

# Strategic Plan



## Mount Clemens Downtown Development Authority 2024 – 2026

Approved by DDA Board: March 6, 2024



To Our Downtown Stakeholders:

We are pleased to present the Mount Clemens Downtown Development Authority's (MCDDA) strategic plan covering the 2024 - 2026 period. This plan establishes the strategic direction of the Mount Clemens Downtown Development Authority (MCDDA). It is incorporated into the 2024-2025 fiscal year budget and contemplates both near term and long term goals and objectives. It is updated on an annual basis. We hope you agree that great things await downtown Mount Clemens, a downtown with a unique history and exciting future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Gilchrist". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Phil Gilchrist, Chair

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Kropp". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Laura Kropp  
Mayor, City of Mount Clemens

Vice-Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Tingley". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brian Tingley, Executive Director

## Purpose

In 1983 a special Blue Ribbon Committee was appointed to discuss downtown concerns. From recommendations of this committee the Mount Clemens Downtown Development Authority (MCDDA) was established in April of 1983. The goals and objectives of the DDA as stated in the act is, "to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation where possible in the business district and to eliminate the causes of that deterioration and to promote economic growth". It is the belief of the DDA that by keeping the economy and vitality of the downtown healthy we also improve property values throughout the entire City of Mount Clemens as well as the quality of life for all of its residents.

This is the MCDDA's strategic plan for the 2024-2026 period. It is a statement of our mission, vision, and shared values and articulated through a series of inter-connected goals and actions steps. It builds off of the strategic plan that is annually adopted by the city commission. Strategic plan progress will be assessed on a regular basis and ensure that the plan is updated as conditions evolve.

## Mission

Enhancing community through effective and equitable public services.

## Vision

**Serve as the Macomb County hub for commerce, arts and culture, entertainment and entrepreneurship. By 2025, downtown Mount Clemens will have begun critical infrastructure improvements and other institutional investments that provide for added business, residential, and retail capacity in the downtown.**

To achieve this vision, the MCDDA will work to meet the following benchmarks:

- Reorganization of the downtown parking system
- Decrease vacant land and buildings
- Increase public/green space
- Increase the quality of our sidewalks/roads
- Attract private investment in the downtown district
- Increase public art installations
- Increase housing stock in the downtown district
- Continue to manage and maintain critical infrastructure investments
- Increase connectivity and enhance the relationship with the Clinton River

## Values

The values of the MCDDA guide all decision making processes. Along with its mission and vision, the values serve as "filters" for decision making. The MCDDA values match those of the city commission so that all city decisions are made through the same prism. Those values are:

- **Progressive:** Moving forward, building community
- **Responsive:** Service oriented elected and appointed officials
- **Inclusive:** Welcoming and respectful of all
- **Dynamic:** Positive, energetic, and always willing to engage
- **Ethical:** Doing what is right in the best interest of the entire community

## Areas of Focus

Over the course of this plan the MCDDA will focus on the following four areas:

### **1. Infrastructure & Placemaking**

- Enhance the pedestrian and bicycling experience throughout the downtown
- Improve the downtown parking experience for visitors and residents
- Improve public spaces and streetscapes
- Increase the connectivity between the core downtown and the Clinton River
- To the extent possible assist downtown buildings with exterior improvements
- Explore opportunities to develop residential units within the downtown
- Advocate for clean energy and environmentally sound public improvements
- Explore reestablishing the farmers' market as a downtown institution
- Maintain and increase public art installations

### **2. Business Recruitment & Retention**

- Become a facilitator for downtown businesses that need resources to strengthen their market share
- Recruit businesses into the downtown that fill a market void
- Maintain and build digital attraction resources
- Become an entrepreneurship hub and destination

### **3. Leadership & Collaboration**

- Develop long-term stability with existing staffing
- Increase staff presence downtown
- Be a leader among city efforts to increase diversity and inclusivity
- Continue to educate staff and board on emerging trends and best practices
- Create capacity to seek grants or other funding to support implementation of strategic plan
- Maintain ongoing relationship with Macomb County and other state and regional agencies, and seek other partnerships
- Develop revenue diversification

### **4. Marketing & Promotion**

- Communicate with stakeholders about the role of the DDA in city-wide and regional economic development activities
- Increase digital marketing efforts
- Review all special events
- Increase communication efforts with downtown stakeholders

## **Goals and Action Steps**

## 1. Infrastructure & Placemaking

### **Goal: Enhance the pedestrian and bicycling experience throughout the downtown**

Action Step 1. Assist the city with the installation of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure such as bike racks, pedestrian crossing signage and bike lanes.

