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WASECA VISION 2030

SCENARIO-BASED THINK TANK WORKSHOP

May 25, 2017



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This report summarizes the half-day scenario planning session held in Waseca, Minnesota, on May 25, 2017. Approximately 60 Waseca stakeholders, community members, council members, and city staff participated in the workshop and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of a collaborative project of the Business & Entrepreneurial Support Team (B.E.S.T.) of Waseca County, the City of Waseca, Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce, Waseca County, the Waseca Mayo Clinic, and Waseca Public Schools. The project aims to establish a community vision, along with values, a strategic implementation plan, and action plans.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

future→iQ

WORKSHOP HOSTED BY:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The scenario planning work presented in this report was conducted as part of a collaborative project led by B.E.S.T. of Waseca County, Minnesota.

The components of this planning work included pre-Think Tank surveys, experiential learning by playing The Future Game, long-term Scenario Planning, and discussion about preferred futures.

- **Pre-Think-Tank Surveys** – A survey was sent to invited participants of the scenario-planning workshop, and this input, along with assistance from City staff and the Steering Committee helped to create the axes of the scenario matrix and guide the workshop discussions.
- **Waseca Vision 2030 Future Think-Tank Workshop** – The scenario-based planning workshop held on May 25, 2017, provided an important opportunity to engage Waseca stakeholders, community members, Council Members and City staff in a critical dialogue about the future and changing dynamics of Waseca County.

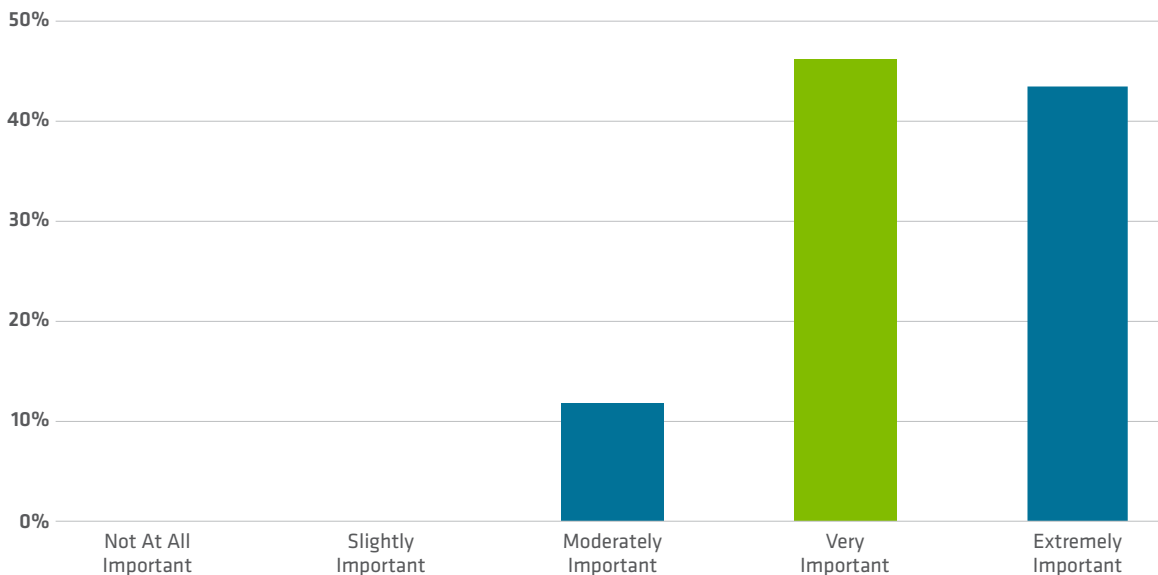




2.0 STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

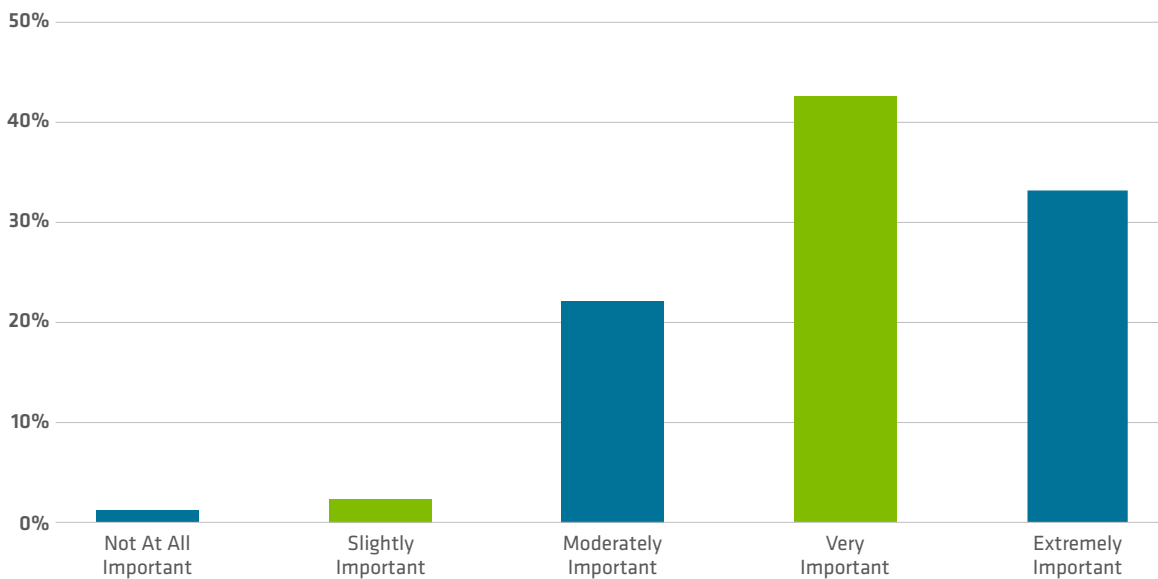
Prior to the planning workshop, surveys were conducted. Workshop participants were asked about their views on having a shared vision for the future of Waseca. The following graphs show a high level of importance placed on having a shared vision for Waseca, and the importance of having a shared vision in decision-making, both at work and in respondents' personal lives.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR WASECA COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO HAVE A SHARED VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY?

