

Midland County Community Excellence Assessment

P.1a (1) Community Definition and Identity

Midland County, Michigan lies along the Tittabawassee River, in the middle of the state's Lower Peninsula, 120 miles northwest of Detroit. It originated in the 1830s as a lumbering settlement. In 1890, Herbert Henry Dow arrived in Midland and subsequently founded The Dow Chemical Company. His success enabled Midland to survive the end of the logging era and to grow to its present size.

The County would self-describe itself as being a scientific community, having a highly skilled workforce, and being highly philanthropic. Midland County is considered a rural community. MyMichigan Health, a University of Michigan affiliated Health System, is the largest employer in Midland County. Other large employers include Dow Inc. and Midland Public Schools.

In 2020 the county population was 83,445 and the City of Midland population was 41,922. While the State of Michigan saw an overall increase in population of 2% between 2010 and 2020, Midland County and the City of Midland population changes were negligible between 2012 and 2020. In 2020, approximately 50% of the population was between the age of 5-44 years old. The median age of Midland County residents is higher than the median age in the State of Michigan. In the 2020 census, most Midland County residents are White (93.67%) with the largest minority of residents being Hispanic (3.13%), followed by Asian (2.3%) and Black or African American (1.48%).

The residents of Midland County are highly educated. In 2019, 34% of Midland County residents aged 25 years or older possessed a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 44% in the City of Midland and 29% in the State of Michigan. Over 94% of Midland County residents aged 25 years or older were high school graduates.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Project tracks health outcomes and health factors across the nation. Midland County ranks 7th of 83 counties in the State of Michigan in overall health factors and 8th in the state on overall health outcomes.

Midland County residents enjoy access to a multitude of public and private recreation opportunities. The City of Midland maintains 72 parks on 2,700 acres of land, ranging from small to large parks that include team sport facilities. Midland County owns or manages 1,130 acres of parkland. Dow Gardens and the Chippewa Nature Center attract many visitors every year. The Midland Center for the Arts encourages participation in and appreciation for art, music, science, and history.

The Midland County COE - 2026 effort consists of four focus areas: Developing our Talent, Enriching our Community, Building our Livelihood, and Caring for our People.

Developing Our Talent. Midland County offers high quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. Our community nurtures a skilled workforce and places high value on post-secondary learning. We provide opportunities for children and youth to realize their hopes and dreams. Recent community successes include the work of the Midland County Career and College Access Network with a 34% increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students completing a post-secondary degree or credential and a 15% increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students earning their high school diploma or GED. Increase in skilled trades learning opportunities, the start of preschool “scholarships” for families in need, and school districts that provide a variety of opportunities including agriscience, international baccalaureate, special services to support all students and more.

Enriching Our Community. We strive to ensure that Midland County is a vibrant hub of arts, culture, entertainment, and recreational opportunities. We value and respect our natural resources and work to continue to develop new opportunities for people to connect with nature. Recent community successes include the opening of the Whiting Forest Canopy Walk, a new streetscape downtown, the addition of the Great Lakes Bay Invitational (an LPGA tournament), a new outdoor summer beer garden, a new Broadway series at the performing arts center, and new restaurants in town.

Building Our Livelihood. Midland County creates and sustains competitive advantages for existing and future businesses. We focus on retaining, expanding, and attracting jobs, with the goal of growing our tax base (to support services within the county) and creating employment opportunities. We are well-connected and invest in our physical and technological infrastructure. Recent community focus includes increasing broadband access to outlying areas of the County.

Caring For Our People. Midland County promotes the welfare of the community through systems level planning, collaboration, and promotion of health and human services. A contributor is MyMichigan Health, which is affiliated with Michigan Medicine, the healthcare division of the University of Michigan. The Health System has chosen Community as one of its five foundational elements, recognizing the priority of partnering to meet needs within the community, including both tertiary and wellness. Midland County has collaborated on a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) which touches on four critical areas: later life quality, mental health, substance use disorder and healthy living. The community is currently collaborating to update the CHIP.

