The Right Place is the economic development organization that drives current and long-term economic prosperity in West Michigan.

Building on three decades of knowledge and experience in understanding the opportunities and challenges affecting the West Michigan economy, The Right Place, Inc. develops and implements comprehensive strategies to retain, expand, and attract businesses vital to the region's long-term health. These strategies include marketing the region globally, connecting area businesses to national and international resources, identifying emerging growth opportunities, and strengthening the global competitiveness and innovation of area firms.

Through these and other activities, The Right Place is fostering an environment of sustainable economic growth, high quality employment and wealth creation for the West Michigan economy.
INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE 2017-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

Since our founding in 1985, The Right Place has developed and implemented comprehensive strategies to drive long-term economic growth and prosperity in West Michigan. Those strategies have continuously improved, adapting over time to regional, national, and global economic shifts.

Over the years, these strategic plans provided both focus and direction for our work, work that has positively impacted West Michigan in the creation of over 44,000 new jobs and $4.7 billion in capital investment. Building on this success, we present our 2017-2019 Strategic Plan for The Right Place.

This three-year plan was developed with our board of directors, staff, and community partners, along with support from our strategic partners at PwC. While it incorporates many of the same focus areas, we have made changes based on new economic shifts and opportunities.

NEW, ENHANCED METRICS

Historically, we have tracked and evaluated our progress on three key metrics: Jobs, Payroll, and Capital Investment. And while these three metrics are critical to economic growth, today, it represents only a fraction of our total work.

Hence in the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, we have added six new metrics to our core, including: the total number of projects completed, total number of unique companies served, total number of companies assisted, total number of talent assists, and total number of event attendees. These new metrics begin to better capture the breadth and depth of our impact in the region.
INCREASED FOCUS ON BUSINESS SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Much of our value in driving economic growth is based on building and sustaining business support systems for West Michigan’s growing companies. To that end, we have more clearly defined business support systems in this new strategic plan to better reflect the impact they have on West Michigan businesses and economic growth. We also plan to expand these systems with new resources for area companies.

SHIFT IN DESIGN

Since adding industrial design to our 2014-2016 Strategic Plan, we have learned it is a unique talent asset of West Michigan’s economy and an integral part of our industries. Thus, to better reflect its role in the region, we have now included it as part of our work-ready talent strategy.

During the next three years, The Right Place will continue to advance the West Michigan economy guided by the thought leadership of our board of directors and in collaboration with our regional partners. Through this leadership, we are confident West Michigan will experience economic growth over the next three years and beyond.
A PLAN FOR GROWTH

FOUNDATIONS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Every community relies on strategic, foundational assets on which its regional economy can grow. These assets are the building blocks of long-term economic growth. To ensure West Michigan’s economic foundation is prepared for continued growth, The Right Place will focus efforts on several core areas: Business Support Systems, Infrastructure, Work-Ready Talent, and Quality of Life.

STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS

No two communities or regions are alike, and each has unique industry strengths. In West Michigan, The Right Place and our partners have identified four strategic growth industries: Advanced Manufacturing, Food Processing and Agribusiness, Life Sciences and Medical Devices, and Information Technology and Communications. Over the next three years, The Right Place will work to grow investment and new jobs in each of these four industry sectors.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

The Right Place plays a critical role in providing thought leadership and long-term economic growth strategies for the West Michigan region. By engaging the business and community leaders on our board of directors, The Right Place is able to set a comprehensive vision for economic prosperity in the region.

2017 – 2019
METRICS OF SUCCESS

NEW/RETAINED JOBS

4,200
ANNUAL GOAL: 1,400

NEW/RETAINED PAYROLL

$150,000,000
ANNUAL GOAL: $50,000,000

NEW CAPITAL INVESTMENT

$500,000,000
ANNUAL GOAL: $167,000,000
The following new metrics provide additional support to the top-line outcome metrics, better reflecting the organization’s comprehensive economic development work.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS COMPLETED**
Represents the total number of business expansion, attraction, and retention projects completed.
ANNUAL GOAL: 17

**MANUFACTURING SUPPORT CONTRACTS COMPLETED**
Represents the total number of MMTC-West manufacturing support contracts completed.
ANNUAL GOAL: 120

**COMPANIES SERVED**
Represents the total number of individual companies served in West Michigan.
ANNUAL GOAL: 400

**COMPANY ASSISTS**
Represents the total number value-added assists provided to West Michigan companies.
ANNUAL GOAL: 1,333

