



# COMMUNITY MARKETING STRATEGY

CITY OF LAINGSBURG  
MICHIGAN



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# About Laingsburg

Laingsburg, Michigan is a charming small town in western Shiawassee County, known for being a tight-knit community reflecting small town America. With a population of just over 1,200, Laingsburg offers a serene, friendly atmosphere where neighbors know each other by name. The town features historic buildings and local landmarks that reflect its rich history. Outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to enjoy, from the serene waters of the Looking Glass River and Lake Victoria to the scenic trails of nearby Sleepy Hollow State Park. Laingsburg's local events and community gatherings foster a strong sense of togetherness, making it an inviting place for families and individuals seeking a peaceful yet vibrant community.



# Marketing Strategy Goals

## Primary Goals

**Retain & Attract Businesses:** An important goal of the City's marketing strategy is to retain and attract businesses to the area, particularly, downtown.

**Retain & Attract Residents:** One of the main goals for the marketing strategy is to retain and attract residents to keep the city a growing and vibrant community.

**Redevelop Key Sites:** In addition to retaining and attracting both residents and businesses, redeveloping key sites into productive uses is also a major goal of this marketing strategy.

## Secondary Goals

**Encourage Local Engagement:** The City's marketing strategy can also aim to encourage local engagement and participation in City events and initiatives.

**Build on the City's Reputation:** The City's marketing strategy can help build its reputation and perception among both residents and outsiders.



# The City Brand

Statement  
Identity

# BRAND STATEMENT

Welcome to Laingsburg, where community thrives, and nature inspires. Laingsburg is a haven for those seeking a close-knit, welcoming atmosphere and where an escape to nature is just down the street. Our community is a testament to the beauty of small-town living, where historic charm meets modern life. As you stroll through our streets, you'll find quaint buildings that tell the story of our history, complemented by vibrant events that bring our community together.

Education and family are at the heart of Laingsburg. Our schools are known for their dedication to providing quality education and fostering a nurturing environment for students to grow and succeed.

In Laingsburg, tradition meets tranquility, creating an ideal blend of small-town charm and natural beauty. Our commitment to preserving our history while embracing progress ensures that Laingsburg remains a vibrant, dynamic place.

Laingsburg is more than just a place to live, it's a place to belong.



# BRAND IDENTITY

The City has an established logo but no tagline.



LOGO

## SUGGESTED TAGLINE

*"Where Opportunity and Tradition Meet"*

### Logo Description

The logo for Laingsburg features a stylized depiction of the community with both downtown and rural elements. The upper portion showcases a row of buildings representing main street. Above these buildings, fireworks light up the sky, adding a festive and celebratory atmosphere. The lower portion of the logo presents a natural landscape with a winding path leading to Lake Victoria, flanked by trees and fields, highlighting its rural, agricultural setting. The name "LAINGSBURG" is prominently displayed across the middle in a bold, serif font on a curved banner, with uppercase letters that convey a sense of tradition and stability. Overall, the logo combines elements of both urban and rural life, symbolizing a small town rich in community spirit and natural beauty, with fireworks indicating a lively place with events and celebrations. An important note on the file of the City's logo is that it is in extremely low resolution (72 dpi) and doesn't translate well when used in any non-website based medium. Recreating this logo in a high resolution (300dpi) format will help the City improve the look of any print materials.

### 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. Laingsburg need to develop a style guide for logo usage and typeface. Suggestions are highlighted under Fonts and Colors on page 8.

### Laingsburg's Community Brand

In focus groups with business leaders, the community's brand consistently emerged as one characterized by cooperation and a welcoming attitude towards businesses. This perception was remarkably universal, even in instances where there were challenges or issues with other levels of government. The positive reputation of the community was not diminished by these challenges, as business leaders were careful to differentiate between the various levels of government. In particular, the city was highlighted as providing the most positive interactions. Business leaders frequently mentioned the city's proactive approach and responsiveness, which contributed to a sense of trust and collaboration. This distinct separation ensured that the city's reputation remained strong and untarnished, reinforcing its image as a business-friendly environment. The focus groups revealed a clear consensus that the city stood out as a supportive and cooperative partner in their business endeavors.

# BRAND IDENTITY

The City of Laingsburg does not have a formal style guide for the use of its logo. Therefore, this section uses approximations (and suitable replacements) for fonts and colors.

**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.

LAINGSBURG  
I AM YOUR PRIMARY FONT

Garamond (Serif Font)

Where Opportunity and Tradition Meet  
I am your Secondary Font

Montserrat (Sans Serif Font)

## Primary vs Secondary Fonts

In graphic design, the distinction between primary and secondary fonts plays a crucial role in creating effective and visually appealing designs. The primary font, also known as the main or headline font, is typically used for the most prominent text elements such as headings, titles, and major callouts. It is chosen for its ability to capture attention and convey the overall tone and style of the design. On the other hand, the secondary font, also known as the body or support font, is used for less prominent text such as body copy, subheadings, and supplementary information. This font is selected for its readability and complementary qualities, ensuring that it harmonizes with the primary font without overshadowing it. The careful selection and pairing of primary and secondary fonts contribute to a cohesive and balanced design, enhancing both the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the text.

**Colors-** Like typefaces, having a common color palate will help the city logo create a common feel for the brand. For Laingsburg, four main colors that were selected are below. It should be noted other colors can and should be used in conjunction with these colors and logos for different purposes, but for the logo itself these four primary colors (along with solid black) should be the main uses.



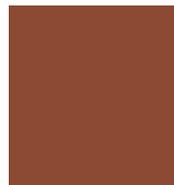
CMYK: 88/38/100/35  
RGB: 20/91/46  
LAB: 34/31/19  
Hex: #146236



CMYK: 6/7/63/0  
RGB: 243/125/224  
LAB: 89/-4/51  
Hex: #fef591



CMYK: 72/20/0/0  
RGB: 39/162/218  
LAB: 62/-19/-39  
Hex: #7dd2f7



CMYK: 31/74/81/27  
RGB: 141/74/52  
LAB: 39/27/25  
Hex: #894c3a



# Existing Marketing Assets

**Print  
Website  
Social Media  
Recommendations**

# EXISTING MARKETING ASSETS

The City of Laingsburg has been proactive in its marketing and communication efforts. For a community of its size, the City has a better than average municipal website and an average social media presence. This section will highlight the existing assets the City either maintains directly or plays a significant role in producing.

## Print

The City currently produces a quarterly newsletter that is mailed out to residents along with their water bills. This is a basic newsletter format that communicates general City and local event information.

## Website

The City has a solid website with several important areas related to marketing. For the purposes of this strategy, the focus is on three sections: Visitors, Residents, and Development Opportunities.



## Visitors

This section of the City’s website has three main relevant subareas, all pertaining to various aspects. These are: Events, Businesses, and Recreation. In addition, as a user moves down the page, there is also a link for applying for an application, requirements, and related ordinance for food trucks in the city. While this link doesn’t fit neatly anywhere else within this section, it is a helpful and welcoming message to prospective food truck vendors.

**Events-** This is a list view of the various festivals and events in the community. Simple and effective, the list includes specific dates and links to the appropriate website, Facebook page, or other online resource for more information.

**Businesses-** Like the Events section, this is a simple listing of the various businesses, organizations, and general things to do in the community in one place. Each listing includes a phone number, address, and a link to the appropriate website or Facebook page. The sections are divided in easy to understand areas of Retail; Restaurants; Places of Worship; Personal Care; Things to Do Around Town; Auto & Home; Insurance, Realty, & Others; and Community Organizations.

