



## **ACTION STRATEGY**

CITY OF MANISTEE  
FEBRUARY 2019

#### SUMMARY FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In August 2018 local leaders and stakeholders from Manistee met with Governor Snyder for a round table discussion to kick-off the Project Rising Tide Initiative. At this initial meeting, all stakeholders identified key assets, obstacles, and opportunities related to economic development and the priorities to continue moving the community forward with the additional assistance from Project Rising Tide (PRT).

The stakeholders represented a wide-ranging group of local business owners, employers, officials from Manistee and neighboring communities, Chamber of Commerce, DDA, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Manistee County Community Foundation, nonprofits, the school district, and other interested parties with the common goal of improving the community. Through this initial discussion at the kickoff meeting, combined with subsequent steering committee meetings, four key topics rose to the top of the list of priorities in terms of furthering Manistee's economic development goals. These topics include workforce housing, cohesive community branding, board training and development, and a consistent definition and strategy for economic development. Because Manistee is a Redevelopment Ready Certified community, Project Rising Tide will further help support the local efforts for community and economic growth.

The housing related barriers identified were the fear and misunderstanding surrounding workforce housing, aging housing stock, poor conditions of the rental properties that are available, housing variety, no up to date housing information available online and negatives experiences on the part of developers who attempted to develop workforce housing in Manistee.

As far as economic development, the community is often described as lacking the ability of various groups to collaborate and work as a team. A consensus amongst stakeholders is that there are multiple entities working on economic development initiatives in silos, causing duplication of efforts and lack of a common mission and objectives. An important goal of this effort is to begin working together to ensure all groups can start to move forward and build a vision together.

Similarly, there seems to be an opportunity to convey a more uniform marketing and branding message about Manistee. There is a need to identify a common vision and identity for the community that will welcome others. Furthermore, numerous groups have developed their own marketing and branding materials, creating a disconnect with the shared vision. The desire to make a more uniform Manistee brand was identified to market the Manistee waterfront and other local assets to promote investment in the community.

Finally, the steering committee was in unanimous agreement that Manistee needs to agree on the definition of economic development. While there are various groups in the community who have developed plans and strategies to tackle various elements of economic development, it was agreed that the community would benefit from having a neutral third party convene discussions to inform a holistic community-wide economic development strategy.



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

This action strategy will be the shared responsibility of the City Council, City staff, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, the Manistee CEDAM fellow, and additional stakeholders, with the assistance of MEDC staff and consultants when appropriate. The action strategy is heavily reliant on the participation of local citizens and their support.

The philosophy of this action strategy is to lay the foundation for economic development activities in the city that can sustainably function without in-depth assistance from the MEDC team and championed by the community.

January – March 2019

Action item	Owner	Deliverable
Recruit Local Stakeholders to Lead Marketing, Housing and Economic Development efforts.	CEDAM Fellow	Project Rising Tide Subcommittees, Outline document emailed to PRT/TED.
ED Strategy kick-off meeting	Place + Main, Economic Development Subcommittee	Process & Preliminary Schedule
ED Strategy Focus Groups (Public & Private Leaders)	Place + Main, CEDAM Fellow	Summary of findings
Conduct PRT Initiatives outreach, engage community through diverse communication channels.	CEDAM Fellow	Feedback on priorities, projects and initiatives.
Community Economic Development Summit	Place + Main	Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
Identification of Key Redevelopment Sites	Place + Main, CEDAM Fellow, City	Sites Identified; Photos
Branding Subcommittee Kick-off Meeting	Arnett, Muldrow, & Associates, Branding Subcommittee	Identification of key areas of focus for branding and marketing effort
Stakeholder interviews	Arnett, Muldrow, & Associates	Preliminary recommendations related to branding and marketing
Engage with local employers and business owners to define specific challenges (Focus Groups); utilize data to confirm the dynamics and issues shared.	Place + Main, CEDAM Fellow	Summary of findings
Gather and Review essential past efforts, background information, studies and data for Branding Strategy	CVB, CEDAM Fellow, Arnett, Muldrow, & Associates, Branding Subcommittee	Findings for new Branding & Marketing Strategy.
Conduct housing assessment to determine current housing stock conditions and expected future housing needs.	CEDAM Fellow	Housing Survey, Assessment
Assess current public boards and needs for Board Training and Development.	Steering Committee, CEDAM Fellow	Identification of Training and Development needs for Board Development Strategy.



