

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

THROUGH ALL OBSTACLES

Here We Grow



GREATER
FREMONT
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL



CHAIRMAN
CHRIS WALZ
WALNUT RADIO, LLC

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

To measure our success for 2020, it is important to look beyond the numbers to evaluate the outsized impact GFDC and our partners have had on the community. After all, 2020 created unprecedented opportunities to lead because we encountered unprecedented challenges. COVID-19 impacted how Fremont's residents went about their daily lives and how businesses operated, exposing the weaknesses that live just below the surface of our daily lives, allowing us to discuss how to address them in meaningful ways. Issues like housing challenges, food insecurity, and education inequalities were exacerbated, for example. For some, COVID-19 brought about health and financial challenges that were decimating and we acknowledge the pain of our neighbors and friends. We also acknowledge that great obstacles create great opportunities - opportunities for growth and for coming together. 2020 could be viewed as the year that Fremont and Dodge County came together like never before.

As a community, we quickly found ways to support our most vulnerable residents. GFDC organized drive-by food giveaways in early March - an initiative that has been continued by our partners, with thousands of residents fed throughout the year. Our local banks went to bat for Dodge County businesses, helping them to secure vital PPE funding when businesses throughout the country were struggling to do so. GFDC earmarked funds to support frontline workers, providing food and financial support to help keep them going. GFDC, non-profit organizations, community volunteers, and business leaders all worked together to support our first responders and medical

professionals, community members in need, the elderly, and businesses who were struggling. In 2020, we came together and rose above our challenges through strategic planning, collaboration, and sheer grit. Through all obstacles - Here. We. Grow.

And that's exactly what we did in 2020 - grow. While communities throughout the country were reeling from job losses and company closures - we grew, attracting over \$1.5 billion in investment. Business expansion and capital investment continued with companies like Wholestone Farms, RTG Medical, and Ele Metal all expanding, just to name a few. Our housing starts have continued at a record pace as well. In 2018, our housing study showed we needed an additional 1,500 units. We will have 3,000. Fremont Commons, Morningside Point, and Bluestone Commons are all examples of housing development that has continued in 2020.

This sustained growth was possible because we had put our strategic plan in action long before COVID-19 arrived. This forward-thinking approach is exactly why we need GFDC, our investors, and partners to continue looking ahead to what's next for Fremont and Dodge County. By focusing on our four pillars of Business Attraction, Business Retention and Expansion, Workforce Development, and Quality of Life, we can sustain disruptions to our life and economy, and be confident that bright days ahead.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Al Sawtelle • Board of Public Works
- Barry Benson • First National Bank of Omaha
- Bob Missel • Dodge County Supervisor
- Brad Dahl • Fremont Public Schools
- Brett Richmond • Methodist Fremont Health
- Chuck Johannsen • First State Bank & Trust
- Dave Mitchell • Yost, Schafersman, Lamme, Hillis, Mitchell, Schulz & Hartmann, P.C.
- Diane Mallette • Structural Component Systems, LLC
- Jessica Kolterman • Lincoln Premium Poultry
- Les Leech • Fremont Beef Company
- Les Shallberg • Fremont Electric, Inc.
- Maggie Diers-Yost • Deer Pointe Corporation, Diers Ford Lincoln
- Scott Getzschman • Mayor, City of Fremont
- Scott Webb • Wholestone Farms
- Susan Kruml • Midland University

2020 OFFICERS

- Chairman** • Chris Walz, Walnut Radio, LLC
- Vice Chairman** • Marlin Brabec, • Don Peterson & Associates
- Treasurer** • Scott Meister, Pinnacle Bank
- Past Chairman** • Mike Arps, • Arps Red-E Mix
- Secretary** • Garry Clark, Executive Director, Greater Fremont Development Council

YEAR 1 VISION 2025



Holistic Economic Development is the principle that guides GFDC and has influenced our vision setting and capacity building. By focusing on workforce development, housing creation, business attraction and retention, and quality of life enhancements, GFDC is helping to build a greater Fremont and Dodge County. Our efforts were recognized by the LT. Governor in February of 2020, when GFDC and the City were given the Certified Economic Development Community Award.

Collaborative efforts have resulted in significant improvements in all areas of Dodge County life and we are just getting started! We know that Fremont and Dodge County have the talent, leadership, and focus needed to propel us into the future with a clear plan for attraction, retention, quality of life, and workforce preparedness.

