

### Introduction

Rising Tide is an initiative envisioned by Governor Snyder and implemented by the Talent and Economic Development (TED) team with the mission of supplying at risk communities with the tools they need to design and build a successful economic framework. Project Rising Tide supports vibrant, thriving communities to attract business investment and talent by creating a sustainable path toward economic stability and growth.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Talent Investment Agency and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (TED team) has committed their assets to engaging specific communities across the state in order to empower them to shape their future and maximize economic potential.

One community in each of the ten Prosperity Regions was selected using the following data cross matched by population:

- Poverty level;
- Unemployment level;
- Labor participation rate;
- Renter occupied units; vacancy rates; and
- Percentage of households receiving food stamps.

Data is provided in Appendix A.

This initiative will employ the MEDC’s Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) program as the initial mechanism to support the Rising Tide platform in each of the ten Prosperity Regions. Depending on each community’s unique issues, additional supportive services will be provided.



## **Project Scope & Mission**

To create sustainable resources for housing services with a focus on succession planning and capacity building.

## **Problem Statement**

There is a lack of homeownership as well as quality and diverse housing types in the Village.

## **Community Summary**

With a rental housing percentage close to 51%, most of the rentals in the village are converted single family housing or apartments. In some locations, though zoned as two family, houses were converted to four and six family developments. The Village is working diligently to correct these errors of the past where zoning ordinances were not followed. Within the Village, there are approximately four absentee landlords who own 12 or more units each. The Community Development Coordinator has been working to ensure that the properties have been inspected, but enforcement has proven difficult due to time constraints.

There is the potential for developing around 96 second floor units in the Village's downtown, including a total of 400 parking spaces. There are currently no neighborhood organizations, however there are Neighborhood Watch programs and a Lake Association. The Village has been referring homeowners in need to the South West Michigan Community Action Agency. The South West Community Action Agency administers the Van Buren County Homeowner Rehab program through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Only seven homeowner rehabilitations have been completed in the Village since 2005. The Van Buren County Habitat for Humanity is currently working on homes in the Village; there are seven (7) properties with two (2) single family homes currently in the development and ownership process.

Harloff Manufacturing Company, a new company who recently located in the Village, has had a lot of trouble finding quality housing for their staff. As they continue to expand in the area, they'll need viable housing options for new employees.

There is a new 42 mixed unit Berkshire senior apartment community being developed right downtown by General Capital Inc. It is being funded in part by Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) through MSHDA. There are several Land Bank parcels in the revitalization district, and five Habitat for Humanity properties that have the potential for new infill housing. Most of the Village is built up with old housing stock with little space for new housing.

The Paw Paw Housing Commission operates Miller Court Senior Apartments with 81 units for seniors and disabled individuals. They have a six month average vacancy rate of 1.23%. They are currently working to convert to Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). RAD allows public housing agencies to leverage public and private debt and equity in order to reinvest in the public housing stock. The Commission was recently awarded LIHTC by MSHDA to rehabilitate the 81 units and the common areas of Miller Court Senior Apartments. The Commission currently has three staff members. The Housing Commission board is very active in the community. A non-profit was created by the Housing Commission board to apply for LIHTC financing. The Paw

Paw Area Nonprofit Housing Corporation, supported by the same Board Members as the Housing Commission, see an opportunity to assist with future housing rehabilitation and perhaps new construction as the nonprofit evolves and matures. The Board is interested in training to assist them in taking advantage of future opportunities.

The Village plans to update their master plan in the summer of 2016. The results from a Target Market Analysis study will also be completed around this time. This study will show the housing types and potential number of units the community could attract and will be commentary to the master plan. The Village hopes to improve homeowner connectivity to the commercial areas including trails that connect to nearby communities like Lawrence and Mattawan. The community also recently passed a complete streets ordinance. In addition the downtown hosts a trunkline bringing 150-200 trucks through the community a day. The Village would like to look at Pedestrian safety for multiple intersections to improve walkability for residents.

