

EMBRACE
THE
MOMENTUM...

Here We Grow



GREATER
FREMONT
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN

Al Sawtelle
Board of Public Works

In 2021, our focus was to prepare for the extraordinary growth we anticipate seeing over the next decade and build upon the successes we've had in previous years. This year, the Greater Fremont Development Council (GFDC) spent a lot of time doing the legwork to prepare the community for the Port Authority application with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. GFDC dedicated its time to finding more ways to bring affordable housing developments to the region, working with the city on future land use maps, and identifying sites for additional development.

This past year was also about the community reinvesting in itself. To this end, GFDC worked closely with the city to lay a strong foundation for future growth. Highlights from 2021 included the issuing of a large school bond to allow for new and updated facilities in coming years, as well as a new Career & Technical Education Center. Additionally, the community has been working with a consultant to create a new future land use map and a unified development code that will be in play for the next several decades. GFDC and the Fremont Chamber held a business feedback meeting on the UDC proposal, sat on the steering committee, and had our site advisory group provide feedback on the comprehensive plan future land use map.

In the meantime, existing companies and local businesses have seen increased success in Fremont, giving them new opportunities to hire more personnel and make bigger community-wide investments. Wholystone Farms, a

locally-owned pork processing facility, has committed to bringing on 800 new full-time employees in 2022. Regionally, there is a strong promise of new projects that will, no doubt, contribute positively to the state's economy, specifically in Fremont and across Dodge Country. We've seen increased interest in our community and the number of companies looking to make major investments here is unprecedented.

As we prepare for 2022, GFDC's goal is to continue moving momentum from past years forward. With a strategic focus on legislation that strengthens infrastructure and accessibility for supply chains, as well as more capital investments and a commitment to attracting and retaining businesses, I know the Fremont area will continue to thrive. GFDC's dedication to developing the local workforce and ensuring a premier quality of life for the residents of our community remains strong. We look forward to finding new, innovative ways to grow our economy in 2022, driving home the message that Fremont is the place for businesses that desire a close-knit community with big-city potential.

GFDC exists thanks to the dedication of the people and businesses that call Fremont home. We could not continue to grow without the support of our board of directors and committee members, and those who tirelessly work to improve the economy and quality of life for Fremont residents. A sincere thank you to everyone who has invested their time and resources in helping us—and the greater Fremont area—**thrive**.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Joey Spellerberg • Mayor, City of Fremont

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Diers Ford Lincoln

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SECRETARY • Megan Skiles, Executive Director •
Greater Fremont Development Council

VISION 2025

GFDC's mission is to provide leadership on economic growth initiatives across the Fremont area and pursue opportunities that will result in quality job creation and retention. This past year, there were significant improvements across these areas, including new legislation aimed at aiding future economic development, multiple new housing opportunities, and an inclusive site development plan that works in tandem with the community. In 2022, we look forward to building upon this foundation and increasing opportunities for business growth, quality of life investments, and workforce preparedness.

IN FREMONT ... HERE. WE. GROW.





221 new jobs were
created in the last year

**More than \$160.5
million** in capital
investment
was committed

GFDC supported the
newly-approved **\$123
million bond** for
Fremont Public Schools

Here We Grow

In 2021, GFDC, Fremont and Dodge County continued building upon the momentum of the previous year. We successfully sought out promising opportunities for economic growth and identified new ways to attract and retain businesses in our area. We made civic engagement a priority, including the community in the decision making processes surrounding updating the city code and long-term comprehensive plan.



More than 160 new housing units came on the market in the Fremont area

Managed 5 Site & Building Development Grants for area businesses who are expanding

GFDC staff **attended several workforce development summits**

New port authority legislation paved the way for **increased economic growth** across the area

GFDC was heavily involved in the review and updates to the City of Fremont's **comprehensive plan and unified development code (UDC)**



MEET OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In September, the Greater Fremont Development Council was pleased to welcome Megan Skiles as its new Executive Director. Megan joined GFDC after five years with the Greater Omaha Chamber Economic Development Partnership, where she worked with seven counties—including Dodge County—on a variety of economic development and site selection projects. Megan was heavily involved in business recruitment and attraction, often educating organizations about Nebraska and the economic benefits available to companies looking to move here.

“Nebraska offers a unique blend of small-town community accessibility mixed with big-city transportation options that are not possible everywhere,” she explained. “The accessibility in Nebraska goes far beyond our location and infrastructure. It transcends all aspects of doing business. If you need to work with another company, you have access to their management. If you want to partner with local educators on workforce development, their door is open. If you need to speak with a policymaker or even the Governor, you can do that in Nebraska.”

If Megan’s previous success is any indication of the value she will bring to GFDC, there is no doubt that the organization will continue to flourish with her at the helm. In her first four months on the job, Megan met with more than 50 businesses, organizations, and community leaders and has plans to continue making her rounds. “What’s struck me about the community so far is the emphasis on doing business and finding solutions together,” she explained. “Community and business leaders are eager to rally around a cause to get something done and care deeply for their community. Greater Fremont is getting ready for growth and is investing in itself and its people; that is a great place to be in to help catalyze equitable opportunity and growth.”