In Fremont ... Here. We. Grow.

Over **2,000 jobs** have been created in the past 18 months

Dodge County Small Business Relief Program grant launched as part of the Welstead Fund with \$62,000 is available to be awarded to small businesses



Housing starts exceeded expectations with **3,000 units built or under construction**

Career Placement Academy was launched and first set of participants placed with local employers

GFDC conducted Dodge County **Business Impact Survey** to gain insight into how COVID-19 impacted local businesses and the type of help businesses need to recover

Here We Grow

GFDC, Fremont and Dodge County pushed forward in 2020 with remarkable success. In spite of unprecedented challenges - we grew. COVID-19 shone light on issues, giving us the opportunity to lead in ways that make our community a better place for all of our residents.

GFDC **Grab N Go food events** fed thousands



More than **\$1.5 billion** in capital investment commitments

GFDC hosted virtual **Diversity and Inclusion Forum**

GFDC hosted a **COVID-19 nonprofit forum** to connect businesses and residents with area services

GFDC and the Chamber hosted **Drive Thru Job Fairs**





ON THE MOVE

The success of Fremont is gaining state and national attention. Garry Clark and GFDC were featured on NET, Nebraska's PBS station. Garry Clark was also elected as President of the Board of Directors for the National Rural Economic Developers Association. Mayor Scott Getzschman was recognized by the International Economic Development Council, earning a Leadership Award for Public Service.

In Fremont we don't simply show. In Fremont...Here. We. Grow.

In 2020, with existing team members moving to new opportunities, GFDC was pleased to welcome new additions to the team. Lauren Foster, our Director of Quality of Life, joined GFDC from the Greater Omaha Chamber where she served as their Business Intelligence Coordinator and Business Attraction and Retention Project Manager. She also led the Chamber's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Employee Resource Group and was appointed to the Omaha Parks and Recreation Board in 2019. Her wealth of experience is being put to work to create opportunities for Fremont and Dodge County businesses, residents and investors. Lauren helped to update the Dodge County housing study by rolling out a survey to the public via a public meeting and housing forum at the beginning of 2021. She will be actively engaging stakeholders throughout the year.

Kelsey Martinez, Director of Business Services, is a native of Fremont and thrilled to be joining GFDC after graduating from the University of Nebraska. She is focused on building deep relationships within Dodge County communities so that GFDC can better understand, and respond to, the needs of the greater community. She will also be leading the organization's marketing and communications efforts.

"Lauren and Kelsey have brought their unique talents and experiences to their roles at GFDC. They are passionate about Fremont and Dodge County and are focused on helping us to further our mission. Here. We. Grow. means seeking out the fresh ideas and perspectives that will propel GFDC and our community forward. I am confident that Lauren and Kelsey are the right people to help us do so," said Garry Clark, former President and CEO of GFDC.

Looking forward to 2021, GFDC is taking steps to move us closer to achieving our Vision 2025 goals.

- **GFDC conducted a virtual housing forum with developers in the community, non-profits, and stakeholders.**
- **GFDC is expanding our reach in Dodge County and the greater region.**
- GFDC's programming will continue to support the businesses who call Fremont and Dodge County home, while ensuring that our efforts are led by our vision for Holistic Economic Development where every aspect of our community programming works in tandem to support our continued growth.



TIER I

Dale Olson
Deer Pointe Corporation
Diers Ford Lincoln
Don Peterson & Assoc.
First National Bank Fremont
First State Bank & Trust Co.
Fremont Beef Company
Fremont Electric, Inc.
Lincoln Premium Poultry
Methodist Fremont Health
Pinnacle Bank
Valmont
Wholestone Farms

TIER II

Arps Red-E-Mix, Inc.
Gene Steffy Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram
Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership (GOEDP)
RTG Medical
Sid Dillon Chevrolet, Inc.
Structural Component Systems, Inc.
Yost, Schafersman, Lamme, Hillis, Mitchell, Schulz & Hartmann, P.C.

