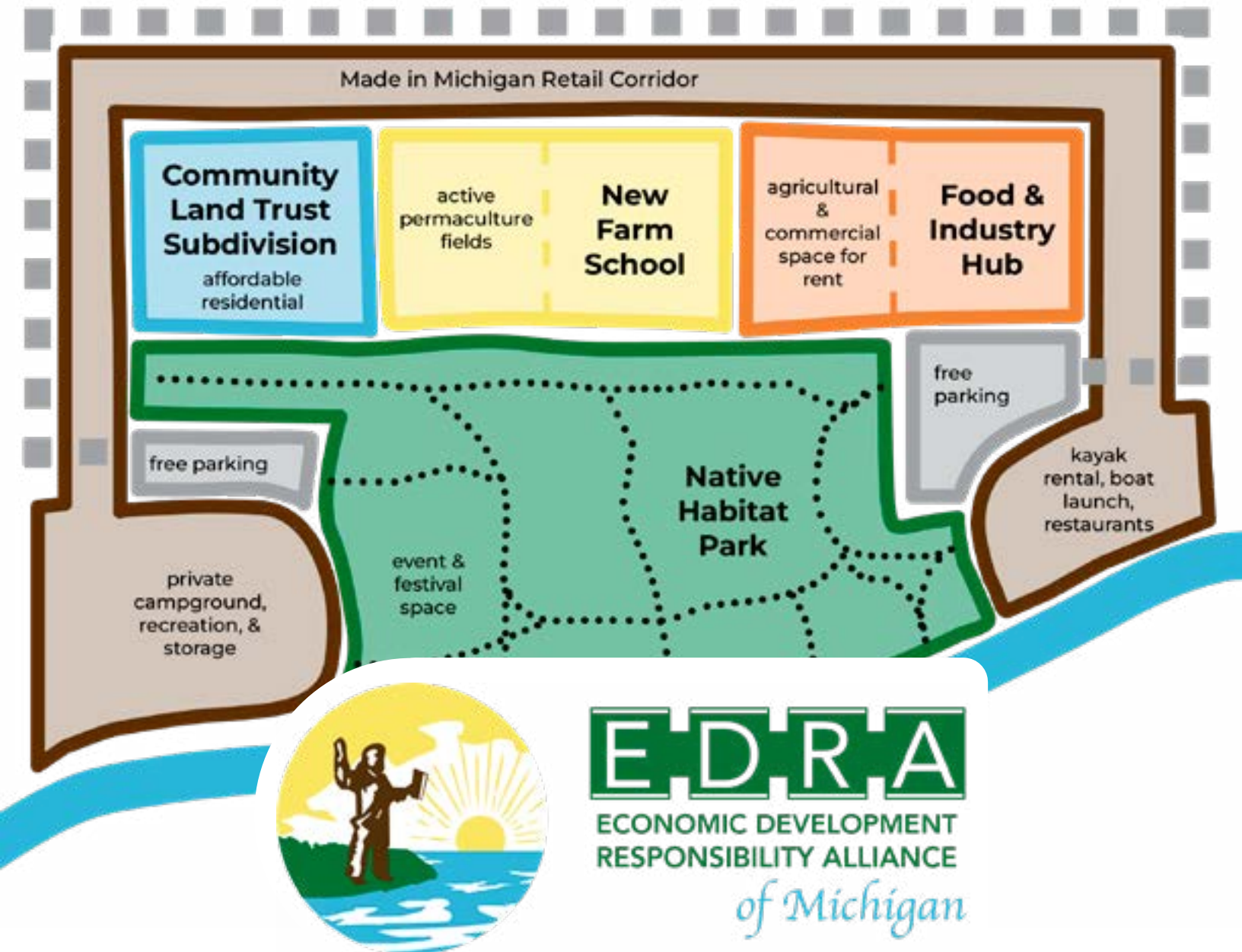




Agricultural Renaissance Community (ARC) Model

A new model for large-scale economic development in Michigan

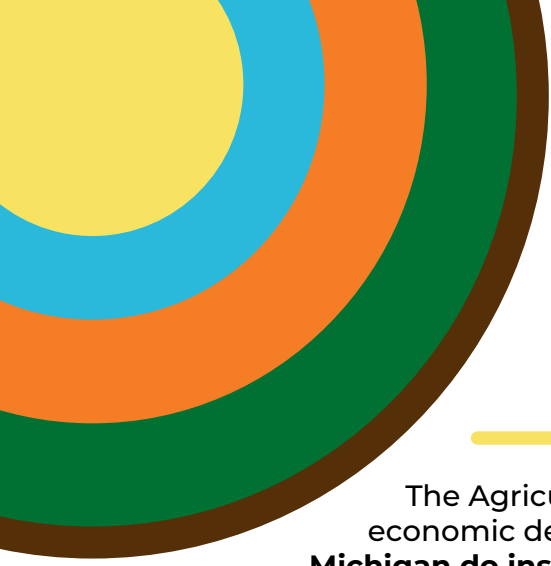
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For more information, see:
[ARC Action Guide](#)
[ARC Research Compendium](#)
at edraofmi.org/alternative-development





The Agricultural Renaissance Community

At a glance

The Agricultural Renaissance Community (ARC) is a new model for economic development designed to answer the question: **so what should Michigan do instead of Manufacturing 4.0?**

The ARC is a **large-scale, mixed-use model for development designed to improve local economies, ecologies, and communities, without major subsidies or loss of local control.** Instead, ARC developments are driven by the needs and desires of local community members, and they generate both affordability and overall profitability using simple land management techniques and the free market.

Inspired by the feedback of Michigan's grassroots communities and confirmed by cuspung academic research, this model could not only create jobs, but re-invigorate entire local economies.

Spanning 100 to 2,000 acres, the ARC model has five zones which each address a different (but related) need in the local community:

1) Light industry—Which brings truly quality jobs, good wages, and more money flowing into the local economy. Top recommendations: food hubs, fiber mills, hempcrete manufacturing, industrial wool processing, and other activities supportive of local and regenerative agriculture.

Mark Shephard's 106 acre permaculture New Forest Farm



2) Housing—Which is actually affordable for local residents, using a Community Land Trust model for homeownership and sustainable, energy-efficient building practices.

3) Retail & recreation—Which supports local industry and natural resources, including an anchor grocery local farm market, Michigan-made product retail, scenic restaurants, and recreation tourism such as private campgrounds and kayak rentals.

