

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
FOR  
2021



**WEST MI  
SHORELINE**

**Regional Development Commission**

# 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 below statements were developed by the Commission staff in the spring of 2020 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?**

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

### **HOW do we do it?**

By leveraging the programs of the Commission and utilizing staff expertise to provide local resources through cross jurisdictional collaborative partnerships, involvement of diverse stakeholders, and empowerment of local decision makers.

### **WHAT do we do?**

Perform state and federal planning functions through administering programs in transportation, economic development, environmental, and local government services that provides funding and project eligibility to our region.

## **Equity Statement**

The Commission defines equity as the intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities and abilities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes.

The Commission recognizes structural racism and other forms of oppression have contributed to persistent disparities which the Commission seeks to dismantle within its region. The Commission strives to engage community members, especially those whose voices have traditionally been marginalized. The Commission works with local governments, residents, and public and private partners to provide resources, support, and opportunities that create prosperous and thriving communities for all citizens.

The Commission also strives to provide a work environment that recognizes individual differences, is free from discrimination, and is respectful of the rights and dignity of all individuals. The Commission has built its reputation on the foundations of excellence and integrity, and expects its employees to exhibit behaviors consistent with these standards.

Therefore, the Commission commits to leveraging our resources and assets to create more equitable communities through the programs it administers, as well as to develop racially conscious partnerships and processes that anticipate unintended outcomes to ensure the inclusion of all people in the region and organization.

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As I read through my leadership message from 2020 in preparation for this year's message, the words "historic" and "unprecedented" continued to be a common theme into 2021. I ended my message last year by hoping for a more uneventful 2021. That most definitely did not happen as 2021 was absolutely an eventful year, but in a much different way. While a lot happened at the national and state levels with historic federal investments, the development of a COVID-19 vaccine, and continued political division, I want to focus on a positive message closer to home.

Early in the fiscal year, long-time Environmental Program Manager, Kathy Evans, announced that she was ready to enter the next season of her life by retiring from WMSRDC. I must admit this was not easy for me as I have worked with Kathy for more than twenty years and consider her a good friend. Protecting the environment was not just Kathy's job or even career. It was, and continues to be, her passion, and I feel truly blessed to have worked alongside her. Kathy has been an inspiration to me, personally and professionally. She is a wealth of knowledge and successfully built the WMSRDC Environmental Program almost from scratch. In doing so, she has left it in a strong and stable position ready to turn the page and write the next chapter. We welcome her successor, Fallon Chabala, who will be an excellent steward of the Environmental Program and continue to build upon the strong foundation Kathy created.

I want to express thanks to Kathy for her passionate dedication to protecting the environment in West Michigan, for her leadership, wisdom, knowledge, and most importantly for her friendship. I congratulate her on her retirement and wish her all the best as she now enters a new phase in her life.

I will also highlight some of the major accomplishments of 2021. WMSRDC made a significant investment and transition in technology. This major shift has helped staff be more efficient while working remotely. The final three environmental projects required for delisting Muskegon Lake as an Area of Concern are "substantially complete," the Shoreline Land Use and Resiliency Plan (SLURP) for the City of Ludington and Pere Marquette Township was completed, one hundred percent of the federal aid roads were rated, the Pandemic Response and Resiliency Plan (PRRP) is underway, and four staff members graduated from the Michigan Infrastructure Council Asset Management Champion Program. These are just a few of the many WMSRDC accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2021.

Even though we are still in the midst of a global pandemic, the WMSRDC board and staff remain dedicated to the success of this agency. It is this dedication that made 2021 an eventful year.

Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

**"I want to express thanks to Kathy (Evans) for her passionate dedication to protecting the environment in West Michigan, for her leadership, wisdom, knowledge, and most importantly for her friendship. I congratulate her on her retirement and wish her all the best as she now enters a new phase in her life."**



# ENVIRONMENTAL

## **Lake Michigan Rivers and 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). This partnership offers up to \$14 million for fish passage and stream habitat restoration projects through 2025. In 2021, three projects were selected for funding. The Little Cedar Creek implementation phase will replace two road stream crossings in Little Cedar Creek and restore 500 feet of instream habitat. The White River project will replace three road stream crossings in Swinton Creek and one in Cushman Creek with open span bridges and restore 1,000 feet of instream habitat. The Stony Creek project at Marshville Dam Park includes dam remnant removal, removal of two old bridges and three culverts, a bridge replacement, and 500 feet of instream habitat replacement. Project partners include Muskegon County Road Commission, Oceana County Road Commission, Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute, Conservation Resource Alliance, Oceana County Parks, watershed groups, and private landowners.

