

Strategy/Goal Proposal for Elk Rapids DDA April 2019

Mission: To be the catalyst for enhancing the overall health of the business community while preserving the character and supporting commerce.

Vision: Creating a vibrant, sustainable community where people and business thrive.

Big Idea:

Market our strengths while developing a multisector, comprehensive approach to encourage year-round viable commerce and a sustainable economy. Build collaboration across sectors around a common agenda.

Inspiration:

Change is inevitable. Be in control of the change. Move it in a positive direction or it will go the other way. Seek out opportunities. Have conversations.

Collaborate community wide to change attitudes.

Five Key Metrics for a Sustainable Healthy Community

- Active Outdoor Living/Healthy Food
- Year-Round Commerce/Population
- Social Cohesion
- Environmental Responsibility
- Excellent Education

10 Signs of a Successful Community

- People work together vs allowing political and past disagreements keep them from making progress
- They have big plans-A blueprint for the big ideas
- Downtown is #1-Attention, creativity and resources are poured into downtown to ensure success.
- Open, welcoming community
- You can easily name local patriots
- Public and private partnerships are real-both sectors understand that they can't be successful w/o each other
- People know the civic story
- Near a research University
- Community College is near and dear
- Distinctive, innovative schools

Urgent Needs

- Recruit DDA Board members that are engaged and invested in the community and bring knowledge, ideas and resources to the table.
- Recruit viable candidates for Village Council 2020 election who understand civic issues and are pro-business, change, prosperity, opportunity.

- Join community committees already working on projects (i.e. Tart Trail)
- Funding and NLEA partnership decisions
 - NLEA
 - Events
 - Grants
 - Private Sector investment
- Collaborate on projects with Village Council, Chamber, Green ER, Private Sector, Art Rapids, Tart Trail, Paddle Antrim, etc

Demographic Issues

- Median age is 60 years old. Higher than any other community around us.
- Declining year-round population
- Aging population resulting in civic divide-against positive change, responsible growth, prosperity
- Declining school population/Deteriorating school infrastructure/teachers and young families can't afford to live here
- Increasing dark streets/vacation homes and weekly rentals
- Stagnant/fixed income
- Extreme Seasonal economy, few year-round businesses with sustainable jobs
- Rising housing prices
- Rising taxes
- Aging infrastructure

Goals and proposed projects based on these issues: (Some projects will show up under multiple goals)

- Workforce Housing, allowing the 70% of workforce that doesn't live in ER to consider moving here. Attract young families. Build year-round population.
 - Housing committee consisting of public and private sector experts who are engaged and invested in community
 - Survey potential property opportunities quickly
 - Find Housing opportunities outside Village with lower taxes and water bills
 - Research and implement grant opportunities for rental rehab
- Market our assets/Build a sense of place/Wayfinding
 - Water on all sides
 - Quaint downtown
 - Bridge Walk
 - Destination/Niche Businesses
 - Golf Course
 - Good Health Care close
 - Great Schools
 - Safe, low crime community
 - Torch Lake Tour
 - Close to TC 20 minutes
 - Close to NMC 15 minutes
 - 10 minutes from resort (build relationship)

- Build year-round economy-Shoulder season and winter activities-outdoor activities
 - Tart Town Initiative
 - Paddle Antrim
 - Bridge Walk
 - Collaborate with Art Rapids and Chamber on Community Events
 - Establish and market bridge walk
 - Ferry Service to and from Sutton's Bay
 - Protect neighborhoods from going dark/Advocate to regulate short term rental businesses
 - Market year-round assets and destination businesses-Winter Warriors
 - Develop Christmas shopping season
 - Develop winter events and activities to attract visitors into town
 - Year-round farmer's market/CSA drop off in town
 - Build relationship with Resort
- Strengthen Downtown/protect retail/Add unique businesses
 - Wayfinding-Gateway signing
 - Mixed use rehab Grant (Java Jones, Chang's, Doc Schutte, Lawyer, etc)
 - Succession planning
 - Develop plan to attract unique businesses
 - Market aggressively-Merchant Mondays, Winter Warriors, Christmas shopping, Shop Local, Events
 - Add electric car charging station
 - Events in shoulder and winter seasons
 - Move Farmer's Market to downtown
- Attract sustainable Jobs/ Businesses
 - Marketing packet
 - Tax and infrastructure incentives-building the tax base
 - Comprehensive Ames Street Revitalization Plan and Bridge Walk Extension
- Environmental action-Water is everything-Incentives for Green Energy
 - Collaborate with Green ER on action-oriented projects
 - Work with Merchant Group to promote responsibility for a greener business community
 - Electric charging station
 - Green Academy
- Build School Enrollment
 - Support marketing
 - Support aesthetic and urgent improvements and repairs
 - Day Care
 - Workforce housing initiatives