

# Antrim County

## Economic Development Corporation

Mission Statement: Retain, expand, and promote County-wide economic growth and stability.

**June 21, 2016**  
**Minutes**

Members present: Dawn LaVanway, Mike Allison, Jan Bassett, Pete Garwood, Dave Heeres, Kathy Peterson, and Veronica Welter  
Members Absent: Sherry Comben, Bonnie Robbins  
Others Present: Janet Koch, Andy LaPointe

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Dawn LaVanway, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

### **2. Public Comment**

None.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion by Dave Heeres, seconded by Jan Bassett, to approve the minutes of May 17, 2016 as presented. Motion carried – unanimous.**

### **4. Mancelona Development Strategy (see attached pgs. 4-26)**

Bethany Whitley, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, said the final draft of the US 131 corridor project had been completed and was in the distribution stage. There is an overall document; there is also a document that targets Mancelona. The project was funded through the Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative.

Sarah Lucas and Elise Crafts, Networks Northwest said the US-131 Corridor Economic Strategy targets a number of communities. Among all the communities, the single item that all were interested in was trails. Another area of common interest was marketing the region for tourism purposes. There appears to be a growing recognition that the region is a network of connected communities, not isolated towns.

Ms. Lucas said there are two goals for the document; it's a work plan and it's a regional document that can be of use for targeting grants. In July, there will be a meeting where duties and responsibilities will be assigned to stakeholders in Mancelona.

Pete Garwood, County Administrator, noted that the Dura property was mentioned in the Mancelona section of the document. Ms. Lucas said the large annual assessment for the property was addressed in the document. Mike Allison said the ideal purchaser of the property would have a requirement for sewer.

**Motion by Jan Bassett, seconded by Mike Allison, that the Antrim County Economic Development Corporation supports the US-131 Mancelona Development Strategy as presented by Networks Northwest. Motion carried – unanimous.**

**Motion by Dave Heeres, second by Pete Garwood, to recommend that the Antrim County Board of Commissioners supports the US-131 Mancelona Development Strategy.**

**Motion carried – unanimous.**

Ms. Lucas said her information was that an extension of US 131 was not likely.

**5. Northern Lakes Economic Alliance**

Ms. Whitley and Andy LaPointe, from the Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority, said Amanda Baker was the new joint DDA director for both Elk Rapids and East Jordan and that the arrangement was working out well.

Ms. Whitley said two interns are currently working at NLEA. They are researching the top 20 “hot jobs” for young people and will be creating a multi-media project to present to area schools. Ms. Whitley said she will bring information about the project back to the EDC the next time she appears before the group.

**6. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Update**

Janet Koch, Associate Planner, will contact the State of Michigan regarding CVBs and bring the information back to the EDC.

**7. EDC Survey Results**

The EDC reviewed the memo included by Ms. Koch in the agenda packets.

Ms. Koch said she will pass on information she receives about funding opportunities to the clerks in the County’s villages and townships; she will also send the information to the EDC members.

Ms. Koch was directed to contact Frontier Communications and request that a representative attend a future EDC meeting to discuss Frontier’s build-out of fiber in Antrim County under the Connect America Fund Phase II program.

Ms. Bassett had distributed the Chain of Lakes guide from the Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. LaVanway had distributed a brochure from Charlevoix County that highlighted each of the cities and villages in their county. The EDC discussed promotional efforts of the County and considered the creation of a brochure similar to Charlevoix County’s. Quotes for a color brochure will be obtained. Mr. Garwood said Mark Stone, the County’s Operator of Dams and owner of Michigan Maps, had spoken to the Buildings, Lands & Infrastructure Committee about a promotional video of the county. Mr. Garwood said a listing of all the parks and access points in Antrim County was currently online.

While discussing the EDC’s 2017 budget, Mr. Allison and the rest of the EDC said they would like to see the County Board of Commissioners continue the membership with NLEA.

It was the consensus of the EDC to send out a new survey every other year and provide an overview of the previous survey with the new survey. Ms. Koch was directed to add a link to the survey results on the County website’s home page and to send links to all who were sent an e-invitation to participate.

Ms. Koch will provide the names of the eight survey participants who asked for more information to the EDC, who will contact those whom they know; the Administration staff will contact the remaining participants.

**8. Public Comment**

Mr. Allison said Mancelona had received a grant from Safe Routes to School and was working on trails at Wetzel Lake through the State of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources.

Andy LaPointe said he'd sent in an application to be a member in the EDC. He added that he was no longer a member of the Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority.

Ms. Koch reminded members that Dr. Sarah Nicholls from Michigan State University would be making two tourism presentations on Thursday; one in Elk Rapids at 10 am and the other in Kearney Township at 3 pm.

The EDC discussed the recent changes from the State of Michigan regarding funding for housing.

**Motion by Mike Allison, seconded by Pete Garwood, to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion carried – unanimous.**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.



# MANCELONA

*Framework for  
Growth & Investment*

US-131 Economic Development Strategy  
Draft June 2016

# Planning for Growth & Investment in Mancelona

## Background: US-131 Economic Development Initiative

With support from the Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative—and led by local communities, Networks Northwest, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, and Venture North—the US-131 Economic Development initiative explores the economic issues at play along the US-131 corridor, from Cadillac to Petoskey, and identifies key actions needed to address some of the challenges impacting the corridor’s economic competitiveness.

As part of this effort, a local economic development plan was developed for the Mancelona community. Networks Northwest provided assistance to the community to identify, prioritize, and address issues related to growth and investment in the Village and create strategies to build upon the community development initiatives already occurring within Mancelona.

## Plan Adoption and Implementation

Mancelona has the option of endorsing *Mancelona Framework for Growth and Investment* and/or incorporating its strategies into local master plans, capital improvement plans, recreation plans, and other local policies.

Implementation will occur as resources permit at the local level, with assistance from partnering agencies as desired or necessary.

## Target Audience

The plan is intended to serve as a resource for the following entities:

- Economic Development Resources—Funding & Technical Assistance
- Real Estate Developers
- Local, State, and Federal Governments
- Existing and Potential Residents and Businesses