**Recreation-** As with the previous sections, this is a simple list of the parks and other outdoor recreation opportunities in the immediate area. However, unlike the other sections, there are no links to additional online information about any of these assets.

## Residents

While this section has no formal landing page, it contains numerous links to information existing residents would find useful. This includes information on elections, permits, the library, and other resources. Interestingly, there is also a link to available rental properties, but no indication of how up-to-date the list of apartments and rental owners is.

## Development Opportunities

While not navigable from the tabs across the top of the website, this page is found on the main page of the website. This landing page is focused on the potential development of several sites in the city and includes links to the City’s economic development incentive policies, basic information on three sites (217 E. Grand River Avenue, Treat Street Park, and 120 S. Rail Road), and two data packages for 217 E. Grand River Avenue.

# EXISTING MARKETING ASSETS

**Economic Development Incentives-** The “Economic Development Incentives” document from the City outlines various incentives available to support economic growth in the area. It includes details on tax abatements, grant opportunities, and other financial incentives aimed at attracting and retaining businesses. The document is designed to provide potential developers and investors with the necessary information to take advantage of these opportunities, thereby fostering local economic development.

**Basic Information on Sites-** This link opens a PDF file that contains an overview of 217 E. Grand River Avenue, Treat Street Park, and 120 S. Rail Road. This document is six pages long and gives basic information on these sites and the community’s vision for each. It is a simple and effective tool.

**Bank House Site- Full Property Package-** This document is more of a non-RFQ marketing package for the 217 E. Grand River Avenue site. This package is substantially bigger than the Basic Information package and includes demographic data, information on incentives, and a description of the type of development desired for the parcel.

**RFQ for 217 E. Grand River Avenue-** This document is the full Request for Qualifications created by Giffels Webster in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Redevelopment Services team. This twenty page PDF includes renderings on desired development, potential building programming, and various incentives.

**Why Laingsburg?**  
Incorporated as a Village in 1871 and then as a City in 1951, Laingsburg has its roots as a railroad stop and agricultural community. The City of Laingsburg has since transformed into a bedroom community for the Lansing area and has made great strides within the last several years to build its brand, modernize its functioning, capacity, and upgrade its infrastructure.

**Snapshot**  
The City of Laingsburg is approximately 10 minutes from the I-69 international trade corridor.  
Laingsburg is situated between the greater Lansing and Flint areas.  
Downtown Laingsburg is located within 5 miles of three lakes (Scenic, Victoria and Ovid) and Sleepy Hollow State Park, which sees 300,000 plus visitors annually.

**Treat Street Park – Pt. 2**  
**ID# 022-60-077-000-00**

**Site Information (Snapshot)**

- Acreage & Status**  
24 acres in total. Vacant Land. City Owned Property.
- State Equalized Value:** \$0 (city owned)
- Cost:** Obtain figure from City
- Zoning**  
C-1, Central Business District
- Future Land Use**  
Commercial
- Utilities**  
Electric & Gas: Consumers Energy  
Water: Private Well  
Sewer: City of Laingsburg  
Internet: Daystar, High Speed Fiber Internet Offered
- City of Laingsburg Contact**  
Paula Wiloughby, City Clerk/Treasurer  
Phone: (517)651-5374

Location: 217 E. Grand River Rd. Picture Source: Google Maps Street View

**REQUEST FOR DEVELOPER QUALIFICATIONS**  
217 E. GRAND RIVER AVENUE | LAINGSBURG, MICHIGAN

Month Date, Year

**SITE OVERVIEW**

217 E. Grand River Avenue (looking Southwest) outside the site.

Located within the heart of downtown, this site is within a 15-minute walk from downtown restaurants, a grocery store, a convenience store, and McClinton Park. Currently vacant, this site is adjacent to Memorial Park and was acquired by the City in 2008 for public use and open space. The City now is interested in seeing the parcel redeveloped in a way that supports downtown businesses and existing residents. The parcel is zoned C-1, Central Business District zoning district, and allows flexibility by permitting mixed-use developments (commercial uses in conjunction with residential uses). A recent ALTA survey shows no current deed restrictions and also provides locations of utilities. There are no known environmental issues present.

**Site utilities**

- Electric & Gas: Consumers Energy
- Water: Private Well
- Sewer: City of Laingsburg
- Internet: Daystar, High speed fiber Internet offered

**Contacts**

- City of Laingsburg: City Clerk / Treasurer: 517.651.5374
- Shawanssee County: 989.743.2233
- Shawanssee Economic Development Partnership: 989.725.9281
- Michigan Department of Transportation: 517.325.4375
- Shawanssee County Soil Division and Sediment Control: 989.743.2390
- Consumers Energy: 800.805.0490
- Daystar Communications: 989.720.8900

**PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO**

**Redevelopment Concepts**  
The city envisions a two- to three-story mixed-use building with minimal, if any, setback. The initial concept maintains a continuous street wall along S. Grand River and includes design elements that enhance the pedestrian experience.

This concept includes a 10,020 square foot ground floor of non-residential space (retail/restaurant/cultural/entertainment flex space) and two floors of residential units (approximately 19 units around 900 square feet each). Open connections between Grand River and the parking area will be maintained through a pedestrian walkway or plaza.

As a part of the RFQ development process, stakeholders had the opportunity to offer insights into the local market needs and comment on desired development form and use. Highlights of this feedback include:

- Larger rental dwellings are encouraged to provide more “family-sized” housing downtown.
- Family-style restaurants with outdoor dining are desired, along with a grocery that offers a combination of conventional and organic goods.
- Generally, two- to three-story buildings are acceptable with pedestrian-oriented spaces connecting the parcel to other downtown spaces. Recent nearby building renovations illustrate that property owners are investing in downtown properties and enhancing the historic character of the area. Recreation, arts, and culture are important local assets that stakeholders are seeking to enhance.

3D rendering of the proposed development.

Examples from the Basic Information Package (top); Full Property Package for 217 E. Grand River Avenue (middle); Request for Qualifications (bottom row)

