

Lathrup Village
DDA: Solutions
for the Business
Corridors



Purpose

In the spirit of transparency, we want to share what we are learning through our Recast Leaders Cohort.

We want to showcase our intentions and thought process for the “Maker’s Mile”.

We want to elicit discussion and feedback from residents, business/property owners and prospective investors in our DDA district.

Brief History

Main Street Oakland County provided DDA staff with news on the Recast City Cohort opportunity, sponsored by Michigan Municipal League and the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation.

Staff immediately went to work on the application, forming the team, and preparing necessary points of contact.

In late January 2026, the team assembled to prepare for the interview. The team penned the term: “The Maker’s Mile” for the Southfield Road Corridor.

In Early February, Lathrup Village was one of six communities admitted into the cohort.



What is Recast City?

Also known as “Recast Leader’s Cohort”. Started by Ilana Preuss, former Chief of Staff for EPA Smart Growth Program.

She wrote a book on redeveloping/revitalizing small city downtowns (*Recast Your City: How to Save Your Downtown with Small-Scale Manufacturing*).

Started the Recast City Leaders program; 10-month educational venture for communities that costs \$20,000 to learn the process to revitalize downtown/corridors. and help businesses succeed

Intended to help communities activate vacant storefronts, support small-scale production and maker businesses, and focuses on practical, implementable economic development strategies

Full program cost is provided by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation.

Why Explore These Strategies?

Nationwide data shows retail environments are changing.

Traditional storefronts are difficult to fill with retail alone.

Small producers and makers are growing segments of the economy.

Communities are seeking flexible mixed-use business districts.

Opportunities to support local entrepreneurs.

Work Currently Underway



- Identifying economic barriers for entrepreneurs



- Evaluating opportunities within the business corridor



- Exploring zoning and policy considerations



- Developing goals for activating commercial spaces



- Preparing for next cohort workshop

Goals for Lathrup Village

01

Strengthen the Business Corridors;

02

Activate vacant or underutilized commercial space;

03

Support entrepreneurs and small businesses;

04

Explore zoning flexibility for small-scale production;

05

Encourage new types of business activity.

What is Small-Scale Production?

A community of businesses that produce some kind of tangible good.

The businesses must be able to replicate or produce these products in-house and sell them in their stores.

- Think woodworking, jewelry, leather, 3D Printed goods, hair/skincare products, biotech, hardware, etc.

- They can also ship them from their stores.

What is a Maker Space or Maker Business?

Small businesses that produce goods locally.

Often combine production and showroom retail.

Encourage entrepreneurship and local innovation.

Often activate underused storefronts.

The Maker's Mile

A play off Chicago's "Miracle Mile" or St. Clair Shores' "Nautical Mile", this is was our arbitrary mile-long designation.

This project will cover the entire business district of Lathrup Village.

Open a pathway for already existing businesses to begin utilizing Small-Scale Manufacturing as well as permit new businesses to open within the districts.

Instead of Re-Zoning individual nodes or parcels per project request, we intend to add use types to our zoning designations.

The Maker's Mile: An Umbrella Identity

The Maker's Mile acts as an Umbrella Identity- an overarching theme of the entire district.

The "Maker's Mile" is not one block, but a corridor-based initiative applied strategically across our commercial areas.

Under the umbrella are corridor-based creative production networks activated through targeted nodes.



PROJECT
DIAMOND



**MICHIGAN
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

How This Program Can Succeed

- Through community partners and organizations, like:
 - Oakland THRIVE
 - Lathrup Village Chamber of Commerce
 - Project DIAMOND through Automation Alley
 - Main Street Oakland County
 - Michigan Economic Development Corporation
 - Financial Institutions like Chase Bank and Michigan First CU
 - Lathrup Village Residents

Questions and Discussion

We are hopeful that this presentation provided enough *preliminary* information to spur discussion or will elicit questions and intrigue amongst the community. We are happy to answer any questions at any time.

Please note: These plans are not final. Everything we presented is still in preliminary stages, so there is still plenty of time to make changes to plans or ideas moving forward.

Questions for the Planning Commission:

- What opportunities do you see for small-scale production locally?
- Are there zoning considerations we should explore?
- How can we support entrepreneurs in the corridor?
- What concerns should be addressed early in the process?