



# 2023 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY MARKETING STRATEGY





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## Redevelopment Ready Communities®

This Economic Development and Community Marketing Strategy is aligned with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) program. The RRC program was created to assist municipalities to create transparent, predictable, and efficient processes into their development efforts by utilizing the program's six [best practices](#) (below.) This involves planning for new investment and reinvestment, identifying assets and opportunities, and focusing limited resources. RRC empowers communities to shape their future by assisting in the creation of a solid planning, zoning and development foundation to retain and attract businesses, investment and talent.

The City of Hastings sees RRC as being key to the City's efforts and has committed to becoming a Certified RRC Community by creating this transparent, predictable, and efficient environment within the City's regulatory authority.

### Redevelopment Ready Communities® Best Practices

1. Plans and Engagement
2. Zoning Regulations
3. Development Review
4. Boards & Commissions
5. Economic Development & Marketing
6. Redevelopment Ready Sites®



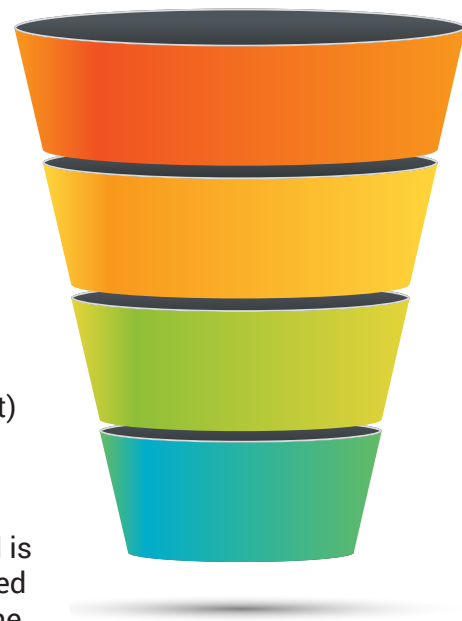
# HOW LOCAL ECONOMIES WORK

To understand the role of economic development, it is important to understand how local economies work. This section serves as a brief primer of local economy and wealth creation.

Every local economy acts like a funnel of water. But instead of water inside the funnel, it's money. The money moves around inside the funnel when goods or services are purchased from each other. When things are purchased outside the community, money leaves the funnel. Likewise, when money comes into the community from the outside, through selling goods and services somewhere else or by bringing in visitors to spend money locally, money comes to the funnel. If a community spends more than it brings in, the local economy shrinks. If it brings in more than it spends, then the local economy grows.

Money leaves the community most often through retail goods. Whether items are purchased online or in another community, money leaves the community. If the money is spent in a local business, a portion of the money still leaves (from the business having to buy the item it sold) but the local business retains a portion of the money. These local businesses often hire other local businesses and further circulates money in the community. In the end, with a locally owned business, the money that's left over (profit) stays within the community. For retail items bought elsewhere (online or another community) the profit goes somewhere else.

Money comes to a community in one of three primary ways: a good is made in a community and sold somewhere else, a service is provided by someone who lives within the community to someone outside the community, or money is brought to the community by people visiting and spending it locally for lodging, food, and entertainment.



**The ultimate goal of a community is to bring in more money than what leaks out, thus growing its local economy.**



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTORS

Economic development has evolved over the last several decades to emerge as a more holistic discipline focused on creating prosperous local and state economies. Originally focused on the recruitment and retention of industry, primarily manufacturing, economic development has become a much broader effort recognizing the importance of additional factors, such as the roles played by talent, tourism, place, and entrepreneurship in the economic success of a community. These areas are defined below:

**Industry-** Best classified as “traditional economic development,” Industry focuses on manufacturing, mining, or other value-added industries where the end products or services are sold outside the immediate local economy.

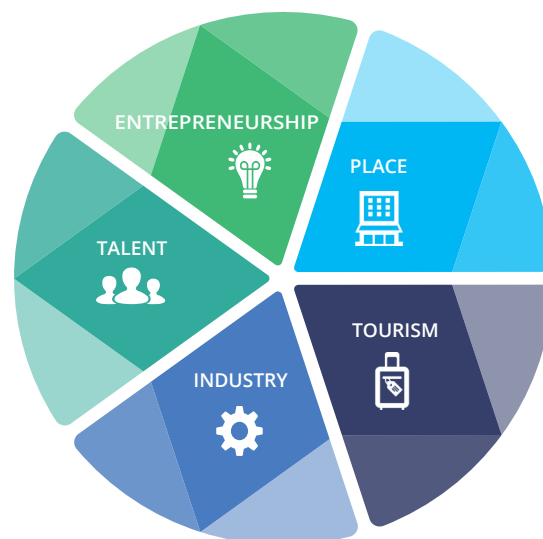
**Talent-** The available or needed people and skills enabling a community to be competitive in helping local businesses expand, attracting new business, or creating jobs themselves.

**Place** -This includes the physical areas that help define the character of a community. Downtowns, historic districts, neighborhoods and housing, and bike trails are all examples of Place. Place is a key factor in a community’s ability to attract and retain Talent.

**Entrepreneurship-** The development of entrepreneurs and small businesses is key to economic prosperity. In addition to their role as economic contributors, small businesses help retain money in the local economy. Nurturing these entrepreneurs can help grow them into larger businesses and contributors to the local economy.

**Tourism-** The attraction of visitors, and their related spending, from outside the local area. Tourism has several forms, from recreation and leisure to business-related to agri-tourism. For this strategy, it is defined as recreation and leisure-related visits and visitors.

This economic development strategy for the City of Hastings touches these five areas. In addition, the City recognizes that economic development is a team sport and requires cooperation from multiple groups to reach its goals.



# TIE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

In 2021, the City of Hastings completed a Community Development Master Plan which outlined five key areas, or “Vision Elements,” to concentrate their efforts to work towards. Of these five elements, four (Economy, Community, Infrastructure, and Natural Resources/Recreation) directly tie to economic development and community marketing efforts.

## Vision Elements

### **Economy – Growing the Economy**

The presence of talent—a skilled, knowledgeable workforce—is needed to support existing business and also helps to create and attract high-paying, sustainable jobs.

### **Community – Creating Vibrant Places**

A high quality of life and place—defined by vibrant, desirable communities and environments—help to attract the talent needed to drive job creation and economic growth.

### **Infrastructure – Working Toward Sustainability**

Community services, such as affordable sewer and water, well-maintained roads, and high tech infrastructure like wi-fi and broadband—are necessary to support new investment.

### **Natural Resources/Recreation – Enhancing Economic Prosperity**

Recreation opportunities help create the high quality of life that attracts both businesses and talent to a community. Much of the area’s tourism, which forms an important part of the community’s economy, is driven by recreation and recreational access to the Thornapple River and surrounding natural resources.

### **Leadership – Effective Governance**

Growth and investment decisions are made by our local elected and appointed officials. They work with the public, developers, neighboring communities, and many others to ensure that the interests of our community are served. This is a delicate balancing act that requires strong relationships between the public, community stakeholders, and their representatives.

# KEY ISSUES

The purpose of an economic development strategy is to help focus a community on the actions that need to be taken to address key needs and build off of the community's strengths. Below are the key issues this strategy will address.



## **LACK OF AVAILABLE HOUSING**

The lack of available housing, of just about any type, is a huge barrier to this growing community. Employers need places for their current and prospective employees to live.



## **LOCATION**

Hastings' location, within an hour of Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Lansing give it the ability to orient to any of those cities. However, the perception of residents of those communities of Hastings' location is that it is "far away" and "hard to get to."



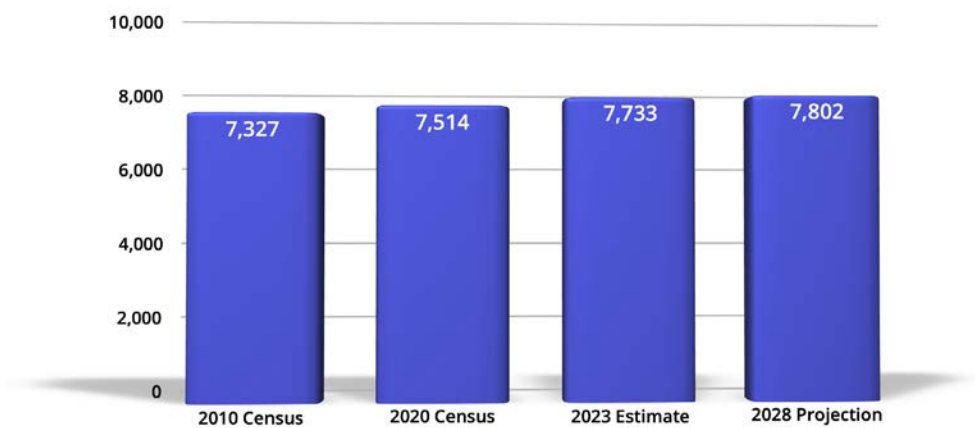
## **LACK OF BRAND AWARENESS**

Hastings does not have a strong brand identity with potential residents, visitors, and businesses outside of the community.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Population and Household Trends

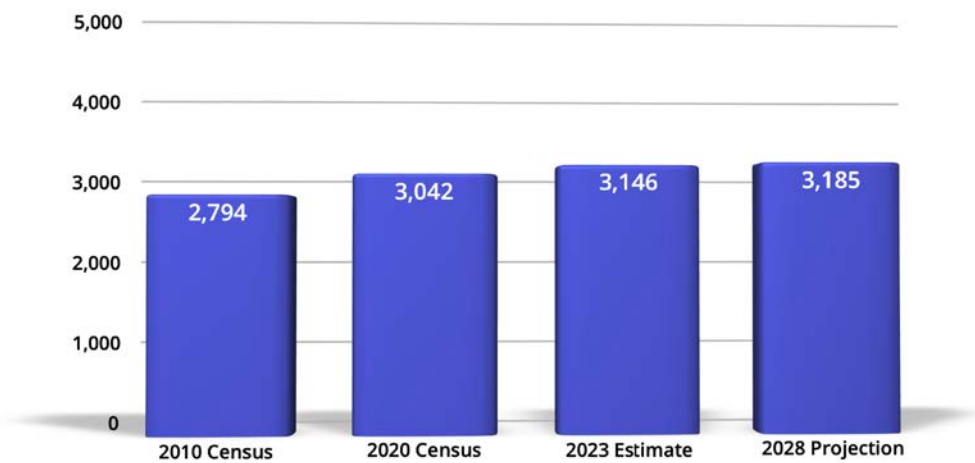
### Population Trend 2010 Census - 2028 Projection



Years	Percent Change
2010 to 2020	+2.55
2020 to 2023	+2.92
2023 to 2028	+0.89

Source: Claritas 2023

### Household Trend 2010 Census - 2028 Projection



Years	Percent Change
2010 to 2020	+8.88
2020 to 2023	+3.42
2023 to 2028	+1.24

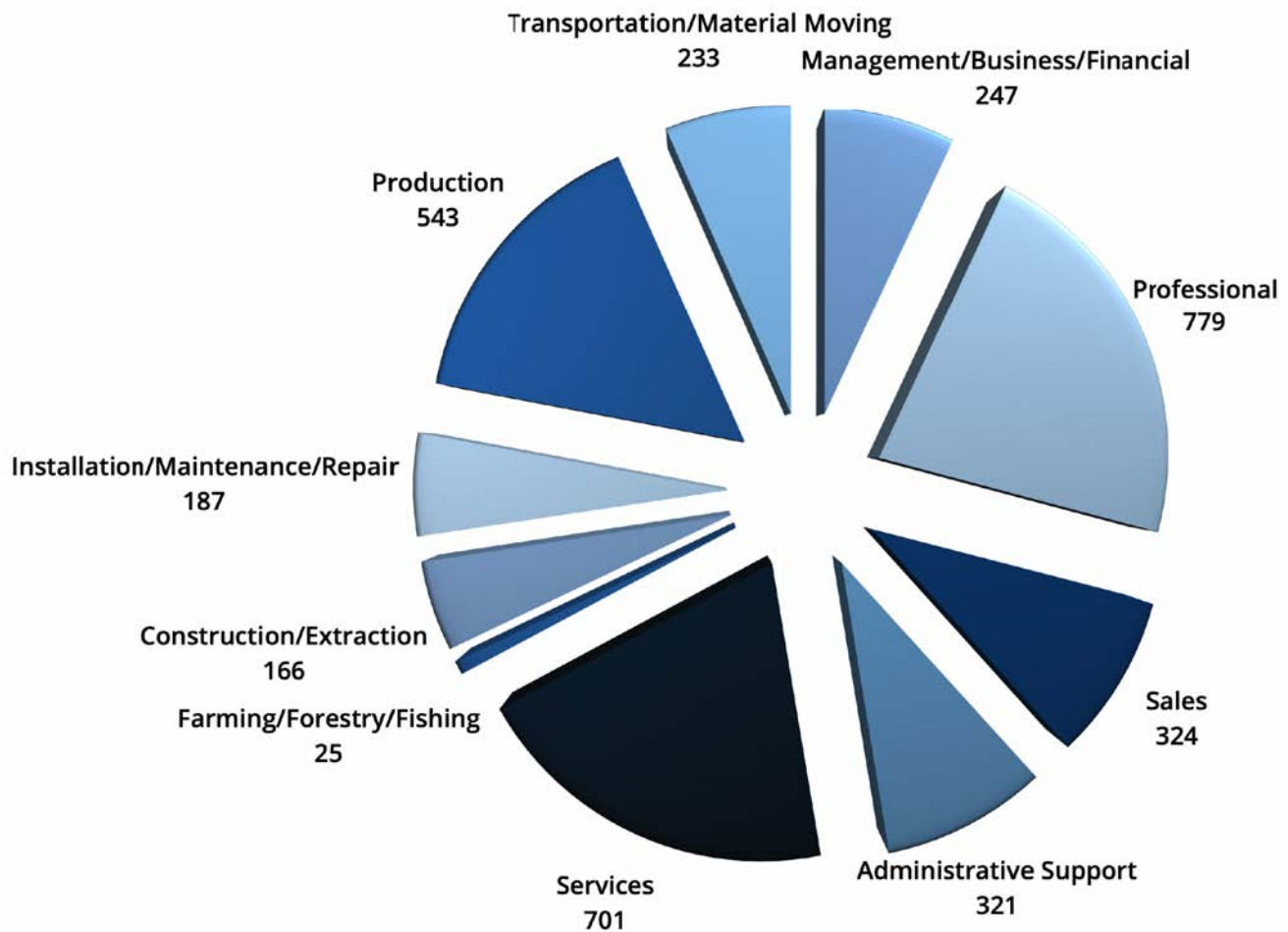
Source: Claritas 2023

While the City of Hastings has experienced moderate population growth in recent years, the number of households has risen at almost double the rate. With household size shrinking from 2.62 in 2010 to a projected 2.44 in 2028, this will further put pressure on the housing market, creating more demand for rental and owner-occupied units. This will further exacerbate the city’s housing shortage, making it difficult for the area to attract new residents and employees for expanding or new businesses.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Employment in Hastings