TIER III

Christensen Lumber
Erickson & Brooks, CPA's

Getzschman Heating, LLC
Great Plains Communications
HyVee Food Stores, Inc.
Jayhawk Boxes, Inc.
Marlin and Marla Brabec
Nye Health Services
Omaha Public Power District
1Platte Valley Bank
1S2 Roll-offs, LLC
Shaw, Hull & Navarrette, CPA's
Taylor & Martin, Inc.
Thompson Construction, Inc.
US Bank
Walnut Radio, LLC

TIER IV

Abe Krasne Furnishings
All Metals Market, Inc..
Butler Ag
Cecilia and Andrew Harry
Eakes Office Solutions
Fremont Contract Carriers
Fremont Family YMCA
Fremont Tribune
Hills Farm, Inc.
Inspro Insurance
Lou's Sporting Goods
Moostash Joe Tours, Inc.
Olsson Associates
Pathfinder Farm Management

P & H Electric
Premier Staffing
Royal Canin
Sampters

EDUCATORS

Fremont Public Schools
Metropolitan Community College
Midland University

PUBLIC PARTNERS

City of Fremont
Department of Utilities
Dodge County

BUSINESS ATTRACTION & EXPANSION

Fremont... Here. We. Grow. in our continued business attraction and expansion efforts. 2020 saw sustained capital investments - largely due to the growth of our local businesses. Their commitment to Fremont and our region is commendable and GFDC has worked diligently to help in every way possible.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- GFDC processed 8 requests for site and building funds from the state economic development department. These funds are tied to job creation and are designed for businesses looking for matching grants to build and/or expand.
- RTG Medical – broke ground on a 56,000 sq foot facility. GFDC helped RTG Medical to obtain new market tax credits to fund their building expansion. They are investing \$18 million and will be creating 200 jobs!
- Wholystone Farms is investing \$300 million in their expansion and creating 500 jobs!

- Ele Metal is creating 5 to 10 new jobs with their expansion.
- Summit Medical Staffing started with 10 workers and are already doubling their staff while building a headquarters in Fremont in the business park.
- Project Protein is investing 47 million in capital investment for their manufacturing, warehousing, and cold storage facility and creating 100 jobs!

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Business Retention and Expansion meetings were virtual this year with Kelsey jumping in to connect virtually with 105+ businesses. GFDC also conducted a business survey to determine where businesses were at and what challenges they were facing in light of COVID-19. Their responses gave us the insight we needed to identify ways to support them virtually.

36

LEADS

5

NEW PROJECTS

\$1.5

BILLION IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

2,000+

JOBS CREATED

289

BUSINESS EXPANSIONS

105

BR&E VISITS





WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & PREPAREDNESS

GFDC IS COMMITTED TO CREATING & COLLABORATING ON PROGRAMMING

Fremont Talent Ready Initiative - the Manufacturing 30/30 group made up of industry, education & workforce service partners is an ongoing initiative with strong support from the community. This group supports Dream It. Do It. by aligning with the Greater Omaha Region Dream It. Do It. group who is leading the way to bringing career pathway awareness to students in the region through partnerships, technology & a traveling STEM Trailer.

CAREER PLACEMENT ACADEMY

The Career Placement Academy is being launched to help people go through a one or two week training to prepare them to enter the workforce. Existing companies can meet with participants and hire them on the spot. We launched the pilot in February 2020 and 80% of participants were hired. The academy worked so well it will now take place quarterly.

DID DRIVE THRU JOB FAIRS IN COVID

GFDC, the Chamber, our partners and businesses got creative in 2020 - finding ways to connect employers and workforce while maintaining social distancing. Thus, the Drive Thru Job Fair was born. We hosted multiple job fairs in 2020 where people could drive up and receive a packet of information from Fremont and Dodge County employers who were hiring.

QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENTS

In 2020, our community members needed support in new ways. We identified the critical needs for Greater Fremont as a result of COVID-19.

Early on it became clear that it could be difficult for some people to access the meals they needed for their families. The Grab N Go food events were started to meet this need. Over 1,000 families were fed as the Food Security Task Force and community partners donated their time and money to care for our community.

Other initiatives like the Multicultural and Inclusion Council went virtual with presentations that helped us to address the social justice tension that our country faced during 2020. We learned from speakers, heard from community members and are committed to continuing this work.



