

Village of Middleville Economic Development Strategy

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Introduction

Economic Development acts as the stimulus towards generating a strong and prosperous community. A locally strong economy experiencing development is not strictly a result of luck or good timing, but rather is the outcome of careful planning and implementation. The Village of Middleville is positioned in a prime geographic location, situated southeast of metropolitan Grand Rapids, with direct accessibility to major transportation routes such as M-6 and M-37, and within close proximity to wonderful natural features such as the Thornapple River, Gun Lake State Park. As the local economic climate is primes itself for growth, the Village of Middleville shall adopt and implement an economic development strategy.

The Village has witnessed significant positive growth in economic development and private investment in recent years including business expansion, increase in new home construction, and new business operations. The benefits are visible every day, demonstrated by recent plant expansions at *Bradford White Corporation*, and new businesses such as *Accurate Machine & Tool*, *Riverdog Tavern*, and *Harkema Automotive*. Furthermore, the residential housing development has reached unprecedented levels with approximately fifty new single family homes constructed in 2015 & 2016. As we near the end of the second decade of this millennia, development and demographic and migration patterns indicate a comprehensive strategy is vital to the future and sustainability of the Middleville community.

Through the adoption of an economic development strategy, procedures will be institutionalized that enables local officials, elected and appointed bodies to implement the goals and objectives of the Village. Through direction from economic and demographic analyses, the strategy will allow business owners, residents and visitors to have a clear understanding of the vision of the Village. The goals cannot be met without reaching out to stakeholders for support, including the Local Development Finance Authority, Downtown Development Authority, the Barry County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Alliance, local businesses, residents, visitors and Thornapple-Kellogg schools.

The Economic Development Strategy will be shaped in a fluid framework, accommodating for fluctuations to the market and variations in public demand. Specific goals will contain several objectives that address each task and list the expected result. The goals and objectives shall be revisited and amended as necessary, taking into account development patterns and volatility in public and private investment. After compiling the information, Village officials will report on the accomplishments of the economic development strategy on an annual basis.

Economic Development Strategy

Goal: Business Expansion & Retention

Maintaining existing businesses and extending opportunities to potential business ventures is vital to the economic development of the Village. By staging business visits, creating a business registry and collaborating with local partners, the Village is better suited to retain the existing businesses and present opportunities for the businesses to expand. The Village should be able to meet this goal with several programs and policies to enable staff, officials, and businesses owners to engage in an open dialog that addresses any needs, concerns or suggestions.

The Village has identified the following objectives needed to satisfy business expansion and retention:

- Create a targeted Business Retention Program.
- Conduct at least 25 employer visits each year.
- Utilize best practices in the Economic Development industry, providing a high degree of value to the employers while collecting important benchmark data to gauge business trends.
- Collaborate with appropriate partners such as Barry County Chamber of Commerce (BCCC) and Economic Development Alliance (BCEDA), Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Michigan Mechanical Training Center (MMTC), and West Michigan Works! to help identify challenges and provide needed resources as opportunities arise.
- Create a geographic database, which includes a business registry of all businesses in the Village.

Goal: Business Attraction

In order to continue to attract new and creative businesses, the Village must have a concrete database that quantifies what businesses currently exist. As the Village inputs the database, available properties that are potential for development and redevelopment will be placed on a high priority. The Village will work with private developers on initial conversations that express where the current needs are for business types. The Village will also engage local and state partners for further coordination with market needs for business attraction.

The following objectives have been identified to satisfy business attraction:

- Establish a comprehensive Village database of available development properties for site selection purposes - for local, regional and state utilization.
- Work collaboratively with developers, government entities and businesses to identify and utilize incentive programs to bring development projects to fruition.
- Notify potential business owners and developers of the resources available from the West Michigan Regional Dashboard.

Goal: Workforce Development

Establishing a strong and skilled workforce requires constant collaboration with essential partners. The Village itself cannot directly facilitate a workforce development program, but can reach out to local and public institutions for partnerships. The Village can act as a liaison between the public institutions and the private businesses to fill the gaps between workforce supply and demand. The Village will engage in a strategy to continue close monitoring of labor needs, employment trends, and business opportunities to help facilitate this gap in the work force market.

