

KINGSLEY, MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN



PHASE 2: GOALS & TACTICS

Prepared by the
Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation

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Background & Introduction

The Kingsley Downtown Development Authority contracted with the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation on February 19, 2012 for the purpose of developing an Economic Development Action Plan for the Village of Kingsley. The defined scope of work includes three primary phases. The first phase, Current Conditions and SWOT Analysis, was delivered in May 2013 and included a formal presentation by the TBEDC to the DDA during a public meeting on June 4, 2013.

During the June 4th DDA meeting, the TBEDC staff presented the Phase I major findings, culminating in a discussion of the SWOT Analysis that looked closely at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Kingsley's continued economic development. The TBEDC also facilitated a conversation between DDA members and audience participants to identify and select three major economic development objectives to focus on over the course of the next few years.

The major objectives identified by DDA members and community stakeholders during the meeting are the subject of this second phase of the required scope of work, Economic Development Implementation Strategies. These major objectives include the following overriding goals:

- Promote Kingsley as a Bedroom Community;
- Develop the Kingsley Industrial Park; and
- Expand the Craftsman Theme.

These major objectives, and the tactics necessary to achieve them, are the focus of this second phase in the development of the Kingsley Economic Development Action Plan.

The third phase of the project includes a focus on the implementation and economics of a fly fishing strategy to be deployed as a catalyst for economic development. The Village Manager directed the TBEDC to collapse this phase of the project into the second phase in an attempt to expedite project deliverables and to better understand the contextual fit between the Village's main objectives and the potential for related development centered around the fly fishing industry.

This report is presented in three main sections. The first represents those projects that can be readily managed by the Village's staff and have the potential of providing rapid economic activity. In some cases, additional outside assistance or further collaboration may be necessary, but these are projects that the community and Village officials articulated as immediate concerns requiring definitive action. The second section represents longer term projects designed to fuel economic development over a correspondingly longer period of time. The third section of this report addresses the alignment of economic imperatives to the fly fishing industry, and makes recommendations on how to achieve maximum economic benefits from the strategy. All of the priorities identified in this report, whether the initial priorities or the longer term projects or those related to fly fishing, were identified by community leaders as key objectives to be undertaken at some point in the future. Supporting tactics are provided for each objective. They serve as a roadmap for implementing new projects that will further drive the local economy.

Section 1. Getting Started with Three Priority Projects

It is important that the list of objectives and supporting tactics in the Economic Development Action Plan be manageable for a small staff. Kingsley recently hired a new Village Manager. As consultants on

this project, the TBEDC wants to avoid writing a plan that overwhelms the Village's management team. Collectively, the community and TBEDC have developed a list of important projects. They are all highlighted in the ensuing pages of this document. Yet, they cannot all be possibly implemented at the same time. It is important that the most important projects be addressed first. Success will build further success as the project list is skillfully managed over time.

To that end, it is important to concentrate on priorities in order to avoid the Action Plan from being placed on a shelf and ignored. The most critical projects are distilled as the "Big Three." Their immediacy and urgency was strongly articulated by elected and appointed officials, and by members of the public. They include:

1. Recruiting a family restaurant to Kingsley;
2. Developing an incentive package for the industrial park; and
3. Marketing and promotion.

These "Big Three" objectives will go a long way toward further defining Kingsley as a bedroom community. These objectives provide the opportunity to secure additional economic activity within the Village boundaries. They complement all that has been accomplished to develop a unique sense of place through the craftsman theme, strong neighborhoods, and excellent school system.

The Village staff has the capacity to immediately address these Big Three projects. They may require outside assistance, but the tactics supporting these objectives can be managed by the staff. These objectives are identified below and their supporting tactics are similarly highlighted:

Priority Project #1: Recruiting a Family Restaurant

Kingsley residents strongly articulate the desire for a family restaurant in or near the Village. This desire supports the need for more commercial offerings in the Village core, available to residents and visitors alike. A family-style restaurant will help anchor the strategy of promoting a bedroom community by meeting a very basic need of Village residents. The following steps should be deployed to implement this important objective:

Tactic 1.1. Conduct an asset inventory of potential space or locations for a family restaurant.

Village officials should make a brief inventory of available vacant space or green space that could support a new restaurant. It should be clear what existing buildings are available to support a restaurant prior to commencing a marketing campaign.

Tactic 1.2. Determine what public incentives are available to encourage the private sector to open a family restaurant.

DDA and Village officials should pre-package a suite of incentives designed to encourage the private sector to invest in Kingsley. Donating an existing building or at least providing low cost rent (or deferred rental payments), deferring property taxes, and grant funding assistance could be included in the package. In some instances, it may be advisable to offer enterprising restaurateurs with cash assistance (in the form of grants or low interest loans) to get their business up and running. The goal is to pre-package all of the available incentives prior to marketing.

Tactic 1.3. Develop an offering with statistical references.

DDA and Village officials should compile a short offering memorandum that highlights the advantages of locating a restaurant in Kingsley. Much of the demographic and economic data included in the Phase 1 report could be helpful. It notes the population, density, and age of Village residents. The Combined Kingsley Cluster – consisting of Kingsley, Mayfield, and Paradise Townships – creates a resident population base of nearly 8,000 people (more than half of Traverse City) with relative purchasing power greater than Traverse City. It is hard to imagine a “town” of this size without a family restaurant in Northern Michigan. The data makes a compelling case for the private sector to open a restaurant in the Village, but it must be articulated to the marketplace.

