



City of Highland Park
**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

Adopted March 2, 2026

Prepared by



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Acknowledgments

The City of Highland Park acknowledges that the Economic Development Strategy developed in partnership with local and regional strategic partners has been undertaken to establish a clear economic development vision and implementation plan for the City. This strategy will strengthen Highland Park's ability to attract investment, support business growth, create jobs, and foster sustainable redevelopment opportunities aligned with the City's long-term objectives.

This strategy was prepared with the support of the State of Michigan Treasury and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities Program. The City of Highland Park extends its appreciation for the resources and partnership provided to advance this important work and further the City's economic development and community revitalization goals.

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Table of Contents

- Acknowledgmentsiii**
- Project Purpose and Executive Summary..... 1**
- Physical, Cultural and Social Assets..... 3**
- Highland Park History 4**
- Community Demographic Profile7**
- City Branding and Identity19**
- Community Engagement25**
- Economic Development Vision and Mission31**
- Economic Development Action Plan45**
- 1-Year Action Plan55**

Tables

- Table 1: Population Change by Age 1990–2023..... 9
- Table 2: Population Forecast Change by Age, 2020–2050.....10
- Table 3: Race and Hispanic Origin..... 11
- Table 4: Distribution of Educational Attainment 12
- Table 5: Forecasted Jobs by Industry Sector13
- Table 6: Household Income.....14
- Table 7: Annual Household Income Distribution14

Figures

- Figure 1: Comparative Population Change Since 20137
- Figure 2: Population Change by Age, 2010–2023 8
- Figure 3: Population Forecast Change by Age, 2020–2050.....10
- Figure 4: Annual Household Income Distribution14

Maps

- Map 1: Economic Development Strategic Planning Map43

1 | PROJECT PURPOSE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Highland Park, in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program, the State of Michigan Treasury, and the Highland Park Strategic Partnership partners, has undertaken the development of a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Guided by MEDC's RRC framework, this initiative establishes a clear vision for economic revitalization and provides the foundation for long-term, sustainable growth in Highland Park.

The Highland Park Economic Development Strategy supports the following MEDC Objectives:



Engages with community partners



Conduct a physical, cultural and social assessment



Conduct an identity audit and defines the City brand



Strategies to Market priority redevelopment sites which spur residential and commercial development



Outlines Economic Development goals and objectives



Provide the action plan for implementation of planned objectives and initiatives

2 | Physical, Cultural and Social Assets



Highland Park's historical and cultural assets are central to its identity and play a critical role in shaping the City's long-term economic development strategy. As the birthplace of modern industrial production through the Highland Park Ford Plant and a community deeply influenced by the Great Migration, Highland Park reflects a legacy of innovation, resilience, and cultural pride. Iconic structures such as the McGregor Library, historic neighborhoods, and longstanding institutions anchor the City's character, while arts, music, and cultural traditions continue to sustain community vitality. In alignment with the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) framework, this chapter conducts a physical, cultural, and social asset audit to identify opportunities that leverage these strengths. By honoring Highland Park's history and showcasing its unique identity, the City can attract new investment, market priority redevelopment sites, and align economic development with community revitalization.



Highland Park History

This historical foundation of Highland Park illustrates how transportation innovation and suburban planning shaped Highland Park even before its later role in industrial development.

Highland Park’s origins trace back to the late 1800s, when the area was primarily agricultural land known as Whitewood, located north of Detroit and intersected by the Grand Trunk Railroad. The community began to transform when Captain William H. Stevens, an entrepreneur and industrialist, established an estate called “Highland Park.” His influence extended further in 1886, when he helped launch the Highland Park Railway, one of the nation’s first electric streetcar systems. This advancement provided a direct connection to Detroit, making the area more attractive to developers and residents, and setting the stage for rapid suburbanization.

By the late 19th century, developers marketed Highland Park as a desirable residential area, promoting the promise of suburban living with access to modern amenities but without the costs associated with city life. Land subdivisions, deed restrictions, and real estate advertising reinforced this image, attracting middle- and upper-class families. Highland Park was officially incorporated as a village in 1889, and through a series of annexations in the following years, the community’s boundaries expanded to resemble its modern footprint by the early 1890s.



Ford Model T Plant (Highland Park Ford Plant)

Opened in 1910, this site is one of the most significant industrial landmarks in the world. It was here that Henry Ford introduced the moving assembly line, revolutionizing global manufacturing and making the automobile accessible to the middle class.

Historic Neighborhoods & Architecture

Highland Park contains early 20th-century residential architecture, including stately homes, historic apartment buildings, and tree-lined streets reflective of its prosperous industrial past.



McGregor Public Library (Historic Landmark)

An iconic cultural and civic building, representing Highland Park’s rich educational and civic history.

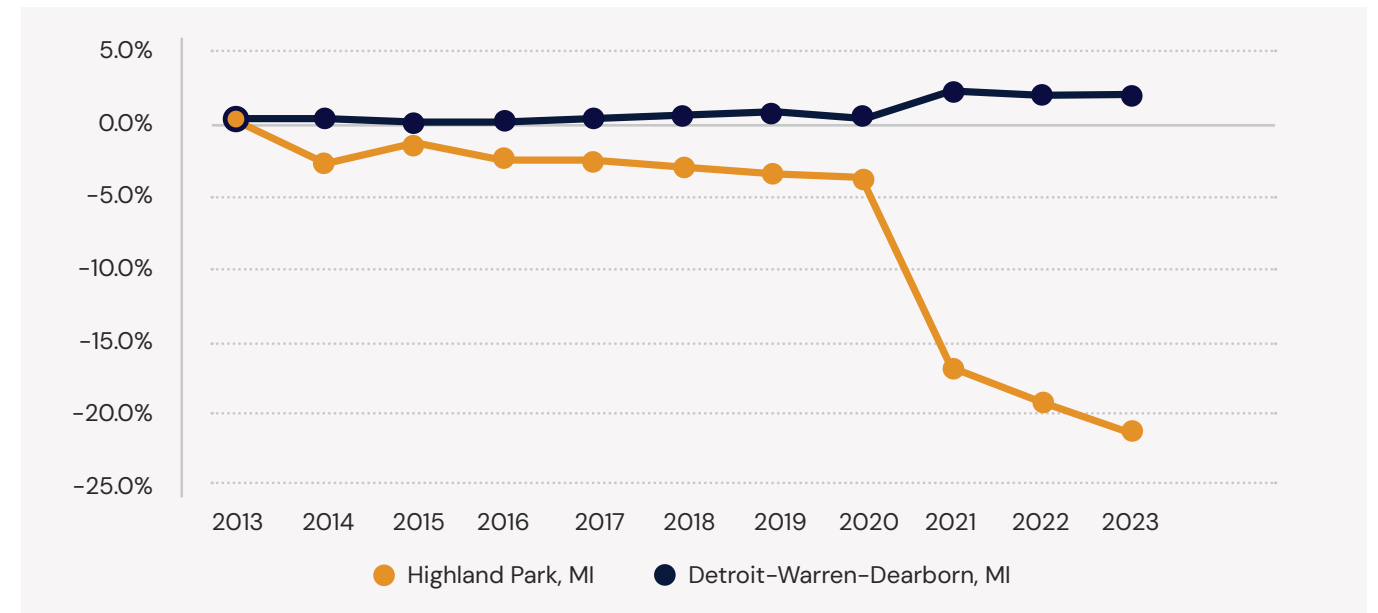
3 | COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Highland Park's current economic landscape, it includes demographic and workforce trends, key industries and employers, real estate market dynamics, infrastructure assets, and historic challenges such as population loss or disinvestment.

Local Population Data

To further emphasize Highland Park's population change over the past decade, figure 1 compares Highland Park's population change to the Detroit-Warren-Dearborn region. As seen in figure 1, Highland Park gradually declines starting in 2015, whereas the regional population change gradually increases. Notably, Highland Park follows the inverse of the regional trend, decreasing as the region increases. Then, Highland Park decreases steeply from -4.2% in 2020 to -17.6% in 2021, while the regional trend begins to gradually decline starting in 2021.