## Participating Organizations

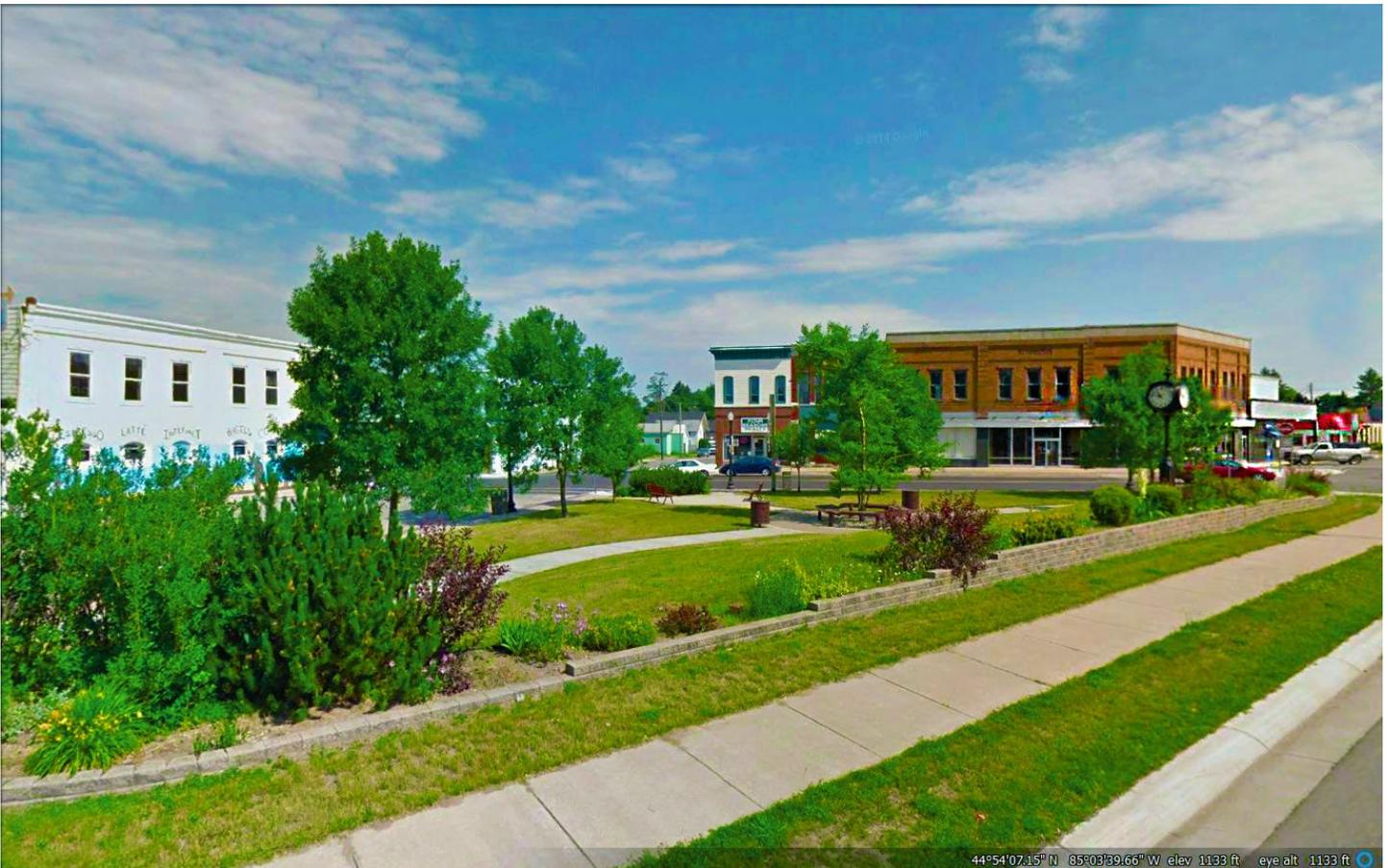
- Networks Northwest
- Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
- Village of Mancelona
- Mancelona Downtown Development Authority
- Mancelona Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Works
- Community Resource Development
- Antrim County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
- Local Businesses
- Engaged Citizens

# Introduction to Mancelona

Mancelona is a small village set in the heart of Northwest Michigan's woods, fields, and hills. The Village is home to about 1,700 residents, a school, commercial uses and industry—all of them with access to important infrastructure, transportation, recreation, and community amenities. <sup>1</sup>

Industry has been a defining characteristic for Mancelona for most of its 134-year history. Beginning with a blast furnace that opened in the 1880's for the manufacture of charcoal pig iron, Mancelona has seen industry come and go. <sup>2</sup> With it have come job gains and losses, economic booms and busts, environmental contamination and clean-up, and, through it all, community improvement efforts driven by an engaged and passionate public.

Today, Mancelona and the region are ripe with opportunity and potential: timber, agriculture, and oil and gas resources surround the Village, providing important assets for business and industry. Located along US-131, Mancelona is closely linked to neighboring communities that together form a distinct corridor of local recreation. The region's scenic beauty, rural character, and resorts draw visitors from throughout Michigan and the US for activities ranging from skiing to boating. In Mancelona's historic downtown, visitors and residents shop at locally-owned businesses and participate in popular community events like the Bass Festival and the Buck Pole, while the public land and trails surrounding the Village make it a destination for hunters, fishermen, snowmobilers, and motorized trail users. Mancelona offers important amenities for families as well: its schools boast high graduation rates and supportive, successful, community-based programs and career preparation. Businesses, too, have access to important amenities: sewer, water, and high speed Internet infrastructure are available for new and existing businesses; and affordable housing prices offer opportunities to attract the young people and families needed for today's workforce.



Downtown Mancelona

# Mancelona Assets & Challenges

It's important to recognize, however, that while Mancelona boasts valuable assets that are important for attracting business, residents, and visitors, the community has experienced a number of setbacks over the years that have had devastating community and economic impacts:

- Legacy contamination from historic industrial activity continues to impact the Mancelona area and its reputation. Despite millions of dollars spent on clean-up over more than two decades, stigma persists regarding current and future water quality in the Village.
- A gas explosion in 1995 demolished three buildings in the downtown. While remaining downtown buildings are not affected by the explosion, perceptions that the explosion damaged the foundations of some buildings have created difficulties for property owners that are looking to sell or make improvements to the buildings.
- In 2009, in the midst of Michigan's recession, the Village's main employer, Dura, closed its doors. Over 300 employees lost their jobs, and the building was sold, salvaged, and abandoned. Having gone through the foreclosure process, the vacant property comes with a special assessment and pre-existing environmental concerns that reportedly discourages interested buyers. And, its removal from the special assessment district puts a burden on other businesses located in the district.
- As Village residents dealt with unemployment and reduced incomes from the recession, the Village was hard-hit by the foreclosure crisis. It continues to contend with foreclosed, abandoned, and blighted homes. These blighted and abandoned homes contribute to low property values that discourage new investment or development: property owners can't access financing because the costs of residential construction and development will be higher than the value of the completed home.
- High unemployment rates, low incomes, and the realities of generational poverty contribute to negative perceptions of the Village—including the perception that crime rates and drug usage are higher here than in other parts of the region.

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Median annual income is **\$30,588**.
- **23%** of labor force is unemployed.
- **81%** of population have High School Degree. **8%** have Bachelor's Degree.

Source: BLS-Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), US Census 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**72% of Mancelona students qualify for free and reduced lunch.**

(Source: MI School Data)

**% of households that are living in poverty or are considered asset-limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE):**

- 56 Mancelona Township**
- 38 Antrim County**
- 38 Northwest Michigan**
- 40 Michigan**

Source: United Way of Michigan ALICE Report 2014

Mancelona's history presents some unique challenges and uphill battles. Not least among them is the need to address negative images of the Village caused by that very history. But the Mancelona community, which retains both pride in its history and a forward-looking commitment to action, is passionate and united in its work to overcome its obstacles and capitalize on its many assets. What's more, the Village is supported by a strong and solid network of Federal, State, County, and regional partners, as well as neighboring communities. Together with its partners, Mancelona is considering its assets and needs and putting the pieces together to create a strong, resilient community.

This economic development strategy considers the Village's economic opportunities in the context of both its challenges and its assets and lays out a course for immediate action.

