

April 8

# LEELANAU COUNTY

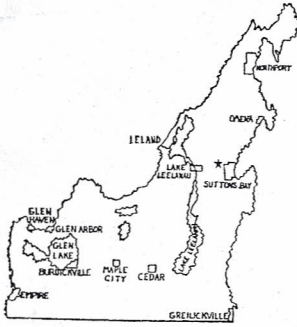
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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN: A PROPOSAL TO WRITE, ADOPT, AND IMPLEMENT A BLUEPRINT FOR JOB GROWTH AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

March 12, 2013

*Submitted by Chet Janik, County Administrator  
J.T. Hoagland, EDC Chairperson*

### INTRODUCTION

At its February 12<sup>th</sup> joint meeting with the Leelanau County EDC, the Board of Commissioners voted to invite a proposal from the Traverse Bay EDC (TBEDC) to support County Staff to develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Leelanau County.

The key point is that this is a **Leelanau County initiative**. If approved by the Board of Commissioners, it would be executed under the Administrator's supervision using the Board-authorized resources deemed necessary to best support the effort. **It includes the active participation of critical stakeholders** that live and work in Leelanau County. As was directed by the Board, we therefore submitting this proposal and seek the Board's concurrence.

The February 12<sup>th</sup> joint session between the Board and LCEDC is perhaps the strongest evidence that we need a unifying strategy for moving forward collaboratively with a cohesive economic development strategy. Simply stated, there was a wide spectrum of opinions with no unifying strategy to define a path forward. We shared plenty of concerns but lacked strategies to mitigate them. The Administrator stressed at that time the need to establish three or four major goals that will form the foundation for long term prosperity in our county. Under this proposal, the Board will establish these major goals. The County Staff, supported by the TBEDC and other **subject matter experts, will develop implementation strategies and tactics to achieve the established goals; and will be held responsible for the success of the initiative.**

### A UNIFIED, FOCUSED & DISCIPLINED STRATEGY

Mr. Janik had ample opportunity to work with Mr. Hoagland, the EDC Board, and the staff over the last few months reviewing current posture related to economic development initiatives. **There is a strong consensus among the staff and EDC that it is time for Leelanau County to embrace a more formal and directed approach to its economic development initiatives.** Few counties in the State of Michigan can compete with Leelanau County. We are blessed by the existence of many unique natural features, entrepreneurs, solid schools, robust infrastructure systems, and talented people. Yet we currently lack a



cohesive focus that brings these unique attributes to bear in our economic development initiatives; making us much less competitive than our potential. Leelanau County could be a national leader in smart, sustainable economic development by adopting a focused strategy to accentuate our strengths while addressing our shortcomings. The benefits of a defined Economic Development Strategic Plan will be measured in new jobs, additional tax base, increased student populations in our schools, and enhanced tourism. We need to follow a focused plan to realize our full potential, however.

This proposal to the Board is that Leelanau County embark on an exciting venture by writing, adopting, and implementing an Economic Development Strategic Plan that will serve as a blueprint for new job growth and economic prosperity. Such a plan should be derived by Leelanau County in a manner particularly sensitive to our unique situation and attributes. Future growth must be sympathetic to our way of life, representing this special peninsula and its small towns, bucolic setting, and entrepreneurial spirit. We should define our own future.

To that end, we propose that the Board authorize and fund the following strategy to develop and implement an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE**

The Economic Development Strategic Plan will be developed and implemented in three distinct phases:

##### ***Phase I.***

##### ***Defining the Planning Process and Identifying Major Initiatives – The Job of the County Board***

As a critical component to the Economic Development Strategic Plan, we propose that by June 1, 2013 the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners assist the effort this by defining the major initiatives (plan objectives) that will form the critical components of the plan. In so doing, the Board will define the critical question, "what are the three or four major economic development initiatives that are important to Leelanau County?" As noted in our previous discussions, it is absolutely essential that these major themes be formulated at the County Board level.

