

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC
PLAN**

City of Marshall

Final copy-March 15, 2016

Approved by Marshall City Council
April 4, 2016

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Executive Summary

“He who fails to plan is planning to fail.”-Winston Churchill

On December 10, 2015 and December 14, 2015, the City held two 4-hour meetings to discuss and develop a Strategic Plan for Economic Development within the City of Marshall. The meetings were facilitated by Nancy Ohle, OD Consultant and Corporate Trainer and paid for by the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program. Participation in these meetings included City Council, the City Director team, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) and Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance (MAEDA).

The City of Marshall has established strong cooperation and support on economic strategies from the city administration, City Council and its appointed authorities, boards and commissions. All City staff, appointed authorities, boards and commissions fully support, cooperate and assist in promoting the economic strategies developed as part of this Economic Development Strategic Plan. As a result, new businesses entering Marshall find a strong, supportive and cooperative cross-section of government staff, authorities, boards and commissions promoting all facets of economic development for the benefit of the entire community.

The strategies outlined in this document will continue to steer the Marshall Community into a proactive future and encourage partnership with neighboring communities. Once met, the strategic goals will ensure stability for Marshall as a very desirable place to live, work and grow. The Strategic Plan is a guiding tool which provides direction for goals like infrastructure expansion, diversified housing options, developing a “pad-ready” site in the new industrial park, providing fiber to the premises, incentivizing small business, expansion of the DDA district, enhancing downtown shopping hours, expanding social and recreational opportunities, and supporting an internship program between the schools and industry.

Introduction

The City of Marshall developed the Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance in 2013 to serve the communities needs with economic development, small business management and development, and tourism. Currently MAEDA is staffed under contract by Southwest Michigan First.

Marshall has not developed a strategic plan for economic development to this point. As the City implements various changes to meet the requirements of becoming a Redevelopment Ready Community, one of the sticking points was the lack of an economic development & marketing strategy. Aside from RRC requirements for certification, this is a worthy endeavor for the City of Marshall. With the loss of major businesses over the last years, the amount of developable land within the City, and a downtown that is truly vibrant, it is certainly worth the time and effort to plan and protect our resources.

Many of the goals in Marshall's Master Plan update 2015 pertain to the strategic goals in this plan. For example, Master Plan Goal #3 is to "Ensure the long term stability of Marshall's neighborhoods" (Page 17) coincides with the strategic goal #2 for "Diversifying Marshall's housing options including single-family homes, housing for the elderly, and downtown loft spaces". Another example is Master Plan Goal #4, which deals with ensuring the viability of Marshall as a commercial center. This directly correlates with strategic goals #5 and #6 that address strengthening of the downtown and Marshall's small business center. Furthermore, Master Plan Goal #5, states that "Marshall has an interest in strengthening the employment base and industry", resulting in strategic goal # 10 the development of an internship program, thus creating a partnership between Marshall Public Schools and Marshall's industries.

Marshall City's Capital Improvement's Program (CIP) 2016-2022, addresses the strategic goals as outlined in this document through the planned funding of improvements to water, waste water, and electric utilities. Strategic goal # 1, addresses funding and expanding current infrastructure into expanded locations. Also, in the CIP, is a market study update for allocating funds in all commercial districts and corridors; to provide information to existing business for marketing, promotions and retention which is vital to the strategic goals of strengthening Marshall's businesses.

Overall, the strategic goals outlined in this document will carry Marshall into a proactive future, ensuring that the City stays relevant with the changing times and grows consistently, while caring for the assets currently in place. The strategic plan is also meant to serve as a doctrine to encourage partnership between the City of Marshall and its outlying neighbors for the betterment of the entire county.