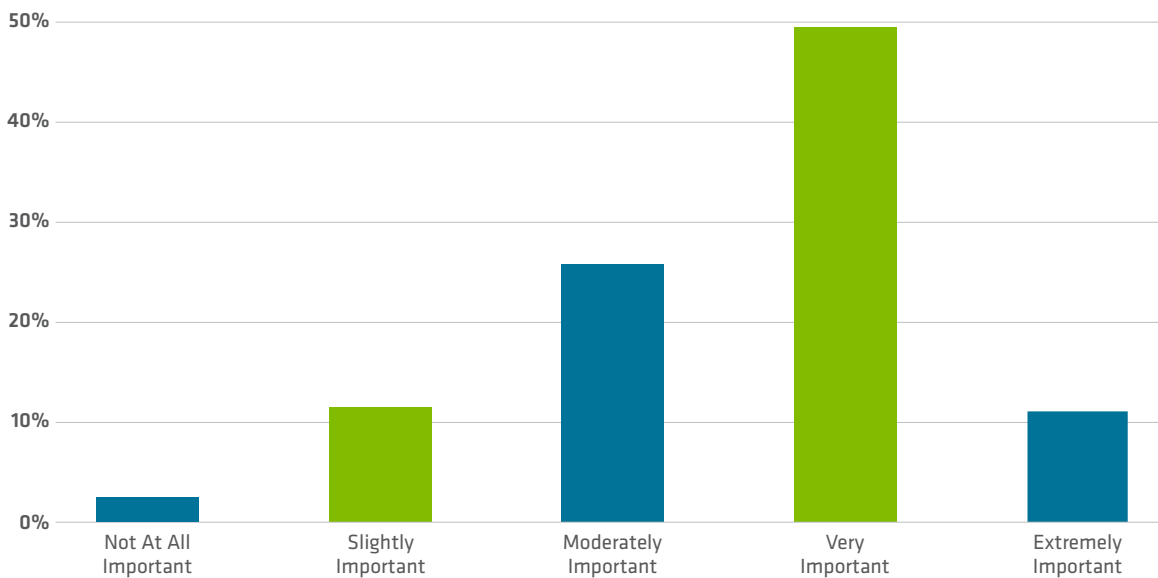




FOR MAKING DECISIONS AT YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION FOR WHICH YOU WORK, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO HAVE A SHARED VISION FOR WASECA?



FOR MAKING DECISIONS IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO HAVE A SHARED VISION FOR WASECA?





3.0 SCENARIO PLANNING

The Waseca Vision 2030 scenario-based planning workshop was conducted on May 25, 2017, and included invited community members, stakeholders, City Council Members and City Staff. This half-day workshop was attended by approximately 60 participants. The workshop was intended to assist in the understanding of future drivers that affect Waseca and to build cohesion around a unified vision for the community.

3.1 SCENARIO-BASED PLANNING WORKSHOP

B.E.S.T. of Waseca County contracted Future iQ and LHB to design and deliver a future orientated planning workshop to facilitate the understanding of the drivers that impact the Waseca community. The workshop began with participants playing The Future Game. The game was participatory, with each table group acting as its own planning entity. The purpose of the game was to show how decisions at all stages of planning affect the future. The experiential and collaborative experience of the game created the setting for the next part of the workshop involving education about future trends and global conditions, and ultimately the opportunity for participants to explore scenario planning for Waseca. Future iQ's Scenario Planning process provides a method to explore plausible futures and consider the implications of various future scenarios. The process aims to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making.
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape Waseca over the next ten to 20 years.
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for the Waseca community.
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision.



The scenarios developed during this Scenario Planning process and outlined in this report are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key actions for Waseca and in identifying how various groups might best contribute to future developments. The design of the workshop included a presentation and discussion about key forces shaping the future at both global and local levels. These exercises and work were aimed to build a robust basis for the scenario formulation. Participants were then guided through a Scenario Planning process to develop four plausible scenarios for the future of Waseca. The process involved exploration and discussion of global, regional, and local trends and forces of change; development of a scenario matrix defining four plausible scenarios spaces for the future and, the development of descriptive narratives of each scenario. The event concluded with discussion of the scenarios, selection of a preferred scenario, and first steps to determine the strategic actions required to create the preferred scenario.

3.2 DEVELOPING FOUR PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

Waseca community members, stakeholders, and City Council Members and staff explored the future and developed plausible future scenarios, looking out as far as 2030.

