

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014-2015

An Annual Addendum to the 2013

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

*Economic Development District serving
Michigan's Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties*



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission



Produced in coordination with

**The U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

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Introduction

2014-2015 Annual Performance Report

This 2014-2015 Annual Performance Report is the first annual report to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) on the progress of the Economic Development District's 2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Annual Report consists of yearly reporting requirements outlined by the EDA, an update on recent economic development activities in southwest Michigan, and a snapshot of recent economic trends.

2014-2015 Update Report Summary

Required Updates for Annual Reporting

The CEDS Annual Performance Report shall discuss the following statements required by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). This report reflects updates from 2014-2015 with responses from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission; southwest Michigan's Economic Development District (EDD).

1. Any changes in technical components of the CEDS as required by the EDA's CEDS Summary of Requirements

EDD Response:

The only changes to the technical components of the CEDS include two committee member replacements. See Figure 1.

Figure 1: 2015 CEDS Committee Roster

| Name | Affiliation | Sector |
|-----------------|--|---------|
| Aaron Darling | Greenbush Brewing Company | Private |
| Arnie Redsicker | Rosta USA Corp | Private |
| Betty Guy | Lakeland HealthCare | Private |
| Bill Haase | IBEW Local 153 | Public |
| Brett Bowen | Flagstar Bank | Private |
| Cynthia LaGrow | Cass County Economic Development Corporation | Public |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Dan Peat | Kinexus (Michigan Works!) | Public |
| Dave Tomko | The Growth Coach | Private |
| Debbie Gillespie | Lake Michigan College | Public |
| Ed VanderVries | Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation | Public |
| George Saleeby | Swing-Lo Systems | Private |
| Jack McCloughan | South Haven Economic Development Department | Public |
| Jeff Noel | Whirlpool Corporation | Private |
| Jennifer Owens | Southwest Michigan First | Private |
| Jill Bland (REPLACEMENT) | Southwest Michigan First | Private |
| Jim Finan | Indiana Michigan Power | Private |
| Jodi Gruner | MDARD Economic Development Division | Public |
| Joseph Dick | Chemical Bank | Private |
| Joe Giannola | Giannola Investments | Private |
| Joe Sobieralski | Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance | Public |
| Kimberly Fedison | Berrien County Community Development Department | Public |
| Lisa Croteau | Niles Main Street, DDA | Public |
| Luann Harden | Western Michigan University - Southwest | Public |
| Michael Ferrill | USA Secure Data Systems | Private |
| Mike Schrom | TCB Food Processing | Private |
| Nicole Rodden-Bowen | Benton Harbor Department of Community Development | Public |
| Marja Winters (REPLACEMENT) | Benton Harbor Department of Community Development | Public |
| Pat Iliff | Ibid County Electric | Private |
| Sarah Jollay | Jollay Orchards | Private |
| Steve Packer | Honee Bear Canning | Private |
| Victoria Pratt | Cornerstone Alliance | Public |

2. Performance of the CEDS based upon the performance evaluation criteria established in the CEDS
 - a. Number of Jobs Created After Implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 - i. Total Employment in Initial Year
EDD Response:
See Figures 2 & 3
 - ii. Total Employment in Subsequent Years
EDD Response:
See Figures 2 & 3

Figure 2: Southwest Michigan Economic Development District, Employment Changes 2011-2015

| Geography | 2011 | 2013 | 2014 | % change |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Niles-Benton Harbor MSA (non-farm employment) <i>Source: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research</i> | - | 59,740 | 60,760 | +1.7% |
| Berrien County #1 <i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages</i> | 58,552 | 59,254 | 59,695 | +2.0% |
| Berrien County #2 <i>Source: EMSI (Kinexus' State of the Workforce)</i> | 80,967 | 82,279 | - | +1.6% |
| Cass County #1 <i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages</i> | 8,503 | 8,590 | 8,618 | +1.4% |
| Cass County #2 <i>Source: EMSI (Kinexus' State of the Workforce)</i> | 14,500 | 14,667 | | +1.2% |
| Van Buren County #1 <i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages</i> | 21,475 | 20,603 | 20,792 | -4.7% |
| Van Buren County #2 <i>Source: EMSI (Kinexus' State of the Workforce)</i> | 28,286 | 27,769 | | -1.8% |
| EDD #1 (Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Counties) <i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages</i> | 88,530 | 88,447 | 89,105 | +0.7% |
| EDD #2 (Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Counties) <i>Source: EMSI (Kinexus' State of the Workforce)</i> | 123,753 | 124,716 | - | +0.8% |

