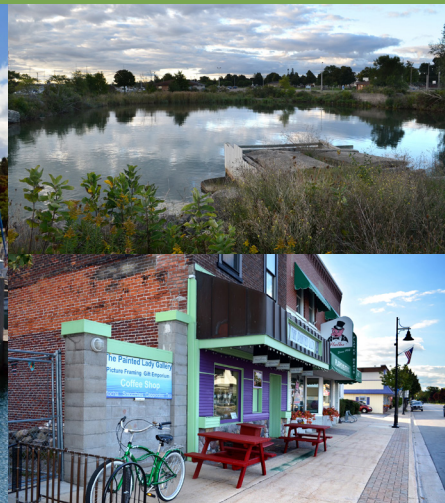


COMMUNITY PROFILE: ROGERS CITY



The Sustainable Small Harbors project received funding from Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Waterways Program, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality – Office of the Great Lakes, and Michigan State Housing Development Authority to engage stakeholders in waterfront communities around Michigan. In 2015-2016, through public workshops and design charrettes, the project team helped community leaders assess challenges and opportunities related to the economic and environmental sustainability of their waterfronts. This community profile captures the insights and future visions developed through that process. For more information, see: sustainablesmallharbors.org.



Community Basics

Waterfront: Lake Huron

County: Presque Isle

Area: 8.34 square miles

Population: 2,747 people in 2014 (-17.3 percent change from 2000-2014)

Median Household Income: \$40,251 in 2015

Median Age: 48.1 (2014)

Source: U.S. Census, 2000, 2010; City data

COMMUNITY INVENTORY

Rogers City is located in Presque Isle County on the shore of Lake Huron. The city lies approximately halfway between Cheboygan, 40 miles to the north, and Alpena, 37 miles to the south. The state-designated Heritage Route U.S. 23 connects the region's Lake Huron waterfront communities. Rogers City offers natural shorelines, lighthouses, waterfalls, scenic parks, boutique stores, fishing tournaments, and cultural heritage establishments such as the Presque Isle County Historical Museum and the Great Lakes Lore Maritime Museum. Hoeft State Park provides year-round camping and was one of the fourteen original Michigan state parks, located on land donated by lumber magnate

Paul H. Hoeft in 1922. The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, based in Alpena, identifies several shipwrecks just offshore from the Rogers City area. The world's largest open-pit limestone quarry, the Port of Calcite, is located within the city limits and is one of the largest shipping ports on the Great Lakes.

On the shores of Lake Huron, Rogers City provides an opportunity to visit the Great Lakes in a less populous area. Landmark establishments such as Plath's Meats and the nearby U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Hammond Bay Biological Station are a draw for many. The Huron Sunrise trail, an all-asphalt 10-mile pedestrian and biking trail, connects downtown Rogers City to Hoeft State Park.

Rogers City has experienced population loss over the past decade, potentially linked to shifting family size across society, loss of jobs in the area's mining and shipping industries, and an increasing proportion of seasonal or part-time residents. Presque Isle County's population also declined, but less so over the same period.

Source: Rogers City Master Plan (2014), USGS, Rogers City Community Recreation Plan

- Rogers City Master Plan (2014)
- Rogers City Community Recreation Plan (2014)
- City of Rogers City Zoning Map (2016)

The Rogers City Municipal Marina has more than 100 slips (92 seasonal, 34 transient, 1 commercial) and a floating dock. Amenities include fuel and pump-out facilities, water, electricity (30/50-amp with 220-volt service), restrooms, showers, dog run, picnic tables, grills, laundry, playground and park, car rental, and courtesy vehicle. A breakwall extension provides a fishing platform, and a fish cleaning station is available. The harbor entrance and gas dock are nine feet below chart datum. The Rogers City Ramp, administered by the city, provides a launch site for public use. In November 2016, the marina achieved Michigan Clean Marina Program certification.

Dredging and Federal Infrastructure

There are currently no dredging or federal infrastructure projects in Rogers City. The calcite mine within city limits does have a deep water port, but dredging has not been required.



Figure 1: Rogers City Marina. Source: USACE 2012

COMMUNITY LIABILITIES

As part of the visioning process, the community self-identified the following assets and weaknesses:



Figure 2: Assets (top) and weaknesses or barriers (bottom) reported by the community, where larger text size indicates a higher frequency of mentions. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors

COLLABORATORS

To draw upon community expertise, the following technical meetings were convened:

- Harbor Advisory Committee;
- Parks and Recreation Committee; and
- Team Rogers City (a collaborative of volunteers, also known as “Super Pos”).

