

Culvert Data Collection Pilot Project

Throughout 2017 and early 2018 WMSRDC, along with a number of member communities, participated in the State of Michigan's 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot. From this, culvert condition was identified as a transportation issue that is ripe for asset management tracking. Culvert maintenance and replacement of culverts before they fail can be a road safety issue as well as a cost issue. Culverts that fail may also mean the roadway itself fails, necessitating replacement.

As part of the next step for the expansion of infrastructure asset management in the state, two million dollars from the State of Michigan's FY2018 budget was allocated to the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) to implement a data collection pilot to ascertain roadway culvert conditions. It is the intention of the TAMC that most of this funding will be dispersed to local road agencies as reimbursement for culvert data collection.

The intent of this pilot is to collect culvert data that can be used to generate the following information on Public Act 51 Certified Roads in Michigan at a state wide level:

- Estimate the total number of culverts in the State
- Estimate the overall condition of culverts in the State
- Determine the range of physical characteristics of culverts, such as material, size, and depth
- Benchmark estimates of agency labor (time and materials) necessary to find and collect inventory data for culverts on a dollar per mile or other production rate basis

Local agencies that agree to participate will be collecting a number of different data elements related to their culverts. These include: GPS coordinates and culvert material type, shape, length, width, etc. To ensure consistency of the inspection process, the Center for Technology and Training (CTT) is assisting the TAMC with managing the culvert pilot and has sponsored a number of training sessions. These training sessions included an informational webinar held on April 19, a RoadSoft training held on April 25th, and a culvert evaluation session on April 26th.

Once local agencies have completed data collection, it will be submitted to the CTT. The data will then be analyzed and shared with the State of Michigan. It is hoped

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SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot

As noted in the previous WMSRDC Newsletter, Governor Snyder unveiled the results of the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot project at a press conference held at Founders Brewing Company in Grand Rapids on May 4, 2018. The press conference included a panel discussion with Governor Snyder, Carmine Palombo from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), Erin Kuhn from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), and John Weiss from the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC). Visit the WMSRDC website to learn more about the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot project and for a link to the final report and executive summary. Pictures from the event are shown below.



Pictured from left to right: Carmine Palombo, Governor Rick Snyder, Erin Kuhn, and John Weiss.



Pictured from left to right: Erin Kuhn, Governor Rick Snyder, and James Rynberg.

At the 2018 Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) Spring Conference held in Traverse City on May 22, TAMC honored the three regional planning agencies and Governor Snyder's Administration with the 2018 TAMC Organization Award. The awards were presented to Therese Empie from Governor Snyder's Executive Office, John Weiss, Carmine Palombo, and Erin Kuhn for their work on the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot project. The TAMC Organization Award is to recognize leadership and setting for a path of improvement for public agencies in response to the needs of their transportation network and infrastructure. During the TAMC Conference, the four pilot leaders also gave a joint presentation on the pilot project journey, lessons learned, and future recommendations.



Pictured from left to right: Erin Kuhn, John Weiss, Carmine Palombo, and Therese Empie.

Muskegon River and the Veterans Memorial Park Restoration Project

The restoration of fish and wildlife habitat and water quality along the Muskegon River at Veterans Memorial Park is in its final year of construction. It is part of a broad community vision for improvements to the historically significant park. The \$2.6 million project is being funded by a WMSRDC grant through a Great Lakes Regional Partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Great Lakes Commission. The park was originally established as a memorial to World War I veterans in 1934. Input for the current project was received by the Muskegon County Veterans Advisory Committee, Northside Lions Club, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership and the cities of Muskegon and North Muskegon. Muskegon County is the landowner. A previous City of Muskegon grant through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) developed the formal plaza, parking lot, retaining walls, gardens and seating area, north of the Muskegon River. The MDOT grant also provided new electrical wiring and lamp posts throughout the entire park, on the north and south sides of the river. On June 5, 2018, seventy community members attended a public tour of the project.