## **Muskegon Lake Area of Concern**

Muskegon Lake is nearing the end of its decades long chapter as a Great Lakes Area of Concern. Thanks to WMSRDC's partnership with the Great Lakes Commission and NOAA through a grant from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), three large scale restoration projects wrapped construction by December of 2021. At lower Muskegon River, an old celery farm was restored to wetland habitat then reconnected to the river. At the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve, lower Muskegon River has been reconnected with Muskegon Lake, restoring fish passage and habitat. The former Amoco Tank Farm concrete wall was removed to restore fish habitat and reconnect the coastal wetland to Muskegon Lake. Future work includes post restoration monitoring at all three sites and a shoreline restoration project at the Boys and Girls Club, formerly the YMCA. All the hard work and dedication that has gone into Muskegon Lake will be highlighted at the Annual Great Lakes Area of Concern Conference set to be held in Muskegon in May. The original conference date was postponed from September 2021.

## **Reforestation for Restoration, Resilience, and Recreation**

WMSRDC saw the completion of the Coastal Zone Reforestation grant in 2021. Funded by the United States Forest Service (USFS) through a GLRI grant, WMSRDC planted 557 trees to intercept over 286,622 gallons of stormwater runoff. Partners included the City of Muskegon, the Muskegon Conservation District, and five state parks along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

WMSRDC also partnered with the Delta Institute under a grant from the USFS and GLRI to assist the State of Michigan and five communities along the Hart – Montague Trail to plant 202 trees and 309 seedlings to control up to 24,900 gallons of stormwater runoff as well as build capacity in forest management for the future.

WMSRDC is currently working with the USFS and the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly to plant 245 trees and 40 seedlings within the Muskegon River Watershed. Partners are the cities of Roosevelt Park, Fremont, and Muskegon along with Cedar Creek and Dalton townships. These trees will control up to 25,400 gallons of stormwater within the Muskegon River Watershed.



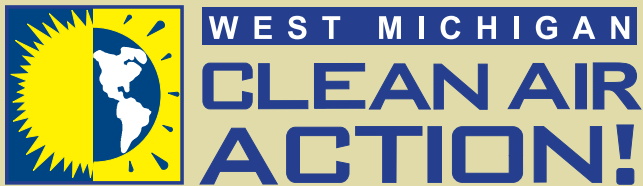
The Lower Muskegon River Restoration project restored a 53 acre celery farm to natural wetland conditions adding wildlife habitat and wetland ecosystem services. This project will help delist Muskegon Lake as an Area of Concern.



# AIR QUALITY & COMMUNICATIONS

## Clean Air Action

WMSRDC continued to be an active partner of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC). Formed over twenty-five 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 2021 highlighting voluntary actions people can take on Clean Air Action days.