Figure 3: Southwest Michigan Unemployment Rate, August 2013 to September 2015

| Counties | August 2013 | August 2014 | September 2015 | 12-month net change |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Berrien County | 8.8 | 6.1 | 4.3 | -1.8 |
| Cass County | 7.7 | 5.1 | 4.1 | -1.0 |
| Van Buren | 8.0 | 6.0 | 4.6 | -1.4 |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| County | | | |
| | <i>Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics: LAUS – September 2015: Unemployment rates by county, not seasonally adjusted</i> | | |

b. Number and Types of Public Sector Investments Undertaken in the Region

i. EDA Sponsored Investments

EDD Response:

See Figures 4 & 5

ii. Significant Federal, State, and Local Investments

EDD Response:

See Figures 4 & 5

Figure 4: Significant Federal, State, and Local Investments, 2013

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-------|-----------|
| APPLICANT: | Brownfield Redevelopment Authority of Van Buren County | | | |
| PROJECT: | Brownfields Petroleum Assessment | | | |
| LOCATION: | Various sites, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Half of the total amount (\$200,000) expended from grant issued in 2011. Redevelopment of properties contaminated by petroleum. | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | \$100,000 | --0-- | --0-- | \$100,000 |
| APPLICANT: | Wolf Lake Stats Fish Hatchery | | | |
| PROJECT: | Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Fishing Pier, Boardwalk, and Viewing Platforms | | | |
| LOCATION: | Almena Township, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Construction & installation of fully accessible fishing pier, boardwalk, and viewing platform | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | --0-- | \$300,000 | --0-- | \$300,000 |
| APPLICANT: | MDNR, Parks and Recreation Division | | | |
| PROJECT: | Warren Dunes State Park Infrastructure Development | | | |
| LOCATION: | Lake Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Land and Water Conservation Fund | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| PURPOSE: | Redevelopment of day use facilities at Warren Dunes State Park | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | \$440,000 | \$900,000 | -0- | \$1,340,000 |
| APPLICANT: | Berrien County Parks | | | |
| PROJECT: | Love Creek County Park Expansion | | | |
| LOCATION: | Berrien Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Acquisition of 24 acres to expand skiing and hiking trails for Love Creek County Park. | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$80,000 | \$40,00 | \$120,000 |
| APPLICANT: | Pokagon Township | | | |
| PROJECT: | Pokagon Township Hall Site Improvements | | | |
| LOCATION: | Pokagon Township, Cass County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Improvements Township Hall grounds: trails, community garden, and pavilion | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$102,900 | \$68,600 | \$171,500 |
| APPLICANT: | Shreeji Ganesh, Inc/Chemical Bank | | | |
| PROJECT: | New Hilton Garden Inn , Benton Harbor | | | |
| LOCATION: | Benton Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | USDA RBS Guaranteed Loan Program | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Construct 110 room hotel with conference center near I-94 Pipestone exit | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Applicant | Total |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| | \$5,750,000 | --0-- | \$4,000,000 | \$9,750,000 |
| APPLICANT: | City of Benton Harbor | | | |
| PROJECT: | Union Field Project | | | |
| LOCATION: | Benton Harbor, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Redevelopment of Union Field to address safety hazards and meet ADA requirements | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | \$75,000 | \$300,000 | \$100,000 | \$475,000 |
| APPLICANT: | New Buffalo Township | | | |
| PROJECT: | Kruger Road Park Acquisition | | | |
| LOCATION: | New Buffalo Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Purchase of 12.21 acres of undeveloped land with frontage on Galien River for future park | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$150,000 | \$70,000 | \$220,000 |
| APPLICANT: | New Buffalo Township | | | |
| PROJECT: | Glassman Park Development Phase I | | | |
| LOCATION: | New Buffalo Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Improvements to recreational facilities as identified by public input to support heavy usage | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$300,000 | \$400,000 | \$700,00 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| APPLICANT: | New Buffalo Township | | | |
| PROJECT: | Glassman Park Development Phase I, LWCF | | | |
| LOCATION: | New Buffalo Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Improvements to recreational facilities to meet goals outlined in the Galien River Watershed Management Plan | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$200,000 |
| APPLICANT: | MDNR Wildlife Division | | | |
| PROJECT: | Porter Township State Game Area Land Initiative | | | |
| LOCATION: | Porter Township, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Purchase of 400 Acres adjacent to federal Kinney Waterfowl Production Area | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | --0-- | \$1,800,000 | --0-- | \$1,800,000 |