Action Step 2. Assist the city with District 12 of the Sidewalk Replacement Program currently scheduled for the spring of 2025.

Action Step 3. Assist the city with the federal Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A) grant that will allow for the development of a downtown district safety action plan.

### **Goal: Improve the downtown parking experience for visitors and residents**

Action Step 1. Work with the city on conducting a parking system management analysis for the downtown parking system.

Action Step 2. Assist the city with the removal of parking meters and transition to a kiosk/zone based parking system.

Action Step 3. Assist the city with any future efforts aimed at improving the juror parking experience.

### **Goal: Improve public spaces and streetscapes**

Action Step 1. Utilize the Cherry Street Studio for a construction liaison and resource center during the Downtown Revitalization Project.

Action Step 2. Assist the city on visioning efforts for a redesigned Main Street.

Action Step 3. Reevaluate downtown lighting needs after completion of the Downtown Revitalization Project.

Action Step 4. Promote of the Oasis Social District as a regional destination and encourage additional participation.

Action Step 5. Assist the city with exploring ways to improve the aesthetics of dumpster locations and refuse removal within the downtown.

### **Goal: Increase the connectivity between the core downtown and the Clinton River**

Action Step 1. Continue efforts at utilizing the riverfront for events and explore non-DDA promoters and/or partners.

Action Step 2. Assist the city and Harbor Commission with an assessment of the operational needs of the marina via a consultant study.

Action Step 3. Engage the Michigan Department of Transportation and Macomb County on pedestrian crossing improvements along NB Gratiot.

Action Step 4. Assist the city and county on possible redevelopment of the city hall property and vacant county property.

Action Step 5. Assist the city with the SEMCOG Planning Assistant Grant for the riverfront.

### **Goal: To the extent possible assist downtown buildings with exterior improvements**

Action Step 1. Continue the façade grant program with a focus on building improvements and not signage.

Action Step 2. Seek alternative funding sources for the assistance of physical improvements for privately owned buildings.

### **Goal: Explore opportunities to develop residential units within the downtown**

Action Step 1. Monitor the continued redevelopment of the Victory Inn site into an apartment complex.

Action Step 2. Assist the city with investigating the impacts of continued residential development on the downtown.

### **Goal: Advocate for clean energy and environmentally sound public improvements**

Action Step 1. Advocate for energy efficiency and the reduction of environmental impacts as a part of all public investments within the downtown.

Action Step 2. Explore grants to replace the existing electrical vehicle charging stations and add additional stations.

**Goal: Explore reestablishing the farmers’ market as a downtown institution**

Action Step 1. Establish a stronger relationship with the leadership of the Mount Clemens Farmers’ Market.

Action Step 2. Identify a downtown location for the Mount Clemens Farmers’ Market beginning with the 2025 season.

Action Step 3. If the DDA and Mount Clemens Farmers’ Market are unable to agree to a new downtown location, establish a new DDA-run market.

**Goals: Maintain and increase public art installations**

Action Step 1. Continue as a sponsor of the MCEP sculpture program and identify new locations within the core downtown.

Action Step 2. Identify opportunities for new mural or sculpture installations.

Action Step 3. Develop an inventory of existing public art and determine owner/responsibility and maintenance needs.

**2. Business Recruitment & Retention**

**Goal: Become a facilitator for downtown businesses that need resources to strengthen their market share**

Action Step 1. Develop a business resource guide/welcome packet that can be distributed to local businesses.

Action Step 2. Encourage face to face meetings between DDA Board members and new businesses.

Action Step 2. Explore partnerships with other agencies that could assist businesses with needs, provide trainings and certifications, discuss best practices, and help with job recruitment.

**Goal: Recruit businesses into the downtown that fill a market void**

Action Step 1. Work with the county and its Placer data to determine what markets need to be filled in the downtown.

Action Step 2. Promote [www.thinkmtc.com](http://www.thinkmtc.com) to local, regional and national site selectors, commercial brokers and others.