Figure 1: Comparative Population Change Since 2013

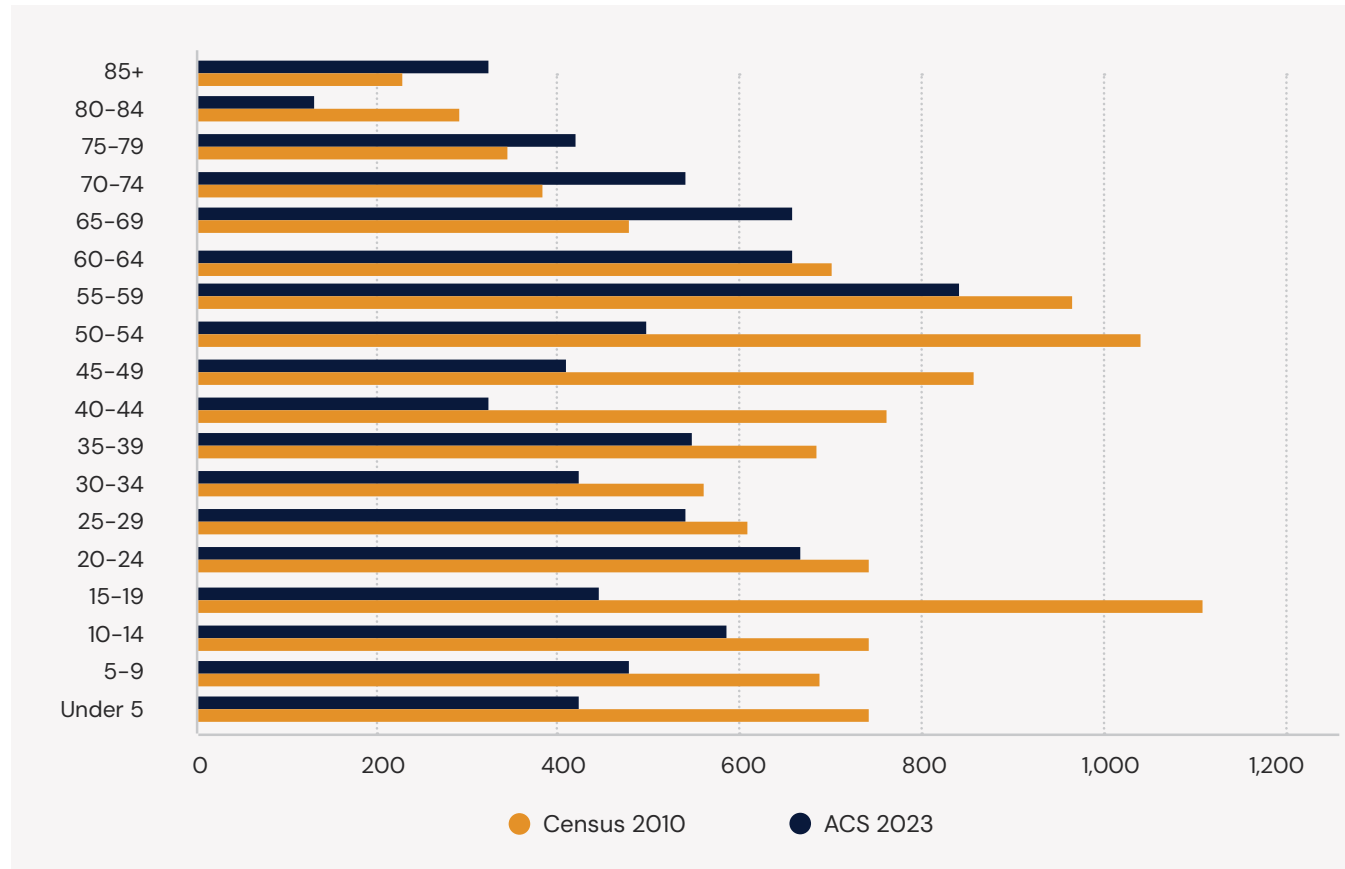


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS)

Age Distribution

In 2023, Highland Park's age distribution skews towards a slightly older population. Residents between the ages of 55 to 59 make up around 9.5% of the population, with the 60 to 64 age group (7.4%) and the 65 to 69 age groups (7.4%) following close behind. The 20 to 24 age group (7.5%) is the second highest population group.

Figure 2: Population Change by Age, 2010–2023



Median age

Over the past decade, the median age in Highland Park has steadily increased. In 1990 the median age was 32 and in 2010 the median age was 40.5. By 2023, the median age increased to 45 years old, displaying a 4.6% change in the last 13 years. By assessing the age distribution of Highland Park, the City can consider the types of services and amenities that would improve the quality of life for an aging population.

Table 1: Population Change by Age 1990–2023

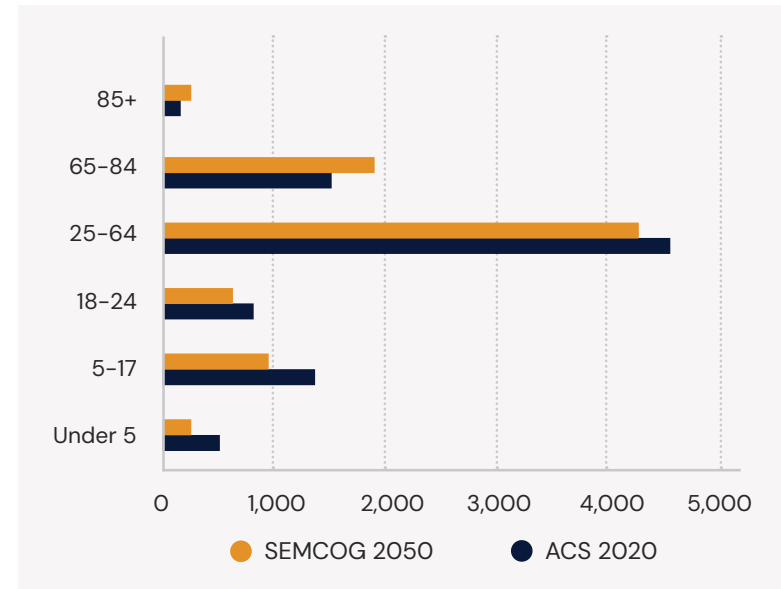
Age Group	Census 1990	Census 2000	Census 2010	ACS 2023	Change 1990 - 2000	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2023
Under 5	1,753	1,277	735	417	-457	-547	-318
5-9	1,401	1,668	680	471	267	-922	-209
10-14	1,543	1,270	731	586	-273	-590	-145
15-19	1,711	1,052	1,100	439	-659	-1	-661
20-24	1,539	1,061	730	659	-478	-277	-71
25-29	1,469	2,182	604	535	-928	-495	-69
30-34	1,641		552	417		-524	-135
35-39	1,554	2,415	675	540	-375	-508	-135
40-44	1,236		749	320		-502	-429
45-49	865	2,115	847	403	449	-282	-444
50-54	801		1,031	489		80	-542
55-59	856	699	956	834	-157	234	-122
60-64	914	578	695	650	-336	108	-45
65-69	919	1,360	471	651	-274	-177	180
70-74	715		378	530		-291	152
75-79	584	845	335	412	-60	-149	77
80-84	321		286	128		-49	-158
85+	302	224	221	317	-78	-78	96
Total	20,121	16,746	11,776	8,798	-3,375	-4,970	-2,978
Median Age	32.0	34.5	40.5	45.1	2.5	6.0	4.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, and 2019–2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Population Forecast

In 2050 there are two age groups that are projected to increase: 65 to 84 (25.6%) and 85+ (43.9%). This trend follows the current age distribution trend which displays an increase in older population groups. The remaining age groups are all projected to decrease in 2050 when compared to 2020. The under 5 age group is expected to experience the greatest decrease in population (-47.8%).

Figure 3: Population Forecast Change by Age, 2020–2050



Source: SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast

Table 2: Population Forecast Change by Age, 2020–2050

Age Group	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	Change 2020-2050	Percent Change 2020-2050
Under 5	781	660	635	633	591	583	547	-234	-30.0%
5-17	2,351	2,100	1,947	1,835	1,797	1,714	1,715	-636	-27.1%
18-24	1,279	1,016	982	1,034	1,008	977	1,037	-242	-18.9%
25-64	7,622	7,346	7,196	7,219	7,349	7,537	7,520	-102	-1.3%
65-84	2,582	2,842	3,097	3,177	3,200	3,171	3,241	659	25.5%
85+	241	239	275	360	417	526	533	292	121.2%
Total	14,856	14,203	14,132	14,258	14,362	14,508	14,593	-263	-1.8%

Source: SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast

Race and Hispanic Origin

Highland Park’s racial makeup is primarily Black with 93% of the population in 2010 and 85.8% of the population in 2023 identifying as Black. The second highest population group is White with 2.9% of the population in 2010 and 9.2% of the population in 2023 identifying as White. Between 2010 and 2023 the White and Multi-Racial groups have increased by 6.2% and 1.6% respectively.

