

annual report

2015

mission statement

The Commission's mission is to "promote and foster regional development in West Michigan through cooperation amongst local governments and regional partners."

Why/How/What Statements

The following statements were developed by the Commission staff in the spring of 2024 as an organization-wide project to expand upon the Commission's mission statement. "We" in the statements refer to the Commission and its staff.

WHY do we do what we do?

West Michigan is an amazing place with tremendous opportunity and unlimited potential. We believe that regional planning improves the quality of life for all West Michigan residents. Therefore, we are passionate about serving the region and committed to doing our part to make a difference in the place we call home.

HOW do we do it?

We provide resources and expertise to support cross jurisdictional collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and empowerment of local communities.

WHAT do we do?

Perform local, state and federal planning functions that facilitate funding opportunities and determine project eligibility within the region through programs in transportation, economic development, environmental, and local government services.



purpose statement

We believe in the intentional effort to ensure everyone has a voice in their community. This is achieved when institutional and historical obstacles based on personal background and experiences are removed, ensuring they no longer determine education, health, or life opportunities.

We are committed to identifying and addressing these challenges through engagement and collaboration with local governments, residents, and both public and private partners. Our focus is to provide resources and support that contribute to the development of vibrant and prosperous communities.

The foundation of our organization is rooted in principles of excellence and integrity, and we expect our team members to embody these values in their professional conduct. We strive to maintain a workplace that respects individual differences and upholds the dignity of all.

Therefore, we pledge to utilize our resources to encourage unity and fairness throughout the region. We will cultivate partnerships and implement processes that proactively invite a variety of perspectives into our programs.

By implementing this commitment, we strive to lead by example in supporting communities where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

director's message

2025, *The Rollercoaster Ride*



I have noticed that there are two kinds of people in the world: Those that like rollercoasters and those that do not. I, personally, have always loved the adventure and thrill of a rollercoaster ride; the slow chinking of the climb to the top of the first hill, the view and anticipation once the car has reached the top, exhilaration and fear during the plummet to the bottom of the hill, followed by the high speed of every twist and turn during the remainder of the ride.

For me, 2025 felt very much like a rollercoaster ride with its ups and downs, twists and turns. The year was full of anticipation, uncertainty, surprises, and excitement. I want to highlight some of my most memorable parts of the 2025 rollercoaster ride.

Environmental:

On October 1, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) along with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) announced the Delisting of Muskegon Lake as an Area of Concern.

Economic Development:

In August 2025, the West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Analysis of the five-county region was completed. The study was funded by the U.S Economic Development Administration and included an asset mapping platform developed by Michigan State University.

Transportation:

The Shoreline Trails and Greenways (STAG) Plan was completed during the summer of 2025. The project mapped ways to connect existing regional paths as well as identify additional local access options to scenic places (waterways, parks, greenways) and everyday places (stores, banks, work). Funding was provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the City of Muskegon, Muskegon County, and the Muskegon Bicycle Coalition.

Local Government Services:

The West Michigan Shoreline Materials Management Planning effort continued. The three-year planning effort was in its beginning stages during 2025 with completion of the regional plan required by July 2027.

These projects and more are highlighted in further detail throughout this annual report. WMSRDC staff, as always, remained resilient, focused, and committed to the region in the work they do despite the ups and downs, twists and turns. I want to thank the WMSRDC Board for their continued support of the agency and constant encouragement throughout the year.

While I will continue to enjoy rollercoasters, I am ready to move on from the rollercoaster of 2025 and look ahead to what 2026 will bring our way.



Sidewalk art in
Downtown Muskegon

materials management planning

Materials Management Planning

Materials Management Planning is a new planning process prescribed by amendments to Part 115, Solid Waste Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451. Meant to replace “solid waste planning” at the county level in Michigan, materials management goes beyond merely landfilling waste within the state. It represents a concerted effort to divert waste away from landfills through the management of materials through activities such as, but not limited to, recycling and composting.

The foundation for materials management is the Materials Management Plan (MMP). All counties in the state are required to have an approved plan in place by July 2027. To meet this deadline, the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana opted to develop a single, regional MMP and selected WMSRDC as their Designated Planning Agency (DPA) to guide them through the planning process. In this role, WMSRDC serves as staff to the regional Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC), develops draft MMP content for the committee to review, and provides guidance and support to county administrators for managing MMP grants from the state.

In 2025, the MMPC met monthly and worked through some growing pains as members accumulated shared knowledge, awareness, and expectations for the materials management process. WMSRDC worked with the MMPC and County Administrators



to prepare the required year-one MMP Work Plan for EGLE approval which occurred in late March 2025. Between March and August each county executed a contract with EGLE to begin implementation of the work plan and preparation of the MMP. WMSRDC, with direction from the MMPC, began engaging with local governments in August to educate local officials regarding materials management and gather baseline information for the MMP. This included development and distribution of an online survey and fact sheet. Valuable information, such as available curbside waste pickup services, drop-off sites, private haulers, and community drop-off events,

was gathered through the online local government survey. This information will help the MMPC identify service and infrastructure gaps and develop MMP goals and objectives to not only fill those gaps but also meet benchmark recycling standards set by the state. To date, nearly 70 surveys have been collected. The MMPC also began development of goals and objectives in the fall of 2025. WMSRDC, the MMPC, and counties will continue development of the plan an anticipated completion of a draft plan by late summer 2026.