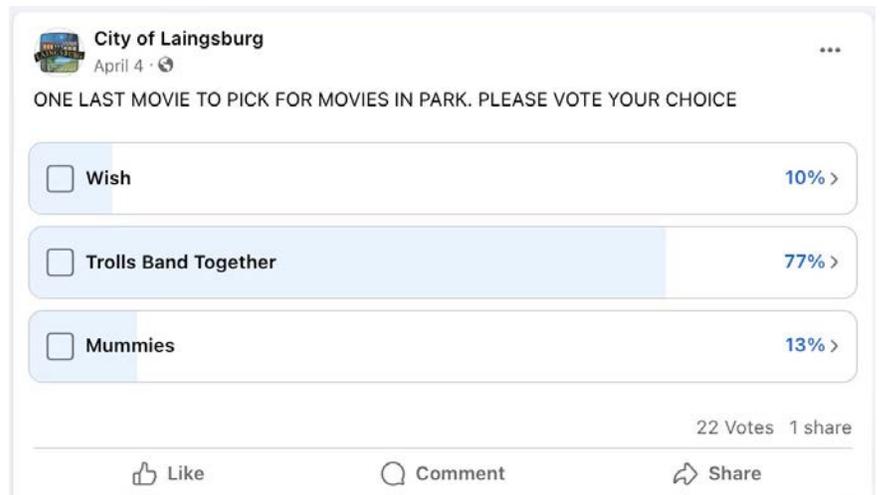
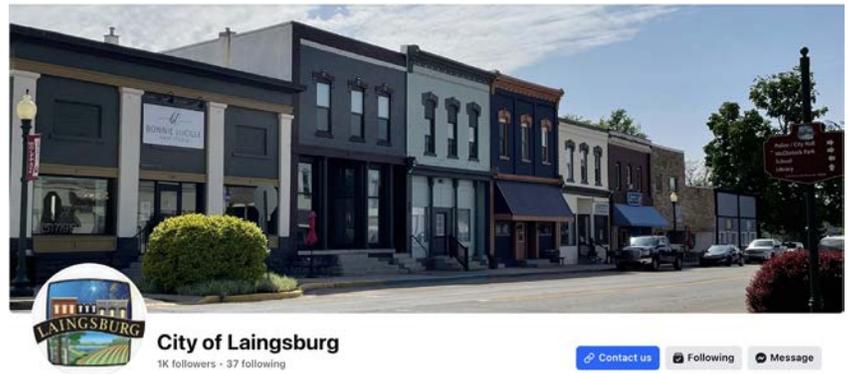
# EXISTING MARKETING ASSETS

## Social Media

The City has a very limited social media presence. The City maintains an active and diverse Facebook page and YouTube channel that is used exclusively for posting council meetings.

The City’s Facebook page has a respectable amount of followers listed as “1K,” which does not provide a specific number, but typically, Facebook lists in increments of 100, so it is reasonable to assume the City’s actual follow count is between 1,000-1099.

The City posts between 1-3 times per week but is fairly sporadic and does not appear to have a strategy in place for using social media other than well intentioned posts for informing residents of various issues, recognizing employees, and garnering feedback.



## Text Alerts

The City recently added a text alert service to notify residents of both community activities and Department of Public Works activities. This is a great addition to the City’s efforts at proactively communicating.

## Sleepy Hollow State Park Efforts

The City and Downtown Development Authority actively market to visitors at Sleepy Hollow. Fliers are posted at several locations at the park, fliers given to campers at check-in, and even a small billboard across from the entrance to the park. Despite these efforts, businesses downtown report they rarely get visitors from the park into their businesses.

# MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS- ASSETS

The City does a very good job of communicating to residents and marketing events. The City's website, especially its Development Opportunities section, is very good for a community's Laingsburg's size. Specific recommendations for improving the assets and usage of the City's website and social media are below. Following each recommendation is a suggested timeframe for implementation. "Short-term," means this should be done in less than a year; "Mid-term," means between one to two years, and "Long-term," means two years or more.

## General Recommendations

**Professional Photography-** This crucial aspect of community marketing is often overlooked. Professional photography harnesses the power of visual storytelling to convey what words alone cannot: beauty, enjoyment, a sense of belonging, diversity, hospitality, and a place that feels like home. The City should aim to reinforce these messages through high-quality images. While the City's website has a small image collection, a contract should be arranged for a professional photographer to capture the City across all four seasons. The goal is to produce 100-250 high-quality photos that will be added to an accessible portal for use by both the City and the general public. Priority photos should include:

- Parks & Trails (both empty and in use)
- Community Festivals & Events
- Looking Glass River, Lake Victoria, & Other Nearby Lakes
- Key Redevelopment Sites
- Downtown
- Key Businesses

*Timeframe:* Short-term

**Celebrate Wins-** The City has been able to accomplish quite a bit 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 very good. However, there are a few additions that could make the website a better tool for helping to promote the community.

**Add "Recent Projects" Section-** The purpose of this section is to highlight recent successful projects the City has implemented. Priority should be given to those projects that help benefit the attraction or expansion of a local business, but all successful and notable City projects should be highlighted in a case study format.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

**Add "Media Center" Section-** This section would include primary media contact information, recent press releases, and a catalog of professional photos (recommended above) highlighting key assets of the community. This section would become a resource for local and regional media, as well as the general public, to access communications from the City as well as media that could be used in stories.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

**Utilize Canva for Newsletters and Graphics-** The City should begin to use Canva, a free online graphic design software to help raise the level of professionalism of its communication pieces.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

# MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS- ASSETS

**Add Process Section in “Development Process”-** 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

**Update Social Media Links-** The City’s website currently does not link to its only social media account. Adding this link helps provide continuity between communication channels. Adding additional social media links as they come online will also be crucial.

**Timeframe:** Short-term

## Social Media Recommendations

The City makes good use of its Facebook page. As noted earlier, its Facebook presence is good and informs followers of events in the community as well as other happenings. However, the City has no other active social media channels. The overall recommendation for the City’s social media efforts is to expand their offerings and 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 for residents and a great business opportunity for entrepreneurs and developers. 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

**Instagram-** The City should add an Instagram account. Instagram trends younger and is far more visual due to its photo/graphic based content. 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.

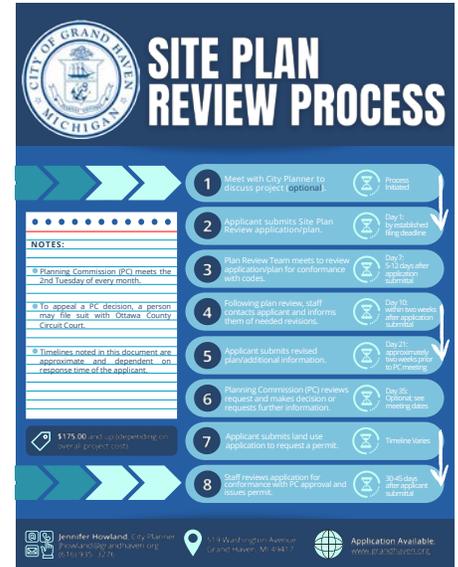
**Timeframe:** Short-term

**LinkedIn-** LinkedIn would be a drastically different social media channel than the City’s Facebook and Instagram efforts. This channel would focus on the business aspect of the City with content focused on business and real estate opportunities, boast about City successes, and post for professional assistance (staffing or contractors) when needed. Key audiences for this channel are business leaders, real estate professionals, and economic development.

**Timeframe:** Short-term

**YouTube-** The City should consider adding a YouTube channel as a holding area with videos posted and linked when needed. Not as a primary channel of its own.

**Timeframe:** Short-term





# Community Marketing Strategy

**Residents**  
**Businesses**  
**Visitors**  
**Key Sites**

# COMMUNITY MARKETING

The City of Laingsburg has done proactive marketing, whether intentionally or not, 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
- Current and Prospective Visitors
- Developers and Investors

Each of these audiences, or target markets, is crucial to the community. Messaging will vary depending on the audience, with the key being to tailor the message to highlight the community’s positives in a way that aligns with the goals and desires of each target market. Additionally, how this messaging is delivered, referred to as the “channel,” is critical. Channels will vary based on the target market and may overlap. Key aspects of the city, such as quality of life, have broad appeal and may be emphasized across all sectors. These channels can include outlets such as social media, the city’s website, specific media outreach, or direct marketing through targeted emails.

