

# GROW PROSPERITY

It's 2040 and St. Joseph's economy is thriving. We've become well-known for our pre-K-16 focus, public/private education collaboration and entrepreneurship. Starting in middle school, students start dozens of digital businesses, selling everything from tutoring services to robotics. Several new businesses have grown up in St. Joseph, a result of dynamic partnerships between established businesses and high-tech agriculture. The community has become known as the center of new agriculture-based technology that is creating new inventions in crop science and food production, attracting new industry to St. Joseph. But growing prosperity is more than just economic growth and personal incomes, it is also about the quality of local civic leadership that provides the foundation for collaboration, engagement and inclusiveness. Without strong leadership there can be no prosperous and successful community. If we are to be prosperous in our future, it must start with strong leadership at all levels.

## 2040 GOALS

By 2040, St. Joseph's economy reflects its agricultural and manufacturing roots, but has transformed itself by taking advantage of a growing need for skilled and high-tech workers. This has allowed existing companies to be successful, while also attracting new companies that seek a skilled workforce and a community that allows them to successfully compete in the global marketplace.

- St. Joseph's economic development efforts are not only defined by our existing businesses but what new business opportunities can be created by attracting and growing talent.
- The local business community establishes a mentoring program that benefits young entrepreneurs. This leads to a collaboration between businesses and education and the growth of new business opportunities.
- Innovations in agribusiness are pursued through a strategy that engages local business, area educational resources and an investment by the community to provide the talent and facilities to grow high-tech agriculture in St. Joseph.
- Local private investments, such as angel funds, seed capital and venture capital funds, act as a catalyst to grow and attract start-up companies. This becomes a primary generator of thousands of new, high-wage jobs.
- St. Joseph strategically invests in its infrastructure that complements city planning to create opportunities for business attraction.
- To leverage its location and access to talent, as well as other amenities, the City and County develop a regional (Kansas City & Northwest Missouri) growth strategy that includes cooperation with economic development projects, infrastructure and talent attraction.

- The community creates a neighborhood leadership program providing assistance with training and education that encourages neighborhood associations and citizen engagement.
- A nationally-recognized student leadership program is offered to high school students. The one-year class offers theory and practical lessons on leadership and civic engagement and culminates in a capstone project that engages the public in one of the goals of Imagine St. Joseph 2040.
- A leadership and training program is developed by the not-for-profit community to provide individuals who are prepared and ready to take positions on various boards and committees. The City and most other agencies require this training before someone is qualified to serve.
- An “entrepreneur-in-residence” program is created, which offers a stipend, housing in one of St. Joseph’s historic mansions, and seed funding. Entrepreneurs are selected through a competitive startup pitch contest available to entrepreneurs from Missouri and neighboring states.
- The Chamber and United Way create an annual speakers series, attracting national thought leaders to address issues associated with Imagine St. Joseph 2040 and civic leadership.

### What “positive disruptions” would increase our performance in this strategy?

- High school curriculum includes a requirement that all students receive business start-up training and coaching.
- An ag-based venture capital fund starts up and is headquartered in St. Joseph.
- The USDA builds a high-tech agricultural research facility in St. Joseph.
- Missouri revises its economic development incentives to focus support for early stage companies and increase job training funding for high-tech, skilled jobs and reward investment in new technology.
- A Civic Council is established representing all the neighborhood associations in St. Joseph. The Civic Council becomes the focus of volunteerism, civic engagement, and leadership development. It becomes a new model for civic governance in the U.S.
- The City constructs a new eastside wastewater treatment facility allowing further residential and commercial development to the east beyond the Platte River.
- The city charter is revised providing term limits for the Mayor and City Council, providing opportunities for new leaders to seek and hold public office.
- The Department of Defense identifies the 139th Airlift Wing as a Center of Excellence for air mobility research and innovation, adding investment and personnel, but also attracting new private sector contractors to St. Joseph to conduct research and collaborate with the Air Guard.