

Economic Development

We are focused on making the West Metro the most attractive and supportive place to do business in the State of Minnesota. The diversity of businesses in our footprint and meeting their specific needs is something that sets us at MRC apart from the rest. We will support:

- Protecting **industrial land** through policies that maintain its tax base and support the retention and creation of local jobs critical to the region’s economic vitality.
- Cultivating **regional entertainment assets** by advocating for investments that boost visitation, local spending, and economic vitality around arenas, theaters, and museums.
- Enabling cities statewide to **establish social districts**, creating designated areas for open container consumption to grow local economies.

Housing

Accessible, affordable, and realistic housing policies are key to ensuring growth for our region over the next decade. We are interested in and support policies that are mindful of:

- Supporting state-level **preemption of rent control** to encourage housing development and investment in rental properties.
- Maintaining and growing **accessible home ownership** all residents that supports a diverse and growing workforce
- Keeping in mind Minnesota’s **glaring racial disparities** in homeownership and prioritizing opportunities for generational wealth creation
- **Alleviating homelessness**, resulting encampments, and intentional solutions for the chronically unhoused and those suffering unmitigated addiction
- Advocating for the **CUB Tax Credit**, a 30% tax credit for qualifying building expenses, to incentivize commercial-to-residential conversions in underutilized spaces

Public Safety

We advocate for a region where crime statistics and the public perceptions of safety match. The economic vitality of our region depends on the assurance of public safety in our communities and as such MRC supports policies that:

- **Strengthen public safety** by supporting officer recruitment, business–law enforcement partnerships and linking homeless individuals to stable housing and services
- **Reduce encampments** and vagrancy throughout the region by supporting access to permanent housing, along with increased investments in mental health services, effective addiction treatment, and ample emergency shelters
- **Accelerate downtown revitalization** by partnering with city officials to fund increased patrols, enhanced lighting, and public space improvements that boost the overall business economy and street-front ecosystem

Regulations and Tax Environment

Decreasing barriers to entry and ensuring that all businesses and their operators have the chance to grow is a primary directive of the Chamber. We will push streamlining of regulations and prioritize transparency, speed, and ease for businesses. We will advocate for a fair and competitive tax/regulatory environment, ensuring that the region and its cities are not at a disadvantage by placing themselves on an island that is distinctly hostile to business. We will accomplish these objectives by taking the following actions:

- We will work to **ensure that local and county policies are consistent** with state law as they relate to a competitive business environment
- **Opposing new employer mandates**, such as inconsistent minimum wage levels and predictive scheduling, that increase compliance costs and create uncertainty for businesses.
- Opposing redundant, imbalanced and capricious **Labor Standards Boards** that could create additional regulatory burdens for employers and erode control over the due course of business models in a free market system
- Pursuing legislation that encourages **voluntary business adoption of sustainability practices** through incentives and support, not penalties
- **Opposing new laws, rules, fees, or taxes** that would slow the construction and deployment of broadband networks or make access more expensive for businesses and residents.

Talent and Workforce

Access to a diverse, skilled workforce is an essential tool for business growth. We support public policies that prioritize efforts to help employers attract and retain employees, while also allowing employers the flexibility to meet the needs of their companies and employees. This includes:

- **Expanding workforce access through training programs** and partnerships with schools and businesses to build pipelines for all industries.
- **Support and promote ongoing leadership development programs** throughout the region to ensure we're developing and retaining important young and emerging talent.