Strategic Situation/Challenges

Education & Workforce

Noted by the committee was a lack of an available workforce in the area; especially an educated or “technical” workforce. Manufacturers are finding it harder and harder to retain skilled employees. Several reports over the last years have recorded that America has a “skills shortage” in manufacturing, combined with the threat of retiring baby boomers (Collins, 2015). It is reported that even though this trend was foreseen, the problem was not headed off due to money and the avoidance of training investment (Collins, 2015). Also, another notable factor is that manufacturers are struggling to hire workers who can perform highly skilled labor, “particularly with a STEM education” (Collins, 2015).

Dealing with education, the committee expressed that there was a lack of places to learn particular trades in the area and a lack of higher education facilities in close proximity. The closest vocational school to Marshall is the Calhoun Area Career Center (CACC) but this is only a resource available to 11th and 12th grade students and is not adult education. Kellogg Community College also offers the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTTC) in Battle Creek which is designed to “meet the employee training needs of area business and industry” (Kellogg.edu).

Business Support

The committee felt that there was a lack of available educational and technical resources available for small businesses in Marshall. Blu Fish has been providing this service for downtown owners and will continue to do so. Small business is very important to the economy; they provide roughly half the workforce in the United States and collectively create a new job every 7 minutes (Kiisel, 2015). Without adequate training, it is unreasonable to expect a small business owner to succeed but typically they have the passion and energy to put forth an effort. Forbes recommends that a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) or other like-resources be made available to owners to help the probability of success and longevity (Kiisel, 2015).

The Younger Crowd

As one of the major challenges to Marshall, the committee pointed out that there is a lack of “things to do” in Marshall for younger people and younger families. It is a well-known fact that Millennials move to the places where they want to live and then look for a job, not the other way around (Fulton, 2012). They want “hip and fashionable” places to eat and live (like loft and downtown apartments), they want public transportation and walkable spaces with many options of what to do and see within the immediate area (Fulton, 2012).

Infrastructure and Transportation

Another challenge for Marshall was infrastructure expansion and transportation. Acquiring funds for quick infrastructure upgrades is a struggle-when a new development comes to town and the City needs to get infrastructure to the site quickly. The legal requirements of acquiring the funds quickly can be a real challenge. Also, the lack of regional transportation in Calhoun County and Michigan as a whole is a very real problem. The City of Marshall introduced the “Connector” service to Albion but funding has proven to be a major hurdle and striking agreements to collaborate with other neighboring jurisdictions has been met with resistance.

Reluctance for Change

Marshall is a historic, older community and the committee noted that there are still old alliances in play that may be outdated and breeding a thought process that change is not “good” or acceptable. This community tends to feel threatened when new ideas come to town.

There is a marked expectation difference between generations. Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1965) are the era of relentlessly hard workers, while Generation X-ers are best known for being team players. Compare that with Generation Y (Millennials) who are techy, a tad argumentative and much more lackadaisical about working (The Economist, 2013). The expectations for their communities are therefore different as well; a Millennial tends to want to be where the technology is, while a Baby Boomer tends to stay away from these areas. Making all generations happy with change is a contentious feat at best.

Strategic Opportunities

Upgrade Utilities

The committee felt strongly that one of Marshall's greatest opportunities lies in the ability to upgrade infrastructure and utilities to meet potential growth. This includes implementation of fiber high-speed internet to the premises and further infrastructure engineering with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Industrial Park

Also noted, was the fact that Marshall has plenty of buildable undeveloped space in the industrial park. Currently there is a section with infrastructure, sidewalks and lighting in place ready to build and develop. The committee agreed that there should be a focus on agriculture and high-tech manufacturing centers.

Vibrant Downtown

Marshall has a vibrant downtown that craves expansion. The downtown area is historic and very active, unlike many historic downtowns in Michigan, with thriving retailers. The committee suggested that more aesthetic work be implemented in the area and along the West Michigan Avenue corridor including banners, benches, sidewalks, and flower pots.

Riverfront

Marshall is lucky enough to be situated on the Kalamazoo River to the south end. The River District Overlay was implemented to bring more business to the area, along with more outdoor events. The committee pointed out that there are many recreation opportunities along the river.

