Results of Steering Committee Interviews:

Comments have been edited to remove comments that would clearly identify the speaker.
Comments between lines "___" were provided by different speakers

1. **You said during the May 22 meeting that your primary concern was _____. Can you elaborate on that?**

   I have been thinking a lot about *When Work Disappears* by William Julius Wilson. When manufacturing goes bad, people feel it really hard. Concerned that manufacturers will start cutting back again, or move out manufacturing functions. How do you build long term sustainability? Acuity - type companies of the world are great --have to innovate or get old.

   Sheboygan community is old. Lacking influx of talent -- young innovators. Reliant on manufacturing.

   Lack of transparency, how to get started and who's involved

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   Risk of too much buzzwords. Building big physical district of buildings -- was supposed to be leasee

   Challenging place to get people to live -- some amazing stuff, golf, race etc. Majority of our faculty in Milwaukee or Green Bay suburbs.

   Hard to get young people with ideas. Lots of people leave for college, never return.

   But don't tend to be types that spin off new products businesses, etc. Challenging to get young people to move to Sheboygan. Housing, etc. Meaning 25-30 year olds.

ECONOGY
talent group

Sheboygan Innovation Hub, Phase 1 / Feasibility
July 30, 2019

Right now Sheboygan is very heavy on manufacturing. Bureau of Labor Statistics says we are 4th highest in nation for share of total employment in manufacturing. Our bonding capacity has been downgraded because of our over reliance on this sector.

We are trying to offer things to help train employees to help increase automation. Move employees into more high tech and automation.

We have many family-owned companies, they have invested in community to make quality of life good. We need to work to develop the new companies of the future. Make a way for more people who can home grow businesses like these.

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Needs:
>   Gender diversity in engineering
>   Skilled trades
>   Specific struggle: electricians, electromagnetic, specialized welders.

Part of this is national shortage

"Soft" skills: career readiness, regardless of age -- older career changing,
>   Critical thinking
>   Communication
>   Leadership within their roles
>   Digital technology
>   Work ethic
>   Teamworks
>   Global fluency
>   Career management -- proactive, taking initiative, taking steps to manage career,

In the last 5 years this has been more of a focus. Not just pushing a button. Some line leaders have these skills but few/far between

Manufacturing was always assumed to be simplistic, now expectations are more advanced.

If employees learned a skilled trade via school, may not have learned critical thinking, leadership

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Long term employability, people are looking for employability over employment

Challenging employers in the community to think about developing their employees beyond the value to their company. This approach to our employees hasn't exactly taken root but it needs to.

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We've had lots of good visits (St. Louis) and good plans (innovation districts) and not a lot of solid buy-in from local business owners.

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Future workforce planning—how do we create a workable, livable, appealing community that will encourage younger workers to come to Sheboygan County (or stay in the county) to ensure we have a supply of properly skilled workers that we need in the future? Having a healthy, thriving community is the best way to ensure that we attract the talent we will need.

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Concerned about the future of family ownership. What happens when young no longer want to run it? What happens when ownership is not local?

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Concern: Coming from the HR perspective, labor shortages is the top concern. Top talent isn't willing to move to this area. We need more people. Period.

Hourly manufacturing (start at $17.25/hour) is the top challenge in terms of hiring, but we know that in the future, we're going to need people with different skill sets than we need right now.

Most employees live in Sheboygan and Plymouth.

The things happening that would draw talent are the same types of events that happened years and years ago. Nothing is fresh, which may have an influence on the ability to draw and/or keep talent.

Lakeshore Tech is Open access. We take anyone regardless of past academic performance. We prepare to enter the workforce at whatever exit point they want. We want to make sure that the opportunity cost to them of schooling vs. working, and the ROI to the student and the community is worth it. Our purpose is to build upward mobility.

Most of our students are part time, working minimum wage jobs while in school. Meet workforce needs.

We are strategic about workforce needs. We won't train you for a job you can do off street. We want to equip you to grow.

E.g: learning to be a machinist. You will get the CNC training, base level skill set. But it's also integral that your education be embedded in skills that are applicable to all industries. Especially thinking critically and working in a group. That's how you set up upward mobility.

