Economic Development Strategic Plan
CITY OF EAST LANSING

City of East Lansing
Department of Planning, Building, & Development
Division of Community & Economic Development
5 Focus Areas of Economic Development Strategic Plan

1. Inclusive Economic Development Concepts
2. Placemaking
3. Vibrant/Unique City and Downtown District
4. Expand/Diversity Tax Base
5. Branding & Marketing
Contents

PURPOSE ................................................................................................................................................. 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ................................................................. 1
REGIONAL CONTEXT/THEMES ............................................................. 2
THE PLACE .................................................................................................................. 3
  Downtown ......................................................................................................................... 3
  Neighborhoods ................................................................................................................ 3
  Michigan State University ......................................................................................... 4
THE PEOPLE .................................................................................................................. 5
  Population ....................................................................................................................... 5
  Age ...................................................................................................................................... 5
  Race and Hispanic Origin .............................................................................................. 6
  Median Income ................................................................................................................ 6
  Housing ............................................................................................................................ 6
  East Lansing Housing Study ........................................................................................ 7
  East Lansing Housing Study – Top Takeaways............................................................ 8
  Near Term Housing Action Plan ................................................................................ 9
ECONOMIC INDICATORS .................................................................................. 11
  Lansing Region Top Employers ................................................................. 11
  East Lansing Highest Education Levels ...................................................................... 11
  East Lansing Residents’ Industry of Employment .................................................. 12
RECENT INVESTMENTS/TRANSFORMATION OF DOWNTOWN ................. 15
  Center City ..................................................................................................................... 15
  Park District ................................................................................................................ 15
  The Hub @ East Lansing .............................................................................................. 16
  MSUFU Building .......................................................................................................... 16
  Techsmith ...................................................................................................................... 16
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT ............................................. 17
ECONOMIC INCENTIVE PROGRAMS .......................................................... 18
  Tax Increment Financing (TIF) ..................................................................................... 18
PURPOSE

This Economic Development Strategic Plan (Plan) describes the vision, focus areas, and goals of the City of East Lansing with respect to economic development. The Plan was prepared and guided by the City Council’s Strategic Priorities to help ensure economic development strategies align with Council priorities and the City’s Master Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City is committed to working closely with business and property owners, Michigan State University, budding entrepreneurs, community members, and local and regional partners to improve the economic future of East Lansing while preserving the community character, charm, and accessibility that continues to make our City an attractive place to live, work, study, and recreate.

East Lansing’s proximity to Michigan State University, creative culture, progressive heritage, and vibrant downtown provides a strong foundation for sustainable economic development. The City is engaged with Michigan Economic Development Corporation Redevelopment Ready Communities initiative and is in the final stages of the approval process to become certified. This effort has provided an opportunity for the City to develop this Plan, which provides additional background, context, and analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to consider future development and growth.

Traditional economic development activities such as business attraction, retention, and expansion are important for East Lansing. Given its limited resources, the City prioritizes its efforts to make its local role most effective, while employing the tools and wherewithal of our state and regional partners as much as possible. The focus areas and related goals established in this Plan, when taken in the context of our regional partnerships, are largely centered on strengthening the quality of place and local business relations, and support services. Through this local
focus, we strive to foster an environment that is conducive to business investment and success because it is a place that people want to live, work, study and recreate. Ultimately the quality of our place, services, and amenities are the best tools we have to attract talented people and drive new job creation, and thus, to diversify and expand the tax revenues.

**REGIONAL CONTEXT/THEMES**

The City of East Lansing is part of the Greater Lansing Region, which is generally defined as the tri-county region of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties. Recently, the region has been expanded to include Shiawassee County by the Census Bureau. East Lansing believes its economic future rises and falls with that of our regional partners. Consequently, the City’s economic development strategy seeks to have an appropriate alignment with strategies developed by our regional partners. This plan includes a summary of the City’s Master Plan, Council Strategic Priorities, and the Strategic Plans for the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and the Arts Council of Greater Lansing as Appendix 1. Notable themes derived from these documents helped to shape the vision, mission, goals, and objectives in this Strategic Plan. They include:

1. Quality of place
2. Economic Resilience and Job creation
3. The Attraction, Retention, Employment, and Engagement of Talented People
THE PLACE

East Lansing is centrally located in mid-Michigan, Ingham County, occupying roughly 13.5 square miles of land area. It is known for its strong neighborhoods, walkability, vibrancy, and diversity. The City of East Lansing is the proud home of Michigan State University (MSU), one of the top applied research universities in the world. Residents enjoy access to East Lansing’s 25 public parks, MSU, downtown, and regional amenities.

Downtown

Tree-lined streets and patio dining add to the attractiveness of the downtown, home of an eclectic mix of local and national chain shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, art galleries and more. It is experiencing significant growth, as demonstrated through recent development projects such as the Graduate Hotel, The Landmark, Newman Lofts, The Abbot, and currently under construction: a new MSUFCU headquarters. These projects have increased the diversity and density of downtown housing, increased food and retail options, including a new Target store, Jolly Pumpkin and Barrio Tacos, and improved utility infrastructure and enhancements to the built environment.

