

Annual Performance Report—October 2021

Southwest Michigan Economic Development District

Serving Berrien, Cass, & Van Buren Counties

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022



Southwest Michigan Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 Annual Performance Report—October 2021

Prepared by:
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
“Planning Great Communities Together”

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www.eda.gov



Left to right: B.H. BL-94 Charrette, B.H. Arts District mural, Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Pow Wow, S.H. Lighthouse, Bangor Amtrak Station, and Dowagiac Under the Harvest Moon Festival.

Adjustments to Strategy

CEDS Committee

The CEDS Committee experienced a few changes in membership over the past year. There are currently 19 members from across the region. Additional members are currently being recruited for the 2022 CEDS Committee that include organized labor, education, workforce development, and underserved populations.

CEDS Strategy Committee Membership (2021)		
Member	Title	Organization
Matt Davis	President, P.E., LEED AP	Wightman & Associates, Inc.
K. John Egelhaaf	Executive Director	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
Dan Fette	Community Development Director	Berrien County
Jeff Carmen	County Administrator	Cass County
Jeff Rea	President and CEO	Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce
Rachel Wade	Vice President of Strategy	United Way of Southwest Michigan
Zach Vaughn	Project Manager of Physical and Business Development	Cornerstone Alliance
Shelley Klug	Manager of Econ. & Business Development	Indiana Michigan Power (AEP)
Zachary Morris	Economic Development Coordinator	Van Buren County/Kinexus
Gary Wood	Vice Chair	Local Food Council
Mark Parrish	Tribal Council Member/ Secretary	Pokagon Band Tribal Council
Gail Patterson-Gladney	County Commissioner	Van Buren County
Michelle Audette-Bauman	Community Development Team	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Linda Preston	Supervisor/ MTA Chair	Pokagon Twp/ SWMPC
Bob Harrison	County Commissioner	Berrien County
Tony McGhee	Vice President of Development Services	Abonmarche
Sarah Spoonholtz	Regional Director	Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber
Roseann Marchetti	County Commissioner	Cass County
Ken Flowers	Dean, Career & Workforce Education	Lake Michigan College

Adjustments to Strategy

Project Identification Process

Due to the scale of the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act funding, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission developed a more robust project identification and selection process in order to advance the region's strongest project proposals to the EDA grant application.

The project selection process consists of six steps:

1. **Call for projects**
2. **Submission to SWMPC**
3. **Eligibility test**
4. **Project scoring**
5. **Selection**
6. **Application to EDA**



After each round of project submissions, the CEDS Committee members have a chance to review and score projects individually. A virtual meeting is then held to discuss projects as a group and are voted on.

Renewed Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

SWMPC was excited to see equity be added at the forefront of EDA's investment priorities. We are putting more effort into reaching and understanding the needs of traditionally underserved populations in our region. Last year we added a representative from United Way of Southwest Michigan to the CEDS Committee and recently started talks with other organizations like the OutCenter of Southwest Michigan (LGBTQ+ community center) to better understand the population we serve.

DEI is an important element in our CARES Act COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan as we seek to better understand how the pandemic hurt lower income, women, and minorities the most.

Next year we start on a new CEDS for the region that will include DEI as we work to make southwest Michigan a great place for everyone to live, work, and play.



Economic Development Activities and Action Plan Progress

Vision

“To cultivate a resilient and competitive economy that supports an excellent quality of life and builds pathways to prosperity for all residents.”

Annual Update

This annual update was produced through surveying the CEDS Committee, one-on-one contact with CEDS Committee members, and using data from websites of local organizations and agencies.

Agency Acronyms

Cornerstone Alliance (CA)
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC)
Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
Berrien County Strategic Leadership Council (SLC)

Other Acronyms

Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS)
Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS)

Goals

Goal #1: Livability for Talent Attraction

Promote a diverse environment that creates an excellent quality of life for talent.

Goal #2: Education & Training

Attract, retain, and develop a high-quality workforce.

Goal #3: Infrastructure

Create, improve, and maintain services and infrastructure.

