



West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

June/July 2017

WMSRDC Awarded Economic Development Planning Grant

In May, U.S. Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow announced that WMSRDC would receive a \$210,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help spur economic development in West Michigan. WMSRDC provided \$90,000 match to secure the award, bringing the project total to \$300,000 which will be used over a three year period.

The award primarily supports the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is designed to bring together the public and private sectors to create an economic development roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS contains a set of regional goals and objectives and a list of regionally significant economic development projects, both of which are annually maintained by WMSRDC. In addition, the award will support activities of the WMSRDC economic development program, including: provision of economic development technical assistance to communities throughout the district; annual maintenance of the WMSRDC Industrial and Business Park Inventory; and integration of economic development planning with other regional program areas within the district, including resilience planning,

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Happy Retirement to Susan Stine-Johnson

For over ten years Susan has been responsible for the financial management of WMSRDC's programs, preparation and maintenance of the budget, and administration of the benefits program. She has also been in charge of the management and administration of the homeland security program. Susan has been a valued employee and all of her hard work is greatly appreciated. Susan's official last day at WMSRDC was June 30. Please join us in wishing Susan the enjoyment and relaxation she has earned in her retirement years.



WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

Transportation Work Program

The Fiscal Year 2018 Unified Work Program (UWP) was approved by the Transportation Policy Committee at its June meeting. The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration are currently reviewing the document for final approval, which is expected in July. The UWP outlines the budget and activities for the metropolitan transportation planning program for the next fiscal year.

The UWP is a federally required document, which is reviewed and approved on an annual basis. Some of the key roles that are outlined in the UWP include:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): The LRTP outlines plans for meeting long-term transportation needs with constrained finances including the use of local, state, and federal transportation goals and objectives to guide transportation plans and projects.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The primary purpose of the TIP 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 the next three year period. Projects are selected from the LRTP based on need, local initiative, and requirements of the federal government through the current transportation legislation.
- Air Quality Planning: Promote voluntary emission reduction activities through marketing and outreach programs.
- Non- Motorized Planning: Develop and expand non-motorized transportation options in the region.
- Performance Measure Planning: Identify and implement strategies that will aid in planning for the entire transportation network.
- Public Involvement: Support and facilitate early and ongoing public involvement in the development and review of plans and programs.
- Technical Assistance: Provide technical assistance to interested community groups upon request.
- Special Needs: Seek out and consider the interests of people traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system.
- Data Gathering: Data collection for Highway Performance Monitoring Systems (HPMS) for eligibility of highway safety funds, based upon certified public road mileage, for road improvements.

For more information regarding the Unified Work Program or any other metropolitan transportation related questions, please contact Brian Mulnix, Program Manager, at bmulnix@wmsrdc.org or by phone at 231-722-7878 ext. 20.

Stormwater Planning & Green Infrastructure

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Stormwater, Asset Management, and Wastewater (SAW) grant program provided WMSRDC with a \$99,404 grant to develop a Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) for a 5,472-acre, urban portion of the Muskegon Lake watershed. An additional \$11,045 in matching funds was provided by the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership, Verplank Trucking, Consumers Energy, and Great Lakes Dock and Materials.

The SMP is focused on the Muskegon Lake subwatersheds of Ruddiman Creek and the Division Street outfall within the cities of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Roosevelt Park, and Norton Shores. The area's impervious surfaces lead to flashy hydrology within drainage systems, and stormwater runoff contributes to elevated levels of heavy metals, organic chemicals, and excessive sediment

in surface waters. The SMP identifies recommendations for Best Management Practices (BMP) as well as eight site-specific conceptual plans that incorporate green stormwater infrastructure design features.

The SMP seeks to minimize non-point pollution; maintain the integrity of stream channels for biological and drainage functions; reduce flood damage; minimize any increase in stormwater runoff from new developments; maintain groundwater recharge; improve aesthetics of land and water resources within the community; and develop BMP recommendations that meet goals identified in the Michigan Water Strategy. Implementation of the SMP will contribute to water quality improvements, help meet goals of the Michigan 21st Century Infrastructure Plan, and protect the quality of Lake Michigan as a major source of public drinking water in the region.