Upward mobility may require some additional schooling. We don't assume 2 years -- we focus on learning competencies. We believe you will have on and off ramps with education woven through career. This is somewhat unique to Lakeshore -- some other technical schools are moving in this direction. The term is "Competency based education" Success is measured in mastery of skills. If you've been working in industry, we don't make you wait full semester to demonstrate that you have a particular skill set. Execute on competencies. Instead of tracking class completion, we keep "tick sheet" that documents what competencies you have. It allows you to come back and only do what's needed: I have these competencies, come back when need more. It's a customizable education. Not asking them to give up their jobs that they need.

Concern: influence of individual interests within city government, way ahead of small business interests

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School district = Majority minority within 5-10 years.

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2. What has your company / organization tried to do to address that concern to date? Has anyone else in the community done anything to try to address that concern?

A Chamber of Commerce -led group tried to engage around this. Involved a lot of diversity and inclusion professionals from corporations. They didn't know how to extend what they knew to the community level. Seemed to want to, but didn't seem to know how.

Perception that there needs to be an onboarding type process for people of color moving to the community, but no one seemed to be able to develop it.

There has been efforts to "market" Sheboygan county as a very livable place, but I'm not sure how much traction it has gained. These are long term, slow burning campaigns, so there needs to be consistency and some additional investment.

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The coworking spaces but there's not a lot of other activities around transparency

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We are trying to offer more programming at the library -- makerspace. This was our first foray into something along those lines.

The library is semi- autonomous -- it has its own board that the city appoints some people, but it depends on the city for budget. Library gets city insurance and HR but manages its own budget. It was all local (gov) funds when built, library has done some additional fund raising more recently. This is a typical structure in WI.

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Not as much as should be done.

Bemis tries to provide corporate lattice opportunities. Moving employees around in different opportunities and sectors of the company. We need to leverage the fact that there is a diversity of employment experiences within the company. We need to be deliberate about why we're moving employees around.

Kohler may have the biggest opportunity to leverage this approach.

Possibility of a talent exchange between companies, a consortium of knowledge share in the community

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We work together with the other companies but we do want the best talent in the area. We don't want to miss out on the opportunity to gain talent that is considering Sheboygan.

Different recruiting strategies. Really focused on early talent, high school paid work experiences, apprenticeships, key partnerships.
Industry 4.0 strategy - at this point, starting at the ground level with a steering team comprised of tech, engineering, etc.

What are the issues - people and processes?

Predictive maintenance is an area of focus within the industry 4.0 strategy

At Johnsonville, everyone's annual review requires them to explain when/how they've been innovative in the past year.

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Lakeland started co op -- a couple of years ago. Challenge is always recruitment.

Match to companies dying for workers. 12 month calendar now. Alternate semesters. Eg 3 co ops: (a) income (b) skills to satisfy local labor need. Hospitality has worked great. Same with accounting, criminology. One foundational, one in major. Credit bearing. Enrolled in one credit while on work. Reflective. As much as ¼ credits. 2 years in a row -- leading in enrollment growth.

Lakeland is good at tech school transfer -- 1200 full time undergrad on campus, 2100 Online or blended. Most students have an associates degree, Very good on transfer. Built programs with Bemis and Kohler. If a student works 2nd shift a few days a week, they get tuition reimbursement. This came from companies coming to us.

3. **What does the concept of an Innovation Hub mean to you? What does it look/sound/feel like? Who is there? What are they doing?**
   _or_

   What does a culture of innovation look/feel like to you?

I don't know what that looks like in Sheboygan. I've always struggled with what that means. In Milwaukee -- the fresh water, etc. initiatives -- they're concrete, people can latch onto them, see how to engage. Milwaukee has research kicking -- they _have_ something.

What is our calling card? Just seems too big, too vague.

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Reception of diversity varies by age

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When the concept launched in 2017, there was interest but skepticism due to lack of info on specific local [programmatic] fit. Now it's starting to make more sense.

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I'll go to the dark scary place on this...there are couple employers in town that will put their name on it and dominate it. As soon as I see Kohler's name on something, I back off because I know they will dominate the conversation. One of my fears is that it could become Kohler centric or Accuity centric. Instead we need to find the common ground for what every employer needs.

