

DIVISION
UNITED



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIVISION UNITED



INDEX

01 INTRODUCTION TO DIVISION UNITED

02 HOW TO READ THE PLAN

03 MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY STRATEGIES

04 EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

05 PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES

06 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

07 APPENDIX A: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

01

INTRODUCTION TO DIVISION UNITED

1.1 WHAT IS DIVISION UNITED?

Division United is long range framework plan that seeks to identify specific strategies to improve the quality of life, economic vitality, and long term character of the South Division Avenue corridor by leveraging the Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit service as an agent for catalytic investment. Division United identifies a wide variety of strategies to increase density while facilitating responsible, equitable development along South Division Avenue. Finally, Division United represents a partnership between the Cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming, and The Rapid to align land use and development strategies in the corridor to support positive outcomes for all communities and riders.

1.2 WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE CORRIDOR?



- ONE TRANSIT AGENCY
- THREE MUNICIPALITIES
- TWO BUS ROUTES (1 AND SILVER LINE)
- 11 STATIONS
- 19,000 RESIDENTS
- 17,800 JOBS

1.3 BUS RAPID TRANSIT ON SOUTH DIVISION

The Rapid's Silver Line, the first Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) in Michigan, represents more than 10 years of planning and public engagement. The South Division corridor was chosen as the location for the route based on specific factors such as the location of major activity centers, economic development potential, cost effectiveness, and high ridership on the existing Route 1. The line was constructed and operational by 2014. The region is growing in both population and jobs, resulting in the need to expand the existing transit service.

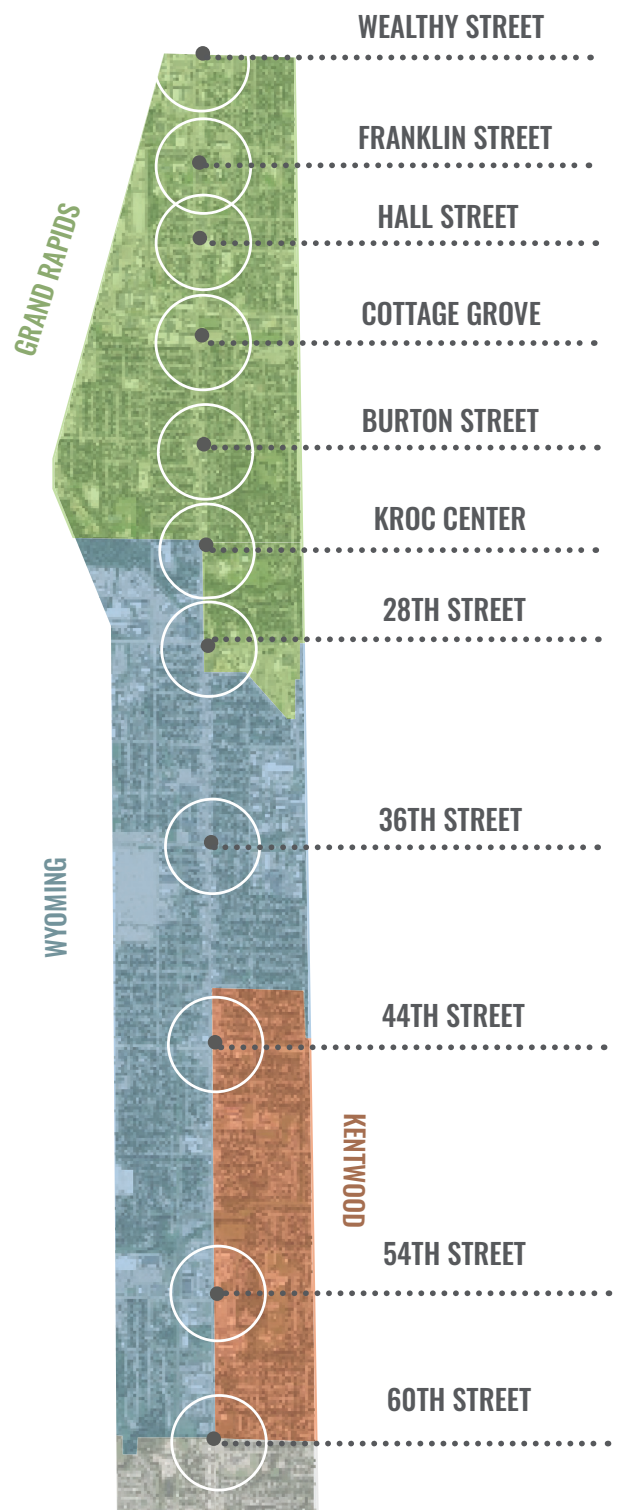
Between 2014 and 2020, average daily ridership in the corridor grew by 40%. Although the surrounding area along the Silver Line Route grew in ridership, the surrounding area has not developed to maximize the potential benefits of having a BRT. These benefits include increased economic activity and access to diverse housing options. Although all three cities have passed zoning code adjustments to help support higher-density uses and more efficient use of existing land there still continues to be a lack of economic development. To help stimulate momentum and take advantage of transit benefits, the cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Kentwood and The Rapid have partnered together to develop Division United as a framework plan that sets in motion collective action for corridor improvements.

1.4 WHAT IS TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT?

The over arching goal of a transit-oriented development (TOD) center is to create dense, mixed-use development to increase housing options and employment opportunities around highly served area stations.

The goal of Division United, is to activate and add density to the area around each of the 11 Silver Line stations. A map to the right shows the station locations, the quarter mile buffer, and the municipal boundaries each station area falls within. A quarter mile buffer illustrates the typical amount a person is willing to walk to use public transit, which makes it a critical range for station area improvements.

1.5 WHAT MAKES TOD SUCCESSFUL?



02

HOW TO READ THE PLAN

2.0 PLAN COMPONENTS

The Division United Plan is organized among three document types: the Executive Summary, five toolkits, and a TOD guide that provide individual station plans. The graphic on page 7 shows the order in which these documents are meant to be read and the level of specificity in each.

2.1 PLAN DOCUMENTS

The **Executive Summary**, this document, provides a high level summary of the 15 strategies that touch the project area.

These strategies are categorized into three areas: Mobility and Connectivity, Equitable Development, and Placemaking and Placekeeping.

