



Gov. Whitmer announces \$83.8 million in statewide grants through the Revitalization And Placemaking program

Kathleen Achtenberg

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

- Placemaking projects bring new use, investment to properties impacted by COVID-19 pandemic • Additional project will bring multifamily housing to downtown Portage

LANSING, Mich. – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer joined the Michigan Economic Development Corporation today to announce Michigan Strategic Fund approval of \$83.8 million in grant funding across 22 statewide community development projects around Michigan through the Revitalization And Placemaking program. The MSF also approved support for a new multifamily project that will bring much-needed housing to the city of Portage.

[Approved by the Michigan Strategic Fund](#) to support MEDC’s strategic focus on innovative placemaking and continue to help communities recover from the impacts of COVID-19, the **Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) program** utilizes \$100 million in federal American Rescue Plan dollars to support investments in projects that promote population and tax revenue growth to proactively address negative economic impacts of COVID-19 in traditional downtowns, social zones and public spaces. Today’s announcement includes the allocation of \$83.8 million in funds; the remaining awards will be announced at a later date.

“Today’s grants underscore our proactive investments in projects that promote population and tax revenue growth in our communities. These investments will help create vibrant places that attract and retain talent, add new housing options, enable business creation and attraction, and provide resources for Michigan citizens and communities,” **Gov. Whitmer said.** “By putting federal funds to work to address the impacts of COVID-19, we are making a real impact on our families, our communities, and our small businesses. I will work with anyone to keep getting things done and growing our economy.”

The [RAP program](#) is intended to spur investments that will address the inventory of vacant, underutilized office, commercial, and community spaces due to the pandemic by supporting efforts to repurpose them for the community to enjoy. Projects can also include the development of permanent place-based infrastructure associated with traditional downtowns, social-zones, outdoor dining and placed-based public spaces. Projects that include housing must include units that are priced to be attainable to the local workforce, including households with less than 120 percent of the area median income.

The program is designed to address a rise in vacancy rates throughout Michigan’s downtowns and commercial districts by supporting building conversions and renovations that will attract new users and build increased vitality. Additionally, the program is intended to invest in public space place-based infrastructure to help reverse the adverse economic impacts of the pandemic.

The program allows individual public space projects to apply for up to \$1 million, individual real estate projects to apply for up to \$5 million in support of their efforts to revitalize underutilized

estate projects to apply for up to \$5 million in support of their efforts to revitalize underutilized spaces, while local economic development or community development organizations and non-

profits may also apply for up to \$20 million to implement programs in support of their own local or regional revitalization strategies. Demand for the program exceeded available funding 5:1, highlighting the continued importance of placemaking in helping communities make a full economic recovery following the pandemic.

Today's grants were allocated in three categories:

- **Public Space Place-Based RAP Awards** – \$9,058,627 awarded to 10 communities around Michigan for infrastructure improvements, public facility enhancements, affordable housing, downtown improvements, and more;
- **Real Estate Rehabilitation RAP Awards** – \$9,843,045 awarded to mixed-use development projects in Clare, Marquette, and Grand Blanc;
- **Subgrant RAP Awards** – \$64,904,067 awarded to nine local economic development organizations/units of government for different community development projects around the state.

Grant Recommendations to the MSF September 7, 2022:

Public Space Place-Based Awards:

Municipality	Applicant	Amount	Description
Houghton	City of Houghton	\$1,000,000	Add placemaking elements to the downtown
Negaunee	City of Negaunee	\$885,261	Infrastructure and placemaking upgrades
Traverse City	Traverse City DDA	\$1,000,000	Riverfront activation
Lexington	Moore Public Library	\$572,366	Library expansion
East Lansing	City of East Lansing	\$1,000,000	Placemaking and park improvements
Grand Ledge	City of Grand Ledge	\$1,000,000	Placemaking and walkability improvements
Dearborn	East Dearborn DDA	\$787,718	Outdoor gathering space
Ecorse	City of Ecorse	\$1,000,000	Riverfront public space improvements
Wyandotte	Wyandotte DDA	\$1,000,000	Public alley enhancements
Mount Clemens	City of Mount Clemens	\$813,282	Walkability & connectivity improvements

Total Public Space Place-Based: \$9,058,627

Real Estate Rehabilitation Awards:

Municipality	Applicant	Amount	Description
Clare	Ideal Theater Clare, LLC	\$988,045	Restoration of historic downtown theater
Marquette	Ore Dock Real Estate	\$3,905,000	Rehabilitation of historic building into mixed-use and public space
Grand Blanc	Garden Building of Grand Blanc, LLC	\$4,950,000	New construction of a mixed-use building

Total Real Estate Rehabilitation: \$9,843,045

Subgrant Program Awards:

Municipality	Applicant	Amount	Description
Alpena	Target Alpena Development Corp.	\$4,967,527	Mixed-use redevelopment with layers of local support
Grand Rapids	City of Grand Rapids	\$9,378,000	Multiple projects addressing the need for quality affordable/attainable housing
Muskegon	City of Muskegon	\$6,000,000	Downtown revitalization adding diverse housing types at multiple affordability levels, and accessible places for social gathering
Various Cities	The Right Place	\$3,613,166	Investment in bold public space place-based initiatives that attract and retain talent and businesses
Flint	City of Flint	\$10,000,000	Support mixed-income, multi-family housing development and integration of civic and institutional uses in a mixed-use environment
Lansing	City of Lansing	\$6,694,375	Comprehensive strategy to support small businesses, community non-profits and housing needs
Niles, Benton Harbor	Berrien County	\$2,600,000	Support real estate reinvestment that leverages existing investments and contributes to implementation of locally-approved plans
Various Cities	Southwest Michigan First	\$7,910,999	Support real estate redevelopment and placemaking that will attract and retain talent
Detroit	Downtown Detroit Partnership	\$13,740,000	Invest in projects that focus on living and playing downtown as a way to generate new demand for small businesses and new tax revenue for the city

Total Subgrants: \$64,904,067

Total: \$83,805,739

To see a map of the distribution of funds by county, [visit here](#).



Target Alpena Development Corporation will use a Target Alpena MEDC RAP subgrant for the construction of a new two-story, mixed-use building consisting of 15 residential units and five commercial spaces in downtown **Alpena**. The project is expected to generate a total capital investment of \$10 million, supported by a \$4,967,527 RAP subgrant.

This project activates an empty space in the core of Alpena, bringing key elements to the community. The project includes 15 apartments on the upper level, adding attractive and affordable housing to the community and our downtown. Additionally, the developer intends on offering a subsidy to attract a badly needed daycare center on the lower level along with four other retail spaces. Both housing and daycare are critical to filling local jobs and attracting and retaining young families to the community.

“Our downtown has had great momentum in recent years and much of it can be attributed to the support of the MEDC and their programs. This project continues to build on that momentum in a

really meaningful way and can help draw more eyes on Alpena and further create additional interest in our region. This is a huge win for Alpena and specifically our downtown,” said **Target Alpena**

Director of Economic Development Michael W. Mahler. “I would like to acknowledge our MEDC team that supports this region for their help and guidance on this process. They are wonderful partners on this path toward revitalizing our downtown and creating a more active and vibrant walkable city. Interest has never been greater in our downtown than it is today. We have come a long way in the last decade and this project will only add to the energy and excitement.”



Ore Dock Real Estate, LLC – Rosewood will rehabilitate an existing building much-needed workforce housing and support a growing business in downtown **Marquette**. The project includes placemaking components through outdoor entertainment areas, urban green spaces, public infrastructure improvements, and the creation of four new housing units through both historic and conventional rehabilitation practices.

In addition to bringing workforce housing the project will provide new, safe, outdoor public gathering spaces and walkways, which is a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project is expected to generate a total capital investment of \$7,816,456, supported by a \$3,905,000 Real Estate Rehabilitation RAP award.

“The RAP grant program is helping us materialize a vision, execute a strategy, and achieve goals we never believed possible coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **Ore Dock Brewing Company Co-Founder and General Manager Andrea Pernsteiner.** “With the support of the MEDC and other community partners, we look forward to creating a space that will honor the legacy of the trestle property while affording us the opportunity to continue building towards a sustainable future.”



The Paradise Valley Alleyscape project is part of the Downtown **Detroit** Partnership subgrant application. The project will transform an underutilized gateway alley that sits right next to the main Gratiot Avenue entrance to Paradise Valley into a safe, art-filled, walkable space that will create a

vibrant pedestrian experience. The project is expected to generate a total capital investment of \$1,407,000, supported by a \$703,500 RAP subgrant.

“On behalf of the Downtown Detroit stakeholders, we are excited to be among the statewide Revitalization and Placemaking award recipients, we look forward to working in concert with our partners and the MEDC to expand Downtown's public spaces into a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all,” said **DDP CEO Eric B. Larson**. “This funding is the next step in supporting a more resilient and vibrant city center that will connect people, resources and services more fluidly.”

