



# *envision* **ECORSE**

## *A Citizen's Strategic Plan for Developing the Ecorse Community*



Underwritten by:

communityfoundation  
FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN



## Acknowledgements

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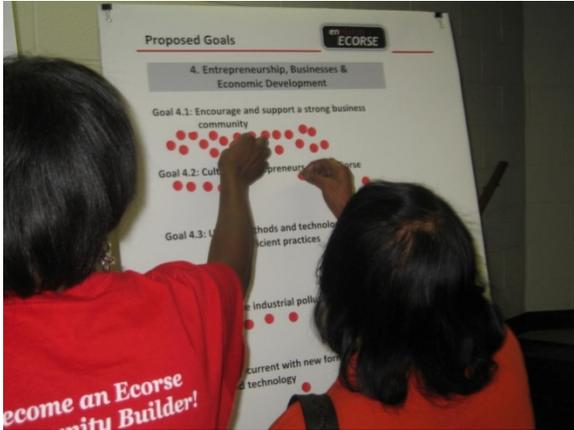
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## Background – Why Do We Need to Envision Ecorse?

**The Hard Facts** - The citizens of Ecorse have been witness to dramatic changes in the state and national economy over the past 20 years or so. As the manufacturing sector has declined across Michigan, Ecorse has suffered. Auto manufacturing and steel production jobs have drained from the region. The City of Ecorse has suffered high rates of unemployment, a declining population, and increasing poverty rates. Home foreclosure rates have been high in Ecorse and many key service businesses have closed.

At the same time, Ecorse City government lost its way. City officials overspent city funds, failed to keep accurate financial records, and made poor decisions which led to numerous costly lawsuits. The most recent city administration misappropriated funds and participated in kick-back schemes which resulted in prison sentences for the Mayor and controller. The city's failure to properly collect taxes and disperse funds to the county and school district, together with the corruption of its officials, resulted in the community's loss of trust and confidence in its elected officials and local city government.

**Looking to the Future** - Last spring, Ms. Joyce Parker, the state appointed *Emergency Financial Manager* for Ecorse noted that the financial status of the City of Ecorse was beginning to improve. With continued efforts to reduce costs and manage its obligations, the city would be on sound footing and ready for the new administration. With local elections set for November 2011, the citizens of Ecorse would be asked once again, who should be empowered to operate city government. Through their votes in the fall election, the citizens will select the leaders who will control city finances in the future.

What will happen after the new council members are seated and given back the control of city finances? Will the elected officials work together to re-build Ecorse? Will the council members work cooperatively with citizen groups to clean up neighborhoods, foster cultural events, and celebrate the community's diversity? Will the city's newly elected officials carefully manage the city's budget while improving streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure? Will they join with citizen groups to attract new



*Ecorse citizens reporting on community assets*

business to the city? Will city government be run ethically and efficiently for the good of the entire community?

The citizens of Ecorse will determine how these questions are answered. Citizen votes will decide who fills the seats. But how those elected officials carry out their duties, depends in large measure on what the people of Ecorse ask of them. What do the people of Ecorse want and demand of their elected officials? What is the community's vision for the future of Ecorse? What goals and objectives do the citizens of Ecorse want their elected and appointed leaders to pursue?

To move forward, these hopes and expectations must be clearly stated by citizens and community leaders. Then, working together with their elected officials, citizens and community leaders must develop cooperative and collaborative efforts to get the job done. Citizens and community leaders must stay engaged, participating in advisory committees and working groups to keep things moving. When the people are engaged and focused on the goal, elected officials and city government will also stay on track.

### **Getting Started with Envision Ecorse!**

Last spring, Ms. Parker called on the **Michigan Municipal League** (MML) and the nonprofit community service organization known as **LIAA** to guide a communitywide process to help the *citizens of Ecorse develop a strategic plan for the city*. With some financial support provided directly by MML and LIAA, the City of Ecorse was able to obtain the remainder of funds needed for the project from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. With outside funding secure, the *Envision Ecorse!* project was launched.

By June, LIAA's staff members had conducted a series of video recorded interviews with Ecorse residents, business owners and educators. These interviews formed the basis of a video promoting *Envision Ecorse!* and called on all citizens to participate. The video was published on YouTube (search for *Envision Ecorse!*) and widely circulated on DVDs.

### **Project Advisory Committee**

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Next, LIAA developed an aggressive process for engaging a large number of citizens in a multi-part discussion on the future of the community. The process was first described at a public meeting on Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Soon after, a Project Advisory Committee was formed to help encourage public participation, plan for large community gatherings, and refine this unique civic engagement project. For example, Committee members helped distribute literally thousands of Envision Ecorse! flyers, put out yard signs, contacted churches and community organizations, made specific invitations to high school students and sent out the message over the internet.

### **Citizens Leading the Way to Envision Ecorse!**

*Envision Ecorse!* was designed as a community-wide conversation about the future of Ecorse – a conversation that must continue. Community residents came together in a series of three large and inclusive gatherings. Each time well over 100 people shared a meal, divided into 12 smaller discussion groups, then came together again to share what had been discussed.