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I've often been confused by this… I've generally thought about a diverse physical place, industries and professions mixed together, share insights and best practices. Learn from each other. Work on things in common -- systems, software. Sharing ideas and new ideas. Eg: Ward 4, Milwaukee. Share ideas, resources. Jakes is kind of like that.

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Space where you're able to build and create with partners there, i.e. corporates, VCs, service providers, etc.

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Being newer to the area, I think about the gaps from me moving here. For one, more young people living in the area. The population is aging rapidly. More fresh businesses. Downtown Sheboygan should be where you want to spend your weekends. People knowing where the highlights of Sheboygan County area.

Communication is huge. I can't find events and other things happening. Communications team uses the talent toolkit from SCEDC.

Bringing more diversity to Sheboygan County. Growing up in Detroit, I was raised in a diverse environment and saw the benefit of it.

Everyone supports diversity but there are gaps in the processes that point to the lack of diversity we see. Same type of people on the hiring committee that are being interviewed, etc. Diversity in perspectives is just as important as racial, gender, etc. diversity.

Story about another employee who came from Detroit - African-American woman who just had a child and wants to move because she doesn't want her child to grow up around a lack of diversity.

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My perception is based on things I've seen in MKE -- Water Council space. Educational, activity spaces, Midwest Energy Research Consortium (M-WERC) as well.

The one thing that I got from M-WERC was that they thought we should concentrate on high speed packaging. Several companies (Heissen, another in Falls) + Rockline, Falls makes diaper machines. Unique niche.

Heard about chemical focus, R&D, lots of people in foods, but how to help. Plus people who want to tinker.

Jake's is supposed to be an "innovation hub" - has anything big come out of it?

Maybe it's a physical place, maybe it's not… call it a "Bubble" where intersecting beneficiaries work together in a way that's helpful, collaborative, not afraid to fail.

[Follow up question regarding what this means for lower income people with less bandwidth to "fail"]: We have to have recognition that any concept can fail if there's no market. How we do that: get failure out of way before roll it out to students -- they're too important to give them failing product. Cut bait.

The HUB would be tangible evidence of the focus on innovation and growth in the county. It would be cool (temperature), new, modern, clean, open and have a sense of energy and life.

Innovation Hub needs to address millennials and diversity of age and gender.

Good news is Sheboygan has no conflicts between big companies and ready to leverage the opportunity for different sectors (.com/.gov/.edu) to work together and engage smaller businesses.

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Gathering place to share ideas, experiences, young professionals, i.e. Acuity

Innovation represents diversity (external and internal), which is not a strength of Sheboygan

- slow to change if they don't get it, once they get it, then change can happen
- some not open to conversations
- some very open companies (Kohler, Sargento and Johnsonville) are attracting new employees;
- closed companies are not attracting new employees and not open to innovation and diversity.

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To me the culture is a "feeling," a general sense, something that people just "know" in their gut. So I will focus on the artifacts of culture—those tangible things you can see. New businesses launching, new stores, new restaurants, etc. New companies. Housing and apartments being built, new programs and entertainment options. Robust participation from local universities and schools.

Don't know. Positive changes, benefit full community.

I can't think of anything that would stop someone. Options are endless (school) compared to what they used to be. Charter school's cutting edge, educationally innovative. If students are ready to graduate, they have a lot of opportunities within county already, we have to do better at connecting them. Generally good opportunities.

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Opportunities for students at different levels, introduced to mindset and what it takes, mix with existing companies, inside companies.

Programming to help people get started, mentorship, more formal workshops, makerspace type space. Programming less than physical things. Students to professionals. Love to see competition -- funding for come.

Behavior: at least a couple of companies incredibly unwilling to share / very sensitive to share. Almost to strange level, Can't bring in thumb drive. Mindset.

Commons -- if this changed peoples' attitudes toward Sheboygan. If you ask today, is Sheboygan innovative, dynamic, most will say no, especially young people. Would love this to change the mindset. Believe that you can build a career here. Because of this, I view Sheboygan as a place I don't have to leave. Right now the majority of smart young people leave. Might be that what they're looking for is here, but they don't know it. Visibiity for cool things.