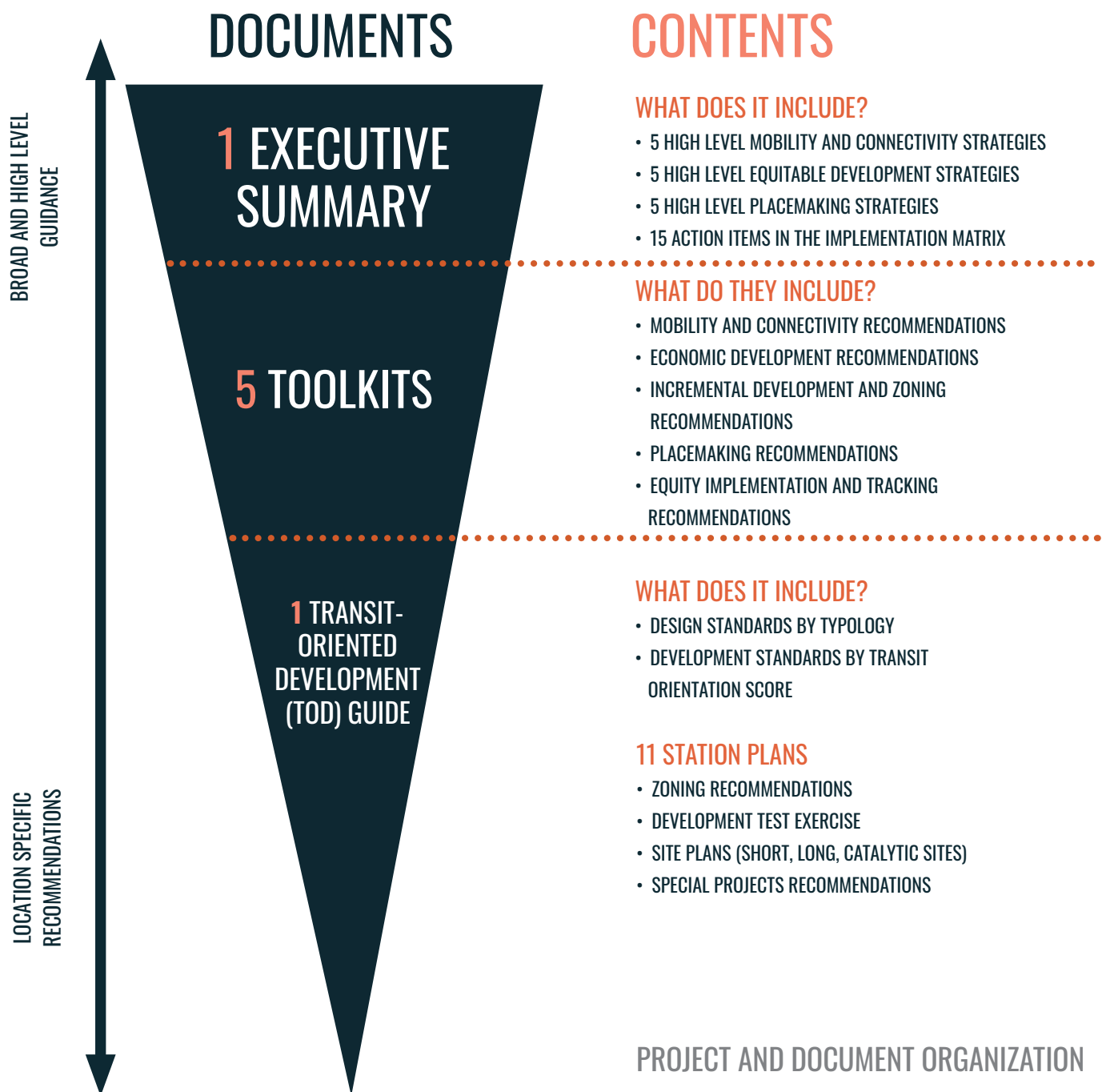
Page 8 and 9 provide an illustrative road map on how the strategies are categorized as well as instructions on how to reach each strategy within this document.

The **Toolkits**, of which there are five, contain specific projects, policies and/or program recommendations that can be applicable at multiple locations within the Division United corridor. The five toolkits are:

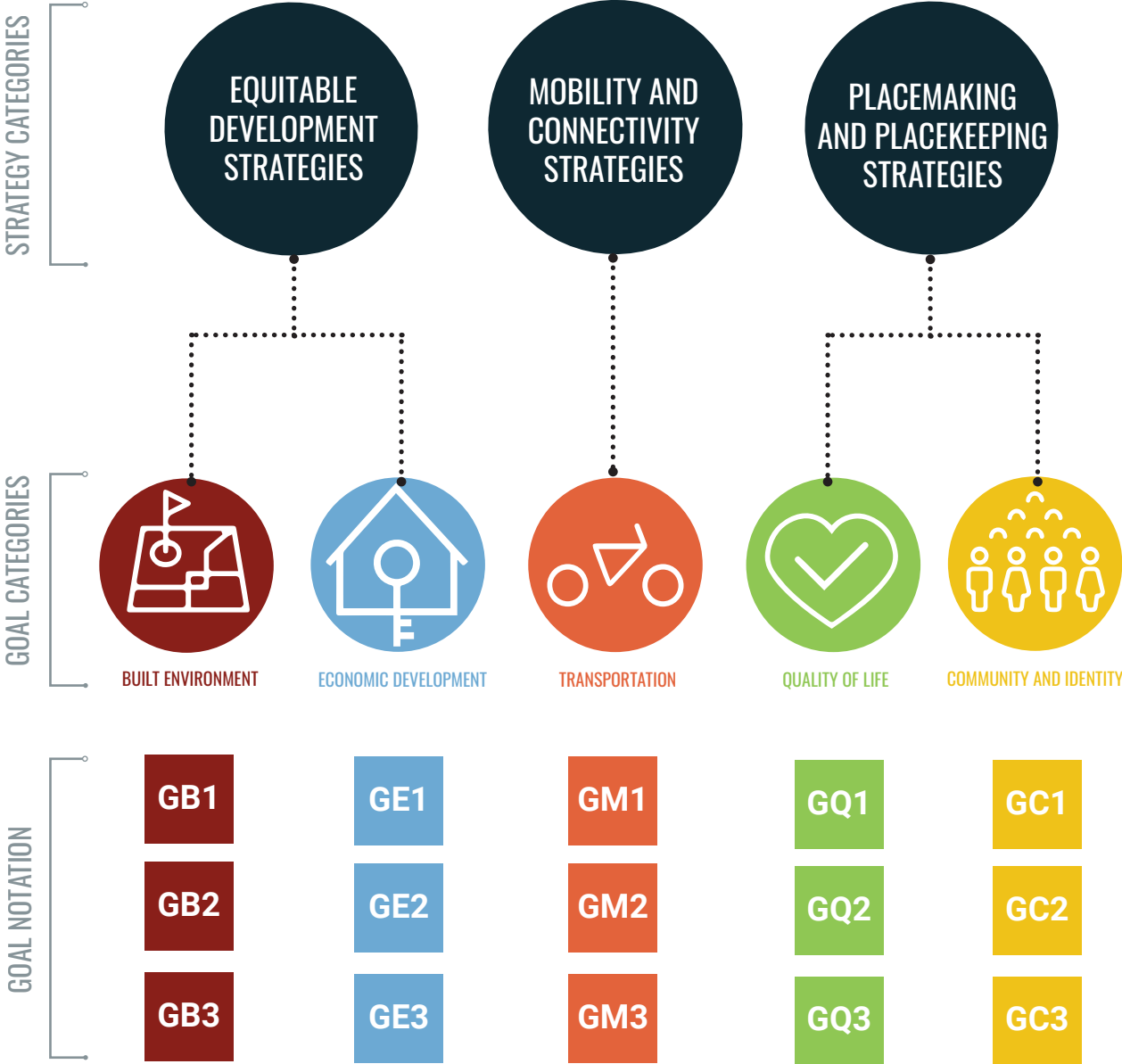
- Economic Development Toolkit
- Incremental Development Toolkit
- Placemaking Toolkit
- Mobility and Connectivity Toolkit