4) Education—Which uses evidence-based Montessori and project-based learning models, combined with hands-on permaculture farming and outdoor learning spaces. Scalable to community needs, from a Learning Center resource for area schools to a full K-12 public school.

5) A Habitat & Community Park—Which provides a free resources to the community with public trails, a refuge for wildlife, and space for large-scale festivals, public gatherings, and other community cultural events which stimulate the local economy and improve local sense of place.



The Agricultural Renaissance Community

A development ecosystem

As with any healthy organic system, the five zones of the ARC co-exist symbiotically, nourishing and supporting one another.

Together, they make one whole, flourishing organism.

The ARC is a place where industry, residents, students, and shop owners are working together in a closed-loop economy. The factory provides jobs for residents. The school provides education for local children. The grocery store and shops sell what the factory makes, and supplies local residents. The park provides a beautiful place where residents, workers, and visitors alike can enjoy nature and a healthy ecosystem. All of these zones are making it possible for small farms to start up new operations nearby.

Together, they're all putting more dollars into the local economy—and they're raising the quality of life for residents, both human and otherwise.

Urban planners have been trying to design the perfect “15 minute city” for decades, but the pallor of the WEF’s mantra “you will own nothing and be happy” hangs heavy over its head. Planners design what they think is a utopia; residents see an automated prison.

The ARC model takes a different approach. It achieves what the “15 minute city” concept sets out to do in terms of providing all the essentials for living within a walkable community, but it sets different priorities. The ARC prioritizes personal agency rather than centralized control, and it embraces the technology of nature over the virtual environment. It’s a place where residents own their own homes, grow their own food, and potentially even run their own businesses. It nurtures self-sufficiency, and abundance.