The first community gathering, titled ***Discover & Dream*** was held in the Media Center of Ecorse City High School on Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. Together, over **100 citizens** of Ecorse joined together to re-discover the positive forces at work in Ecorse. With the help of a dozen professional facilitators, the citizens began by developing an inventory of physical and cultural community assets found throughout the community. Then, all the participants began to dream together about what might be possible in Ecorse with the commitment of the citizens, good governance and cooperative effort.

The second community gathering was called ***Dream & Design*** because it focused on a *Vision for Ecorse in 2030*. Coming together at Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church on Thursday evening, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, over **150 citizens** helped describe a vision for the future and established a series of goals for action that would move the community forward. Again, a dozen professional facilitators helped to keep the discussion open and forward-thinking while recording all the key information.



*Ecorse citizens **Discovering & Dreaming***



*Ecorse citizens **Dreaming & Designing***

The final community gathering in this sequence was held at the First Missionary Baptist Church on Thursday evening, October 6<sup>th</sup>. Emphasizing action, the gathering was titled ***Design & Destiny***. Again, nearly **150 citizens** participated in assigning priorities to community goals for development and improvement. Then, with the help of a dozen professional facilitators, everyone worked to identify ways that these goals could be achieved by city officials, community leaders and citizens working together.

Throughout the three community gatherings, citizens worked cooperatively together, sharing ideas and comparing experiences. The discussions were frank, direct and meaningful, but always civil. Most of all, these discussions were positive, up-beat and hopeful. The citizens of Ecorse are clearly ready to work cooperatively together to improve their city and build a better community. After the elections of November, these citizens will look to the city officials for their cooperation, leadership and support.

### **A Citizen's Strategic Plan for Ecorse**

This publication compiles the information, opinions, and direction provided by the citizens of Ecorse over three in-depth public discussions. The level of participation was tremendous. A very large number of citizens turned out each time. In each case, 12 professional facilitators helped assure that everyone had a chance to present their views and record the information. We cannot be sure that all views of all citizens are reflected in this document; but it is true that everyone was invited and large numbers of people participated. This is truly a Citizen-Driven Strategic Plan for Ecorse and a solid basis for future action by city officials, community leaders and citizen groups throughout the community.

### **The Gifts & Assets of Ecorse – Just the Beginning**

In the process of formulating the goals, objectives, priorities and ultimate direction of the Ecorse community, *Envision Ecorse!* participants began by talking about and identifying the physical and cultural assets of the community. In general, a community asset is any resource that might contribute



*Ecorse citizens **Designing & Determining the City's Destiny***

to the enjoyment or economic development of Ecorse. Even if unoccupied and in disrepair, historic structures can be an asset for future development. Similarly, highways that connect the city to suppliers and other population centers are assets to build on. Unique cultural or natural features can be assets too, like Dingell Park on the Detroit River.

During the first public gathering, *Discover & Dream*, citizens and community leaders worked together in 12 break-out groups to identify and map their community assets (see below). With large aerial maps spread out on their tables, the groups identified over 200 unique community assets. The following list includes all of the assets identified by the participants in just one night. The result of just one exercise, the list is sure to grow as more people think further about the resources of Ecorse.

Below, we have organized the list of all the community assets identified at one community gathering under eight key topics. These are the topics used to organize and categorize the Goals and Objectives described in this *Citizens' Strategic Plan for Ecorse Community Development*. The eight topics are:

- (1) Government;**
- (2) Physical Design & Walkability;**
- (3) Greenway & Parks;**
- (4) Cultural Development;**
- (5) Entrepreneurship, Business & Economic Development;**
- (6) Transportation;**
- (7) Education; and**
- (8) Neighborhoods.**



*Ecorse citizens discussing community assets*



*A Citizen's Strategic Plan for Developing the Ecorse Community*

**Government**

Downriver Community Conference  
Income Tax  
Envision Ecorse Advisory Committee  
DTE Weatherization Program

Police/public safety response  
Emergency Financial Manager  
Grant Writers  
Envision Ecorse!  
Taxes (from U.S. Steel)  
Computers in library

Equipment in council building  
Good website  
Choices for internet  
Open communication with council members  
Finances in Order

Regional library system  
Police and Fire response time  
St. Francis Cemetery  
Trash Collection  
Fire Dept. & EMS

**Physical Design and Walkability**

Good connected sidewalks  
High School Track

Accessibility to schools by walking or biking  
Good bike path system

Stores are within walking distance  
Lighting & Trees

Strong walkable community

**Greenways and Parks**

Pepper Creek  
Bird Sanctuary (Mud Island)  
Greenway Initiative  
Mud Island  
The Waterfront  
Parks

Tennis Court  
Jefferson Park  
New Community Garden  
Beach Street Park  
Popp Field  
Pool

Gym  
15<sup>th</sup> Street Park  
Mill Street open-space  
Dingell Park Riverfront & Marina  
Ecorse Creek

Beach Street Park  
Municipal Park  
Local recreation in close proximity  
Lincoln Park all the way to Ford Street

**Cultural Development**

Diversity  
St. Francis Church  
Effort for historical museum  
30 different churches  
Elks Club (scholarships)  
Basketball  
Soccer  
Want to make a difference  
Ability to come together  
Able to embrace diversity  
Senior Complex  
Spirit to try  
People "believe"

People are involved  
Religious leaders  
Lions Club  
Senior Citizens  
Communication  
Community participation  
Long-lasting social networking  
People rally for a cause  
Senior Center  
Resilient citizens  
The Band  
The Football Team  
2<sup>nd</sup> Oldest Rowing Club

Feels like everyone is related  
People always come back  
Rarely see "for sale" signs  
Lions Club uniform/hat/coat Program  
Mason social club  
Senior citizen club  
Friendly/Engaging People  
Oldest down-river community  
Football teams hang together  
Pastors - Retired Teachers  
People smile back!

