Economic and Workforce Development (PA 5512)
Humphrey School of Public Affairs
Fall 2020

Class Time: 6:00-8:45 p.m. Tuesdays, (synchronous and asynchronous online instruction)
Instructor: Neal Young
Office Hours: Tuesdays 5:30-6:00 p.m., via Zoom
Email: youn0336@umn.edu (probably the best mode of communication).

Course Overview

The course surveys job-oriented economic development, focusing primarily on approaches and practices in the United States. It explores how urban and regional economies grow, why industries and employers locate where they do, and how workers decide where to live and work. It reviews the practices that federal, state and local governments and economic developers use to create jobs, including approaches aimed at retaining and expanding businesses, recruiting businesses, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, encouraging industry clusters, building on arts and culture, and capitalizing on workforce development. The class will evaluate which approaches and practices seem to work, emphasizing a framework for assessing the potential for real impacts from public sector, economic development efforts.

The course is organized around three broad segments:

1) Theories of regional development: We will begin the course with a brief review of theories of regional economic growth and change. We will review definitions of economic development and of regions, and discuss prevailing theories of how regions grow and change (such as economic base, growth and trade theories). We will examine theories of firm and industrial location, and discuss the phenomenon of industrial districts and clustering. Finally, we discuss the role of supply-side actors, namely workers and households, in making location decisions that shape regional economic outcomes.

2) Workforce development practice: We will include discussions of workforce development. We will cover the field’s shift from a largely supply-side, anti-poverty orientation toward an increasing attention to the changing skill needs of businesses on the demand side, and review approaches such as career ladders and sector-based models.

3) Economic development practice: This segment of the course is dedicated to a review of economic development practice in the United States. We will begin with a discussion of the institutional frameworks and political economy of economic development, and then discuss several broad areas of economic development practice: community infrastructure, business recruitment and incentive competition; industrial retention and revitalization; technology, innovation and entrepreneurship; culture, tourism and consumption-based development; and finally, the emergent “green economy.”
The course is organized thematically by week. There will be approximately 50-100 pages of reading will be assigned per session. Every week will have a lecture on the readings. Every week, or close to it, will have guest speaker presentations from economic and workforce development practitioners (likely either video recorded or from a podcast). In the early weeks, there will be a segment of class that will focus on a data related topic of relevance to the class, particularly the regional analysis project.

Assignments and Grading

The course features several assignments (further information about each assignment will be provided). Your grade will depend heavily on your ability to deliver the specifics that the assignments lay out. The grades will be weighted some for writing style and improvement over the semester. IMPORTANT: Read and use the “MemoWritingGuide” and “Matt’s Writing Tips” (Matt taught the class previously—documents can be found under the “Resources” heading in the opening section of the PA 5512 Canvas site. Good writing is a critical skill for planners and policy analysts!

1) Regional Analysis (20% of course grade): Students will choose a U.S. metropolitan region and complete an analysis of that region’s economic structure. This 8-12 page (SINGLE-spaced) analysis will provide a succinct, narrative discussion of the region’s industrial and occupational structure and specializations, population and unemployment levels and change, and other distinctive aspects of the regional economy. It will be due before class on Tuesday, November 3. (Must be submitted in Canvas, in PDF format.)

2) Economic Development Exercises (First exercise at 5%; remaining four exercises at 10% each; 45% total): The second set of assignments will consist of an exercise related to a topic of discussion from the previous week’s class. It will entail creating a product similar to what you might create in an economic or workforce development organization. The first exercise is a professional e-mail on your preferred economic development policy. This assignment will be due before class on September 15. The second exercise is completing talking points on rankings. This assignment will be due before class on Tuesday, October 6. The third exercise is creating presentation slides on industry clusters and is due before class on Tuesday, October 13. The fourth exercise is a policy memo on incentives and is due before class on Tuesday, November 17. The fifth exercise is a policy memo on economic impacts and is due before class on Tuesday, December 8. (Must be submitted in Canvas, in PDF format.)