Goal #4: Support Business

Support and meet the needs of current, new, and emerging businesses.

Goal #5: Coordination

Promote better coordination among different economic development groups.

Goal #1: Livability for Talent Attraction

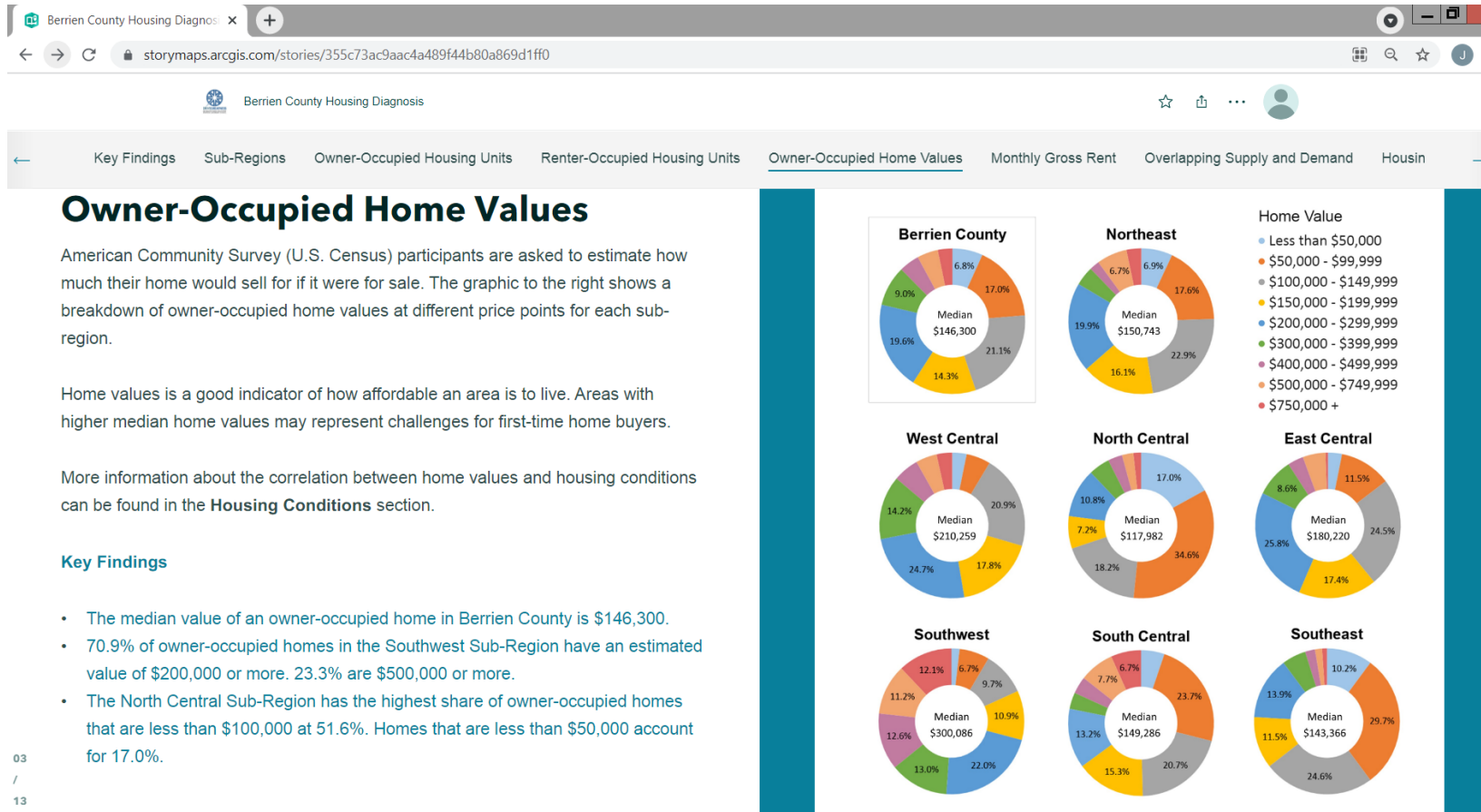
	Objectives and Strategies	Implementation projects
1.1	<p>Create a more diversified transportation system, integrated with community development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create walkable neighborhoods • Encourage new transportation patterns that support efficient multi-model transportation options • Support community development that is transit-oriented 	<p>Implementation of 2018 Napier Avenue Pedestrian Bicycle Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed gaps and safety for cyclists by resurfacing and adding bike lanes for two miles of roadway. Preliminary engineering for sidewalks completed for future 2022 project. <p>Pedestrian improvements to benefit student access to various learning institutions in Village of Lawrence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Lawrence in conjunction with Lawrence Public Schools, Van Buren Intermediate School District, and Safe Routes to School <p>University of Michigan NSF grant for City of Benton Harbor Mobility Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority, Kinexus, University of Michigan, SWMPC
1.2	<p>Encourage development of additional recreational opportunities and amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the development of additional public spaces in urban, suburban, and rural environments • Promote existing and support development of new trails and natural areas (e.g., parks, recreation areas, rivers, and lakes) 	<p>Recreation plans; Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail (SWMPC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning work for Niles—Berrien Springs connection (2020-2021) • Missing link between Niles and Mishawaka constructed (2020) <p>Paw Paw River Water Trail (SWMPC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail maintenance, coordination, and signage through local municipality and area economic development funding (2021) <p>Dowagiac River Water Trail (SWMPC)</p> <p>Planning 6 mile Mountain Bike Trail on Whirlpool’s headquarters in Benton Township (construction in 2022)</p> <p>Red Arrow Linear Park: Union Pier and Harbert sections are complete. USDA Rural Development Funding awarded to Berrien County to complete engineering for gaps between US-12 and downtown Bridgman.</p> <p>Planning for a green infrastructure project in Benton Township on the Meijer property that will include 4 rain gardens. (construction in 2022)</p>

