

VILLAGE OF MARCELLUS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Development Plan Projects and Activities Roster

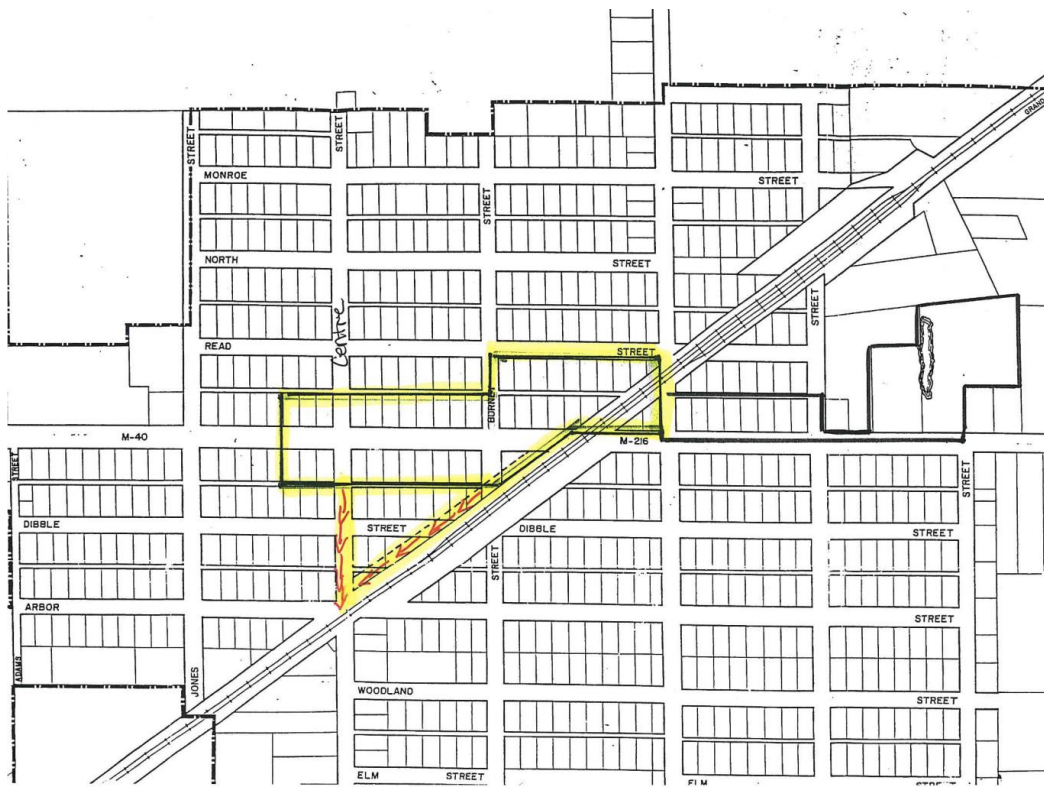
This Development Plan Projects & Activities roster is prepared pursuant to requirements of Section 17 of the Downtown Development Act consisting of responses to specific information requested in subsections 2(a) through 2(p).

The principal project of this process is a list of specific projects and activities, including estimates of their cost and an implementation schedule prepared by the DDA and approved by the Village Council, after public hearing. The DDA is limited to undertaking only projects and activities cited on this roster.

Focus on Downtown:

Downtown Marcellus is the heart of the community, hosting its commercial district and serving as its hub for community events. Suffering from larger economic trends in spending, such as online shopping and big box stores, downtown Marcellus's historic commercial district, once comprised of family-owned businesses, is faced with vacancies and a lack of commercially-diverse infrastructure.

Rather than viewing these vacancies as insurmountable challenges, the Downtown Development Authority is actively using this opportunity to rethink downtown Marcellus in a way that is economically and socially sustainable. This includes considering diverse housing options, establishing a downtown identity, and advocating for the mindful implementation of new businesses and employment opportunities.



Preserving the Past:

With the majority of Marcellus's buildings constructed between 1876 and 1915, downtown Marcellus has the advantage of the small town American aesthetic, punctuated with multiple two-story historic structures. Historically, they have served as theaters, performance halls, hardware stores, and markets. While a number of these buildings need extensive facade and restoration work, the downtown has a unique piece of history upon which to build.

