2017 Project Overview
The Rising Tide project 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—collectively, the Talent and Economic Development (TED) team—have committed their assets to engaging ten communities across the state, empowering them to shape their future and maximize economic potential. The initiative employs the MEDC’s Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program as the initial mechanism to support the Rising Tide program, and all of the technical assistance work positions communities to be successful while working through the RRC process.

This document presents the fruit of that effort.
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Located within the heart of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Newberry is an often-undiscovered gem by visitors of the area. Surrounded by pristine natural beauty like the Tahquamenon River and elusive Tahquamenon Falls, Newberry has an opportunity to better leverage its year-round recreational resources for economic development. The village serves as the hub of commercial services for the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Within its historic downtown, there is plenty of underutilized and affordable retail space for interested start-ups.

**MASTER PLAN**

With input from residents, business leaders, and local officials, Newberry developed its first ever master plan. There were a variety of opportunities for citizen involvement throughout the process, including an evening visioning session, a series of stakeholder interviews, and a strategic planning session with the village Council. The project team conducted a housing assessment, identified and mapped properties ripe for redevelopment, and created a realistic action plan with goals tied to implementable strategies. The final master plan is also an important document as Newberry embarks on developing its first-ever zoning ordinance.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

Newberry developed a much-needed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that identified capital expenditures and expected funding sources over the next six years. As a funding and implementation tool, the CIP recognizes the limited administrative capacity of the village. The CIP uses Plan-IT software, which will allow village officials to update the CIP annually without outside assistance.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

With the understanding that economic prosperity fosters a more vibrant community and improves quality of life, economic development is the number one priority for village officials. The Economic Development Strategy explores opportunities related to marketing, redevelopment sites, and improved coordination and collaboration with surrounding communities and NGOs. Moving forward, the village is armed with strategies to more effectively capture tourism traffic associated with Pictured Rocks and Tahquamenon Falls.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

From a staffing and organizational management standpoint, Newberry is in transition and experiencing the growing pains of new leadership. The village received technical assistance on matters such as economic development, business recruitment, and interjurisdictional collaboration. A partnership was formed with the Luce County EDC to market downtown Newberry’s Falls Hotel property to prospective breweries in Northern Michigan. Another partnership with the accounting and business advisory firm Plante Moran helped review and establish sound fiscal practices. A cash flow analysis indicated that water and sanitary funds were in need of adjustment, resulting in rate structure modifications. Other important efforts included a restructuring of the regional Convention and Visitors Bureau and considering the feasibility of becoming a city under Public Act 19 of 1968.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Every community has a unique story to tell, and the purpose of the communications plan for Newberry is to help the village better tell its story to visitors, residents, and prospective investors. To truly capitalize on its geographic location, Newberry will promote ‘The Gateway to the Falls.’ The plan also provides templates and advice on developing effective press releases, media alerts, and social media campaigns.
The Village of Central Lake is located within the geographic boundaries of Central Lake Township in northwest Antrim County. It is also within the Elk River Chain of Lakes watershed that covers almost all of Antrim County; the village is bisected by Hanley and Intermediate Lakes. Historically, the towns along the chain of lakes were created during the 1800s lumbering era, and much of the land was used for timber and farming-related activities. A number of historic homes dating back to this era are still iconic historic attractions in the village.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Economic Development Strategy (EDS) began with a community engagement session where residents voted on Central Lake’s top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. After formulating goals and objectives, the strategies offer concrete actions aimed at drawing more visitors downtown, increasing economic opportunity for residents and businesses, and enhancing the city’s branding. A highlight is the identification of three sites that are available for redevelopment to improve downtown’s attractiveness and create jobs. The EDS also recommends marketing itself more effectively to a wider audience by investing in a community branding effort.