Tactic 1.4. Develop promotional materials.

DDA and Kingsley officials should synthesize the available data and marketing opportunities into appropriate promotional materials. A one-page flyer depicting the opportunity, highlighting the available incentives, and noting the supporting demographic data will be an effective marketing tool to use when talking to potential restaurateurs. It is important to note that marketing materials do not have to be extensively developed and overly fancy. What is important is that the information be developed in a written document that synthesizes the opportunity and convincingly makes the business case for outsiders considering an investment in Kingsley.

Tactic 1.5. Target potential companies.

Finally, DDA and Kingsley officials should promote the opportunity by using their promotional materials targeted to potential restaurateurs. Regionally-based food service companies should be approached to discuss the possibility of opening a family restaurant in Kingsley. This will be an opportunity to highlight available locations, incentives, and deal points while heralding the Village’s strong economic profile.

Priority Project #2: Developing an Incentive Package for the Industrial Park

Kingsley has a privately-owned, largely undeveloped industrial park. It is located along M113 and represents an ideal location for expanding commercial or industrial businesses. The park includes 117 acres zoned for industrial uses. It has not yet been split into individual parcels in order to maintain maximum flexibility. The owner, Mr. Rob Bach, hopes that its size and flexibility will accommodate larger lot sizes and users. Approximately 2/3 of the property is served by an existing water main; and ¼ of it is served by the Village’s main sewer line. Electricity extends to the property.

The industrial park has seen little economic activity in recent years. Largely, this is the result of the recent economic recession that effected industrial development nation-wide. Kingsley did not escape the downturn. As a result, interest in the industrial park diminished.

Yet the industrial park is ideally situated just outside the Village core on a strategic highway leading to a major north-south state corridor with direct connections to Grand Rapids and markets beyond. It is designated “industrial” and has the supporting infrastructure capable of meeting the needs of regional manufacturers. As Kingsley continues to promote itself as a bedroom community, and as regional awareness continues to grow about the investment climate in the Village, it is entirely realistic to expect interest to grow in the park. Steps should be taken now to capitalize on that interest before it is

expressed by the market place. Affirmative steps should be taken to seed the opportunity and to nourish small businesses that decide to make it their home.

Tactic 2.1. Collaborate with the Property Owner.

The industrial park is privately owned and operated. While the park has not grown as quickly as hoped, the owner had incredible vision to place personal wealth at risk in developing it. Kingsley officials should collaborate with the owner to assist him in further marketing and developing the industrial park. His investment should be viewed as a significant contribution to the local economy. Further development will benefit the community in many ways; not just in direct job creation but with utility and water sales, and a bolstered tax base. Where possible, Village officials should work with him by identifying his immediate needs and working to assist him to complete the park's development and fill it with industrial companies. One immediate area for collaboration is the need for higher visibility signage at the industrial park. A prominent sign could serve as a landmark for the industrial park and better announce the opportunity to motorists driving by it.

Tactic 2.2. Develop Incentive Package

The Village has the power and authority to do what a private owner cannot accomplish. It can craft an incentive package to help lure new business to the park. This is a step that should be immediately taken. Working together with local utilities, Village leaders should develop a suite of amenities that are readily available to business. This could include tax relief, direct financial assistance in the form of grants or low interest loans, and lower water and utility rates. The goal is to make the industrial park the preferred alternative for new private sector investment while having a ready "package" of incentives that are pre-approved and ready to go when business knocks on the door.

Tactic 2.3. Market the Opportunity

The Village also has an opportunity to collaborate with the park's owner by jointly marketing the industrial park within the region. Anecdotally, not many business leaders throughout Grand Traverse County seem to know that there is an industrial park in Kingsley; and it is not readily obvious to those driving by it. As noted earlier, a prominent sign could help matters. So too could a combined marketing campaign that broadcasts the opportunity throughout the region. Newspaper and radio advertisements will help promote new investment. This could be a cost that is divided between the Village and the park's owner. Getting the word out will help drive traffic to the property.

Priority Project #3: Marketing and Promotion

There is an opportunity for Kingsley to further differentiate itself within the region as a premier place to live and educate children. This will require a Kingsley-specific promotional campaign similar to the popular advertising campaign adopted by Elk Rapids – "We are ER" – to promote its school system. The following steps should be deployed to realize this objective:

Tactic 3.1. Complete an asset inventory of unique attributes that differentiate Kingsley as an ideal place to live and educate children.

The first step in developing appropriate marketing materials requires an assessment of what makes Kingsley unique. As identified in the Phase 1 analysis of this report, the Village's affordable homes and

excellent school system are strong differentiators. Listed home prices were 37% below comparable homes in Traverse City at the beginning of 2013. Kingsley schools perform at levels equal to or above their peers, and the community support for extracurricular activities and local sports teams is extraordinarily high. In addition, Kingsley's well-developed park system, ideal location, village charm, and embrace of children and family are compelling. The community teen center, pocket parks, and country air are equally strong selling points. These factors combine to make Kingsley a preferred "hometown" for young families. These characteristics should be captured in an asset inventory to be used in the development of promotional materials.

