

Central Corridor
Business Resources Collaborative
Supporting Strong Businesses, Vibrant Communities

Strategic Work Plan

Version 1.0 – July 2010

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Please Note: Page numbers need to be added to Table of Contents when Strategic Work Plan is approved.

Introduction

This Strategic Work Plan was produced by more than forty people from private, non-profit and public sector organizations who committed to working in a collaborative manner in “supporting strong businesses and vibrant communities” along the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line area and beyond.

Starting in the fall of 2008, volunteer members of the Business Resources Collaborative contributed their time, talent and efforts to develop a community-based approach, where none had previously existed, that would be helpful to businesses and property owners.

Now guided by their unifying core beliefs, shared mission, integrated goals and objectives the Business Resources Collaborative (formerly “First Friday”) group is preparing to introduce the Plan corridor-wide and transition towards implementation within three targeted, yet overlapping areas of need:

1. Construction Mitigation
2. Business Support
3. Economic Development

Who is this Plan intended to benefit? The greater community, but especially Central Corridor businesses and property owners who seek ways to proactively:

Prepare for the impact of Light Rail Transit
Survive during periods of construction
Thrive after the line becomes operational in 2014.

Local organizations with the capability for delivering resources and services directly to businesses and property owners are also intended to benefit. With some financial limitations and gaps in capacity it is these providers through their independent and combined efforts who are in the best position to directly assist business and property owners respond to challenges and opportunities.

The Business Resources Collaborative which has no formal power or authority is *neither* a non-profit organization, private company, or other formal entity. Rather, as a community-based group, success will require ongoing out-reach to expand the number and diversity of people who voluntarily come together corridor-wide to help serve others. This will entail sacrifice, the necessity for group members to manage inevitable conflicts and agree to back decisions once made. To that end, Page-22 contains the names of Business Resources Collaborative Leadership Team members who participated in developing Version 1.0 of the Strategic Work Plan and will coordinate its implementation, monitor results and make periodic revisions.

As you review this Plan, please give consideration to any feedback you may have to strengthen it and interest you or others may have in partnering with the Business Resources Collaborative. Your ideas and participation are appreciated.

Shared Mission

Coordinate the delivery of a comprehensive, integrated mix of services that will support efforts by a diversity of area businesses and property owners in the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit region to:

- Successfully mitigate challenges that may impact their financial performance during periods of construction;
- Be strongly positioned to thrive after project completion; and
- Contribute to the ongoing economic development of vibrant communities.

Vision

Create and implement an innovative, highly effective collaborative model that can be adapted by other communities interested in supporting the efforts of a diversity of businesses and property owners to:

- Successfully mitigate challenges that may impact their financial performance during periods of construction;
- Be strongly positioned to thrive after project completion; and
- Contribute to the ongoing economic development of vibrant communities.

Unifying Core Beliefs

- Strong businesses are essential to growing and sustaining economic health and vibrant communities.
- In the long-term, when completed the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit will benefit existing and new businesses, neighborhoods and the regional economy. However, in the short-term, during periods of construction many existing businesses will experience minor to significant adverse challenges that may impact their financial performance.
- Some small businesses and those previously struggling will be particularly challenged to survive during periods of construction.
- Businesses relatively close to the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit that are able to proactively prepare and collaborate will be in a better position to plan, manage, and respond to challenges during periods of construction and to thrive when the system becomes operational.