The following objectives are necessary to satisfy workforce development:

- Contact Thornapple-Kellogg Schools, Kalamazoo Community College, Davenport University, Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, and Grand Rapids Community College when intern or apprenticeship opportunities are available with the Village.
- Notify employers, businesses and residents of training opportunities available from Michigan Works!, MMTC, and BCEDA.
- Inform employers and business owners of grant opportunities available from West Michigan Works! and MMTC.

Goal: Residential Development Recruitment & Marketing

Middleville has seen significant growth in residential development in recent years and the availability of land capable of supporting residential use is being exhausted. The success of our commercial, industrial and retail uses are contingent upon residents using and enjoying those services. The Village will closely monitor population, migration, household income, workforce trends in the county and the region to properly assess the housing supply and demand. It shall be imperative the Village communicate with housing developers, lending institutions and real estate brokers for insight into the housing market. Furthermore, the Village will need to closely monitor the rental housing quality and supply and adopt policies that ensure all dwelling units are fit for occupancy.

The following objectives are necessary for recruitment and marketing of residential development:

- Collaborate with local public and private entities to develop a housing needs assessment and utilize this assessment to attract additional housing development in the Village.
- Partner with the Middleville Housing Commission to develop a strategy to address housing opportunities.
- Create database of existing housing types and housing conditions.
- Create Rental Unit Certification Program to maintain a record of rental housing units in the Village.

Goal: Infrastructure

A reliable and supportive infrastructure system is tantamount with successful economic development and is vital to the protection of public health, safety and welfare. The Village must have in place infrastructure that can support businesses, residents, and development both large and small that would not deter businesses or industry from locating to Middleville. The Village will continue to monitor needs of existing street systems, water and sewer systems, waste water, pedestrian and recreation facilities, and communication needs such a broadband service to ensure that sustainability and service to our existing infrastructure is attainable. Capital expenditures and policies will be considered and adopted to satisfy any needs in the infrastructure that may inhibit or deflect economic development from occurring in the Village.

The following objectives are necessary to satisfy infrastructure improvements:

- Execute a plan to expand Broadband service throughout the Village.
- Identify and support critical infrastructure that would pave the way for development within the Village.
- Adopt a “Dig-Once” policy that reduces public facilities maintenance costs and encourages communication between public and private utility providers.

Goal: Public Relations & Advocacy

A transparent government is a government that does not operate in a vacuum, neglecting dialog and input from residents and businesses. The Village of Middleville will remain vigilant in its attempts to make development and redevelopment tools readily available to potential users. The tools will create a streamlined avenue of communication between the private and public partners, and increases the likelihood of implementation. The Village will also assist developers in advocating public input on major projects in the Village. The incorporation of internal policies within the public participation plan will enable the Village to continue an open relationship with public and provide significant opportunities for people to express their thoughts and comments.

The following objectives are necessary to satisfy public relations and advocacy:

- Advocate for potential pro-development programs and policies.
- Increase awareness of legislation and policy changes that could impact development.
- Communicate regularly with public and private partners on progress of goals.
- Adopt a public participation plan that assists developers with obtaining public input.

Marketing Component

Goal: Marketing and Promotion

Friends and family that are familiar with Middleville are fully aware of the qualities the Village has to offer. However, because of limited notoriety, the Village does not immediately correlate on as a destination for recreation, business opportunity, family relocation, and tourism. The Village should capitalize the tremendous quality of life attributes such as the Thornapple River, trail network, Village parks, local events, and successful business ventures. A comprehensive marketing package would assist in the promotion of the Village, created in digital and tangible formats. The marketing package would enable the Village to promote itself at many local, county, and regional events, in addition to being displayed on the municipal website. To assist in the determination of success and failures of the marketing campaign, the Village will need to adopt an internal tracking mechanism. The mechanism can enable better understandings for strategic investments into the promotion of the Village.

To promote the Village, notification of important policy decisions within various mediums will be necessary to enhance the transparency and cooperation with stakeholders. The Village will also remain in close communication with local business organizations such as the Barry County Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to establish and maintain a “Village Brand”. The establishment of a brand will allow for recognition and create a rallying point for all entities to mutually agree upon and achieve.

