



## West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

April/May 2015

### WMSRDC Participating in Governor Snyder’s Regional Transit Mobility Initiative

On June 2, 2014, Governor Snyder released a special message to the legislature on the topic of aging, titled “Making Michigan a Great Place to Live Well and Age Well.” The special message included the following regarding access to transportation: “Michiganders, including many older adults, need regional mobility and transit providers to become more regionally focused. This is both an urban and rural issue.” In that message, the Governor asked the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to partner with metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and regional planning agencies (RPAs) to work on the issue of regional transit mobility. This activity is being alligned through the Governor’s Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) and the borders set up within.

In response, MDOT has requested the assistance of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) and others in obtaining data related to the transit systems across RPI Region 4. WMSRDC and partners developed a survey for the purpose of documenting the need and the ability of individuals to make use of available local transit services for trips that cross county lines and/or transit service areas. WMSRDC then distributed the survey to transit partners in the region while offering assistance and/or guidance on completing the questionnaire.

See Regional Transit Mobility on page 8

### The Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame Announces Inductees for 2015 - and WMSRDC’s Kathy Evans is One of Them!

Kathy Evans is the Environmental Program Manager for WMSRDC, but even before she came to WMSRDC, she accomplished great things as a result of her environmental leadership over the past 25 years. Kathy has been an unstoppable leader for environmental and conservation causes. She has an amazing ability to bring diverse people, organizations and interests together to find common solutions to complex issues. She is known throughout the Great Lakes region as a leader on water quality issues and has brought millions of state and federal dollars to West Michigan to improve natural resources and to restore Muskegon Lake, a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC). Through her support for community-based leadership, Muskegon Lake is well on its way to being delisted as an AOC. WMSRDC is so very proud of Kathy and all her accomplishments. She is, and continues to be, an environmental leader indeed and very much deserves this honor.

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WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



## SPOTLIGHT PROJECT: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - Revitalizing West Michigan Communities

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), and the Great Lakes Commission, awarded the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission a \$7.9 million grant to restore fish and wildlife habitat and protect water quality in the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern.

The project will remove a 2,015 foot long berm of unnatural fill that artificially disconnected Bear Creek from its former, natural floodplain wetlands. The fill prevents native fish and wildlife from passing between Bear Lake, Muskegon Lake, and the Lake Michigan Watershed. The restoration site is located where Bear Creek enters Bear Lake. The project will remove 130,000 cubic yards of phosphorous-laden muck and prevent ongoing threats to water quality in Bear Lake and Muskegon Lake.

### *Social and Economic Benefits of Project:*

In addition to the project's environmental benefits, it is also expected to yield social and economic benefits. Over the past decade, the GLRI invested \$17 million for the cleanup of contaminated sediments in Muskegon Lake, leveraging an additional \$9 million in State cleanup funds. In 2007, John C. Austin led a Brookings Institution study of restoration plans for the Great Lakes Region and determined that the cleanup of contaminated sediments would directly raise coastal property values by \$12 to \$19 billion.

In 2012, Dr. Paul Isely, Seidman College of Business, Grand Valley State University studied the socio-economic benefits of a \$10 million NOAA/WMSRDC Muskegon Lake Shoreline Habitat Restoration Project. That study found that the restored shoreline habitat will generate more than \$66 million in economic benefits for its \$10 million investment, including: a \$12 million increase in property values, up to \$600,000 in new tax revenues annually, and over \$1 million in new recreational spending annually.



## West Michigan Green Infrastructure Conference Save the Date: August 4 and 5

WMSRDC is working with the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, the Grand Valley Metro Council, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to organize a West Michigan Green Infrastructure Conference to be held on August 4 and 5. The program will feature expert presenters and a diverse selection of field experiences in Muskegon, Holland, and Grand Rapids. The conference will be held at the Eberhard Center on August 5, with field experiences on the afternoon of August 4. The Holland field trip will feature wetland restorations for water quality, and the Grand Rapids field experience will feature low impact development practices. The Muskegon experience will include a bicycle and trolley trip to view green infrastructure at locations along the Muskegon Lake shoreline and the Lakeshore Trail bike path.

Save  
the Date!