Supporting Strong Businesses, Vibrant Communities

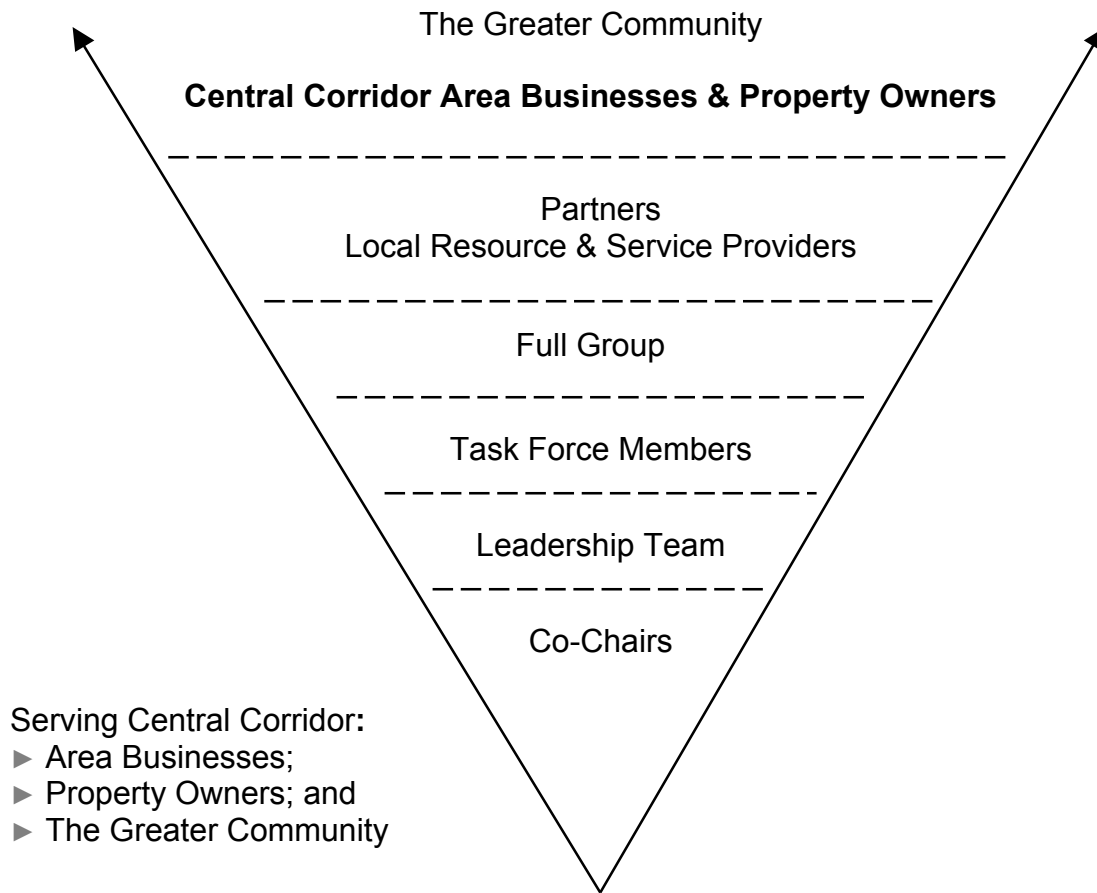
- Many businesses, especially those that rely on a consistent flow and volume of customer traffic will have the greatest level of need for various kinds of services before, during and after periods of construction.
- Businesses will benefit in the short- and long-term by having access to timely and accurate information as well as a comprehensive, integrated mix of quality services that are made available in an efficient, coordinated manner.
- The Central Corridor is made up of ethnically and culturally diverse groups of businesses and neighborhoods which define its unique identity and vitality for which we believe should be protected, valued and supported before, during and after construction of the Light Rail Transit project.
- After completion, the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit will promote further economic development in the region for decades into the future.

Overview of Collaboration

Brief History

Built on the foundational ground-working that was conducted by more than forty “First Friday” volunteer group members who started to meet monthly in 2008, the Business Resources Collaborative is committed to working as a community in support of the need Central Corridor businesses and property owners have for:

- Timely and accurate information; and
- Integrated mix of resources and services that are made available by local providers in an efficient, coordinated and cost-effective manner to achieve maximum benefit.



People and Partners

More than forty people from a diversity of organizations have generously offered their time and talent in producing this Strategic Work Plan. These same people, now supported by others who have recently joined in the effort are working collaboratively as a growing community of volunteers to achieve their shared mission, goals and objectives.