SITE ASSESSMENTS

The village has a number of sites that are poised for redevelopment. In partnership with the Gaylord Office of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), technical and field services were provided to conduct a number of individual site assessments to ascertain their eligibility for brownfield redevelopment. These efforts will be eventually coordinated through MDEQ and the Antrim County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Two businesses received direct assistance with site selection: the team helped guide Mammoth Distilling Company’s relocation from Ann Arbor, and also worked with representatives from Workforce Development as well as the Michigan Department of Agriculture to help a local multigenerational farm consider whether to expand its operations to include a meat processing facility. Both efforts will contribute to the local job market.
ZONING REVIEW

The purpose of the zoning review is to update the city’s zoning practices, and to align the revisions with Redevelopment Ready Communities best practices. The suggested updates reflect modern standards for zoning that include allowing upper story residential uses by right, using native plants according to northwest Michigan conditions, and increasing the height of the existing PUD by an additional story. The evaluation showed that Central Lake’s zoning was balanced and not onerous for property owners and developers to read.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The goals of the Communication Plan are multi-purpose. The Village of Central Lake uses this plan to build the village of Central Lake brand, increase awareness of the village, share news, improve relations with surrounding communities, and strategize about communications platforms. The plan underscores the importance of using social media consistently, and identifies which traditional, local, and regional media outlets can help to communicate Central Lake’s message.
The city of Grayling is a small community located in northern Lower Michigan, in Crawford County. The city is just over two square miles in total. The Grayling area offers a multitude of recreational opportunities, and as such, the city benefits from an abundant tourist-oriented economy. Grayling draws on its accessibility from I-75 and M-72, natural features, and strong community spirit as it continues to grow. Many of the property owners in the surrounding area are seasonal residents, whereas most residents within the city limits are permanent. The quality and quantity of its housing stock are among the challenges faced by the city. The community has also identified that it must seek ways to attract redevelopment while maintaining its significant natural and cultural resources.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
To kickoff the strategy process, a task force held a brainstorming session to solicit community stakeholder input on how the city can approach economic development. With over 100 people in attendance, the stakeholders identified Grayling’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Their input had a sizable impact on final strategies. Lacking day care facilities, poor transportation links, and missing middle housing were frequently mentioned. The strategies provide step-by-step guidance on how to address these problems. Further, the EDS identifies 19 sites within the city that are suited for redevelopment.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
The Communications Plan is a customized list of media outlets the city can use as a platform to spread updates, events, and news about Grayling to a wider audience. The plan also provides a guide for how to tactfully take advantage of the speed and breadth of social media so that Grayling can re-brand itself as a destination in northwest Michigan.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
Grayling is well situated along I-75 and en route to larger tourist destinations like Traverse City and Petoskey, yet the city’s downtown has suffered from commercial vacancies. A recommended future project is the development of infill housing to build demand for downtown businesses, then to target revitalization efforts on the highly visible and vacant corner properties. The recommendations also call for beautifying the downtown through facade and streetscape improvements.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance efforts in Grayling included educational training for the DDA, Village Council, and Planning Commission. The DDA received information about the roles and responsibilities of its members, as well as the role of the DDA body as a public developer. The Planning Commission learned about Capital Improvement Programs and successful examples of implementing these programs in similar communities.

Based on market assessments backed up by input from the city and DDA, several sites were evaluated for housing opportunities. These included the former Fred Bear Manufacturing facility and residual lands owned and managed by the Grayling Golf and Country Club.

BRANDING

In an effort to re-brand Grayling to attract more visitors and potential residents, the city collaborated with the Grayling Main Street team to publicly define itself. Grayling's brand statement emphasizes that it is a creative, historic, and inviting place: Michigan's Most Colorful Rivertown. The brand plays on Grayling's valuable natural asset, the Au Sable River. Multiple logos were created for the city, including one with a colorful paddle to symbolize its good-natured outdoor spirit.
Evart is located in the southwest portion of Osceola County. Along with Reed City, Evart is one of only two cities in the county. Evart is connected to the Pere Marquette rail-trail (a recreational trail converted from former railway lines). Due to this trail, and the Muskegon River, one of Evart’s strengths is its ample recreation options. The vision of Evart is well established, as residents participated in planning sessions along with local representatives. Residents want Evart to be known as a destination in Michigan. The vision describes crowded sidewalks downtown with a variety of restaurants, retail, and entertainment options, including a vibrant riverwalk. The Master Plan and other reports address the needs of residents and outline steps to reach the community’s goals.

**MASTER PLAN**

The Master Plan, building on momentum from Evart’s recent planning efforts, identified poor housing quality and an unsteady work environment within the community. The Evart Master Plan uses the in-depth housing field work, a housing survey, and several meetings with the region’s largest stakeholders to not only address these issues, but also to plan for the ways in which they intersect.