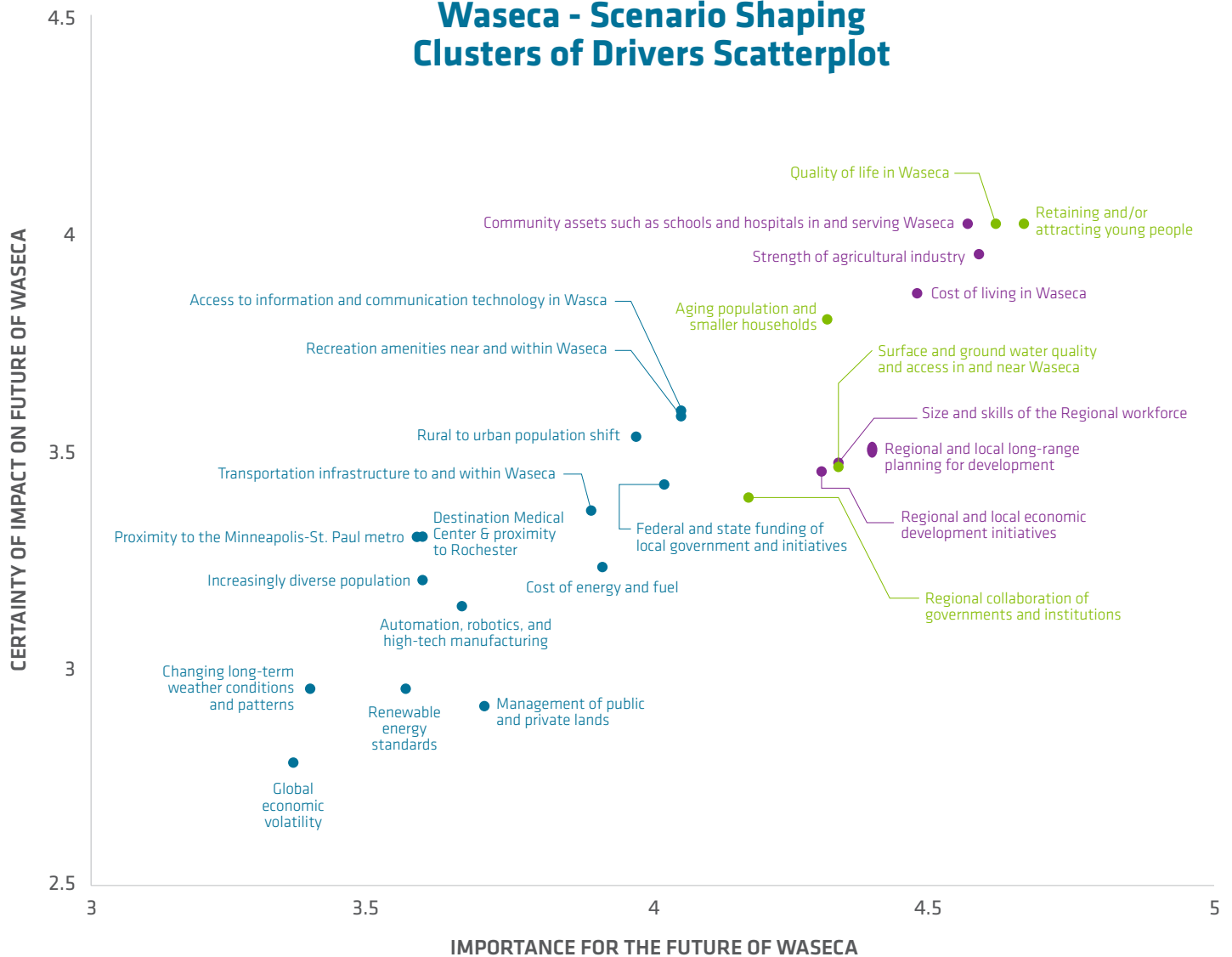
3.2.1 DRIVERS SHAPING THE FUTURE

With the background of the global, national, and regional forces and how they relate to Waseca, participants were invited to respond to a survey prior to the workshop. The survey sought to gain insight into what participants believe to be the key drivers of the community of Waseca and specifically how to address resource allocation.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance of drivers in relationship to the future of Waseca. In addition, respondents were asked how certain they were about the drivers' potential impact on Waseca. The resulting scatter plot helped identify two clusters. In addition, the respondents were asked to indicate if they thought the driver would overall be a positive or negative influence on the future of Waseca. The driver names colored in blue represented those viewed as a strong positive impact, and those in red a strong negative impact.



Waseca - Scenario Shaping Clusters of Drivers Scatterplot



The green and purple coded clusters of drivers indicate those that were highest in importance and certainty of impact. These two clusters were used to define the scenario axes in the following section. Most drivers were seen to have a potential positive impact on the future, with the exception of 'Aging population and smaller households', and the 'Rural to urban population shifts' which were seen to have potential negative impacts on the future of Waseca.



Creating scenario spaces – four plausible scenarios for the future

Based on the pre-Think-Tank responses and the scatter plot and identified clusters in the previous section, themes, were identified to become the basis for two major axes on the scenario matrix that define four scenario 'spaces'. These spaces were used to formulate four plausible scenarios.

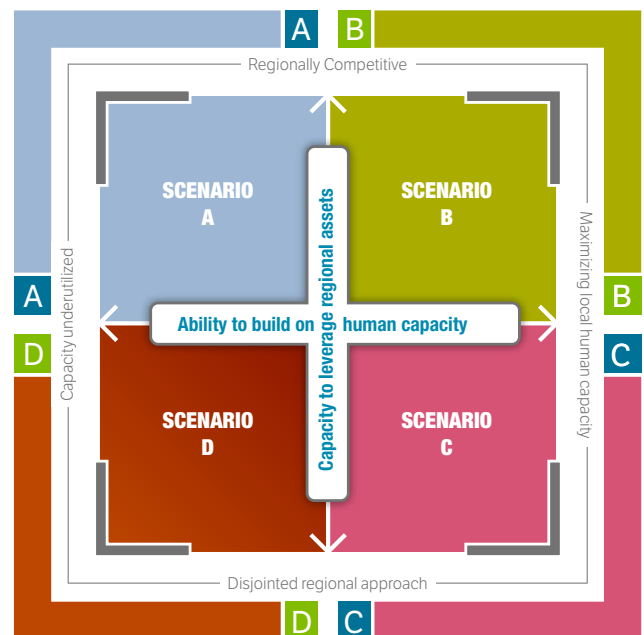
The two axes identified, and the associated drivers from the scatterplot were:

Ability to build on human capacity

- Retaining and/or attracting young people
- Quality of life in Waseca
- Aging population and smaller households
- Regional collaboration of governments and institutions

