



**REOPEN  
MAIN ST.**

# Michigan Main Street COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan

## How to Use This Guide

**Step 1** – Review the Reopen Roadmap and the details of all action items under Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality.

**Step 2** – Determine the action items that will be the focus of your organization's COVID-19 recovery efforts based on the needs of your community and downtown or commercial district. Check off the action items on the Reopen Roadmap.

**Step 3** – Use the Reopen Main Street Worksheet to determine and assign a timeline and priority for each action item. Assess your existing projects and programming to determine if the action item is related to any existing/ongoing projects. Also determine who will take the lead within your organization and match the action item to your existing organizational transformation strategy and goals.



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

# REOPEN ROADMAP

## Michigan Main Street Economic Recovery Action Items

Organizational planning and communications, heightened awareness campaigns to enhance comfort levels, tactical urbanism and placemaking tactics to maximize public spaces, collaborative clean and safe regimens, and strong partnerships will be essential to recovery. Use this roadmap to help generate a tactical response for your organization and use the recovery worksheet to plan.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

- A. Strategic planning session
- B. Projects and programs

### COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Be the hub of district communications
- B. Publicize actions the organization is taking
- C. Facilitate internal org. communications

### PARTNERSHIPS

- A. Be the eyes, ears and voice for the district
- B. Promote good housekeeping

### VOLUNTEERS

- A. Shine the spotlight on members/volunteers

### FUND DEVELOPMENT

- A. Plan for different scenarios
- B. Fundraise

### MARKETING & ADVERTISING

- A. Deploy feel-good marketing/advertising
- B. Update and maintain directories
- C. Say something positive
- D. Promote local tourism opportunities
- E. Illustrate the experience

### EVENTS

- A. Assess events for health and safety
- B. Introduce small-scale entertainment

### DISTRICT MAINTENANCE

- A. Go hyper-clean!

### DISTRICT AMENITIES

- A. Install additional amenities
- B. Rethink access and amenities
- C. Install public hand-washing stations
- D. Increase signage

### INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETScape

- A. ID infrastructure needs to promote safety
- B. Experiment with road diets
- C. Promote customer-friendly parking

### VIBRANCY/IMPROVEMENTS

- A. Add color and experiment
- B. Address storefronts and improvements

### BUSINESS RETENTION/RECOVERY

- A. Host roundtable or block meetings
- B. Promote business recovery programs
- C. Awareness for landlord concession options
- D. Offer a "Safe Start" kit to businesses
- E. Help businesses boost their online presence

### SMALL BUSINESS VENTURES

- A. Think about new opportunities
- B. Maintain inventory of opportunity sites
- C. Strengthen entrepreneurial support system



# ORGANIZATION

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

### A. Strategic Planning Session

- Engage the board of directors and committee members in a strategic planning session to re-affirm your transformation strategy, goals, and measures of success.
  - Set additional goals and/or measures of success to meet new organizational and district needs related to district recovery.
  - Determine goals that will continue to help the organization meet your existing transformation strategy.

### B. Projects and programs

- Identify projects and programs that fit within the strategy, goals and measures of success, and that will help meet organizational and district needs.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Be the hub of district communications

- Continue to work and position the organization as the go-to source for district information, news and updates.
- Plan and deploy an escalated awareness campaign promoting and illustrating actions the district and businesses are taking to best ensure a clean, safe, and comfortable environment and experience.
- Prepare materials, posters, signs etc. – linked to the overarching district awareness campaign – that businesses can customize and place at entries and points of sale to communicate actions taken to keep employees and customers safe.

### B. Publicize actions the organization is taking

- Communicate actions and the role your organization and partners are playing to advance district and community-wide recovery efforts.

### C. Facilitate internal organizational communications

- Ensure the Organization Manager is communicating regularly with individual board members via telephone.
- Ensure Board members are regularly communicating with each other.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### A. Be the eyes, ears and voice for the district

- Be alert to state and local updates and changing conditions. Work collaboratively with local government and partner organizations to monitor changes,

communicate with stakeholders, and advocate for the needs of district businesses.