One of the new restoration features, under the WMSRDC project, is the reinstallation of the historic, 1934 Willard Gebhart landscape design. The original landscape was severely degraded when the Dutch Elm disease wiped out the large tree canopies that lined the parkway corridor in the 1970s. Replacement trees were planted to improve the park's appearance over the years, although not according to the original landscape design. By 2013, many trees had died and others were in severe decline. The new, native trees will tolerate fluctuating water levels, warmer summer temperatures, harsh winters, road salt, wet and dry soils, and even temporary periods of standing water. Under future low water periods, when Lake Michigan water levels go back down, the new irrigation system can be used to water trees and plants.

Another new restoration feature is underwater. Large woody structures and gravel spawning beds were installed in the ponds. The south pond's underwater side slopes were also reinforced with wood structure, filter cloth and rock up to the surface water line. This will prevent

the surrounding land from eroding into the pond as water levels rise and fall, and create habitat for fish and wildlife. This also reduced the space where wide bands of non-native invasive cattails had begun to thrive. Cattails had surrounded the shoreline and blocked views of the center island and other memorial features. To top it off, a low-growing native planting of colorful flowers and grass-like sedges is being installed along the south pond shoreline. Until firmly established, the new plants will be protected from waterfowl predation with orange exclusion fencing. This low-growing plant will protect scenic views, while providing habitat, beauty and ease of maintenance.

The opening of the restored south pond to the Muskegon River is now providing fish passage and water quality improvements. The south pond had become choked with algae and stagnant water. Views from the island bridges within the park were degraded, although this was not visible from vehicles that passed by on the Causeway. The project also removed old oil pipes and other material to improve environmental conditions within the park. With these improvements, the south pond will once again provide a reflecting pool appearance, as intended by the historic landscape design, and a reason that the Causeway was once known as Michigan's Most Beautiful Mile.

Although high water levels caused some temporary construction delays, the project will be complete in 2018. It was designed to be resilient and will accommodate water level fluctuations without harm to the park's infrastructure, memorials or natural resources. Final work, to be completed this summer, includes post-construction repairs to concrete pathways to ensure that they will accommodate future high water periods. In addition to this work, the final plantings, removal of orange construction fencing, replacement of memorial plaques, repairs to lawn ruts, and other final construction related repairs will be completed. The park has remained open during the two-year construction period and will be fully usable in the fall of 2018.

MAR Annual Meeting

The Michigan Association of Regions (MAR) held its annual meeting on June 19 and 20 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The meeting brought together leaders from the 14 regional planning agencies from across the state.

During the first day, attendees learned about the Kalamazoo Promise program, the ten years it has provided a cost-free college education at Michigan's public universities to more than 4,900 students, the data on student success and how the Promise model has expanded across the country.

The group also toured the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Culinary Allied Health Building and Food Innovation Center, and learned about major development projects in downtown Kalamazoo. On the second day, the regions heard reports from state and federal partners and held their annual meeting. During the annual meeting, the MAR members elected new officers for the upcoming year including Erin Kuhn as vice president of MAR.

RPI Meeting

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) held a regular meeting at the WMSRDC offices on Monday, June 18. Attendees received an update from Paul Griffith, Michigan Works West Central on the broadband activities supported by the WMPA as well as state and federal broadband initiatives. John Weiss and Erin Kuhn gave an update on the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot Project and the 11 mini grants awarded with Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) funds to assist communities in Region 4 for their participation in the Pilot project. The group was also informed of upgrades to the West Michigan Regional Dashboard funded by the WMPA. To wrap things up, the group discussed another round of funding for local projects. A committee of approximately five volunteers will be leading the effort. The next WMPA

Fremont Receives EDA Grant

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$738,425 grant to the City of Fremont to make roadway improvements needed to support current businesses and encourage additional economic growth. The project is expected to create or retain more than 100 jobs and generate \$4.4 million in private investment. The EDA investment will support the new construction of nearly a 1/2 mile of roadway that will provide an alternative truck route from the Fremont Industrial Park to Michigan State Route 82. The project will reduce traffic congestion in downtown Fremont and alleviate truck traffic from residential streets.

The City of Fremont was eligible to apply for this grant because the project aligns with the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is maintained by WMSRDC. WMSRDC also assisted in completing the application for this project. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development, designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of a region. This plan enables communities within the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana to apply for assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Agency (EDA). In addition to maintaining the CEDS, WMSRDC helps communities identify potential projects and apply for assistance through EDA, as well as a myriad of other state and federal agencies.