This section will outline the target markets, the respective messaging for each market, and the recommended channels for delivering the messaging. Many of the recommendations in this section resulted directly from suggestions from several focus groups conducted as part of this marketing strategy. The insights provided by these groups, which included business, and non-profit leaders, as well as 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 should proactively market to potential residents. There are six resident types that the community would be competitive in attracting. These are:

**Raising a Family-** 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.

**Working Singles & Couples-** This group includes individuals who are not married or are in a committed relationship, and who do not have children living with them. This group may include young professionals, students, and retirees who are looking for a community that offers a vibrant social scene, cultural events, and nightlife. They may also prioritize neighborhoods with convenient access to public transportation, job opportunities, and a range of dining and entertainment options.

**Empty Nesters-** Empty nesters includes individuals or couples who are typically in their 50s or older and have no children living at home. These individuals may be looking for a community that offers a low-maintenance lifestyle with easy access to healthcare, recreational activities, and cultural events. They may also prioritize neighborhoods that are safe, quiet, and offer a strong sense of community, as well as convenient access to shopping and dining options.

**Active Retirees-** Individuals or couples who are typically in their 60s or older and are looking for a community that offers a vibrant, active lifestyle. These individuals may be interested in downsizing their homes and moving to a community that offers a range of amenities and activities, such as golf courses, fitness centers, and social clubs. They may also prioritize neighborhoods that offer a safe, welcoming environment with easy access to healthcare, shopping, and dining options.

**Remote Workers-** Individuals who work remotely or have the flexibility to work from home, and who may be looking for a community that offers a good quality of life and amenities that support their work-from-home lifestyle. These individuals may prioritize neighborhoods with access to high-speed internet, co-working spaces, and other amenities that support their work needs. They may also prioritize neighborhoods that offer a healthy work-life balance, with access to outdoor activities, cultural events, and dining options.

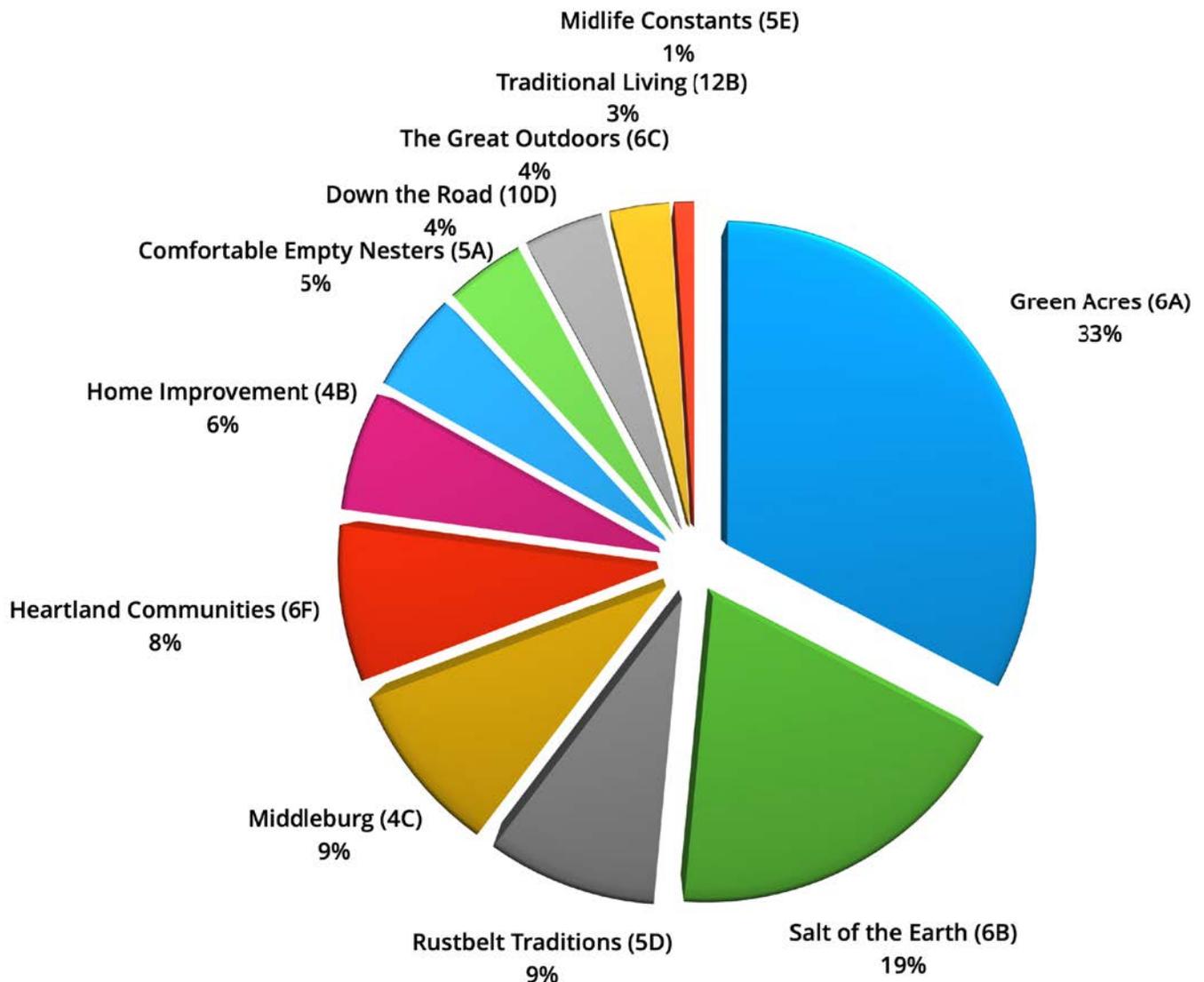
**Coming Home-** These people are returning home and includes individuals or families who have previously lived in the immediate area and are now looking to live where they grew up. These individuals may have a strong connection to the area, such as family ties, nostalgia, or a sense of community pride. They may prioritize neighborhoods with a strong sense of community, access to local amenities and businesses, and a welcoming environment.

# 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 greater Laingsburg area are shown in the chart below. The charts outlining highlights of each of these market segments follow the following three pages and should be used as additional insight into the target market when specific marketing pieces are created. (IMPORTANT NOTE: There is only one market segmentation in the city of Laingsburg, proper. That segmentation is Rustbelt Traditions.)