Residential

The committee discussed the opportunity for a unique and somewhat bold senior housing development in Marshall, containing single-level smaller homes with attached garages. Also discussed was the need for upper-class, floor-level rentals for "snow birds".

For residential opportunities for families, it was stated that Marshall could use more single family homes of new construction, priced mid-range or below \$225,000. Also, as mentioned prior, the younger generation is looking for new, somewhat "hip" apartments and lofts, preferably close to the social center (downtown). Marshall is in a unique position to provide upper-level apartments above most of the businesses in the downtown and as downtown residency increases, the businesses will benefit as well.

The idea of an inter-generational Recreation/Senior Center was discussed as well. This community could support both uses in one building since both are currently non-existent. Using one facility to meet both demands, not only creates the highest and best use for one building, but also encourages interaction between generations.

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

MARSHALL - THE CITY OF HOSPITALITY

The City of Marshall recognizes that our community enjoys a special quality of life. Our mission as a City government is to continually enhance this uniqueness by providing quality municipal services to our citizens. This mission will be accomplished through efficient use of resources.

“SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY”

“Service to the Community” is the attitude for all personnel to follow as we seek to carry out the Mission Statement for the City of Marshall.

Vision 2020 Statement

A visitor to the City of Marshall in 2020 will be shown the following: (no order of priority):

- *Beautification of West Michigan Avenue corridor*
 - *Pedestrian friendly*
 - *Enhancement of property appearance*
 - *Conversion of overhead line to underground*
- *Vibrant downtown*
 - *Increased residential units*
 - *More retail business*
 - *Fully occupied 2nd and 3rd floors*
 - *Unified shopping hours*
- *Fiber to the premise*
 - *High speed internet*
- *Increased Industrial Park occupancy*
- *More senior living opportunities*
- *Higher education facility*
- *Diverse housing options*
- *Variety of employment opportunities*
- *Balance demographics*
- *City-wide non-motorized amenities*
- *Family oriented parks*
- *Expanded evening and weekend activities*
- *Safe and healthy environment*
- *Well maintained and expanded Riverwalk*
- *Sustainable dog park*
- *Creative redevelopment of vacant commercial and industrial property*
- *Viable community solar field*
- *Quality community hospital*
- *Top-rated public school system*
- *Self-sustaining airport*

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Strategic Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: The City has built and funded infrastructure to strategic, expanded locations.

Champions: Director of Electric Utility, Director of Public Services and Director of Finance

To facilitate economic growth in the Marshall area it is important to have infrastructure in place to support major future development sites, as well as undeveloped areas within and surrounding the City of Marshall. Having this infrastructure in place will enhance the marketability, and be a positive attribute for site selection for economic development purposes. Expansion of this infrastructure could utilize existing PA425 agreements with the Townships, and will increase the tax base and expand employment opportunities in the area.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Three (3) major sites have been clearly identified:
 - 1) I-94 & Old US-27 North (State Farm property)
 - 2) East Michigan Ave at Partello Rd.
 - 3) C Drive North south of Michigan Ave.
- 1.2 Key Partners have determined these three (3) sites as high potential for development.
- 1.3 These Sites are subject to PA425 agreements.

Outcomes:

- 1) Marshall has facilitated regional collaboration.
- 2) Water, sewer and electric has been expanded to strategic locations.
- 3) Marshall continues to preserve, rehabilitate and maintain city infrastructure and assets.

Key Partners:

- 1) Neighboring townships
- 2) MAEDA
- 3) State of Michigan

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 1	<i>Baseline 2016</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. Provide “shelf ready” project designs for development at 3 sites.	0	Dec-17	3
2. Increase megawatts of available capacity at I-94 & Old US 27	1	Nov-16	20
3. Increase megawatts of available capacity at East Michigan Av.	1	As required	To be determined
4. Increase megawatts of available capacity at C Drive North	1	As required	To be determined
5. A study has been completed that compares Marshall to other cities with regional systems.	0	Dec-16	1

Goal 2: Marshall’s tax base has increased due to diversified housing options.

