

1. Business Retention, Expansion, Attraction

Strengthen our economic development efforts through business retention visits:

- a. Formalize a business retention call program as early into 2018 as possible and implement the program.
- b. Establish a call prioritization effort starting with the largest private sector employers in the County.
- c. Schedule at least 15 visits annually, record and report interview results to the EDC Board and perhaps other interested stakeholders like the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and/or the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).
- d. Invite MEDC and/or MDARD personnel to participate in the retention visits.
- e. Prioritize the identification of food processing company expansion opportunities.
- f. Assist with incentive packaging for at least six (6) company expansions on an annual basis.
- g. Participate and respond to at least six (6) RPI/MEDC Project RFP's annually.
- h. Participate in any or all Right Place or MEDC organized Site Selector Visits to West Michigan.

2. Marketing and Communication

An effective economic development effort involves the preparation and distribution of up to date and attractive electronic and printed marketing materials. These are essential for communicating with investors, local units of government, and local businesses as well for use with any business development inquiries from outside the county.

- a. Update and expand the availability of marketing materials at least annually.

- b. Develop and update an economic development website at least twice a year with links to various organizations performing economic development activities like The Right Place, MEDC.
- c. Create food processing specific marketing materials for business development efforts.
- d. Create fund development marketing materials especially geared for private investment prospects.
- e. Establish a consistent schedule for in person, EDC success sharing, activity reporting including the County Board and local units of government at least six (6) per year or as requested.
- f. Work to schedule at least five (5) service club presentations annually.

3. Fund Development

Although challenging, it's important to raise the necessary funding for economic development activities.

- a. Double the financial resources to support EDC activities and staffing over three (3) years.
- b. Create an operating budget of at least \$125,000 annually.
- c. Expand financial assistance through RPI/MEDC to support operations.
- d. Explore other regional funding opportunities especially with foundations.
- e. Broaden base of funding support with a target of 50% of financial support from non-public entities.
- f. Expand Board responsibilities to include fund development coordination, capture and the maintenance of relationships with the investors.
- g. Limit staff involvement responsibilities involving fund raising to administrative support.
- h. Hire a consultant or staff person to coordinate fund development especially if the Board chooses not to increase its role in this organization responsibility.

4. Organization

This section describes an organization's incorporation status and what the EDC might want to consider short-term and long term for economic development advancement throughout the County.

- a. Create a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2018, especially to increase options for fund development.
- b. Examine restructuring including operating as a private-public not-for-profit entity.
- c. Consider phase out of public EDC as coordinator of economic development activities.
- d. Deploy or commit available RLF funds for projects.
- e. Consider refunding or capturing new project seed funding to leverage private expansion/investment projects.