economic development

Agriculture Analysis and Agri-Cluster Coalition



In 2024 WMSRDC teamed up with Michigan State University's Product Center and MSU RS&GIS to initiate the West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis, a comprehensive effort designed to gather insight that would be used to support agriculture and food processing in the region. This year-long project resulted in an economic analysis with a trove of baseline information detailing the economic significance of agriculture, at both the regional and individual county levels, including economic impacts, market analysis, area profiles, and comparative analyses of Kent and Ottawa counties. There is also an interactive mapping suite that promotes awareness of the region's agriculture assets with powerful geographic context. The economic analysis and map applications may be accessed through the WMSRDC website, www.wmsrdc.org/project/west-michigan-agriculture-impact-analysis/.

WMSRDC presented the Analysis to stakeholders in August 2025, after which attendees were immediately led through an exercise to evaluate agricultural opportunities and needs identified within the Analysis. This activity helped prioritize potential initiatives and shift collective efforts toward action. To continue positive momentum generated through creation of the Analysis, WMSRDC and Annika Gacnik, Economic Recovery Corp Fellow, organized the West Michigan Agri-Cluster Coalition. The Coalition is intended to meet quarterly and operate as a flexible hub-and-spoke model that allows stakeholders to engage on an as-needed basis, depending on capacity, expertise, and interest. The Coalition will focus on coordinated funding strategies, such as joint grant applications, to reduce duplication and strengthen the region's competitiveness for external resources.

WMSRDC will continue to guide maturation of the Agri-Cluster Coalition through 2026 as a networking and resource hub for the agriculture sector in West Michigan. Participation in the Coalition is open to interested stakeholders across the agricultural sector value chain. Anyone with interest in joining or learning more about the West Michigan Agri-Cluster Coalition may contact WMSRDC to learn more.

WMSRDC initiated the West Michigan Agriculture Impact Analysis with a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Additional support was generously provided by the Fremont Area Community Foundation, community foundations for Mason, Muskegon, and Oceana counties, the Make it in Michigan Competitiveness Fund, and a Rural Readiness Grant.



Presentation of the West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis on August 27, 2025

economic development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

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 as well as guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of a region. Development of the CEDS is led by WMSRDC, overseen by the CEDS Strategy Committee, and approved by the WMSRDC Board as well as the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The CEDS Strategy Committee meets quarterly and includes a variety of representatives from throughout the WMSRDC region.

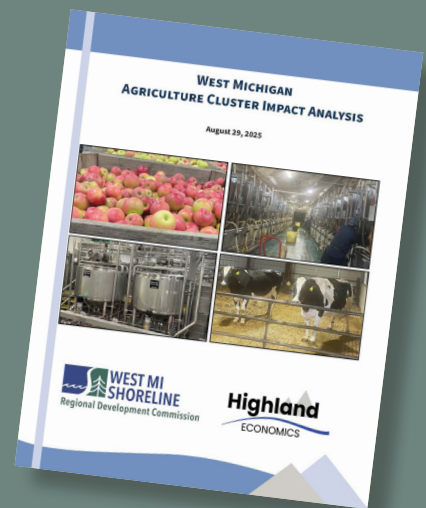
The CEDS is required to maintain the region's designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the EDA. This designation enables communities and other eligible entities

within the district to remain eligible for EDA assistance.

In 2025, there were four CEDS-enabled EDA grants active within the region at different stages of implementation, totaling over \$3.6 million in federal investment. These projects included: City of Hart Wastewater System Upgrades (awarded 2022), Lake County Economic Diversification and Capacity Building (2023), West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis (2024), and the WMSRDC Partnership Planning Grant (2023-2025).

Over the past year, WMSRDC worked to maintain the current CEDS document through quarterly meetings of the CEDS Strategy Committee. Each meeting included a review and discussion of goals and objectives in the following order: Infrastructure (winter meeting), Workforce (spring), Natural

Resources & Quality of Life (summer), and Economic Variety & Regional Integration (fall). This approach proved worthwhile and helped keep the CEDS relevant and aligned with ever-changing economic development priorities.



ERC Reflection from Annika Gacnik

In the second year of the Economic Recovery Corps Fellowship, collaboration emerged as the most important guiding principle in my directive to help strengthen West Michigan's agricultural industry. From the formation of the West Michigan Agri-Cluster Coalition to the development of the Food Systems Planning Community of Practice, the agricultural community has shown that it is stronger and more effective when we collaborate rather than compete and coordinate rather than duplicate.

The regionally focused West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Economic Impact Analysis, completed in September, has highlighted the importance of coordinated cluster development efforts, which range from improved infrastructure to wraparound services,

all of which require multi-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration. To this end, the newly formed West MI Agri-Cluster Coalition, which operates as a flexible hub-and-spoke model, has committed to prioritizing collective impact by coordinating implementation and grant funding strategies.

At a national scale, the Food Systems Planning National Community of Practice, hosted by Michigan State University and co-created this past year through multiple design sessions, emphasizes shared planning frameworks and peer learning. Participating in the design sessions showed how intentional facilitation and open-source data sharing can transform a concept into an active community of practice that will support food systems planning efforts across the U.S.