We look forward to hearing Megan’s ideas and are excited to seek new opportunities under her leadership that will drive sustainable growth for GFDC and the communities it serves.

“Nebraska offers a unique blend of small-town community accessibility mixed with big-city transportation options that are not possible everywhere.”



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, Lamme, Hillis,
Mitchell, Schulz,
Hartmann & Wilson, 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

Platte Valley Bank

S2 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 2021, there were several developments that will impact how the community grows into the future, including key capital investments and legislation that will set the stage for economic development across the community for the next decade.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

The city of Fremont hired an urban planning and design firm to review and propose recommendations to the city's existing Comprehensive Plan, including the Unified Development Code (UDC) and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). During these updates, the code will be streamlined and simplified, and the permitting process will become faster. GFDC was invited to sit on the steering committee created to allow community members the opportunity to hear the recommendations and propose their own ideas. Updating the comprehensive plan will help attract new opportunities for development.

GFDC created the site Targeted Advisory Group (TAG) to help identify land for development. The committee, led by GFDC Executive Director Megan Skiles, locates sites for a variety of projects ranging between 20,000 to 200,000 square feet.

Nebraska's Department of Economic Development was more aggressive in going after key legislation that would make big impacts across the area. Between the Port Authority Bill and Rural Rail Development Bill, Fremont will have mechanisms to help develop infrastructure and go after larger projects.

Existing corporations, like Lincoln Premium Poultry and Wholystone Farms, attracted the attention of auxiliary businesses wanting to cluster near Fremont's established industries, bringing new interested parties to the area. Lincoln Premium Poultry is Costco's chicken processing plant, and in 2021, it accounted for 1% of Nebraska's gross domestic product (GDP).

\$160.5

MILLION IN CAPITAL
INVESTMENT

221

JOB'S CREATED



21

ACTIVE PROJECTS

6

LANDED PROJECTS

42

NEW PROJECTS

52

BR&E VISITS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SCHOOL BOND AIMED AT RENOVATION AND UPGRADES PASSED

The Fremont Public Schools system secured a \$123 million dollar bond that will fund necessary elementary and high school renovations, a new career and technical education center, and increased technology, safety, and security measures for students and faculty.

GFDC PARTICIPATES IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Kelsey Martinez, GFDC's Director of Business Services, attended the ACT Workforce Summit, where she garnered practical insights to help improve the Fremont community. Martinez and Lauren Foster, GFDC's Director of Quality of Life, also attended the Diversity and Inclusion Summit in Columbus, where they discussed professional opportunities to connect workforce challenges to resources rooted in diversity, equity and inclusion. GFDC representatives also spoke with high school students about leadership at Nebraska's Jobs for America's Grads (JAG) organization.



QUALITY OF LIFE

G FDC representatives participated in the Fremont Chamber of Commerce Leadership program, presenting to students during Economic Development Day and working with high school juniors on community-centric projects.

The City of Fremont also celebrated its first ever Fremont Hispanic Festival, which included a parade, family-friendly activities, and a diverse display of ethnic foods and performances. GFDC's Multicultural and Inclusion Council welcomed more than 1,000 attendees throughout the festivities. This allowed us to demonstrate, as a community, that we embrace and celebrate people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Plans are already underway for the 2022 celebration, which promises to be bigger and better than ever.



HOUSING

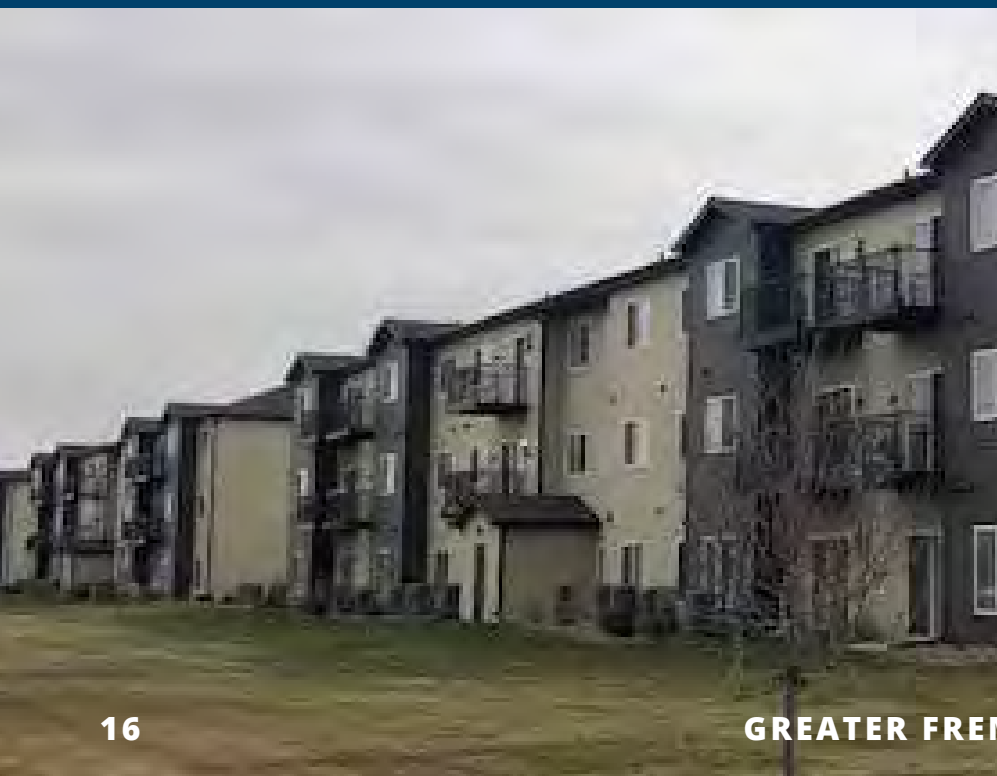
The State of Nebraska was gifted \$108 million this year for Disaster Relief efforts caused by winter storm Ulmer and \$30 million are allocated toward housing resiliency. The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority also began work on the Housing Credit Allocation Plan for low-income housing tax credits. Public hearings on the matter will begin in early 2022 and applications will likely be accepted in March.