3) FINAL PROJECT (25%): Students will complete an economic development policy report for a state or metropolitan area of their choosing (it can be the same region as the regional analysis). Additional detail will be provided on the Canvas site and in class. This project will be due by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, December 22.

4) Attendance and Participation (10%): Though this class is being taught mostly online, students will benefit from active participation in synchronous class events, as well as participating in asynchronous class discussions on the Canvas site. Other possibilities for participation include engaging directly with the instructor, as well as other potential options.

5) Grading Rubric (for all assignments): 20% format; 40% message; 20% clarity; 20% mechanics.
Texts

There are two required texts for the course:


All other required readings will be made available on the course Canvas site (CANVAS LINK).

Course Schedule by Week

NOTE: Assigned readings are subject to change, as is the order for our class topics. Please check Canvas for the most updated selections.

Week 1 (September 8): Introduction

Why should planners and policymakers care about economic and workforce development? This may seem like an obvious question, but promoting “place prosperity” remains an ongoing challenge for cities, regions, states and nations across the world. This session will highlight the broad themes for the course and a roadmap for the weeks ahead.

Readings:

Kane, 2009. “Smart Economic Development for Minnesota: Getting It Right in Tough Times and Beyond,” pp. 1-14. (This short reading presents frameworks and concepts that will be used throughout the course. We will return to this later in the course for an in-depth discussion.)

Week 2 (September 15): Defining Economic Development, Defining Regions

Note: Exercise 1 Due in Canvas at 5pm

We begin the course with a critical assessment of the “what” and the “where” of regional economic development practice. Specifically, we will discuss the concept of “economic development,” what it means and how our theoretical understandings and practical applications of the term have evolved. And we will review the theoretical underpinnings of “regionalism” as it applies to the project of regional planning.

Readings:
Economists and geographers have given considerable thought to how economic activity is distributed across space, and the dynamics that fuel the growth, evolution, and (occasional) decline of regional economies. In this week we will review prominent theories of regional economic growth, most notably economic base, growth and trade theories. We will discuss the dynamics of growth across regions, including the tendencies within capitalist economies toward uneven development.

Readings:
Malizia and Feser, Ch. 3, 5, 6 and 7; “Economic Base Theory,” “Regional Theories of Concentration and Diffusion” “Regional Growth Theory,” and “Trade Theory,” pp. 51-80, 103-122, 123-149, and 150-173.

The outcomes of regional economic change are ultimately predicated upon the decisions of individual actors – firms and workers – operating in the context of market forces, public policies, and other institutional frameworks. In this week we delve into the demand side of the market, to firms and industries, to understand the forces that drive their decisions about where to locate. We will review and compare neoclassical economic, political economic, and institutional theories of industrial location, as well as theories like product/profit cycles that help to explain shifting location over time.

Readings:
Week 5 (October 6):

**Note:** Exercise 2 Due in Canvas 5pm

**Agglomerations, Industrial Districts and Clusters**

The tendency of economically interdependent actors to agglomerate, or “cluster,” is one of the most powerful and enduring dynamics shaping regional economies. In this week, we will review classical theories of industrial district formation and its recent revival in the form of “new industrial districts” and “industry cluster” theories. We will weigh the strengths and limitations of these theories in their capacity to explain regional growth and change.

**Readings:**


Week 6 (October 13): Supply Side Drivers: Migration and Labor

**Note:** Exercise 3 Due in Canvas 5pm

Traditional regional economic theories grant primacy to the role of capital in “making” regional economies through firms’ decisions about where to invest (and disinvest). Yet there is growing appreciation for the importance of choices that workers and households make about where to
live. In this week we will review the literature on migration and regional growth, as well as contemporary critiques, such as Richard Florida’s “creative class” thesis.

Readings:


Week 7 (October 20):

Overview of Labor Markets and Workforce Development Policy

This week we return, first, to our exploration of the theoretical underpinnings for Creating Good Work and look at how the labor market functions. We examine what classical theories and alternative viewpoints have to say about how do people find jobs, how are skills formed and how do employers organize work. Topics covered include inequalities in the labor market and developments in the structure of work. Then we turn to an overview on workforce development programs, policies and practices that define this field, talking about the evolution of workforce development from its origins in programs for poverty reduction to an increased orientation toward employers and economic development priorities.

