



Economic Development & Community Marketing Strategy

Prepared for
Branch County Economic Growth Alliance
City of Bronson
City of Coldwater
Village of Quincy
Village of Union City



Prepared by:
Joe Borgstrom, Principal
Email: joe@placeandmain.com
Phone: (517) 614-2733

November 30, 2018

Mr. Jeff Budd, President
Board of Directors
Branch County Economic Growth Alliance
1 Grand Street
Coldwater, MI 49036

Dear Mr. Budd and Branch County Economic Growth Alliance Board of Directors:

On behalf of Place & Main Advisors, LLC, I am pleased to present you with this Economic Development and Community Marketing Strategy for Branch County, encompassing the City of Bronson, the City of Coldwater, the Village of Quincy and the Village of Union City.

This strategy was partially paid for with technical assistance funds from the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and as such has been reviewed and approved by RRC staff. This strategy, and its respective subsections for the above-mentioned municipalities meets all requirements for RRC's Best Practice 6, Economic Development and Community Marketing Strategies.

This strategy builds off the work done in each community and is designed to be implemented with the capacity the respective communities have. In the end, we are confident in the strategy we have put forth and each community's ability to execute it.

Thank you for the opportunity for our firm to work with you. We have truly enjoyed our time with the municipalities in Branch County and have high expectations for their future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Borgstrom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" and last name "Borgstrom" clearly distinguishable.

Joe Borgstrom, Principal
Place & Main Advisors, LLC

Table of Contents

Branch County

I. Introduction & Overview	4
II. Economic Development Strategy Process	9
III. Regional Economic Development Goals	11
IV. Countywide Barriers to Growth	13
V. Economic Development Strategic Objectives	16
VI. Implementation Partners	19
VII. Community Marketing Strategy	21

City of Bronson

B-I. Overview	26
B-II. Community Input Process	30
B-III. Local Goals	33
B-IV. Local Strategic Objectives	35
B-V. Key Redevelopment Sites	37
B-VI. Implementation Plan	40
B-VII. Community Marketing Strategy	44

City of Coldwater

C-I. Overview	50
C-II. Community Input Process	54
C-III. Local Goals	57
C-IV. Local Strategic Objectives	60
C-V. Key Redevelopment Sites	63
C-VI. Implementation Plan	66
C-VII. Community Marketing Strategy	72

Village of Quincy

Q-I. Overview	80
Q-II. Community Input Process	84
Q-III. Local Goals	87
Q-IV. Local Strategic Objectives	89
Q-V. Key Redevelopment Sites	92
Q-VI. Implementation Plan	95
Q-VII. Community Marketing Strategy	100

Village of Union City

UC-I. Overview	110
UC-II. Community Input Process	114
UC-III. Local Goals	117
UC-IV. Local Strategic Objectives	119
UC-V. Key Redevelopment Sites	122
UC-VI. Implementation Plan	124
UC-VII. Community Marketing Strategy	128

I. Branch County Introduction & Overview

Introduction

This Economic Development and Community Marketing Strategy is designed to assist both countywide efforts for economic development in Branch County as well as the four municipalities therein. This strategy is composed of several sections divided between economic development strategy and community marketing strategy. For ease of use, this strategy is organized with separate sections for:

- Branch County
- City of Bronson
- City of Coldwater
- Village of Quincy
- Village of Union City

While the four municipalities have separate and distinctive sections from the county level, their needs helped form the collective strategy for the county. Furthermore, several issues like housing and transportation, span communities and are reflected in the strategy.

This strategy was generously provided matching funds by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program and has been reviewed and approved by their team. The intent of this strategy is two-fold. First, to provide the region and communities with an easy to understand and executable strategy to attract business, residents, private investment, and tourists to the community. Second, to help the four individual municipalities become compliant in their efforts for RRC certification. This economic development and community marketing strategy will meet the required standards for strategies in Best Practices 6.1 and 6.2.



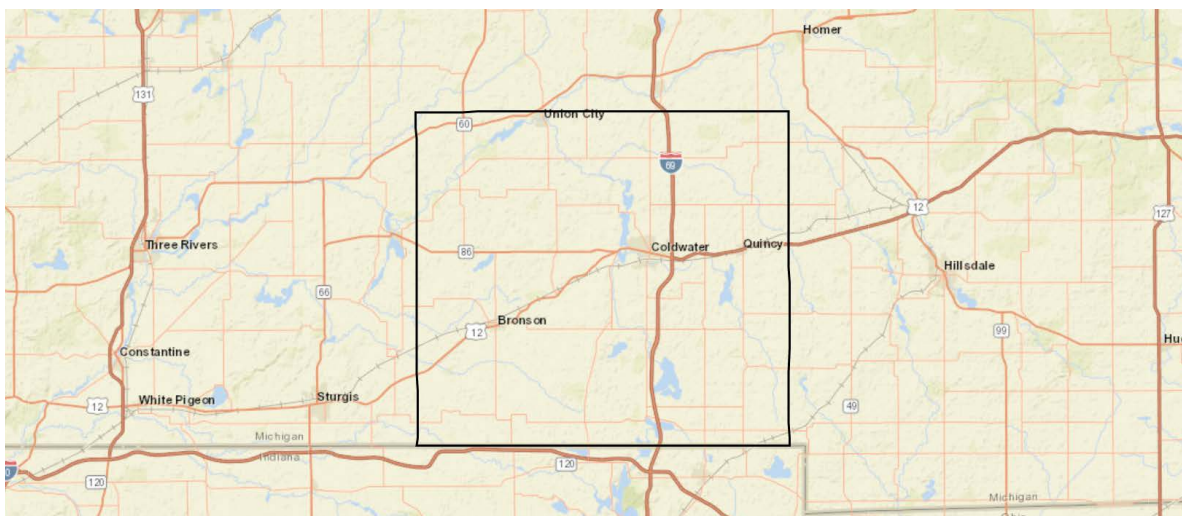
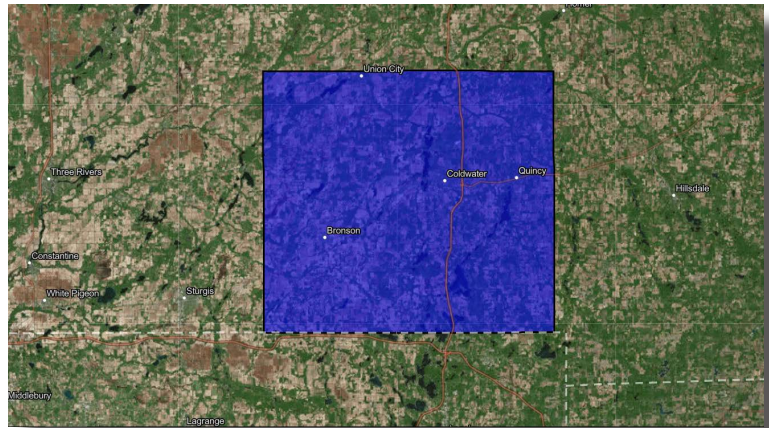
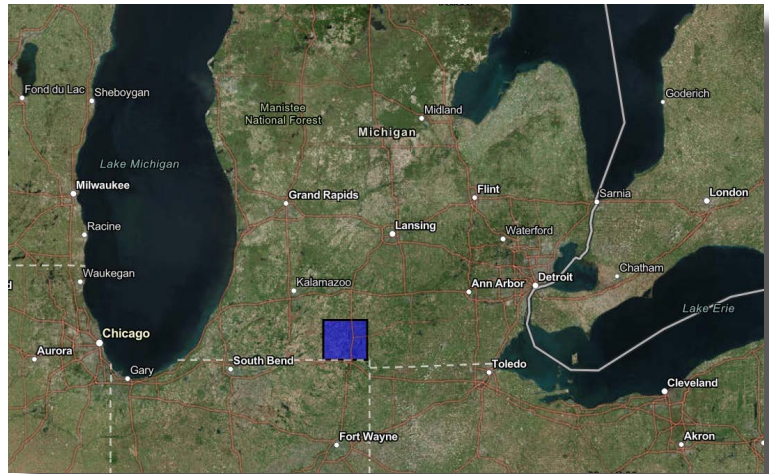
I. OVERVIEW

Location – Branch County

Branch County is located at the center of the southernmost part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. As the one of the counties bordering Indiana, it serves as the gateway to the state of Michigan. Branch County is served by I-69, which stretches from the US-Canada border in Michigan's thumb all the way eventually to the US-Mexico border. In addition, it is also served primarily by US-12, but also state highways M-60, M-66, and M-86 in the western and northwest portions of the county. The county has a strong agricultural presence with several agri-businesses located in the region. Its location along I-69 also make it an attractive destination for manufacturing and logistics.

From a natural resource perspective, the county is home to over 100 lakes and numerous rivers and creeks, connecting many of the lakes in the north and south to form two major chains of lakes.

Coldwater, the county seat, is home to a regional hospital and is the largest city in the county. The county also contains the City of Bronson and the Villages of Quincy and Union City, all with traditional downtowns, as well as sixteen townships.

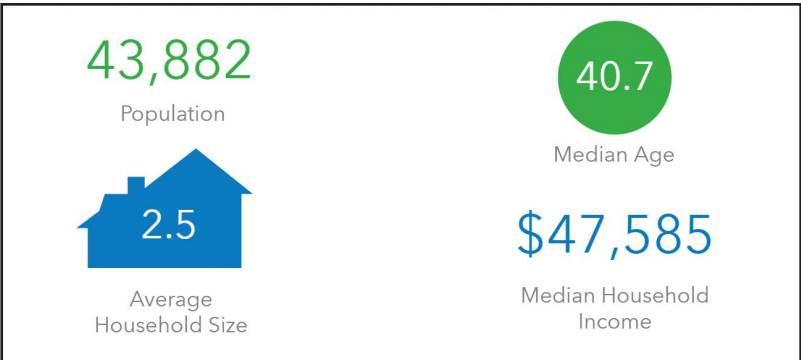


I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

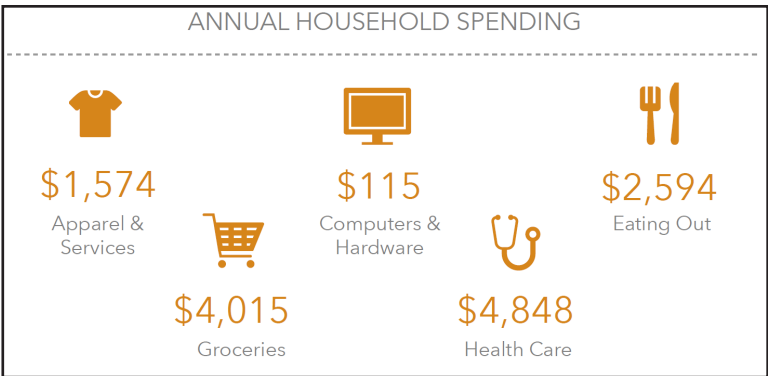
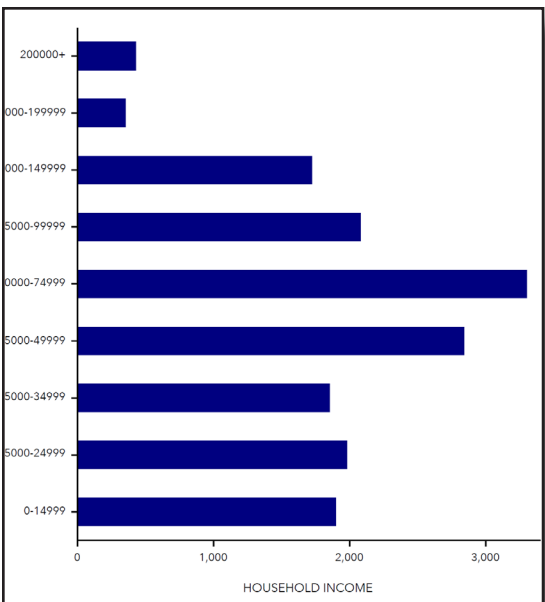
Population

According to 2018 census estimates, Branch County had a population of 43,822 with 16,450 households, a median age of 40.7 years old. The average household size is 2.5 people. 32.1% of households have children under 18 years of age.



Household Income

The median household income for the county in 2018 was estimated at \$47,585 with a per capita income of \$23,829 and a median net worth of \$102,818. Household income is projected to grow to \$53,469 by 2023.

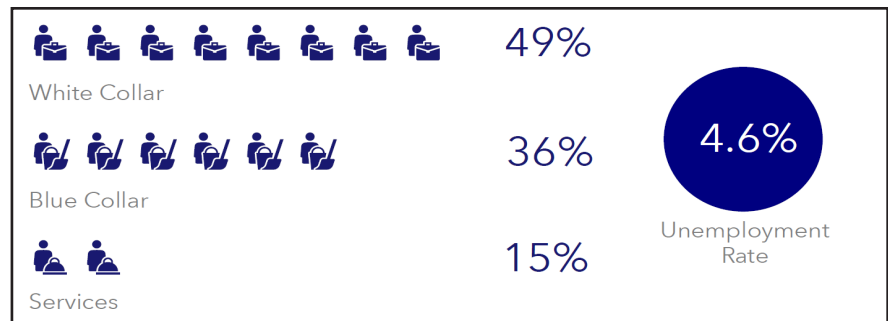
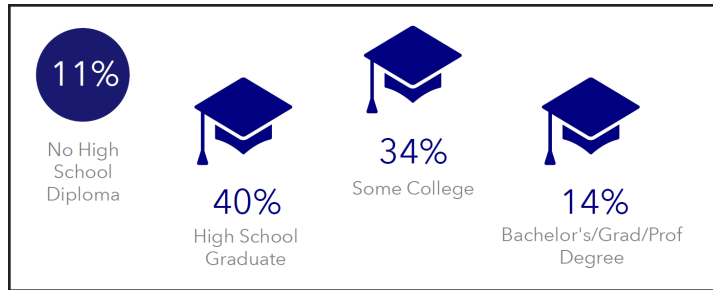


I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

Labor Force

The total labor force within the county is estimated at 19,039 people with 88% having a high school diploma or higher. Unemployment in Branch County as of September 2018 was 4.6% with 49% of those employed working in white collar jobs, 36% in blue collar, and 15% in services.



Housing Demand

The total number of housing units occupied in Branch County for 2018 was 16,450 with 12,533 (60.1%) of those being owner-occupied and 3,886 (18.6%) were rental units. The average home value for the county is \$159,737 and average residential rent is \$536/month.

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	2018		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	11,990	100.0%	11,900	100.0%
<\$50,000	1,384	11.5%	1,167	9.8%
\$50,000-\$99,999	3,731	31.1%	3,252	27.3%
\$100,000-\$149,999	2,556	21.3%	2,411	20.3%
\$150,000-\$199,999	1,606	13.4%	1,672	14.1%
\$200,000-\$249,999	894	7.5%	1,034	8.7%
\$250,000-\$299,999	537	4.5%	668	5.6%
\$300,000-\$399,999	661	5.5%	855	7.2%
\$400,000-\$499,999	223	1.9%	282	2.4%
\$500,000-\$749,999	244	2.0%	331	2.8%
\$750,000-\$999,999	110	0.9%	163	1.4%
\$1,000,000-\$1,499,999	28	0.2%	42	0.4%
\$1,500,000-\$1,999,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$2,000,000+	16	0.1%	23	0.2%
Median Value	\$117,214		\$131,750	
Average Value	\$159,737		\$181,790	

II. Economic Development Strategy Process

II. Economic Development Strategy Process

The Economic Development Strategy Process for Branch County took into account the needs of many communities and how to help position them for future success both at the municipal level as well as the county level. The process to complete this strategy followed the following outline:

Process Step

- Kick-Off Meeting
 - Scope
 - Process Review
 - Preliminary Scheduling of Meetings
- Tours of Bronson, Coldwater, Quincy, & Union City
- Focus Groups
 - County Economic Development Leadership
 - Bronson Public & Private Business Leaders
 - Coldwater Public & Private Business Leaders
 - Quincy Public & Private Business Leaders
 - Union City Public & Private Business Leaders
- Public Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis
 - Bronson
 - Coldwater
 - Quincy
 - Union City
- ESRI Demographic Analysis
 - Bronson
 - Coldwater
 - Quincy
 - Union City
- Identification of Key Redevelopment Sites
 - Bronson
 - Coldwater
 - Quincy
 - Union City
- Identification of Implementation Partners
- Development of County and Local Economic Development Goals
- Draft Recommendations to County and Local Leadership
 - Feedback
 - Project Leads
 - Implementation Timeline
- Final Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Review by MEDC
- Final Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Review and Presentation
- Final Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Delivered in electronic format

III. Regional Economic Development Goals

III. Local & Regional Economic Development Goals

For an economic development strategy to follow best practices put forth by the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, the individual objectives must tie back to one or more of the local goals and goals identified in the regional context. Each of the projects put forth in this strategy meets this criterion.

Regional Goals

Branch County is part of Michigan Prosperity Region 8 which encompasses the central to southwest portion of the southern end of the lower peninsula. This region has defined its goals as the following:

- 1) Create a more diversified transportation system
 - Create walkable neighborhoods
 - Encourage new transportation patterns that support efficient multi-modal transportation options
 - Support community development that is transit-oriented
- 2) Encourage development of additional recreational opportunities and amenities
 - Encourage an environment where social interactions can occur
 - Promote existing and support development of new trails and natural areas (e.g., parks, recreation areas, rivers, and lakes)
- 3) Encourage increased access to housing options regarding density, cost, style and location
- 4) Support sustainable development
 - Develop infrastructure that can be sustained financially and environmentally over the long-term
 - Maintain or improve environmental quality

Local Goals

Each of the four municipalities in this strategy have recently completed or renewed their respective master plans.

IV. Countywide Barriers to Growth

IV. Countywide Barriers to Growth

During the course of this strategy development process, several reoccurring themes emerged from the four Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOTs) and numerous focus groups and one-on-one discussions that were conducted. Additional data research has confirmed a vast majority of these concerns. The following areas have been identified as the largest barrier to growth for Branch County:

Housing- While a lack of available quality housing was identified in every community SWOT, this need was emphasized by several major employers in the area. In fact, it was cited as the biggest need in the eyes of the employers that were engaged in this process. These employers cited a lack of both work-force appropriate housing as well as higher end executive housing as major detractors for their ability to attract talent to their respective organizations. This issue is confirmed by a recent housing target market analysis.

Workforce- There are three areas of this barrier: Workforce Availability, Underemployment, and Needed Skill Sets.

Workforce Availability- With 4.6% unemployment, most economists would say Branch County is nearing full employment. For the most part, the main issue isn't the availability of jobs, it's availability of employable workers. As a result of an inability to find suitable employees, employers have started importing workers from outside of Branch County, most notably from Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. Employers have stated many of these workers would prefer to not have to commute such a long distance, but the lack of attainable housing has made moving to the county difficult.

Underemployment- While unemployment is low, the number of lower wage jobs in the community still creates an inability to attract new development and retailers. New employers to the area, primarily Clemens Food Group, have significantly raised wages in certain sectors, and have created higher wages across the board. But other employers are in lower wage industries, forcing some with higher skill sets into lower paying jobs.

Needed Skill Sets There is strong desire to attract higher paying jobs to the county, but the lack of needed post high school education hinders the community from successfully competing for these jobs. More emphasis on skill development, whether college and four-year degrees or vocational education, is needed.



IV. Countywide Barriers to Growth

Transportation- This is a broad category that has arisen as a need as brought by employers both in the manufacturing, health care, and tourism sectors. As noted above, some employers have begun importing employees from outside the county, using a private sector transportation company, to bus in workers from Battle Creek/Kalamazoo. The health care sector has noted a lack of safety for, and awareness of, pedestrians has led to a lack of connectivity of staff at the regional hospital to downtown Coldwater specifically. Lastly, hoteliers have lamented the lack of organized public transportation routes for tourists to be able to go to attractions or events without needing to drive.

Downtown Vacancies- The number of vacancies and overall state of the respective downtowns were among the top priorities in three of the four community SWOTs. (Union City was the only community where first floor vacancies are low.) These downtown vacancies are an economic detriment in and of themselves, but key employers also cite them as adding to the difficulty in attracting talent to the area.

Sense of Place/Quality of Life- Numerous stakeholders referred to the county's abundance of water as well as some key cultural amenities as large assets. However, there is a significant lack of public access to the more than 100 lakes and rivers in the county. Additionally, a lack of an abundance of arts and culture and a coordination among those resources in the area was also noted.

Lack of Brand Awareness- Branch County, whether from an economic development, tourism, or residential product, suffers from a lack of awareness and a lack of cohesion. The Coldwater Country Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) went through an extensive branding and partnership several years ago with Travel Michigan, but the Coldwater Country brand failed to connect with other communities in Branch County due to its Coldwater-centric naming. Furthermore, in the economic development and residential marketing realms, Branch County has little to no brand recognition.



V. Economic Development Strategic Objectives

V. Economic Development Strategic Objectives

The Economic Development Strategy is a direct reflection of the input of stakeholders and professional redevelopment staff. It balances the desires of the community with market feasibility and the county's capacity for this strategy's execution.

The Branch County Economic Growth Alliance (BCEGA) has a long, successful history of working with existing companies and attracting new ones to the community. Their largest success to date, the recruitment of Clemens Food Group, a project that netted more than 800 jobs, is a testament to their effectiveness in traditional economic development activities. This strategy is intended to be a compliment to their activities and suggests these additional activities could be taken on by BCEGA or other community partners.

Strategic Objectives – Branch County

Housing- A lack of available quality housing was identified in every community SWOT and emphasized by several major employers. Each of the four participating communities also have housing as part of their local strategic objectives. These four entities should work together to identify potential sites and upper floors in downtown buildings for additional housing opportunities. The potential new build sites could then be bundled and marketed as a larger package of sites, creating an economy of scale for potential housing developers. This packaging could possibly gain greater interest by having a variety of housing choices and sale prices that could help make development for economically desirable for a developer. Also, interested property owners for downtown properties could potentially joint contract with a builder or builders to renovate upper floors for additional housing opportunities. The county-wide Targeted Market Analysis (TMA) completed recently would also give a better indicator on the types and values of housing needed.

Workforce Development- The Branch County Economic Growth Alliance should work with the county Intermediate School District, Kellogg Community College, Michigan Works, and major employers to make sure educational offerings (vocational and otherwise) are meeting employers needs. Helping the educational institutions understand what needs employers need now and into the future will help better align talent with available jobs. A formal process should also be in place to notify graduates of the ISD programs of available jobs from the employers in the community.

Additionally, the 13th year programs in Quincy and Coldwater should be adopted by the school districts in Bronson and Union City as well. A major goal of economic development for the region should include raising the amount of post-high school education, whether that is four-year degrees or certification programs.

KELLOGG
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MICHIGAN
WORKS!
Southwest

Transportation- The BCEGA should be taking a lead role in facilitating communication between major employers and the Branch Area Transportation Authority (BATA) to make sure major employers needs are being met and what additional solutions BATA could provide, even on a fee-for-service basis. These conversations with BATA could also include the Coldwater Country Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) to coordinate conversations with local hoteliers to also provide transportation for tourists to/from events.

