

Winter 2025
CEDS Strategy Committee
Quarterly Economic Development Meeting
January 24, 2024



Meeting Notes

Agenda

- 1) WMSRDC Update
- 2) EDA Update
- 3) **Infrastructure** and the CEDS
- 4) Roundtable Discussion

Attendance:

Julie Burrell, Newaygo County
Stephen Carlson, WMSRDC
Peter Dickow, Sen. Peters
Jodi Gruner, MDARD
Kasey Jernberg, City of Grant
Mark Kinney, WSCC

Erin Kuhn, WMSRDC
Tobi Lake, Lake County
Chad Marr, MI Works! West Central
Phil Morse, Village of Shelby
Jodi Nichols, Lake County
Greg Poches, FAF

Current EDA Grants in the Region

- 1) City of Hart: Wastewater Upgrades
- 2) Lake County Economic Diversification
- 3) WMSRDC Ag Cluster Analysis

Potential EDA Projects

- 1) FARM (equipment/construction)
- 2) Mason County (planning)
- 3) Fremont Digester

1) WMSRDC Update

- W. MI Ag Cluster Impact Analysis
 - Due by September 30, 2025
 - Team:
 - Highland Economics
 - MSU Product Center
 - MSU RS&GIS
 - Steering Committee (monthly)
 - Stakeholder forums (late winter/early spring)
 - Stakeholder interviews (tbd)

2) EDA Update

- EDA reauthorization successful
 - Baseline grant rate 60% EDA / 40% local match
 - Consistent priorities
 - Infrastructure
 - Manufacturing
 - Workforce
 - Innovation
 - Economic recovery & resilience
 - Distress criteria & other details yet to come

3) Infrastructure and the CEDS

- Distinguish between physical (hard) infrastructure vs social (soft) infrastructure
- CEDS objectives: Are they relevant? What is missing? **Conclusions from the meeting discussion are highlighted below...**
 - Expand availability of broadband infrastructure
 - **Broadband is still a relevant topic**

- Maximize utilization of waterborne commerce
 - Expand this to “Blue Economy” beyond just “waterborne commerce”
- Maintain reliable transportation networks
 - yup
- Provide infrastructure and utilities to support the economy and eliminate barriers to growth and expansion
 - Consider folding broadband into this objective
- Prioritize climate resilience in infrastructure maintenance and improvements
 - Important to acknowledge and consider climate resilience in state and federal project applications
- Add “housing” as an infrastructure objective

4) Roundtable Notes

- Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) 30 Year Integrated Infrastructure Strategy link:
<https://www.michigan.gov/mic/30-year-strategy#:~:text=The%20Strategy%20will%20encourage%20community,of%20life%20for%20Michigan's%20residents.>
- Newaygo County Economic Update is Tuesday, January 28 – Contact [Julie Burrell](#)
- Mason County State of the Community breakfast is Wednesday, February 12 – Contact [Kristi Zimmerman](#)
- Shelby engaged with community/downtown visioning and planning
- Lake County going through its EDA economic diversification grant, looking forward to implementing outcomes
- Infrastructure data in GIS... what information is valuable, would it be useful to maintain on a regional scale?
- MI Works! WC focused on pre-apprenticeships and connecting with school-aged youth.
- FAFW focused on housing and food infrastructure (among many other things)
- City of Grant has a workforce housing pilot project; additional housing anticipated
- West Shore Community College moving forward with Hart “community center” (including education space & food hub)... construction expected late summer or fall 2025
- MDARD is a willing and able economic development partner, especially in rural areas

Next meetings:

April 24 (Thursday): Workforce

July 25 (Friday): Natural Resources & Quality of Life

October 24 (Friday): Economic Diversity & Regional Integration