Tactic 3.2. Develop appropriate marketing and promotional materials, and use radio, print- and news-media to broadcast the message.

DDA and Village officials should develop a promotional strategy to highlight the unique and positive attributes of living in Kingsley. A one-page flyer to be used as a mailer or insert, appropriately placed and sized newspaper advertisements, and a commercial for radio broadcasts should all be considered. The duration and timing of a media campaign is a relevant consideration. Timing a media push for different seasons of the year is appropriate, perhaps to coincide with major public events in Kingsley, like the Adams Fly Festival or the start of the school year.

Section Two: Secondary Goals

The priorities identified as key projects have the potential of rapidly impacting the local economy. These are projects that can be more quickly implemented by the Village staff. Longer term initiatives were also identified by community stakeholders. All of the projects center around three key themes: promoting the bedroom community, developing the industrial park, and developing the craftsman theme. The following projects reflect these themes, and were first articulated by the community during the June 4 DDA meeting. They represent secondary goals that should command the Village's attention once the priorities are underway.

Project #4: Promote Kingsley as a Bedroom Community by Addressing Local Needs

As established in the first phase of this study, the demographic analysis supports the fact that a large preponderance of employed residents living in Kingsley commute to Traverse City, Cadillac, or other communities for work. They reside in Kingsley but their principle place of employment is elsewhere. Most commuters drive to Traverse City for work. Residents choose to live in the Village, or in its immediately surrounding townships, because of its lower cost of real estate, the excellent reputation of its school systems, and its relative proximity to places of employment, especially Traverse City. Kingsley provides an affordable place to live and a great location to educate children, but it does not meet the basic employment, cultural, and entertainment needs of its residents. Kingsley residents choose to drive predominantly to Traverse City to meet their shopping, health care, employment, and entertainment needs.

During the June 4, 2013 meeting of the DDA to review this report's Phase 1 findings and to identify major economic development objectives for the future, DDA members and other Village officials identified the further definition and development of a bedroom community as a major goal going forward. This can occur by first addressing unmet needs within the Village and secondly by better promoting the community.

There is a necessity to meet relatively basic needs of Kingsley residents in and around the Village core. In order to attract more residents to the bedroom community, it is necessary to provide basic amenities within the Village core to make it a more attractive place to live. A key strategy to further develop a bedroom community is the need to actively promote the Village as a cost-effective place to live with excellent schools capable of educating children. A promotional campaign is needed to "get the word out" that Kingsley is a preferred location in Northwest Michigan to live and educate children.

During the June 4th DDA meeting, residents of Kingsley articulated the need to better position the Village as a destination for new residents and visitors. The strategy is to make Kingsley a more appealing place to live and visit by offering additional activities and economic alternatives that keep people within the Village without having to commute to Traverse City, or elsewhere, to meet basic needs. A key tactic to achieving this strategy is to better program existing "green space" and recreational opportunities.

Tactic 4.1. Leverage existing "green space" and park space to develop Kingsley as a destination.

Kingsley officials have done an excellent job preserving green space for the good of the general public. Its public parks, too, are among the best in the region. Current efforts are underway to expand Civic Center South by developing an additional twenty acres. Already, the park provides a wide array of

offerings geared to meet the sports and recreational needs of Village residents. The Kingsley green space and park system includes the following:

- Civic Center South is a 60-acre park owned by the Village and operated by a park authority. Approximately 40 acres, consisting of the original tract, are built-out with 2 soccer fields, 2 baseball diamonds, 2 pavilions, 2 beach volleyball courts, an 18-hole disc golf course, an archery range, an ice rink, a ½ mile walking trail, playground, and public restrooms. The Village recently acquired 20 additional acres to expand the park. The Village has plans this summer to add 9 more disc golf holes, lacrosse fields, and 2 more baseball diamonds.
- Brownson Park is located in the downtown core. It includes a band shell, public lawn, a children’s splash pad (constructed in 2006 and expanded in 2012), playground, and public restrooms. It is a popular summertime retreat. Traverse City public schools frequently use it for summertime programming by sending busloads of children to play in the splash pad.
- Grove Park is a rustic, unimproved public space located near the Brownson/113 intersection by the Hideaway Bar. The Village plans to add a pavilion, benches, and walking path to it in the near future.
- Veterans Memorial Park will be constructed beginning August 2013. It will be located on a Village owned parcel along 113.
- Mayfield Pond Park is located in Mayfield. It is administered by a joint park and recreation department of Kingsley and Mayfield. It is considered the “home” of the Adams Fly, where it was first tied by Leonard Halladay while fishing in the pond.

Going forward, Kingsley officials should consider the implementation of those tactics that support making green space and park space as regional destinations. They include:

Tactic 4.2. A concert series for Brownson Park.

The success of the Adams Fly Festival underpins the idea that Brownson Park is well-suited to host regional events. Participants from around the region meet at Brownson Park to celebrate the history, culture, and art of the Adams Fly. Additional events like this should be planned for Summer 2014. The infrastructure is already in place to host new public events.