- Equity Toolkit

The last document type is the **TOD Development Guide**. The first section of this document classifies the types of stations within the project area and provides recommendations for each station type. The second section of this document provides 11 Station Specific Plans. Each plan includes zoning recommendations, provides site design recommendations for the 300-500 feet around the transit station, and identifies actions that need to occur (number of acres to be redeveloped and types of development that should occur).

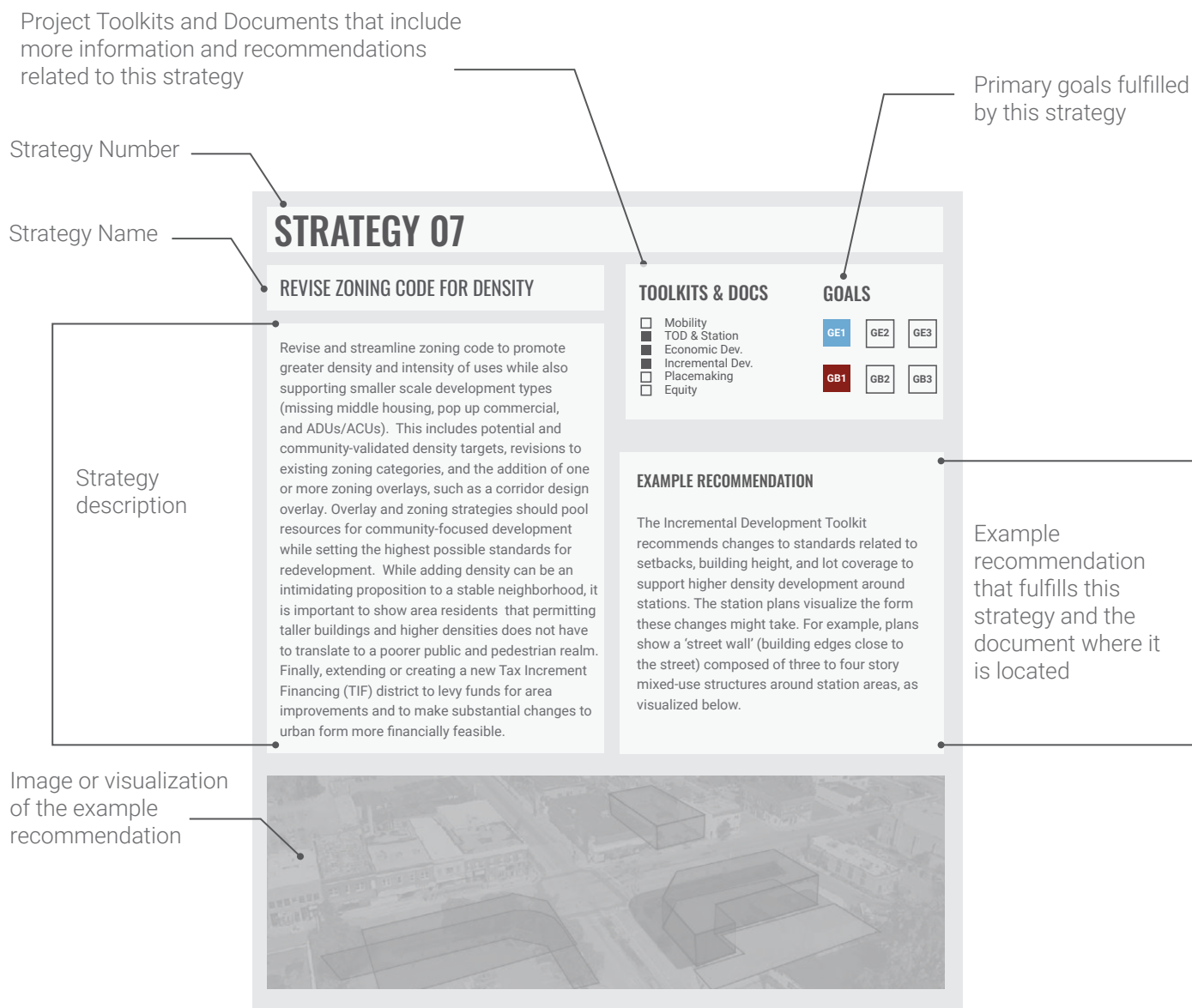


CATEGORIZATION OF STRATEGIES:



STRATEGIES AND GOALS

HOW TO READ EACH STRATEGY:



HOW TO READ STRATEGY PAGES

03

MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY STRATEGIES

MOBILITY AND
CONNECTIVITY
STRATEGIES



TRANSPORTATION

GOALS

GM1

Greater value and priority will be placed on transit service and facilities.

GM2

People will be safe from physical or vehicular harm while walking along and across South Division.

GM3

Sustainable transportation options will be available for all ages to access surrounding neighborhoods.

EQUITY CONCERNS

Ensure connections to stations are prioritized for transit-dependent populations and those most vulnerable to pressures from a lack of mobility.