As a result, the ARC is a community which is largely self-governing, self-regulating, and self-sustaining. And it’s one which brings abundance to its surrounding community in the form of jobs, healthy and affordable food, and more access to nature, culture, and education.

Most importantly: **it’s the kind of place where Michiganders would want to live, work, and play.** In the dirt, if they want.



The five zones of permaculture.





The Agricultural Renaissance Community

Ag as economic development

Michigan has an incredible opportunity right now: to set the national model for transitioning from industrial to regenerative agriculture. This is a massive opportunity for statewide economic growth; a revitalization of local agriculture would mean job creation up and down the agricultural and industrial supply chains. It could also mean better food security and lower prices for local residents.

Michigan residents need to eat, and people want to farm. But the current model of industrial agriculture makes it nearly impossible for new small farms to succeed. There's clearly a gap here—and it's one we can bridge, with a little innovation.

The opportunity: young farmers & the small regenerative ag entrepreneur

Our research has found that next generations don't want to be factory workers; they want to be regenerative farmers.

The problem: lack of supply infrastructure for small agriculture

Farmers can grow regenerative, small batch products, but they often have nowhere to process or sell it; most distributors work with large farms, and processing can be expensive and inaccessible.

The solution: food hubs, fiber mills, and agro-industrial manufacturing

Michigan has endless opportunity for light industrial manufacturing of stable necessities which support local agriculture. Demand for sustainable industrial and building materials is high and on the rise, such as hempcrete, wool insulation, and wool peat fertilizer. Demand is also rising for natural fiber textiles such as wool, hemp, and linen.

And food hubs, which have been studied and recommended by a USDA task force for economic development and local food security, can bridge the gap between local farmers and local consumers, significantly raising the incomes of local farms, adding agricultural jobs, and lowering food prices for local residents.



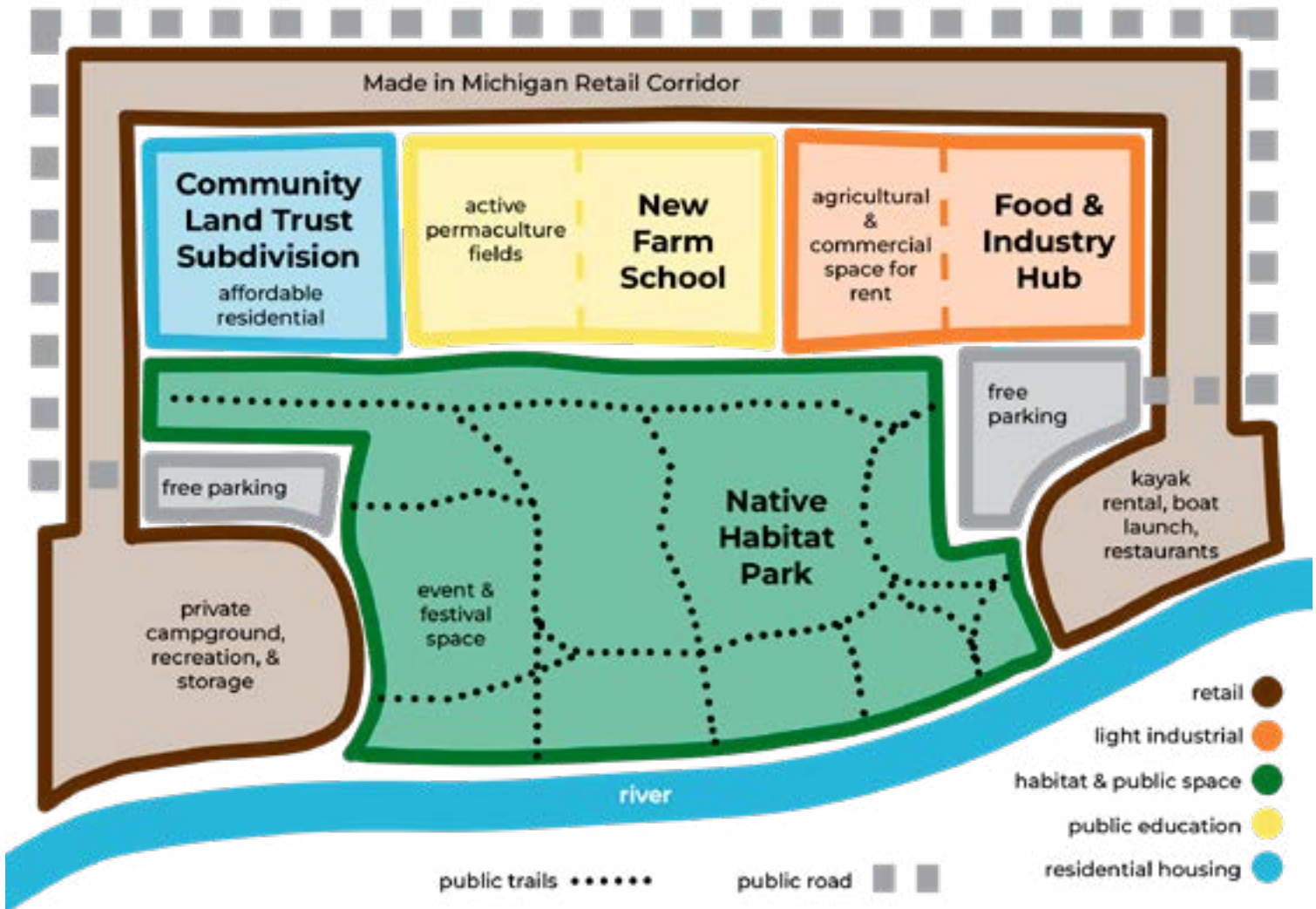
Detroit's Eastern Market is a historic food hub.



