

Draft Economic Development Strategy Ready for Review

Over the past year, the WMSRDC and the CEDS Strategy Committee have worked hard to strip down and rebuild the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). These efforts have culminated with release of the 2018 CEDS draft for public review. Through November 16, the draft is available to view and download at <http://wmsrdc.org/project/ceds-2018/>.

The CEDS outlines a broad strategy to increase prosperity over the next ten to twenty years. Its ultimate purpose is to increase economic capacity to achieve regional economic prosperity in the West Michigan Shoreline Economic Development District. The 2018 edition marks a new era for our CEDS. First, the new CEDS is about one-third the length of the previous edition, and also features a new layout. Second, the CEDS narrative cascades directly from input received through a series of SWOT sessions held in fall 2016. As a result, the Action Plan chapter containing goals, objectives and strategies, is tailored to the region's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Lastly, the new CEDS does not include a "project list," which is no longer a requirement of a CEDS document. In lieu of a project list, WMSRDC is renewing its commitment to actively engage with economic development stakeholders throughout the region, and connect them with contacts, resources and information to increase the economic capacity and prosperity of the region.



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SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot - Data Collection Phase

Work continues on the Governor's 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot as the year-long project moves past the halfway point. WMSRDC and Grand Valley Metro Council from Region 4 in west Michigan and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments from Region 10 in southeast Michigan have come together to work with the state, local governments, and utilities to develop the process of integrated planning across drinking water, stormwater, wastewater, and transportation assets. To date, several stakeholder team meetings, advisory board meetings, regional meetings and subject matter expert workshops have pulled together over 120 asset owners and industry experts to help define the data collection process.

In mid-September, communities in the two pilot regions received data request packages that explained the data collection and submission process. The communities have been asked to submit data on their assets (drinking water, stormwater, wastewater, and transportation) to the regional leaders by November 1, 2017. Technical teams from both Region 4 and 10 will be working with the State of Michigan and Center for Shared Solutions to ensure all data will be accurately mapped and integrated with the state's existing Michigan Geographic Framework Technology. This data will be vital as the pilot project moves forward to identify potential system requirements for a demonstration database and further help determine what information will be included in the final state-wide asset management program.

Stay tuned as there is much more work to be done before the pilot project is completed in April 2018. For more information regarding the Asset Management Pilot Project, please visit the WMSRDC website at www.wmsrdc.org.

PilotVision: Michigan has...

- A culture of asset management across all infrastructure assets.
- A state-wide assessment of our transportation, water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure.
- A long-term integrated asset management strategy that results in coordination and increased cost efficiencies for utilities and local agencies of all sizes.
- The data and information needed to determine funding levels, and the incentives needed, for strategic infrastructure investments.

Pilot Mission:

- Build a culture of asset management across the state.
- Develop consistency across asset owners in asset standards and management practices.
- Create mechanisms for coordinated planning and communication across asset owners and types state-wide.
- Develop a system that will support our understanding of assets and enable us to make informed decisions at a local, regional, and state level.

Five New Grant Announcements!!!

WMSRDC staff was busy writing grants during the winter of 2016/2017. The work paid off with the recent announcements of five new grant projects. The projects are designed to improve the environment, economy and quality of life in the West Michigan Region.

U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Hemlock Woolly Adelgid - \$600K

This project will improve forest health in four West Michigan counties by surveying and controlling the spread of the HWA, a non-native invasive pest that has degraded forest ecosystems throughout North-eastern forests from Maine to Michigan. Recently discovered in West Michigan, WMSRDC will work with West Michigan CISMA partner, MDNR, MDARD, as well as public and private landowners to slow the spread.

U.S. Forest Service GLRI Lake Michigan Coastal Zone Reforestation - \$200K

This project will improve forest health, provide ecosystem services and prevent non-point source runoff from entering Lake Michigan by replanting native trees in urban communities and state parks located within the Lake Michigan coastal zone. The project will improve urban tree canopy and forests located in Muskegon State Park, City of Muskegon, Silver Lake State Park, Charles Mears State Park, and MDNR property that is managed by the Mason/Lake Conservation District.

NOAA Habitat Focus Area \$586,946

WMSRDC is partnering with GVSU AWRI, NOAA, Michigan DNR Fisheries Division, community leaders, landowners, and the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership to integrate science, stake-

holder input and natural resources management activities at several fish and wildlife habitat restoration locations along Muskegon Lake's south shoreline. The three year project will implement NOAA's HFA Plan for Muskegon Lake. Project activities will be designed to ensure the future resiliency of coastal resources and provide valuable scientific information that will be used to assess restoration activities and inform future restoration goals and priorities.