In addition, recent placemaking efforts supported by the Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Management Board have significantly enhanced the vibrancy, diversity, and branding of downtown East Lansing. Combined, these efforts have enhanced the pedestrian, shopper, and diner experience – adding to the sense of place and desirability of living, working, and playing in downtown East Lansing.

Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods of East Lansing contain almost any style of single-family housing one can imagine. There are quiet tree-lined streets with pristine historic homes; or for residents seeking a more urban lifestyle, quality apartments within walking distance of campus, events and restaurants. As a university town, the neighborhoods are a hub for educated professionals, retirees, and students enjoying a culture of diversity and forward-thinking. [East Lansing Neighborhoods Map]
Michigan State University
MSU is one of the top research universities in the world- on one of the largest, greenest campuses in the nation. As a Land Grant University known for a vast number of applied sciences, MSU is home to nationally ranked and recognized academic, residential college, and service-learning programs. It is a diverse community of dedicated students and scholars, athletes, artists, scientists, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

MSU is also one of the largest universities in the nation by enrollment (over 50,000 students) and is the largest employer in East Lansing with more than 12,500 faculty and staff. The University has built strong alumni support and engagement, with 563,000 alumni worldwide. Furthermore, Michigan State is ranked in the top 20 in the nation for international student enrollment and brings the world to East Lansing through more than 325 international institutional partnership agreements in 80 countries and over 125 different nationalities represented in the student population.

Construction is completed for the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) at MSU—a $730 million national user facility for nuclear science funded by the Department of Energy Office of Science, MSU, and the State of Michigan. FRIB will advance understanding of rare isotopes and provide research opportunities for scientists and students from around the globe. The facility is expected to become operational in 2022, but MSU already enjoys the honor as first in the nation for nuclear physics.

A repurposed department store on Grand River Avenue contains the Technology and Innovation Center (TIC). The TIC is a partnership now 10 years strong between MSU, the City of East Lansing, and the East Lansing Downtown Development Authority. It has become the region’s strongest hub for entrepreneurial support and funding, university technology transfer, and start-up incubation, consistently ranking in the top three Michigan SmartZones in funding through the State Business Accelerator Fund. In the last four years alone over 60 companies, 54 of which are high tech, have been created through over $11,000,000 in outside funding. Companies located at the TIC are now regularly looking for space to grow in downtown East Lansing!

In the recent past, MSU has strengthened its focus on the new economy, and has enhanced its efforts to commercialize technologies created through the applied sciences. This is evident in the co-location all of their entrepreneurial and investment components with the TIC including their technology transfer office (Spartan Innovations), intellectual property (MSU Technologies), business support (MSU Business Connect), a venture capital arm (Red Cedar Ventures), and the MSU Foundation.

East Lansing Maps
[East Lansing Interactive GIS Map]

[Other useful City Maps]
THE PEOPLE

Population
East Lansing’s population grew rapidly between 1950 and 1980 reaching its peak at 51,392 persons. While the 1990 census had its population at 50,996, a decade later the population had dropped below 50,000, partially reflecting the increase in student housing available outside of the city’s border and a decrease in available family housing within East Lansing.

The most recent data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Decennial Census, shows a population decrease of approximately 2% or to 47,741 persons. It should be noted that City Staff is concerned that significant errors have resulted in undercounts in university towns such as East Lansing. Staff is working through a special process created to address these issues at the Census Bureau and is hopeful that the census for the City will be updated to reflect the accurate numbers for East Lansing.

Age
Using 2010 census numbers, 62% of the overall population is college-aged (18-24). The next largest population group is the 25- to 39-year-old population, typically associated with the “young families”, which comprises 13% of the population. While this group is the second largest population group, it decreased in size by 26% between 1990 and 2000 and another 3% between 2000 and 2010. The remaining age groups range from 2% to 6% of the overall population.

Family households declined by 5.8% during that period, an indicator that the college age population group increased while other population groups decreased. Recent census figures indicate that population cohorts in age groups under 18 continue to decline. While some of this is due to declining birth rates nationally, it is also partially due to the decline in the 40- to 54-year-old age cohort. Persons in population groups born between 1946 and 1964 (Baby Boomers) have increased and are expected to continue to grow. With strong programming in services and social opportunities for persons 55 and over, the city provides a great setting for retirees. After 2010, the City’s housing stock expanded through development in areas brought into the City with strong sales in the 30-45 year old age cohort and increasing elementary school age residents.
Race and Hispanic Origin
East Lansing prides itself on being a diverse community. Michigan State University brings students from more than 125 countries to the area, which makes East Lansing home to 7,264 international students and their families, according to 2016 fall enrollment data. The 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data shows East Lansing approximates the racial and ethnic profile of the region with 76.4 percent of the population considered “White,” 10.8 percent Asian, 7.2 percent African American and 4.8 percent some other race (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race Group</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone, percent</td>
<td>76.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American alone, percent</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone, percent</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races, percent</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino, percent</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent</td>
<td>73.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Data

Median Income
East Lansing is an affluent community, with a family median income of $106,951. The median individual income drops to $40,800, reflecting the influence of a large student population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Type</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median income (dollars)</td>
<td>$40,800</td>
<td>$106,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean income (dollars)</td>
<td>$78,039</td>
<td>$141,854</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2019 American Community Survey Income in the Past 12 months (In 2020 inflation dollars)

Housing
Partially in reaction to the lack of available family housing and because of limited opportunities to expand its tax base, the City, in the late 1990’s began a concerted effort to expand its borders through annexation and other economic development agreements. By 2010, the City doubled in size but while the 2010 Census showed a 2,054 person increase in total population, the number of households increased only slightly between 2000 and 2010, probably because of the “Great Recession”.