# Community Resource Development: Building Capacity and Creating Change in Mancelona

The Community Resource Development (CRD) was established as a non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC) in order to bridge the connection between resources dedicated to enhanced educational achievement and community development related challenges and opportunities.

The CRD is an excellent example of the engagement and passion of Mancelona's residents, advocates, and businesses. Together with its partners, the CRD has secured millions of dollars in grants that have supported environmental clean-up, family and student services, and placemaking.

## History of the CRD

In July 1994, the Mancelona School District, with financial support from the Kellogg Foundation, embarked on a vision known as Project S.H.A.R.E (School and Home Alliance for Restructured Education) to position the school district as the hub of a new approach that would coordinate and integrate services provided by partner regional health and human service organizations targeting at-risk children and families. The over-arching vision was to use the heart of the community (its school system) as a catalyst to improve the quality of life for all present and future generations of Mancelona residents. The project grew in part, out of alarm over the disproportionate rate of Protective Services referrals coming from the school district. Project S.H.A.R.E also included commitments of staff and other resources committed by the 21 collaborating county, regional and state level health and human services partner organizations—most of whom were later coordinated under one shared roof of the Mancelona Family Resource Center.

As the Project S.H.A.R.E. delivery system grew, so did the need for a nonprofit organization to bridge the needs of the school system and those of the impoverished economically challenged community surrounding it. CRD was created in 1995, with a director shared between Project S.H.A.R.E and the newly-created nonprofit. From its inception, CRD embodied the vision of educational reform (bringing community resources into the schools to help students learn, stay in school and prepare for life) as a catalyst and foundation for improving the quality of life of the entire community. Over the course of ten years (1995 to 2005) CRD, together with collaborative partners, advocated for, facilitated, and coordinated an ever-growing grass roots, regional, state and federal coalition responsible for high-impact community initiatives.

## What is next for CRD?

With an emphasis on building collaborative partnerships in order to focus on solutions to long-standing environmental, educational and community development-related challenges, CRD and the Mancelona community have come a long way toward setting the stage for a better future.

While community and economic development challenges still remain, the leadership within the Mancelona community is resilient, strong and ready to forge ahead. The close-knit community holds to its history while possessing forward-thinking commitment to readying Mancelona for growth and future opportunities. The CRD is an example of and model for this vision and the community's dedication, and it remains a transformative rural community development model with the potential to enact long-term change. Now, in 2016, a renewed commitment to build community capacity through grassroots efforts, coordinated leadership, and partnerships will drive local efforts to meet and overcome Mancelona's community development and economic challenges.



MAWSA staff with the 2012 Best Tasting Water for the Region award. MAWSA first won the award in 2006 & 2007 and consistently from 2010-present. ([facebook.com/Mancelona-Area-Water-Sewer-Authority](https://www.facebook.com/Mancelona-Area-Water-Sewer-Authority)).

# CRD and Mancelona Partners: A Grassroots Legacy

## Collaborative Community-Based Services

Project S.H.A.R.E./CRD, the Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency, and local, regional and state health and human service provider agencies developed the 8,400 square foot Mancelona Family Resource Center (now the Ironmen Health Center) in 1995. The Resource Center provides a “one-stop, seamless and integrated service delivery system”, through re-positioned staff from multiple service provider agencies - all working under one shared roof built on the school campus. This service delivery model also included an Early Childhood Development initiative that emphasized before- and after-school day care programs, as well as “wrap-around” and home based services.

## Placemaking

Project S.H.A.R.E./CRD, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA), the Mancelona Village Council and local business representatives worked together to form the Mancelona Downtown Development Authority (DDA). During the initial phase of a DDA- and Village-led streetscape project, a natural gas explosion destroyed several downtown businesses. Project S.H.A.R.E convened local, regional, state, and federal partners in a collaborative effort resulting in a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to assist in the rebuilding of the downtown, the commission of a sewer engineering study and the completion of a tax-increment financing authority (TIFA) plan.

## Environmental Assessment and Clean-Up

CRD and community partners have led critical efforts to address environmental contamination in the Mancelona area. In 1995, CRD and Antrim County received grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for technical assistance, brownfield assessment, and evaluation of the 200-acre Tar Lake Superfund site, which ultimately led to a three-phase (removal, remediation and redevelopment) process initially aimed at the clean-up of the Tar Lake site. Over 47,000 tons of tar and other debris from a five-acre ground depression on the Antrim Iron Works property in the first phase of the project.

CRD also facilitated the creation and acted as the coordinator of the Antrim County United Through Ecology (ACUTE) community engagement coalition. ACUTE was formed in order to advocate for and coordinate solutions to groundwater contamination, known as the Wickes TCE plume, originating from past industrial activities at the Dura plant. The trichloroethylene (TCE) plume extended over 6 miles from the Dura site, contaminating over 13 trillion gallons of groundwater from Mancelona northwest into Shanty Creek, Schuss Mountain and Cedar River Villages. ACUTE has effectively advocated for the continual expansion of and improvements to the Mancelona Area Water and Sewer Authority’s (MAWSA) regional municipal water system, advocating for and leveraging grant dollars and support from the MDEQ and Antrim County in order to mitigate the impact on the MAWSA well system located in the path of the TCE plume. Construction on water main improvements/extension and a storage tank located at the Cedar River well field site will begin the summer of 2016.

## Mancelona Area Water and Sewer Authority (MAWSA)

CRD was instrumental in the creation and operational support of MAWSA. MAWSA, with funding and guidance from the MI Dept. of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), designed and constructed a regional water system consisting of 18 miles of water main that extends from the Village of Mancelona to the Schuss Mountain/Shanty Creek and Cedar River village area. This project also included significant rehabilitation and the elimination of debt of the pre-existing Village of Mancelona water system. This MAWSA system currently provides safe drinking water to properties impacted by the Tar Lake and Dura sites. In total over \$20 million was invested in providing critically needed water-related infrastructure to address the two groundwater contamination plumes. MAWSA also built a sewer system that serves the 131 corridor and downtown businesses and Mancelona Public Schools.

# Infrastructure

Business and industry need access to affordable, reliable, efficient infrastructure to produce and distribute goods and services. Adequate access to roads, energy sources, sewer, municipal water, and other services that support the operations, expansion, and improvement of business must also be paired with technology-based infrastructure: telecommunications and high-speed internet are critical in today's business operations.

Mancelona is well-served by quality infrastructure that is unusual even in communities of larger size. However, infrastructure issues in Mancelona are complicated by contamination as a result of historic industrial activity. Despite ongoing monitoring and management of the contamination by State and local partners, ensured access to safe drinking water via MAWSA, and accolades from the State as the "best tasting" drinking water, the perception of contaminated water impacts the image and property values of Mancelona. Additionally, special assessment costs for the sewer district reportedly act as a barrier to the sale or redevelopment of the Dura property.

## CHALLENGES

- Closure of the Dura plant has left a financial burden on the Village for infrastructure costs.
- Perceptions of poor water quality due to historic contamination create stigmas that impact property values and business growth.
- No infrastructure is available in the designated Antrim County Industrial Park.