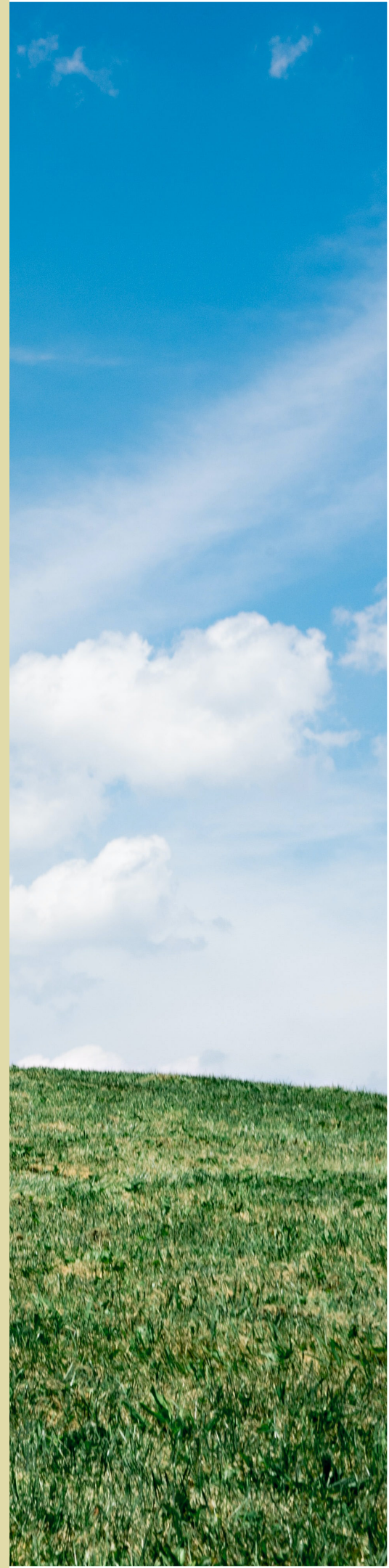
In 2021, the Center for Applied Research Studies (CARRS) at Central Michigan University administered a survey aimed at the residents of Kent, Muskegon, and Ottawa counties. The survey's main goal was to assess residents' and subgroups of the population (e.g. senior citizens) awareness of and compliance with Clean Air Action days. In particular, the extent to which residents in the three counties are aware of air pollutants and its problems. Special attention was given to measuring whether they are knowledgeable about and actively engaged in Clean Air Action days and related activities. One of the main takeaways from the survey is that 92 percent of citizens surveyed are aware of Clean Air Action days.

## U.S. Census Affiliate

WMSRDC continued to fulfill its duties as a U.S. Census Bureau Affiliate. WMSRDC strives 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.

## Technology Upgrades at WMSRDC

Utilizing funding through the Economic Development Administration's CARES Act Grant as well as grants from the Michigan Department of Transportation, WMSRDC underwent an organization-wide technology upgrade. All staff members received new laptops, software subscriptions, and upgraded peripheral equipment. In collaboration with Shoreline Technology Solutions, the Commission completely migrated to a fully cloud-based platform in January 2021. This shift allowed the staff to be more efficient while continuing to work remotely through the height of the pandemic and permanently transition to a hybrid work schedule. In addition, the staff engaged with ESRI to purchase GIS software licenses to enable the Commission to have a fully independent GIS department.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## **CEDS Implementation**

WMSRDC continued its mission to implement the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by fostering collaborative regional economic development efforts and helping to coordinate economic development activities within the region. 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. The CEDS is required for eligible entities within the region to remain eligible to apply for economic development grants and assistance opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The CEDS is overseen by the CEDS Strategy Committee which convenes quarterly to share economic news and events throughout the region, and to network with peers. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, committee meetings have been held virtually. WMSRDC staff also utilizes the CEDS committee to distribute information regarding potential funding opportunities and resources.

## **Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance is fundamental to the WMSRDC economic development work program. This essentially involves helping communities navigate the EDA grant application process; from vetting ideas, to crafting applications, to accepting and managing grants. Throughout 2021, WMSRDC assisted numerous communities in pursuit of EDA funding opportunities. Success was found in helping Greater Muskegon Economic Development apply for and receive an EDA grant to develop an industrial parks master plan for the City of Muskegon Heights. Going into 2022, at least three additional project applications were nearing submittal. As funding opportunities related to infrastructure and the pandemic arise, WMSRDC will continue to prioritize providing assistance to meet the economic development needs of communities.

## **Entrepreneurial Market Analysis**

WMSRDC and the Grand Valley State University Muskegon Innovation Hub (Hub) received a grant from EDA to study the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the West Michigan lakeshore area in 2020. Public Sector Consultants was hired to conduct the Entrepreneurial Market Analysis, which was completed in May 2021 and is available on the WMSRDC website. This project will help the Hub and other organizations within the region be more responsive to entrepreneurs and micro-enterprises, especially considering impacts of the pandemic.