Leadership Team	Selected by members of Business Resources Collaborative “Full Group” to serve as a member of the Leadership Team:
Co-Chair	Jim Roth, Executive Director Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)
Co-Chair	Karri Plowman, Director of Central Corridor & East Metro Partnership Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
	Chris Ferguson, Coordinator Stadium Village Commercial Association
	Hussein Farah, Business Development Director African Development Center
	Kristin Guild, Manager Business Development City of Minneapolis, Community Planning & Economic Development
	Linda Winsor, Executive Director University Avenue Business Association (UABA)
	Lori Fritts, President Midway Chamber of Commerce
	Michael McLaughlin, Executive Director Southeast Business Association (SEBA)
	Mihailo Temali, President & CEO Neighborhood Development Center
	Nancy Homans, Policy Director City of Saint Paul, Office of Mayor Christopher B. Coleman
	Natalia Pretelt, Loan Program Manager Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)
	Robin Cauffman, Manager of Public Involvement Metropolitan Council, Central Corridor LRT Project Office
	Va-Megn Thoj, Executive Director Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA)

Task Forces “Construction Mitigation” Task Force Members:

Craig Blakely, Economic Development Strategic Services
City of Saint Paul

Isabel Chanslor, U7 Project Manager
Neighborhood Development Center

Jim Roth, Executive Director
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)

Natalia Pretelt, Loan Program Manager
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)

Robin Cauffman, Manager of Public Involvement
Metropolitan Council, Central Corridor LRT Project Office

“Business Support” Task Force Members:

Craig O’Brien, Economic Development Specialist
City of Saint Paul

Ellen Muller, Economic Development Manager
City of Saint Paul

Emily Stern, Senior Project Coordinator
City of Minneapolis

Isabel Chanslor, U7 Project Manager
Neighborhood Development Center

Jim Roth, Executive Director
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)

Linda Winsor, Executive Director
University Avenue Business Association (UABA)

Lori Fritts, President
Midway Chamber of Commerce

Mike Temali, President & CEO
Neighborhood Development Center

Nancy Homans, Policy Director
City of Saint Paul, Office of Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

Natalia Pretelt, Loan Program Manager
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)

Va-Megn Thoj Executive Director
Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA)

“Economic Development” Task Force Members:

Ellen Muller, Economic Development Manager
City of Saint Paul

Jim Roth, Executive Director
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)

Kristin Guild, Manager Business Development
City of Minneapolis, Community Planning & Economic Development

Mike Temali, President & CEO
Neighborhood Development Center

Nancy Homans, Policy Director
City of Saint Paul, Office of Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

Natalia Pretelt, Loan Program Manager
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)

Va-Megn Thoj Executive Director
Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA)

Other Partners Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Director
Central Corridor Funders Collaborative

Please Note: A complete list of the people who offered their ideas, feedback and guidance through their participation in one or more of the Business Resources Collaborative “Full Group” meetings is presented in the Addendum.

Roles and Responsibilities

Co-Chairs Collaborate with the Leadership Team in establishing the Full Group’s overall strategic direction, producing the agenda for work sessions, making arrangements and facilitating the meetings. Collaborate with the Leadership Team in Communication and Performance Management Plan development and related implementation activities. Serve as a primary point of contact for partners and stakeholders.

Leadership Collaborate with the “Full Group” in producing and implementing the Strategic Work Plan in a coordinated manner with others in the community. Collaborate with the Co-Chairs in Communication and

Performance Management Plan development and execution. Identify local resource and service providers.

Full Group Collaborate with the Leadership Team and others in the community in establishing strategy and supporting implementation activities.

Please Note: Through their independent and combined efforts it's envisioned that local organizations will provide resources and services directly to businesses and property owners.

Resource and Service Providers

Integral to the success of this Strategic Work Plan are the more than 100 local organizations with the capability and capacity for providing helpful resources and services directly to business and property owners who proactively seek ways to:

Prepare for the impact of Light Rail Transit
Survive during periods of construction
Thrive after the line becomes operational in 2014.