Entrepreneurship & Economic Gardening- The number and size of vacancies existing in three of the four downtowns in the county will not be able to be filled by solely recruiting businesses from other districts. Furthermore, helping established businesses grow, manufacturing or otherwise, as well as helping home-based businesses move from the garage or basement to commercial or industrial space is economic development in its truest form. Utilizing the region's chambers of commerce and the Small Business Development Center trainings to help grow existing businesses will be a critical component to helping fill vacant spaces and growing the county's economic base.

Sense of Place/Quality of Life- Branch County has over 100 lakes, but public access to these lakes is not readily available. The county and four local governments should work to increase access to these lakes and promote their use by residents and tourists as a quality of life amenity. There also needs to be better coordination of arts & culture amenities as well as creation of new amenities to help attract retain and talent to the county. The creation of an arts trail, connecting the four communities, could help raise awareness of the cultural resources available and help promote the creation of additional assets.

County Level Branding- Brand recognition of Branch County, whether from an economic development or tourism perspective is not terribly high. The most well thought out branding on the local government level belongs to Quincy's, "In Quincy" (or "QuINcy") branding and logos. While each of the other local governments and even county brands are acceptable, there lacks a cohesive brand for the entire region to attract business, residents, and tourists. The BCEGA, CCCVB, and Branch County Board of Realtors should partner to identify funding and execute a coordinated branding campaign for the greater Branch County community.

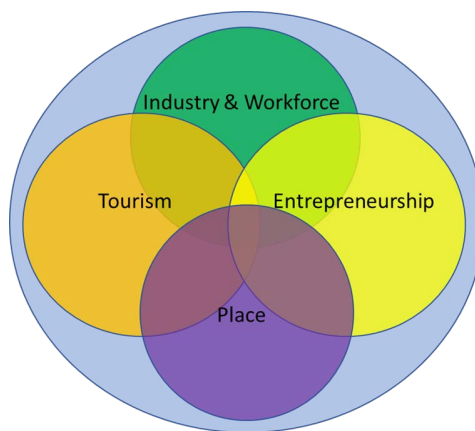


The Village of Quincy's branding is an excellent example of quality brand integration. The Village uses the "QuINcy" logo in numerous places from signage to even the community firepits. The common QuINcy typology is also used by the Chamber of Commerce and others in the community transcending it from a municipal logo to a true community brand..

VI. Implementation Partners

VI. Implementation Partners

For decades, traditional economic development was defined by luring industry to a community through cheap land, cheap talent, and incentives. While attraction efforts and incentives are still used, modern economic development practices evolved to include retention, entrepreneurship, workforce development. Even more recently, placemaking and tourism have been recognized as key economic drivers in communities of all sizes. The Venn diagram below shows the current areas of economic development:

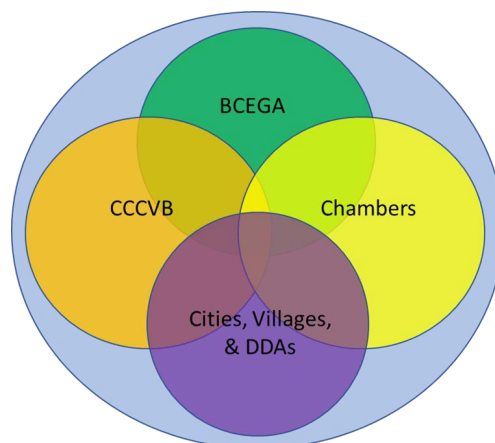


The approach this Economic Development & Community Marketing Strategy takes recognizes this leap to modern economic development, including the importance of placemaking, or creating vibrant places where people want to be.

The Branch County Economic Growth Alliance (BCEGA) does not currently have the budget or staffing to take on many of the projects outlined in this strategy. Furthermore, economic development in 21st century is a team sport. The implementation of this strategy will require additional funding and staff support for the BCEGA as well as work with:

- Local chambers of commerce
- Local Cities and Villages (and their respective Downtown Development Authorities)
- Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB)
- Michigan Works!
- Branch County Board of Realtors

Using the framework of the diagram above, this strategy enlists the above entities in helping in the corresponding areas:



VII. Community Marketing Strategy

VII. Community Marketing Strategy- Branch County

Introduction

To proactively support the community's marketing efforts, we recommend five key areas BCEGA and its Implementation Partners should focus their efforts:

- I. Build Community Pride
- II. Identify and Build on Assets
- III. Identifying Marketing Targets
- IV. Build Community Brand
- V. Enhance Communication Channels

These recommendations are not just for attracting new businesses, investment, families, or tourists. They can also improve the community for residents, help retain existing businesses and showcase the community's mindset to regional and state partners and decision-makers.

Branch County

While the overarching unit of government for the four municipalities, there exists little brand recognition both within and outside the community for Branch County as a place. Tourism efforts focus on "Coldwater Country" and the regional chamber of commerce is named "Coldwater Area Chamber of Commerce." As the largest municipality in the county, Coldwater certainly has reason to have the largest amount of attention in marketing for the county, but it is not the only municipality. In fact, an overemphasis of focus on Coldwater could be causing disengagement from other communities, all of whom have something to offer beyond the city limits of Coldwater. For this reason, it's imperative that Branch County and county-level Implementation Partners develop a strong brand and strategy for the county.

I. Build Community Pride

To increase county level community pride, the BCEGA and County government must be committed to helping spread positive news stories on a regular basis via the communication channels below. Furthermore, this community pride must extend beyond sharing positive news stories, to proactively looking to develop positive stories. This could be by celebrating an economic development "project of the year" for both Coldwater and for smaller communities. This will allow for proper recognition for projects like Clemens Food Group as well as smaller projects that might not have the same jobs and investment numbers but will still be important for one of the smaller communities.

There are also several projects, each outlined in every community marketing strategy, that should be undertaken countywide. These projects include spreading good news stories as outlined above as well as celebrating graduating high schoolers and their respective selection of continuing education, whether that's college or technical training, in order to foster a greater sense of pride in the accomplishments of our residents.

VII. Community Marketing Strategy- Branch County

II. Identify and Build on Assets

Branch County is blessed with significant assets. From excellent freeway access, to historic downtowns, a regional hospital, and airport, to rural beauty, character, and more than a hundred lakes, the county is well positioned to make incredible things happen.

The biggest assets that have been observed are the following:

Location- Freeway interchanges, Michigan's first major exit northbound from Indiana.

Water- More than a hundred lakes and several rivers give the county a significant attraction in an important quality of life area.

Agriculture Processing & Manufacturing- the companies in Branch County still make things. From major employers to smaller shops, a significant portion of the county's employment base in industries that contribute to creating wealth in communities.

Historic Downtowns- These centers of commerce, four total, give each community a unique sense of place and a significant boost to quality of life.

Regional Hospital- A significant driver of investment and talent recruitment, having a regional hospital gives prospective companies and residents peace of mind that medical help is nearby if necessary.

These assets help tell the story of why residents, businesses, and developers should want to come to Branch County and should be a part of every marketing package put together.

III. Identify Marketing Targets

Each community in this strategy has specific target markets in four major groups:

- Businesses
- Residents
- Tourists
- Developers

These groups are also reflective of the needs of each community. Businesses for tax base, employment opportunities, and quality of life. Residents to continue to fuel growth. Tourists to enhance economic opportunity and developers to help communities to renew and reinvent themselves. The Community Marketing Strategy for each community addresses their specific needs.

VII. Community Marketing Strategy- Branch County

IV. Build Community Brand

The largest need at the county level is for a strong regional brand. Coldwater's strong leadership in economic development and tourism over the years has caused the county and other local entities to defer or default marketing related decisions to their leadership. This is understandable but must give way to joint ownership of a regional brand to expand the region's influence.

Branch County can become the unifying brand for the communities in the region. But creating an authentic brand will require genuine and repeated celebration of the success of every community in the region. This culture is difficult to build but can be a powerful force to galvanize the county's population to help create a better economic situation for everyone.

The Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) recently went through strategic planning in conjunction with this project. As a result, from a tourism perspective they identified several four focus areas for their role in the community:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Group Tours
- Leverage Water Recreation
- Branding

These areas, all community marketing focused, are designed to align with efforts at the local level both in marketing as well as economic development.

V. Enhance Communication Channels

The Branch County Economic Growth Alliance (BCEGA) needs to become more proactive in its marketing messaging and communication. Below are several areas the BCEGA should implement:

Social Media- The BCEGA should create a Facebook page to tout local hiring, successful projects, and other regional accomplishments. It should serve as the primary voice for economic development issues in the region.

Web- BCEGA must develop its own website separate from the City of Coldwater. While well intentioned, by having a page on the city's website, it gives the appearance the BCEGA is a function of the City of Coldwater, and not an independent non-profit. Having a separate website will also allow greater flexibility in how the site can be used.

Public Relations- BCEGA must take a more proactive role in telling the region's economic success story and BCEGA's role in making that happen. This will help the public have a better understanding of what the organization does as well as demonstrate to potential funders the value of the organization.

Advertising- Advertising should be used very sparingly for economic development purposes. There is no shortage of magazines who are willing to sell expensive ads. BCEGA would be better served to use limited resources towards promoting the area via social media to targeted industries, local companies hiring, or promoting entrepreneurial training done by partner organizations.

VII. Community Marketing Strategy- Branch County

The purpose of the BCEGA is to promote and market the region for economic development purposes. By engaging in the efforts above, along with reinforcing the key messages below, it can help achieve that.

Branch County	Tourist	Resident	Business
Core Messages	South central Michigan's Coldwater Country, has many adventures waiting to be explored. With more than 100 lakes, including two chains of lakes to railroad excursions, countless antique shops and architectural gems, along with a plethora of festivals and events, the area is bursting with things to see and do!	Family-Friendly Community; Close to Larger Metros, but Small Town Living	Proximity to Kalamazoo/Battle Creek/Indiana and 80/90; Hub of lower central Michigan; Cooperative Government
Target Markets	Families; Empty Nesters; Detroit; Grand Rapids; Ontario, Canada; Cleveland; Cincinnati; Toledo; Indianapolis; Chicago	Families; Upper Management; Doctors; Battle Creek/Marshall/Indiana Commuters	Agribusiness; Manufacturing; Health Care; Downtown Retail/Office
Partnerships	Coldwater CVB; Travel Michigan; WMTA	BCBOR	BCEGA; SWMF; MEDC

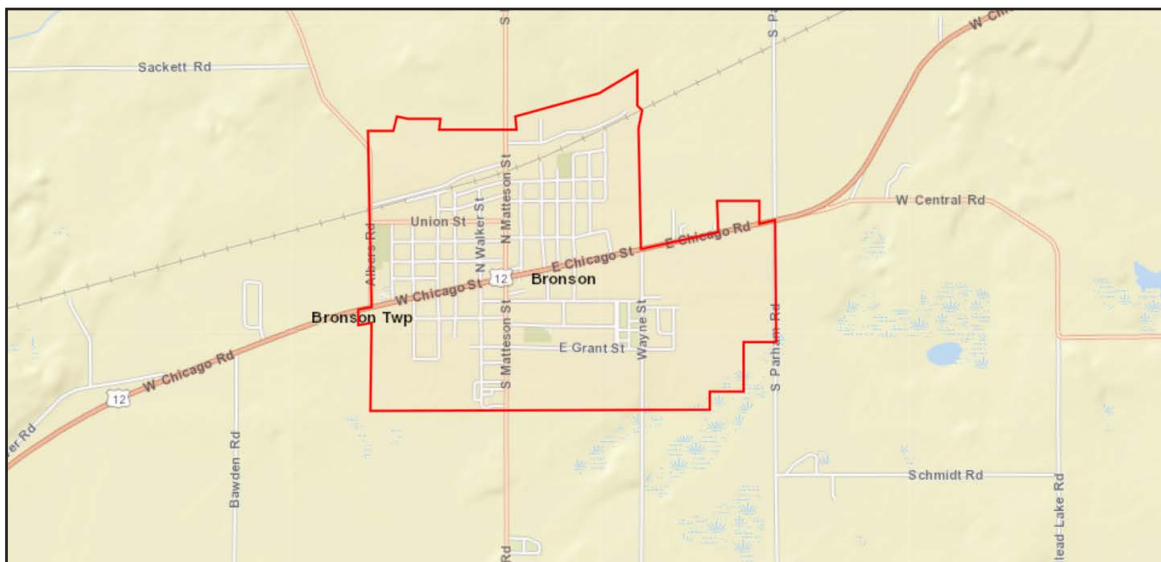
These recommendations are not just for attracting new businesses, investment, families, or tourists. They can also improve the community for residents, help retain existing businesses and showcase the community's mindset to regional and state partners and decision-makers.

B-I. City of Bronson- Overview

B-I. OVERVIEW

Location – Bronson

The City of Bronson is located along US-12 to the southwest of Coldwater and is the southernmost city in Branch County. US-12 is the major road serving the community and is bisected north and south by South Matteson Lake Road / Orland Road (road changes names at US-12.)

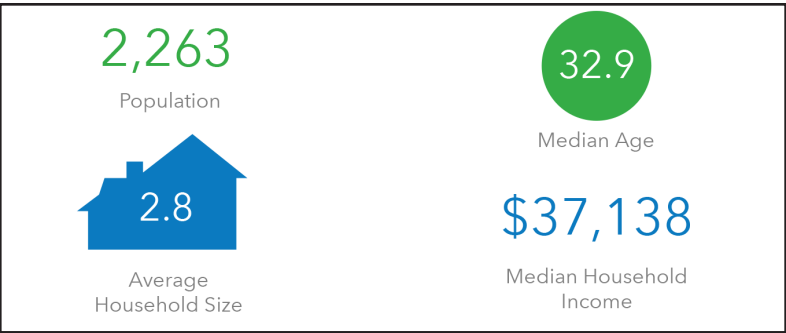


B-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

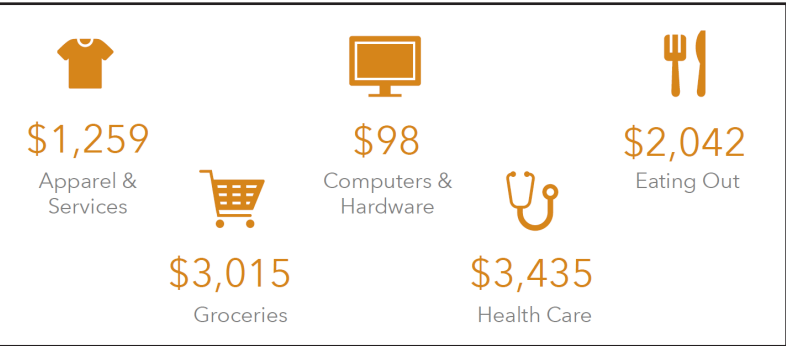
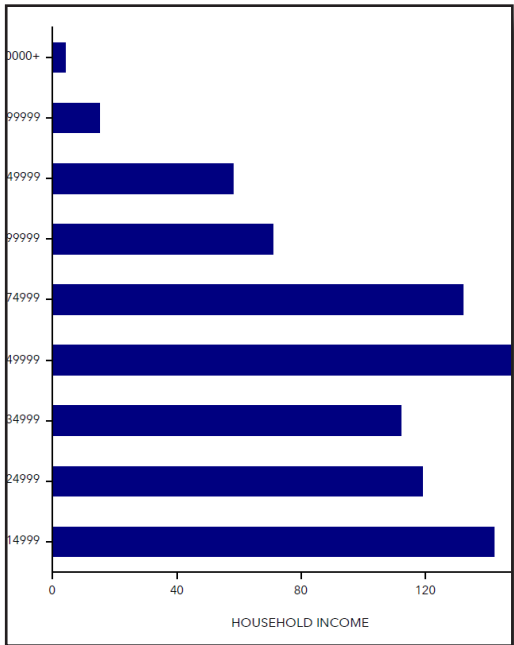
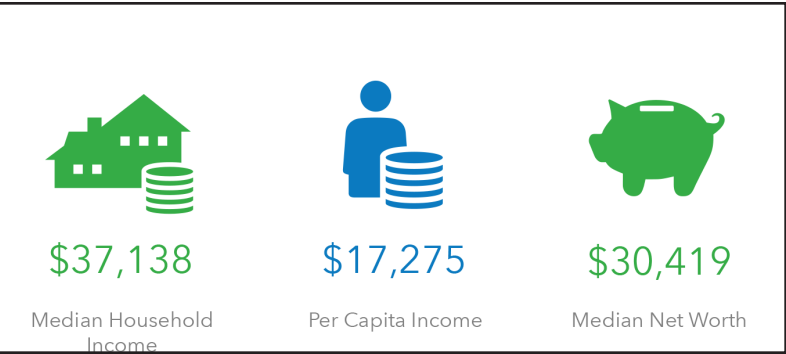
Population

According to 2018 census estimates, the City of Bronson had a population of 2,263 with 807 households and a median age of 32.9 years old, significantly below the county's median age. The average household size is 2.8 people. 37.2% of households have children under 18 years of age.



Household Income

The median household income for the city in 2018 was estimated at \$37,138 with a per capita income of \$17,275 and a median net worth of \$30,419. Household income is projected to grow to \$41,388 by 2023.

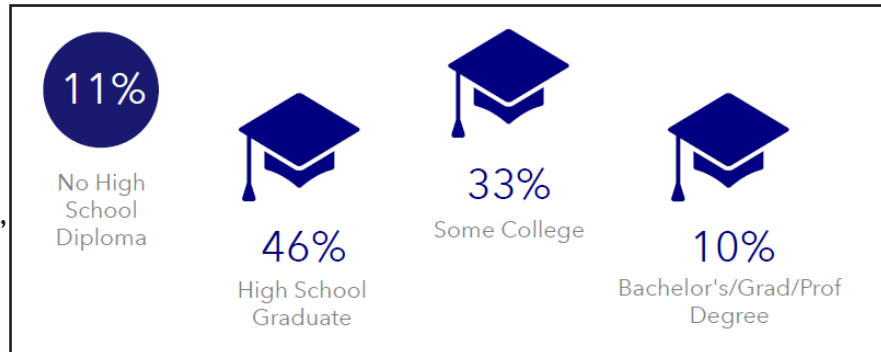


B-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

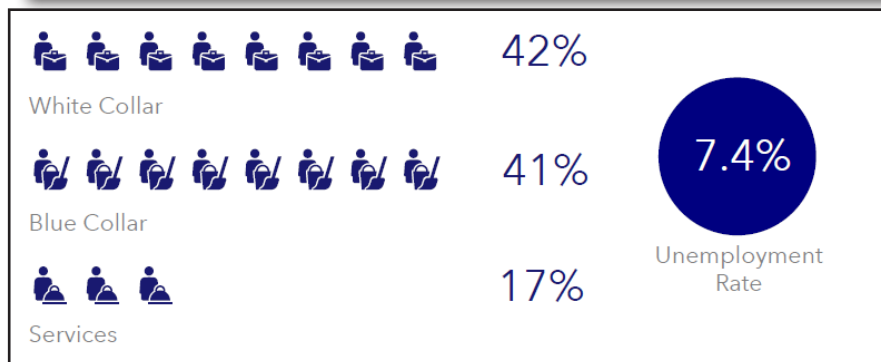
Labor Force

The total labor force within the city limits was estimated at 976 people with 89% having a high school diploma or higher. 38% of those employed in the City of Bronson work in white collar jobs, 40.8% in blue collar, and 21.2% in services. 65.7% of residents work in Branch County and have an average commute time of 19.6 minutes.



Housing

The total number of housing units occupied in Branch County for 2018 was 16,450 with 12,533 (60.1%) of those being owner-occupied and 3,886 (18.6%) were rental units. The average home value for the county is \$159,737 and average residential rent is \$536/month.



2018 Home Value (Esri)	
2018 Home Value less than \$50,000 (Esri)	83
2018 Home Value \$50,000-\$99,999 (Esri)	268
2018 Home Value \$100,000-\$149,999 (Esri)	96
2018 Home Value \$150,000-\$199,999 (Esri)	33
2018 Home Value \$200,000-\$249,999 (Esri)	4
2018 Home Value \$250,000-\$299,999 (Esri)	4
2018 Home Value \$300,000-\$399,999 (Esri)	10
2018 Home Value \$400,000-\$499,999 (Esri)	2
2018 Home Value \$500,000-\$749,999 (Esri)	1
2018 Home Value \$750,000-\$999,999 (Esri)	3
2018 Home Value \$1,000,000-\$1,499,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$1,500,000-\$1,999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$2,000,000 or greater (Esri)	3
2018 Median Home Value (Esri)	81,810
2018 Average Home Value (Esri)	111,144

B-II. Community Input Process

B-II. Community Input Process

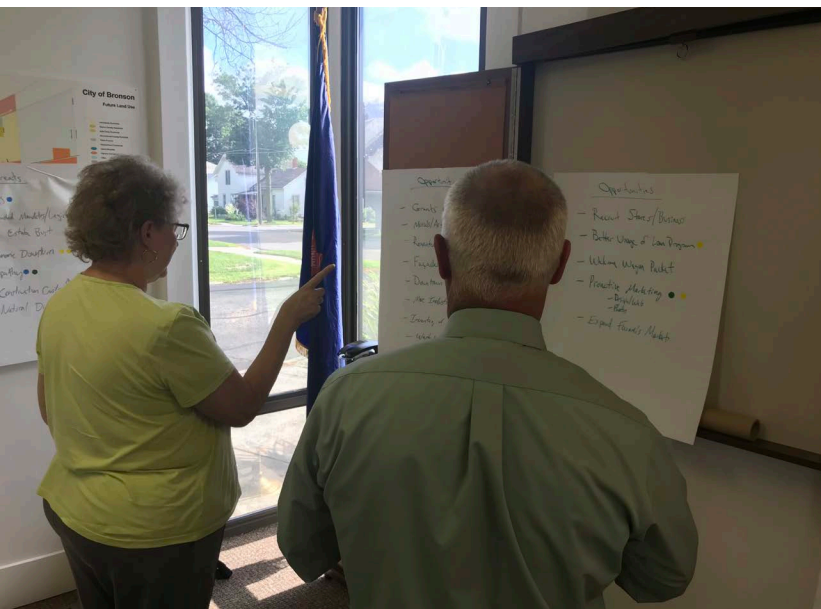
Over the course of the summer and fall of 2018, several meetings were conducted to determine what possible opportunities could be seized in the future. On June 27, the city held a public meeting where a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) were formed. Attendees then were asked to vote on the most important items in each area. The following are the areas for each listed by those items with the number of votes is in parentheses.