Grand Rapids  
August 4-5, 2015

### West Michigan Green Infrastructure Conference

For management of stormwater and nonpoint source pollution

A regional Green Infrastructure Conference is coming to Grand Rapids, **Eberhard Center**, on August 5, 2015. The conference expands on the 2014 statewide conference to highlight a broad range of benefits and opportunities provided by GI planning and preservation in west Michigan. A highlight of this conference will be presentations of case studies showcasing how GI is already being used in west Michigan, creating healthy environments for today's families and future generations.

Local decision makers will also learn the basics of GI and its multitude of benefits, as well as how working together through partnerships can make GI a success in their own area. Engineers, contractors, and public works employees will benefit from sessions on policy and financing, stormwater management and regional green infrastructure planning.

#### Who should attend this unique conference?

- \* Anyone with duties related to land use and stormwater management
- \* Local government decision makers and engineers
- \* Foundations and environmental non-profits
- \* Planners
- \* Consultants and landscape architects
- \* Developers and builders
- \* Drain commissioners
- \* Road agencies
- \* Conservation organizations

*Look for more news on this  
exciting conference, including  
exhibitor opportunities, at  
[www.michigan.gov/  
deqworkshops!](http://www.michigan.gov/deqworkshops)*

**Pre-Conference Activities: August 4 —Afternoon tours of local GI projects and evening reception**



### West Michigan Watershed Collaborative

West Michigan watersheds are critical to the quality of life and prosperity of Michigan. As part of Michigan's Regional Prosperity Initiative, several West Michigan planning organizations and watershed groups will collaborate to identify priority water quality needs and a strategy to generate sustainable financial resources to implement best management practices for the protection of West Michigan watersheds and the Lake Michigan ecosystem.

If your watershed organization would like more information on how to be involved, please contact Kathy Evans, Program Manager at (231) 722-7878 ext. 17 or by email at [kevans@wmsrdc.org](mailto:kevans@wmsrdc.org).

## WMSRDC Hires New GIS Specialist

WMSRDC is proud to announce the appointment of Jamie Way to the position of GIS Specialist. Jamie comes to WMSRDC with experience and knowledge gained from working in the Newaygo County GIS Department. Jamie will be developing, implementing, and managing GIS data for WMSRDC programs related to transportation, environmental, economic development, and other planning efforts.

Joshua Croff, WMSRDC's former GIS Specialist, is headed out to San Francisco, California to train to become a computer programmer. WMSRDC wishes Josh well in his future endeavors in sunny California.

## Comprehensive Economic Development Plan

The 2015 edition of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was approved by the WMSRDC Board in January, is now available on the WMSRDC website under Reports & Publications. There is also a CEDS Summary Report, which provides a handy overview of the CEDS.

Regarding the CEDS, grant applications were submitted in March to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for two of the projects identified in the plan. Muskegon Community College applied for a Public Works Program grant to help establish a Technology Center in the former Muskegon Chronicle building in downtown Muskegon.

The other application was submitted by WMSRDC for a Technical Assistance grant to support the West Michigan Port Development Study. This project will assess multi-modal transportation infrastructure surrounding the Port of Muskegon and provide a study to identify a range of options for the establishment of a port organization.

Grant awards for the March applications are expected to be announced this spring. In addition, EDA will be accepting another round of grant applications due in June.

## WMSRDC Serving on MSU Regional Economic Innovation Panel

Erin Kuhn, WMSRDC Executive Director, has been appointed to the Michigan State University EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) Consultative Panel. The group consists of professionals engaged in a broad range of economic development related activities.

The Panel meets several times per year to conduct the following:

- Counsel the REI University Center on the substantial content and regional collaboration issues and factors that are instrumental in enabling Michigan's existing and would-be regional innovation clusters to compete economically and most effectively in the global knowledge economy and network society.
- Assist in ensuring that state-of-the-art development knowledge and practices are embedded in the work of REI and that its activities build upon and complement other initiatives across that state.
- Help organize and contribute to the Innovate Michigan! Summit, webinars and co-learning plans.
- Initiate digital discussions through social media and other virtual networking tools.

Erin is looking forward to representing West Michigan as she serves on the Panel.

## Asset Management

WMSRDC attended mandatory annual training for the Commission's annual Asset Management program. The data collection process is expected to begin in May.

