Whitewater Business Park: Industrial Expansion Strategy Analysis

University of Wisconsin Whitewater

College *of* Business and Economics

Fiscal and Economic Research Center

Executive Summary

The Whitewater Business Park represents a significant industrial expansion opportunity in Southeastern Wisconsin. Its existing concentration of advanced manufacturing, polymer science, and logistics firms provides a strong foundation for sustained economic growth.

As industries continue shifting toward more technology-driven operations, the park is well-positioned to evolve into a leading regional business hub. **Current tenant activity already supports over 2,500 jobs and generates substantial labor income, demonstrating a strong economic base.** Strategic expansion would enable the park to transition from a net exporter of labor to a self-sustaining employment center. By targeting key industry gaps and strengthening internal supply chains, Whitewater can improve talent retention, diversify its tax base, and enhance long-term fiscal stability. This report outlines a data-driven strategy to support that transition and position the business park as a competitive industrial destination in Wisconsin.

Market Demand Assessment

TARGET INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT

The case for expanding the business park is rooted in a workforce recapture strategy. By prioritizing advanced, technology-driven manufacturing firms that require high-skilled labor, the city can better align local talent with available opportunities. Currently, many of Whitewater's most educated residents face long commutes or underemployment due to a lack of local high-skill roles. This gap highlights a clear opportunity: a built-in talent pool that can support incoming firms if the right industries are recruited.

The Whitewater Business Park represents far more than a conventional real estate development. It is a comprehensive asset designed to match the local talent with regional opportunity. By developing the available land, the city transitions from a service and student economy into a high-tech industrial hub.

SKILL VS. OPPORTUNITY GAP

The 53190 zip code is home to **894 residents with Master's Degrees**, yet **local employment opportunities are currently dominated by nearly 3,500 jobs in manufacturing and retail, food, and accommodation services**. Even within the business park's residing block group, existing infrastructure is primarily utilized for transportation and warehousing rather than the high-value production roles the residents are qualified for. This forces Whitewater's most educated professionals into long commutes or local underemployment, but indicates a potential talent pool, pending further validation through resident employment surveys, for professional-tailored firms considering the business park.

Taxonomic Framework and Analytical Methodology

The evaluation of the Whitewater Business Park's economic landscape requires a dual-classification approach. The **Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)** system, developed in the 1930s, remains a foundational tool for grouping businesses based on their production characteristics or demand patterns, particularly in legacy databases and for historical trend analysis.

In contrast, the **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)**, introduced in 1997 and updated every five years, offers a more granular, six-digit hierarchical structure that better reflects the contemporary shift toward information technology, specialized professional services, and high-tech manufacturing.

For this report, interactions are defined through several lenses: **upstream** material supply, **downstream** value-added processing, **lateral** operational support, and innovation-driven **technical complementarity**. **Upstream interactions** occur when the output of one firm (e.g., rubber compounding) serves as a raw material for another. **Downstream interactions** involve the further refinement, assembly, or distribution of goods. **Lateral interactions** encompass shared logistical or maintenance infrastructure, such as heavy truck repair or business support services. Finally, **technical complementarity** arises when specialized knowledge-based firms (e.g., software developers or sensor engineers) provide the digital infrastructure for physical manufacturing operations.

A core strategic objective of this analysis is to leverage proximity within the business park to reduce transaction costs, accelerate the feedback loop for new product introduction (NPI), and foster a resilient "micro-supply chain" that is less susceptible to global shocks.

Industry Identification and Tenant Inventory

The tenant mix in Whitewater demonstrates a high degree of specialization across four primary clusters: Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Polymers and Sealing, Agricultural and Food Logistics, and the Innovation/ Professional Services cluster.

Business Name	SIC Code	NAICS Code	Primary Industry Description
Simes Construction Inc	1794	238910	Construction Services
HEXPOL	3053	339991	Rubber Compounding & Sealing Devices
Fab Pro	3441	332312	Fabricated Structural Metal
Generac	3519	333618	Motor and Generator Manufacturing
Husco Automotive LLC	3694	336320	Motor Vehicle Electrical Equipment
The Coburn Company, Inc.	5031	423310	Agricultural Equipment Wholesaling
Riemer Systems	5047	423450	Medical Equipment Wholesaling
MacLean-Fogg Component Solutions	5085	423840	Industrial Supply Wholesaling
Fastenal	5085	423840	Industrial Supply Wholesaling
Martin Brower	5142	424420	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesaler
Basin Holdings	6719	551112	Holding Company/Mgmt
Blackthorne Capital Management	6799	523910	Investment Advice
Nitardy Funeral Homes	7261	812210	Personal Services
Pauquette Center	8049	621330	Psychological Services
Jedi Virtual K-12	8211	611110	Educational Services

Industry Identification and Tenant Inventory Cont.