Champions: Director of Community Services and Director of Public Safety

As a diversifying City, Marshall recognizes that there is a need for more and different types of housing within the City. The goal is that this community has appropriate housing to offer every resident from every walk of life making Marshall an attractive place to settle and stay.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Perform market research to know the needs and desires of current and potential residents.
- 2.2 Identify needs and desires for housing within the City of Marshall.
- 2.3 Assess the availability of land for the development of new housing opportunities.

Outcomes:

- 1) Marshall has newly built single-family, mid-price-range houses.
- 2) Marshall has a single-story housing neighborhood for seniors.
- 3) New loft and upper floor housing is developed downtown.
- 4) Development of new apartment complexes and flats have started.

Key Partners:

- 1) Area Realtors
- 2) Developers
- 3) State of Michigan

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 2	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. A housing study has been completed.	0	Jun-17	1 study
2. A list of available land has been gathered.	0	Jun-17	1 list
3. Opportunities for new housing developments are actively being marketed.	0	Jan-18	3 sources

Goal 3: A “spec” building has been constructed in the new industrial park.

Champions: MAEDA CEO and LDFA Board

Economic Development research has shown that new builds are too time consuming for many industrial developers. These developers are more likely to locate or relocate where there are existing buildings that meet their needs or a planning process that is significantly shortened. Many communities have been successful with this type of pre-planning in place for potential developers.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Define the type of spec building to be constructed
- 3.2 Determine which lot to build on.
- 3.3 Identify and acquire the proper financing.
- 3.4 Complete infrastructure to the site.
- 3.5 Present to Planning Commission on the concept of “pad ready” and “spec building”.

Outcomes:

- 1) Marshall has found an interested partner.
- 2) The new industrial park has a pad-ready site.
- 3) The feasibility of a “spec building” has been researched.

Key Partners:

- 1) Interested partner
- 2) LDFA
- 3) MAEDA

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 3	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. Type of spec building and lot have been identified.	0	Jul-16	Both ready
2. The site is “pad-ready” with preliminary approvals.	0	Mar-17	1 site
3. The feasibility of a spec building has been researched.	0	Jan-17	1 study

Goal 4: Ultra high speed data service (Fiber to the Premises) is provided to businesses and residences in Marshall.

Champions: Director of Electric Utility and Finance Director

For the purpose of economic growth and the attraction of Marshall as a place to live, grow, and work, it is important for all businesses and residences to have at least 1 gig of connectivity available. The nature of “work” is changing and the environment of today’s society requires internet speed. By providing this quality of connectivity, Marshall will see an increase in business, learning opportunity, and sale of homes.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Complete customer survey, legal review and proforma.
- 4.2 Develop preliminary design.
- 4.3 Make sure funding is in place.
- 4.4 Build system.

Outcomes:

- 1) Marshall has implemented Fiber to the Premises.
- 2) Growth and opportunities for Marshall have increased.

Key Partners:

- 1) City (Electric Director)
- 2) Key Partners like Oaklawn, schools, LDFA
- 3) Calhoun County

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 4	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. Develop preliminary design.	0	Mar-16	1
2. CPA has approved proforma.	0	Apr-16	1
3. Beginning to build system.	0	Jul-16	1
4. Fiber system goes commercial	0	Mar-17	1

Goal 5: Marshall supports innovation and entrepreneurship in business.

Champions: MAEDA CEO

Through providing support and education to area businesses, especially new business owners, Marshall hopes to make our community a top choice for starting a new business. Also, providing this type of support, business retention will increase. The amount of vacant buildings will decrease.

Strategies:

- 5.1 Offer concierge service to business owners through MAEDA.
- 5.2 Develop a 12-month program for new business owners.
- 5.3 Offer an annual award for business owners (best participation, etc.)

