms to provide financing for building improvements to buildings in Downtown Grand Rapids that are mandated by the Minnesota State Building Code, such as handicapped accessibility improvements.
- ❖ Buildings in the Downtown are some of the oldest in the community and present a higher level of required investment to address Code deficiencies.
- ❖ The Program can provide up to \$50,000 per project. Loans are amortized over 10 years at an interest rate of 1%. Payments on these loans are deferred and are completely forgivable if the borrower retains ownership of the property for the full term.
- ❖ In 2023, GREDA provided a \$50K loan to Kreklow Dental Clinic for handicapped accessibility improvements made with their interior renovations.

Downtown Plan Projects and Initiatives

- ❖ GREDA has begun implementing goals identified by the Downtown Plan, which was completed in June of 2023
- ❖ GREDA issued a \$75K loan under the Downtown Entertainment Loan program for Riverfest, which was paid back in full.
- ❖ GREDA established a loan program with forgivable terms for upgrades mandated by the State Building Code to older downtown buildings. (additional detail in this report)
- ❖ GREDA received grants from the Blandin Foundation and MN IRRR to fund the Downtown Organization Project. GREDA has hired Economic Development Services, Janna King, to lead an advisory group of 20 Downtown stakeholders through the process of structuring a sustainable downtown organization.
- ❖ GREDA staff worked with a developer/retailer that is considering the renovation of the former Pluemers Furniture store.
- ❖ GREDA staff worked with a developer/restaurantier considering a downtown location.
- ❖ GREDA staff worked with the Free-Range Food Co-op in their search for a location for their planned grocery store.



Plat of Great River Acres – Single Family Residential Sites

- ❖ GREDA continues to market the remaining single-family home sites and one large multi-family site.
- ❖ Three single-family homes have been developed to date, with at least one additional planned for 2024 construction.
- ❖ Available properties are listed on www.grandrapidseda.com



Single Family Housing – Redevelopment of former Forest Lake School Site

- ❖ GREDA developed and recorded a new subdivision entitled Forest Lake Addition creating 22 single family home lots.
- ❖ GREDA discounted and sold 8 lots to Itasca County HRA for their development of owner-occupied single-family affordable homes, structured as a Community Land Trust.
- ❖ In 2024, GREDA will consider the sale of 8 more lots to Itasca County HRA.
- ❖ GREDA discounted and sold 2 lots to Itasca County Habitat for Humanity, also for owner-occupied single-family affordable homes.



Multi-Family Housing and Manufactured Housing Community Prospects

Item 6.

- ❖ GREDA has a preliminary development agreement in place with Oppidan Inc., the developers of the Pillars project. Oppidan is performing due diligence on a proposed 132-unit apartment on a GREDA parcel located north of the West Elementary School in the plat of Great River Acres.
 - On GREDA's behalf, the City received a \$200,000 grant from MN IRRR for pre-development work such as soil borings, phase 1 environmental report and preliminary site design.
 - GREDA staff has submitted a \$750,000 grant request to the new MN IRRR Housing grant program.
 - GREDA staff is currently working with Oppidan to prepare an MHFA Workforce Housing grant application for an April 30, 2024, submittal.
- ❖ GREDA staff is in early conversations with a developer developing a concept for market rate apartments on the GREDA Block 20/21 site, located north of the library.
- ❖ Staff continues to work with local investors performing due diligence on a concept for a 60-unit housing community on the former WWTP site.

L&M Fleet Supply Distribution Center Project

- ❖ L&M Fleet Supply accepted a proposal from the City and GREDA to provide TIF and Tax Abatement business assistance as well as a land write down on GREDA's sale of a 46-acre site for the development of a new 210,000 square foot, state of the art distribution center for L&M Fleet Supply. That assistance, together with our partners at MN IRRR and MN DEED was as shown below.