Strengths

Public Safety (12)
 Low Interest Loans (4)
 Parks/Park Program (3)
 Community Support (2)
 Traditional Downtown (2)
 US-12 (2)
 Library/Librarian (1)
 Hardware Store (1)
 Schmitt's/Stinger's (1)
 Theatre (1)
 Schools/Athletics
 Paved Streets/Curb & Gutter
 White Star/Barn Auction
 Farmer's Market
 Bill's Steak House
 Sports Boosters
 Service Orgs/Fundraising
 Events
 Stable City Government
 Solar Farm
 Grants
 Recycling/Trash Citywide

Weaknesses

Lack of Funds (9)
 No Marketing (8)
 Infrastructure (8)
 Lack of Businesses (2)
 No Pharmacy (2)
 Lack of Available Housing (1)
 Limited Industrial Spots Available
 No Grocery Store
 US-12/MDOT
 Brownfields
 Apathy
 Location/No Freeway Access
 Lack of Electric Utility
 No Laundromat
 No Assisted Living



B-II. Community Input Process**Opportunities**

Downtown Redevelopment (8)
Grants (6)
More Industry (4)
Proactive Marketing (4)
Murals/Arts Trail (2)
Better Usage of Loan Program (2)
Welcome Wagon Packet (1)
Renovated Medical Office
Facades
Inventory of Available Property
Wastewater/Infrastructure
Streetscape
Recruit Stores/Businesses
Expand Farmer's Market

Threats

Apathy (8)
Drugs (7)
Unfunded Mandates/Legislature (6)
Economic Downturn (6)
Construction Cost Increases (1)
Natural Disasters (1)
Real Estate Bust



B-III. Local Goals

B-III. Local Goals

For an economic development strategy to follow best practices put forth by the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, the individual objectives must tie back to one or more of the local goals and goals identified in the regional context. Each of the goals put forth in this strategy meets this criterion.

The goals for the City of Bronson are from the city's Master Plan, originally adopted in 2007 and re-adopted in 2012 and 2017.

Goals**General Community**

- 1) Foster an economically vibrant, small town atmosphere.
- 2) Promote Bronson as a city with a high quality of life for existing and future residents.
Residential
- 3) Promote and retain a high-quality housing stock.
- 4) Encourage residential development that responds to and meets the needs of a changing, dynamic population.
- 5) Improve existing neighborhoods.

Commercial

- 6) Promote the central business district as a major economic development asset of the City.
- 7) Promote new commercial development throughout the US-12 corridor.
- 8) Continue support of existing commercial business growth.

Industrial

- 9) Direct new industrial investment to locate in the industrial park.
- 10) Continue the retention and expansion of existing industries.

Public Services & Facilities

- 11) Provide a range of public facilities and services consistent with the character of the City, which meets present and future needs and supports the public health, safety, and welfare of residents.
- 12) Develop and maintain a network of roads and sidewalks that provide safe and convenient access to residents and businesses.

B-IV. Local Strategic Objectives

B-IV. Strategic Objectives- Bronson

In addition to the countywide Strategic Objectives that would benefit the City of Bronson (housing, workforce, transportation, quality of life, and branding) there are several actions the City, likely through its Downtown Development Authority (DDA) could undertake to improve their economic situation.

Promote No Interest Loan Program- The city has a well utilized low interest loan program. This program should be further capitalized and expanded to allow downtown building owners to use for interior improvements.

Allowing property owners to access a no interest rate for building improvements would help give an added incentive to much needed renovations. There may be matching loan funds available through the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development (USDA-RD) programs.

Façade Improvement Program- The DDA should create and capitalize a matching façade grant program to help spur additional investment into needed buildings downtown. These funds could also include matching funds or bonus points for murals, tying into two overall county goals of improving downtowns and increasing art and culture amenities.



Downtown Streetscape- The downtown street-scape needs to be updated and repaired, especially sidewalk crumbling along Matteson Street north of US-12. Investment is needed in much of the district, but the city must be willing to invest first to demonstrate to existing and potential building owners the area is worth investing in.

Increased Festivals/Events- One of the fastest ways to generate foot traffic and community pride within a city is to increase the number of festivals and events. These do not need to be elaborate three-day festivals but could be an expansion of the music in the park series or expanding the farmer's market. These events should look to target other key demographic groups within the city to engage them and bring them downtown.

B-V. Key Redevelopment Sites

B-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Bronson

A review of the community shows the need to prioritize the redevelopment of three sites. The following sites should be prioritized in the following order:



Vacant Lot on US-12- This approximately 0.11 acre site is a shovel-ready location in the heart of downtown with adjacent public parking in very good condition. This site should be target for a 2-3 story mixed-use building.



North Matteson Block- These five buildings represent the largest redevelopment opportunity in the city. Their existing condition of blight is a detriment not just to themselves, but properties across the street and throughout downtown. Code enforcement needs to be a big priority with these properties as does the crumbling public infrastructure in front of them.

B-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Bronson

North Matteson Buildings- Across the street from the previous property are these two side-by-side buildings in very good condition. These are the most move-in ready for prospective tenants. This building should be proactively marketed by the city.

B-VI. Implementation Plan

City of Bronson

Economic Development Strategy- Implementation Plan

STATUS COLOR LEGEND & TOGGLE

Not Started	In Progress	Delayed	Complete
ON	ON	ON	ON

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
1. Promote and Expand No Interest Loan Program	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager	Ongoing	Ongoing			3 Loans Executed
1.A. Review previous low interest loan plan to determine what changes (if any) need to be made to the original program	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.B. Identify additional funding sources	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.C. Determine how loans will be serviced	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.D. Execute agreement (if necessary) for loan servicing	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.E. Develop additional marketing materials for the loan program	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.F. Hold informational meeting for property owners about loan program	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.G. Review Loan Applications	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.H. Select Projects	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.I. Close on Loans	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.J. Monitor Loans	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.K. Celebrate success on project	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
1.L Close Loan	1, 6, 8	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2. Façade improvement program	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager	1/1/2020	12/31/2020			2 Facades Renovated

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
2.A. Hold informational meeting for property owners about Façade grant program	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.B. Identify potential construction company(ies) to work with building owners	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.C. Obtain initial construction cost estimates for facades	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.D. Obtain commitment for financing from local lenders	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.E. Apply for MEDC funds for Façade grant	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.F. Administer grant	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.G. Close out grant	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
2.H. Celebrate Success	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3. Downtown Streetscape	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager	10/1/2019	12/31/2020			New Streetscape Implemented
3.A. Work with engineering company to determine scope and design of streetscape	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.B. Work with construction company to determine approximate budget for streetscape	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.C. Identify sources of funds	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.D. Budget for project	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.E. Post Request for Proposal (if no firms are on contract)	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.F. Review proposals	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.G. Select contractor & execute contract	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.H. Construction	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
3.I. Complete construction, celebrate success	1, 6, 11	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4. Increase Number of Festivals & Events	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager	1/1/2019	12/31/2019			2 new festivals or events created

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
4.A. Joint meeting with DDA, Chamber, and Polish Festival Committees	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.B. Outline need for more festivals	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.C. Create Festival & Event Calendar (Current one is meetings only)	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.D. Plan events during gap periods	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.E. Determine goal of each event	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.F. Determine needed support for each event	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.G. Solicit volunteers for each event based on need and expertise	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.H. Create work plans for each event	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.I. Execute work plans and events	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.J. Promote events to public	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					
4.K. Celebrate success	1, 6	4	Not Started	Brandon Mersman, City Manager					

B- VII. Community Marketing Strategy

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Bronson

The City of Bronson is a quaint, small town along one of Michigan's most famous trunk lines, US-12. With a walkable downtown and affordable housing, it's a perfect place for young families.

I. Build Community Pride

The City of Bronson offers potential residents, businesses, and tourists a different product than any of the other municipalities in Branch County. Building community pride is an important part of the community's marketing efforts. If people are proud of where they live, they become sales people for the community just by talking well about the city they live in. Below are some additional actions the City can take to create more community pride:

Additional Events- While the city has a very successful Polish Festival, and August Concert series, the city lacks additional event options, especially in the fall, winter, and spring. This can be assisted, and community pride built, by having more festivals and events, each geared to different age groups within the community. Bringing people together in celebration of a community's heritage, a fun race, or even just a good beer, helps to build civic pride.

National Signing Day- In partnership with Bronson Public Schools, the community can stage a "signing day event" similar to those for college-bound athletes but for any student identifying their post high school education whether it's in a four-year university, community college, or other technical education. This will engender pride of graduating youth and create an expectation of future accomplishment. This event would also be publicized with local and regional media.

Good News Sharing- The City of Bronson does a really good job of promoting its own services, events, and news via Facebook as well as good news from Bronson businesses, non-profits, and Bronson Public Schools. These efforts should be continued and expanded to other social media platforms as well.

II. Identify and Build on Assets

During a public Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) conducted in June 2018, the following strengths were identified and ranked (total voting points are in parentheses.)

Strengths

Public Safety (12)
 Low Interest Loans (4)
 Parks/Park Program (3)
 Community Support (2)
 Traditional Downtown (2)
 US-12(2)
 Library/Librarian (1)
 Hardware Store (1)
 Schmitty's/Stinger's (1)
 Theatre (1)
 Schools/Athletics
 Paved Streets/Curb & Gutter
 White Star/Barn Auction

Farmer's Market
 Bill's Steak House
 Sports Boosters
 Service Orgs/Fundraising
 Events
 Stable City Government
 Solar Farm
 Grants
 Recycling/Trash Citywide

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Bronson

These assets can be used to help market the city to potential businesses. As an example, the traditional downtown and loan program were mentioned among the top strengths. These assets can be combined with historic tax credits for existing or potential building owners interested in renovating their buildings.

III. Identifying Marketing Targets

A community needs to understand its target markets. There are typically four audiences when considering target markets:

- Business
- Residents
- Tourists
- Real Estate Developers

Business

In the Business category, there are two major subsections to consider: Employment Base Businesses and Retail & Restaurant. The first section is Employment Base Businesses, or those businesses who sell their goods or service outside of the local economy and bring in money from other markets. These are typically the focus of traditional economic development. They are manufacturing, wholesale, finance, and others.

Traditional economic development strategy is to examine the local employment base and identify clusters of businesses who may have potential suppliers or customers whose collocation of a facility might be beneficial to all parties. This strategy also has merit in Bronson.

The City and economic development staff should work with Douglas AutoTech, HG Geiger Manufacturing, and All American Drive Service to determine if there are any key suppliers or customers that may benefit from being located nearby.

Retail & Restaurant are important sectors for downtown redevelopment. While Retail & Restaurant has traditionally been considered as ancillary, but their presence is critical in quantifying quality of life for prospective Employment Base Businesses and the attraction of new talent to the community. An analysis of the retail gap that exists between supply and demand based on consumer spending (Appendix 7) shows that there is significant leakage of virtually all retail to outside the community. Given Bronson's proximity to Coldwater and its big box retailers Walmart and Meijer, this is not a huge surprise.

From a retail recruitment perspective, the city should target health and personal care retailers. Unfortunately, not enough retail gap that exists suggest there is enough financial support within the community to justify another restaurant.

Key Redevelopment Sites

In addition to listing available properties on the City's websites, custom marketing pieces for priority sites should be created to allow prospective buyers easier access to the information in a downloadable PDF format. The City should also make use of databases such as ZoomProspector and make Redevelopment Ready Communities staff aware of key sites for inclusion in MEDC materials.

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Bronson

Residents

As part of the analysis on potential residential targets, the community's current demographics play a significant role. To do this, local demographics are analyzed by Tapestry segmentation. Tapestry segmentation provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition—then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups.

The City of Bronson's Tapestry Segmentation breaks down as the following:

Rank	Segmentation*	Percentage of Population
1	Traditional Living (12B)	75.2%
2	Down the Road (10D)	23.7%
3	Heartland Communities (6F)	1.1%

The City of Bronson's exiting industrial base and close proximity to Coldwater are its biggest strengths in attracting residents.

Tourists

The City of Bronson is fortunate to have the Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) as an organization to help market the community to tourists. As previously mentioned, the CCCVB conducted some strategic planning in conjunction with this marketing strategy. As a result, their strategic plan covers the vast majority of tourism concerns for the village and is located in the Branch County section of this strategy.

LifeMode Group: Hometown
Traditional Living 12B

Households: 2,395,200
Average Household Size: 2.51
Median Age: 35.5
Median Household Income: \$39,300

WHO ARE WE?
Residents in this segment live primarily in low-density, settled neighborhoods in the Midwest. The households are a mix of married-couple families and singles. Many families encompass two generations who have lived and worked in the community; their children are likely to follow suit. The manufacturing, retail trade, and health care sectors are the primary sources of employment for these residents. This is a younger market—beginning householders who are juggling the responsibilities of living on their own or a new marriage, while retaining their youthful interests in style and fun.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Married couples are the dominant household type, but fewer than expected from the younger age profile and fewer with children (Index 79); however, there are higher proportions of single-parent (Index 146) and single-person households (Index 112).
- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.51.
- Homes are primarily single family or duplexes in older neighborhoods, built before 1940 (Index 228).
- Most neighborhoods are located in lower-density urban clusters of metro areas throughout the Midwest and South.
- Average commuting time to work is very short (Index 22).
- Households have one or two vehicles.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Over 70% have completed high school or some college.
- Unemployment is higher at 7.3% (Index 134); labor force participation is also a bit higher at 63.4%.
- Almost three quarters of households derive income from wages and salaries, augmented by Supplemental Security Income (Index 139) and public assistance (Index 152).
- Cost-conscious consumers that are comfortable with brand loyalty, unless the price is too high.
- Connected and comfortable with the Internet, they are more likely to participate in online gaming or posting pics on social media.
- TV is seen as the most trusted media.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
america.com/tapestry

*Note: This index represents the ratio of this segment score to the US 12B score (rounded to 100).
Detailed information on Tapestry Segmentation is available at america.com/tapestry.

The CCCVB has done research on key population and geographic targets for the county, which are below:

Target Audiences- Families, Empty Nesters

Target Geographies- Detroit; Grand Rapids; Ontario (Canada); Cleveland; Cincinnati; Toledo; Indianapolis; Chicago

Developers

An important audience for the City of Bronson is potential developers. This group will be necessary for the redevelopment of the identified properties in downtown.

A key component of marketing to this audience will be the use of Requests for Qualifications (RFQ). RFQs are used by communities who are seeking to find developers for specific properties. RFQs, unlike Requests for Proposals (RFPs) do not require a developer to have a near finished idea of a product, but rather seeks developers with relevant experience who want to work with the Village to develop a joint

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Bronson

plan for a property. RFQs are generally more desirable by the development community for their flexibility and lack of sunk costs into developing a plan under a RFP that a community may or may not like. The primary type of developer the village should seek are Mixed-Use developers who may be interested in the three downtown properties listed in the Key Redevelopment Sites.

The city does a good job on their website with available commercial and industrial properties. This should be maintained and custom marketing pieces on prominent properties created and shared on the website, social media, and other outlets such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC.)

Lastly, the search for developers may be difficult. The city and other municipalities should work with local builders and like-minded entrepreneurs to grow a system of local developers using training being provided by the Michigan State Land Bank Fast Track Authority and the Incremental Development Alliance of Michigan (<https://www.mismallbuildings.org/>.) The purpose of this group is to equip potential developers with the knowledge necessary to potentially make the leap from builder, designer, architect, or even just interested party to a small developer.

City of Bronson				
Audience	Product	Place	Price	Promotion
Businesses	Small Manufacturing; Downtown Retail & Restaurant	Downtown Bronson	Mid	Realtors; Online; Email
Residents	Small Town America; Walkable; Affordable Housing	BCBOR; Major Employers	Low to Mid	Realtors; Online; Email
Tourists	Unique shops; family-friendly festivals and events; Gladiola capital	Downtown Bronson	Low to Mid	Advertising; PR
Developers	Downtown Buildings	ULI, MEDA, Incremental Development Alliance	Low to Mid	RFQ

IV. Build Community Brand

The City of Bronson has a serviceable logo and brand. Its brand of “Family. Friends. Neighbors.” Is reflective of impressions gathered in interviews, focus groups, and public meetings. This is a tight knit community with a strong sense of pride.

This brand should be reinforced regularly throughout its communications. A summary of key messages, markets and partnerships is below:

Bronson	Tourist	Resident	Business
Core Messages	Unique shops; family-friendly festivals and events; Gladiola capital	Small Town America; Everyone Knows Each Other	Cooperative government
Target Markets	Families; Empty Nesters	Families; Retirees	Manufacturing; Downtown Retail
Partnerships	Coldwater CVB; Travel Michigan; WMTA	BCBOR	BCEGA; SWMF; MEDC

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Bronson

V. Enhance Communication Channels

The City of Bronson does a very good job with its own communications efforts and promoting others within the community. An effective communications strategy considers the various channels and how they can be best utilized for putting the community's message out.

Social Media- The Village has a great Facebook presence and does well promoting other Bronson school, or non-profits posts as well, helping to spread good news and build community pride. In an effort to communicate to younger citizens and potential customers (Millennials and Gen Z,) the City should also consider adding SnapChat and Instagram accounts to help promote the city.

Web- The city's website is good and meets several of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Best Practices. It makes good links to other community resources but lists available properties in the city.

Public Relations- The city does a good job of posting on its social media and website but could also be proactively distributing press releases to both local print and radio media as well as regional media on more important items.

Advertising- This is the most expensive form of communication and should be limited to those activities or events that have the potential to generate significant revenue for the community. The CCCVB currently does advertising on behalf of the county for tourism-related efforts.

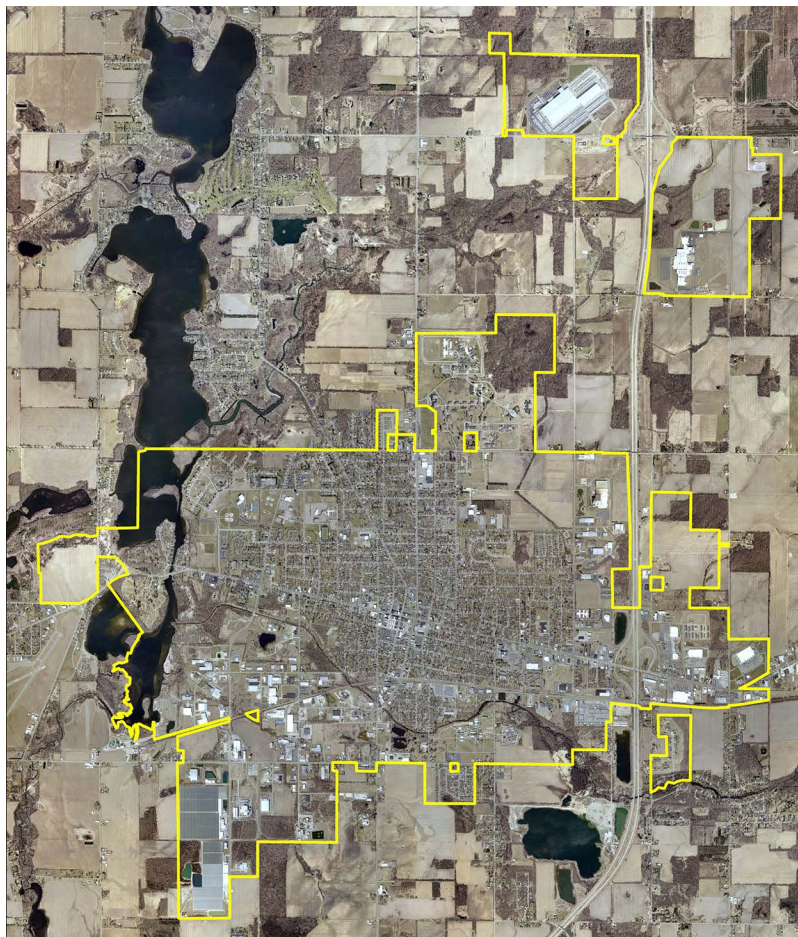
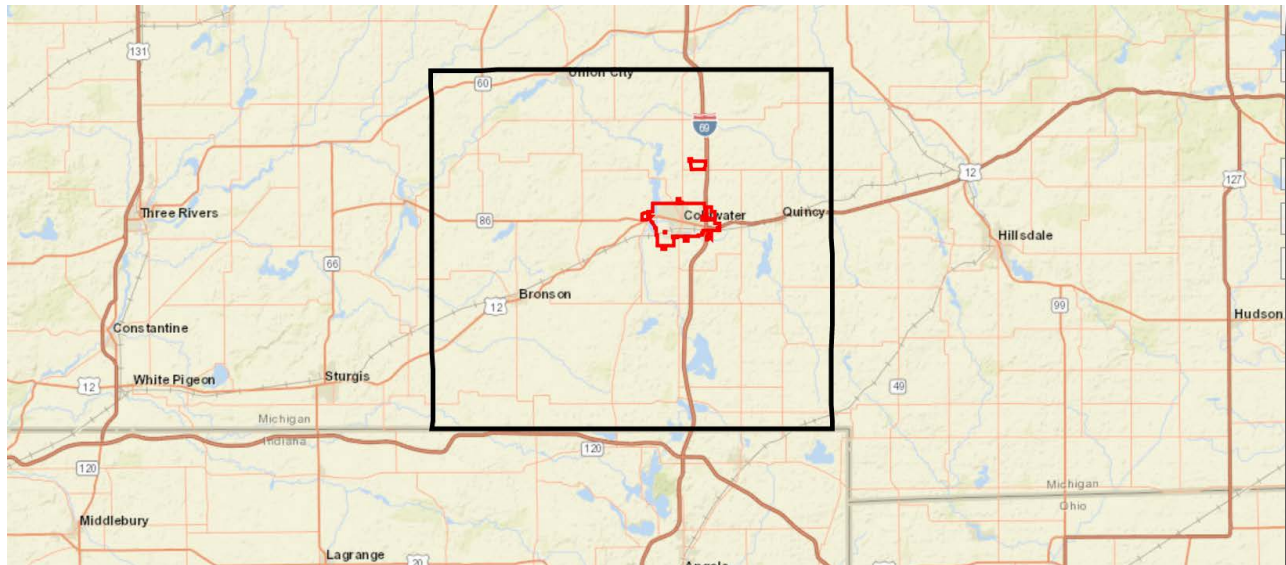
The overarching goal of the marketing strategy for the City of Bronson needs to be celebrate the success of the community, whether it's the village government itself or those businesses or organizations located within it. It also exists to highlight the potential opportunities that exist here.



C-I. City of Coldwater- Overview

C-I. OVERVIEW**Location – Coldwater**

The City of Coldwater is located along I-69 and US-12 in the geographic middle of Branch County. The City of Coldwater is the county seat of Branch County and its largest city and is served by Branch County Memorial Airport and ProMedica Coldwater Regional Hospital.



