SWOT ANALYSIS
HUMAN CAPITAL

S Strengths

- Workforce Training Resources
- Well-educated workforce
- Higher Ed networks (Public-private)
- Competitive Public School System
- Engaged non-profits and strong networks
- Technical assistance providers

W Weaknesses

- Aging/limited (shrinking) Workforce
- Workforce preparedness/ethic/soft skills
- Population not growing at needed rate
- Labor Force Participation Rate declining
- Ability of education institutions to meet the job skills demanded by local employers
- Rural Awareness – educating current residents of opportunities & assets in the region
- Unmet demand for specialized workers

O Opportunities

- Growth through intentional and domestic immigration
- Investments in talent retention and attraction
- Utilizing retires/seniors experience knowledge
- Marketing quality of life and economic opportunity to millennials and young families
- Entrepreneur training
- Develop and implement college and career awareness programs such as school-to-work transition, career and technical education

T Threats

- Proximity to the metro/twin cities, and regional centers
- Aging population that is viewed as an asset
- Lack of population/workforce
- High wage, high demand industries in neighboring states drawing many skilled workers out of the region
- MN policies & regulations around customized training especially and teacher licensing in K-12
- Special skills worker shortage
- Trailing spouse employment

SWOT ANALYSIS
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

S | Strengths

- Strong economic & business development networks/business leaders
- Clusters: Manufacturing, Natural Resource based industries(agriculture & tourism) & health care industries
- Access to gap financing
- Diverse economy not fully dependent on one industry
- Manufacturing associations
- Transportation corridors
- Distance to regional and metro centers

W | Weaknesses

- Aging Workforce that is not seen as an asset
- Small pool of available workforce
- Provide financial assistance to lower/offset business costs
- Lower wages and related challenges to filling non-high skill/high wage positions
- Venture/Seed Capital
- Available and affordable access to child care
- Available and affordable housing

O | Opportunities

- Socially, environmentally aware entrepreneurs
- Demographic shifts- Utilizing the 65+ population in appropriate industry
- Attracting international and domestic migration to grow the population and fill jobs
- Improve the efficiency of doing business and starting business
- Ag-Bio Science
- Proximity to Canadian markets
- Collaboration with neighboring states

T | Threats

- Global impacts on commodity markets and energy costs
- Uncertain directions of environmental and investment and other policies at State and Federal levels
- Economic Diversity
- Resistance to changing demographics
- Lack of succession and transition planning
- Climate change
- Natural and manmade disasters
- Lack of available and affordable access to child care

SWOT ANALYSIS
COMMUNITY RESOURCES

S — Strengths

- Quality of life
- Strong tourism infrastructure, programs, opportunities
- Natural amenities, especially parks, trails, and public lands
- Healthy communities initiatives
- 4 and 2-year post-secondary education
- K-12 institutions
- Community Action and Housing Redevelopment Authority
- Arts communities and initiatives

W — Weaknesses

- Rural healthcare gap and funding mechanisms
- Overwhelmed community leaders
- Marketing Rural
- Not enough new community leaders stepping up
- Disinvestment is residential and commercial property/buildings
- Child care affordability and availability
- Access to affordable and available housing

O — Opportunities

- Civic Engagement
- Arts & Culture
- Tourism, especially originating from neighboring western states
- Placemaking
- Historic downtowns
- Transition and succession business ownership
- Broadband coverage to homes in rural areas
- Increasing demographic diversity

T — Threats

- Educational gaps/resources for schools Declining funding for the arts
- Civic engagement
- Failed community bonding initiatives
- Diminished access to funding for community reinvestment and renovation
- Environmental degradation: manmade or natural
- Resistance to demographic diversity

SWOT ANALYSIS
FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

S | Strengths

- Good transportation networks
- Multi-modal local and regional transportation networks
- Tillable Land and Available Water
- Low interest financing for septic and well
- Educational institutions resources & support
- Quality of natural environment
- Strong manufacturing , healthcare, and educational sectors
- Public-private partnerships

W | Weaknesses

- Lack of quality, affordable housing
- Aging underground infrastructure
- Housing -workforce/senior and age of housing and value gaps
- Small community infrastructure
- A higher low-income population that reduces the tax base
- Broadband deployment & connectivity
- Shovel Ready Sites
- Planning for capital needs in municipalities

O | Opportunities

- Working with regional partners-EDA, foundations and other funders
- Availability of affordable housing
- Redevelopment programs for commercial and residential property
- Broadband deployment & connectivity
- Capital Improvement Planning
- Multi-modal transportation planning
- Leverage public-private partnerships for planning and funding

T | Threats

- Decreased available funding sources: public and private
- Disinvestment in infrastructure (above and below ground), capital needs, and community facilities
- Housing supply including price, value, and age
- Tax forfeited properties and vacant institutional buildings
- Reduced funding for broadband investment