STRATEGIC PLAN
FY 2024 - FY 2029

CITY OF LUDINGTON

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The City of Ludington is located in Western Michigan in Mason County and sits on the east shore of Lake Michigan. Ludington is known for its two historic lighthouses, serving as the Michigan home port of the S.S. Badger carferry, its historic downtown, and many beaches and parks, including Ludington State Park and Stearns Park Beach.

The City of Ludington has approximately 50 employees across 20 departments including the Assessing Office, Building Department, Cartier Park Campground, Cemetery, City Clerk, City Manager, City Treasurer, Community Development, Fire Department, Motor Pool, Municipal Marina, Parks, Planning and Zoning, Police Department, Public Works, Recreation Department, Senior Citizens Center, Utility maintenance (water and sewer), Wastewater Treatment Plant and Water Treatment Plant.

Ludington operates under a Mayor, City Manager, and City Council form of government. Ludington has 9 elected City Council members including the Mayor. The City Council appoints the City Manager who serves as the chief Administrative and Executive Officer of Ludington. Other elected officials include the City Clerk and City Treasurer.

The average tenure of employees is 10.34 years.15.4% of employees are eligible to retire in 1 year, 4.6% are eligible to retire in 3 years and 6.2% are eligible to retire in 5 years.

The City of Ludington has two Defined Benefit Retirement Plans. Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) for the SEIU union group and non-union group and the Police Pension Retirement System for the Police Union Group. In the SEIU/Non-union MERS Defined Benefit Plan there are 25 employees vested. 9 employees have met the years of service vesting and the age requirement and 16 of these employees have met the years of service but not the age requirement.There are 4 employees vested in the Police Pension Retirement System.

Population, Unemployment and Demographics

LUDINGTON POPULATION	LUDINGTON POPULATION	LUDINGTON DEMOGRAPHICS
As of 2020 Census- Approximately 7,655 (5% decrease from 2010)	Median Age - 42.3 (2.87% decrease from a year ago) Median Age - Michigan - 40.3	White (88.6%) Non-White (Hispanic) (4.8%) Black or African American (2.6%)
LUDINGTON UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 4.7%, (higher than both state and national average) State Average of 3.9% National Average of 4%.	LUDINGTON POPULATION IS OLDER 65 years or older - 28.4% 65 years or older - Michigan - 18.7%	

Population by Age Range

% of Population vs Age Ranges

- 0-9: 10%
- 10-19: 13%
- 20-29: 11%
- 30-39: 13%
- 40-49: 9%
- 50-59: 7%
- 60-69: 15%
- 70-79: 12%
- 80+: 8%
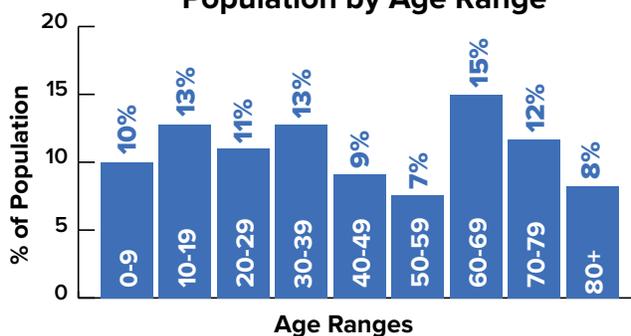
Population by Age Category

18 to 64
49%

- Under 18
- 18 to 64
- 65 and over
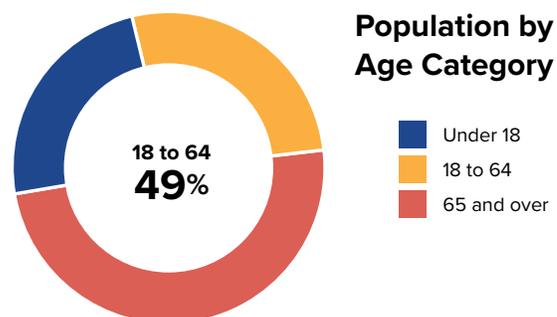
HOME OWNERSHIP AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS

The median household income saw a significant increase of 8.39% in 2022 from $45,673 to $49,503, reflecting positive upward economic trends. The median home value in Ludington, MI is $300,000, which is higher than the county median home value of $169,450. The national median home value is $308,980. Homes typically sell within 33 days, indicative of a competitive market.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Annual Income	Percent of Household Income
Under $50K	50%
$50K - $100K	31%
$100K - $200K	16%
Over $200K	3%

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

ANNUAL INCOME
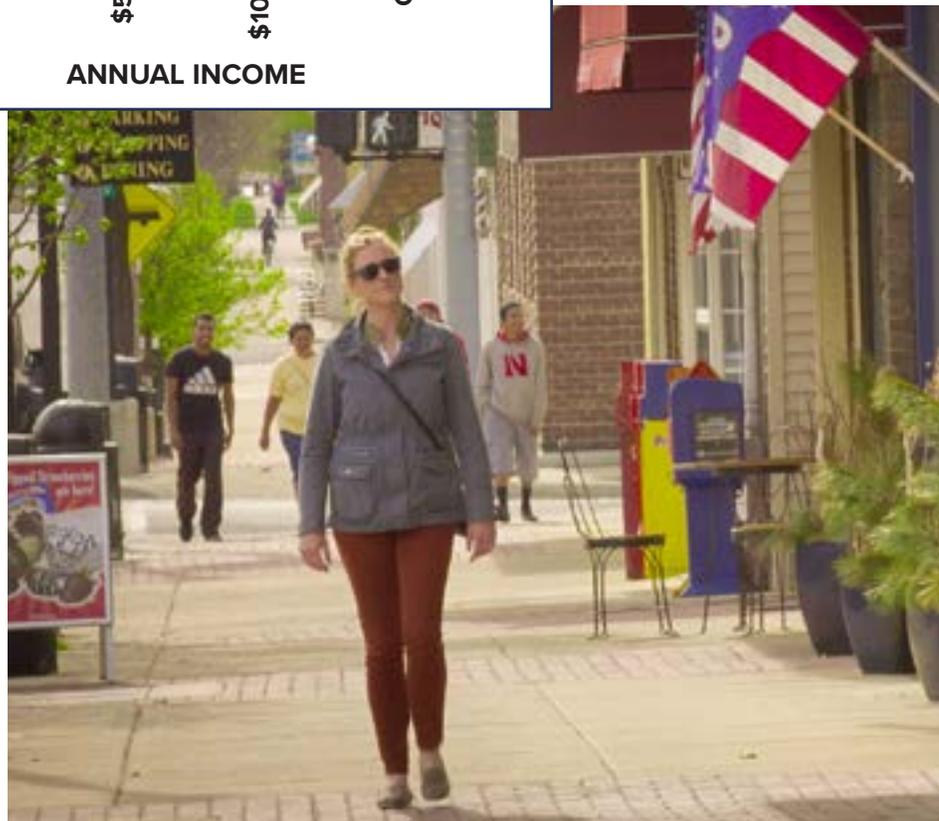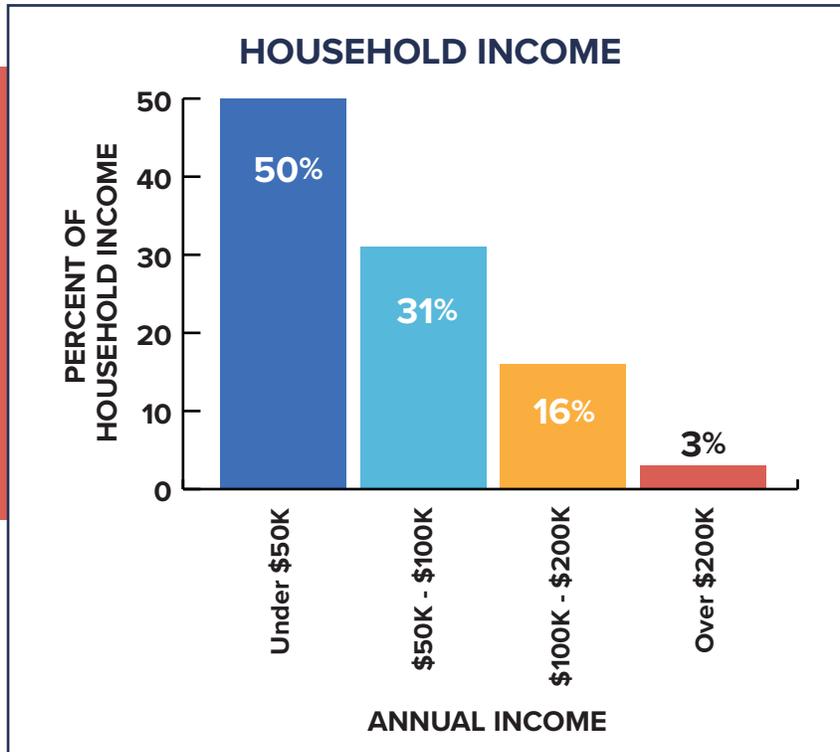
STRATEGIC PLAN STRUCTURE

