

# COUNCIL MEMO

**Date:** February 9, 2024

**To:** Mayor Steve Gander, Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Tim Riopelle, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Ben Pokrzywinski, Dale Helms, Brian Larson, and Karen Peterson.

## Department Update:

### Paul Gorte – Economic Development Director

The State of Minnesota has provided resources for the University of Minnesota to provide technical assistance to help small communities become well-positioned to benefit from federal, state, and local investments. The program is Empowering Small Minnesota Communities (ESMC). The program provides technical assistance, at no cost to the small communities, to (1) identify and embrace existing assets; (2) propose work that will advance resilient and sustainable economic, social, or transportation infrastructure; and (3) proactively embrace projects and processes that may generate new project ideas or frameworks for future development.

The application deadline for consideration for participation is February 14. Economic Development submitted an application that included three economic development opportunities: development and design considerations for two undeveloped properties along Highway 2 and identification of ways to address the infrastructure issues in the existing industrial park. The projects are consistent with priorities identified in the recent Visioning session of the Council. The only anticipated cost to the City is the staff time needed to work with the University of Minnesota team. The application has been received and is being evaluated.

Here is a link to program information: [Empowering Small Minnesota Communities Program | Center for Transportation Studies \(umn.edu\)](#)