Source: ESRI, 2024

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - RESIDENTS

Segmentation	Socioeconomic Traits	Market Profile
<p>Green Acres (6A)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 33%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.7</p> <p>Median Age: 43.9</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$76,800</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education: More than 60% are college educated.</li> <li>• Labor force participation rate is high at 66.8%.</li> <li>• Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and increasingly, from retirement.</li> <li>• They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability.</li> <li>• Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the Internet is not viewed as entertainment.</li> <li>• Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing choices reflect Green Acres residents' country life, including a variety of vehicles, from trucks and SUVs to ATVs and motorcycles, preferably late model.</li> <li>• Homeowners favor DIY home improvement projects and gardening.</li> <li>• Media of choice are provided by satellite service, radio, and television, also with an emphasis on country and home and garden.</li> <li>• Green Acres residents pursue physical fitness vigorously, from working out on home exercise equipment to playing a variety of sports.</li> <li>• Residents are active in their communities and a variety of social organizations, from charitable to veterans' clubs.</li> </ul>
<p>Salt of the Earth (6B)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 19%</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>Rustbelt Traditions (5D)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 9%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.47</p> <p>Median Age: 39</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>Middleburg (4C)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 6.7%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.75</p> <p>Median Age: 36.1</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$59,800</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education: 65% with a high school diploma or some college.</li> <li>• Labor force participation typical of a younger population at 66.7%.</li> <li>• Traditional values are the norm here— faith, country, and family.</li> <li>• Prefer to buy American and for a good price.</li> <li>• Comfortable with the latest in technology, for convenience (online banking or saving money on landlines) and entertainment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents are partial to domestic vehicles; they like to drive trucks, SUVs, or motorcycles.</li> <li>• Entertainment is primarily family-oriented, TV and movie rentals or theme parks and family restaurants.</li> <li>• Spending priorities also focus on family (children's toys and apparel) or home DIY projects.</li> <li>• Sports include hunting, fishing, bowling, and baseball.</li> <li>• TV and magazines provide entertainment and information.</li> <li>• Media preferences include country and Christian channels.</li> </ul>
<p>Heartland Communities (6F)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 8%</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>
<p>Home Improvement (4B)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 6%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.88</p> <p>Median Age: 37.7</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$72,100</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher participation in the labor force; most households have 2+ workers.</li> <li>• Cautious consumers that do their research before buying, they protect their investments.</li> <li>• Typically spend 4–7 hours per week commuting, and, therefore, spend significant amounts on car maintenance (performed at a department store or auto repair chain store).</li> <li>• They are paying off student loans and home mortgages.</li> <li>• They spend heavily on eating out, at both fast-food and family restaurants.</li> <li>• They like to work from home, when possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy working on home improvement projects and watching DIY networks.</li> <li>• Make frequent trips to warehouse/club and home improvement stores in their minivan or SUV.</li> <li>• Own a giant screen TV with fiber-optic connection and premium cable; rent movies from Netflix.</li> <li>• Very comfortable with new technology; embrace the convenience of completing tasks on a mobile device.</li> <li>• Enjoy dining at Chili's, Chick-fil-A, and KFC.</li> <li>• Frequently buy children's clothes and toys.</li> </ul>

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - RESIDENTS

Segmentation	Socioeconomic Traits	Market Profile
<p>Comfortable Empty Nesters (5A)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 5%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.52</p> <p>Median Age: 48</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$75,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education: 65% with a high school diploma or some education; 36% college graduates; nearly 68% with some college education.</li> <li>• Average labor force participation at 61%.</li> <li>• Most households' income from wages or salaries, but a third also draw income from investments and retirement.</li> <li>• Comfortable Empty Nesters residents physically and financially active.</li> <li>• Prefer eating at home instead of dining out.</li> <li>• Home maintenance a priority among these homeowners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents enjoy listening to sports radio or watching sports on television.</li> <li>• Physically active, they play golf, ski, ride bicycles, and work out regularly.</li> <li>• Spending a lot of time online isn't a priority, so most own older home computers.</li> <li>• Financial portfolio includes stocks, certificates of deposit, mutual funds, and real estate.</li> </ul>
<p>Down the Road (10D)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 4%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.76</p> <p>Median Age: 35</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$38,700</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education completed: 36% with a high school diploma only, 41% with some college education or a degree.</li> <li>• Labor force participation rate is 59.0%, slightly lower than the US.</li> <li>• Family-oriented, outgoing consumers; they place importance on preserving time-honored customs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchased a used vehicle in the past year, likely maintaining the vehicle themselves.</li> <li>• Routinely stop by the convenience store to purchase gas, groceries, and snacks.</li> <li>• Participate in fishing and hunting.</li> <li>• Use the internet to stay connected with friends and play online video games.</li> <li>• Listen to the radio, especially at work, with a preference for rap, R&amp;B, and country music.</li> <li>• Enjoy programs on Investigation Discovery, CMT, and Hallmark, typically watching via satellite dish.</li> <li>• Often prepare quick meals, using packaged or frozen dinner entrees.</li> <li>• Favorite fast food: burgers and pizza.</li> <li>• Frequent Walmart Supercenters, Walgreens, dollar stores, Kmart, and Big Lots for all their shopping needs (groceries, clothing, pharmacy, etc.).</li> </ul>
<p>The Great Outdoors (6C)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 4%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.44</p> <p>Median Age: 47.4</p> <p>Median Household Income: \$56,400</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% have attended college or hold a degree.</li> <li>• Labor force participation is low at 60%.</li> <li>• Typical of neighborhoods with older residents, income from retirement and Social Security is common, but residents also derive income from self-employment and investments.</li> <li>• Residents are very do-it-yourself oriented and cost conscious.</li> <li>• Many service their own autos, work on home improvement and remodeling projects, and maintain their own yards.</li> <li>• They prefer domestic travel to trips abroad.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satellite dishes and riding lawn mowers are familiar sights in these rural settings, along with multiple vehicles; four-wheel drive trucks are popular, too.</li> <li>• Residents are members of AARP and veterans' clubs and support various civic causes.</li> <li>• Technology is not central in their lives: light use of internet connectivity for shopping to entertainment.</li> <li>• Most households have pets—dogs or cats.</li> <li>• Television channels such as CMT, History, and Fox News are popular.</li> <li>• They enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, and boating.</li> </ul>

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - RESIDENTS

Segmentation	Socioeconomic Traits	Market Profile
<p>Traditional Living (12B)</p> <p>Percent of Area: 3%</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 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: 1%</p> <p>Average Household Size: 2.31</p> <p>Median Age: 47</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>

# 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
Raising a Family	Excellent schools; Great walkable community; Numerous parks and outdoor activities
Working Singles & Couples	Walkable community; Nice downtown; Close to work; Outdoor activities
Empty Nesters	Safe, walkable neighborhoods; Nice downtown with dining; Close to Lansing/East Lansing; Outdoor activities
Active Retirees	Nearby shopping; Outdoor activities; Safe, walkable community
Coming Home	Nearby employment opportunities; Newer amenities; Safe, walkable neighborhoods; Downtown with dining options; Outdoor activities

**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
Raising a Family	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok); Direct Realtor outreach
Working Singles & Couples	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok); Search Engine Optimization of Website
Empty Nesters	Social Media (Facebook); Direct Realtor outreach; Email; Print Newsletter
Active Retirees	Direct Realtor outreach; Email; Print Newsletter; Social Media (Facebook)
Coming Home	Social Media (Facebook, TikTok); Laingsburg Public Schools (alumni groups); Current residents

# Key Partnerships- Residents

In order to effectively market to residents, Laingsburg 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.



Laingsburg Community Schools is a key partner for the City. The high quality schools was consistently the top item mentioned in focus groups as the most important asset in the community. Schools are a key driver for young families.

**Contact:**

Matthew Shastal  
Superintendent

**Email:**

[matt.shastal@laingsburg.k12.mi.us](mailto:matt.shastal@laingsburg.k12.mi.us)

**Phone:**

(517) 651-2705



The Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership (SEDPA) is a key partner for Laingsburg. As the regional economic development organization, their goal is to improve the conditions of the county to attract and retain employers. More recently, they have been active in talent recruitment.