As an example only, and based on the feedback from the EDC and staff, these major initiatives (our key focus) may include:

- Economic development strategies and tactics related to value added agricultural pursuits;
- Economic development strategies and tactics related to clean applied technology;
- Economic development strategies and tactics related to the County's outstanding quality of life as a place to reside and visited by tourists; and finally
- Economic development strategies and tactics to be jointly pursued in partnership with the Tribe.

##### ***Phase II.***

##### ***Identifying Strategies and Supporting Tactics – The Job of the Staff***

Once the Board has formally initiated the strategic planning process and has adopted the major themes to be included in it, the Administrator proposes that the staff be authorized to write a plan that deploys specific strategies and tactics that address the major themes. This plan will be completed by the staff and presented to the Board for its approval by December 31, 2013.



The Staff will be responsible for providing execution details to the major themes adopted by the Board. This will provide the roadmap for how we, as a County, arrive at the major plan objectives identified by the Board. The EDC and Staff will focus on the details. They must be well defined action steps with related milestones and timelines that are quantifiably measurable and reportable. As a general rule, it would make sense that we develop four or five key strategies supporting each plan objective; and then develop detailed tactics, or action steps, to achieve the defined strategies that include specific timelines and metrics for measuring success.

In identifying specific tactics, the EDC and Staff will develop specific projects to address each strategy. Each project will have a specific start and end date, reviewed quarterly to measure progress and reported back to the County Board.

### ***Phase III.***

#### ***Implementing the Plan & Measuring Success – The Job of the Staff***

Once the Economic Development Strategic Plan is presented and formally adopted by the County Board of Commissioners, it will be the job of the County Staff to measure progress and ensure fidelity to the plan over the course of 2014.

The County EDC be empaneled on a quarterly basis to receive plan updates and a status report from the Staff. This will give real meaning to the job of the EDC, and it will keep the Staff accountable to it in a measurable, definable manner. It will also modify the current meeting rhythm of the EDC into a more cogent, meaningful body. The County Administrator will be the staff person assigned to "own" each strategy and to maintain the vision. As such, ensuring fidelity to the plan's strategies in a focused manner will be my responsibility. This will provide a blueprint for measuring new initiatives in a disciplined manner that will bring new focus to our economic development efforts. Senior staff personnel will be assigned ownership of each tactic, or project. Key staff will be assigned to serve as (1) the plan manager responsible for tracking process, ensuring timelines are met and that meetings are occurring on a timely basis; and as (2) the performance manager responsible for monitoring key performance indicators related to each strategy. Updates will be provided in a very transparent manner to the EDC and County Board using a simple system of green, red, or yellow indicators.

#### **TIMING AND COST**

The cost to develop and implement the plan will be \$25,000 over a two year period.

**There is a strong possibility that the majority or all of the additional cost could be recouped by grants from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Rotary Charities.**

This is in addition to funds already budgeted by Leelanau County for economic development and passed through to the Traverse Bay EDC for ongoing work being done in the County. A proposed cost and timeline schedule is as follows:

Phase or Activity	Cost	Suspense Date
Phase 1: Plan Objectives	\$10,000	June 1, 2013
Phase 2: Tactics & Strategies	\$5,000	December 31, 2013
Phase 3: Tactics & Strategies	\$5,000	March 1, 2014
Phase 4: Implementation	\$5,000	2014

## CONCLUSION

We strongly believe that we need this to be successful as the private sector cannot define an economic development strategy for our County. It will look to the Board to establish direction and leadership. We require a unified and disciplined approach to economic development. We need to establish an exciting vision and then lay the groundwork to inspire the private sector to make targeted new investment in Leelanau County consistent with our needs and desires. Hoping that it will happen is a failed strategy.

Leelanau County is extremely well positioned to maximize its truly unique assets. This is a very special place to live, work, live, and play. An Economic Development Strategic Plan is needed at this time to break the cycle of "business as usual." A properly designed and carefully implemented plan will yield significant results measured by new jobs, increased tax revenue, new students in our schools, and more tourists in our shops and hotels. As Michigan continues to claw its way out of recession, Leelanau should take aggressive, proactive steps as a national leader in smart, sustainable economic development. An Economic Development Strategic Plan will serve as a blueprint for doing so by generating new jobs and economic prosperity.