Finally, my fellowship capstone on organics waste diversion underscores the need for coordinated approaches as the region makes the shift from a linear to a more circular development vision. My conversations with farmers, processors, nonprofits, and government agencies have affirmed that waste is a shared challenge, but also a shared opportunity. By collectively revaluing agricultural surplus, byproducts, and organic waste, we can recapture lost economic value across West Michigan.

From regional coalition-building to national community of practice designs, this past year has shown that meaningful change requires thoughtful collaboration grounded in shared goals and mutual support. I am eternally grateful to have been partnered with WMSRDC for this fellowship, as they truly understand and demonstrate these values every day.

local government services



Blue Lake Township Planning Assistance

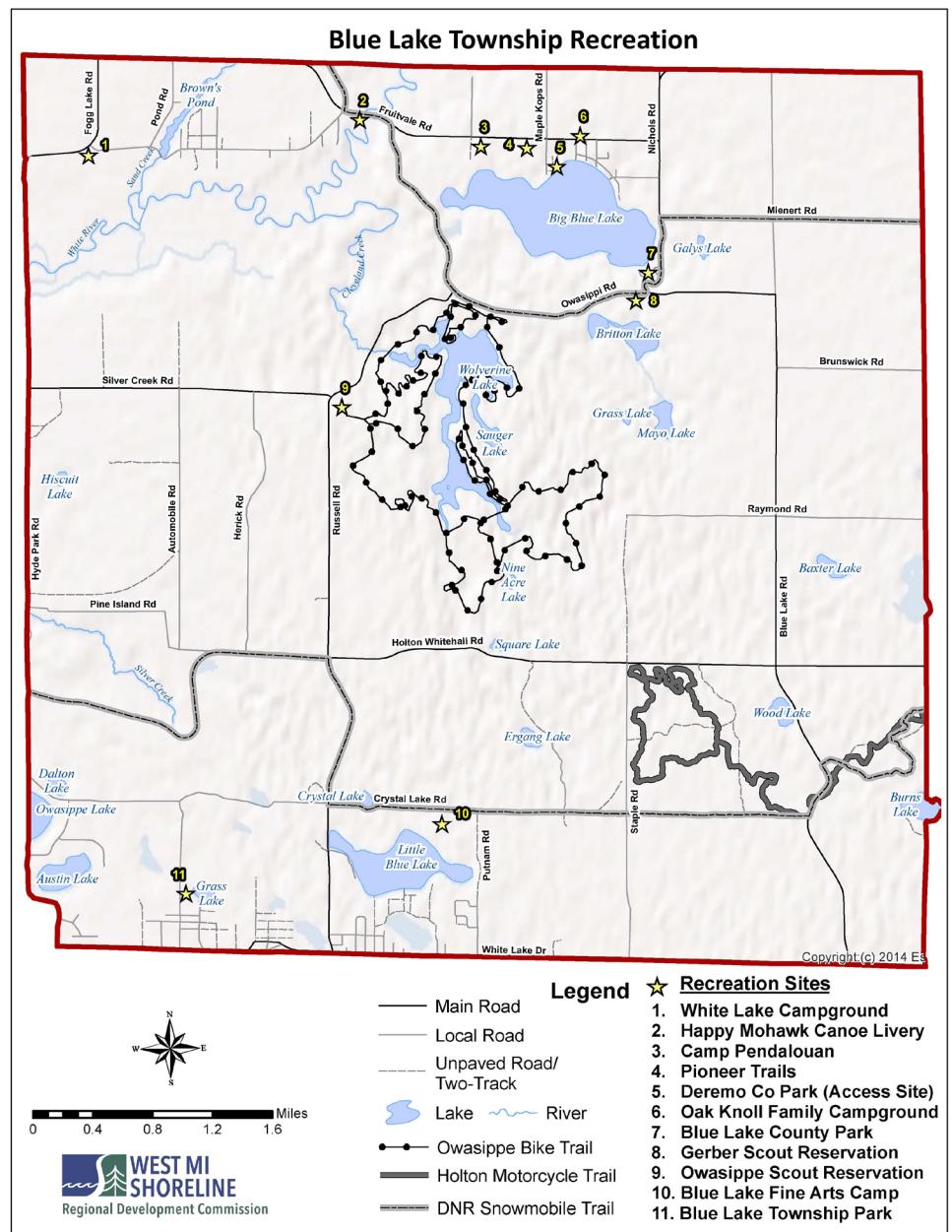
An essential role of WMSRDC is to support the planning responsibilities of local governments. WMSRDC annually assists a few selected communities in preparing land use plans, recreation plans, comprehensive master plans, or other locally based plans. Additional services include public engagement and GIS mapping.

Few local governments in the WMSRDC region have paid planning staff, and many communities lack resources necessary to hire a private consultant. In addition, all local governments experience leadership turnover, which can create a void of knowledge and experience. Such conditions can inhibit local ability to develop or maintain planning documents, whether required or desired. In this respect, WMSRDC offers a constant presence and resources to support and help local governments meet their community's planning needs.

