

# Charter Township of Union West DDA District Implementation Strategy

2021



## Charter Township of Union

Adopted October 27, 2021

# Implementation Strategy Background & Overview

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The purpose of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is to correct and prevent deterioration and promote economic growth within Union Township's West principal business district. A development plan is one tool the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and DDA rely upon for identifying and implementing projects aimed at spurring new private investment. Supporting the development plan is an implementation strategy, or a matrix of projects both planned and proposed that is intended to be located outside the plan, in a workbook, so a new adoption process is not needed when future cost estimates are generated. The project implementation strategy is a matrix that is composed of projects that fall under the category descriptions listed below. The detailed project strategy that follows the category descriptions includes project categories, names and descriptions; priorities, time frames, cost range estimates (once available), and status notes. The matrix is intended to be a living document that can be updated as needed. As a reference, below are the projects that the implementation plan contains.

## 1. Business Development

The DDA will assist the Economic Development Authority, Planning Commission, local officials, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, etc., in providing an acceptable climate for business investment. Efforts will focus on assisting existing businesses and promoting new businesses that benefit the community. This will likely involve the following projects:

- Institution of a building rehabilitation grant program that provides qualifying applicants funding to improve their building.
- Encouraging property owners and developers to create mixed-use developments, in keeping with District zoning requirements.
- Other potential activities that support and promote local business development.

## 2. Public Buildings and Spaces

To better create a sense of place at strategic locations in the DDA District, the DDA will support the development and enhancement of public buildings and spaces including: pedestrian plazas, parks, open spaces, gardens, gazebos, sculptures, art, performance areas, walkways, and supporting site amenities, construction of public restrooms, or other similar structures identified as development occurs.

## 3. DDA Marketing/Development Studies and Promotional Events/Materials

Destination branding and marketing have a key relationship with successful districts. It is an important task to complete once the DDA has identified redevelopment goals and has established its identity within the greater region. Marketing and development attraction studies can be used as tools to attract specific development types or specific developers. Marketing materials (online, print, radio, mailers, billboard rental) can also be prepared for distribution to developers, retailer, and real estate firms promoting Union Township. This may include brochures, exhibits, trade area data, web site materials, social media activities, etc. It is also the Township's desire to create a unified image and market the West DDA District of Union Township as a cohesive business District. To that end, funding can be used for a joint marketing strategy and promotions with involvement of the business community that brings together resources for advertising, special events, and public relations.

#### 4. Building Facade and Sign Improvement Program

Existing signs and structures in the DDA that are in need of upgrade in terms of design, materials and colors can apply for funding under this program. The DDA can allocate resources to pursue the following efforts toward upgrading the appearance of buildings in the District:

- Develop design guidelines or requirements for all buildings and signs in the District with corresponding sketches and pictures
- Develop a program to assist business owners in funding these improvements as a method to encourage implementation of the design guidelines or requirements

#### 5. DDA Property Acquisition

This involves the acquisition of property to accomplish the goals set forth by the DDA. There are times when key pieces of property become available for purchase within the DDA District, which require the DDA to purchase said properties for redevelopment or public purposes. This can also be a tool to assist with blight removal and demolition within the District.

#### 6. Special District & Urban Design Plans

District plans and urban design help to guide the built environment of the District. Many times, these plans focus on form and design elements to enhance the function of the District. Results of these plans can lead to new development projects that have been thoughtfully crafted to create vibrancy and increase density within the District core. These plans also generally result with the development of design-based guidelines for redevelopment of existing sites or development of new sites.

#### 7. Demolition

Occasionally, development opportunities require demolition of existing sites and structures. The DDA can participate in the costs of the demolition process when it is appropriate to spur new development opportunities.

#### 8. Public Infrastructure Improvements

Public improvements cover a wide array of projects including street lighting, streetscape enhancements, water and sewer improvements; electrical improvements, burying of existing and new utilities, storm water improvements, parking improvements, and generally anything else that falls within the public right-of-way, easement, or public realm.

#### 9. Private Infrastructure Improvements

As part of redevelopment, developers are often required to improve private infrastructure or anything on a private property (not in a public right-of way). The DDA is able to assist with offsetting these costs, specifically when it comes to integrated parking structures such as vertical and underground parking, utilities, water and sewer tap fees; soft costs, and others that support density in accordance with local zoning, master plans, and city goals, but may be cost-prohibitive to complete the project. Although these improvements are considered private for funding purposes, they have public benefit and support the redevelopment efforts of the Township and DDA.