Capacity to leverage regional assets

- Community assets such as schools and hospitals
- Strength of agriculture
- Cost of living in Waseca
- Regional and long-range planning for development
- Regional and local economic development initiatives



Workshop participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by the two major axes of 'Ability to build on human capacity' and 'Capacity to leverage regional assets' (see diagram). Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each axes. While these end points do not necessarily represent two extremes on a linear continuum, they are distinct enough to suggest some degree of separation and a plausible range



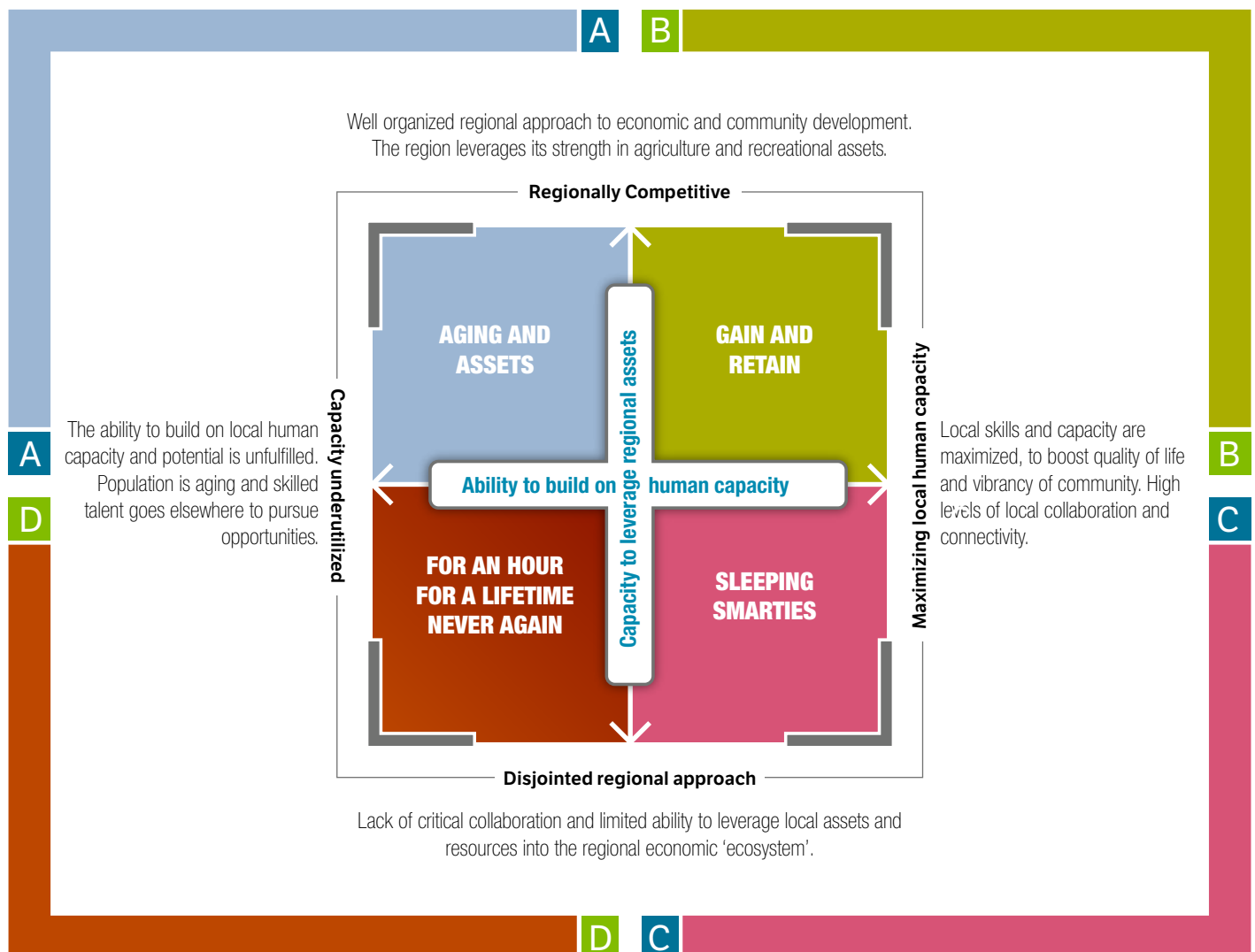
of outcomes between them. The four quadrants (scenario spaces) based on different combinations of the two cluster themes, were reviewed and discussed with the workshop participants. This discussion explored the description of the end points included in each scenario space, the possible interaction between these drivers, and how they formed the axes that defined the four scenario spaces. Participants were asked to consider the main attributes of each of the quadrants and to begin to speculate about how changing societal attitudes and behavior and the impacts of technology and policy would look in a future based on each of the quadrants.

3.2.2 SCENARIO MATRIX – VIEWS OF THE FUTURE

Event participants were randomly allocated to one of four groups and asked to formulate a scenario for their respective quadrant. Each group was asked to describe characteristics of the following dimensions of Waseca in 2030 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given in terms of the triple-bottom line of social, economic, and environmental characteristics.

Additionally, they were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2020, 2025, and 2030 and to give their scenario a descriptive name. Once the scenarios had been developed, each group reported back, describing their scenario to the other workshop participants. Each group's notes for their scenario and the description were used to produce the detailed narrative for each scenario. Below is the scenario matrix showing the names of each scenario as described by the workshop participants.

