



Project Rising Tide Michigan

2018 Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Economic Development - Michigan Association of Planning

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) committed their assets to mentoring ten communities across the state in order to empower them to shape their future and maximize economic potential. The communities, one in each of the State's Prosperity Regions, then charted an action plan to achieve success, and a team of consultants was retained by the MEDC to help them achieve it.

Place + Main Advisors were part of the consulting team that provided holistic technical assistance to overcome gaps in local capacity and bring in new expertise. Each community's work plan addressed its individual needs while strengthening engagement in best practices. An impressive collection of deliverables resulted from the project, including economic development strategies, communications plans, branding services, and site analyses. These were valuable pieces in each community's development toolkit. Perhaps more vital was the convening of each community's "players," as elected officials, staff, developers, business owners, agency representatives, and consultants took advantage of the opportunity to work together on action items. Every instance of cooperation and connection represented a step toward overcoming the larger structural barrier of limited capacity in these communities.

The project also sought to maximize potential benefits of connecting ten peer communities across the State. For example, issues such as housing quality and intergovernmental coordination arose nearly universally, this wider-lens view offered opportunities to share information, solutions, and lessons.

Place + Main Advisors provided three main services through Project Rising Tide. These services were:

Economic Development Strategies- These strategies include comprehensive analysis of the community and recommendations to better position it for economic growth. Analysis includes demographic information and trends, extensive community input, identification of key redevelopment sites, and specific steps for implementation.

Communities receiving this service: Central Lake, Charlotte, Ewart, Grayling, Hillsdale, Newberry, and Paw Paw

Downtown Redevelopment Plans- These plans are focused on concrete steps the community can take, based on demographic and market analysis, to improve the downtown area. Recommendations focus on design, economics, and organizational improvements.

Communities receiving this service: Grayling, River Rouge, and Sandusky

Communications Strategies- These strategies include details on how and when to communicate to media, press release and media alert templates, as well as lists of local, regional, and statewide media contacts for distribution and outreach.

Communities receiving this service: Central Lake, Charlotte, Ewart, Grayling, Harrison, Hillsdale, Newberry, and Paw Paw, River Rouge, and Sandusky