Between 1990 and 2000, non-family households increased by 1,809. In 1997 the City Council passed Ordinance 900 Which limited a single-family residential dwelling in the RA, R-1, and R-2 districts to a family or two unrelated persons, and a dwelling in the R-3 District to a family and one unrelated or three unrelated persons. Prior to this ordinance a dwelling could house four unrelated persons (depending on its size) and was much more valuable for a student rental than for a single-family home.

The loss of family households continued through the next decade, but at a significantly lower rate. In addition to Ordinance 900, the Council established several additional policies in the late 1990s and early 2000s to reduce the loss of owner-occupied, single-family housing to rental housing. Meanwhile, during
this period non-family households continued to grow partly through additional conversions of single-family housing and partially through new student housing developments.

Given that the city’s vacancy rate in both 2000 and 2010 was 1.2% and 2.8% respectively, it can also be assumed that the decline in family households could be in part due to the lack of available housing options for purchase (U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010).

**East Lansing Housing Study**

The City engaged with a team comprised of LandUse USA I Urban Strategies and CIB Planning to develop a comprehensive housing study. The study provided information about the City of East Lansing’s current housing market, especially the impacts of recent developments on housing demand in the area and answered some fundamental questions regarding projected trends to help understand the current conditions and assist in the future planning of the City in line with policy goals.

The study resulted in the following Near Term Housing Action Plan. The Near Term Housing Action Plan will be implemented by several different divisions within the Department of Planning, Building, & Development, including Housing & University Relations, Planning & Zoning, and Community & Economic Development staff.

Please see the next page of this Plan for the Top Takeaways from the Study and page 9 for the Near Term Housing Action Place for more information derived from the Study.

The Housing Study, Residential Target Market Analysis - Market Study Report, related Appendixes, and other housing study documents can be viewed and downloaded here: [https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/2163/28017/East-Lansing-Housing-Study](https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/2163/28017/East-Lansing-Housing-Study)
East Lansing Housing Study – Top Takeaways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL Housing Study - Top Takeaways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>There are ample housing options for students:</strong> the pace of development among new student housing has been outpacing growth in student enrollment.¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>There is a direct correlation between income and ethnicity, race, and lifestyle preferences.</strong> Increasing diversity and addressing equitable access to the City is possible by making more attainably priced housing available for low to moderate income households.²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>East Lansing’s attainability problem is significant:</strong> of the new households wanting to move here, the majority of them — both renters and homebuyers — want prices either at or below market rate.³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>East Lansing is losing market share to neighboring municipalities,</strong> which may be due in part to the availability of housing types desired by outside homebuyers/renters.⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>EL’s movership rates</strong> across all incomes, housing tenures, and age brackets are **significantly higher than Ingham County as a whole.**⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Virtually all new homebuyers are seeking detached single-family homes,</strong> though demand also exists for townhomes and other attached housing types *if provided with the right amenities.*⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>The majority of new renters are inclined to choose attached units,</strong> rather than detached houses.⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. **East Lansing’s upper income population is comprised predominantly of families and retirees.**⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>East Lansing’s moderate-to-lower income population is</strong> (apart from students) *primarily comprised of singles of all ages.*⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. There is a moderate mismatch of available housing types (detached vs. attached) and those which potential residents want to buy or rent — **EL is about 5% underbuilt on attached units compared to current demand trends.**¹⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. **There is significant market potential for attracting singles and young professionals across all income brackets.**¹¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. **New units should be marketed to a diverse range of lifestyle clusters.**¹²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. <strong>There is a general pattern of price per square foot going down as unit size goes up.</strong> This is true for both for-sale and for-rent units.¹³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Market Study Draft, Section K, p. 29; Section B, PDF pp. 47 - 51, 55 – 59.  
² Market Study Draft, Section A, p. 4; p. 32; Appendix One, p. 7.  
⁴ Market Study Draft, Section C; Appendix One, p. 5; Appendix Three, p. 3.  
⁵ Market Study Draft, Section E, Charts 1 and 2.  
⁶ Market Study Draft, p. 12.  
⁷ Market Study Draft, p. 15.  
⁸ Appendix One, Section A1, Chart 1.  
⁹ Appendix One, Section A1, Chart 2.  
¹⁰ Market Study Draft, p. 4.  
¹¹ Market Study Draft, Section C; Ibid., Section B.  
¹² Market Study Draft, p. 32.  
¹³ Appendix Three, pp. 3 – 5.
### Near Term Housing Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Strategy/Project</th>
<th>Responsible Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Add elements to the zoning code to allow a step-down of density primarily north of downtown, as envisioned in the Master Plan.</td>
<td>a. Revisit Master Plan, Future Land Use Map (FLUM), to determine feasibility of overlay implementation.</td>
<td>Community &amp; Economic Development (CED), Planning &amp; Zoning (PZ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Intentionally address equity issues in housing, including a review of existing and potential City housing programs that serve low-to-moderate income families. | a. Identify gaps in borrowing/lending by talking to realtors, developers, and other stakeholders.  
   b. Determine existing program needs for the Homeowner Assistance Program (HOAP), the Homeowner Rehab Program, and the Employee Down Payment Assistance Program (EHOP).  
   c. Brainstorm additional services, funding sources, and potential partners for additional homebuyer programs. | CED, Housing & University Relations (HUR), PZ |
| 3. Address housing and accessibility challenges facing East Lansing’s seniors and residents with disabilities. | a. Develop one-pager explaining Universal Design code.  
   b. Develop programs, seek out partners, and funding sources for home modifications to empower aging-in-place for homeowners. | PZ, CED, HUR |
| 4. Review of Northern Tier areas of Future Land Use Map to determine if further study of any area is needed from a housing perspective. | a. Revisit Commercial Future Land Use categories, particularly C2 & C3 to determine feasibility of residential and/or mixed-use development in those areas. | PZ, CED |
| 5. Review of single and multiple family zoning districts to consider any changes necessary to make them more effective in allowing desired housing types. | a. Review Planned Unit Development (PUD) District zoning regulations to determine if changes are needed.  
   b. Review minimum area and other requirements for Clustered Development Plan and Neo-Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan ordinances to determine if changes are needed. | PZ, HUR |
| 6. Consider policies promoting diversified housing types for new development. | a. Revisit current inclusionary housing requirements to determine effectiveness.  
   b. Review of code and policy issues related to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) & other opportunities. | CED, PZ, HUR |
7. Identify opportunities to create more attainable housing opportunities for new professionals and seniors through various programs and partnerships.