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In Sheboygan, we manage relationships more than results. Don't want to offend or upset anybody. "If I do the work and give you the credit, will you stay out of the way?" There's a lot of tip toeing around. We'll have to get past that.

There's no chicken squashing in innovative cultures. These environments allow the egg (idea) to grow into a bird that can fly (successfully scaled idea) before it's squashed.

The people that live in the county aren't exposed to a lot of failure. We have to motivate some controlled risk taking.

We get fascinated with a new idea, we like shiny pennies. Once the idea gets to the point of taking hard work, we're already on to the next new idea. We'll need to fix that. We confuse activity with productivity. People take pride in the number of projects that are happening.

Constantly too many cooks in the kitchen. When there's something new happening, there's the culture of needing to have everyone there. There needs to be clarity around

role definition and what each player is going to bring to the table. This is very important so that feelings don't get hurt because if feelings get hurt in Sheboygan County, it all goes up in flames.

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- Clearer definition of what the innovation hub is to smaller businesses;
- Co-operating between SCEDC (bigger players) and Chamber (smaller);
- This study can be a catalyst for a bridge between bigger and smaller businesses;
- Bigger and smaller business are open to building bridges, as current bridges are not in place;
- innovation summit brought together all types of stakeholders, .gov, .edu, .com, .org,
- Innovation hub is a joint effort between big and small businesses
- Invite everyone (.gov/.edu/.com/.org) to the table
  - if all ten big .com players participated, that would be a success
  - greater success if medium and smaller .com business players all participated

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Access: SBDC type of resources for new entrepreneurs, more accessible, more visible and well known

Behavior: More centralized resources to start more new businesses would create more entrepreneurship opportunities

Health: New business start-ups and different types of start-ups, i.e. stay-at-home-mom that are now ready to be entrepreneurial

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Growing population. New businesses launches.   Shorter time to fill for new positions.

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Trig (Jake's Cafe) does a good job of connecting people who could collaborate. I've seen this dynamic -- there was a web based advertising firm, grew and moved to another location. Jake's is an informal incubator. Does social events for members as well. I've seen places elsewhere where you can do space rental. etc. but that dynamism is missing.

City does a lot of outreach with the Hmong community, such as by doing radio show. Owner of radio show is trying to retire, Wants someone to take over radio station. Primary value is in communicating to older population. Mayor speaks on show regularly to give updates on city initiatives.

4. In terms of entrepreneurship and innovation, who are the unusual suspects (i.e. disruptors, dreamers, etc) and how does the community interact with those individuals/entities?

- There should be no parameters of who we involve;
- Diversity and inclusion is important;
- Targets should be;
  - Innovation programming group, .gov and .edu with big and small businesses
  - women (stay-at-home-moms, working moms)
  - minorities (Hmong, Hispanic)

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Most of them move. Maybe a dozen people who are involved in Ward 4 in Milwaukee --Steve Meck? Not uncommon. Folks started business in Chicago and bring part of it back to Sheboygan. Or start elsewhere, sell and move back. Better to have new opportunities being birthed.

Can't think of 30 and 40 year old firms, can't even think of a failure. Most are going to big stuff and hospitality. Don't think of sheboygan ends up with a lot of startup

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We tend to romanticize entrepreneurs that have succeeded (3 Sheeps).

The school district, they want to do their own thing, trying to figure out how to engage with companies. They way they go about it is over bureaucratized and makes it difficult to navigate.

5. What does your <u>personal</u> vision for the Innovation District look like?

- All big and small company employees housed at at Innovation Hub and engaged and sharing with each other
- Joint entities that co-exist together;n
- The "District" is the county/city's commitment to encouraging innovation;
- The Hub is a building. Hub is a nice thing to have, but innovation can happen outside of the building.