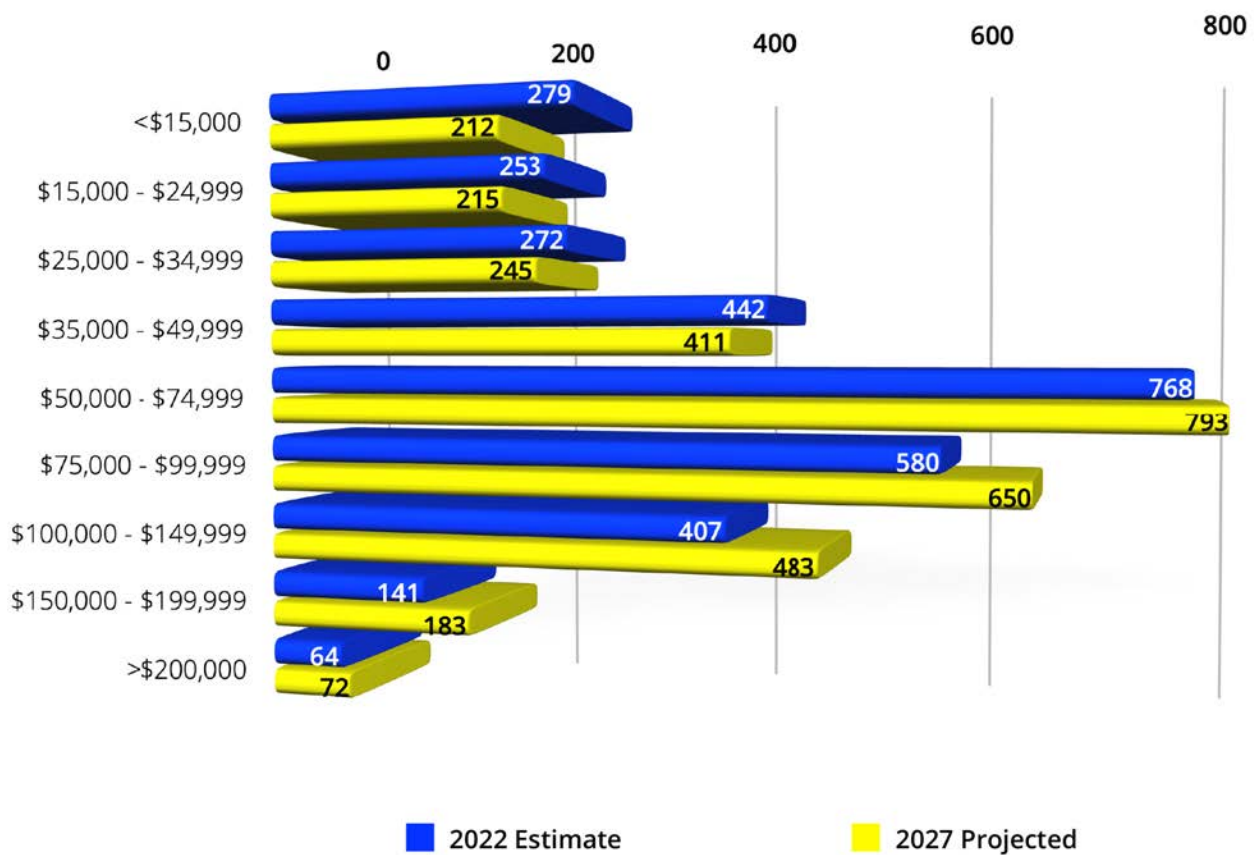
Source: ESRIs 2023

The chart above outlines the number and type of jobs available in the city of Hastings. As this chart demonstrates, there is a diversity of the types of jobs that exist. It is important to note that there are several large employers located in the area but are not in the city proper and are not reflected on this chart. These employers skew heavily to production but also include professional jobs as well.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- Household Income

Site	2022 Median Household Income	2022 Average Household Income
Hastings, MI	\$58,874	\$73,897
Barry County, MI	\$67,170	\$86,600
Michigan	\$63,818	\$91,758

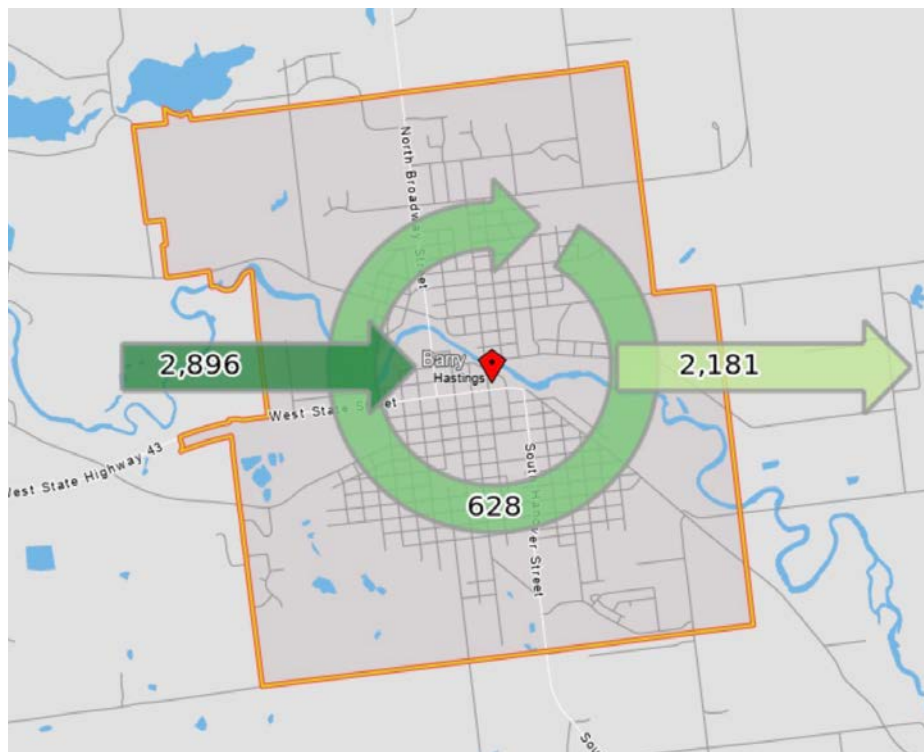


Source: Claritas 2023

The household income of city residents lags significantly behind both the state and county median (14%) and averages (17%). Projections for 2027 show an increase from \$73,897 to \$83,105 with household income detail (above) showing a decrease in all income ranges below \$50,000 and increases in all income ranges above \$50,000. This data suggests upward mobility for numerous households in average income.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

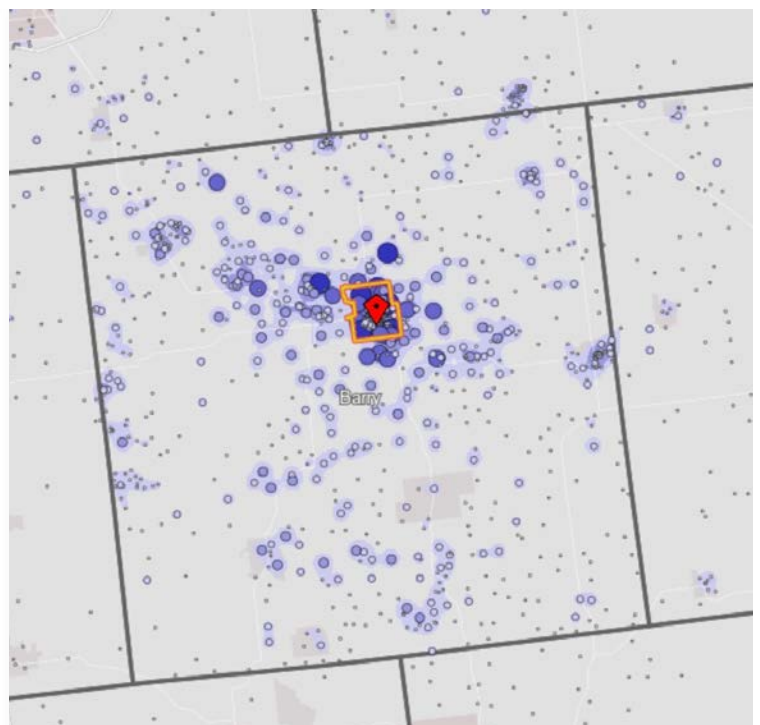
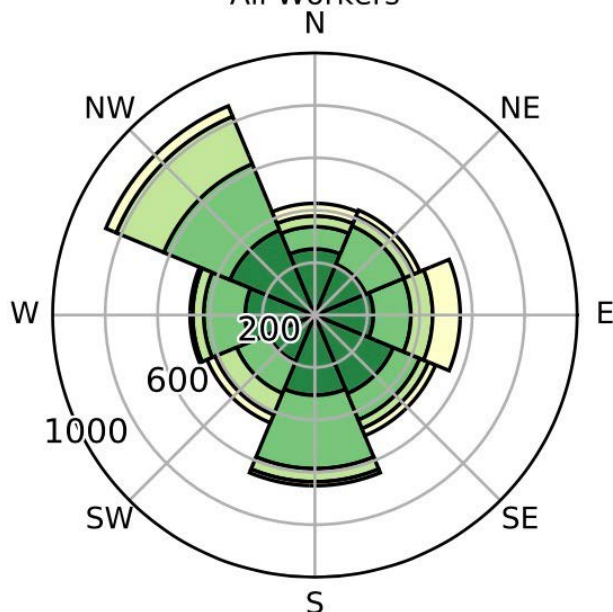
## Key Data Points- Job Inflow/Outflow



There is a tremendous amount of inflow/outflow for workers in the city. 2,181 residents leave the city each day for work, while 2,896 workers come into the city from other places. 628 residents both live and work in the city.

Based on the Census map and chart below, the majority of the workforce that works within the city limits comes from nearby in Barry County.

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2020  
All Workers



Source: US Census, 2022

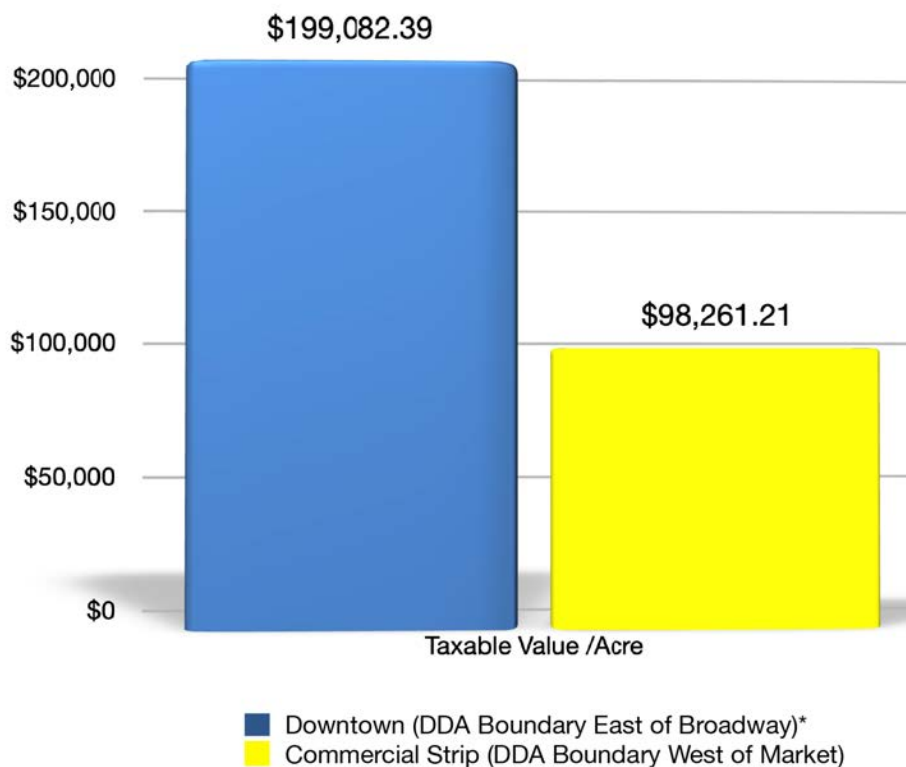


# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- DDA Taxable Value Comparison

The graph and chart below show a comparison of the two main commercial areas in the city: the downtown area and the commercial strip in the eastern part of the city. Both are part of the City's Downtown Development Authority's boundaries. The chart at the bottom of the page outlines the total taxable value of each area, the amount of acres in each area, and lastly the taxable value per acre. The Downtown area used the parcels within the DDA boundary east of Broadway. Removed from the calculation of the taxable value per acre of the downtown were any City or County-owned buildings or parks, as they do not generate tax revenue. However, the City-owned parking lots were included as they directly serve the downtown properties and offer a more fair comparison to the commercial strip properties who must provide their own parking.