Figure 5: Significant Federal, State, and Local Investments, 2014

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| APPLICANT: | Berrien County Parks and Recreation Department | | | |
| PROJECT: | Rocky Gap Park Improvement | | | |
| LOCATION: | Benton Township, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Improvements to accommodate restrooms, shelter and public use | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | --0-- | \$300,000 | \$200,000 | \$500,000 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| APPLICANT: | Village of Three Oaks | | | |
| PROJECT: | Carver Park Access and Recreation Improvements | | | |
| LOCATION: | Village of Three Oaks, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Addition of paved pathways, pavilion, seating & picnic facilities, signage, restrooms & lighting | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | --0-- | \$273,700 | \$117,500 | \$391,200 |
| APPLICANT: | Cass County Parks and Recreation | | | |
| PROJECT: | Dodd Park Development Project | | | |
| LOCATION: | Pokagon Township, Cass County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Addition of cabins, parking, restrooms, and accessible trail | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$111,800 | \$39,300 | \$151,100 |
| APPLICANT: | City of South Haven | | | |
| PROJECT: | South Haven bank Stabilization and Fishing Platform | | | |
| LOCATION: | South Haven City, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Expand Black River Park into adjacent parking lot, stabilize river bank and install accessible fishing platform | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Applicant | Total |
| | -0- | \$78,100 | \$78,100 | \$156,000 |
| APPLICANT: | City of South Haven | | | |
| PROJECT: | North Beach Park Improvements | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| LOCATION: | South Haven City, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Improve access and enhance beach recreational opportunities | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Applicant | Total |
| | --0-- | \$300,000 | \$379,900 | \$679,900 |
| APPLICANT: | Lemon Creek Winery | | | |
| PROJECT: | Adding Value to Lemon Creek Grapes | | | |
| LOCATION: | Berrien Springs, Berrien County | | | |
| SOURCE: | USDA Rural Development, Value Added Producer Grant | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Increase production, initiate marketing & sales campaign, and expand customer base | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Applicant | Total |
| | \$200,000 | --0-- | \$200,000 | \$400,000 |
| APPLICANT: | Michigan Department of Natural Resources | | | |
| PROJECT: | Dowagiac Access and Corridor Acquisition | | | |
| LOCATION: | Volinia Township, Cass County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Purchase of 120 acres of undeveloped land with 5,500 feet frontage on Dowagiac Creek (Westrate farm) | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$721,200 | --0-- | \$721,000 |
| APPLICANT: | South Haven Area Recreation Authority | | | |
| PROJECT: | Pilgrim Haven Phase I Development Project | | | |
| LOCATION: | South Haven Township, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| PURPOSE: | Create barrier free public access to Lake Michigan | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | -0- | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$100,00 |
| APPLICANT: | City of Hartford | | | |
| PROJECT: | Farmer's Market Expansion Project | | | |
| LOCATION: | Hartford City, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | USDA Rural Development | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Construction of restroom facilities | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal -- RBEG | Federal -- CFGP | Applicant | Total |
| | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$80,000 | \$120,000 |
| APPLICANT: | Michigan Department of Natural Resources | | | |
| PROJECT: | Paw Paw to Hartford Multi-use Trail Partnership | | | |
| LOCATION: | Paw Paw Township, Lawrence Township, Hartford Township, Van Buren County | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Acquire 11 miles of former railroad corridor to develop trail to connect to Van Buren State Park Trail | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | --0-- | \$750,000 | --0-- | \$750,000 |