Food Pantry - Pennsylvania Club  
St. Francis - Food  
7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist - Food  
Close to Canada  
Variety of faith-based institutions  
Rowing Club boat house  
Polaski Club  
Auburn Cafe  
Youth Baseball

**Entrepreneurship, Business and Economic Development**

Barber Shop	Boat Marina	Entrepreneurs	Grocer at 19 <sup>th</sup>
Collision Shop	Greek Restaurant	11 <sup>th</sup> Street Men (Father’s Day)	Old Security Bank
Shoe Shop	Chinese Restaurant	Brownfield Development (at US Steel)	Dime Store
Independent Restaurants	Mexican Restaurant	Family Dollar	Grand Porte Café
Child Care	Mom & Pop Shops	Riverside Coney Island	Midget Market
Sparkle & Shine	Ice Cream Truck	Auburn Café	Emagenes
New health clinic	New start up businesses	Shrimp Hut	Income Tax & Accounting
Viable downtown area	Several lawn care services	Available space for small businesses	
Area of walkup cafés	Waterfront/Detroit Princess Port	New print shop	
Waterfront Condos	Good Cell Phone Coverage		
U.S. Steel			

**Transportation**

SMART Buses	Great Lakes Bus	10 <sup>th</sup> and Southfield	Cleanliness & safety on Jefferson
IGC Salliotte Road Improvements	Outer Drive is a good connector	8 <sup>th</sup> to Labadie	
Senior citizens bus	Good grid system (streets)	14 <sup>th</sup> Street to Hyacinth	
SEMPA & MDOT	13 <sup>th</sup> Street	12 <sup>th</sup> Street	
Bus service into Detroit	Salliotte and 12 <sup>th</sup>	Access to public transportation	

**Education**

New Schools	Board of Education	Back to school program	Adult continuing education
Schools/City Partnerships	PTO	School/City cooperation for Recreation Services	
School System	High School Alumni	Schools focus on cultural activities	
After School/Summer Programs	High School		
	School of Choice		

**Neighborhoods**

Block Clubs	Safety	Mill Street	Italian Area (“small”)
Front Porches	Crime Watch Program	Development	Hispanic Area
Alleys	Cleaning Efforts	Opportunities with vacant homes	Sparkle & Shine
Community Garden		Greek Town	
Upkeep of property			

## **The Ecorse Community's Vision**

In the communitywide gathering focused on discovering and dreaming, Envision Ecorse began to build on the assets already present in Ecorse. Focusing on the positive, they talked of their dreams for the future of Ecorse, naming hundreds of realistic improvements that could be made to the community. Then, each of the breakout groups described their vision for the future of Ecorse and offered their suggestions for a Vision Statement for 2030 that might capture the community's hopes and dreams while giving real focus and encouragement to the citizens and City Officials working to build a better Ecorse. The following *Vision Statement for Ecorse in 2030* melds together a number of words and phrases presently proposed.

### ***A Vision Statement for Ecorse in 2030***

**We *Envision Ecorse* as a beautiful, diverse and multicultural community with a booming waterfront, a thriving downtown, abundant cultural opportunities, high-quality recreational facilities, and a first rate transportation system. The citizens of Ecorse take pride in their well-kept homes, safe neighborhoods and a strong educational system, welcoming visitors and celebrating their durable riverfront community.**



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## Citizens' Goals for the Ecorse Community

Over the series of three community gatherings, *Envision Ecorse!* participants engaged in discussions about what steps city officials, service groups, and citizens should take to improve and develop the community. We asked ourselves, what goals would the city need to achieve to reach the citizens' vision of Ecorse?

Participants worked with facilitators in 12 breakout groups to develop workable lists of Goals for community improvement and growth, categorized under various topics. They considered how the achievement of each Goal might bring them closer to the community they hoped and dreamed Ecorse could become. The separate breakout groups reported to the larger assembly at each gathering and presented their points of view.

At the third and final communitywide gathering, *Design & Destiny*, the *Envision Ecorse!* participants reviewed the list of 30 major Goals they had developed in previous gatherings. Categorized under 8 separate topics, these 30 Goals represent the heart of a strategic plan for communitywide development. They are challenging, but achievable Goals identified by the people of Ecorse for the City of Ecorse. To reach these Goals, city officials, community organizations and institutions, community leaders and the citizens will need to devote real time, attention and effort. However, this project has demonstrated that the citizens of Ecorse are committed to changing and improving their community.