Gardening wool pellets produced by a farm in Ireland.



The ARC Model



A new Citizen Public-Private Partnership (CP3)

Zone 1: Light industrial park

Zone 2: Community Land Trust housing

Zone 3: Retail & recreation

Zone 4: New Farm School

Zone 5: Habitat & Community Park



the ARC model

A new Citizen Public Private Partnership (CP3)

Local volunteers represent the heart and soul of many community operations. Volunteers are essential for maintaining well-run schools, folk festivals and community events, community gardens and spaces, and—critically, but often forgotten: in providing stakeholder feedback on township, city, and county development plans.

Yet the window of opportunity created for resident input into local development projects is narrow, and there's no process to ensure local stakeholders' desires are actually incorporated.

Officials and developers notoriously shy away from stakeholder input from the local public. It can be rough-edged, irrelevant, and sometimes in direct opposition to what developers and/or local officials want to do. However: the context for this input is combative by design, and the timeline of their involvement is too late to be impactful.

We propose flipping the script on how local officials and corporations view local stakeholder input, by treating it as an early asset, rather than a latent barrier.

Local citizen stakeholders hold a treasure trove of profitable ideas for local development—and oftentimes the willingness to donate time and labor to make it happen. These residents and business owners are the keepers of the community's vision, and they can be a powerful force to stop projects—or to propel them forward. With this in mind, we propose an upgrade to the Public-Private

Partnership (P3) model: a new Citizen Public Private Partnership, or CP3.

Where the old P3 model deprioritizes local stakeholders' vision for their community, the CP3 model would place local stakeholder input at the very beginning of the development pipeline. The input process wouldn't be limited to a few inaccessible meetings; it would tap into an active network of community volunteers with the ability to form research subcommittees, to survey communities, and to advocate and work hard to make the ultimate project a success.

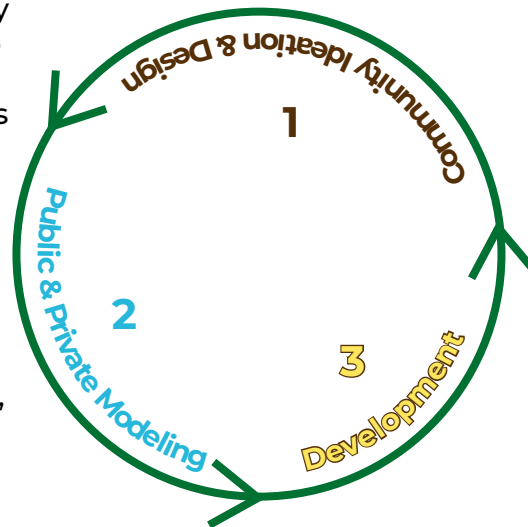
This model relies on active, embedded local volunteer networks and an open, transparent working relationship with local community members.