Table 3: Race and Hispanic Origin

Race and Hispanic Origin	Census 2010	Percent of Population 2010	ACS 2023	Percent of Population 2023	Percentage Point Change 2010-2023
Non-Hispanic	11,620	98.7%	8,701	98.9%	0.2%
White	347	2.9%	807	9.2%	6.2%
Black	10,955	93.0%	7,545	85.8%	-7.3%
Asian	46	0.4%	9	0.1%	-0.3%
Multi-Racial	229	1.9%	313	3.6%	1.6%
Other	43	0.4%	10	0.1%	-0.3%
Hispanic	156	1.3%	97	1.1%	-0.2%
Total	11,776	100.0%	8,798	100.0%	0.0%

U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 2019–2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

When compared to 2010, education levels in 2023 have risen with the greatest increase in population age 25 and over with a Graduate / Professional Degree (4.3%). Following closely is a bachelor's degree (4.2%), some College, no Degree (3.6%), and associate degree (2.9%). Significantly, there has been a reduction in population age 25 and over that did not graduate high school (-9.4%). Through analyzing the education levels, the City can assess the level and type of employment opportunities Highland Park has to offer its residents, as well as potential new residents.

Table 4: Distribution of Educational Attainment

Highest Level of Education*	ACS 2010	ACS 2023	Percentage Point Change 2010-2023
Did Not Graduate High School	25.4%	16.0%	-9.4%
High School Graduate	36.4%	30.9%	-5.6%
Some College, No Degree	23.2%	26.8%	3.6%
Associate Degree	6.4%	9.3%	2.9%
Bachelor's Degree	5.4%	9.5%	4.2%
Graduate / Professional Degree	3.2%	7.5%	4.3%

* Population age 25 and over

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment Distribution

In terms of employment distribution, Highland Park's employed population that is 16 years or older is projected to be 6,605 in 2050 which is a 4.8% increase from 2019 (6,302). Of this working population, the most prevalent industries are forecasted to be Healthcare Services (905), Professional and Technical Services & Corporate HQ (839), and Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities (823). This differs from the top three sectors in 2019 as Retail Trade was one of the top three industry sectors.

Table 5: Jobs Forecast by Industry Sector

Jobs Forecast by Industry Sector	2019	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	Change 2019-2050	Percent Change 2019-2050
Natural Resources, Mining & Construction	162	152	182	178	192	200	209	225	63	38.9%
Manufacturing	287	255	486	476	499	502	542	564	277	96.5%
Wholesale Trade	362	318	330	320	332	339	338	321	-41	-11.3%
Retail Trade	668	597	561	545	515	506	487	489	-179	-26.8%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	628	637	861	886	905	858	841	823	195	31.1%
Information & Financial Activities	393	377	406	416	418	423	423	430	37	9.4%
Professional and Technical Services & Corporate HQ	921	870	885	863	876	863	860	839	-82	-8.9%
Administrative, Support, & Waste Services	512	489	511	522	542	560	576	590	78	15.2%
Education Services	319	298	304	319	329	338	323	322	3	0.9%
Healthcare Services	641	640	746	800	838	885	887	905	264	41.2%
Leisure & Hospitality	275	202	249	242	230	219	212	201	-74	-26.9%
Other Services	630	580	599	581	599	583	587	589	-41	-6.5%
Public Administration	504	473	476	517	337	307	306	307	-197	-39.1%
Total Employment Numbers	6,302	5,888	6,596	6,665	6,612	6,583	6,591	6,605	303	4.8%

Source: SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast

Household Income

Median household income from 2010 to 2023 in Highland Park has slightly decreased from \$28,234 to \$27,582 which is a 2.3% change. Per capita income has increased by 45.8% from 2010 to 2023 with a \$7,867 change. The greatest number of households fall into the \$10,000 to \$14,999 annual household income range (648). There are a small number of households in both the \$150,000 to \$199,999 range (12) and \$45,000 to \$49,999 range (27). Household income is important in determining the type of housing to provide for future residents.

Table 6: Household Income

Income (in 2023 dollars)	ACS 2010	ACS 2023	Change 2010-2023	Percent Change 2010-2023
Median Household Income	\$28,234	\$27,582	-\$652	-2.3%
Per Capita Income	\$17,193	\$25,060	\$7,867	45.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 7: Annual Household Income Distribution

Annual Household Income	# of Household (ACS 2023)
\$200,000 or more	128
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12
\$125,000 to \$149,999	111
\$100,000 to \$124,999	150
\$75,000 to \$99,999	328
\$60,000 to \$74,999	184
\$50,000 to \$59,999	266
\$45,000 to \$49,999	27
\$40,000 to \$44,999	309
\$35,000 to \$39,999	145
\$30,000 to \$34,999	160
\$25,000 to \$29,999	273
\$20,000 to \$24,999	161
\$15,000 to \$19,999	375
\$10,000 to \$14,999	648
Less than \$10,000	541
Total	3,818

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4: Annual Household Income Distribution



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Highland Park Market Snapshot

The 2025 Consumer Spending Report for Highland Park highlights below-average spending across nearly all major household categories when compared to national benchmarks. With Spending Potential Index (SPI) values consistently below 50, households in Highland Park spend less than half of what the typical U.S. household spends in each category. While this reflects constrained purchasing power, it also identifies several opportunities for targeted investment, strategic retail recruitment, and community development initiatives.

Highland Park's consumer profile signals a community where essential goods and affordability-driven services will thrive, while premium markets may struggle. The Spending Potential Index reveals not just spending gaps but also investment opportunities for businesses, policymakers, and community organizations to meet residents' core needs, lower household costs, and build economic capacity. Long-term strategies that combine affordable service delivery with workforce and housing investment will position Highland Park for more balanced growth and increased consumer potential.

Category	Total Spending (\$)	Average (\$)	Spending Potential Index
Apparel & Services	\$4,507,529	\$1,153.12	47
Education	\$3,099,927	\$793.02	44
Entertainment/Recreation	\$7,024,168	\$1,796.92	44
Food at Home	\$14,190,128	\$3,630.12	49
Food Away from Home	\$7,112,185	\$1,819.44	44
Health Care	\$14,244,505	\$3,644.03	47
Household Furnishings & Equipment	\$5,014,005	\$1,282.68	44
Personal Care Products & Services	\$1,862,830	\$476.55	45
Shelter	\$45,728,732	\$11,698.32	44
Support Payments/Gifts in Kind	\$5,175,212	\$1,323.92	40
Travel	\$5,465,418	\$1,398.16	39
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs	\$2,452,462	\$627.39	47

Commercial Market Summary

Commercial Market Share

Highland Park’s commercial real estate landscape reflects a community in transition. The city balances a strong foundation of industrial heritage with emerging opportunities in retail and service-based sectors. Highland Park’s market is composed of 104 retail properties representing 60% of the market share, 50 industrial properties accounting for 29.24%, and 17 office properties comprising 9.94% of the market. While industrial properties account for a large portion of total floor area, elevated vacancy rates indicate underutilized assets that could be repositioned for new economic activity. In contrast, the retail sector demonstrates higher occupancy, supported by convenience-oriented businesses, auto services, and neighborhood-serving establishments. The office market remains modest, reflecting limited demand for traditional professional space. Together, these dynamics reveal a market with both structural challenges and significant redevelopment potential, particularly for adaptive reuse, mixed-use infill, and small business growth.

	Property Type	Properties	%
Retail	Service Station	17	16.35%
	Retail Building	16	15.38%
	Auto Repair	14	13.46%
	Supermarket	13	12.50%
	Service	7	6.73%
	Storefront Retail/ Residential	7	6.73%
	Convenience Store	7	6.73%
	Freestanding	5	4.81%
	Storefront	5	4.81%
	Storefront Retail/Office	5	4.81%
	Restaurant	2	1.92%
	Auto Dealership	2	1.92%
	Retail	2	1.92%
	Fast Food	1	0.96%
Drug Store	1	0.96%	
	Sub-Total	104	60.82%
Industrial	Industrial	44	88.00%
	Warehouse	2	4.00%
	Manufacturing	2	4.00%
	Distribution	1	2.00%
	Showroom	1	2.00%
	Sub-Total	50	29.24%
Office	Medical	7	41.18%
	Office	5	29.41%
	Bank	4	23.53%
	Office / Residential	1	5.88%
	Sub-Total	17	9.94%

Economic Development Challenges and Opportunities

Highland Park faces long-standing economic and market challenges, including population decline, lower household incomes, aging housing stock, and underperforming commercial corridors that have limited private investment and constrained local economic activity. However, the city’s strategic location within the Detroit region, combined with its historic assets, strong community identity, and significant inventory of vacant and underutilized land, creates a unique opportunity to guide redevelopment in a deliberate and impactful way. These conditions position Highland Park to pursue targeted, inclusive economic development strategies that attract new investment, support small businesses, revitalize key corridors, and expand housing and employment opportunities while ensuring that existing residents benefit from future growth.