P.1a(2) Community Offerings

Building Our Livelihood	Employment opportunities with major employers Other Large employers Supportive lenders Strong Business development
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Developing Our Talent	High quality public secondary education College and Post Graduate education Alternative and trade education Young professional programs Early learning and literacy programs
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Caring for Our People	Excellent health care Senior care and senior living options Affordable housing programs and initiatives Affordable public transportation Public Safety Programs for Veterans, the disabled and recidivism prevention Non-profit crisis support
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Enriching Our Community	Large arts program (community and professional theatre) Extensive city and county parks, trails, and museums Professional and participative sports

Extensive and diverse houses of worship
 Fairs and Festivals
 Cultural Awareness programs
 Tourism development

P.1a(3) Residents, Customers and Stakeholders

	Inclusive and Welcoming Community	Food Security	Senior Services and Basic Needs	Early Care, day care, pre-schools	Shopping, Dining & Entertainment Options	Recreational Opportunities	Post-Secondary Education	Employment Opportunities	Available Workforce	Ease of Transportation	Affordable Housing	Diversity of Housing	Quality K-12 Education	Public Safety	Quality Health Care
Resident Groups															
Young Adults	x				x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Families	x			x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x	x
Low-income residents	x		x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Businesses and firms	x			x	x		x		x			x	x	x	x

P.1a.(4) People and Organizational Resources

Organizational Resource	Building Our Livelihood	Developing Our Talent	Caring for Our People	Enriching our Community	Organizational Resource	Building Our Livelihood	Developing Our Talent	Caring for Our People	Enriching our Community
MyMichigan Health Midland	X		X		City Center Authority	X			X
Midland Business Alliance	X	X			MPS, ESA, Windover		X		
United Way			X		Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC)	X	X		
City & County Government			X		Center for the Arts, Creative 360				X
Parks and Rec, Midland Soccer Club	X			X	Midland Daily News				X
Service Organizations			X	X	Midland County Health Department			X	
Davenport/Delta/Northwood/CMU/MSUExt.		X			Area Foundations	X	X	X	X
Midland County Senior Services			X		Midland Area Community Foundation	X	X	X	X
Legacy Center		X	X		Arnold Center, Disability Network, ARC	X		X	
Shelterhouse/Open Door/1016			X		Dow Gardens, CNC, Whiting Forest, Little Forks				X
Greater Midland		X	X		Great Lakes Loons				X
Grace A Dow Library		X		X	GLBR Alliance	X			
211			X		Downtown Development & Center City Authorities	X			
City & County Government	X		X		Faith Community			X	X
Community Mental Health			X		Midland Cogeneration Venture (MCV)	X			
MivPros	X			X					

P.1a(5) Unique Regulatory Environment

Midland County's geography consists of extensive wetlands and flood plains. Rivers and creeks cross the county and significantly impact the regulatory environment under which we operate. From the Federal level (FEMA) to the State level (EGLE, DNR, etc.) to the County level (Drain Commissioner) to the City level (Building Departments), there is a strong regulatory role in the ongoing growth and development of the community.

Despite the abundance of surface waters, there is a lack of easily accessible drinking water in the County. Water is provided to the City via the Saginaw Midland Water Supply Corporation's piped supply originating in Lake Huron. The City in turn provides water to the surrounding townships, under the agreed upon terms and limitations of the Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA) policy that regulates and controls commercial and residential development in much of the County.

Legacy environmental issues resulting from past manufacturing of the Dow Chemical Company continue to play a significant role in the use of lands and waterways throughout the County and City. A variety of regulatory standards are in place and stipulated agreements exist to address these legacy concerns. Both the EPA and EGLE have strong regulatory roles in the administration and enforcement of these agreements.

Finally, Midland County was once a dry county. This historic status continues to have an impact today as the Michigan Liquor Control Commission maintains limited liquor licenses that are or can be made available to new establishments. This impacts the potential development and the affordability of entities desiring to serve alcohol.

P.1b(1) Mission, Vision, Values

The Midland County Community Excellence Group is a standing entity called the Community Success Panel (CSP). The CSP was inspired by a peer community assessment of Columbus, Indiana in 2010.

Community leaders were brought together by a partnership of the Midland Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Midland, and Midland Tomorrow for the purpose of determining to what extent local institutions, each with a stake in the long-term success of Midland, were aligned in their individual efforts to expand economic opportunities and prosperity for all residents and businesses. The CSP was formed in 2015 as a result of a community wide effort to improve the quality of life in Midland County. The CSP has Operating Guidelines which have been adopted for our COE effort.

Our Vision:

Midland County: Together-Forward-Bold.
An exceptional place where everyone thrives.

Our Purpose:

To enhance prosperity in Midland County by gathering key stakeholders to envision our best future through sharing ideas, building productive relationships, and aligning economic development efforts.

Our Responsibilities:

Participants come together in a spirit of collaboration to find commonality as they work to:

- Develop a community-wide economic development plan, the cornerstone of a thriving community
- Develop key indicators to measure and evaluate the impact of the initiative on the community's prosperity and economic growth,
- Encourage alignment of the work conducted by each member organization with the community-wide plan,
- Seek and foster operational efficiencies and improvements among member organizations, and
- Pursue funding options to assist with key initiatives and programs which support the initiative

Our Focus Areas: described in greater detail in P.1a (1)

Building Our Livelihood

Developing Our Talent

Caring for Our People

Enriching Our Community

Our Values:

- **Community of choice** – We want to be the community of choice for business and individuals. We want to achieve the greatest return on investment of our resources –both financial and human – by offering the very best value for our people.
- **Forward-thinking** – Midland welcomes innovative approaches and believes we should take our future into our hands in a proactive way. In making our plans we need to ask, “When we look back 10 years from now, what will we wish we had done today?”
- **Welcoming community** – We want to attract, develop, and engage a diverse population and ensure that everyone is able to participate in the future growth of the community. We believe in treating people with respect.
- **High aspirations** – We believe that excellence is the only standard for our community. As Herbert Henry Dow said, “anyone would lose out who does not keep continually in front, and it

takes a continuous, strenuous effort to stay there.” We believe in making that continuous effort and setting high expectations and aspirations.

- **Collaboration** – We are deeply committed to an ongoing public/private dialogue to accomplish what we desire in Midland County. Community leaders are expected to connect human and financial resources as collective impact is the way to truly transform and move our community ahead.
- **Service to others** – We believe in giving back whether through time, talent, or treasure. We are a community that looks for ways to serve and care for our neighbors. We recognize that engaged citizens are essential to build the future we envision.

P.1b(2) Composition

Our Members:

Ayre-Rhinehart Realtors	Midland Business Alliance
City of Midland	Midland Center for the Arts
Corteva	Midland County Educational Service Agency
County of Midland	Midland Public Schools
Dow, Inc.	MyMichigan Health
DuPont	Northwood University
Great Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau	Senior Services/Midland County Council on Aging
Greater Midland Community Center	The H Hotel
Memorial Presbyterian Church	Three Rivers Corporation
Michigan Baseball Foundation	United Way of Midland County
Midland Area Community Foundation	

P.1b (3) Leadership System

The Community Success Panel is a collaborative group formed by agreement of the member organizations. The backbone organization is the Midland Area Community Foundation (MACF). The MACF provides administrative and coordinating support to the group. Each year the chairperson and vice chair for the panel are elected from the community volunteers who sit on the panel. The chairperson and vice chair serve one-year terms with the vice chair becoming chairperson after one year. Members are expected to attend regularly and, if the designated individual is unable to attend, to appoint another individual from their organization to attend in their absence.

P.1b (4) Programs and Services

Currently, the CSP does not offer any services or offerings collectively. The group has primarily done information sharing and looked for ways to align efforts. Initiatives are developed and implemented through the member organizations.

As part of the Communities of Excellence journey, the conversation has begun to focus on how to achieve true collective impact. This involves a results-based accountability approach within the CSP as we put the components of collective impact in place. This means we need to share a vision of change and a commitment to solve a problem by coordinating our work and agreeing on shared goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, demonstrated the value of collaborative action. The Midland County COVID-19 Coalition brought together community leaders to discuss innovative ways to understand the needs, identify gaps and respond to the pandemic, and to communicate a coordinated response. The CSP enabled the formation of this group as seven members serve on the Coalition. The Coalition developed a website ReliefMidland.org, implemented a grant process for nonprofits, and initiated support for small business.

P.1b(5) Suppliers, Partners and Collaborators

All CSP members are considered partners in our COE effort. There are no current “suppliers” as any initiatives or projects are carried out by the respective member entities. The CSP has recently begun collaborating with two other groups working in similar areas.

The first called THRIVE is an initiative between The Michigan Health Improvement Alliance, Inc. (MiHIA) and the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance (GLBRA). They are collaborating to bring high-value impact & benefit to our community citizens, and other regional organizations and institutions across a four-county area, including Midland County. THRIVE has developed 34 interventions which we have now mapped to the Midland County focus areas.

The second is Vision 2030 made up of Dow Inc., local foundations, and other community partners. Vision 2030 and the CSP have recently combined efforts agreeing to use COE methodology. An Advisory Committee was formed stakeholders from each initiative in 2021 and has met regularly over the past year. This Advisory Committee has expanded to include constituents not normally well-represented in community initiatives such as agriculture and those with disabilities. A key tenet of Vision 2030 was actively seeking resident voices through membership in the initiative or outreach to the community. It will also challenge the effort to consider funding sources for major community needs.