Figure 6: Significant Federal, State, and Local Investments, 2015

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| APPLICANT: | City of South Haven | | | |
| PROJECT: | North Beach Improvement | | | |
| LOCATION: | North Beach Park, 45 Lakeshore Dr., South Haven | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Improve access to North Beach while protecting its natural resources | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | --0-- | \$300,000 | \$536,700 | \$836,000 |
| APPLICANT: | Cassopolis Family Clinic | | | |
| PROJECT: | Service Area Competition | | | |
| LOCATION: | Cassopolis Family Clinic - Cassopolis | | | |
| SOURCE: | Health Resources and Services Administration | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Provision of health care service to Cass and Berrien Counties | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |
| | \$1,659,677 | --0-- | --0-- | \$1,659,677 |
| APPLICANT: | Village of Mattawan | | | |
| PROJECT: | McGillen's Crossing Park | | | |
| LOCATION: | McGillen's Crossing, Lot 21 (East Half), Lot 22, Lot 23 | | | |
| SOURCE: | Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Provide recreational facilities while protecting and enhancing accessibility to the local creek and its environment. | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Other | Total |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | -0- | \$318,200 | \$106,100 | \$424,300 |
| APPLICANT: | Village of Cassopolis | | | |
| PROJECT: | Wasetwater Collection System Improvement | | | |
| LOCATION: | Village of Cassopolis | | | |
| SOURCE: | USDA-Rural Development-RUS | | | |
| PURPOSE: | Replacement of seven deteriorated lift stations and improvements to four lift stations that are in good condition. The project will help eliminate total lift station failures in the future. | | | |
| FUNDING: | Federal | State | Applicant | Total |
| | \$1,480,000 | --0-- | --0-- | \$1,480,000 |

- c. Number of Jobs Retained in the Region
 - i. Number of Jobs Retained as a Result of Federal Investments

EDD Response:
Brownfield redevelopment: 300 new, 12 retained
Hilton Garden Inn: 50 created
Lemon Creek Winery: 4 created, 27 retained
TOTAL: 354 new, 39 retained
 - ii. Number of Jobs Retained as a Result of Select State Investments

EDD Response:
Postle Aluminum 40 created, 85 retained
Kay Manufacturing 80 created
Whirlpool 180 created
Total: 300 New, 85 Retained
- d. Amount of Private Sector Investment in the Region after Implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

EDD Response:
See Figure 6

Figure 7: Private Sector Investments in Michigan, 2013-2015

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| ENTITY: | C&S Machine Products, Inc. |
| MUNICIPALITY: | City of Buchanan |
| INVESTED: | \$3,565,162 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 45 retained |
| ENTITY: | Coloma Frozen Foods |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Hagar Township |
| INVESTED: | \$1,033,902 (personal property), \$7,830,853 (real property) |
| JOBS: | 56 full-time & 50 seasonal retained |
| ENTITY: | Delta Machining, Inc. |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Howard Township |
| INVESTED: | \$760,900 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 72 retained, 1 created |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| ENTITY: | Hoffmann Die Cast Corporation |
| MUNICIPALITY: | City of St. Joseph |
| INVESTED: | \$426,000 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 93 retained, 12 created |
| ENTITY: | Innovation Machining Corporation |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Niles Charter Township |
| INVESTED: | \$56,000 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 5 retained |
| ENTITY: | Moraine Vineyards, LLC |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Baroda Township |
| INVESTED: | \$246,945 (personal property), \$900,000 (real property) |
| JOBS: | 10 retained, 2 created |
| ENTITY: | Quality Mold & Engineering |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Village of Baroda |
| INVESTED: | \$813,444 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 25 full-time and 2 part-time retained |
| ENTITY: | R&M Manufacturing |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Niles Charter Township |
| INVESTED: | \$124,211 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 14 retained |
| ENTITY: | Spartan Tool, LLC |
| MUNICIPALITY: | City of Niles |
| INVESTED: | \$1,243,963 (personal property), \$997,212 (real property) |
| JOBS: | 55 created |
| ENTITY: | Vickers Engineering |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Weesaw Township |
| INVESTED: | \$9,000,000 (personal property) |
| JOBS: | 162 retained |
| ENTITY: | Walmart |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Village of Paw Paw |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| INVESTED: | \$7,000,000 |
| JOBS: | 250 Created |
| ENTITY: | Meijer |
| MUNICIPALITY: | City and Township of South Haven |
| INVESTED: | \$20,000,000 |
| JOBS: | 300 Created |
| ENTITY: | Hilton Garden Inn |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Benton Harbor, MI |
| INVESTED: | \$9,750,000 |
| JOBS: | 50 created |
| ENTITY: | Kay Manufacturing |
| MUNICIPALITY: | St. Joseph, MI |
| INVESTED: | \$9,300,000 (MI Business Development Grant recipient) |
| JOBS: | 80 created |
| ENTITY: | Whirlpool |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Benton Harbor, MI |
| INVESTED: | \$18,900,000 (Recipient of incentives and abatements from MEDC) |
| JOBS: | 180 created |
| ENTITY: | Cass Family Medical |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Cassopolis |
| INVESTED: | \$6,500,000 |
| JOBS: | 31 created, 35 retained |
| ENTITY: | Postle Aluminum |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Cassopolis |
| INVESTED: | \$13,000,000 (Recipient of CDBG and OJT grants) |
| JOBS: | 40 created, 85 retained |
| ENTITY: | Tri Pac |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Penn Township |
| INVESTED: | \$2,000,000 |
| JOBS: | 39 created, 31 retained |