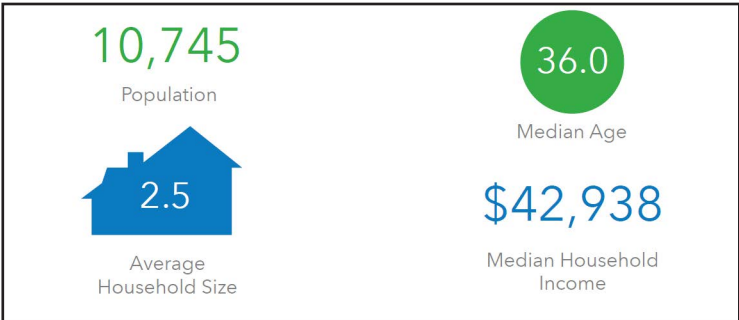
C-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

Population

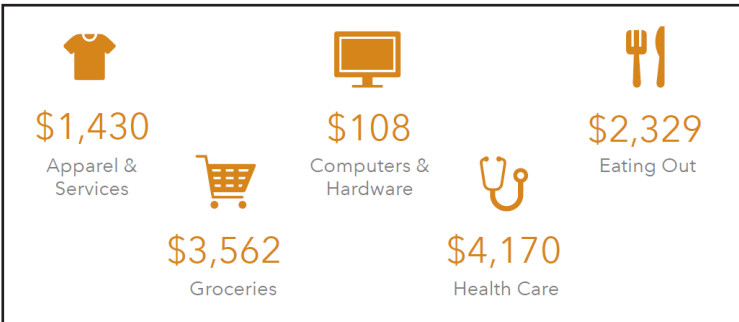
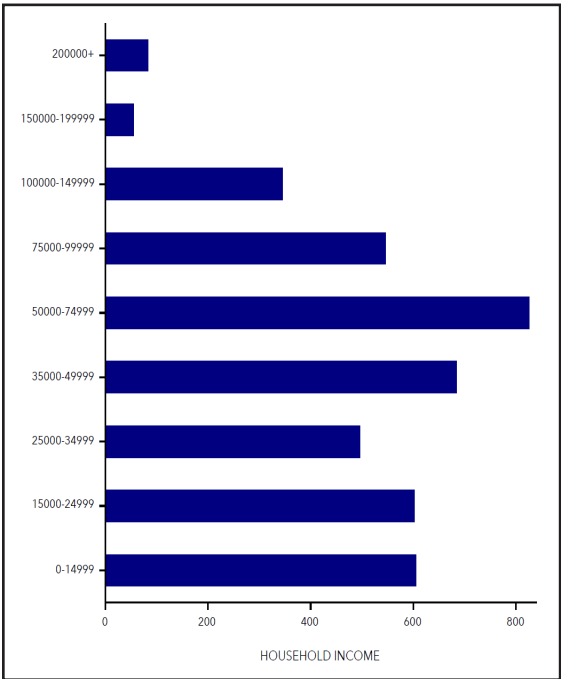
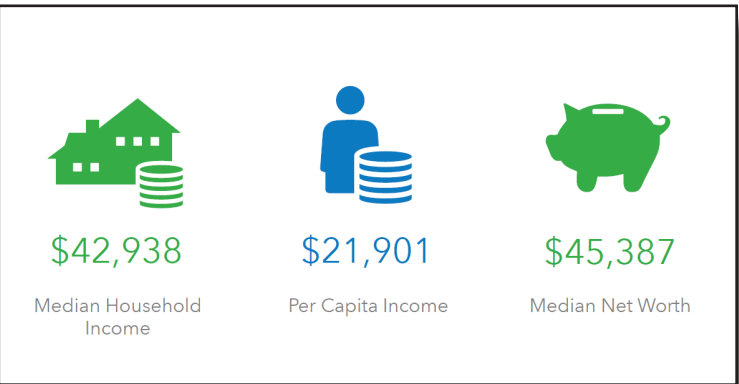
According to 2018 census estimates, the City of Coldwater has a population of 10,745 with 4,243 households and a median age of 36.0 years old. The average household size is 2.48 people. 34.9% of households have children under 18 years of age.

Coldwater is also the most racially diverse community in Branch County with roughly 20% of its population identifying as of Yemenis descent or directly immigrated from Yemen.



Household Income

The median household income for the city in 2018 was estimated at \$42,938 with a per capita income of \$21,901 and a median net worth of \$45,387.



C-I. OVERVIEW

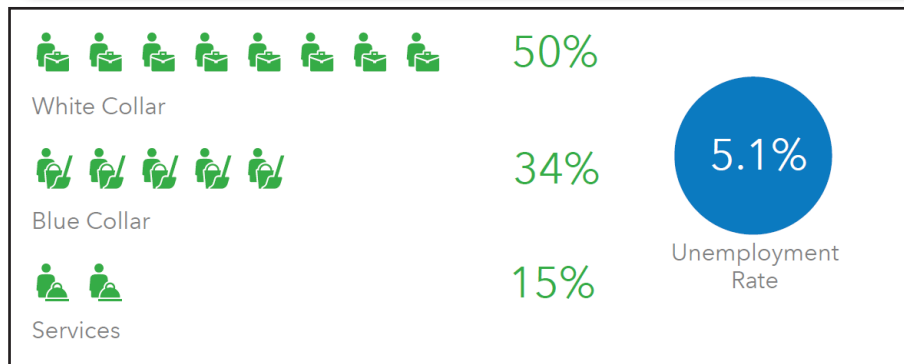
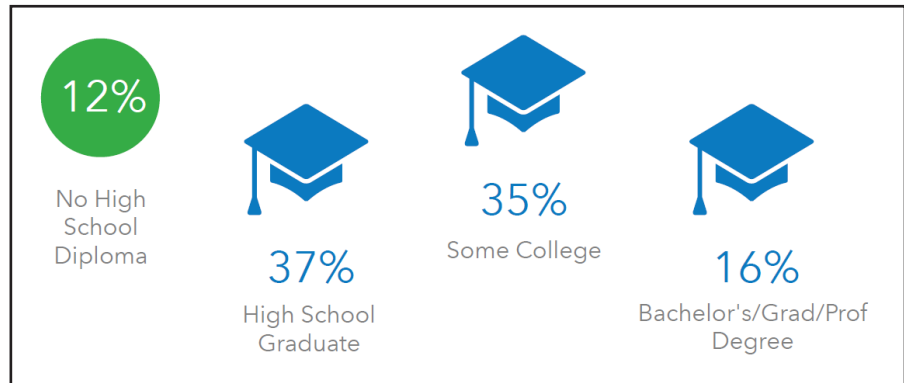
Summary of Key Information

Labor Force

The total labor force within the city limits was estimated at 4,816 people with 88% having a high school diploma or higher and 51% having at least some college. 46.3% of those working in the City of Coldwater are employed working in white collar jobs, 34.1% in blue collar, and 19.6% in services. 80.4% of residents work in Branch County and have an average commute time of 18.1 minutes.

Housing

The total number of housing units occupied in the city for 2018 was 4,255 with 60.5% of those being owner-occupied and 39.5% were rental units. The average home value for the county is \$112,669 and average residential rent is \$574/month.

**2018 Home Value (Esri)**

2018 Home Value less than \$50,000 (Esri)	337
2018 Home Value \$50,000-\$99,999 (Esri)	1,046
2018 Home Value \$100,000-\$149,999 (Esri)	575
2018 Home Value \$150,000-\$199,999 (Esri)	218
2018 Home Value \$200,000-\$249,999 (Esri)	164
2018 Home Value \$250,000-\$299,999 (Esri)	36
2018 Home Value \$300,000-\$399,999 (Esri)	28
2018 Home Value \$400,000-\$499,999 (Esri)	15
2018 Home Value \$500,000-\$749,999 (Esri)	24
2018 Home Value \$750,000-\$999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$1,000,000-\$1,499,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$1,500,000-\$1,999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$2,000,000 or greater (Esri)	0
2018 Median Home Value (Esri)	92,280
2018 Average Home Value (Esri)	112,669

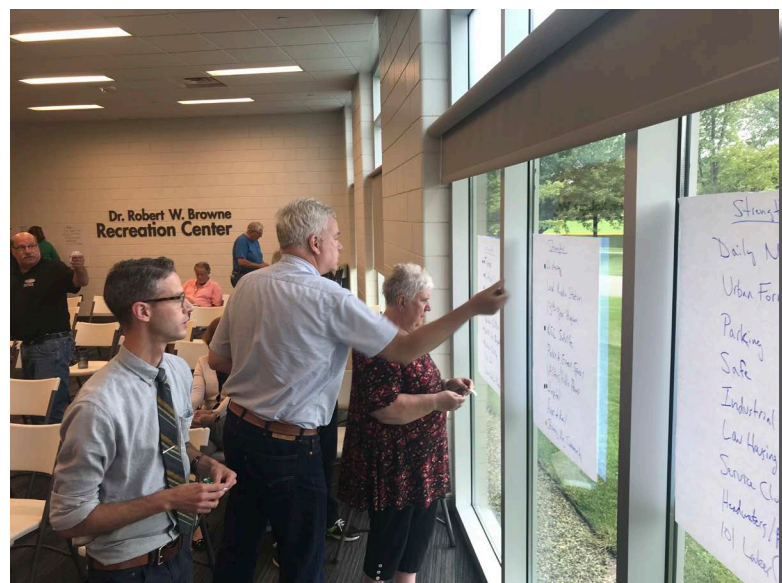
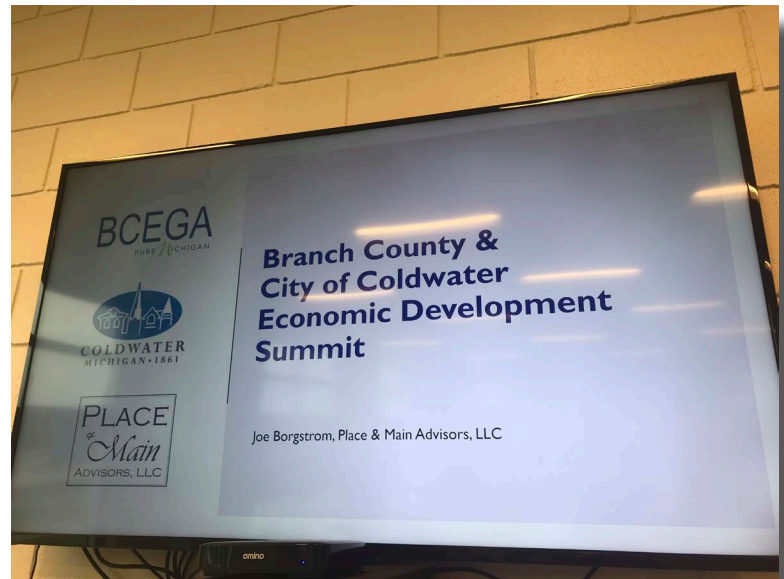
C-II. Community Input Process

C-II. Community Input Process

Over the course of the summer and fall of 2018, several meetings were conducted to determine what possible opportunities could be seized in the future. On August 29, the city held a public meeting where a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) were formed. Attendees then were asked to vote on the most important items in each area. The following are the areas for each listed by those items with the number of votes is in parentheses.

Strengths

Location (Highways/Connectivity) (33)
 Parks & Green Spaces (17)
 Utilities/Public Power (17)
 Airport (13)
 Tibbits Opera House (12)
 Historic Buildings (11)
 Lakes (10)
 Career Readiness Program (8)
 Safe (8)
 Cultural Diversity (7)
 Recreation Facilities (7)
 Hospital (7)
 Kellogg Community College Satellite (6)
 Local Radio Station (5)
 History (3)
 Strong Agricultural Community (3)
 Urban Form/Neighborhoods (3)
 13th Year Program (2)
 Industrial Base (2)
 Service Clubs (2)
 Access to Rail (1)
 Parking (1)
 111 Lakes (1)
 Drive-In
 Daily Newspaper
 Low Cost of Housing/Living
 Headwaters/Rivers
 Charitable Giving
 MSU Extension
 New Jail



Weaknesses

Threats

Opportunities

C-III. Local Goals

C-III. Local Goals

For an economic development strategy to follow best practices put forth by the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, the individual objectives must tie back to one or more of the local goals and goals identified in the regional context. Each of the goals put forth in this strategy meets this criterion.

The goals for the City of Coldwater are from the city's Master Plan, adopted in 2017.

Goals

Residential

- 1) To emphasize and strengthen the single-family home character and neighborhood atmosphere of the City, while providing for a variety of new, high quality housing types and protecting the natural features of the city.
- 2) To offer a significant level of local housing choice for young singles, empty nesters, retired baby boomers, childless couples and others who desire housing options other than detached single family housing units.
- 3) Encourage infill.

Office

- 4) To provide for exclusive areas for office uses that will have limited impact beyond the site and which are intended to serve nearby residences or business.
- 5) To provide for Research and Development uses that are characterized by buildings in which people are employed in activities that are of a technical research nature, or are professional activities including technical training and education.
- 6) Encourage infill

Commercial

- 7) To provide for a proper land use distribution of commercial uses.
- 8) To provide mechanisms for traffic management in commercial areas that will make such areas easily accessible, while limiting the impact on adjacent thoroughfares.
- 9) To improve the appearance of existing and future commercial areas – especially entry corridors.
- 10) Encourage infill.

Industrial

- 11) To provide for industrial development in a manner that increases the community's tax base, results in proper land use relationships, and does not negatively impact the environment.

C-III. Local Goals

Central Business District

12) Maintain and encourage a thriving central business district (CBD) Community Facilities.

13) To provide quality public services and community facilities which promote the public health, safety and welfare and contribute to the quality of life for community members.

14) To cooperatively plan and locate school facilities and services within the Coldwater Public School System.

15) To provide adequate police and fire protection for City residents and property owners.
Recreation Facilities

16) To continue to serve residents with community parks which provide a wide range of facilities, including active and passive recreation, competitive sports, facilities for children and adolescents, and picnic and nature study areas. The ideas set forth in this section are provided to set a vision for the future and establish actions and policies designed to reach that future vision.

17) To provide recreation programs and facilities to meet the present and future needs of all City Residents.

Environmental Resources

18) To continue to protect natural features including lakes, a river, wetlands, woodlands, rolling topography, and open spaces. These features are significant not only because of their strong appeal to residents, but also because they constitute a functioning ecosystem largely unspoiled by human activity. Preservation of these natural features should be a prevailing objective in all future development.

Historic Preservation

19) To encourage the preservation of the City's historic character in preserving or restoring historically significant properties as well as promoting new development compatible with existing character.

Transportation and Traffic

20) To provide a transportation system that facilitates the smooth, safe and efficient flow of automobiles, trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

21) To develop a system of pedestrian and bicycle sidewalks and pathways that link residential areas with schools, recreation areas, commercial districts and other destinations.

C-IV. Local Strategic Objectives

C-IV. Strategic Objectives- Coldwater

The City of Coldwater is the largest city in the county and largest base of employment for the county as well. As such, a large share of potential projects are also assigned to the city as well. The city has done a very good job at attracting base employers over the last ten years with several recent new employers, such as Clemens Food Group, significantly raising average wages and benefit packages. These newer employers have forced many existing employers to increase wages and benefits to their employees. This has proved to be an economic benefit to the local economy.

Downtown Improvements- The current state of downtown was listed as the biggest challenge and opportunity for the community during its public SWOT analysis. This challenge is backed up by major employers who've stated its previous positive condition as a factor for attracting talent and its current status as turning talent off on the area. The majority of the infrastructure downtown is in good condition with several new parking lots recently completed. Wide sidewalks provide pedestrians the ability to walk along a very busy US-12 while not feeling threatened by traffic. However, several larger vacancies still need to be addressed. The projects below should be taken on to address these vacancies.

Additional Housing (Upper Floor and Infill)- One of the major challenges building owners will have in filling their retail vacancies is the lack of immediate market and the inability for the retail portion of the building of multi-story buildings to shoulder a monthly mortgage payment on its own. To remedy these situations, redevelopment of vacant and/or underused upper floors will be necessary. Returning upper floor spaces to productive use will increase cash flow for the buildings, allowing more flexibility for property owners in retail rent amounts. Additionally, the addition of new residents in the downtown proper gives a ready supply of new customers for retail and restaurant opportunities. Housing in general is addressed later in this section but adding additional units of housing downtown will also help the community at large in its efforts to retain and attract talent.

Inventory Available Downtown Property- An inventory of downtown property currently available for sale should be created to assist potential businesses and developers to identify investment opportunities.

Retail & Restaurant Development- There is significant need for additional retail and restaurant businesses in downtown Coldwater. However, given the amount of vacant square footage downtown, recruiting businesses from elsewhere will not fill so much space. The City, DDA, and Chamber should work together to encourage entrepreneurship with a focus on potential retail and restaurants. This will also necessitate the need to create a culture of entrepreneurship by embracing trends like pop-up retail and food trucks. Pop-up retail and food trucks are often ways for businesses to temporarily test the market to make a better case for a more permanent location within the community.

Façade Improvement Program- The condition of the facades of many of the buildings downtown need repair and updating. Priority should be given to projects that leverage additional investment (the program could be used as an incentive tool) and leverage historic tax credits. Impactful changes should also be targeted (i.e. removing mansard roofs, inappropriate façade coverings, etc.) These funds could also potential leverage funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) through their grant programs.

C-IV. Strategic Objectives- Coldwater

Additional Housing- Major employers have said loud and clear that the lack of housing is a major issue for their existing and prospective employees. This goes for manufacturing, food processing, and health care sectors alike. Housing, of all types, is needed in the community. A recent Target Market Analysis concluded the need for multi-family, missing middle, and single-family homes in the City of Coldwater. In addition to the recommendation above for more downtown/upper floor housing, the following are actions the City of Coldwater can take to improve the availability and quality of housing in the community:

Land Acquisition and Facilitation- Available housing in Coldwater is difficult to find. The City should take proactive steps to identify land for the development of higher end single family homes. This land would preferably already be within the city or could be in close proximity with the potential for a conditional land transfer agreement or annexation. If the city has the resources to acquire the land they should, or secure an assignable option with the existing property owner, so the city could proactively seek out a developer. With housing demand high across the state, demand for housing developers is also high. In order to attract an appropriate developer, the city will have to package and market the property to potential candidates.

Possible Partnership with Quincy on RFQ- Once appropriate land or tracts are identified, the City of Coldwater should partner with the Village of Quincy who has similar plans to jointly market the two municipalities' property jointly, thereby creating a larger, more attractive project to potential developers.

Redevelop Fairfield Plaza as potential Multi-Family- The Fairfield Plaza has seen significant vacancies over the past several years. Furthermore, these types of developments were built with useful lives of 20-30 years, with Fairfield Plaza nearing this age already. Careful consideration should be given to demolishing these structures and redeveloping these key properties into sites for higher density multi-family buildings. Fairfield's near-downtown location, makes it a good candidate site for additional apartments.

Partner with Union City on Canoe/Kayak Water Trail- One of the major quality of life issues that has come up over the course of several public meetings and stakeholder interviews, is the need to better leverage the area's more than 100 lakes and rivers. A key part of this will be the need for public entities to improve access to these assets. With the St. Joseph River connecting both Coldwater and the Village of Union City, a unique partnership can be formed between the two entities to create a water trail where kayakers and canoers could travel from one community to the other. This would create a new tourism product that would attract attention and visitors to both communities.

Improve Walkability/Bikeability/Connectivity to Hospital, Surrounding Neighborhoods- Coldwater is fortunate to have a great trail system and several major employers within a relatively close distance to downtown. These systems need to better connect to their anchors and new pathways or routes and appropriate wayfinding signage developed to encourage connectivity to downtown.

C-V. Key Redevelopment Sites

C-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Coldwater

A review of the community shows the need to prioritize the redevelopment of several sites. Most prominent of these sites are our major buildings downtown.



Starr Block- This three story, four store front building is one of the largest vacancies downtown. Upper floors should be converted to office or residential.



Former Hallmark- This three story, three store front building is the most visible vacancy downtown. Upper floors should be converted to office or residential.



Former North Woods Coffee Co- This three story, two store front building was home to a well loved coffee shop. Its vacancy is also highly visually impactful. Upper floors should be converted to office or residential.



Former Southern Michigan Bank & Trust Building- This three story, two store front building is the most architecturally distinctive and poses the hardest to redevelop first floor.

C-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Coldwater

Fairview Plaza- This mostly vacant strip mall on the north end of the city was once a new retail hub and growing part of the city. Years of disinvestment and competition from new retail near the freeway have severely limited its ability to attract new businesses. However, this location, with a grocery store on an adjacent lot, could make for an attractive location for multi-family apartments.



Willowbrook Plaza- While anchors at this conventional power retail strip center have been relatively stable, the interior of the center has seen significant turnover and vacancy issues. Additional uses such as a call center or data processing center should be considered for this space.