EPA GLRI Urban Green Infrastructure \$499,999

A Muskegon County property, located at the gateway into Muskegon's downtown area, will provide green infrastructure benefits including healthier greenspace for residents, cleaner water in Muskegon Lake, and an improved scenic view of the City's entrance from Seaway Drive at Shoreline Drive. During the late 1800's, Beidler's Creek traversed the county property as it meandered through what is now the Nelson Neighborhood, past Nelson School, through the Nims Neighborhood and on to Muskegon Lake at Rotary Park/Heritage Landing. The project will provide biofiltration for stormwater runoff and improve the quality of surface waters at a popular, public recreation area. At one time, Beidler's Creek served as the City of Muskegon's public water supply. Strong public involvement and educational activities will be integrated with the project.

Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership \$31,165

The MLWP will continue to advise state and federal agencies on the cleanup and restoration of Muskegon Lake. WMSRDC will provide staff support and technical assistance to advance this work and to meet the cleanup goals that will ultimately result in the delisting of Muskegon Lake as a Great Lakes Area of Concern. Delisting is targeted for 2020.

Fall CEDS Meeting

The Fall CEDS Strategy Committee meeting took place on October 27 at Marquette Trails Golf Club near Baldwin in Lake County.

The meeting was hosted by the Lake County Economic Development Alliance. Economic development representatives from across the WMSRDC region were in attendance.

The group, also known as the CEDS Strategy Committee, gathered over lunch to discuss the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document, as well as discuss the latest economic news and events from across the region. The meeting also featured a presentation from a member of the Lake County Economic Development Alliance regarding efforts and challenges associated with broadband service in Lake County. The winter CEDS Strategy Committee meeting will be scheduled in the January/February timeframe and will be held in Newaygo County.

New TIP Under Development

WMSRDC is set to begin the process of developing the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which will cover fiscal years 2020-2023. WMSRDC will work with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in the early development stages to establish revised air quality models as well as updates to socio-economic data used for TIP and Long Range Plan development. This information will allow planners to identify potential capacity deficiencies in the transportation network and plan for addressing some of those issues through project development, while remaining compliant with federal air quality requirements.

The last approved TIP covered fiscal years 2017-2020. It is expected that the new document will be brought to the Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO) committees in FY2019 for final approval. The TIP will be developed in stages over the next two years with assistance from the MPO committees and MDOT. Project selection will take place in early FY2019.

TIP documents are short range planning documents that cover four-years of project programming for the MPO area. The TIP includes federally funded transportation projects that will be completed in the metropolitan area of Muskegon and Northern Ottawa counties.

Work Program & Budget

At the regular meeting of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission on September 18, the board approved the fiscal year 2018 Work Program and Budget. The document outlined work and projects to be accomplished during the fiscal year in the designated WMSRDC program areas. These areas include air quality, transportation asset management, community development & local government services, economic development, environmental program, federal project review system, geographic information system services, homeland security, information & communications, transportation metropolitan planning organization – management, metropolitan transportation data assistance, metropolitan area transportation planning, regional transportation planning, rural transportation planning, and transit planning. The budget approved by the WMSRDC board for fiscal year 2018 totaled \$13,031,447.

Regional Transportation Work Program Approved

The Fiscal Year 2018 Regional Work Program (RWP) was recently approved by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The document outlines the budget and activities for WMSRDC's Regional Transportation Program for the next fiscal year. Budget estimates for the RWP are provided by MDOT.

Some of the key roles for WMSRDC that are outlined in the RWP include:

Management of the Rural Task Force and Small Urban Program – WMSRDC provides staffing to both the Rural Task Force as well as the Small Urban Task Forces within the region. Staff responsibilities include setting up meeting dates and times; submitting eligible projects to MDOT as approved by the RTF committees; submitting proof of public involvement; and meeting minutes.

Asset Management - The resources allocated to WMSRDC for this work item are used to collect data on the condition of roads within the region. These include coordinating and facilitating road surface data collection on approximately one-half of the Federal Aid System.

Technical Assistance - Provides technical assistance to interested community groups upon request.