**ZONING ORDINANCE**

Understanding that a Master Plan is only as useful as the support of its Zoning Ordinance, the ordinance was updated to complement and enforce the Master Plan’s goals and help streamline the development process. The Zoning Ordinance modernized the parking requirements, incorporated floodplain and wellhead overlay districts, and reduced the steps developers must take to gain land use permits.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Another critical document that will propel Evart forward is the Economic Development Strategy (EDS). Taking a deeper dive into the economic realities in Evart, the EDS translated insight derived from meetings with the Downtown Development Authority and Local Development Finance Authority into strategies to improve Evart’s economic prospects. The resulting document shows how to redefine the leadership’s role and reorganize its structure, and how to improve potential redevelopment sites to market them aggressively. The plan also calls out the need for a trained real estate development professional on staff, adding capacity to efforts to fill commercial and industrial vacancies.
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
In the heart of Michigan and along the Pere Marquette Trail, Evart has a lot to share with the rest of the state. The Communications Plan recommends sharing news in the daily newspapers. As discovered through the master planning process, the digital divide means that residents without access to the internet have little way to stay updated on current city events. The plan also provides guidance on generating an appropriate amount of social media posts and identifies other media sources that help spread the city’s message further.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was a much needed tool in Evart. Looking five to six years in the future, the CIP takes the recently conducted inventory and budgets the cost of updating infrastructure on an annual basis. The CIP holds city departments responsible for maintaining the capital improvement and prioritizes the investments.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
The results from a city-conducted community survey on housing demonstrated serious concern over the quality of rental units. As a follow-up to address this issue, another survey was sent to city managers statewide to gauge the effects of rental inspections programs on improving housing quality without harming relationships with local landlords. At two sessions held in Evart, stakeholders reviewed the results on price, frequency, and repercussions of its implementation, and discussed how to bring this type of program to the city in a way that works more as a carrot as less as a stick. In another promising development, work completed through Project Rising Tide has led the city to submit a notice of intent to apply for the Select level of the Michigan Main Street program to focus on downtown revitalization.
With a variety of businesses and industry, a rich history, and a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities, Harrison seems to have it all. Nestled within the city is beautiful Budd Lake, and as locals are quick to highlight, one can get to 20 different lakes within a 20-minute drive of the city. This family-oriented community has a dedicated network of volunteers and city staff who are committed to fostering a strong, vibrant community. Harrison is home to a traditional downtown district which has historically served as a focal point for development.

MASTER PLAN

Harrison developed a long-range master plan that sets forth an ambitious 15-year vision for how the community plans to grow, develop, and redevelop. Leadership and oversight was provided by the Planning Commission. Public input sessions fed into the goals and action plan, and the Planning Commission hosted a well-attended public open house to gather feedback on the preliminary goals, actions, and the Future Land Use map. Some of the key goals identified by the community include attracting and retaining a diversity of businesses, investing in downtown, supporting neighborhood revitalization, and expanding transportation options. As a part of the planning effort, leadership conducted a city-wide inventory of potential redevelopment sites. There is also a public participation plan that formalizes diverse methods of civic engagement to ensure transparency in all future planning processes.

ZONING ORDINANCE

After completion of the master plan, the city’s zoning ordinance was rewritten to support the land use policies and development approval process described in the master plan. The project team reformulated an old, outdated zoning ordinance to make it more supportive of creative redevelopment projects and mixed-use projects within the core of the city. Key updates to the zoning ordinance include flexible parking standards, a planned unit development option, updated landscaping standards, and a wellhead protection overlay district to protect drinking water quality.
PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN
Given its high-quality natural resources, Harrison is committed to positioning itself as the recreational hub for central Michigan. Under the leadership of the Parks and Recreation Committee, Harrison self-funded a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan in conjunction with the Master Plan. The city administered a community-wide survey to gather input on projects and priorities. A key component is the development of the Nature Trail, which will loop through City Park and connect neighborhoods with schools and other amenities, providing recreational benefits as well as expanded transportation options.

BRANDING AND MARKETING
As a part of a comprehensive branding and marketing process, Harrison received technical assistance on colors, fonts, images, and logos that will effectively communicate the Harrison brand. Harrison was provided with a diversity of branding options for various occasions. Through this intensive three-day process, the project team reaffirmed the city’s brand message, which is “Harrison, MI: 20 Lakes in 20 Minutes.”