a. Engage with Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to determine potential for low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) funding for mixed-income and senior projects.

b. Engage with for- and non-profit affordable housing developers to gauge interest in working in EL.

c. Connect with community development financial institutions regarding securing financing for attainable housing.
## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

### Lansing Region Top Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Company</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE OF MICHIGAN</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>13,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPARROW HEALTH SYSTEM</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL MOTORS</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>4,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLAREN HEALTH</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTO-OWNERS INSURANCE GROUP</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>2,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACKSON NATIONAL LIFE INS CO</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>2,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PECKHAM INC</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANSING SCHOOL DISTRICT</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DART CONTAINER CORP</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Lansing Area Economic Partnership

### East Lansing Highest Education Levels

Residents' Highest Level of Education

*Source: US Census American Community Survey 2019, Published in 2020*
## East Lansing Residents' Industry of Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residents' Industry of Employment</th>
<th>City of East Lansing</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>5,234</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>1,113</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of companies and enterprises</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and technical services</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and support, waste management</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: US Census American Community Survey 2019, Published in 2020*
CULTURAL AMENITIES

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, adjacent to downtown on the University Campus, is a premier venue for international contemporary art, featuring major exhibitions and serving as a hub for the cultural life of the MSU and broader community. The building itself is a cultural gem anchoring the downtown. It was designed by Zaha Hadid, a world-renowned Pritzker Prize-winning architect.

The Wharton Center, located nearby on the MSU campus, is Michigan’s largest performing arts venue with four unique stages (The Cobb Great Hall, Pasant Theatre, MSU Concert Auditorium and Fairchild Theatre). The center is the leading venue among Big 10 institutions and has the largest programming schedule of any independent performing arts center affiliated with a university in the country. Wharton Center brings the best Broadway shows, the finest classical musicians, unrivaled dance companies and an A-list of high profile performers to mid-Michigan.

Greater Lansing and East Lansing in particular is a welcoming destination for the creative practitioners, cultural organizations, and talented people of all walks of life. A regional collaborative effort recently updated the Cultural and Economic Development Plan for the Region, which is available here.

The Capital region has approximately 4.8 million visitors per year, which results in more than $1.1 billion in economic impact and over 11,000 jobs. The region boasts diverse tourism amenities with theaters, museums, zoos, convention centers, and other attractions. A large percentage of visitors to the region come here to visit cultural or sporting events, especially on the MSU campus- at Wharton Center, Breslin Center, and Spartan Stadium. East Lansing welcomes thousands of MSU alumni and fans on football
Saturdays, Spartan Basketball game days, and other sporting events. The downtown is primarily served by the Marriott Hotel and Kellogg Convention and Hotel Center. A new hotel, The Graduate East Lansing, is in development and expected to be operational in 2020.
RECENT INVESTMENTS/TRANSFORMATION OF DOWNTOWN

Within the last three years, three major projects have been approved in downtown East Lansing and are currently under construction or completed. Collectively, they will add over 1,000 residential apartments, a 194-key full-service hotel and over 70,000 square feet of new retail to the downtown core through the investment of several hundred million dollars.

**Center City**
The Center City District is a mixed-use redevelopment project that includes significant placemaking improvements to Albert Avenue and Grand River Avenue, both senior housing (91 rental units) and mixed market housing (273 rental units), street level retail and the addition of an “urban” or flexible-format Target store. The project site is located along the 100 and 200 blocks of Grand River Avenue and the City’s Albert Avenue Parking Lot, 200 Albert Ave. The total project site is just over 2 acres. More information, including project plans are available here.

