

WMSRDC Board Approves CEDS Updates

In March, the WMSRDC Board approved updates to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for 2016. Those updates include adjustments to the Regionally Significant Economic Development and the Regional Community Investment project lists, as well as a full update of the WMSRDC Industrial & Business Park Inventory.

2016 CEDS PROJECT LISTS

Regionally Significant Projects

- Lake County EDC Capacity Building - Lake County
- Tech Center Renovations- West Shore Community College
- Zephy/Bosma Property Redevelopment- Muskegon Twp. & North Muskegon
- Infrastructure Improvement Project - Muskegon County
- Port of Muskegon Regional Logistics Hub Implementation - Muskegon County
- Industrial Redevelopment Project - Muskegon Heights
- The Stream Call Center/Training Facility - City of Newaygo
- Food Processing Cluster Infrastructure Project - City of Hart
- Agri-Food Technology Academy - Regional
- Regional Industry Cluster Analysis and Development Study - Regional

Community Investment Projects

- Lake County Museum
- Idlewild Community Development
- Ludington Convention Hall
- Ludington Water Treatment Plan and Water System Upgrades
- Ludington Wastewater Outfall Pipe Relocation
- Ludington Wastewater Treatment Plant and Sewer Collection System Upgrades
- Muskegon County Convention Center
- Muskegon County Placemaking
- Muskegon County Recycling Center
- Howmet Playhouse Improvements
- Global Trade Mission for the Blue Economy

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SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

Port of Muskegon Update

WMSRDC continues to be actively involved in work around the Port of Muskegon which includes supporting the efforts of both the Muskegon County Port Advisory Committee, as well as the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership. These groups are leading multiple efforts to position the Port of Muskegon as a regional logistics hub and restore the environment of Muskegon Lake.

The Port of Muskegon Infrastructure and Organizational Analysis is underway. After a request for proposals process, Martin Associates was selected as the consultant for the project. Martin Associates is a well-known and respected consultant with extensive knowledge and experience working with ports around the country and within the Great Lakes. A team from Martin visited Muskegon in April to meet with local leaders and port operators, and become familiar with the community's transportation infrastructure including roads, water, rail, and air. During their two-day visit, the team interviewed a variety of groups and individuals with interests in the Port of Muskegon, conducted a land tour of port facilities including the Muskegon County Airport, and participated in a water tour of port infrastructure on the lake.

The Muskegon County Port Advisory Committee will be hosting a Port Day on July 26 in Muskegon. The purpose of Port Day is to invite manufacturing and agribusiness executives from the West Michigan region to visit Muskegon and personally view the logistics capabilities of the Muskegon Port. In addition, the completed Port of Muskegon Infrastructure and Organizational Analysis will be unveiled and presented to Port Day participants by the Martin Associates team.

Keep up to date on this Port of Muskegon project on the WMSRDC website at www.wmsrdc.org and future issues of this newsletter.



WMSRDC Recognized Locally

WMSRDC recently won the 2016 Sustainability Champion Award in the Government Division from the Muskegon Area Sustainability Coalition for the Commission's work in environmental clean-up and port expansion. In addition, Muskegon County nominated WMSRDC for the inaugural "Pure Award Best Practices" award as part of the Governor's 2016 Pure Michigan Tourism Conference. WMSRDC's work around recreational best practices related to the Lake Michigan Water Trail and the West Michigan Blueways & Greenways Plan landed the Commission in the top five nominees from across the state.

Community Partners Reduce Phosphorous for Water Quality Improvements

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative provided a grant to reduce nutrients in Bear Lake in the Lower Muskegon River Watershed. The overall project goal is to improve local water quality and to prevent nutrients from causing problems in Lake Michigan.