Readings:


Week 8 (October 27): Economic Development Practice: Overview

In this week we begin the shift from theory to practice with a brief overview of contemporary regional economic development policy and practice in the United States. We will begin with a classroom discussion about smart and not-so-smart approaches to economic development. We will discuss the institutional framework for economic development practice, how the U.S. compares to other industrialized and developing nations, and the politics and political economy of economic development practice.

Reading:


Kane, 2009. “Smart Economic Development for Minnesota: Getting It Right in Tough Times and Beyond,” pp. 1-14. (Be sure to read these pages, rather than the executive summary. The summary skips over some material that is important for this course, including the drivers of economic growth. This is the same reading you had for the first class, but we will go more deeply into it for this session.)


Optional Reading:

**Week 9 (November 3): ED Practice: Setting the Table For Development with Community Infrastructure**

**NOTE: Regional Analysis (20% of course grade) is due on Tuesday, November 3 on Canvas at 5pm. For specifics, go to the detailed assignment later in this syllabus.**

There are a number of factors that prepare a region for economic development. This week, we will discuss several forms of infrastructure and regional assets that can be cultivated to set the table for development. Topics like transportation infrastructure, brownfield redevelopment, and broadband development will be discussed.

**Readings:**


Week 10 (November 10): ED Practice: Business Recruitment & Incentive Competition

For many observers, economic development practice is synonymous with the efforts of states and localities to recruit businesses that will expand or relocate operations within their communities, usually in exchange for generous tax abatements and incentives. Is this “competition for capital” wasteful, or is it healthy? Can the practice be improved, or should it be abandoned altogether? In this week we will review the practice of business recruitment and debate its merits as an economic development strategy.

Readings:


Bartik, Timothy J. 2007. “Solving the Problems of Economic Development Incentives,” Ch. 5 (pp. 103-139) in Reining in the Competition for Capital.


Bartik, Timothy J. 2019. “An Ideal State Incentive Program, Taking Account of Economic and Political Realities,” Ch. 6 (pp. 89-99) in Making Sense of Incentives: Taming Business Incentives to Promote Prosperity, Upjohn Institute, available online at: https://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1277&context=up_press.

Week 11 (November 17): ED Practice: Manufacturing, The Service Economy, and Globalism

Note: Exercise Memo 4 Due on Canvas 5pm

Different regions can follow different paths to prosperity. Some focus on manufacturing growth. Others focus on building service industries. In either case, globalization impacts those strategies. In this week we review the practice of industrial retention and sector- and cluster-based strategies for economic development.
Readings:


Week 12 (November 24): ED Practice: Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

For years, policy makers have sought to emulate the apparent success and dynamism of regions like Silicon Valley and Boston through initiatives to stimulate research and development, innovation and entrepreneurship in “high tech” fields like information technology and biotechnology. Can economic development policy actually plant the seeds of high-tech growth? In this week we review the track record of technology-based economic development and assess its potential and its limitations. A bit heavy on the reading here.

Readings:

Malizia and Feser, Ch. 9, “Entrepreneurship Theories,” pp. 195-213.


LeRoy, Greg, Leigh McIlvaine, Peter Fisher, et. al. January 2010. Growing Pennsylvania’s High-Tech Economy: Choosing Effective Investments, “Introduction and Methodology” (pp. 1-2) and “Executive Summary” (pp. 3-8).


Week 13 (December 1): ED Practice: Regional Input-Output and Economic Modeling AND The “Green Economy” – Hope or Hype?

This week we will cover two topics. First, economic impacts can be used to make a project with mediocre results seem bigger. However, this amounts to little more than economic boosterism. How can economic impacts be done in a way that is intellectually honest and meets the needs of policymakers? The second topic will focus on policy-led efforts to shift the United States toward a “clean energy” economy that have fueled tremendous optimism that these investments can be harnessed toward innovation, job creation and economic vitality, in cities and rural communities alike. Are planners and policy makers simply chasing windmills (literally)? Or is there something to the “green economy”? In this week we will begin to unpack the economic development field’s latest “next big thing,” with the goal of getting beyond the hype.