Before working on a plan of action, participants were asked to help identify which of the 30 Goals listed deserved the highest priority. Recognizing that all 30 Goals are important, which did they believe needed the greatest emphasis? Each of the participants were asked to vote for their four top priority goals by placing a red dot next to those Goals. Hundreds of votes were cast. Ultimately, each of the Goals was important to someone. The following table presents all 30 Goals divided into two priority categories: each goal in the first group received over 10 votes, and each Goal in the second group receive less than 10 votes.

### **GOALS with 10 or More Votes**

#### **Government**

- Foster good leadership in the City
- Provide the best services possible in the most efficient way

#### **Physical Design & Walkability**

- Develop the waterfront as a key community feature
- Maintain and improve the look of Ecorse

#### **Greenways & Parks**

- Increase recreational opportunities for all seasons

#### **Cultural Development**

- Increase and support special events that help foster community cohesion and pride
- Cultivate a strong social services community that is supported by active and caring citizens

#### **Entrepreneurship, Businesses, & Economic Development**

- Encourage and support a strong business community

#### **Transportation & Transit**

- Provide a variety of transportation choices

#### **Education**

- Encourage and support active parents and community in the school system

#### **Neighborhoods**

- Improve the look and feel of neighborhoods
- Repair existing infrastructure
- Increase safety in neighborhoods

### **GOALS with 9 or Fewer Votes**

#### **Government**

- Increase communication between the city and residents
- Make Ecorse a more walkable community
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- Revise the City's charter and management structure

#### **Physical Design & Walkability**

- Develop multi-use areas

#### **Greenways & Parks**

- Preserve and enhance the area's open space and natural beauty

#### **Cultural Development**

- Preserve and increase the area's entertainment opportunities
- Embrace and celebrate the community's diversity
- Develop programs/initiatives that help increase civic pride
- Preserve and showcase the city's cultural heritage

#### **Entrepreneurship, Businesses, & Economic Development**

- Cultivate entrepreneurs within Ecorse
- Reduce industrial pollution
- Stay current with new forms of communication and technology
- Utilize methods and technologies that support energy efficient practices

#### **Education**

- Provide many educational opportunities for the citizens of Ecorse

#### **Neighborhoods**

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Foster and support an active citizenry in neighborhoods

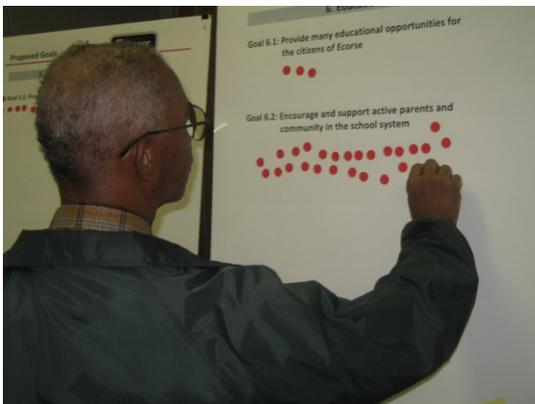
## ***A Citizens' Plan for Action – Goals, Objectives & Strategies for the Future of Ecorse***

During the last Envision Ecorse community gathering, about 150 citizens worked together, and in 12 breakout groups to review the Goals developed in previous meetings and create an action plan for achieving these Goals. With the help of professional facilitators, these citizens described a number of objectives and strategies for reaching each of the Goals.

For this *Strategic Plan, Envision Ecorse!* defined **GOALS** as the accomplishments that must be achieved if the vision is to become a reality. **OBJECTIVES** are clear statements of activities required to achieve each GOAL. With these definitions in mind, the participants developed and recorded both Objectives for each goal and offered many suggestions on strategies for success.

The following table is the final collection of **GOALS & OBJECTIVES** offered by *Envision Ecorse!* participants to Ecorse City officials, community leaders, organizations and citizens. This document offers a tangible and substantial focus for efforts by elected and appointed Ecorse City officials as well as a wide range of citizen groups, civic organizations, schools and citizens.

***Envision Ecorse! commends this Citizens' Strategic Plan for Ecorse Community Development to the City Commission and all residents as a workable and sensible path for positive change and development.***



**TOPIC 1. GOVERNMENT**

**GOAL 1.1 FOSTER GOOD LEADERSHIP IN THE CITY**

**A. Establish a citizen committee(s) to keep the City accountable & working on this the *Strategic Plan* (& other City plans)**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should help convene a *Citizen Advisory Committee*, with defined responsibilities & parameters (i.e. purpose, composition of committee, powers, meeting time, etc.).
2. Neighborhood block clubs should appoint one member to serve on the (new) *Citizen Advisory Committee*.
3. Working with local business owners, city officials should appoint at least three business owners to serve on the (new) *Citizen Advisory Committee*.

**B. Develop a "Leadership Mentor" Program**

***Strategies:***

1. Working with the (new) *Citizen Advisory Committee*, City officials should research how leadership programs in other communities function & how program components could be duplicated &/or implemented in Ecorse.
2. Working with the (new) *Citizen Advisory Committee*, City officials should identify local leaders & invite them to participate in the "Leadership Mentor" Program.
3. Working with the *Citizen Advisory Committee*, City officials should contact school officials to determine what type of mentoring program would be beneficial & identify potential student participants.