This data suggests the downtown area provides a higher return on investment in terms of taxable value (the value property taxes are generated from) than the commercial strip area on per acre basis. Assisting and continuing to enhance the downtown district should be a priority for the City.



Source: Regrid, Place + Main Advisors, LLC 2023

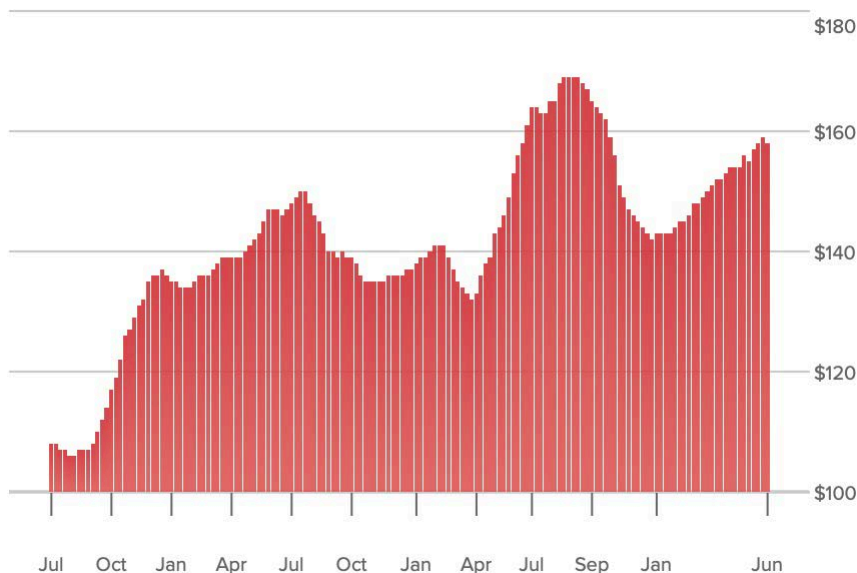
District	2022 Total Taxable Value	Area (acres)	Taxable Value /Acre
Downtown (DDA Boundary East of Broadway)*	\$15,715,743	78.94	\$199,082.39
Commercial Strip (DDA Boundary West of Market)	\$14,709,438	149.7	\$98,261.21

\* Less City and County-owned buildings and parks. City-owned parking lots are included in the calculation.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- Housing Sales Per Square Foot

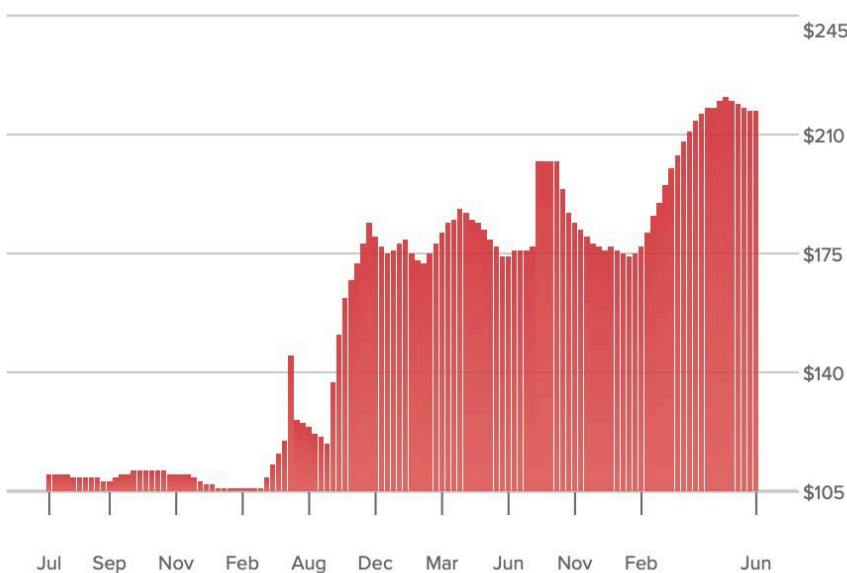
### Single Family Sales Per Square Foot (July 2020-June 2023)



The graphs (left) breakdown the monthly sales per square foot of single family residential units (top) and Condo/Townhome sales per square foot (bottom), respectively, over the past three years. Both demonstrate the increase in sales over the past three years, with some dips and spikes in pricing during that time as well.

As part of this process, a focus group was conducted with local Realtors. They confirmed, anecdotally, the steady increase in prices during this time as well. In addition, they emphasized the lack of available housing inventory as a major barrier.

### Condo/Townhome Sales Per Square Foot (July 2020-June 2023)



While the sale price of homes has gone up, the cost per square foot to construct new homes has also dramatically increased. This increase in construction cost has exceeded the sales per square foot in both the single family and condo/townhome categories. Thus, making the construction of new units more difficult. Current construction rates for the area range from \$200 to \$250 a square foot.

Recent efforts by numerous parties, including the Barry Community Foundation, have attempted to address this issue by utilizing prefabricated homes.

Source: *GuaranteedRate.com*

However, the answer to this problem will likely involve multiple solutions and housing types. Single family homes and condos/townhomes are just two housing types while there are a myriad of others, including duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, courtyard buildings, and cottage court style.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- Visitor Data

As part of this report, GPS-enabled technology called geofencing (or mobility data) was utilized to understand where visitors originated before coming to in the city of Hastings. A twelve-month capture period was used, from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. During this time, all visitors who were within the city limits for at least 10 minutes, were captured in this data. This data allows the community to understand where, at a zip code level, people are coming from.

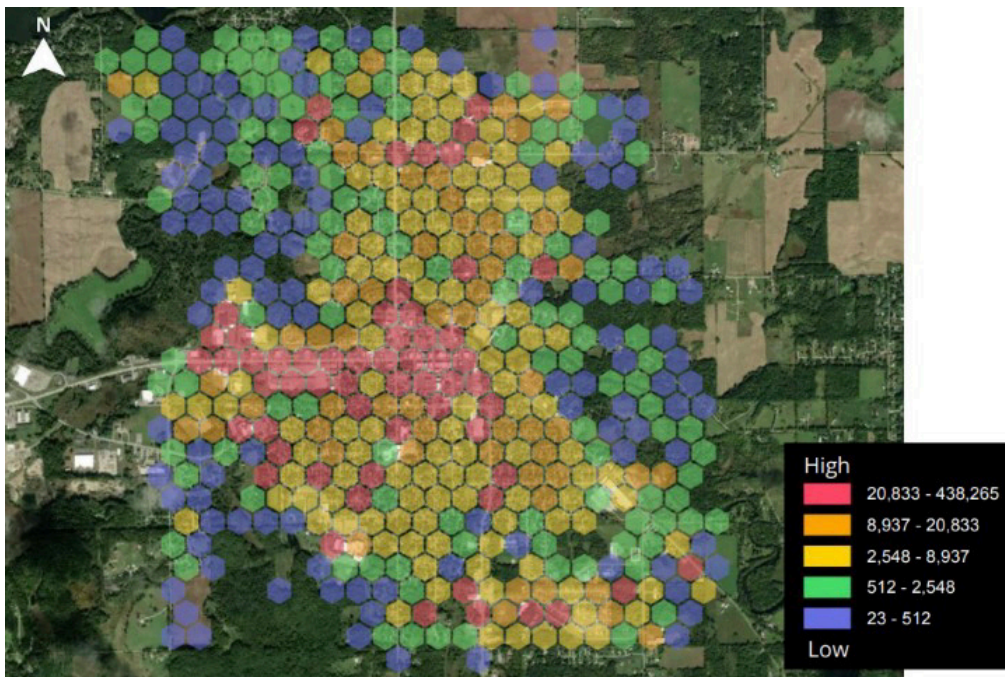
This data is widely available to national-level retailers and allows for the identification of geographic areas that make up the district's primary trade area. Once this area was identified, Place + Main Advisors, LLC used this map to pull additional market data, including the following visitor and retail leakage data from data sources including Claritas, the U.S. Census, ESRI, and augmented with their own analysis and extrapolation of data.

**4,100,000**  
Visits

**393,800**  
Unique Visitors

**10.4**  
Visits Per Person

## Where Visitors Go

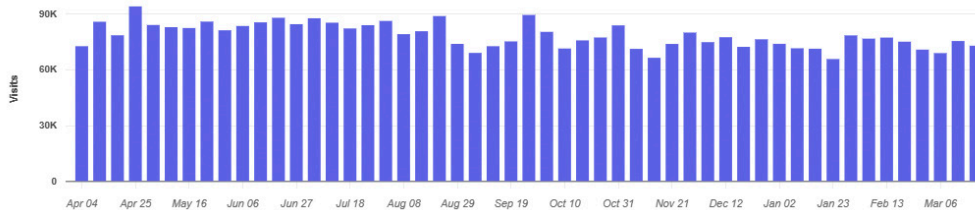




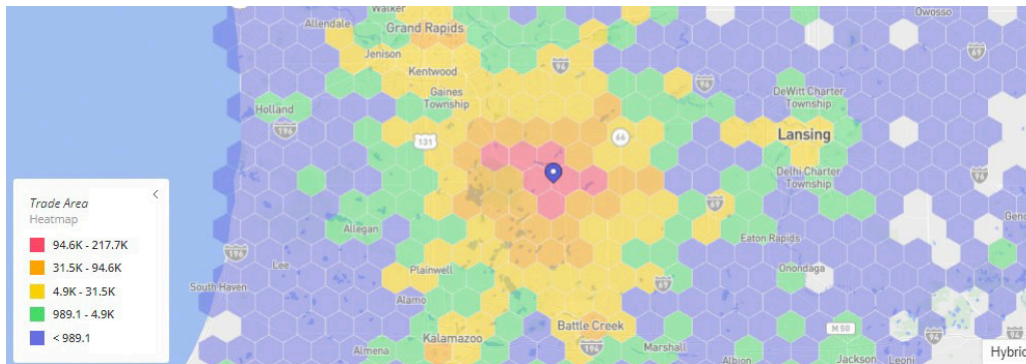
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- Visitor Data

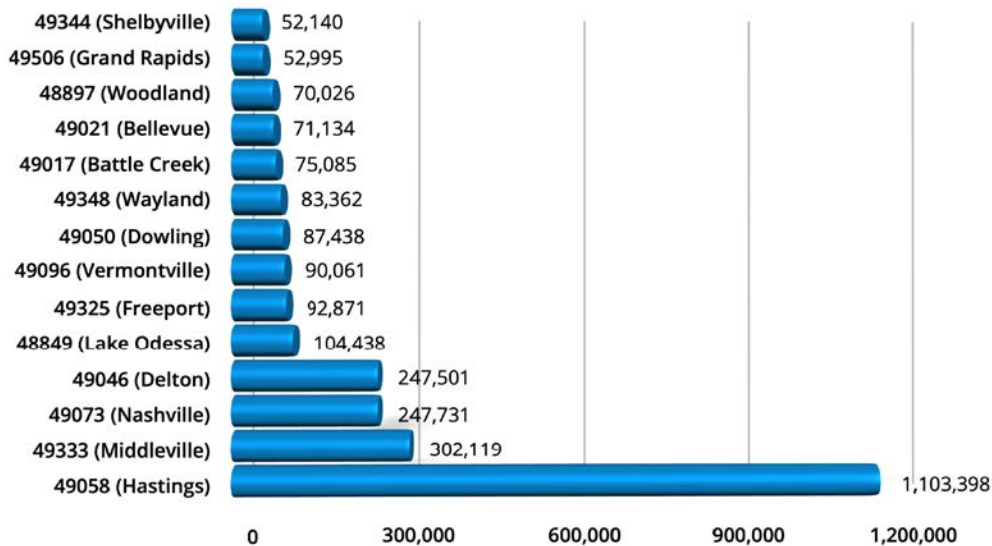
### Weekly Visits



### Visitor Origin



### Top 10 Visitor Origins By Zip Code

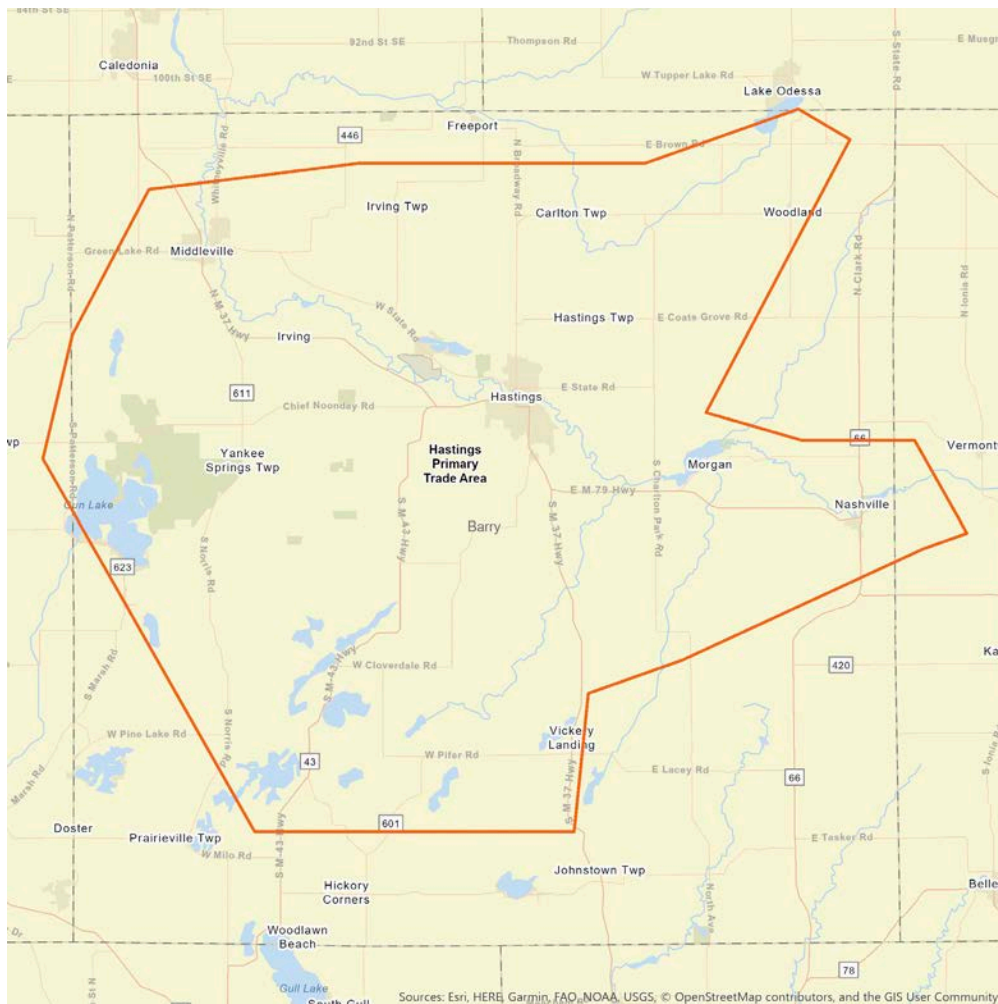


# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- Primary Trade Area

The primary trade area for this report was also established by using mobility data, or cell phone data, to determine where people are coming from into the city. Using this GPS-enabled technology called geofencing, the City of Hastings can understand at the zip code level where current customers in the district are originating. This allows for a better understanding of customer spending, needs, and the types of businesses that would be a best fit for the district. This data is widely available to national-level retailers.