C-VI. Implementation Plan

City of Coldwater

Economic Development Strategy- Implementation Plan

STATUS COLOR LEGEND & TOGGLE

Not Started	In Progress	Delayed	Complete
ON	ON	ON	ON

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	START DATE	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
						END DATE	START DATE	END DATE		
1. Add Upper Floor Housing	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	In Progress	Economic Development Assistant Audrey Tappende	7/1/2019	9/1/2021				15 new units
1.A. Determine and map which properties could redevelop upper floors into housing	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.B. Hold informational meeting with building owners reviewing TMA data	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.C. Survey building owners to determine interest	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.D. Identify potential construction company(ies) to work with building owners	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.E. Obtain initial construction cost estimates for upper floors	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.F. Help building owners to develop pro forma	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.G. Obtain commitment for financing from local lenders	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.H. Apply for MEDC funds if needed	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.I. Administer grant	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.J. Closeout grant	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
1.K. Celebrate success	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	3, 4	Not Started							
2. Inventory & Map Available Property Downtown	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	1, 4	In Progress	Economic Development Assistant Audrey Tappende	1/1/2019	7/1/2019				Inventory Created
2.A. Using a map of the district, mark vacant properties	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started							

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
2.B. Work with owner-contracted realtors to obtain relevant information	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
2.C. Work with Assessing department to get information (sq footage, TV & SEV, etc.)	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
2.D. Make inventory available online	R-2, HP-19, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
3. Retail & Restaurant Development	CBD-12	4	In Progress	Economic Development Director Lisa Miller	9/4/2018	7/1/2021			2 new retail or restaurants created
3.A. Work with Chamber and SBDC on business plan development workshops with emphasis on retail and	CBD-12	4	Not Started						
3.B. Identify potential financing solutions with banks (Example- Downtown Loan Fund)	CBD-12	4	In Progress						
3.C. Working with local realtors, host Downtown Open House during festivals and events to allow people to go into vacant	CBD-12	4	Not Started						
3.D. Use appropriate market data to encourage retail	CBD-12	4	Not Started						
3.E. Identify other regional, locally-based retailers as potential recruits	CBD-12	4	Not Started						
4. Façade Improvement Program	CBD-12, HP-19	4	In Progress	Economic Development Director Lisa Miller	9/4/2018	9/1/2020			3 Facades Renovated
4.A. Research successful façade grant programs	CBD-12, HP-19	4	In Progress	Economic Development Director Lisa Miller	9/4/2018	12/31/2018			
4.B. Establish objective façade grant program	CBD-12, HP-19	4	In Progress		1/1/2019	5/1/2019			
4.C. Hold informational meeting for property owners about program	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
4.D. Identify potential construction company(ies) to work with building owners	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
4.E. Obtain initial construction cost estimates for facades	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
4.F. Obtain commitment for financing from local lenders	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
4.G. Apply for MEDC funds for Façade grant	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
4.H. Administer grant	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
4.I. Close out grant	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
4.J. Celebrate Success	CBD-12, HP-19	4	Not Started						
5. Land Acquisition and facilitation for additional residential	R-1, R-2	3	In Progress	City Manager Keith Baker	8/1/2018	12/31/2021			25 new housing units created
5.A. Identify suitable properties in or near city limits	R-1, R-2	3	Complete						
5.B. Identify owners and contact info for all potential property owners	R-1, R-2	3	Complete						
5.C. If needed, engage third party to facilitate acquisition of assignable options on all properties	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.D. Acquire assignable purchase options on all properties	R-1, R-2	3	In Progress						
5.E. Create Property Information Package on site for redevelopment	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.F. Conduct market Feasibility Study for Residential, Retail uses	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.G. Develop RFQ for developer for site	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.H. Post RFQ	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.I. Evaluate RFQ Responses & Interview as needed	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.J. Select Developer	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.K. Execute a Pre-Development Agreement with Developer	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.L. Community charrette with stakeholders	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.M. Review zoning for appropriate uses	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.N. Pro Forma Development & Identification of Gap	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.O. Secure project financing, and if necessary, incentives	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
5.P. Final Development Agreement	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.Q. Finalize Financing	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.R. Close on Real Estate	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.S. Construction	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
5.T. Celebrate Success	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6. Possible Partnership with Quincy on Request for Qualification (RFQ)	R-1, R-2	3	In Progress	Planning & Zoning Administrator Dean Walrack	7/1/2019	12/31/2019			RFQ Created & Executed
6.A. Determine receptiveness of Village of Quincy to joint RFQ for residential developers	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.B. Seek and receive approval of both Coldwater and Quincy councils to proceed	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.C. Establish a joint RFQ committee with Quincy	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.D. Develop RFQ and evaluation scoring with input and feedback from Quincy	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.E. Issue and promote RFQ	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.F. Review and score RFQ submissions	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.G. Conduct interviews with potential developers	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
6.H. Establish pre-development agreements with Coldwater, Quincy, and developer	R-1, R-2	3	Not Started						
7. Redevelop Fairfield Plaza as Potential Multi-Family	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started	Economic Development Assistant Audrey Tappende	1/1/2020	12/31/2023			12 new apartment units created
7.A. Meet with owners of Fairfield Plaza to discuss future plans	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						
7.B. Review Target Market Analysis (TMA) information with owner	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						
7.C. Propose redevelopment of site to multi-family	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						
7.D. Assist property owner with pro forma development, incentives if necessary	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						
7.E. Rezone property to multi-family	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
7.F. Assist in finding financing	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						
7.G. Monitor construction	R-1, R-2, R-3	3	Not Started						
8. Partner with Union City on Canoe/Kayak Water Trail	CF-13, RF-16, ER-18	2	Not Started	Community Enrichment Director Julie Santure	3/1/2019	3/1/2020			Trail Created
8.A. Reach agreement with Union City on joint marketing of water trail	CF-13, RF-16, ER-18	2	Not Started						
8.B. Work with Union City and CCCVB to create joint marketing collateral using Rotary Park boat launch and Union City Riverfront Park as entry points, linking to the Greater Union City Water Trail and Heritage Trail	CF-13, RF-16, ER-18	2	Not Started						
8.C. Post trail extension to michiganwatertrails.org and other relevant websites	CF-13, RF-16, ER-18	2	Not Started						
9. Improve Walkability/Bikeability/Connectivity to Hospital, Surrounding Neighborhoods	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	In Progress	Planning & Zoning Administrator Dean Walrack	1/1/2019	12/31/2020			New wayfinding implemented
9.A. Map anchor institutions and major employers with existing trails and pathways	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
9.B. Identify potentially lower vehicle traffic pedestrian pathways from institutions and major employers to downtown and other key nodes	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
9.C. Identify barriers to increased walkability/bikeability from institutions and major employers to downtown and other key nodes	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
9.D. Create appropriate wayfinding with walking times from institutions and major employers to downtown and other key nodes	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
9.E. Explore bikeshare and E-scooter mobility options and determine if feasible	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						
9.F. Implement bikeshare and/or E-scooter options if feasible	TT-21, CBD-12	1, 4	Not Started						

C-VII. Community Marketing Strategy

C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater

The City of Coldwater is the largest city in the county and home to the vast amount of infrastructure and community assets within the region. It has a regional hospital, airport, and is home to the largest employers in the county.

I. Build Community Pride

The City of Coldwater has a lot of assets to be proud of and to build on. It is home to numerous historic homes, has a great system of parks, and a downtown with buildings in overall good shape. However, the community seems to lack an overwhelming sense of pride. There appears to be a dwelling on the negative aspects of the community, which can lead to a downward spiral effect.

The City needs to be more proactive on touting not only its accomplishments, but the accomplishments of its businesses, residents, and school. Community pride is a recognition that “we are all in this together” and that “a rising tide lifts all boats.” There are a few things that can be undertaken to increase community pride.

Historic Home of the Month- Coldwater has a tremendous historic district with great homes. Fostering pride in these homes will be key to not only build community pride but can also be a strategy for combating blight. By recognizing a Historic Home of the Month (or Quarter), the City can do a yard sign designating the home and do a press release, picture, and feature it on the city’s website. This will encourage home owners to keep up maintenance of their homes and possibly make improvements.

“Famous From Coldwater”- There are currently more than 20 notable people, from the first American woman to get pilot’s license to three current Major League Baseball (MLB) umpires, to Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) pioneers who are from Coldwater. Celebrating these people and recognizing them publicly sends a powerful message that people from Coldwater accomplish things.

National Signing Day- In partnership with Coldwater Public Schools, the community can stage a “signing day event” similar to those for college-bound athletes but for any student identifying their post high school education whether it’s in a four-year university, community college, or other technical education. This will engender pride of graduating youth and create an expectation of future accomplishment. This event would also be publicized with local and regional media.

Good News Sharing- The City of Coldwater does a good job of promoting its own services and news via social media. This could be expanded to share good news from Coldwater businesses, non-profits, and Coldwater Public Schools.



C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater

II. Identify and Build on Assets

The City has an abundance of assets as previously noted. During a public Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) conducted in August 2018, the following strengths were identified and ranked (total voting points are in parentheses.)

Strengths

Location (Highways/Connectivity) (33)	Strong Agricultural Community (3)
Parks & Green Spaces (17)	Urban Form/Neighborhoods (3)
Utilities/Public Power (17)	13th Year Program (2)
Airport (13)	Industrial Base (2)
Tibbits Opera House (12)	Service Clubs (2)
Historic Buildings (11)	Access to Rail (1)
Lakes (10)	Parking (1)
Career Readiness Program (8)	111 Lakes (1)
Safe (8)	Drive-In
Cultural Diversity (7)	Daily Newspaper
Recreation Facilities (7)	Low Cost of Housing/Living
Hospital (7)	Headwaters/Rivers
Kalamazoo Community College Satellite (6)	Charitable Giving
Local Radio Station (5)	MSU Extension
History (3)	New Jail

These assets can be used to help market the city to potential businesses and residents. As an example, three of the top seven strengths (Location, Utilities/Public Power, and Airport) should be used as emphasis points when talking with prospective industrial businesses.

Five of the top seven (Location, Parks & Green Spaces, Tibbits Opera House, Historic Buildings, Lakes) should be used as Quality of Life emphasis points with prospective residents and tourists as well as businesses.

It should be noted the Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau recently underwent strategic planning in conjunction with this Community Marketing Strategy and has identified “Group Sales” and “Leverage Water Recreation” as new goals. Group Sales proactively seeks to attract groups of visitors such as sports tournaments to leverage the city’s parks assets and Tibbits Opera House as destinations for tourists. Leveraging Water Recreation will seek to market the county’s more than 100 lakes to outdoor enthusiasts like kayakers and canoers.

Additionally, these assets can be built on to improve their accessibility (like more public access points for lakes and rivers) or usage (leveraging historic tax credits for developers interested in redeveloping historic downtown buildings.)

C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater

III. Identifying Marketing Targets

A community needs to understand its target markets. There are typically four audiences when considering target markets:

- Business
- Residents
- Tourists
- Real Estate Developers

Business

In the Business category, there are two major subsections to consider: Employment Base Businesses and Retail & Restaurant. The first section is Employment Base Businesses, or those businesses who sell their goods or service outside of the local economy and bring in money from other markets. These are typically the focus of traditional economic development. They are manufacturing, wholesale, finance, and others.

Traditional economic development strategy is to examine the local employment base and identify clusters of businesses who may have potential suppliers or customers whose collocation of a facility might be beneficial to all parties. This strategy has merit in Coldwater.



City and economic development staff should work with those companies in the Food and Agricultural Processing Sectors like Clemens Food Group, ConAgra Foods, and Mastronardi to determine if there are any key suppliers or customers that may benefit from being located nearby. Likewise, the City can develop a proactive marketing message that Coldwater is a hub of Food and Agricultural Processing, staking out its place in the market.

Retail & Restaurant are important sectors for downtown redevelopment. While Retail & Restaurant has traditionally been considered as ancillary, but their presence is critical in quantifying quality of life for prospective Employment Base Businesses and the attraction of new talent to the community. An analysis of the retail gap that exists between supply and demand based on consumer spending (Appendix 2) shows that there is significant oversupply of restaurant options, particularly in the chain fast food and fast casual categories. That is not to say there is not a market for higher quality restaurants to locate downtown. However, given the large amount of oversupply, there may be the need for incentives for a higher risk venture like restaurants.

This oversupply largely holds true for retail as well with the presence of both Walmart and Meijer, though there appears to be undersupply for clothing and accessories.

From a retail and restaurant recruitment perspective, the city would be best to not recruit national chains and work to develop unique retail and restaurant experiences that cannot be obtained elsewhere.

C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater

Key Redevelopment Sites

In addition to listing available properties on the City's websites, custom marketing pieces for priority sites should be created to allow prospective buyers easier access to the information in a downloadable PDF format. The City should also make use of databases such as ZoomProspector and make Redevelopment Ready Communities staff aware of key sites for inclusion in MEDC materials.

Residents

As part of the analysis on potential residential targets, the community's current demographics play a significant role. To do this, local demographics are analyzed by Tapestry segmentation. Tapestry segmentation provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition—then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups.

The City of Coldwater's Tapestry Segmentation breaks down as the following:

Rank	Segmentation*	Percentage of Population
1	Traditional Living (12B)	33.8%
2	Heartland Communities (6F)	18.7%
3	Small Town Simplicity (12C)	13.5%
4	Hardscrabble Road (8G)	9.7%
5	Midlife Constants (5E)	9.6%
6	Rustbelt Traditions (5D)	8.8%
7	Rural Bypasses (10E)	5.1%
8	Salt of the Earth (6B)	0.8%



* Detailed Segmentation Profiles are included in Appendix A

These profiles and a recent Target Market Analysis (TMA) suggests the City needs more housing product in order to attract more residents. A mix of multifamily apartments, missing middle housing types, and upper end housing would all be valuable in attracting workers for the many manufacturing and employment base businesses as well as higher skill and wage jobs such as senior management and doctors from the hospital.

The Coldwater Public Schools 13th Year Program could also be marketed to families with young children as a benefit for the community as well. The City's website could also link to the Branch County Board of Realtors website as a resource for potential residents to find available housing. Lastly, as new housing units come online, these new opportunities should be communicated to major employers in the area, many of whom have numerous employees who are commuting into the community from other areas.

C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater

Tourists

The City of Coldwater is fortunate to have the Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) as an organization to help market the community tourists. As previously mentioned, the CCCVB conducted some strategic planning in conjunction with this marketing strategy. As a result, their strategic plan covers the vast majority of tourism concerns for the city and is located in the Branch County section of this strategy.

The CCCVB has done research on key population and geographic targets for Coldwater, which are below:

Target Audiences- Families, Retirees

Target Geographies- Detroit; Grand Rapids; Ontario (Canada); Cleveland; Cincinnati; Toledo; Indianapolis; Chicago

Developers

A crucial audience for the City of Coldwater must be potential developers. This group will be necessary for the redevelopment of downtown as well as the development of additional single-family housing the community desperately needs to be competitive for talent and to grow its local economy.

A key component of marketing to this audience will be the use of Requests for Qualifications (RFQ). RFQs are used by communities who are seeking to find developers for specific properties, especially those listed in the Key Redevelopment Site section of this economic development strategy. RFQs, unlike Requests for Proposals (RFPs) do not require a developer to have a near finished idea of a product, but rather seeks developers with relevant experience who want to work with the City to develop a joint plan for a property. RFQs are generally more desirable by the development community for their flexibility and lack of sunk costs into developing a plan under a RFP that a community may or may not like.

There are two primary types of developers the city should seek:

- Single Family Housing
- Mixed-Use

These are the two products in the most demand in the city today. Furthermore, the city should also have proactive discussions about what possible incentives the community would be willing to use to help recruit a developer to the community.

The City may also want to conduct a joint RFQ with the Village of Quincy for potential residential developers as the Village has similar needs and partnering will create a larger package that may solicit more interest from developers.

The City currently maintains a presence on their website of available commercial and industrial properties. This should be maintained and custom marketing pieces on prominent properties created and shared on the website, social media, and other outlets such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC.)

C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater

Lastly, the search for developers may be difficult. The city and other municipalities should work with local builders and like-minded entrepreneurs to grow a system of local developers using training being provided by the Michigan State Land Bank Fast Track Authority and the Incremental Development Alliance of Michigan (<https://www.mismallbuildings.org/>.) The purpose of this group is to equip potential developers with the knowledge necessary to potentially make the leap from builder, designer, architect, or even just interested party to a small developer.

City of Coldwater				
Audience	Product	Place	Price	Promotion
Businesses	Cluster Industries; Walkable, Traditional Downtown Location	Downtown Coldwater; LDFA Near Clemens Food Group	Mid	Realtors; Online; Email
Residents	Traditional Neighborhoods; Downtown Living	BCBOR; Major Employers	Mid to Upper	Realtors; Online; Email
Tourists	Family Friendly Fun; Culture; Lakes	Downtown; Lakes; Parks	Low to Mid	Advertising; PR
Developers	Downtown Buildings; Vacant Land for Housing	ULI, MEDA, Incremental Development Alliance	Low to Mid	RFQ

IV. Build Community Brand

While the City of Coldwater has an effective and consistent city logo, the City does not have an effective overarching brand, or unifying message about what the city is and what it has to offer. With as many assets as the community has, it should join the county level organizations in going through a formal branding effort to help create a unifying message.

A few possible suggestions based on observations, impressions, and interactions within the community as a potential brand would be:

Coldwater. Warm Hearts.

Coldwater. Warm Welcome.

Coldwater: Front Door to Michigan

Coldwater: The Middle of Everywhere

Whatever brand is ultimately chosen, it should be applied as consistently as possible and used to reinforce key messages of the community below:

Coldwater	Tourist	Resident	Business
Core Messages	Easily accessible; one-of-a-kind attractions; performance arts; outdoor recreation; family-friendly festivals and events	Numerous amenities (public pool, parks, larger community); a walkable community	Proximity to Indiana and 80/90; Hub of lower central Michigan; Cooperative Government; All major incentives available
Target Markets	Families; Empty Nesters; Detroit; Grand Rapids; Ontario, Canada; Cleveland; Cincinnati; Toledo; Indianapolis; Chicago	Families; Upper Management; Doctors; Battle Creek/Marshall/Indiana Commuters	Agribusiness; Manufacturing; Health Care; Downtown Retail/Office
Partnerships	Coldwater CVB; Travel Michigan; WMTA	BCBOR	BCEGA; SWMF; MEDC

C-VI. Community Marketing Strategy- City of Coldwater**V. Enhance Communication Channels**

The City of Coldwater does an adequate job with its own communications efforts. An effective communications strategy considers the various channels and how they can be best utilized for putting the community's message out.

Social Media- The City has a good Facebook presence, but only posts once a week or whenever there's a specific city issue to distribute. This medium could be used to post other Coldwater businesses, school, or non-profits posts as well, helping to spread good news and build community pride. In an effort to communicate to younger citizens and potential customers (Millennials and Gen Z,) the City should also consider adding SnapChat and Instagram accounts to help promote the city.

Web- The City's website is very good and meets much of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Best Practices. It makes good links to other community resources but should also list available properties in the city, especially those properties listed in the Key Redevelopment Sites section of this strategy.

Public Relations- The city does a good job of posting on its social media and website but could also be proactively distributing press releases to both local print and radio media as well as regional media on more important items.

Advertising- This is the most expensive form of communication and should be limited to those activities or events that have the potential to generate significant revenue for the community. The CCCVB currently does advertising on behalf of the county for tourism-related efforts.

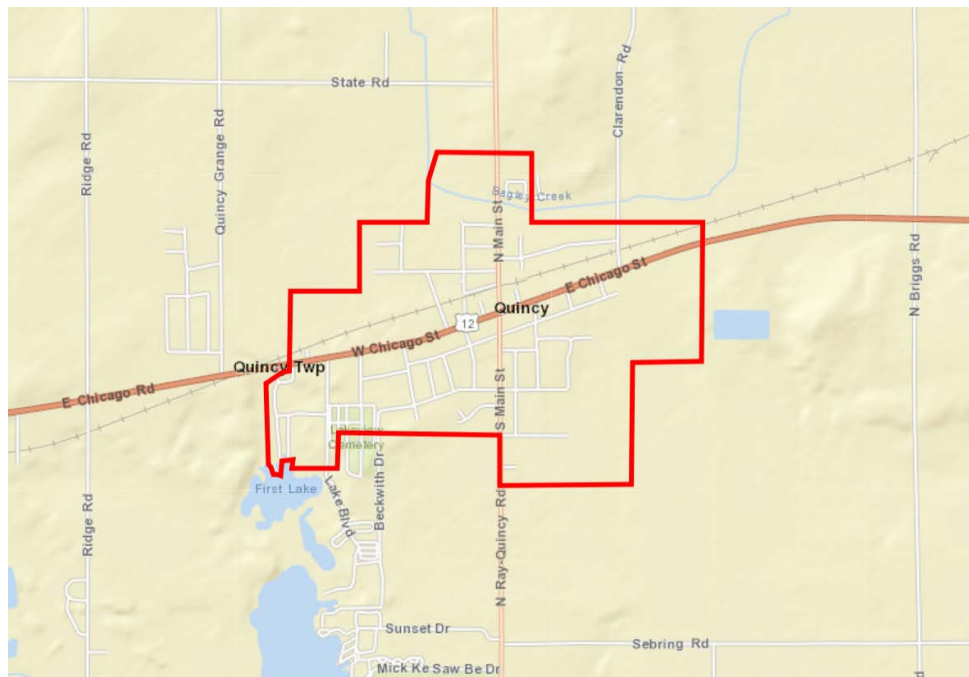
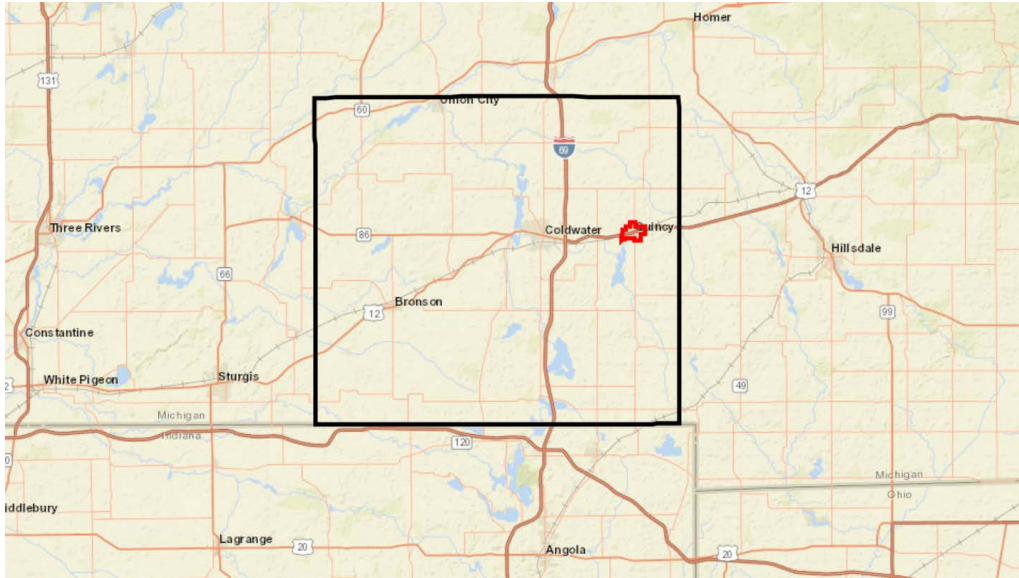
The overarching goal of the marketing strategy for the City of Coldwater needs to be celebrate the success of the community, whether it's the city government itself or those businesses or organizations located within it. It also exists to highlight the potential opportunities that exist here.

Q-I.Village of Quincy- Overview

Q-I. OVERVIEW

Location – Quincy

The Village of Quincy is located along US-12 to the east of Coldwater in Branch County. US-12 is the major road serving the community and is bisected north and south by Main Street. The Village of Quincy is surrounded by Quincy Township and is the only village in the township.

