

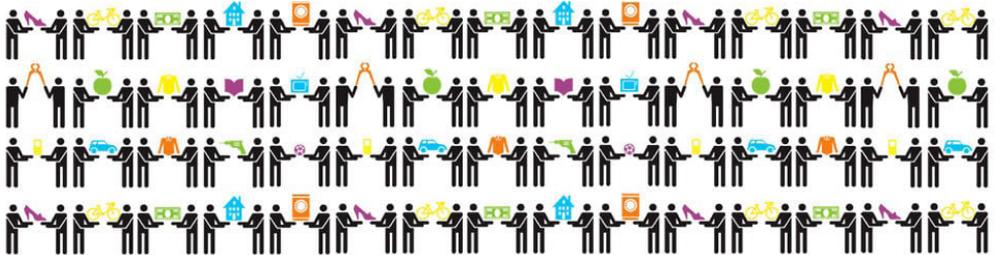
WMSRDC

WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



2018

Annual Report





WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Who We Are

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) 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.

The mission of WMSRDC is to promote and foster regional development in West Michigan through cooperation amongst local governments and other regional partners. WMSRDC provides services and manages and administers programs in homeland security, transportation planning, economic development, environmental planning, community development, local government services, and other special projects.

Message From Executive Director

As 2018 comes to a close and I reflect back upon the past year, one word keeps entering my mind: BLESSED. There are so many blessings to be thankful for, some of which include the staff, board, and numerous partners of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission.

The WMSRDC Staff: I am truly blessed as an executive director to have such an amazing staff. They are complete professionals that come to work every day with a passion for what they do. They are dedicated and well respected leaders in their fields of expertise. I love to watch them collaborate on projects that cross their program areas, find solutions to projects, or ideas to better serve our region. My favorite thing is to hear a burst of laughter come from the planning room as they work together. The 11 employees at WMSRDC have worked at the Commission for a total of 120 collective years, with an average tenure of 11 years. We are a family and I feel blessed to work with each and every one of them.

The WMSRDC Board: Some people would say that having 21 bosses would be a challenge. I disagree. The 21 member WMSRDC board is another blessing. Their continued support and leadership have meant more to me than they know. They have allowed me to lead WMSRDC into new partnerships to enhance and expand the agency to better serve our regional membership. They have provided guidance and wisdom to help me continue to develop as an executive director. I am truly grateful for each and every one of them.

The WMSRDC Partners: WMSRDC is so blessed to have such outstanding local, state, and federal partners. The projects, programs, and initiatives we are able to accomplish collectively have made a tremendous impact within our region through the various WMSRDC programs including transportation, environmental, economic development, homeland security, and local governmental services. They are innovative and creative in the opportunities and ideas they bring to the table. We are blessed that they choose to partner with the Commission.

As we move into 2019, I continue to count the many blessings we have at WMSRDC.

Erin Kuhn, Executive Director



Regional Collaborative Efforts

In early 2018, WMSRDC in partnership with the Grand Valley Metro Council, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, and the State of Michigan successfully completed the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot Project. The pilot was extremely successful in collecting data on 13,500 miles of wastewater lines, 14,800 miles of drinking water lines, 6,700 miles of stormwater drains, 23,025 miles of roads, 4,856 bridges, and 14,399 culverts. The pilot involved 69 subject matter experts, 158 communities, 150 communication and coordination summit attendees, 95 maturity assessment webinar attendees, 12 stakeholder meetings, and eight state departments.

This summer, the state legislature passed and the governor signed PA 323 creating the Michigan Infrastructure Council. On July 19, 2018, Governor Snyder announced the initial appointments to the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC). Erin Kuhn, WMSRDC executive director, was named as one of five appointees by the governor. The MIC was created within the Department of Treasury and the council consists of nine voting members; five appointed by the governor and four appointed by the leaders of the legislature. The council will bring together local utility and infrastructure owners, regional representatives, finance and policy experts, and state department leaders to coordinate infrastructure-related goals and develop a long-term strategy for Michigan's infrastructure assets. The council will construct a statewide asset management database, facilitate the data collection strategy, and produce a 30-year investment and management strategy for the state of Michigan.