Outcomes:

- 1) More businesses are started in Marshall.
- 2) More businesses are choosing to stay in Marshall.

Key Partners:

- 1) MAEDA
- 2) DDA
- 3) Veteran business owners
- 4) Local Foundations

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 5	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. A plan has been fully created to support existing and new businesses.	0	Aug-16	1 plan
2. Business owner program has begun.	0	Jan-17	1 program
3. MAEDA offers concierge service to business owners.	0	Jul-16	1

Goal 6: MAEDA/Chamber has an effective incentive program for businesses.

Champions: MAEDA CEO and Director of Finance

An incentive program builds community support for the Chamber and MAEDA. In Marshall, the goal is to have established businesses helping new and upcoming businesses. Building membership within the Chamber will encourage both.

Strategies:

- 6.1 Create Top 10 list of benefits to utilize in recruiting additional members and maintaining current membership in the chamber.
- 6.2 Revitalize the benefits of being a chamber member.

Outcomes:

- 1) Members are utilizing benefits to strengthen business community.
- 2) Businesses are actively helping other businesses.
- 3) Membership has grown.

Key Partners:

- 1) MAEDA/Chamber
- 2) Chamber ambassadors
- 3) Local Foundations

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 6	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. Benefits for chamber members have been revitalized.	0	2 nd quarter 2016	1
2. Top 10 Benefits of Membership List has been made.	0	Jul-16	1
3. Additional members have been recruited.	0	annually	5%

Goal 7: The downtown has been expanded to the River District.

Champions: Director of Community Services and City Manager and DDA Board and MAEDA and Director of Public Safety

It is important to expand the DDA district to the River District to create synergy between the traditional downtown and the less traditional River District businesses. Through this expansion, Marshall hopes to increase the DDA benefits to the River District in an effort to grow and improve the area, as well enhance and share the customer base between the two areas.

Strategies:

- 7.1 City Council will consider revising the DDA district after receiving DDA recommendation.
- 7.2 Work to contact and create partnerships with owners.
- 7.3 Implement the revised DDA district.

Outcomes:

- 1) Customers see a greater unity between the River District and the downtown.
- 2) All businesses are benefiting from membership in the DDA.
- 3) The River District has become more aesthetically pleasing.

Key Partners:

- 1) MAEDA
- 2) DDA
- 3) Local businesses in the downtown and River District

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 7	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. Contact with owners has been made.	0	May-16	All new
2. The revision of the DDA district has been approved.	0	Jun-16	1 revision
3. The DDA district has successfully been expanded.	0	Jul-16	1
4. Improvements to expanded DDA have begun.	0	Aug-17	1 completed

Goal 8: Business hours have been expanded in the DDA.

Champions: MAEDA CEO and DDA Board

Marshall wants to be known as a retail and tourist destination. There is a need for expanded and unified hours as part of the marketing of Marshall. This gives tourists the ability to see all of what Marshall has to offer.

Strategies:

- 8.1 Create partnership between DDA businesses to stay open with longer, more unified hours.
- 8.2 A study has been completed on preferred shopping hours in downtown.
- 8.3 Study results have been shared to create an on-going strategy for shopping hours.

Outcomes:

- 1) Increased customer traffic in the DDA and subsequent increased business.
- 2) Marshall is branded as a community with attractive shopping hours.

Key Partners:

- 1) MAEDA
- 2) DDA
- 3) Retailers group
- 4) DDA businesses

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 8	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. A study has been completed	0	Dec-16	1
2. Businesses have increased and consistent business hours in the DDA.	0	Jul-17	20%
3. Businesses have increased and consistent business hours in the DDA.	0	Dec-18	40%
4. Businesses have increased and consistent business hours in the DDA.	0	Jul-19	60%

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Goal 9: Marshall has facilities for expanded social and recreational attractions.