Maple Lake was created by the Village of Paw Paw in 1907 by the construction of a hydropower dam. The hydropower is no longer operational but the dam is still structurally sound. The lake serves as a focal point for outdoor activities and community engagement in the Village. A management plan was created for the lake in 2009 giving measures and improvement costs up until 2014. The health of the lake is a prevailing issue and one of the large concerns for the community.

The following priorities were identified during discussions: complete the Target Market Analysis and master plan update, improve housing, pedestrian safety and trail connections, and Maple Lake rehabilitation. The below action items are a result from the discussions and priorities set with the Village.

### Target Customer

Village Manager, Village Council, Paw Paw Housing Commission board, citizens and other community stakeholders

### January to March 2016

Action Item	Owner	Deliverable
Engage with the Paw Paw Housing Commission	TED Team	Assist housing services
Connect MDOT on pedestrian safety priorities	Village Staff	Create and clarify opportunities for funding
Asses the availability of economic development information	TED Team	Evaluate the community's website for ease of access to planning, zoning, development, housing and talent information.

Engage Stakeholder Groups, Coca-Cola, St. Julian Winery, Knouse Foods	TED Team, Stakeholder Groups,	Stakeholder support and update
Strategy for Succession Planning (Village and Housing Commission)	Village Staff, Housing Commission, Stakeholder Group or Consultant	Create a timeline and outline for identifying and documenting internal policies and practices.
Review Rental Ordinance Code and process	Village Staff, Stakeholder Group or Consultant	Strengthen the rental ordinance enforcement.
Update Village rental housing data and incorporate into housing assessment maps	Village Staff	Improve accuracy of Housing Assessment Maps, County data and ordinance enforcement
Continue to address metrics in RRC self-evaluations	Village Staff, Consultant	Working towards Redevelopment Ready Community status
Engage with Michigan and Van Buren Habitat for Humanity on possible projects.	Michigan and Van Buren Habitat for Humanity	Plan to improve Habitat owned vacant space in Village
Engage with MDOT and DNR on trails and pedestrian safety funding opportunities	Village Staff, Stakeholder Group, Planning Consultant, MDOT, TED Team	Meeting(s) to discuss development of enhancement plans.

The Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) self- evaluations look at the planning, zoning, and development foundation to retain and attract businesses, investment, and talent. Implementation of the RRC best practices will serve as the framework for which economic development programs and visions can flourish in the Village of Paw Paw. The preliminary housing assessment maps show current housing conditions using effective age, state equalized value and 100% homestead homes through census data through the help of Van Buren County staff. The Village has been working on updating their rental property list. These maps will be modified to include any possible additional rental properties tracked by the Village. They can be used to aid decisions in the housing strategy as a part of updated master plan. During this time it will also be important for the Village to continue to work on the Redevelopment Ready Community metrics. Conversations with MDOT will continue to help explore options for pedestrian safety and trails within the community. The Village’s website will also receive recommendations for improvements to ensure easy access to all economic development information.

### **April to June 2016**

Action Item	Owner	Deliverable
Review RRC economic development strategy guides	TED Team, Village Staff	Determine the importance of an economic development strategy and how it could be included in the master plan update

Document development review processes.	Village Staff	Review and visually depict community's development process(es). Complete flowchart(s) for community.
Finalize Habitat for Humanity Project Plan with Target Market Analysis results	Michigan and Van Buren Habitat for Humanity, Village staff	New development plans that meets the needs of the TMA and Master plan
Engage with downtown building owners on apartment updates and creation	Village Staff, DDA, TED Team, Stakeholder Group	Presentation focused on second story downtown development
Incorporate Target Market Analysis results into the Master Plan outreach and update.	Village Staff, Stakeholder Group, Planning Consultant,	A housing plan that reflects current data, and succinct community outreach.
Paw Paw Housing Non-profit development plan	Paw Paw Housing Non-profit, Stakeholder group, Consultant	Clear plan and steps to establish a non-profit housing development organization, plan for capacity building and training
Engage with MEDC PR & Marketing for Community Profile video	Village Staff, Stakeholder Group, TED Team	Work with MEDC staff to capture video content, provide edits
Succession Plan (Village and Housing Commission)	Village Staff, Stakeholder Group or Consultant	Clear steps and procedures for future leaders.
Identify individuals to assist conversations in Maple Lake management	TED Team	Opportunities for further in-depth discussions

