

**Possible Questions for
Mayors or Community Development Leaders to
Ask Businesses:**

Topical Areas

Location [Natural Resources and/or Public Infrastructure]

- *Please describe your business (history, what you produce or service you provide)*
- *Why is your business here and what keeps you here?*
- *What natural resources are you dependent upon for the success of your business?*
- *Is your business located in other places?*
- *Which Public Infrastructure Investments do you consider critical to the success of your industry?*
- *Does your business depend on any services provided by regional organizations or local units of government? If so, which ones?*
- *Do the existing public resources and infrastructure serve your business well? If not, where's the gap?*

Connections with industry partners, supplies and local customers (Cluster linkages):

- *Where in the global economy are your key supplier relationships?*
- *How is it connected with related industry suppliers and the supply chain that supports your business?*
- *Do you have supplier relationships you are worried about in the current economy? Can we help in any way?*
- *Where are your suppliers located?*
- *Why do you do business with these suppliers rather than others?*
- *Do you have companies that you partner with to get better prices for your supplies?*
- *Has there been a change in your supply network in the past two years? If yes, what and why did that happen?*
- *Are there any local key supplier relationships that you are concerned about?*
- *Do you have "demanding local customers" with world-class expectations?*
- *Where are your customers located?*
- *Has demand rose or fallen for your most successful product in the last three years? Do you see demand rising or falling in the next three years? Next 10 years?*
- *Do you hope to create new product lines in the near future? If so, what product and what would help you reach that particular goal?*
- *Who are your competitors, and where are they located?*
- *Do you belong to an association that helps your business?*
- *What do you think your industry will look like in 25 years?*
- *What is it about your business structure that will help you remain competitive in the future?*

Workforce Traits, Needs and Vision:

- *What occupations are most critical to the success of your firm?*
- *Are people readily available to fill any open position you might have?*
- *What degrees are required of workers in these occupations?*
- How important is access to employees with bachelor's degrees to the success of your business?
- How important is access to employees with advanced degrees?
- Where do your workers acquire their initial training?
- Where do you turn for continuing training?
- Do you feel that the local educational and training institutions within a 50-mile radius are fulfilling your workforce development needs? Why or why not?
- What kinds of skills and training are required to address your company's needs?
- Did the regional workforce have something to do with locating here?
- Are your workforce needs being met?

New Business Creation:

- *Where do your business expansion ideas or products come from?*
- *Are your sales (revenue) growth opportunities predominantly local, domestic or international? What are the three largest revenue markets?*
- Do local or state regulations prevent you from creating or expanding your business?
- How is the climate for new business creation here?
- What kind of new business growth do you see for the future of the Twin Cities metro region?

Access to Investment / Expansion Capital:

- *Do you have adequate access to investment or expansion capital?*
- *Is the risk capital needed for growth available in TC?*
- Is funding to realize productivity improvements readily available?
- Does your business plan adequately attract the appropriately risk priced investment capital?

Quality of Life or Cultural Amenities:

- *What brought your business to the Metro Area and what is keeping you here?*
- Do you and your employees enjoy living in this community?
- *What elements of this community do you consider the most important for attracting and retaining the most valuable employees?*
- Does the quality of life associated with our cultural amenities here in the greater metro area influence your stake in the region?