STRATEGY 01

RE-ALLOCATE ROAD SPACE

Reallocate street space along Division Avenue, as well as along major cross streets, in order to increase space for modes other than cars. The right-of-way is a public asset that should service all users, not just personal vehicles. The street can be programmed to include more variation in activity as well as users if the share of the road dedicated to passenger vehicles is reduced. This includes the consideration of a dedicated, painted bus lane along Division Avenue, which will increase the efficiency and prominence of the Bus Rapid Transit service. It also includes reducing the width and number of travel lanes, adding a central vegetated median, expanding the width of sidewalks, and adding access management regulations by ordinance that limit new curb cuts and close redundant driveways or move them to side streets.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- Mobility
- TOD & Station
- Economic Dev.
- Incremental Dev.
- Placemaking
- Equity

GOALS

- GM1
- GM2
- GM3

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

Item 1 in the Mobility Toolkit recommends reducing travel lanes and adding a striped bus lane on both sides of Division Avenue. A dedicated, painted bus lane would improve the efficiency and prominence of BRT service along South Division.



Image: AECOM, 2020

STRATEGY 02

IMPROVE CROSSING CONDITIONS

Ensure safe pedestrian crossings on Division Avenue and add more crossings when needed. Upgrade crosswalks to be high-visibility and accessible. Examples of improvements could include any of the of the following: Extend curbs at intersections, install raised crosswalks and speed tables, install pedestrian islands and medians, reduce curb radii, and install Leading Pedestrian Interval signals. Add color-enhanced pedestrian striping or permeable pavers. Target all station areas and key intersections in the study area for these improvements, and add mid-block crossings at strategically important locations.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☒ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☐ Economic Dev.
- ☐ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☐ Equity

GOALS



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

Item 4 in the Mobility Toolkit recommends high-visibility crosswalks with roadway markings. The Better Block pop-up activity at Logan and South Division tested a temporary crosswalk improvement that reduced the crossing width from 58 feet to 33 feet.



Image: Better Block, 2020



STRATEGY 03

ADD INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NON-MOTORIZED AND TRANSIT USERS

Add infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized users to travel along Division Avenue and within streets in the study area. Increase shared-use paths off-street and bicycle lanes, boulevards, and protected lanes on-street, and connect existing networks, especially between community facilities such as schools. When bike infrastructure is added adjacent to bus or traffic, vehicle speeds must be taken into account. Low-stress connector and trail networks, such as Jefferson Street or the Interurban Trail, are suggested as primary routes for non-motorized traffic, with safe connections to stations on Division.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- Mobility
- TOD & Station
- Economic Dev.
- Incremental Dev.
- Placemaking
- Equity

GOALS

- GM1
- GM2
- GM3

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

Item 10 in the Mobility Toolkit identifies a number of treatments for non-motorized infrastructure types. Bike boulevards, as the one shown below, are a strategy to turn smaller streets into safe, low-speed bike access corridors.



Image: Better Block, 2020

STRATEGY 04

IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF MOBILITY OPTIONS AND RULES

Improve understanding of mobility options and rules along Division Avenue while continually assessing improvements and outcomes for affected individuals. Support and sustain the formation of transit riders unions and citizens advisory committees (CACs), as well as the involvement of existing community groups and leadership (churches, schools and business districts) in street improvements. Clarify impacts and enforcement strategy of new transportation ordinances, such as the Vision Zero crosswalk ordinance update (2018). Ensure adequate way-finding and supporting materials for all stations and pilot a group travel training program or Bus Buddy program for disabled individuals, limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals, and other users that may need additional support navigating the Silver Line.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- Mobility
- TOD & Station
- Economic Dev.
- Incremental Dev.
- Placemaking
- Equity

GOALS

GM1

GM2

GM3

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

Item 03 in the Equity Toolkit recommends encouraging participation in mobility-focused advocacy organizations. In the study area, Safe Routes to School participants, the Greater Grand Rapids Bike Coalition (GGRBC), and Multi-modal Activists Against Auto Dependent Development (MMAAADD) are potential partners to leverage in raising awareness about mobility options.



Image: John Eisenschen, 2010

STRATEGY 05

ESTABLISH MOBILITY HUBS

Provide mobility hubs with more options for seating, shade, Internet and charging options, protection from wind and rain, bike parking, and easy to rent scooters and e-bikes at or close to stations in order to provide last mile connections to nearby destinations and transit. Ensure that these hubs follow an 'eight to eighty' philosophy and are accessible and comfortable for riders and commuters of all ages and abilities (school age children, the elderly, people with disabilities). Identify locations where special needs bikes and scooters may be needed.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☒ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☐ Economic Dev.
- ☐ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☐ Equity

GOALS

GM1

GM2

GM3

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

The Transit Corridor Enhancement chapter of the Mobility Toolkit and the individual station plans identify possible locations and designs for Mobility Hubs in a range of sizes in the corridor. The image to the right shows a rendering of 54th street's proposed mobility hub, which includes scooter and bike share, wayfinding kiosks and instructions, and lighting and amenities. The image below shows a smaller hub at 44th street.





Bike share and bike
parking

Scooter
Share

Amenities and lighting

Wayfinding and info
kiosk

04

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



GOALS

GE1

Programs will help long-standing residents and business owners generate sustainable wealth.

GE2

Policies will encourage growth in a diverse set of jobs that are better connected to people living in the corridor.

GE3

Development processes will ensure that current residents are informed about and understand the impacts and benefits of development.

GB1

New development will foster variety, enhance cultural diversity and grow the population.

GB2

The mix of land uses will continue to include residential, commercial, office, retail and industrial.

GB3

The housing mix will allow for people of all income levels and household sizes to have options for renting or owning a home.

EQUITY CONCERNS

Limit displacement and minimize the economic burden that stems from development and investment on households that can least afford it.

STRATEGY 06

SUPPORT INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Focus on incremental development strategies as the first push as well as the long term model for economic growth for the corridor. Incremental development is a focus on small-scale growth and value that is created, maintained, and owned by the local community. It requires supporting local entrepreneurs with both financial resources (small loans, grants, rebates, and micro-lending) and educational resources, such as the Incremental Developer Workshops. Economic growth is more inclusive and sustainable when it increases local participation and leverages or builds expertise in business and property development among the people who already have roots and commitments in a neighborhood. Strategies should focus on enabling current community actors to achieve their full potential as economic change agents. While large, new development is often an attractive proposition, in many cities it is becoming increasingly apparent that bigger is not necessarily better, especially if the incentives awarded to development exceed its proven capacity to add revenue, jobs, or units. Municipalities should also consider a citywide study of the tax revenue vs the infrastructure and cost deficit generated by each address at the parcel level.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

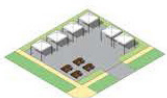
- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☒ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☐ Equity

GOALS



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

The Incremental Development Workshops identified a range of small footprint, pop-up commercial options that are low cost ways to grow and validate an early-stage business. These forms link business incubation efforts with a corridor activation strategy aimed at infill development.



