

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. MISSION: Set the standard in creating an entrepreneurial culture; be the example for revitalization of our business districts and be the leaders in building sustainable public/private partnerships.
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. CONSENT AGENDA
  - A. Minutes –Meeting August 5, 2021
  - B. Financial Report
  - C. Development Projects
6. PUBLIC REMARKS
7. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. Celebrate Meridian Motor Days –Meridian Cares Presentation
  - B. Village of Okemos Financial Public Incentive Proposals
8. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Meridian Economic Development Strategy
9. TOWNSHIP REPORTS
  - A. Township Board
  - B. Township Manager
  - C. Planning Commission
  - D. Chair
  - E. Staff
10. COMMUNITY REPORTS
  - A. Meridian Mall
  - B. MABA
11. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. NEXT MEETING DATE
  - A. November 4, 2021, 7:30am
14. ADJOURNMENT



Charter Township of Meridian  
Meridian Economic Development Corporation  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864  
Thursday, August 5, 2021– Minutes -DRAFT

**Members**

**Present:** Joel Conn, Treasurer Phil Deschaine, Tom Conway, Township Manager Frank Walsh, Shawn Dunham, Henry Kwok, Trustee Kathy Ann Sundland, Adam Carlson, David Ledebuhr, and Brenda Chapman

**Members**

**Absent:** Kimberly Thompson

**Others**

**Present:** Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark, Carmine Avantini, President CIB Planning, Eric Heltzer, Advanced Redevelopment Solutions, and Trustee Patricia Herring Jackson

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice Chair chapman called the meeting to order at 7:30 am and read the mission statement.

2. **MISSION:** Set the standard in creating an entrepreneurial culture, be the example for revitalization of our business districts, and be the leaders in building sustainable public/private partnerships.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**MOTION BY MEMBER DUNHAM TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CONN. MOTION PASSES 9-0.**

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes-June 3, 2021
- b. Financial Report
- c. Development Projects

**MOTION BY MEMBER CARLSON TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CONWAY. MOTION PASSES 9-0.**

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Celebrate Meridian Motor Days-Meridian Cares

Director Clark discussed that High Caliber Karting will be hosting the Meridian Motor Day event on Saturday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. The event is expected to bring 200 cars. They are requesting a sponsorship from the EDC for the event. This would help pay for the costs of the trophies and portable toilet rentals needed for the event.

**MOTION BY MEMBER CONWAY TO SUPPORT THE MERIDIAN MOTOR DAYS WITH A \$3,000 DONATION. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CONN. MOTION APPROVED 9-0.**

b. Village of Okemos Approval of Request of Reimbursement

Eric Heltzer mentioned the restoration portion of the project is now complete and they are requesting the final reimbursement from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund. The total reimbursements from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund were under budget for this project.

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR TO APPROVE THE SECOND REIMBURSEMENT FROM THE MERIDIAN REDEVELOPMENT FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,327.96 TO THE VILLAGE OF OKEMOS LLC/TRU NORTH DEVELOPMENT. SUPPORTED BY CONN. MOTION APPROVED 9-0.**

8. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Township Board

Treasurer Sundland reported the following:

- Approved the rezoning at Jolly and Kansas for Sparrow.
- Approved a traffic study for Mt. Hope.
- Discussed railroad quiet zones.
- Approved the DDA loan forgiveness.
- Finalized the citizen's survey.
- Approved the Pathway Master Plan Update.
- Discussed SmartZone.
- Approved COVID appreciation pay for Police and Fire.
- Approved paramedic school sponsorship for a potential candidate.
- Approved ballot language for recreational marijuana.

b. Township Manager

Manager Walsh reported the following:

- Local road projects are underway. Check the website for details on projects.
- The solar project at the Service Center is complete.
- Working through the 2022 Budget process.
- The Township will receive \$4.5 million in American Rescue Plan funds.
- Issues with political signatures at the Farmers' Market.
- Pine Village has their building permit.
- Thinking about enhancing the Meridian Redevelopment Fund through the 2022 Budget.