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
Every community has a unique story to tell, and the purpose of the communications plan is to help Harrison better tell its story to visitors, residents, and prospective investors. Key messages developed for Harrison focus on its outdoor recreation opportunities, diverse industry, and a supportive environment for redevelopment. The plan also provides templates and advice on developing effective press releases, media alerts, and social media campaigns.
Sandusky is located in the “thumb” of Michigan; it is the seat of Sanilac County and surrounded by primarily rural townships. Sandusky covers 2.14 square miles and is home to just over 2,600 residents. The city of Sandusky has an opportune location at the juncture of M-46 and M-19. It is described as “an urban and general service district” by the county, due to its infrastructure and relatively high densities of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Like many cities in Michigan, Sandusky is adapting to challenges associated with a shrinking population.

**MASTER PLAN**

The Sandusky Master Plan has a strong housing component, as this issue frequently arose as an area of concern. As a county seat, Sandusky is an employment hub, but has had trouble accommodating people who are interested in moving to the city due to lack of housing options. After housing field work and a review of the Zoning Ordinance, the plan features several recommendations for expanding the housing supply and formats in addition to looking at how to expand economic opportunity. In Sandusky, there can’t be success in one and not the other. The Plan also takes seriously the improvement of public safety features for the aging and disabled population.

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN**

To begin this plan, several interviews were conducted with downtown business owners to hear where the challenges lie in boosting downtown’s attractiveness to residents. The responses revealed interest in organizing to fund improved streetscapes, facades, and snow removal. A Principal Shopping District can levy a special assessment to raise funds for these improvements. There is also interest in creating a “shop local” campaign to increase awareness of the importance of supporting locally-owned businesses.

**PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

Sandusky offers exceptional recreational opportunities for its residents and nearby visitors. The city invested its own funds in a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan in coordination with the master planning process to take advantage of synergies. A community-wide survey serving both efforts provided ample insight into recreation preferences. With this information, the City can use its budget to fund changes that make the parks safer, more accessible and comfortable, and ultimately more attuned with users’ preferences.
BRANDING

The branding process brought together Sandusky residents to brainstorm text and image combinations that could define the city’s history and lifestyle. The community chose to illustrate its small town feel with a simple and inviting message: “Welcome Home.” The image of the gazebo with the hanging American flags showcases the city’s military history and admiration for residents who have fought in the U.S. armed forces. The gazebo also represents a community asset in the heart of the city, a space where anyone is welcome.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Sandusky is proud of its small-town friendliness and wants to share what it has to offer in the way of family-oriented festivals and outdoor events. The Communications Plan recommends expanding the city’s media outlets for greater opportunities to unveil its new branding. The outlets in the plan offer a range of media types (print, social, etc.) as well as geographic scales.
The City of Charlotte offers residents small-town charm combined with sound educational, health care, employment, and personal enrichment opportunities. Charlotte continues to build upon a strong framework of pride and public infrastructure to expand those opportunities for current and future residents. Citizen participation was critical during the Project Rising Tide process, including visioning sessions, community work groups, and surveys. Collaboration with Charlotte Rising, a Select-level Michigan Main Street organization working to cultivate a vibrant and enduring Downtown Charlotte by expanding its economic diversity and capacity, enhancing its historic appeal and creativity, endorsing its pride and promise, and enlivening its connectivity and investment, was also important. Charlotte plans to focus on investment in the downtown, reinvestment in the older neighborhoods, and the planned expansion of new residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

**SUBAREA PLAN**

A Downtown Framework plan was developed to guide future development and improvement opportunities. To initiate the planning process, an intensive one-day site walk and design charrette was attended by community members. During the site walk, participants identified traffic speed and noise, walkability, and pedestrian comfort as primary physical challenges to a healthy downtown business environment. The group discussed Complete Streets design principles that seek to better balance right-of-way use for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Key design charrette outcomes included a 4-to-3 lane “road diet” on M-50, streetscape improvements, shared-use parking, pedestrian linkages, and pocket park opportunities. An illustrative Downtown Framework Plan and cross sections graphically summarize the community’s desired solutions. This planning effort will support the creation of a form-based zoning code to guide the preferred development configuration.