Business Name	SIC Code	NAICS Code	Primary Industry Description
East West Wisconsin, LLC	8748	541618	Management Consulting
CESA 2	9411	923110	Educational Administration
Wisconsin Army National Guard	9711	928110	National Security
Simonswerk North America Inc	3429	333320	Specialized Hardware/Hinges
Summerset Marine Construction	1629	236210	Marine Construction
Lavelle Industries, Inc.	3061	326291	Molded Mechanical Rubber Goods
Husco International	3492	332912	Fluid Power Valves and Fittings
NPI-Plus (East West)	3671	334419	Electronics Manufacturing Services
iButtonLink	3823	334513	Industrial Sensors & Software
PropertyX LLC	6513	531311	Real Estate Management
Kreative Solutions LLC	7311	541810	Advertising & Business Services
Straight Forward	4813	561421	Call Center/Contact Center
Iron Forge Development	7375	541511	Custom Computer Programming
S & H Truck Services	7538	811111	Heavy Truck Repair & Maintenance

IMPLAN

Where available data on companies located within the Whitewater business and technology park were available, an analysis was conducted utilizing the 2026 IMPLAN economic modeling system to determine the economic impact of the jobs created by the companies located within the area. IMPLAN is an input-output model used to estimate 1) temporary jobs generated by construction, 2) direct and indirect tax revenues, and 3) all indirect job and spending numbers. By capturing the **"multiplier effect,"** the IMPLAN model allows the reader to see the full impact of a group of businesses in each geographic area. The multiplier accounts for **"indirect spending,"** such as supplies required for the original product being measured, and **"induced spending,"** which is money that re-circulates in the economy due to employees' spending. The term "indirect" is used here to reflect both of those categories. This model produces an economic multiplier, a quantitative measure of economic impact that recognizes that all levels of economies are interconnected networks of interdependent activity. These projections assume a high level of local spending retention; actual impacts may vary based on external leakages to surrounding metropolitan areas.

Direct Effect – This refers to production change associated with a change in demand for the goods or services produced by the companies themselves. It is the initial impact to the economy.

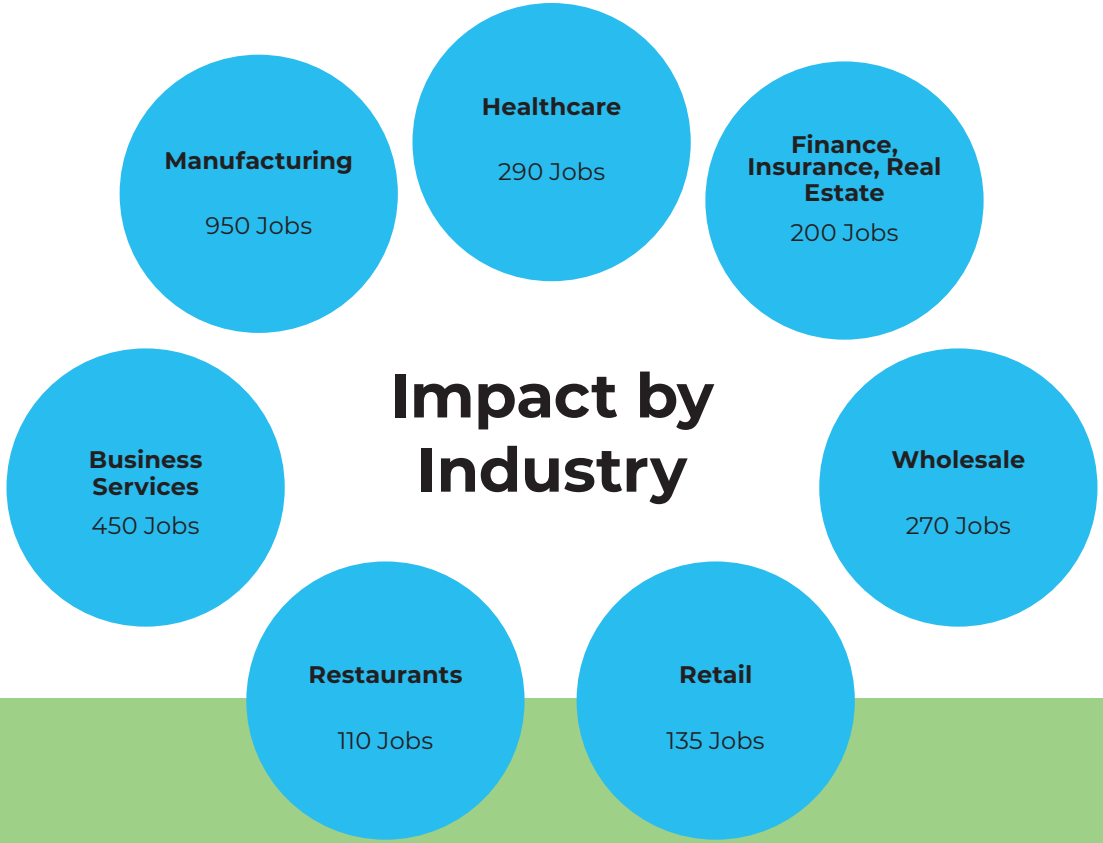
Indirect Effect – This refers to the secondary impact caused by changing input needs of directly affected industries (e.g., additional input purchases to produce additional output). It concerns inter-industry transactions, as businesses that exist within the business park create a demand for locally sourced materials needed to produce its product or service.