**Contact:**

Justin Horvath  
President and CEO

**Email:**

[jhorvath@sedpweb.org](mailto:jhorvath@sedpweb.org)

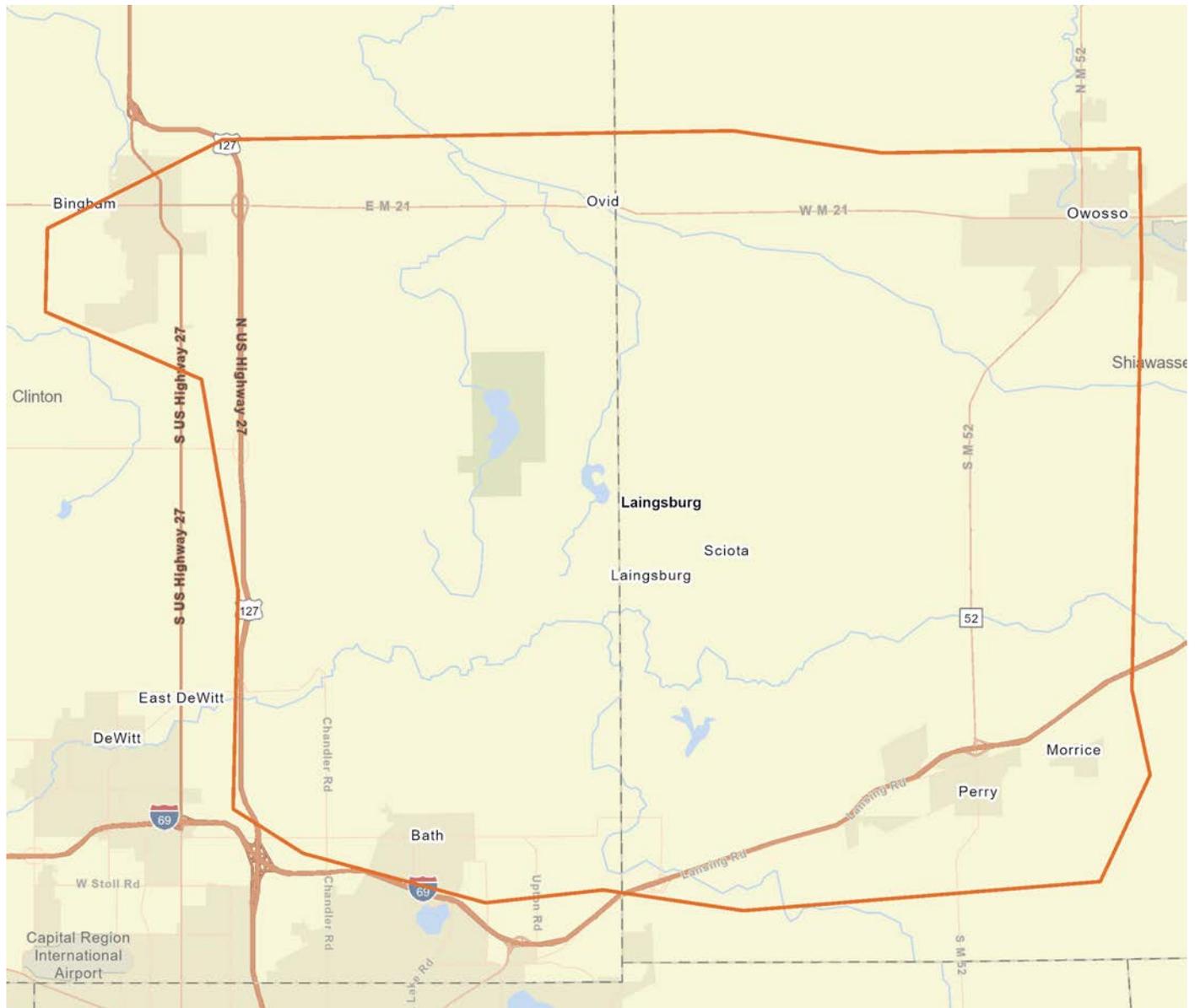
**Phone:**

(989) 725-9241

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - BUSINESSES

## BUSINESSES

The focus of the City of Laingsburg's efforts to market to businesses centers around downtown and other commercial areas in the community. These businesses are primarily retail and food service in nature. In order to understand what types of businesses the City should market to, one must understand the market for the community and the laws of supply and demand related to that market. To do this, geofencing technology was used to determine where, geographically, customers are coming to the city from and comparing the supply and demand of 110 categories of goods. By using this technology, an accurate depiction of the community's primary trade area, or geographic customer base, was created. A map of the city's trade area is below.



# COMMUNITY MARKETING - BUSINESSES

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 for a good or service than what exists in the area’s supply, a gap (or leakage) is created. This leakage is money that leaves the area to spend in another area because the particular good or service is not available within the defined area. This leakage is the best potential source for the types of additional businesses the area may need. The presence of a gap is not a guarantee of success for prospective businesses.

Additionally, retail markets rarely stay the same over time. Some areas grow while others shrink. As a community seeks to help existing businesses expand and attract new, having an understanding of which areas are growing or shrinking is important to know.

The following are charts showing the current and projected market demand and highest leakage areas for the trade area defined on page 2d.

	2023 Demand (\$)	2023 Supply (\$)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus	2028 Demand (\$)	Projected Gap/Surplus
Total retail trade including food and drink (NAICS 44, 45 and 722)	\$1,110,260,162	\$929,106,151	\$181,154,011	\$1,244,486,501	\$315,380,350
Retail trade (NAICS 44 and 45)	\$994,647,746	\$875,929,770	\$118,717,977	\$1,113,053,826	\$237,124,056
Food services and drinking places (NAICS 722)	\$115,612,415	\$53,176,381	\$62,436,034	\$131,432,675	\$78,256,294

Source: Claritas, Place + Main Advisors, 2024

The retail data for 2023 and projections for 2028 highlight some interesting trends in supply and demand. Currently, there's a noticeable gap between the demand for retail trade and food services and the available supply, suggesting that there are plenty of opportunities for new businesses to step in. For example, the combined demand for retail and food services far exceeds the current supply, and this gap is expected to grow even larger by 2028. This trend is consistent in both the general retail sector and the food and drink category specifically. Essentially, the market is signaling a strong potential for growth, and businesses looking to expand might find it worthwhile to consider these areas to meet the increasing demand. Specific targets are outlined in the following pages.

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - BUSINESSES

Using data from the primary trade area of the Retail Gap Analysis and Projected Retail Growth analysis, the chart below outlines the potential gap that will exist if each category remains static and demand is realized as projected. From there, industry sales per square foot were used for each category to project the maximum amount of total square footage that the market could absorb. These categories, listed in order of the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), should be the primary targets for Laingsburg.