Muskegon Area Smart Commute Week a Success

The annual Muskegon Area Smart Commute Week took place June 11-15 and has replaced Bike to Work Week. The week consisted of events promoting cycling, walking, running, taking the bus, and carpooling. Loads of perks from local businesses were offered at various locations around the greater Muskegon area.

The Smart Commute Week kicked off with a rally at the Muskegon Farmers Market on a rainy, Saturday, June 9, 2018. WMSRDC staff was there hosting an air quality information table and a Muskegon Area Transit System bus was available to walk through and get a quick lesson on riding and reading the brand new route maps.

During the week of June 11-15, Muskegon area community members challenged each other to a friendly competition known as the Smart Commute Week Challenge. Individuals registered and others created teams. The participants racked up points to qualify for prizes with every smart commute trip they made. Seven teams registered for the 2018 Smart Commute challenge consisting of a total of 58 team members and a total of 33 people registered as individuals. Both teams and individuals brought the total number of smart commuters registered for the challenge at 91 participants. Over \$350 worth of prizes to winning teams and individuals were distributed.

WMSRDC's Clean Air Action program teamed up with the Muskegon Area Smart Commute Week because the goals of both projects aligned perfectly which include promoting a healthy lifestyle and achieving better air quality through the promotion of emission reduction activities.

In addition to WMSRDC, other sponsors of Muskegon Area Smart Commute Week were the Community Foundation for Muskegon County and the City of Muskegon Parks Department. Corporate drivers and partnerships included City Hub Cyclery, Bicycle Rack, Break Away Cycle, Muskegon and the White Lake Chamber of Commerce, Muskegon Area Transit System, WMSRDC, Coffee Factory, Pigeon Hill Brewery, Drip Drop Drink, Unruly Brewery, Root Down, Fetch Brewery, Peadills, Positively Muskegon, Access Health, Healthwest, Muskegon Farmer's Market, Shoreline Natural Wellness, Muskegon Yoga Center, Community Shores Bank, and Iheart Radio.

Asset Management Begun

Regional staff 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.

WMSRDC is required to collect data on the Federal Aid eligible road system, but also rates local roads as a service for local road agencies. So far in 2018 Federal Aid data collection has begun for Oceana County and Newaygo County. In addition, WMSRDC staff has completed local road ratings for the Village of Fruitport as well as the Village of Shelby.

Long Range Plan Model Preparation

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Muskegon Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), have started development of the Travel Demand Forecast Model ("model") in preparation for the development of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP and associated model is one of the requirements for receiving federal monies for use on federal-aid roadways within the WestPlan Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

As part of this, WMSRDC and MDOT hosted three different workshops in the MPO to assist local road agencies in gathering the first layer of data necessary to run the model. This data includes socio-economic data to establish a base-year for the model. Local road network information was also looked at to ensure accuracy and clarification of attributes.

Lake Michigan Coastal Zone Reforestation Project



Lake Michigan's Coastal Zone Management Area (CZMA) runs along the eastern edge of Lake Michigan and includes portions of Mason, Oceana, and Muskegon counties. WMSRDC has received a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant through the United States Forest Service (USFS) for tree planting in urban and forest lands within the CZMA that have been impacted by stormwater runoff due to loss of tree cover. Insect pests and tree diseases like emerald ash borer, oak wilt, and hemlock wooly adelgid are a serious threat to our native trees causing die offs and concern. Loss of tree canopy can increase stormwater runoff causing erosion, limiting or eliminating habitat, fouling surface water with excessive nutrient laden sediments, and degrading scenic values.

WMSRDC is working with state and local partners to plant trees within the City of Muskegon and five of Michigan's State Parks within the CZMA. Replacement of canopy will help to restore and protect impacted locations as well as provide wildlife habitat and improve scenic values.