In 2025, WMSRDC completed updates to the Comprehensive Development and Community Recreation plans for Blue Lake Township in Muskegon County and provided planning guidance to numerous local communities throughout the region. Many planning projects are slated to begin in 2026 as well.

Although writing local plans constitutes a fraction of the overall WMSRDC work program and budget, this service is central to our mission of supporting and coordinating planning functions of local governments. As a policy, WMSRDC does not wish to compete with private consultants,

and therefore, does not respond to requests for proposals issued by local governments. We are careful to only provide this service when local communities cannot afford to, or choose not to, enlist services from the private sector.



environmental Lake Michigan Rivers & Coastal Wetlands Regional Partnership



In 2020, WMSRDC entered the Lake Michigan Rivers and Coastal Wetlands Regional Partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). After five years of planning, implementation, and monitoring, the three selected projects for this funding were completed by September 2025.

In the Little Cedar Creek Watershed, WMSRDC collaborated with Muskegon County Road Commission and GEI Consultants to replace two perched, plugged, undersized culverts with adequately sized, clear span culverts and implement 500 feet of in-stream fish habitat enhancements. The project restored 3.5 miles of fish passage and reconnected 12 acres of wetland habitat and essential spawning and nursery habitat for lake-run and resident fish species such as brook trout, brown trout, and sculpin.

The White River project included the removal of four road stream crossing

structures that were inadequate for fish passage, installation of open span bridges or pipe arches at each road crossing, and over 1,000 lineal feet of in-stream habitat restoration improvements. Through these efforts Oceana County Road Commission and their subcontractors, GEI Consultants, Catskill Remedial, and Kanouse Outdoor Restoration reconnected 7.24 miles of stream and an estimated 7.6 acres of wetland floodplain habitat to lake-run, potamodromous and resident species.

At Marshville Dam Road and Stony Creek Oceana County Road Commission, Scott Civil Engineering, and JE Kloote Contracting removed two old foot bridges and three inadequate culverts and installed a beautiful open span timber bridge along Marshville Dam Road. Catskill Remedial and Kanouse Outdoor Restoration then implemented the designs by GEI Consultants to remove the old

dam and install 500 feet of instream habitat. Thanks to multiple funding secured by Conservation Resource Alliance, Stony Creek saw an additional 2,000 feet of instream habitat upstream of the WMSRDC project footprint and a recreational access platform. This resulted in the opening of 6.5 miles of stream to fish passage and access to 18.0 acres of adjacent wetlands.

WMSRDC would also like to thank Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute (GVSU), who conducted pre- and post-restoration monitoring at all project sites, and Oceana County Parks and private landowners, who have not only allowed the project and utilization of resources on their land but have also been instrumental in communicating the progress and success of the project to the community.



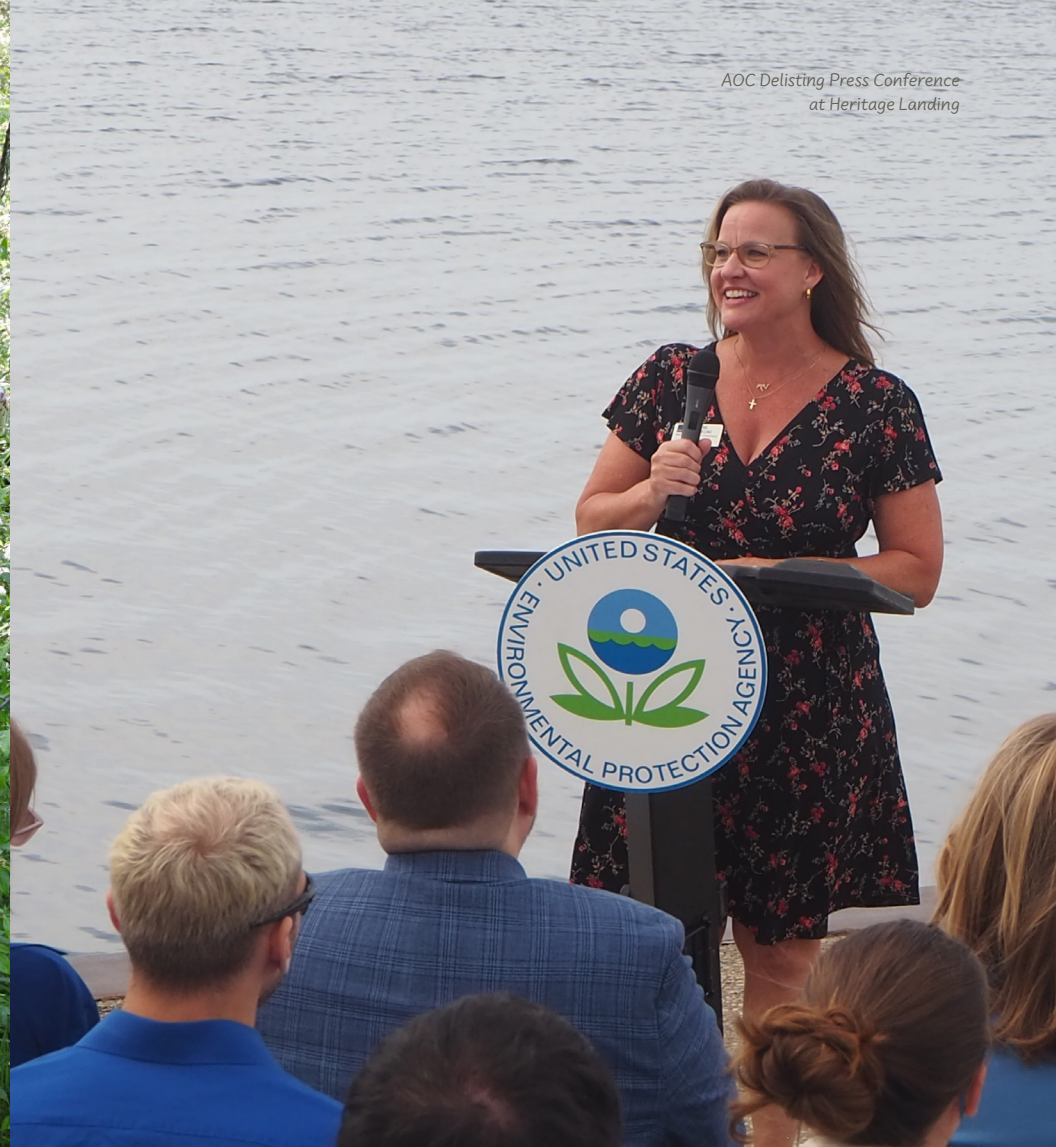
Little Cedar Creek and Sweetser Road crossing after construction