CATEGORY	2023 DEMAND (\$)	2023 SUPPLY (\$)	2023 GAP	2028 DEMAND (\$)	PROJECTED GAP	PROJECTED MAX. SQ FOOTAGE
Furniture stores (NAICS 4421)	\$11,521,109	\$4,470,505	\$7,050,604	\$12,997,653	\$8,527,148	26,237
Home furnishings stores (NAICS 4422)	\$8,229,818	\$2,687,979	\$5,541,840	\$9,436,718	\$6,748,739	31,985
Supermarkets (NAICS 44511)	\$114,187,958	\$60,908,607	\$53,279,351	\$129,376,924	\$68,468,317	136,937
Beer, wine, and liquor stores (NAICS 4453)	\$10,507,625	\$5,778,829	\$4,728,797	\$12,130,986	\$6,352,157	5,775
Cosmetics and beauty supply stores (NAICS 44612)	\$3,485,344	\$859,672	\$2,625,672	\$3,812,585	\$2,952,913	9,086
Women's clothing stores (NAICS 44812)	\$5,267,341	\$1,045,533	\$4,221,808	\$5,017,936	\$3,972,403	13,241
Children's and infants' clothing stores (NAICS 44813)	\$1,665,615	\$0	\$1,665,615	\$1,682,413	\$1,682,413	5,608
Family clothing stores (NAICS 44814)	\$17,730,079	\$1,243,163	\$16,486,916	\$17,591,048	\$16,347,885	71,078
Clothing accessories stores (NAICS 44815)	\$1,445,472	\$257,704	\$1,187,768	\$1,373,838	\$1,116,134	3,189
Shoe stores (NAICS 4482)	\$5,981,550	\$1,007,042	\$4,974,508	\$6,653,344	\$5,646,302	18,821
Sporting goods stores (NAICS 45111)	\$9,546,387	\$4,162,201	\$5,384,187	\$10,281,835	\$6,119,634	32,040
Hobby, toy, and game stores (NAICS 45112)	\$3,639,408	\$681,768	\$2,957,640	\$3,929,775	\$3,248,007	9,280
Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores (NAICS 45322)	\$2,134,562	\$795,960	\$1,338,602	\$2,324,794	\$1,528,834	7,644
Pet and pet supplies stores (NAICS 45391)	\$3,955,365	\$2,830,132	\$1,125,233	\$4,694,529	\$1,864,397	6,014
Drinking places (alcoholic beverages) (NAICS 7224)	\$4,121,784	\$957,403	\$3,164,381	\$4,804,982	\$3,847,579	10,993
Full-service restaurants (NAICS 722511)	\$51,436,407	\$20,785,354	\$30,651,053	\$58,600,099	\$37,814,745	61,991
Limited-service restaurants (NAICS 722513)	\$43,224,894	\$26,482,520	\$16,742,374	\$48,946,713	\$22,464,193	112,321
Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars (NAICS 722515)	\$6,612,026	\$3,900,717	\$2,711,309	\$7,484,806	\$3,584,089	8,433

Source: Claritas, Place + Main Advisors, 2024

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - BUSINESSES

**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.

Target Audience	Key Messages
Retail	Opportunity to make money in Laingsburg; Strong and loyal customer base; Affordable real estate; Business-friendly local government
Restaurants	Opportunity to make money in Laingsburg; Strong and loyal customer base; Affordable real estate; Business-friendly local government
Developers	Affordable real estate; Strong market demand for residential and retail; Business-friendly local government

**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
Retail	Social media (Facebook, Instagram) Highlight market opportunity, available space; Success stories
Restaurants	Social media (Facebook, Instagram) Highlight market opportunity, available space; Success stories
Developers	Realtor outreach; Social media (LinkedIn, Facebook)

# Key Partnerships- Business

In order to effectively market, Laingsburg must utilize existing partnerships with local and other regional entities. These partners, highlighted below, market the community or county on an ongoing basis. While the City may never be the sole focus of their marketing efforts, the assets that the community has 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 Laingsburg Downtown Development Authority (DDA), while staffed by City employees, is still a vital partner to marketing the city. They proactively market to potential visitors and could be a more important partner moving forward if they participate in the Michigan Main Street program.



The Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership (SEDP) is a key partner for Laingsburg. As the regional economic development organization, SEDP works with municipalities to find developers for key properties.

**Contact:**  
Justin Horvath  
President and CEO  
**Email:**  
jhorvath@sedpweb.org  
**Phone:**  
(989) 725-9241



The Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce (SRCC) hosts the regional Small Business Development Center, which helps entrepreneurs in business planning and start-up activities.

**Contact:**  
Cherly Peterson  
SBDC Consultant  
**Email:**  
cpeterson@shiawasseechamber.org  
**Phone:**  
(989) 723-5149

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - VISITORS

## VISITORS

The focus of the City of Laingsburg’s efforts to attract visitors centers around capturing visitors to Sleepy Hollow State Park to its downtown and other popular areas in the community. When evaluating what businesses, services, or activities a visitor might want, it is important to know where these visitors are coming from. Using similar geofencing technology to what was used in the Business Marketing section, below is a chart of the top twenty-five zip codes visitors to Sleepy Hollow are from. This data reflects visits from January 1, 2022-December 31, 2023.

Zip Code	City	State	Percent of Visits	Total Visits
48848	Laingsburg	MI	7.691	32,837
48867	Owosso	MI	6.87	29,334
48879	Eureka	MI	5.331	22,763
48866	Ovid	MI	4.266	18,216
48820	DeWitt	MI	3.061	13,069
48911	Lansing	MI	2.602	11,112
48906	Lansing	MI	2.461	10,508
48823	East Lansing	MI	2.332	9,956
48910	Lansing	MI	1.948	8,320
48872	Perry	MI	1.783	7,612
48917	Lansing	MI	1.542	6,583
48837	Grand Ledge	MI	1.395	5,957
48808	Bath	MI	1.394	5,950
48831	Elsie	MI	1.351	5,767
48912	Lansing	MI	1.297	5,538
48842	Holt	MI	1.207	5,154
48817	Corunna	MI	1.157	4,939
48840	Haslett	MI	1.087	4,639
48864	Okemos	MI	1.016	4,337
48854	Mason	MI	0.989	4,225
48473	Swartz Creek	MI	0.817	3,486
48429	Durand	MI	0.812	3,468
48813	Charlotte	MI	0.811	3,465
48825	East Lansing	MI	0.763	3,257
48827	Eaton Rapids	MI	0.695	2,969

Source: Cobalt Community Solutions, 2024

Interesting to note, none of the top twenty-five visitor zip codes are from more than 45 minutes away. This is consistent with overnight reservation data obtained from Michigan State Parks. This clearly indicates Sleepy Hollow is a regional destination and frequently used as a “staycation” location. “Staycations” are overnight visitors who are local but stay at a local hotel or campground as a vacation while either still working during the day and/or using the proximity to save money on gas and food.

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - VISITORS

Now that data confirms Sleepy Hollow State Park as a staycation destination, strategy around visitors can focus on:

- 1) The needs of visitors on staycation vs vacation
- 2) Promoting Sleepy Hollow more as a staycation destination
- 3) Diversifying visitors and promotion of Sleepy Hollow beyond the immediate region as “the best kept secret” of the state’s park system

**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.

Target Audience	Key Messages
Existing Visitors to Sleepy Hollow	Take advantage of the activities and programming at the state park but also explore the nearby charming business district, and local happenings, of downtown Laingsburg during your stay at Sleepy Hollow State Park
Regional Residents	Save time and stress with a getaway that’s close to home. Plan a stay at Laingsburg’s Sleepy Hollow State Park, just a quick trip away
Visitors from Outside the Region	Reconnect and recharge in Laingsburg; Unplug and unwind in a peaceful setting; Reconnect with loved ones and recharge your spirit surrounded by nature.

**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
Existing Visitors to Sleepy Hollow	Social media (Facebook, Instagram) Note: that this communication may need to start with a printed piece given the connectivity issues at the park
Regional Residents	Social media (Facebook, Instagram)
Visitors from Outside the Region	Social media (Facebook, Instagram), Targeted Ads, Partnership with Michigan State Parks

# Key Partnerships- Visitors

In order to effectively market to potential visitors, it is vital that Laingsburg establish and utilize 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 community happenings, events, and new business openings (especially those that would be of interest to a visitor) would be highly beneficial.



The Shiawassee County Convention & Visitors Bureau is a key partner to promote the city as a destination to potential visitors from outside the region.