P.2 Community Situation

P.2.a (1) Competitive Position

Although many of Midland County’s large employers recruit on a national level, we elected to evaluate our position against other Michigan communities focusing on Michigan residents and potential decision influencers. These communities were Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Detroit Metro, and Traverse City.

	<u>Detroit</u> <u>Metro</u>	<u>Grand</u> <u>Rapids</u>	<u>Ann</u> <u>Arbor</u>	<u>Traverse</u> <u>City</u>	<u>Midland</u>
<u>Decision Influencers</u>					
Large metropolitan area	x	x			
Low Population Density (COVID desirable)	x	x		x	x
Recreational Opportunities	X	x	x	x	x
Water recreation				x	
Higher Education Opportunities	x	x	x	x	x
National University			x		
Cultural Opportunities	x	x	x	x	x
Enhanced Community Development	x	x	x		
Affordable Housing	x	x	x	x	x
Easy Quality of Life			x	x	x

High Quality School System		x	x	x	x
Airport / Transportation Hub	x	x		x	x

P.2a (2) Competitive Changes

- Continued Pandemic Recovery
- Small Business Impact
- Increase in at risk ALICE population
- Education and childcare (broadband access)
- May 2020 Dam breakage and flooding
- Property value decline
- Tax revenue decline
- Housing availability and costs
- Community re-build

Like most US communities Midland County was highly impacted by the COVID pandemic. In addition, a failure of two area dams on the Tittabawassee River in May 2020 led to extensive flooding and property damage which still affects the region. However, both of these events have led to a high level of collaboration between entities including United Way, the Midland Area Community Foundation, the Midland County Emergency Manager, the Midland County Educational Service Agency and numerous businesses, non-profits and houses of worship. These have also caused us to focus on two major themes, while operating with our four Focus Areas. These are Thriving Workforce (formerly Enabling a Living Wage) and Developing and Retaining Talent.

P.2.b (1) Core Competencies

Partnering and cooperation between city and county government and large employers.

P.2.b (2) Challenges and Advantages

Key Strategic Challenges	CSP Focus Areas	Initiatives
•SC1: Income disparities	•Caring for Our People	•Thriving Workforce
•SC2: Competing nationwide for talent	•Building Our Livelihood •Developing Our Talent	•Developing and Retaining Talent
•SC3: Significant infrastructure needs/funding •Broadband Access •Dam failure/rebuild •Aging assets (Midland Community Center, Midland Center for the Arts) •Transportation System	•Caring for Our People •Enriching our Community	•Being addressed outside CSP/COE •Midland County Broadband Initiative •Four Lakes Task Force •Multiple initiatives outside COE •Transportation task force/study
•SC4: Need to be more welcoming and inclusive community.	•Enriching Our Community •Caring for Our People	•Wellbeing Initiative •Belonging Initiative •We Hear You Initiative

		•Anti-Racist Midland
Key Strategic Advantages	CSP Focus Areas	Initiatives
•SA1: Wellbeing Coalition Initiative	•Caring for Our People	•Wellbeing Coalition Initiative •Belonging Initiative*
•SA2: Engaged Community Leadership	•Building our Livelihood •Developing Our Talent •Caring for Our People	•Community Success Panel, Vision 2030 Merger
•SA3: Giving and generosity. The community is highly philanthropic through its employers and foundations.	•Caring for Our People •Enriching Our Community	•Community Success Panel, Vision 2030 Merger
•SA4: Highly skilled and educated workforce	•Building Our Livelihood •Developing Our Talent	•Developing and Retaining Talent

P.2.c Performance Improvement System

During 2020, we developed a modified Plan, Do, Check Act process, the PLACE performance improvement process: Plan, Learn, Adjust, Communicate, Evaluate. We will evaluate whether the PLACE process may serve as the foundation for a performance improvement system in the coming year.

Glossary of Abbreviations

ALICE – Demographic describing the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed

COE – Communities of Excellence

CSP – Community Success Panel; the Midland County Community of Excellence Group

DNR – Michigan Department of Natural Resources

DRT – Developing and Retaining Talent collabor-action Team

EGLE - The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy

EITC – Earned Income Tax Credit

ELW – Enabling a Living Wage collabor-action Team

ESA – Midland County Educational Service Agency

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Association

LPGA – Ladies Professional Golf Association

MACF – Midland Area Community Foundation; Midland County Backbone Organization

MPS – Midland Public Schools

MUGA – Midland Urban Growth Area

PLACE – Plan, Learn, Adjust, Communicate, Evaluate (Communications Process)

SPP – Strategic Planning Process