



Mason County, Michigan

Monthly Update: March 2018



MCGA Opens *Uncommon Spaces* Placemaking Grant

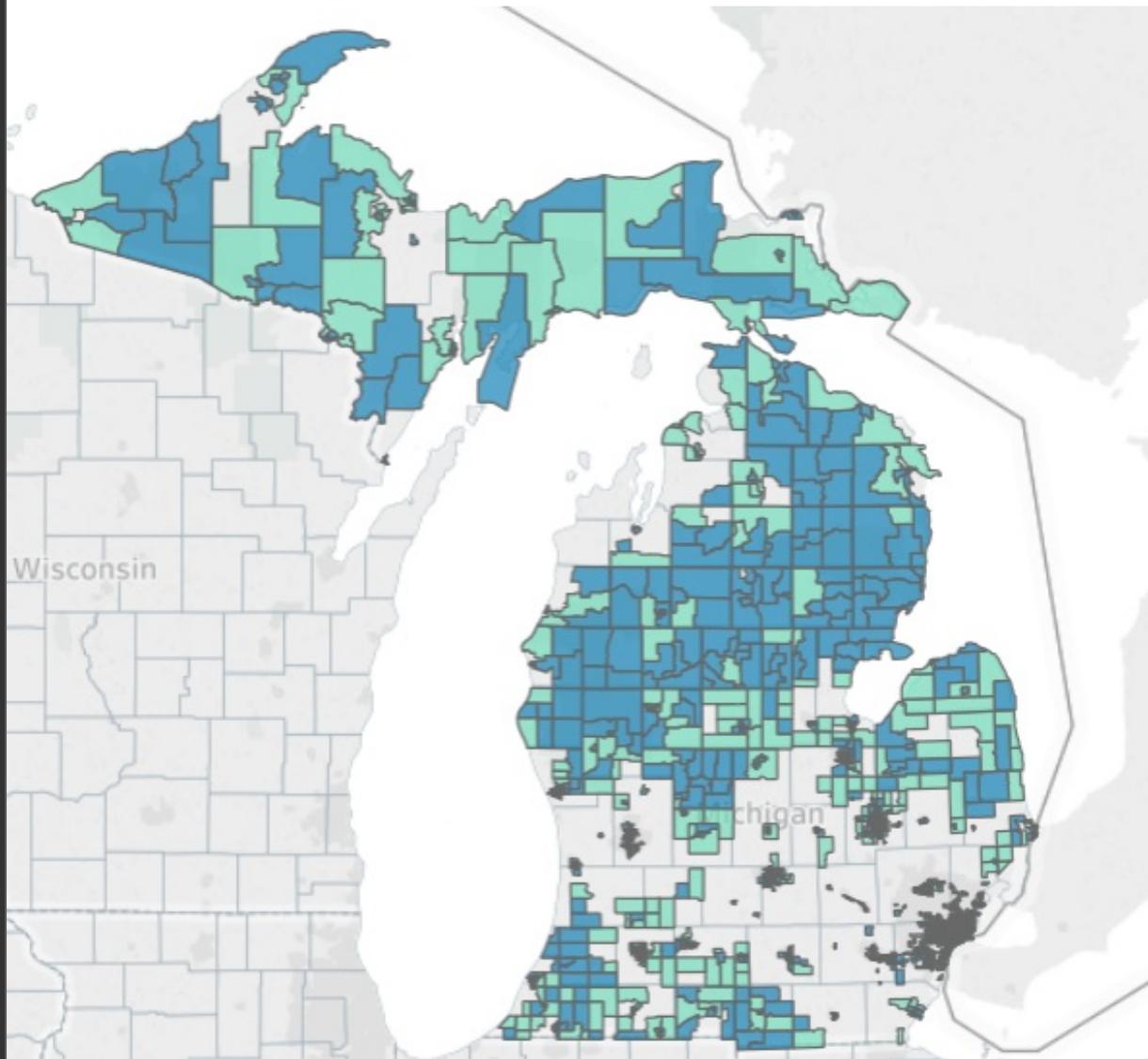
The Mason County Growth Alliance, with support from the local business community, announced on Monday that it will be accepting proposals for the spring round of funding for the Uncommon Spaces Placemaking Grant Program. The Growth Alliance will award up to \$5,000 to support community-driven placemaking projects in Mason County. This grant is intended to support projects which capitalized on Mason County's assets, inspiration, and potential, contributing to the area's unique "sense of place" for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Last years' grant was awarded to the City of Ludington to support the West End Revitalization Project, which will transform the west end of Ludington Avenue into a pedestrian plaza with access to Lake Michigan. Unlike last year, this years' program will be divided into two funding rounds: one in the spring and one in the fall. Each round will award up to \$5,000 to support placemaking projects.