Economic Opportunities

- Implement strategies to attract and retain working-age residents, including workforce housing, family-oriented amenities, and targeted talent attraction initiatives.
- Expand access to quality jobs and support small business growth to increase household incomes while capturing unmet local retail demand.
- Prioritize housing rehabilitation, infill development, and mixed-income housing to stabilize neighborhoods and increase housing quality and choice.
- Target key corridors for revitalization through façade improvements, small business support, and catalytic redevelopment projects.
- Strengthen the city’s brand and streamline development processes to attract private investment and reposition Highland Park in the regional market.
- Leverage proximity to major employment centers and transportation networks to attract businesses and residents seeking accessibility and affordability.
- Assemble and prepare priority sites for redevelopment to attract transformative projects and guide long-term growth.
- Align workforce development and business attraction efforts with growth sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare.
- Provide resources, technical assistance, and incentives to support local entrepreneurs and expand neighborhood-serving businesses.
- Invest in parks, trails, streetscapes, and public spaces to improve livability and support economic activity.
- Align job sector growth in manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare in alignment with regional trends and offer pathways to job creation and workforce development.
- Fill gaps in local services by creating opportunities to support small businesses, foster entrepreneurship, and build a more self-sustaining local economy.
- Expanding parks, trails, and public spaces can enhance livability, improve health outcomes, and make the city more attractive to residents and investors.
- Encourage strong resident engagement which provides a foundation for future inclusive redevelopment and anti-displacement strategies.

4 | BRANDING & MARKETING STRATEGIES

A strong city brand and coordinated marketing strategy are critical tools for attracting investment, supporting businesses, and strengthening community pride. Highland Park's identity—rooted in its historic legacy of innovation, creativity, and resilience—should serve as the foundation for a refreshed communications and marketing approach. This strategy defines how Highland Park presents itself to residents, visitors, and investors while aligning with broader economic development and community revitalization goals.

City Branding and Identity

Highland Park's brand should convey its position as a city of innovation, resilience, and opportunity. The City's public image is shaped by its visual identity, tone of communication, and the consistency of its messaging across all platforms.

A refreshed approach to branding can highlight the City's strengths and aspirations, helping to attract new residents, businesses, and visitors while reinforcing civic pride among current community members.

The City's identity should be built around several key themes:

- » **Innovation and Legacy:** Recognizing Highland Park's historic role in shaping the modern industrial city.
- » **Reinvestment and Renewal:** Emphasizing ongoing redevelopment and growth opportunities.
- » **Community and Collaboration:** Highlighting the partnerships and shared vision driving the City's transformation.
- » **Creativity and Culture:** Showcasing the people, art, and heritage that make Highland Park unique.



Community Partners and Stakeholder Support

Highland Park's success depends on collaboration. Particularly, through building strong relationships with community partners and regional organizations will amplify the reach and impact of branding and marketing efforts. Engaging with local and regional partners through branding initiatives such as cross-promotional campaigns, public art programs, or neighborhood revitalization efforts will support developing community trust and ensure consistent messaging across all platforms.

Key partners may include:

- » Wayne County Economic Development and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for regional coordination and grant opportunities.
- » Local business owners, educational institutions, and nonprofits to co-host events and share consistent messaging.
- » Community-based organizations and neighborhood groups that can act as ambassadors for the City's brand.

Celebrating Highland Park's Historical Significance

Highland Park's history is one of innovation, creativity, and national importance. As the birthplace of the modern assembly line and a hub of African American cultural and civic life, the City's story is integral to the narrative of American industry and urban transformation. Preserving and promoting this history offers both cultural and economic value. A strategic effort to highlight and share Highland Park's historical significance can strengthen civic pride, attract heritage tourism, and reinforce the City's brand identity.

Key initiatives may include:

- » Storytelling and Interpretation: Creating digital and physical storytelling tools such as interpretive signage, murals, or sculptures that highlight key moments, people, and places in Highland Park's history.
- » Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse: Encouraging preservation of landmark buildings and the adaptive reuse of historic industrial and civic structures for modern purposes, such as innovation hubs, housing, or cultural venues.
- » Partnerships with Cultural Institutions: Collaborating with the Highland Park Historical Society, Detroit Historical Museum, and regional arts organizations to promote the City's legacy through exhibitions, lectures, and educational programs.
- » Commemorative Events: Establishing annual events or heritage festivals celebrating community milestones or historic neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- » Digital Heritage Campaigns: Using social media and online archives to share stories of resilience, innovation, and community leadership that define Highland Park's identity.



Marketing for Highland Park Success and Partnerships

A targeted marketing strategy should highlight Highland Park's competitive advantages such as its central location within Metro Detroit region, access to major transportation routes, affordability, and entrepreneurial rich history. Marketing materials should emphasize both economic opportunity and quality of life, detailing a story of a city that is rebuilding through innovation, creativity, and community pride.

Key marketing strategies include:

- » Developing a campaign that showcases development-ready sites, workforce assets, and business incentives.
- » Creating multimedia content (videos, case studies, and success stories) to promote investment and community engagement.
- » Expanding regional partnerships with chambers of commerce, real estate professionals, and universities to attract investment and talent.
- » Using social media and digital storytelling to communicate the City's transformation to a broader audience.

Modern Branding Elements

Modern branding elements such as a city logo, slogan, and visual identity system should be refreshed to reflect Highland Park's evolving image. Demonstrating a strong visual brand conveys consistency, professionalism, and a unified approach to public engagement and communication.

City Logo

A redesigned logo can symbolize Highland Park's rebirth and future-focused outlook. It should incorporate clean, modern design principles while honoring the City's history and architectural character.

City Slogan

A compelling slogan can unify messaging across all platforms. The slogan should be concise, memorable, and flexible enough for use in marketing, signage, and digital communications.

Public Participation Plan

As part of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program, the City must maintain a Public Participation Plan that defines how it engages diverse audiences and communicates major initiatives. This plan ensures transparency, inclusivity, and consistency in community outreach and branding.

The Public Participation Plan should identify key audiences such as residents, prospective homeowners, visitors, developers, businesses, and regional partners and tailor specific messages and communication methods for each.

Additional, core communication channels may include public meetings, social media, newsletters, the City's website, and community events. The plan should also incorporate feedback loops, ensuring that public input informs decision-making and that residents feel heard and involved in Highland Park's future.

5 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How residents, business owners, community leaders, and other stakeholders were engaged during the planning process. It summarizes engagement methods, key themes from public input, and how that feedback shaped the plan's priorities.





Keep, Fix, Aspire – Activity #1

The attendees were asked to reflect on their city, specifically what they would like to keep, fix, and aspire for Highland Park to reach economic development goals.

Keep

Community members left a total of seven comments related to what they would like to see kept and maintained in Highland Park to support local economic development. In general, these comments related to community resources, services, partnerships, and historical charm. Below are a few key direct quotes displaying the strengths of Highland Park:

- » “Keep as many of the buildings with “good bones” that can be revitalized”
- » “Historic housing”
- » “Community engagement pieces. Ex. Community policing and fire”

Fix

Attendees provided 18 comments regarding potential improvements that they feel would better the city’s economic development potential. Overall, most of these comments related to street lighting. Attendees also emphasized missing infrastructure, signage, and support of new businesses. Below are a few quotes that reflect many of the shared concerns:

- » “Clean up parks in the city – make them kid safe”
- » “Bring city services back in house and develop a standard of excellence”
- » “Water issues”
- » “Housing and development agreements”
- » “Streetlights and street signs”

Aspire

When asked about their vision for the economic future of Highland Park, attendees consolidated their ideas to 14 sticky notes. Overall, community members hope to see thriving businesses in a safe and vibrant city, with a range of housing options, a strong education system, and successful redevelopment projects. Participant sentiments are transcribed below:

- » “More productive and encouraging working relationships with HP developers”
- » “Vibrant and exciting, SAFE community”
- » “Add adequate green spaces for seniors and children
- » “Give grants to homeowners who have lived here for years and need repairs to their homes. Help businesses to stay in business – fix up business fronts.

Assets & Opportunities – Activity #2

For this poster board, the attendees were asked “What makes Highland Park a great place to live? What challenges do you face as a resident, business owner, or other stakeholder?” These comments were then organized into sections on Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities.