## **CARES Act Planning Grant**

In 2020, WMSRDC accepted a special EDA planning grant to help the region respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Work on this grant continued in 2021 and included the following accomplishments: workplace upgrades to help adapt to adverse working conditions; online surveys to document local pandemic impacts; establishment of a broadband committee for Muskegon County; and additional staff to increase WMSRDC's capacity and assist in the development of an economic Pandemic Response and Resilience Plan (PRRP).





# RURAL TRANSPORTATION

## Asset Management

In a typical year, WMSRDC staff, along with a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and a county road commission employee, collect condition information 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. In 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, data was not collected on any of the federal aid roads. Data collection continued to be impacted by COVID in 2021. Rather than the traditional three-person rating team, roads were instead rated by a two-person team comprised of WMSRDC staff. Despite these challenges, staff successfully completed ratings on one hundred percent of the federal aid eligible roads within Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and northern Ottawa counties. Staff continued to receive multiple trainings throughout the year such as culvert asset management and software training sessions.

## Rural Task Force Update

The Region 14 Rural Transportation Task Force (RTF), administered by WMSRDC, met virtually in April to determine how the task force allocation of \$1.1 million in COVID relief funding would be allocated to various agencies. The month prior to that, all county task forces met individually to determine individual county projects. In November, local RTF task force meetings were held for all five counties in the region to determine projects for FY2023-2026 totaling approximately \$3.5 million in federal and state funding. In addition, the committees approved 23 project amendments for FY2020-2023. After local projects were selected, the full five-county task force met in December to confirm the projects. Typical projects included road construction, road maintenance, and transit capital purchases.

**The Rural  
Transportation  
Task Force  
receives about  
\$3.1 million  
in federal  
funding as  
well as a little  
over \$425,000  
in state  
funding.**



# METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION

## **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

The West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan) continues to provide services and expertise to its member agencies. WestPlan is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Muskegon and Northern Ottawa counties, and serves the road and transit agencies within that area. WestPlan has served as the MPO since 1973 and continues to provide regional and metropolitan planning services to its member agencies. As the MPO, WestPlan administers a comprehensive transportation planning program to assist in planning for state and federal transportation funding for road and transit improvements. Partnering with local, state, and federal agencies, the MPO develops long and short range plans as well as other federally required documents that assist in planning and allocating transportation funding.

The FY2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the federally approved plan used by the MPO as a guide for allocating federal funds to projects. All federally funded local and state transportation projects are housed within that document. The TIP was approved in FY2019 and will be updated in FY2022 with the FY2023-2026 plan. Projects in the plan are constantly updated and amended through the MPO process. The MPO brings the changes to the Technical and Policy committees who meet monthly to approve the requests. MPO meetings are open to the public and are attended by representatives from all road and transit agencies in the MPO area. State and federal agencies also have seats on the committees and review all amendments. The current TIP lists over 160 projects with well over one hundred million dollars of planned investments in Muskegon and Northern Ottawa counties. MPO staff continues to work on the new TIP which is expected to be completed and approved in FY2022.

## **West Michigan Regional Transit Systems Governance & Organizational Transition Study**

The Regional Transit Study stayed on schedule with consultants from SRF analyzing the Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) and Harbor Transit Multi-Modal (Harbor Transit) agencies. The focus of the study is to look at ways to streamline service areas and make a more efficient system to serve transit users of the MATS and the Harbor Transit systems. Organizational structure is also an important part of the study with SRF looking at ways to coordinate system operations between the two major transit agencies. SRF interviewed local stakeholders and government officials and received valuable input for the study. SRF also looked at several other transit agencies throughout the country with similar structures and services to possibly use as a guide for determining the best way forward with the structures of the agencies. WMSRDC staff met bi-weekly with the consultants who provided updates and status reports for the study. It is expected that an initial draft report will be available at the beginning of 2022 and the completed report will be available later in the year.





# LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

## **Asset Management Champion Program**

During 2021, four WMSRDC staff members participated in and completed the first Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) Asset Management Champion Program. The purpose of the program was to help establish a network of trained individuals and organizations to strengthen asset management throughout Michigan's complex infrastructure system. A number of participants in the program included department of public works managers, city managers, and planners from within the WMSRDC region.

The instruction for the Asset Management Champion Program was extensive. Trainings took place between April and June of 2021 and consisted of nine asynchronous learning modules and three facilitated discussion/peer interaction modules.