Goal #1: Livability for Talent Attraction

	Objectives and Strategies (continued)	Implementation projects
1.3	<p>Support sustainable development</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infrastructure that can be sustained financially and environmentally over the long term • Maintain or improve environmental quality 	<p>Green infrastructure workshops/grant writing (SWMPC)</p> <p>Watershed management plans and SAW grants (SWMPC)</p> <p>Lake Michigan Tributaries non-profit/tribal partnership (SWMPC)</p>
1.4	<p>Encourage increased access to housing options regarding density, cost, style, and location for existing residents and new talent</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a region-wide Target Market Analysis to gain better data to support ‘missing middle’ housing development • Support education of developers and financiers regarding housing and demographic trends and community objectives • Support education of community leaders regarding redevelopment programs, land use and zoning techniques, and enforcement options to maintain housing stock 	<p>Michigan’s Great Southwest Strategic Leadership Council Housing Diagnostic Project (SWMPC)</p>
1.5	<p>Execution of Core Projects than have a positive impact on the economic vitality of Berrien County by improving the quality of place</p>	<p>Union Pier Business Corridor Project in Chikaming Township—USDA RDBG grant awarded</p>

Livability for Talent Attraction Highlight

Housing was identified as a major concern for many organizations and businesses in our region. In late 2019, the Berrien County Strategic Leadership Council partnered with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission to go beyond a traditional housing study by building a housing diagnosis tool. This StoryMap tool is the byproduct of the SLC’s effort to allow for data to drive initial understanding about the state of the housing market, then to have that initial understanding vetted by the expertise of its membership. Ultimately, the process seeks to yield clear and actionable solutions to housing challenges. Moreover, it is understood that standard housing “studies” may give a snapshot of the current conditions but because it takes a period of many years to see change, a single snapshot may not be what is required. Rather, the approach taken by the SLC is to build a durable, credible, recurring methodology to regularly take the “temperature” of Berrien County’s housing sector, understand how it is trending and evolving, and respond accordingly with tools for action. The work is made possible by the generous funding from organizations that include the United Way of Southwest Michigan, the Berrien Community Foundation, the Pokagon Fund, and the SLC itself.