- Explore opportunities to collaborate and coordinate projects and programming to support district businesses, and implement projects that meet the needs of the district.

### B. Promote good housekeeping

- Encourage businesses to go beyond what is minimally required to provide a safe, clean and comfortable environment for employees and customers.
- Consider drafting a “good business neighbor pledge” and recognize businesses who commit to follow or exceed minimal maintenance and housekeeping standards, customer-friendly parking practices, etc.
- Consider creating window clings to showcase business health and safety efforts.

## VOLUNTEERS

### A. Shine the spotlight on members and volunteers

- Put your volunteers and members in the spotlight by featuring their contributions and the actions they’re taking to aid recovery efforts, help fellow businesses and community members, and build a stronger sense of community.
- Take the opportunity to recruit new volunteers to aid in implementing new projects and programming.

## FUND DEVELOPMENT

### A. Plan for different scenarios

- Use scenario planning to forecast a realistic budget accounting for revenue shortfalls and conserving fund reserves. Use different potential scenarios to determine expenditures and revenues based on organizational and district needs.

### B. Fundraise

- It may seem like an inappropriate, inopportune or awkward time to ask for support, but the ability to influence positive change and play an impactful role in post-pandemic recovery efforts requires resources. Invite those who are able to invest in the cause, and consider crowdfunding and other alternative fundraising avenues that provide stakeholders, friends and advocates the opportunity to invest.

### C. Thank existing sponsors and donors

Take this time to send a thank you to sponsors and donors who have already contributed, or have committed to contributing, to your organization’s COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.



# PROMOTION

## MARKETING & ADVERTISING

### A. Deploy feel-good marketing and advertising

- Develop and deploy feel-good institutional marketing and comprehensive advertising campaigns highlighting the importance of hometown, local businesses, measures to safely welcome back customers, etc.

### B. Update and maintain directories

- Provide an easy way for businesses to provide information to keep district directories and apps up-to-date with current business hours, customer-convenience services offered, etc.
- Create a virtual shopping guide to promote online shopping in the district.

### C. Say something positive

- Use sandwich boards, storefront treatments, banners, sidewalk stencils, etc. to animate the stroll and convey positive messages.

### D. Promote local tourism opportunities

- Promote self-guided walking tours of district sites, attractions, etc. and develop suggested itineraries for day-trippers and stay-cationers.
- For those who may still be hesitant to venture out, consider offering a narrated virtual tour – possibly as a teaser until they're ready to emerge – and that residents and prospective visitors can enjoy on their own time at home or in small group settings

### E. Illustrate the experience

- Gather and use images and testimonials to promote positive district experiences and accolades in this season of change and recovery, and as a means of enhancing comfort levels and promoting special customer accommodations, services and perks.

## EVENTS

### A. Develop strategies to assess existing events and ensure public health and safety are the top priority

- Assess all existing events to determine which events will continue and which will have to be postponed or cancelled.
- Survey the community to gauge their level of comfort in returning to downtown for events and shopping.
- Think about how to host events within the district, abiding by social distancing guidelines.
- Work with community partners and stakeholders to coordinate their events in downtown with public health and safety as the top priority.
- Develop positive messaging to explain any event cancellations that may have to occur.
- Work with event sponsors to determine appropriate ways to pivot their funding for additional district recovery efforts

### B. Introduce small-scale entertainment

- Small scale entertainment might include busker platforms, street performers, and solo and two-piece musical acts performing live in the district.
- Smaller-scaled entertainment, centered in spaces large enough to accommodate social distancing, can help signal the district is open for business and provide a compelling reason for residents to re-emerge, stroll, and find a new comfort zone in the district.
- Live stream performances to help reassure those still hesitant to venture out that the district is open for business, and to show attendees enjoying its comforts.



# DESIGN

## DISTRICT MAINTENANCE

### A. Go hyper-clean!

- Work with local government to plan and clearly define responsibilities for district maintenance and cleanliness, being mindful of special measures that may be required.
- Work to publicize and clearly illustrate special efforts being taken with the public's health, safety and comfort in mind.
- Consider and discuss the possible need for dedicated or additional staff assigned to district maintenance and cleanliness.

## DISTRICT AMENITIES

### A. Install additional temporary and permanent amenities

- Assess needs related to additional amenities to enhance health, safety and cleanliness and coordinate with the municipality on the installation.

### B. Rethink access and amenities

- Consider possibilities and the potential benefits of alleyway and parking lot reconfigurations to accommodate backdoor and window pickups, drive-thru pickups, alternate pedestrian passageways, public seating areas, etc.
  - This may be an important consideration for maintaining or offering alternatives for curbside pickup services that have become popular during the pandemic crisis.

### C. Install public hand-washing stations

- The installation of publicly-accessible hand-washing or sanitization stations in sidewalk areas, pocket parks or other highly visible spaces could go far in promoting good hygiene and enhancing visitors' comfort level.
  - Portable hand-washing stations are typically available from the same vendors who supply porta-potties for events.
  - In some cases, it might even be possible to retrofit public drinking fountains already installed, or even to attach custom-fabricated hand-washing stations to existing fire hydrants.

### D. Increase signage

- Assess and act on the possible need for additional signage to direct visitors to parking areas and pedestrian passages, especially if parking is removed from streets to accommodate a comfortable pedestrian flow, outdoor seating areas, etc.
- Use signage to provide safety information to customers and visitors.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & STREETScape

### A. Identify infrastructure needs & changes to promote safety

- Assess needs related to district infrastructure to promote social distancing guidelines and safety and coordinate with the municipality on potential changes that may need to be made.

### B. Experiment with road diets

- Road diets could create more room for pedestrians, outdoor seating, dedicated and expanded bike lanes, etc. Treatments to accomplish this, in the short term, may be more temporary in nature and borrow on placemaking tactics.

- Experimenting with road diet options now will help address immediate concerns, but it could also provide inspiration and direction for longer-term pedestrian-focused and prioritized street and streetscape improvements.
- Longer term, street events could also be more frequent and desired. For example, the idea of closing a district's main street on Sunday and filling the street with people (appropriately social distanced in the near term) may be more appealing.

### C. Promote customer-friendly parking policies

- A sincere effort to welcome back customers suggests that priority for parking – the most convenient parking – should be focused on the customer.
  - Work with businesses to promote and implement customer-friendly parking policies, and to identify parking areas and spaces most appropriate to accommodate the needs of district business owners and employees.
  - Consider including a commitment to practice and promote customer-first parking practices as part of the good housekeeping and "good business neighbor pledge" ideas discussed in the Organization section.
  - Examine or review opportunities for shared parking arrangements to accommodate the district's different users and uses during different times of the day as a means of maximizing utilization of the existing parking supply.

## VIBRANCY & IMPROVEMENTS

### A. Add color and experiment

- Add color to the streetscape. Street banners, colorful "open" flags at storefront entrances, outdoor art installations (in partnership with local non-profit artist and arts-based partners), and flower donor programs are just a few examples of ways to add color and a heightened sense of vibrancy to the district.
- Public spaces will play an even more critical role in economic recovery and community building efforts. Experiment with tactical urbanism and placemaking techniques to maximize public spaces. Use the time to experiment and try new things, new treatments, new features and new ways to enhance and engage visitors as part of an immersive environment.

### B. Address storefronts and promote improvements

- Use vacant storefront windows to promote available space, new business ventures, and your organization's district enhancement and economic recovery efforts.
- Work with property owners and local, state or national stakeholders to determine available financial support for improvements. Consider incentives your organization can continue or create to incentivize physical improvements.
- Coordinate a storefront decorating initiative that allows all business owners to refresh their storefront window displays.



# ECONOMIC VITALITY

## BUSINESS RETENTION/RECOVERY

### A. Host roundtables or block meetings

- Convene small group business roundtables or block meetings at different intervals during the reopening and recovery period to:
  - Share information on district-wide activities
  - Identify business needs and challenges
  - Engage businesses in an exchange of ideas
  - Promote collaborative marketing efforts.

### B. Promote small business recovery programs

- Continue efforts to identify and make businesses aware of financial assistance and technical assistance programs, grants and loan programs available through local, state, regional and national sources. Continue efforts within the organization to allocate funds, or fundraise, for small business financial support.

### C. Enhance awareness of landlord concession options

- The unfortunate reality is not all businesses will survive, and others might survive with help from landlords who are both willing and able. Share examples of leasing arrangements and concessions with landlords who may be in a position to help or are seeking a quality tenant.
- Deferred rent and other landlord-tenant arrangements may be helpful in retaining existing businesses
- Examples of common commercial landlord concessions that could help fill opportunity sites with quality tenants include:
  - Free rent
  - Higher tenant improvement allowances
  - Shorter lease periods
  - Move-in allowances

### D. Offer a “Safe Start” kit for businesses

- Give your businesses an assist in the reopening phase by assembling and offering a “Safe Start” kit summarizing and containing:
  - Essential information from state and local reopening plans and their requirements
  - Customizable promotional materials and templates
  - Contacts for business assistance resources
  - Information on upcoming district-wide activities, events and marketing efforts
  - Other pertinent information and materials

### E. Help businesses boost their online presence

- Provide businesses resources to develop e-commerce initiatives
- Develop an e-commerce plan for your downtown district
- Continue and escalate efforts encouraging small businesses to enhance their online presence and incorporate eCommerce capabilities.
- Work with state and local partner organizations (i.e. Michigan Main Street, Small Business Development Center, etc.) to identify possible training resources and technical assistance programs that could help advance these efforts.

## SMALL BUSINESS VENTURES

### A. Think about new opportunities

- Even in the midst of the recovery effort, opportunities are bound to emerge. Consider, for example, how reduced seating capacity at existing restaurants could open new opportunities for expansions, food trucks and kiosk-style grab-and-go eateries.

### B. Maintain a current inventory of opportunity sites

- Update and maintain a current inventory of properties and spaces available for sale or lease.
- Make the inventory available online and promote opportunities via social media, networking opportunities, tours, etc.

### C. Strengthen your entrepreneurial support system

- The timing for escalating investments to bolster the local entrepreneur support system could be opportune. The 2008 recession saw an increase in entrepreneurial activity when employees who lost their jobs decided to make their own jobs.
- Recent layoffs, uncertain employment prospects, and an increasing number of employees working from home may represent the largest pool of new business prospects seen in more than a decade.
- Think about needs and opportunities for programs and resources to support entrepreneurs. Examples include:
  - Business plan training
  - Mentoring programs
  - Business plan and pitch contests
  - Access to start-up capital
  - Availability of co-working space or other shared space arrangements
  - Availability of pop-up spaces

### D. Be ready for investors

- The misfortune or simple motivation of some property and business owners will translate to opportunities for new investors – and there will be investors looking to capitalize. Be ready to help them locate opportunities and navigate local property and business development processes.
- Work with existing property owners to make available space ready for investment and ensure space gets filled with the highest and best use.
- Examples of information to have ready include:
  - A current list of, and contact information for, properties available for sale or lease
  - A one- or two-page community and district profile
  - Information on local property and business development resources
  - Information on zoning and the local development review and permitting process (for new construction or building rehabilitation in the district)



# REOPEN MAIN STREET WORKSHEET

## IMMEDIATE/ URGENT RESPONSE

	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
Relates to an existing/ongoing project? <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Y : _____	Transformation Strategy Goal						
	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
Relates to an existing/ongoing project? <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Y : _____	Transformation Strategy Goal						
	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
Relates to an existing/ongoing project? <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Y : _____	Transformation Strategy Goal						
	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
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## WITHIN 30 DAYS

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Relates to an existing/ongoing project? <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Y : _____	Transformation Strategy Goal						
	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
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	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
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## WITHIN 60 DAYS

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	<b>Lead</b>	Director <input type="radio"/>	Board <input type="radio"/>	Design <input type="radio"/>	Org <input type="radio"/>	Promo <input type="radio"/>	EV <input type="radio"/>
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# REOPEN MAIN STREET WORKSHEET

## WITHIN 90 DAYS

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## LONG TERM

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