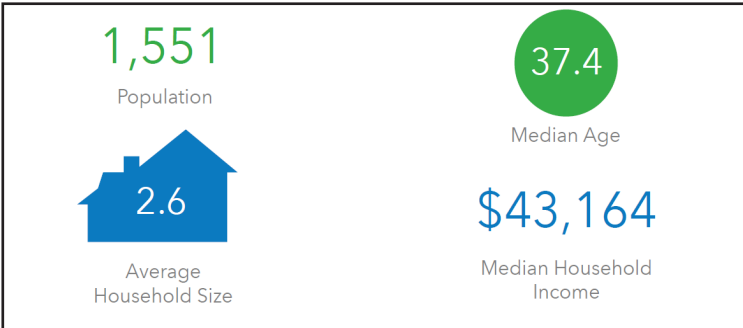


Q-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

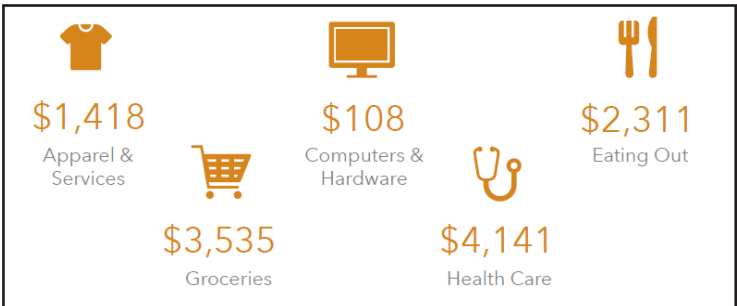
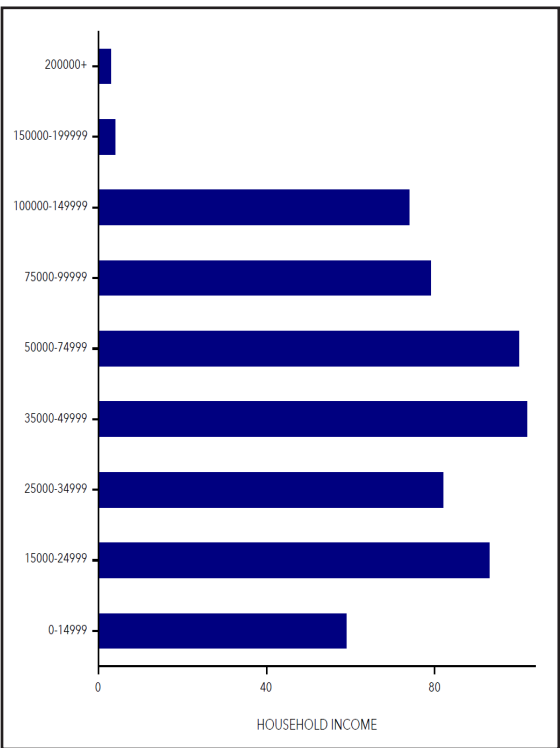
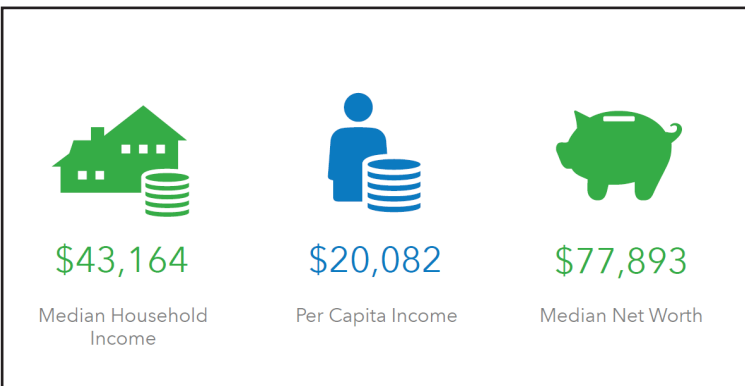
Population

According to 2018 census estimates, the Village of Quincy had a population of 1,551 with 598 households and a median age of 37.4 years old. The average household size is 2.6 people. 40.5% of households have children under 18 years of age, the highest percentage of households with children in the county.



Household Income

The median household income for the village in 2018 was estimated at \$43,164 with a per capita income of \$20,082 and a median net worth of \$77,893.

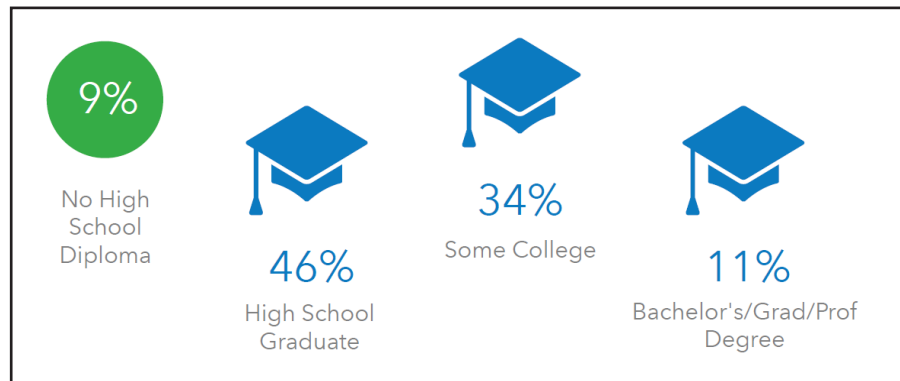


Q-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

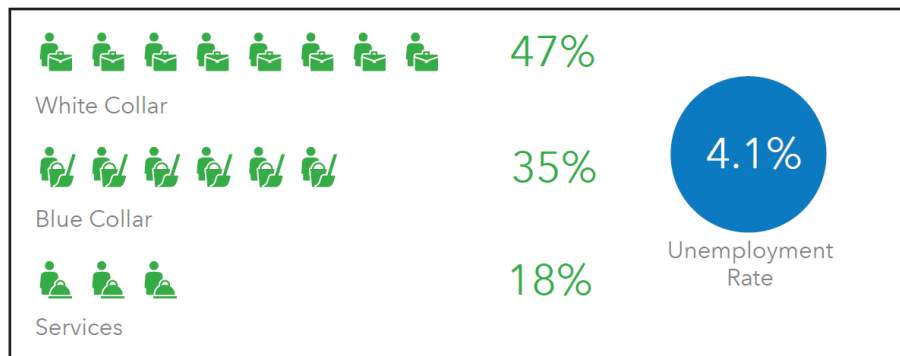
Labor Force

The total labor force within the village limits was estimated at 795 people with 91% having a high school diploma or higher and 45% having at least some college. 42.8% of those working in the Village of Quincy were employed working in white collar jobs, with 40.8% in blue collar, and 21.2% in services. 69% of residents work in Branch County and have an average commute time of 21.1 minutes.



Housing

The total number of housing units occupied in the city for 2018 was 743 with 65.6% of those being owner-occupied and 34.4% were rental units. The average home value for the county is \$114,312 and average residential rent is \$444/month.



2018 Home Value (Esri)

2018 Home Value less than \$50,000 (Esri)	36
2018 Home Value \$50,000-\$99,999 (Esri)	156
2018 Home Value \$100,000-\$149,999 (Esri)	165
2018 Home Value \$150,000-\$199,999 (Esri)	20
2018 Home Value \$200,000-\$249,999 (Esri)	22
2018 Home Value \$250,000-\$299,999 (Esri)	1
2018 Home Value \$300,000-\$399,999 (Esri)	11
2018 Home Value \$400,000-\$499,999 (Esri)	2
2018 Home Value \$500,000-\$749,999 (Esri)	1
2018 Home Value \$750,000-\$999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$1,000,000-\$1,499,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$1,500,000-\$1,999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$2,000,000 or greater (Esri)	0
2018 Median Home Value (Esri)	104,545
2018 Average Home Value (Esri)	114,312

Q-II. Community Input Process

Q-II. Community Input Process

Over the course of the summer and fall of 2018, several meetings were conducted to determine what possible opportunities could be seized in the future. On June 19, the village held a public meeting where a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) were formed. Attendees then were asked to vote on the most important items in each area. The following are the areas for each listed by those items with the number of votes is in parentheses.

Strengths

Park (14)
 Good Infrastructure (10)
 Fire/Police (8)
 Traditional Downtown (5)
 Festivals (5)
 Innovative Government/Community (4)
 Dedicated Staff (3)
 Aggressive Grant Seeking (2)
 Campground/Lake (2)
 Creative Schools/13th Year Program (1)
 Museum
 Library
 Rail
 Full Industrial Park
 Good Working Relationship w Neighbors
 Strong Chamber
 Location (Quality of Life & Transportation)
 Good People
 Giving Community

Weaknesses

Lack of Housing (Senior & Market) (19)
 Lack of Businesses/Restaurants (11)
 Blight (9)
 50% Vacancy Downtown (6)
 Lack of Rental Ordinance (5)
 Lack of Retail (3)
 Low Household Income (3)
 Infrastructure Problems (2)
 Number of Rental Properties (1)
 Lack of Formal Recreation Facilities
 Park is Land Locked
 Milleage Rate Too High
 Educational Attainment Level
 Drugs
 Lack of Daycare
 Ugly Downtown
 Lack of Volunteers
 Built Out Industrial
 Negative School Publicity



Q-II. Community Input Process**Opportunities**

Medical Marijuana (21)
Downtown Project (13)
Rotary Rec Project (6)
Linear Path (3)
Redevelop Cement Plant (3)
New Industrial Parcels (3)
Police Millage (3)
Connect Campgrounds/Lake Population (1)
Upper Floor Housing (1)
Food Incubator
Larger Event Building
Fiber Extension

Threats

Drugs (25)
Negative Effect of School Issues (14)
Environmental Rules (6)
State/Federal Economy (7)
State Legislature (Unfunded Mandates) (2)



Q-III. Local Goals

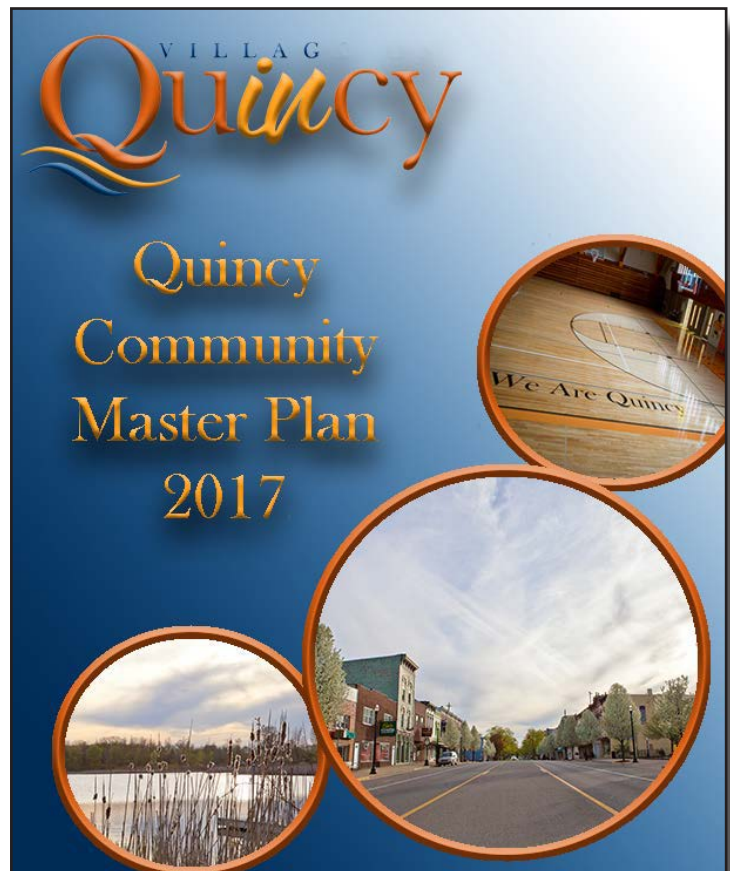
Q-III. Local Goals

For an economic development strategy to follow best practices put forth by the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, the individual objectives must tie back to one or more of the local goals and goals identified in the regional context. Each of the goals put forth in this strategy meets this criterion.

The goals for the Village of Quincy are from the city's Master Plan, adopted in 2017.

Goals

- 1) Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices.
- 2) Foster a Distinctive and Attractive Community, with a Strong Sense-of-Place.
- 3) Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas.
- 4) Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration.
- 5) Encourage an efficient and safe multi-modal transportation network that facilitates economic growth while integrating various modes of transportation to ensure a higher quality of life for community residents.



Q-IV. Local Strategic Objectives

Q-IV. Strategic Objectives- Quincy

In addition to countywide projects, there are several key projects within the Village of Quincy that could improve the community's economic situation. The village currently enjoys a relatively low unemployment rate and a nearly full industrial park with successful businesses. However, downtown has been identified as a key area in need of help as is expanding the village's offerings in the areas below:

Development of Northeast Block of Downtown- The Village of Quincy has been very proactive and forward thinking in imagining the redevelopment the "Downtown Block." This area is currently open parking and has limited use. Redevelopment concepts showing several buildings of varying mixed-uses, a new municipal building, and public gathering area. From a real estate development perspective, this project should be the community's first priority.

Additional Housing- A recent Target Market Analysis (TMA) has indicated there is demand for up to 58 new units of housing, including single family, upper floor, and multi-family style units. The village will need to be proactive in addressing these needs. Goals for housing are below:

Upper Floor- Upper floor redevelopment has multiple benefits for a community. In addition to creating more housing units the community needs, returning upper floor spaces to productive use will increase cash flow for the buildings, allowing more flexibility for property owners in retail rent amounts. Allowing more flexibility in first floor rents could help fill vacant spaces. Additionally, the addition of tenants in the downtown gives a ready supply of customers for retail and restaurant opportunities.

Workforce, Upper-Mid Tier- Housing in the \$150,000-250,000 range, especially single family, appears to be in demand. This type of housing is attainable for general workforce and upper-middle income families and would be a good fit for Quincy. A few more expensive units may also be feasible. In addition to the Quail Meadows project below, it appears there is demand for a new walkable neighborhood within the village limits.

Complete Quail Meadows Project- Quincy has a long history of being proactive in housing and economic development. The Quail Meadows project was initiated to help address some of the housing needs in the village. However, inconsistencies with a single developer have left this project incomplete. These remaining parcels could be packaged with additional parcels, to create better economy of scale for a master developer for multiple properties.

Land Control and RFQ Partnership with Coldwater- The Village should take proactive steps to identify land for the development of single-family homes in the \$150,000-250,000 range. This land would preferably already be within the village or could be in close proximity with the potential for a conditional land transfer agreement or annexation. If the village has the resources to acquire the land they should or secure an assignable option with the existing property owner, so the village could proactively seek out a developer. With housing demand high across the state, demand for housing developers is also high. In order to attract an appropriate developer, the village will have to package and market the property to potential candidates. Potentially partnering with the City of Coldwater, who also has demand for more housing, could help create an even larger and more diverse package of properties to market to potential developers.

Q-IV. Strategic Objectives- Quincy

Façade Improvement Program- Quincy is blessed with some incredible architecture, detailed transoms on doorways, and beautiful murals. However, several buildings downtown are in need of attention in the form of maintenance and updating. Permanent awnings and facades covering upper floor stories should be removed, several buildings need tuck pointing, and it appears basic maintenance or painting could go a long way. The Village should explore interest in pursuing the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) façade improvement programs as a potential source of matching funds.

Expansion of Industrial Park- The Village of Quincy is in the enviable position of having an industrial park that is at capacity. Even vacant parcels have been secured for future expansion plans of existing companies. Quincy should identify additional acreage near or adjacent to the existing industrial park. If available land is not adjacent or near, other suitable land should be identified for industrial expansion. With a nearly built out industrial park, the village will not be able to attract, or possibly even retain existing, employers who need addition land.

Retail & Restaurant Development- There is significant need for additional retail and restaurant businesses in downtown Quincy. However, given the amount of vacant square footage downtown, recruiting businesses from elsewhere will not fill so much space. The Village, DDA, and Chamber should work together to encourage entrepreneurship with a focus on potential retail and restaurants. This will also necessitate the need to create a culture of entrepreneurship by embracing trends like pop-up retail and food trucks. Pop-up retail and food trucks are often ways for businesses to temporarily test the market to make a better case for a more permanent location within the community.



Q-V. Key Redevelopment Sites

Q-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Quincy

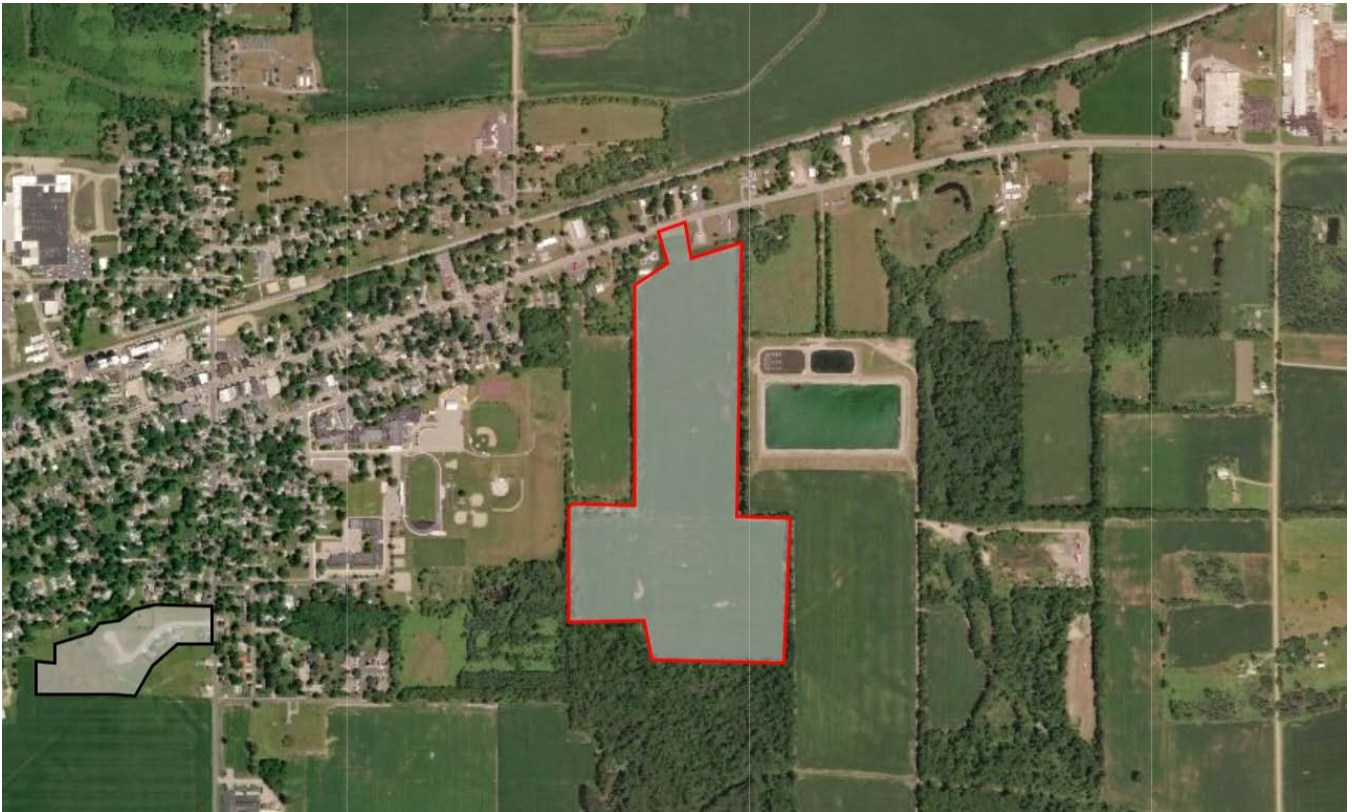
A review of the community shows the need to prioritize the redevelopment of several sites. Most prominent of these sites are our major buildings downtown.



Downtown Block- The village as worked to develop a mixed-use concept for downtown that would encompass several properties and create a walkable addition to the downtown by better utilizing publicly and privately owned properties.



Quail Meadows Property- The village owns several parcels to this property where there is already utilities. 16 lots have yet to be built out and are the Village's quickest and best option for building new homes in the community.

Q-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Quincy

Farm Property East of Village- This approximately 71 acres is the land that would be most attractive to potential housing developers with half of its acreage already in the village and the rest immediately adjacent. Furthermore, its proximity to the high school would make it a short walk and attractive to families.

Q-VI. Implementation Plan

Village of Quincy

Economic Development Strategy- Implementation Plan

STATUS COLOR LEGEND & TOGGLE

Not Started	In Progress	Delayed	Complete
ON	ON	ON	ON

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
1. Downtown Block Project	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga	12/1/2018	12/31/2021			Project at least 50% Developed
1.A. Create Property Information Package on site for redevelopment	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Brittany Hartman					
1.B. Conduct market Feasibility Study for Residential, Retail uses	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.C. Develop RFQ for developer for site	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.D. Post and promote RFQ	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Brittany Hartman					
1.E. Evaluate RFQ Responses & Interview As Needed	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.F. Select Developer	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Village Council					
1.G. Execute a Pre-Development Agreement with Developer	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.H. Community charrette with stakeholders	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.I. Review zoning for appropriate uses	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.J. Pro Forma Development & Identification of Gap	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
1.K. Secure project financing, and if necessary, incentives	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.L. Final Development Agreement	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Charles Lillis					
1.M. Finalize Financing	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Banker/Eric Zuzga					
1.N. Close on Real Estate	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.O. Construction	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
1.P. Celebrate Success	1, 2, 4	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
2. Add Upper Floor Housing	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga	12/1/2018	12/31/2021			4 new units
2.A. Determine and map which properties could redevelop upper floors into housing	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
2.B. Hold informational meeting with building owners reviewing TMA data	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
2.C. Survey building owners to determine interest	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
2.D. Identify potential construction company(ies) to work with building owners	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
2.E. Obtain initial construction cost estimates for upper floors	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
2.F. Help building owners to develop pro forma	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
2.G. Obtain commitment for financing from local lenders	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
2.H. Apply for MEDC funds if needed	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
2.I. Administer grant	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Third Party Administrator					
2.J. Closeout grant	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Third Party Administrator					
2.K. Celebrate success	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
3. Land Acquisition and facilitation for additional residential	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga	1/1/2019	12/31/2021			10 new housing units created
3.A. Identify suitable properties in or near village limits	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.B. Identify owners and contact info for all potential property owners	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
3.C. If needed, engage third party to facilitate acquisition of assignable options on all properties	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
3.D. Acquire assignable purchase options on all properties	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.E. Create Property Information Package on site for redevelopment	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Brittany Hartman					
3.F. Conduct market Feasibility Study for Residential, Retail uses	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Consultant					
3.G. Develop RFQ for developer for site	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.H. Post RFQ	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Brittany Hartman					
3.I. Evaluate RFQ Responses & Interview as needed	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.J. Select Developer	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Village Council					
3.K. Execute a Pre-Development Agreement with Developer	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
3.L. Community charrette with stakeholders	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.M. Review zoning for appropriate uses	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.N. Pro Forma Development & Identification of Gap	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started						
3.O. Secure project financing, and if necessary, incentives	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.P. Final Development Agreement	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Charles Lillis					
3.Q. Finalize Financing	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Banker/Eric Zuzga					
3.R. Close on Real Estate	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.S. Construction	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
3.T. Celebrate Success	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
4. Possible Partnership with Coldwater on Request for Qualification (RFQ)	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga	1/1/2019	12/31/2021			RFQ Created & Executed
4.A. Determine receptiveness of City of Coldwater to joint RFQ for residential developers	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
4.B. Seek and receive approval of both Quincy and Coldwater councils to proceed	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
4.C. Establish a joint RFQ committee with Coldwater	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
4.D. Develop RFQ and evaluation scoring with input and feedback from Coldwater	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga/Keith Baker					
4.E. Issue and promote RFQ	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
4.F. Review and score RFQ submissions	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga/Keith Baker					
4.G. Conduct interviews with potential developers	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga/Keith Baker					
4.H. Establish pre-development agreements with Quincy, Coldwater, and developer	1, 2	1, 4	Not Started	Charles Lillis					
5. Façade Improvement Program	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey	12/1/2018	12/31/2020			2 facades improved
5.A. Research successful façade grant programs	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
5.B. Establish objective façade grant program	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
5.C. Hold informational meeting for property owners about program	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
5.D. Identify potential construction company(ies) to work with building owners	2	4	Not Started	Brittany Hartman					
5.E. Obtain initial construction cost estimates for facades	2	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
5.F. Obtain commitment for financing from local lenders	2	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
5.G. Apply for MEDC funds for Façade grant	2	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
5.H. Administer grant	2	4	Not Started	Third Party Administrator					
5.I. Close out grant	2	4	Not Started	Third Party Administrator					
5.J. Celebrate Success	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
6. Land Acquisition for Industrial Park Expansion	4, 5	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga	12/1/2018	12/31/2022			Min 10 acres acquired
6.A. Identify suitable properties in or near village limits	4, 5	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
6.B. Identify owners and contact info for all potential property owners	4, 5	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
6.C. If needed, engage third party to facilitate acquisition of assignable options on all properties	4, 5	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
6.D. Acquire properties	4, 5	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
6.E. Rezone to appropriate zoning	4, 5	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
6.F. PA 425 or Annex property to Village, if needed	4, 5	4	Not Started	Eric Zuzga					
6.G. Begin engineering for expansion of utilities to site	4, 5	4	Not Started	Jason Laney					
6.H. Create marketing materials for site	4, 5	4	Not Started	Brittany Hartman					
7. Retail & Restaurant Development	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey	12/1/2018	12/31/2022			1 new retailer or restaurant
7.A. Work with Chamber and SBDC on business plan development workshops with emphasis on retail and restaurants	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
7.B. Identify potential financing solutions with banks (Example- Downtown Loan Fund)	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
					START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	
7.C. Working with local realtors, host Downtown Open House during festivals and events to allow people to go into vacant spaces	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
7.D. Use appropriate market data to encourage retail	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					
7.E. Identify other regional, locally-based retailers as potential recruits	2	4	Not Started	Erin Veysey					

Q-VII. Community Marketing Strategy

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Quincy

The Village of Quincy is perhaps the most resourceful community in Branch County. It has developed a reputation as an innovative local government and known for having quality events such as Pints in the Park, Kids Day in the Park, and its Main Street Festival.