## ASSETS

- US-131, M-72, and rail access provide important transportation infrastructure for business and industry.
- High-speed internet is available through fiber, cable, DSL, wi-fi, 4G and fixed wireless. Free wi-fi is available in the downtown
- Sewer and water are available throughout the Village, with additional capacity. In addition to providing clean and safe drinking water, the water system regularly wins state awards for providing the region's "best tasting" drinking water.
- Upgrades and extensions to the MAWSA network of well fields and water mains ensure that properties in areas affected by contamination plumes will have reliable access to clean drinking water.

## THE DURA PROPERTY AND SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

The Mancelona Area Sanitary Sewer Special Assessment District was established in 2000. Since that time, \$17 million has been invested in the development of a municipal water system; and in 2007, nearly \$2.5 million in loans, grants, and bonds was spent to develop a sewer system.<sup>3</sup> A special assessment was established to repay the bonds, based on all users of the system at the time. The primary user of the sewer, expected to bear a large portion of the costs, was the Dura plant, which closed in 2009 and was later sold. Purchasers of the property deconstructed and salvaged the building, and then allowed the property to go into tax foreclosure. Apart from job losses and subsequent economic impacts, the plant's closure has also created a substantial financial burden for the Village in infrastructure costs. Because the Special Assessment cannot be legally changed in any way until the bond is paid off, special assessment payments that were originally established for the property must be paid yearly with the taxes.

It's important to note that, while the special assessment costs may be perceived as an initial barrier to sale, the infrastructure capacity available at the Dura site remains an important and valuable asset for business and industry. Ready for redevelopment, with cut and capped water and sewer service lines feeding the property with valves and manholes still in place, there are plentiful opportunities to package the site as "redevelopment ready" industrial or commercial property.

## MAWSA & WATER QUALITY PERCEPTION

With leadership and coordination from local and County entities, CRD, and other partners, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began work in 1998 to remove and remediate groundwater contamination from the site of the former Antrim Iron Works plant near Mancelona. At a cost of about \$16 million, 47,000 tons of liquid tar were removed and transported to an energy recovery plant. EPA and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) then installed a bio-sparge system on the tar lake site in order to clean groundwater as it moves off-site. A municipal water system was also developed to ensure access to clean, quality drinking water.<sup>3</sup>

During activities surrounding clean-up of Tar Lake contamination, a trichloroethylene (TCE) plume was discovered in 1997, originating south of the Dura property and moving northwest toward Bellaire. Multiple partners, include the MDEQ, are engaged and monitoring the contamination. Because the extent of the contamination makes clean-up cost-prohibitive, \$18 million has been spent on measures to avoid contaminated water. Among those activities was the creation of the Mancelona Area Water and Sewer Authority (MAWSA) in 2000. Any individual wells in the area have the option of connecting to the municipal water system to ensure clean drinking water.

Since the water system was developed, ongoing improvements have been made, with support from County, state, and federal partners, to ensure that water for the municipal system is not impacted by the plume. In the face of limited state funding to pay for improvements to the water system, Antrim County is sharing some costs with the DEQ to implement upgrades and extensions to the water system. However, despite efforts to ensure safe drinking water, perceptions of poor water quality and uncertainty about contamination impacts on individual wells create stigmas that impact property

## Partners & Resources

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
US Department of Agriculture—Rural Development

Provide efficient and cost-effective public services.

Benchmark: Monthly household expenses

Address negative perceptions of water quality.

Work with partners to develop “FAQ” informational packages and talking points about Mancelona water, contamination, clean-up, and mitigation to share with realtors and property owners.

Work with partners to develop public relations strategy for communicating water quality facts and issues to and with the public.

Promote and package infrastructure assets.

Work with partners to develop “FAQ” informational packages and talking points about Mancelona sewer and water

Maintain efficient, cost-effective infrastructure that continues to provide high-quality drinking water and capacity for new growth.

Maintain a current Capital Improvements Plan to identify needs, goals, and budgets for future infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

# Business & Industry

Mancelona is located amidst a wealth of valuable natural resources—including oil, gas, timber, and agriculture—with ready access to sewer, water, broadband, natural gas, industrial property, and multi-modal transportation pathways. These assets position Mancelona for growth; but the area’s potential for business expansion is affected by several factors, including the size of the community’s customer base, competition from nearby communities, and lack of complementary businesses within the Village to complement the existing commercial and industrial mix, according to a 2015 business survey.

A 2016 target industry market analysis for Mancelona identified top priorities for recruitment to Mancelona, as well as necessary actions to attract new development. In addition, the 2015 business survey indicated that the most desired forms of new development were industry and manufacturing, retail stores, full-service restaurants, and professional

## CHALLENGES

- Downtown vacancies detract from a potentially vibrant retail environment.
- Blight and deteriorating commercial properties create a negative image and discourage some business activity.
- Declines in manufacturing employment experienced during the recession continue to impact employment.
- Special assessment rates may deter some businesses.

## ASSETS

- Natural resources, including timber and oil and gas, support multiple businesses—from local to multi-national firms.
- Merit fiber backbone provides high-speed Internet, a “must-have” for new business growth.
- Ready access to a highways, rail, and airports create opportunities for Mancelona to..
- Processing and warehousing needs for agricultural products may offer opportunities for “food innovation” activity.
- An industrial park provides space for new business and industry.
- The Dura property is served by infrastructure and provides an important redevelopment opportunity for new business or industry.
- Tourism-related activity in and around Mancelona present untapped potential.
- Businesses are highly visible to large amounts of traffic from US-131 and M-88.

## Target Market Analysis

A target market industry analysis was completed in 2016 to identify opportunities for the reuse or redevelopment of potentially high-impact industrial properties in the Village of Mancelona. The analysis evaluated industry clusters and development patterns, trends, and needs/priorities of business owners, for the purpose of identifying site selection criteria for high-growth industries who may be interested in locating in Mancelona.

The study found that Mancelona possesses differentiating assets from other Northern Michigan locations which will help to attract business, including available space and infrastructure for new enterprises, coordinated pro-growth leadership, and the “Up North” community lifestyle. Limitations to business growth include high special assessment costs, lack of move-in ready properties, and limited marketing tools.

Given the availability of development-ready land but lack of move-in ready properties, Mancelona should target industries that are willing to set up new facilities and operations rather than those that need to move in to existing buildings. Operations focused on forest products, value-added food products, transportation/logistics, and automotive parts/components are marked as first priority target industries for Mancelona to recruit. Secondary targets include tool and die shops, equipment/machinery transportation, and oil/natural gas production. The full target analysis is available by contacting the Networks Northwest Regional Planning Department at (231) 929-5000.

# Enhance and attract business opportunities.

Benchmark: Parcel marketing, unemployment rate, population mix

## Create an adaptive and resilient retail environment.

Encourage and facilitate new retail activity that meets local niche market demands

## Attract new business looking to relocate or expand.

Identify a single point of contact for economic development conversations who is able to represent cross-jurisdictional interests, speak to available assets, and provide access to available financing.

Create a marketing packet or web page geared towards business owners interested in doing business in the area.

Create a packet of incentives for identified development/redevelopment properties and state clearly what incentives are available to new businesses.

Track statewide and local business news to identify and reach out to existing growing/evolving enterprises within the Northern Michigan region.

