

# 2018 Melvindale Economic Development Strategy

## Executive Summary

Our practicum group of Urban and Regional Planning students at Michigan State University have been given the opportunity to provide the City of Melvindale, Michigan with a socio-economic profile and economic development strategy that can be built into their master plan. Upon meeting with the clients representing Melvindale, the team has developed a data-based economic development strategy. The team started by establishing a current socio-economic profile of the city, a retail market analysis, detailed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, and then drafted a comprehensive list of recommendations based on the data. Together, these items will make up a “Phase One” analysis to be included in an update of Melvindale’s master plan.

Melvindale is historically a manufacturing-based city, with many technical and mechanical services. Overtime, other businesses and industries have added to Melvindale’s economy. Some of the most common business types include retail trade, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and professional/scientific and tech services. While the workforce population of the city has a lower educational attainment than Michigan and Wayne County, there are opportunities for economic growth.

The location of Melvindale, between Detroit and Dearborn lends to its identity as a bedroom community. The city would benefit from an overall city brand. Through careful analysis of the city’s strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats, the MSU practicum team has established the beginnings of identifying Melvindale as a livable bedroom community. The team has recommended four goals to support economic growth that include, green development, talent retention and attraction, downtown development, and transportation and infrastructure. As these four goals are implemented they will work together to help establish a true sense of place for the City of Melvindale.

Specifically, green development focuses on encouraging environmentally friendly buildings and construction methods. This goal addresses the opportunities of encouraging LEED certification of existing structures and new developments, implementing a minimum green space ordinance and utilizing vacant land to encourage social capital through community gardens. Melvindale can also capitalize on talent retention and attraction efforts through their well-established school system that provides the younger population with a strong educational background. Building off the strength of the schools, the city can do more to encourage and

facilitate the interaction between college students, young professionals and local businesses to help build greater connections with the city's talent pool. Moreover, the city can promote the strong education system through these developmental programs and events to attract new professional businesses to help boost the overall economy and add to the city's growing work force.

The remaining two goals are downtown development, transportation, and infrastructure. Similar to green development, downtown development can revitalize underutilized properties in Melvindale. The downtown should focus on infill development, streetscaping and attraction of more local businesses such as retail shops, coffee shops, and entertainment establishments such as movie theatres. While the Downtown Development Authority in Melvindale has already deemed a designated stretch of commercial property as being the city's downtown area, there is great opportunity to create a more thriving and lively central area for residents to enjoy. Based on assessment of existing conditions, Melvindale possesses the ease-of-access to surrounding cities. While Melvindale heavily depends on automobiles, there is opportunity for alternative modes of transportation such as public transit and bike sharing.

Ultimately these four goals are integral components to connecting people in the city to where they live, work, and play. To support the implementation of these recommendations, the MSU practicum team has categorized these goals and objectives into short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions. The recommendations will help serve Melvindale to become a livable bedroom community with plenty to offer.