As mentioned previously, this mobility data allows for the identification of geographic areas that make up the district's primary trade area. Once this area was identified, Place + Main Advisors, LLC used this map to pull additional market data, including the following demographic and market retail data from data sources including Claritas, the U.S. Census, ESRI, and augmented with their own analysis and extrapolation of data.



**46,143**  
Population  
2023 Estimate

**18,023**  
Households  
2023 Estimate

**\$76,118**  
Median Household  
Income

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Key Data Points- Retail Gap

### About Retail Gap Data

When an area's demand for retail goods and services does not match the supply, it creates what is called a Retail Gap. When there is more demand than there is supply, it creates leakage. This leakage results in customers leaving the trade area to purchase the goods or services in another market. When there is more supply than there is demand, it creates a surplus. A surplus is not necessarily a bad thing, as it could be a sign of customers coming to the trade area from other places to purchase the goods or services in this trade area.

### PRIMARY TRADE AREA

	2023 Demand	2028 Supply	2023 Retail Gap	2028 Projected Demand	Projected Opportunity
<b>Total Retail Trade and Food + Drink</b>	\$960,647,497	\$310,417,090	\$650,230,407	\$1,102,836,666	\$792,419,576
<b>Total Retail Trade</b>	\$859,629,765	\$275,447,483	\$584,182,282	\$988,312,251	\$712,864,768
<b>Total Food + Drink</b>	\$101,017,732	\$34,969,607	\$66,048,125	\$114,524,415	\$79,554,808

Retail Sectors w/ Largest Leakage	2023 Demand	2023 Supply	2023 Retail Gap	2028 Projected Demand	Projected Opportunity
Furniture stores	\$10,076,215	\$257,728	\$9,818,487	\$11,505,262	\$11,247,534
Home furnishings stores	\$7,137,180	\$657,483	\$6,479,697	\$8,374,863	\$7,717,380
Supermarkets	\$97,872,947	\$45,793,968	\$52,078,979	\$115,320,379	\$69,526,411
Pharmacies	\$43,162,560	\$25,119,248	\$18,043,312	\$49,342,370	\$24,223,122
Cosmetics	\$2,997,947	\$0	\$2,997,947	\$3,433,383	\$3,433,383
Optical goods stores	\$1,536,101	\$555,471	\$980,631	\$1,847,446	\$1,291,975
Women's clothing stores	\$4,537,225	\$658,496	\$3,878,729	\$4,454,967	\$3,796,471
Children's clothing stores	\$1,407,016	\$0	\$1,407,016	\$1,442,297	\$1,442,297
Family clothing stores	\$15,367,265	\$0	\$15,367,265	\$15,466,168	\$15,466,168
Clothing accessories stores	\$1,259,773	\$0	\$1,259,773	\$1,211,827	\$1,211,827
Shoe stores	\$5,185,945	\$352,763	\$4,833,182	\$5,803,156	\$5,450,393
Sporting goods stores	\$8,423,738	\$2,469,282	\$5,954,456	\$8,872,534	\$6,403,252
Hobby, toy stores	\$3,099,884	\$4,209	\$3,095,674	\$3,508,210	\$3,504,001
Gift, novelty stores	\$1,843,338	\$403,362	\$1,439,976	\$2,050,650	\$1,647,288
Pet and pet supplies	\$3,455,944	\$9,133	\$3,446,812	\$4,194,555	\$4,185,422
Full-service restaurants	\$45,040,157	\$14,709,922	\$30,330,235	\$51,000,215	\$36,290,293
Limited-service restaurants	\$37,579,850	\$16,087,716	\$21,492,135	\$42,747,457	\$26,659,741
Snack and beverage bars	\$5,743,833	\$3,039,243	\$2,704,590	\$6,542,233	\$3,502,990



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## What the Data Tells Us

- The city's population and households are growing, with households growing at a faster rate than population creating more demand for housing.
- The city's private job sector is fairly balanced and not too dependent on one industry over another.
- The median and average household income for city residents lags behind both the county and state's median and average income, but average income is expected to rise around \$10,000 over the next five years.
- There is very little overlap between the people who live in the city and those who work in the city limits. Workers in the city are mostly from just outside the city while the majority of city residents work within 25 miles of home.
- The downtown core has almost twice the taxable value per acre as the main commercial strip to the west. This is due to the density and size of the built environment versus the far less dense strip area. This implies the City gets far more tax revenue from the downtown.
- Housing prices have risen significantly over the last three years, but not enough to cover the rising cost of new construction of single family housing.
- There are significant opportunities for new locally-owned businesses in the primary trade area for the city.





← FREE PARKING  
← FIRE STATION  
← LIBRARY  
↑ CITY HALL / POLICE  
→ SHOP / DINE

# Economic Development Recommendations



# Actions to Address Challenges

In response to the specific challenges the City of Hastings is facing, the actions below are recommended. These recommendations will assist both immediate and long-range issues while addressing the five areas of economic development. Chief among these recommendations is to increase housing supply of all types. This one topic of housing has far reaching impact in the areas of Industry, Talent, Place, and even Entrepreneurship.

## Housing

The largest challenge facing the city currently is the lack of inventory of available and diverse housing options for existing and prospective residents. This lack of inventory is creating a choke point for the community's growth, both from a population perspective as well as for workers for local businesses.

There are several actions the City can take to help promote more and diverse housing options:

**Identify Buildable Sites-** Identifying buildable sites is a crucial activity in the realm of housing development. It involves assessing various locations and determining their suitability for constructing new residential properties. The process begins with a comprehensive analysis of factors such as zoning regulations, land use restrictions, environmental considerations, and infrastructure availability. This assessment helps housing developers identify sites that meet the necessary criteria for constructing residential buildings, such as adequate access to utilities, transportation networks, and community amenities. By evaluating the potential of different areas, developers can make informed decisions about where to invest their resources and create much-needed housing options for the growing population. Prioritization should be given to those areas that are currently zoned to accommodate housing (and in what forms.) Secondary priority should be given to those sites that could be rezoned to accommodate housing.

**PUDs & Site Condos-** The use of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Site Condominiums in housing offers several benefits to developers, homeowners, and communities alike. PUDs and site condos provide flexibility in design and land use, allowing for innovative and customized housing solutions. These developments often incorporate a mix of housing types, such as single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments, within a single community, catering to diverse housing needs and preferences. PUDs and site condos also often feature shared amenities like parks, recreational areas, and common spaces, fostering a sense of community and promoting social interaction among residents. Additionally, these developments can optimize land use by incorporating green spaces, preserving natural features, and implementing sustainable design practices. They offer an opportunity for developers to create thoughtfully planned, walkable neighborhoods with a range of services and conveniences nearby.



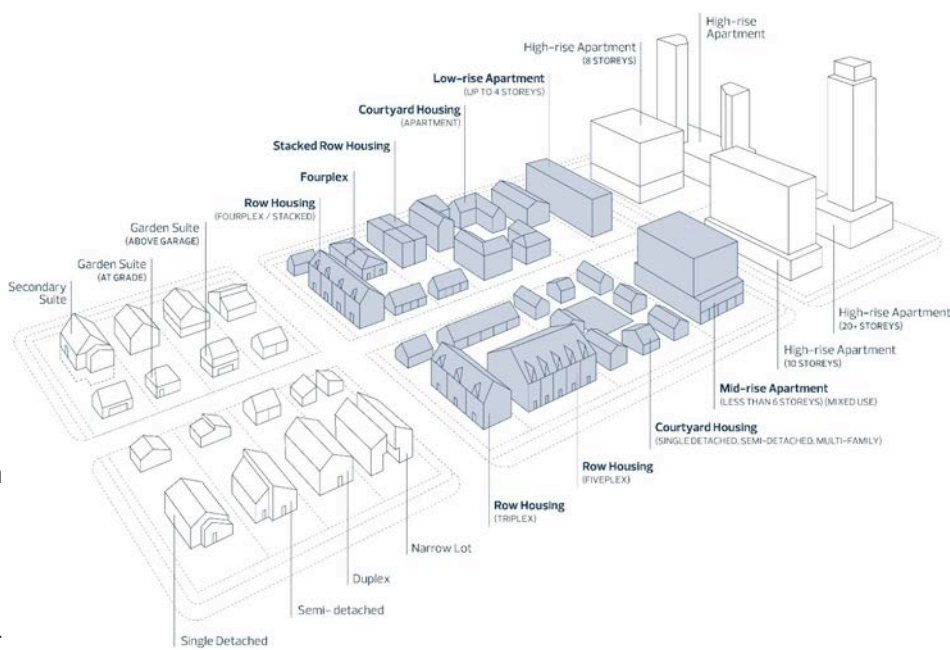


# Actions to Address Challenges

**Land Assembly-** Land assembly is an activity in housing development that involves combining multiple adjacent parcels of land into a single larger plot. It is undertaken to facilitate the creation of larger-scale housing projects and optimize land use. The process typically involves negotiating with individual landowners, acquiring their properties (or an assignable option,) and consolidating them into a unified site. Land assembly allows developers to overcome the limitations of small, fragmented plots and unlock the potential for more efficient and comprehensive housing solutions. By merging parcels, developers can achieve economies of scale, optimize infrastructure planning, and design cohesive neighborhoods. This activity enables the creation of high-density housing developments that can accommodate a larger number of residents while maximizing land utilization.

**Upper Floor Housing-** The conversion of vacant upper floors in downtown to housing holds significant importance for the city. Converting these unused and underused spaces into residential units would create new energy in downtown while helping to address the community's housing shortage. By adding housing options, downtowns become more attractive and livable, attracting residents who desire a convenient, more urban lifestyle. This influx of residents can stimulate local businesses, increase foot traffic, and foster a sense of vibrancy. It would also preserve historical buildings and architectural character, enhancing the cultural and aesthetic appeal of the downtown.

**Missing Middle Near Downtown-** Creating “missing middle housing” is of utmost importance in addressing the housing needs of diverse communities. Missing middle housing refers to the range of housing options that bridge the gap between detached single-family homes and large-scale apartment complexes. These housing types, such as duplexes, townhouses, and small-scale multi-unit buildings, provide a crucial middle ground that is often lacking in many housing markets. By promoting the development of missing middle housing, communities can cater to a broader spectrum of households, including young professionals, small families, and empty nesters. This form of housing offers a balance between affordability, privacy, and density, accommodating a variety of incomes and lifestyles. It also promotes walkability and supports the vitality of neighborhoods by providing a mix of housing options within a compact, urban fabric. By diversifying housing choices and filling the gap between single-family homes and large developments, missing middle housing helps foster inclusive, sustainable communities and addresses the growing demand for affordable, well-designed housing options.



# Actions to Address Challenges

## Issues with Constructing New Housing in Hastings

The creation of new housing units in Hastings is a significant challenge, as pointed out in “Key Data Points- Housing Sales Per Square Foot” (page 13.) For the last several years, the cost of construction has exceeded the community’s average sale per square foot. This creates several key issues that developers must contend with. These are:

**Low Profitability or Losses-** The fundamental issue is that the developer or builder may not be able to recover their investment when the home is sold or may even make a loss. This is because the selling price may not cover the costs incurred in acquiring land, materials, labor, and other construction-related expenses.

**Difficulty Securing Financing-** Banks and other lenders may be hesitant to finance construction projects if they assess the risk to be too high, which can happen when the cost of construction exceeds the potential selling price. This could lead to a slowdown in housing construction, as developers may struggle to secure the necessary funding.

**Housing Supply Shortage-** If developers can’t make a profit because the cost of construction is too high compared to the sale price, they may delay new projects or not undertake them at all. This can result in a shortage of housing, leading to increased demand and further inflating house prices, especially in high-demand areas.

**Affordability Crisis-** If only high-end homes are profitable to build, developers might focus exclusively on this segment of the market, exacerbating affordability issues for middle and lower-income individuals and families. A scarcity of affordable housing can result in social disparities and longer commute times for people who can’t afford to live near where they work.

**Economic Impact-** The construction industry is a significant contributor to the economy, providing jobs and stimulating economic growth. If construction slows due to low profitability, this can have a knock-on effect on the wider economy.

**Investor Concerns-** For those investing in housing development projects, the risk increases when the cost of building new houses exceeds the average sales price. This can lead to a decrease in investment in the housing sector.