“Thriving communities and talent attraction are vital to our overall economic development strategy; communities across Michigan responded with innovative proposals to create holistic, people-first economic development here in Michigan and we had to make very difficult choices,” said **Quentin L. Messer, Jr., CEO of MEDC and President and Chair of the MSF Board**. “From Houghton and Traverse City, to Grand Ledge and Grand Blanc, we remain committed to ensuring that all Michiganders feel the impact of MEDC’s efforts to grow Michigan’s economy. We appreciate the support of the Governor and our partners in the legislature to use these federal funds to fund these critical programs and the work is just beginning.”

RAP builds on existing MEDC placemaking programs, including [Public Spaces](#), [Community Places](#), and resources for communities to create gathering spaces to address the impact of COVID-19. In partnership with Main Street America and Michigan Main Street, MEDC offers a [Reopen Main Street](#) website that provides resources, strategies, and assets for downtowns and communities as they plan for their return to operations following the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, on [MEDC's community development website](#), the [Resiliency page](#) offers immediate strategies and actions around community resiliency framed through the lens of the [Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practices](#).

To learn more about MEDC’s placemaking initiatives, community development technical support, support for small businesses and historic preservation efforts visit www.miplace.org.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Legislator quotes can be found at the end of this release.

Community revitalization project will bring much-needed housing, vibrancy to city of Portage



Tall Timbers Portage, LLC plans to construct a four-story multifamily building in the Centre Avenue Corridor of **Portage**. When completed, the project will include 180 apartments, parking space and a common area. Ten percent of the units will be reserved for households earning between 80 and 120 percent of area median income. The project will also incorporate sustainable building and development practices.

Upon completion, the project will bring contaminated property back to productive use, adding vibrancy and density to the area. In addition, the project will address the need for housing in the community driven by significant expansion projects at Stryker, Pfizer, and other major employers, and sets the tone for future development in the community.

The City of Portage Brownfield Redevelopment Authority today received Michigan Strategic Fund approval of \$4,749,348 in state tax capture to be used for the reimbursement of eligible brownfield activities at the site. The city of Portage is supporting the project through the local tax capture portion of the brownfield work plan, valued at \$6,420,333.

“The transformative and compelling Tall Timbers project is located on a transit line, is part of a growing and intense walkable mixed-use corridor, has a minimum 10 percent workforce housing component and will be the first privately owned gold Leed certified development in our city’s history,” said **Portage City Manager Pat McGinnis**. “To top it off, we’ve enjoyed leadership and consultancy from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The Tall Timbers project checks all the boxes for Portage.”

LEGISLATOR QUOTES:

“These grants have the power to turn a wish or an idea into a reality,” said **Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich, D-Flint**. “By working in tandem, the Legislature and MSF are helping communities create new attractions to draw folks downtown, revitalize valuable historic buildings, and develop better living spaces for Michiganders. From Downriver to the Keweenaw Peninsula, cities across the state will now be able to put their ideas into motion, and I look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the months ahead.”

From the start, the Legislature prioritized investing federal COVID relief dollars that would make transformational changes in our state and not simply for the sake of growing government,” said **Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey, R-Clarklake**. “In that effort, and with bipartisan support, we dedicated \$100 million from the Biden administration’s American Rescue Plan funding for infrastructure and revitalization projects. I am pleased the MSF has acted so quickly to put those dollars to work to help improve our communities and boost the economy.”

“We’ve fought tirelessly to get these federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan exactly where they belong — out in our communities making a durable difference in the places we call home. These recommendations to the Michigan Strategic Fund board represent exactly the kind of smart, one-time investments into our local infrastructure we have been calling for in Lansing,” said **House Democratic Leader Donna Lasinski, D-Scio Township**. “And while these grants will fund so many diverse improvements, from riverfront investments in Traverse City to tackling housing accessibility in Grand Rapids, or historic building rehabilitation in Marquette to funding walkability and connectivity in Mt. Clemens, they all work together toward stronger local economies, enhanced community infrastructure, and a Michigan full of revitalized hometowns and destinations.”

About Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state’s marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development with the focus on growing Michigan’s economy. For more information on the MEDC and our initiatives, visit www.MichiganBusiness.org. For Pure Michigan® tourism information, your trip begins at www.michigan.org. Join the conversation on: [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).