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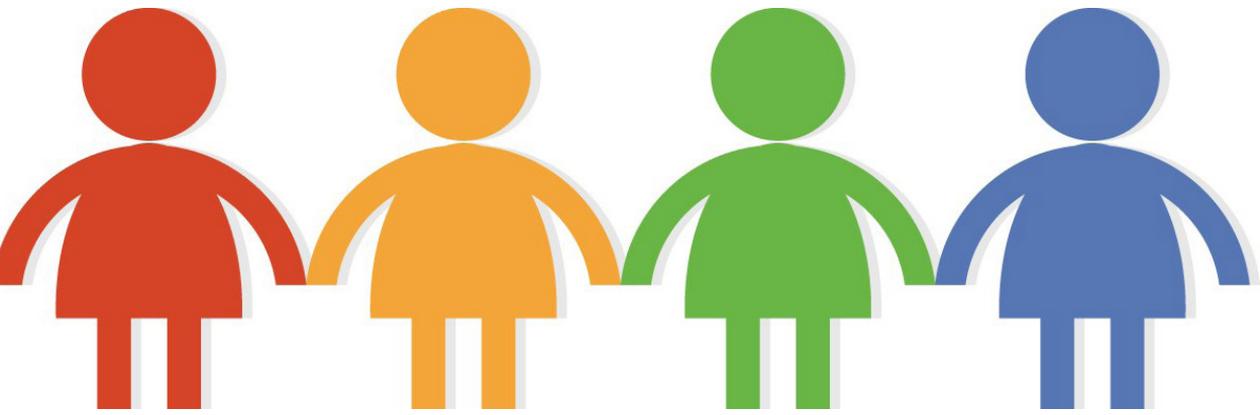


Regional Collaborative Efforts Continued

WMSRDC is now leading the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance: On October 1, 2018, WMSRDC assumed fiduciary leadership of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA). In addition, Erin Kuhn, WMSRDC executive director, is also serving as chair of the WMPA steering committee. The WMPA, also known as Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) Region 4, was created by Governor Snyder over six years ago and encompasses 13 counties in West Michigan. The 35 member steering committee includes representatives from a variety of sectors including regional planning, metropolitan transportation planning, adult education, workforce development, economic development, higher education, and philanthropic agencies.

WMPA Project Funding: In August, the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) held its third call-for-projects. As a result, 13 projects from throughout the 13-county region were submitted with a total funding request of more than \$448,000.

Updated West Michigan Regional Dashboard: A newly designed West Michigan Regional Dashboard was released in September 2018. The dashboard is an online tool that tracks the region's progress on critical economic, environmental, and social indicators. The dashboard was funded and supported by the WMPA through a collaboration of The Right Place and nine other regional organizations. The revised version offers expanded indicators and updated data. To view go to www.wmdashboard.org.



Economic Development

In 2018, counties within the WMSRDC region entered a transition period in economic development planning. This included significant turnover in county-level economic development staffing, and resulted in the loss of four crucial members of the WMSRDC CEDS Strategy Committee. In addition, two of the five county-level economic development organizations within the region were completely restructured or eliminated, and two others were seriously considering how they should operate/exist going forward. Rest assured WMSRDC will remain a constant presence in the region's economic development. During this period of change, WMSRDC maintained open lines of communication with the CEDS Strategy Committee, and became more involved at the county level as a partner and resource for economic development.

WMSRDC began implementing the region's new economic development plan, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2018-2022. 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 regional prosperity and resilience. A CEDS Strategy Committee oversees its development and implementation. 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 district to remain eligible for EDA assistance. In 2018, the City of Fremont in Newaygo County was able to leverage this designation, securing a \$738,425 grant to make roadway improvements needed to support business growth. The EDA investment will support the new construction of nearly one half mile of roadway that will provide an alternative truck route from the Fremont Industrial Park to Michigan State Route 82.