Each year, WMSRDC staff, along with a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and a county road commission employee, collect data for approximately half of all the federal aid roads within the WMSRDC region.

The data collection effort requires the collection of three items: PASER rating, surface type, and the number of lanes. PASER is a visual rating assessment system that rates the road surface condition for a given segment on a scale of 1-10. This data collection process is part of an ongoing statewide program to evaluate the condition of the state's road system.

These ratings are the first step in a planning process known as Asset Management. Asset Management is based on an inventory of each local road network within each of the municipalities and then applying the correct fix or maintenance based on the rating.

Once rating is completed, WMSRDC staff converts the data into a format that can be used with a Geographic Information System so the communities can analyze their data and track year-to-year progress in upgrading their road systems.

## Long Range Transportation Plan Public Involvement Open House and Comment Period

Progress continues on the West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan) 2040 Transportation Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. Federal statute requires the public have reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs. In accordance with the Public Participation Plan for Transportation Decision Making, WMSRDC encourages early and ongoing public participation through a series of meetings, press and information releases, direct emailings, internet postings, and social media.

The public review period will be held from May 22 through June 5, 2015. An open house will be held on June 1, 2015 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the WMSRDC office for the public to review the LRTP draft plan, view project lists and maps, and to discuss the plan with WMSRDC staff and others.

The draft of the plan, after all public comments are considered and referenced in the document, is expected to be acted on by the Transportation Technical and Policy Committees at their meetings on June 11 and June 17, 2015 respectively.

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update

The Transportation Technical and Policy Committees acted on the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment H in March of 2015. The Amendment is currently under review by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA.) The TIP's primary purpose is to identify programs and projects to be funded with federal aid in accordance with federal law and the regulations of the FHWA during the designated four year period (FY2014-2017). WMSRDC works with the Technical and Policy Committees to develop and maintain the TIP, which includes amending existing and new projects into the document.

A majority of the amendments under state and federal review are from transit agencies including the Muskegon Area Transit System, Harbor Transit, the American Red Cross, and Pioneer Resources. There were also several bridge related projects for the City of Norton Shores and the Muskegon County Road Commission. Details of these projects can be found on the WMSRDC website or by contacting WMSRDC.

## Catastrophic Nuclear Event Exercise Coming to Michigan

The Michigan National Guard, U.S. Army North, Michigan State Police, Michigan Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, Michigan Department of Community Health, local government municipalities, and others will participate in a Michigan National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Catastrophic Nuclear Event exercise in Michigan from June 23-27, 2015. The exercise scenario called "Northern Exposure 15" features the detonation of a 10-kiloton Improvised Nuclear Device (IND) in the Grand Rapids area. The other proposed locations for the exercise are expected to include Lansing, Camp Grayling, Fort Custer/Battle Creek Air National Guard Base (ANGB), Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, and Selfridge ANGB.

Damage resulting from the detonation of a 10-kiloton Improvised Nuclear Device in metro Grand Rapids with a population of 750,000 would be the following: Severe Damage Zone in a 0.75 mile radius, Moderate Damage Zone in a 2.0 mile radius, Light Damage Zone in a 4.0 mile radius. The after effects would be mass casualties, radiation exposure, physical trauma / thermal, psychological/worried well, secondary toxic industrial chemical/ toxic industrial material (TIC/TIM) releases in light damage zone, terrorist threat (evolving threat), domestic criminal threat, and civil unrest.

The purpose of the exercise is to train and confirm the readiness of Michigan Army National Guard forces allocated to the US Northern Command CBRN Response Enterprise, as well as forces assigned to the Michigan National Guard Reaction Force, to provide support to civil authorities in a realistic, live, constructive and simulated training environment.



## Fiscal Year 2015 Homeland Security Grant Update

Prior to the release of the Federal 2015 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) guidance, the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP-EMHSD) is requesting that all Homeland Security (HLS) regions, including West Michigan Region 6, complete a Fiscal Year 2015 HSGP Stakeholder Survey Template and a brief FY-2015 HSGP Project Workbook.