**Contact:**

Kimberly Springsdorf  
Executive Director

**Email:**

visitshiawassee@gmail.com

**Phone:**

(989) 723-1199



The marketing and outreach department of the Michigan State Parks is another valuable partner to the city of Laingsburg. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the umbrella department for the Michigan State Parks, is committed to the use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources. Communication with this group could result in the Michigan State Parks sharing information about and the happenings within Sleepy Hollow State Park with those interested in Michigan State Parks.

**Contact:**

Maia Turek  
Engagement and Innovations Specialist,  
Parks and Recreation Division  
Michigan Department of Natural  
Resources

**Email:**

turekm@michigan.gov

**Phone:**

(989) 225-8573

# MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS- VISITORS

The City and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) engage in traditional marketing to attract potential visitors, particularly those at Sleepy Hollow. However, there are several challenges associated with marketing to this group due to the nature of their home location. One significant challenge is that the vast majority of visitors to Sleepy Hollow are from the local region. As a result, when these visitors frequent local businesses, they may not be easily identified as visitors from the park, as they often present themselves as locals or people from nearby areas.

Another issue is that regional visitors to the park tend to remain loyal to their regular shopping habits, despite their stay at Sleepy Hollow. Unlike when visiting a distant location, where their usual shopping and dining options are not readily available, they can still easily visit their routine places while staycationing close to home. This loyalty to their regular habits poses an additional challenge in attracting them to explore new local businesses during their stay.

Despite these challenges, there are a few recommendations to assist in the community's efforts.

**Improved WiFi at Sleepy Hollow-** Cell phone reception and Wi-Fi availability at the park is not strong. The City and DDA could work with park officials at improving WiFi connectivity at the park. This would allow for newer, technology based advertising to be used to market to visitors.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

**Social Media Ads Triggered by Geofence-** The technology exists to do digital ads on Facebook and Instagram for visitors to the city and/or Sleepy Hollow. These ads are triggered once a social media user enters a defined area and last for a week or two following. Making visitors aware of the businesses and events in Laingsburg in real time in a format visitors use most often would be helpful.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

**Further Promotion of Sleepy Hollow Beyond the Region-** Sleepy Hollow is perhaps the best kept secret in the Michigan State Parks system. Working with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Michigan State Parks team, the community could help promote Sleepy Hollow beyond the region. Promoting the events in the area and at the park are good angles to take in making potential visitors outside the region aware of the park.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - KEY SITES

## Key Sites

The City has identified three key sites for redevelopment. These sites are:

- 217 E. Grand River Avenue
- Treat Street Park
- 120 S. Rail Road

This section will outline each of these three properties and make recommendations for their marketing.



**217 E. Grand River Avenue  
Old Bunkhouse Site**



**Treat Street Park  
ID# 022-60-077-000-00**



**120 S. Rail Road  
Old Elevator Site**

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - KEY SITES

## 217 E. Grand River Avenue

Total Size: .24 acres

Zoning: C-1, Central Business District

Current Use: Vacant

**Future Land Use:** This site is situated in the heart of downtown with access to Grand River Avenue. Potential for retail and/or residential development with close proximity to restaurants, grocery, convenience stores, gas stations etc.

**Key Challenge to Redevelopment:** The site is relatively small in a small town. Finding a developer who wants to take a smaller project, most likely a decent distance away from other investments.



*Rendering (right) created by Giffels Webster as part of the community's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) package.*

## Marketing Recommendation

The City's efforts to market the property have included making use of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Services team and the opportunity to have a custom Request for Qualifications (RFQ) document created. This document is a great marketing piece that includes renderings depicting what the site could potentially look like at completion. Adding additional information, especially retail leakage data as found in this strategy, could be useful in helping to market this opportunity. Furthermore, using the Redevelopment Services team to create a sample construction and operating pro forma could help make the financial case for this project. Links to the RFQ document should be shared on social media channels with specific emphasis on LinkedIn.

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - KEY SITES

## Treat Street Park

Total Size: 1.4 acres

Zoning: Recreation

Current Use: IN – Institutional District

Future Land Use: Currently planned for Public/Parks & Recreation, but could be rezoned for housing.

Key Challenge to Redevelopment: The site is relatively small and located in a small town. Finding a developer willing to undertake a smaller project, likely situated at a considerable distance from other investments, can be challenging.



*The City has provided the renderings and precedent photos (right) as part of their information packages.*

## Marketing Recommendation

The idea of using the site as a pocket neighborhood is solid. The City should take the next step and look to identify either a regional builder who have done such work and make outreach or look to find a potential local builder who may want to make the next step and become a developer themselves. A separate file with the basic site info should be created for each site. Links to the basic info document should be shared on social media channels with specific emphasis on LinkedIn.

# COMMUNITY MARKETING - KEY SITES

## 120 S. Rail Road

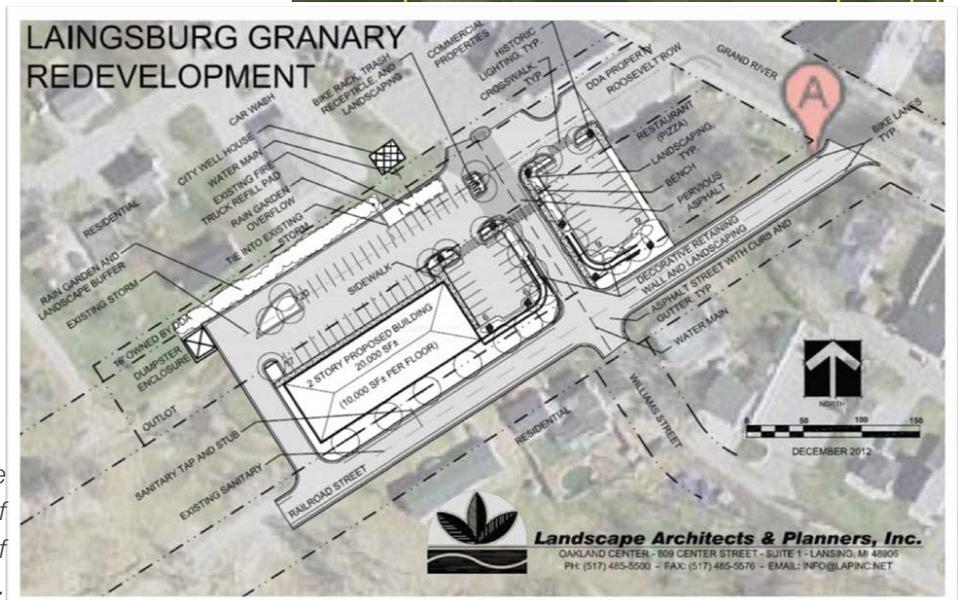
Total Size: 2.3 acres

Zoning: RM – Medium Density Residential District

Current Use: Vacant

Future Land Use: Commercial

**Key Challenge to Redevelopment:** The site is long and narrow, limiting opportunities to redevelop the entire site. The same challenge of market size in the previous two sites, also applies here.



*The City has provided the rendering (right), depicting use of the front part of the site as part of their information packages.*

## Marketing Recommendation

While the one basic information package is helpful, creating a separate file containing the site information should be created for each location. Links to these documents should be shared on social media channels, with a particular emphasis on LinkedIn.

This Strategy Created By



Joe Borgstrom, Principal



Telephone  
(517) 614-2733



E-mail:  
[joe@placeandmain.com](mailto:joe@placeandmain.com)