

Quality of Life

From a general perspective regarding all dimensions of life experience ~ social, physical, mental, and spiritual.

From a business perspective: "Employee Well-Being is Every Organization's Business" by Keith Roberts, Minnesota Business, Feb. 2010.

Career Well-Being

Genuine job satisfaction ~ Liking what one does each day

Job security

Educational opportunities for training and advancement

&

Financial independence

Ability to support family

Ability to fund education

Ability to fund personal interests & development

Opportunities for financial education to build knowledge & confidence for managing one's own financial affairs.

Social Well-Being

Quality relationships; positive social network

Pride in one's Community & a sense of engagement in the area one lives.

Creative opportunities. Art & Cultural organizations.

Recreational opportunities, indoor and outdoor.

Physical & Mental Well-Being

Healthy lifestyle

Access to quality healthcare

Community health programs & wellness education

Fitness centers & recreational programs

Spiritual Well-being

Choice of churches and spiritual centers.

Acceptance of diversity.

Location & Environment

Scenic beauty, natural resources

Public Safety

Environmentally friendly attitude of residents

Good education

Public transportation

Up-to-date communications/internet

Adequate housing ~ quality & availability

These ALL contribute to Community Well-Being

How does quality of life affect the community? & What is the economic impact?

People want to live here ~ Quality of life attracts individuals & families to the area.

People want to work here ~ Quality of life attracts businesses to the area.

People want to engage in the community ~ volunteer participation in a variety of non-profit & civic organizations creates a more diverse and vibrant community.

Also, engagement in the community by residents leads to stable government and strong public services.

Scenic beauty and outdoor recreation attract tourists to the area ~ creating a thriving lodging and restaurant industry as well as retail opportunities.

In the workforce, the well-being of employees affects the company's bottom line.

Healthier workforce => lower insurance costs

Happier workforce => higher productivity

Much more detail is described in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

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Carolyn Hedin carolynhedin@yahoo.com

Economic Development and Quality of Life: Which comes first?

Good schools, jobs, housing, infrastructure, healthcare, and scenic beauty all contribute toward enticing individuals and businesses to locate to an area and to stay for a long time. Yet such positive attributes not only contribute to, but are a result of, economic vitality. Given that Red Wing already has a great start to all the above, how can these aspects of community be maintained, strengthened, and expanded?

This is the charge of the City's Council, Commissions, and Citizens; and, perhaps, the impetus for establishing an Economic Development Agency. Yet while the City's Comprehensive Plan seeks to address a variety of needs and benefits for all citizens, collaboration amongst all the parties is essential for a clear sense of direction. Too many separate visions could compromise the greater good.

Economic development, if successful, will support and strengthen existing entities and businesses while creatively seeking new ventures and opportunities. Will new efforts contribute to Quality of Life ~ or sacrifice it?

It's up to us! ~ the Citizens

It depends on Vision ~ or lack of vision. Do we seek what we envision? Or, do we accept whatever is presented to us? Are we focused on the past or the future?

Is our seeking based upon knowledge, experience, and awareness of possibilities?

Are we electing and appointing knowledgeable, experienced, confident and committed individuals to councils, commissions, and public service so that we have good leadership for our vision and plans? Knowledge + creative thinking = > successful outcomes.

Is collaboration our strong suit? Are we all working toward the greater good while pursuing individual goals and interests?

Are we open to emerging trends and opportunities?

Are we fiscally responsible to ensure future success?

Economic development guidelines for quality of life

Focus on long-term vs short-term results. Look beyond immediate solutions for ideas based on long-term sustainability. Avoid "mish mash" ~ accepting whatever is offered, anywhere.

Focus on quality vs quantity. Stability. Focus on (current and new) businesses that offer lasting, full-time employment opportunities with benefits for employees.

Respect long-term zoning purposes. Highest and Best Use shouldn't refer to the owner. The highest and best use of real estate (land or buildings) would ideally complement the neighbors and immediate surroundings, and improve the long-term use of the site relative to a comprehensive plan.

Develop design guidelines for construction that improve a site or setting ~ and not compromise it. Build attractive buildings that are meant to last. These efforts will, in turn, attract more businesses and investment into our community.

Honor and preserve our natural scenic beauty. Expand parks and trails and connect them to a larger network.

Support the arts and invite new artistic opportunities and ventures.

Excerpts from Bill George, former Chairman & CEO of Medtronic Inc; "Solving Minnesota's jobs crisis", The Star Tribune, Sunday April 11, 2010, Business Section D.

"Sustainable jobs are created by innovation, new companies and small businesses. ... The two primary job sources will be the expansion of hometown companies and the creation of an environment that fosters innovation and spawns new companies."

"To foster the growth of [large] companies and start-ups alike, Minnesota needs to enhance a business-friendly environment and the quality of life that attracts innovators and entrepreneurs.

"Every innovative center has a strong technical university at its core."

"Business leaders need to work together...not just look after the interests of their own companies."

"The generous philanthropic arms of these companies...can expand their grants locally to support a caring environment with high quality of life."

"A more-positive relationship with state government... for business friendly policies."

"Improve our K-12 public education ...math and science."

"Finally we cannot underestimate the importance of the intangible 'quality of life' that makes Minnesota attractive to the diverse people required to build great global companies."

~A vibrant arts scene

~dynamic professional sports franchises

~lively downtown centers

~beautiful lakes and parks

~strong religious and social support communities