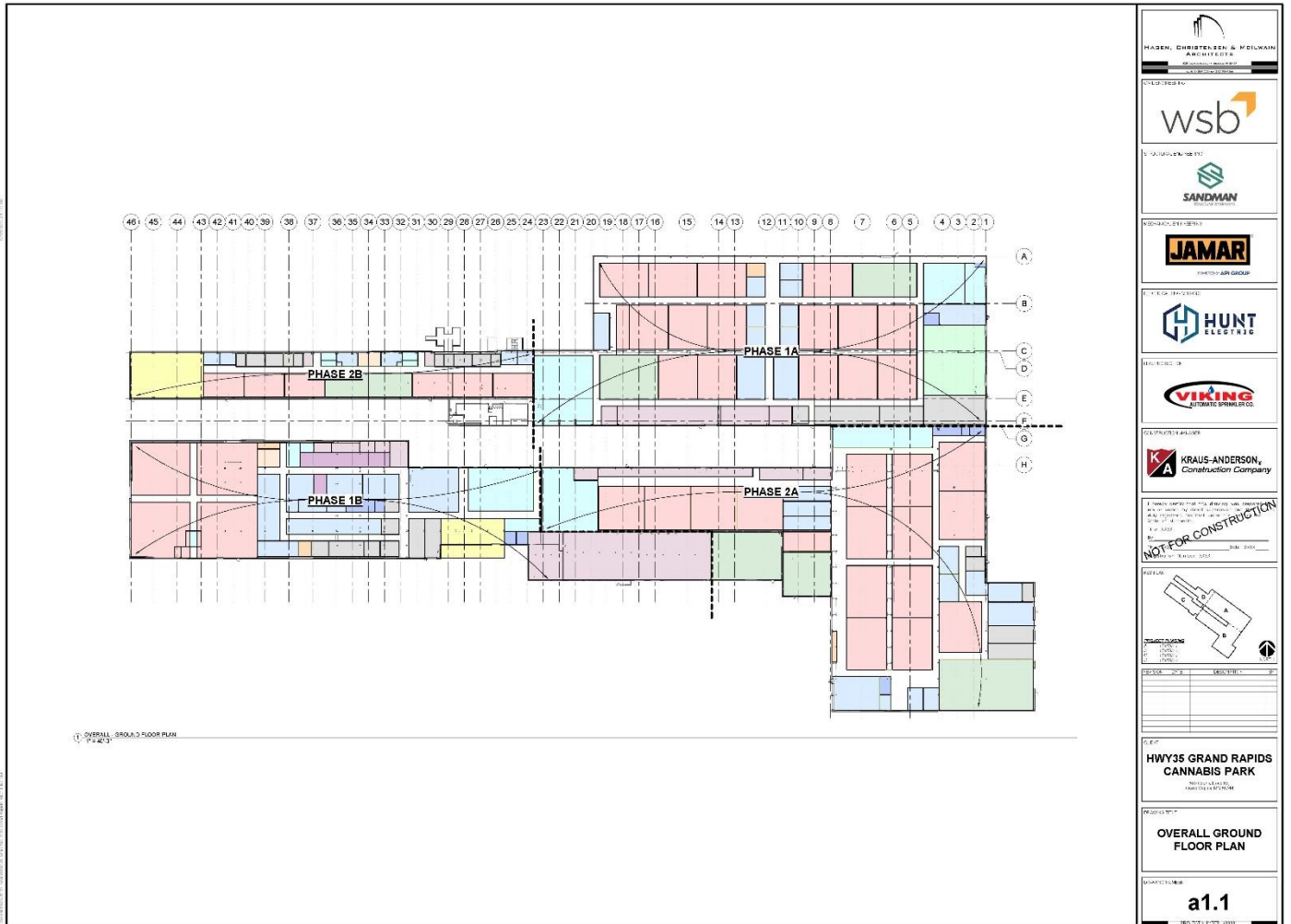
	MN IRRR	MN DEED/GREDA	Equity	Bank	City	Itasca County	Total
Property Acquisition		717,160	78,460	235,390			1,031,010
Site Work Construction			1,189,600	3,568,800			4,758,400
Building Construction			2,632,700	24,856,400	4,251,800	1,401,100	33,142,000
Purchase of M&E	2,500,000	2,000,000		10,452,000			14,952,000
FFE and Software			537,500	1,612,500			2,150,000
Total Project Cost	\$2,500,000	\$2,717,160	\$4,438,260	\$40,725,090	\$4,251,800	\$1,401,100	\$56,033,410

- ❖ The L&M Distribution Center Project will retain the 81 FTE positions currently employed in the existing distribution facility in LaPrairie. In addition, the project will create 31 full-time positions within the first two years of operation.
- ❖ The average hourly wage of the new positions including the value of benefits is \$36.61.
- ❖ GREDA closed on the acquisition of private property and simultaneous sale to SE 7th Avenue Distribution (L&M Supply subsidiary) in mid-December.
- ❖ Construction is set to begin in May of 2024.



Redevelopment of the former Ainsworth Industrial Site – HWY 35 Cannabis Grow and Manufacturing Facility

- ❖ In July 2023, GREDA and the City responded to an opportunity to support a proposed redevelopment of the former Ainsworth industrial site at 502 Co. Rd. 63. The proposed project involved the purchase of the site by the newly formed Minnesota Company, HWY 35, LLC.
- ❖ HWY 35 sought support and assistance from MN IRRR, MN DEED, the City and GREDA for the renovation of the vacant industrial building and site for cannabis grow and manufacturing facility.
- ❖ The proposed project involves the buildout of 240,000 s.f. of the building in two equally sized phases, creating indoor grow area for two 30,000 s.f. canopies, growing area for immature plants, processing, packaging, and laboratories for the manufacturing of marijuana infused products.
- ❖ Each of the two phases of the project is anticipated to add 200 jobs in Grand Rapids, ranging in wages from \$18-\$30/hour.
- ❖ Two business loans, with forgivable terms based on reaching employment targets, totaling \$20MM, were approved by MN IRRR in October of 2023. GREDA lead the effort to gather letters and resolutions of support from GREDA, the City of Grand Rapids, Itasca County and the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce.
- ❖ HWY 35 closed on their purchase of the property in February of 2024, and has plans to begin their buildout in April of 2024.



**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023
With Comparative Totals for the Period Ending December 31, 2022

Preliminary	2022 ACTUAL TO 12/31/22	YTD ACTUAL TO 12/31/23	2023 ANNUAL BUDGET	
Fund Balance 1/1/XX:	\$ 18,096	\$ 4,296	\$ 4,296	
<hr/>				
REVENUES:				
Taxes	-	35,000	35,000	0%
Supplemental Aid	-	-	-	0%
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	0%
Interest - Investments	103	128	200	64%
Interest - Loans	-	-	-	0%
Mortgage Payment	-	-	-	0%
Fund Balance Usage	-	-	-	0%
TOTAL REVENUES	103	35,128	35,200	100%
EXPENDITURES:				
Supplies/Materials	148	7	100	7%
Other Services/Charges	13,755	14,130	16,050	88%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	13,903	14,138	16,150	88%
REVENUES > EXPENDITURES	(13,800)	20,991	19,050	
<hr/>				
FUND BALANCE				
Fund Balance Usage	(13,800)	20,991	-	
FUND BALANCE 12/31/XX	\$ 4,296	\$ 25,287	\$23,346	



**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

*Schedule of Changes in Revenue, Expenditures, and Fund Balance
FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023*

Preliminary

FUND BALANCE 1/1/23	\$ 1,090,453
<hr/>	
REVENUES:	
Taxes	40,083
Supplemental Aid	3,706
ST/MN-IRRRB Grant	20,000
Blandin Foundation Grant	655,720
Interest-Investments	14,139
Net Change Fair Value Investments	9,934
Interest-Loans	5,151
Nat'l Gas CIAC Fee	4,080
Rent-EDA House	17,853
Miscellaneous	199
Principal-CBIL Payments	45,443
Principal-EWCL Payments	152,967
Loan Proceeds/Repayments	75,000
Sale of Land Held in Inventory	<u>292,390</u>
TOTAL REVENUES	1,336,664
EXPENDITURES:	
Miscellaneous	30,316
Commercial Building Improvement Loan Program	40,000
Downtown Block 18-21	-
Airport South Industrial Parks	64,247
Downtown Plan Project	156,032
Great River Acres	5,438
Forest Lake School Redevelopment	36,251
Blandin Foundation PRI Loan	125,746
L&M Distribution Center	1,084,733
Ainsworth Facility Redevelopment	1,885
ASV-Yanmar Parts Distribution Center	<u>4,491</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>1,549,139</u>
2023 REVENUES > EXPENDITURES	(212,476)
<hr/>	
FUND BALANCE 12/31/23	<u><u>877,977</u></u> (1)

Please Note:

(1) The Fund Balance includes designations for Com Bldg Imp Loans of \$34,421



The GREDA Board of Commissioners recently completed the development of their 2024 Work Plan. The work plan development process first involved a review of the unfinished business from the 2023 Work Plan, and a review of the goals stated within the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan. From that exercise, the GREDA Commissioners identified a list of potential objectives for 2024. Those potential objectives were examined and ranked by the individual GREDA members, and, through additional group discussion, GREDA approved a list of priorities and a work approach for the issues they will take a lead role in completing and those that they will partner with others on.

In developing the list of priority issues, the GREDA considered the following criteria:

Community impact: If the goal is achieved, will the impact be substantial in the community?

Chances of success: Is the objective reasonably attainable?

Resource availability: Does EDA/City of Grand Rapids possess adequate resources to achieve this goal?

EDA ownership: But for the EDA, will any other entity, commission or department achieve this objective?

The resulting work plan is shown on the following five pages of this report.





Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority 2024 Work Plan

* Results of Issue Identification and Ranking			* Desired Outcomes/Work Approach/Schedule			
Issue/Task/Work Item	Role	Term (years) Short 1-2 Med. 3-5 Long 6+	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Industry Advancement/Support						
Continue to assist the L&M Distribution Center project.	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete the process of removing FAA encumbrances on City parcel. ▪ Acquire and convey City parcel to L&M 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administer MIF loan for equipment
Continue to support Yanmar Expansion project	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administer MIF loan for equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with Yanmar on next phase – high bay warehouse 		
Pursue and support initiatives addressing housing shortages	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to support private development interest in housing projects by reviewing proposed uses of TIF and/or Tax Abatement. ▪ Support the development of housing on GREDA owned parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with housing developers, MN IRRR, MHFA, GMHF and Blandin Foundation to incentivize and remove financial barriers for projects. ▪ Secure the development of one or more multi-family housing developments. 		



* Results of Issue Identification and Ranking			* Desired Outcomes/Work Approach/Schedule			
Issue/Task/Work Item	Role	Term (years) Short 1-2 Med. 3-5 Long 6+	Item 6.			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Industry Advancement/Support						
Continue to work with HWY 35 LLC on current and future development opportunities	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and advise the City Council on any application for a TIF Redevelopment District. Prepare development agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for collaboration with MN North Itasca Campus Work with spinoff developers/businesses interested in co-location. 		
Ensure an adequate inventory of industrial sites and facilities exist in the community.	Lead	S		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider opportunities to make strategic property acquisitions for future industrial development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to explore funding opportunities that would support the development of a speculative, flexible, industrial/warehouse building in Grand Rapids. 	
Support initiatives addressing workforce and childcare shortages	Partner	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with industries about their challenges and provide support or connections to support. 			
Provide as needed support for wood product industries.	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue ongoing regular communications with Blandin Paper management regarding as needed assistance. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with MN Power Boswell officials and explore collaborative opportunities. 	



* Results of Issue Identification and Ranking			* Desired Outcomes/Work Approach/Schedule			
Issue/Task/Work Item	Role	Term (years) Short 1-2 Med. 3-5 Long 6+	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Industry Advancement/Support						
Continue to support our medical service providers to ensure that Grand Rapids maintains and grows its position as a regional hub.	Lead	S	▪	▪	▪ Communicate with major providers, Grand Itasca and Essential about trends in rural health care and the buildout of services and jobs to support growth.	▪
Assist with the redevelopment of the Boswell site.	Partner	M	▪	▪ Support County efforts to implement energy transition strategies.	▪ Identify energy transition funding state and federal programs that may be applicable to GREDA efforts toward economic diversification.	▪
Transportation/Logistics						
Plan for highway transportation and corridor land use improvements to address underperforming commercial areas and blighted conditions within the City.	Lead	S	▪	▪ Apply for funding and create a corridor plan along Highway 2 between 6th Ave. E. and 19th Ave. W. that addresses multi-modal transportation issues, city utility replacement needs, blight, environmental contamination, visual appeal and underinvestment	▪	▪
Transportation/Logistics						

Item 6.



* Results of Issue Identification and Ranking			* Desired Outcomes/Work Approach/Schedule			
Issue/Task/Work Item	Role	Term (years) Short 1-2 Med. 3-5 Long 6+	Item 6.			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Continue to advocate for highway transportation route improvements to improve linkages between Grand Rapids and the interstate, the Duluth port.	Lead	L	▪	▪ Have discussions with appropriate agencies, government, and elected officials and sponsor research that supports the prioritization of improvements to the TH2 corridor to Duluth.	▪	▪
Redevelopment & Downtown						
Downtown Plan Implementation.	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the Downtown Organization project. ▪ Assist with the redevelopment of downtown sites, specifically: Pluemers building, IEDC building, GREDA lots, and Block 36. 	▪	▪ Assist in advancing an updated vision for use of Central School and its needed building upgrades.	▪
Consider ways to support the relocation/renovation of local small businesses and assist with ADA compliance improvement funding options.	Lead	S	▪	▪ Increase marketing of Downtown Mandated Building Improvement Loan program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have discussions with Blandin Foundation about the possibilities of expanding the geographic boundaries of the program. ▪ 	▪



* Results of Issue Identification and Ranking			* Desired Outcomes/Work Approach/Schedule			
Issue/Task/Work Item	Role	Term (years) Short 1-2 Med. 3-5 Long 6+	Item 6.			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Redevelopment & Downtown						
Support the redevelopment of strategic commercial sites outside of the downtown.	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support investment interest in the redevelopment of infill sites such as the former Kmart site, former Ray's Sport & Marine, Grand Rapids Marine, Itasca County Farm Co-op, Ben's Bait, Dondelinger Dodge and Ford, former Sawmill Inn site. 			
Administration						
Consider ways to diversify the membership of the Commission and amend the meeting format to include updates from local partners/organizations.	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As membership opportunities arise, recruit applicants that further a diverse board. Invite local partner organizations to provide updates, one presentation per quarter. 			
Enhance the marketing of GREDA services and programs.	Lead	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider comprehensive updates to the GREDA website under a new platform. Utilize media to communicate the many GREDA successes and raise awareness of GREDA programs. 			

