

# Strategies: A Call to Action

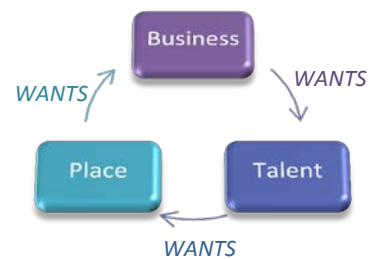
## Growing Northeast Michigan's Economy.

The New Economy features differ from the Old Economy in that the quality of “place” really matters - both physical and cultural amenities - compared to the old economy standard of being a cheap place to do business; attraction of talented and educated people rather than companies is critical; sector diversity is desired - focus is not purely manufacturing; energy smart and communication dependent rather than fossil fuel dependent; ability for organizations and individuals to “retool” and be adaptable; economic change is collaborative involving business, government and nonprofits; and connection to emerging global opportunities is critical.



## Creating Vibrant Places

**Background:** Economic growth depends on skilled talent. Attracting and retaining skilled talent means providing a high quality of life in terms of “great places” in order to draw diverse individuals to Northeast Michigan. Therefore, placemaking is an essential component in business and workforce development. This concept is simplified in the diagram to the right: places (communities) want business and business wants talent. The talent, which is so desired by employers, wants great places to



live. Redeveloping urban centers can attract residents and draw visitors, thereby adding layers of economic activity giving urban centers a new vitality and strength. Some skilled workers want to live in vibrant, walkable communities with a diverse set of offerings. Other skilled workers want to live in rural areas but still desire and use the amenities in the nearby communities. Great places exist at a neighborhood scale, therefore placemaking is a neighborhood issue – not a large urban concept. However, placemaking needs to also occur in a coordinated regional manner in order to provide these skilled workers with a diverse offering of a network of vibrant communities which are all connected by the physical and virtual trails of Northeast Michigan. The key is to cultivate rich and inviting communities by building upon the area’s historical foundation and natural assets. This will instill a sense of pride among existing community members, enhance the existing economy by attracting visitors and new workers to the area.

**Strategy: Strengthen the quality of place throughout Northeast Michigan to entice talent and business development.**

**1. Target investment into small, urban centers.**

- a. Determine building form in demand by the sought-after talent.
  - (1) Complete a Target Market Analysis (TMA) for the region focused on SPCs.
  - (2) Develop strategies in each community focused on developing those desired building forms and arrangement resulting in the addition of disposable income into urban centers.
  - (3) Identify appropriate business types needed to serve the targeted urban centers.
  - (4) Through the Target Market Analysis, determine the priority locations to focus investment in residential opportunities.
  - (5) Adopt Main Street principles in the SPCs.
- b. Offer modules from the Michigan Placemaking Curriculum in strategic placemaking centers.
- c. Seek out strategic facilitation from the appropriate State agencies to result in general placemaking projects and tasks for the region.
- d. Achieve “Redevelopment-Ready Communities status.
- e. Create general place plans in Strategic Placemaking Centers which integrate arts and culture.

Strategic Placemaking Centers (SPCs)	Strategic Placemaking Nodes (SPNs)
Alpena Cheboygan Gaylord Grayling Houghton Lake Oscoda/AuSable Rogers City Tawas City/East Tawas West Branch	Atlanta Harrisville Hillman Indian River Lewiston Lincoln Mackinaw City Mio Onaway Posen Roscommon

- f. Provide best land use practices to communities and advocate changes in the planning process to streamline approvals.

## **2. Coordinate placemaking at a regional level to link urban and rural places visually, functionally and culturally.**

- a. Create and organize meetings of the Northeast Michigan Placemaking Network to address funding, capacity, leadership, entrepreneurship, and metrics. Utilize network to convene events.
- b. Expand placemaking network to include indigenous arts and culture into SPCs.
- c. Engage a consultant to develop a regional marketing initiative to promote regional places.
  - (1) Complete community branding and promotional materials and tie that into the regional identity.
  - (2) Develop informational materials that will promote the “great places” in Northeast Michigan and link together small towns to increase destination trips to the region in order to improve the business climate, create opportunities for new business, and attract retirees and young people to the region.
  - (3) Initiate joint and cross-promotion between arts and cultural organizations throughout the region.
- d. Improve way-finding and accessibility to culturally significant places.