**Park District**
This project replaced a set of functionally obsolete and blighted buildings at the major gateway corner of Grand River Ave and Abbot Roads. The Park District project broke ground in January 2019. Phase I of development included the construction of a mixed-use tower with 11 levels of apartments, 2 levels of parking, and ground floor retail. In addition, a 194-room standalone hotel, titled the Graduate was completed in the summer of 2021. More information, including project plans, is available here.
The Hub @ East Lansing

This redevelopment project includes a 10-story mixed use building, including 347 market rate apartments and 12,220 square feet of retail. The project is adjacent to the University at the southeast corner of Grand River Avenue and Bogue Street (918 and 1010 E. Grand River). More information, including project plans, is available here.

MSUFU Building

MSUFCU is currently constructing a 7-story building on the northwest corner of Abbot Road and Albert Avenue in downtown. The building will be used as a credit union branch, office space, and 1-level reserved for community space. The project is anticipated to promote job growth and increase office space in downtown. The project is anticipated for completion in Spring 2023.

Techsmith

International software development company, Techsmith, in partnership with MSU and the MSU Foundation, is constructing a new 2-story headquarters on approximately five acres of land at the corner of South Crescent and Harrison Road, 14 Crescent Rd., in East Lansing. The new construction will consist of approximately 62,500 square feet and add 275 fulltime employees.
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The city currently works to create and grow its economic vitality through innovative programs, new economy initiatives and hands-on collaboration with developers and entrepreneurs. Locally, the City works closely with the following local entities comprised of volunteer and City leadership:

**Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**
The DDA is a publicly appointed 11-member board created in 1986 under Public Act 197 of 1975. Their mission is to correct and prevent deterioration, encourage historical preservation and to promote economic growth within the downtown district. The Authority has access to tax increment financing (TIF) as well as a special assessment to assist the development of downtown sites into mixed use projects (retail, housing, entertainment, office, or a combination of uses). The DDA has provided TIF support to several downtown projects over the years including University Place (Marriott and office tower) and City Center. The DDA has also financed and managed numerous downtown infrastructure and public art projects.

**Downtown Management Board (DMB)**
The DMB is a publicly appointed nine-member board. It was created in July 1997 in accordance with Michigan Public Act 146. It serves the downtown through marketing and promotion activities, business attraction and retention efforts, and by helping to maintain the common areas in the district. The DMB collects a modest special assessment which supports their endeavors.

**Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA)**
The BRA is a publicly appointed 11-member board created in 2000 under Michigan Public Act 381 of 1996. Its role is to assist in the redevelopment of contaminated, blighted, or functionally obsolete buildings. The BRA has access to TIF and grants available for redevelopment activities such as environmental studies, clean-up activities, site preparation, and infrastructure improvements. The BRA has spurred over $400M of investment since inception and currently administers 16 active plans.

**Economic Development Corporation (EDC)**
The EDC is a publicly appointed 9-member board which was created under Michigan Public Act 338 of 1974. Its main role is to provide a conduit for tax-exempt bonds to help finance qualifying projects. Recently, it’s been used to provide competitive financing for projects such as the Michigan High School Athletic Association headquarters, the State News headquarters, and the redevelopment/expansion of the Burcham Hills Retirement Community.

**Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA)**
The LDFA is a publicly appointed 7-member board which was created in 2008 pursuant to Public Act 281 of 1986. It provides TIF support to the City’s SmartZone, a technology-focused economic development effort that primarily supports the downtown incubator, the Technology Innovation Center.
ECONOMIC INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

The City of East Lansing has a variety of incentives available for a project that demonstrates need and merit. In addition, the DDA offers economic incentives and resources for local businesses. The incentive programs are summarized below.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**
The use of DDA TIF and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority TIF may be used in compliance with the Council’s TIF Policy and BRA Administrative Procedures found here.

[TIF 101 and Summary of TIF Plans]

**Personal Property Tax abatement**
Under Public Act 328 or 1998, the City can provide as much as 100 percent abatement of personal property taxes for qualifying office or technology businesses. Property eligible for abatement includes equipment, furniture, computer systems and other taxable business assets other than real property. The City policy on PA 328 tax abatements is available here.

**Land**
The land controlled by the City is available to the selected developer to purchase or lease as deemed appropriate based on the project needs. Please note, a sale of City property may necessitate a vote of the citizens per City Charter.

**Opportunity Zones**
A portion of a Federal Opportunity Zone is located within the City. City staff is engaged with a regional collaborative to create an Opportunity Zone Network to provide resources and share best practices in order to help investors take advantage of the nascent program.

**DDA Façade Improvement Program**
The Façade Improvement Program is available for businesses located within the DDA. The program will provide matching funds for improvements to the façades of commercial buildings and up to $1,000 in design assistance. Grants require a cash match on behalf of the applicant for all eligible expenses. Funding is provided on a competitive basis. Available matching funds are made possible through the DDA. View or download program guidelines and application form here.