We saw the completion of the first 25-row houses in Bluestem Commons, which are now taking leases.

Demolition and framing began at the Lofts @ 505. Units are expected to be completed in Summer 2022. They have secured the first couple of leases for the units.

Phase 2 of building at the Fremont Commons complete and Phase 3 is coming in 2022. Fremont Commons is currently 88% leased with half of residents establishing new roots in Fremont.

The Site TAG committee worked to identify possible sites that could accommodate housing projects in the future.



INITIATIVES RECAP

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.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

WITH SO MANY NEW INITIATIVES HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY, IT IS A GREAT TIME TO THINK BIG AND GO AFTER PROMISING GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES. THE FUTURE IN FREMONT LOOKS BRIGHT, AND WE ARE EXCITED FOR ALL OF THE DEVELOPMENTS COMING IN 2022.

GFDC will continue to feed off of Megan Skiles' new ideas as she settles into her role as Executive Director.

The momentum from the port authority and rail site development bills, as well as Fremont's location as a manufacturing and logistics hub, will open the community up to new advancements and opportunities for economic growth.

With the passing of the school bond, Fremont High School and the Metropolitan Community College will be partnering to provide instruction at the new career and technical center, which will utilize \$9 million of the \$123 million allocated funds. GFDC will be heavily involved in helping form industry advisory groups for the new career and technical education programs.

Local employers, like Wholestone Farms and Lincoln Premium Poultry, will continue to invest in workforce growth and development. Wholestone says it will hire 800 new full-time employees in the new year.

GFDC's Kelsey Martinez, in partnership with the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce and the Fremont Creative Collaborative, is working on the Small Business Education Series, which will be focused around education and entrepreneurship. The series will welcome local businesses and start-ups to hour-long classes and workshops for topics focused on running a small business.

Fremont has retained the services of Houseal Lavigne, an urban planning and design firm based in Chicago, to help with updating the city's Comprehensive Plan, including reviewing the Unified Development Code (UDC) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The city's comprehensive plan will set the stage for the next 20+ years of future growth and development in Fremont.

A PORT AUTHORITY IN LANDLOCKED NEBRASKA?

During the 2021 Nebraska Legislative Session, a bill was passed into law creating the Nebraska Municipal Inland Port Authority Act. Greater Fremont Development Council, in partnership with City and County leaders, immediately began working behind the scenes to start forging a path for this opportunity in the community. At the end of January, the Fremont City Council and Dodge County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an interlocal agreement allowing the region to pursue Nebraska's Municipal Inland Port Authority Act, designating an area and mechanism for industrial development, and taking the first step towards becoming one of five Port Authorities that will be created across the state.

Since then there has been plenty of conversation about how establishing a Port Authority will be transformational for Fremont and Dodge County, but what exactly is a Port Authority?

In short, the Port Authority is its own quasi-governmental body with certain powers over a set geography boundary (the Port Authority District). These powers create a mechanism for the funding and development of infrastructure. The mission of the Port Authority is to give Nebraska a needed

economic development tool to create and develop large industrial sites and attract business to the state.

SO WHY NOW?

Year over year, more companies and businesses have been looking at Fremont and Dodge County as an opportunity for growth and expansion, and there are many things that are attracting these companies to Nebraska communities, however there have been a number of quality projects we have lost to out-of-state communities, who have the ability to deliver sites and the necessary infrastructure in a shorter timeline.

Fortunately, the Nebraska Municipal Inland Port Authority Act were passed into law to help Nebraska communities to be more competitive and increase our odds of success. It will allow our region to begin planning and give us a tool to think ahead of development, instead of being reactionary.

In today's global supply chain crisis, site selection is really a site elimination process and speed-to-market is the game changer. This is a timely initiative that will position Dodge County, Nebraska to respond to the global supply chain crisis and position ourselves as a solution to the problem.

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