- Working with the Village of Okemos to secure the needed funding for the project.

c. Planning Commission

Director Clark mentioned the planning commission is working on updates to the sign ordinance. They will be holding a joint meeting with the Township Board on Monday, August 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Ordinance.

d. Chair

None.

e. Staff

Director Clark reported the following:

- The citizen survey is out to the community and there will be a presentation to the Township Board on the results in a few weeks.
- DDA is working on programs that could enhance DDA businesses.
- The libraries are working on a volunteer fair.
- House of Soles is hosting a shoe donation.
- Haslett Marathon construction is underway.
- Joe's on Jolly is also underway.
- The old Burger King site has been demolished in preparation for the new Buddy's restaurant.
- A new bakery is coming to the Township.
- Working on potential Mall development.

9. COMMUNITY REPORTS

a. Meridian Mall

Member Dunham reported that shoppers are using caution with the COVID variant. High Caliber Karting continues to work on their expansion.

b. MABA

Director Clark reported that MABA is meeting at Lake Lansing South. She is serving on the Board and they are working on brand recognition and membership.

10. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

Member Conway recognized Manager Walsh and how well he is respected across the state. Manager Walsh mentioned that the website is being overhauled and the new site will be unveiled in October.

Member Kwok discussed the difficulties of finding staff for small businesses. Some are offering signing bonuses. There is hope that when the MSU students return they will possibly fill some of those vacancies. There may need to be future discussion regarding more small business grants.

Member Ledebuhr stated the residential housing market is hot. However, there is a downturn in office space.

10. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

- September 2, 2021 at 7:30am

12. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objection, Vice Chair Chapman adjourned the meeting at 8:53am.

**MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION**

Aug-21

Independent Bank Total EDC Funds **\$45,485.22**

**TRANSACTION ACTIVITY - Deposits**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Deposit Type</u>	<u>Amount</u>
8/31/2021	Interest	1.91

**CHECKS WRITTEN Since Last Bank Statement**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ck.#</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Paid to:</u>
08/23/21	1044	\$2,500	Meridian Township LEAP Grant - Installment 1

<b>Total</b>	<u><u>\$42,987.13</u></u>
<b>Total in Bank</b>	<b>\$ 42,987.13</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>



230 W Main St  
Ionia, MI 48846

## Statement Ending 08/31/2021

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

Page 1 of 2

Account Number: XXXXXXX2419

>001285 3701217 0001 093443 10Z

00520651  
NSP 713  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP  
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP EDC/ACCOUNTS PAYABLE  
5151 MARSH RD  
OKEMOS MI 48864-1104

### Managing Your Accounts

Okemos  
 800.355.0641  
 IndependentBank.com



Welcome to your new Independent Bank account statement! We hope you enjoy this more user-friendly and enhanced view of your accounts and transactions.

### Summary of Accounts

Account Type	Account Number	Ending Balance
BusinessFlex TM	XXXXXXXX2419	\$42,987.13

### BusinessFlex TM-XXXXXXXX2419

#### Account Summary

Date	Description	Amount
08/01/2021	Beginning Balance	\$45,485.22
	1 Credit(s) This Period	\$1.91
	1 Debit(s) This Period	\$2,500.00
08/31/2021	Ending Balance	\$42,987.13

#### Interest Summary

Description	Amount
Annual Percentage Yield Earned	0.05%
Interest Days	31
Interest Earned	\$1.91
Interest Paid This Period	\$1.91
Interest Paid Year-to-Date	\$15.13
Average Ledger Balance	\$44,920.70

#### Other Credits

Date	Description	Amount
08/31/2021	Credit Interest	\$1.91

#### Checks Cleared

Check Nbr	Date	Amount
1044	08/25/2021	\$2,500.00

\* Indicates skipped check number

#### Daily Balances

Date	Amount	Date	Amount	Date	Amount
08/01/2021	\$45,485.22	08/25/2021	\$42,985.22	08/31/2021	\$42,987.13

#### Interest Rate Changes

Interest Rate As Of Date	Interest Rate
08/01/2021	0.0500%



Date	JNL	Type	Description	Reference #	Debits	Credits	Balance
Fund 950 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION							
Assets							
Department 000.000							
08/01/2021			<b>950-000.000-001.000 CASH</b>		BEG. BALANCE		45,485.22
08/23/2021	GJ	JE	CHECK 1044 - MER TOWNSHIP (LEAP ARTG	63087		2,500.00	42,985.22
08/31/2021	GJ	JE	RCRD INTEREST EDC - AUG	63257	1.91		42,987.13
08/31/2021			950-000.000-001.000	END BALANCE	1.91	2,500.00	42,987.13
TOTAL FOR DEPARTMENT 000.000					1.91	2,500.00	
TOTAL Assets					1.91	2,500.00	42,987.13
TOTAL FOR FUND 950 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION					1.91	2,500.00	42,987.13
GRAND TOTALS:					1.91	2,500.00	42,987.13

Amber Clark  
Neighborhoods & Economic  
Development Director  
Meridian Township  
Economic Development and Projects  
October 2021

### **New Businesses Opening/Relocating**

- Williams Audi Volkswagen Jolly Road
- Square One Breakfast
- Tinkr Lab 2650 E Grand River Ave

### **Under Construction**

- Haslett Marathon-1619 Haslett Road-new building construction
- Chief Okemos Circle Condos
- Red Cedar Manor-Commercial/Residential Development
- Silverstone Estates—residential development Powell Road
- Copper Creek residential neighborhood off Haslett Road
- Williams Volkswagen of Okemos
- Joe's on Jolly 2360 Jolly Road (restaurant and fitness training center)
- Buddy's Pizza--2010 Grand River Ave

### **Approved/Not Commenced**

- Sparrow 24- Hr Small Emergency Service Center
- Silverleaf Condominiums
- Woda Cooper submitted site plan approved
- Newton Park Apartments Multifamily mixed use Haslett Road (SE corner Okemos/Haslett)-approval for SUP extended for another year – proposed amendment partial approval
- Pine Village 1673 Haslett Road Commercial /Residential development approved  
*Meridian Township Brownfield Plan* – proposed amendment to rearrange first floor
- Village of Okemos 4661 Okemos Road Commercial/Residential development  
*Approved EGLE Brownfield, Meridian Redevelopment Fund*



**To: Economic Development Corporation Directors**  
**From: Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark**  
**Date: October 8, 2021**  
**RE: Village of Okemos Financial Public Incentive Memo**

---

The attached is a memo created by Village of Okemos LLC, development team regarding the Village of Okemos redevelopment at Hamilton and Okemos roads in Meridian Township. The Community has requested a healthy commercial 'downtown' and it is the mission of Meridian Township leadership to develop a district that invites a mixture of residents with viable businesses for a healthy corridor. The attached memo reviews the proposed requests from the developer for the available public funding buckets that can support the revitalized area.

The Meridian Economic Development Corporation is initial body to review requests of the Meridian Redevelopment Fund, a fund created by Meridian Township to aide in the future redevelopment of the Potential Intensity Change Areas. PICAs as we refer to them have been established at the "Carriage Hills" commercial district on Lake Lansing Road, Haslett Village Square at Haslett/ Marsh Road and Village of Okemos at Hamilton and Okemos.

The Township board will have final approval on any public assistance funds for redevelopment projects. Please see the memo attached.

**ADVANCED REDEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS**

PO Box 204, Eagle MI 48822

Tel 517.648.2434

ephelzer@msn.com

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board Members – Meridian Township

From: Eric P. Helzer, EDFP, Principal – Advanced Redevelopment Solutions (ARS)

Copy: Pat Smith & Jonathan Branoff – Village of Okemos, LLC (VOO), and John Peckham – ARS

Date: September 8, 2021

**Subject: Village of Okemos, LLC – Financing Status**

**Village of Okemos Redevelopment Project – Hamilton and Okemos Roads (Project)  
Meridian Township, Okemos, MI 48864**

On behalf of the Village of Okemos, LLC (VOO), see attached updated Source of Funds Analysis we have prepared as a result of a good working session between the VOO development team members and the Township representatives on Wednesday September 8, 2021. The gap in financing to develop this exciting mixed-use redevelopment Project was discussed at length during this meeting. As a result of these discussions, an additional Meridian Township Redevelopment Fund Grant addressing the Off-Site Costs associated with existing poor infrastructure conditions (roads and sidewalks, water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electrical, gas, etc.) necessary to allow this mixed-use redevelopment Project to proceed as one part of the solution satisfying a portion of the gap in financing. As such, to close the remaining gap in financing, VOO with the support of the Township, will pursue, through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF), a Michigan Community Revitalization Program (MCRP) Grant and Loan.

In short, the following identifies the VOO current estimates of the Project’s future requested “asks” of the Township once we meet with the MEDC to gain acknowledgement of their support for gap financing with the MCRP.

Estimated Amounts by Program Pending Approval by Township (does not include State agency programs)

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) TIF = \$2,257,655

Meridian Township Redevelopment Fund Grant #2 = \$570,000

Meridian Township Redevelopment Fund Grant #3 = \$1,899,153

*Total Estimated Amount of Request to Township = \$4,726,808*

Additionally, a Brownfield Plan will need to be approved by the Township to allow for an Act 381 Wok Plan request of the State to gain access to State Tax Increment Revenues (TIRs) estimated at \$2,849,727, since local TIRs are captured by the DDA.

We look forward to your continued support and our future discussions on this exciting Project.

ATTACHMENT:

Sources of Funds Analysis as of September 8, 2021

## Village of Okemos Redevelopment Project - Sources of Funds Analysis (9-8-2021)

	Privately Funded (Developer) <i>(pending)</i>	EGLE Grant <i>(secured)</i>	EGLE Loan * <i>(secured)</i>	BRA TIF * <i>(pending)</i>	DDA TIF * <i>(pending)</i>	Meridian Twp Redevelopment Fund Grant #1 <i>(secured)</i>	Meridian Twp Redevelopment Fund Grant #2 <i>(pending)</i>	Meridian Twp Redevelopment Fund Grant #3 <i>(pending)</i>	MCRP Gap Financing (\$750,000 Grant, \$5,000,000 Loan) <i>(pending)</i>	GRAND TOTAL
<b>\$ Amount</b>	\$ 54,820,856	\$ 905,077	\$ 905,275	\$ 2,849,727	\$ 2,257,655	\$ 33,980	\$ 570,000	\$ 1,899,153	\$ 5,750,000	\$ 69,991,723
<b>%-age of Grand Total</b>	78.32%	1.29%	1.29%	4.07%	3.23%	0.05%	0.81%	2.71%	8.22%	100.00%
Privately or Publicly Sourced	Private	Public	Public	Public**	Public**	Public	Public	Public	Public	NA
<b>Private Portion</b>										
Private \$ Amount	\$ 54,820,856	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	TBD	\$ 54,820,856
Private %-age of Grand Total	78.32%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	TBD	78.32%
<b>State Public Portion</b>										
State Public Portion \$ Amount	\$ -	\$ 905,077	\$ 905,275	\$ 2,849,727	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,750,000	\$ 10,410,079
State Public Portion %-age of Grand Total	0.00%	1.29%	1.29%	4.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.22%	14.87%
<b>Local Public Portion</b>										
Non-Meridian Township Local Public Portion (\$ Amount)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,539,169	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	NA	\$ 1,539,169
Non-Meridian Township Local Public Portion (%-age of Grand Total)	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.20%	0%	0%	0%	NA	2.20%
Meridian Township Local Public Portion (\$ Amount***)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 718,486	\$ 33,980	\$ 570,000	\$ 1,899,153	NA	\$ 3,221,619
Meridian Township Local Public Portion (%-age of Grand Total***)	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.03%	0.05%	0.81%	2.71%	NA	4.60%

**NOTES:**

\* The Developer will be borrowing from a bank or other institution against the Brownfield & DDA TIF Recapture. The amount that can be borrowed will be determined by the Net Present Value of the TIF. The longer the recapture schedule the lower the Net Present Value of the TIF, and therefore the less the Developer is able to borrow against the TIF. Anything that delays the full recapture of the TIF reduces the Net Present Value of the TIF, lowers the amount that the Developer can borrow against the TIF, and hurts the Developer's ability to move forward with the project. Based on recent lender discussions, we are estimating that we can borrow approximately 65% of the Year 1 Net Present Value. BRA TIF Bank Loan = \$663,026 (Note that the EGLE Loan must first be repaid with BRA TIF revenues then the BRA TIF Bank Loan debt service can be reimbursed with the BRA TIF). DDA TIF Bank Loan = \$1,257,932.

\*\* As TIF is a reimbursement program generated from a Developer's private investment as a result of their improvements, the governing Authority (BRA/DDA) uses the captured new tax increment revenues to reimburse the Developer (or the Township) for their incurred costs of the completed eligible work under the TIF Plan. As such, the Developer's own created new tax dollars are repaid back to the Developer until such time that the eligible costs the Developer has incurred are fully reimbursed. However, the Developer must find sources of funds to pay for the up front work (i.e Bank Construction Loans, Owner's Equity, EGLE Loan) and wait for the annual TIF reimbursements to service the Developer fronted sources of funds. Without the completion of the proposed Project there would be no new tax incremental revenues created on this Project property. In other words, without the redevelopment project, property values will not increase and no new taxes will be available to pay for eligible needed improvements to land (environmental/asbestos abatement/demolition) or infrastructure improvements (water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electric, gas, roads/sidewalks, etc.).

\*\*\* Meridian Township's portion of the DDA TIF contribution to the Project is based upon the millages rates used in the approved DDA Development and TIF Plan page 20. Meridian Township's millage rate is 8.8007 mills out of a total of capturable millages in the amount of 27.6539 mills due to the Capital Area District Library opting out of the Development and TIF Plan. Therefore, Meridian Township is contributing 31.82% of the capturable millages to the DDA Development and TIF Plan.

**Advanced Redevelopment Solutions**



**To: Economic Development Corporation**

**From: Amber Clark Director Neighborhoods & Economic Development**

**Date: October 7, 2021**

**Re: Meridian Township Economic Development Strategy/ Market Study**

---

The goals of 2021 are heavily focused on the redevelopment of the Haslett and Okemos PICA. As we come to the last quarter of the year without construction in either PICA a review of our goals and development strategy is in order. COVID-19's alterations to our economy is ongoing; we have an opportunity to review our current development strategy and goals. Included is the current Economic Development strategy for the Township, a strategy that should be reviewed annually and updated in our records as a part of documenting the requirements of our RRC status as a Redevelopment Ready Community with the State of Michigan. RRC status allows the Township access to funding for technical assistance like with the Downtown Development Authority's TIF Plan and access to funding for a market study produced for Haslett (48840) in 2018.

The Haslett PICA and Okemos PICA currently have approved projects mixed used projects from 2018 and 2019. Coming to the end of 2021 we are seeing the lasting rebound of the economy in labor and supply chain. This memo is to prompt discussion with the Meridian EDC members regarding the vision, goals and tactics for Economic Development. The aspects this body intended to focus on would create a simplified Business, Retention and Expansion program, support PICA development and pursue other development funding tools. It is the recommendation to prepare a market study for members of the Meridian EDC, DDA, CIA and others to use to make better planning decisions regarding development.

**Recommendation: Please see the goals and strategies below. With the changes in the economic environment so volatile, it is my recommendation to work with the Downtown Development Authority and pay for a market study for Meridian Township.**

**The following are the goals prepared by the Economic Development Department's for the Economic Development Corporation to adopt in 2021:**

- 1. Support endeavors that assists entrepreneurship, start-ups and businesses of all sizes through volunteerism, advocacy and funding.**
  - A. Create a program to assist businesses with outreach, advertising, event planning and Business to Business connection.

- B. Create a Shop Small Program that launches annually during the holiday season
- C. Engage with school districts to implement a entrepreneurial program or support existing business programs within our public schools.

**2. Continue to build and maintain regional relationships to foster continued growth and development in our community.**

- A. Provide all the assistance possible to foster the redevelopment of our PICA districts b. Collaborate with and advocate for the transformational redevelopment of the Meridian

**3. Work strategically to ensure that Meridian Township is a great place to start, run and grow a business.**

- A. Support implementation of a program to highlight local business and their success stories, utilize social media, HOM TV to announce milestones, new products, changes in leadership, investment in community. Coordinate with regional business advocacy group where appropriate.
- B. Vet platforms and support the implementation of an online data base of Meridian Township business. Utilize surveys, track interactions among other value added services to assist in business retention and attraction efforts.
- C. Help the planning division solicit feedback for the adoption of Form Based Code, Overlay Zoning Districts and/or MUPUD revisions to better streamline the development process. Consider density, minimum dwelling unit size and unwanted/unneeded construction of new commercial spaces-focus on infill.