Readings:

Chapters 1 & 2 on input-output analysis and cautions (file name = RegInputOutput+Cautions)


UN Environment Programme. 2008 (September). Green Jobs: Toward Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World. Section 1, pp. 33-51. [DON’T NEED TO READ SECS. 2 & 3.]


Week 14 (December 8): ED Practice: Quality of Life, Tourism and Consumption
As cities and regions become increasingly aware of the need to attract workers, not just firms, efforts to promote arts and cultural amenities have moved from the realm of sideline niceties to the mainstream of economic development. Cities have long used tourism as a way to bring income into their communities, so is this any different? Is promoting the local “consumption base” a viable path to local economic development?

Readings:


In this final meeting, we look back at our discussions of economic and workforce development and link to smart approaches.

Readings:


Rubin, “Shoot Anything that Flies, Claim Anything that Falls,” Economic Development Quarterly.


**Detail on Course Assignments and Projects**

**Exercise 1 (e-mail): Due September 15**

Based on your incoming ideas about economic and workforce development and the Kane article, write an email to your (hypothetical) supervisor describing your preferred economic or workforce development policy. What are the advantages of this approach? What are the disadvantages?

Please submit this exercise in email format on Canvas by 5pm on September 15.
Exercise 2 (talking points): Due October 6

**Understanding and Using Regional Rankings**

The exercise will help you better understand how to evaluate and understand regional rankings. Many organizations now rank regions on various metrics of economic performance.

This assignment asks you to review the latest rankings on “the business climate” and other dimensions purported to be related to business friendliness. Prepare 1-2 pages of talking points based on the latest Tax Foundation rankings available at: [https://taxfoundation.org/publications/state-business-tax-climate-index/](https://taxfoundation.org/publications/state-business-tax-climate-index).

Your role is as a professional staff person in a major economic development organization in the state of your choosing. The heat is on your agency from the press, elected officials, and the business community, over your state’s recent rank as a place for business. The rankings come from the latest ratings by the Tax Foundation, which we will discuss during the last hour of class and are part of the background material for this class. Your boss, who serves as the director for economic development activities, has asked you to prepare talking points on the factors used to construct these ratings and to assess how relevant they are for your region. In particular, you have been asked to assess whether or not these ratings accurately reflect the climate for business in your community – has anything been left out, have key factors been overlooked? You have also been asked to identify key assets and strengths which may have been neglected in the ratings.
**Industry Cluster Analysis**

This exercise will help you learn about a national tool to better understand industry clusters in regions around the country. Industry clusters are often used to assess economic strengths and opportunities.

This assignment asks you to review data related to your chosen region on industry clusters at the U.S. Cluster Mapping website at: [http://www.clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us). Prepare 5-8 slides on key points related to the data and analysis available for your region.

Your role is as a professional staff person in a major economic development organization in a region of your choosing. Your leadership has heard of clusters, but is not very knowledgeable. Your goal is to educate your leadership on the potential of a cluster-based strategy in your region. What are clusters? What clusters are important in our region. Are there clusters that represent a growth opportunity for your region. Are there clusters that represent an industry that is becoming less important over time? Feel free to draw in conclusions from other readings as well, with appropriate citation.
Mid-Term Project (Regional Analysis): Due November 3 (Report is worth 20% of final grade)

Due: Tuesday, November 3 in Canvas at 5pm – in pdf format, preferably. Late papers without instructor notification will be accepted at a penalty of 1% per hour, up to a maximum penalty limit of 20%. Approval for late papers without penalty may be granted, with at least five days advance notification and sufficient justification; such determinations are at the discretion of the instructor.

You will choose a metropolitan region in the United States and complete an analysis of that region’s economic structure. Most of the data points necessary for the assignment will be introduced in the data topic sessions, which is geared toward informing you of the necessary sources and ways to access data. Students may choose any metropolitan region defined by the Census Bureau as a Metropolitan Statistical Area. (However, because Pittsburgh and Sioux Falls are featured in the assignment examples on the Canvas site, you will not be allowed to pick either of these two metro areas for your assignment.)