## 10. Site Preparation

Costs associated with site preparation can be significant for both public and private investment. These costs include such activities as clearing and grubbing; compaction and sub-base preparation; cut and fill operations; dewatering, excavation for unstable material, foundation work (to address special soil concerns, retaining walls, temporary sheeting/shoring, specific and unique activities, etc.); anything on private property not in a public right-of-way to support density; and prohibitive costs to allow for greater density in accordance with local zoning, master plans, and Township goals.

## 11. Environmental Activities

Environmental Activities would include activities beyond what may be supported by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) under an approved Brownfield Plan and Act 381 Work Plan to protect human health and the environment, off-set cost-prohibitive environmental costs and insurance needs, etc. This can also include wildlife and habitat preservation, or restoration related to a specific development project or Public Buildings and Spaces under item #2 above.

## 12. Project-Specific Gap Funding

Recognizing that the cost of mixed-use, traditional development is higher than it is for undeveloped sites, the Township may, at its own discretion, commit project-specific future tax increment capture back to private projects for a specified period of time. The goal is to provide funding to close the “gap” that prevents the project from becoming a reality due to financial feasibility. For example, if the pro-forma for a project indicates that it cannot generate enough income to cover the cost of construction and a reasonable rate of return for a developer/investor, future tax increment can be committed to that development to make it feasible. It can also be used as a tool to attract companies and businesses to the city to create new employment opportunities within the DDA District.

## 13. Consultation and Operational Expenditures

The Consultation and Operational Expenditures category provides for professional services (staff) and operational activities relating to the DDA. This category is relatively variable and is subject to the level and complexity of future activities taken on by the DDA. Professional services are required to implement the proposals within this Plan and to manage and operate the DDA. This may include, but is not limited to, market studies, grant writing and administration; planning and architectural design; engineering, inspections and construction management services; and environmental assessment and mitigation planning. DDA operational activities may include but are not limited to public notices, mailings, office supplies, administrative support, and equipment usage/rental, etc.

## 14. Bond Repayments

Tax capture can be used to pay back money that was borrowed for eligible projects under this plan.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES GOALS ADDRESSED

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Board of Trustees goals addressed by the current and planned EDA projects and activities, and that would be addressed by EDA authorization of additional economic development projects in the DDA Districts (From Policy 1.0: Global End).

1. Community well-being and common good
2. Prosperity through economic diversity, cultural diversity, and social diversity
3. Safety
4. Health
5. Natural environment
6. Commerce

**Annual Projects: East and West DDA**

Art Reach of Mid-Michigan Annual Festival of Banners along the Pickard Road corridor in the East DDA District.

Installation and maintenance of twelve (12) Welcome Banners in collaboration with the City of Mount Pleasant, Mount Pleasant Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Middle Michigan Development Corporation (East DDA)

Annual funding transfer to the Fire Fund in support of the fire service delivery contract with the City of Mount Pleasant (East DDA and West DDA)

Annual payment to Middle Michigan Development Corporation in support of MMDC economic development activities for the East DDA and West DDA Districts

Annual payment to Mt. Pleasant Area Convention and Visitors Bureau in support of economic development activities for the East DDA and West DDA Districts

Legend	
	New
	Existing, planned, proposed

## WEST DDA PROJECT LIST

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>BUSINESS RETENTION &amp; RECRUITMENT</b>				
<b>Organize an association of business owners in the District.</b>	Medium	2-4 years		
Facilitate the creation of an organization of the business owners in the West DDA District to work together on special events, coordinated hours, and other mutually beneficial business-led projects; and to expand opportunities for communication between the EDA and local businesses.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>PUBLIC BUILDINGS &amp; SPACES</b>				
<b>New public landmark or community gathering place.</b>	Medium	2-4 years		
Develop, implement, and fund a project to create a prominent public landmark or focal point amenity for the DDA District, or to create a transformational community gathering place for events. <i>Purpose: Spaces outside of the workplace and home are important for building strong communities. These spaces help people connect within their community around shared interests. If successful, shared spaces not only serve to connect people, but become a place the users will defend and protect.</i> <i>Potential locations: Adjacent to the Isabella Community Credit Union at Lincoln/Remus, or adjacent to Green Acres Mt. Pleasant</i>				The purpose, potential locations, and development options for this project should be considered as part of an update to the West DDA Development Plan.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
<b>New recreation area along the Chippewa River.</b>	Medium	2-4 years		
Work with the State of Michigan, Isabella County, and other stakeholders to develop additional public recreation amenities along the Chippewa River in the southern part of the DDA District to support future growth and development in the District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Health; and Natural Environment</i>				