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Goal #2: Education & Training

Objectives and Strategies	Implementation projects
<p>Promote accessibility and opportunities to participate in education and skilled training programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailor programs to market demands 	Kinexus, Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren
<p>Encourage a culture of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for all learners Encourage, and promote the personal and regional economic benefits of, lifelong learning Promote digital literacy 	<p>Michigan Reconnect</p> <p>Kinexus, Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren</p>

Education & Training Highlights

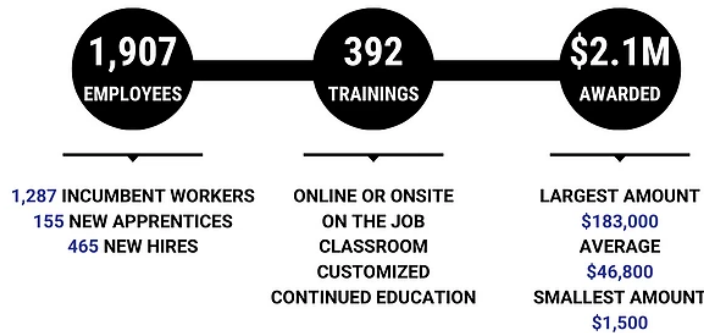
Going PRO Talent Fund:

Previously called the Skilled Trades Training Fund (STTF), Going PRO is a competitive funding source that provides a solution to skill shortages throughout the State of Michigan. Our Business Team helps local employers navigate the process of applying for these funds and helps develop a plan based on needed skills in the industry.



GET READY TO GO PRO

45 Companies in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren (BCVB) counties were awarded funds to hire & train 1,907 employees. Our companies selected 90 different training providers to complete a total of 392 unique trainings. Michigan Works! BCVB was the 3rd highest awarded region in the state, with a total amount of \$2.1 Million.



WHY GO PRO?

- BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE**
Investing in your team through training helps improve quality, reduces the need for overtime, and creates a more adaptable workforce.
- IMPROVE YOUR CULTURE**
Training helps improve employee engagement, resulting in increased productivity.
- RETAIN YOUR PEOPLE**
According to Gallup, engaged teams experience up to 31% less turnover.



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Michigan Works! is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Michigan Relay Center: 711 Voice and TDD. Michigan Works! is a proud partner of American Job Centers. Supported by the State of Michigan and federal funds.

Goal #3: Infrastructure

	Objectives and Strategies	Implementation projects (lead agency)
3.1	Improve infrastructure information	
3.2	Encourage infrastructure development and interconnectivity to better support education, training, and employment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase mobility: transit and non-motorized 	Connect Berrien Plan and TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan (SWMPC)
3.3	Advance the effective and efficient transportation of goods	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support regionally impactful infrastructure opportunities for the movement of freight (e.g., completion of US-31, US-131 BR/US-131 Interchange Upgrade, three lanes of traffic on I-94, through the region) • Recognize intermodal freight transportation opportunities (e.g., rail transportation, reliever port for Chicago and Detroit) • Promote maintenance and improvement of the freeway system and connecting roads • Promote maintenance and improvement of state and local roads • Encourage aviation to better support business • Take advantage of our existing water infrastructure along the Lake Michigan shoreline for the transportation of freight (e.g., freight harbors on Lake Michigan) 	<p>TwinCATS and NATS Long Range Plans and Transportation Improvement Program (SWMPC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plans for TwinCATS and NATS (2019) • Produced the 2020—2023 Transportation Improvement Program for TwinCATS and NATS (2019) <p>Twin Cities Harbor Conservancy/Office of Great Lakes/Sea Grant/et al. charrette and planning (SWMPC)</p> <p>Promote the implementation of the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) Infrastructure Asset Management Self-Assessment tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted multiple webinars to instruct local units of government on how to complete the Self-Assessment tool

Goal #3: Infrastructure

	Objectives and Strategies (continued)	Implementation projects
3.4	<p>Advance the effective and efficient transportation of people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote maintenance and improvement of the existing freeway system and connecting roads Encourage passenger rail as a viable transportation option for inter and inner regional movement Encourage aviation to better support passenger transportation Promote coordination of regional mass transportation (e.g., use existing transportation asset inventory) Promote non-motorized transportation options 	<p>TwinCATS and NATS Long Range Plans and Transportation Improvement Program (SWMPC)</p> <p><i>Connect Berrien Plan</i> to connect people to South Bend and Michigan City (SWMPC)</p> <p>Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (SWMPC)</p> <p>Pavement conditions reports for each county as well as at the urbanized level</p> <p>Amtrak Pere Marquette passenger rail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication and meetings with Michigan legislators and staff regarding the appropriation of funding for an engineering and environmental study
3.5	<p>Assist in cultivating a comprehensive telecommunication system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote region-wide access to telecommunications (broadband, cellular) Encourage improved speed and quality of telecommunications infrastructure 	<p>Berrien & Cass Counties partnership with Merit and SWMPC</p>
3.6	<p>Explore and promote a sustainable and economically competitive approach to energy supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote competitive reliability and cost of energy Promote a diversified and sustainable energy portfolio 	<p>Indiana Michigan Power’s Watervliet Solar Power Plant generates up to 4.6-megawatts of electricity</p> <p>SpartanSolar-Midwest Energy and Communication’s Cassopolis Plant generates up to 0.8-megawatts (solar subscription program)</p> <p>Construction started on the Indeck Niles Energy Center will generate 1,000-megawatts (natural gas)</p>

Infrastructure Highlight



Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) is a member-owned cooperative providing electric, propane and fiber internet services to more than 40,000 residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial customers in 12 under-served rural counties in southern Michigan and northern Indiana and Ohio.

MEC acquired nearly 500 acres in Penn Township and the Village of Cassopolis, Michigan for the purpose of constructing a new headquarters on approximately 70 of those acres at the corner of M-60 and Decatur Road as well as a 0.8 MW community solar array on 20 adjacent acres. Having approximately 400 acres of undeveloped land remaining, MEC is investing in its future and the future of rural Michigan by pursuing the development of a business and industrial park to promote community growth and job creation.

The Southwest Michigan Advanced Research and Technology (SMART) Park will be a business and industrial park that will entice prospective tenants with flexible parcel sizes that can accommodate large facilities along with a well-planned transportation system that will allow for a large volume of truck traffic and access to rail service along a CN main rail line. MEC secured the services of Thomas P. Miller & Associates to develop a target market analysis to determine the viability of the proposed development. Once the need for the Park was established, MEC engaged Abonmarche to join the project team to conduct site development due diligence and develop plans for the Park's buildout. An Economic Impact Analysis developed by Kinexus Group projects the Park will create 877 jobs in the local community. The final piece of the predevelopment puzzle was the Village of Cassopolis and Penn Township working together to create a PA 425 agreement for the property to ensure consistent zoning and planning practices across the entire site which straddled the two jurisdictions.

This work and investment of MEC and its members was rewarded in September 2021 when the Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced it was awarding a \$6 million grant to the project. Additional funding support for the project is being provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and most importantly the members who make up the MEC cooperative and see the value and importance of investing in our rural communities.

Construction is slated to begin in the Spring of 2022 with sites ready for development before the end of the year. One multi-national company has signed a letter of intent to locate in the Park with a projected investment of over \$100 million and the creation of 50-75 new jobs.



Goal #4: Support Business

Objectives and Strategies	Lead agency / Implementation projects
<p>Support and meet the needs of current, new, and emerging businesses</p>	<p>Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Emergency Relief Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed \$100,000 in business relief grants • Manufacturing Days • Building Trades Week <p><u>Market Van Buren</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 143 Jobs Retained • 12 Businesses Retained • 80 Jobs Created • \$11.5 Million Capital Investment • 12 loans to local businesses (total of \$240k) <p><u>Cornerstone Alliance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 475 Businesses Assisted • 9 New Business Starts • \$1.1 Million Capital Investment <p>Cass County Economic Development Corporation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnered with Kinexus Group/Market Van Buren to provide economic development assistance to County businesses <p>Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Tool Kit for Managing COVID-19 <p>Michigan Economic Development Corporation</p> <p>(highlight on following page)</p>

Goal #4: Support Business Highlight

Whirlpool's \$80 million investment in Benton Harbor and St. Joseph taking innovative approach to business growth and talent attraction in the region

Whirlpool is planning to invest more than \$60 million to rehabilitate and reconstruct its Global Laundry and Dishwasher Technical Center in the city of **St. Joseph**. The new Technical Center will involve the demolition of a four-story building, construction of a new facility and renovation of the existing space that will remain. The current and future buildings are to be utilized as office space and laboratory testing of pre-manufactured home appliances. Whirlpool Corporation will retain 400 full-time engineering, research and development, and administrative support positions, all of which average \$140,000 in annual wages.

Through a partnership with Harbor Shores Community Redevelopment LLC, Whirlpool Corporation also plans to construct Harbor Shores Apartments, a multi-family development with 80 apartments and 120 parking spaces, which is anticipated to result in \$20.9 million in total capital investment in the city of **Benton Harbor**. By coupling the investment in new housing units with the redevelopment of the nearby Technical Center, Whirlpool Corporation will be able to generate positive business impacts, including the ability to attract and retain needed talent while offering housing options.

In collaboration with Whirlpool Corporation's anticipated improvements to its St. Joseph Technical Center, Cornerstone Alliance was previously awarded a grant through the 21st Century Jobs Fund in the amount of \$1.2 million to coordinate development and construction of a pedestrian bridge to connect the city of St. Joseph and the city of Benton Harbor over the Paw Paw River, to create better access to the St. Joseph Technical Center.

As a result, the Michigan Strategic Fund today approved a Michigan Community Revitalization Program performance-based grant in the amount of \$750,000 for Harbor Shores Community Redevelopment LLC. It also approved a brownfield work plan for the Berrien County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority including state tax capture in the amount of \$1,894,405 for the reimbursement of brownfield activities at the Technical Center. Additionally, the Board approved an amendment to Cornerstone Alliance's Michigan 21st Century Jobs Fund grant agreement to extend due dates as needed and reflect the updated project scope.

The project aligns with MEDC's strategic plan by helping support 400 high-paying jobs in the focus industries of engineering, design and development, and professional and corporate services while supporting workforce housing that allows talent to continue living and work in the state.



Goal #5: Partnering & Coordination

Objectives and Strategies	Implementation projects
Provide resources to and, when appropriate, lead the downtown development efforts for municipal investment partners.	Cornerstone Alliance, Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and area chambers use a variety of programs to assist in development efforts.
Encourage collaboration among public and nonprofit sectors.	United Way of Southwest Michigan joined CEDS Committee (2020)

Resiliency in Region

Palisades Economic Recovery Initiative

The Goal - Execute then implement a comprehensive economic recovery strategy for the benefit of southwest Michigan in the wake of the upcoming closure of the Palisades Nuclear Power Station.

The Basics - The work will take place from 2021-2023 and will provide the community with the capacity to have greater influence over their economic future while they stay informed and engaged in the events associated with the plant closure and decommissioning process.

Three major components:

Public Engagement

Economic Recovery Strategic Planning

Economic Recovery Strategy Implementation

The project involves broad organization collaboration. The SWMPC will orchestrate broad organizational collaboration. Vital to the project success are partners at the University of Michigan's Economic Growth Institute, Market Van Buren, Van Buren County, and departments of state government including the Michigan Department of Treasury, Michigan State Housing and Development Authority.

Public Engagement - Deep and persistent public engagement is a central theme of our work. We have begun to create a central hub for reliable information on all the formal events surrounding the plant closure and the economic recovery strategy.

Public engagement will start as the analysis phase of the economic recovery strategic planning is under way and will continue throughout the 3-year process and will focus on:

- Website, Facebook, other social media channels
- Print and broadcast media
- Public meetings

Economic Recovery Strategic Planning – This process has begun and is approximately half-way through a thorough analysis of the current positive impact Palisades has across the regional economy. Out of the analysis, the strategy will then assess the systems, sectors, and community assets already in place that can be aligned, augmented, or expanded to fill the impending gaps to be left by the plant closure. The last step of this planning process will be to develop a recovery/implementation action plan which will outline both general and specific response actions and prioritize them.

Analysis Phase

Primary Impacts, Secondary Impacts, Tertiary Impacts

Assessment Phase

Conclusions Drawn (scale of loss, opportunities for mitigation)

Recovery/Implementation Action Plan

Specific Responsive Actions, Prioritization of Actions

Palisades Economic Recovery Initiative cont.

Economic Recovery Implementation - Implementation of the recovery strategy will be facilitated by a designated recovery implementation specialist. Their sole focus will be to systematically drive the actions itemized in the recovery strategy. The same dedication to transparency and public dialogue will continue in the implementation phase.

Facilitated by Economic Recovery Specialist
Specialist employed for initial two-year term

Why? - This process has been designed with an understanding that recovery won't happen accidentally and it won't happen through a single act of economic attraction. Rather it will happen through enlightened action across multiple fronts in concert.

The benefits of a successful recovery strategy will be diverse and will significantly impact:

- School districts
- Philanthropic organizations
- Events and organizations who rely on volunteers
- Local government services
- Local businesses
- Residents and visitors

Final Product

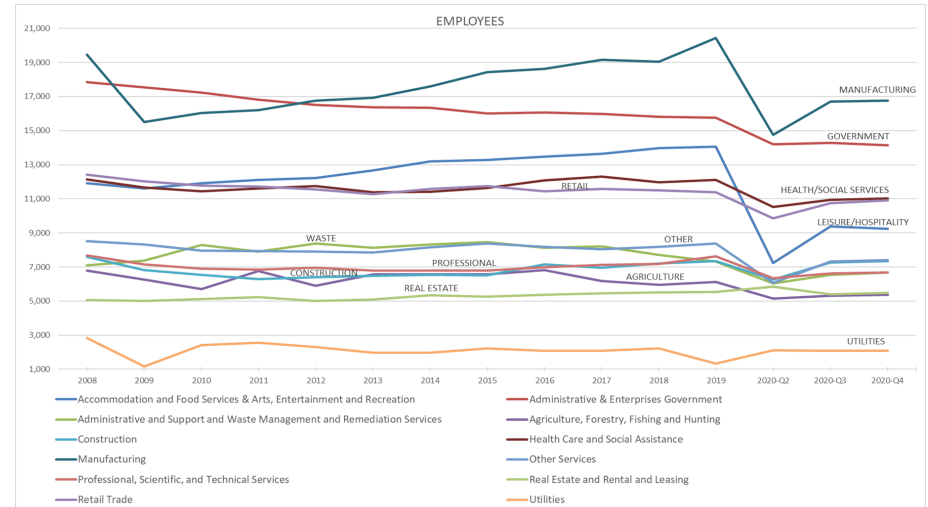
- Public Information Sharing
 - Website
 - Social media channel(s)
- Documented Economic Recovery Strategy
 - Analysis to understand breadth and scale of loss
 - Roadmap for community action
- Economic Recovery Specialist
 - Embedded specialist to facilitate implementation of recovery strategy
- An Innovative Model for Other Communities Facing Decommissioning in the Future

Budget - The project has been funded through a partnership with the EDA which has funded the majority of the project (\$969,261), the Consumers Energy Foundation (\$140,000), The Michigan Department of Treasury (\$53,000), and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (\$50,000).

EDA CARES Act COVID 19 Economic Recovery

The COVID 19 Economic Recovery Project began in late 2020 and will be completed in October 2022. Its focus is on the development of an economic recovery and resilience plan, tied to the region's CEDS that will address the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The process follows a three-phase approach; analysis, assessment, and action.

The analysis phase involves the collection of data and intelligence on topics that have surfaced as vital to how COVID 19 has impacted the regional economy. The topics of research include the metrics that measure the basic health of the economy while also showing the disparate impacts that the virus has had on various economic and population sectors. Another area is the provision of broadband internet in the region. This is a vital issue for business, education, healthcare, and how government remains connected to the electorate. Next, the intelligence gathering explores the other recovery planning efforts being conducted throughout the region as well as the actions planned by them for recovery. The data collection effort includes resources through a collaboration with the Kinexus group as a source of locally derived workforce and business data.



The assessment phase involves knitting together the individual components of the analysis phase into a comprehensive recognition of the economic condition of the region, post-pandemic. Our goal with the assessment will be to paint a comprehensive picture of regional assets oriented toward recovery, and to align those regional assets into concerted, complementary action. The SWMPC will look for gaps in the existing sub-regional recovery efforts and explore ways to empower them with new collaborations across sectors not otherwise represented. From the results of the assessment phase, the SWMPC will seek region-wide endorsement for the coordinated recovery effort. This will be done through presentations and requests for endorsement from boards of commissioners, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, and various other critical partners.

In the action phase the SWMPC will build the overarching strategy to link all recovery activity within the region. We will drive recovery activity through the emphasis areas of the CEDS, plus community health, and equity across our population. The strategy will demonstrate opportunities for alignment of public and private assets where partner goals intersect (e.g. broadband, transportation, health). It will also demonstrate the opportunity for the alignment of goals and actions in time. The strategy will identify universally beneficial actions. Actions will be assessed against the best available economic modeling (executed by the University of Michigan's Economic Growth Institute) to determine the potential return on the investment being considered. In order to measure the resiliency of potential recovery actions, the following measures will be employed to assess each action. Does it build new infrastructure that can withstand economic, manmade, and natural hazards? Does it rely on infrastructure that is designed to withstand economic, manmade, and natural hazards? Does it contribute to redundancy? Does it complement other actions? Can it be sustained with minimal inputs over time? Does it lead to equitable rewards? Our expectation is that the level of rigor applied to pandemic recovery and resilience through this strategy will represent a new, durable, credible way of collectively catalyzing our regional economy.

Goals for the Coming Year

Community and Economic Development Program of SWMPC

A. **Administration** – Complete financial and progress reports including the 2022 Annual Report under the terms of the EDA planning grant

1. Carry out operations policies and procedures
2. Maintain and develop the print, digital, and on-line data collection and reports
3. Issue annual service delivery report (GPRA)
4. Conduct an annual audit of SWMPC
5. Comply with EDA District regulations (eligibility, designation, CEDS)

B. **Information Center** – Prepare, publish, and promote data products in response to client needs

1. Review U.S. Census and other relevant data to analyze District economic trends
2. Continue information distribution through:
 - a. SWMPC website
 - i. Include sections to assist communities with RFP/RFQ
 - ii. Include info to assist communities in realizing their planning goals
 - b. Bi-Monthly SWMPC Board Meetings
3. Communicate availability of new data

C. **Direct Community Assistance** – Optimize Implementation of CEDS Priorities

1. Assist regional partners by researching other potential grant funding sources for important projects of regional impact
 - a. Assist with grant writing
 - b. Assist with technical services (mapping, etc.)

2. Facilitate regional assistance and coordination of resources
 - a. Work with Michigan’s Great Southwest Strategic Leadership Council (SLC) to align organizations and find collective impact
 - b. Maintain SWMPC contacts database

D. **Planning and Projects**

1. Produce the 2022—2026 CEDS
 - a. Digital CEDS using Esri StoryMaps and other data visualization tools
2. Build membership of the CEDS Committee for 2022 that complies with EDA guidance
 - a. Hold CEDS committee meetings as needed
 - b. Interact with CEDS committee through other forms of communication including surveys, conference calls, and other outreach
3. Respond to EDA requests for additional reports, data, and regional information
4. Maximize opportunities to collaborate with regional collectives to coordinate federal resources for the purposes of implementing the CEDS priorities
5. Incorporate resiliency into CEDS and other planning
6. Identify gaps in broadband internet coverage and develop strategies to close the gaps