# Actions to Address Challenges

## Place Enhancement

From an economic development perspective, placemaking is crucial because it can enhance local economies in several ways. First, it creates attractive, vibrant spaces that encourage community interaction, foster a sense of belonging, and increase foot traffic, which can boost local businesses. Improving public spaces also increases property values, thereby increasing the tax base. Additionally, well-designed spaces can attract visitors, further stimulating the local economy. Quality placemaking can foster entrepreneurship and innovation by creating spaces that nurture creativity and facilitate collaboration. Lastly, by enhancing the quality of life, placemaking can attract and retain a talented workforce, a critical component for economic growth in today's economy.

**Improve Streetscape Downtown-** Downtown Hastings is in the process of designing improvements to the downtown streetscape. These improvements will do several key things for the downtown: improves walkability, encourages pedestrians to walk the district, increasing the likelihood of visiting businesses in the district; provide room for outdoor dining, helps to increase activity in the downtown; improves the value of the properties in the district; and improves safety and accessibility for visitors of all ages and abilities, making downtown a place for everyone.

**Façade Component Grants-** An alternative approach to large scale façade improvements is to create a component grant which identifies one key area for improvement for a large portion of the district. An example would be for the DDA to do a component grant program for new awnings in a given year. The program could pay up to 50% for a certain number of awnings (8-10 buildings for instance.) This would create a positive visual difference in 8-10 buildings instead of just one. Furthermore, the DDA could facilitate the awnings, creating an economy of scale (or volume discount) as well as maintain design standards on what the respective awnings for each building would look like. The following year, the DDA could do the same thing with a different component, such as signage. The following year would be another component.

Based on the existing conditions in the district, our recommendation for component grants would be the following: Year 1- Awnings; Year 2- Signs (with an emphasis on signs that are pedestrian-oriented, otherwise known as blade signs;) Year 3- Exterior Lighting; Year 4- Paint; Year 5- Outdoor Furniture.



**Continue Park Enhancements-** The City of Hastings has spent a considerable amount of time and money improving the community's parks. These efforts should continue and look to refine the park users' experience to include items such as wayfinding signage and bicycle repair stations. Improving these parks not only improves the experience for residents but makes the parks larger assets for attracting visitors to the community.



# Actions to Address Challenges

## Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship plays a fundamental role in any local economic development strategy, driving innovation, creating jobs, and stimulating local economic growth. Entrepreneurs, by launching new businesses, contribute to local economies by providing goods and services, generate tax revenue, and create employment opportunities and local wealth. Furthermore, entrepreneurial activity fosters competition, resulting in a broader range of products and services available to consumers. Importantly, local entrepreneurs are deeply tied to their communities, making them more likely to reinvest their earnings locally, creating a positive economic cycle.

### Conduct Regular “Start Your Own Business”

**Trainings-** Regular, locally-held entrepreneurship trainings should be held in partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), based in Grand Rapids. These sessions should be held quarterly with lots of promotion through the social media channels of the city and Chamber. The first step in creating more locally-owned businesses is by encouraging more residents to become business owners.



**Create Local Preference Policies-** The City, along with the County and Corewell Health Pennock Hospital, should enact local preference policies for their respective purchases. These local policies would give locally-owned companies preference in the purchasing of various goods and services as long as the price is within 10% of the lowest bid. This small change would help keep money in the local economy instead of exporting to places like Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo.

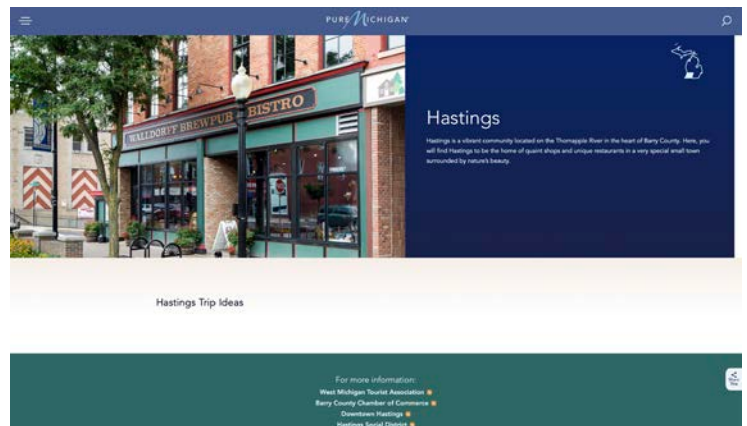
**Small Business Access to Lending Institutions-** Once an entrepreneur has successfully gone through the business planing process with the SBDC, a meeting can be convened with the local banks in Hastings where the entrepreneur (or even established business) can pitch their plan to local lending institutions. This convening saves both entrepreneurs and financial institutions time by doing one meeting instead of multiple spread out over several weeks. These meetings also create competition among lenders, increasing the likelihood of the small business owners receiving the financing they need.

# Actions to Address Challenges

## Tourism

Tourism plays a pivotal role in local economies as a significant source of income and employment. Visitors can provide businesses, ranging from hospitality, retail, to food and beverage sectors, a consistent stream of customers. This demand promotes local entrepreneurship and job creation, thus boosting the economy. Hastings has not traditionally had a strong tourism presence. This should change as the community has a lot to offer potential visitors and additional spending at local businesses would be beneficial to all concerned.

**Boost Presence on Michigan.org-** Travel Michigan, the state's tourism entity, spends tens of millions of dollars annually promoting the state and its website, michigan.org, to potential visitors. The City of Hastings has a page on this website and has only a minimal presence. The City may boost this presence with locally-written feature stories, non-chain retail and restaurant listings, park information, and other destinations that would be attractive to visitors. The city's page, and those of local businesses, are all free of charge. They just need to be updated and content added.



**Better Leverage of City's Trails-** The city is home to several high quality trails and parks. These assets could be better leveraged to attract hikers and cyclists from outside the community. Marketing of these assets is covered in the Community Marketing Strategy section.

**Recruitment of a Second Hotel/Creation of Convention & Visitors Bureau-** The city should monitor the region's Smith Travel Report (STR) reports to determine the success of the existing hotel and make a determination if the recruitment of a second hotel is possible. The recruitment of a second hotel could make the formation of a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) more feasible. Having a CVB would be beneficial as their goal is to market the community to visitors.

# Actions to Address Challenges

## **Industry**

The Hastings area has a large amount of industry for a community of its size. While several large employers are located outside of the city, there are still significant employers within the city limits. Continuing to regularly visit with these employers through coordinated retention visits is a must. In addition to the existing efforts the city undertakes in partnership with the Chamber, these recommendations should also be considered:

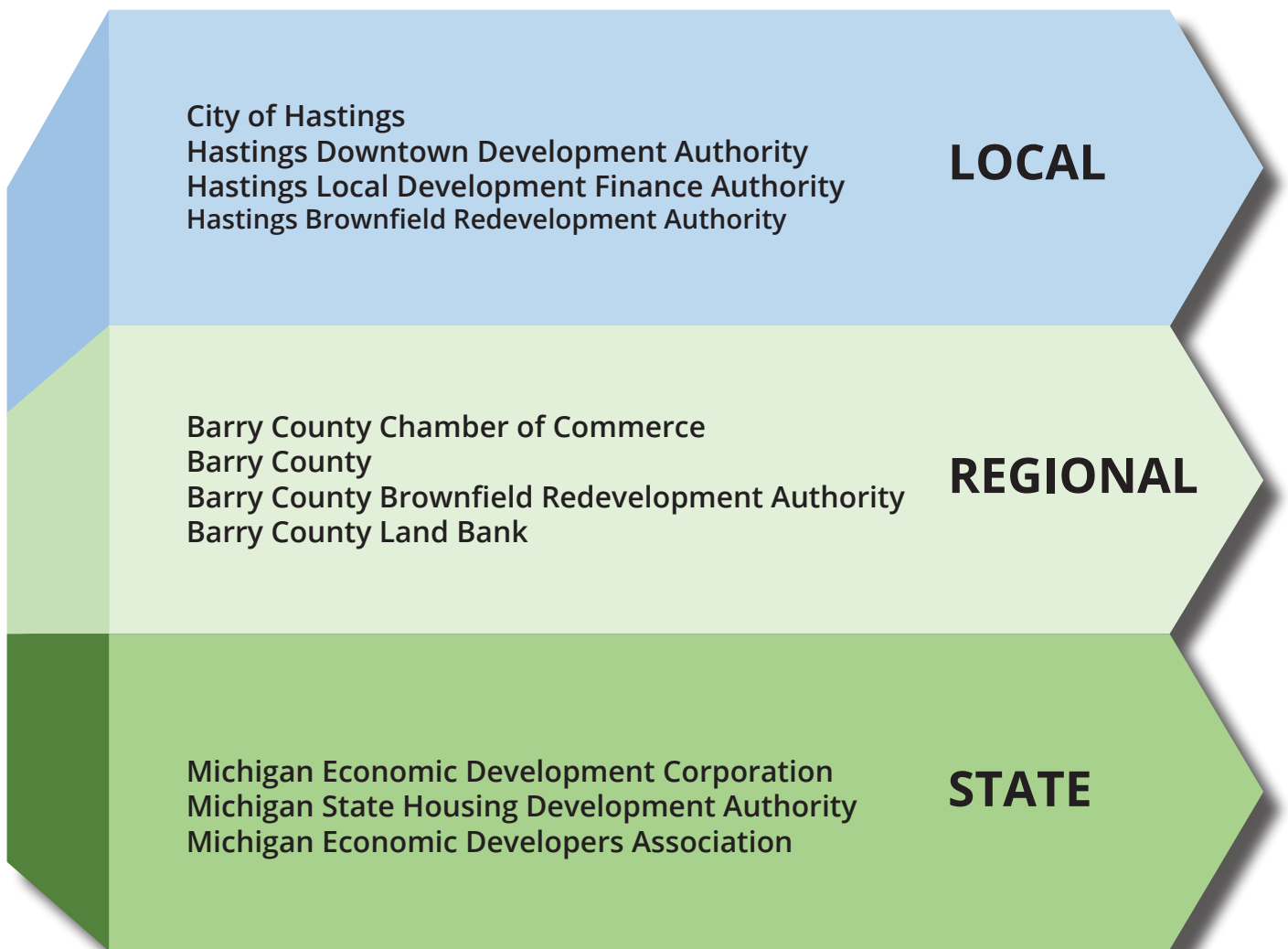
**Assist in Employee Attraction-** Several larger employers are finding it difficult to find talent. Assisting these employers is a top priority. The City, via its social media channels, should be helping to advertise these openings as well as work with the Chamber of Commerce and others to put together a marketing package aimed at helping recruit workers.

**Market City-Owned Industrial Properties-** The City owns several lots in the industrial park that are vacant. These lots can be found on several locations on the internet. However, none of these sites are currently actively marketed on the city's or Chamber's website. This specific recommendation is covered in greater detail in the Community Marketing Strategy on page 36.

**Annual Business Roundtable Discussions with Various Industries-** Industry roundtables are collaborative forums that bring together professionals, experts, and stakeholders from a specific industry to discuss and address key issues, trends, and challenges facing the sector. These roundtables could provide a platform for participants to engage in open and meaningful discussions with the city and other local stakeholders about their challenges, share insights and experiences, and collectively brainstorm innovative solutions. This could be a more effective way to reach smaller businesses by sector in the city such as retailers, restaurants, and others.

# Economic Development Partners

Economic development requires the involvement and commitment of several entities at multiple levels. The City of Hastings is part of a larger robust economic development ecosystem at the local, regional, and state levels. The chart (below) outlines these partners and at what levels they exist.





# Implementation Plan

Action	Lead	Support	Timeline	Success Measure	Cost	Priority	Vision Element
<b>Housing</b>							
Identify Buildable Sites	City		Dec 2024	Vacant parcels suitable for development identified	Low	High	Economy Community
PUDs & Site Condos	City	Planning Commission	Jun 2025	Two PUDs permitted	Low	High	Economy Community
Land Assembly	City	Private Developers	Dec 2025	City has secured (either through purchase or assignable option) 30-40 acres	Mid-High	High	Economy Community
Upper Floor Housing	DDA	City; Property Owners	Dec 2024	Assist in creation of 12 new housing units	Mid	High	Economy Community
Missing Middle Near Downtown	City	DDA; Planning Commission	Dec 2025	Assist in creation of 20 new housing units	Mid	High	Economy Community
<b>Place</b>							
Improve Streetscape	DDA	City	Dec 2026	Streetscape improvements made	High	Mid	Economy Community Infrastructure
Facade Component Grants	DDA	City	Dec 2025	Component grant established; 12 grants given	Mid	Mid	Economy Community
Park Enhancements	City	DDA	Dec 2027	Wayfinding created; Bicycle repair stations added	Mid	Low	Community
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>							
Conduct Regular "Start Your Own Business" Trainings	Chamber	SBDC; City; DDA	Jun 2024	Trainings held four times a year	Low	High	Economy
Create Local Preference Policies	Chamber	City; County; Corewell Health Pennock	Dec 2024	Local purchasing preference established	Low	High	Economy
Small Business Access to Lending Institutions	Chamber	Local Lenders; DDA	Ongoing	4 meetings per year	Low	Mid	Economy