The following objectives are necessary to satisfy the goal of marketing and promotion:

- Development of marketing materials to “tell the Village story”.
- Develop a Measurable Dashboard to define and measure return on investment.
- Track activity statistics such as retention and attraction projects.
- Issue regular press releases highlighting recent Village actions and decisions.
- Partner with the business organizations, BCCC, DDA and local business owners to help establish a Village brand.

Village of Middleville:
Economic Development Strategy Responsibility Matrix

Goal	Objective Narrative	Party Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable
<i>Business Expansion & Retention</i>	25 employer visits	VM, P/ZA, DDA Staff	12/31/2017	Employer visit database
	Create a Business Contact List	All staff	4/1/2017	Business Contact Form, Folder, & Geographic database of businesses
	Create a targeted Business Retention program	VM, DDA Staff, DDA, VC	9/30/2017	Business Retention Program plan document with implementation procedures
	Collaborate w/ BCCC, MEDC, MMTC and West Michigan Works to assist in identifying challenges and locate potential resources	VM, DDA Director	12/1/2017	Chronological log of visits w/ discussion narrative
<i>Business Attraction</i>	Create database of development properties for site selection purposes	P/ZA, AA	6/1/2017	Database of development properties; uploaded to Village website
	Work with developers, government agencies and business to help identify incentive programs	VM, DDA Staff, P/ZA	12/1/2017	Chronological log of visits w/ discussion narrative
<i>Workforce Development</i>	Contact TK Schools and local community colleges when intern or apprentice opportunities are available at the Village	VM, AA, DPW	6/1/2017	Intern position description listed on website and available for pick up in the Village office
	Notify employers, businesses and residents of training opportunities provided by local agencies	VM, P/ZA, DDA Staff	9/30/2017	Tracking log of conversation and notifications to potential users
	Inform business owners and employers of grant opportunities	VM, P/ZA, DDA Staff	6/1/2017	Tracking log of conversation and notifications to potential users

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Residential Development Recruitment & Marketing	Collaborate with potential partners to develop housing needs assessment	P/ZA, VM, AA	12/31/2017	Housing Needs Assessment
	Partner with Middleville Housing Commission to address housing opportunities	P/ZA, VM, Middleville Housing Commission	12/31/2017	Housing deficiency identification document, including strategies to improve housing conditions
	Rental Unit Certification Program	P/ZA, VM, CEO, Professional Code Inspectors (PCI), VC	12/31/2017	Cohesive Rental Unit Certification Program; registry forms and tracking spreadsheet, procedures for ensuring compliance
Infrastructure	Broadband service	VM, DPW, P/ZA	12/31/2017	Village map demonstrating broadband coverage and lack thereof
	Identification of infrastructure development that enables economic development	VM, DPW, P/ZA, Engineer	9/30/2017	Map and documentation of infrastructure priorities
	Dig Once policy	VM, DPW, P/ZA, Village Council	9/30/2017	Adoption of a "dig once" Resolution/Ordinance

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<i>Public Relations & Advocacy</i>	Advocate for pro-development programs	VM, DDA Staff, P/ZA	12/31/2017	Log of business visits, discussion items and programs presented that offer incentives
	Increased awareness of policy changes	Village Attorney, Planning Consultant, DDA Staff	6/1/2017	Procedure of maintaining updates of legislative changes and process to accommodate for said changes
	Regular communication with public and private partners	VM, DDA Staff, P/ZA	6/1/2017	Log of business visits, discussion items
	Assist developers with public input for projects	P/ZA, Planning Commission, Village Council		Amended Public Participation Plan, Developer/Neighboring properties input checklist
			12/31/2017	
<i>Marketing & Promotion</i>	Tell the Village Story	DDA, VM, DDA Staff	6/1/2017	Presentation that effectively and creatively markets Middleville
	Creation of measurable dashboard to track Return on Investment	DDA Staff, VM	6/1/2017	Measurable Dashboard
	Tracking of activity statistics	DDA Staff	12/31/2017	Tracking form of activity stats
	Regular press releases	All staff	6/1/2017	Press release on Village website and in local newspaper
	Partner with MBA, Chamber of Commerce, DDA to create brand	VM, DDA, DDA Staff	12/31/2017	Village Brand Logo, Brand Documents, Digital Marketing of Brand