This 8- to 12-page (single-spaced) analysis will provide top-level indicators of a metro area’s recent economic performance, industrial and occupational structure and specializations, and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics – all pertinent to the region’s economic development capacity and outcomes. Your audience, here, is staff – and perhaps some policymakers – at public agencies and non-profit organizations involved in identifying sensible economic development strategies and programs for your region.

Benchmark the information about your metropolitan region against comparable information for the United States as a whole, so, for example, note both your metro area’s poverty rate and the U.S. poverty rate for the same period. (Benchmarking is especially important for income measures over time in cases where the income levels aren’t adjusted for inflation because inflation alone will raise the levels. If you adjust your income measures over time for inflation, this is not as critical an issue.) For some top-level indicators, such as income and employment growth, consider benchmarking your region against other similar metropolitan regions. By way of example, you might pick a number of benchmark metros that are of similar size to your metro area and, maybe, from the same geographic region. (NOTE: For benchmarks against other metro areas, it’s probably best to present the levels for each of the other metros rather than trying to devise a single benchmark level for those other metros. Constructing one benchmark level for multiple metros might become somewhat problematic because the different metros will be of different sizes, so questions then arise about weighting for population or area.)

The page total includes data tables, so use of them well. When you present data in a table or in a graphic, avoid repeating the data in your text and focus your text instead on analyzing that data. It is critical that you include analysis, not just regurgitation of data. Consider using one table to present several data points – population growth, unemployment, income and poverty, for example. Condense data points from large tables, showing, for example, only the industries with largest/smallest employment changes rather than showing all the industries. Consider incorporating data points into your narrative, perhaps as bullets, too. For any data used, tap into recent numbers – from, say, the most recent five- or three-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. Don’t over-play or over-interpret data results. No need to include appendices with your complete data runs. Good to know: For economic and demographic characteristics
(income, and educational attainment, for example) pulled from Census surveys, the use of multi-
year spans from the ACS is smart because otherwise the margins for error may be large when
you’re looking at the metro level.

This assignment is your analysis of the data to identify what’s going on in your metro area. It
does not require you to tap into what we’ve covered in terms of economic development theories.
That being said, you are encouraged to go beyond simply reporting your data and to provide
some analysis of what it means for your region in terms of economic vitality and prospects.
The Canvas site offers two example reports done for past classes. Please note: The assignment
sheet for those example reports differed some from this current description, so be sure to follow
what’s laid out here for this year.

I prefer footnotes rather than end notes. Also, you are welcome to include a cover page and
table of contents, but this is not required. A cover page and table of contents won’t count toward
your page limit.

Assignment specifics:
Please cover the four main topics listed below in boldface type (regional overview, top-level
indicators, etc.) Feel free to rearrange the order to fit your needs. Except for cases noted below
as “critical,” it’s up to you to decide what to include for each of the four main topics. I’ve listed
out good elements to consider. The more elements you have, the more information you’re
offering about your metro. And don’t forget benchmarks (as noted above).

• Summary of key points and findings

Start your paper with a summary paragraph or two, laying out your key points and findings.
(Write it last, but put it at the top.) This puts the news up front. Best to skip the conclusion at the
end, and instead present your conclusions, here, at the start. [NOTE: The example papers on
the Canvas site did not follow this format, so don’t follow those models on this element.]

• Regional overview – this section should be short, and it may cover the following:
  o Definition of the region. This is critical for the assignment.
  o Key features, in terms of the geography or the economy.
  o Historical information, if it is relevant to your analysis or to understanding the region
  o Why you chose this region (This was listed as a requirement in the past, so the examples on
    the Canvas site both include this element, but it is not required.)