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Innovation District may not be a long term sustainable good fit for Sheboygan, as it requires time, money and commitment, maybe 20 years too early…

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Transparency, vibrancy at spaces where innovators tend to go, (mentioned Tryg Jacobson at Jake's Cafe), but why go there? , transparency in the ecosystem, culture around high growth startups, learn by doing and doing imperfectly

Sheboygan is conservative in the sense that moonshot ideas could be feasible but they are met with doubt, there's a need for an idea to be buttoned up and polished before it's believable and supported

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It has to be almost an innovation Switzerland. A place where there's no rank, no stripes. No naming rights. No perceived ownership. It should be funded through anonymous donations...because the names of the funders don't ultimately matter in the grand scheme of what we're trying to accomplish. We almost need to de-identify things.

A place where people can go to make good ideas happen…..we have a ton of good ideas but not many people are making them actually happen.

It should be a place where people can go and experiment.

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I don't have a mental picture of it. We had talked about arts district previously ... There is an Arts Preserve being constructed at the end of Indiana Avenue. Plan was for food along the way…. Housing for creative people. Badger Lofts will have 9k sf in retail space.

6. How do the Innovation Hub that we're talking about, and the larger Innovation District, fit together? How do you think they should work together?

Fit between district and hub could be one of two things: hub could be an anchor -- a reason why other entities locate there. Like an IBM hub -- suddenly a bunch of things pop up.

Second, could be about bringing new money into the economy -- make it here and sell elsewhere. Versus, for example, a local pizza restaurant, just shuffling the same money around that's already being spent. Does it have to be incubator? Not exclusively.

- All big and small companies hiring creative, imaginative employees that they are looking for;
- Put Sheboygan on the map Wisconsin and midwest innovation map; and

- Attracting new companies starting up in and moving to Sheboygan

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I think they have to be symbiotic.

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No one thought about this before. Some conversation within the company. I think we have a lot of opportunities… how will this impact us? How would we use it?

I personally lean more toward the hub than toward the district. I love makerspaces, etc. Note example of the Navy Yard in New York. People need a place to go -- it's born out of necessity.

7. a. **If you had to create or choose your *personal* three main objectives (outcomes) for our portfolio of innovation opportunities today, what would you choose?**

b. **If you had to create or choose your *community-wide* three main objectives (outcomes) for our portfolio of innovation opportunities today, what would you choose?**

Poverty: city more dilapidated
        Enrollment steady / declining
        Kids are getting tougher and tougher -- challenges within their own lives.

Mental health. They have mental health services at all elementary schools and a health clinic at an elementary that is 92% free and reduced lunch. Milwaukee has more poverty than we have, but theirs is more geographically defined. A lot needs to be done.

How does this mesh with hospitality? Closest school to Blue Harbor is 2 blocks south of resort = poorest. White proportion of students dropped 6-7% per year 2016-17 [I may not have date right, but it was recent]. School board was shocked.

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1) some sort of programming focused on high school / college students, structured around semesters. Enough contact time to build course around it and get credit. Phenomenal for us
2) help us figure out student run businesses. -- helps that get started. Hard for the university to do that themselves.
3) we've been thinking about "muskie enterprises -- copied off flyer -- run stuff on campus. Great job for handful of businesses. Other ideas for campus run businesses?

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Incentive package IT company --recruitment . Find IT hub that can be anchor.
We have plenty of people -- need to move folks up from retail and service. People are there, need to reskill them. Figure out education model.

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Should try to be attractive to a younger highly qualified person. That would introduce people here to new level of business Supporting things coming up. Younger crowd elevates thinking. Won't solve all workforce, but innovation hub isn't going to be able to do all of that .

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- All big and small companies hiring creative, imaginative employees that they are looking for;
- Put Sheboygan on the map Wisconsin and Midwest Innovation map; and
- Attracting new companies starting up in and moving to Sheboygan

- Co-working space
- Mentorships
- Professional development that complements and does not compete with existing solutions (?)

- Meeting, social space
- Resources to encourage different ways of thinking
- Foster more community engagement
- Resources for potential new businesses
- Mentors/mentees
- Community at large being involved

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I would like to see a healthy, thriving community, however that occurs

Better workforce training and planning; attracting more talent, diversity and inclusion

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1. Create space where current companies can send their creative people -- automation, new products, growth + space for people who want to build new .
2. Arts infusion into it. Role of artists. Like the Carmel [IN] arts and innovation district.