This request comes as MSP-EMHSD anticipates the release of the FY-2015 HSGP Federal Guidance. Each region in Michigan is being asked to complete the FY-2015 Stakeholder Survey and to provide two sustainment projects in the FY-2015 HSGP Project Workbook by no later than Monday, April 27, 2015. The above requested information is necessary to ensure that each region's needs and priorities are supported in the grant application and to begin preparing for the FY-2015 HSGP grant process.

As of April 15, 2015, the FY-2015 HSGP Federal Guidance had not been released. MSP-EMHSD had stated previously, that FEMA may require that all FY-2015 grant funded projects be submitted with the application. This information will not be known until the federal guidance has been released.

If FEMA decides to require that all FY-2015 HSGP Projects be submitted at time of application, there will likely be a very short turnaround time for project submissions. MSP-EMHSD will provide additional guidance if FEMA decides to require that all projects be submitted at time of application.

WMSRDC is responsible for the management and administration of the homeland security program for the counties of Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa.



## WEST MICHIGAN CLEAN AIR ACTION!

### Summer Clean Air Action Season is Here

The Clean Air Action Summer Season is upon us. WMSRDC has been an active partner of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC) since the coalition's inception in 1995. The WMCAC is a partnership of businesses, academic institutions, government agencies, industry, and non-profit organizations in Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, and Kalamazoo counties working together to achieve cleaner air in the region through the education and promotion of voluntary emission reduction activities.

WMSRDC and coalition partners encourage individuals, businesses, and organizations to help by making clean air choices on Clean Air Action Days. The coalition strives to limit the health and environmental damage that excessive ground level ozone and particulate matter can cause by encouraging organizations and the general public to engage in voluntary emission reduction activities.

Every year, WMSRDC and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) partners in Holland and Grand Rapids, combine efforts and funding for an annual public outreach campaign. By combining resources, the WMCAC is able to leverage program funding to reach the maximum benefit. This year's campaign includes the purchasing of promotional items, educational materials, radio and television public education ads, and the annual kick-off luncheon event of which local television meteorologists and others interested in air quality attend annually. The WMCAC is celebrating its 20th anniversary on educating the public through the Clean Air Action Program this year. The presentation at the kick-off luncheon, held on May 1, 2015, will highlight the past, present, and future of the Clean Air Action Program. To learn more about the WMCAC and the Clean Air Action Program, go to [www.wmcac.org](http://www.wmcac.org).

### Mason County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

WMSRDC will be assisting in the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Mason County. The project will be funded by a grant awarded to the Mason County Rural Fire Authority by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Forest Resources Division.

The completed CWPP will include a detailed assessment of wildfire risks and a prioritized action agenda for mitigating the effects of wildfire in Mason County. WMSRDC will work closely with stakeholders such as the United States Forest Service, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, local firefighters, and landowners. Connections forged between stakeholders during the planning process will help facilitate the protection of lives, properties, infrastructure, and natural resources long into the future.

The Mason County CWPP project kicks off in June 2015 and is expected to be complete in the latter half on 2016.

### Muskegon Lake Vision 2020

Staff from WMSRDC along with several community partners will embark on facilitating a Muskegon Lake Vision 2020. The Vision 2020 will be developed based on public input in four focus areas including environmental, recreational, residential, and commercial activities surrounding Muskegon Lake. Four public input sessions; one for each focus area, will be held during the month of June.

The Muskegon Lake Vision 2020 is expected to be completed by January 2016 and will provide a collective community consensus for how Muskegon Lake can remain sustainable and viable in each of the four focus areas.

Stayed tuned for more information regarding the Vision 2020.



## Regional Transit Mobility continued from page 1

This data is being collected for all RPI regions across the state including the counties in RPI Region 4, which includes the 13 counties of Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa. The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission is collecting data for eight of the counties, and WMSRDC is collecting data for the remaining five counties.

Once all surveys are completed and returned by transit agencies, WMSRDC will work with the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission to incorporate all findings into one document and then forward that document on to MDOT. MDOT will then work with the Michigan Association of United Ways, through a professional consultant, to gain and evaluate a broader perspective regarding transportation needs in Michigan.

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 120 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties. WMSRDC is also responsible for the management and administration of the homeland security program for the counties of Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa. WMSRDC is also the planning agency for the metropolitan transportation planning (MPO) program for Muskegon and Northern Ottawa Counties.

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