To facilitate implementation support, the following initial state and regional partners were identified:

- MDNR Waterways Program;
- USDA Rural Development;
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation — Community Assistance Team field staff;
- Michigan Sea Grant staff; and
- Michigan State University Extension staff.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: “ROGERS CITY 2036”

“Rogers City 2036” represents a shared future vision of the community based on the charrette design process. The preferred alternative reflects a public park and boater facilities at the marina, indoor boat storage, marine sanctuary visitor’s center, kayak launch and natural harbor, senior and multi-unit residential housing, marina support building(s), and a Class A recreational vehicle (RV) park.

Modifications to the marina site include reducing the parking area and adding a green space buffer between the parking lot and marina. In the design, this area would house boater amenities and provide picnic options. The festival lawn for performances would be expanded and encircled with a walking path. The Maritime Great Lakes Lore Museum would be moved from downtown to the waterfront with a Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center, Maritime



Figure 3: Rogers City preferred alternative full site plan. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors

Full Charrette Report

For additional information on the three alternatives the community evaluated and the development of the “preferred alternative,” please see the full charrette report, [available for download on the website](#).

Heritage Trail, and Seaman’s Memorial. Inside the old commercial fishing harbor, a kayak launch would be added and the harbor enhanced by adding fish habitat and creating a natural space for wildlife. Using the small harbor for paddle sports will improve access to Lake Huron and separate non-motorized craft from launching motor boats. This harbor would be enhanced with underwater habitat improvements.

Condominium development and a Class A RV park were selected as part of the preferred alternative. The park’s design accommodates large recreational vehicles that are self-contained and do not necessarily require additional support buildings; pump-out and trash services would be required. A similar project was proposed in 2003 but was not advanced.



Figure 4: Current view (top) and artistic rendering (middle) of new and relocated waterfront features highlighted in the charrette design. Artistic rendering (bottom) of proposed kayak launch. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors

CONNECTIVITY

The ability to easily navigate and move across a walkable area in a harbor community is a key feature for sustainability. New and improved signage along M-23 is vital for Rogers City since the city is removed from the primary highway. Installing unique signage features at the points shown in Figure 6 would help identify Rogers City as a destination and provide a link with the rich history of the area.

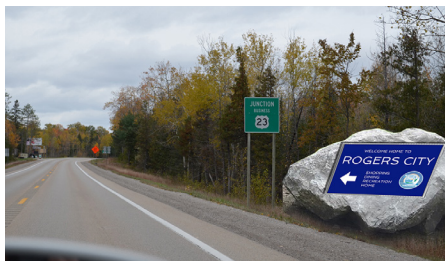


Figure 5: Example of wayfinding signage, using local limestone to reflect sense of place in connecting to the local calcite mine. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors

Many of the streets in Rogers City are wider than recommended by Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The preferred alternative specifies the pavement be narrowed on Michigan Avenue, Huron Avenue, and Erie Street to make more green space and improve the environment and pedestrian spaces. Impermeable surfaces contribute to large amounts of polluted stormwater runoff during rainfall events, so reducing the amount of paved surface would reduce runoff and pollution entering Lake Huron.

VALUE CAPTURE – INITIAL EFFORTS

Increasing residential opportunities in Rogers City would increase the tax base. The preferred alternative envisions multi-unit residential development with senior living facilities and condominiums. Behind the residential units, a large indoor boat storage facility would be added. During summer months, the indoor



Figure 6: Map of the main vehicular transportation routes into Rogers City. The red dashed route could be marketed as a Scenic Waterfront Loop off US-23 in order to draw people into town. The focus points for signage are circled. Source: Sustainable Small Harbors

storage could alternatively be used as a festival shelter or covered farmers market. In 2004, a similar site plan was proposed but not advanced. A full analysis would be required to determine the financial feasibility of these projects. Anecdotally, during the public events, there was significant interest in the harbor condominium residential opportunities.

Additional steps would be required to capture value derived from implemented updates at the waterfront.