Integrating Science and Natural Resources

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated Muskegon Lake as a Habitat Focus Area (HFA) in 2015. The HFA provides a collaboration framework that strengthens the value of ongoing and future research as it relates to restoration activities. In response to a NOAA request for HFA proposals, WMSRDC and GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute propose to study restored shoreline habitats, aquatic plants, macroinvertebrates, water quality and fisheries. The NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service's Office of Habitat Conservation (OHC) received 14 proposals representing \$7,849,400 for a three year period. The Muskegon Lake proposal was selected as a finalist and was invited to provide a proposal for a total federal funding request of \$537,458 over a three year period.

The proposed project will expand upon previously completed fish and wildlife habitat restoration with prior NOAA support, and will determine how Muskegon Lake is responding to the improvements. Targeted monitoring, scientific investigations, and stakeholder input will lead to the development and implementation of habitat restoration plans to sustain coastal resiliency. Muskegon River, Muskegon Lake, and Lake Michigan are part of a complex interconnected system and researchers have often focused their efforts on distinct parts of this system. This project will incorporate monitoring information from all three. The information will be transferred to Great Lakes AOC communities.

MEDA Conference

WMSRDC staff participated in the Spring Economic Development Toolbox Conference on May 16 in Lansing, Michigan. The annual one-day event is organized by the Michigan Economic Developers Association (MEDA). Several concurrent breakout sessions were offered, broaching subjects such as workforce development, community development, and foreign trade policy.

WMSRDC maintains a MEDA membership allowing staff to stay connected with economic development professionals and current issues in Michigan. The mission of MEDA is to undertake education, networking, and advocacy on economic development for and in support of its members, partners, and stakeholders.

Upcoming CEDS Committee Meeting

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee will convene for its summer meeting on August 4 in Mason County.

The committee is comprised of representatives from each county in the region. It oversees the development and maintenance of the CEDS for the WMSRDC Economic Development District. Member counties take turns hosting the meetings, which are typically held quarterly over lunch at a local restaurant.

The upcoming meeting will feature a guest speaker from Mason County to highlight unique economic development efforts in that area. The committee will also consider and discuss specific strategies to be incorporated in the new CEDS document, which is currently under development by WMSRDC.

EDA Representative Visits WMSRDC

The WMSRDC region is an Economic Development District designated by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). One benefit of this designation is guidance provided through an Economic Development Representative (EDR) by the EDA Regional Office in Chicago.

The EDR assists in preparing applications for EDA investment and also notifies the region of various federal economic development resources and grants, as they become available. The EDR for WMSRDC, Mr. Lee Shirey, paid a visit this past May to discuss any potential applications for EDA investment. Contact WMSRDC for more information or to discuss potential economic development opportunities and arrange a conversation with Mr. Shirey.

2017 Asset Management Begun

WMSRDC recently began the process of collecting data for its annual Asset Management program. Asset management is a planning tool that is based on an inventory of each local road network within the region. It provides data that will allow transportation officials to monitor, plan, and strategically improve the road network.

In 2002, the Michigan Transportation Commission formed an Asset Management Council and enacted the Asset Management Program. The Council is appointed by the Transportation Commission and answers directly to the Commission and legislature. Its goal is to inventory all 39,000 miles of federally eligible roads within the State of Michigan, and according to the data collected, determine future distribution of ACT 51 transportation funds.

When the program began, data was annually collected for 100% of the federal aid eligible roads. For the past four or five years approximately 50% of the federal aid eligible roads have been rated every year. For the 2017 data collection effort, WMSRDC has decided to once again rate 100% of the federal aid eligible roads in order to give our member communities better data to plan with.

Each year, WMSRDC staff, along with MDOT and a county road commission employee, collects this data for each county in Region 14. The data collection effort requires the collection of three items: road condition rating, surface type, and the number of lanes. The road rating assessment rates the road surface condition for a given segment on a scale of 1-10.

So far data collection has been completed for Mason County, Newaygo County, and Lake County. Data collection for Muskegon County, Oceana County, and northern Ottawa County will take place in July and August.

Training Wheels to Help Develop On-Road Bicycle Facilities

The City of Muskegon Heights will be hosting a “Training Wheels” educational course on July 18 designed to help engineers and planners develop on-road bicycle facilities. WMSRDC and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will be assisting the city with the training and logistics for the workshop.