Strengths

Attendees left a total of 10 comments related to the strengths they see in Highland Park that make it a great place to live. In general, these comments related to their sense of community, their rich history, central location, and the people. Below are a few key direct quotes displaying the strengths of Highland Park:

- » “Small town hospitality”
- » “Community organizations/non-profit support”
- » “Community of people willing to work together to make a stronger Highland Park”
- » “Community block groups”

Weaknesses

Attendees left a total of eight comments related to the weaknesses they see in Highland Park that make it a great place to live. In general, these comments related to missing education systems, and streetlights, as well as minimal access to public transportation and green spaces. Blight was also mentioned several times. Below are a few key direct quotes displaying the weaknesses of Highland Park:

- » “Consistent and reliable public transportation”
- » “Inadequate education system”
- » “Blight throughout the city”
- » “No library”

Threats

Attendees left six comments related to the threats they see to Highland Park. In general, these comments related to housing affordability, access to safe water, crime, displacement, and population loss. Below are a few key direct quotes highlighting the attendee sentiments:

- » “Outside speculators who will increase affordability”
- » “Michigan property tax law as property values rise”
- » “Higher crime rates”
- » “Population decline”

Opportunities

Attendees left 13 comments related to the opportunities they see in Highland Park. Overall, these comments related to increasing access to urban gardens, green spaces, and food, revitalizing the school system, fostering economic growth, pursuing planning initiatives, and prioritizing long-term residents. Below are a few key direct quotes highlighting the attendee sentiments:

- » “Protect long-term residents and prevent displacement”
- » “Support and promote community and home gardens”
- » “Improve pathways to healthy/safe food, parks, gardens”
- » “Connection to Joe Louis Greenway”
- » “School system coming back”

Strategic Planning Areas – Activity #3

For this poster activity, attendees were asked to select specific areas and sites within Highland Park that they perceive as being pertinent to economic development initiatives. Ten points were plotted on the map by community members, with specific ideas outlined for four of them. The intersections are listed below:

Pasadena St & 2nd Ave.

- » “Church and green space”

Gerald St & Brush St.

- » “Avalon Village”

Winona St & John R St.

- » “Parker Village rezoning”

Victor St & Brush St.

- » “Industrial Park”

Additional Locations

- » Between Rhode Island St and Massachusetts St
- » Elmhurst St and 3rd St
- » Glendale St and Hamilton Ave
- » Florence St and Joslyn St
- » Between Louise St and Easton St. East of 3rd St
- » Cander St. East of John R St

Big Idea Board

Lastly, attendees were asked to answer the question, “What’s your big idea for Highland Park?”. The attendees left 30 comments related to their big ideas for Highland Park. Below is a description of these key sentiments and ideas.

Key Findings Summary. Many of the comments left on the big idea board reflect sentiments already discussed above. Additional themes include recommendations for additional social service programming, affordable housing models, blight removal, school system expansion and additional miscellaneous recommendations. Below are a few direct quotes that highlight the attendee sentiments:

- » “Live entertainment/event place on Hamilton: for plays, comedy etc.”
- » “Tech renewal center. Repurpose Model T factory as tech industry/AI hub”
- » “Tourism plan and/or other revenue generating activities”
- » “Business incubator”
- » “Emergency housing for unhoused social support. Community programs for youth and kids, including job training”
- » “Community grocery that hires people from the community”

Future Vision – Activity #4

Residents were asked, “what does the future vision of Highland Park look like to you?” A word bank was also provided to emphasize a focus on vision, mission, core values, personality, health and medical, community, branding, events, and history. Many comments reflected a desire for affordable living with access to green space and various community amenities. Attendees envisioned a Highland Park with vibrant neighborhoods for retail, dining, and entertainment, while maintaining character and historical charm. Direct quotes are available below:

- » “Housing that ranges from affordable to market value”
- » “I would like to see a great walkable community with green space and bring back quality shopping and restaurants. Also, schools and businesses.”
- » “Community garden and agriculture classes”
- » “Increase green space (trails/parks)”
- » “Thriving business district”

Conclusion

Overall, the June 10, 2025 Public Engagement Feedback Session garnered essential local knowledge that will inform the Economic Development Strategy Plan development. The session’s conversations and comments reflected attendees’ sentiments of maintaining current neighborhood character, while supporting improvement of community services, housing attainability, business development, blight removal, and other various infrastructure upgrades.



6 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Vision and Mission



Mission Statement

Build Highland Park to be a strong, inclusive, and resilient community by expanding housing choices from affordable to market value, fostering innovation and thriving businesses, enhancing public spaces and recreation, and cultivating a distinct economic identity. Through collaboration, sustainability, and equitable development, we strive to create a walkable community with quality schools, green spaces, shopping, restaurants, and opportunities for all residents.

Vision Statement

Highland Park will be a walkable, inclusive community with diverse housing, strong schools, thriving businesses, and accessible public spaces. By leveraging innovation, sustainability, and collaboration, the city will drive economic growth, attract investment, and improve quality of life for all residents.

Economic Development Goals

Connecting Highland Park’s economic development goals with broader regional and state-level initiatives and aligns local strategies with partnerships, funding sources, and economic trends across Metro Detroit and Southeast Michigan.

<p>Inclusive Housing & Community Development</p>	<p>Innovation & Entertainment Redevelopment</p>	<p>Resilient & Sustainable Economic Growth</p>
<p>Create and maintain a diverse range of housing options that are affordable, accessible, and equitable, while fostering high-quality development that strengthens neighborhood identity, stability, and growth.</p>	<p>Revitalize key areas to serve as dynamic hubs of innovation, creativity, and business development, while supporting entrepreneurship, attracting diversity, and the enhancement of entertainment, arts, and tech-based development.</p>	<p>Advance long-term economic growth by investing in industries of the future, supporting green and inclusive job creation, and building economic systems that can adapt to change and benefit all residents.</p>
<p>Strategic Business Growth & Collaboration</p>	<p>Public Spaces & Recreation</p>	<p>Economic Identity & Brand Excellence</p>
<p>Strengthen the local economy through support for small businesses, targeted investment attraction, and collaboration with partners across sectors to leverage resources and drive a more connected business environment.</p>	<p>Enhance and expand access to parks, recreational facilities, and public gathering spaces that promote health, environmental sustainability, and community spaces for residents of all ages.</p>	<p>Develop a compelling and authentic brand that reflects the community’s values, aspirations, and assets, while attracting investment, talent, and media through strategic marketing and storytelling.</p>

Economic Development Department Objectives

The Highland Park Economic Development Department has demonstrated measurable progress in driving revitalization and reinvestment throughout the city, with strong momentum toward achieving its strategic goals. In 2024, the department successfully facilitated the sale of more than 30 residential lots and structures at auction, generating over \$141,000 in revenue, and secured an additional \$52,250 through closed development purchase options. The department has prioritized implementing a streamlined Planning Division capable of administering and reviewing both residential and commercial development currently in the pipeline.

Several large scale projects have been spearheaded, including the \$20 million JLG Construction development and the \$7 million New and Improved Housing Program, both aimed at reshaping the local housing market. Demolition efforts have focused on removing blighted homes impacting residential neighborhoods, with more than 161 city and county owned properties cleared to make way for future growth.

In addition to real estate, the department has strengthened local business support through expanded small business resources, initiated a citywide lighting plan, modernized zoning and application processes, and secured more than \$3 million in grants to fund community improvements. In addition, the department plays a central role in directing development authorities, including the TIFA, BRA, and HPPC, building a stronger foundation for long term growth. The city’s Economic Development Strategy will build on this success, compounding progress and accelerating investment, housing, and infrastructure improvements to advance Highland Park’s vision for a sustainable and thriving future.

OBJECTIVES

- » Decrease publicly owned inventory by 20% (estimated 440 parcels)
- » Increase city’s greenspace through parks and rec inventory (10 acres/1000 residents)
- » Strengthen nuisance abatement efforts
- » Re-establish the historic commission
- » Re-establish the illegal dumping task force | anti-tagging unit
- » Research and apply for more targeted grant opportunities
- » Begin city inventory and property assessment updates/corrections
- » Initiate a workforce development plan
- » Create a business retention and expansion strategy

Economic Development Strategies & Initiatives

The City of Highland Park is committed to creating a resilient and inclusive economy that supports local businesses, attracts new investment, and improves quality of life for residents. This Economic Development Strategy outlines key focus areas that leverage Highland Park's assets, its historic character, strategic location, and entrepreneurial spirit to foster sustainable growth. The initiatives described below align with the City's broader goals of community revitalization, housing stability, and equitable development.

Economic Development Metrics

Tracking measurable outcomes is essential for understanding progress and ensuring accountability. The Highland Park Economic Development Department, working in alignment with the Economic Action Plan, should establish a clear set of performance metrics that are evaluated annually.

These may include population and household trends, building permits issued, planning applications processed, income and property tax revenue, and other economic indicators. Collecting and analyzing this data will allow the City to monitor growth, evaluate the effectiveness of its strategies, and make informed adjustments to future initiatives.

Small Business Resource Center

Supporting entrepreneurship and small business development is central to Highland Park's economic success. Establishing a Business Resource Center will provide a central hub where business owners can obtain permits, licenses, applications, and assistance all in one location.

This "one-stop shop" will streamline the process of doing business in Highland Park while reducing barriers for startups and small enterprises. Partnerships with Wayne County, the MEDC, and other regional entities can connect businesses to training, technical assistance, and funding programs. A Business Resource Center will also help promote equitable access to business opportunities and foster an environment where local entrepreneurs can thrive.

Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment

Highland Park's housing market plays a central role in the community's overall economic health. The City's 2030 Community Master Plan provides a strong foundation for neighborhood revitalization, but evolving state requirements now call for more detailed housing strategies within local master plans. Updating Highland Park's plan to include housing goals, policies, and implementation tools will help address issues such as housing quality, affordability, and reinvestment in older neighborhoods.

Through coordinated planning, code enforcement, and incentive programs, Highland Park can promote stable neighborhoods, encourage new construction, and improve the overall housing mix. The Michigan Housing Data Portal serves as an important resource for identifying local trends and aligning local housing strategies with state and regional priorities.

Parks and Recreation Plan

Recreation and open space are vital components of a healthy and vibrant community. The City's Parks and Recreation Plan will establish a clear vision for improving and maintaining parks, trails, and recreational facilities across Highland Park. Supported by DNR funding, this plan will identify community priorities, guide future capital investments, and coordinate partnerships to expand recreational programming.

Forming a parks and recreation steering committee can ensure that residents, City staff, and stakeholders collaborate in shaping long-term goals and project priorities. The resulting plan will serve as both a roadmap for implementation and a prerequisite for accessing state and federal funding for future park improvements.

Joe Lewis Greenway

The City of Highland Park is actively engaged in a collaborative engagement with the Joe Louis Greenway Partnership to support the implementation of the regional Joe Louis Greenway as it passes through the city. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to expanding access to high-quality, safe, and connected green infrastructure while strengthening Highland Park's integration into the broader regional trail network.

The Joe Louis Greenway represents a significant opportunity for community and economic development, and has the potential to draw visitors, support local businesses, and elevate Highland Park's profile as a connected, vibrant destination within the region. The corridor will serve as a platform for programming, events, and wellness activities while also acting as a catalyst for adjacent commercial investment and revitalization.

Innovation District

The Innovation District outlined in the Economic Development Strategic Map represents an opportunity to attract technology-oriented businesses, creative industries, and educational partnerships that align with Highland Park's industrial legacy. By leveraging existing infrastructure and proximity to major employment centers, the City can foster an environment that supports entrepreneurship and innovation.

Stakeholder and grassroots engagement will be key to developing a comprehensive plan that integrates business incubation, workforce training, and mixed-use development. The district should reflect a grassroots approach to economic revitalization, emphasizing inclusion, collaboration, and long-term sustainability.

Michigan Main Street Program & Corridor Improvement Authorities (CIAs)

The revitalization of Highland Park's commercial corridors is essential to fostering a vibrant and sustainable local economy. To support these goals, the City should explore participation in the Michigan Main Street Program (MMSP) and the establishment of Corridor Improvement Authorities (CIAs) as tools to guide, finance, and manage long-term reinvestment efforts.

Michigan Main Street Program

The Michigan Main Street Program, administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), provides technical assistance, training, and access to funding opportunities that help communities strengthen their downtowns and neighborhood business districts. The program is based on the nationally recognized Main Street Four-Point Approach focusing on Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Vitality—to create sustainable, locally driven revitalization strategies.



Participation in the MMSP would position Highland Park to:

- » Build local capacity for corridor management and small business support.
- » Access MEDC and state-level resources for facade improvements, small business grants, and streetscape enhancements.
- » Strengthen partnerships among business owners, property owners, and local government.
- » Promote cultural events and place-based economic activity that reinforces Highland Park's unique identity.

The Hamilton Avenue and 2nd Avenue Corridors, as identified in the Economic Development Strategic (EDS) Map, are ideal candidates for the Main Street framework due to their historic character, concentration of commercial uses, and potential for walkable, mixed-use environments.

Corridor Improvement Authorities (CIAs)

In addition to the Main Street Program, the Corridor Improvement Authority Act (Public Act 280 of 2005) provides Michigan communities with a legal mechanism to establish CIAs in areas that require coordinated public investment and management. CIAs can capture Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues to fund public improvements such as lighting, landscaping, signage, and pedestrian infrastructure along key corridors.

Entertainment and Mixed-Use Corridors

Revitalizing Highland Park's commercial corridors is critical to fostering economic vitality and enhancing community identity. The Economic Development Strategic Map identifies specific corridors that have potential for entertainment, cultural, and mixed-use development.

These areas should be prioritized for zoning updates that encourage a wider range of uses, including housing, retail, hospitality, and creative industries. Streetscape improvements, pedestrian amenities, and public art can further activate these corridors.

Participation in programs such as the MEDC Main Street Program would support local business growth, promote place-based investment, and strengthen Highland Park's position as a regional destination for entertainment and culture.

Downtown TIF & DDA Planning

Highland Park's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a critical tool for financing and guiding downtown revitalization. To maximize its effectiveness, the City should update its Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan to align with contemporary development needs and community goals.

An updated plan will enable the DDA to strategically direct resources toward infrastructure upgrades, building rehabilitation, and catalytic projects that attract private investment. A clear and transparent TIF strategy will also help build community trust and ensure that development benefits are shared.



Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment

The City of Highland Park adopted its 2030 Community Master Plan, but since adoption, the State of Michigan has updated the Planning and Zoning Enabling Act (PZEA) to require the inclusion of housing strategies in local community plans. Highland Park is well-positioned to update its Master Plan to include new goals, objectives, and strategies for future housing development and rehabilitation.

Housing & Economic Development Snapshot

The Michigan Housing Data Portal highlights local housing trends that support economic development, housing choice, and long-term strategic planning.

- » From 2013 to 2023, Highland Park's population decreased by 22%, while the Detroit–Warren–Dearborn Metro Area population increased by 2%.
- » The median household income in Highland Park was \$27,582 in 2023 — an increase of \$8,601 (+45%) since 2013.
- » As of 2023, 41% of households earned less than \$20,000 per year, while 4% earned \$150,000 or more. Over the past decade, the share of households earning below \$20,000 fell by 11 percentage points, and those earning above \$150,000 rose by 3 percentage points.
- » Housing tenure data show that of 3,818 occupied homes, 45% were owner-occupied and 55% were renter-occupied in 2023. Additionally, 33% of all homes were vacant. By comparison, only 29% of households in the metro area were renters, while 71% were homeowners.
- » Single-family housing represented the largest share of Highland Park's housing in 2023 (52.8%, or 3,008 homes), followed by multifamily housing (47.1%, or 2,679 homes). The number of multifamily homes decreased by 1,080 between 2013 and 2023.
- » Vacancy rates, an indicator of market tightness, declined by 2.5 percentage points between 2013 and 2023, with only 0.4% of homes vacant and available in 2023—signifying a more constrained housing market.
- » Of the 2,161 total single-family homes, 24% were renter-occupied and 76% were owner-occupied.



According to the American Community Survey (ACS):

- » Home values in Highland Park increased 17% from 2010 to 2023, compared to a 50% increase in the metro area.
- » The median gross rent (rent plus utilities) in 2023 was \$691, an increase of \$174 (+34%) since 2010.
- » In 2023, 72% of rental homes (1,449 units) were affordable to households earning less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).
- » 62% of renters were cost-burdened (spending over 30% of income on housing), down from 69% in 2018.
- » 35% of renters were severely cost-burdened, spending over 50% of income on housing.

Priority (Re)Development Sites & Marketing

Highland Park contains a number of underutilized and strategic properties that offer opportunities for redevelopment and adaptive reuse. These priority sites represent potential catalysts for neighborhood revitalization and economic activity. The City should identify and profile each site, documenting existing conditions, infrastructure needs, zoning designations, and potential development concepts.

Marketing these sites through digital platforms, economic development partners, and state-level programs such as the MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) can attract developers and investors aligned with the City's vision. Redevelopment of key parcels will not only generate new tax revenue but also reinforce Highland Park's identity as a community open to innovation and reinvestment.



Economic Development Strategic (EDS) Map

The Economic Development Strategic (EDS) Map identifies key sites, corridors, and districts across Highland Park that are poised for reinvestment and transformation. These areas represent the highest potential for catalytic redevelopment locations where coordinated public and private action can produce visible, long-term impacts on the City's economic health and community identity.

Each site or corridor should include a brief redevelopment profile outlining existing conditions, infrastructure and utility capacity, zoning considerations, desired future uses, and potential catalytic impact. These profiles will guide decision-makers, developers, and investors in aligning project goals with the community's long-term vision.

To maximize impact, the City should develop marketing materials for each redevelopment area, including conceptual site plans, zoning summaries, and demographic insights. Coordinated marketing through regional partners and state programs such as the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) initiative will ensure that these opportunities are visible to a wide range of investors, developers, and entrepreneurs.

