



Bankers, Finance & Development

Aug 11, 2025

Executive Brief

Municipal leaders, infrastructure development, bank representatives and financial institutions assessed Sauk County's growth outlook, infrastructure needs, workforce challenges and future opportunities. While tourism, manufacturing and financial services drive economic momentum, rising infrastructure costs, workforce shortages, and policy barriers require coordinated solutions.

Participants identified critical areas requiring **executive action** and **executive focus** to ensure sustainable growth and competitiveness.

1. Development & Growth Outlook

Executive Action:

- Expand housing options through targeted incentives (TIF, TID, cash and land deals).
- Approve policies that reduce barriers to development and attract private investment.
- Establish an economic development champion to coordinate countywide growth initiatives.

Executive Focus:

- Support proactive municipal strategies that balance growth across communities.
 - Endorse regional collaboration to align growth with workforce and housing needs.
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2. Infrastructure & Investment Needs

Executive Action:

- Secure state and federal funding for housing, roads, water, sewage and utilities.
- Expand Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and related programs to cover workforce and attainable housing.

Executive Focus:

- Promote long-term planning for resilient infrastructure that supports both residents and businesses.
 - Encourage collaboration among municipalities to maximize investment impact.
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3. Policy & Regulatory Environment

Executive Action:

- Advocate for streamlined permitting processes to reduce costs and delays.
- Approve policies supporting innovative and alternative housing models.

Executive Focus:

- Endorse transparency and accountability in municipal development processes.
 - Champion alignment of county policy with state and regional priorities.
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4. Technology & Innovation

Executive Action:

- Support the adoption of AI and automation in community banking and other sectors.
- Invest in training programs to ensure workforce readiness for technological advancements.

Executive Focus:

- Balance innovation with preservation of community banking values.
 - Encourage responsible risk management in the adoption of technology.
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5. Workforce Development

Executive Action:

- Enhance partnerships with schools, technical colleges, and universities to expand training pathways.
- Invest in housing solutions that attract and retain entry-level and specialized workers.
- Implement structured career pathways to improve retention.

Executive Focus:

- Champion soft skills and emerging technology training in workforce programs.
 - Support multi-sector collaboration to address long-term workforce needs.
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6. Industry–Academic Collaboration

Executive Action:

- Expand internships, apprenticeships and career pathways from high school through professional levels.
- Strengthen trade associations and peer groups to drive workforce development.

Executive Focus:

- Promote youth engagement in trades and professional fields.
 - Encourage industry storytelling to attract future talent.
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7. Emerging Trends & Future Opportunities

Executive Action:

- Invest in digital banking innovations such as Information Technology Management Systems (ITMs) and community-focused financial products.
- Align development incentives with industries positioned for demographic and market shifts.

Executive Focus:

- Support innovation in financial services that deepens community engagement.
- Endorse strategies that anticipate long-term market trends.

8. Public–Private Partnerships

Executive Action:

- Approve shared-investment models to attract large-scale employers and developers.
- Formalize municipal and private sector collaboration through a Sauk County Economic Development Council.

Executive Focus:

- Promote community engagement to ensure developments align with resident needs.
 - Support transparent coordination of incentives and resources.
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9. Environmental & Sustainable Practices

Executive Action:

- Prioritize green infrastructure in new developments.
- Encourage the adoption of eco-friendly building and operational practices.

Executive Focus:

- Champion sustainability as a long-term competitiveness strategy.
 - Support education on resilience and environmental stewardship.
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Next Steps

- Advocate for streamlined permitting and expanded incentives.
- Seek federal/state funding for infrastructure and housing.
- Expand workforce partnerships with schools and colleges.
- Support responsible AI adoption in banking and industry.
- Establish the Sauk County Economic Development Council.
- Promote sustainable infrastructure investments.