# Implementation Plan

Action	Lead	Support	Timeline	Success Measure	Cost	Priority	Vision Element
<b>Housing</b>							
Conduct Regular "Start Your Own Business" Trainings	Chamber	SBDC; City; DDA	Jun 2024	Trainings held four times a year	Low	High	Economy
Create Local Preference Policies	Chamber	City; County; Corewell Health Pennock	Dec 2024	Local purchasing preference established	Low	High	Economy
Small Business Access to Lending Institutions	Chamber	Local Lenders; DDA	Ongoing	4 meetings per year	Low	Mid	Economy
<b>Tourism</b>							
Boost Presence on Michigan.org	City	Chamber	Jun 2024	75% of eligible businesses listed on michigan.org	Low	Mid	Economy
Better Leverage of City's Trails	City	Chamber	Dec 2025	Trails marketed through social media; trail websites	Low	Low	Economy
Recruitment of a Second Hotel/Creation of Convention & Visitors Bureau	Chamber	City	Dec 2026	New hotel recruited to community; CVB created	Mid	Mid	Economy
<b>Industry</b>							
Assist in Employee Attraction	Chamber	City	Dec 2024	Marketing materials created; Social media posts to support	Low	Mid	Economy
Market City-Owned Industrial Properties	City	Chamber	Dec 2023	City parcels marketed via website	Low	High	Economy
Annual Business Roundtable Discussions with Various Industries	City		Dec 2024	Roundtable discussions with key business sectors held one a year	Low	Mid	Economy



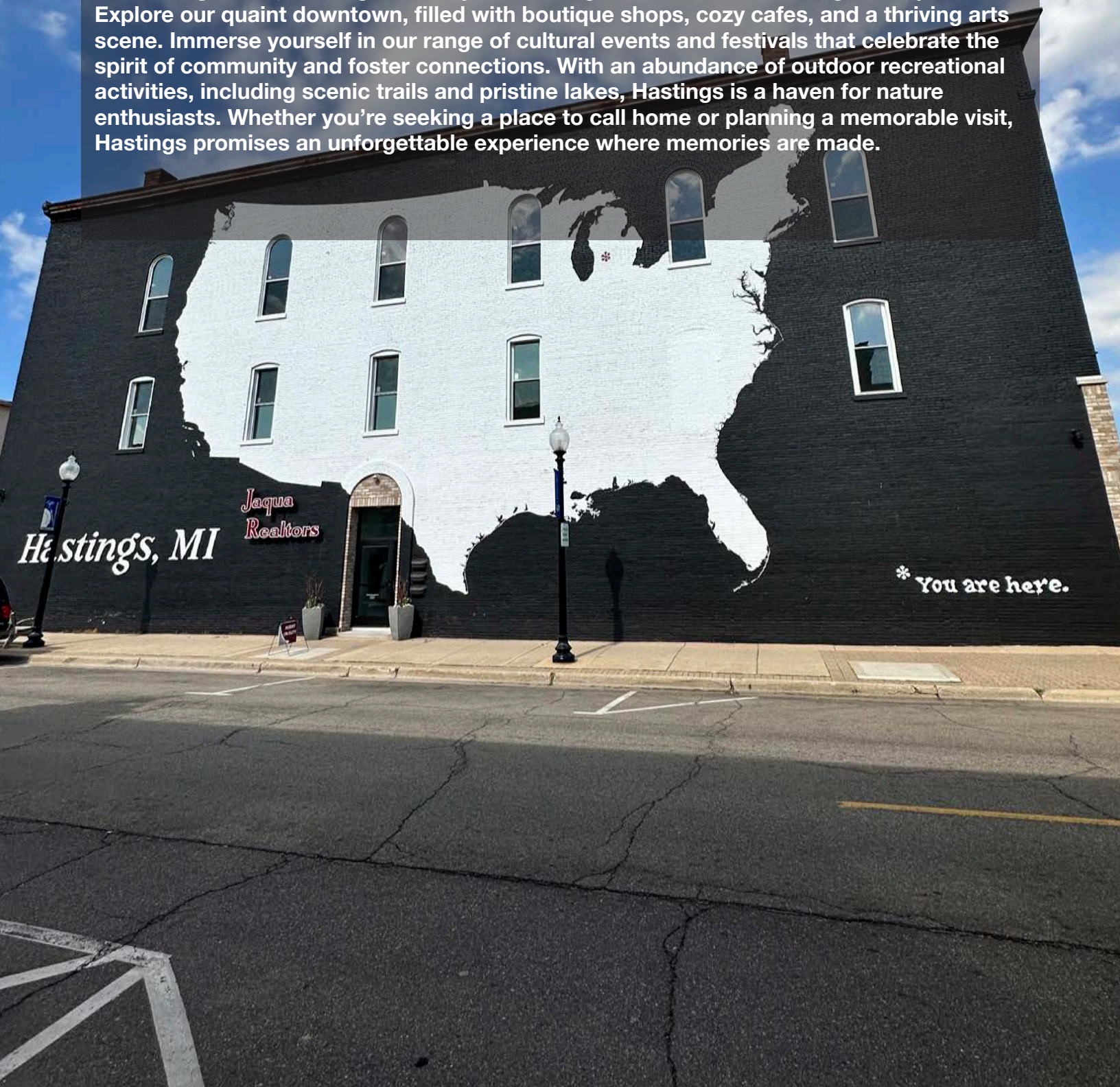


# Community Marketing Strategy



# Brand Statement

Discover Hastings, a hidden gem nestled in the heart of Michigan. Our vibrant community blends rich history with a hard-working spirit, offering a unique experience that captures the essence of authentic American small-town charm. From our natural beauty to our welcoming locals, Hastings invites you to indulge in a warm and inviting atmosphere. Explore our quaint downtown, filled with boutique shops, cozy cafes, and a thriving arts scene. Immerse yourself in our range of cultural events and festivals that celebrate the spirit of community and foster connections. With an abundance of outdoor recreational activities, including scenic trails and pristine lakes, Hastings is a haven for nature enthusiasts. Whether you're seeking a place to call home or planning a memorable visit, Hastings promises an unforgettable experience where memories are made.





# Brand Identity

The City of Hastings has established City and Destination logos and taglines.



**CITY LOGO**

## **TAGLINE**

*"We Treasure the Old. Progress with the New."*



**DESTINATION LOGO**

## **TAGLINE**

*"On the Thornapple"*

## **Brand vs Logo**

One of the biggest points of confusion in community marketing is the differences between what a brand is and a logo. To put it simply, a brand is the way people feel about a community, its reputation, and how it wants to represent itself. A community's brand is a reflection of its values and is shown in how people experience the community. A brand communicates a feeling or feelings about a community. A logo meanwhile, is a graphic that ties to the brand. A community can have several different logos and taglines depending on the situation. Taglines are two to five words summing up the brand or an aspect of the brand and are often presented with a logo.

The City's logo and brand have not been updated in multiple decades. It would be wise for the City to engage a community branding consultant to develop not just a new logo, but a new brand for the community. Updating the look and feel of the City's logo would help communicate the City's commitment to progress. The community's destination brand of "Hastings on the Thornapple," does not resonate with potential visitors or businesses unless they know the Thornapple is referencing the Thornapple River.

## **Hastings' Community Brand**

Hastings' community brand is one of a traditional small town. A quaint downtown, traditional neighborhoods, and a community that is welcoming and everyone knows each other.

In focus groups, it was also mentioned several times that Hastings is a "self contained" community. Meaning, one could have all of their needs met here without having to go to a larger metro area like Grand Rapids (most frequently mentioned), Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, or Lansing.

## **Different Taglines for Different Audiences**

The City should consider varying their taglines depending on the prospective audience. The current universal tagline, "We Treasure the Old. Progress with the New," is a statement of the city's values. However, it may not be as effective for someone looking to locate a larger manufacturing facility. A tagline should still be true to the community. For business-focused marketing, the City should adopt, "Where history meets innovation," to highlight the City's forward thinking but still highlighting the strong quality of life amenities they are known for. More information about marketing to different audiences using different messages is detailed later in this report.

# Brand Identity

**Typefaces (Fonts)-** To create a consistent look and feel between the different logos there needs to be commonality in both font usage and color palate. These fonts should be driven by the font selection used in the City logo and augmented with tastefully chosen secondary fonts to compliment.

Based on current usage, the following fonts are recommended for the City of Hastings for publications:

## HEADER

**Arial Black**

## Subhead

**Arial Black**

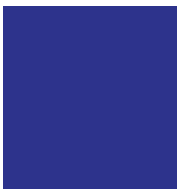
### Subhead 2

**Raleway (Bold)**

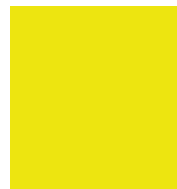
Body Copy

Raleway (Regular)

**Colors-** Like typefaces, having a common color palate will help the city logos create a common feel for the brand. For the City of Hastings, two main colors that were selected are below.



CMYK: 100/98/6/1  
RGB: 46/51/139  
Hex: #2e358b



CMYK: 9/2/100/0  
RGB: 238/229/10  
Hex: #eee50a

# Existing Marketing Assets

Community marketing plays a pivotal role in establishing the identity, visibility, and growth of a community. By actively promoting and marketing itself, the City of Hastings can attract attention, engage its residents and stakeholders, and foster a sense of belonging. It can enable the city to showcase its unique characteristics, values, and offerings to a wider audience, increasing its influence and impact. Effective community marketing can also attract new members, businesses, and investment, which contributes to the community's overall prosperity. Overall, community marketing empowers a community to assert its presence, amplify its voice, and thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

The City of Hastings has both formal and informal agreements that defer most of their marketing efforts to the Barry County Chamber of Commerce. The chamber is a valuable partner and the City's commitment to being part of the county region is admirable. However, the City must still market itself in addition to the efforts put forth by the Chamber. This section will look at the City's specific assets and make recommendations for the City to implement going forward.

## E-Newsletter

The City of Hastings has recently launched an E-Newsletter. While still in the initial launch stage, moving from the former print newsletter to an electronic format is a positive step forward. The E-Newsletter format allows for a more dynamic presentation with links to additional information while saving on the cost of postage.

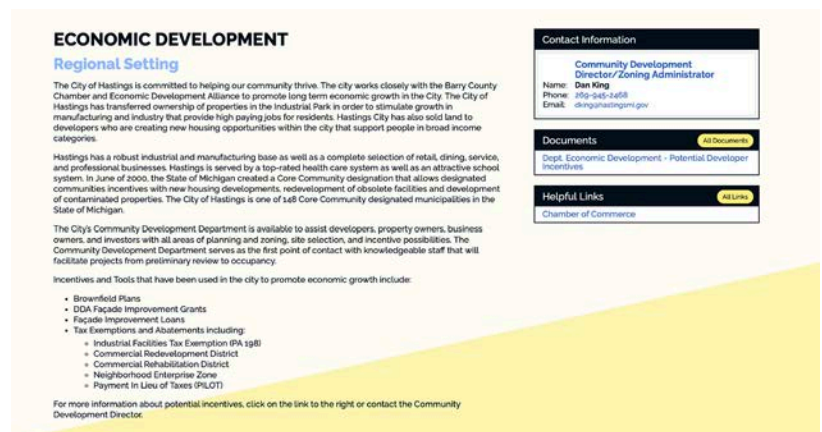
## Website

The City's website appears to follow a standard format for municipalities with a clear navigation menu and links to services. The primary audience for this website is existing residents. There are sections that pay a minimum amount of service to potential businesses and developers but is lacking in these areas.



## Economic Development

The economic development section of the website provides a brief overview of the City's efforts and partnership with the Chamber as well as highlight's key aspects of the community. It also has contact information for the Community Development/Zoning Administrator, a link to the Chamber website, and a link to the City's Development and Finance Tools.



## Prospective Residents

There is no section of the City's website that addresses prospective residents.

## Video

The DDA has done several videos with a professional videographer in the past. These videos are well intended but should consider shorter format (30 seconds or less) and more use of still photography. Many videographers can do both stills and video content.



# Existing Marketing Assets

## Social Media

The City of Hastings has several social media channels. Many of them are active and all are linked to the City website. Social media is an important part of a community's ability to communicate to residents as well as market to prospective businesses and developers. Furthermore, each channel has its own benefits, drawbacks, and audiences. The City has social media accounts on the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

### Facebook

By far the most used and followed social media account the City has, this page is updated frequently with 1-3 posts per day. This account has over 6,900 followers and posts most frequently about events, but also includes recognition of holidays, job postings for the City, and other miscellaneous matters.



### Twitter

The City's third largest social media presence with roughly 500 followers, it is technically active as it typically posts daily (with sometimes months between spurts of daily posts,) it posts mostly the same content as Facebook, though not as frequently or consistently.

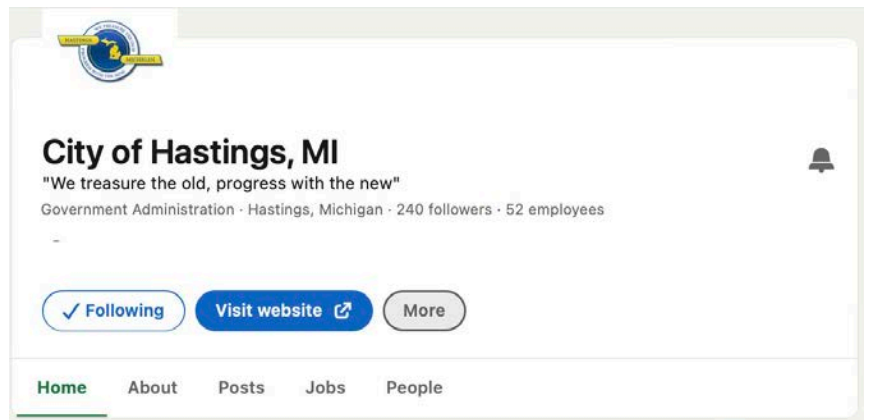
### Instagram

Arguably, this is the City's second most important but fourth largest social media presence with approximately 1,000 followers. This account posts between 1-3 times per week. As a photo/video-driven platform all of the posts have photo content with the majority of the content for the City or community events.



### LinkedIn

This is the City's smallest social media presence with an audience of only 240 followers. It is kept up to date much like Twitter with inconsistent posts that mirror all the rest of the City's social media channels.