View of Stony Creek from the new fishing platform.

environmental

GVSU conducting
Tier 1 fish monitoring
at a White River crossing
location.



Muskegon Lake Area of Concern

On October 1st, 2025, and over thirty years of hard work and dedication, Muskegon Lake was officially delisted as an Area of Concern (AOC). This tremendous milestone is predicated by years of collaboration, coordination, and perseverance. The announcement was made by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) with a press conference at Heritage Landing on the shoreline of Muskegon Lake followed by a reception on the USS LST 393. Federal, state, and local project partners remediated more than 190,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment totaling an investment of approximately \$47 million. EPA provided \$21 million of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding and \$9.2 million of funding under the Great Lakes Legacy Act cost-share program. These investments leveraged an additional \$16.3 million from state and local partners through in-kind and cash contributions. Partners completed seven (7) habitat restoration projects with \$38 million in GLRI funding, restoring approximately 134 acres of habitat and over 6,000 feet of shoreline. These restored areas include nearly 100 acres of open water and emergent wetlands, as well as habitat for fish and native plants. Additionally, project partners removed more than 110,000 tons of logging-era sawmill debris from the lake, restoring habitat for bottom-dwelling invertebrates and for fish and wildlife populations. The Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership, Grand Valley State University, Muskegon Conservation District, Muskegon County, the Cities of Muskegon and North Muskegon, Laketon Township, public and private landowners, neighborhood associations, and interested community members also played pivotal roles in the delisting process. WMSRDC was honored to stand with the community along with our local, state, and federal partners to celebrate this historic achievement.

environmental

City of Muskegon Urban Tree Management

Thanks to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act (UCF IRA) Grant Program, WMSRDC partnered with the City of Muskegon to provide a phased approach to urban forestry. This summer, Davey Resources Group was competitively selected to begin this process with an unbiased and detailed tree inventory of Muskegon's over 14,000 trees. Davey also produced a corresponding tree management plan to help the city organize future efforts and ultimately lead to restored tree canopy resilience with healthy and biodiverse trees.

To engage the youth of the community with this project, 21 trees were planted on Muskegon Public High School campus by high school students, DTE volunteers, and community volunteers (Aldea Coffee), with support from teachers/school administrators, Muskegon Community College, Muskegon Rotary, City of Muskegon, and WMSRDC. The remaining 15 tree removals and 9 plantings to be funded under this award will be implemented by City of Muskegon in 2026.

The project team understands that the tree inventory and associated management plan outlined management above and beyond the funds of this project. Under the annual budget and future grants, the City of Muskegon will assume the responsibilities described in the management plan, including the continuation of dangerous tree removal and new tree plantings, administering updates to the tree inventory data, and consistent health monitoring of all trees within the city's jurisdiction.



Resilience Planning in West Michigan

This year, WMSRDC secured funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) to collaborate with community leaders, stakeholders, and the competitively selected environmental consulting firm, Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ETC), to develop a prioritized list of nature-based projects. WMSRDC hosted county level planning meetings in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Oceana, and Newaygo Counties to allow participants to provide input on locations in need of protection and the ideal outcomes and benefits from resiliency and restoration efforts.

Depending on highest priority projects' scopes and budgets, two to four of the identified projects will be pre-pared to flow into the Site Assessment and Preliminary Design phase of the NCRF pipeline. The additional projects recognized in the plan will continue to work through development and community preparedness to be submitted under future years of the NCRF pipeline or through other funding programs.

All future designs will utilize soft engineering solutions influenced by fluctuating water levels seasonally and annually and resilient to site hydrology to reduce any future coastal hazards, while ensuring all projects en-hance habitat and benefit native wildlife, leading to improved habitat for native plants and animals, reduced shoreline erosion, improved fish passage, and increased tourism due to improved fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and aesthetics.