COVID-19 CRITICAL NEEDS FOR GREATER FREMONT



ADDRESSING
CHILD CARE
CONCERNS



AWARENESS OF
STATE & LOCAL
RESOURCES



WORKFORCE
AND FLATTENING
THE CURVE



ACCESS TO
FOOD FOR
FAMILIES/ELDERLY



INTERNET
ACCESS
TO CHILDREN

For more information, email us at info@fremontcodev.org

Better Together
- Greater Fremont

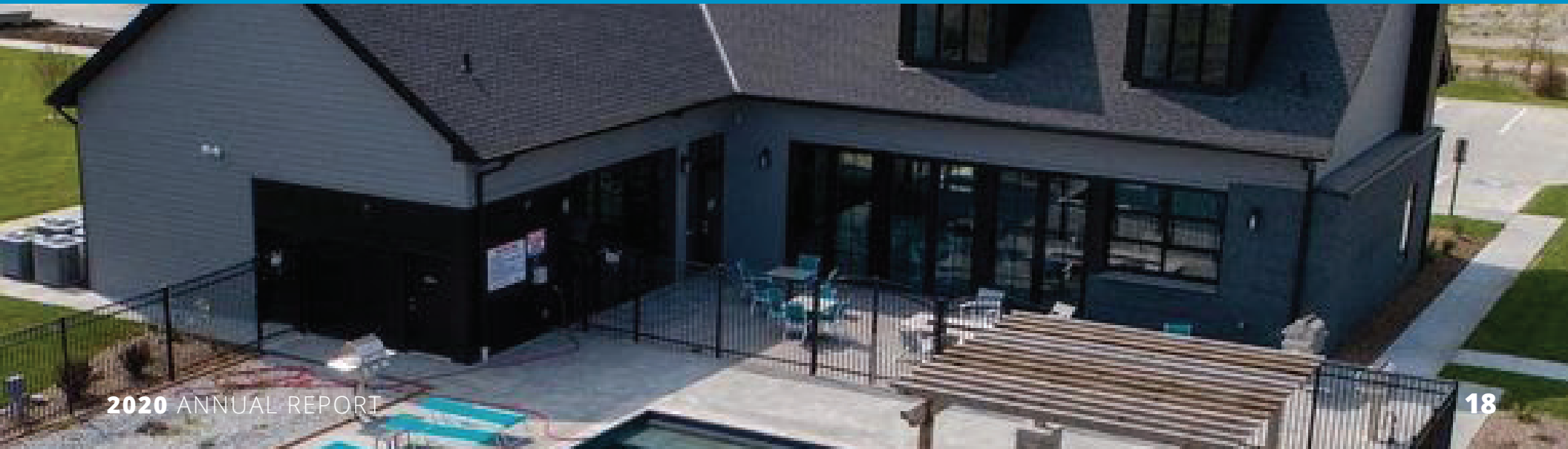




2020 HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS

Fremont and Dodge County had record housing starts over the past two years. In 2017 we did a Housing Study that showed we needed 1,500 units. We are on track to have 3,000 units developed by the end of the year. An NIFA grant was secured to update the housing study (released January '21).

- We saw the grand opening of the Fremont Commons project (originally called Morningside Crossing). 108 units were developed in phase one with GFDC contributing \$1 million to their \$15 million project. Their vacancy rate is very low and they are already building Phase II with another 108 units.
- Morningside Crossing has broken ground.
- Bluestone Commons will be close to 268 units once complete. This development will have low to moderate income housing. GFDC loaned them \$400,000 from the Here We Grow Homes Fund.
- Senior housing project on Yagar Road is being built with 270 units.
- Sun Ridge is a new mixed use development with townhomes and single family units, along with neighborhood retail.



A fresh and more aggressive five-year plan has been developed by the GFDC Board to assure that Fremont's current economic momentum continues. It is called Here We Grow 2025.

Here We Grow 2025 will step up efforts to develop a skilled workforce, and to stimulate the creation of housing options for employees to live and work in Fremont while still focusing on Business Attraction & Business Retention & Expansion. Below are our goals for our four pillars.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

GOAL: To secure new investment and support job creation through the successful attraction of new companies who do not have a location in Fremont.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

GOAL: To support our existing businesses by retaining investment and employment levels through assistance in growth and creation of new quality jobs in the Greater Fremont Area.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & PREPAREDNESS

GOAL: Ensure that our current and future workforces have the right skills to meet the needs of existing businesses and prospective businesses so that our emerging workforce choose to earn a quality living here and help the Fremont Area thrive.

QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT

GOAL: Enhance the quality of life for all current and future residents to ensure that Fremont area residents and companies have a bright future full of opportunities.

EDUCATORS

Fremont Public Schools • Midland University • Metropolitan Community College



GREATER FREMONT DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL STAFF

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