

Eaton Rapids Main Street – America’s Small-Town Atmosphere Transformation Strategy Development Plan

Desired Future State: Downtown Eaton Rapids is valued, safe and busy, with attractive and desirable businesses filling the historic storefronts and attainable, upper-floor residential units housing families and young professionals. Parks, greenspaces and the riverfront add to the charm of Eaton Rapids’ small-town atmosphere, and activities and events invite people of all ages to explore and linger in this walkable, sustainable and welcoming downtown.

Overarching Goals	Measures of Success	Possible Projects/Activities
<p>Create safe, accessible, walkable and attractive entry points into and throughout the Downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase in foot traffic b. Motorized traffic flow is calmed c. Uptick in economic vitality of existing businesses d. Decrease in vacant buildings/storefronts e. Increase in event attendance f. Improved public perception of safety of downtown crosswalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target financial and other resources to specific corridors • Expand partnerships and planning with MDOT, especially relating to traffic calming and improving crosswalk safety
<p>Develop and coordinate intentional business retention and development processes and systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Net, annual gains in downtown businesses b. Improved business development processes and systems c. Increase in gross sales receipts for existing downtown businesses d. Increase in business investment e. Increase in downtown foot traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create streamlined, “one-stop shop”, business development center • Develop Ambassador Group • Develop business recruitment strategy to address identified gaps
<p>Develop a welcoming and inviting culture that attracts and retains families and young professionals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local boards and service organizations will see an increase in membership by younger professionals. b. Increase in family-friendly, Third Spaces. c. Increase in attainable, downtown upper floor housing attractive to young families. d. Increases in school enrollment e. Increases in current business owner satisfaction. f. Decrease in vacant buildings/storefronts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop business recruitment strategies targeting family-friendly environments. • Develop and implement a comprehensive façade improvement plan • Create plan to attract appropriate residential developers • Improve/expand greenspaces and parks