

# North Branch *Homegrown. Hometown.* 2021 Training Strategy (Council/PC/DDA/ZBA)

North Branch is a Certified Community and active participant in the [Redevelopment Ready Communities \(RRC\)](#) process which supports communities’ efforts to foster economic and community development through a predictable and proactive approach to planning and development. One component of the RRC framework is to establish yearly training goals for development-related boards and commissions. This strategy outlines the village’s training expectations and framework and establishes priorities for each board. It will be updated at the beginning of each year to stay relevant to changing trends.

## TRAINING FRAMEWORK

**Funding:** The village establishes funding for each board. For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, funding was \$400 for Council, \$1,600 for the Clerk (who handles development requests), \$300 for the Planning Commission. Funding requests will be most favorably considered when directly related to a priority topic established in this strategy.

**Consistent Encouragement:** The Village includes training as a reoccurring agenda item. This offers a chance to remind members of upcoming training, allow time for at-meeting training, and encourage report outs from recently attended training. This practice will continue.

**Sharing Outcomes:** Village officials are expected to provide a short verbal report out at the next meeting following any training event and share any materials such as recordings, handouts, etc. This helps increase the Village’s return on investment in terms of time and cost.

**Primary Goals:** For the 2021 year, the Village has established the following goals for training:

1. Provide at least two at-meeting training opportunities for each board.
2. Have every board member complete at least one outside training activity.
3. Better tie training priorities to established plan actions.

**Training Methods:** Village staff will plan for at least two at-meeting events for each board; these could be short presentations, watching a video together, attending a webinar together, reading and discussing an article, etc. The Village encourages officials to pursue training methods which make the most sense for them individually outside of meetings. Training should be a combination of new information and the basics to help officials stay up to date on existing documents and responsibilities.

### Priority Topics/Events by Board for 2021

#### Village Council

Village Council is responsible for key aspects of the Village’s developing efforts including adoption of zoning amendments, budgets, approving economic development incentives, and more. Council meets monthly.

| Priority Topic                  | Related to                 | Potential Resources   |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Municipal Fiscal Sustainability | Board’s role               | <a href="#">Fiscally Ready Communities</a> (Treasury), MML  |
| Tree Planting Program Basics    | Master Plan – Streets Goal | Other communities, MML, <a href="#">Arbor Day Foundation</a> , <a href="#">Vibrant Cities Lab</a> |

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## **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is tasked with developing and implementing the [master plan](#), developing and maintaining the [zoning ordinance](#), reviewing site plans, and implementing parts of the [economic development strategy](#). The commission meets monthly.

| Priority Topic                           | Related to   | Potential Resources  |
|--|--|--|
| Missing Middle Housing                   | Master Plan – Residential Goals; ED Plan – Encourage New Housing | <a href="#">Missing Middle Housing</a> , <a href="#">StrongTowns</a> , MML |
| Downtown Historic Preservation Standards | Master Plan – Downtown Goals                                     | State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan Historic Preservation Network |
| Annual Plan Progress Reviews             | All Plans  | Annual Report, Village Staff   |

## **Downtown Development Authority**

The DDA meets monthly and is charged with implementing the [DDA TIF Plan](#) and portions of the [Economic Development and Marketing strategy](#). Training priority topics are primarily tied to the applicable goals in those plans, but also includes an effort to meet with one other local DDA to share information. The DDA meets monthly. North Branch joined the [Michigan Downtown Association](#) (MDA) in 2021 to further enhance available training opportunities.

| Topic                                       | Related to                          | Potential Resources  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| DDA TIF & Planning                          | Need to update DDA TIF plan by 2023 | MEDC, Michigan Downtown Association (MDA)                                    |
| Potential Approaches Downtown Façade Grants | ED Strategy – Update Façade Grants  | Other DDAs with Façade grants, MEDC  |
| Small Business Resources                    | Existing Needs                      | Lapeer Development Corporation, <a href="#">MEDC Small Business Services</a> |

## **Zoning Board of Appeals**

The ZBA meets as needed throughout the year and is charged with reviewing variance requests and appeals. Training for this board is likely to occur almost exclusively at meetings throughout the year. The Village Building Official will provide the necessary training at these meetings.

| Topic                  | Related to   | Potential Resources   |
|------------------------|--------------|---|
| Zoning Court Decisions | Board’s Role | MSU Extension Annual Recap  |
| Dimensional Variances  | Board’s Role | Zoning Administrator, MEDC Training Module, MSU Extension Resources |