**GOAL 1.2 PROVIDE THE BEST SERVICE POSSIBLE IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY**

**A. Study & consider merging with public services with neighboring jurisdictions**

***Strategy:***

City officials should work with officials from neighboring jurisdictions to study, consider & determine the feasibility of merging public services or working together to more efficiently provide for public services.

**B. Gain a post office in the city**

***Strategy:***

City officials should contact the United States Postal Service to determine how a local post office branch could be opened in the City.

**C. Repair deteriorating infrastructure**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should work together to determine the condition of the City's infrastructure & prioritize which infrastructure is in need of repair or replacement.
2. City officials & staff should ensure infrastructure repairs & replacements are noted in future capital improvement plans.
3. City officials & staff should research & apply for Federal Programs that provide funding for infrastructure projects.
4. City officials should study the feasibility of applying a special assessment to certain areas of the City where infrastructure repairs are especially needed.

### **GOAL 1.3 INCREASE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CITY & RESIDENTS**

#### **A. Utilize electronic billboard to inform citizens**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should post up-coming meeting dates & events (e.g. spring clean-up) on the electronic billboard to better inform citizens.

#### **B. Create a community newsletter**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & staff should develop & mail a community newsletter at least four times a year. Each newsletter should include a “report” from each City department & each city committee/commission & information about how citizens can participate on city committees/commissions.
2. City officials & staff should develop & mail an annual report of the City’s accomplishments, projects & accolades.

### **GOAL 1.4 ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION**

#### **A. Provide outreach materials & encourage representatives from Block Clubs & other groups to attend City Council & Planning Commission meetings**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should create an official *Citizen Advisory Committee*, with defined responsibilities & parameters (i.e. purpose, composition of committee, powers, meeting time, etc.).
2. The *Citizen Advisory Committee* members should report back to their neighborhood block groups & other constituents the results of *Committee*

activities & upcoming meetings of City committees/commissions.

3. City officials & staff should develop & mail a community newsletter at least four times a year that includes information about how citizens can participate on city committees/commissions.

#### **B. Develop a “Youth Council” or other youth engagement mechanism to keep younger people involved**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should work with school officials to develop a “youth council” & “youth ambassador” that would provide a youth perspective on current issues before the city. Time for the “youth ambassador” to report on the youth perspective should be placed on the agenda of each city council meeting.
2. City officials should work with school officials & the “youth council” to develop & administer a comprehensive survey to students that will identify which issues are the most important to the community’s youth.

### **GOAL 1.5 REVISE THE CITY’S CHARTER & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

#### **A. Revise the City’s charter**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & City staff should engage in additional training to be sure city operations are appropriate & efficient.
2. City officials & City staff should work with the Michigan Municipal League to study, review & determine the need for revising the City’s Charter - noting opportunities for more appropriate & efficient operations.

## **TOPIC 2. PHYSICAL DESIGN & WALKABILITY**

### **GOAL 2.1 DEVELOP THE WATERFRONT AS A KEY COMMUNITY FEATURE**

#### **A. Increase waterfront activities & celebrations, such as fireworks, boat races, & paddle boating**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should engage citizen groups to organize & develop activities & celebrations.
2. Citizen groups & city officials should seek sponsorship from local businesses.

#### **B. Develop major physical & cultural features along the waterfront**

***Strategies:***

1. Working with citizens, city officials should plan steps to acquire land along the waterfront.
2. City officials & staff should *seek funding* to build new & improved structures on the waterfront.  
New structures should include a *band shell* as well as *expanded & renovated boardwalk*.
3. Citizens & citizen groups should assist city officials & track their progress.

#### **C. Attract specific businesses that would enhance the character & use of the waterfront**

***Strategies:***

1. Citizens, (new) business association & city officials should review options for business attraction.
2. Working with citizens, City officials should review master plan, zoning & other documents for development readiness.
3. Citizen groups, (new) business association & city officials should advertise/market opportunity for ice-cream vendor & others.

4. Pursue options for capturing some funds from business development to support waterfront improvements (e.g., TIF District).

#### **C. Develop the value of community's connection with the Mud Island Wildlife Refuge**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should open lines of communication with the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.
2. Working with citizens & relevant interest groups, City officials should explore potential for tourism & other local value.

### **GOAL 2.2: MAINTAIN & IMPROVE THE LOOK OF ECORSE**

#### **A. Improve city owned properties**

***Strategy:***

City officials & citizens should initiate city-wide beautification & streetscaping efforts, such as installing more lighting, trees, & flowers along corridors.

#### **B. Encourage business & homeowners to keep their properties clean**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should work with citizens to review & revise the zoning ordinance & building codes.
2. City officials should provide business owners & homeowners education about codes & consistently enforce the codes.
3. City officials should work with non-profit groups & neighborhood block clubs to develop property maintenance programs.

**GOAL 2.3: MAKE ECORSE A MORE WALKABLE COMMUNITY**

**A. Repair existing sidewalks**

**Strategy:**

Working with citizens, city officials should initiate a sidewalk inventory to record where repair is needed.

**B. Install sidewalks, where needed, in both neighborhood & business districts**

**Strategies:**

1. City officials should develop a non-motorized plan to create a well connected pedestrian-friendly city.
2. City officials should work with key landowners to develop pedestrian walkways in significant places, like around U.S. Steel & along the river as reflected in the (new) non-motorized plan.