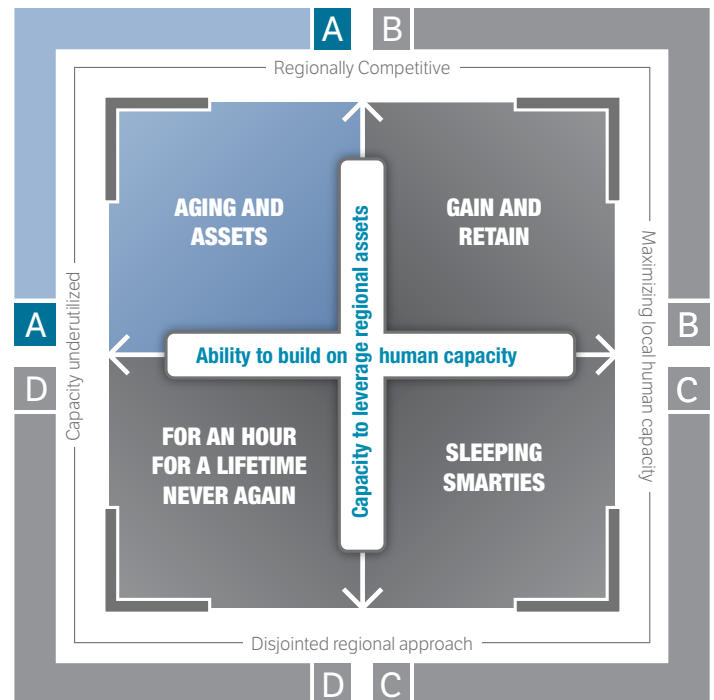
These four scenarios paint very different plausible futures for Waseca. The workshop participants considered them all as largely plausible futures, as in, they could actually happen. Narratives and descriptions of each scenario, as developed by the workshop participants, are included in the following section. Each scenario has its subsequent consequences and impacts on Waseca – impacting the community, services, and organizational fabric in different ways. No one future is the ‘perfect’ future, as each comes with its attendant challenges and implications. The process, however, does provide a way to tease out the future scenarios and examine them from a speculative standpoint. They represent different possibilities for the future, and are not predictions.





3.3 SCENARIO A – AGING AND ASSETS

On a regional basis, Waseca is competitive and is able to leverage its agricultural and recreational assets to the extent that it can find and attract a skilled workforce in these sectors. With an aging population, the tax base is reducing and more affordable housing is needed for those on fixed incomes. A shrinking population also means an inability to build on local human capacity and younger workers are seeking jobs elsewhere making Waseca a bedroom community. Infrastructure issues are degrading quality of life and skilled workers who don't work in agriculture and recreation are forced to relocate for jobs.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic Characteristics

- Shrinking Population
- Aging Population
- Agriculture and Tourism strong
- Low wage jobs
- Automation

Social Characteristics

- Increase in crime
- Healthcare issue
- Less connection with community
- Lack of skilled workers
- Low income housing
- Quality of life may diminish
- Bedroom community

Environmental Characteristics

- Great park system (trail/lake)
- Land rich
- Water quality and infrastructure issues
- Agricultural pollution



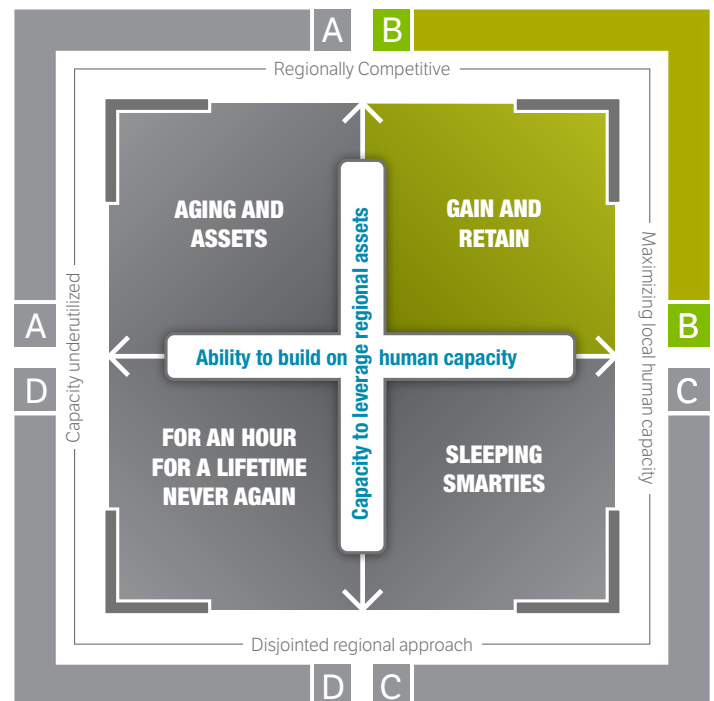
AGING AND ASSETS - HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2025	2030
Economic	<i>QuadGraphics goes all robotic</i>	<i>'Livingroom farming' first full robotic tractor</i>	<i>Waseca hospital to close</i>
Social	<i>Tom Lee leaves Waseca schools; moves to Mankato schools</i>	<i>Crime and drugs on high increase</i>	<i>Population falls to 5,000</i>
Environment	<i>Soil quality improves to create higher yields</i>	<i>Trail system connects to New Richland and Waterville</i>	<i>Final collapse of Waseca sewer system</i>



3.4 SCENARIO B – GAIN AND RETAIN

Waseca is both maximizing local human capacity and leveraging its regional assets. High skilled workers are able to live and work in Waseca and there is a high level of collaboration and connectivity between industry sectors. Quality of life is high and infrastructure keeps up with the demands of population increases. Technology advances including alternative energy sources enhance quality of life including clean water and drainage for farming systems. Proper sanitation and drainage systems are emphasized in water management policies.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic Characteristics

- More food production, processing and distribution
- More food distribution (restaurants and factory)
- Broader housing opportunities (rezoning, annexing, abatements)
- Alternative energy (Agriculture, wind, solar)
- Economic land use: development

Social Characteristics

- Highly skilled workers
- Higher incomes / increased median incomes
- Active art community
- Higher quality of living
- Greater diversity