Planting event at Muskegon Public High School
(Photo Credit: John Noling)

Rural and Regional Transportation

Asset Management

Each year, WMSRDC staff collaborate with MDOT and county road commission representatives to collect data on the condition of federal-aid roads throughout the region, including northern Ottawa County. This data collection includes three main criteria: road condition ratings, surface type, and the number of lanes. In 2025, WMSRDC successfully completed ratings for 100% of the federal aid-eligible roads across Lake, Mason, Oceana, Newaygo, Muskegon, and northern Ottawa counties.

WMSRDC staff also participated in asset management training courses throughout the year, including multiple staff members participating in the Michigan Infrastructure Council's Asset Management Champions program.



Rural dirt road
in Lake County.

Regional Transportation Planning

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) has continued to assist the Michigan Department of Transportation in administering the Rural Task Force and Small Urban program. WMSRDC diligently performs these tasks for the counties of Muskegon, Oceana, Newaygo, Lake, and Mason. It also effectively administers the Small Urban Transportation Program. WMSRDC is responsible for scheduling meetings, conducting the public involvement process, documenting meeting activities, and submitting information to MDOT.

Rural Task Force Local Rural Task Force (RTF) meetings were held with the individual counties throughout 2025 to review and approve amendments to the FY2026-2029 TIP. These amendments were presented to all five counties within the RTF at a joint meeting, which was held in October. The Rural Task Force received approximately \$4.0 million in federal funding and just over \$680,000 in State funding during the fiscal year. Typical projects funded through the RTF include road construction and road maintenance, as well as replacing transit buses, and updating supporting equipment and facilities.

Small Urban During October and November, WMSRDC held committee meetings for each of the region's small urban areas, including Whitehall, Fremont, and Ludington. Each committee is comprised of representatives from local road agencies, transit agencies, and county road commissions and are tasked with selecting and approving projects to receive \$420,000 in federal funding on a biennial basis. During each meeting, the committee confirmed project details for the approved FY2026 projects and selected and prioritized projects to receive funding in FY2028 in their respective small urban area. Each of the three committees chose one project to be completed in FY2026: a reconstruction on S. Jebavy Drive for a quarter mile south of US-10 overseen by Mason County Road Commission; Muskegon County Road Commission is performing road rehabilitation on Whitehall Road between Fruitvale and Skeels Roads; preventative maintenance on portions of Connie Avenue and Lake Drive implemented by the City of Fremont.



Downtown City of Ludington

metropolitan planning organization

Shoreline Trails and Greenways Plan

In 2025, WestPlan MPO completed the Shoreline Trails and Greenways (STAG) Plan, a regional non-motorized transportation plan for Muskegon County and northern Ottawa County. The plan was developed in partnership with WMSRDC and Progressive Companies and establishes a coordinated framework for expanding and improving the region's trail and greenway system. This initiative was funded through WestPlan MPO planning funds, with additional contributions from the City of Muskegon, the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners, and the Muskegon County Bicycle Coalition.

Plan development included extensive coordination with local governments, agencies, and community partners, as well as a comprehensive public engagement process. From January through July 2025, WMSRDC staff and Progressive Companies conducted outreach activities throughout the area, including public meetings in the City of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Grand Haven, and Whitehall. Engagement strategies included focus groups, pop-up events, an interactive planning exercise, community meetings, and a regional survey. More than 700 individuals participated in the planning process.

The STAG Plan identifies a preferred regional trail and greenway network intended to improve non-motorized connectivity across Muskegon County and northwest Ottawa County. Building on an assessment of existing non-motorized facilities, the plan identifies gaps and barriers in the current network and recommends priority trail connections, safety improvements, wayfinding enhancements, and strategies to improve equitable access. The recommended network strengthens connections between communities, employment centers, everyday destinations, and recreational and natural resources, while remaining consistent with adopted local and regional plans and advancing broader goals related to economic development, tourism, public health, and active transportation. A phased implementation framework is included in the plan and identifies potential funding sources to support project development. WestPlan MPO will continue to coordinate with member jurisdictions and regional partners to support implementation and incorporation of the plan into local planning, capital improvement, and development efforts.



Bridge over Grand River –
pedestrian trail side

MPO Overview

The West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan) serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Muskegon County and portions of northern Ottawa County. As the MPO, WestPlan is responsible for planning and programming transportation projects and studies within its service area. It administers a comprehensive transportation planning program that supports state and federal funding decisions for roadway and transit improvements.

Established under federal legislation in 1973, the MPO continues to operate under evolving federal transportation laws. Member road and transit agencies are represented through the MPO's Technical and Policy Committees, which form the organization's governance structure, with the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) providing staff support.

Working through these committees—and with meaningful public input—the MPO develops both long- and short-range transportation planning documents that guide investment in the regional transportation network and coordinate with neighboring MPOs. These plans are essential for determining how federal transportation funds are allocated to projects. MPO meetings are open to the public and include participation from all roadway and transit agencies in the MPO area, as well as state and federal agencies that contribute to the development of planning documents.

metropolitan planning organization

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Another federally required responsibility of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the development and maintenance of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The current plan for the WestPlan MPO is the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which was officially adopted in FY2024.