A number of residents have expressed a desire to host “music in the park” whereby the Village book popular regional bands, school choirs, orchestras, and minstrel groups to perform on a regular basis, perhaps weekly during the summer. Village officials should focus on a single evening of the week to host musical events. The concert series should be well promoted using paid and free media, like radio and newspaper. Concerts could be coupled with dancing and food offerings, perhaps by encouraging the region’s new fleet of food trucks to participate, or by booking regionally-based caterers and restaurateurs. If well promoted, a concert series is likely to bring new people into the Village to visit while meeting a basic need for those who reside in Kingsley.

Detractors of this idea have expressed a concern that Brownson Park not be “commercialized,” expressing the notion that Kingsley not lose its Village identity. This is a valid consideration. It is important that efforts to create a destination not alter the unique charm inherent to Village life. On a limited basis, however, it may be that a concert series will help to bolster the Village brand by exposing outsiders to the places and people that make Kingsley so special. Music and food are ideal ways to bring people together in a celebration. A concert series, if properly developed and strongly sponsored by a champion, will work to highlight the best of Kingsley without changing its fundamental character.

Tactic 4.3. Cross Marketing Sports and Recreational Opportunities.

Kingsley has a well-developed park system. Civic Center South, in particular, has the capacity to support regional sport and recreational endeavors. Village officials have an opportunity to leverage existing regional events by working with their sponsors by providing expanded venues for their events. There are a number of collaborative opportunities for Village officials to consider:

- The region’s Cherry Bomb Lacrosse Tournament held in late July each year hosts 125 teams from around the United States in Traverse City. The tournament is at capacity and might benefit from additional venues. It sells out each year. Civic Center South could provide additional fields for play.
- The North American VASA ski race, held in February each year, brings racers from around the world to the Traverse City region. It is considered a premier ski race and recognized globally within the Nordic ski community. The winter offerings available at Civic Center South may appeal to race organizers. Ample parking, outdoor ice skating, and restrooms could provide an expanded venue for VASA-related activities.
- The Ice Man Cometh Bicycle Challenge Race begins each November in Kalkaska and ends at Timber Ridge. It is the country’s longest point-to-point mountain bike race, and is well attended by racers from around the world. The 2013 race sold out in just 32 minutes. There may be an opportunity for Kingsley officials to work collaboratively with race organizers to host a satellite event in Kingsley, perhaps at Civic Center South.
- The National Cherry Festival and Traverse City Film Festival bring tens-of-thousands of people to the region each summer. It is possible that some events could be programmed to occur in Kingsley. For example, a movie showcasing fly fishing, like *A River Runs Through It*, could be shown outside at Brownson Park.

These are just a few examples of the types of regional events that may benefit from expanded venues. The point is that Kingsley has the infrastructure already in place to support these events or similar activities. They provide cross marketing opportunities for the Village. Working together, Village officials could promote Kingsley while supporting one or more of these types of regional activities.

Going forward, Village officials should begin a discussion with event organizers to explore how Kingsley might support these larger, regional events. Kingsley has the space and infrastructure capable of bolstering these well-established, well-attended events. New activities could be explored: a kick-off concert in the park, satellite events like qualifying races, or post-race event like an evening bonfire or awards ceremony are the types of extension activities that could help to further promote Kingsley by more extensively programming its existing green space and parks.

Tactic 4.4. Extend the regional trail system to connect to Kingsley trails.

Kingsley has developed its own internal trail system that links its neighborhoods and public parks. There is an ongoing effort to explore the extension of the system to tie into a broader, regional system of trails. This is viewed as a longer term tactic to bring additional visitors to Kingsley while promoting a South County brand strategy (further discussed in this report). Kingsley officials should open a dialogue with TART Trail officials about potential routes, tie ins, and funding sources to further expand existing trail systems and to tie them together.

These tactics are designed to promote Kingsley as a bedroom community. Specifically, they provide new economic and recreational opportunities for the people who live in Kingsley, and they provide a reason for non-Kingsley residents to visit the Village as a destination. Developing a summer concert series, cross marketing sports and recreational opportunities, and extending the regional trail system to Kingsley will further promote the Village as a destination for new residents and a place to visit for others.

Project #5: Develop and promote a South County strategy.

Promoting Kingsley can occur on two levels. Community leaders discussed the possibility that a broader “South County” strategy be developed in collaboration with the surrounding townships. As evidenced throughout this report, though, there is also a need for Kingsley-specific promotions tailored to advertise specific differentiators that make the Village a unique place to live, work, and educate children. The tactics supporting the promotion of Kingsley are further defined:

Tactic 5.1. Develop a “South County” brand strategy.

Elected and appointed officials in Kingsley articulated the need and related opportunity to work collaboratively with other jurisdictions to develop a brand strategy that promotes the south end of Grand Traverse County.

Just as Leelanau County is known for its bucolic beauty, and Traverse City is known for its shopping district and proximity to the Bay, so too should the south end of Grand Traverse County be branded for the purpose of promoting living and recreating in the area. DDA and Village officials articulated a need to work together to define a new brand for the area. While the communities of Fife Lake, Mayfield, Paradise, and Kingsley work collaboratively today with joint park authorities and policing, there is more that should be done to promote the area. A number of steps should be taken to implement this tactic:

Tactic 5.2. Work cross-jurisdictionally to collaboratively develop and deploy a joint brand.