Metro Transportation Planning

The West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Muskegon and Northern Ottawa County areas and is administered through WMSRDC. This program addresses a multitude of transportation projects such as resurfacing and reconstructing existing roads, safety and bridge repair projects, air quality related projects, and non-motorized projects. Details about specific projects are found in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The MPO program also assists in transit planning for the Muskegon Area Transit System, Harbor Transit in northern Ottawa County, and various other transit providers that participate in the program. Planning activities include assistance with applications and collaborating on services related to seniors and individuals with disabilities.

In 2018, work continued on the new TIP for FY2020-2023 and the 2045 LRP. A majority of the work involved socio-economic data review and updates as well as working with partners at the Michigan Department of Transportation to update the Statewide Travel Demand Model for the transportation network. Staff met with local officials from MPO member road agencies to review the current socio-economic data and update it as needed to develop baseline data for modeling purposes. Staff also worked with state and local MPO members to develop a fiscally constrained project list for FY2020-2023, which was approved by both MPO committees in October 2018. Work will continue into 2019 on both documents.



Rural Transportation Task Force and Asset Management

WMSRDC assisted with the five-county Rural Transportation Task Force as it continued to meet in 2018. The task force receives approximately \$3.1 million of federal funding and a little over \$425,000 in state funding per year. Typical projects include road construction, road maintenance, and transit capital purchases. Projects are chosen at the individual county level prior to approval by the five-county task force. During 2018, task force members began the process of choosing new road and transit projects for the fiscal years 2020-2023. WMSRDC is responsible for scheduling meetings, administering the public involvement process, documenting meeting activities, and submitting information to MDOT.

In October, WMSRDC completed the annual process of collecting data for the Asset Management program. Asset Management is a ranking based on an inventory of each local road network within the region. It provides data that allows transportation officials to monitor, plan, and strategically improve the road network. Each year, WMSRDC staff, along with MDOT and a county road commission employee, collects this data for approximately half of all the federal aid roads within the region. The data collection effort requires the collection of three items: road condition rating, surface type, and the number of lanes.



West Michigan Pike & Traffic Count Program

WMSRDC continued to work with the Muskegon County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and other west Michigan CVB's during 2018 with the creation of a Corridor Management Plan for the West Michigan Pike. WMSRDC drafted the plan, which is now under review by committee members. WMSRDC is acting as a fiduciary agency for additional funding for the committee. In FY 2019, WMSRDC will be working with the committee on a signage plan for the historic Pike route. The West Michigan Pike was designated in 2016 as Michigan's newest Scenic Byway. This route follows US-31 from the State's southern border to US-10 near Ludington. Traveling through Berrien, Van Buren, Allegan, Ottawa, Muskegon, Oceana, and Mason counties, the route is 184 miles long. The main goals of the designation are to promote tourism and the history of the area. The Pike was originally developed between 1911 and 1922 as a way to promote tourism in West Michigan.

WMSRDC continues to oversee a traffic count program in the Muskegon urban area. In 2018, WMSRDC contracted with AECOM to collect approximately 100 traffic volume counts. In the spring of 2018 after the counts were completed, the data was placed on the WMSRDC website in an interactive traffic count database that is available for public use. In addition to the standard volume counts, WMSRDC contracted with AECOM to provide 15 classification counts. Along with traffic volume, classification counts also categorize the type of vehicle using the roadway. These counts are used by local road agencies, the MDOT, and a variety of businesses and developers.



Redevelopment Ready Communities and Homeland Security

Under a contract with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), WMSRDC is eligible to provide technical assistance to member communities that are engaged in the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program. The RRC program is 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 a community has a vision for the future—and the fundamental practices in place to get there. WMSRDC will be available to assist member communities, at a reduced rate, to complete tasks in pursuit of RRC certification through December 31, 2019.