The kinds of resources and services that business and property owners along the Central Corridor may find helpful include, but are not necessarily limited to:

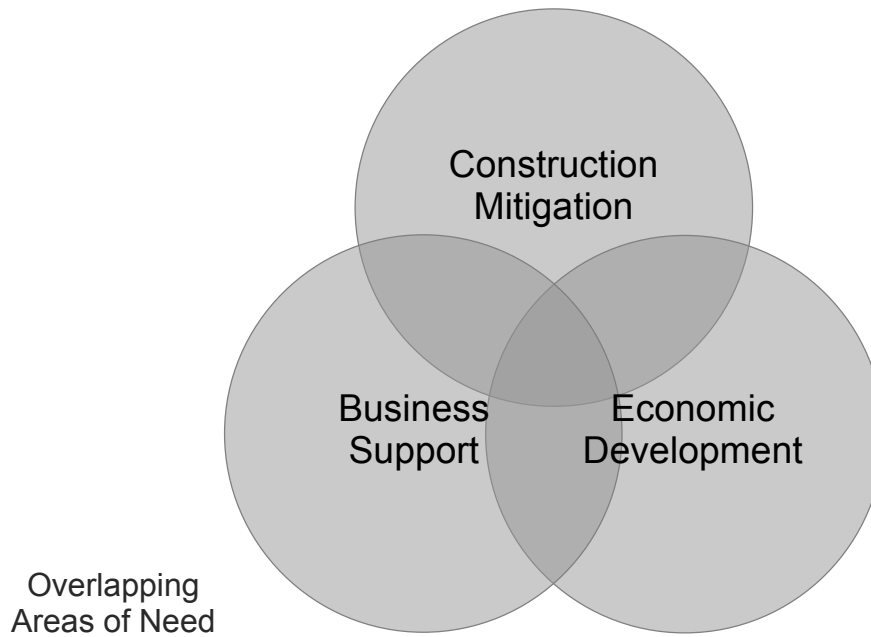
- General Business Consulting
- Organization Development
 - Strategic Planning
 - Change Management
- Leadership Development
- Workforce Training
- Construction Skills Training
- Marketing & Sales Support
- Business Operations
- Financial Assistance
 - Loans
 - Grants
- Technical Assistance & Professional Services
 - Information Technology
 - Accounting
 - Financial Planning
 - Legal
 - Realty
- Property/Facility Management (Energy Efficiency)
- Information & Referral

Please Note: Content for the Directory of Resource and Service Providers (V1.) is presented as an Addendum Item.

Targeted Areas of Need for Resources and Services

The Business Resources Collaborative supports the coordinated delivery of a comprehensive, integrated mix of resources and services within three distinct, yet overlapping areas of identified need:

1. Construction Mitigation
2. Business Support
3. Economic Development

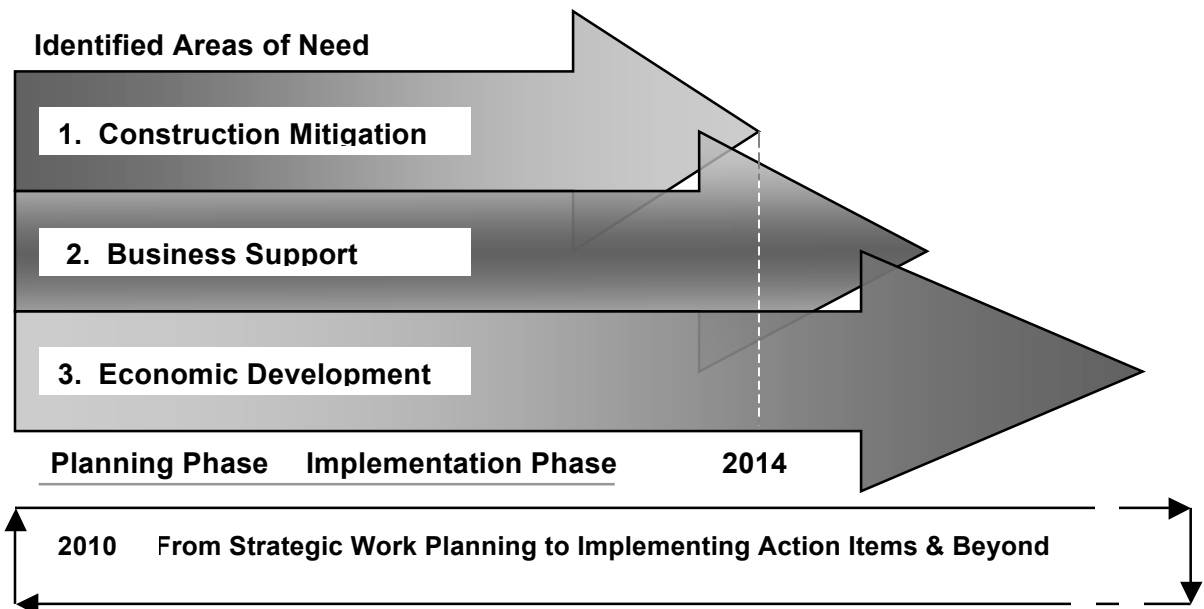


Primary Goals

1. Construction Mitigation – Eliminate or reduce construction related impediments that may cause disruption to the financial performance of businesses.
2. Business Support – Strengthen the ability of existing businesses to proactively prepare and effectively manage:
 - Adverse conditions that may occur during periods of construction; and
 - Beneficial opportunities that may arise after construction is completed.
3. Economic Development – Maximize the economic opportunity and job growth potential, and thereby the community benefit, of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line.

Major Near-Term Milestones

Please Note: All of the “Action Items” specified on the following pages are linked to the Goal & Objectives for each of the Identified Areas of Need.



Construction Mitigation

Primary Goal

Eliminate or reduce construction related impediments that may cause disruption to the financial performance of businesses.

Objective #1	Develop strategies to communicate construction activities in a timely manner so that business owners have the most current information and they can make the best decisions.
Action Items	a. Set notification standards b. Develop general CCLRT construction communication plans
Collaborators	CCC

Objective #2	Work with the cities to implement parking management strategies prior to construction so that parking mitigation is in place before on-street parking is removed.
Action Items	a. Develop plans and strategies to mitigate the loss of parking (2009 St. Paul, 2010 Minneapolis) b. Implement parking mitigation plans, support the city's efforts (2010)
Collaborators	Parking Solutions Team (PST)

Objective #3	Develop plans with the construction contractors and affected businesses to maintain access for deliveries, customers and employees.
Action Items	a. Identify general strategies to maintain access, communicated to businesses b. Develop construction mitigation brochures, distribute to businesses c. Add specifications into the contract document that outlines expectations and roles of the contractors (Civil East and Civil West) to maintain access
Collaborators	CCC

Objective #4	Develop and implement construction communication plan for each segment of the corridor to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about construction.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Define segments of the corridor b. Conduct stakeholder analysis to identify specific needs c. Develop specific plans to engage those community groups d. Prepare detailed construction communication plan for each segment
Collaborators	Collaborators: CCC, BAC, CAC and feedback from other groups such as district councils, business chambers, associations, etc.

Objective #5	Develop and implement comprehensive signage system that communicates about construction activities and access to the diverse stakeholders in the corridor.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify informational needs b. Add specifications into the contract document that describes location, placement, timing and content of signs (Civil East and Civil West) c. Work with the Business Support team to develop marketing campaign that would include signs outside the corridor (outside of project scope)
Collaborators	CCC

Business Support

Primary Goal

Strengthen the ability of existing businesses to proactively prepare and effectively manage:

- **Adverse conditions that may occur during periods of construction; and**
- **Beneficial opportunities that may arise after construction is completed.**

Objective #1	Complete a pre-construction baseline study of existing businesses corridor-wide; track businesses before, during, and post construction to determine the changes occurring to corridor-wide businesses as the Light Rail Transit is built and begins operating.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finalize criteria to track (for example): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic demographics, vacancies, new investments, investors, ownership patterns and trends. • Profile of individual businesses that would include staffing, gross revenues/sales levels and economic impacts on community, and identify access to parking. • Customer identification. b. Evaluate and utilize results and make continuous improvements to data gathering and business support activities. c. Monitor and help shape the implementation of the baseline study including: access to information, budgeting, timeline, who completes the study and inclusion of the criteria mentioned above.
Collaborators	