Representatives from Kingsley, Fife Lake, Paradise and Mayfield should begin meeting to discuss the need for a South County brand. Communication is the key. It is often difficult for local governments to work together beyond traditional boundaries, but it is time for officials to begin this important discussion. Representatives should begin the process with a defined objective of developing a supporting brand capable of representing all of the communities in South Grand Traverse County. Together, they should develop a representative brand that communicates the benefits and advantages of living, working, and playing in the immediate area. Preliminary discussions could result in the

eventual development of a real brand identity, complete with logo, slogan, and promotional campaign geared towards paid and free media sources.

Tactic 5.3. Promote cooperation between Village and Townships.

As representatives from these communities begin to define a brand strategy, they have an opportunity to share the broader message of their cooperation within the region. This is news. At the township, village, county, and state levels there are opportunities to let the broader marketplace know that these communities are working together for their joint prosperity. Part of the strategy should include the important demographic and economic data contained in the first phase of this report. There is a significant population of affluent County citizens living in these communities. Their voices should be heard. Collectively, they have much to say about the distribution of resources, development of their communities, and the advantages inherent to living and playing in their communities. A unified front will likely generate more benefits than can be derived from any one community going it alone.

Project #6: Expand the Craftsman Theme.

The Village has done an incredible job defining a charming inner core by making concrete investments in streetscaping, sidewalks, landscaping, and new construction. Additional investments are planned for a series of pocket parks this summer, including the new art park and veterans memorial park. It has embraced the Adams Fly as an iconic image to further define the Kingsley experience. Banners placed around the Village brandish the image. It represents a call to nature and the solitary quiet of fly fishing, suggesting an earlier, simpler time characteristic of small town America. This theme is extended into the interiors of important public buildings. The Village Hall and Library are replete with craftsman architecture, furniture, finishings, and themes, including the pottery wall and fireplace in the Library, and of course the Adams Fly pictorial. Handmade craftsman furniture anchors the Village Council chambers, and Norman Rockwell wall hangings are there, which further define the craftsman theme.

Already, the Village is capitalizing on the craftsman theme by further expanding it into the development of Memorial Park. The Park's new arbor entryway will be designed in the craftsman theme with architectural amenities and a color scheme to match related accoutrements in the Village.

During the June 4th DDA meeting, participants articulated an opportunity to further translate the craftsman theme into economic development strategies. A number of key tactics are recommended to achieve this goal.

Tactic 6.1. Identify the type of economic activities or businesses that characterize the craftsman theme and are desired in Kingsley.

Using the craftsman theme as an inspiration for economic development suggests a broader series of targets than simply the fly fishing industry. Already, Kingsley has embraced a number of different inspirations that could translate into additional economic activity. Woodworking, pottery, fly tying, furniture making, and gardening/landscaping are all embraced within the greater definition of the craftsman theme. These disciplines begin to suggest target markets suitable for expansion and growth in the Village. Other related craft disciplines that operate as businesses throughout the Northwest Michigan region include craft beer making, candle making, honey and soap production, metal working, knitting and quilting shops, and artisanal foods like cheese, charcuteri, and dairy products. Painters and sculptors also represent members of the regional artistic community. The goal is to secure enough of

these types of craftsmen and women, conducting business in Kingsley, to generate regional interest in visiting the Village as a destination.

The DDA has an opportunity to identify these craft businesses as target markets and to pursue them with a defined marketing strategy.

Tactic 6.2. Identify target companies.

A target list of the businesses and individuals that practice these crafts should be compiled. As an effort to target market, they should be approached with a detailed proposal inviting them to conduct business in Kingsley.

Tactic 6.3. Develop a proposal, with meaningful incentives (potentially to include an incubator), inviting craft businesses to the Village.

Just as in recruiting any business to Kingsley, the more groundwork that is laid by community officials in securing craft business, the better the likelihood of success. As with any business, local economic conditions must favor a move and expansion to a new area. DDA and Village officials have an opportunity to tailor an incentive package for these types of craft businesses. The types of incentives that are typically viewed favorably include tax relief and, in the case of Village owned property, rent relief. Additionally, small businesses may be attracted to a “craft incubator” where production and retail floor space is rented individually but common areas are shared by multiple vendors; thus sharing the costs associated with building occupancy and business operations. Community leaders should consider the adaptive reuse of existing building stock for this purpose. An incubator will lower operating costs for individual businesses and serve as a strong marketing tool in recruiting them.

Tactic 6.4. Promote a “craftsman village.”

As craft businesses begin to express an interest in operating out of the Village, there will be an opportunity to bolster marketing efforts by tying the craftsman theme to broader promotional efforts. Promoting Kingsley as a “craftsman village” creates a unique thematic brand likely to titillate visitors’ interest. It is easy to imagine tourists and residents from throughout the region making a day trip to Kingsley to shop and interact with local craftsmen and women. This is ideal promotional material that will further differentiate the Kingsley message and experience. Promotions tied to newspaper and radio paid and free media will ensure a wide audience of potential visitors.