TENT MARKETS



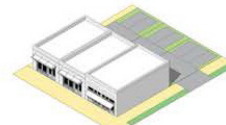
FOOD TRUCKS



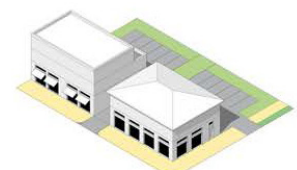
TRAILERS



MICRO-RETAIL



COMMERCIAL
1-STORY



MIXED USE REHAB
MAX. 3 UNITS PER FLOOR

STRATEGY 07

REVISE ZONING CODE FOR DENSITY

Revise and streamline zoning code to promote greater density and intensity of uses while also supporting smaller scale development types (missing middle housing, pop up commercial, and ADUs/ACUs). This includes potential and community-validated density targets, revisions to existing zoning categories, and the addition of one or more zoning overlays, such as a corridor design overlay. Overlay and zoning strategies should pool resources for community-focused development while setting the highest possible standards for redevelopment. While adding density can be an intimidating proposition to a stable neighborhood, it is important to show area residents that permitting taller buildings and higher densities does not have to translate to a poorer public and pedestrian realm. Finally, extending or creating a new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to levy funds for area improvements and to make substantial changes to urban form more financially feasible.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

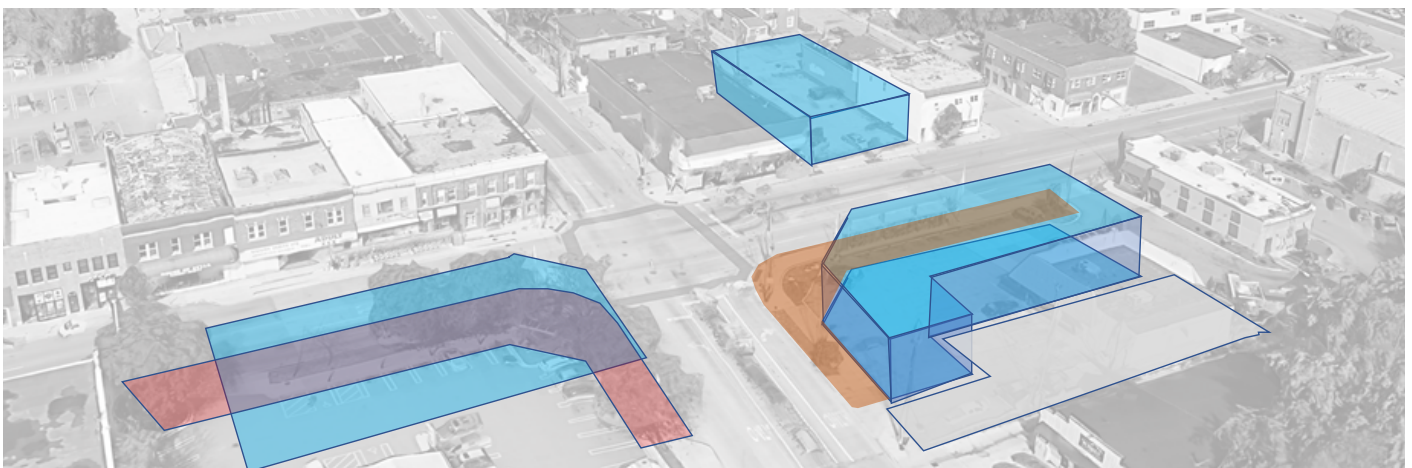
- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☒ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☐ Equity

GOALS

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| GE1 | GE2 | GE3 |
| GB1 | GB2 | GB3 |

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

The Incremental Development Toolkit recommends changes to standards related to setbacks, building height, and lot coverage to support higher density development around stations. The station plans visualize the form these changes might take. For example, plans show a 'street wall' (building edges close to the street) composed of three to four story mixed-use structures around station areas, as visualized below.



STRATEGY 08

UTILIZE PUBLIC LAND AND RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY NEEDS

Take advantage of already publicly owned and controlled land and resources to raise the bar on the existing built form and design outcomes in the corridor while leveraging public/private partnerships, especially with area organizations and leadership. Public investments in community assets and placemaking can be a precursor and catalyst to increased private development interest. When possible, acquire private vacant land within the corridor for public use. In general, a more aggressive public sector role is needed. Prioritize needed public or community facilities at these locations, such as a credit union and a youth tech center (see also Strategy 10). Any large private-public partnership to develop public land for housing or commercial use should include a community benefit agreement.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☐ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☒ Placemaking
- ☒ Equity

GOALS

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| GE1 | GE2 | GE3 |
| GB1 | GB2 | GB3 |

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

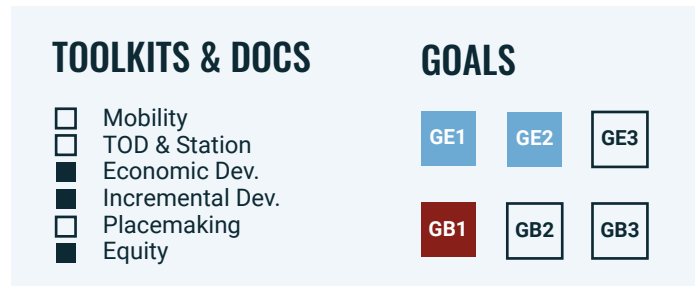
The Rapid is willing to work with its existing properties on the corridor for community focused joint development. The plan below represents a concept for the transformation of the 60th Street Park and Ride into a mixed use housing development (see circles 3, and 4 in the image below).



STRATEGY 09

SUPPORT CREATION OF LIVING WAGE JOBS FOR RESIDENTS

Support the creation of more living wage jobs through expansion and growth of existing businesses, as well as through the addition of new businesses on major and currently undeveloped sites along Division Avenue. Create or expand job training and professional development programs linking to local employers and local high schools. Prioritize job training programs that support emerging industries and green/sustainable jobs, such as solar installation (see also Strategy 12). Ensure that residents know what pathways already exist in terms of funding and are equipped to use them; commit to greater transparency and engagement around economic development programs. Finally, support zoning code updates that could create job generating opportunities, such as light industrial, commercial office and retail. This is especially important at stations that have high job density, but low job diversity (such as Cottage Grove). The jobs landscape of the future corridor must include greater variation in job types, as well as employment opportunities that are less land use intensive and more compatible with mixed-use neighborhoods.



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

The Michigan Community Revitalization program (MCRP) program distributes gap funding for a variety of different project types, including those that contribute to Michigan's revitalization as a vital job generating state. ('creation of jobs' is a factor in considering project eligibility). Proposed projects for the corridor that are focused on job training, such as a youth tech center, could potentially utilize these funds. 616 Fulton street in Grand Rapids is an example of a funded project.



