

CITY OF WOODBURY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

January 27 , 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a meeting of the Economic Development Commission was held at Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, on the 27th day of January 2025.

ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Amy Schmitdt called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

ITEM 2. ROLL CALL

Upon roll call the following members of the EDC were present: Amy Schmidt, Silwai Ing, Michael Zoladkiewicz, Tim Horton, Bill Sevold and Eric Simonson.

Absent: Emanuel Ekstrom, Erich Mische, Jory Deloach, Paul Leindecker, Philip Rush.

Also present: Janelle Schmitz Community Development Director, Jamie Fritts, Housing and Economic Development Manager, Eric Satre Destination Woodbury Manager, and Jamie Thoen, Administrative Assistant.

Introductions were given and oath of office was read by Vice Chair, Amy Schmidt to the new members Bill Sevold and Eric Simonson.

The Overview of 2026 EDC Work Plan and Meeting Schedule discussed by Janelle Schmitz to the members.

ITEM 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Michael Zoladkiewicz to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2025 EDC meeting.

SECOND: Tim Horton

VOTE: All in favor: Amy Schmidt, Silwai Ing, Michael Zoladkiewicz, Tim Horton, Bill Sevold and Eric Simonson.

AGAINST: None

ABSENT: Emanuel Ekstrom, Erich Mische, Jory Deloach, Paul Leindecker, Phillip Rush.

ITEM 4: DESTINATION WOODBURY UPDATE

Mr. Satre discussed the Woodbury Hotel Updates he stated the next quarterly Woodbury hotel leadership meeting is being scheduled as part of the Mayor's Business Outreach program. He discussed the EDC discussed having the business outreach meetings include various industry sectors, instead of meetings with individual businesses, and the hotel sector will be the first of these meetings with the mayor.

Mr. Satre said several recent changes have occurred within the local hotel market over the past couple of years. He discussed the sister hotel properties, stating they were the Courtyard and Residence Inn properties and they were sold in December 2025. He said the Sheraton Hotel

changed management in December 2025, and the La Quinta Hotel was sold in March 2024.

Mr. Satre said Woodbury hotels continue to perform well. According to CoStar hotel data, Woodbury has an average occupancy of 69 percent in 2025. He said compared to other suburban cities, Maple Grove has 69 percent occupancy, Plymouth has 50 percent occupancy and Eagan has 67 percent occupancy last year. He said these comparisons show that Woodbury performs well in hotel occupancy and is gaining towards pre-pandemic levels.

Performance Measurements and Metrics

Mr. Satre discussed performance measurements and metrics stating the table below provides a review of the 2025 DMO performance measurements.

DMO Measurement	2025 Proposed Annual Target	2025 Actuals	2024 Actuals
Lodging Tax Revenue	\$650,000 revenue	\$682,550*	\$628,030
Hotel Occupancy	66.0%	69.0%	64.0%
Website Visitors (Sessions)	60,000 Sessions	76,180 Sessions	NA
Website Session Duration	1m 30s Duration	2m 10s Duration	NA
Facebook Followers	500 Facebook Followers	1,860 Followers	NA
Instagram Followers	250 Instagram Followers	430 Followers	NA
Total Video Views	5,000 Views	278,570 Views*	NA
Visitor Guide Distribution	5,000 Guides	5,000 Guides	NA
Parks and Trails Map Distribution	4,000 Maps	4,000 Maps	NA

*Video views from all social media platforms
 Sources: CoStar STR, Google Analytics, Meta

Mr. Satre stated in 2025, website data from Google Analytics revealed strong interest in dining, attractions, local events, and things to do, followed by shopping and places to stay. He said the largest audiences come from Minneapolis, Woodbury, Chicago, Saint Paul and nearby communities. He said most website traffic comes from Google searches, followed by social media and direct visits. He also said, very little user traffic was directed to the website from AI tools like ChatGPT or Copilot.

