

Charter Township of Union East DDA Implementation Strategy



Charter Township of Union

Adopted October 27, 2021

Implementation Strategy Background & Overview

The purpose of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is to correct and prevent deterioration and promote economic growth within Union Township's East 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 in the District and 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 key relationships 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 East 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

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

EAST DDA PROJECT LIST

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
BUSINESS RETENTION & RECRUITMENT				
Organize an association of business owners in the District	High	1-2 years		
Facilitate the creation of an organization of the business owners in the East 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>				
Business Incubator & Innovation Center: Feasibility analysis	High	1-2 years		
Investigate establishing a small business incubator via a feasibility analysis at the former Mid Michigan college bldg (Pickard/Summerton) for the purpose of job skill training that businesses in the DDA District can utilize to strengthen and grow their workforce.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce; Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
Business Incubator & Innovation Center: Application and Funding	Medium	2-4 years		
Develop an application and funding process for the Mid Michigan college building renovation. TIF funding can support the development and management/operations can be supported by a non-profit organization. The non-profit consortium to include Central Michigan, DDA, Mott foundation, etc.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce; Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				

Business Incubator & Innovation Center: Acquisition and Build	Medium	2-4 years		
Complete the acquisition process for the innovation center and work with engineering and design firms to design and renovate the center.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce; Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
Business Incubator & Innovation Center: Operations and Management	Medium	Ongoing		
Develop a non-profit consortium (Central Michigan, DDA, Mott foundation, etc.) to handle all operations and management of the innovation center				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Commerce</i>				
Target Market Analysis	Low	4-6 years		
Identify investment opportunities and market gaps for retail and residential markets.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
PUBLIC BUILDINGS & SPACES				
Funding to support preparation of an updated Parks Master Plan	High	1 year	Estimated: \$10,000-\$15,000	Funded for 10k, Rodney is working on it
Funding in support of preparation of the East 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>				
Parks and Recreation Improvements	Medium	2-4 years		
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>				

Additional improvements to and expansion of Jameson Park	Medium	2-4 years		
Funding in support of property acquisition to expand Jameson Park, update ballfields, provide additional recreational facilities, expand parking areas and stormwater management facilities, and complete other building, site, and infrastructure improvements.				Funded for some of work
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Health</i>				
New public landmark or community gathering place	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 McGuire Elementary, within potential expansion areas B (adjacent to neighborhood) and A.</i>				The purpose, potential locations, and development options for this project should be considered as part of an update to the East DDA Development Plan (SEE ITALICS IN DESCRIPTION).
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range	Status
DDA MARKETING/DEVELOPMENT STUDIES & PROMOTIONAL EVENTS/MATERIALS				
Branding and marketing activities	Medium	2-4 years		
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 East DDA District, but there is more that can be done.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

Wayfinding signage	Medium	2-4 years		
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>				
District Advertising	Medium	Annually		
Annually promote Development Area businesses through group buying outdoor advertising, print media, television, and radio advertising.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
Community Events	Medium	Annually		
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>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range	Status
BUILDING FAÇADE AND SIGN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM				
Grant program – building facades	High	1-2 years		
Develop and implement a grant program to improve the appearance of existing buildings in the DDA District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
Grant program – freestanding signs	High	1-2 years		
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 signs.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
DDA PROPERTY ACQUISITION				
High Bay Flex Office property acquisition and development	Medium	2-4 years		
Explore potential opportunities in the high bay flex office/warehouse spaces for business growth and attraction, as identified by the MMDC.				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.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and</i>				
Explore acquisition of Enterprise Park for Industrial	Medium	2-4 years		
Explore feasibility of acquiring property at Pickard/Enterprise Drive for industrial use. The area benefits from easy access to US-127, flat land, adequate power (440V, 3 phase in bldg.), good roads.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
SPECIAL DISTRICT & URBAN DESIGN PLANS				
Establish a budget line item for special projects like feasibility studies, design plans, etc.	Medium	2-4 years		
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Commerce</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
DEMOLITION				
Residential foreclosure acquisition and redevelopment	Medium	2-4 years		
Explore the acquisition and demotion of foreclosed residential property in expansion area B for redevelopment into a public pocket park or thoroughfare with a sidewalk				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; and Health</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS				
Construct a cross-connection between Bud St. and Airway Dr.	High	1-2 years		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to construct a new local road and associated sidewalk and underground utility improvements between Bud St. and Airway Dr. This project would create a new pedestrian and vehicular connection between existing neighborhoods and may facilitate development of underutilized land in this area.				Will require coordination with and agreement from the Road Commission, along with property acquisition for the road right-of-way.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
Construct an extension of Corporate Dr. eastward to Belmont Dr.	High	1-2 years		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to extend Corporate Dr. from its current end point east of Packard Rd. eastward to Belmont Dr., along with associated sidewalk and underground utility improvements. This project would create a new pedestrian and vehicular connection and facilitate development of underutilized land in this area.				Will require coordination with and agreement from the Road Commission, along with property acquisition for the road right-of-way.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
Locate and map the existing streetlighting and irrigation systems	High	1-2 years		