**GOAL 2.4 DEVELOP ADDITIONAL MULTI-USE AREAS**

**A. Finish Mill Street development**

**Strategy:**

Working with citizens & business community, City officials should direct the development of this site.

**TOPIC 3. GREENWAYS & PARKS**

**GOAL 3.1: INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL SEASONS**

**A. Develop new recreational facilities & opportunities**

**Strategies:**

1. Partnering with schools & local recreational groups, city officials should develop an inventory of existing recreational assets & opportunities to gain a full understanding of existing recreational assets.

2. Working with citizens & local groups, city officials should develop a plan & secure funding to develop a recreational center that serves all Ecorse Citizens, especially youth.
3. City officials should engage citizens to create an overall Recreation Plan for the development of a pool, more ball diamonds, & a nature walk at Pepper Creek among other desired recreational facilities.

**B. Bring Ecorse Rowing Club back to Ecorse**

**Strategy:**

City officials & staff should work with the Rowing Club & citizen supporters of the Rowing Club to provide the necessary facilities that would bring the Rowing Club back to Ecorse.

**GOAL 3.2: PRESERVE & ENHANCE THE AREA'S OPEN SPACE & NATURAL BEAUTY**

**A. Increase the number of Greenways available in Ecorse**

**Strategies:**

1. City officials should continue to support & expand the Greenway Initiative to help develop local greenways in key places, like from Outer Drive to the river.
2. City officials & staff should *seek funding* to develop greenways.

**B. Maintain & improve existing parks**

**Strategies:**

1. City officials & staff should develop a Park Improvement & Maintenance Plan. The Plan should include installing more basic amenities, such as bathrooms, drinking fountain, & garbage cans. City officials & staff should work with community service

programs & local horticulture groups to clean-up & beautify the parks.

2. City officials, staff, & citizens should work to improve the safety of Ecorse parks by having better lighting & patrolling.
3. City officials, staff & citizens should develop creative fundraising efforts, such as selling water at parks, to raise funds for park maintenance & improvement.

#### **TOPIC 4. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **GOAL 4.1: INCREASE & SUPPORT SPECIAL EVENTS THAT HELP FOSTER COMMUNITY COHESION & PRIDE**

###### **A. Increase the number of fairs & festivals**

***Strategy:***

City officials should work with businesses & citizen group to develop fairs & festivals. The fairs & festivals should include an arts & crafts fair, a music festival, an annual community walk, & a rowing regatta.

###### **B. Encourage neighborhood clean-up initiatives**

***Strategy:***

Citizens & groups, such as block clubs, should develop neighborhood clean-up events & programs.

###### **C. Hold periodic community gatherings**

***Strategy:***

City officials should hold annual gatherings to celebrate the accomplishment of the Strategic Plan & bolster ongoing community improvement efforts.

###### **D. Improve & expand relations between the police & the community**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should increase community outreach efforts to help Ecorse police & citizens come together (e.g., hold an ice-cream social; establish routing foot patrols).

##### **GOAL 4.2: CULTIVATE A STRONG SOCIAL SERVICES COMMUNITY THAT IS SUPPORTED BY ACTIVE & CARING CITIZENS**

###### **A. Understand what services are already available**

***Strategy:***

Working with local service agencies, city officials should engage citizen groups in creating an inventory of services.

###### **B. Expand & support neighborhood block clubs**

***Strategy:***

Working with citizens & service clubs, city officials & staff should develop a Block Club network that would help support & expand Block Club activities.

###### **C. Create more community opportunities for youths & seniors**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should develop a community center that includes amenities & activities specifically focused on youth & seniors.

**D. Support non-profits that provide for community services**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & citizens should work with area non-profits & churches to increase community services, such as access to healthcare, daycare, shelters, & training courses on home management & parenting.
2. Local non-profits should develop a shared, interagency information & resource center to help residents find the assistance they need

**GOAL 4.3: PRESERVE & INCREASE THE AREA'S ENTERTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**A. Attract businesses that provide entertainment, such as a movie theater, bowling alley, dinner train, upscale restaurants, skating rink, & boutique shops**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & citizen groups and (new) business association should develop a recruitment plan to attract entertainment businesses
2. City officials & staff should create marketing materials to help attract entertainment businesses

**B. Develop & Expand Social/Activity Clubs**

***Strategies:***

1. Citizens & local groups should develop special interest clubs (e.g., chess club, rowing club, community band) & market these clubs to raise awareness about them
2. City officials should reach out to existing clubs, such as Rotary, encouraging more involvement with the city

**GOAL 4.4: EMBRACE & CELEBRATE THE COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY**

**A. Hold a yearly Ecorse ethnic celebration**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should work with local businesses & citizen groups to plan for & execute a yearly ethnic festival

**B. Develop a Multi-Cultural Center**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should work with local businesses & citizen groups to create a Multi-Cultural Center

**C. Provide bilingual signs & literature**

***Strategies:***

1. Citizens & non-profits should work to determine what languages are prevalent in Ecorse
2. City officials & staff should install bi-or multi-lingual signs & literature based on common languages spoken in Ecorse

**GOAL 4.5: DEVELOP PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES THAT HELP INCREASE CIVIC PRIDE**

**A. Establish an "Ecorse Pride" non-profit that coordinates citizen led improvements**

***Strategies:***

1. Working with local officials & staff, citizens & citizen groups should establish a non-profit that coordinates citizen volunteers

2. The (new) Ecorse Pride non-profit should develop a youth program to complete community improvement projects, such as planting flowers.