Objective #2	Develop corridor-wide marketing strategies to actively promote business before, during and after construction.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Complete the development and begin implementation activities of the Central Corridor Comprehensive Marketing Plan that includes pre, concurrent and post-construction strategic goals, objectives and tactics. b. Document marketing activities that have already been implemented to help mitigate disruptions and financial losses for businesses related to construction currently underway in downtown St. Paul. c. Identify, develop, and implement marketing activities that have an immediate favorable impact on the performance of businesses where pre-construction is currently underway to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Collaborators	
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Objective #3	Develop and coordinate the dissemination of comprehensive multi-lingual business specific communications to local businesses focused on available resources, Light Rail Transit construction, parking and the pedestrian environment.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify all appropriate languages b. Identify current resources for translated materials and interpreting services. c. Provide translated materials and interpreters where needed d. Develop and implement communication methods.
Collaborators	

Objective #4	Integrate and enhance the efforts of resource providers in offering expert assistance and/or services and resources to businesses as they proactively prepare to survive and thrive before, during and after Light Rail Transit construction.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify and categorize the various needs for services and resources (kind and level) b. Raise funds to provide financial assistance, services, and resources for small businesses. c. Produce and maintain a comprehensive directory of resource (service) providers that can be distributed community-wide through various partners to stakeholders as a co-branded informational tool. Place on website with links to providers' URL. d. Develop strategies to identify and fill gaps, improve access, improve quality, and/or add value to businesses.
Collaborators	

Objective #5	Develop strategies to increase the financial resources for businesses and businesses' access to those resources.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify all financial assistance and resources to mitigate business interruption, provide business improvement and access to capital for business growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants • Loans • Technical and professional assistance • Business education and training b. Provide financial assistance, services, and resources for small businesses.
Collaborators	

Objective #6	Augment the efforts of partners to help ensure that parking/access solutions for businesses are effective and timely. Ensure that critical unforeseen challenges are resolved in an efficient manner.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Build and sustain parking strategies developed in Construction Mitigation Objective 2. b. Develop, promote and implement long term parking solutions based on business and residential communities' input.
Collaborators	

Objective #7	Identify and support opportunities for corridor-wide area businesses to provide products and services related to the project. Promote Corridor-wide business-to-business commerce.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure access to contract opportunities for project and related activities. b. Market local businesses to project workers and vendors. c. Promote local business certifications and training opportunities.
Collaborators	

Objective #8	Educate area businesses about energy efficiency and energy cost-saving opportunities and help businesses access available programs and resources to support investments in energy-saving upgrades to lower business operating costs.
Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investigate the availability of financial resources that may help, particularly small business implement energy efficiency solutions b. Establish ways to assist the Energy Innovation Corridor in building awareness about their various programs, resources and partners. c. Showcase energy solutions with rapid Return On Investment to stakeholders
Collaborators	Energy Innovation Corridor and Partner Organizations

Economic Development

Primary Goal

Economic Development – Maximize the economic opportunity and job growth potential, and thereby the community benefit, of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line.

Objective #1	Support existing, and encourage new, business districts predominantly characterized by small, locally-owned businesses.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore a variety of district marketing and branding models as possible strategies to support business retention, expansion and recruitment b. Evaluate the need for alternative forms of financing/property ownership to maintain affordability c. Identify, develop and market financing tools geared toward small, locally-owned businesses d. Assess policy/regulatory implications for new and existing businesses. Make recommendations for streamlining the process where possible. e. Encourage mixed-used developments
Collaborators	

Objective #2	Explore existing financial tools and develop new tools that can be promoted to current and prospective businesses and property owners.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gather information regarding all of the existing financial tools that are available to businesses and developers b. Pursue additional financial tools and resources to support business expansion and commercial and mixed-use development
Collaborators	

Objective #3	Support work intended to create a comprehensive <i>public</i> investment strategy that will attract, shape and accelerate appropriate <i>private</i> investment.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine critical infrastructure needs (e.g. streets, utilities, broadband) b. Identify financial resources for critical infrastructure investment c. Assess policy/regulatory implications and make recommendations to encourage further investment
Collaborators	