**WORK-READY TALENT ASSISTS**
Represents the total number of individual professionals assisted in West Michigan.
ANNUAL GOAL: 525

**EVENT ATTENDEES**
Represents the total number of event attendees educated at Right Place events.
ANNUAL GOAL: 1,600
INITIATIVES

STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing currently accounts for 15 percent of all jobs and nearly 2,500 companies in the region, and firmly remains the foundation of West Michigan’s economy. The region is home to one of the nation’s largest and most extensive manufacturing sectors, specializing in a wide variety of materials and industries. If you can dream it, we can make it.

The Right Place and the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center – West (MMTC-West) will drive initiatives to support global competitiveness, collaboration, investment, and growth in advanced manufacturing.

FOOD PROCESSING AND AGRIBUSINESS

Michigan is the second most diverse agricultural state in the country, next to California. With an abundant food and water supply, West Michigan is uniquely positioned to lead the nation in food processing and agribusiness. The region’s agribusiness sector produces one-third of Michigan’s total agricultural sales, contributing $1.5 billion to the regional economy.

The Right Place and MMTC-West will drive economic development and growth efforts to better position West Michigan as a food processing and agribusiness leader in the nation.

LIFE SCIENCES AND MEDICAL DEVICES

West Michigan is home to some of the most advanced healthcare, research, and education facilities in the Midwest, bringing billions in investment to the region. And along with the investment comes talent. Over the past ten years, talent attraction and job growth within the region’s life science sector has grown 38.7 percent, 18 points higher than the national average.

To support this continued growth, The Right Place will drive growth strategies within the life sciences sector.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

From full-service, large-scale managed IT solutions to custom software, online and app development, West Michigan’s IT industry is growing at nearly 14 percent, 5 percentage points higher than the national average. And with employment costs 30 percent below the national average, the region’s industry is in a strategic position for success.

The Right Place will drive future growth within West Michigan’s IT industry by investing strategic collaborations to grow West Michigan’s IT industry and attract new opportunities to the region.
FOUNDATIONS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

BUSINESS SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Business support systems are the fundamental building blocks on which West Michigan’s business community grows. Whether directly through our work each year with hundreds of businesses throughout West Michigan, or indirectly through our industry councils, events, and partners at MMTC-West, The Right Place is providing the strategic support systems West Michigan businesses need to succeed.

The Right Place will continue to drive these strategic business support systems, providing integrated solutions to retain and expand companies in West Michigan, as well as attracting new business to the region.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Without world-class infrastructure, West Michigan has little hope for long-term economic growth. Whether it is roads, freight rail, port service, air travel, fresh water, waste water, or broadband, strategic investments in infrastructure are critical to our region’s ability to grow.

For this reason, The Right Place will convene efforts to enhance West Michigan’s infrastructure network by working with state and regional partners.

WORK-READY TALENT

In today’s race for business investment and jobs, access to skilled, work-ready talent is critical. Those communities that address and solve the talent challenge will win the economic growth race. To that end, The Right Place recently took a significant step forward by establishing a new partnership with Hello West Michigan, and leading the launch of the Discover Manufacturing initiative.

Working with these two important initiatives, along with regional education and workforce development partners, The Right Place will support efforts to retain and attract the talent West Michigan’s businesses will need today and in the future.

QUALITY OF LIFE

A community’s quality of life is now one of the top 10 factors in choosing a business location. Many organizations throughout West Michigan are doing tremendous work to increase the quality of life here in the region that will pay dividends for years to come.

The Right Place is engaged with over 60 of those community organizations and initiatives and will continue to support efforts to build the necessary connections between quality of life and economic growth.
MISSION
The Right Place is the economic development organization that drives current and long-term economic prosperity in West Michigan.

VISION
Building on three decades of knowledge and experience in understanding the opportunities and challenges affecting the West Michigan economy, The Right Place, Inc. develops and implements comprehensive strategies to retain, expand, and attract businesses vital to the region’s long-term health. These strategies include marketing the region globally, connecting area businesses to national and international resources, identifying emerging growth opportunities, and strengthening the global competitiveness and innovation of area firms. Through these and other activities, The Right Place is fostering an environment of sustainable economic growth, high quality employment and wealth creation for the West Michigan economy.