# Marketing Recommendations- Assets

## General Recommendations

**Professional Photography-** This is often the most overlooked part of community marketing. Professional photography uses one of the most powerful mediums to communicate what simple words can't: beauty, fun, a sense of belonging, diversity, welcoming, and a place you can see yourself calling home are all messages the City wants to reinforce. Arranging a contract to have a professional photograph the City in all four seasons, with a goal of 100-250 high quality photos added to an accessible portal for the City and the general public to access and use. Priority photos should include:

- Parks & Trails (both empty and in use)
- Community Festivals & Events
- Thornapple River
- Key Redevelopment Sites
- Major Employers
- Recent Notable Public & Private Projects

Timeframe: Short-term

**Celebrate Wins-** The City has been able to accomplish a great deal in recent years. Ensuring the communication of the success of these projects is important to let residents know the City is being successful with its goals. This takes the form of Press Releases (alerting regional media of successes,) social media posts, and posting to the City's website.

Timeframe: Short-term

## Website Recommendations

The City's website overall is adequate. However, there are a few additions that could make the website a better tool for helping to promote the City.

**Add "Why Hastings for Business" Section-** This page would be dedicated to market data about Hastings. Highlights would focus on workforce, household and population trends, household income, and retail leakage data. The audience would be prospective businesses looking to potentially locate in the City.

Timeframe: Mid-term

**Add "Why Hastings for Residents" Section-** This section would be geared towards marketing to prospective residents. Information would include the availability of jobs and housing opportunities as they become available. This section would also feature the quality of life assets of the community.

Timeframe: Mid-term

**Add Process Section in "Developing in the City"-** This section would be instructional for anyone who wants to do any type of development in the City. This would include downloadable graphics/flowchart of the various approval processes for developing/redeveloping property in the City. These charts should also include key contact information and estimated timelines for approval.

Timeframe: Mid-term

**Add Real Estate Section-** The City owns several parcels that are zoned for industrial. However, there are no details on the website about what sites are available and any information relevant to each site. 90% of real estate searches start online so making sure the City's sites are readily marketed in the City website is critical. This section could evolve to include any other key privately-owned sites in the future as well.

Timeframe: Short-term

# Marketing Recommendations- Assets

## **Social Media Recommendations**

The City makes good use of social media. As noted earlier, its Facebook presence is good and does a great job of informing followers of events in the community as well as other happenings. The City's other social media channels are mostly active, which is far more than peer governments. The overall recommendation for the City's social media efforts is to bring more of a focus for each channel. Social media should be the primary method of marketing the City as a great place to live to residents. Specific channel recommendations are as follows:

**Facebook-** The City's Facebook page should continue to be the main hub of social media activity. It is the most commonly used platform. This page should be a clearing house of information and highlights from the other channels. The audience for this channel is the general public.

Timeframe: Short-term

**Twitter-** While the City's Twitter presence is good for a local government account, the nature of the platform requires high engagement to be successful. The City should largely abandon its use for day-to-day postings with the exception of emergencies, and especially public safety related events. The audience for this channel is the general public.

Timeframe: Short-term

**Instagram-** This account should be focused on communicating and marketing the City's high quality of life. The channel can still be used to communicate critical information, but the focus should largely be on photos over graphics. This channel should showcase many of the professional photos referenced earlier as well as the candid photos it currently uses. The audience for this channel is the general public, with emphasis on residents and prospective residents and visitors.

Timeframe: Short-term

**LinkedIn-** The most needed overhaul of the City's social media efforts, the focus of this channel should be about business in the City, real estate opportunities, and a spot where the City can boast about its successes. Key audiences for this channel are business leaders, real estate professionals, and economic development.

Timeframe: Short-term



# Community Marketing

The City of Hastings has done marketing for several years. Many of its efforts to communicate with residents and businesses could fall into the category of “community marketing.” Even just an effective communication strategy can work as marketing for a community.

There are three key markets that the City should consider priority audiences for its marketing efforts. These are:

- Current and Prospective Residents
- Current and Prospective Businesses
- Developers and Investors
- Visitors from Outside the County

Each of these audiences, or target markets, are important to the community. Messaging will vary depending on the audience. The key in each situation is to tailor the message to accentuate the positives of the community in a way that aligns with the goals and desires of the target markets. In addition, how that messaging is delivered to the target markets is also critical. The “how” of this delivery is referred to as a “channel.” Channels will vary based on the target market and may overlap. Key aspects of the city, such as quality of life, have a high appeal across all sectors and may be repeated. These channels may include outlets such as social media, the city’s website, specific media outreach, or direct marketing through target emails.

This section will outline target markets, the respective messaging to each market, and the recommended channels to deliver the messaging. Many of the recommendations in this section came as a direct result of suggestions from several focus groups that were conducted as part of this marketing strategy. The insight these groups provided, which ranged from business, religious, and non-profit leaders to residents were invaluable.



# Community Marketing - Residents

## Residents

Residents, both existing and potential, are a critical target market for the city. It is important for the health of the local economy that there are potential business owners and customers within the community. This creates economic viability for businesses.

***Specific Target Markets-*** The City of Hastings should strongly consider marketing to specific segments of the population, instead of just broadly. Several categories of potential residents would be:

***Families-*** These families are typically looking for a safe and welcoming community with good schools, strong education programs, and extracurricular activities for their children. They also tend to prioritize neighborhoods with parks, playgrounds, and other family-friendly amenities.

***Young professionals and entrepreneurs-*** Attracting young professionals and entrepreneurs can bring fresh talent, innovation, and economic growth to the community. Offering job opportunities, affordable housing options, and a vibrant local culture can be appealing to this demographic.

***Retirees and active seniors-*** Highlighting the city's peaceful atmosphere, quality healthcare services, and recreational activities suitable for retirees can make it an attractive destination for those seeking a slower-paced and retirement-friendly community.

***Artists and creatives-*** Fostering a supportive arts scene, cultural events, and affordable studio spaces can attract artists and creatives who seek an environment that nurtures their talents and offers opportunities for collaboration and expression.

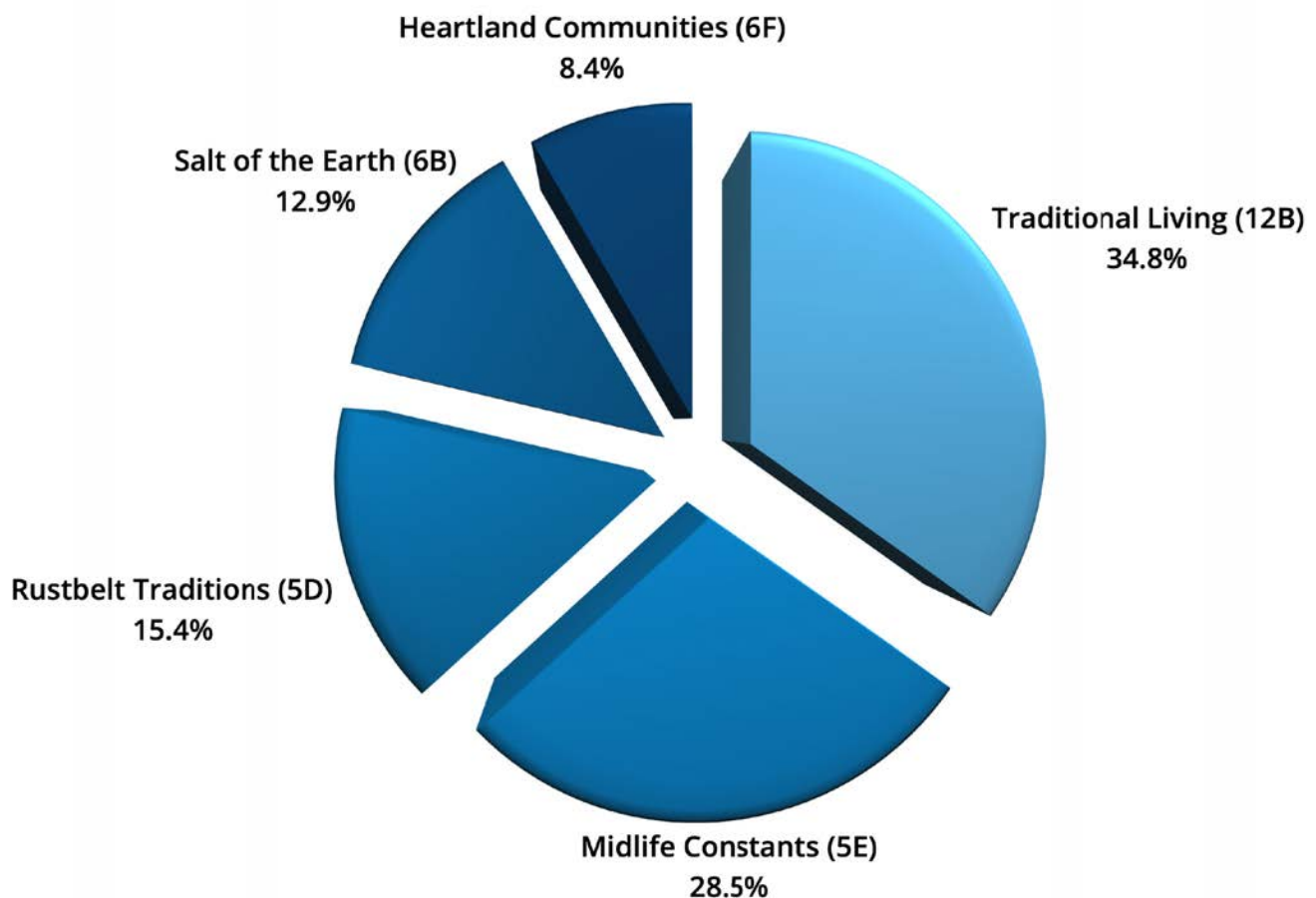
***Outdoor enthusiasts-*** Emphasizing the city's proximity to natural landscapes, parks, trails, and recreational opportunities like fishing, hiking, and biking can appeal to individuals and families who enjoy an active and outdoor lifestyle.

# Community Marketing - Residents

## Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of dividing groups of consumers who share similar needs, characteristics, or behaviors. This approach allows the city to tailor their marketing efforts to specific segments of the market, rather than trying to appeal to the market as a whole. Market segmentation typically involves analyzing demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral factors to identify distinct groups of consumers with unique needs and preferences. By understanding these segments, businesses can develop targeted marketing strategies that effectively reach and engage with their intended audience, ultimately leading to increased sales, customer loyalty, and overall success.

The various market segmentations for the City of Hastings are shown in the chart below. This data confirms the target markets identified are consistent with the existing population of the community. The charts outlining highlights of each of these market segments follow the following two pages and should be used as additional insight into the target market when specific marketing pieces are created.





# Community Marketing - Residents

Segmentation	Socioeconomic Traits	Market Profile
<p>Traditional Living (12B)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 34.8%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.51</p> <p>Median Age: 35.5</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$39,300</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 70% have completed high school or some college.</li> <li>• Labor force participation is a bit higher than the national rate at 63.4%.</li> <li>• Almost three-quarters of households derive income from wages and salaries, augmented by Supplemental Security Income (Index 139) and public assistance.</li> <li>• Cost-conscious consumers that are comfortable with brand loyalty, unless the price is too high.</li> <li>• Connected and comfortable with the internet, more likely to participate in online gaming or posting pics on social media.</li> <li>• TV is seen as the most trusted media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shop for groceries at discount stores such as Walmart Supercenters.</li> <li>• Convenience stores are commonly used for fuel or picking up incidentals.</li> <li>• Tend to carry credit card balances, have personal loans, and pay bills in person.</li> <li>• Half of households have abandoned landlines for cell phones only.</li> <li>• Favorite TV channels include Freedom, CMT, and Game Show Network.</li> <li>• Fast-food devotees.</li> <li>• Enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing and taking trips to the zoo.</li> </ul>
<p>Midlife Constants (5E)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 28.5%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.31</p> <p>Median Age: 47.0</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$53,200</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education: 63% have a high school diploma or some college.</li> <li>• At 31%, the labor force participation rate is low in this market.</li> <li>• Almost 42% of households are receiving Social Security; 27% also receive retirement income.</li> <li>• Traditional, not trendy; opt for convenience and comfort not cutting edge. Technology has its uses, but the bells and whistles are a bother.</li> <li>• Attentive to price, but not at the expense of quality, they prefer to buy American and natural products.</li> <li>• Radio and newspapers are the media of choice (after television).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefer practical vehicles like SUVs and trucks (domestic, of course).</li> <li>• Sociable, church-going residents belonging to fraternal orders, veterans' clubs, and charitable organizations and do volunteer work and fundraising.</li> <li>• Contribute to arts/cultural, educational, health, and social services organizations.</li> <li>• DIY homebodies that spend on home improvement and gardening.</li> <li>• Media preferences: country or movie channels.</li> <li>• Leisure activities include movies at home, reading, fishing, and golf.</li> </ul>
<p>Rustbelt Traditions (5D)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 15.4%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.47</p> <p>Median Age: 39.0</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$51,800</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most have graduated from high school or spent some time at a college or university.</li> <li>• Labor force participation slightly higher than the US at 67%.</li> <li>• While most income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts.</li> <li>• Family-oriented consumers who value time spent at home.</li> <li>• Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.</li> <li>• Budget-aware shoppers that favor American-made products.</li> <li>• Read newspapers, especially the Sunday editions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents take advantage of convenience stores for fueling up and picking up incidentals.</li> <li>• Watching television is a common pastime; many households have more than four TVs.</li> <li>• Favorite programming ranges from Freeform, A&amp;E, and TNT to children's shows on Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel.</li> <li>• Residents are connected; entertainment activities like online gaming dominate their internet usage.</li> <li>• Favorite family restaurants include Applebee's, Arby's, and Texas Roadhouse.</li> <li>• Radio dials are typically tuned to classic rock stations.</li> </ul>