Objective #4	Identify economic growth sectors corridor-wide that foster investment, entrepreneurial opportunities and job growth, and support transportation connections between growth areas and unique existing business districts.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Select and market major redevelopment sites for transit oriented development (SE Mpls and West Midway Industrial and Station Areas) b. Engage property owners in dialogue to strengthen relationships and create high quality, sustainable solutions for job growth c. Develop a compelling marketing statement for each investment opportunity d. Identify and establish relationships with key investment partners e. Evaluate and establish a target investment goal for the Central Corridor area f. Investigate the expected magnitude of commercial foreclosures on area properties and define strategies to minimize impact/maximize redevelopment potential
Collaborators	City of Minneapolis, City of St. Paul

Objective #5	Define and promote appropriate employment and training strategies to maximize job opportunities, with particular focus on local hiring.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify key employment hubs and develop relationships with businesses to foster employment opportunities and strategies for residents b. Engage key workforce programs and services to implement a neighborhood based employment strategy with these employment hubs and businesses.
Collaborators	

Objective #6	Explore the viability of a corridor-wide branding strategy that would work in conjunction with district brand identities.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify and assess the unique characteristics of businesses along the corridor. b. Evaluate district branding opportunities and find common elements that can be shared in an overall corridor-wide campaign c. Identify tools and resources to develop and promote a corridor-wide branding campaign.
Collaborators	

Keys to Success

The Six C's

1. **Community Engagement:** Reaching out to expand the number and diversity of people corridor-wide that actively participate in coordinated manner to support businesses, property owners and the greater community.
2. **Collaborative Effort:** Championing an inclusive, community-based approach that encourages and strengthens the contributions of individuals, groups and organizations aligned by a shared mission.
3. **Consensus Decisions:** Having your independent voice heard during the process of decision-making and agreeing to speak with a single voice in support the group's decisions once it's made.
4. **Communicate X's 10:** Using every reasonable opportunity and vehicle possible to constantly and consistently communicate internally and externally.
5. **Celebrate Success:** Taking the time in "planning your work and working your plan" to recognize small wins as they happen and consolidate gains to sustain even higher quality results.
6. **Courageous Action:** Imaging possibilities and taking bold, decisive action in overcoming great challenges and creating transformational opportunity.

The following Leadership Team members have participated in creating Version 1.0 of the Strategic Work Plan and agree to collaborate with each other in supporting implementation, monitoring results and making periodic revisions.

Jim Roth, Executive Director
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers

Karri Plowman, Director of Central Corridor & East Metro Partnership
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

Chris Ferguson, Coordinator
Stadium Village Commercial Association

Hussein Farah, Business Development Director
African Development Center

Kristin Guild, Manager Business Development
City of Minneapolis, Community Planning & Economic Development

Linda Winsor, Executive Director
University Avenue Business Association (UABA)

Lori Fritts, President
Midway Chamber of Commerce

Michael McLaughlin, Executive Director
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Mihailo Temali, President & CEO
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Nancy Homans, Policy Director
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Robin Caufman, Manager of Public Involvement
Metropolitan Council, Central Corridor LRT Project Office

Va-Megn Thoj, Executive Director
Supporting Strong Businesses, Vibrant Communities

Addendum Items

Communication Plan Overview

Content for Directory of Resource and Service Providers

Name of Organization
Resources and Services Provided
Telephone Number
Website / Email Address

“Full Group” Membership List

September 2009 – March 2010

Performance Management Approach

Balanced Scorecard

Selected Presentation Slides & Handout Materials

Forms and Worksheets

Balanced Scorecard Assessment Worksheet
Resource and Service Providers Profile
Prioritization Exercise

Contact Information

Central Corridor Business Resources Collaborative

Co-Chairs (2010):

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Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
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As you review this Strategic Work Plan, please give consideration to any feedback you may have to strengthen it and interest you or others from our community may have in partnering with the Business Resources Collaborative.
Your ideas and participation are appreciated.

Thank You