**B. Promote Ecorse**

***Strategy:***

City officials should work with citizens to develop a new Ecorse logo.

**GOAL 4.6: PRESERVE & SHOWCASE THE CITY'S CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**A. Develop a historical museum**

***Strategies:***

1. Interested citizens, groups & the library should engage in a partnership to develop an Ecorse historical society
2. The (new) historical society should raise funds, work with city officials, & gather community support to develop a historical museum.

**B. Honor veterans & other local heroes**

***Strategy:***

City officials should work with local veteran groups to honor heroes through festivals, monuments, & parades.

**TOPIC 5. ENTREPRENEURSHIP, BUSINESSES, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL 5.1: ENCOURAGE & SUPPORT A STRONG BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

**A. Create a new business association**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should convene a business-owners discussion group and assist in establishing a business association.

**B. Create a distinct downtown area**

***Strategies:***

1. Working with citizens, community leaders, and businesses, city officials & staff should select an area of focus to serve as the downtown.
2. Working with businesses & citizens, city officials should develop a Downtown Development Plan.
3. City officials & staff should seek funding to provide improved infrastructure and *sense of place* amenities in the proposed downtown area to spur development.
4. City officials & staff should explore & implement various small business tax-break options to small businesses.

**C. Develop a city outreach program to existing & potential businesses**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should develop marketing materials & create an outreach campaign to welcome, guide, & provide incentives to businesses to commit to Ecorse.

**D. Create an Economic Development Plan**

***Strategies:***

1. Working with local businesses & citizens, city officials & staff should develop an economic development plan with measurable objectives, such as attracting five new businesses in a year.
2. City officials & staff should inventory buildings available for new businesses.
3. Include attracting needed businesses, such as grocery stores & a farmer's market, as part of the (new) Economic Development Plan.
4. Include a strategy for developing a strong light-industry base using existing amenities, such as rail.

**E. Encourage businesses to hire local residents**

***Strategy:***

City officials & citizen groups should explore techniques, such as tax breaks, to encourage businesses to hire local residents.

**F. Develop a "buy local" program**

***Strategy:***

The (new) Businesses Association should develop a "buy local" campaign to encourage Ecorse citizens to shop & receive services at local businesses.

**GOAL 5.2: REDUCE INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION**

**A. Hold large businesses accountable for not complying with environmental regulations**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & staff should create stronger lines of communication to distribute information on regulation & provide warning that enforcement is being strengthened.
2. City official & staff should enforce regulations to the extent that the city has power.

**GOAL 5.3: CULTIVATE ENTREPRENEURS WITHIN ECORSE**

**A. Create a career development program for youth**

***Strategies:***

1. Local businesses, schools, citizens, & local groups should partner to develop a summer job program for youth.
2. Schools should identify & work with businesses that can host apprenticeship programs for school credit.
3. Local businesses, schools, citizens, & civic groups should partner to develop a job-shadowing program for youth.
4. Schools should include more vocational opportunities in the educational system.

**GOAL 5.4: STAY CURRENT WITH NEW FORMS OF COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY**

**A. Ensure that Wi-Fi is available city-wide, especially in business districts**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & citizens should inventory existing Wi-Fi spots.
2. Businesses, city officials & nonprofit groups should partner to develop a Wi-Fi Accessibility Plan.

**B. Provide publically accessible computers & computer training**

***Strategy:***

Citizen groups should work with city officials to secure funding & develop a technology center for Ecorse citizens.

**GOAL 5.5: UTILIZE METHODS & TECHONOLGIES THAT SUPPORT ENERGY EFFICIENT PRACTICES**

**A. Encourage large businesses to use energy efficient techniques**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & staff should seek assistance in community-wide training on new energy efficient techniques.
2. City officials should develop incentives for businesses to use energy efficient techniques.

**B. Develop a program to install solar panels on homes & businesses**

***Strategy:***

Working with non-profits & energy companies, city officials & staff should develop a solar panel installation program.

**TOPIC 6. TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT**

**GOAL 6.1: PROVIDE A VARIETY OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES**

**A. Increase & improve bike lanes**

***Strategies:***

1. Working with citizens, city officials & staff should take inventory of existing bike lanes.
2. Bike lanes should be included in a comprehensive Non-motorized Plan with revised Master Plan.

**B. Increase public transportation options in the region**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials & staff should work with citizens & public transportation agencies to develop a Public Transportation Plan. The plan should include bus & rail along with other transportation options, & a strategy to connect multi-modal transportation options.
2. City officials & staff should work with citizens & public transportation agencies to develop a senior rider program.

## **TOPIC 7. EDUCATION**

### **GOAL 7.1: ENCOURAGE & SUPPORT ACTIVE PARENTS & COMMUNITY IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

#### **A. Develop parent outreach programs**

***Strategy:***

Schools should provide incentives for parents to become more involved (e.g., parents should be invited to sit in on classes).