The program had three main goals:

- Build Awareness: Build AM Champions to foster a culture of asset management best practices across Michigan.
- Develop Knowledge: Develop AM Champions who understand and promote the value of asset management aligned with the five topics in the MIC Asset Management Readiness Scale.
- Establish Community: Establish a community of AM champions to seed peer relationships and build a network of asset management leaders across the state and across infrastructure silos.

This pilot program proved to be a success and 78 individuals from across the state completed the training including four staff members from WMSRDC. The MIC plans on expanding the program, opening it up to more individuals while incorporating lessons learned during the pilot program.



## **Michigan Infrastructure Council**

## **ARPA Local Government Workshops**

During September and October, the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR) partnered with Michigan State University Extension to host regional meetings for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) local government funding. The WMSRDC area regional meeting was held virtually on October 12 with more than 50 participants in attendance.

The purpose of the workshops was for local and tribal government officials to explore ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding spending opportunities in a regional context. Topics covered included the following:

- ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recover Fund Basic Rules
- Best Practices and Early Examples of ARPA Spending
- Practical Considerations for Contracts, Accounting, and Project Management
- Group Discussions Related to Regional Collaboration
- Leveraging Other State and Federal Funding and Priorities

Communities are encouraged to work collaboratively with other units of government and organizations in the region in spending local fiscal recovery funds to maximize overall benefit to the broader community and the state as a whole. WMSRDC will continue to partner with MAR and Michigan State University Extension in fiscal year 2022 to aid local governments as they plan for the use of these funds.

# WMSRDC BOARD

## Fiscal Year 2021 Board

Bonnie McGlothin, Chairperson	Councilperson, City of Muskegon Heights
Dale Nesbary, Vice-Chairperson	Muskegon Community College
James Maike, Secretary	Newaygo County Commissioner
Ron Bacon	Mason County Commissioner
Ron Christians	Oceana County Commissioner
Kim Cyr	Muskegon County Commissioner
Jennifer Hodges	Supervisor, Muskegon Township
Rich Houtteman	WMSRDC Appointee
Marcia Hovey-Wright	Muskegon County Commissioner
Ken Johnson	Commissioner, City of Muskegon
James Kelly	WMSRDC Appointee
Bryan Kolk	Newaygo County Commissioner
Andrea Large	WMSRDC Appointee
Phil Morse	Oceana County Commissioner
Roger Morgenstern	Councilperson, City of Norton Shores
James Rynberg	Mayor, City of Fremont
Lewis Squires	Mason County Commissioner
Len Todd	Lake County Commissioner
Rillastine Wilkins	Muskegon County Commissioner
Kathy Winczewski	Councilperson, City of Ludington
Crystal Young	West Shore Community College

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



# WMSRDC STAFF

## Office of Executive Director

### **Erin Kuhn, Executive Director**

Erin is the Executive Director of WMSRDC. She has been with the agency for more than 20 years working in the economic development and local government services programs prior to becoming the executive director in 2014.

Erin is a governor appointee and voting member of the Michigan Infrastructure Council and serves on several of the Council's sub-committees including the Asset Management Self-Assessment Data Committee and chairs the Asset Management Champion Program Committee. She also serves as President of the Michigan Association of Regions and is former chair of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance. She serves on the United Way of the Lakeshore Board of Directors and is Chair of the United Way's Community Impact Council. Erin is a member of the Muskegon Rotary Club, former Lakeshore Athena Award nominee, and a Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce Agent of Change.

Erin was born and raised in West Michigan. She earned degrees from Muskegon Community College and Grand Valley State University. She currently lives in the City of Norton Shores with her husband and three children.

### **Syndi Copeland, Office Manager**

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, Syndi oversees the day-to-day operations of the Commission office; acts as Secretary to the Executive Board; and is responsible for providing administrative services to other professionals in the Commission. Syndi has been with the Commission for 14 years.

Syndi attended college at Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music and Moody Bible Institute. Throughout her career she has provided various office support to a K-12 school, psychologist, insurance agency, food service provider, aerospace industry, tobacco corporation, church, hospital, university and finally, WMSRDC.