The training involves using the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines for developing bicycle facilities, particularly on-road type facilities. The course includes both classroom instruction and an on-road, on-bike portion where class participants will actually ride a predetermined route and discuss various positive and negative aspects of the existing designs. The on-bike segment will provide participants with a firsthand look at the benefits of providing an alternative mode of transportation that does not require expensive facilities for communities to build or maintain.

The class is open to city and county managers, MDOT managers, engineers, planners, elected officials, DDA staff, economic development staff, township officials, Chamber of Commerce officials, and any other interested transportation stakeholders.

The class is limited to 25 people, and it is recommended that participants bring their own bicycle and a helmet. There will be a limited amount of bikes available for those that cannot bring one. You must be pre-registered to attend this training. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jake Eckholm at jeckholm@cityofmuskegonheights.org.

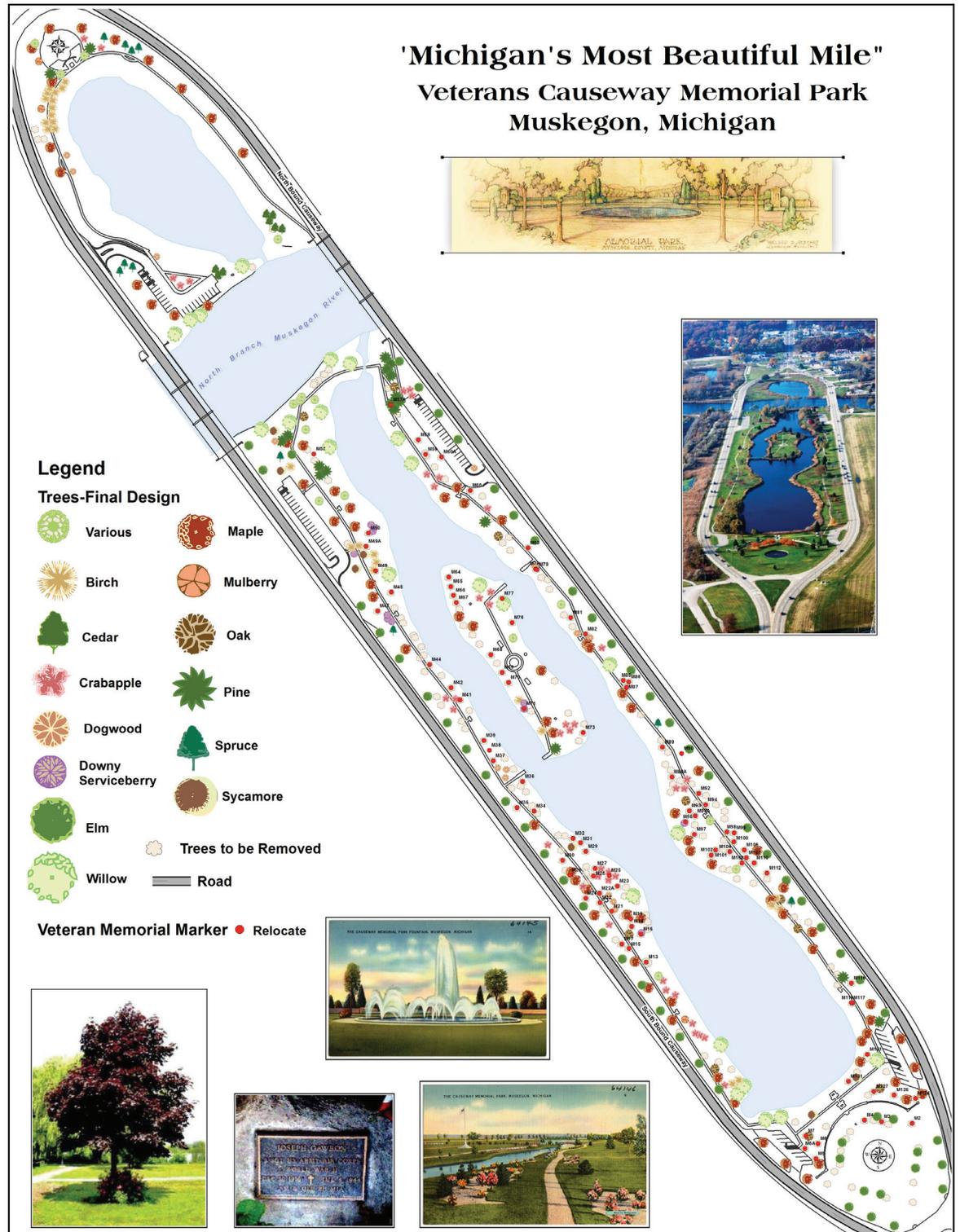
Veteran's Memorial Park

The Veteran's Memorial Park and Muskegon River habitat restoration project is being managed by WMSRDC with funding provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Great Lake Commission (GLC).

Before any of the work on the river habitat restoration or park redesign could begin, a complete inventory of veteran's memorial markers and trees within the park needed to be completed. The initial GPS points and photos of all of the veterans memorial trees and markers were taken by the Muskegon County Veteran's Advisory Council and used by WMSRDC to map their locations in the park.

This inventory, along with the design for the park, made it possible to know which trees with veteran's markers would be removed and therefore would need to find a new place within the park to place the marker. The inventory of the veteran's markers included not only the locations but also the names of the veterans and any information their markers could provide. WMSRDC has reached out to family members to let them know of the project, notify them if a marker would be moved, and show them what options they had for new locations within the park.

This map, developed by Jamie Way, GIS Specialist, won the People's Choice Award for Map Design at the IMAGIN GIS Conference in Traverse City in June.



The top historical image courtesy of Lakeshore Museum Center. The aerial image courtesy of Muskegon County Veterans Advisory Council and Photography Plus.

Muskegon Lake and Bear Lake Non Native Invasive Species Removal Project Update

September 30, 2017 will see the end of this invasive species control project for Muskegon Lake and Bear Lake. To date, 115 coastal wetland acres have been treated to control Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife and approximately 13 acres of adjacent uplands were treated for Spotted Knapweed and Honeysuckle. In addition, 590 tree seedlings have been planted and almost 3,000 native plants are in the process of being installed at targeted locations around Muskegon Lake and Bear Lake.

The removal of the nonnative invasive species and the replacement of the native plants will provide the habitat improvement and biodiversity needed to remove one of the designated beneficial use impairments of the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern.

This year there have been at least two experiential learning events for 6th to 12th grade students providing hands-on connections and awareness of invasive species issues for our future citizens and the establishment of a permanent vehicle for local oversight and management of invasive species through the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership. This will provide sustainability into the future.

This restoration and sustainability will be aided by our annual plant status survey and by updating the Muskegon Lake Biodiversity Protection and Phragmites Management Plan giving direction for long term management of these difficult resource impacts.



Newaygo County Recreation Plan

The Newaygo County Parks and Recreation Commission, with assistance from WMSRDC, has begun the process of updating its five-year community recreation plan. The county hired WMSRDC to facilitate the planning process and draft the plan to meet specifications required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

Completion of the plan will help qualify Newaygo County for recreation grant programs offered by MDNR. The first step of the planning process is to ask the public and parks customers to share their likes, dislikes, and ideas for improving parks and recreation opportunities in Newaygo County.

The county parks director and WMSRDC staff held a series of public input meetings at four Newaygo County Parks on Saturday, June 17. In addition, surveys were made available at park offices and a form was made available to the public on the Newaygo County Parks and Recreation website.

A draft of the plan is expected to be available for public review this October, and the plan will be completed in January or February of 2018.

Homeland Security Reporting

It is once again time for WMSRDC staff to prepare the Emergency Management Homeland Security Division Biannual Strategy Implementation Reports (BSIR). The purpose of the BSIR is to report on the status and expenditures on a project-level basis to both the Michigan State Police (MSP) Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The BSIR is due to MSP in mid-July and will include project information regarding both the Fiscal Year 2015 and 2016 Homeland Security Grant programs.



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environmental planning, transportation planning, and community development.

WMSRDC is diligently working on significant revisions to the district's CEDS document, which is expected to be more cohesive and targeted to the region's economic strengths and needs. A draft of the new CEDS will be available for a thirty-day public review period this fall, and the final plan will be available in January 2018.

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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