The City of Muskegon will receive 300 trees to be planted at locations that will benefit from the estimated reduction of 17,700 gallons of stormwater runoff annually. Trees will also be planted in Muskegon, Hoffmaster, Silver Lake, Charles Mears, and Ludington State Parks replacing trees lost to invasive pests or disease. Many of these trees will be located within campgrounds providing shade as well as stormwater reduction and high aesthetic values. An additional site in Mason County will also be targeted for the reduction of the invasive species, Autumn Olive, and the installation of approximately 3,000 trees with substantial benefits for erosion control and runoff reduction. The grant is slated for completion in 2019.

Redevelopment Ready Communities

WMSRDC is developing a partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) that will provide assistance to local communities who are interested in pursuing Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification.

The RRC program, offered by the MEDC, is available to communities across the state. It's a voluntary, no-cost certification program designed to promote effective redevelopment strategies through a set of best practices. The program measures and then certifies communities that integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into their daily development practices. The RRC certification is a formal recognition that your community has a vision for the future—and the fundamental practices in place to get there. Within the WMSRDC region, there is currently one RRC certified community (City of Muskegon) and eleven communities that are engaged with MEDC seeking certification.

The partnership between WMSRDC and MEDC will enable WMSRDC to provide planning assistance to communities in pursuit of RRC certification at a reduced cost. Keep an eye out for more details at wmsrdc.org, or contact program manager Stephen Carlson for more information at 231-722-7878 ext. 11 or scarlson@wmsrdc.org

Clean Air Action Program Update

For over twenty years, WMSRDC has been an active member and funder of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC). 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.

So far the summer of 2018 has been a busy one:

- WMSRDC spearheaded the production and placement of a new public service announcement focussing on the health benefits of clean air activities on susceptible population
- WMSRDC was interviewed on two local radio stations helping to further educate the public about ways to keep the air clean
- WMSRDC was a key player in the Muskegon Area Smart Commute Week (see article in this newsletter)
- WMSRDC distributed air quality education materials at the Maranda in the Park Party in the City of Muskegon on June 28th of which hundreds of families attended

Homeland Security Update

WMSRDC has closed the fiscal year 2015 Homeland Security (HLS) Planning grant as of May 31, 2018. Also in May, WMSRDC and the Region 6 Board began work on the FY2017 HLS Planning grant. Work on the 2016 HLS Planning grant is well underway and will continue until May 31, 2019.

WMSRDC is working on completing the Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR) for the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Homeland Security Division (MSP-EMHSD). This report is due to the MSP-EMHSD in July 2018. Staff is also working with the Region 6 Board to schedule this year's physical inventory of equipment purchased through the Homeland Security Planning Grants. The physical inventory is required to be conducted every other year. This includes WMSRDC staff traveling to each of the 13 counties within Region 6 to conduct the inventory. The final inventory report is due to MSP-EMHSD in October 2018.



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that this process will shed some light on the feasibility of expanding the culvert asset management program to all communities statewide.

The culvert asset management pilot program is part of a larger policy goal at the State of Michigan to create a culture of Asset Management within the state. Michigan has a 15 plus year history of using Asset Management principles for federal aid eligible roads, and is considered a leader in the US. Michigan's leadership wants to capitalize on this success and expand it to other infrastructures.

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.

- James Rynberg, Chairperson, Mayor, City of Fremont
- Wally Taranko, Vice-Chairperson, Mason County Commissioner
- Bonnie McGlothlin, Secretary, Councilperson, City of Muskegon Heights
- Kay Beecham, Councilperson, City of Norton Shores
- James Brown, Oceana County Commissioner
- Benjamin Cross, Muskegon County Board of Commissioners
- Dean Gustafson, Oceana County Board of Commissioners
- Jennifer Hernandez., Supervisor, Muskegon Township
- Susie Hughes, Muskegon County Commissioner
- Charles Lange, Mason County Commissioner
- Joe Lenius, Councilperson, City of Ludington
- Howard Lodholtz, Lake County Commissioner
- James Maike, Newaygo County Commissioner
- Chris McGuigan, WMSRDC Appointee
- Dale Nesbary, Muskegon Community College
- Chris Ortwein, Newaygo County Commissioner
- Ron Steiner, WMSRDC Appointee
- Byron Turnquist, Commissioner, City of Muskegon
- Rillastine Wilkins, Muskegon County Commissioner
- Crystal Young, West Shore Community College
- Vacant, WMSRDC Appointee

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