<b>Funding to support preparation of an updated Parks Master Plan</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1 year</b>	Estimated: \$10,000-\$15,000	
Funding in support of preparation of the West DDA component of an updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which would allow the Township to be eligible for state recreation grants.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Health</i>				
<b>Parks and Recreation Improvements</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Funding to improve public parks and pocket parks within the District				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Health</i>				

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>DDA MARKETING/DEVELOPMENT STUDIES &amp; PROMOTIONAL EVENTS/MATERIALS</b>				
<b>Branding and marketing activities.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Hire marketing and graphic design professionals to develop and implement a marketing and branding campaign for the purpose of establishing the DDA District as a distinct place for the purpose of marketing and attracting customers, businesses, and visitors. This strategy needs to incorporate a range of elements from traditional print and media efforts to social media and Internet promotions.				The Middle Michigan Development Corporation and Mt. Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce provide some marketing and media services that benefit the West DDA District, but there is more that can be done.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
<b>Wayfinding signage</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Develop, implement, and fund a project to design and install wayfinding directional signage for community facilities, businesses, and other amenities in the DDA Districts, to assist visitors in reaching their destinations, to increase awareness of key local amenities, and to further develop a unified visual character for the DDA Districts.				Will require coordination with MDOT and the Road Commission, along with acquisition of necessary easements. This project should be considered as part of an overall branding and marketing effort.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Prosperity through Economic Diversity, Cultural Diversity, and Social Diversity</i>				
<b>District Advertising</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Annually</b>		
Annually promote Development Area businesses through group buying outdoor advertising, print media, television, and radio advertising.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				



<b>Community Events</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Annually</b>		
Assist in the funding of community events that are hosted in park spaces and community gathering spaces				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Prosperity through Economic Diversity, Cultural Diversity, and Social Diversity</i>				
<b>Streetscape improvements in the West DDA District.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Funding in support of projects to plan for, design, and install streetscape and intersection improvements in the West DDA District.				Will require coordination with road authorities. This project should be considered as part of an overall branding and marketing effort.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				

<b>West DDA District Projects &amp; Descriptions</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Cost Range Estimate</b>	<b>Status/Notes</b>
<b>BUILDING FAÇADE AND SIGN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM</b>				
<b>Grant program – freestanding signs.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage replacement of existing pole-mounted freestanding signs on lots with monument-style ground-mounted signs. The goal of this program is to establish a more coordinated visual character for business signage and maximize sign visibility in areas where mature street trees tend to obscure taller				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
<b>Grant program – building facades.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>		
Develop and implement a grant program to improve the appearance of existing buildings in the DDA District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
<b>Grant program – exterior lighting.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage replacement of unshielded exterior light fixtures with fully shielded fixtures coordinated pole lighting designs.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>DDA PROPERTY ACQUISITION</b>				
<b>Property acquisition and development.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Identify, purchase, market, sell, lease, and/or redevelop strategic properties as catalyst projects to spur further private investment. Public Act 57 of 2018 allows the EDA to improve land and construct, reconstruct, rehabilitate, restore and preserve, equip, improve, maintain, and operate any building, including multiple- family dwellings, in the DDA Districts for the use, in whole or in part, of any public or private person or corporation, or any combination thereof.				The MMDC has identified an unmet need for high bay flex office/ warehouse spaces for business growth and attraction. Potential opportunities should be explored as part of an update to the West DDA Development Plan.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and</i>				
West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>SPECIAL DISTRICT &amp; URBAN DESIGN PLANS</b>				
Establish a budget line item for special projects like feasibility studies, design plans, etc.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>DEMOLITION</b>				
Fund a program that will help with the cost of demolishing obsolete and vacant structures.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS</b>				
<b>Stormwater management improvements in the West DDA District.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Identify priority locations and design, implement, and fund projects as determined necessary to improve local drainage and enhance stormwater management in the West DDA District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Health</i>				
<b>Additional public utility extensions in the West DDA District.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Identify priority locations and design, implement, and fund projects to extend municipal water and sanitary sewer lines as determined necessary to support new development in the West DDA District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Health</i>				