Induced Effect – This is caused by changes in household spending due to the additional employment generated by direct and indirect effects. The induced effect measures the effects of the changes in household income, as individuals working in the new businesses and the businesses' suppliers spend money at restaurants, grocery stores, and shops.

Economic Impact of Business Park Companies

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct Effect	1,400 Jobs	$105,000,000	$525,000,000
Indirect Effect	640 Jobs	$53,000,000	$175,000,000
Induced Effect	660 Jobs	$42,000,000	$130,000,000
Total Effect	**2,700 Jobs**	**$200,000,000**	**$830,000,000**

Impact by Industry



Cluster Analysis: Mechanical and Automotive Engineering

The core of the Whitewater Business Park's industrial identity is its mechanical and automotive cluster, anchored by Generac, Husco International, and Husco Automotive. These entities operate within a sophisticated framework of electro-hydraulic and electro-mechanical control systems. Husco Automotive LLC, classified under SIC 3694 and NAICS 336320, specializes in electrical equipment for internal combustion engines and electrified vehicles, including wiring harnesses, alternators, and electronic instrument panels.

This cluster exhibits significant potential internal verticality. Husco International (NAICS 332912) focuses on fluid power valve and hose fitting manufacturing, which requires precision structural inputs. Fab Pro (NAICS 332312) could provide these critical structural metal fabrication services, enabling the creation of custom enclosures and manifolds for Husco's valves. Furthermore, the evolution of Husco's product line toward "intelligent" systems like INCOVA—which replaces traditional spool valves with electronic controls—could create a direct demand for the custom software services provided by Iron Forge Development and the electronics manufacturing capabilities of NPI-Plus.

Generac is another pivotal firm when analyzing this specific cluster. Its potential to sustain collaborative relationship with auto electric manufacturing firms such as Husco Automotive LLC could allow both entities to capitalize on their proximity. In theory, Husco Automotive LLC would provide the precision engineering with power timing and logistics Generac needs for its production, while Generac could provide the physical torque and power components required by Husco Automotive LLC for their outputs. On paper these two companies work well together and represent a mutual relationship. Proximity is a key variable in a synergy such as this, allowing engineers from both sides to communicate more efficiently and exchange inputs at lower costs. Identifying other relationships such as this will narrow down target industries best suited for expansion.

Complementarity is also evident in the specialized hardware sector. Simonswerk North America (NAICS 333320) produces high-end adjustable hinge systems used in demanding retail and industrial environments. While their primary markets include the Apple Campus and Mercedes-Benz Stadium, their proximity to metal fabricators and polymer specialists in the park allows for localized sourcing of finishes and seals.

Cluster Analysis: Advanced Polymers and Sealing Solutions

The advanced polymer cluster is arguably the park's most evident potential value chain. It begins with HEXPOL (SIC 3053 / NAICS 339991), a global leader in rubber compounding. The Whitewater facility specializes in high-performance materials like FKM (Fluoroelastomer), HNBR (Hydrogenated Nitrile), and AEM (Ethylene Acrylic Rubber), which are specifically engineered to withstand extreme heat, chemicals, and abrasion.