WMSRDC staff continued to serve as fiduciary for the Region 6 Homeland Security Planning Board. Throughout the year, staff completed several tasks and reporting responsibilities 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. In January and again in July, WMSRDC completed and submitted the Biannual Strategy Implementation Reports (BSIR) to the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP-EMHSD). In May, the FY 15 Homeland Security Planning Grant was completed and closed. Around the same time, the FY17 Planning Grant was initiated. Throughout the year, WMSRDC staff completed the FY 18 Project Workbook, as well as prepared updates to the FY16 and 17 Project Workbooks. During the months of August and September, WMSRDC staff worked with the Region 6 Planning Board to conduct the biannual physical inventory of equipment purchased through the Homeland Security Planning Grants. The process includes WMSRDC staff traveling to each of the 13 counties within Region 6 to conduct the inventory. The final inventory report was then submitted to the MSP-EMHSD as required by grant guidance. Finally, WMSRDC received and signed the grant agreement for the FY18 Homeland Security Planning Grant during the fall of 2018. This grant is not expected to be opened until the spring of 2019.



Local Government Services

In 2018, WMSRDC utilized GIS mapping to help give the Blue Lake Township (Muskegon County) Planning Commission different perspectives of land uses within the township and help revise the township's future land use map. This was part of WMSRDC's effort to assist Blue Lake Township in updating its master plan. The master plan will communicate the community's vision for the future of Blue Lake Township over the next 5 to 20 years, and must be reviewed at least every five years. The Blue Lake Township Master Plan is expected to be completed in early 2019.

WMSRDC also began assisting Golden Township (Oceana County) with updating the Golden Township Master Plan. Numerous opportunities for public input were offered between July and September in order to capture perspectives of permanent and seasonal residents, as well as visitors. This included a public meeting, a booth at the Apple & BBQ Festival, and a mail-in survey made available on the township's website. The comments gathered during this initial project phase will be used to inform and guide adjustments to the goals and objectives of the master plan, which is scheduled for completion in 2019.

In addition, WMSRDC presented the Newaygo County Board of Public Works with a strategic recycling plan to help Newaygo County establish a sustainable level of recycling services to its residents. WMSRDC began assisting Newaygo County with preparing the plan in 2017.



Invasive Species Detection and Treatment

The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is an invasive pest that attacks native Michigan hemlock trees. The hemlock is a slow growing, long living tree that is vitally important for Michigan's forests as it provides shelter and food for wildlife and helps cool and regulate the temperature of the forest floor, streams and fisheries. Introduced by nursery stock from the east coast, the HWA has been found in West Michigan from Ottawa County north to Oceana County along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

The HWA grant is focused on locating and tagging hemlock trees within this area and searching for signs of HWA in order to detect the outer most extent of the infestation. With the northern most extent of HWA detected, treatment has begun to try to slow the spread to neighboring areas and reduce the number of HWA and infested trees.

During this project 11,309 hemlock trees have been identified and tagged with unique ID numbers and mapped using WMSRDC's GIS system. With that data in hand, teams have treated 6,988 infested hemlock trees over 303 acres. More surveys and treatments are scheduled for spring of 2019. Outreach sessions have been held in Ottawa, Muskegon, Oceana, and Mason counties to educate landowners on how to identify hemlock trees, how to detect signs of HWA and what to do if it is detected on their property. For more information, visit savemihemlocks.org.



Reforestation Reinforces Resiliency

In 2018, WMSRDC worked with partners on two U.S. Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants. These grants will allow for the planting of trees which will bolster resiliency efforts by providing many eco-system services. These tree services include storm water runoff reduction, enhancement of green infrastructure, replacement of tree loss due to invasive species, wind throw, and disease, as well as improve visual aesthetics.