I. Build Community Pride

The Village of Quincy has a lot to offer potential residents, businesses, and tourists. Building community pride is an important part of the community's marketing efforts. After all, if people are proud of where they live, they become ambassadors and sales people for the community just by talking well about the community. Below are some additional actions the village can take to create more community pride:

#QuINcy Photo Contest- The Village, or its DDA, should sponsor a monthly or quarterly “#QuINcy Photo Contest” where people share their favorite things about the community on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) using the #QuINcy hashtag. The best photo for each period could win tickets to Pints in the Park or a gift certificate to a local business. This would leverage the village's existing social media accounts as well as begin to have people proactively talk about the things they like about the community.

National Signing Day- In partnership with Quincy Community Schools, the community can stage a “signing day event” similar to those for college-bound athletes but for any student identifying their post high school education whether it's in a four-year university, community college, or other technical education. This could also apply to students in Quincy's 13th Year program. This will engender pride of graduating youth and create an expectation of future accomplishment. This event would also be publicized with local and regional media.

Good News Sharing- The Village of Quincy does a good job of promoting its own services, events, and news via social media. This could be expanded to share good news from Quincy businesses, non-profits, and Quincy Community Schools.

II. Identify and Build on Assets

During a public Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) conducted in June 2018, the following strengths were identified and ranked (total voting points are in parentheses.)

Strengths

Park (14)	Full Industrial Park
Good Infrastructure (10)	Good Working Relationship with Neighbors
Fire/Police (8)	Strong Chamber
Traditional Downtown (5)	Location (Quality of Life & Transportation)
Festivals (5)	Good People
Innovative Government/Community (4)	Giving Community
Dedicated Staff (3)	
Aggressive Grant Seeking (2)	
Campground/Lake (2)	
Creative Schools/13th Year Program (1)	
Museum	
Library	

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Quincy

These assets can be used to help market the village to potential businesses and residents. As an example, the park, the traditional downtown, and festivals and events were all ranked among the top strengths. The village could make further improvements to Village Park and submit it to the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association for an award. If the park wins an award, the village could then tout its “Award Winning Park” as they market the community to potential residents and businesses. Touting the number of visitors that come to events is also helpful to tell potential businesses. Both the park and downtown businesses can and should be marketed to seasonal visitors at Sunset Cove and Cottonwood resorts as well as seasonal residents and second homeowners.

Additionally, these assets can be built on to improve their accessibility or usage (leveraging historic tax credits for developers interested in redeveloping historic downtown buildings.)

III. Identifying Marketing Targets

A community needs to understand its target markets. There are typically four audiences when considering target markets:

- Business
- Residents
- Tourists
- Real Estate Developers

Business

In the Business category, there are two major subsections to consider: Employment Base Businesses and Retail & Restaurant. The first section is Employment Base Businesses, or those businesses who sell their goods or service outside of the local economy and bring in money from other markets. These are typically the focus of traditional economic development. They are manufacturing, wholesale, finance, and others.

Traditional economic development strategy is to examine the local employment base and identify clusters of businesses who may have potential suppliers or customers whose co-location of a facility might be beneficial to all parties. This strategy also has merit in Quincy.

The Village and economic development staff should work with Speedrack and E.A.B. Fabrication to determine if there are any key suppliers or customers that may benefit from being located nearby. Retail & Restaurant are important sectors for downtown redevelopment. While Retail & Restaurant has traditionally been considered as ancillary, but their presence is critical in quantifying quality of life for prospective Employment Base Businesses and the attraction of new talent to the community.



An analysis of the retail gap that exists between supply and demand based on consumer spending (Appendix 3) shows that there is significant leakage of virtually all retail to outside the community. Given Walmart and Meijer's respective location in nearby Coldwater, this isn't surprising. However, not all retail spending is being captured by those two big box chain retailers.

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Quincy

There is a significant amount of leakage around Food & Beverage Stores, suggesting a small market may be viable with its biggest selling point being convenience versus price for people who need an item or two and don't want to drive into Coldwater. Clothing stores, outside of big box, also have potential. Quincy is home to a destination retailer: Patty's Bridal and Apparel, which brings customers from significant distances. There could be potential for complementing businesses, such as a florist, or men's formal wear/tuxedo rental businesses. Additionally, an upscale resale shop may also be a potential target.

From a retail and restaurant recruitment perspective, the village should target potential microbreweries. With Pints in the Park a successful event that draws brewers from across the state, it would be an excellent time to pitch the community to potential breweries. Another potential would be to work with the contestants in the home brew contest to possibly make the leap into full-time brewing.

Residents

As part of the analysis on potential residential targets, the community's current demographics play a significant role. To do this, local demographics are analyzed by Tapestry segmentation. Tapestry segmentation provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition—then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups.

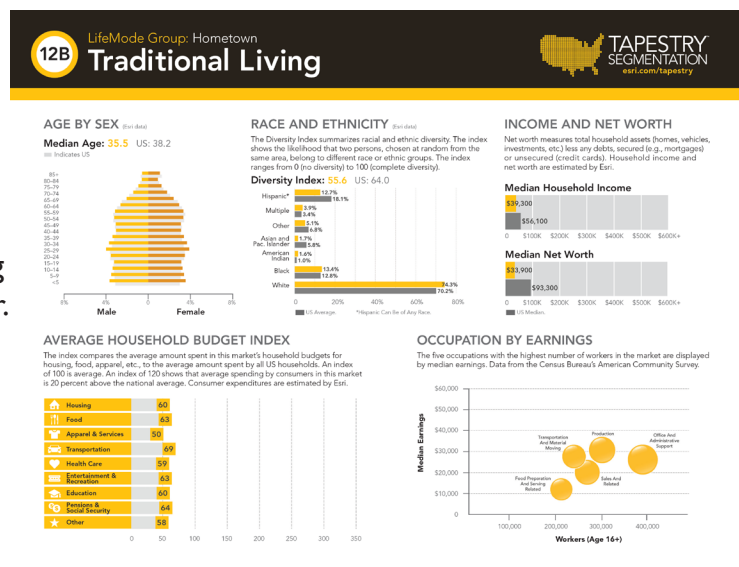
The Village of Quincy's Tapestry Segmentation breaks down as the following:

Rank	Segmentation*	Percentage of Population
1	Traditional Living (12B)	62.9%
2	Heartland Communities (6F)	37.1%

* Detailed Segmentation Profiles are included in Appendix 4

These profiles and a recent Target Market Analysis (TMA) suggests the Village needs more housing product in order to attract more residents. A mix of multifamily apartments, upper floor housing downtown, and mid-priced housing would all be valuable in attracting workers for the many manufacturing and employment base businesses in Coldwater.

The Quincy Community Schools 13th Year Program could also be marketed to families with young children as a benefit for the community as well. The Village's website could also link to the Branch County Board of Realtors website as a resource for potential residents to find available housing.



VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Quincy

Tourists

The Village of Quincy is fortunate to have the Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) as an organization to help market the community tourists. As previously mentioned, the CCCVB conducted some strategic planning in conjunction with this marketing strategy. As a result, their strategic plan covers the vast majority of tourism concerns for the village and is located in the Branch County section of this strategy.

The CCCVB has done research on key population and geographic targets for the county, which are below:

Target Audiences- Families, Retirees

Target Geographies- Detroit; Grand Rapids; Ontario (Canada); Cleveland; Cincinnati; Toledo; Indianapolis; Chicago

Developers

A crucial audience for the Village of Quincy must be potential developers. This group will be necessary for the redevelopment of the Northeast Block of Downtown property as well as the development of additional single-family housing the community desperately needs to be competitive for talent and to grow its local economy.

A key component of marketing to this audience will be the use of Requests for Qualifications (RFQ). RFQs are used by communities who are seeking to find developers for specific properties, especially for the Downtown Block and those other properties listed in the Key Redevelopment Site section of this economic development strategy. RFQs, unlike Requests for Proposals (RFPs) do not require a developer to have a near finished idea of a product, but rather seeks developers with relevant experience who want to work with the Village to develop a joint plan for a property. RFQs are generally more desirable by the development community for their flexibility and lack of sunk costs into developing a plan under a RFP that a community may or may not like.

There are two primary types of developers the village should seek:

- Mixed-Use (Downtown Block project)
- Single Family Housing (Hunting Trail and other land)

These are the two products in the most demand in the village today. Furthermore, the village should also have proactive discussions about what possible incentives the community would be willing to use to help recruit a developer to the community.

The village may also want to conduct a joint RFQ with the City of Coldwater for potential residential developers as the city has similar needs and partnering will create a larger package that may solicit more interest from developers.

Key Redevelopment Sites

The village should create a page on their website dedicated to available commercial and industrial properties. This should be maintained and custom marketing pieces on prominent properties created and shared on the website, social media, and other outlets such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC.)

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Quincy

Lastly, the search for developers may be difficult. The city and other municipalities should work with local builders and like-minded entrepreneurs to grow a system of local developers using training being provided by the Michigan State Land Bank Fast Track Authority and the Incremental Development Alliance of Michigan (<https://www.mismallbuildings.org/>.) The purpose of this group is to equip potential developers with the knowledge necessary to potentially make the leap from builder, designer, architect, or even just interested party to a small developer.

Village of Quincy				
Audience	Product	Place	Price	Promotion
Businesses	Cluster Industries; Walkable, Traditional Downtown Location	Downtown Quincy	Mid	Realtors; Online; Email
Residents	Small Town America; Lakes; Innovative Community; Education Focused; Low Cost of Living	BCBOR; Major Employers	Mid to Upper	Realtors; Online; Email
Tourists	Small Town America, near lakes, with fun family friendly festivals and events	Downtown; Lakes; Park	Low to Mid	Advertising; PR
Developers	Downtown Buildings; Vacant Land for Housing	ULI, MEDA, Incremental Development Alliance	Low to Mid	RFQ

IV. Build Community Brand

The Village of Quincy recently rolled out an excellent new logo and brand with “QulNcy” (In Quincy.) The Village has been very good with its roll out, consistency, and reinforcement. It is a model other community inside and outside the county should be looking to.

The QulNcy campaign has been successful in creating a buzz about the village being the community for quality events, headlined by its Pints in the Park event. The Village’s other brand reinforcement, like rentable sandwich board signs, branded fire pits in the park, and other signage does a great job. This brand should be expanded to market the community to potential businesses, developers, and residents. The flexibility of the brand “In Quincy) can be used to highlight some of the strengths of the community from business (“We make things happen in QulNcy”) to visitors (“You’ll find a relaxing, welcoming community in QulNcy”) to residents (“Make your home in QulNcy.”)

Quincy	Tourist	Resident	Business
Core Messages	Small Town America, near lakes, with fun family friendly festivals and events	Small Town America; Lakes; Innovative Community; Education Focused; Low Cost of Living	Helpful and responsive government; close proximity to I-69/Coldwater
Target Markets	Young Families, Retirees	Families; Diverse Incomes; Coldwater/Marshall Commuters	Manufacturing; Downtown Retail
Partnerships	Coldwater CVB; Travel Michigan; WMTA	BCBOR	BCEGA; SWMF; MEDC

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Quincy

V. Enhance Communication Channels

The Village of Quincy does a very good job with its own communications efforts. An effective communications strategy considers the various channels and how they can be best utilized for putting the community's message out.

Social Media- The Village has a great Facebook and emerging Instagram presence. These mediums could also be used to post other Quincy businesses, school, or non-profits posts as well, helping to spread good news and build community pride. In an effort to communicate to younger citizens and potential customers (Millennials and Gen Z,) the Village should add more content to its Instagram account and consider adding a SnapChat account as well.

Web- The Village's website is very good and meets much of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Best Practices. It makes good links to other community resources but should also list available properties in the village, with emphasis on the Downtown Block and other properties listed in the Key Redevelopment Sites section of this strategy.

Public Relations- The village does a good job of posting on its social media and website but could also be proactively distributing press releases to both local print and radio media as well as regional media on more important items.

Advertising- This is the most expensive form of communication and should be limited to those activities or events that have the potential to generate significant revenue for the community. Additional advertising for Pints in the Park would be beneficial, as this ticketed event generates a good amount of revenue and the additional advertising could help draw bigger crowds. The CCCVB currently does advertising on behalf of the county for tourism-related efforts.

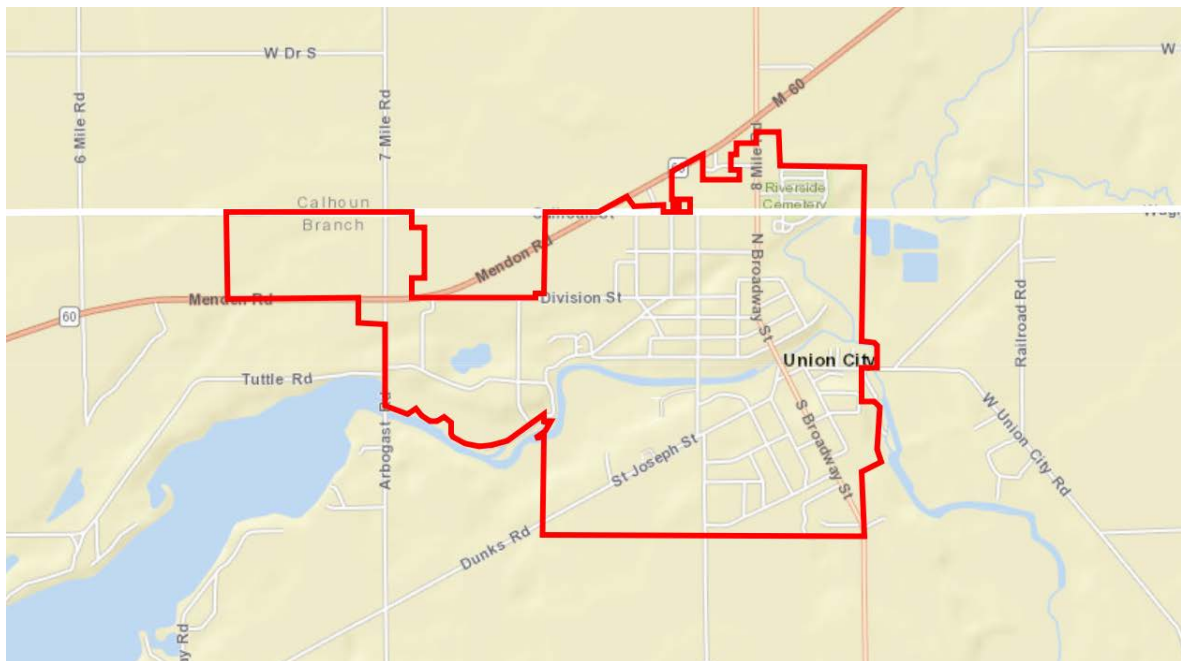
The overarching goal of the marketing strategy for the Village of Quincy needs to be celebrate the success of the community, whether it's the village government itself or those businesses or organizations located within it. It also exists to highlight the potential opportunities that exist here.

UC-I.Village of Union City- Overview

UC-I. OVERVIEW

Location – Union City

The Village of Union City is located along M-60 in the northeast portion of Branch County. M-60 borders the village to the north, with the main north-south road serving the community being Broadway Street and is bisected east and west by Union City Road. The Village of Union City is surrounded by Union Township and is the only village in the township.

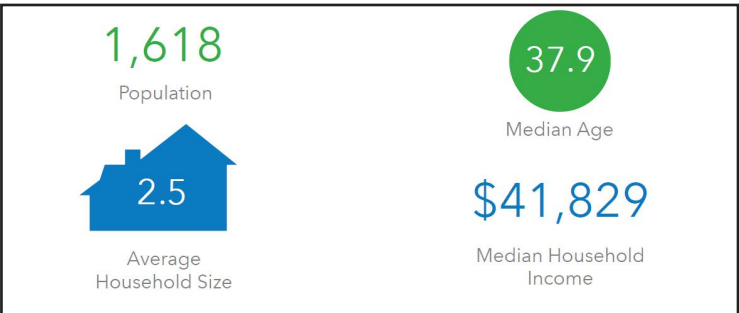


UC-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

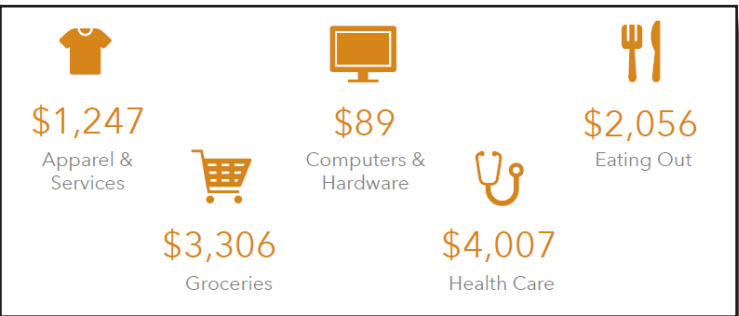
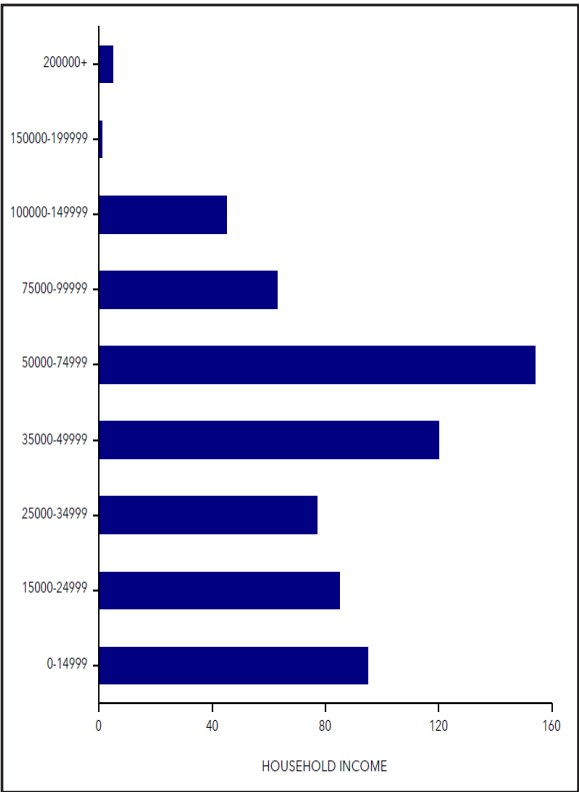
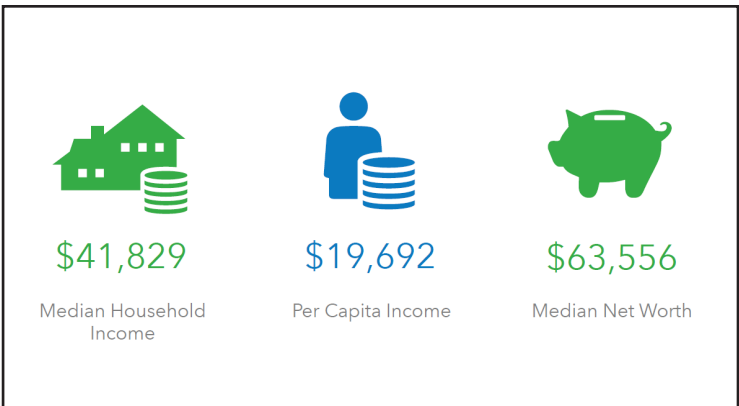
Population

According to 2018 census estimates, the Village of Union City had a population of 1,618 with 645 households and a median age of 37.9 years old. The average household size is 2.5 people. 33.9% of households have children under 18 years of age.



Household Income

The median household income for the city in 2018 was estimated at \$41,829 with a per capita income of \$19,692 and a median net worth of \$63,556.

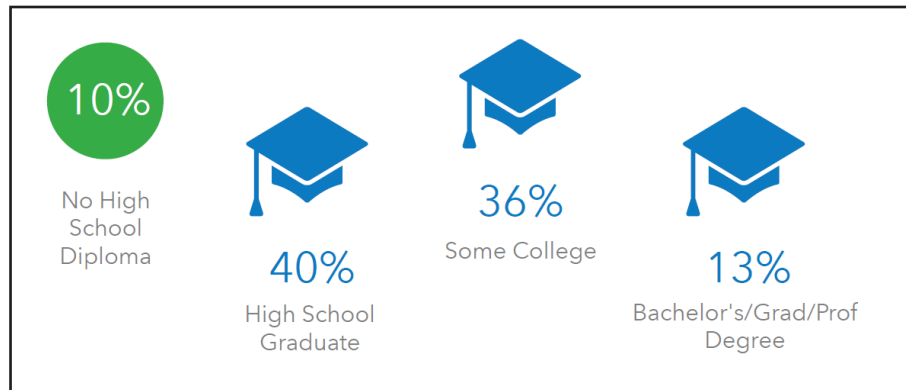


UC-I. OVERVIEW

Summary of Key Information

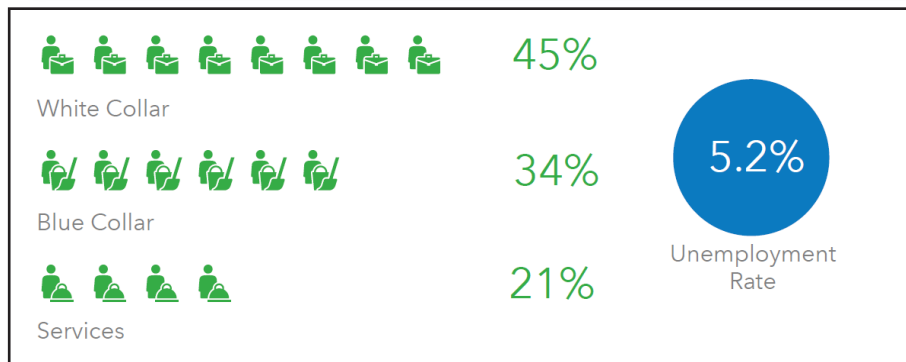
Labor Force

The total labor force within the village limits was estimated at 662 people with 90% having a high school diploma or higher and 49% having at least some college. 42.3% of those working in the Village of Union City were employed working in white collar jobs, with 34.3% in blue collar, and 23.4% in services. 39.8% of residents work in Branch County and have an average commute time of 31.5 minutes.