## Partners & Resources

- US131 Corridor Community Study
- Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
- NW MI Small Business Development Center
- TraverseCONNECT
- Mancelona Target Industry Market Analysis
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Small Business Development Center

## Identify and recruit priority markets.

Identify and reach out to growing/evolving enterprises, especially within the region, to share business and industry assets and opportunities.

Identify and reach out to former regional/local residents, high school graduates, and community college alumni to share business and industry assets and opportunities.

Identify and reach out to recreational visitors to the region to share business and industry assets and opportunities.

## Provide resources and assistance for locally-owned businesses.

Work with partners to provide and promote training and counseling for business planning, development, and management.

Work with partners to provide, promote, or enhance access to small business loans and other financing alternatives.

Work with partners to develop or promote business mentoring programs.

## Proactively address negative perceptions of Mancelona.

Identify and contact “alumni” of the region, particularly those who lead industrial or commercial operations, with simple, engaging information about the possibilities in Mancelona.

Create and share a regular community “spotlight” to showcase an individual or businesses who is working hard to better Mancelona.

# Working Mancelona

A regional labor shortage and skills gap is impacting Mancelona: declining numbers of young people and families, increasing numbers of retiring employees, and barriers to employment are all contributing to challenges reported by businesses in finding qualified employees with the right skills and work ethic. Businesses region-wide report workforce issues as being a top challenge to business growth and expansion. Meanwhile, Mancelona’s unemployment rates are higher than average, due in part to barriers to employment, such as cost of childcare and lack of transportation.

## CHALLENGES

- More workers are reaching retirement age, while working age residents leave the region—leaving more job openings and fewer people to fill them.
- Rates of students attending 4-year or any higher learning institution are below state averages
- Seasonal business fluctuations make it difficult to hire, train, and retain staff year-round.
- Barriers to employment like the cost or unavailability of childcare, lack of transportation, and limited housing choices create added difficulties in recruiting and retaining workers.
- Limited career opportunities and lower wages compared to other parts of the state discourage some local graduates from returning home to work.
- Relatively lower rates of residents with advanced degrees make it difficult to staff higher-skilled positions.
- High poverty rates in Mancelona and related family issues contribute to a lack of preparedness and decreased chances of success later in life for some children.

## SUCCESS: COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

Since 2001, the Community in Schools program in Mancelona has been helping keep kids in school, improving their success rate, and increasing graduation rates. The program positions site coordinators inside schools to assess students’ needs and provide resources to help them succeed. It includes partnerships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, and volunteers to provide food, school supplies, health care, counseling, academic assistance, or mentoring. It recognizes that every child needs and deserves these “Five Basics:” a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, a safe place to grow and learn, a healthy start and a healthy future, a marketable skill to use upon graduation, and a chance to give back to peers and community.

## ASSETS

- Mancelona Schools has a 92% graduation rate.<sup>4</sup>
- The Community in Schools program provides highly-successfully mentoring, services, and “wrap-around” support to students.
- Mancelona Resource Center connects and provides access to multiple service providers.
- Mancelona Public Schools offer a variety of opportunities for job training, skills development, and advanced education, including a “five-year” high school track that allows students to earn an associates degree while in high school
- The presence of a workforce is a necessary ingredient for business attraction, and Mancelona has more workers than jobs.
- Partnerships with Northwest Michigan Works and Northwestern Michigan College provide opportunities for trainings, recruitment, apprenticeships, and other workforce development initiatives.

### Top 10 Antrim County Industries

Industry	# Jobs, 2014	Average Monthly Earnings
Accommodation & Food Services	1,023	\$1,486
Manufacturing	933	\$3,788
Retail Trade	526	\$1,931
Health Care & Social Assistance	359	\$3,231
Public Administration	324	\$2,782
Educational Services	316	\$3,303
Construction	283	\$2,767
Other Services (except Public Administration)	214	\$2,030
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	197	\$2,251
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	183	\$2,190

Source: United States Census Bureau. 2016. US Census LEHD LODES dataset V7.2

## Enhance, retain, and attract a skilled workforce.

Benchmark: Educational attainment, unemployment rate, population mix

### Attract and retain talent.

Promote local quality of life as relocation attractions

Facilitate “attract back” activities for high school and college graduates

Facilitate, support, and promote internships at local companies

Create local reputation that is welcoming and innovative

### Increase work-based learning opportunities.

Facilitate and promote partnerships between schools, employers, workforce agencies for apprenticeships

Facilitate and promote job-shadowing, tours, and informational interviews

Facilitate and promote internships at local companies

### CRADLE TO CAREER

Some communities have established collaborative, multi-organizational initiatives designed to create more opportunities for early childhood education, college preparedness, career training, and “attract back” incentives for local high school graduates. These “cradle to career” initiatives may include educational endowment funds or related initiatives that support expanded preschool access, parenting support, scholarship programs and support services for college-bound high school graduates, vocational training, and adult education. Launch Manistee, a newly-formed network of diverse educational stakeholders, is one regional example of this “collective impact” approach to lifelong success.

65

Average round-trip commute, in miles, for Mancelona workers

### Increase job training opportunities.

Work with partners to develop new opportunities for skills training for in-demand occupations and industries

Work with partners to facilitate and promote mentoring at local business

Work with partners to facilitate and promote “soft skills” classes and trainings for employability skills

Work with partners to facilitate and promote internal training at local businesses

### Provide educational & community supports to families & children.

Explore partnerships within and outside Mancelona to develop cradle-to-career/early childhood education

Work with partners to facilitate and promote parenting and family education

### Partners & Resources

- Great Start Collaborative
- Mancelona Area Public Schools
- Industrial Arts Institute
- Northwest MichiganWorks!
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District
- Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
- TraverseCONNECT
- Community Resources Development

# Housing Mancelona

Communities throughout Northwest Michigan are experiencing changes in housing demand and shortages of housing choices that are impacting businesses, schools, and community vitality, and Mancelona is no exception. Small homes, rentals, or multi-family housing units that are consistent with single-family development—otherwise known as the “missing middle” - are all becoming more important in meeting the needs of the workforce, an aging population, small households, young professionals, and families. Without them, employers struggle to hire qualified new workers, including professional staff; and schools lose out on new students. Meanwhile, few developers region-wide have the experience or financing options needed to build these new housing types. In Mancelona, a lack of quality rentals or moderately-priced, quality housing options makes it difficult for new hires to relocate to the community.

Mancelona also struggles with significant numbers of homes that were lost to foreclosure, many of them now abandoned. With the region’s highest rate of foreclosures between 2006-2009, the Village now contends with vacant homes that contribute to blight and declining property values. In fact, property values now limit opportunities for new developments: because costs for new residential development are higher than the property values upon completion of construction, it’s difficult to access financing for new development.

## CHALLENGES

- Few local developers have the experience or resources to develop needed, in-demand housing types.
- Blighted and abandoned homes negatively impact property values, neighborhood aesthetics, and quality of life.
- Challenges in accessing financing, due to low property values, prohibit new residential construction.

## ASSETS

- Housing is more affordable than in other parts of the region.
- The availability of sewer, water, and natural gas create opportunities for higher-density development.
- Vacant housing presents opportunities for redevelopment.
- Zoning allows for high-density.