The Uncommon Spaces Placemaking Grant aims to keep creativity, culture, and community ever-present in the public realm, and aims to support community and economic development strategies as outlined by the Mason County Growth Alliance. "Economic development is inherently linked to community development" says Spence Riggs, Executive Director of the Growth Alliance. "The quality of life and vibrancy of our community directly impacts the ability of our industry to attract and retain talent. We were happy to support Ludington's West End Project, and look forward to participating in

other exciting projects in the years to come."

The Growth Alliance will be accepting grant proposals through Friday, April 6. The grant is open to all municipalities, businesses, and community organizations in Mason County. For more information on the Uncommon Space Grant Program and how to apply, [click here](#) or call 231-845-6646.



Opportunity Zone Legislation Targets Investment in Low-Income Census Tracts

Opportunity Zones are a new community development program established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. The Opportunity Zones program provides a tax incentive for investors to re-invest their unrealized capital gains into Opportunity Funds that are dedicated to investing into Opportunity Zones designated by the chief executives of every U.S. state and territory. Eligible zones must be nominated by the state governor, who can nominate up to 25 percent of all low-income census tracts in the state.

Currently, Michigan's state leadership has proposed designating Census Tract 9505 as one of these Zones. This census tract includes the southern portion of the City of Ludington as well as parts of Pere Marquette Charter Township along US 10. Recommendations will be presented to the US Department of Treasury for final approval later this month. For more information on Opportunity Zones and which census tracts have been nominated for Opportunity Zone designation, [click here](#).



LHS Economics Students Shares Ideas for Attracting Talent

This past February, the Growth Alliance teamed up with Economics students from Ludington High School to explore strategies for making the Ludington Area a more appealing destination for workforce relocation. This is part of a collaborative effort with Ludington Area Schools to develop partnerships with the business community in order to provide students the opportunity to work on real-world challenges.

This particular project encouraged students to look at workforce attraction from both a community and employer perspective. After learning about the issue for community and business leaders, students had two weeks to study the problem and come up with their proposed strategies to address workforce attraction. Housing, transportation alternatives, and off-season recreation and entertainment were identified as opportunities for community improvement, while students pointed to reexamining and redefining job descriptions as well as offering non-traditional benefits as a possible consideration for employers. Participating community and business partners were encouraged by the students' feedback, and look forward to finding ways to collaborate in the future.



High School Job Fair Scheduled for Mid-April

In the month of April, the Growth Alliance & Mason County College Access Network will be partnering with local school districts to organize two summer job fairs for high school students. This is an opportunity for students to learn about a variety of summer employment opportunities in Mason County, while also providing employers the chance to network with high school students, talk about employment opportunities, and help meet their summertime staffing needs. Moreover, this provides employers the chance to talk with graduating seniors about potential career opportunities available in Mason County.

Job fairs will take place at Ludington High School on Friday, April 13th from 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM, and at Mason County Central High School on Monday, April 16th from 12:00PM to 2:00 PM. Click [here](#) to download a participation form to reserve your spot in the summer job fairs.

The summer job fairs are a part of a larger initiative to connect Mason County employers with area students to help retain local talent. Contact Nick Palmer at info@masoncan.org for more information on the summer job fairs.

About the Mason County Growth Alliance:

The Mason County Growth Alliance was created in 2006 to support economic growth and community development in Mason County. Its mission is to nurture a more dynamic economy to support a vibrant quality of life in the community. The Growth Alliance believes its efforts must be devoted to building on its business base, encouraging entrepreneurship, and capitalizing on the local community assets.



Mason County Growth Alliance

spencer@ludington.org | 231-845-6646 | masoncountygrowth.com

See what's happening on our social sites:

