

Spring 2025
CEDS Strategy Committee
Quarterly Economic Development Meeting
April 24, 2025



Meeting Notes

Agenda

- 1) EDA Update
- 2) WMSRDC Update
- 3) Workforce and the CEDS
- 4) Roundtable Updates

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) Broadband Training (Newaygo County)
- 2) FARM (equipment/construction)

Attendance:

Ken Adamski, Shelby State Bank
Julie Burrell, Newaygo County
Curtis Burdette, Oceana County
Stephen Carlson, WMSRDC
Ryan Coffey-Hoag, MSUE
Sue DeVries, MEDC
Peter Dickow, Sen. Peters
Jodi Gruner, MDARD

Mark Kinney, WSCC
Erin Kuhn, WMSRDC
Jodi Nichols, Lake County
Chad Marr, MI Works! West Central
Phil Morse, Village of Shelby
Jodi Nichols, Lake County
Greg Poches, FACF
Darryl Todd, MEDC

1) EDA Update

- Must comply with Executive Orders... remove references to DEI, equity, climate change
- Accepting applications
 - Baseline grant rate 60% EDA / 40% local match
 - Competitive projects will have measurable impacts (job creation/retention, leverage/attract private investment)

2) WMSRDC Update

- W. MI Ag Cluster Impact Analysis
 - Due by September 30, 2025
 - Team: WMSRDC, Highland Economics, MSU Product Center, MSU RS&GIS
 - Support for project has been committed by all county-level foundations. Thank you!
 - "Ag Week" stakeholder meetings held at the end of March
 - Productive engagement/blitz of interviews between variety of ag stakeholders and the Highland team.
 - Open question: Would this be worthwhile conducting annually?
 - Comment/suggestion: Perhaps it would be useful to undertake a similar concept but for various sectors, rather than just agriculture.
- Steering Committee meeting penciled in for June 4

3) Workforce and the CEDS

- Attendees reviewed and discussed the Workforce Goal and Objectives outlined in the CEDS.
 - Overall consensus was that the existing narrative sufficient to reflect workforce needs in the region and support current and future workforce development initiatives.

- There are many ongoing and collaborative initiatives to develop the local workforce, including youth engagement, upskilling, and networking.
- How can the CEDS and CEDS process be leveraged to support workforce development?
 - Changes in funding streams may necessitate greater communication and coordination
- CEDS workforce objectives: Proposed revisions are highlighted below...
 - ~~Invigorate~~ **Strengthen and expand** partnerships between private industry clusters and higher education and career technical education
 - ~~Reinforce~~ **Enhance** the labor force through talent attraction
 - Increase workforce participation through mitigation of barriers
 - Increase K-12 exposure to **alternative all** career paths
 - Meet local demands for training and education programs

4) Roundtable Notes

- Numerous workforce initiatives underway/planned throughout the region: MI Career Quest, MMTC, HR Network, etc.
- Oceana County: Small Business Summit on May 8.
- Michigan Works! West Central: Hiring events upcoming.
- The Right Place: Asset mapping for Outdoor Recreation Manufacturing underway.
- MEDC: Business expansions happening, but at a slower pace than last year. Jobs are available!
- Lake County: GEO prison re-opening as ICE facility; Economic diversification study to be rolled out soon.
- Village of Shelby: Blue Photon expansion; Wood carving festival July 11-12
- West Shore Community College: Hart facility moving forward; rec center expansion to include training space; pool renovation; fire science (online) education coming this fall; EMT training is about 10% of college enrollment.

Next meetings:

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

October 24 (Friday): Economic Diversity & Regional Integration