• Top indicators of levels and trends for metropolitan growth and development (may be rolled in
  with regional overview, if that works best) – good to include the following:
  o Population growth
  o Unemployment rate
  o Income – BEA’s per capita personal income or Census’ median household income, or both
  o Employment growth
  o Poverty rate
  o Gross Domestic Product by Metropolitan Area per capita (BEA)

• Regional industrial and occupational structure – good to include the following:
  o Industry
    • Identify the top industries by employment levels.
• Use location quotient on employment by industry. This is critical for this assignment to identify what you estimate to be the top industries of specialization for the metro area (high LQ ratios).

  o Occupation (use Standard Occupational Classifications)
    • Identify the top occupations by employment level.
    • Use location quotient on the data for employment by occupation to identify specialization, or lack thereof, among the metro area’s occupations.

  o Major regional employers (overall, within key industries)

  o Demographic characteristics – good to include the following:
    • Population
    • Breakouts by age, race/ethnicity and other factors (what’s most relevant?)
    • Educational attainment
    • Population changes, including, perhaps, net migration rates or rates by key variables, such as education level and origin/destination
Exercise Memo 4: Due November 17

The Pros and Cons of Incentives

This exercise will help you understand the debate over economic development incentives. The assignment is based on a real-world scenario and asks you to take on the role of trusted advisor to the governor and to prepare a briefing memo for him outlining the key issues in this debate and advising him what to do.

A Belgian firm, Nethamed, is a manufacturer of medical and surgical equipment. The company is looking for a North American management and manufacturing hub. The project is expected to create 150 jobs within three years and up to 600 jobs when fully phased in. They have stated that they are looking at at least three other locations in the United States. They are requesting incentives to reduce business costs of at least $4 million.

The memo should take the form of a 2-3 page single spaced brief for the governor. It should address the following questions:

♦ What is at stake?
♦ What criteria would you recommend for evaluating the desirability of alternative policies?
♦ What policy alternatives have you identified (at least two)?
♦ How would you evaluate the alternative policies in terms of your stated criteria?
♦ What is your concluding policy recommendation, including suggestions for implementation?

Memos will be graded based on how well you refine the material down to the critical issues and develop and support a clear recommendation. You should present a single point of view and develop a recommendation based on your state’s economic situation, its competitive position among its neighboring states, and the state’s historic use of incentives. The governor has asked for and values your opinion, which is what should come across in your memo.

Exercise Memo 5: Due December 8

**Input-Output Analysis**

You are an analyst for a local city. Nethamed, a manufacturer of medical and surgical equipment, has promised to create 150 jobs in your area. Using the file on the Canvas site, assess for the city council, the economic impact of Nethamed on Minnesota’s economy. Include jobs, wages and value added impacts.

Write a 2-3 page memo summarizing the economic impact on the state economy. Memos will be graded on how understandable they are to the average city council who makes decisions on incentives.
Final Project: Economic Development Policy Report

(Report is worth 25% of final grade)

**Due Tuesday, December 22, by 5pm** – in PDF format. Late papers without instructor approval will be accepted with a penalty. Approval for late papers without penalty may be granted, with at least four days advance notification and sufficient justification. Such determinations are at the discretion of the instructor.

**What to produce**

You will produce a 8- to 12-page paper (single-spaced) that examines a particular economic development strategy or program, or examines selected elements of an economic development plan done for your geographic area, evaluating the usefulness of your featured topic or topics in terms of important economic development outcomes for your geographic area. (See sections below on “What to cover” and “Grading.”) Write your report for an audience of public-sector officials, chamber of commerce leaders, city or state staff, or others who would be interested in the particular economic development practice for your geographic area. You are encouraged to use data and graphics to the extent that they are helpful to your examination of the strategy, program or plan. Note that the page limit does not include the title page or table of contents, if you offer them.

For this assignment, your best option likely will be to use the region you featured in your regional analysis assignment, although you can chose a different region, particularly if the economic development practice that you want to explore does not match well with the geographic area that you analyzed for the earlier assignment. If you so choose, you may use a state as your geographic region. Please make clear in your report what city, region or state you are discussing.