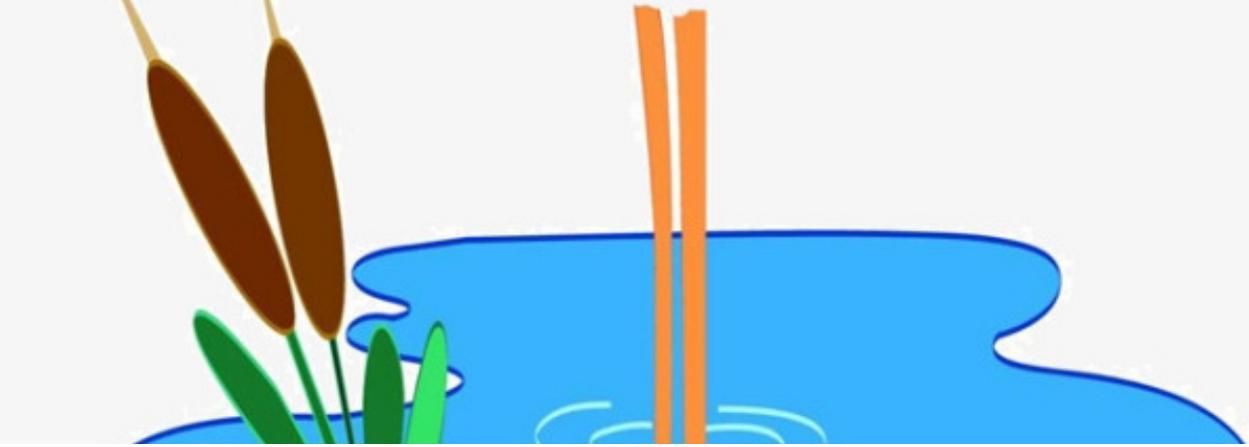
One of the grants that began in 2017 allowed for a partnership between WMSRDC, the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, and the Muskegon Conservation District to plant trees in urban areas to reduce storm water runoff. Trees were planted in the cities of Muskegon, North Muskegon, Big Rapids, and Bridgeton Township. So far, 416 trees have been planted along with 750 saplings. This grant will be complete in early 2019.

In 2018, WMSRDC began work on the second grant aimed at storm water reduction and tree replacement within the West Michigan Coastal Zone Management Area. The initial portion of this grant is in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in five West Michigan State Parks, which are Hoffmaster, Muskegon, Mears, Silver Lake, and Ludington. The City of Muskegon is also partnering in this portion of the grant. Over 500 large trees will be planted this year. An additional 3,000 seedlings will be planted in 2019.



Michigan's Way of Life: Our Rivers, Lakes, and Streams

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance and the West Michigan Watershed Collaborative brought together a coalition of stakeholders and developed a funding strategy to protect Michigan's valuable surface water resources – our rivers, lakes and streams. WMSRDC worked with the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council and the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council to identify the scope of this need within our 13-county region. An annual funding need of \$13.6 million over ten years is needed to implement existing plans that are designed to restore and protect West Michigan's rivers, lakes and streams - an average of \$470,000 for each watershed. In contrast, over the past six years, the average annual amount of grant funds available through Michigan's non-point source water quality program is \$3.5 million. Because the state's grant program is competitive and requires a significant local matching contribution, funding has never been adequate for the need. To address this growing concern, WMSRDC and its regional partners worked with Public Sector Consultants to evaluate several funding mechanisms. With input from communities and stakeholders throughout the region, it was determined that a voluntary contribution with a watershed-based decision-making structure could help solve this problem. Over the coming year, partners will craft statewide legislation to enable the voluntary funding program. The program must be flexible to meet the needs of regions and watersheds throughout the state. Additional stakeholder input will be taken and key elements of the voluntary contribution program will be fine-tuned. Key elements include the following: counties collect voluntary contributions through property tax bills; counties work with regional planning organizations to pass through voluntary contributions; regional planning organizations administer water resources advisory councils to guide funding allocations; regional planning organizations, counties and water resources stakeholders tailor the initiative to best suit Michigan's regional needs. The results will be an improvement in our Michigan way of life by protecting our water resources – our rivers, lakes and streams!



Restoration Projects Improve Water Resources & Yield Community Economic Benefits

Restoration was completed on three large-scale fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects in September 2018, thanks to support from the U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the NOAA/Great Lakes Commission Regional Partnership. Over the past four years, scientific monitoring, engineering, design and construction were completed on three large-scale restoration projects. The projects re-connected rivers with 65 acres of restored wetland floodplains, improved fish passage and water quality, and softened 7,820 feet of shoreline at three Muskegon Lake watershed locations: a former celery farm on Bear Creek at the mouth of Bear Lake; Muskegon River at Veterans Memorial Park, and the nearshore waters of Muskegon Lake's south side. Grand Valley State University (GVSU) Annis Water Resources Institute performed pre-restoration and post-restoration ecological monitoring for each project.