These compounds could serve as the primary feedstock for Lavelle Industries (SIC 3061/3069, NAICS 326291/326299). Lavelle is a vertically integrated OEM manufacturer that designs and molds precision rubber and plastic components, including gaskets, seals, bushings, and O-rings. This implied interaction between HEXPOL and Lavelle is a textbook example of upstream/downstream complementarity. HEXPOL provides the "material difference" through custom recipes, while Lavelle transforms those recipes into functional parts for the HVAC, plumbing, and transportation industries.

Furthermore, MacLean-Fogg Component Solutions contributes to this cluster through its Engineered Plastics Company (EPC), which specializes in close-tolerance functional plastics and insert molding. The integration of these firms creates a "Polymer Hub" where shared knowledge of elastomer behavior and injection molding techniques can be leveraged for rapid innovation. The fasteners and plastic solutions provided by MacLean-Fogg could also support the final assembly needs of the mechanical cluster, demonstrating cross-cluster synergy.

Cluster Analysis: Agricultural and Food Logistics

The agricultural and food distribution cluster leverages Whitewater's strategic location within "America's Dairyland" to manage high-volume supply chains. The Coburn Company (NAICS 423310/423820) has operated since 1925 as a major manufacturer and wholesale distributor of milking equipment and livestock supplies. Their product range—from milk filtration systems and portable milkers to animal health tools—requires a steady supply of rubber tubing, plastic moldings, and fabricated metal parts, all of which are products produced by neighboring firms like Lavelle and Fab Pro.

Parallel to Coburn is Martin Brower (SIC 5142 / NAICS 424420), which operates a highly sophisticated multi-temperature logistics and distribution network for the frozen food industry. Martin Brower functions as a 3PL and 4PL provider, managing the end-to-end supply chain for multinational fast-food chains. This involves complex demand planning, real-time inventory tracking, and specialized warehousing.

This logistics-heavy cluster is potentially supported laterally by S & H Truck Services (SIC 7538/7539), which could provide the essential maintenance and repair for the heavy truck fleets operated by both Martin Brower and Coburn. This localized maintenance infrastructure ensures high operational uptime for the park's distribution giants.

Cluster Analysis: Innovation and Professional Infrastructure

The Innovation Center (1221 Innovation Dr) serves as the “intellectual engine” of the park, housing firms that could provide the digital and administrative services required by the modern industrial tenants. iButtonLink (NAICS 334513) is a pioneer in sensor network technology and data loggers, providing monitoring solutions for the cold chain, transportation, and aerospace industries. Their sensors have been utilized on the International Space Station, demonstrating a level of technical excellence that elevates the reputation of the entire business park.

Iron Forge Development (NAICS 541511) complements the sensor hardware with custom computer programming, specifically focusing on software that meets the needs of customers. Their expertise in applications software and system design is prospectively vital for firms like Husco and Lavelle as they adopt Industry 4.0 practices such as predictive maintenance and automated quality control.

NPI-Plus (East West Wisconsin) provides another critical link as an electronics manufacturing services (EMS) provider. They offer quick-turn prototyping and a “New Product Introduction” model that is ideal for the innovation-focused startups in the park, allowing them to localize their supply chain from design to box-build assembly. Additionally, East West Wisconsin is helping push the “advanced manufacturing” agenda by providing smart engineering services to outdated producers. A push for integration of similar firms/services within the park could help upgrade labor opportunities, ultimately increasing the attraction of more skilled laborers. This ecosystem is rounded out by Straight Forward, which offers call center and contact center solutions that can scale as the park’s manufacturers grow their customer bases.

Potential Upstream, Downstream, and Lateral Interaction Matrix (SIC)

The following matrix visualizes the interactions between the SIC codes represented in the park. An “I” indicates an input or an upstream relationship while an “O” indicates an output or downstream relationship between industries.

Industry/SIC		Buyers									
		Rubber Compounding (3053)	Mechanical Rubber (3061)	Structural Metal (3441)	Ind. Valves (3491)	Motors and Generators (3621)	Auto Electrical Equipment (3694)	Ind. Supply Wholesale (5085)	Custom Software (7371)	Truck Repair (7538)	Management Consulting (8748)
Suppliers	Rubber Compounding (3053)		I			I					
	Mechanical Rubber (3061)				I/O	I	I				
	Structural Metal (3441)				I/O	I	I		I/O		
	Ind. Valves (3491)		I/O	I/O			I/O	O	I/O		O
	Motors and Generators (3621)				I		I/O		I/O		
	Auto Electrical Equipment (3694)		I	I	I/O	I/O		O	I/O		O
	Ind. Supply Wholesale (5085)	I	I	I	I	I	I				
	Custom Software (7371)			I/O	I/O	I/O	I/O				I
	Truck Repair (7538)							I			
	Management Consulting (8748)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	

SIC Interaction Checklist and Criteria

The interactions marked in the SIC matrix are based on established industrial supply chain norms and the specific capabilities of the Whitewater tenants. Below are further examples of these relationships.

- **SIC 3053 -> SIC 3061:** Upstream material flow. Custom rubber compounds are a primary input for molded mechanical goods.
- **SIC 3061 -> SIC 3491/3694:** Component integration. Molded seals and O-rings are essential for the integrity of hydraulic valves and automotive electrical assemblies.
- **SIC 3441 -> SIC 3491/3694:** Structural support. Precision-fabricated sheet metal is used for the housings and brackets of complex mechanical and electrical systems.
- **SIC 3621 -> SIC 7371:** Modern motors often require integrated variable frequency drives (VFD) or programmable logic coding. Custom software firms provide the code to run the motor, while the motor manufacturers provide the physical test beds and hardware platforms for that software.
- **SIC 5085 ->All Manufacturing:** Operational maintenance. Wholesalers provide the fasteners, MRO supplies, and tools required for daily factory operations.
- **SIC 7371 -> SIC 3491/3694:** Technical Integration. Custom software is required for the digital control of hydraulic and automotive components.
- **SIC 7538 -> 5031/5142:** Lateral support. Fleet logistic maintenance is vital for regional distribution.
- **SIC 8748 -> All firms:** Supply chain resolve. Management consulting firms can provide the supply chain solutions to any industry.

Potential Upstream, Downstream, and Lateral Interaction Matrix (NAICS)

The NAICS matrix focuses on the modern process-based interactions that define the park's efficiency. An "I" indicates an input or an upstream relationship, while an "O" indicates an output or downstream relationship between industries.

Industry/SIC		Buyers									
		Gaskets/Seals (339991)	Molded Rubber (326291)	Fab. Sheet Metal (332312)	Fluid Power (332912)	Motor and Generator Mfg. (335312)	Auto Electrical Manufacturing (336320)	Industrial Supplies (423840)	Custom Programming (541511)	Truck Maintenance (811111)	Management Consulting (541618)
Suppliers	Gaskets/Seals (339991)		I			I					
	Molded Rubber (326291)				I/O	I	I/O				
	Fab. Sheet Metal (332312)				I/O	I	I/O		I/O		
	Fluid Power (332912)		I/O	I/O			I/O		I/O		
	Motor and Generator Manufacturing (335312)				I		I/O		I/O		I
	Auto Elec. Manufacturing (336320)		I/O	I/O	I/O	I/O			I/O		
	Industrial Supplies (423840)	I	I	I	I	I	I				
	Custom Programming (541511)			I/O	I/O	I/O	I/O				I
	Truck Maintenance (811111)							I			
	Management Consulting (541618)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	

NAICS Interaction Checklist and Criteria

The NAICS system emphasizes the “process” of production, which highlights some of the following synergies:

- **NAICS 339991 -> NAICS 326291:** Process feedstock. Specialized sealing devices and compounds are used in the broader rubber molding processes.
- **NAICS 332312 -> NAICS 332912:** Value-added fabrication. Sheet metal components are critical for the protective enclosures and mounting systems of fluid power valves.
- **NAICS 335312 -> NAICS 336320:** Two-way co-design enablement. The motor provides the physical torque and rotation, and the electric system provides the power timing and logic.
- **NAICS 541511 -> NAICS 332912/336320:** Digital enablement. Software firms develop the logic for the “Smart Valves” and electronic instrument panels that represent the future of the automotive and heavy equipment sectors.
- **NAICS 423840 -> All Manufacturing:** Just-in-time logistics. Industrial suppliers act as the inventory buffer for precision fasteners and hydraulic fittings.
- **NAICS 811111 -> 423310:** Fleet optimization. Specialized repair services cater to the refrigerated trailers and heavy agricultural machinery used in the park’s distribution hub.
- **541618 -> All firms:** Operational advancement. Consulting firms provide smarter manufacturing solutions and can help increase overall operational efficiency for any other industry.

Ecosystem Gap Analysis and Strategic Voids

Identified Redundancies and Overlaps

Industrial Wholesaling (SIC 5085/NAICS 423840): Both Fastenal and MacLean-Fogg operate in this space. While this ensures price competition, it also represents a potential redundancy in floor space. One of these firms could be offered targeted municipal incentives, such as specialized equipment grants or tax credits for high-reliability electronics, to diversify into more specialized sectors, such as high-reliability electronics components distribution, to better serve iButtonLink and NPI-Plus.

Educational and Public Sector Administration (NAICS 923110/611110): The presence of CESA 2 and Jedi Virtual K-12, along with the Innovation Center's university collaboration, is a strength, but there is a risk of fragmented workforce development efforts. Streamlining these into a unified "Whitewater Skills Lab" would better serve the recruitment needs of the manufacturers.

Critical Structural Gaps

Metal Finishing and Surface Treatment (SIC 3471/ NAICS 332813): Firms like Fab Pro and Simonswerk require specialized metal finishing (anodizing, plating, powder coating).

Tool and Die and Mold Making (SIC 3544/NAICS 333511): Lavelle Industries and MacLean-Fogg rely heavily on custom molds for their injection and compression molding operations. A dedicated tool and die shop in the park would accelerate prototyping and reduce lead times for custom customer orders.

Specialized Industrial Packaging (SIC 2653/NAICS 322211): The high volume of finished goods leaving the park—from hydraulic valves to boat lifts—requires durable, customized industrial packaging.

Independent Testing and Validation Laboratories (SIC 8734/NAICS 541380): There is a clear need for an independent lab that can perform stress testing, chemical analysis, and environmental validation.

Strategic Recruitment Recommendations and Target Codes

To maximize the “Synergy Coefficient” of the Whitewater Business Park, new tenant recruitment should be prioritized based on their ability to close identified gaps and support the technological evolution of the anchor tenants. These recommendations are structured around the idea of a localized supply chain within the business park.

Priority 1: High-Precision Infrastructure Support

These firms are positioned to lower the cost of production for existing manufacturers by reducing logistics overhead for existing manufacturers and reduce the environmental impact of long-distance shipping for finishing services.

Target Industry	Recommended SIC	Recommended NAICS	Strategic Rationale
Metal Finishing & Plating	3471	332813	Provides essential downstream finishing for Fab Pro, Generac, Husco, and Simonswerk.
Tool and Die Shop	3544	333511	Supports custom molding needs for Lavelle and MacLean-Fogg.
Electronic Component Wholesale	5065	423690	Supplies the specific micro-components needed by iButtonLink and NPI-Plus.

Strategic Recruitment Recommendations and Target Codes Cont.

Priority 2: Logistics and Supply Chain Resilience

These targets focus on the efficient movement and protection of goods, supporting the distribution-heavy sectors of the park.

Target Industry	Recommended SIC	Recommended NAICS	Strategic Rationale
Industrial Packaging	2653	322211	Manufactures the protective housing for shipping finished industrial goods.
Specialized Freight Forwarding	4731	488510	Coordinates international air/sea freight for firms with global reach like Simonswerk.
Testing & Calibration Labs	8734	541380	Provides the ISO 17025 validation required by iButtonLink and HEXPOL.

Strategic Recruitment Recommendations and Target Codes Cont.