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- Have options for innovators and makers
- Engaging them in activities attractive enough to attract engineers and skilled trades

● Impact and beautify community -- areas that need TLC.

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1. Corporates, entrepreneurs working to innovate together
2. Programming
3. Engaging young talent at colleges

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Dude, this is the million dollar question.

Workforce plan for the County. I know I need 27 skilled tradesmen in the next 3 years, and I'm sure the other companies have those numbers, too. But we don't have these numbers at the macro level.

9. **If you had $3-5M over 2-3 years, how would you spend that money?**

Local task force to deal with changing demographic. How to make all people feel welcome. We're gonna have to figure out how not to lose affluent families. How embrace diversity?

We used to hear more from employees that they needed employees. Now we hear "we can't keep people here" -- they go back to Milwaukee.

The Great recession was a big hit on manufacturers. What happens when that happens again?

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Probably would fund 30 startups at 100k and save the rest to continue funding the ones that last

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Opportunity	Outcome	TOTAL Investment	Total Funding Years	Impact

Workforce training and public/private partnerships (big and small - .	Fill future job needs	$1MM-$2MM	$1m/year for 5 years	Fill jobs, healthy future workforce
Entrepreneurship funds	Interesting community investment	$300k	$300k/year for 5 years	Micro loans for new businesses
Retraining	Future job needs	$500K	$250k/year for 5 years	Better trained workforce
Start-UP-Fund	New Start-up	250k/	750k over 3 years	

Workforce training and public/private partnerships	Fill future job needs. training	$1MM-$2MM		Fill jobs, healthy future workforce
Entrepreneur funds	Interesting community investment	$150K		Micro loans for new businesses
Retraining	Future job needs	$500K		Better trained workforce

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- Transportation, especially rail
- Affordable housing
- Retail - options for shopping

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I would create an exchange that is overt and visual that allows somebody to effectively navigate the resources in the community that are available to support innovation. Example: Amazing machines that sit idle after the engineers go home. Creating a way to leverage this stuff.

There is so much in the county that is underutilized.

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10. I s there anything else that you think we ought to know about? Any questions you wished we had asked? Anything else you want to tell us? Any examples of best practices that you'd like us to consider?

This is a closed kind of community. It takes so long to assimilate -- until that nut is cracked, it's really hard to recruit. EG: when we are recruiting African-American staff: who would I send them to talk to to find our what it's really like to live here ? There's no group of minority community leaders --no informal support network in place.

Our recruitment sphere = all of WI and Chicago.

We dont look like our student population. We are trying to, but not there yet.

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There are so many big companies in the county that are putting money into our communities to make our communities exceptional and those traditional views on diversity are probably rooted in the minds of those families.

I'm pretty blunt and straightforward, but I won't bring up left-leaning ideas or principles.

[Company] is big on religion and will even ask about religious views for certain executive positions at the company.

We live here because of employment.

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- how do we integrate big and small .com's with .edu and .gov and .org's

- commitment to addressing climate change could be an attractor for millennials and gen z

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The families that own the big businesses in the county kind of get along

The fact is that no one really knows what's going on.

Bemis has a program that gives employees the opportunity to spend $1500 of the company's money to fix a problem, no questions asked,

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- Major progressive corporations give generously to education, social services and community

- Workforce training new or duplicative? Already being funded

- Entrepreneurs being funded on an individual basis.

- Climate Change – weather changes not helping, so not much to do if the weather is bad, if the weather is good then lots of things to do

- Retention may be more of a challenge then attraction. Not welcoming to newcomers. Close-mindedness starts at the top. Elephant in the room that no one talks about.

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Important to have Education institutions on board. Gary Miller, Chancellor at UWGB. Interested in Sheboygan in part because of highway visibility. But they are still trying to sort out integration. Enrollments are down

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The culture is that the big companies are experts in business innovation

There's a group of 4-5 private family owned companies that are sometimes referred to as the Sheboygan Mafia that get together and fund things collaboratively behind the

scenes. They are loyal and have a true passion for helping the community. There needs to be other options that benefit the community for them to fund.

Johnsonville starting to look at regenerative health

Johnsonville innovation studio in Chicago was outsourced

The mentality growing up is that I go to work for the major 5 companies