**4. Support endeavors for vertical construction of the PICA's in particular the Okemos and Haslett PICAs.**

- A. Work closely with Township board members on the public incentive amenity quality to gain great enhancements for our residents through public private partnerships.
- B. Ensure an efficient review process for the Meridian Redevelopment Fund with strong ethical recommendations for projects that meet the goals of the Township.



## CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

### MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

---

#### **History: Where we've been, where we are and where we are heading.**

For decades, Meridian Township has been conflicted between development and remaining a rural community. The proximity to the Capitol and Michigan State University, coupled with wooded lots, a dynamic park system, great schools and freeway access made Meridian truly a natural choice for residents of Mid-Michigan, who seek a great place to live, to find much of what they were looking for. The Meridian Mall opened its doors in 1969, and with it, Grand River Avenue in Meridian Township became a commerce center to serve the needs of the rapidly growing population. Between 1960 and 1970, Meridian's population grew a whopping 71.5% and continued growing over 20% by 1980 and again by 1990. Long-term community members spoke out about the township's need to control the growth and preserve what Meridian Township had long meant to its residents – a peaceful place away from the city. Economic growth was happening to Meridian Township and something needed to be done to ensure the changes were supplementing the great community, not detracting from it. Five years ago, this long debate culminated in a new determination to adopt and implement an updated Master Plan.

In November 2017, the Meridian Township Board adopted a new Master Plan. The plan calls for a balance between preserving what the community has long stood for while implementing a tactical strategy to improve the areas the residents deemed not up to community standards. Meridian enjoys an established series of highly desired subdivisions, excellent parks and land preservation programs, nationally recognized public school systems, strong trails for bicycles and pedestrians, and quality public services like libraries and transit. The areas requiring improvement include the eroding, once village-like commercial hubs of downtown Okemos, the four-corners of Haslett and the Carriage Hills shopping centers. These shopping destinations have failed to evolve in the changing world of retail and struggle to maintain occupancy of relevant tenants. Similarly, the Meridian Mall, once a thriving hub for the capital region, also faces significant occupancy challenges. Grand River Avenue, while it has many long-term commercial and professional office tenants, craves connectivity, vibrancy and an infrastructure upgrade to allow for safe and convenient use regardless of whether a citizen arrives by car, transit, bike or foot.

As the Master Plan was being developed, the Township Board was taking bold steps to implement a strategy to fix the largest problem most municipality's face – underfunded pension debt. It would be impractical to consider economic development the primary objective without addressing this looming crisis. In August 2017, the voters approved the strategy that will allow Meridian Township to become a debt-free community within ten years. On the heels of this achievement, the Township Board enacted an action plan for the Fourth Quarter 2017 to not only adopt the Master Plan, but to implement the plan and deliver what the residents requested.

In the fall of 2017, the Township Board adopted a 2018 budget that allowed for the establishment of a Redevelopment Fund and hire an Economic Development Director. The Township created a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and enrolled in the Redevelopment Ready Communities program via the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The Economic Development Director, along with elected officials, staff and citizen input, is charged with executing the following economic development strategy as it relates to the Master Plan. Below is a summary of long-term goals for the Township to achieve primarily through the efforts of the Economic Development Director. These goals are meant to be long standing, but will be reviewed annually. The implementation strategy will be a series of annual objective to be completed to accomplish each goal. The Economic Development Director will provide the Township Board and annual summary of objectives met, and suggest new objectives for the coming calendar year.

## Economic Development Strategy

### Goal: Public Relations & Advocacy

It is critical to engage as many community stakeholders as possible when determining the future of the Township. Master Planning will occur every five years at a minimum where every effort will be made to engage stakeholders on all levels; residents, land owners and business owners, to ensure that the updated vision for the Township reflects the desires of as many community members as possible. As new projects come forth, developers are encouraged to engage with neighbors who are impacted by their proposed development to garner feedback and support before they invest significant time, money and effort to their plans. Township staff will assist when requested or as needed. Public engagement should help the Township and the developer produce a more welcome development project in a more timely fashion with less friction.

The following action steps will be necessary in achieving this goal:

- Utilize our public participation strategy to disseminate information to a wide variety of stakeholders
- Engage with Developers, Land Owners, Business Owners and Realtors to earn the trust required to be looped in early as development projects are considered.
- Work closely with developers in the early stages of projects and connect them to local homeowners associations, business owners and land owners.

### Goal: Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction

To have the economic development success we expect, it is critical to retain the businesses we have, advocate for those who are succeeding to reinvest in the Township through renovation, expansion or relocation, and attract new businesses to select Meridian as the community they choose to expand into. If grand openings replace those going out of business, we are simply stagnant which perpetuates the reputation of a community with a transient business base.

In order to achieve this goal, it is critical we execute the following:

- Implement a plan to visit with existing business owners to solicit feedback as to whether their business trend projects them to grow, shrink, close, or stay status quo and react accordingly.
- Uncover obstacles the Township has created that are preventing the business community from having the success they otherwise could have. Advocate for adjustments where practical.
- Engage with the residents of the Township to gather an ongoing wish list of desired commercial, retail, office and dining options not currently available in the Township and solicit those uses to come to Meridian.

Goal: Redevelopment the PICA districts as defined in the Master Plan and assist all of our business districts in remaining vibrant assets in our community (The Mall, Grand River Ave, Okemos & Jolly, Saginaw Business Loop, Hannah Plaza and Haslett Road)

The Master Plan calls for the redevelopment of our potential intensity change areas (PICA) which are defined as Downtown Okemos, the Haslett Four Corners and the Carriage Hills shopping center. Each space is unique, but the common theme is that these once-vibrant districts have fallen into disrepair and are under occupied. The Township has many business districts, but these three are specifically ripe for redevelopment into quaint village-like uses. We are proposing mixed-use in each so the residents of these villages will have many of the desired services and entertainment options within a convenient walk or bike ride. Also, these villages will become destinations for residents living in

nearby subdivisions where they can arrive by transit, car, bike or foot and spend the day. Similar to the redevelopment of the PICA's, our other business districts will require consistent focus, proactive ordinance review and development attraction. The mall will need nearly constant support to evolve from its current form to a more relevant and economically sustainable design. The Grand River Corridor will require implementation of policy that are found in The Capitol Corridor publication of 2014 and the Shaping the Avenue vision of 2017-2018.

For this vision to be achieved, it will be imperative to take the following action:

- Share the vision with developers, commercial realtors, land owners and business owners.
- Utilize the Meridian Redevelopment Fund, the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Redevelopment Ready Communities certification, where applicable, as resources to allow for the best possible development projects.
- Facilitate the dialogue between the developer, the Township, utility partners and the Ingham County Road Department and/or MDOT to ensure we maximize quality and accessibility of the development project.
- Review the associated ordinances that govern these critical areas and propose amendments to policy that prohibits or slows development that we've encouraged in the Master Plan.

Goal: Protect what is referred to in the Master Plan as the "eastern third" of the Township from dense and transformational development.

The feedback provided by the citizens of Meridian Township made a strong argument for development in our existing core districts, but asked for the rural character of this area to remain. The focus of Economic Development is to be on infill, not sprawl. As development projects and rezoning applications come through the approval process, we must remain vigilant in this cause.

Goal: Ensure Meridian is complimentary, congruent and competitive with Mid-Michigan economic development initiatives

Meridian Township has a significant role to play in the revitalization of the tri-county region. It is imperative to remain aware of initiatives in surrounding communities so the region can move forward together as a whole. Similarly, Meridian should share its plans with its neighbors to gather feedback and confirm there are limited duplicated efforts. To achieve this goal, the Economic Development Director and certain elected officials and staff should be assigned to attend various regional meetings and trainings to gather and share information.

Goal: Market the Township's community assets and competitive advantages

As more development and employment opportunities arise, Meridian needs to consistently advertise its brand (A Prime Community) to share the story Meridian Township has to tell. While physical involvement in local and regional meetings is critical, in the world of social media and websites, Meridian's story needs to be "findable". One of our best tools to court future businesses and residents can be our digital footprint. We must maximize all communication efforts to share the greatness that IS Meridian Township.

Goal: Follow the process in, and meet the deadlines of, the Master Plan implementation plan