Syndi has been a West Michigan resident for nearly 40 years. She currently resides in Grand Haven with her husband. Syndi enjoys baking and quilting and the West Michigan beaches! Her husband and she host dinner events with a wide variety of people, but their favorites are with their three grown children, their spouses, and those WONDERFUL grandchildren!

## Finance and Budget

### **Amanda Snyder, Finance Manager**

Amanda is the Finance Manager of WMSRDC. She joined the Commission in 2019 after working nearly a decade as an industry accountant specializing in non-profit accounting.

Amanda is passionate about marrying accounting and operations with technology. Since her arrival at the Commission, she has strived to modernize operations utilizing cloud-based, paperless systems. In early 2021, she led an organization-wide technology migration to improve operational efficiency and flexibility. The best part of her job is when someone wants to talk about accounting and finance. Her continuous goal is financial transparency, and she enjoys engaging the staff and board members about the Commission's operations.

Additionally, Amanda serves as Treasurer for the Walden Green Montessori Board of Directors and is a member of the Association for Governmental Accountants. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Western Michigan University and a Master of Professional Accounting from the University of Miami, Coral Gables. She resides in Whitehall with her husband and two children where she enjoys gardening and lazy beach days.

# WMSRDC STAFF continued

## Air Quality and Information & Communications

### **Amy Haack, Program Manager**

Amy is the Air Quality and Communications Planner for WMSRDC. Amy is also an integral member of the transportation staff and has been with the agency for more than 25 years.

Amy is the chairperson of the Muskegon County Specialized Services Coordinating Committee which provides operating assistance for transportation services primarily for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Amy is the President of the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council and was honored with a Sustainability Champion Award in 2019 for her leadership in that role. Amy is also a longtime partner of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC) of which she regularly represents during interviews about Clean Air Action with local radio and television media. Amy continues to lead numerous outreach and communications strategies for clean air taking the program from being unknown in its inception to currently boasting an over ninety percent awareness rate for West Michigan residents.

Amy was born and raised in the Muskegon area and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Western Michigan University. Amy lives in the Village of Fruitport with her husband and daughter and gives of her time and planning knowledge as an elected nonpartisan councilperson in her community. Amy also enjoys reading good books, taking long walks, hiking in beautiful places, and pedaling her bicycle for miles and miles.

## Economic Development, Community Development, and Local Government Services

### **Stephen Carlson, Program Manager**

Stephen (pronounced “Steffen”) oversees the economic development and local government services program areas. He has been with WMSRDC since 2003 and earned a degree in Geography from Grand Valley State University in 2004. He believes in supporting the work of local governments and promoting regional cooperation. Stephen has written or collaborated on more than two dozen documents spanning regional economic development, local master and recreation plans, hazard mitigation, wildfire protection, flood mitigation, brownfields, and shoreline resilience. He has training in infrastructure asset management, leadership, and GIS to go along with experience with grant writing, public engagement, and facilitation.

Stephen enjoys the outdoors, playing sports, gardening, and traveling. His personal achievements include receiving a Muskegon Community College golf scholarship; involvement with the Grand Valley State University men’s club volleyball team as co-founder, player, and coach; teaching a course in map design at Muskegon Community College; and many summers spent playing semi-professional beach volleyball on the Midwest Professional Volleyball Association tour. Stephen lives in Norton Shores with his wife and two children.

## Environmental Planning

### **Fallon Chabala, Program Manager**

Fallon joined WMSRDC in 2021 as the agency’s Environmental Program Manager. Prior to joining WMSRDC, Fallon was the coordinator of a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) first in the Saginaw Bay region and then for the Barry, Calhoun, Kalamazoo region. Throughout this time, she managed multiple field crews, as well as state and federal grants. This oversight included ensuring proper permits, licenses, and permission from landowners, while meeting project deliverable deadlines. To support collaborative management, she gathered and disseminated information from professional organizations and provided education and outreach to the general public. Fallon also spent multiple years working as a student intern at Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute.

Fallon was born and raised in Norton Shores. She earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Grand Valley State University. She currently lives in Grand Rapids with her husband.



# WMSRDC STAFF continued

## **Gale Nobes, Planner**

Gale provides planning assistance to the WMSRDC environmental program. He has worked on the agency's environmental projects since joining in 2015.