Housing

The total number of housing units occupied in the city for 2018 was 743 with 70.8% of those being owner-occupied and 29.2% were rental units. The average home value for the county is \$115,133 and average residential rent is \$467/month.



2018 Home Value (Esri)

2018 Home Value less than \$50,000 (Esri)	89
2018 Home Value \$50,000-\$99,999 (Esri)	182
2018 Home Value \$100,000-\$149,999 (Esri)	89
2018 Home Value \$150,000-\$199,999 (Esri)	47
2018 Home Value \$200,000-\$249,999 (Esri)	27
2018 Home Value \$250,000-\$299,999 (Esri)	3
2018 Home Value \$300,000-\$399,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$400,000-\$499,999 (Esri)	1
2018 Home Value \$500,000-\$749,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$750,000-\$999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$1,000,000-\$1,499,999 (Esri)	7
2018 Home Value \$1,500,000-\$1,999,999 (Esri)	0
2018 Home Value \$2,000,000 or greater (Esri)	0
2018 Median Home Value (Esri)	86,676
2018 Average Home Value (Esri)	115,337

UC-II. Community Input Process

UC-II. Community Input Process

Over the course of the summer and fall of 2018, several meetings were conducted to determine what possible opportunities could be seized in the future. On June 6, the village held a public meeting where a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) were formed. Attendees then were asked to vote on the most important items in each area. The following are the areas for each listed by those items with the number of votes is in parentheses.

Strengths

Good/Improving Infrastructure (8)
 Traditional/Historic Downtown (7)
 Union Lake (6)
 Local Paper (5)
 M-66/M-60/I-69 Access (5)
 Parades/Community Events (4)
 Village-Owned Electric (3)
 Fire/Police Departments (3)
 Hardware (3)
 Own Water System (2)
 Active Community Orgs (2)
 Doctor/Dentist (2)
 Nudist Camp (2)
 Good Social Media (1)
 Heritage Water Trail/River (1)
 No State Trunk line (1)
 Friendly (1)
 Annual M-60 Sales (1)
 Strong Chamber
 Active Council
 Post Office
 Amphitheater
 New Library
 Grocery Store
 Bank
 Pharmacy
 Parks
 Children's Author
 Community Unlimited
 Food Pantry
 Yoga/Event Center
 Vet
 Thrift Store
 Diverse Churches
 Good School Athletics
 New Field House
 Schools (Math & Science programs/AP)

Strengths (Cont.)

Cemetery
 Farmer's Market
 Some Good Houses
 Theater
 Hammond House
 Restaurants
 Corn Maze



UC-II. Community Input Process

Weaknesses

No Fiber/Cell Service/Wi-Fi (11)
 Lack of DDA/PSD (11)
 Lack of marketing (available properties) (8)
 “Same Ten People” do everything (6)
 Bad township relationship (6)
 No historic district (3)
 Sewer Rates (2)
 High level of poverty (2)
 Lack of housing (2)
 Bedroom Community/No Industry (1)
 Aging leadership (1)
 Not enough restaurants
 Blight
 Hard Water
 Electric rates
 Sidewalks/Roads
 Not a thoroughfare
 Lack of Sense of Community
 Drugs
 Lack of Arts/Culture
 Old Guard/People Set in Ways
 No Diversity
 Low school test scores
 Lack of child care/senior activities
 Built out
 Trees in bad shape
 Low general fund
 Lack of Inventory of buildings/land
 Industrial chicken farm
 No nightlife/evening activities

Opportunities

Fiber/Public Wi-Fi (25)
 Actively market sites/property (7)
 Increase hydro production (4)
 More embracing of technology (4)
 Garbage/Recycling Uniformity (4)
 Former trailer factory (2)
 Housing Opportunities (2)
 Heritage Water Trail/Lake (1)
 M-60/M-66 draw (1)
 Swimming pool/Ice rink/splash pad (1)
 Library/Home School/MI Virtual (1)
 Better relationship w township (1)
 More southside businesses
 Better use of amphitheater
 Better leverage of library
 Façade improvements
 Art/Music teachers
 Low cost of living
 Brewpub
 Leverage sporting events
 Snow removal

Threats

Close mindedness/resistance to change (15)
 Unfunded liabilities (9)
 Lack of housing (7)
 Overloaded staff (6)
 Drugs/Mental Health (5)
 Limited tax base (5)
 Education level (3)
 Wind turbine issues (3)
 Aging fleet (1)



UC-III. Local Goals

UC-III. Local Goals

For an economic development strategy to follow best practices put forth by the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, the individual objectives must tie back to one or more of the local goals and goals identified in the regional context. Each of the goals put forth in this strategy meets this criterion.

The goals for the Village of Union City are from the city's Master Plan, adopted in 2017.

Goals

Downtown Development

1) Reinforce and strengthen the Village's central business district as the commercial and cultural center of the community.

- Promote new commercial activity within existing downtown district boundaries.
- Continue to promote building maintenance and facade improvements.
- Promote upper-story residential use commercial buildings.
- Utilize the Chamber of Commerce to analyze the market area and retail impact of the downtown relative to Union City, Branch County, and southern Calhoun County.

Housing

2) Provide a variety of suitable housing alternatives for the Village's residents that promote stability within existing neighborhoods and provides effective guidance to new residential development.

- The Village recently hired a code enforcement officer and is working to expand active code enforcement efforts to remove blighting influences on the Village.
- Direct the future location of new housing projects through appropriate zoning, subdivision regulations, and utility extension policies. To include senior assisted living.
- Extend sidewalks in those residential areas currently without sidewalks and repair or replace where necessary in neighborhoods with existing sidewalks.

Community Facilities

3) Improve community facilities and infrastructure.

- Develop Village-wide sidewalk installation program for new construction and repair and replacement.
- Have the Village's Electric Department continue to evaluate the street lighting and make recommendations on what changes may be necessary.
- Consolidate the Village Hall along with other Village properties to a larger facility to increase efficiency.
- Continue to upgrade playground equipment and facilities at the Village Parks.
- Improve public infrastructure with new curb, gutter, and pavement when reconstructing or repairing Village roads.

UC-IV. Local Strategic Objectives

UC-IV. Strategic Objectives- Union City

In addition to countywide projects, there are several projects within the Village of Union City that could improve the community's economic situation. With very little industrial property, the village's economic focus should be on strengthening its downtown. The downtown itself is in relatively good shape with few first-floor vacancies. The projects below outline several steps the village can take to strengthen its downtown:

Riverfront Property Project- The former Siler's building at the intersection of St. Joseph Street and Broadway sits along the St. Joseph River and is the most significant redevelopment site in the village. A brewpub operator has expressed interest in the building and would be an excellent end use. The building would also be a good location for river-based activities such as fly fishing or kayak/canoe outfitters. The Village should work with the prospect and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Community Assistance Team (CATEam) for potential incentives to assist.

Creation of Downtown Development Authority- The Village currently does not have a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to assist with development needs in the downtown. The benefits of a DDA are two-fold: 1) the creation of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) plan can generate revenue to help spur specific projects to benefit downtown forward and 2) Creates an organization that is made up of business and property owners and other stakeholders whose sole charge is to improve downtown. Both these benefits justify the creation of this entity.

Upper Floor Housing/Office- The village's downtown first floor vacancy rate is relatively low. However, several storefronts have office uses instead of retail or restaurant options. Additionally, many upper floors are vacant or underutilized. To improve this, downtown's upper floors should be converted or rehabilitated for residential and office uses. More residential units downtown will add to the number of potential customers, increasing demand for retail and justifying moving office uses to upper floors. Furthermore, creating more productive upper floor creates better cash flow for property owners, allowing more flexibility to attract retail.



UC-IV. Strategic Objectives- Union City

Kayak/Canoe Launch at Riverfront Park- The St. Joseph River is perhaps the most underutilized asset, from an economic development perspective, within the village. The Village currently owns and maintains the beautiful Riverfront Park on the river off St. Joseph Street downtown. There appears to be a channel already partially created off of the river that could potentially be converted into a canoe/kayak launch or livery. The St. Joseph River already has a water heritage trail and creating a way for people to access the river would allow for an additional tourism draw. The Village should also coordinate with the City of Coldwater and Coldwater area hoteliers to create a Coldwater to Union City trail.



UC-V. Key Redevelopment Sites

UC-V. Key Redevelopment Sites- Union City

A review of the community shows the need to prioritize the redevelopment of several sites. Most prominent of these sites are our major buildings downtown.



Riverfront Property- This property, three buildings total, sits at the foot of the bridge in the heart of downtown and on the St. Joseph River. Whether these buildings stay intact, or are demolished for a new structure, this site is the most prime location for reuse in the Village.



Vacant Parcel Next To Dollar General- This vacant parcel is the largest single unbuilt parcel in the Village. This parcel could be used to construct a multi-story, mixed-use building or small scale apartment complex.

Q-VI. Implementation Plan

Village of Union City

Economic Development Strategy- Implementation Plan

STATUS COLOR LEGEND & TOGGLE

Not Started	In Progress	Delayed	Complete
ON	ON	ON	ON

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	START DATE	ANTICIPATED		ACTUAL		Success Measurement
						END DATE	START DATE	END DATE		
1. Riverfront Property Project	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager	1/1/2022	12/31/2024				Property redeveloped
1.A. Work with identified interested parties to determine what support from the village may be needed: (Redevelopment Liquor License support, Proper zoning in place)	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager						
1.B. Work with interested parties to potentially secure MEDC funding if needed	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager						
1.C. Identify if public parking nearby can support project and what improvements are needed	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager						
2. Create Downtown Development Authority	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager	1/1/2020	12/31/2020				DDA Created
2.A. Sets a public hearing, based upon its resolution of intent, to create a DDA.	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager						
2.B. Notice is given of a public hearing by publication and mail to taxpayers within a proposed district and to the governing body of each taxing jurisdiction levying taxes that would be subject to capture of tax increment revenues.	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager						
2.C. Public hearing and public comment	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager						

2.D. Within 60 days, the governing body of another taxing jurisdiction may, by resolution, exempt its taxes from capture and file the resolution with the clerk of the Village of Union City.	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
2.E. Not less than 60 days following the hearing, the village council may adopt proposed ordinance creating the DDA and designating the boundaries of the DDA district.	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
2.F. The ordinance must be published at least once in a local newspaper and filed with the Secretary of State.	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
2.G. The governing board of the DDA shall be appointed or may be the same as the planning commission. Otherwise the authority will be supervised by a board that includes the municipality's chief executive officer and 8-12 members appointed by the governing body. A majority of the board must be individuals with an ownership or business interest in property in the district and one member must reside in the district if there	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
2.H. If the DDA board anticipates the need for capturing tax increments or using revenue bonds to support a project, a development plan and a tax increment financing plan must also be adopted by the DDA board and the Village of Union City.	1	4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3. Add Upper Floor Housing/Office	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager	1/1/2020	12/31/2020			4 new units
3.A. Determine and map which properties could redevelop upper floors into housing/office	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.B. Survey building owners to determine interest	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					

3.C. Identify potential construction company(ies) to work with building owners	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.D. Obtain initial construction cost estimates for upper floors	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					15 new units
3.E. Help building owners to develop pro forma	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.F. Obtain commitment for financing from local lenders	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.G. Apply for MEDC funds if needed	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.H. Administer grant	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.I. Closeout grant	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
3.J. Celebrate success	1, 2	1, 3, 4	Not Started	Chris Mathis, Village Manager					
4. Kayak/Canoe Launch at Riverfront Park	1, 3	2	Not Started	Village Park Board	1/1/2019	12/31/2019			Launch built
4.A. Work with engineering firm to determine cost of kayak/canoe launch at Riverfront Park	1, 3	2	Not Started	Village Park Board					
4.B. Identify and apply for funding opportunities (USDA-Rural Development, Michigan DEQ possible sources)	1, 3	2	Not Started	Village Park Board					
4.C. Construct launch	1, 3	2	Not Started	Village Park Board					
4.D. Work with Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) to market site	1, 3	2	Not Started	Village Park Board					
4.E. Collaborative work with Coldwater and other nearby communities to market trail	1, 3	2	Not Started	Village Park Board					

UC-VII. Community Marketing Strategy

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Union City

The Village of Union City is perhaps the most remote community in Branch County. It is a scenic rural community that is a poster child for “small town America.” Its strong rural character is evident and presents itself as a welcoming community. Its Farm to Fork event in September is an annual must-see event and the only one of its kind in the area.

I. Build Community Pride

The Village of Union City offers potential residents, businesses, and tourists a different product than any of the other municipalities in Branch County. Building community pride is an important part of the community’s marketing efforts. After all, if people are proud of where they live, they become ambassadors and sales people for the community just by talking well about the community. Below are some additional actions the village can take to create more community pride:

River Centric Events- The Village is blessed with the St. Joseph River flowing through it. The Village’s Riverfront Park is an excellent community resource. The river could be leveraged and celebrated a few different ways from a River Cleanup in the spring to Rubber Ducky Races as a fundraiser to a cardboard canoe regatta race in the summer. This asset can be used as a draw to downtown and its businesses while bringing people together in a fun environment.

National Signing Day- In partnership with Union City Community Schools, the community can stage a “signing day event” similar to those for college-bound athletes but for any student identifying their post high school education whether it’s in a four-year university, community college, or other technical education. This will engender pride of graduating youth and create an expectation of future accomplishment. This event would also be publicized with local and regional media.

Good News Sharing- The Village of Union City does a really good job of promoting its own services, events, and news via Facebook and its own website. This could be expanded to share good news from Union City businesses, non-profits, and Union City Community Schools.

II. Identify and Build on Assets

During a public Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) conducted in June 2018, the following strengths were identified and ranked (total voting points are in parentheses.)

Strengths

Good/Improving Infrastructure (8)	Nudist Camp (2)	Bank
Traditional/Historic Downtown (7)	Good Social Media (1)	Pharmacy
Union Lake/River (6)	Heritage Water Trail/River (1)	Parks
Local Paper (5)	No State Trunkline (1)	Children’s Author
M-66/M-60/I-69 Access (5)	Friendly (1)	Community Unlimited
Parades/Community Events (4)	Annual M-60 Sales (1)	Food Pantry
Village-Owned Electric (3)	Strong Chamber	Yoga/Event Center
Fire/Police Departments (3)	Active Council	Vet
Hardware (3)	Post Office	Thrift Store
Own Water System (2)	Amphitheater	Diverse Churches
Active Community Orgs (2)	New Library	Good School Athletics
Doctor/Dentist (2)	Grocery Store	New Field House

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Union City

These assets can be used to help market the village to potential businesses and residents. As an example, the traditional downtown, Union Lake, and St. Joseph River were all mentioned among the top strengths. These assets can be built on to improve lake and river accessibility or usage. Buildings downtown can leverage historic tax credits for building owners interested in renovating upper floors. Additionally, these assets are all big Quality of Life assets that can be used to attract potential residents and even businesses who want or need access to a recreational river and lake.

III. Identifying Marketing Targets

A community needs to understand its target markets. There are typically four audiences when considering target markets:

- Business
- Residents
- Tourists
- Real Estate Developers

Business

In the Business category, there are two major subsections to consider: Employment Base Businesses and Retail & Restaurant. The first section is Employment Base Businesses, or those businesses who sell their goods or service outside of the local economy and bring in money from other markets. These are typically the focus of traditional economic development. They are manufacturing, wholesale, finance, and others.

Traditional economic development strategy is to examine the local employment base and identify clusters of businesses who may have potential suppliers or customers whose colocation of a facility might be beneficial to all parties. The Village of Union City has roughly eleven businesses total that meet this definition. While there are only eleven businesses, they employ roughly 24% of the employees within the village. They are small in number, but important to the economy. It will be important to reach out personally to each of these businesses to determine what help, if any, the village can provide to assist in their growth.

Retail & Restaurant are important sectors for downtown redevelopment. While Retail & Restaurant has traditionally been considered as ancillary, but their presence is critical in quantifying quality of life for prospective Employment Base Businesses and the attraction of new talent to the community. In Union City's case, they are also 27% of the employment base in the community as well.

An analysis of the retail gap that exists between supply and demand based on consumer spending (Appendix 5) shows that there is significant leakage of virtually all retail to outside the community. Given Union City's proximity between Battle Creek and Coldwater, this is not a huge surprise. Clothing stores have potential, both resale and new, as does home furnishings and appliances.

From a retail and restaurant recruitment perspective, the village should target potential microbreweries. The retail gap that exists suggest there is enough financial support within the community to justify another restaurant. A brew pub could also generate additional sales from outside the community as well.

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Union City

Residents

As part of the analysis on potential residential targets, the community's current demographics play a significant role. To do this, local demographics are analyzed by Tapestry segmentation. Tapestry segmentation provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition—then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups.

The Village of Union City's Tapestry Segmentation breaks down as the following:

Rank	Segmentation*	Percentage of Population
1	Heartland Communities (6F)	97.5%
2	Salt of the Earth (6B)	2.5%

The Village's rural, small town charm and river and lake access are its biggest assets. These should be the most frequent talking points. The Village's website could also link to the Branch County Board of Realtors website as a resource for potential residents to find available housing.

Tourists

The Village of Union City is fortunate to have the Coldwater Country Conference and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) as an organization to help market the community tourists. As previously mentioned, the CCCVB conducted some strategic planning in conjunction with this marketing strategy. As a result, their strategic plan covers the vast majority of tourism concerns for the village and is located in the Branch County section of this strategy.



The CCCVB has done research on key population and geographic targets for the county, which are below:

Target Audiences- Agri-tourists, Young Families

Target Geographies- Detroit; Grand Rapids; Ontario (Canada); Cleveland; Cincinnati; Toledo; Indianapolis; Chicago

Developers

An important audience for the Village of Union City is potential developers. This group will be necessary for the redevelopment of the identifies properties in downtown.

A key component of marketing to this audience will be the use of Requests for Qualifications (RFQ). RFQs are used by communities who are seeking to find developers for specific properties. RFQs, unlike Requests for Proposals (RFPs) do not require a developer to have a near finished idea of a product, but rather seeks developers with relevant experience who want to work with the Village to develop a joint

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Union City

plan for a property. RFQs are generally more desirable by the development community for their flexibility and lack of sunk costs into developing a plan under a RFP that a community may or may not like.

The primary type of developer the village should seek are Mixed-Use developers who may be interested in the riverfront property, the vacant lot next to Dollar General, or the former grocery store.

The village should create a page on their website dedicated to available commercial and industrial properties. This should be maintained and custom marketing pieces on prominent properties created and shared on the website, social media, and other outlets such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC.)

Lastly, the search for developers may be difficult. The city and other municipalities should work with local builders and like-minded entrepreneurs to grow a system of local developers using training being provided by the Michigan State Land Bank Fast Track Authority and the Incremental Development Alliance of Michigan (<https://www.mismallbuildings.org/>.) The purpose of this group is to equip potential developers with the knowledge necessary to potentially make the leap from builder, designer, architect, or even just interested party to a small developer.

Village of Union City				
Audience	Product	Place	Price	Promotion
Businesses	Small Manufacturing; Downtown Retail & Restaurant	Downtown Union City	Mid	Realtors; Online; Email
Residents	Small Town America; Lake; Low Cost of Living; Close to Battle Creek/Kalamazoo	BCBOR; Major Employers	Low to Mid	Realtors; Online; Email
Tourists	Outdoor recreation; Agri-Tourism; historic architecture	Downtown; Lakes; Park	Low to Mid	Advertising; PR
Developers	Downtown Buildings	ULI, MEDA, Incremental Development Alliance	Low to Mid	RFQ

Key Redevelopment Sites

The village should create a page on their website dedicated to available commercial and industrial properties. This should be maintained and custom marketing pieces on prominent properties created and shared on the website, social media, and other outlets such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC.)

IV. Build Community Brand

The Village of Union City has a great municipal logo, but not a defined brand or unifying message about what Union City is about and what it has to offer. As county level entities look to establish a brand, Union City would be wise to join this effort to help create a formal brand.

VI. Community Marketing Strategy- Village of Union City

A few possible suggestions based on observations, impressions, and interactions within the community as a potential brand would be:

Union City: The state of the Union is strong.

Union City: The best of small-town America

Union City: Farm Fresh. Down Home.

Whatever brand is ultimately chosen, it should be applied as consistently as possible and used to reinforce key messages of the community below:

Union City	Tourist	Resident	Business
Core Messages	Outdoor recreation; arts and culture; historic architecture	Small Town America; Everyone Knows Each Other; Close to Battle Creek/Kalamazoo but far enough away to "get away"; Farm to table community	Cooperative and helpful local government; Farm Community
Target Markets	Agri-tourists, Young Families	Families; Retirees; Kalamazoo/Battle Creek	Downtown Retail; Agribusiness
Partnerships	Coldwater CVB; Travel Michigan; WMTA	BCBOR	BCEGA; SWMF; MEDC

V. Enhance Communication Channels

The Village of Union City does a very good job with its own communications efforts. An effective communications strategy considers the various channels and how they can be best utilized for putting the community's message out.

Social Media- The Village has a great Facebook presence. This medium could be used to post other Union City businesses, school, or non-profits posts as well, helping to spread good news and build community pride. In an effort to communicate to younger citizens and potential customers (Millennials and Gen Z,) the City should also consider adding SnapChat and Instagram accounts to help promote the city.

Web- The Village's website is very good and meets much of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Best Practices. It makes good links to other community resources but should also list available properties in the village, with emphasis on the properties listed in the Key Redevelopment Sites section of this strategy.

Public Relations- The village does a good job of posting on its social media and website but could also be proactively distributing press releases to both local print and radio media as well as regional media on more important items.

Advertising- This is the most expensive form of communication and should be limited to those activities or events that have the potential to generate significant revenue for the community. The CCCVB currently does advertising on behalf of the county for tourism-related efforts.

The overarching goal of the marketing strategy for the Village of Union City needs to be celebrate the success of the community, whether it's the village government itself or those businesses or organizations located within it. It also exists to highlight the potential opportunities that exist here.