These tactics will work together to begin to create a craftsman village in Kingsley. Developers at the Grand Traverse Commons took a similar approach in the adaptive reuse of the former State Hospital by targeting local crafts businesses to create a neighborhood of related, but different shops. It has become a popular tourist destination, and is a memorable place to shop and visit. Developers there describe this approach as “the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker” method of economic development. As it worked at the Grand Traverse Commons, it could also work in Kingsley.

Section Three: Fly Fishing as a Catalyst for Economic Development

Overview

Kingsley has staked its position as an important fly fishing destination in Northwest Michigan. Its strategic location between two famous trout fisheries, the Manistee and Boardman Rivers, and its historic claim to the iconic Adams Fly, justify this stance. In recent years, the Village has upped the ante by hosting, for two years now, the Adams Fly Festival. It has become a signature event for Kingsley. Adorned with streetscape banners with imagery of a solitary fly fisherman, the Village welcomes enthusiasts the first weekend in June for a fly fishing expo and celebration of the art. The community has moved aggressively to brand in alignment with the sport, helping to further differentiate it from other communities in southern Grand Traverse County.

The Adams Fly Festival and related public improvements designed to complement the craftsman theme, are an innovative approach to economic development. Outdoor recreation, and its subset of fly fishing, are big business. They represent an affluent, well educated, and mostly male constituency willing to travel in pursuit of solitary waters.

Socioeconomic Profile & Demographics

According to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey in 2006 (Trout Fishing in 2006: A Demographic Description and Economic Analysis), "Fishing [for trout] continues to be a male dominated sport. Females make up a quarter (25 percent) of all freshwater anglers and even fewer trout anglers (21 percent). This is disproportionately lower than the U.S. population where women are the majority at 52 percent." The report identified that "about half of all trout anglers (49 percent) are between the ages of 35 and 54 years old."

Fly fishermen tend to be well educated. While 15 percent of the U.S. population 16 years and older do not complete high school, only 10 percent of both freshwater anglers and trout anglers do not complete high school. "As for advanced degrees, 13 percent of trout anglers earned graduate degrees compared to only 10 percent of all freshwater anglers and the U.S. population. It's safe to say that trout anglers are among the most educated anglers. Freshwater anglers' participation in trout fishing increased as their years of education increased; from 20 percent for anglers with less than 12 years of education to 36 percent for anglers with 5 or more years of college."

Higher educational attainment by trout anglers translates into higher disposable incomes and earning potential. "In 2006, the median household income for the U.S. was slightly over \$48,000, while that of trout anglers was over \$50,000 (DeNava-Walt et. al., 2007). Trout anglers also had more advanced degrees than the U.S. population. Generally, we expect to find a positive correlation between education and income. Twenty-four percent of trout angler households earned more than \$100,000, compared with only 17 percent of households in the U.S. Freshwater anglers from households earning between \$35,000 and \$39,999 a year participated in trout fishing at the lowest rate of 18 percent. Freshwater anglers from households earning more than \$100,000 had the highest participation rate, 35 percent."

Impact on State & Local Economies

Outdoor recreation, including trout anglers, contribute significantly to the state and national economy. The following table represents the economic impact of outdoor recreation on the state and national economy, according to a 2012 study by the Outdoor Industry Association:

Metric	Michigan Economy	U.S. Economy
Consumer Spending	\$18.7 billion	\$646 billion
Wages & Benefits	\$5.5 billion	\$35 billion
Tax Revenue	\$1.4 billion	\$39 billion
Direct Jobs	194,000	6,100,000

The Association refers to the industry as “an overlooked economic giant,” and compared its impact to other economic sectors by consumer expenditures. It reports the following economic impacts by comparative sectors:

- Financial Services and Insurance \$807 billion
- Outpatient Health Care \$806 billion
- **Outdoor Recreation \$646 billion**
- Gasoline and Other Fuels \$428 billion
- Motor Vehicles and Parts \$374 billion
- Pharmaceuticals \$348 billion
- Household Utilities \$307 billion

It also compares job creation statistics by industry:

- Professional, Technical & Scientific Services 7.7 million jobs
- **Outdoor Recreation 6.1 million jobs**
- Construction 5.5 million jobs
- Transportation and warehousing 4.3 million jobs
- Education 3.5 million jobs
- Information 2.5 million jobs
- Oil and Gas 2.2 million jobs

According to the American Sport Fishing Association’s January 17, 2013 study, “An Economic Force for Conservation,” the growth trend is positive when considering freshwater angling as a growing industry. “the number of anglers increased 11 percent over the past five years and fishing tackle sales grew more than 16 percent. When expenditures are multiplied by our nation’s 60 million anglers, their dollars have a significant impact on our nation’s economy.”

The report notes that “America’s nearly 60 million anglers are estimated to spend \$46 billion per year on fishing equipment, transportation, lodging and other expenses associated with their sport. With a total annual economic impact of \$115 billion, fishing supports more than 828,000 jobs and generates \$35 billion in wages and \$15 billion in federal and state taxes. Despite the economic difficulties facing the U.S. economy over the past five years; the total amount spent on sportfishing, which encompasses tackle, travel and other equipment, grew five

percent.”