Strategic Redevelopment Areas identified on the EDS Map include:

Ford Park/ Former School Site

The Ford Park area represents a major opportunity for civic-oriented redevelopment that combines public facilities, green space, and potential mixed-use development. Its central location makes it ideal for re-imagining community amenities and reinforcing civic identity within Highland Park. Redevelopment concepts should explore connections between public services, recreation, and nearby commercial nodes.

2nd Avenue Corridor

The 2nd Avenue Corridor is a primary north-south spine within Highland Park and a focal point for economic activity. Redevelopment should emphasize adaptive reuse of existing buildings, infill housing, small business spaces, and improved pedestrian infrastructure. Streetscape enhancements and zoning flexibility will help activate this corridor as a mixed-use, human-scale environment.

Hamilton Avenue (North) Corridor

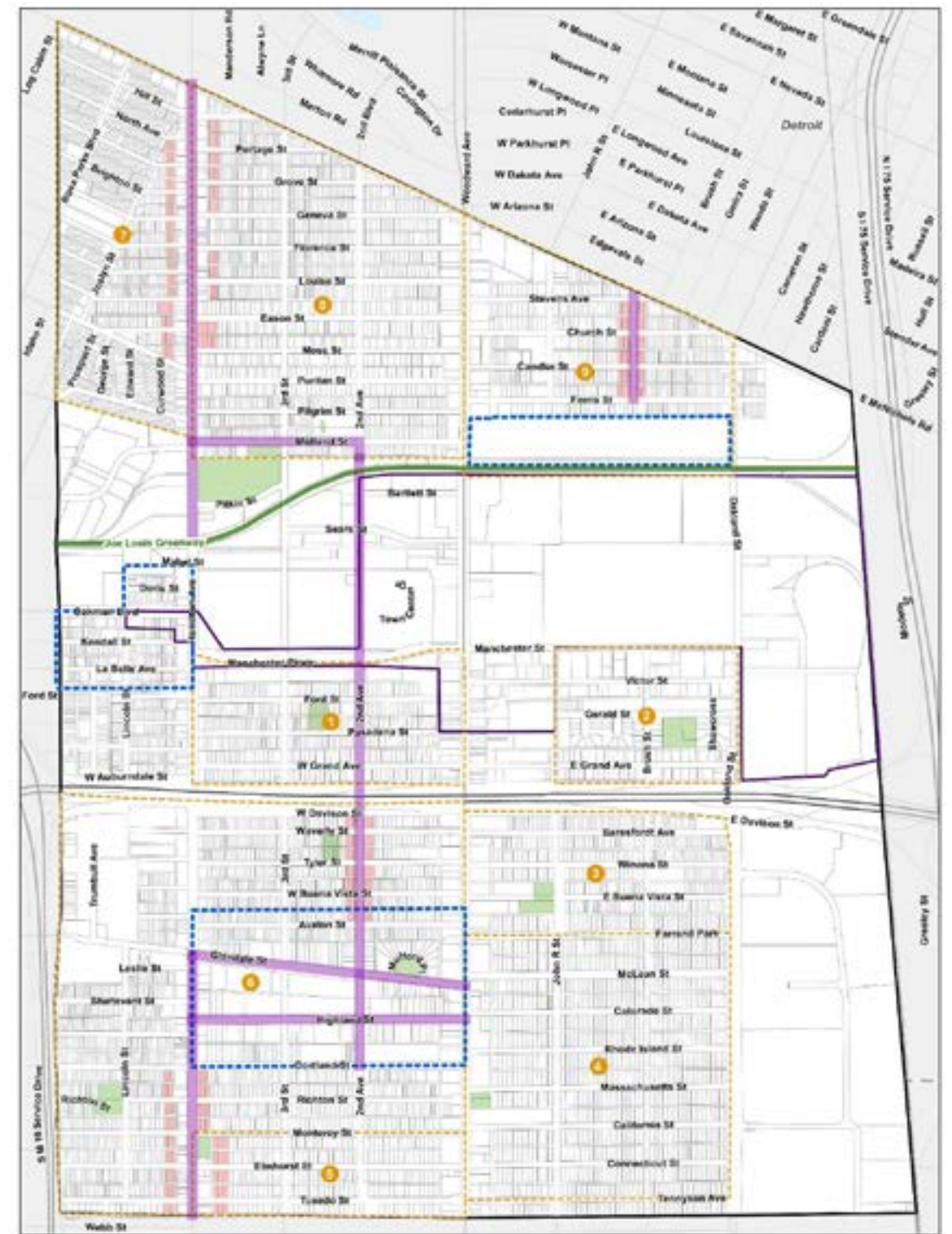
The northern segment of Hamilton Avenue has strong redevelopment potential due to its access, visibility, and proximity to regional transportation networks. Targeted investment in this area could include new commercial development, light industrial adaptive reuse, and streetscape improvements to enhance business accessibility.

Hamilton Avenue (South) Corridor

The southern segment of Hamilton Avenue serves as a gateway into Highland Park and presents opportunities for high-impact redevelopment. This corridor could attract retail, mixed-use housing, and neighborhood-serving amenities. Redevelopment strategies should also address facade improvements, walkability, and enhanced public realm design to strengthen its gateway character.

Innovation District

The Innovation District, as identified on the EDS Map, is envisioned as a dynamic hub for creative industries, light manufacturing, and entrepreneurial activity. Strategic planning in this area should focus on creating a supportive ecosystem for small businesses and start-ups, workforce training opportunities, and public-private partnerships that encourage reinvestment in existing industrial assets. The district will serve as a model for innovation and community-driven economic growth.



**Map 1:
Economic
Development
Strategic Planning
Map**

April 24, 2025

LEGEND

- Entertainment Corridors
- Joe Louis Greenway
- Parks
- Parking
- Neighborhoods
- Special Districts
- TIF District
- City of Highland Park

0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographics Information, v. 17a. Data Source: City of Highland Park, 2022. MCA, 2023. McKenna, 2023.



7 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

The implementation roadmap outlines specific strategies and actions tied to the plan’s goals, identifies responsible parties, timelines, and performance metrics. The tracking component includes a monitoring framework to evaluate progress over time and adjust strategies as needed.

ED	Economic Development	NP	Nonprofit Organizations		High Priority
HP	City of Highland Park	HP IT	Highland Park IT Department		Medium Priority
HP Parks & Rec	Parks & Recreation Department	HP Admin	City administration/staff support		Low Priority
PC	Planning Commission	HP Planning	Highland Park Planning		
WCLB	Wayne County Land Bank	DNR	Michigan Department of Natural Resources		
MSLB	Michigan State Land Bank	S	Schools		
WC	Wayne County Departments (Economic Development, Planning, etc.)	AO	Arts Organizations		
MEDC	Michigan Economic Development Corporation	LB	Local Businesses		

GOAL 1

Inclusive Housing & Community Development

GOAL 1

1.1 OBJECTIVE: Decrease Inventory of Publicly Owned Land !!!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Include public agencies in long-range housing strategic plan	ED	HP WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parcels transferred to private/nonprofit ownership • Acres of land prepared for housing development
○ Issue RFP packages for development	ED	WCLB MSLB	

1.2 OBJECTIVE: Deliver New Affordable and Workforce Housing Units by 2030 !!!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Conduct housing market study	ED	MEDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new units built • Percentage of units affordable to households at 60–120% AMI
○ Support rehab programs for vacant/underutilized properties	ED	NP MEDC WC	
○ Promote Principal Residence Tax Exemption	ED	HP Assessor's Office	
○ Initiate the development of a workforce development plan	ED	NP MEDC WC	

1.3 OBJECTIVE: Reduce Cost-Burdened Households by 8% by 2029 !!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Create a Housing Policy Committee	ED	CC PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Reduction in cost-burdened households • Number of households assisted through affordability programs
○ Draft affordability policy (PILOT, LIHTC, Housing Brownfield TIF)	ED	CC PC MEDC	
○ Adopt Housing Affordability Policy	ED	ED PC	

1.4 OBJECTIVE: Protect Renters from Absent Landlords !!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Engage Housing Commission Advisory Board	ED	CC PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusionary housing policy adopted • % Of new units developed under policy
○ Prepare framework	ED	NP MEDC	
○ Draft policy	ED	CC PC	
○ Adopt inclusionary housing policy	CC	ED PC	

1.5 OBJECTIVE: Preserve Historic Structures are listed on the Federal Historic Register

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Develop Study Committee			
○ Identify Historic Structures			
○ Prepare and Submit historic applications			

1.6 OBJECTIVE: Adopt Long Range Housing Strategies into Master Plan

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Develop Housing Master Plan Advisory Council			
○ Identify community housing goals			
○ Engage and survey community			
○ Draft and Adopt Housing Strategic Plan			
○ Adopt Zoning Ordinance recommendation found in Housing Strategic Plan			