An event will be organized to help the downtown building owners understand the opportunities that are available to redevelop and create units in downtown Paw Paw. The non-profit Housing commission will continue to explore training and capacity building through a development plan. This will enable local stakeholders to assist the Village in their housing needs. During this time a succession plan will be completed for both the Village and Housing Commission ensuring the hard work of the current leadership is not lost when it is time to retire. Conversations with MDOT will continue in order to find opportunities to fund pedestrian safety and trails. The DNR will be looped in as another possible stakeholder and resource. It will be important to combine the outreach for the Master Plan and Target Market Analysis projects. The Target Market Analysis results can be combined with the housing assessment maps to aid in the creation of a housing strategy within the Master Plan. An economic development strategy will help in identifying opportunities and challenges and implementation steps related to planning, zoning, business attraction and retention, development, housing and talent. The RRC has a guide to help create a concise and efficient process. It is recommend that the Village review this guide and consider adding an economic development strategy to the master plan update. The Master Plan will be updated in the summer of 2016. The community has additional concerns over the health of Maple Lake. The TED Team will identify individuals to assist with the Maple Lake Management discussions. These discussions could also be included as a part of the master plan update if desired.

## July to September 2016

Action Item	Owner	Deliverable
Update Zoning Ordinance	Village Staff, Consultant	Evaluate the community's zoning ordinance to determine if it aligns with the goals of the new master plan, allows for a variety of housing types, allows mixed use by right and includes standards to improve non-motorized transportation.
Inventory of redevelopment sites completed.	Village Staff	Assist community to identify and prioritize up to (3) redevelopment sites. Gather basic site information and organize into property information packet to be posted online
Incorporate housing assessment and strategies into completed Master Plan	Village Staff, Consultant	Clear direction and path for successful housing implementation
Find resources for Homeowner Rehabilitation	Village Staff, Paw Paw Housing Commission, Stakeholder group	Enable the Paw Paw Housing non-profit to provide needed housing services.
Continue to address metrics in RRC self-evaluations	Village Staff, Consultant	Working towards Redevelopment Ready Community status