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ENTITY: | Irish Tower |
| MUNICIPALITY: | Bangor, MI |
| INVESTED: | \$870,000 |
| JOBS: | 19 created |
| ENTITY: | Bent Tree Market |
| MUNICIPALITY: | City of Dowagiac |
| INVESTED: | \$2,000,000 (Mno-Bmadsen investment) |
| JOBS: | 8 Created |

- e. Changes in the Economic Environment of the Region (Changes to Taxes & Fees, New Incentive Programs, etc.)

EDD Response:

On August 5, 2014 Michigan voters approved the passage of Proposal 1. This proposal gave final approval to phase out the State’s Personal Property Tax (PPT) on commercial and industrial property and levied an Essential Services Assessment (ESA) millage tax on manufacturing property exempted from the PPT.

No significant local changes to economic environment.

3. Description of community involvement in the CEDS process:

EDD Response:

Between the publication of the 2013 CEDS and this 2015 Annual Report, community stakeholders have participated in a range of economic development initiatives that are supported by the CEDS process, including:

Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI)

The RPI is a voluntary competitive grant process designed to encourage local private, public and non-profit partners to create vibrant regional economies. It was signed into law as part of the Michigan’s FY 2014 budget (59 PA 2013).

In 2015 the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and regional partners were successful in the pursuit of a \$228,750 RPI grant to fund the building of collaborative relationships across a range of institutions, as well as a “Prosperity Plan” Volume 2; a 7-county regional collaboration plan for growth. Partners in this process (the Prosperity Committee) have held 23

meetings since the beginning of the program in 2014. The Committee approved the final Volume 2 document on November 5, 2014 (see Appendix A).

In 2016, the Prosperity Committee expects to pursue a third round of funding under this program to develop a list of priority projects that can be worked on collaboratively across the seven-county “prosperity region”, which encompasses two adjacent Economic Development Districts. Priority projects that have been suggested by this committee for future consideration include: improving the region’s access to broadband and supporting the development of a high-speed rail corridor between Chicago and Detroit. Additionally, it is expected that these priority projects will have a strong connection to the CEDS of both of the prosperity region’s EDDs, as some of the projects may coincide. This will create a mutually reinforcing relationship between the two processes and create a greater support network for economic development projects in the future.

Newly published Southwest Michigan Prosperity Plan Volumes one and two contain the following goals:

- **Community Development:** Improve the livability of our region’s to attract and retain talented workers.
- **Education:** Promote talent development and retention.
- **Infrastructure:** Encourage expansion and improvement of regional infrastructure.
- **RPI Strategies:** Advance regional communication and collaboration

Each of these Prosperity Plan goals relate strongly to the goals that are present in the 2013 CEDS. As such, the RPI should be viewed as a process that can support and empower activities in the CEDS by bringing the support of State leaders and regionally-focused institutions of neighboring our region to the table.