Environmental Characteristics

- Clean lake water
- Proper sanitation/drainage
- Active education
- Incentives for 'green' activities
- Increased pollutants from more people mitigated



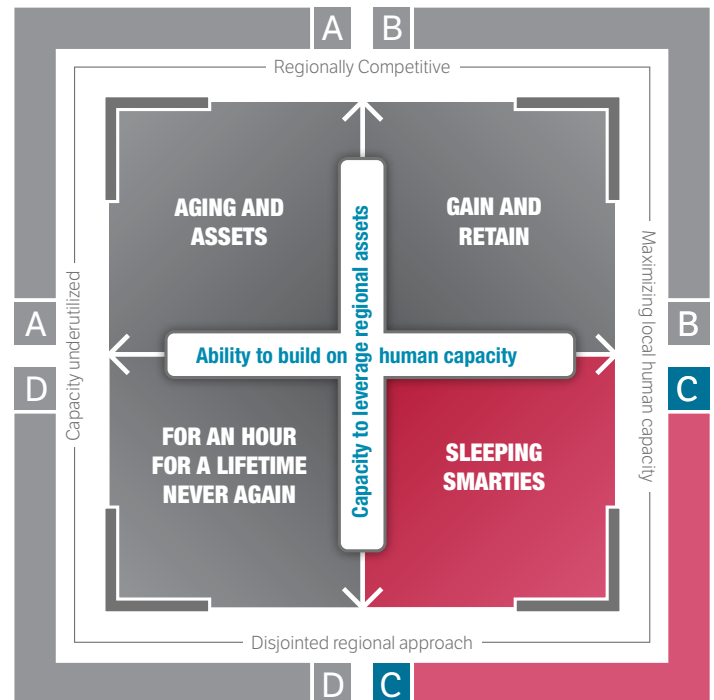
GAIN AND RETAIN - HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2025	2030
Economic	<i>New businesses: Retention</i>	<i>Lower cost of living</i>	<i>Tax rebates</i>
Social	<i>New ball park / Bike trails</i>	<i>Theatre arts season begins</i>	<i>'Walking town' (enchanted downtown)</i>
Environment	<i>New parks/trails</i>	<i>City composts/recycling</i>	<i>Clear Lake in clear – Top news: 2" Rain – No Houses Flooded!</i>



3.5 SCENARIO C – SLEEPING SMARTIES

The Waseca community is utilizing and growing its local human capacity well, but is failing to market this capacity to leverage its assets in the region. Over time this failure leads to economic isolation and a significantly reduced local economy. The focus on human capacity leads to Waseca being an exporter of talent, but fails to result in economic diversity and growth within the community. The economic isolation results in a community where commuting out of town for work is the norm, and business is limited to providing basic services and needs, increasing the tax burden on residents. Community assets such as the lakes and recreational opportunities are enhanced for resident use and enjoyment, but are not leveraged to bring in business and visitors.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic Characteristics

- Agricultural moved out
- Business – limited retail and service
- Manufacturing gone
- Elder care increasing
- Economic Isolation
- Tax burdened home owners
- Local healthcare limited
- Lack of jobs for resident retention
- Remote workers thrive

Social Characteristics

- Strong Schools
- Services for resident enjoyment
- Value Education
- Government Quality of Life Good (parks, trails, lakes)
- Limited expansion focus
- Students leaving after school
- Aging population – Increase services

Environmental Characteristics

- Disjointed, inconsistent community development
- Lakes improved but costly and short-term fixes
- Parks & Recreation always catching up
- Environmental considerations vs. property rights
- No expanded access to natural resources



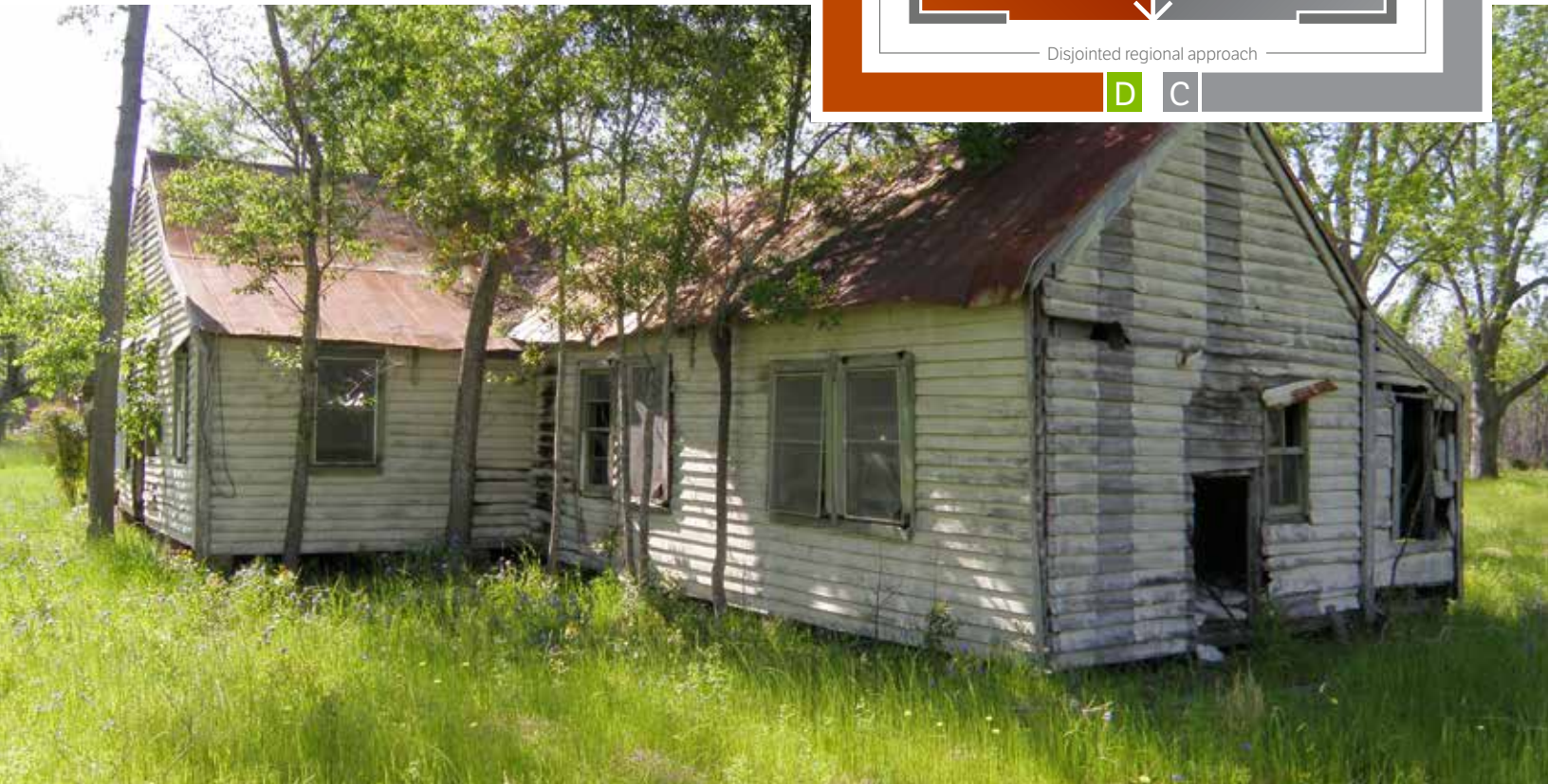
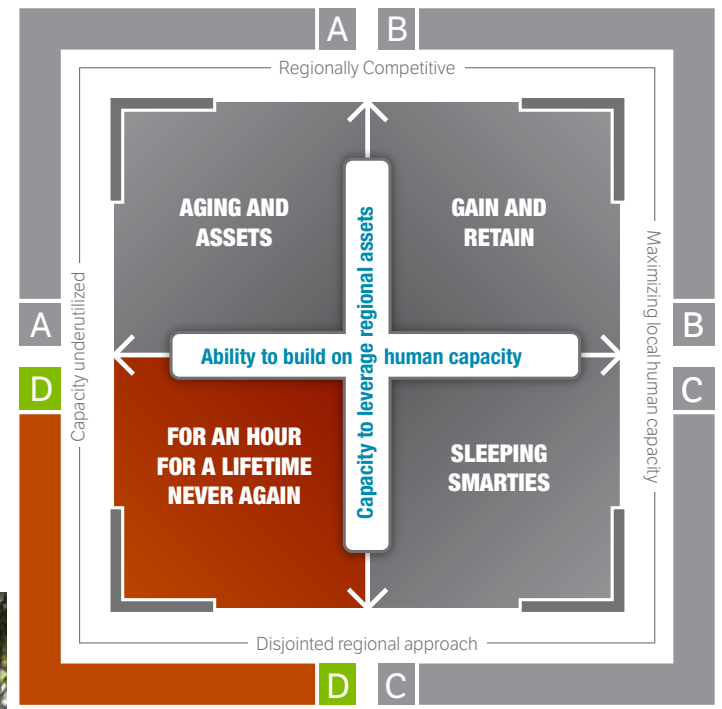
SLEEPING SMARTIES - HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2025	2030
Economic	<i>Waseca becomes exporter of jobs</i>	<i>Residential property taxes on the rise</i>	<i>Birds Eye Foods closes Waseca plant</i>
Social	<i>Remodelled school attracts families from neighboring communities</i>	<i>First in state test scores – Enrolment sky rockets @ Waseca schools</i>	<i>University of Waseca opens</i>
Environment	<i>City Council approves lake clean up</i>	<i>Residents clamor for lake focused recreation</i>	<i>Waseca sells Maplewood Park for private residential housing</i>



3.6 SCENARIO D – FOR AN HOUR, FOR A LIFETIME, NEVER AGAIN

Waseca entities (government, public, private) do not collaborate on community building or leveraging of local assets. Competition from neighboring communities draws skilled workforce away leaving an aging population with increased service needs. The education system deteriorates due to lack of funding and tax base, as do infrastructural improvements. Pollution increases and public health including substance abuse becomes a greater issue. Businesses begin to locate elsewhere due to lack of services and community stability.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic Characteristics

- High unemployment and taxes
- No population growth
- Lack of skilled workforce
- Low paying jobs
- Inadequate funding of schools / hospitals
- Business leaving / inability to attract businesses
- Increased home foreclosures
- Less attractive place for regional cooperation and investment

Social Characteristics

- Inadequate schools and hospitals
- Increased need for human services
- Higher crime and substance abuse
- Lower accountability of people / finger pointing
- Higher levels of vandalism / petty crimes
- Lower level of public health
- Higher school drop-out rate and law enforcement needs

Environmental Characteristics

- Degradation of infrastructure
- Fewer recreational facilities
- Higher levels of pollution, especially water pollution
- Land abandonment
- Greater sewer issues



FOR AN HOUR, FOR A LIFETIME, NEVER AGAIN - HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2025	2030
Social	<i>City Council votes down infrastructure improvements</i>	<i>Record high unemployment and home foreclosures</i>	<i>City Council resigns / More bars than retail</i>
Economic	<i>All needs increasing</i>	<i>Highest crime rates in 40 years</i>	<i>Last grocery store in town closes</i>
Environment	<i>Clear Lake closed to swimming due to excess pollution</i>	<i>Waseca parks all closing due to safety concerns - in disrepair</i>	<i>Waseca sanitary system collapses</i>