The impact in Michigan is significant. The Great Lakes Echo reported on January 22, 2013 that more than 1.19 million fishing licenses were purchased from the Department of Natural Resources between March 2012 and January 17, 2013. The DNR reported for 2011 that “an estimated two million Michigan residents and nonresident tourists fish Michigan waters. Recreational fishing is the largest and highest-valued use of the state’s fishery resources. The economic impact of sport fishing is in excess of \$2 billion annually and provides more than 15,000 jobs.” The Great Lakes Echo reports similar statistics for 2011, noting \$2.46 billion in fishing-related sales. Some of this success was driven by a three-month, \$125,000 Pure Michigan ad campaign “to entice sport enthusiasts from nearby states such as Ohio and Indiana.”

Notable Promotions by Other Communities

The positive economic impacts of fly fishing are not unnoticed by other communities similar to Kingsley. A four-county region in North Carolina created the “first and only fly fishing trail in the United States,” known as the Western North Carolina Fly Fishing Trail. Trail organizers advertise via an impressive website that heralds the benefits of fishing “15 hotspots in the region.” The American Museum of Fly Fishing, located in Manchester, Vermont, and the Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum, located in Livingston Manor, New York, establish their regions as preeminent fly fishing locations and provide an epicenter for marketing, retail sales, professional guide services, as well as an important meeting point to orient visitors to their respective regions. Indeed, communities throughout the American West, Eastern Seaboard, and Midwest have branded themselves as fly fishing meccas.

To get a better sense of the communities that have successfully branded themselves in relation to the sport, and of the national competition to Kingsley, consider the Forbes list of “Top Ten Fly Fishing Towns” in the North America:

1. West Yellowstone, Montana
2. Missoula, Montana
3. Roscoe, New York
4. State College, Pennsylvania
5. Grayling, Michigan
6. Calgary, Alberta
7. Glenwood Springs, Colorado
8. Mountain Home, Arkansas
9. Redding, California
10. Asheville, North Carolina

While some of these communities boasts international reputations, some made famous by Hollywood films and famous authors, like Missoula, Montana (A River Runs Through It by Norman Maclean and made famous in film by Robert Redford and Brad Pitt), others – like Grayling, Michigan – are little known outside fly fishing circles and hardly boast the same charming sense of place already developed in Kingsley.

There is a clear opportunity for Kingsley to continue to foster its reputation as an important fly fishing mecca, in part by emulating the successes of other communities, while at the same time articulating its own and distinctly unique value proposition to the sport as the home of the Adams Fly.

Project #7: Continue to Develop Kingsley as a Fly Fishing Destination

Considering the effort of time and expense already invested by Kingsley officials to establish the Adams Fly Festival and in developing a charming sense of place defined by the craftsman theme, it makes perfect sense to use this foundation to further explore economic development initiatives aligned to the art and sport of fly fishing. Kingsley is not starting from scratch. A platform exists to launch an exciting initiative that further promotes the Village as a unique destination for fly fishing enthusiasts. The following tactics are designed to aid that effort:

Tactic 7.1. Collaborate with Industry

Kingsley officials should begin this effort by eliciting feedback from the fly fishing industry. The Village should begin a conversation with local fly shop owners and guides, as well as nationally prominent figures in the sport, to receive suggestions on how best to position itself as fly fishing destination. Already, local leaders contribute to the Adams Fly Festival. The suggestions and tactics included in this report should become part of a larger discussion designed to elicit feedback while promoting the endeavor. Prominent local and national figures could be honored with a unique distinction as “Kingsley Advisors” and empanelled as a quasi-board of advisors responsible for helping to craft overall direction.

Tactic 7.2. Regionalize the Effort by Creating the Fly Fishing Passport

To ensure regional leadership and as a means of self-appointing Kingsley as a critical destination or stopping off point for visiting anglers, Village officials could develop a passport system with Kingsley serving as a prominent starting point. Like any passport, the Kingsley Fly Fishing Passport would include regional trout fishing destinations, like the Holy Water and Gates Au Sable Lodge in Grayling, and prominent regional streams and rivers, like the Manistee, Boardman, Pier Marquette, and Au Sable Rivers, that must be visited by anglers. A stamp could be affixed to a decorative passport each time a visiting angler fishes a destination hotspot. The goal is to include Kingsley, and a visit to the Adams Fly display, within the passport system to secure its place as a destination.

Tactic 7.3. Develop a More Prominent Display or Museum for the Adams Fly

The Adams Fly display in the public library heralds an important historical event for the Village but there is an opportunity to leverage it to better align with a best in class strategy designed to invite fly fishing anglers from around the globe to Kingsley. Village officials should consider a long term strategy to reposition the Adams display into something greater. A museum showcasing the fly, the life and times of Leonard Halladay, and period fly fishing paraphernalia could give visitors and tourists a reason for traveling to Kingsley. A museum could form the anchor to a larger foundation designed to educate anglers, preserve fisheries, promote related retail sales, and serve as an important nexus where industry and enthusiasts meet. Kingsley’s Friends of the Library did an exemplary job financing and building the public library. A similar effort could result in regional, or even national, distinction.