## What is the Missing Middle?

The “missing middle” refers to multi-unit or clustered housing types that are compatible with, and look similar to, single family homes—such as duplexes, fourplexes, row houses, cottage developments, and courtyard apartments. These housing units are becoming increasingly popular as the region’s population changes and more households look to move to smaller homes.

## ANNUAL POTENTIAL MARKET DEMAND, MANCELONA VILLAGE

	Annual Market Demand, 2014-2019		Median rent	Median home value
	Owners	Renters		
Young singles	2	4	\$550	\$89,000
Young families	1	1	\$450	\$45,000
Lower-income families/households	0	3	\$525	\$92,000
Low-income GenX	0	4	\$475	\$75,000
Low-income Boomer singles/empty-nesters	0	1	\$400	\$39,500
Low-mod income blue collar Boomers	1	1	\$455	\$75,000
Lower-income seniors	0	1	\$500	\$95,000

*\*Conservative scenario. An aggressive scenario, i.e. with active efforts to attract new residents, could triple the market potential. Data from the 2015 Northwest Michigan Target Market Analysis, prepared by LandUseUSA. Underlying data provided by the Internal Revenue Services; US Decennial Census; American Community Survey; and Experian Decision Analytics*

**\$609**

2014 Mancelona median gross rent <sup>5</sup>

**\$11.71**

Hourly wage needed to afford average rental <sup>6</sup>

# Provide affordable and attainable housing to meet varied demand.

Benchmark: Monthly household expenses

## Encourage rehabilitation of existing vacant or dilapidated properties.

Explore grants, work with lenders, and identify other opportunities to create incentive programs or financing for home rehabilitation

Explore opportunities for establishing a Land Bank Authority

Leverage incentives and programs available through the County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

Review options for rental inspections ordinances

## Provide incentives and encourage partnerships.

Identify and recruit developers that produce desired housing products

Consider use of tax incentives to encourage affordable residential development or home rehab

Consider brownfield, downtown development authority, corridor improvement authority or other means to incentivize infrastructure and improvements for housing development

Identify and package “development ready” properties to market to developers for mixed-use/mixed-income developments

## Land Bank Authority

Land Bank Authorities are authorized to take ownership of and manage tax-foreclosed properties, and can also buy land and buildings or receive donations of property. Once it owns a property, it can clean up, redevelop, or simply hold and maintain the property tax-free until it’s ready for sale or development. Because of their ability to clear “dirty” titles, qualify for brownfield funding, and partner with private, public, or nonprofit agencies for redevelopment, land bank authorities offer many tools for housing development and redevelopment.

Land bank authorities must be created at the County level and require the support and authority of the County Treasurer. To date, Antrim County has not pursued the establishment of a land bank authority. The Village can work with the County to share information and develop partnerships to enhance the Village’s, and the County’s, capacity to encourage and facilitate new development and redevelopment.

## Partners & Resources

Mancelona Target Market Analysis

Antrim County Housing Inventory

Northwest Michigan Housing Solutions Network

Networks Northwest

# Placemaking

“Placemaking” refers to community improvement strategies and initiatives that result in vibrant, safe, and friendly places that are cherished by both residents and visitors. It builds on a community’s unique assets—like its history, natural resources, or public spaces and buildings—and prioritizes the “livability” and vibrancy of a place. Placemaking uses walkability, social events, entertainment options, gathering spaces, and the unique small town character or sense of place created by historic buildings, natural resources, or scenic vistas.

Mancelona is no stranger to placemaking. Following the 1995 gas explosion, the community converted vacant space left by demolished buildings into an attractive park that has become an important community gathering space; and today, hundreds of volunteers are working to transform and beautify the downtown. In today’s economy, these types of activities are critical: communities that are high-quality places to live, work, play, and raise a family tend to be more successful in attracting the residents, skilled workers, and businesses needed for economic development. Placemaking thus represents an increasingly important economic development strategy for communities like Mancelona— especially along the Village’s most visible corridor, US-131. Impressions of this highly-traveled corridor shape the perception of visitors and others traveling through or to the Village, and they currently feature high traffic volumes, auto-oriented development, and some deteriorating properties that detract from the impression of the Village as a whole. Downtown, meanwhile, includes some vacancies and deteriorating or outdated facades. To enhance Mancelona’s economic opportunities and attract new investment, it will be critical for new development and improvements to use placemaking principles that create vibrant, safe, walkable, and attractive community spaces. However, it will be important to ensure that all placemaking activities align with each other and with a community-wide consensus or “vision” for Mancelona.

## CHALLENGES

- Many state and federal programs that can support placemaking principles come with red tape or require staff or funding resources that are not available locally.
- Opportunities for implementing placemaking or walkability initiatives along US-131 and M-88 are impacted by state transportation policies.
- Participation in façade improvement grants on the part of business owners has been limited.

## ASSETS

- A strong and active volunteer base has led downtown placemaking efforts by creating parks, painting business facades, planning events, and planting flowers.
- The downtown historic character creates a unique “sense of Mancelona.”
- A façade improvement program is available to business owners.
- Mancelona is surrounded by an outdoor recreation paradise.

## CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding refers to the process of soliciting funds from the public to create projects or fund new or existing businesses. Crowdfundingmi.com offers a platform for communities to seek local funding for public projects. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Public Spaces Community Places program provides grants that match dollars raised by crowdfunding for strategic projects.

# 52

Mancelona  
Village Walk  
Score  
(walkscore.com)

# Create a vibrant, welcoming, attractive Mancelona.

## Benchmark: Population mix, Public safety

### Redevelop, reuse, or clean up vacant, blighted, and underused properties.

Consider use of DDA or brownfield tax increment financing to fund blight removal or remediation, and/or to act as match dollars for state and federal grants.

Explore grants from state or other sources to fund blight removal or remediation.

Use “development-ready” techniques to prioritize reuse or redevelopment of vacant commercial space .

Identify priority structures and properties for redevelopment/blight removal.

Work with the County to explore establishment of a Land Bank Authority.

### Provide alternative funding sources or resources to support placemaking initiatives.

Leverage DDA/TIF districts and funding sources for community improvement projects.

Provide small grants to business/property owners for small improvements.

Work with partners to develop local or regional funding sources, i.e. revolving loans or grant funds, dedicated to Mancelona.

Explore opportunities for crowdfunding priority projects.

### Work with community partners to develop and implement placemaking strategies.

Identify, through the creation of a master plan or other publicly driven initiatives, a community vision and downtown plan.

Incorporate community history, arts, culture, and other unique local assets in community improvement and placemaking projects.

Support volunteer-based programs in implementing community improvement projects.

Work with schools and other partners to develop young professional and youth leadership programs.

Work with partners to develop local leadership programs (i.e. Leadership Grand Traverse).

Work with communities along US-131 to promote, expand, and enhance outdoor recreation assets.

## Partners & Resources

Michigan Main Street Program

Michigan Municipal League

Michigan State Housing Development Authority

Networks Northwest

Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

Crowdfunding MI

# Recreation

Recreation is a major economic driver, especially in Northwest Michigan. Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, biking, hiking, horseback riding, boating and other outdoor events draw visitors to the region, increasing regional earnings, spending, and new investment. And, workers and businesses often choose to locate in areas with opportunities for and access to recreation, making recreation an important strategy for talent or workforce attraction and retention.

Recreation in Mancelona is an important untapped resource in terms of economic development potential. Studies report that the economic impact of recreation is related to the length of visitors' stays and overnight visits: the longer people remain in an area, the more they spend. However, with limited options for hotels, dining, or downtown entertainment, Mancelona misses important opportunities to capture additional revenue from visitors and tourists in town for events, trails, fishing, and hunting.

## CHALLENGES

- Few options for overnight accommodations limit opportunities to capture additional revenue from visitors.
- Mancelona is under-represented in terms of recreation earnings, jobs, and grant dollars received, when compared with the rest of the region.
- Limited funding opportunities and different trail user groups complicate the maintenance and development of Kalkaska's many trail systems.
- Without a 5-year Recreation Plan, the Village is not eligible to apply for recreation funds from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

## ASSETS

- Nearly 200,000 acres of forested land, 264 miles of rivers and streams, and more than 76 lakes make Antrim County an outdoor recreation paradise.<sup>8</sup>
- Nearby Shanty Creek Resorts are a widely-known and popular destination.
- The Mancelona Buck Pole and the Annual Bass Festival draw thousands of visitors annually and showcase the downtown.
- Trail systems surrounding the Village include the North Country Trail, Glacial Hills, and state-owned ORV and snowmobile trails.

## TRAIL COUNTRY

Trails surrounding Mancelona offer important economic development potential. Motorized trails in the Pere Marquette State Forest and the North Country Trail have long been important destinations for many visitors, while the recently developed trail system in nearby Bellaire has become a major new draw, particularly for mountain bikers. Trail usage comes with major economic impact, and trail development has become a proven way to attract new visitors and investment. Discussions are currently underway regarding the potential to develop trails around Wetzel Lake near Mancelona that could connect into larger trail networks. As neighboring communities like Kalkaska also work to expand and enhance their trail networks, coordinated trail-building efforts could work to create a regional trail hub or destination.

185

Miles of trails in  
Antrim County<sup>7</sup>

190,000

Acres of forestland in  
Antrim County<sup>8</sup>

# Enhance recreation and entertainment options.

Benchmark: Number of recreation plans adopted, overnight lodging ordinance

## Encourage, support, & promote additional affordable, family-oriented activities and entertainment.

Identify and recruit entertainment businesses to key downtown properties

Develop and maintain a 5-year, DNR-approved recreation plan

Work with partners to explore opportunities to host events such as sports tournaments, competitions, races

Co-market organized events with golf, skiing, water, fishing, and hunting

## Encourage & support the development of tourism/visitor businesses and services infrastructure and entertainment.

Work with Mancelona Chamber to build connections between surrounding areas/accommodations and Mancelona

Explore partnerships with/between the Mancelona Chamber of Commerce and the Traverse City Area Visitors Bureau

Work with neighboring communities and organizations to market and promote lodging and other visitor opportunities

## Enhance, support, and promote an interconnected trail system.

Work within ongoing coordinated trail planning efforts and with neighboring communities and stakeholders to develop and link trail systems

Identify potential trail connectors to parks, schools, and other community resources

Identify potential trail routes to link existing trail networks

Leverage and link to existing nearby trails, including North Country Trail and Glacial Hills

Connect to Shanty Creek/Schuss Mountain

Build relationships with TOMBA, MMBA

Provide and promote services/amenities to trail users

## Partners & Resources

Grand Traverse Hiking Club

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

Antrim County Conservation District

Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA)

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Upnorthtrails.org

## BUILDING CAPACITY: RECREATION PLANS

Through its recreation grants program, currently funded through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides funding assistance to communities that would like to purchase land for parks or are planning to improve or develop recreational facilities. To apply for these grant programs, a community must adopt a 5-year recreation plan.

# Governance

Local governments play powerful roles in economic development, especially in activities related to infrastructure and placemaking. The Village of Mancelona and its partners at the County level have taken a strong leadership role in encouraging community improvements that will support business growth and development. With support from the CRD and partner agencies, Mancelona has been proactive in engaging partners like the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and USDA in projects like infrastructure development and clean-up of contaminated properties.

However, many competing priorities vie for limited funding and staff time. Further, without a master plan or other policy guidance, it can be difficult to prioritize activities or seek funding needed for community improvements. Additional dollars and capacity could support the planning and implementation needed to accommodate growth and investment, and to implement innovative projects and development opportunities.

When working with limited capacity, partnerships with state, county, and regional partners are critical. However, in Antrim County, economic realities vary dramatically between lower-income communities in the eastern half of the County and the wealthier waterfront communities in the west, contributing to the perception of an “east-west divide” and a County-wide lack of consensus around economic priorities that would help support Mancelona. Addressing and balancing different needs on a County-wide basis will be important in building working relationships between local, County, and other partners.

## CHALLENGES

- Limited financial resources and staff capacity limit opportunities to work directly with potential investors, developers, or businesses.
- Stark economic differences between shoreline and “inland” communities, or the eastern and western halves of Antrim County, create perceived difficulty in aligning County-wide priorities and initiatives with Mancelona needs.
- The Village currently lacks a Master Plan and a community-wide vision that can guide growth and aid in decisions about limited resources.

## ASSETS

- Village leaders and Community Resource Development (CRD) work with County, State, and regional partners to improve quality of life and opportunities for investment.
- The Antrim County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Economic Development Corporation are taking steps to provide incentives for redevelopment.
- A business-friendly environment and community support for growth encourage new investment and development.
- Regional and state partners, including Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, Networks Northwest, and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and other agencies provide technical assistance and financial support as available.

## Building Capacity: Redevelopment Ready Communities

The Redevelopment Ready Communities Program is a statewide certification program, managed by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, that supports communities in efforts to become development ready and competitive. It encourages innovative redevelopment strategies and efficient processes which build confidence among businesses and developers. It provides assistance in establishing deliberate, fair, and consistent development practices—making them more attractive for investments that create desirable places. Certification as a RRC community signals that a community has effective development practices in place, like well-defined development procedures, a community-supported vision, an open and predictable review process, and compelling sites for developers to locate projects. Becoming RRC certified is an important priority for the Village of Mancelona.

# Ensure flexible, efficient, responsive administration.

Benchmark: Planning policies adopted/implemented, RDR community certification

## Enhance local economic development capacity with partnerships.

Build and enhance partnerships with regional agencies to enhance local capacities

Continue existing and explore additional opportunities for technical assistance, i.e. Michigan Main Street

Become certified as a Redevelopment Ready Community

Explore and develop partnerships with neighboring communities on projects of greater-than-local-impact

Build and enhance partnerships with County and neighboring units of government

## Consider planning and zoning policies that encourage and support new investment that meets community goals.

Develop a Village Master Plan with a clear community vision and strategy for growth and investment

Review and update ordinances, policies, and processes to ensure that they are deliberate, fair, consistent, and efficient

Review zoning and other policies to identify opportunities to improve development readiness

Consider zoning changes to allow desired development types as uses-by-right

Consider zoning changes that create a strong sense of place, especially in commercial areas

## Incentivize growth in targeted areas.

Develop, package, and promote market studies, development incentives, and other resources for priority redevelopment sites

## MASTER PLAN

A master plan is a guide that is intended to shape local land use decisions, based on a vision developed by a community about its future. Master plans also serve as the foundation for zoning ordinances, which control how land and buildings are developed and used. They can also act as a guide for other ordinances or regulations, typically addressing issues like the development of land, the placement and extent of public facilities, natural resource protection, transportation, and housing choices.

To thrive and compete in the state and global economy, planning is an important first step, providing the foundation needed to make informed decisions about managing limited resources, directing development to appropriate locations, and ensuring that development is designed to protect and enhance our communities most valued features. The Village of Mancelona does not currently have a master plan—a resource that could help the community prioritize and fund needed projects.

## Partners & Resources

Antrim County

Michigan Economic Development Corp.

Networks Northwest

Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

# Destination Mancelona

In today's economy, competition for workers, visitors, residents, and businesses is fierce. Many battles for these new residents, visitors, and businesses are fought and won with marketing and promotion: promoting a positive identity and desirable place-based assets can draw visitors and new residents to a community—and with them, new investment. The success of the Pure Michigan advertising campaign both within and outside Michigan has shown the tremendous potential for business growth through the marketing of place-based assets: in 2013, the ad campaign brought in 4 million visitors with a \$1.2 billion impact.<sup>9</sup>

To be a competitive destination for tourism and business, Mancelona must set itself apart from other communities with a positive identity. While much work remains to be done to enhance and package them effectively, Mancelona has enormous assets that can be leveraged and marketed for business, residents, and tourism. To date, many of those assets have been under-recognized or overshadowed by the “big-ticket,” highly-publicized nearby destinations like Traverse City and Petoskey. When considering how, where, what, and when to market, it will be important to recognize that, while there are many valuable opportunities to capitalize on their proximity, Mancelona is not any of these destinations—nor should it be. Marketing should celebrate and promote Mancelona's own unique assets, image, and opportunities to a clear target audience.

## CHALLENGES

- Few options for overnight accommodations or entertainment limit the potential for tourism-related economic impact.
- Mancelona lacks an image or brand as a statewide or regional destination.
- Negative perceptions created by economic downturns, unattractive development along main corridors, and lower-than-average incomes discourage some tourist activity.

## ASSETS

- Ambitious ongoing community-building initiatives create momentum and regional recognition.
- The Mancelona area boasts a wealth of recreation opportunities, events, and public land that are sought after by diverse demographics.
- Positioned in the heart of “Pure Michigan” and on the way to many regional attractions, Mancelona is situated in a highly desirable and visible location.
- Recreation opportunities available along the US-131 corridor—like snowmobiling, motorized trails, fishing, and hunting—act as an important and potentially lucrative regional niche.
- The availability of affordable housing and shorter commutes can appeal to workers and others struggling with regional costs of living.

## LIVE, WORK, PLAY @ MYNORTH.COM

MyNorth.com is the online home of *Traverse, Northern Michigan's Magazine*, an award-winning magazine with a nation-wide readership. An enhanced “Live-Work-Play” component of MyNorth.com features opportunities for employment, business expansion, education, real estate, and recreation for all communities in Northwest Michigan. The website acts as a portal and features *Work Here* and *Live Here* sections that include business directories and maps; job postings; school directories; real estate information; “cool companies;” a page and promotional video for each county in Northwest Michigan; and featured communities—including the Village of Mancelona. In 2015, the website had 1.4 million visits and traffic is growing rapidly. Visitors originated from 221 counties, all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as 663 cities in Michigan.<sup>10</sup>

# Promote a strong and vibrant Mancelona.

Benchmark: Gross regional product, Unemployment rate

## BEST PRACTICE:

### Regional Marketing on the Sunrise Side

In Northeast Michigan, a group of 90 stakeholders, including local governments, public agencies, chambers of commerce, and others collaborated on a marketing approach for Heritage Route 23, a historic highway along Michigan's east coast that spans 45 municipalities. Since 2008, the Heritage Route Management Council has worked successfully to enhance, market, and promote the region's assets.<sup>11</sup> The Council leveraged partnerships, grants, and local resources to:

- Create a logo
- Develop an interactive online map showcasing 1,400 attractions along the route
- Purchase Pure Michigan ads focusing on the region and targeted select markets
- Develop and widely distribute brochures
- Establish a Heritage Route welcome center
- Map and interpret "trails" (i.e. Quilt Trail) and tours
- Provide posters and interpretive materials for distribution and display at outlets along the route
- Work with Emmy-award winning filmmakers to create documentaries on the routes history, culture, natural features, and legends
- Sponsor a volunteer-driven hospitality training
- Create resources for supporting coastal tourism business development

The campaign resulted in significant increases in tourism, particularly from markets targeted in the Pure Michigan advertising campaign.

[www.usheritagroute23.org](http://www.usheritagroute23.org)

## Market local assets to attract new residents and businesses.

Compile community data to develop a strong message regarding schools, housing, transportation benefits, recreation, infrastructure, hospital, and public safety

Explore opportunities to use/enhance existing relocation guides

Develop a marketing/branding strategy

## Participate in a regional marketing campaign.

Cooperate with other 131 communities to develop a regional marketing campaign—i.e., Sunrise Side, Western UP Tourist Association

Develop and maintain a strong online tourism/visitor presence in cooperation with other 131 communities

## Partners & Resources

NW Michigan Works!

Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

NMC/NCMC

Crowdfunding MI

Mancelona Area Chamber of Commerce

Community Resources Development

## References

1. Networks Northwest, *US-131 Corridor Community Inventory* (2014)
2. Edward Crippen, *Mancelona in the 20th Century* (2002)
3. Community Resource Development
4. Michigan School Data
5. US Census, *American Community Survey 5-year Estimates* (2014)
6. National Low Income Housing Coalition Housing wage Calculator, [nlhc.org](http://nlhc.org)
7. [UpNorthTrails.org](http://UpNorthTrails.org)
8. Antrim County Master Plan (2012)
9. Pure Michigan, [www.michigan.org](http://www.michigan.org)
10. [MyNorth.com](http://MyNorth.com)
11. [RidetheBreezeway.com](http://RidetheBreezeway.com)
12. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)*
13. EMSI, *QCEW Employees—EMSI 2016.2 Class of Worker* (2015)
14. US Census, *LEHD LODES dataset V7.2* (2016)
15. Avenue ISR, *Mancelona Target Market Analysis* (2016)
16. United Ways of Michigan, *ALICE Study of Financial Hardship* (2014)
17. LandUseUSA, *Northwest Michigan Target Market Analysis* (2015)
18. [WalkScore.com](http://WalkScore.com)
19. US Forest Service, *FIDO Database*
20. [MichiganBusiness.org](http://MichiganBusiness.org)
21. Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
22. Networks Northwest, *A Framework for Recreation in Northwest Michigan* (2014)
23. Michigan Department of Natural Resources
24. Networks Northwest, *A Framework for Arts & Culture in Northwest Michigan* (2014)