Gale's previous environmental work includes 16 years as a soil conservation technician with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of which he retired, two years as a project manager with Timberland Resource Conservation & Development (RC & D), and many years of volunteering. Gale's volunteer efforts include serving as a board member of the Muskegon Conservation District, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, and Trout Unlimited. Gale is also a longtime member of the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership.

Gale is a Muskegon resident. He attended Muskegon Community College and Arizona State University where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

## **Transportation Planning**

### **Joel Fitzpatrick, Planning Director**

Joel Fitzpatrick works for WMSRDC as the Transportation Planning Director, overseeing all transportation programs for the Commission. He has been with the agency since 2007. Joel coordinates the agency's small urban and rural transportation programs, overseeing transportation project selection, and programming for the region's five counties. He also administers the MPO's traffic count program, which collects approximately 100 traffic counts per year, as well as the region's asset management program, which collects data for hundreds of miles of federal aid eligible roads every year.

Joel serves on the Michigan Department of Transportation's Rural Task Force Oversight Board as well as its education sub-committee. Joel is a member of the American Planning Association and is a Certified Planner through their American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He has also completed the Michigan Infrastructure Council's Asset Management Champion Program. Joel's prior experience includes having served on the City of Roosevelt Park's Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. Prior to joining WMSRDC, Joel worked in various planning positions focusing on economic development planning, historic district planning, grant writing, and recreation planning. Joel has an undergraduate degree in Economics as well as a Master's degree in Public Administration, both from Central Michigan University.

### **Brian Mulnix, Program Manager**

Brian Mulnix has been with the agency since 1998 and works primarily in transportation planning but has experience in all areas of the agency including GIS, local government services, and environmental planning. His current role is the Program Manager for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) where he is responsible for the planning of over \$15 million in federal transportation funding to improve the multi-modal transportation system and network in West Michigan. Brian also develops short- and long-range transportation plans for the transit and road agencies within the MPO.

Brian earned his Bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University and his Master of Public Administration from Grand Valley State University. Brian has served on his local planning commission for over 15 years and volunteers for various groups and events in the area. Brian grew up and continues to live in the White Lake area in northern Muskegon County with his two children.

### **Jamie Way, GIS Specialist**

Jamie has worked as WMSRDC's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist since 2016 where she creates and manages the mapping software as well as mapping of all data and content used to manage WMSRDC programs. She

*Jamie's bio is continued on next page.*

# WMSRDC STAFF continued

belongs to both the Michigan Communities Association of Mapping Professionals (MiCAMP) and Improving Michigan's Access to Geographic Information Networks (IMAGIN) GIS user associations where she has won awards for her mapping skills. Jamie began her career in mapping while attending Muskegon Community College where she received her degree with a GIS Certification. Before coming to WMSRDC, Jamie interned for Muskegon County GIS before heading to Newaygo County where she worked in the GIS Department for several years. Her work spans across all WMSRDC programs, including transportation, local planning, environmental, economic development, and specialty GIS projects such mapping cemeteries, bridge and culvert safety data, as well as Veterans Memorial Park.

Jamie is also a part of the WMSRDC transportation team taking part in annual PASER road ratings and transportation planning activities. In addition, she has managed several environmental grants such as the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid invasive species treatments and multiple tree planting grants. Jamie serves as an Asset Management Infrastructure Champion and is trained in Redevelopment Readiness Communities.

Before becoming a cartographer, she worked as an educational sign language interpreter for the public school system. Jamie resides in Norton Shores and enjoys birding, mushroom hunting, cooking, and crocheting.