Tactic 7.4. Further Promote the Adams Fly Festival

The Adams Fly Festival has the potential of being a national event. The fisheries and waterways in Northwest Michigan already attract fly fishing anglers from around the world. There is an opportunity to marry interest in the region to the festival itself. Broader promotion of the festival on a regional and national scale could bear fruit. Consider the following:

- Village officials should consider accessing any number of national fly fishing publications to advertise the festival, both free media and paid. Promotional give-aways should be considered. A national contest sponsored by, or advertised in, one of the national publications could provide winning applicants with air fare and lodging to attend the event.
- There are cross marketing opportunities to better promote the Festival with a number of regional events that are already well established. For example, the National Writers Series by the Writers Series of Traverse City, might sponsor a fly fishing writers symposium in Kingsley; or the Traverse City Film Festival might show a fly fishing film during the festival in the Village.
- Kingsley officials should redesign the Village website to reflect the fly fishing and craftsman themes. Currently, the website makes no mention of the Adams Fly or fly fishing. The easiest, most cost effective way to reach a worldwide audience is by simply revamping the existing website.

Conclusion

The Kingsley Economic Development Action Plan is the product of the citizens of the Village. It was developed in collaboration with Village and DDA officials, interested citizens, and key stakeholders. It is the product of months of work, many conversations, and multiple meetings. In Phase 1, Current Situation and SWOT Analysis, economic and demographic data was analyzed to develop a baseline of current conditions in the Village. It highlights the Villages unique differentiators as a special place in Northwest Michigan to live and educate children. Among its key findings are:

- Kingsley is among the most densely populated communities in Grand Traverse County, supporting the continued development of its inner core as a pedestrian friendly bedroom community capable of serving the needs of its citizens who reside in close proximity to government buildings, schools, places of worship, and multiple public parks.
- Kingsley's population is among the youngest in Grand Traverse County. Young families choose to live in the Village because of its affordable housing, excellent school system, and public services and amenities, like public parks.
- Kingsley has more young families than any other community in Grand Traverse County. By an overwhelming amount, Kingsley's homes are comprised of married couples with children age 19 or younger.
- Housing prices in Kingsley are disproportionately less expensive than comparable housing stock in Traverse City; allowing young families to access quality housing and solid neighborhoods that might be out of reach in Traverse City. This important metric is probably the single largest driver to the on-going development of Kingsley as a bedroom community.
- Kingsley, along with its adjoining townships of Mayfield and Paradise, comprise a substantial population base greater than half the population of Traverse City. Communities of its size tend to have greater cultural, recreational and service amenities than are currently available from the private sector in the Village.
- Kingsley, Mayfield, and Paradise combined have a stronger relative purchasing power than Traverse City.

The Villages strong, relatively wealthy population base and quality, affordable housing create an ideal environment to attract young families with school-aged children. The Village has made significant investments in its downtown core. The craftsman theme is intertwined in its public improvements, including streetscapes, landscapes, public parks, and public buildings. The net effect of these improvements, combined with strong neighborhoods, creates a quality of life and sense of place not typically found in similarly situated communities in Northwest Michigan.

The second phase of the Economic Development Action Plan highlights important goals to be pursued in the further economic development of Kingsley. These goals were identified as desirable outcomes by the men and women who attended a DDA meeting on June 4, 2013. It also includes the tactics necessary to achieve the identified goals. The goals and corresponding tactics form a detailed roadmap

for the Village to follow into the future, starting with three key priorities and followed by longer term objectives; all developed in the form of seven key projects.

Kingsley is poised for continued growth as a bedroom community. Village officials have wisely invested in the community to differentiate it as a special place to live and charming community to visit. Clearly, more work lies ahead, but the foundation is in place for continued economic investment. This plan will facilitate that continued growth.

Addendum: Including Seniors and Planning for Their Future

After the June 4, 2013 presentation of Phase 1 findings by the TBEDC to the DDA and audience members, it was pointed out that the Phase 1 data was not reflective of the important contribution that senior citizens can, and do, make in Kingsley. The demographic data is so strongly in favor of young families that it occupied center stage in the delivery of the Phase 1 report. It should be noted that Kingsley represents an ideal bedroom community for young families because of the foresight, planning, and investment of the community's senior population. Kingsley's senior citizens serve as elected officials, sit on important boards, and volunteer as active members of the community in very important roles. Their steadfast leadership will continue to be required as Kingsley embarks on the implementation of the Economic Development Action Plan.

In the same way, and for the same reasons, that Kingsley is attractive to young families, it remains the home of community members who long ago established themselves in the community, raised and educated children there, and continue to contribute to the economic, recreational, and cultural vitality of the Village. The Village's population density and role as the South County's business and government hub represent an ideal opportunity to meet the needs of its senior citizens. Across the country, savvy community planners are starting to ask important questions about meeting the future needs of our country's aging population base. The ability to meet those needs in a walkable, accessible manner is critical. Kingsley's neighborhoods are located in close proximity to the Village hub. Its parks and amenities, including the library and artistic pocket parks, remain accessible to senior citizens who live in the Village.

Planning for the future, Village officials will hopefully address the primary objectives of this plan with an eye towards the community's senior citizens. Affordable housing prices, walkable streets, decorative pocket parks, an emphasis on education and culture, and new amenities (like a family restaurant) are as attractive to seniors as they are to young families. The Village's senior members have much to contribute, and much to say, about its future. They will continue to provide important leadership and should be encouraged to contribute their wisdom and leadership.