Pure Michigan Byway Program - Staff implements the Pure Michigan Byway Program for MDOT. Activities include: Preparing corridor management plans, providing guidance to local “grassroots” organizations seeking to nominate a state highway as a Pure Michigan Byway or National Scenic Byway, addressing local specialized issues relating to future transportation system improvements, providing opportunities for public involvement activities related to the Byway, and ensuring the Byway corridor management plan is up to date.

Air Quality Planning - Promote voluntary emission reduction activities through marketing and outreach programs.

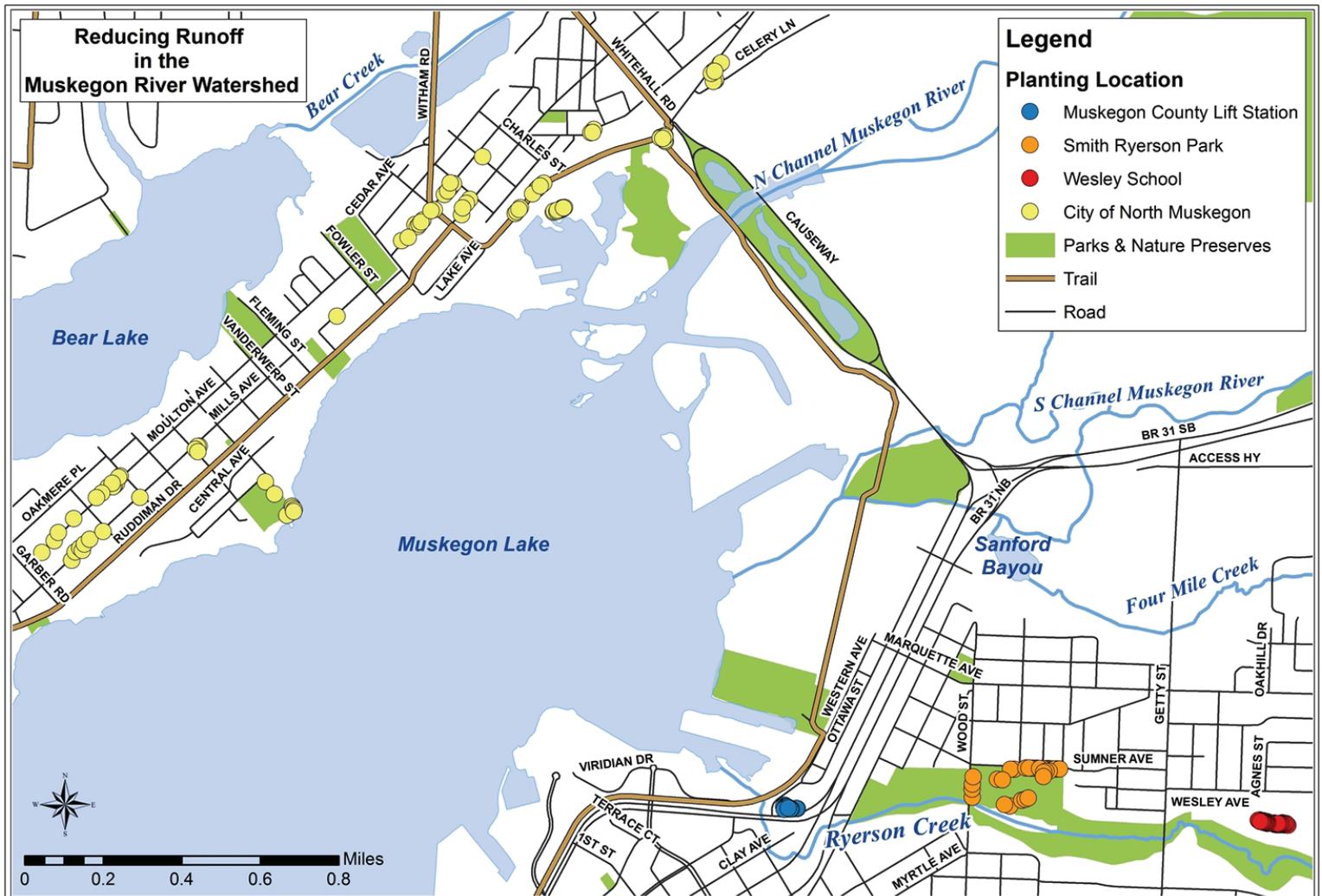
Non-Motorized Mapping – Staff works to develop and implement aspects of a non-motorized investment plan to identify needed projects, prioritizing those projects, and determining the best funding arrangements for the projects within the region. In addition, staff works to promote the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the overall transportation planning activities, coordinates with stakeholders and seeks public input.