Rather than allowing corporate and political interests to decide what projects should be brought to a community, then fighting the community to implement these projects, the CP3 model proposes that

corporations and local leaders first ask local stakeholders what they envision for the community, then enlist their help to make it happen.

The Public-Private Partnership is still intact with the CP3 model; local development needs both public and private investment. But this doesn't mean that private interests need to run the show with local development. Private investors can enjoy both solid returns and widespread community support, if local citizen stakeholders are designing the investments.

Developers and local officials are likely to find that local community volunteers have ideas that are not only viable, but profitable.



the ARC model

Zone 1: Light industrial park

Intended use for the zone:

Light industrial activities, in particular those which are supportive of local agriculture. If size allows, the site should allow for multiple “anchor” tenants of at least 12,000sf each, with the remaining space being rented for small-scale commercial and agricultural use. (see: [Research Compendium](#) page 31: Food Hubs & Agricultural Industry)

Stated purpose of the zone:

To support local agriculture through the industrial processing of agricultural products, while creating stable, high-paying jobs for the local community. Food hubs and the production of “food local people can actually eat” should be given high priority, given local communities’ need for local, affordable food. But industrial and commercial fiber manufacturing are also great opportunities to support local agriculture and create good jobs. An ideal zone would include both a food hub and an industrial processing facility.

Ideal **anchor tenants** include, in order of preference:

- Food hubs
- Fiber mills
- Industrial hemp or wool processing
- Meat processing facilities
- Lumber & woodworking
- Mycelium manufacturing (such as Mycoworks)
- other agricultural materials processing

Commercial and agricultural **rental facilities** would ideally include commercial kitchen space, cold storage, food processing equipment, fiber processing, and farmland targeting tenants such as:

- In-home catering expansions
- Small-scale food production
- Retail-exempt meat processing
- Fiber co-ops
- Woodworkers
- Startup farmers
- other small businesses within the community

This zone may NOT include activities such as:

- data storage and processing
- technology manufacturing
- mining (mineral, gravel, or otherwise)
- grid-based energy production or storage
- polymer manufacturing
- any other activities which involve the use of PFAs, forever chemicals, large quantities of water (50k+ per day), or which creates substantial pollution of air, water, soil, night skies, or sound.

All anchor tenants must be prepared to provide full environmental impact reporting on their proposed developments, and rental facilities must be designed with the same level of review. Anchor tenants must be able to demonstrate their development plans have had ample input from local citizen stakeholders.



A local processing wool at the Rainbow Fiber Co-Op in New Mexico



Zone 2: Community Land Trust housing

Intended use for the zone:

Quality residential housing for homeowners, renters, or senior communities which provides energy efficiency, a healthy, natural environment, and affordability. (see [Research Compendium](#) page 35: Solutions for Housing)

Stated purpose of the zone:

To provide quality housing which is affordable to the lower and middle class without relying on subsidies.

The parameters of this zone depend largely on the needs of the local community, and they should be guided by the municipality's master plan. In areas where single family homes in the country are in highest demand, this zone should emphasize single family homes with acreage. In communities where there is a deficit of housing for seniors, this zone should prioritize senior living communities. In more communities where more dense housing is in demand, this zone should accommodate apartment buildings.



A community land trust in the UK

In all cases, residences should be designed with energy efficiency, passive heating such as geothermal, and landscaping based around permaculture best practices. Agricultural uses should be accommodated and allowed within reason, including chickens and small livestock. In the case of higher density housing, there should be designated community space for greenhouses, gardening, composting, and egg production.