**State & Federal Incentives**
The City will work with the developer to secure any available State and Federal incentives. In past downtown mixed-use projects, the State of Michigan has provided support via TIF and available tax credits. The MEDC also has a Community Revitalization Program and Michigan Business Development Program specifically geared to incentivize certain types of developments.
### SWOT ANALYSIS

#### STRENGTHS
- Strong neighborhoods
- Educated, engaged citizenry
- Strong public and private schools
- Excellent working relationships with City
- Home of MSU
  - Major Employer
  - Built in demand for amenities, products and services
  - Attractor of bright people from around the world
  - Technology/ inventions
  - Athletic Attractions
- Strong creative and artist population
- Good government
  - Stabilized financial picture
    - Income Tax
    - Funding for Infrastructure, Parks, Public Service
  - Strong public/private institutions in place
    - DDA, BRA, LDFA, EDC, DMB
  - Regional/ State Relationships
    - LEAP, LRCC, MEDC, Legislature, etc
  - TIF Policy/ Plan
  - Housing Policy
- Safe community
- Central location/ transportation connectivity
  - I-69, I-96, M-127
  - Multimodal transit
- Relative Diversity
- Recent large investments/ new developments
- Vibrant downtown district

#### WEAKNESSES
- MSU
  - “Transient” student population
  - Effects on demography
  - Effects on “poverty” rate/ income inequality
  - Geography
  - Tax exemption
  - Can promote interests that compete with city projects
- Housing supply incongruities
  - SFR inventory/ young family challenges
  - Condo inventory/ downsizing challenges
  - Economic disincentives
  - Affordable housing challenges
- Linear downtown
- Fiscal pressures
  - Minimal revenue-generating options
    - Property Taxes/ Prop A
    - State Revenue Sharing
- Regional economic growth
- Negative perceptions of downtown parking/ structured parking

#### OPPORTUNITIES
- Leverage recent developments
  - Positive perception changes
  - New amenities/housing opportunities
- TIC/ Talent emanating from Michigan State University
  - Tech/ R&D/ other office uses that want to be in a vibrant downtown and/or adjacent to MSU
- Community building with students
  - Encourage to embrace EL as their community
  - Connect to win-win educational opportunities
  - Connect to career opportunities
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Regional market/ demand
- Public spaces
- Northern Tier employment-centered development
- Marketing & Events in Downtown
- Developments catering to market for older adults

#### THREATS
- External
  - Global Economic Forces
    - Retail/ internet
    - Property Values
    - Loss of talent
  - Higher Education Dynamics
    - Less on-campus classrooms
    - Less international students
    - More on-campus housing, amenities
  - Housing demand shifts
  - Regional competition
  - Shifting politics in state legislature
- Internal
  - City budget pressures
  - Perception of City processes
  - Stagnation of business districts
  - Student-neighborhood conflicts
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

The focus areas identified in this Plan will help guide the City of East Lansing when evaluating existing programs and developing new ones to help meet the goals associated with each focus area of this Plan.

**Mission**

To provide policies, programs, projects, and actions that enhance the economic, environmental, and social well-being of the community and foster a healthy and vibrant downtown district, a diverse and inclusive business community, and sustainable growth.

**Focus Areas**

**FOCUS AREA 1: INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
**FOCUS AREA 2: PLACEMAKING**
**FOCUS AREA 3: VIBRANT/UNIQUE CITY AND DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**
**FOCUS AREA 4: EXPAND/DIVERSIFY TAX BASE**
**FOCUS AREA 5: BRANDING & MARKETING**

**Plan Alignment**

This Economic Development Strategic Plan is guided by five (5) Focus Areas; each containing a set of goals. The Focus Areas and related goals were developed and guided by City Council Strategic Priorities, which were developed and guided by the City's Master Plan. This helps ensure alignment among the Economic Development Strategic Plan, City Council Strategic Priorities, and the Master Plan.

**Plan Implementation**

Plan implementation will be facilitated by the Department of Planning, Building, & Development, Community & Economic Development Division (CED). To facilitate the implementation of this Plan, CED staff will work with internal and external stakeholders to develop objectives, strategies, and work plans that aim to meet the goals associated with each of the five (5) Focus Area.

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**City Council Strategic Priorities**

- Institute a placed-based economic development strategy focused on high-quality, people centric public spaces and amenities to attract and retain talent and encourage additional employment-centered development and tenancy in areas aligned with the Master Plan.
- Invest in parking system with a focus on operational and maintenance best practices, technological improvements, effective marketing, and data-driven master planning to increase sustainability, longevity, and to maximize the use potential.
- Incorporate inclusive and accessible recreation, cultural and economic development opportunities into existing policies and programming and continue to implement policies that attract more diverse age groups and daytime population to live and work in the Community and removes barriers to engagement and participation.
- Identify research, data collections and outreach strategies (including software and online platforms) to strengthen existing data collection efforts to improve inclusive stakeholder outreach and inform decision making, with a focus on strengthening the relationship with our community members, community partners and businesses to increase effective communication with all stakeholders.