<b>Streetlighting system installations in the West DDA District.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Funding in support of projects to eventually complete the installation of new streetlighting along all roads in the West DDA District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
<b>Public sidewalks on both sides of East Remus Road</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>	Funded	
Construction of public sidewalks on both sides of M-20 (East Remus Road) between Bradley and South Lincoln Rd.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
<b>Lincoln Road – completion of sidewalks on the west side of the road.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>		
Work with the Road Commission to complete the construction of new sidewalks within the county road right-of-way along the west side of Lincoln Road from Broomfield Road north to McDonald Park and the Township Hall.			Funded	
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
<b>Lincoln Road – mid-block pedestrian crossing improvements.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to establish a new mid-block pedestrian crossing with warning lights, signage, striping, and sidewalk ramps and connections as needed to facilitate pedestrian access to McDonald Park from the neighborhood to the east.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
<b>Lincoln Road pedestrian safety-oriented intersection improvements.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund projects for pedestrian-oriented intersection improvements to the Lincoln Road intersections at Remus Road/M-20 and Broomfield Road.			Funded	
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
<b>Lincoln Road – sidewalks on the east side of the road.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Funding in support of projects to eventually complete construction of new sidewalks within the county road right-of-way along the east side of Lincoln Road from Broomfield Road north to Pickard Rd.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
<b>Lincoln Rd. improvement from E. Remus Rd. to the river</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>4-6 years</b>		
Work with the Road Commission to improve S. Lincoln Rd. south from E. Remus Rd. to the Chippewa River bridge.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; Commerce</i>				

<b>Burial of overhead utility and communication lines.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Funding in support of projects to complete the burial of all utility and communication lines in the DDA District, in coordination with Consumers Energy and other entities with existing overhead lines.				Will require coordination with road improvement projects, utilities agreement, and good communication with local businesses.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
<b>Free public WiFi Internet.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Develop, implement, and fund a project to provide for an attractive public amenity like free public wireless internet service, either through a public system or through interconnection of private wireless Internet facilities by partnering with businesses. An example of a private partnership interconnection model is the very successful Wireless Ypsi project: [ <a href="https://meraki.cisco.com/lib/pdf/meraki_cs_ypsilanti_MI.pdf">https://meraki.cisco.com/lib/pdf/meraki_cs_ypsilanti_MI.pdf</a> ]				Any installation of a new or expanded fiber optic network would also require coordination with and agreement from MDOT and the Road Commission, along with acquisition of any necessary easements for surface facilities.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>PRIVATE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS</b>				
<b>Grant program – beautification.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>	Budgeted	
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage landscaping and other site beautification work on existing lots.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
<b>Grant program – pedestrian access.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>	Budgeted	
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage installation of private sidewalks and barrier-free pedestrian access improvements from public sidewalks to existing buildings.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
<b>Grant program – bicycle parking improvements.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage installation of secured and sheltered bicycle parking facilities for businesses.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Health</i>				
<b>Increase broadband Internet capacity.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>2-4 years</b>		
Develop, implement, and fund a project to enhance the capacity and reliability of broadband Internet communications services in the District to attract and maintain businesses and promote economic development, including a new fiber optic network.				Prior to pursuing these projects, a survey of local businesses should be undertaken to identify current options and unmet needs.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
<b>Grant program – exterior lighting.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1-2 years</b>		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage replacement of				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>SITE PREPARATION</b>				
Funding can be used to pay for development site preparation like the removal of foundations, importing of fill, removal of poor soils, etc.	Medium	2-4 years		

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES</b>				
At times the cost of environmental remediation exceeds tax increment that can be captured under the Brownfield Act and additional funding is needed through the DDA.	Medium	2-4 years		

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>PROJECT-SPECIFIC GAP FUNDING</b>				
<b>Identification and analysis of redevelopment sites</b>	Medium	2-4 years		
Identify sites for commercial and retail redevelopment in the District to rehabilitate existing structures and spur additional economic growth and vitality				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Commerce</i>				
<b>Application process for TIF Funding</b>	High	1-2 years		
Set up application process for requests to utilize TIF funding for project re/development				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
<b>Funding administration of TIF</b>	Medium	ONGOING		
Audit and administer TIF funding for re/development				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>CONSULTATION AND OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES</b>				
Funding can be used to pay for the assistance of specialized consultants along with EDA operational costs.	Medium	ONGOING		

West DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status/Notes
<b>BOND REPAYMENTS</b>				
Where necessary, borrowed monies can be repaid using DDA capture tax increment.	Medium	ONGOING		