

## ADVANCE NOW: STRATEGY GOAL AREAS, OBJECTIVES & KEY ACTIONS

### Important Introductory Notes:

- *The Strategy is designed to be comprehensive, providing a proactive plan for addressing the region's most pressing current and future needs.*
- *Some recommendations do incorporate existing efforts within the region that must be scaled to the larger region, enhanced, or aligned with Advance Now and other initiatives and entities.*
- *Recommendations contained within the draft Strategy do not necessarily fall within the current capacity of Thrive or any other single organization.*

The **Advance Now** Strategy is organized into five interrelated goal areas intentioned to advance the region's existing assets and build future opportunities and competitive capacity over the five-year course of **Advance Now** implementation:



## ADVANCE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

---

**Through a comprehensive regional approach to economic development and the strategic pursuit of job creation and business growth in five target clusters, the Madison Region will be a place with diverse, quality employment opportunities and viable, successful businesses.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Build value-added critical capacities and coordination to advance successful economic development efforts.
2. Engage in strategic, target-focused economic development activities to further develop and strengthen the Madison Region's target sectors and clusters.
3. Fully develop and formalize a business retention and expansion (BRE) program actively supported by all regional and state partners.
4. Pursue infrastructure developments that further enhance the competitiveness and connectivity of the region's target sectors.
5. Take action on bold improvements to the region's business climate.

### **Key activities in this goal area include:**

- Enhance business retention and expansion efforts and leverage existing firms to attract new companies to the region.
- Develop several shovel-ready permitted sites and other expedited development incentives—including streamlined permitting and regulatory processes at the state and local levels—to increase the efficiency of regional business growth.
- Expand professional development and research capacity for regional economic development practitioners.
- Increase collaboration and partnerships among local economic development organizations in the region.
- Develop and launch regional business cluster councils for businesses and stakeholders in the Madison Region's five target sectors.

## ADVANCE HUMAN CAPITAL

---

**The Madison Region will grow and attract top talent through a coordinated pipeline, while the current and future workforce will meet and exceed the expectations of firms and business clusters that are starting up, expanding, and locating in the region.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Forge strong partnerships between educators, parents, students, and regional businesses.
2. Align education and workforce development efforts with target sector initiatives.
3. Strategically identify educational attainment disparities and close racial and socioeconomic performance gaps among students in the Madison Region.
4. Fully engage the higher education institutions in regional economic development efforts.
5. Attract and retain talent critical to maintaining the Madison Region's competitive advantage.
6. Develop, enhance, and maintain regional quality of place assets and amenities to attract and retain talent.

### **Key actions in this goal area include:**

- Advocate for increased business and community funding and other support for public schools.
- Continue to coordinate cluster-based career training pipelines in regional education and workforce development organizations, and align diploma, certificate, and degree programs with employer needs.
- Launch an annual regional education summit to address major educational changes facing the region as well as opportunities for innovation.
- Develop stronger institutional collaborations between UW–Madison and other higher education institutions in the region.
- Partner with real estate and human resources professionals to address challenges like low regional wages, high housing costs, and high living costs that impede talent attraction and retention efforts.

## ADVANCE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

---

**Entrepreneurs and small businesses in the Madison Region will have access to world-class capital, support services, and management tools in order to productively grow operations and access new markets.**

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Enhance entrepreneur and small business capacity to access capital in the region, including seed capital, gap financing, angel investment, and venture capital.
2. Further develop and promote a culture of entrepreneurship throughout the region.
3. Develop, expand, and advance entrepreneurial networks and support to nurture a robust regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.
4. Drive productive innovation through the pursuit of additional technology transfer and commercialization opportunities for startup firms.

### Key actions in this goal area include:

- Promote high-potential firms to possible investors, maintaining an updated list of startups with strong growth potential.
- Champion further private sector technology transfer and commercialization.
- Instill a culture of entrepreneurship in the region's young talent through entrepreneurial education, experience, and mentoring.
- Promote an innovative culture in "traditional" workplace settings.
- Nurture relationships and networks that support interaction among, and cultivation of, entrepreneurs and small business owners.

## ADVANCE THE MADISON REGION'S STORY

---

**The Madison Region will effectively develop visionary internal and external marketing efforts to become globally recognized as a competitive and distinctive place for businesses, talent, and quality of life.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Leverage an internal marketing message to build consensus and understanding about quality regional economic development.
2. Create and control an external marketing identity for the Madison Region.
3. Address and dispel the perception of “business unfriendliness” in the Madison Region and Wisconsin.
4. Create new opportunities and develop existing events and assets as launching pads for drawing attention to the Madison Region.

### **Key activities in this goal area include:**

- Launch a national public relations campaign for the Madison Region, including earned media placement and leveraging executives and researchers as national experts and the faces of the region.
- Create and implement a relatable, regionwide internal marketing and branding initiative.
- Ramp up current events in the region—such as the Forward Technology Festival—to larger audiences, higher levels of promotion and engagement, and spinoff association potential.
- Engage top executives to serve as regional ambassadors for external business prospects considering relocation to the Madison Region and to become the “face” of the region in national PR efforts.

## **ADVANCE REGIONAL COOPERATION, LEADERSHIP, AND DIVERSITY**

---

**The Madison Region will fully engage its diverse constituencies and establish partnerships that enhance regional collaboration and demonstrate a consensus approach to shape the eight-county region's economic future.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Further focus regional and local programs that support inclusivity, diversity, and minority engagement in economic and community development.
2. Address and embrace the region's emerging and historic diversity.
3. Leverage the Madison Region's present and future leaders in proactive, long-term regional community improvement and engagement efforts.

### **Key actions in this goal area include:**

- Better link urban, suburban, and rural areas and the diverse range of communities in the eight counties under the banner of the Madison Region.
- Develop and sustain mentoring and networking opportunities between young professionals and mid-career and established regional leaders.
- Improve minority participation on boards, commissions, and other community leadership opportunities through outreach and education.
- Host an annual regional diversity summit to address both new and historic components of diversity across the eight counties.
- Create a regional leadership council of top "influencers" representing broad constituencies to take a unified leadership approach to major issues and challenges in the Madison Region.