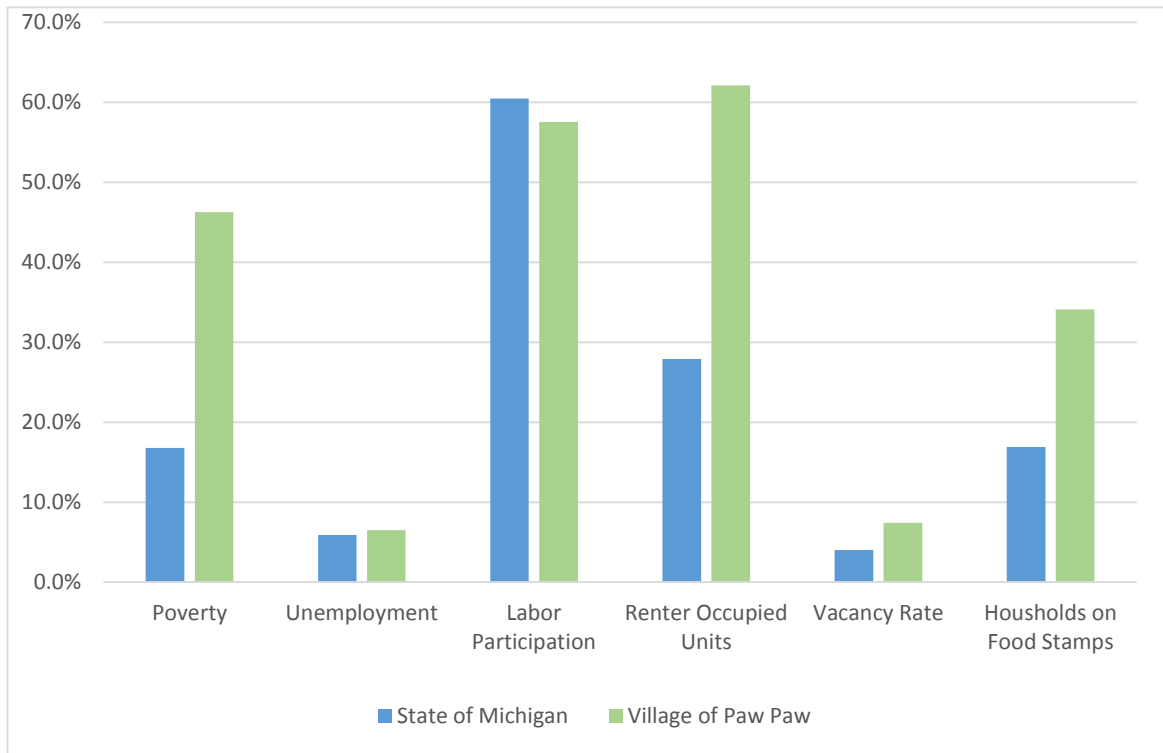
An important follow up to the Master Plan update is making sure it aligns with the zoning. The Zoning for the Village should match the Master Plan and include a variety of housing types and standards to include non-motorized transportation. An inventory will be created and posted online to highlight sites ready for redevelopment. To further assist with housing homeowner rehabilitation resources will be sought out to address the failing housing stock. The RRC work will continue into the end of 2016 and beyond if the Village would like to continue to work towards RRC community status.

It is also the intention that this project sets in place measures for continued success through succession planning and capacity building, that will leave a lasting imprint on the people of Paw Paw.

Appendix A

Data Used to Select Project Rising Tide Communities

	State of Michigan	Newberry	Cental Lake	Grayling	Evert	Harrison	Sandusky	Charlotte	Paw Paw	Hillsdale	River Rouge
Population	<b>9,886,095</b>	1,673	1,078	1,849	1,569	2,324	2,651	9,064	3,498	8,257	7,857
Poverty	<b>16.8%</b>	34.2%	21.1%	32.7%	36.4%	32.9%	26.2%	18.00%	46.3%	31.60%	38.50%
Unemployment	<b>5.9%</b>	7.3%	7.5%	7.7%	6.8%	7.9%	6.6%	4.70%	6.5%	5.80%	7.70%
Labor Participation	<b>60.5%</b>	58.4%	53.6%	50.2%	50.3%	47.9%	53.8%	57.30%	57.6%	56.50%	53.60%
Renter Occupied Units	<b>27.9%</b>	38.0%	35.4%	52.7%	53.6%	39.5%	42.5%	35.90%	62.1%	46.20%	43.50%
Vacancy Rate	<b>4.0%</b>	9.0%	10.7%	11.9%	4.7%	9.7%	5.0%	6.50%	7.4%	7.00%	9.50%
Housholds on Food Stamps	<b>16.9%</b>	30.6%	30.9%	35.6%	40.9%	39.1%	31.4%	24.20%	34.1%	28.10%	40.80%





## Appendix B

### **Project Rising Tide Website Review – Village of Paw Paw**

A municipal web site serves numerous purposes. At a basic level, it is a way to share information about public meetings, access public documents, find links to other community organizations and to obtain general community information. The main audience for this basic information is local residents and officials. Beyond this, a municipal web site is also a demonstration of community character and image. People unfamiliar with a community will often look to a website for information and form first impressions and conclusions. In the context of the RRC program, it is essential that communities meet the threshold of functionality. Beyond basic functionality, a municipal website should also communicate an appealing community image. The Village of Paw Paw's website is functional and organized, however website enhancements could lead to greater impact and higher performance levels. These are discussed below in the context of the RRC Best Practices and in terms of general observations.