He said the events calendar continues to be a popular page on DestinationWoodbury.com. Mr. Satre said a recent example was the two New Year’s Eve celebrations held at M Health Fairview Sports Center—a matinee geared toward young children and a later event for all ages. He gave information on that. He gave information on the ranking for both events. Mr. Satre said that following the events, staff reported approximately 1,200 attendees across both celebrations, which is slightly higher than last year, demonstrating a strong interest in local events from website users.

Top Pages:

1. Dining
2. Attractions
3. Events Calendar
4. Things to Do
5. Shopping
- 6. Places to Stay**

Top Audiences:

1. Minneapolis
2. Woodbury
3. Chicago
4. Saint Paul
5. Cottage Grove

Top Website Sources:

- 63% Google Search
- 23% Social Media
- 11% Direct
- 3% Other
- <1% ChatGPT/Copilot

DestinationWoodbury.com 2025 Data, Source: Google Analytics

Mr. Satre discussed DMO social media updates saying after reaching more than 1.1 million views on the DMO social media channels in 2025, staff has paused social media efforts to review performance and next steps. He said in the meantime, staff have identified Google Photos as an emerging tactic to drive awareness to local amenities and businesses in Woodbury. He said staff posted 81 photos, which have received more than 360,000 views, showing interest in Woodbury.

Mr. Satre discussed visitor spending data saying as staff evaluate data points to inform the DMO’s marketing strategy, data partner Zartico launched a new spending feature, showing how origin markets spend in Woodbury. He gave information on how the audiences are broken down into three areas dining, retail and accommodations.

He gave details saying county residents and local visitors account for most of the dining and shopping spend, while Visitors make up 87 percent of accommodations spend. He said these insights emphasize the importance of how all audiences contribute to the local economy.

He gave information on the 2026 Draft Marketing Plan stating at the December meeting, the EDC reviewed draft marketing themes for the coming year. He said based on that feedback, staff have further refined these themes to develop goals, strategies and desired outcomes for further EDC discussion.

Mr. Satre gave the overall goal: Increase awareness, visitation and economic impact in Woodbury by strengthening digital visibility, developing sought after content, expanding partnerships and delivering high-quality visitor experiences aligned with the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.

Mr. Satre discussed the goals providing the Commission with the following.

Goal 1: Promote Woodbury as a meeting and events destination

Goal 2: Grow event visibility and enhance the visitor experience in Woodbury

Goal 3: Strengthen regional and community partnerships

Goal 4: Optimize digital engagement and targeted reach

Goal 5: Leverage visits to Woodbury through robust data analytics

Goal 1: Promote Woodbury as a meeting and events destination

Objective: Leverage Woodbury’s amenities to drive economic impact to the community and its businesses.

- Strategy #1: Launch seasonal digital campaigns promoting Woodbury to meeting and event planners.
 - Tangible outcome: Inquiries and bookings
- Strategy #2: Secure new events in Woodbury.
 - Tangible outcome: Number of events and actualized hotel stays
- Strategy #3: Exhibit at local industry tradeshow and expos
 - Tangible outcome: Drive inquiries to local event venues and hotels

Goal 2: Grow event visibility and enhance the visitor experience in Woodbury

Objective: Connect current visitors with local amenities and businesses through marketing tactics.

- Strategy #1: Prior to the largest annual sports tournaments in Woodbury, target top markets with social media advertising promoting local hotels, group-friendly restaurants and group activities.
 - Tangible outcome: Track hotel demand through CoStar YoY and clicks to pages
- Strategy #2: Promote the DMO brand and local amenities to attendees at M Health Fairview Sports Center and Central Park events.
 - Tangible outcome: Increase website traffic from Wi-Fi landing pages
 - Tangible outcome: Customize landing pages to specific groups recommending local amenities and activities to engage in.
- Strategy #3: Launch e-newsletter offering a “first look” at content, exclusive deals and local happenings.
 - Tangible outcome: Number of e-newsletter sign-ups from visitor guide QR code sticker

GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Objective: Advance relationships with hotels, community organizations, businesses and industry groups.

- Strategy #1: Build brand recognition and strengthen loyalty as a trusted source of local tourism information.