# Community Marketing - Residents

Segmentation	Socioeconomic Traits	Market Profile
<p>Salt of the Earth (6B)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 12.9%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.59</p> <p>Median Age: 44.1</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$56,300</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steady employment in construction, manufacturing, and related service industries.</li> <li>• Completed education: 40% with a high school diploma only.</li> <li>• Household income just over the national median, while net worth is nearly double the national median.</li> <li>• Spending time with family is their top priority.</li> <li>• Cost-conscious consumers, loyal to brands they like, with a focus on buying American.</li> <li>• Last to buy the latest and greatest products.</li> <li>• Try to eat healthy, tracking the nutrition and ingredients in the food they purchase.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor sports and activities, such as fishing, boating, hunting, and overnight camping trips, are popular.</li> <li>• To support their pastimes, truck ownership is high; many also own an ATV.</li> <li>• They own the equipment to maintain their lawns and tend to their vegetable gardens.</li> <li>• Residents often tackle home remodeling and improvement jobs themselves.</li> <li>• Due to their locale, they own satellite dishes and have access to high-speed internet connections like DSL.</li> <li>• These conservative consumers prefer to conduct their business in person rather than online. They use an agent to purchase insurance.</li> </ul>
<p>Heartland Communities (6F)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 8.4%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.39</p> <p>Median Age: 42.3</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$42,400</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirees in this market depress the average labor force participation rate to less than 60%. More workers are white collar than blue collar; more skilled than unskilled.</li> <li>• The rural economy of this market provides employment in the manufacturing, construction, utilities, health-care, and agriculture industries.</li> <li>• These are budget-savvy consumers; they stick to brands they grew up with and know the price of goods they purchase. Buying American is important.</li> <li>• Daily life is busy but routine. Working on the weekends is not uncommon.</li> <li>• Residents trust TV and newspapers more than any other media.</li> <li>• Skeptical about their financial future, they stick to community banks and low-risk investments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional in their ways, residents of Heartland Communities choose to bank and pay their bills in person and purchase insurance from an agent.</li> <li>• Most have high-speed internet access at home or on their cell phone but aren't ready to go paperless.</li> <li>• Many residents have paid off their home mortgages but still hold auto loans and student loans. Interest checking accounts are common.</li> <li>• To support their local community, residents participate in public activities.</li> <li>• Home remodeling is not a priority, but homeowners do tackle necessary maintenance work on their cherished homes. They have invested in riding lawn mowers to maintain their larger yards.</li> <li>• They enjoy country music and watch CMT.</li> <li>• Motorcycling, hunting, and fishing are popular; walking is the main form of exercise.</li> <li>• To get around these semirural communities, residents prefer domestic trucks or SUVs.</li> </ul>

# Community Marketing - Residents

**Target Audience Messaging-** Messaging to potential targets should vary based on the respective target. There may be overarching themes (quality of life) but each message should be specific to each target.

Target Audience	Key Messages
Families	Great walkable neighborhoods; Lots of parks and outdoor activities
Young Professionals and Professionals	Walkable neighborhoods; Great downtown with dining options; Close to work; Outdoor activities
Retirees and active seniors	Safe, walkable neighborhoods; Great downtown with dining options; Outdoor activities
Artists and creatives	Artist friendly; Outdoor activities; Safe, walkable neighborhoods
Outdoor Enthusiasts	Lots of outdoor activities; walkable neighborhoods; Peace and quiet

**Channels-** In order to have your message heard, you have to get your message in front of your targets in a format they will see. Below are the recommended mediums and channels of communication for each of the groups.

Target Audience	Channels
Families	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Direct Realtor outreach; Website
Young Professionals and Professionals	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Search Engine Optimization of Website (Prospective Resident)
Retirees and active seniors	Social Media (Facebook); Direct Realtor outreach; Email; E-Newsletter
Artists and creatives	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Direct Realtor outreach; Website
Outdoor Enthusiasts	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok); Search Engine Optimization of Website (community section); Direct Realtor outreach

# Key Partnerships- Residents

In order to effectively market to residents, The City of Hastings must utilize existing partnerships with other local and regional entities. These partners, highlighted below, proactively market the community on an ongoing basis. These entities benefit when the rest benefit. This makes them ideal partners. Maintaining an open and ongoing line of communication with these entities to update them on site availability, infrastructure updates, and key events within the community would be highly beneficial.



The Barry Community Foundation bridges community needs with donor interests, granting dollars to programs, projects and organizations that fit our vision, to be a trusted resource for positive change.



The Hastings Downtown Development Authority exists to make downtown Hastings a better place for residents and businesses alike. They are a natural partner to market the community to residents.



The Barry County Chamber and Economic Development Alliance acts as both a business entity and pillar of the community. The Chamber represents many of the local businesses in the community.



Hastings Area  
School System

The Hastings Area School System is a key partner for the City. The need for high quality schools was consistently the top item mentioned in focus groups as a key need in the community. Schools are a key driver for young families.



# Community Marketing - Businesses

Filling vacancies and underused commercial and industrial properties should be a top priority in recruiting businesses.

## Retail

Retail is a key employment sector in Hastings. In addition, having a strong base of retail is good for the downtown and if locally-owned, helps contribute to the overall economic health of the community. Based on the community's retail leakage as outlined on page 17, key targets for retail should be:

Retail Sectors w/ Largest Leakage	2023 Retail Gap	Projected Opportunity
Furniture stores	\$9,818,487	\$11,247,534
Home furnishings stores	\$6,479,697	\$7,717,380
Supermarkets	\$52,078,979	\$69,526,411
Pharmacies	\$18,043,312	\$24,223,122
Cosmetics	\$2,997,947	\$3,433,383
Optical goods stores	\$980,631	\$1,291,975
Women's clothing stores	\$3,878,729	\$3,796,471
Children's clothing stores	\$1,407,016	\$1,442,297
Family clothing stores	\$15,367,265	\$15,466,168
Clothing accessories stores	\$1,259,773	\$1,211,827
Shoe stores	\$4,833,182	\$5,450,393
Sporting goods stores	\$5,954,456	\$6,403,252
Hobby, toy stores	\$3,095,674	\$3,504,001
Gift, novelty stores	\$1,439,976	\$1,647,288
Pet and pet supplies	\$3,446,812	\$4,185,422
Full-service restaurants	\$30,330,235	\$36,290,293
Limited-service restaurants	\$21,492,135	\$26,659,741
Snack and beverage bars	\$2,704,590	\$3,502,990

**Target Audience Messaging-** Messaging to potential targets should vary based on the respective target. There may be overarching themes but each message should be specific to each target.

**Channels-** In order to have your message heard, you have to get your message in front of your targets in a format they will see. Below are the recommended mediums and channels of communication for each of the groups.

Target Audience	Key Messages	Channels
Retail Businesses	Hastings is part of a fast-growing area of West Michigan; Prime retail sites are available; Higher than average household income; Business-friendly local government; High Quality of Life	Realtor outreach; Social media (Facebook, Instagram); Downloadable PDF Brochure
Entrepreneurs	Business-friendly local government; Support for entrepreneurs is available; Space is available; High Quality of Life	Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn); Outreach to Chamber and SBDC staff

# Community Marketing - Businesses

## Industrial

Manufacturers are another key employment sector in Hastings. The city and county are home to several important companies to the overall job market. Chief among these companies are Flexfab and Viking. Working collaboratively with these companies to identify key suppliers and customers who may be interested in locating near their facilities, creating an industry cluster, would be an ideal way to find target companies.

Target Audience	Key Messages	Channels
Manufacturers (General)	Part of a fast-growing area of West Michigan; Prime sites are available; Business-friendly local government; Proximity to Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Lansing; High Quality of Life	Trade shows and recruitment missions via Key Partnerships (top specific industry trade show list on pages 31-32); Direct marketing (LinkedIn); Site location and industrial Realtor outreach; Website
Manufacturers (Suppliers/Customer of Flexfab and Viking)	Part of a fast-growing area of West Michigan; Prime sites are available; Business-friendly local government; Proximity to Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Lansing; Proximity to Flexfab/Viking; High Quality of Life	Trade shows and recruitment missions (via Key Partnerships); Direct marketing (LinkedIn); Site location and industrial Realtor outreach

## Medical

Hastings is home to Corewell Health Pennock Hospital, one of the largest employers in the area. As such, the hospital will have ongoing needs for office space both for themselves and for affiliated medical companies. These will be much smaller businesses than manufacturers, but still a viable industry for the community to target.

Target Audience	Key Messages	Channels
Medical Offices	Part of a fast-growing area of West Michigan; Proximity to Pennock Hospital; Business-friendly local government; Proximity to Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Lansing; High Quality of Life	Realtor outreach; Outreach to hospital

# Key Partnerships- Business

In order to effectively market, the City of Hastings must utilize existing partnerships with other regional and state entities. These partners, highlighted below, proactively market the county, region, and state on an ongoing basis. While the City may never be the sole focus of their marketing efforts, the assets that the community has, especially appealing to industrial users, would be high on the list of communities they would want to promote. Maintaining an open and ongoing line of communication with these entities to update them on site availability, infrastructure updates, and key events within the community would be highly beneficial.



The Barry County Chamber and Economic Development Alliance acts as both a business entity and pillar of the community. The Chamber represents many of the local businesses in the community.



The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) exists to conduct a wide range of economic development activities for the state from community development activities to international business recruitment. They often serve as the first point of contact for prospective businesses looking to locate in the state. As a statewide organization, their knowledge of the region may not be as extensive as the Chamber, so regular communication of key developments and site availability is key.

# Community Marketing - Developers

## Developers

The City of Hastings has a need to encourage additional mixed-use and single family development within the city. Actively marketing the City to potential developers could bring attention to needed housing opportunities.

## Targets

**Regional Developers-** There are several potential developers in the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Lansing markets who may be interested in market rate housing opportunities in Hastings.

**Regional Builders-** The City should explore the desire of builders in the region of looking at Hastings and get an understanding of what they see as the challenges in the market. These builders are best equipped to jump from contractor to developer at a larger scale.

**Local Investors-** Many communities have people who have the means to take on smaller projects but not necessarily the "know how" to actually become small scale developers themselves. Fortunately, there are resources available to help educate through the process. Groups like the Incremental Development Alliance have Michigan chapters with other small developers to learn from.

**Other Developers-** It's difficult to understand who exactly may be interested in doing development in Hastings whether in the region, state, or elsewhere. It will be important to get information out on the City's website and other channels to let potential developers not already identified know of the potential opportunities.





# Community Marketing - Developers

**Medium + Channels-** In order to have your message heard, you have to get your message in front of your targets in a format they will see. Below are the recommended mediums and channels of communication for each of the groups.

Target Audience	Channels
Regional Developers	One-on-one meetings; Request for Qualifications; LinkedIn
Regional Builders	One-on-one meetings; Request for Qualifications
Local Investors	Social media posts, One-on-one meetings
Other Developers	Request for Qualifications

***Request for Qualifications (RFQ)-*** One of the channels recommended is a Request for Qualifications, or RFQ. Unlike a Request for Proposal, or RFP, where municipalities look for a finished proposal from a prospective developer, an RFQ allows for a developer to simply supply their experience as a qualifier and opens the door for the community to help shape what the project would look like. Developers typically prefer the RFQ process versus RFP as there is far less expense without a guaranteed result.

***Social Media Posts-*** This channel would simply ask people if they have ideas or interest in developing specific property. This is reliant on an audience of the City's social media channels that includes both people from and connected to Hastings either through residency, past school affiliation, or through tourism.

# Community Marketing - Visitors

## Visitors

Residents, both existing and potential, are a critical target market for the city. It is important for the health of the local economy that there are potential business owners and customers within the community. This creates economic viability for businesses.

**Specific Target Markets-** The City of Hastings should strongly consider marketing to specific segments of the population, instead of just broadly. Several categories of potential residents would be:

**Outdoors and nature enthusiasts-** Hastings is surrounded by picturesque landscapes, including parks, nature reserves, and lakes. Those who enjoy hiking, birdwatching, fishing, and other outdoor activities might find Hastings appealing.

**Cyclists-** Hastings is known for its bike-friendly atmosphere and infrastructure, making it easier and safer for cyclists to explore the city and its surroundings on two wheels. Cyclists can find dedicated bike lanes, bike racks, and trails throughout the area.

**History and culture lovers-** The city has historical buildings, museums, and cultural events that can interest people with an appreciation for local heritage and traditions.

**"Foodies"-** Visitors who enjoy exploring local cuisine and craft beverages may find Hastings's restaurants, cafes, and brewery to be a draw.

**Festival goers-** Hastings hosts various festivals and events throughout the year, which can attract visitors seeking unique experiences and local celebrations.

**Families and leisure travelers-** Hastings offers a relaxed and family-friendly environment, making it suitable for a quiet getaway or a weekend trip.

**Motorcycle and car enthusiasts-** With scenic roads and beautiful countryside, Hastings can be a destination for motorcycle and car tours.



# Community Marketing - Visitors

**Target Audience Messaging-** Messaging to potential targets should vary based on the respective target. There may be overarching themes (quality of life) but each message should be specific to each target.

Target Audience	Key Messages	Channels
Outdoor and nature enthusiasts	Hastings offers a nature-filled escape just a short drive away.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads
Cyclists	Explore Hastings' picturesque routes and enjoy the serenity of low-traffic rural roads and riverfront trails. An ideal for peaceful and enjoyable cycling.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads
History and culture lovers	Hastings takes great pride in preserving its history, evident in buildings downtown and dedication to historic preservation.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads
Foodies	Discover hidden culinary gems and beloved local eateries that capture the essence of Hastings' community spirit.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads
Families and leisure travelers	Join in the festivities of family-oriented events, where you can celebrate local traditions and enjoy community gatherings.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads
Festival Goers	Experience the magic of Hastings' lively festivals, where the city comes alive with colorful parades, music, and festivities for all.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads
Motorcycle and car enthusiasts	Hastings welcomes motorcycle and car enthusiasts to experience the thrill of open roads and scenic drives in a welcoming and supportive community.	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram); Targeted Ads