[Click here for a full list of Council’s Strategic Priorities]
Focus Area 1: Inclusive Economic Development Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1.1</th>
<th>Evaluate all economic development programs through an equity lens.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.2</td>
<td>In partnership with PR&amp;A and other partners, support the design and production of inclusive, diverse, and frequent programming, including community and cultural events, to welcome community members of all ages and backgrounds to the Community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.3</td>
<td>Update economic development financial incentives and other economic development programming with a focus on small businesses and marginalized populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.4</td>
<td>Foster an inclusive and diverse local economy that supports entrepreneurship and increases economic opportunities for broad participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.5</td>
<td>Facilitate meaningful opportunities for broad stakeholder input and implement pilot projects to identify representative community needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.6</td>
<td>Implement strategies to improve diversity of representation on related boards and commissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.7</td>
<td>Seek out and incorporate inclusive and accessible economic development practices into existing economic policies, procedures, and projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1.8</td>
<td>Support planning and zoning with updated zoning ordinances and city code to remove barriers towards attainable housing and economic development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus Area 2: Placemaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 2.1</th>
<th>Incorporate placemaking strategies in a Downtown Strategic Plan in coordination with the downtown development authority and downtown management board.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.2</td>
<td>Continue and increase collaborations with local and regional partners to design and implement creative placemaking projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.3</td>
<td>Prioritize a people-focused, high-quality built environment conducive for socializing, participating in the local economy, and enhances the pedestrian experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.4</td>
<td>In partnership with PR&amp;A, DPW and other partners, to support the redevelopment and transformation of underutilized public spaces into interesting and unique public places that offer a wide range of seating options, are conducive to hosting community activities, incorporate all forms of the arts, and provide attractive amenities for an enhanced visitor experience. SEE ALSO GOAL 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.5</td>
<td>Ensure safety and security, maintenance, and sanitization are factored into and addressed in placemaking projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.6</td>
<td>Enhance the supportive environment for innovators and entrepreneurship, especially in relationship to MSU’s strength in applied sciences SEE ALSO Goals 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.7</td>
<td>Work with PD, DPW and other to incorporate downtown mobility solutions focused on delivery services, alley congestion, alternative transportation modes, parking, and an enhanced pedestrian experience. SEE ALSO Goal 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2.8</td>
<td>Market and promote placemaking initiatives that align with the goals in focus area 5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Area 3: Vibrant/Unique City and Downtown District

FOCUS AREA 3: Vibrant/Unique City and Downtown District

| GOAL 3.1 | Increase opportunities for office-based businesses, service providers, retail merchants, and artists to participate in the local economy. |
| GOAL 3.2 | Support the PD goal to create a downtown business neighborhood district with subdistricts that align with the character of the subdistrict neighborhoods. |
| GOAL 3.3 | Provide support to police to address mutual safety concerns, including support to assign officers to the downtown neighborhood district. |
| GOAL 3.4 | Update the DDA’s Strategic Priorities to align with the 5 focus areas. |
| GOAL 3.5 | Develop a Downtown Marketing Plan to align with the 5 focus areas. |
| GOAL 3.6 | Attract more diversity in age groups to live downtown. |
| GOAL 3.7 | Support DPW with downtown maintenance and sanitation services and ensure appropriate funding levels are maintained for the level of growth being experienced downtown. |
| GOAL 3.8 | Continue supporting the Downtown Development Authority’s camera expansion project. |
| GOAL 3.9 | Encourage sustainable development and infrastructure concepts into downtown development and revitalization projects. |

Focus Area 4: Expand/Diversify Tax Base

FOCUS AREA 4: Expand/Diversify Tax Base

| GOAL 4.1 | Align approval criteria for financial assistance programs with the 5 focus areas. |
| GOAL 4.2 | Prioritize and support specific development and redevelopment opportunities, including city-owned priority sites and underutilized, blighted, and/or environmentally contaminated sites. |
| GOAL 4.3 | Balance the redevelopment of the Evergreen Properties with the desired uses of properties while responsibly managing the debt liability. |
| GOAL 4.4 | Work with other departments and divisions to support the streamlining of internal workflows, where possible, and increase transparency for a predictable development review process. |
| GOAL 4.5 | Work with other departments and division to support the streamlining of internal workflows, where possible, and increase transparency for predictable business licensing, permitting, and communications process. |
| GOAL 4.6 | Continue working closely with regional partners on business attraction and retention efforts with a focus on office-based tenancy and uses. SEE ALSO Goal 2 and 3. |
**Focus Area 5: Branding & Marketing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 5.1</th>
<th>Continue data collection initiatives with the business community and residents to inform decision-making on project development and program design.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.2</td>
<td>Continue developing highly visible and innovative branding and marketing campaigns that highlight the downtown business district, including the business community, promotional events, and other downtown-related activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.3</td>
<td>Develop sponsorship opportunities to help offset the cost of implementing downtown programming in partnership with the Parks, Recreation, &amp; Arts Department and other stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.4</td>
<td>Support Communications Department with innovative marketing &amp; advertising campaigns that promote Community assets and inform residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.5</td>
<td>Update the design, use, and functionality of the EL Buzz Website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.6</td>
<td>Continue utilizing online platforms and data collection software to maximize data collection efforts and increase access to participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.7</td>
<td>Focus on small-scale, frequent events to promote the downtown district that align with the 5 focus areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 5.8</td>
<td>Market and promote economic redevelopment and development priority sites and brownfield sites identified in focus area 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIXES
## Appendix I- Matrix of Regional Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tri-County Regional Planning Commission</th>
<th>Arts Council of Greater Lansing 2018 Creative 517: A Cultural Economic Development Plan for the Tri-County Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Draft Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Draft Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To champion support of a unified regional brand to uplift community pride and showcase our assets to the world and ourselves</td>
<td>1. Celebrate, leverage and build upon the strengths and assets of our arts, culture and creative sector to enhance economic vitality and quality of life in the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To celebrate, leverage, and build upon the strengths and assets of our arts, culture, and creative sectors in support of the following: economic vitality, placemaking, and quality of life opportunities throughout the region</td>
<td>2. Foster the environment and conditions that support and encourage artists and creative entrepreneurs for more successful businesses and expanded economic activity across the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To design a sustainable financial network to leverage resources in support of arts, culture, and placemaking</td>
<td>3. Support and enhance the work of municipalities and area agencies by integrating artists and creative entrepreneurs into municipal and government departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To strengthen regional efforts to foster communities that are friendly, diverse, welcoming, and inclusive to all</td>
<td>4. Identify and leverage resources for building the creative and cultural community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To support sustainable access and development of our natural resources, green spaces, and riverfront</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To support the work of municipalities, businesses, and area agencies through the integration of artists and creative entrepreneurs into municipal and governmental departments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To strengthen and foster the growth of creative and cultural hubs throughout the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To strengthen the public transit service network to increase efficient, cross-boundary transit options for all people in the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To secure necessary funding to positively transform the degraded condition of our roads throughout the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To support development choices that increase density and promote vibrancy to urban city centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To advance the diversity of housing options/ availability/ affordability throughout the region by addressing current housing needs from all stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. To increase collaboration surrounding infrastructure needs, plans, funding, and implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. To further the expansion of our region’s Knowledge Economy; by building an inviting environment for STEAM-related business and talent, resulting in a measurable increase in the production of intellectual capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. To support the growth of our region’s identified industry clusters by creating market-specific talent solutions and aligning post-secondary opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. To provide sustainable wealth-creation opportunities for our region’s ALICE population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. To foster the growth of the New Economy efforts; to develop a sustainable financial support network for entrepreneurs, start-up companies, and youth entrepreneurship programming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix II - Matrix of Local Priorities

