US-23 South Corridor Revitalization Study: A Focus on Alpena Township

In collaboration with Michigan State University School of Planning, Design and Construction

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Client:
Taking Pride in Alpena Located in Alpena Township

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to complete a corridor assessment of US-23 South in Alpena Township. The focus area was from Mich-E-Ke-Wis Park (north) to Bare Point Rd. (south). The project included background research, a corridor assessment, market analysis, complete streets assessment, and recommendations.

Methodology

To create a complete assessment of the corridor the following steps were taken:
- Create a socio-economic profile of the focus area, City of Alpena, Alpena County, and Michigan.
- Gather data on the economy and market of the corridor, and the surrounding region in 5, 15, and 25 miles radii.
- Complete a walking assessment of all parcels directly lining the corridor using an original grading scale and criteria.
- Complete a street and sidewalk assessment using the form created by Smart Growth America.

Using all of this data, a set of recommendations were created on how to revitalize the corridor with high cost, low cost, short-term, and long-term solutions.

Parcel Assessment

For the walking parcel assessment, a grading scale out of 30 was created for occupied parcels and out of 15 for vacant parcels.

The findings from the Market Analysis in the corridor show:
- The most relevant companies by retail trade are food service and drinking places, and auto repair and tire stores.
- Local customers spend the most money on smoking products, prescription drugs, and owners and renters insurance within a 5 mile radius of the corridor.
- Smoking products have the highest Spending Potential index in the 5, 15, and 25 mile buffers.

Recommendations

The chart below shows the recommendations from the report, separated into low-cost, high cost, long-term, and short-term plans for the community to implement. Recommendations focus on three key areas: filling vacancies and increasing building quality, market and economic growth, and branding and pedestrian design.

Low Cost
- Paint damaged buildings and siding to increase the corridor’s aesthetics.
- Develop specific strategies to attract businesses.

High Cost
- Inform the community about potential economic development opportunities and make a business recommendation list based on consumer spending.
- Create a logo and branding strategy to give the corridor an identity.

Short-Term
- Pop-up shops: offer short-term leases to fill vacancies, provide entrepreneurial opportunities, and fill gaps in the retail market.
- Approach developers and support local entrepreneurs to develop along the corridor.
- Implement Placemaking to build a sense of place.

Long-Term
- Redevelop all blighted buildings.
- Fill all vacancies with a permanent tenant to increase positive economic activity.
- Pedestrian-oriented design to increase the human scale and walkability of the area.
- Build a relationship between the surrounding natural area and the corridor.