The City of Ludington's Core Values describe how we approach our work each day as we serve our customers:

CARING

COMPASSIONATE

SERVICE

INTEGRITY

THE CITY OF LUDINGTON'S MISSION

"We aim to create a thriving and inclusive community, the City will provide high-quality services, promote sustainable development, celebrate its unique heritage and natural beauty, and maintain the highest standards of integrity and public engagement."

THE CITY OF LUDINGTON'S VISION

"Ludington: A vibrant, connected, and year-round community where natural and historic assets are preserved, offering safe, accessible, and walkable spaces. Our city government delivers exceptional services, attracts top talent, and engages residents in a unified vision. Our residents enjoy diverse housing options, employment opportunities, and family-friendly amenities."

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

**The city has 1 pre-implementation goal
and 10 subsequent external and internal goals.**

EXTERNAL GOALS shape the way that City government interacts with the audiences whom we serve.

INTERNAL GOALS shape our operations and our workplace culture.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

GOAL 0

Prepare City of Ludington for Data-Driven Performance Management

EXTERNAL GOALS

GOAL 1

Revitalize Municipal Infrastructure & Capital Improvement Philosophy

GOAL 2

Enhance Ludington Housing

GOAL 3

Craft a Unified Vision for the Community

GOAL 4

Attract Younger Residents

GOAL 5

Empower Community-Led Development

INTERNAL GOALS

GOAL 6

Drive Change Together & Optimize Operations

GOAL 7

Foster Respectful Civic Participation

GOAL 8

Transform City Council Dynamic

GOAL 9

Improve Customer Service Experience

GOAL 10

Collaborate on Societal Solutions

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The City of Ludington's first strategic plan will serve as a road map for the organization over the next five years. An inclusive process which engaged City-wide staff, department supervisors, community members, City Council, and community leaders invited participant feedback and insights throughout the spring of 2024.
This process has highlighted areas where the City of Ludington can improve to better serve the public and to grow its reputation as an exceptional employer and unit of government.

You will see the following definitions in the pages of this document:

GOALS: Goals are broad statements that define a future state for a problem which the City of Ludington is currently facing. Goals include multiple objectives within them.

OBJECTIVES: Objectives are aligned underneath a corresponding goal. Objectives are action items which move the City of Ludington toward realization of the broader goal.

INITIATIVES: Initiatives are specific programs (new or existing) that have data measures tied to them. Initiatives are aligned under an objective, just as objectives are aligned under goals. Initiatives are useful to measure progress in implementation as they have data benchmarks which can be measured and evaluated over time.

DATA MEASURES: Data measures are just as they sound - a quantitative measurement of, well, anything! In order to measure progress on working toward goals and objectives, we have identified a data measure for each initiative. This allows us to measure two specific things: 1) if the initiative is being implemented, and 2) if that initiative is successful in realizing the established objectives and broader goals.
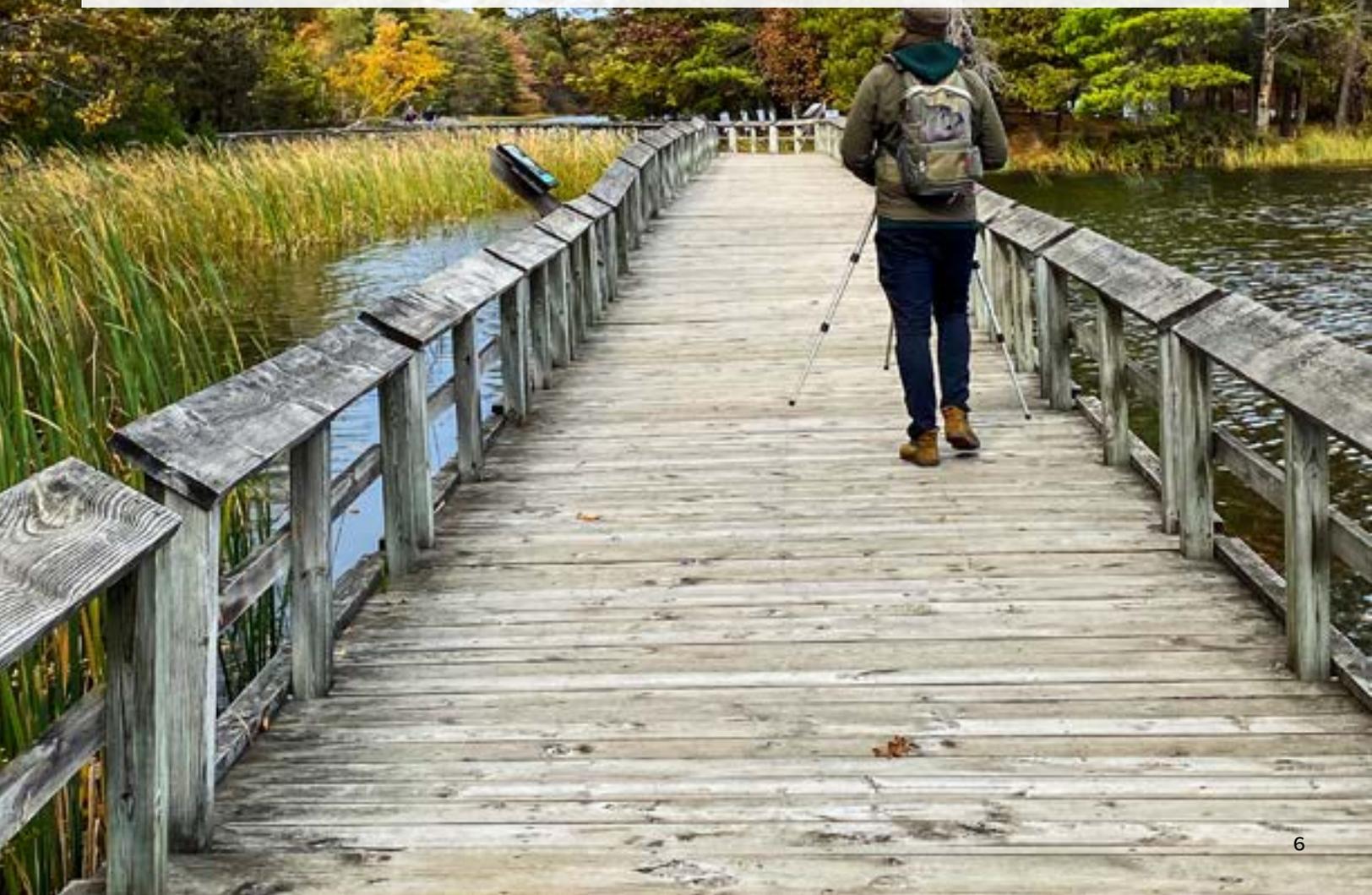
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