Public Involvement - Supports and facilitates early and continuing public involvement in the development and review of transportation plans and programs.

Tree Plantings to Prevent Stormwater Runoff

WMSRDC received a grant to reduce stormwater runoff in the Muskegon River Watershed by planting trees near sensitive wetlands and within urban areas. In October, just under 200 trees were planted along Ryerson Creek and within the City of North Muskegon. A total of 78 trees were planted at Smith Ryerson Park, Wesley School, and the Muskegon County Lift Station at Ottawa Street to help soak up and hold rain water before it can runoff into Ryerson Creek and Muskegon Lake. The City of North Muskegon received 105 trees for planting along the Lakeshore Bike Trail, the City of North Muskegon Department of Public Works and Fire Department, the Watersports Park, and within the road right of way at 30 residences.

Some of the trees used for this grant include: Red Maple, Red Oak, Basswood, Serviceberry, Hackberry, Ironwood, Redbud, River Birch, Dogwood, Flowering Plum, Sycamore, and White Pine. Large trees can hold up to 100 gallons of water, provide shade, block wind and noise, and help mitigate the negative effects of impervious surfaces such as parking lots, roads and rooftops in urban areas. Trees also act as natural filter for water before it drains back into lakes and streams. Grant partners include the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the Environmental Protection Agency with additional support provided by the Muskegon Conservation District, the City of North Muskegon, City of Muskegon, Montague Tree Farm and Great Lakes Landscape Supply.



Homeland Security Update

WMSRDC continues work in the Homeland Security Program. The fiscal year 15 grant is winding down and scheduled to close in May 2018, while the fiscal year 16 grant is well underway with project development and purchasing just starting. WMSRDC staff is also in the middle of conducting an equipment tracking inventory by working with the 13-county emergency managers within Region 6. The Michigan State Police (MSP) Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) require the inventory to be collected annually.

As the designated fiduciary, WMSRDC is responsible for the management and administration of the Homeland Security Grant Program for the counties of Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa.

Blue Lake Township Rec Plan

On Wednesday, October 18 the Blue Lake Township Planning Commission, with assistance from the WMSRDC, held a public hearing to receive public comments regarding the proposed Blue Lake Township Recreation Plan. Following the hearing, the Planning Commission passed a resolution recommending adoption of the Recreation Plan by the Blue Lake Township Board.

Aside from establishing a vision for the future of recreation in Blue Lake Township, successful completion of the recreation plan will qualify the township for recreation grants offered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. As the process to update the Blue Lake Township Recreation Plan draws to a close, WMSRDC will continue working with the Blue Lake Township Planning Commission to update the community's master plan. Within the next few months, a proposed master plan is expected to be available for public review and comment.

Newaygo County Recreation Plan

The Newaygo County Parks & Recreation Commission, with the assistance of the WMSRDC, will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, November 21 to receive comments regarding the proposed Newaygo County Recreation Plan. The meeting will take place at 9:30 AM at the Newaygo County Commissioners Room located at 1087 Newell Street, White Cloud, MI 49349. The meeting is open to the public. Those with an interest in the Newaygo County Recreation Plan are encouraged to attend.

A copy of the proposed Recreation Plan will be available for the public to review at the County Clerk's Office during regular business hours through November 20. Written comments regarding the proposed draft may be submitted prior to November 21 to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, 316 Morris Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49440 or via email at scarlson@wmsrdc.org. Questions regarding the proposed Newaygo County Recreation plan should be directed to Mr. Stephen Carlson (231) 722-7878 (extension 11).



CEDS continued from page 1

The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development, and is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of a region. The CEDS is required to maintain the region's designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). This designation enables communities within the WMSRDC region to remain eligible for EDA funding programs. Since 1966, EDA has made over 40 investments in the WMSRDC region, including those in industrial park and infrastructure improvements, technology centers, technical assistance, and loans. Development of the CEDS is led by WMSRDC, overseen by the CEDS Committee, and approved by the WMSRDC Board. As the designated EDD for the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana, WMSRDC is required to maintain the CEDS annually and update it every five years. Preparation of the CEDS is overseen by a committee of representatives from throughout the WMSRDC region which meets quarterly.

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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