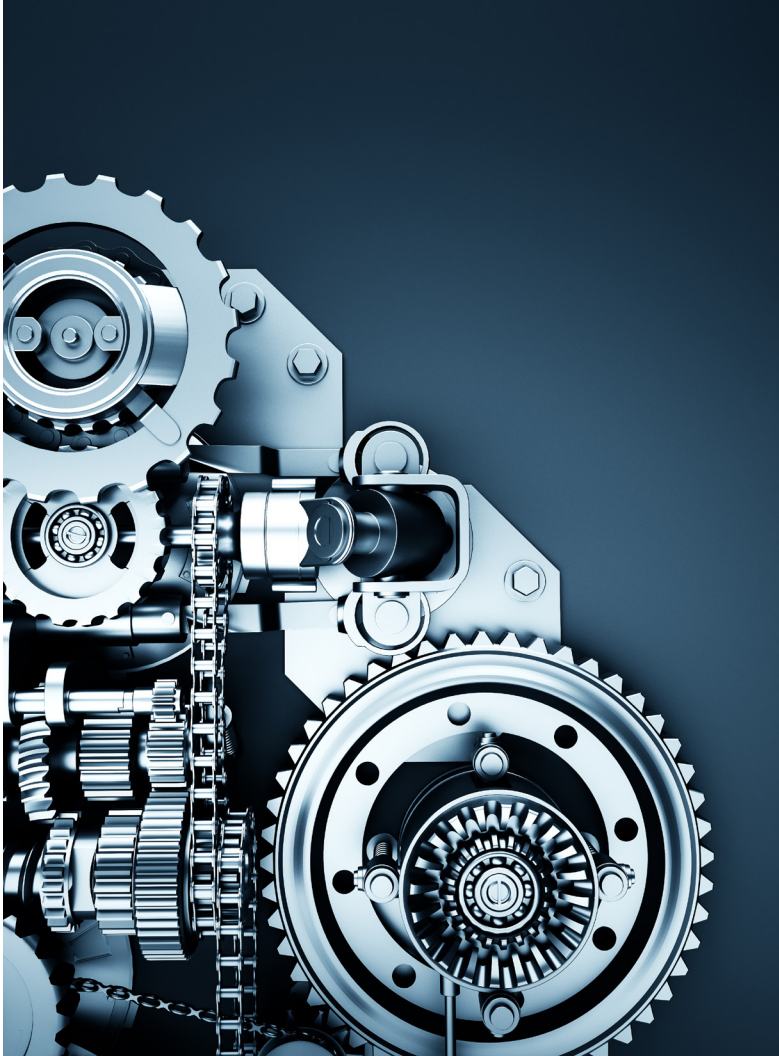
Priority 3: Industry 4.0 Integration

These industries will support the “Smart Manufacturing” transition, ensuring the park remains competitive in the high-tech global market.

Target Industry	Recommended SIC	Recommended NAICS	Strategic Rationale
Robotics System Integration	3569	333999	Implements automated assembly lines for Husco and Lavelle.
Additive Manufacturing (3D)	3999	333249	Enables rapid prototyping for NPI-Plus and custom software development
Industrial Data Analytics	7373	541511	Works with iButtonLink to turn sensor data into predictive maintenance models.

Strategic Alignment and Future Outlook

The goal and long-term vision of the Whitewater Business Park should be to shift the surrounding area from a labor exporter to a self-sustaining and even labor-importing hub. By developing the remaining land in the business park, the city and the surrounding area can actively implement a workforce retention strategy. This gap can be largely filled by recruiting industries that align with the specific degree types found in the local 53190 zip code, thereby attracting and retaining skilled workers. Currently, most jobs within the business park focus on service positions, and the park overall lacks more professional firms. Addressing this skill gap will, in turn, attract more skilled workers and retain them within the community. The park's site features demonstrate the capability to support the growth and scalability of larger, more professional industrial partners.



Strategic Alignment and Future Outlook

Moving forward, strategic planning must focus on high-value industries that align with the education and skill levels of the local workforce. Tech-driven businesses and advanced manufacturing firms are well-positioned to leverage the area's skilled workers. By fostering these industries, development can better align with regional economic goals that aim to diversify the tax base from a student-centric focus to high-yield industrial assets.

One notable exception to the issue of integration and clusters is Generac. While a large employer (with over 400 employees in the immediate area), the input analysis does not create direct interactions with suppliers to either the NAICS codes or SIC codes. While this may be an opportunity to attract companies that can serve relationships with Generac, their customer base would need to expand beyond the Whitewater Business Park. As a result, it is an opportunity but would require a regional expansion of their customer base.

Bridging the skill-opportunity gap would enable local talent to live, work, and spend within the community. This strategic alignment ensures that investments directly contribute to local prosperity. Building on existing assets such as the university and the business park, additional development within the park will strengthen the area as a catalyst for increasing median income, expanding the labor force, and improving overall quality of life. With the right approach, Whitewater can establish itself as a competitive, ready-to-build industrial hub in Southeastern Wisconsin.

ABOUT THE FERC

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Fiscal and Economic Research Center provides research services for area businesses, not-for-profits organizations and government entities, including:

- Economic Analysis
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis
- Market research, marketing strategy and planning
- Statistical analysis
- Simulation analysis
- Ecological and biological analysis
- Government and public policy analysis
- Entrepreneurship
- Economic forecasting and business development

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