Structure of the Community Land Trust:

The Community Land Trust (CLT) model makes housing accessible using the simple mechanism of community land ownership. In its most basic form, CLTs maintain ownership of the land, leasing it to homeowners on long-term leases (typically 99 years). Homeowners buy and sell their homes not at market value, but at 30% of the current local median income. In this way, homeowners are able to put down roots in quality homes which would have otherwise been financially inaccessible. This zone will require the formation of a community land trust.

Like zoning, the parameters of the trust will depend on the needs of the local community. Some communities may need to set income requirements for residents; others may not. In all cases, the CLT should be governed by a board comprised of three parts: 1) experts who can guide the trust with their professional skills, 2) local community members—business owners and residents, and 3) residents of the CLT itself.

Sustainable construction & grid independence:

If new development will be required, allowances should be made for sustainable construction methods, passive heating, rainwater collection, and grid-independence. For example: DIY earthship construction could be appropriate in a rural setting. Options should be explored for hempcrete and wool insulation, and other materials to improve the home's long-term value.



the ARC model

Zone 3: Retail & recreation

Intended use for the zone:

Retail and recreational activities which bring essential goods and services to local residents, support local supply chains, and promote the beauty and enjoyment of the community's natural resources. Allows for multiple boutique retailers, as well as a retail grocer anchor tenant.

Stated purpose of the zone:

To attract retail activity which provides goods and services to its local residents, students, workers, and visitors, while creating quality jobs for local residents. The ARC's retail corridor should aim to strike a balance between bringing essential goods and services to local community members, providing a retail outlet for local manufacturers, and bringing in visitors from outside the area to spend their dollars locally.

The anchor of the retail corridor should be a retail grocer which 1) provides fresh, affordable food to local residents, and 2) provides a retail outlet for local food manufacturers, including other ARC tenants. In cases where the ARC Industrial Park includes a food hub, this grocer will serve as the hub's B2C retail outlet. The exact parameters for this retail outlet depend on the site and the needs of the local community.

Options for a grocery anchor include:

- a private grocery store
- a co-op grocery store
- a neighborhood food market
- a farmer's market
- a community-run produce stand

Aside from the anchor grocery tenant, ideal retail tenants include:

- boutique retail
- restaurants
- coffee/ice cream shops
- hardware/home improvement
- auto repair
- agricultural supply
- private campgrounds
- kayak/tubing rentals
- RV parks
- mini golf/go-cart tracks
- woodwork/handcrafted goods



Detroit's Eastern Market

The goal of this retail zone is to enhance quality of life for other ARC tenants while supporting the local agricultural supply chain and the local economy at large. It should prioritize locals, while also attracting visitors and tourists.

By serving the needs of the local community, this retail corridor ensures more local dollars are spent locally. By attracting outside visitors, it's drawing in cash from outside the area.



the ARC model

Zone 4: New Farm School

Intended use for the zone:

K-12 education and educational activities which are based in permaculture farming, forestry, and the natural environment. This could include school buildings, green houses, and maintenance facilities, and it must include ample acreage for farming and native habitat learning. Zone may be used exclusively for K-12, or it may be accessible for higher education and community learning, depending on the needs of the community.

Stated purpose of the zone:

To provide a space for nature-based education and hands-on learning, for all local K-12 students, and potentially for adult community members.

Scaling to community needs:

Some communities may have overburdened classrooms and be in need of another full elementary, middle, and high school. Some communities may be in desperate need of a quality alternative school. Other communities may have adequate public schools, but they lack the resources for nature-based education and agricultural clubs. The parameters of this zone should flex to fit the unique needs of each community, ranging from a simple Nature Center to a full-fledged K-12 public school.



A private permaculture Montessori school in New York.

New Farm & Nature Center (public-private)

For communities which don't need another school but do need more nature-based resources. A farm and nature center which provides the land stewardship, classes, and learning environment for students across the district to enjoy nature-based education. Accessible to students of public, private, and home schools. Modeled after Blandford Nature Center in Grand Rapids, which provides native habitat learning experiences to students of all ages throughout the year.