- Tangible outcome: Work with hotels to place signage at front desk, tracking QR code to website landing page detailing local transportation, things to do and discounts at local attractions
- Strategy #2: Continue to build rapport locally and with the broader tourism industry.
 - Tangible outcome: Host quarterly hotel meetings, increasing attendance
 - Tangible outcome: Partner with Minnesota Sports & Events on event RFP opportunities and host client on-site visits

Goal 4: Optimize digital engagement and targeted reach

Objective: Improve the online visitor journey, boost search visibility and use targeted advertising to reach leisure, sports and meetings segments.

- Strategy #1: SEO website enhancements and improve accessibility
 - Tangible outcome: Build website content around top user interests while improving the user website journey and increasing user session duration
- Strategy #2: Engage with content creators to promote itineraries, things to do, places to eat and local events
 - Tangible outcome: Increase followers and engagement on social media channels
- Strategy #3: Grow DMO visual library
 - Tangible outcome: Work with professional service vendors and content creators to secure new photography and video assets

Goal 5: Leverage visits to Woodbury through robust data analytics

Objective: Deliver data-driven reporting to inform marketing strategies

- Strategy #1: Establish core digital audience who will act as brand ambassadors
 - Tangible outcome: Secure first party data through new audiences (e.g. sign-ups from e-newsletter, public events and tradeshow, etc.)
- Strategy #2: Dive deeper into analytics across data platforms
 - Tangible outcome: Continue to measure key performance metrics like hotel performance, top website pages and social media posts, top visitor markets and spending (platforms CoStar, Google Analytics, Zartico)

Mr. Satre asked the Commission what they thought about having the DMO at a city facility as a landing page for when visitors log into Wi-Fi.

Discussion and feedback given from the Commission:

- What is the runway to get support staff for the DMO?
- Is there a focus group that weighs in on the goals and objectives.
- Good thoughts about having the a Wi-Fi as the landing page at city facilities
- Local hotel would have rights on landing page and could provide the DMO link to our page.

- Ever thought about having a open casting call for a content creator. Could be an easy entry.

ITEM 5: 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Fritts gave background on the annual report stating each year the Community Development Department creates an annual report to present data to recap the work of the various department divisions and development activity in the community, and to highlight certain projects and achievements from the past year. He gave information stating the report consists of standard recurring sections that provide insight into the work of the department, performance measurements and general development activity in the community. Mr. Fritts said there is typically a ten-year look back which allows data to be compared to previous years and identify trends. In addition to the recurring sections, several “deep dive” topics are selected to further highlight department updates, achievements, projects, or current economic development areas of interest.

Mr. Fritts stated the EDC plays an advising role in the development of the annual report by providing recommendations on its content and format. He gave information on tasks stating one such task in this process is assisting with the selection of the “deep dive” topics for the report. He said at the December EDC meeting, staff presented several concepts for consideration and landed on using the guiding principles of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan as the theme for the 2025 report and the “deep dive” topics.

Mr. Fritts asked Commissioners to please review the Draft 2025 Annual Report attached with this packet prior to the upcoming EDC meeting. Commissioners will be asked to provide feedback on the draft report and recommend changes and edits to the document. He said there may be additional updates to the document that will be presented by staff at the January meeting.

Commissioner discussion and feedback:

- The report shows cleaner and more concise than previous years.
- Site the source on the bottom of the race and ethnicity page of the report (page 7)
- Why do we show race and ethnicity in the annual report is it a requirement.
- Add visitor guide and parks and trails map. (DMO pages)
- Do we report how many residents live and work in Woodbury.
- Why are employment sectors at combined on page 12.
- Clarify top reinvestment projects (page 14)
- Could same day inspections be highlighted or be called out (page 16)

ITEM 6: DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Janelle Schmitz gave a development update advising the Commissioner about future and existing projects in the city. She discussed the following items;

- Bailey Family Masterplan
- Cottage Grove Drive and Dale Road Masterplan
- Gold Line Development- Woodbury Active Adult
- Kiddie Academy
- Alma Flor Ada
- 2050 Comp plan

ITEM 7. ADJOURN

The meeting of the EDC adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janelle Schmitz, Community Development Director
Approved by the Woodbury Economic Development Commission