#### **Assessment of Community Website and Potential Future Steps**

*1. Does the website incorporate basic methods of public notification?*

Village Council dates, times and locations are listed on the Village Council page. However, dates, times and locations of Planning Commission and Historical Commission meetings are not posted. Minutes are posted for the Village Council, Planning Commission, DDA, and Zoning Board of Appeals. However, the postings are not up-to-date.

#### Recommendations

Add the Planning Commission and Historical Commission meeting times to the website. Update all meeting times so they are current and dependable sources of information.

*2. Is it easy to locate pertinent planning, zoning and economic development documents on the City's website?*

The following documents are posted on the site: Village Master Plan Adopted 3-22-2010, Village of Paw Paw Zoning Map, Zoning Amendment Checklist, Rezoning with Master Plan Amendment, Rezoning without Master Plan Amendment, Special Use Checklist, and Zoning Board of Appeals Request.

A link to online payment options is posted on the "Utilities" landing page.

The Village is well aware of the need and has taken steps toward formalizing its economic development strategy.

"Property Information Packages" for identified priority redevelopment sites is not posted on the Web site.

#### Recommendations

Redevelopment sites should be posted and clearly defined for investment.

*3. Does the community website include housing and talent information and link to external partner organizations?*

The website did not have housing or talent information. There was no link to external partner organizations for these resources. The website did contain information on employment through the Village. It was easy to find information for businesses and families who are looking to move to the Village.

### Recommendations

Add links to external partners for housing and talent information when applicable.

#### 4. *Does the website serve as a community marketing tool?*

The community conducted marketing research and launched the “Uncork Paw Paw” campaign targeting residents within the 10 minute, 20 minute, and 30 minute drive of downtown. The website contains a link to the “Uncork Paw Paw” website, which highlights local businesses and features special events like concerts, festivals, and other special events. Information regarding grants and loans for businesses is also provided on the site.

### Recommendations

The “Uncork Paw Paw” website has two distinctly different target audiences: consumers and businesses. Although it is possible to appeal to two different audiences with the same website, a few adjustments might be made in order to better reach and serve those audiences.

The “Locate Here” and “Shop Locally” tabs are an excellent step toward helping audiences segment themselves based on the type of information that they are seeking. The tabs use the active voice and action verbs, e.g. locate, shop, etc. Some of the other tabs on the home page might be better organized and labelled. For example, the “Grants and Loans” tab leads to incentives for businesses. It might be labelled “Grow My Business”, “Business Loans and Grants,” “Business Incentives,” or something making it clear that the content is intended for the business audience.

It might be helpful out to reach out to local consumers, business owners and even developers to find out what they want from the site, how and why they currently use the site, the type of information are they seeking, and whether the site is meeting their needs. For example:

a. Is the existing site useful? The “Your Day in Paw Paw” tab leads to a page that highlights local businesses, but does not include links to their respective websites or to a “directory” or listing of addresses and hours of operation. Although local residents might know where The Sugar Bear is located, tourists and people from neighboring communities might not be aware of its location or its gluten-free, Vegan, and vegetarian menu items.

b. Is the site easy to use? Is it easy to navigate?

c. Are they able to find the information that they are seeking? Do they have a hard time finding information, even when they know that it is posted on the site?

d. Is the information reliable? For examples, calendars need to be updated. The 2015 Community Events Calendar is still posted on the site.

Engaging your audience in a Website upgrade not only leads to a better end product, but it helps them feel a sense of ownership.