Champions: Director of Community Services, Recreation Department and Parks & Recreation Board, and Director of Finance

In order to grow the Marshall community, there is a need to attract and retain younger professionals and families. It is a well-known fact that the younger generation is attracted to areas with new and interesting recreational and social opportunities.

Strategies:

- 9.1 Take an inventory of existing facilities that could work for attractions.
- 9.2 Complete a combined survey to assess needs and desires (phone, survey monkey, door-to-door, mail, schools, etc.)
- 9.3 Hold open house to gather information and share results of survey
- 9.4 Creatively market new opportunities in the City of Marshall for social and recreational uses.

Outcomes:

- 1) Marshall has a community-built Top 10 list of social and recreational needs and desires.
- 2) Expanded social and recreational facilities in Marshall.
- 3) Development of facilities that are more attractive to and used by the younger generation.

Key Partners:

- 1) Existing building owners.
- 2) Multi-generational committee (youth parks and rec board)
- 3) Parks and Rec board to mentor youth board
- 4) Business sponsors/investors
- 5) Fairgrounds

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 9	<i>Baseline 2016</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. Inventory of available facilities has been completed.	0	Jul-16	1
2. Survey completed	1	Jan-17	1
3. Two open houses held.	0	Summer 2016 & Winter 2016	2
4. New social and recreational facilities developed.	0	Jan-18	2

Goal 10: Develop robust regional internship program to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Champions: MAEDA CEO, LDFA and Marshall Public Schools

Talent in the community is declining, as seen by trends in local businesses. The school system has a vested interest in seeing young adults educated and this creates a perfect partnership with local businesses.

Strategies:

- 10.1 Partner with schools and business leaders to identify local internship opportunities.
- 10.2 Utilize counselors and educators, high school students, middle school students and parents to engage them in internship opportunities.
- 10.3 Engage businesses to identify talent needed and understand how internships can be used to enhance their business objectives.
- 10.4 Identify how internship training can lead to college readiness/credits and career-oriented jobs.

Outcomes:

- 1) The number of businesses offering internships has increased.
- 2) Local and regional talent retention has increased.
- 3) MPS has an internship program with local businesses.
- 4) Marshall has a stronger employment base.

Key Partners:

- 1) Marshall Public Schools (MPS)
- 2) Local businesses and manufacturers
- 3) MAEDA (facilitator)
- 4) Calhoun Area Career Center (CACC)
- 5) Kellogg Community College

Performance measures:

How Marshall will assess progress in achieving Goal 10	<i>Baseline 2016</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Target Amount</i>
1. MAEDA has facilitated discussions on internship/job shadow programs with MPS and local businesses	0	Nov-16	1
2. MPS has refined their internship/job shadow program.	0	Sep-17	1
3. CACC has identified and expanded certain trade classes to accommodate identified internships.	0	Sep-17	1
4. There is an increase in internship/job shadow participation by local students.	0	Jan-20	50%

Review and Oversight

Review of the plan

The Economic Development Strategic Plan will be reviewed, approved and amended periodically by City Council. With the help of community key partners, the City of Marshall staff will work towards each goal. Periodic updates on these goals will be reported to City Council through the City Manager.

Oversight

City Manager:	Goal 7: Downtown expansion
Director of Community Services:	Goal 2: Diversified housing options Goal 7: Downtown expansion Goal 9: Social and recreational attractions
Director of Electric Utility:	Goal 1: Expanded infrastructure Goal 4: Fiber to the premises.
Director of Finance:	Goal 1: Expanded infrastructure Goal 4: Fiber to the premises Goal 6: Incentive program for small business Goal 9: Social and recreational attractions
Director of Public Services:	Goal 1: Expanded infrastructure
Director of Public Safety:	Goal 2: Diversified housing options Goal 7: Downtown expansion
MAEDA CEO:	Goal 3: Spec building/pad ready Goal 5: Entrepreneurship support Goal 6: Incentive program for small business Goal 8: Expansion of business hours Goal 10: Internship program

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