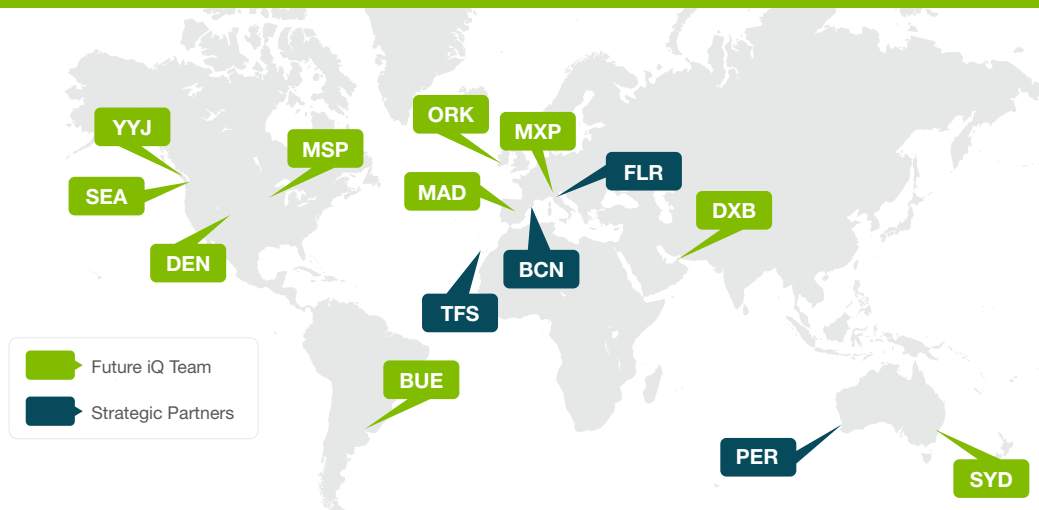
4.0 NEXT STEPS

Workshop participants discussed the ramifications and implications of failing to achieve the preferred future. There was a unanimous alignment of people that 'Gain and Retain' represented the preferred future scenario, however very few people thought that was the current trajectory. The preferred future 'Gain and Retain' outlines the basis of a shared vision for the community. In addition, it gives an indication of the focus areas of action that will be needed for this vision become a reality. Workshop participants discussed what they believed the next steps should be, and how they could move forward.

The axes that shape this future are increasing 'Ability to build on human capacity' and increasing 'Capacity to leverage regional assets'. Because of the long-term nature of the Scenario Planning methodology, stakeholders can often see the 'distant future vision (2030)' as unattainable and unrealistic. However, this often underestimates the progress that can be made of the intervening years, and the cumulative positive impacts of change. As an example, some of the existing work in the Waseca community is already significantly shaping the future directions and actions.

The scenario framework also can help guide additional actions to inform the future, especially pertaining to building infrastructure, collaboration and capacity. Waseca has high quality community resources and excellent service capabilities. The challenge will be to optimize the use of these resources, especially with the gradual expansion of urban community and lifestyle into the rural areas of the county, as well as the draw of other communities for skilled workers. Continuing to connect Waseca to existing efforts, and harness the depth of partnerships already occurring in the broader regional context will be vital. This will allow progress, even in periods of short-term economic stress, and enable the community's ability to strategically plan the next five years to best serve the people of Waseca.

This report lays the foundation for greater understanding of the drivers and values that impact the Waseca community. The preferred future 'Gain and Retain' outlines the basis of a shared vision for community direction, and the scenario framework helps identify and focus on areas of action that will help this vision become a reality.



5.0 ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ is a market leader in the development and application of scenario planning; network analysis, industry and regional analysis, and community engagement and capacity building. Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With over a decade of business experience, the company has grown to have a global clientele spanning three continents.

To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com

Report and Scenario Planning workshop prepared by:



DAVID BEURLE, CEO, FUTURE IQ PARTNERS

As CEO of Future iQ, David specializes in creating future planning approaches for the use in regional, community and organizational settings. David has worked in the field of organizational and regional economic and community planning for over 20 years. His work in community and economic development has earned his work international, national and state awards.



HEATHER BRANIGIN, VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Heather has an academic background in Political Science, International Relations and Education and is committed to helping people understand global interconnectedness and collaboration. She is past President and current Advisory Council member of the United Nations Association of Minnesota and has worked for over 20 years in the fields of international education and development.

6.0 ABOUT LHB

LHB is a multi-disciplinary engineering, architecture, and planning firm known for its design leadership and loyalty to its clients. LHB are experts in public works, pipeline, industrial, housing healthcare, government, education, and commercial design. Since 1966, LHB has been dedicated to being environmentally responsible, reducing long term operating costs, and improving the quality of life for clients.



LYDIA MAJOR, PLA, LEED AP

With an academic background in Landscape Architecture and English, Lydia works with clients and communities to create vibrant public, commercial, and residential places. She uses a collaborative design process to develop solutions that benefit the client, the community and the environment.

7.0 B.E.S.T. OF WASECA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

The Business and Entrepreneurial Support Team of Waseca County (B.E.S.T.) in collaboration with the City of Waseca, Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce, Waseca County, Mayo Clinic Health system-Waseca and Waseca Public Schools have determined that it is critical for the greater Waseca Community to have a common Vision and plan to achieve it for the community. Each of these organizations have their own strategic plans and objectives, but shared vision and values are needed to better unify and coordinate efforts, enable better communication about what the community is and where it is going, and provide a unified voice for where the community needs to invest to get it to its destination. The Waseca Vision 2030 project aims to articulate and plan for these shared values and vision, and this Think-Tank was the first step in the engagement process to create the community roadmap towards a preferred future for generations to come.

For more information on Waseca Vision 2030, please contact:

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8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Future iQ and LHB would like to thank the Waseca Community Visioning Steering Committee and Danny Lenz for the significant time and effort put into the planning and execution of this planning workshop. We sincerely appreciate your contributions.



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