Action Step 3. Analyze the website analytics for [www.thinkmtc.com](http://www.thinkmtc.com) to determine how it is being used.

Action Step 3. If needed, hire a consultant to develop a market analysis of the retail and commercial market, noting potential opportunities and gaps.

**Goal: Maintain and build digital attraction resources**

Action Step 1. Work with the county to maintain and update [www.thinkmtc.com](http://www.thinkmtc.com).

Action Step 2. Identify and implement any changes to the new DDA website at [www.downtownmountclemens.org](http://www.downtownmountclemens.org).

**Goal: Become an entrepreneurship hub and destination**

Action Step 1. Market the city and downtown as a hub for entrepreneurs

Action Step 2. Explore offering entrepreneur workshops in partnership with other organizations such as Velocity and the Small Business Development Center.

Action Step 3. Assist the city in maintaining its designation as a Redevelopment Ready Community.

**3. Leadership & Collaboration**

**Goal: Develop long-term stability with existing staffing**

Action Step 1. Revisit staff models after the city is complete with the Downtown Revitalization Project.

Action Step 2. Cost share the cost of grant writing service with the city.

Action Step 3. Continue contracting with Hunch Free for digital marketing services.

**Goal: Develop the Cherry Street Studio as a hub of downtown activity**

Action Step 1. Permanently move the DDA Coordinator office into the Cherry Street Studio and establish set times the office will be open to the public.

Action Step 2. Increase marketing efforts for the rental of the Cherry Street Studio space.

Action Step 3. Review Cherry Street Studio rental policies to allow limited pop-up retail.

**Goal: Be a leader among city efforts to increase diversity and inclusivity**

Action Step 1. Seek board appointees that represent both the interests of the downtown and those of all who live and work in the city.

Action Step 2. Consider diverse populations when planning events, programming and projects.

Action Step 3. Adopt a diversity, equity and inclusion statement.

**Goal: Continue to educate staff and board on emerging trends and best practices**

Action Step 1. Continue to provide the board with educational pieces.

Action Step 2. Identify in-person or virtual training opportunities for staff and the board.

**Goal: Create capacity to seek grants or other funding to support implementation of strategic plan**

Action Step 1. Continue contracting for grant writing services.

Action Step 2: Look at opportunities for partnering with other organizations such as Advancing Macomb for grant writing assistance.

**Goal: Maintain ongoing relationship with Macomb County and other state and regional agencies, and seek other partnerships**

Action Step 1: Continue contracting with Macomb County for economic development assistance.

Action Step 2: Continue to develop relationships with partner agencies such as SEMCOG, the MEDC and Advancing Macomb, and seek additional partnerships.

**Goal: Develop revenue diversification**

Action Step 1. Identify opportunities for diversification by obtaining foundation and philanthropy opportunities.

Action Steps 2. Research DDA's around the United States to explore alternative organizational and revenue models.

Action Step 3. Seek ways to leverage the non-profit status of the Downtown Development Committee.

#### 4. Marketing & Promotion

**Goal: Communicate with stakeholders about the role of the DDA in city-wide and regional economic development activities**

Action Step 1. Create educational pieces that describe the role of DDA and how they are effective.

Action Step 2. Promote activities that the DDA has assisted with, such as façade grant projects, grant funding that has been secured and strategic plan accomplishments.

Action Step 3. Develop an emailed based communication program via Mail Chimp, Constant Contact or similar program.

Action Step 4. Seek ways to connect and engage with outlying areas of the downtown district.

**Goal: Increase digital marketing efforts**

Action Step 1. Utilize paid social media advertising

Action Step 2. Explore alternative methods of advertising such as radio, video/YouTube, etc.

Action Step 3. Promote the city brand via social media and other digital media efforts.

Action Step 4. Utilize social media as a communication tool for businesses affected by the Downtown Revitalization Project.

**Goal: Determine if added processes are needed to assess the costs/benefits of promotional events and programs.**

Action Step 1. Utilize community surveys to determine the need and desire for events and programs within the downtown.

Action Step 2. Promote the need for event volunteers and develop a database.

Action Step 3. Encourage privately sponsored events in order to reduce the event workload for MCDDA staff.

Action Step 4. Develop print or online resources that would assist with how to operate a special event.