GOAL 2

Innovation & Entertainment Redevelopment

GOAL 2

2.1 OBJECTIVE Encourage the Development of Vacant and Underutilized Land !!!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Update zoning to support redevelopment in vacant and underutilized corridors	PC	ED CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of acres of vacant/underutilized land redeveloped Number of new projects in priority corridors
Develop strategic plans for priority corridors. (Woodward, Hamilton, 2nd)	ED	PC WC	
Identify optimum areas for Michigan's Main Street Program or Corridor Improvement Authority	ED	MEDC NP	

2.2 OBJECTIVE Increase Employment in Major and Future Employment Sectors !!!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Encourage and program future business sectors within innovation corridors	ED	WC ED MEDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new jobs created in innovation corridors % Increase in employment in target sectors
Coordinate with Wayne County ED and Highland Park ED to create a one-stop, streamlined process for business resources	ED	WC ED HP	
Support partnerships with nonprofits and agencies that provide small business development and job training	ED	NP MEDC WC	
Encourage workforce housing development to attract and retain employees	ED	CC PC NP	
Identify financing incentives to attract business employers	ED	MEDC WC	

2.3 OBJECTIVE Attract New Businesses and Employees to the City of Highland Park !!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Identify and coordinate with state and county for tax incentives for new businesses	ED	MEDC WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new businesses established Net increase in city employment
Ensure infrastructure is suitable to support businesses of various scales	HP	ED WC	

2.4 OBJECTIVE Increase Amenities and Services that Attract New Businesses !!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Support the development of businesses that promote tourism	ED	MEDC NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new tourism-related businesses Acres of new or improved public spaces in redevelopment areas
Support the development and implementation of grants and programs for recreation and public spaces near priority redevelopment areas	HP	ED NP	

Resilient & Sustainable Economic Growth

3.1 OBJECTIVE Ensure Businesses in the City Are Diverse and Meet Local Market Demand

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Implement recommendations of Housing Market Study to ensure housing strategies meet housing demand	ED	WC ED MEDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Increase in business diversity across sectors Number of new businesses aligned with local market needs Average time to complete business license approval
Monitor and track the health and composition of the city's business sectors	ED	WC ED MEDC	
Ensure the city administers a streamlined business license process	HP	ED CC	
Develop a strategy for business retention and small business development	ED	WC ED MEDC	

3.2 OBJECTIVE Reactivate the Highland Park Public Library

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Appoint Highland Park Library Commission	HP	ED ADMIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library reactivation completed Budget approved and implemented for operations and rehabilitation Number of programs or services launched post-reactivation
Develop a budget for library operations and rehabilitation	HP	ED CC	
Coordinate with community and regional partners to support facility rehabilitation	HP	NP MEDC	
Engage the Library Commission for activation and oversight	HP	CC Com Partners	

3.3 OBJECTIVE Align Future City Growth with the Availability of City Resources

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Annually complete Capital Improvement Plans for long-term infrastructure planning	HP	ED WC HP Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) updated annually % Of infrastructure projects completed on schedule Alignment of new development with resource capacity

Public Spaces & Recreation

4.1 OBJECTIVE Ensure Residents Have Access to Parks

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Ensure long-term planning for city and park infrastructure via Capital Improvements Planning	HP Parks & Rec	ED CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Of residents within a 10-minute walk of a park Completion of Parks & Recreation Master Plan updates every 5 years % Of capital improvement projects completed for park infrastructure Activation of Joe Lewis Greenway
Update and submit Parks & Recreation Master Plan to DNR every 5 years	HP Parks & Rec	DNR ED	
Develop a conceptual plan for Ford Municipal Park			
Support completion of Joe Lewis Greenway	HP Parks & Rec	DNR ED	

4.2 OBJECTIVE Develop a Policy to Allow Public Art

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Develop Public Art Committee	ED	CC NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Art Policy adopted by City Council Number of public art installations or murals completed annually
Draft policy for public art and murals	ED	Public Arts Com-	
Adopt Public Art Policy	CC	ED MSLB	

4.3 OBJECTIVE Expand Community Events and Recreation Programs

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Develop annual calendar of community events (festivals, cultural celebrations, seasonal programs)	HP Parks & Rec	NP S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community events held annually Attendance rates at recreation programs and events % Increase in resident satisfaction with recreation opportunities
Partner with nonprofits and schools to expand recreation programming	HP Parks & Rec	NP S	
Seek grant funding and sponsorships to support community events	ED	NP CC	

GOAL 5

Strategic Business Growth & Collaboration

5.1 OBJECTIVE Expand Programs that Support Small, Minority-, and Locally-Owned Businesses

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Develop a cohort of small businesses to identify methods to provide additional support and address challenges to business owners	ED	NP MEDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of small, minority, and locally-owned businesses assisted % Increase in business survival/growth rates
Participate in the MEDC Main Street Program to drive business in primary corridors	ED	MEDC CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rate in business support programs

5.2 OBJECTIVE Build Partnerships with Institutions and Investors to Leverage Resources for Business Growth

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Developed an updated TIFA and Brownfield Strategic Plan			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of partnerships formed Amount of resources leveraged for business growth
Coordinate resources with regional partners to provide business development resources to business owners	ED	MEDC WC NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses accessing new resources
Utilize Zoning principles to identify areas for small maker and production spaces			

5.3 OBJECTIVE Identify and Collaborate with Strategic Partners for Commercial and Residential Development Incentives

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Identify Local and State incentives which support commercial and residential developments			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of development incentives implemented Amount of private investment attracted
Create a policy and criteria to support local and state incentives			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of commercial/residential projects utilizing incentives

5.4 OBJECTIVE Develop One-Stop Shop for Small Business Resources and Incentivize Small Business Participation

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
Pursue Redevelopment Ready Certification	ED	WC ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-Stop Shop launched on city website
Develop a Workforce Development Plan	ED	WC CC ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses accessing online resources
Coordinate with Wayne County Economic Development Resource Center to share resources for small business owners	ED	WC ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Increase in participation in small business programs
Locate small business resources on the city economic development website	ED	HP IT MEDC	

GOAL 6

Economic Identity & Brand Excellence

6.1 OBJECTIVE Modernize City Logo, Slogan, and Branding !!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Develop updated city logo and slogan	ED	CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New city logo and slogan adopted • Completion of branding guidelines • % Increase in resident and business awareness of city brand
○ Create comprehensive branding package (colors, typography, templates)	ED	Marketing Consultants	

6.2 OBJECTIVE Establish Consistent Document Branding !!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Design templates for city documents (letters, reports, presentations)	ED	CC HP Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Of city documents using standardized branding • Adoption of citywide branding policy
○ Train staff on brand usage and consistency	ED	HR ALL	

6.3 OBJECTIVE Market Successes and Events in the City !!!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Create annual marketing plan for events and successes	ED	NP LB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of city events promoted annually • Media mentions and social media engagement rates • % Increase in visitor attendance at city events
○ Partner with nonprofits, businesses, and agencies to expand promotion	ED	WC MEDC	

6.4 OBJECTIVE Develop and Adopt a Public Participation Plan (PPP) !!!

PROJECTS	LEAD	SUPPORT	INDICATORS
○ Develop committee to develop Public Participation Plan Framework	PC	CC NP Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Participation Plan adopted by City Council • % of projects utilizing PPP • % Increase in resident participation in planning processes
○ Draft Public Participation Plan	PC	ED	

1-Year Action Plan

Short Term Implementation Plan

To build early momentum and demonstrate measurable progress, the following goals are identified as short-term priorities to be advanced within the first year of implementation. These actions represent foundational steps that strengthen organizational capacity, support local businesses, stabilize neighborhoods, and initiate key planning efforts. Advancing these goals within a one-year timeframe will position the City to effectively implement the broader Economic Development Strategy, align with Master Plan initiatives, and establish a clear trajectory for long-term, sustainable growth.

- Goal 1.1 – Monitor and Track Business Sector Health
- Goal 1.4 – Streamline Business Licensing Processes
- Goal 1.5 – Develop Business Retention & Expansion Strategy
- Goal 1.6 – Establish Business Resource Center & Support Systems
- Goal 2.2 – Align Housing Strategies with Market Conditions
- Goal 2.3 – Expand Housing Programs & Neighborhood Stabilization Efforts
- Goal 3.1 – Establish Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Framework
- Goal 3.2 – Reactivate Highland Park Public Library
- Goal 3.3 – Align Growth with Infrastructure & City Capacity
- Goal 4.1 – Improve Access to Parks and Open Space
- Goal 5.2 – Expand Small and Minority Business Support Programs
- Goal 5.4 – Strengthen Workforce Development Initiatives
- Goal 6.1 – Advance Corridor & District Redevelopment Strategies

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