#### City of East Lansing Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Plan/ Bigger Picture Goals</th>
<th>City Council Strategic Priorities</th>
<th>DDA Strategic Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To Capitalize on and strengthen existing citizen assets</td>
<td>1. Strong Neighborhoods</td>
<td>1. Improve and maintain the physical environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To have a diversified, growing tax base and a vital economy</td>
<td>2. Vibrant Economy</td>
<td>2. Increase investment and business opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To have strong neighborhoods that are diverse, attractive and safe</td>
<td>3. Enhanced Public Assets</td>
<td>3. Expand business development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To have quality community assets.</td>
<td>4. Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>4. Strengthen the DDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To have a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.</td>
<td>5. Sustainable High Performing Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To have land use patterns consistent with smart growth principles such as higher density providing better community self-sufficiency and quality of life mixed uses and walkable neighborhoods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THEMES

Quality of Place

TCRPC – 4 – Foster welcoming communities
ACGL – Identify/ leverage resources or the creative/ cultural community
EL BP – 3 – Strong, safe neighborhoods
CCSP -1 – Strong Neighborhoods
TCRPC – 5 – Sustainable access and development of natural resources
CCSP- 4 – Environmental Sustainability
TCRPC – 7 – Growth of creative/ cultural hubs
TCRPC -8 – Strengthen public transit system
EL BP – 5 – Multimodal transit system
TCRPC – 9 – Transform degraded roads
TCRPC – 12 – Increase collaboration surrounding infrastructure improvements
DDA -1 – Improve the physical environment
TCRPC - 10 – Support development that brings vibrancy to city centers
TCRPC – 11 – Advance diversity of housing options
EL BP – 4 – Quality community assets
CCSP – 3 – Enhanced public assets
EL BP – 6 – Embrace smart growth principles

Economic Resilience/ Job Creation

TCRPC – 2 – Leverage creative sectors to support economic vitality
CCSP – 2 – Vibrant Economy
EL BP – 2 – Diversified tax base/ vibrant economy
DDA – 2 – Increase investment/ business opportunities
DDA – 3 – Expand business development
EL BP – 4 – Quality community assets
DDA – 4 – Strengthen the DDA
TCRPC – 4 – Sustainable funding network for arts
TCRPC – 14 – support growth of region’s identified industry clusters
TCRPC – 15 – Opportunities for our region’s ALICE population
TCRPC – 16 – Foster growth of the New Economy

Attraction & Retention of Talented People
TCRPC – 1- Champion a brand to showcase our assets
CCSP – 1- Strong Neighborhoods
EL BP – 3 – Strong neighborhoods that are diverse, attractive and safe
CCSP -3 – Enhanced public assets
CCSP – 5 – Sustainable high performing government
TCRPC – 2- leverage creative sectors in support of quality of life opportunities
TCRPC – 3 – Foster communities that are welcoming & inclusive
TCRPC – 5 – Support access and development of green spaces
TCRPC – 7 – Foster growth of creative and cultural hubs
TCRPC – 8 – Strengthen public transit service
EL BP – 5 – Safe & efficient multimodal transportation system
TCRPC – 10 – Increase density and promote vibrancy to city centers
DDA – 1 – Improve and maintain the physical environment
TCRPC – 11 – Advance diversity of housing options/ availability/ affordability
TCRPC – 13 – Building an environment for STEAM-related businesses and talent
TCRPC – 14 – Create market-specific solutions and align post-secondary opportunities