Leveraging existing community partnerships alongside state-led initiatives, historic downtown Marcellus can serve as a platform for broader tourism, economic growth, and diverse opportunities. To amplify the existing infrastructure, downtown revitalization initiatives may include a history walking tour, events targeted at historic societies and preservationist groups, and community-led oral history projects.

Preparing for the Future:

Talent retention, named one of the region's largest challenges in the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, is also a problem for Marcellus. In consideration of this, the Downtown Development Authority is actively establishing relationships with the Marcellus Public School. Collaborating with students and educators, the vision is to engage with young residents and present opportunities of ownership in the revitalization of Downtown Marcellus.

Introducing the "Future is Bright" campaign, the Downtown Development Authority seeks to connect the town's rich history with its young residents as a means to generate sustainable interest, engagement, and opportunity.

Opportunities:

- 2nd story residential
- Opportunities for growth and diversification of businesses
- Heavy vehicle traffic with the intersection of two state highways: M-40 and M-216
- Potential for partnerships

Challenges:

- Vacant and underutilized buildings
- Perception of the downtown corridor/deteriorating facades
- Funding for Main Street Projects including Diverse Housing Initiatives

Opportunities:

2nd story residential

One way to increase demand for local businesses and services is to increase the population density of Downtown Marcellus. Encouraging foot traffic and physically bringing more people into the downtown district not only encourages economic growth but presents opportunities for increased talent retention and employment opportunities. There are currently seven historic downtown buildings that have the potential for conversion to upstairs rental units. While we have an inventory of potential second story units, we recommend that the Downtown Development Authority works with business and property owners to convert or rehab these units as an economic development strategy for revitalizing Downtown Marcellus.

Growth and diversification of businesses

Easily a full-time job, Marcellus faces the challenge of limited staffing. In anticipation of growth, however, the Downtown Development Authority is actively seeking grant opportunities and diverse funding sources that can work to support a liaison between the Downtown Development Authority and potential businesses/developers. Already establishing relationships with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and local economic development organization Market Van Buren, the Marcellus Downtown Development Authority is proactively considering avenues of collaboration and support.

Heavy vehicle traffic

Downtown Marcellus is intersected by two state highways, M-40 and M-216. The large traffic footprint presents a number of opportunities to potential businesses. Although the challenge is to attract enough attention for people to stop, the consistent road traffic affords easily accessible opportunities for customers, suppliers, and potential business partners.

Potential for partnerships

Downtown Marcellus, located in the northeast corner of Cass County, has existing relationships with Market Van Buren and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. There are a number of potential partnerships that are currently being investigated including the State Historic Preservation Office, the Main Street Michigan Program, and other local historic preservation organizations and societies. Also, the Downtown Development Authority is actively working to build internal community relationships. Understanding that the collaboration with other Marcellus-based organizations and community-members will serve as a strong foundation for sustainable growth, the Downtown Development Authority is exploring community-driven events, outreach, and collaborative opportunities.

Challenges:

Vacant and underutilized buildings/Deteriorating Facades

Understanding that the deterioration and lack of commercial infrastructure presents challenges, the Marcellus Downtown Development Authority will continue to explore opportunities to support existing and potential property owners in redevelopment and renovations. Reconfiguring the Downtown Development Authority budget, funded through the rental of two industrial units within the Village of Marcellus, the Downtown Development Authority is committed to establishing funds that will be made available to building owners looking to make improvements. While the exact form, grants or a revolving

loan, is currently being researched, the implementation of available funding is intended to encourage renovations that will secure the physical and commercial integrity of the downtown corridor.

Perception of Downtown Corridor

Plagued by years of deterioration, there is public discontent surrounding the physical appearance and lack of beautification initiatives within downtown Marcellus, despite recent community-led beautification projects. With an upcoming water infrastructure project, the Village of Marcellus anticipates rebuilding the downtown corridor to be more considerate of public comment and perception. When faced with budgetary restrictions in consideration of large-scale projects, beautification projects can often take less priority, however, with the recent formation of the Marcellus Improvement Initiative (501c3) and a community-led beautification community, the Downtown Development Authority looks to support our residents in their beautification projects through volunteer-time and financial assistance, when possible.