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The goals for Charlotte’s communications plan are building awareness of downtown Charlotte’s events and available affordable living options, and to share business news across the region. The communication plan gives tips on how to write and time press releases, and discusses the importance of using and social media consistently. It also points out that social media is instant two-way communication, and therefore must be treated differently than other media forms.
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

A group of stakeholders met to identify and prioritize the city’s greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A great strength in Charlotte is the number of organizations dedicated to the city’s economic well-being, but uniting them through a cohesive brand can more clearly define their purpose to potential residents, businesses, and tourists. Other proposed strategies include expanding downtown clean-ups, holding downtown business roundtables, promoting Charlotte with business maps scattered downtown, and using third-party apps like Yelp to promote local businesses.
The Village of Paw Paw is located in east-central Van Buren county at the intersection of I-94 and M-40, approximately 20 miles west of downtown Kalamazoo. The village is situated between Antwerp township to the east and Paw Paw township to the west. Located within Southwest Michigan’s wine and fruit producing region, Paw Paw has established itself as a destination for wine tasting and outdoor recreation, with Maple Lake providing waterfront opportunities for village residents and visitors. The village has traditionally been an attractive setting for industries that heavily depend on transportation, due to the easy access to main highways. Focusing on key concepts such as improving the housing stock and creating a more pedestrian friendly and appealing downtown are among Paw Paw’s goals.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Representatives of Paw Paw’s leadership and business community went through the exercise of identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. With many strengths, the strategies focus on how to effectively and consistently market Paw Paw’s redevelopment opportunities through social media and a new village website. The strategies also identify a number of properties for redevelopment and highlight the need to find more acreage to accommodate single-family housing. The priority is to focus on the prime real estate identified and improve the façade of existing building stock downtown to entice more investment.

Using the Economic Development Strategy, the village administrative staff selected a preferred site for the preparation of a redevelopment vision based on market information and the regional Residential Target Market Analysis. The redevelopment services focused on site development to repurpose a former industrial property using brownfield redevelopment incentives. The selected site is part of a larger community vision developed by the village Planning Commission in conjunction with Michigan State University.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The CIP is a critical and complementary technical assistance document. It is the backbone for all goals that involve expanding infrastructure or capacity, throwing city-wide events, or the general operation of a city on a daily basis. The CIP details the cost and timeline for upgrading infrastructure that a city depends upon. Through this process, village leadership was able to prioritize projects of critical importance over important or desired updates such as street reconstruction and a hydraulic boom and bucket.
HOUSING QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The village’s concern about housing quality was addressed by a two-day field work study that sought to compare housing quality by tenure status. The homes were rated on the amount and severity of the damage visible on the exterior of the home. Homes were then ranked and mapped to determine the spatial distribution of blighted homes. The findings show that on average, owner occupied housing are better maintained than rental units.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Shortly after the initial meeting with village administrative staff, the need to quickly amend and restate the Downtown Development Authority Tax Increment Financing Plan was identified as critical due to its expiration date in December 2016. If not extended, the DDA was going to forgo $255,000 in annual revenues. This would have halted planned physical improvements and marketing efforts in the downtown, and limited the opportunity to fund for redevelopment projects. Technical assistance included preparation of the amended and restated TIF plan, development of a schedule for meetings and public hearings, notices, and public hearing posters, and suggested resolutions of adoption for both the DDA and the Village Council.
The city of Hillsdale was a well known railroad center in the 1950s, with as many as 26 passenger trains a day going in and out. Today, over 8,000 people live in the city, with an anticipated population increase of 0.1% per year. The city of Hillsdale is a county seat with a historic downtown core, and enjoys the advantages of having Hillsdale College in town.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Local stakeholders identified employment opportunities leaving the area as a major weakness. The recommendations paired this weakness with the city’s greatest opportunities: building a stronger connection to the College, increasing vocational training centers, and teaming with MichiganWorks! to train youth for available jobs and encourage businesses to stay. The strategies also identify sites that would benefit from mixed-use redevelopment and possible ways to finance their repair to enliven the downtown, in addition to a facade improvement program and creating more upper floor housing.