New Farm School (public)

For communities which need another school. Although these schools will be fully-fledge public schools, they will also follow alternative curriculum methods. Specifically: Montessori for K-5, and Project-Based Learning for middle and high school. These evidence-based methods have been shown to improve student outcomes across the board both academically and socially. Nature and farming are the ideal environments for these curriculum, as they pose endless opportunities for exploration and experimentation. High school students may sell their goods through ARC retailers and apprentice at the ARC's industrial park.

In cases where the ARC has a senior housing, the school and the senior housing complexes should share farming space and facilitate senior volunteer work with students at the school.



Zone 5: Habitat & Community Park

Intended use for the zone:

Native habitat preservation and re-creation, land stewardship, and public recreation along trail systems. These spaces should allow for markets and festival-style events, including ample parking, and they should be designed to be highly accessible to ARC residents and retail tenants. This zone should encompass no less than 35% of the total ARC footprint.

Stated purpose of the zone:

To provide a habitat sanctuary for local wildlife, to preserve healthy soil and water, to provide the local community with more access to nature, to provide a wilderness buffer zone around the ARC's New Farm School and Industrial Park, and to attract tourists and visitors from outside the area to the ARC's retailers.



The Park serves three customers, which are in order of priority:

- 1) The land, water, and their ecologies,
- 2) Local community members, and
- 3) Out-of-town visitors

Land stewardship:

Preserve, protect, and restore the land to a healthy ecosystem which supports native habitats. Park development may include restoration practices including controlled burns, planting, and dam restoration or removal.

Public recreation:

Provide robust nature trail systems which are accessible to ARC residents and tenants, as well as the general public. Gives local community more access to beautiful natural resources, strengthens sense of place.

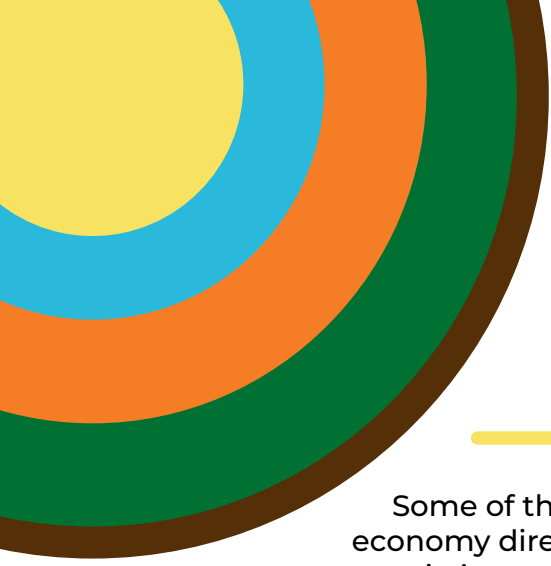
Events & festivals:

Incorporate facilities for festivals and events, such as market lawns, outdoor amphitheaters, parking, restrooms, and electrical/water hookups. Develop campground facilities, in the absence of a private campground tenant.

Park management:

Development and ongoing maintenance of the park will require management, and a steady stream of income. For land stewardship, some of this income will come from grant funding, while events and space rentals generate private revenue.





How does the ARC make \$

For the local community?

Some of the ARC's zones—like its Light industrial park—bring money into the economy directly, in the form of jobs and tax revenue. Other zones enhance the community's overall desirableness to residents, businesses, and visitors, which have an indirect impact on the economy. Together, all five zones create an ecosystem of self-sustainability and abundance which radiates into the local community.

Local tax \$, increasing opportunities for agricultural entrepreneurship, and safe jobs that provide a livable wage \$.

Light Industrial Park \$

Park trails, events & festivals draw visitors who spend their \$ in the local community. Makes the community more desirable to new residents.

Habitat & Community Park

Retail & Recreation \$

Keeps \$ spent within the community, draws \$ from visitors outside the community.

Local community

Raises quality of education, makes the area more desirable for new residents.

New Farm School

CLT Residential Subdivision

Residents spend less \$ on housing, more within the local community.