The MTP is a long-range planning document that typically looks 20 to 25 years into the future and establishes a vision and goals for the region's transportation system. It addresses all modes of transportation, including roads and highways, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, freight movement, and system safety, maintenance, and management.

Additionally, this document provides the policy framework for transportation decision-making and identifies long-term transportation needs and priorities. To be eligible for federal transportation funding, all projects included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) must be consistent with the MTP.

Development of the MTP includes extensive public involvement to ensure that community values, economic development goals, environmental considerations, and opportunity are reflected in the region's transportation strategy. The next update to the MTP is expected to begin in FY2026 and will include a review and update of demographic data used for traffic modeling.

WestPlan MPO documents and updates are available on the WMSRDC website.

Transportation Improvement Program

One of the federally required responsibilities of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the development and maintenance of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a short-term, multi-year planning document—typically covering four years—that identifies and prioritizes transportation projects to be funded and implemented within the MPO area. These projects may include roadway improvements, transit enhancements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and safety initiatives.

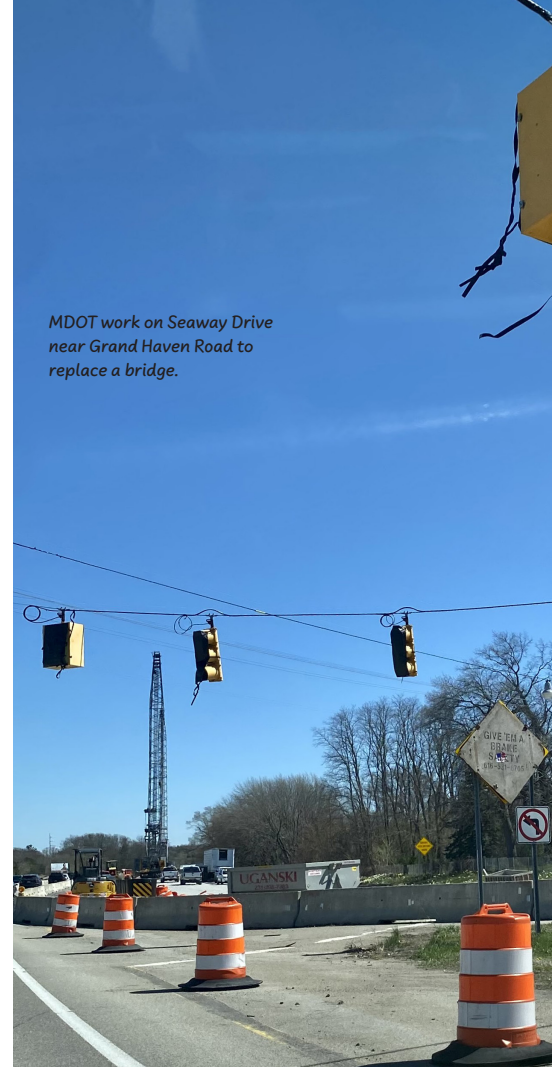
The TIP is developed by the MPO in coordination with state and federal transportation agencies, transit providers, and local governments. Only projects included in the TIP are eligible to receive federal transportation funding, ensuring that investment decisions are transparent, coordinated, and aligned with regional transportation goals.

Throughout the TIP cycle, updates and changes are sometimes necessary due to factors such as cost increases or modifications to project scope. These changes are addressed through formal TIP amendments, which are reviewed and acted upon by the MPO's Technical and Policy Committees during their monthly meetings. In FY2025, the MPO committees approved nine TIP amendments, with cost increases and scope changes being the most common reasons.

The FY2023–2026 TIP guided MPO planning efforts until its expiration on September 30, 2025. Following a comprehensive review and adoption process involving local, state, and federal partners, the FY2026–2029 TIP became effective on October 1, 2025.

In FY2025, a total of \$52,722,443 was programmed for highway, transit, planning, and non-motorized projects within the MPO area. Looking ahead, it is estimated that approximately \$189,298,430 in federal, state, and local funding will be invested in the WestPlan MPO area during the FY2026–2029 TIP cycle.

MDOT work on Seaway Drive near Grand Haven Road to replace a bridge.



Broadway Avenue reconstruction – Summer of 2025

air quality

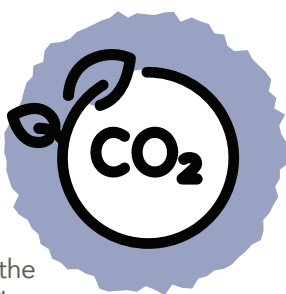
Clean Air Action

WMSRDC continued to be an active partner of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC). The WMCAC was formed over twenty-five years ago and remains a strong partnership of government agencies, academic institutions, businesses, and non-profit organizations in Muskegon, Kent, and Ottawa counties. These partners work together to achieve and maintain cleaner air quality in the region through educational materials and promotional items on voluntary emission reduction activities. Among other outreach activities, an extensive radio and television public education campaign continued in 2025 announcing Clean Air Action days and bringing attention to the goals of the WMCAC through the newly filmed PSA, featuring original and new cast members of all ages. The updated PSA aired on local news stations, steaming television, social media, and other information outlets throughout the 2025 season to promote actions that should be taken during Clean Air Action days.