**Evaluate actual initiatives or perhaps propose new ones**

You are strongly encouraged to find an economic development strategy or program that your area has considered and, perhaps, adopted. Needless to say, if you focus on selected elements of an economic development plan done for your geographic area, then you are on track in this regard. The advantage, here, is that you'll have access to information about the approach considered or implemented and why it is seen as viable. That said, you will be bringing your own analysis to the topic to assess the reasonableness of the approach in the context of economic development theory, its relevance for the economic development of the geographic area, and the possible or likely outcomes. Examples pulled from the topics we’ve covered in our classes on economic development practice include entrepreneurship, industry clusters, retention and expansion for existing industrial firms, arts and culture initiatives, green economy efforts, workforce development programs, and business recruitment.
But for your report, you may also choose an economic development strategy, program or approach that your geographic area has not adopted but that emerged from your regional analysis as one with promise. (I’d advise against choosing both a geographic area different from the one you featured in your regional analysis assignment and also choosing an economic development strategy or program that has not been studied or proposed.)

You have some discretion in deciding how broad a scope to choose for your paper. In many cases, for example, you may find that your region has an overarching economic development plan that includes a number of specific strategies and programs. Based on your ability to adequately cover the points discussed below under “What to cover” and “Grading,” you should decide to focus on either 1) an individual strategy or program, or 2) several strategies or programs (perhaps interrelated ones). I’ll accept a paper that looks at an overall economic development plan and all its elements, but that approach will be very difficult to do well, given this assignment’s page limit. It’s far better to go in-depth on one element or several elements than to cover many elements but only superficially.

**What to cover**

Include or demonstrate these elements in your policy report:

- Knowledge of your featured economic development initiative or initiatives, drawing from plans, proposals or, in the case of initiatives that have been implemented, program reports or websites. Show that you know what you’re talking about.

- An understanding of the theory and concepts behind the featured economic development strategy or program, drawing from class lectures, course readings and other academic articles.

- Critical thinking about how the featured initiative or initiatives fit with the economy, structure and potential of your chosen geographic region. (Do not simply rehash text from your regional analysis. Pick out the points that are relevant to your policy issue and your analysis.)

- Analysis about the featured economic development initiative or initiatives, integrating what you know about your place and what you know about economic development theory and practice. Frame this in terms of economic development outcomes. Examples outcomes include jobs, income, business vitality, tax base, community stability, economic vitality and sustainability. It is possible – and in fact likely – that the reports or documents you have about a region’s economic development initiatives will lack information about outcomes. While you may not be able to know with certainty how a strategy, program or plan will effect important economic development outcomes, you will be expected to draw on class readings, lectures and discussions to offer informed opinions on the likelihood that your featured economic development element or elements will lead to positive and notable outcomes.
• Conclusions about the potential that the featured economic development initiative or initiatives hold for your geographic area and the wisdom of investing public-sector resources to pursue them. If you are not able to draw firm conclusions, you should present informed and justified opinions to help guide your reader on the topic. If need be, you may cover this using on-the-one-hand/on-the-other comments. Your conclusions or opinions here are the top news that you’ll have to share with are your readers. Remember to put your news up front.

To help you frame your critical thinking and analysis for the report, you are strongly encouraged to draw upon guidelines and recommendations from experts in the field of economic development. You may want to pull from the key points of the report on *Smart Economic Development for Minnesota* (the assigned reading for weeks 1 and 7 of the course). I also strongly recommend you consider your policy through the “Racial Equity Impact Assessments of Economic Policies and Public Budgets,” from Week 6.

While you are expected to draw upon a mix of materials – including academic research, and planning documents and reports from local agencies and economic development organizations – you should be able, also, to draw heavily from assigned readings and from class lecture notes to explore your featured economic development practice.

**Format for citations**
Include citations! Please cite all sources, both primary and secondary. For published works, include author, title and year. Footnotes work best. If you use parenthetical citations within the body of your text, be sure to then also include a bibliography that provides the full listing. Web links to the sources are appreciated.

**Grading**
The assignment will count for 25% of your course grade. Grading will follow the general grading rubric of the course.
University and School policies

For links to University of Minnesota and Humphrey School policies, please click the “U of M Policies” link on our course Canvas site, or see https://z.umn.edu/PolicyStatements. Policies include information on student conduct, scholastic dishonesty, sexual harassment, equal opportunity, disability accommodations, and more.