Results show significant improvements in water quality, aesthetics, and aquatic life. Project partners included the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership, Muskegon County Veterans Advisory Council, Northside Lions, County of Muskegon, City of Muskegon, City of North Muskegon, private landowners, North Muskegon Public Schools, and many others. A total of \$14 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant funds supported the projects. A 2013 GVSU socio-economic study of a similar \$10 million Muskegon Lake shoreline restoration project, showed a 7-to-1 return on the investment in Muskegon area economic benefits. In 2018, a study by the University of Michigan showed an average of \$3.65 in community economic benefits for every dollar spent on the cleanup of contaminated sediments and the restoration of habitat across the entire Great Lakes Region.



Air Quality and Information & Communications

WMSRDC continued to be an active partner of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC). Formed over twenty years ago, the WMCAC remains a strong partnership of business, academic institutions, government agencies, industry, and non-profit organizations in Muskegon, Kent, and Ottawa counties. These partners continue working together to achieve cleaner air in the region through the education and promotion of voluntary emission reduction activities. Among other outreach activities, an extensive television public education campaign continued in 2018 highlighting voluntary actions people can take on Clean Air Action Days.

WMSRDC also continued to fulfill its duties as a U.S. Census Bureau Affiliate by striving to keep the WMSRDC website up to date with the latest links and most recently released data from the Census Bureau and other data products.

WMSRDC has also been working with the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the upcoming 2020 Decennial Census. Also developed in 2018 by WMSRDC were economic and demographic projections for each county in the region highlighting potential growth in population and employment through future years.



WMSRDC Board and Staff

Board

James Rynberg, Chairperson, Mayor, City of Fremont

Wally Taranko, Vice-Chairperson, Mason County Commissioner

Bonnie McGlothin, 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

Andrea Large, WMSRDC Appointee

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

Staff

Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

Stephen Carlson, Program Manager

Syndi Copeland, Executive Assistant

Kathy Evans, Program Manager

Joel Fitzpatrick, Program Manager

Amy Haack, Program Manager

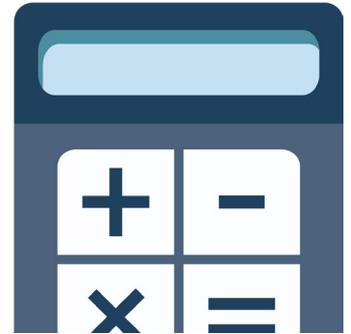
Vicki Luthy, Planner

Brian Mulnix, Program Manager

Gale Nobes, Planner

Christia Seals, Finance Manager

Jamie Way, GIS Specialist



Financials

Audited Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance
For the Year Ended September 30, 2017 and 2018

Revenues	2017	2018
Intergovernmental Revenues		
Federal	\$ 5,787,191	\$ 7,229,643
State	154,491	192,069
Local	<u>313,223</u>	<u>213,554</u>
Total Revenues	6,254,905	7,635,266
Expenditures		
Current		
Land Use Planning	31,050	21,293
Regional Initiatives	0	40,148
Economic Development	123,076	84,659
Transportation Planning	627,663	660,341
Environmental Clean-up	4,437,644	5,792,810
Homeland Security	<u>989,885</u>	<u>952,496</u>
Total Expenditures	\$ <u>6,209,318</u>	\$ <u>7,551,747</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	45,587	83,519
Fund Balance at 10/1/16 for FY17 and 10/1/17 for FY18	<u>277,598</u>	<u>323,185</u>
Fund Balance at 9/30/17 for FY17 and 9/30/18 for FY18	\$ <u>323,185</u>	\$ <u>406,704</u>

**West Michigan Shoreline
Regional Development Commission**

**316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340
Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: (231) 722-7878
Fax: (231) 722-9362
wmsrdc.org**