STRATEGY 10

SUPPORT HOUSING STRATEGIES TO ACCOMMODATE MANY USERS

Support a diverse approach towards housing in the corridor with distinct strategies for different housing users. This means a ‘housing-first’ strategy for the corridor’s most vulnerable users. For example, housing strategies should include opportunities for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness or are trying to re-enter into the market, as well as strategies for existing residents that need financial help to improve their current owned residence, opportunity to help renters become homeowners, and strategies that continue to offer affordable rentals. Ensure that protections and support are being created for naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) as well as subsidized and new builds. Create an education campaign to de-stigmatize public housing. Empower existing residents through grants and other forms of support to build accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and become suppliers of housing themselves, and ensure that zoning and permitting processes expedite and standardize these opportunities.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

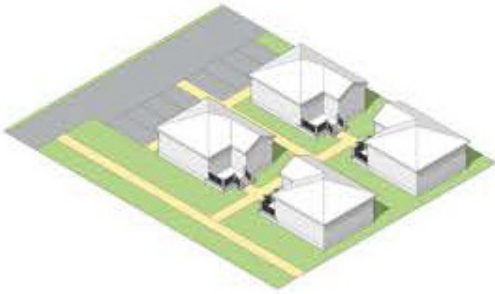
- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☒ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☒ Equity

GOALS

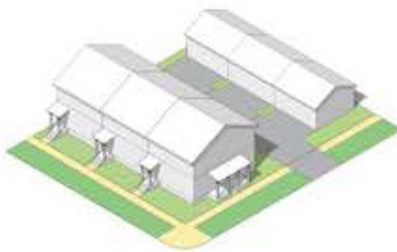


EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

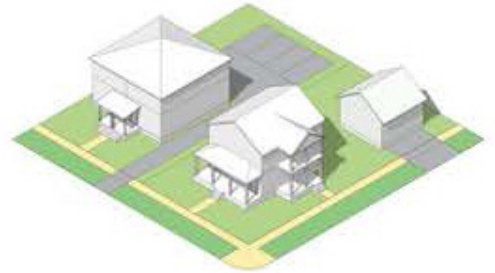
The Incremental Development Workshops and Toolkit introduced a range of housing types, from Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to Multiplexes, that support both a wider range of housing types and a wider range of housing providers. These types are shown to the right. Entrepreneurial adaptations to existing homes can add units or generate an income in the form of rent for the property owner. In Los Angeles, the city recently piloted a program that subsidizes homeowners who construct ADUs and offer them to target groups (older individuals, those experiencing homelessness) as priority renters.



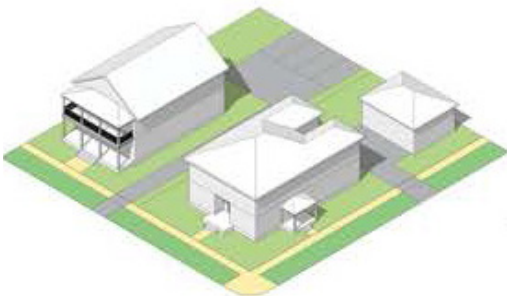
COTTAGES
UP TO 4 ON PARCEL



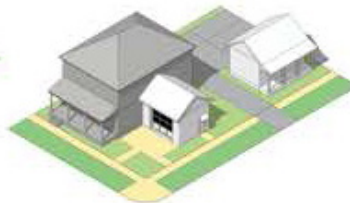
TOWNHOUSE
(UP TO 4 UNITS)



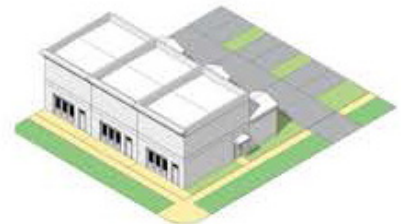
DUPLEX
(IDENTICAL UNITS)



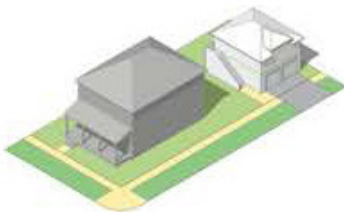
MULTIPLEX
3-4 UNITS



SHOPHOUSE
ATTACHED OR DETACHED



LIVEWORK
RESIDENTIAL ABOVE



ACCESSORY DWELLING
DETACHED (REAR)

PLACEMAKING AND PLACEKEEPING STRATEGIES

PLACEMAKING
AND PLACEKEEPING
STRATEGIES



QUALITY OF LIFE



COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

GOALS

GQ1

All residents will have access to safe, quality and well-maintained parks and public gathering spaces.

GQ2

Investments in community amenities will target improvement in physical and mental health.

GQ3

Environmental impacts on residents will be mitigated.

GC1

Familiar people, food and services will remain even as new development is constructed.

GC2

Community amenities and prominent indicators will reflect the history and culture of the corridor.

GC3

Public engagement will provide residents and property owners the power to influence decision-making processes.

EQUITY CONCERNS

Ensure that cultural resources and quality of life improvements are prioritized for historically under-invested communities rather than communities with existing momentum.

STRATEGY 11

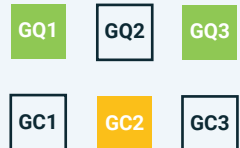
ACTIVATE VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED SPACE

Empower communities to activate underused, vacant spaces and open spaces with art, pop-up commercials, adopt-a-park, and other forms of spontaneous activity, similar to the Better-Block inspired pop-ups conducted as a part of this study. These locations represent opportunities to change the perception of the community, and for outdoor events and meetings to occur, provide potential sites for incubators for small business. Particularly during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, activating outdoor spaces is important. Provide communities with tools to quickly plan and hold these events, such as simple and easy permit options. Communities should be empowered to organize and conduct their own activities in these spaces, as well as at their own businesses and homes.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☒ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☒ Equity

GOALS



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

As a part of the Better Block Activity at 43rd street and South Division, participants cleaned up vacant and underutilized spaces, including empty lots and parking only lots. This created a sense of pride and possibility.