FORM-BASED CODE

A form-based code departs from traditional zoning in that it does not regulate by use but rather by features that preserve the community’s character. In Hillsdale, the form-based code updates the zoning for the downtown core and the downtown edge with a focus on key elements such as architectural style, diverse modes of transit, mixed uses by right, and parking organized by district rather than by parcel. The intent is to create more flexibility within districts to re-create the already successful and beautiful downtown form by addressing intensity of use and the quality of the public realm instead of focusing on separating uses.

ZONING AUDIT

At the start of Project Rising Tide, Hillsdale was in the process of revising several sections of its zoning code. A review was conducted of proposed changes to parking and loading regulations, intended to reduce the overall land area dedicated to parking within the city and to fine-tune the match between a development and its parking requirements. General guidance was also given with regard to a new ordinance regulating medical marihuana establishments.
BRANDING
Hillsdale’s branding strategy strives to preserve its personality and to help the community reach its vision. A photo catalogue of the city’s assets helped to inform the final image: a neoclassical building that represents the city’s beautiful architecture and important civic institutions. The branding package lays out the color palette, spacing, typeface, and variations that can be used for different agencies to create a cohesive brand.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
The Communication Plan strategically outlines the best media outlets for Hillsdale to use as a platform to introduce its new image. Hillsdale wants to share its picturesque downtown and show that it supports entrepreneurs. The Plan also notes that storytelling unites a community and builds pride, along with boosting awareness to potential visitors. Planning succeeds best when a wide variety of community stakeholders is involved, which then contributes to broad dissemination of the city’s message. The strategy also includes customized traditional and social media outlets that can support Hillsdale.

TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS
The city of Hillsdale’s TMA shows 91% of new households are renters. Most of the demand from new households is for single-family homes, but lifestyle data on the incoming residents show that many also prefer structures with at least four units. The TMA compares demand with existing housing stock, showing where there are gaps in the housing supply and noting whether any housing formats can be converted to become more desirable to incoming residents.
The city of River Rouge is one of the 17 communities known as Downriver Detroit. The small city of 2.65 square miles is home to major industrial giants such as National Steel Corp., Texaco, and Amoco Petroleum Products. The city is linked to Detroit in many ways: in addition to sharing a border, they are connected via Jefferson Avenue, River Rouge’s principal thoroughfare, and the Detroit River. River Rouge is also bounded on its northern side by an artificial channel around wholly industrial Zug Island. River Rouge is a part of the most populous county in the state, with nearly 2 of every 10 Michiganders living in Wayne County. Community input represented many different groups of residents within the city.

**MASTER PLAN**

The Master Plan acknowledges River Rouge’s long and rich industrial history as well as its transition toward a more modern economy. In the context of the re-opened Bascule bridge through downtown River Rouge, and the forthcoming construction of the new international Gordie Howe bridge to Canada, the plan tries to prepare the city for the possibility of an influx of workers, residents, and new economic opportunity. The plan also includes a housing inventory, an extensive community survey, a map of potential redevelopment sites, and several engagement sessions to ensure resident buy-in on planning for imminent change.

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY**

The Downtown Revitalization Strategy centers on addressing high vacancy rate across the city. After a tour of downtown to evaluate the building stock, and an analysis on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats with local leaders, the strategies tackle modernizing the marketing of properties. Collecting basic site data and sharing it online is a proactive, city-led approach that helps to ensure that sites are filled with development that meets the needs of the residents, such as a grocery store and a credit union identified by the community.

**TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS**

The residential Target Market Analysis tracks which “lifestyle segments” of the population are moving to River Rouge. The city has high vacancy rates and a gap between market potential for housing and the existing building stock. The biggest gap lies among new households seeking townhomes with 5 to 9 units. The analysis also shows that there is an oversupply of single-family housing units resulting from shrinking demand.
BRANDING

Through an intensive three-day process, the city of River Rouge brainstormed how to capture the city’s essence in a logo. The iterative process includes meetings with the community and revisions to ensure that the colors, image, and text reflect the city’s ethos. It is a powerful visual, with variations for different occasions, that River Rouge can use to promote “where hard work lives” for the decades to come.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The communication strategy is built around communicating River Rouge’s mission-based message as a place of industry and entrepreneurship. To reach a wider audience, the plan lists different media outlets as well as a detailed guide to maximizing social media’s efficiency at delivering news. This plan goes hand in hand with the new branding, as a platform to showcase its colorful and inviting new logo.