The project is designed to meet the recommendations of the Bear Creek Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load Assessment (TMDL) for phosphorous. The TMDL was completed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. It determined that Bear Lake does not meet water quality standards for nutrients and there is a need to reduce the amount of phosphorous that drains from the watershed into Bear Lake. Bear Lake's water quality is also related to Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership efforts to remove the Eutrophication and Undesirable Algae Beneficial Use Impairment, which is needed to remove Muskegon Lake from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

The GLRI grant partners include WMSRDC, Muskegon Conservation District, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, Muskegon County Road Commission, Muskegon County Drain Commissioner, and the Delta Institute. Grant partner activities include:

- WMSRDC is working with landowners to construct a native plant wetland to settle out nutrient-filled sediment from upper watershed drainage areas and release improved water back into Bear Creek.
- The Muskegon Conservation District is working with Delta Institute and agricultural and recreational landowners to install Best Management Practices on private lands in the upper watershed.
- The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly is working with residential landowners along the watershed's lakes and streams to install native plant shoreline buffers.
- The Muskegon County Road Commission is constructing improvements at major road-stream crossings to reduce soil erosion, sedimentation and nutrients.

Each grant partner is working with numerous community partners and volunteers to accomplish the projects, including Michigan Pine and Dunes Girl Scout Council, Bear Lake Association, Muskegon County Parks, City of North Muskegon, and Muskegon, Laketon and Dalton townships.

West Michigan and Control of Non-Native Invasive Plants

WMSRDC is partnering with the West Michigan Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) to develop a sustainable program for the early detection and control of non-native, aquatic invasive plant species within the Lower Muskegon River Watershed. As part of this effort, WMSRDC is collaborating with watershed groups and conservation districts to provide GIS support for the West Michigan CISMA's efforts throughout West Michigan. As the challenge of ever-increasing assaults by non-native invasive plants changes our economic and environmental ecosystems, the need for more tools and collaborations will increase.

A CISMA is a defined area managed for control of invasive plants and animals. CISMAs are comprised of multiple partners with one shared goal: limiting the environmental and economic damage caused by misplaced aggressive species. CISMA partners generally include state, federal, and local government agencies, as well as local groups and individuals with this shared management interest. There are 17 of these areas in the State of Michigan. The West Michigan CISMA includes many of the counties within the WMSRDC region. WMSRDC's partnership with the West Michigan CISMA provides opportunities for increased collaboration that will benefit the quality of the West Michigan Region.

Small Town and Rural Development Conference

WMSRDC staff attended the Small Town and Rural Development Conference on April 12 and 13 at the Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, Michigan. The event, which was organized by the Michigan Rural Council, offered valuable networking opportunities and information about funding and technical assistance opportunities for rural communities. Breakout sessions featured presentations from local, state, and federal agencies on a breadth of topics, such as: talent retention, downtown revitalization, development/redevelopment financing options, civic engagement, energy management, and rural business development.

WMSRDC looks forward to attending this conference again next year and will encourage rural communities within the region to attend as well!

NADO & EDA National Conferences

WMSRDC executive director, Erin Kuhn, recently attended two national conferences in Washington DC. The National Association of Development Organization's Washington Policy Conference was held on April 4 through April 6, and the Economic Development Administration National Conference was held April 7 and 8.

The conferences provided opportunities to network with other directors and economic professionals from around the country, hear about federal initiatives and future federal opportunities, and attend one-on-one meetings with the staff members of Senator Peters, Senator Stabenow, and Congressman Huizenga.

Deconstruction Study Update

The Muskegon County Deconstruction Cluster Feasibility Analysis continues to move forward. The project team from Michigan State University has been busy gathering information on a number of fronts, including: marine port capacities in the Great Lakes; potential availability of deconstructed materials within the Great Lakes; and potential markets for reuse of deconstructed materials.