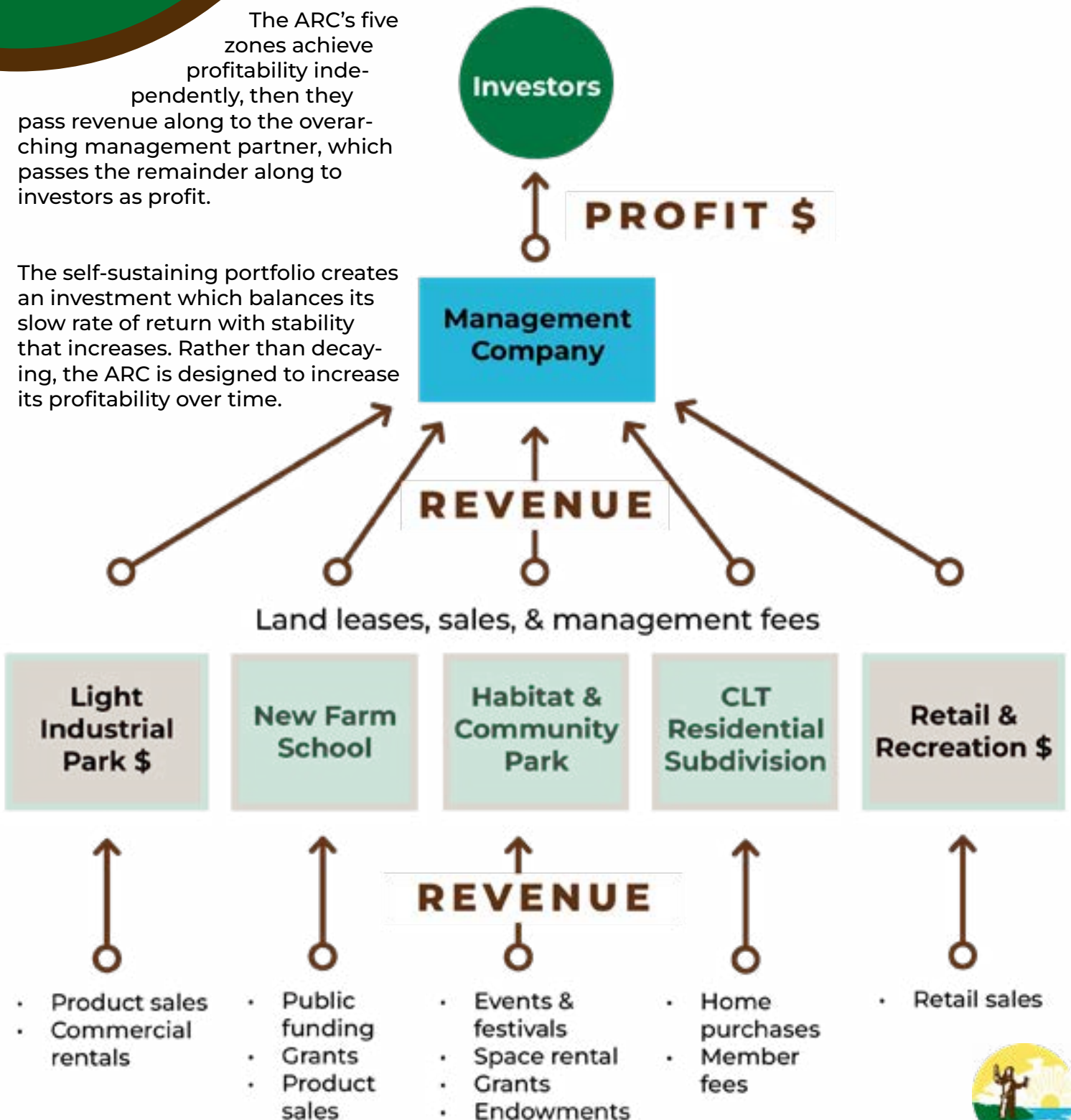


How does the ARC make \$

For investors?

The ARC's five zones achieve profitability independently, then they pass revenue along to the overarching management partner, which passes the remainder along to investors as profit.

The self-sustaining portfolio creates an investment which balances its slow rate of return with stability that increases. Rather than decaying, the ARC is designed to increase its profitability over time.





Join us.

edraofmi.org/alternative-development

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[ARC Research Compendium](#)
[ARC Action Guide](#)