### **GOAL 7.2: PROVIDE MANY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CITIZENS OF ECORSE**

#### **A. Expand & enhance the Ecorse Public Library**

***Strategy:***

City & citizen groups should seek funding sources to expand the library facilities & resources.

#### **B. Bring community college course offering to Ecorse**

***Strategies:***

1. Ecorse Public Schools and City official should recruit local offerings by nearby colleges.
2. Partners should work to attract specialty curriculums, such as performing arts & maritime.

#### **C. Increase computer training opportunities**

***Strategy:***

City officials & school staff members should develop a computer training program for Ecorse citizens.

## **TOPIC 8. NEIGHBORHOODS**

### **GOAL 8.1: IMPROVE THE LOOK & FEEL OF NEIGHBORHOODS**

#### **A. Develop neighborhood pride and improvement programs**

***Strategies:***

1. Block clubs should work together to develop neighborhood pride programs, such as yard beautification contests.
2. Clean up foliage in neighborhoods with help from citizens and civic groups.
3. Block Clubs should develop neighborhood watch over vacant houses & contribute to their upkeep.
4. Block Clubs should develop neighborhood watch over vacant houses & contribute to their upkeep.

#### **B. Connect residents with home/neighborhood improvement funding sources**

***Strategies:***

1. City officials should work with local non-profits to develop a community resource center.
2. City officials should work with existing housing agencies that address housing issues.
3. City officials & staff should develop incentives to sell & give tax reverted properties to new owners.

#### **C. Enforce & possibly increase property maintenance codes**

***Strategy:***

City officials & staff should provide for the reinforcement of existing rules (e.g. removal of abandoned vehicles).

**D. Fix or tear down abandoned, dilapidated houses**

**Strategies:**

1. City officials & staff should work with citizens to revise ordinances to create stiff penalties for not maintaining properties.
2. City officials & staff should work with neighborhood groups to determine if certain alleys should be closed.

**E. Preserve historic homes**

**Strategy:**

City officials & staff should work with the (new) historical society to identify & pursue avenues of preservation for historic homes.

**GOAL 8.2: REPAIR EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

**A. Repair sidewalks, roads, sewer & water systems**

**Strategies:**

1. City officials & staff should allocate existing revenues where possible and seek outside funding.
2. City officials & staff should work with Wyandotte to address flooding issues.
3. Neighborhood groups should form volunteer committees to identify areas that need the most repair.

**GOAL 8.3: INCREASE SAFETY IN NEIGHBORHOODS**

**A. Board up vacant homes and remove blighted buildings**

**Strategy:**

City officials & staff should work with county and citizen groups to identify & remove hazardous buildings.

**B. Create neighborhood watch programs**

**Strategies:**

1. Citizen groups should report and track activities at vacant homes.
2. City officials & staff & neighborhood groups should seek grant funds for neighborhood watch activities.
3. Neighborhood groups should invite cooperation by all neighbors of all ages.

**C. Increase police, fire, & ambulance services**

**Strategy:**

City officials & staff should seek funding & work with service departments to increase capacity.

**D. Increase lighting**

**Strategy:**

City officials & staff should work to increase lighting in key areas.

**E. Create a safe walk to school program**

**Strategy:**

Neighborhood groups should start a "walking school bus".

**GOAL 8.4: CREATE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES**

**A. Increase housing opportunities to accommodate young professionals, young families**

**Strategies:**

1. City officials & citizen groups should work with housing agencies to pursue funding programs, such as state & federal grants.
2. City officials should create incentive programs for developments that include a variety of housing options.

## GOAL 8.5: FOSTER & SUPPORT AN ACTIVE CITIZENRY IN NEIGHBORHOODS

### A. Keep in contact with absentee landlords

#### **Strategies:**

1. City officials & staff should maintain a list of absentee landlords.
2. City officials & staff should develop outreach materials & develop lines of communication to engage absentee landlords in the community.

### B. Establish a youthbuild program

#### **Strategy:**

Neighborhood groups should partner with schools & local housing agencies to develop a youthbuild program.

### C. Encourage neighborhood social activities

#### **Strategies:**

1. City officials, in partnership with neighborhood groups, should plan for & have neighborhood social gatherings, such as block parties.
2. Churches & neighborhood groups should collaborate to reach neighborhood improvement goals.
3. Block Clubs, in partnership with the City, should market their groups & continuously recruit new members.
4. Block Clubs should hold periodical gatherings to learn from each other & strengthen their efforts as a whole.
5. Block Clubs should create a “village” atmosphere by encouraging neighbor to neighbor communication.

## CONCLUSION – A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE COMMUNITY OF ECORSE

This document offers a positive and hopeful vision for the future of Ecorse while presenting a realistic guide for achieving that vision. Many citizens participated in creating this document, offering their brightest hopes and best ideas. The words of the people of Ecorse echo through these pages.

Now it is time to get to work. Together, the elected officials, community leaders and citizens of Ecorse must develop cooperative and collaborative efforts to get the job done. Citizens and community leaders must stay engaged, participating in advisory committees and work groups to keep things moving. When the people are engaged and focused on their goals, elected officials and city government will also stay on track.



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