Other Port of Muskegon initiatives are being coordinated with the deconstruction study as well. WMSRDC will facilitate coordination between MSU and the EDA-funded Port of Muskegon Infrastructure & Organizational Analysis to avoid redundant efforts and share relevant research. In addition, the Muskegon County Port Advisory Committee is partnering with MSU to bring graduate students from Erasmus University in the Netherlands to Muskegon for a summer internship. The students, which will be in Muskegon thanks to a grant from the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, will have an opportunity to provide a unique perspective of deconstruction, reuse of materials, and port and transportation economics in general.

The purpose of the Analysis is to determine the feasibility of developing an industry cluster to repurpose deconstructed materials from demolished properties within the West Michigan region. The Port of Muskegon may also play a role in this concept, with the potential to transport incoming or outgoing deconstructed materials. WMSRDC is partnering with the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development and Muskegon County to complete the study.

New TIP Nearly Complete

The draft FY2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is nearly complete. 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 Federal Highway Administration during a four year period (FY2017-2020).

Working closely with the MPO Technical and Policy committees, a prioritized project list has been developed that is financially constrained out to FY2020. All of the projects have also had an Environmental Justice Analysis done to ensure that selected projects follow federal guidelines. Throughout the process, the public has been invited to participate in the TIP development, and all meetings are held at locations that are accessible to transit and non-motorized transportation. The TIP will include all federally funded highway and transit projects funded in the years 2017-2020. These projects include Local, MDOT, and Transit. The estimated federal allocation for all funding categories in the FY2017-2020 TIP is \$25,005,179. Most of these projects will also include at least a twenty-percent local match.

The MPO committees will act on the draft document in May of 2016, and from there it will be reviewed by MDOT and FHWA for final approval. A public meeting will be held at the WMSRDC offices on May 9, 2016, and a public comment period will be open from May 3 through May 17, 2016.

Rural Transportation Oversight Board

WMSRDC continues to be involved in the Rural Transportation Oversight Board. Voting members of this board include: MDOT – Bureau of Transportation Planning, MDOT – Bureau of Highway Development, MDOT - Officer of Passenger Transportation, the County Road Association, the Michigan Municipal League, and local transit representatives. WMSRDC is participating as a non-voting member representing the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR).

The duties of this committee are to establish the general direction and goals of the Rural Task Force (RTF) Program and ensure consistency in the program's implementation and administration. The committee has worked to establish the general direction and goals of the RTF Program and ensure consistency in the RTF Program implementation. The board has released guidelines which will improve the rural task force project. In addition, the RTF education website, www.michiganrtf.com, is live and has a great deal of information important to the rural transportation planning process.

Traffic Counting Equipment

WMSRDC recently purchased four traffic counters and traffic count software for the Oceana County Road Commission. Traffic counters were purchased through the WMSRDC's Regional Transportation program, which is funded through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT.)

For a number of years, WMSRDC has overseen a traffic count program in the Muskegon urban area that uses a consultant to collect approximately 100 traffic counts per year. These counts are used by local road agencies, MDOT, and a variety of businesses and developers. While it makes financial sense to hire a consultant in the urban area for a large number of counts in a relatively small geographic area, the same approach doesn't make sense for the smaller number of counts needed in the rural areas.

This traffic counter purchase assists not only the road commission, but MDOT and WMSRDC as well. Traffic counts are used by the road commission and other local road agencies when planning for improvements and construction, while MDOT and WMSRDC use these counts for planning purposes. In addition, MDOT requires up-to-date traffic counts when agencies submit applications for funding and requests for changes in road classification.

In the previous fiscal year, WMSRDC purchased traffic counters for the Mason County Road Commission. Other counties within the region have expressed interest in this program for future years.

2016 Homeland Security Fiduciary Training

WMSRDC staff and other Region 6 members will attend the annual 2016 Homeland Security Grant and Fiduciary Training to be held on Monday, May 2, 2016 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Downtown Grand Rapids. Michigan State Police Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division (MSP/MHSD) staff will be on hand to present several topics including:

- Threats and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) overview
- Homeland Security Grant Program processes
- Audit Areas of Concern
- Grant Reimbursement requirements
- Improper Payment Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act (IPERIA) recovery audits

The Monday training event will help kick off the annual 2016 Great Lakes Homeland Security Training Conference and Expo titled “Anticipating Tomorrow’s Threats,” which will take place from May 3-5, 2016 at the DeVos Place Convention Center in downtown Grand Rapids.

2016 Great Lakes Homeland Security Training Conference & Expo

The annual 2016 Great Lakes Homeland Security Training Conference & Expo will be held May 3 through May 5, 2016 at the DeVos Place Convention Center in downtown Grand Rapids. More than 1,200 emergency management and homeland security stakeholders are expected to participate in the three day event. With the theme of “Anticipating Tomorrow’s Threats,” this year’s conference will examine emerging hazards faced in an uncertain and potentially dangerous world.

Several dynamic keynote speakers have been confirmed, including:

- Martin E. Dempsey - The retired U.S. Army general who served as the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Obama from October 1, 2011 – September 25, 2015.
- Don Boyce – The Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Emergency Management, which oversees the federal government’s primary planning, response and recovery efforts for public health and emergency medical support.
- Lt. Christopher Vanghele – A Newtown Police Department officer who was among the first to arrive on-scene during the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shootings incident.
- Kris Paronto, Mark Geist, and John Tiegen – Three survivors of the attack on the American diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012, as depicted in the (2016) movie “13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi.”

The conference will provide a great opportunity for networking with homeland security stakeholders and to learn, share, and interact with industry peers.

Local Government Services

WMSRDC takes pride in supporting local governments in the region. For over 40 years, WMSRDC has helped dozens of local governments develop plans for the future. WMSRDC continues to provide technical assistance and guidance to local governments in the region; ranging from guidance and advice, to public facilitation and plan development.

Projects over the past year have included master plans, recreation plans, public input facilitation, and numerous digital mapping projects.

WMSRDC provides this service to all local governments within the five-county region. Contact the WMSRDC offices for more information regarding the Local Government Services program.

Oceana County Master Plan Update

On April 7, the Oceana County Planning Commission held a public hearing during its monthly meeting to receive comments from the public regarding the proposed update of the Oceana County Master Plan. WMSRDC was on hand to facilitate the meeting and to answer questions regarding the planning process.

Following comments from a few county residents, the planning commission voted to forward the proposed plan to the Oceana County Board of Commissioners with a recommendation to adopt the plan. If adopted by the board, the proposed plan will become the official master plan of Oceana County. Otherwise, the board could choose to return the plan to the planning commission to address specific concerns. A decision by the Oceana County Board of Commissioner is expected by the end of April.

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 its 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 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 production of a new television public service announcement, purchasing of promotional items, educational materials, radio public education ads, and the annual kick-off luncheon event attended by local television meteorologists and others interested in air quality. The presentation at the kick-off luncheon, held on April 29, will highlight how the new ozone standard may impact the number of Clean Air Action Days this summer. To learn more about the WMCAC and the Clean Air Action Program, go to www.wmcac.org.



CEDS Projects continued from page 1

The 2016 CEDS features ten regionally significant economic development projects and eleven regional community investment projects. The primary difference between the two lists is that regionally significant projects better align with investment priorities of the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). All of the projects listed in the CEDS are consistent with the CEDS Goals and Objectives and are included to help them garner additional considerations for assistance from federal and state grantors.

The CEDS is a required document for the region to maintain its status as an Economic Development District designated by EDA. It provides detailed information regarding WMSRDC's five-county region, including a regional profile, economic and demographic information, goals and objectives, economic development project lists, and a detailed work program. WMSRDC convenes the CEDS Advisory Committee to oversee the development and maintenance of the CEDS. It is comprised of economic development officials and representatives from within the region. The CEDS document, project lists, and Industrial & Business Park Inventory are available at www.wmsrdc.org.

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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