STRATEGY 12

RESOURCES AND PLATFORM FOR RESIDENTS AND LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS FIRST

Back long term community place-keeping efforts with tangible financial and legal support. Local grants, improvement programs, paid ambassadorships, facade improvements, and repairs and renovation funds should be made available for existing businesses. Prioritize funding programs that empower existing community members to implement project goals independently. Critically, empower local community members to be needed 'eyes on the street' and establish standards of behavior and accountability that promote an ethic of care at the station area. Case studies in similar cities such as Minneapolis have shown that community ambassador programs oriented around stations can reduce crime and increase transit usage.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☒ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☐ Placemaking
- ☒ Equity

GOALS



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

As part of the Better Block event at Logan and Division Avenue, local food and retail vendors added pop up stalls along the street edge, creating short-term shopping and retail options. Funding should be provided to support similar events that create opportunities for local businesses and creatives and prioritize their use of space in the corridor.



STRATEGY 13

STATION AREA DESIGN STANDARDS

Establish high standards for urban design in the immediate station area as well as opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment, while leaving flexibility for local expressions of pride. Implement development standards for new construction around station areas, through an overlay district. New standards should include facade and material requirements that fit the context of the corridor. Design improvements should be met not only by private sector redevelopment but also through capital project opportunities. Station locations should include complementing public realm strategies, such as colorful art, gateway features, and landscaping. Ensure that every station area is served by one or more community focused uses and that these locations are programmed for pedestrian connectivity to create an inviting location for area residents, employees, and visitors and that these locations are programmed for pedestrian connectivity. At the same time, ensure that area residents have the maximum flexibility for expressions of culture, through creative signage, plantings, and other elements of placekeeping.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☐ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☒ Placemaking
- ☐ Equity

GOALS

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| GQ1 | GQ2 | GQ3 |
| GC1 | GC2 | GC3 |

EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

Station plans emphasizes the need for gateway and public art elements near the station area. This presents an opportunity to create an improved public realm experience that can include work commissioned by local artists, such as the mural at Burton Street station, created during a Better Block activity.



STRATEGY 14

INVEST IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH EQUITY

Convene a group of partners and stakeholders to begin long term conversations about environmental justice (EJ) impacts and health equity in the corridor. This group should consist of city leaders from all three cities, community stakeholders, as well as residents that will be directly impacted. The tension between the area industrial base (a jobs and tax generator) and resident health impacts is likely to continue if a long-term mitigation strategy is not established. This could and should include conversations about compromises in use transition that include lighter industrial uses that may lessen air and noise impacts on adjacent residents, or uses focused on green jobs. It should also address the need for additional green spaces and opportunities for recreation, primarily focusing on new green spaces that have been identified in the station level plans. It should identify agents to implement a healthy food program, as suggested in the plan. It should include discussions of historical impacts of blight declarations and the need to make community members (existing and previously displaced) whole. Finally, this body should also consider the impacts of typology assignments (employment vs neighborhood focused) on station area future land use, and how to transition uses in a 20 year time-frame that balances the needs of all parties.

TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☐ Economic Dev.
- ☐ Incremental Dev.
- ☒ Placemaking
- ☒ Equity

GOALS



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

The station plan at Cottage Grove, a major industrial location, also includes the conversion of a storm water easement parcel into a green space for community members. Sites like this offer long term opportunities for urban agriculture and community gardens.



STRATEGY 15

CULTURAL RESOURCES ROADMAP

Create a comprehensive cultural resources roadmap for the corridor with a timeline and action items. This is a cultural resources management strategy that identifies key area players (community members, organizations, property owners), historical themes of focus and purpose, critical resources and agencies (genealogical society, preservation office, area museums), a preliminary list of physical assets (eligible properties list) and deliverables (bike tour, historic district, historical markers, oral histories, and local curriculum for schools and programs such as GR Urban Explorers). Leverage important community locations as major destinations and points of municipal and regional pride, including parks, schools, and locally significant private homes and businesses. This is particularly important at this time for two reasons: first, because a formal historic study of resources on the corridor has not yet occurred, and second, because the personal histories and experiences of current and long time corridor residents represent an archive of important information about experiences in the past that can inform best practices for the future.



TOOLKITS & DOCS

- ☐ Mobility
- ☒ TOD & Station
- ☐ Economic Dev.
- ☒ Incremental Dev.
- ☒ Placemaking
- ☐ Equity

GOALS



EXAMPLE RECOMMENDATION

The Grand Rapids preservation office has identified 20+ properties that have potential for historical listing, either as a group of properties or on an individual basis, in the South Division corridor. In particular, there are several clusters of mid-century modern buildings that have strong adaptive reuse potential. For example, see the properties at 1944 S Division (1), 1100 S Division (2) and 1922 S Division (3).



2



3




06







IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX


Strategy	Action	Time Frame			Partners
		1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10+ yrs	
1	Add a dedicated bus lane and paint over existing Division Avenue travel lanes with new lanes that are fewer and less wide; create an access management plan to close redundant driveways	X			The Rapid, Municipal Public Works/Transportation Departments, & City Engineers
2	Upgrade all crosswalks on Division Avenue to be high-visibility and accessible	X	X		Municipal Public Works/Transportation Departments, & City Engineers
3	Build out a complete network of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and shared-use paths for traveling between Division Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods.			X	Municipal Public Works/Transportation Departments, Development Review Department
4	Pilot a group travel training program to meet all special needs, including LEP and people with disabilities.	X			The Rapid, Municipal Public Works/Transportation Departments, participating community groups
5	Identify priority locations for mobility hubs and pilot amenities, charging stations, and internet access.	X	X	X	Municipal Public Works/Transportation Departments, Development Review Department, Adjacent Landowners
6	Finance repairs and renovations of existing businesses along Division Avenue. (Potential funding sources: Kentwood EDC Commercial Loan Program, CIA, FOG Mitigation Incentive Program, SBA 504 Loan Program, NEZ, Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, Great Update Rebate, Revolving Loan Fund, Pure Michigan Micro-Lending Program, Michigan Revitalization Program, Corridor Improvement District, Tax increment Financing)	X	X	X	Economic Development Departments, Local business and property owners
7	Create a form-based overlay district across all 3 partner cities with consistent and improved allowances				Municipal Planning and Zoning Departments, Development Review Departments
8	Leverage publicly owned land and support community and transportation facility development through real estate development. (Potential mechanisms: Joint Development and Transportation Utility Fees, and Community Redevelopment Corporation).	X	X	X	All state, municipal, county, and public departments with land in the corridor (The Rapid, Kent County Health Department, Michigan
9	Finance the development of new, affordable housing options along Division Avenue. (Potential funding sources: LIHTC, CDBG, Brownfield Redevelopment Act 381, NEZ, Opportunity Zones, Community Land Trust, Land Value Tax, Revolving Loan Fund, Housing Co-op)	X	X	X	Economic Development Departments, Area housing developers (large and small)