Funding for Main Street Projects including Diverse Housing Initiatives

Recognizing that the primary barrier to Main Street projects and the implementation of diverse housing initiatives is funding, the Downtown Development Authority is committed to supporting present and future building owners in navigating state and local funding opportunities. This includes allocating budget funding to a staff member dedicated to downtown revitalization and creating a gap funding option to encourage building owners to pursue reinvigorating existing businesses, relocate to the downtown corridor, and/or renovate second story units into liveable housing options.

Priority Properties

The Centennial Building

111 W. Main Street

Zone: 201 Commercial Improved

Square Footage: 6204

Utilities: Municipal Sewer/Water

Owner: Frederick Learman Trust



Tailgater

136-140 E. Main Street

Zone: 201 Commercial Improved

Square footage: 6600

Utilities: Municipal Sewer & Water

Owner: Bobby Bidawid



Implementation Strategy

Five Year Plan

Year One:

Expand DDA boundaries

Develop TIF Program

Become “Engaged” Main Street Michigan Community

- Develop a five-year communication plan

- Develop a five-year development plan

- 80% of DDA members must attend MSM online training

Develop marketing strategy

Create network of volunteer support

Implement one community-driven program (ie community garden/dog park/hammock lending and lounge in partnership with the library)

Seek funding for building renovations (MEDC projects)

Develop strategies to assist existing businesses and building owners

Allocate funds for Match on Main (or other Main Street initiative) programs (minimum \$5,000)

Rural Development (RBEG):

- Estimated Cost \$12,000

- This project addresses the application for and implementation of a business revolving fund

- loan program through the USDA Rural

- Development Program. The program would

- request \$50k with a \$10k match to fund a direct

- loan to 1 or 2 businesses.

Year Two:

Become “Select” Level Main Street Michigan Community

- Utilize tech and funding assistance*

- To note: so become “Select” level, there must be one full-time employee dedicated to the program/downtown activation projects *must consider the expense vs benefits***

Continue to actively seek and secure building renovation funding

Begin to search for new businesses to relocate to Marcellus

- Develop incentives for relocation/development

Allocate funds for Match on Main (or other Main Street initiative) programs minimum \$2,500

DDA investment per project (up to two annually)

Explore charging station opportunities

Year Three:

Charging station implementation (estimated costs per futureenergy.com)

\$12-15,000 for infrastructure upgrades

\$5500 mid-level public charging station

\$4-600 parking blocks

Street Streetscaping Amenities:

Estimated Cost \$540,000

This project addresses the installation of sidewalks, roadway, curb, and gutters, ADA accessibility, litter/recycle bins, decorative accent features, additional street furniture, landscaping, and decorative lighting within the Central Business District, details of which are more completely defined in the Master Plan and Parks, Recreation and Greenways plan.

Year Four:**Village Commons Project:**

Estimated Cost \$90,000

This project addresses DDA participation in the construction of a community gathering plan in the Central Business District details of which are more completely defined in the Master Plan and Parks, Recreation and Greenways

Year Five:**Signature Building Purchase:**

Estimated Cost \$200,000

This project contemplated the purchase either buy the DDA or Village Council for DDA rehabilitation and management or possible demolition (if found non habitable) of a downtown property through use of funding through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation signature building program.

Downtown Development Authority

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New Business Recruitment

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

This program recognizes the need for recruitment of new businesses at an annualized expense of \$5,000

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Administrative/Management

Estimated Cost

Estimated Cost: \$55,000/annually

This project recognizes the current and future administration of the DDA by Village support staffing and/or an employed director in accordance with the Main Street Michigan program requirements.

Competitive Business Support Grants

Estimated Cost \$200,000

This project recognizes the need for DDA support to recruit new businesses and provide gap funding to renovate existing downtown buildings compliant with MEDC grant guidelines.