GOAL 0

Prepare the City of Ludington for Data-Driven Performance Management

Why This Matters: The City of Ludington aspires to move into more collaborative decision-making between departments and to use data to inform decision-making, but this change will not happen overnight. Departments need several components to begin implementation of these strategic goals - including: an understanding of the "why" behind data measurement; tools to streamline data capture and benchmarking of strategic goals; a reporting structure that allows department members and management to "speak the same language" in data measurements; and a performance review structure that acknowledges and rewards effective data measurement and benchmark achievement.

Development of these cultural and infrastructural mechanisms will likely take the first 12-24 months following strategic plan adoption to be implemented. While it can be frustrating to start slow, these steps are necessary to ensure system-wide alignment on strategic plan implementation.

OBJECTIVE 0.1

Tools Implemented for Internal and External Data Sharing

Initiatives for Objective 0.1

◆ City Management conducts one-on-ones with department heads to understand what data measures are currently tracked and identify gaps where data tracking may be overly time-consuming or complex.

◆ City Management works to identify system-wide data tracking tools that can be integrated into the City of Ludington, ideally within an existing software tool or office application. Ensure that this system democratizes data access by sharing data broadly across all departments, reducing silos.

◆ Training at the time of launch, as well as ongoing training support, is provided to department supervisors in how to utilize any new tools implemented within the organization.

◆ A stretch goal would be to develop and launch an external-facing dashboard to share strategic plan benchmarks with the public. A more realistic goal may be to develop a quarterly report for the City Council (shareable with the public) measuring implementation progress.

OBJECTIVE 0.2

Culture Shifts Toward Collaborative Data Sharing

Initiatives for Objective 0.2

◆ City Management absorbs the role of data leadership and oversees data-gathering efforts and convenes regularly with department heads.

◆ City Management conducts one-on-ones with department heads to agree upon data measures, frequency of measure, and reporting expectations.

◆ Department employees understand their "rocks," or individual performance measures that correlate with department measures.

◆ Explore project management or customer relationship management tools that enable closing the customer service loop between employees.

◆ Individual performance reviews across the organization incorporate an evaluation of data measurement consistency and departmental attainment of benchmarks.

GOAL 1

Revitalize Municipal Infrastructure & Capital Improvement Planning Philosophy

Why This Matters: Addressing infrastructure deficiencies is crucial for Ludington as residents expect maintained infrastructure, which is increasingly aging out, necessitating considerations of rate structure changes, borrowing costs, and managing both funded and unfunded mandates. Additionally, addressing deferred maintenance of critical water and sewer lines, managing resident expectations for service quality, and ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability amid limited rate increases over extended periods pose a challenge for the City.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Baseline Established for Asset Management

Initiatives for Objective 1.1

◆ Develop a comprehensive asset inventory of all infrastructure and perform condition assessments following State of Michigan and/or Federal guidelines.

- ▸ *Data Measure: % of infrastructure inventoried.*
- ▸ *Data Measure: % of infrastructure with an assigned condition assessment.*

◆ Define annual infrastructure maintenance needs, which will feed into monthly targets and weekly work assignments.

- ▸ *Data Measure: % of infrastructure with maintenance assigned.*

◆ Condition reports and state mandates are considered in sync with the 3-year budgeting process to route resources to the most-needed projects.

- ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N is infrastructure condition report considered in Capital Improvement Plan and 3-year budget cycle?*

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Asset Management Data is Centralized across Organization

Initiatives for Objective 1.2

◆ Research the implementation of a centralized computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) software tool that could incorporate all infrastructure.

- ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N is a CMMS in place in Ludington or has one been explored for acquisition? .*

◆ Establish data policy to ensure departments are tracking data effectively and consistently across departments.

- ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N is a data measuring policy adopted by the City Council?*

Diversified Revenue Sources are Sought-after

Initiatives for Objective 1.3

◆ Regularly assess utility rate structures to ensure that users pay adequately for utility system infrastructure maintenance and lifecycle.

▶ *Data Measure: Develop timeframe for utility rate reassessment.*

◆ Explore use of additional funding sources to fund street paving projects and improve ratings for street pavement in the City.

▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on researching additional use taxes / revenue sources to fund street paving projects.*

▶ *Data Measure: PASER rating by State of Michigan.*

◆ Seed a strategic property acquisition / redevelopment fund.

▶ *Data Measure: Dollar amount budgeted for fund.*

◆ Identify a 5-year investment plan for public spaces.

▶ *Data Measure: Dollar amount budgeted annually toward investment plan.*

GOAL 2

Enhance Ludington Housing

Why This Matters: The housing shortage and aging housing stock in Ludington pose challenges including recruitment issues due to the need for attainable housing for workers, exacerbated by rising costs, second home purchases, and short-term rentals, impacting local salaries, retention, and workforce attraction.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Additional Revenue Sources that are Housing-Specific are Sought-After

Initiatives for Objective 2.1

- Explore the creation of housing revenue sources, such as those adopted in Kalamazoo County, MI.
  - *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around housing millage creation.*

- Explore the creation of a home rehabilitation program for resident-owned properties in the City of Ludington.
  - *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around home rehabilitation programs.*

- Support and assist the private/public partnerships in land bank development to promote rehabilitation of existing homes and infill redevelopment of housing within the City of Ludington.
  - *Data Measure: Y/N for creation of a regional or municipal land bank.*

- Create funding mechanisms for individuals or corporations to make philanthropic contributions toward housing-specific initiatives in the City of Ludington.
  - *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around charitable giving mechanisms supporting housing initiatives.*

OBJECTIVE 2.2

Ludington is a Partner in a Regional Effort to Expand Housing

Initiatives for Objective 2.2

- Explore the creation of a Mason County-wide (or regional) housing coalition to address this issue at a larger scale than solely within the City limits.
  - *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around the creation of a housing coalition.*

- Continue to explore zoning opportunities that can subtly increase density in existing residential neighborhoods (such as through Accessory Dwelling Units).
  - *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around zoning code changes.*

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Housing is Attainable for City Employees and First Responders

Initiatives for Objective 2.3

◆ Explore the creation of employee benefits that are flexible and meet the needs of younger employees who are apt to be first-time home buyers.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around employee benefit changes.*

  ▸ *Data Measure: Establish a benchmark for attainability (either based on percentage of income or a dollar amount monthly.)*

◆ Explore programs that municipalities and local governments implemented that assisted employees with first-time homeownership.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around local government first-time homeowner programs.*

GOAL 3

Craft a Unified Vision

Why This Matters: The absence of a shared vision in Ludington has led to divisions between full-time and seasonal residents, misunderstanding of municipal portions of local tax burdens, a lack of employee engagement, and communication challenges, which hinder progress and foster an environment of tribalism where different groups hold conflicting expectations and frustrations over resource allocation. A major theme from the community survey instrument is that local (year-round resident) voices should hold as much weight as seasonal resident or tourist voices. There is light at the end of the tunnel, though — throughout our discussions in focus groups and within staff and elected official workshops, the common takeaway of what sets Ludington apart for both residents and visitors is that Ludington is a place to gather. Non-residents may live elsewhere for a portion of the year, and residents and non-residents alike may need to leave the community to shop or partake in certain recreational activities, but Ludington remains a place where people want to gather. This identity of Ludington being a gathering place can be a common unifier among different audiences, and we advise the City that they lean into this brand.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Tax Information is Presented in an Accessible, Educational Format

Initiatives for Objective 3.1

◆ Create infographic supplements that break down complex municipal budgeting nuances into digestible segments, explaining the breakdown of municipal revenue sources and the breakdown of individual property tax bills.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of educational supplements for budget process.*

◆ Create breakdowns that explain municipal expenditures and the cost impact by household - helping residents to better understand the costs of municipally-provided services.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of municipal expenditure breakdowns for annual budget by household.*

Ludington's Shared Community Identity is Promoted as a Place for Gathering

Initiatives for Objective 3.2

◆ Promote and encourage projects that enhance existing or create new community gathering places, building upon the success of public spaces such as Stearns Beach Park, Legacy Plaza and Waterfront Park.

  ❯ *Data Measure: Y/N on messaging and communications strategy emphasizing community distinctions / brand of gathering.*

◆ Create more opportunities for residents (and non-residents) to share ideas for programs and improvements in public gathering spaces in the community.

  ❯ *Data Measure: Y/N on public input opportunities around public gathering spaces.*

◆ Promote funding mechanisms (like the Love Ludington Fund) for individuals or corporations to make philanthropic contributions toward projects that promote community gathering in the City of Ludington.

  ❯ *Data Measure: Dollars raised through charitable or philanthropic giving supporting public gathering place project.*

◆ Expand and enhance the West End Project.

  ❯ *Data Measure: Improvements made to enhance West End Project as a community gathering space.*

GOAL 4

Attract Younger Residents

Why This Matters: Ludington has been identified as a premier location to retire, which makes a positive statement about the high quality of life Ludington has to offer. However, the aging population in Ludington has had some negative impacts on the city by reducing school funding, worsening declines in enrollment and community identity. The challenge in attracting younger families to the community has been exacerbated by issues such as lack of affordable daycare, limited job opportunities, and insufficient internet access to support remote work.

OBJECTIVE 4.1

Broadband Infrastructure is an Economic Development Priority for Mason County

Initiatives for Objective 4.1

◆ Explore the creation of a regional broadband taskforce, modeled after communities who have successfully leveraged federal and state funding to bring high-speed internet connectivity to their region.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N for research completed around housing millage creation.*

◆ With regional economic development partners, promote Ludington as a region of choice for remote/hybrid workers, self-employed individuals who are invested in a high quality of life with strong community connections.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on messaging and communications strategy highlighting the high quality of life Ludington has to offer.*

◆ Explore the creation of a Ludington Remote program, scaled down but modeled after the Tulsa Remote program that incentivizes and creates social connections for remote workers to relocate to the community.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on researching the Tulsa Remote program to identify if a scaled model would be suited to Ludington.*

OBJECTIVE 4.2

Community Initiatives Support a Robust Young Professional Ecosystem

Initiatives for Objective 4.2

◆ Connect existing organizations operating young professional programs (Mason County Chamber Alliance, Ludington JCI, Rotary Strive Program, Leadership Mason County, Community Foundation for Mason County) to promote social connectivity organizations in one central location.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of a central landing page or resource that connects young professionals to volunteer and community-building activities.*

◆ Advocate for and support creation of concierge-type services that aid new hires to the region with relocation assistance and spousal support in job seeking.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of concierge-type services for relocating young professionals.*

◆ Support a physical project to transform the main commercial corridor into a people-centric space.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Dollar amount budgeted toward commercial corridor project annually.*

GOAL 5

Empower Community-Led Development

Why This Matters: Redevelopment in the City of Ludington is a contentious issue. This is due to several overlapping issues: challenges in public understanding of available programs, defining the specific criteria for "affordable" housing, educating on how brownfield redevelopment works and the taxpayer benefit to these programs, overcoming a culture which is change-averse, competitive pressures with neighboring jurisdictions, and the amplified voices of individuals in the community who are opposed to development incentives. Empowering community-led development is an important priority for the City of Ludington as it will help to address the regional housing shortage and will hopefully address workforce shortages and school enrollment declines.

• • • • • • • OBJECTIVE 5.1 • • • • • • •

Complex Development Jargon and Processes are Simplified for Community Members

Initiatives for Objective 5.1

◆ Develop simple visuals that explain how brownfield redevelopment functions and the long-term tax benefits and housing units projects bring to the community.

  ▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on the creation of shareable visuals that break down Brownfield redevelopment functions, TIF, IFT, NEX, OPRA, and the long-term tax benefits and housing units projects bring to the community.*

◆ Identify key areas of the City which are redevelopment priorities to increase transparency and awareness around future development.

  ▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on the creation of maps which indicate redevelopment priority areas.*

◆ Develop easy-to-use tools on the City website, such as a development project interactive map, where constituents can readily access project information.

  ▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on the creation of an interactive development page on the City's website, which provides constituents with public project information.*

GOAL 6

Drive Change Together & Optimize City Operations

Why This Matters: A change-averse culture in Ludington hinders progress towards achieving better efficiency and adapting to evolving community needs. This is exacerbated by generational gaps and the necessity for improved communication and staff input to foster a more collaborative approach to local government operations. In City government departments, a lack of comprehension of the cost of "doing business as usual" poses a threat to Ludington by threatening employee motivation, potentially leading to ongoing inefficiencies and missed opportunities for continuous improvement and cost savings.

OBJECTIVE 6.1

Strategic Thinking Principles are Applied Regularly by Leadership

Initiatives for Objective 6.1

◆ Commit to and schedule an annual Council and Department Head meeting where a SWOT analysis is revisited – issues are identified and defined, and solutions found.

> ▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on annual Council/Department Head meeting taking place.*

◆ Develop a change management cover sheet for leadership to complete that breaks down the "why" behind changes, benefits to the organization, timeline for roll out, and ties back to mission and vision statements.

> ▶ *Data Measure: # of suggested changes with change management cover sheet completion annually.*

◆ Use strategic plan check-in meetings to celebrate successes in implementing changes or realizing efficiencies.

> ▶ *Data Measure: # of strategic plan check-in meetings taking place organizationally on an annual basis.*

◆ Encourage a workplace culture where department supervisors and staff are open to innovation and opportunities for efficiency.

> ▶ *Data Measure: # of innovations or efficiency opportunities introduced annually by department.*

OBJECTIVE 6.2

City Council and Department Supervisors Have Stronger, Trust-Based Relationships

Initiatives for Objective 6.2

◆ Develop an onboarding process for newly elected City Council members to introduce them to each municipal department and office (including offsite locations, such as the wastewater plant).

   ▸ *Data Measure: # of City Council members who have completed an onboarding process.*

◆ Department Heads prepare an annual report for City Council with comparative data year over year that demonstrates value departments provide to taxpayers.

   ▸ *Data Measure: # of Departments submitting annual reports to City Council.*

◆ Schedule regular department check-ins for pairs of department heads and City Council members - giving elected officials and department supervisors an opportunity to share department progress, discuss emerging challenges, and build stronger personal relationships.

   ▸ *Data Measure: # of department check-in meetings with City Council members.*

OBJECTIVE 6.3

Team Members Share Feedback Regularly

Initiatives for Objective 6.3

◆ 360-degree reviews of Supervisors encourage honest staff feedback on leaderships' adaptiveness to change.

   ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N implementation of 360-degree reviews for supervisors.*

◆ Utilize City Manager check-ins with departments as an opportunity to gain department-specific feedback on innovations.

   ▸ *Data Measure: # of City Manager department check-ins held quarterly with departments.*

**Foster Respectful
Civic Participation**

Why This Matters: Civic disengagement in Ludington poses challenges due to a lack of candidates for office, fear of lawsuits and divisive politics, which deflate motivation to serve, increase personal costs, and hinder effective strategies for addressing destructive issues and finding qualified candidates.

OBJECTIVE 7.1

**City Council Actions
Shared Promptly
and in High-Use Fashion**

Initiatives for Objective 7.1

◆ Evaluate viewership of full City Council meeting videos over recent years and identify if this is a highly utilized means of civic participation/engagement.

  ▸ *Data Measure: # of viewers of City Council meetings over last year.*

◆ Explore developing a short Council Action email that would go out within 48 hours of a City Council meeting, distilling Council decisions, incorporating facts, statistics/data, and desired outcomes.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of Council Action email newsletter.*

◆ Explore the creation of email templates for Ludington City Council members to communicate directly with constituents on non-political City Council matters.

  ▸ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of email template creation for elected officials...*

Roles of City Council and Staff are Clearly Understood

Why This Matters: A reactive city council in Ludington poses a threat by hindering organizational effectiveness, fostering public perception of ineffectiveness, causing operational frustrations among staff and management, amplifying vocal minority influence, lacking clear leadership hierarchy, and undermining relationship-building efforts with staff due to role misunderstandings and insufficient outreach.

OBJECTIVE 8.1

Roles of City Council and Staff are Clearly Understood

Initiatives for Objective 8.1

◆ Expand description of City Council positions which clarifies the function and limitations of the role. Include position description in papers for individuals seeking to run for elected office and have them accessible on the website.

▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on position description creation.*

◆ Establish communication standards of how Council interacts with department heads and which issues merit immediate attention vs. review at an upcoming issues staff meeting.

▶ *Data Measure: Professionally format, develop and officially adopt organizational chart.*

◆ Develop and adopt an official organizational chart.

▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on creation of official organizational chart.*

OBJECTIVE 8.2

Time is Designated for Issue Discussion by Staff Regularly

Initiatives for Objective 8.2

◆ Establish a standing meeting of staff in each department where issues are brought forth – and establish an expected turnaround timeframe for resolution. Communicate widely in order to set clear expectations with public.

▶ *Data Measure: # of standing meetings held quarterly. # of issues reviewed and followed up on quarterly.*

Ludington Police Department Organizational Chart

POLICE CHIEF
Detective
School Resource Officer
CAPTAIN
SSCENT Officer
Sergeant · Sergeant · Sergeant · Sergeant
Patrol Officer · Patrol Officer · Patrol Officer · Patrol Officer · Patrol Officer · Patrol Officer
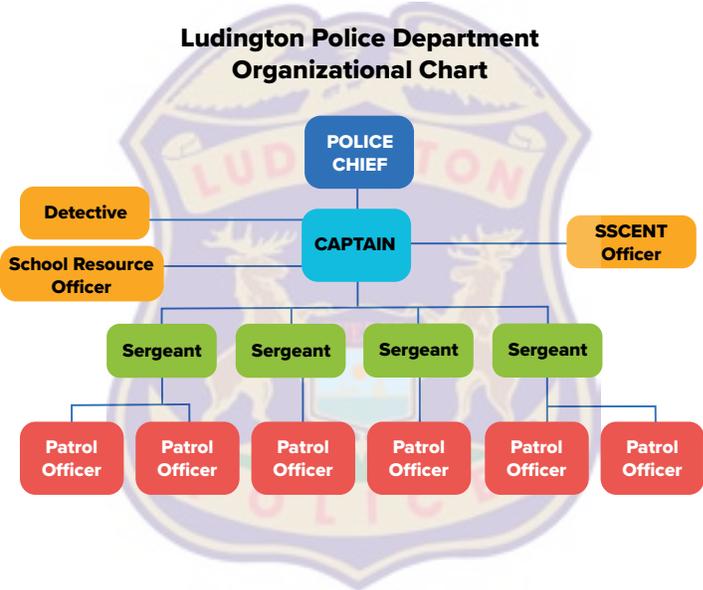
Improve Customer Service Experience

Why This Matters: Perceptions of poor customer service at Ludington City Hall arise from cross-training gaps, an open office layout complicating issue resolution, staff shortages impacting meeting attendance, non-competitive wages affecting service quality, and perceived disrespect or unequal treatment towards residents seeking assistance. Generationally, different demographics expect different things from their City government offerings, which means that a positive service experience for one group may be sub-par service for a different group — it is challenging to meet all service expectations.

OBJECTIVE 9.1

Online and Phone Customer Service Experience Enhanced

Initiatives for Objective 9.1

- Explore addition of an AI-powered search tool to municipal website to answer most frequently answered questions.
    - *Data Measure: Y/N on exploring AI-powered search tool for website.*
- Develop robust training materials for frontline staff who answer phones in municipal offices - ensuring that issues are fully triaged and understood prior to handoffs.
    - *Data Measure: Y/N on development of training materials for frontline staff.*
- Explore the addition of a self-serve kiosk in the City Hall lobby or vestibule with extended hours for individuals who require in-person visits but may need greater flexibility in access.
    - *Data Measure: Y/N on exploration of self-service kiosk for City Hall.*

OBJECTIVE 9.2

Cross-Training Across Departments Prioritized

Initiatives for Objective 9.2

- Develop (perhaps with AI) templates for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are shared interdepartmentally on ShareDrive.
    - *Data Measure: # of templates for SOPs created by the end of 2025.*
- Review SOPs on an annual basis within each department.
    - *Data Measure: % of departments reviewing SOPs annually.*
- Crosstrain roles in the same office to offer enhanced service when unexpected staff outages (vacations, sick leave, turnover) impact the relatively lean team.
    - *Data Measure: # of customer-facing roles cross-trained in the same office*

Collaborate on Societal Solutions

Why This Matters: Growing social issues, coupled with increasing unaffordability in Ludington, have led to increasingly visible social issues (such as homelessness, substance use, etc.) that challenge the high quality of life and safe reputation which the community is known for. Many of these issues range well beyond the city's service scope or mandate – but these systemic issues may strain collaborations with municipal departments such as law enforcement, and have a direct negative impact on organizational staff and limited resource management.

• • • • • • • OBJECTIVE 10.1 • • • • • • •

City of Ludington is a Partner in Systems Change

Initiatives for Objective 10.1

◆ Use strategic thinking / issues discussion templates to discuss issues when they arise – clearly identifying if an issue is within the City's mandate, if there is capacity to address an issue, and where individuals can be directed.

 ▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on development of a strategic issue discussion template specific to social issues.*

◆ Develop an intentional, proactive engagement and communications plan with all stakeholder groups.

 ▶ *Data Measure: Y/N on development of engagement and communications plan.*

• • • • • • • OBJECTIVE 10.2 • • • • • • •

The City is a Trusted Source for Information on Social Issues

Initiatives for Objective 10.2

◆ Develop a communications strategy and web landing page where the City shares resources from various agencies (health department, public safety, nonprofit service providers) to connect individuals with services that may be of help to them.

 ▶ *Data Measure: # of posts highlighting community organizations quarterly, Y/N on development of a City landing page for resources.*

◆ Raise awareness around emerging community issues through formal City communications – the City can be a leader in addressing community challenges in this way, even if the organization cannot individually resolve all issues.

 ▶ *Data Measure: # of posts, Council meeting mentions, or newsletter mentions of emerging community issues quarterly.*

GOAL 0 — Prepare City of Ludington for Data-Driven Performance Management

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
0.1 TOOLS IMPLEMENTED FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DATA SHARING	City Management conducts one-on-ones with department heads to understand what data measures are currently tracked and identify gaps where data tracking may be overly time-consuming or complex.	THREAT: Need to Understand Cost of "Doing Business As Usual"	URGENT	12/31/2025	Policy Change	
	City Management works to identify system-wide data tracking tools that can be integrated into the City of Ludington, ideally within an existing software tool or office application. Ensure that this system democratizes data access by sharing data broadly across all departments, reducing silos.				Time for R&D	
	Training at the time of launch, as well as ongoing training support, is provided to department supervisors in how to utilize any new tools implemented within the organization.	WEAKNESS: Resistance to Change			Time for R&D, Funding	
	A stretch goal would be to develop and launch an external-facing dashboard to share strategic plan benchmarks with the public. A more realistic goal may be to develop a quarterly report for the City Council (shareable with the public) measuring implementation progress.	WEAKNESS: Lack of Shared Vision for Community			Time for R&D, Funding	
0.2 CULTURE SHIFTS TOWARD COLLABORATIVE DATA SHARING	City Management absorbs the role of data leadership and oversees data-gathering efforts and convenes regularly with department heads.	WEAKNESS: Resistance to Change	URGENT	12/31/2025	Policy Change	
	City Management conducts one-on-ones with department heads to agree upon data measures, frequency of measure, and reporting expectations.				Policy Change	
	Department employees understand their "rocks," or individual performance measures that correlate with department measures.	WEAKNESS: Lack of Shared Vision for Community			Policy Change	
	Explore project management or customer relationship management tools that enable closing the customer service loop between employees.	THREAT: City Hall Customer Service "Runaround"			Time for R&D	
	Individual performance reviews across the organization incorporate an evaluation of data measurement consistency and departmental attainment of benchmarks.	WEAKNESS: Resistance to Change			Policy Change	

GOAL 1   Revitalize Municipal Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Philosophy

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
1.1 BASELINE ESTABLISHED FOR ASSET MANAGEMENT	Develop a comprehensive asset inventory of all infrastructure and perform condition assessments following State of Michigan and/or Federal guidelines.	% of infrastructure inventoried; % of infrastructure with an assigned condition assessment.	**THREAT:** Improved Strategy for Capital Improvement Planning	HIGH	12/31/2026	**Time for R&D**	
	Define annual infrastructure maintenance needs, which will feed into monthly targets and weekly work assignments.	% of infrastructure with maintenance assigned.				**Time for R&D**	
	Condition reports and state mandates are considered in sync with the 3-year budgeting process to route resources to the most-needed projects.	Y/N is infrastructure condition report considered in Capital Improvement Plan and 3-year budget cycle?				**Time for R&D, Funding**	
1.2 ASSET MANAGEMENT DATA IS CENTRALIZED ACROSS ORGANIZATION	Research the implementation of a centralized computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) software tool that could incorporate all infrastructure.	Y/N is a CMMS in place in Ludington or has one been explored for acquisition?	**THREAT:** Improved Strategy for Capital Improvement Planning	MEDIUM	12/31/2028	**Time for R&D, Funding**	
	Establish data policy to ensure departments are tracking data effectively and consistently across departments.	Y/N is a data measuring policy adopted by the City Council?				**Policy Change**	
	Regularly assess utility rate structures to ensure that users pay adequately for utility system infrastructure maintenance and lifecycle.	Develop timeframe for utility rate reassessment.				**Time for R&D**	
1.3 DIVERSIFIED REVENUE SOURCES ARE SOUGHT-AFTER	Explore use of additional funding sources to fund street paving projects and improve ratings for street pavement in the City.	Y/N on researching additional use taxes/ revenue sources to fund street paving projects; PASER rating by State of Michigan.				**Time for R&D**	
	Seed a strategic property acquisition/redevelopment fund.	Dollar amount budgeted for fund.				**Time for R&D, Funding**	
	Identify a 5-year investment plan for public spaces.	Dollar amount budgeted annually toward investment plan.				**Policy Change**	

GOAL 2 Enhance Ludington Housing

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
2.1 ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES THAT ARE HOUSING-SPECIFIC ARE SOUGHT-AFTER	Explore the creation of housing revenue sources, such as those adopted in Kalamazoo County, MI	Y/N for research completed around housing millage creation.	**WEAKNESS:** Housing Shortage and Aging Housing Stock	MEDIUM/ LOW	12/31/2029	**Time for R&D, Policy Change**	
	Explore the creation of a home rehabilitation program for resident-owned properties in the City of Ludington.	Y/N for research completed around home rehabilitation programs.				**Policy Change, Funding**	
	Support and assist the private/public partnerships in land bank development to promote rehabilitation of existing homes and infill redevelopment of housing within the City of Ludington.	Y/N for creation of a regional or municipal land bank.				**Time for R&D, Funding**	
	Create funding mechanisms for individuals or corporations to make philanthropic contributions toward housing-specific initiatives in the City of Ludington.	Y/N for research completed around charitable giving mechanisms supporting housing initiatives.				**Time for R&D**	
2.2 LUDINGTON IS A PARTNER IN A REGIONAL EFFORT TO EXPAND HOUSING	Explore the creation of a Mason County-wide (or regional) housing coalition to address this issue at a larger scale than solely within the City limits.	Y/N for research completed around the creation of a housing coalition.	**WEAKNESS:** Housing Shortage and Aging Housing Stock	HIGH	12/31/2026	**Time for R&D**	
	Continue to explore zoning opportunities that can subtly increase density in existing residential neighborhoods (such as through Accessory Dwelling Units).	Y/N for research completed around zoning code changes.					
2.3 HOUSING IS ATTAINABLE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES AND FIRST RESPONDERS	Explore the creation of employee benefits that are flexible and meet the needs of younger employees who are apt to be first-time home buyers.	Y/N for research completed around employee benefit changes; Establish a benchmark for attainability (either based on percentage of income or a dollar amount monthly).	**WEAKNESS:** Housing Shortage and Aging Housing Stock	MEDIUM	12/31/2028	**Time for R&D, Funding**	
	Explore programs that municipalities and local governments implemented that assisted employees with first-time homeownership.	Y/N for research completed around local government first-time homeowner programs.					

GOAL 3   Craft a Unified Vision for the Community

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
3.1 TAX INFORMATION IS PRESENTED IN AN ACCESSIBLE, EDUCATIONAL FORMAT	Create infographic supplements that break down complex municipal budgeting nuances into digestible segments, explaining the breakdown of municipal revenue sources and the breakdown of individual property tax bills.	Y/N on creation of educational supplements for budget process.	WEAKNESS: Lack of Shared Vision for Community	MEDIUM	12/31/2028	Time for R&D	
	Create breakdowns that explain municipal expenditures and the cost impact by household - helping residents to better understand the costs of municipally-provided services.	Y/N on creation of municipal expenditure breakdowns for annual budget by household.					
3.2 LUDINGTON'S SHARED COMMUNITY IDENTITY IS PROMOTED AS A PLACE FOR GATHERING	Promote and encourage projects that enhance existing or create new community gathering places, building upon the success of public spaces such as Stearns Beach Park, James Street Plaza and Waterfront Park.	Y/N on messaging and communications strategy emphasizing community distinctions / brand of gathering.	WEAKNESS: Lack of Shared Vision for Community	MEDIUM/ HIGH	12/31/2027	Time for R&D Time for R&D	
	Create more opportunities for residents (and non-residents) to share ideas for programs and improvements in public gathering spaces in the community.	Y/N on public input opportunities around public gathering spaces.					
	Promote funding mechanisms (like the Love Ludington Fund) for individuals or corporations to make philanthropic contributions toward projects that promote community gathering in the City of Ludington.	Dollars raised through charitable or philanthropic giving supporting public gathering place projects.				Time for R&D, Funding	
	Expand and enhance the West End Project.	Improvements made to enhance West End Project as a community gathering space.				Funding	

GOAL 4 Attract Younger Residents

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
4.1 BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY FOR MASON COUNTY	Explore the creation of a regional broadband taskforce, modeled after communities who have successfully leveraged federal and state funding to bring high-speed internet connectivity to their region.	Y/N for research completed around housing millage creation.	**THREAT:** Aging Population	**HIGH**	12/31/2026	**Time for R&D**	
	With regional economic development partners, promote Ludington as a region of choice for remote/hybrid workers, self-employed individuals who are invested in a high quality of life with strong community connections.	Y/N on messaging and communications strategy highlighting the high quality of life Ludington has to offer.					
	Explore the creation of a Ludington Remote program, scaled down but modeled after the Tulsa Remote program that incentivizes and creates social connections for remote workers to relocate to the community.	Y/N on researching the Tulsa Remote program to identify if a scaled model would be suited to Ludington.				**Time for R&D, Funding**	
4.2 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES SUPPORT A ROBUST YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ECOSYSTEM	Connect existing organizations operating young professional programs (Mason County Chamber Alliance, Ludington JCI, Rotary Strive Program, Leadership Mason County, Community Foundation for Mason County) to promote social connectivity organizations in one central location.	Y/N on creation of a central landing page or resource that connects young professionals to volunteer and community-building activities.	**THREAT:** Aging Population	**LOW**	2/31/2030	**Time for R&D**	
	Advocate for and support creation of concierge-type services that aid new hires to the region with relocation assistance and spousal support in job seeking.	Y/N on creation of concierge-type services for relocating young professionals.				**Time for R&D, Funding**	
	Support a physical project to transform the main commercial corridor into a people-centric space.	Dollar amount budgeted toward commercial corridor project annually.				**Funding**	

GOAL 5 Empower Community-Led Development

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
5.1 **COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT JARGON AND PROCESSES ARE SIMPLIFIED FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS**	Develop simple visuals that explain how brownfield redevelopment functions and the long-term tax benefits and housing units projects bring to the community.	Y/N on the creation of shareable visuals that break down Brownfield redevelopment functions, TIF, IFT, NEX, OPRA, and the long-term tax benefits and housing units projects bring to the community.	**THREAT: Resistance to Development Incentives**	**MEDIUM**	**12/31/2028**	**Time for R&D**	
	Identify key areas of the City which are redevelopment priorities to increase transparency and awareness around future development.	Y/N on the creation of maps which indicate redevelopment priority areas.				**Time for R&D, Policy Change**	
	Develop easy-to-use tools on the City website, such as a development project interactive map, where constituents can readily access project information.	Y/N on the creation of an interactive development page on the City's website, which provides constituents with public project information.				**Time for R&D**	

GOAL 6 — Drive Change Together & Optimize Operations

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
6.1 STRATEGIC THINKING PRINCIPLES ARE APPLIED REGULARLY BY LEADERSHIP	Commit to and schedule an annual Council and Department Head meeting where a SWOT analysis is revisited – issues are identified and defined, and solutions found.	Y/N on annual Council/Department Head meeting taking place.		MEDIUM/HIGH	12/31/2027	Time for R&D	
	Develop a change management cover sheet for leadership to complete that breaks down the "why" behind changes, benefits to the organization, timeline for roll out, and ties back to mission and vision statements.	# of suggested changes with change management cover sheet completion annually.	WEAKNESS: Resistance to Change			Policy Change	
	Use strategic plan check-in meetings to celebrate successes in implementing changes or realizing efficiencies.	# of strategic plan check-in meetings taking place organizationally on an annual basis.				Time for R&D	
	Encourage a workplace culture where department supervisors and staff are open to innovation and opportunities for efficiency.	# of innovations or efficiency opportunities introduced annually by department.	THREAT: Need to Understand the Cost of "Doing Business As Usual"				
6.2 CITY COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT SUPERVISORS HAVE STRONGER, TRUST-BASED RELATIONSHIPS	Develop an onboarding process for newly elected City Council members to introduce them to each municipal department and office (including offsite locations, such as the wastewater plant).	# of City Council members who have completed an onboarding process.		HIGH	12/31/2026	Time for R&D, Policy Change	
	Department Heads prepare an annual report for City Council with comparative data year over year that demonstrates values departments provide to taxpayers.	# of Departments submitting annual reports to City Council.					
	Schedule regular department check-ins for pairs of department heads and City Council members - giving elected officials and department supervisors an opportunity to share department progress, discuss emerging challenges, and build stronger personal relationships.	# of department check-in meetings with City Council members.	THREAT: Concern Around Future Employee Retention			Time for R&D	
6.3 TEAM MEMBERS SHARE FEEDBACK REGULARLY	360-degree reviews of Supervisors encourage honest staff feedback on leaderships' adaptiveness to change.	Y/N implementation of 360-degree reviews for supervisors.	WEAKNESS: Resistance to Change			Policy Change	
	Utilize City Manager check-ins with departments as an opportunity to gain department-specific feedback on innovations.	# of City Manager department check-ins held quarterly with departments.	THREAT: Need to Understand the Cost of "Doing Business As Usual"			Time for R&D	

GOAL 7 Foster Respectful Civic Participation

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
7.1 CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS SHARED PROMPTLY AND IN HIGH-USE FASHION	Evaluate viewership of full City Council meeting videos over recent years and identify if this is a highly utilized means of civic participation/engagement.	# of viewers of City Council meetings over last year.	**WEAKNESS: Challenges in Growing Civic Engagement**	**LOW**	**12/31/2030**	**Time for R&D**	
	Explore developing a short Council Action email that would go out within 48 hours of a City Council meeting, distilling Council decisions, incorporating facts, statistics/data, and desired outcomes.	Y/N on creation of Council Action email newsletter.				**Time for R&D, Policy Change**	
	Explore the creation of email templates for Ludington City Council members to communicate directly with constituents on non-political City Council matters.	Y/N on creation of email template creation for elected officials.				**Time for R&D, Policy Change**	

GOAL 8 Transform City Council Dynamic

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
8.1 ROLES OF CITY COUNCIL AND STAFF ARE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD	Expand description of City Council positions which clarifies the function and limitations of the role. Include position description in papers for individuals seeking to run for elected office and have them accessible on the website.	Y/N on position description creation.		MEDIUM/ HIGH	12/31/2027	Time for R&D	
	Establish communication standards of how Council interacts with department heads and which issues merit immediate attention vs. review at an upcoming issues staff meeting.	Y/N on communication standards document. # of Council members signing annually.	**WEAKNESS:** Challenges in Growing Civic Engagement			Policy Change	
	Develop and adopt an official organizational chart.	Y/N on creation of official organizational chart.				Policy Change	
8.2 TIME IS DESIGNATED FOR ISSUE DISCUSSION BY STAFF REGULARLY	Establish a standing meeting of staff where issues are brought forth - and establish an expected turnaround time frame for issues. Communicate widely in order to set clear expectations with the public.	# of standing meetings held quarterly. # of issues reviewed and followed up on quarterly.	**WEAKNESS:** Reactive City Council			Time for R&D	

GOAL 9 Improve Customer Service Experience

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
9.1 ONLINE AND PHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE ENHANCED	Explore addition of an AI-powered search tool to municipal website to answer most frequently answered questions.	Y/N on exploring AI-powered search tool for website.	THREAT: City Hall Customer Service "Runaround"	MEDIUM	12/31/2028	Time for R&D	
	Develop robust training materials for frontline staff who answer phones in municipal offices - ensuring that issues are fully triaged and understood prior to handoffs.	Y/N on development of training materials for frontline staff.					
	Explore the addition of a self-serve kiosk in the City Hall lobby or vestibule with extended hours for individuals who require in-person visits but may need greater flexibility in access.	YY/N on exploration of self-service kiosk for City Hall.				Time for R&D, Funding	
9.2 CROSS-TRAINING ACROSS DEPARTMENTS PRIORITIZED	Develop (perhaps with AI) templates for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are shared interdepartmentally on ShareDrive.	# of templates for SOPs created by the end of 2025.	THREAT: City Hall Customer Service "Runaround"	MEDIUM/HIGH	12/31/2027	Funding	
	Review SOPs on an annual basis within each department.	% of departments reviewing SOPs annually.				Time for R&D	
	Cross-train customer facing roles in the same office to offer enhanced service when unexpected staff outages (vacations, sick leave, turnover) impact the relatively lean team.	# of customer-facing roles cross-trained in the same office.				Time for R&D, Funding	

GOAL 10   Collaborate on Societal Solutions

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES	DATA MEASURES	SWOT AREA ADDRESSED	PRIORITY RANKING (Urgent, High, Medium, Low)	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED (Policy Change, Time for R&D, Funding)	INTERNAL LEAD ON ACTION STEP
10.1 CITY OF LUDINGTON IS A PARTNER IN SYSTEMS CHANGE	Use strategic thinking / issues discussion templates to discuss issues when they arise – clearly identifying if an issue is within the City's mandate, if there is capacity to address an issue, and where individuals can be directed.	Y/N on development of a strategic issue discussion template specific to social issues.	**THREAT:** Social Issues Growing in Community	**MEDIUM**	12/31/2028	**Time for R&D**	
	Develop an intentional, proactive engagement and communications plan with all stakeholder groups.	Y/N on development of engagement and communications plan.					
10.2 THE CITY IS A TRUSTED SOURCE FOR INFORMATION ON SOCIAL ISSUES	Develop a communications strategy and web landing page where the City shares resources from various agencies (health department, public safety, nonprofit service providers) to connect individuals with services that may be of help to them.	# of posts highlighting community organizations quarterly, Y/N on development of a City landing page for resources.	**THREAT:** Social Issues Growing in Community	**HIGH**	12/31/2026	**Funding, Time for R&D**	
	Raise awareness around emerging community issues through formal City communications – the City can be a leader in addressing community challenges in this way, even if the organization cannot individually resolve all issues.	# of posts, Council meeting mentions, or newsletter mentions of emerging community issues quarterly.				**Time for R&D**	