<p>There is no set of as-built drawings for the EDA's streetlighting and irrigation systems in the East DDA District, and these systems are not currently mapped into the Michigan Utility Notification Center's MISS DIG system. This means that this public infrastructure is vulnerable to potentially costly damage each time an excavation takes place near the lines, and that the EDA will be fully responsible for the associated repair costs. The MISS DIG system and associated Underground Facility Damage Prevention and Safety Act (Public Act 174 of 2013) are intended to protect public infrastructure investments from being damaged or destroyed during excavation work. If these systems were to be accurately mapped and added to the MISS DIG system, liability for the cost of repairs would shift from the EDA to the contractor doing the work that caused the damage. Accurate mapping would help to protect the public investment in these improvements, ease future repairs and system improvements, and assist the Township's Public Services Department with their work on municipal water and sanitary sewer lines in the area.</p>				
<p><i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good; Safety; and Commerce</i></p>				
<p>Burial of overhead utility and communication lines</p>	High	1-2 years		
<p>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.</p>				Will require coordination with road improvement projects, utilities agreement, and good communication with local businesses.
<p><i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i></p>				
<p>Construct an extension of Corporate Dr. eastward to Belmont Dr.</p>	High	1-2 years		
<p>Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to extend Corporate Dr. from its current end point east of Packard Rd. eastward to Belmont Dr., along with associated sidewalk and underground utility improvements. This project would create a new pedestrian and vehicular connection and facilitate development of underutilized land in this area.</p>				Will require coordination with and agreement from the Road Commission, along with property acquisition for the road right-of-way.
<p><i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i></p>				

Construct an extension of E. Ward St. eastward from Elizabeth St. to Third St. south of Palmer St.	High	1-2 years		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to extend E. Ward St. eastward from Elizabeth St. to Third St. south of Palmer St. (behind the Art Van building), along with associated sidewalk and underground utility improvements. This project would create a new connection between neighborhoods.				Will require coordination with and agreement from the Road Commission, along with property acquisition for the road right-of-way.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
Cul-de-sac and sidewalk improvements near the Mary McGuire Elementary School.	High	1-2 years		
Work with the Road Commission and the Mt. Pleasant School District to design, implement, and fund a project to construct: (1) cul-de-sac turnarounds at the south ends of Carter St. and Betty Lane; (2) a sidewalk connection and looping of underground utilities eastward from Carter St. to connect to Betty Lane, Yats Dr., and S. Isabella Rd. along the north edge of the School parcel; and (3) a sidewalk connection to the school entrance.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
Improve roadways in Industrial area in Northwest corner (Expansion Area A)	Medium	2-4 years		
Work with the road commission to improve roadways along N. Packard				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
Improve intersection of Isabella/Pickard	Medium	2-4 years		
Work with road commission to improve roadway and pedestrian intersection at Isabella and Pickard Roads.				During SWOT, it was stated that this should be opened up to 5 lanes of traffic.
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
Sidewalk installation and improvements along Isabella from Broadway (south) to Airport Rd. (north)	Medium	2-4 years		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to install sidewalks along Isabella Road from Broadway (south) to Airport (north). This project would provide pedestrian access and recreation opportunities between the neighborhoods, school, and commercial District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				

Free public WiFi Internet	High	1-2 years		
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: [https://meraki.cisco.com/lib/pdf/meraki_cs_ypsilanti_MI.pdf]				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
Sidewalk installation and improvements along Broadway from Rosewood Dr. to Summerton Rd.	Low	4-6 years		
Work with the Road Commission to design, implement, and fund a project to install sidewalks along Broadway from Rosewood Dr. to Summerton Rd. This project would provide pedestrian access and recreation opportunities between the neighborhoods, school, and commercial District.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				
Bicycle Lanes	Medium	2-4 years		
Install bicycle lanes on roads where right-of-way is available				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
PRIVATE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS				
Grant program – beautification	High	1-2 years		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage landscaping and other site beautification work on existing lots.				Some money in budget
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Community Well-Being and the Common Good</i>				
Grant program – pedestrian access	High	1-2 years		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage installation of private sidewalks and barrier-free pedestrian access improvements from public sidewalks to existing buildings.				Some money in budget
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Safety and Health</i>				

Grant program – bicycle parking improvements	High	1-2 years		
Develop and implement a grant program to encourage installation of secured and sheltered bicycle parking facilities for businesses.				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Health</i>				
Increase broadband Internet capacity.	Medium	2-4 years		
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. 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>				
Grant program – exterior lighting	High	1-2 years		
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: Safety and Health</i>				
East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
SITE PREPARATION				
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		
East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES				
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		

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
PROJECT-SPECIFIC GAP FUNDING				
Identification and analysis of redevelopment sites	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>				
Application process for TIF Funding				
Set up application process for requests to utilize TIF funding for project re/development	High	1-2 years		
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				
Funding administration of TIF	Medium	ONGOING		
Audit and administer TIF funding for re/development				
<i>Global Ends Addressed: Commerce</i>				

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
CONSULTATION AND OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES				
Develop a funding process to pay for the assistance of specialized consultants and EDA operational costs.	High	ONGOING		

East DDA District Projects & Descriptions	Priority	Timeframe	Cost Range Estimate	Status
BOND REPAYMENTS				
Where necessary, borrowed monies can be repaid using DDA capture tax increment.	Medium	2-4 years		