Meeting with property owners about MEDC Rental Rehabilitation Program	MEDC CAT Member	Material and information to property owners about MEDC Rental Rehab Program for further redevelopment.
Conduct 4-6 Workforce Housing focus groups targeted towards 1) local government, 2) realtors/developers, 3) public/neighborhood groups, 4) housing agencies, 5) employers	Networks Northwest / Housing North and City staff / fellow	Summary of findings

**Additional information:**

Within the first few months of implementation, PRT initiatives expect to foster community working relationships between local stakeholders and to additionally promote cross functional communications while engaging the community in all local efforts. To continue building on the City’s capacity, the economic development strategy will also outline deliverables from each stakeholder or organization.

Each finding will be shared with the public to promote accountability and transparency with City led initiatives and continue building community trust. The institutionalization of the Steering Committee will serve as an initiative to continue building the community and their ability to work together and subsequently eliminate local silos.

April – June 2019		
Action item	Owner	Deliverable
Pro Forma Training and Redevelopment Resources	Place + Main, MEDC CAT Team Member	Training on available support resources for redevelopment, pro forma requirements.
Conduct a Housing 101 Community Forum	Networks Northwest / Housing North, Beckett & Raeder, and City staff / CEDAM fellow	Community training session
Development of County and Local Economic Development Goals	Place + Main, local stakeholders, Steering Committee	List of Local and Regional Goals
ED Strategy Final Report	Place + Main, Beckett & Raeder	Final Report with detailed implementation plan
Establish a consistent cross organizational collaboration meeting with community stakeholders.	City, CEDAM Fellow	Institutionalization and review of Steering Committee
Review of Manistee Zoning Ordinance	Beckett & Raeder	Recommendations for removing barriers for housing development
Review of existing board structure	Beckett & Raeder	Matrix that identifies existing boards, roles of boards, and any redundancies
Branding & Marketing final recommendations	Arnett, Muldrow, & Associates	Final recommendations with detailed graphics and supporting images
Overview of RRC Best practices and review of City compliance with RRC Certification	CEDAM Fellow, City, MEDC RRC Planner	Update (as required) of any RRC document, plan or requirement.

Call for Action on recommended strategies	Steering Committee, CEDAM Fellow	Implementation Plan establishing the adoption of the recommendations through the PRT Consultants.
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The activities of the second quarter, continue to build off previous action items. In this stage, PRT initiatives should move forward towards implementation and adoption plans. The call for action would serve as an initiative for community leaders and stakeholders to compromise in completing the recommended plans or accomplishing the established goals.

As part of complying with RRC Requirements, City will continue to review requirements and RRC evaluation to address any criteria that needs to be updated.

July – September 2019		
Action item	Owner	Deliverable
Develop a strategic Housing Plan	Networks Northwest / Housing North	Housing Plan targeting unit needs, target locations and price ranges.
Deliver Board Training	Beckett & Reader	Board training PowerPoint and supporting guidebook and manuals.
Establish an ongoing structure for Public Board training in the Community	Beckett & Reader, CEDAM Fellow	Presentations, written documents and resources available for any person assuming a public board position.
Outline Action Steps	Steering Committee, CEDAM Fellow, City	Outline document specifying subsequent steps for development in the community and responsible parties.
Outline of Core Messages	Steering Committee, CEDAM Fellow	Document outlining core message to potential residents, visitors inclined to invest in the community.

The third and final quarter, is intended to finish implementation plans and overview how the future of the community will look after the technical assistance, look at the lessons learned and the next steps to continue fostering development in Manistee. Core messages will be developed based on community strengths identified during the community engagement process and must represent things that the city can consistently deliver on.

The increased capacity will represent a significant step for the City of Manistee to promote accountability and implementation on strategies and community needs. Diverse action items like implementation of engagement plans, branding initiative and the housing approach, will serve as a starting point to continue building on existing resources and attracting investment to the community, all guided through collaboration and a shared community vision.

Economic development is a long-term game. Change will be incremental and over a long period of time. To attract investment, there must be the perception of long term prosperity and opportunity in the community. The first step in doing so is for local stakeholders to believe it and reinforce this message through positive communication.