## FINANCIALS

### Audited Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance

For the Year Ended September 30, 2020 and 2021

Revenues	2020	2021
Intergovernmental Revenues		
Federal	\$ 3,023,061	\$ 5,473,996
State	150,446	122,597
Local	<u>203,677</u>	<u>237,372</u>
Total Revenues	3,377,184	5,833,965
Expenditures		
Current		
Land Use Planning	56,556	37,450
Regional Initiatives	25,524	10,330
Economic Development	148,467	331,146
Transportation Planning	624,950	654,605
Environmental Clean-up	2,493,816	4,758,837
Homeland Security	<u>12,289</u>	<u>3,670</u>
Total Expenditures	\$ <u>3,361,602</u>	\$ <u>5,796,038</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	15,582	37,927
Fund Balance at 10/1/19 for FY20 and 10/1/20 for FY21	<u>324,120</u>	<u>339,702</u>
Fund Balance at 9/30/20 for FY20 and 9/30/21 for FY21	\$ <u>339,702</u>	\$ <u>377,629</u>

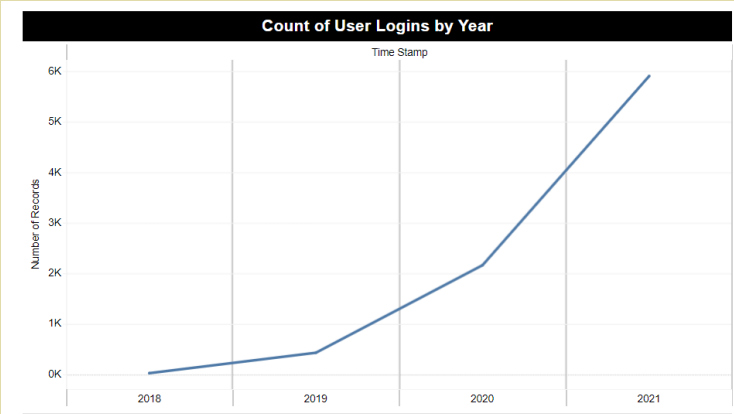
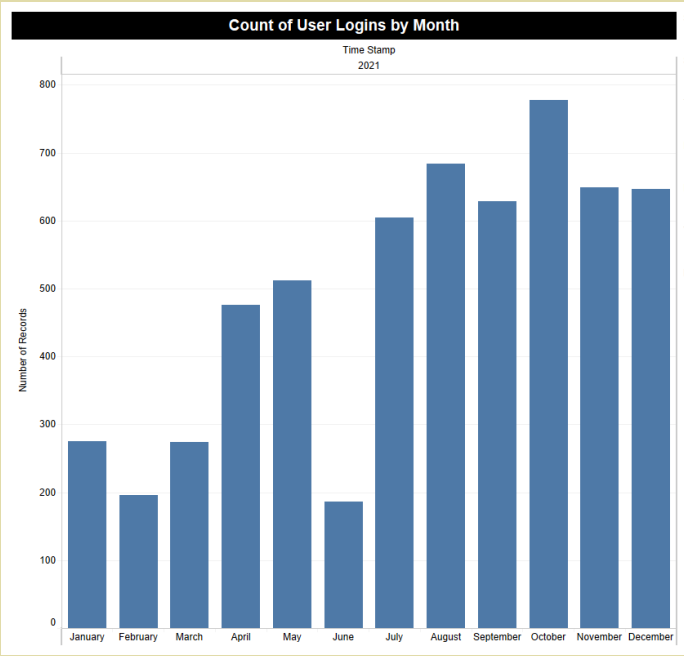


# OPEN DATA & ANALYTIC SERVICE



Munetrix is an online platform that transforms municipal raw data into usable information that can ultimately be harnessed as powerful, actionable intelligence. Since fiscal year 2020, WMSRDC has been a Munetrix sponsor allowing all 120 municipalities and their citizens within the five-county region access to Munetrix’s wide-ranging data. The Munetrix comprehensive measurement dashboards allow users to easily and efficiently meet government mandates while providing a holistic picture of a government’s financial well-being and how it compares to counterparts. With Munetrix, users can be fully transparent about current financial data and where taxpayer dollars are being spent. It’s a single tool that encompasses all of a community’s government reporting needs.

The charts show usage data for the WMSRDC region on the Munetrix website. The top chart shows user data on a monthly basis in 2021 and the bottom chart shows the data over a four year period. Both charts show that usage is trending up as more local governments learn about the online platform and how to navigate it. With the influx of pandemic response funding at the federal level flowing down to local governments, tracking financial data is of the utmost importance. To access the Munetrix tool, visit the WMSRDC website at [www.wmsrdc.org](http://www.wmsrdc.org).



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