IMPLEMENTATION

USE OF DESIGN AND VISIONING PRODUCTS. Rogers City is in the process of proposing a budget that will include \$10,000 for preliminary architectural work associated with the teardown of the old boater's comfort station, replacing it with a multi-purpose building. The new building would include a welcome

center with maritime and local history elements, office space for boat servicing, and a more comfortable space for boaters with Wi-Fi access and laundry facilities. As a creative approach to welcoming boaters, the city envisions the site also providing a bar area, owned by the city, where local restaurants could provide light fare and beverage services. Boaters at the marina would be invited to a "happy hour," potentially staffed by local volunteers.

This concept was sparked by development of the preferred design and visioning process. City manager Joe Hefe reports: "[It is] our hope, once the preliminary architectural work and cost estimate is complete, to apply for grants to assist with construction."

INITIAL IMPACTS. Rogers City is exploring the option of re-engaging in the Michigan Main Street program. The Rogers City Community Development Authority (CDA), an expanded version of a downtown development authority, will soon begin updating its downtown development plan. Some funds presently being used to cover prior debt will be freed up for other purposes, potentially including the hiring of a Main Street Manager. The cost for such a position was the primary reason the city previously did not complete the program.

Rogers City has secured a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Waterways Program that covers half the cost of a sling-load trailer needed to get non-trailer watercraft into and out of the water. The city applied for a second grant through U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. Acquisition of this trailer is perceived to be vital in efforts to promote Rogers City as a year-round home for boats.

CHALLENGES. Rogers City's initial approach to funding the trailer project was characterized by the use of two different grant programs to fund the project. While this is financially savvy, it does require attentive grants management and proposal writing skills, and it may result in a project delay while awaiting notification of grant awards. The city accounted for this uncertainty by setting up a back-up plan; if the second grant did not come through, the city would purchase only the sling-load trailer (\$80,000) and not the towing mechanism (\$40,000). The city would use an existing piece of equipment owned by the Department of Public Works to tow. This would reduce the total project cost from \$120,000 to \$80,000, with MDNR Waterways paying half (\$40,000) and the Rogers City general fund paying the other half (\$40,000).

The marina would repay the general fund over time, through revenues generated through the use of the trailer. The remaining \$20,000 from Waterways would be decommitted. The city has budgeted \$40,000 for the match in case the USDA grant does not come through.

Efforts to collaborate with regional partners on a maritime signage effort have been delayed but are still in progress.

PRIORITIZATION AND FUNDING.

As noted, the city is already initiating plans to build a new structure at the waterfront that will incorporate a number of uses suggested in the visioning process. Grant funding for the trailer project reflects a creative approach to leveraging multiple funding sources.

Another example of Rogers City's creative use of funding mechanisms is their launch of a Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) "Public Spaces, Community Places" crowd-funding campaign to redesign a downtown intersection to tie into the community's placemaking forte: its nautical history. The intersection will feature a Fresnel lens from the Port of Calcite breakwater light. The unique lens, which welcomed watercraft into the port for 80 years, was recently donated to the community by Carmeuse Lime and Stone. Along with the lens, the intersection will include a historic ship's wheel, welcoming and wayfinding signage, limestone boulders, a compass rose, trees and other plantings, a drinking fountain, and benches.

Joe Hefe, city manager, reports:

"We needed to raise \$50,000 in 60 days to secure a \$50,000 match. We were able to raise more than \$62,000, so the grant has been secured. A general contractor has been selected, and construction should begin later this spring [2017],

with the goal of completion by September 1. The lens is in the process of being restored and should be installed near the conclusion of the project. I would recommend the crowd-funding mechanism we used, and I anticipate we will use it again in the future."

The effort occurred outside of the project engagement process but is a great example of a successful application of the funding program.

MOMENTUM. Rogers City has successfully transitioned their leadership committee into an implementation committee. A volunteer group is helping bridge across leadership efforts. Once known as the "Super Pos" group, for being very positive and optimistic, the group is now known as "Team Rogers City" and includes representatives from the city, school, county, chamber, Community Development Authority, and private groups. In essence, this is a group of motivated, dedicated people who can help drive positive change within the town. The city manager and harbormaster are also supportive of the "Rogers City 2036" vision and intend to assist with implementation efforts. City representatives are pursuing the Michigan Economic Development Program (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) certification. They are also exploring a Department of Housing and Urban Development "low-mod" designation, which would signify that more than half of the community's population falls in low- or moderate-income brackets and which would open up additional MEDC grant resources.