Strategy	Action	Time Frame			Partners
		1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10+ yrs	
10	Prioritize job training programs that support emerging industries and green/sustainable jobs	X	X	X	WestMichiganWorks! (local Workforce development board) American Job Center, Economic Development Departments, Area employers,
11	Publicly acquire vacant and underutilized sites and activate them with an adopt-a-park or adopt-a-lot program; support resident efforts to utilize them for pop up and community events	X	X	X	Economic Development Departments, Area community organizations
12	Extend the Community Connector program to support transit, mobility and ridership education in Division United communities.	X			The Rapid, Community Connectors,
13	Codify urban design and development standards for new construction around station areas, as established in an overlay district and based on station plans	X	X		Municipal Planning and Zoning Departments, Development Review Departments
14	Convene a body to monitor and study environmental and justice and health impacts in the corridor.	X			Kent County Health Department, West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC), LINC UP
15	Create a cultural resources roadmap. This will include strategies for identifying and preserving historical buildings and assets, identifying marker locations, and making oral and written histories of the corridor more widely available.	X	X	X	Grand Rapids Historical Society, Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Department, Kentwood and Wyoming Planning Departments, Incremental Development Alliance, local genealogical societies and cultural resource management professionals

APPENDIX A- GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ICON
 TRANSPORTATION	Greater value and priority will be placed on transit service and facilities. GM1	Reduced travel times, improved on-time arrivals, increased hours of service, and more frequent service to each bus stop.	M1
		Better access to connecting transit (e.g., at 28th, 44th).	M2
		Dedicated bus lane (painted, resin, dyed, or asphalt).	M3
		Improved maintenance of Silver Line stations and all bus stops (in addition to Silver Line stops) in the corridor.	M4
		Ensure equitable access to transit, in part by improving multi-lingual information on service.	M5
	People will be safe from physical or vehicular harm while walking along and across South Division. GM2	Reduce vehicle traffic along Division Avenue and in surrounding neighborhoods.	M6
		Improved pedestrian crossings at existing intersections and add mid-block pedestrian crossings at strategic locations.	M7
		Add streetscaping elements, including trees for shade and beautification, where pedestrians stand, sit and wait.	M8
		Reduce number of driveways and curb cuts.	M9
		Updated infrastructure that meets accessibility standards and best practices for pedestrians of all abilities.	M10

CATEGORY	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ICON
 TRANSPORTATION	<p>Sustainable transportation options will be available for all ages to access surrounding neighborhoods.</p> 	Improved routes to schools that prioritize access for children walking, bicycling, skateboarding, and using scooters.	
		Support the creation or continued activation of a transit riders union or other community body to advocate for transit-reliant users.	
		Transit and micro-transit connectivity to major employers and institutions (esp. outside a 10 minute walking distance)	
		Better connected walking and bicycling networks to, from, and across South Division Ave.	

CATEGORY	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ICON
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<p>Programs will help long-standing residents and business owners generate sustainable wealth.</p> <p>GE1</p>	Develop more direct pathways for small-scale development and local business ownership.	E1
		Funding resources available to repair and allow improvement of existing homes / businesses.	E2
		Public land and assets offered to local residents / businesses.	E3
		Attract significant employers to the opportunity sites (esp. at south end of corridor).	E4
		Recruit minority-owned or local bank / credit union.	E5
	<p>Policies will encourage growth in a diverse set of jobs that are better connected to people living in the corridor.</p> <p>GE2</p>	Generate employment that supports a mix of uses.	E6
		Protect job-generating uses but better buffer them from surrounding community.	E7
		Link school and job training centers to surrounding industrial employers.	E8
	<p>Development processes will ensure that current residents are informed about and understand the impacts and benefits of development.</p> <p>GE3</p>	Seek or provide financial support to small, local and first time developers.	E9
		Create more transparent development process for residents, businesses, developers, and the general public.	E10

CATEGORY	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ICON
 BUILT ENVIRONMENT	New development will foster variety, enhance cultural diversity and grow the population. GB1	Identify development opportunities for vacant and underutilized parcels in the corridor.	N1
		Support for existing businesses and commercial properties through storefront improvements, especially minority-owned.	N2
		Add additional outreach programs for existing residents and businesses.	N3
		Identify design guidelines that support the introduction of more walkable urban environments.	N4
	The mix of land uses will continue to include residential, commercial, office, retail and industrial. GB2	Support addition of job-generating uses, including industrial and commercial uses.	N5
		Better align building and zoning codes with likely smaller scale and more flexible building types.	N6
		Identify residential density targets needed to support corridor commercial and absorb housing demand at transit nodes.	N7
	The housing mix will allow for people of all income levels and household sizes to have options for renting or owning a home. GB3	Develop affordable housing programs to ensure delivery of a mix of affordable uses.	N8
		Add flexibility in code for additional housing types (missing middle housing).	N9

CATEGORY	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ICON
 QUALITY OF LIFE	All residents will have access to safe, quality and well-maintained parks and public gathering spaces. GQ1	Programming of underutilized public sites or rights-of-way.	Q1
		Leverage publicly owned land for green space and recreational space.	Q2
		Improve access to parks and public spaces.	Q3
		Add programmed public open space in areas with limited amounts.	Q4
	Investments in community amenities will target improvements in physical and mental health. GQ2	Provide greater opportunities for physical fitness and recreation.	Q5
		Improve access to fresh and healthy food.	Q6
		Partner with corridor health institutions and land owners to recruit health and family services to corridor and connect residents to them.	Q7
	Environmental impacts on residents will be mitigated. GQ3	Identify public and private side strategies to improve pedestrian realm.	Q8
		Continue to monitor the impacts old infrastructure/ lack of improvements have had on residents.	Q9
		Buffer industrial uses from adjacent residential neighborhoods.	Q10

CATEGORY	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ICON
 COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY	Familiar people, food and services will remain even as new development is constructed. GC1	Support and develop community events celebrating corridor history and culture.	C1
		Preserve iconic and historic buildings that add character to the corridor for adaptive reuse when possible.	C2
		Protect businesses that are consistent with future land use and provide programs for them to expand in place.	C3
	Community amenities and prominent indicators will reflect the history and culture of the corridor. GC2	Development of narratives and media that highlight the unique history of the corridor.	C4
		Invest in public art / place-making / third place.	C5
		Official or unofficial designation of under-appreciated community assets.	C6
	Public engagement will provide residents and property owners the power to influence decision-making processes. GC3	Develop standards for engagement around new development projects.	C7
		Community engagement that reflects the diversity of the corridor.	C8
		Community engagement proposed by and run by residents.	C9

DIVISION
UNITED