Kicking off the 2025 summer season, the annual Clean Air Action kick-off picnic was held at Johnson Park in Grant Rapids on May 15th featuring chairperson Kathryn Ross' opening statement, presentations from EGLE on wildfire smoke and PM2.5s, and WMSRDC, MACC, and GVMC's presentation on the 2024 season. Additionally, staff at WMSRDC continued active participation in the planning of WMCAC Steering Committee meetings and activities. These activities included informational display rotations throughout the Muskegon and Northern Ottawa area and participating in STEAM Along the Lakeshore, which hosted nearly 1,000 children of all ages.

During the summer of 2025, there were 8 action days called, spread throughout the season though mostly held in June and July. The WMCAC submitted a letter of support to EGLE to consider the fires an exceptional event to remove the data from consideration when determining attainment status in West Michigan.

WMCAC's Lauryn Blake and volunteer works the Air Quality booth at STEAM Along the Lakeshore.



GIS

2025 Review

In 2025, the GIS team dedicated considerable effort to improving public access and engagement with data managed by WMSRDC. The centerpiece of this initiative was the launch of a centralized hub, designed to make it easier for users to access applications, view maps, and download public data. This hub can be easily found on the WMSRDC website on the GIS Program page.

This hub features several new applications aimed at supporting planning services and enhancing transparency. Among these are the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Dashboard, Missed Incident Safety Survey, Traffic Safety Dashboard, and PASER Road Rating Dashboard.

The TIP Dashboard offers an interactive way to explore information about FY2026–2029 TIP projects. Users can view details such as fiscal year, primary work type, funding source, S/TIP status, and even submit requests for additional project information.

The Missed Incident Safety Survey (Near-MISS) is an anonymous crowdsourcing tool that allows the public to report locations of concern and near-miss incidents. This data complements traditional crash records, helping identify high-risk and high-injury roadways and guiding future traffic safety projects.

The Traffic Safety Dashboard consolidates the High-Risk and High-Injury networks into one convenient location. These networks are based on a five-year history of fatal (K) and serious injury (A) crashes and play a key role in developing safety action plans and prioritizing traffic safety improvements.

Finally, the PASER Dashboard provides both the public and municipalities with access to current and historical PASER ratings across the region. Users can filter by year, county, municipality, federal-aid eligibility, and rating, and view summaries of total mileage categorized as good, fair, or poor.



West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Geographic Information Systems
The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) has Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services that are integral to our core programs including Transportation, Environment, Local Government Services, and Special Projects. Our GIS capabilities are utilized for analysis, visual displays, and geographic data management. This site is a source for the GIS staff to engage, share, and highlight various datasets and applications with the communities we serve.



Geospatial Hub Landing Page



Access the Geospatial Hub

financials

REVENUES	2024	2025
Intergovernmental revenues		
Federal	3,177,425	1,273,284
State	167,702	290,500
Local	333,892	451,404
Investment Earnings	7,467	18,758
TOTAL REVENUES	3,686,486	2,033,946

EXPENDITURES		
Current		
Land use planning	83,936	18,316
Regional initiatives	67,333	126,738
Economic development	82,033	326,913
Transportation planning	780,768	956,018
Environmental clean-up	2,576,573	483,990
Administration	8,960	20,716
Capital outlay	-	30,584
Debit service		
Principal	42,983	53,088
Interest and fees	8,455	7,406
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	3,651,041	2,023,769

Net change in fund balance	35,445	29,051
Fund balance at beginning of year	440,116	475,561
Fund balance at end of year	475,561	504,612

2025 regional commission board

Kathy Winczewski, Chairperson
Councilperson, City of Ludington

James Rynberg, Vice Chairperson
Mayor, City of Fremont

Michelle Hazekamp, Secretary
Commissioner, Muskegon County

Tim Beggs, Commissioner
Oceana County

Kim Cyr, Commissioner
Muskegon County

Beth Dick, Vice President of Finance
Muskegon Community College

Rachel Gorman, At-Large Commissioner
City of Muskegon

Jennifer Hodges, Supervisor
Muskegon Charter Township

Les Johnson, Commissioner
Mason County

James Kelly, WMSRDC Appointee
MSU Extension

Dr. Mark Kinney, Vice President
of Academics & Student Services,
West Shore Community College

Bryan Kolk, Commissioner
Newaygo County

Andrea Large, WMSRDC Appointee
Community Foundation for Mason County

Joel McCormick, Commissioner
Oceana County

Bonnie McGlothlin, Mayor
City of Muskegon Heights

Chris McGuigan, Commissioner
Muskegon County

Paul Mellema, Commissioner
Newaygo County

Roger Morgenstern, Councilperson
City of Norton Shores

Lewis Squires, Commissioner
Mason County

Clyde Welford, Commissioner
Lake County

WMSRDC Staff

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Amanda Snyder, Finance Manager

Syndi Copeland, Office Manager

Economic Development, Community Development and Local Government Services

Stephen Carlson, Program Manager

Transportation Planning

Joel Fitzpatrick, Planning Director

Brian Mulnix, Program Manager

Lauryn Blake, Planner

Jack Grice, Planner and GIS Technician

Environmental Planning

Fallon Chabala, Program Manager



**WEST MI
SHORELINE**

Regional Development Commission

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WMSRDC.org



Planting event at Muskegon
Public High School (Photo Credit: