

PILLAR 1: CREATING THE REGION AS A 'HUMAN TALENT HUB'



This Strategic Pillar summary report lays out the outcomes and direction for this pillar topic, as determined in the engagement sessions, with over 1,000 people contributing ideas and perspectives. This process has produced lots of ideas and strategic vision, which have been condensed into this Strategic Pillar summary.



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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Create the region as a renowned 'human talent-hub'
- Create the region as an entrepreneurial magnet

The concept of creating the region as a 'human talent hub' was strongly supported by stakeholders during focus group sessions.

IMPORTANCE OF A 'HUMAN TALENT HUB'

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, the concept of the region being a 'human talent hub' has gathered significant support. The focus group discussions identified this pillar as a key part of the future strategic positioning of the region. Across the United States, and around the world, there is currently a significant competition for talent, especially in the skill areas associated with emerging technologies and biosciences, including health and medicine. For the Greater Mankato region to achieve its vision, it will be important to be at the forefront of talent creation, attraction and retention. This requires a holistic approach to skills development, local livability, career opportunities and lifestyle choices.



RegionalValue

- The ability to develop, attract and retain talent will be a key differentiator for the region's future success. It is also a fantastic approach to build the region as a specialized location with a unique proposition, which is a skilled and ready workforce.
- There are significant advantages in cultivating a reputation as being a place where talent thrives. It makes attraction easier and helps build pride in calling the region home.
- The talent hub concept also can help spur innovation and entrepreneurship in the region, with the potential for creating spin off businesses and ventures.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The Greater Mankato region already has a strong and effective talent development system, from K-12 schools through to College and University. This Strategic Pillar aims to build on that strong foundation.

Proposed strategic action areas to support this pillar include:



CONTINUE TO FOSTER DEEP COLLABORATION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES

The region already hosts an enviable range of quality educational institutions that are working in a coordinated manner. This collaboration should be further deepened, to continue to create a seamless regional skills and talent development system.



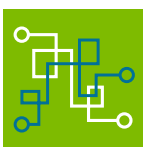
CONNECT STUDENTS TO LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

A key opportunity is to retain the talent in the region. Currently there is considerable turnover, especially in University students, who attend courses in the region but then leave for careers. This includes a sizable cohort of talented international students. Student focus groups highlighted the opportunity to create connections with the local business ecosystem, that may better present local career options and choices.



BUILD COMMUNITY CULTURE THAT ENCOURAGES TALENT EXCELLENCE

A thriving talent hub will require a pervasive culture that recognizes, appreciates and celebrates talent. This will also need to translate to fostering and encouraging entrepreneurial thinking and mindset. This is a message that will need to be cultivated by many regional leaders, to help nurture this cultural focus.



FutureInsight

- Minneapolis / St Paul is emerging as one of the key US metropolises that is attracting younger people and talent. The Greater Mankato region can leverage this trend and offer a more intimate smaller regional center experience.
- Many stakeholders noted that the region is currently orientated to families and family-based experiences. This focus will need to broaden, with more amenities to attract emerging and younger generations who have different social desires and aspirations.

“There are good career opportunities here compared to other cities in the region, along with more options in general. As the city grows, I think more people will want to move here and I can see it being important to Minnesota.”
- Survey #1 Respondent

- Need more higher paying jobs.
- Retain students as they graduate.
- Develop infrastructure that supports an intergenerational model.

Continue to strengthen and connect health care, education and job opportunities in the more rural areas of the region.

The ‘old guard’ needs to make way for new people, new ways of thinking and doing.

Attract people to the region with jobs in technology, healthcare and bioscience.

Increase collaboration between business and higher ed to recruit and retain talent in the area.

“The region has opportunity for programs to be continued to be developed and implemented in training qualified workers for manufacturing and to address regional and national short falls for rural mental health counselors.”
- Survey #1 Respondent

- Attract production workforce/ support services.
- Upskill and backfill.
- Reinvent education; make education more adaptable.
- Recruit people back to the region; attract youth.

“As long as we continue to grow and offer things that entrepreneurs, families, college students, etc are looking for and needing, I believe that we have great potential of becoming even more of a hub or “hot spot” in Minnesota and potentially the surrounding states.”
- Survey #1 Respondent

- Create social fabric to attract new workforce.
- Embrace social changes; see as an enhancement to our community.
- Provide non-traditional options to attract and retain talent.

Provide flexible k-12/higher Ed opportunities (future-ready workforce & mental/health wellness).

Align skillset training to industry needs.

- Need to build the reputation of the region, as a place where young people get a chance to succeed.
- Build closer connections between the education system and the employers, to build two-way awareness and interest.
- Create more internships between local students and the larger local firms, to open career pathways.
- Work with faculty to make sure they understand the bigger vision for the region, so they can be sharing that with students to create pride and excitement about the regional future.



Promote the strength of the region in terms of the mix of experiences, from unique downtown, to access to natural resources for outdoor recreation.

Need to break down cultural barriers in the community, for example between international students and the community.

Build a strong physical connection between MSU and downtown Mankato, to create a more vibrant urban core, that offers more cultural experiences, spaces and activities.

Need to enhance the entrance corridors into Mankato and the region, to reflect the vision and reflect vitality.

Source of Stakeholder Idea:

- Community Survey
- Think-Tank Workshop
- Focus Groups



The Greater Mankato Growth, Inc organization (GMG) has agreed to take the leadership role in helping develop the implementation plan, and will be convening other regional stakeholders to work on the Strategic Pillars and potential action areas. This work will progress through 2024.

For more information about **Transforming Tomorrow Together - Greater Mankato 2040**, please contact:



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'Transforming Tomorrow Together - Greater Mankato 2040' is a planning and visioning project exploring the future of the Greater Mankato region. This regional planning process has been supported by a wide range of stakeholders and institutions in the Greater Mankato region. This project is about coming together as a region and building a vision and roadmap for 2040.

More details about the initiative and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

lab2.future-iq.com/greater-mankato-2040/