Employer Internship Training Program (EITP)

After the 2013 CEDS was published, higher education and workforce development leaders on the CEDS committee worked together to develop a multi-institution collaborative training program to help local agribusiness and manufacturing employers develop the capacity for hosting internships. The content of this regional program tied into Prima Civitas’ state-wide *Intern in Michigan* program that provides employers with guidebook of

helpful information on topics like the hiring process, developing a program of work, legalities of working with interns, and a trove of useful templates frequently used when managing interns. SWMPC developed a regional directory of internship coordinators for this meeting. This directory (See Appendix B) is intended to help employers in their future attempts to navigate southwest Michigan's educational institutions as they search for talented interns.

The first EITP event was designed as a two-day series occurring on February 12th and March 19th, 2014 in Benton Harbor (Berrien County) and was facilitated by Lynn Kelly Albertson, Executive Director of Professional and Career Development at Western Michigan University. The event was attended by 21 different employers overall, including: seven in agribusiness, three in manufacturing, and ten within other sectors. Following the success of this meeting, Southwestern Michigan College, a community college with campuses in Decatur (Cass County) and Niles (Berrien County) joined the EITP team.

The second EITP event was a one-day meeting that occurred on September 17th, 2014. This event took place in South Haven (Van Buren County) and was facilitated by Amanda Dumond, Director of Talent Initiatives at Prima Civitas. The event was attended by 11 employers, including: five manufacturers, one agribusiness employer, and four from other sectors.

Following these meetings, SWMPC followed up on multiple requests for more information on connecting employers with local resources that could match them with talent.

Southwest Michigan Broadband Initiative

The purpose of the region's Broadband Initiative is to improve the access, adoption, and potential usages of high-speed internet across southwest Michigan. SWMPC has partnered with Connect Michigan, a state-wide non-profit broadband advocacy organization on their Connected Communities program to assess the adequacy of the region's broadband environment.

Based on Connect Michigan's assessment, Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties are nearing the status as "Certified Connected Communities"; however, some are closer than others and progress on Connect Michigan's

recommendations (provided in these assessments) will bring each county closer to achieving this goal.

Following a regional broadband stakeholder meeting on May 22, 2014, an ad-hoc broadband advisory task force (BATF) of experts in the region was formed to prioritize and develop action items for a list of 32 recommendations provided in the Connect Michigan assessments. The BATF was scheduled to meet quarterly throughout 2015 and has completed the initial stages of refining the region’s broadband strategy.

Figure 8: Broadband Advisory Task Force Roster

| Name | Affiliation |
|-------------------|--|
| Charles Olszewski | Lake Michigan College |
| Dave Allen | Midwest Energy |
| Greg Gomolka | Comcast |
| Katie Montoya | Berrien County Community Development |
| Phil Knuth | CommuniCeer, llc. |
| Sam Accorso | Van Buren Intermediate School District |
| Matt Kodis | Kinexus |
| Cynthia LaGrow | Cass County Economic Development |
| Kim Oldham | Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency |
| Marilyn Passmore | Charter Communications |
| Bruce Mackellar | MSU Extension |

The first BATF meeting, held on June 25, 2014 determined the top five priorities in each of the three categories of access, adoption, and use. During the next quarterly meeting on September 17, 2014, the BATF identified action steps for progressing on a number of these priorities. Figure 8 describes the BATF’s top priorities and action steps that they were able to identify at these meetings.

Figure 9: Broadband Advisory Task Force Roster

| Access Priorities |
|--|
| 1. Identify, Map, and Validate Broadband Demand; determine what is truly needed |
| 2. Perform an Analysis of Local Policies and Ordinances |
| 3. Develop Public-Private Partnerships to Deploy Broadband Service in order to help communities to plan for creative solutions |
| 4. Complete a Vertical Assets Inventory |
| 5. Perform a Broadband Build-out Analysis in Unserved Areas |
| Adoption Priorities |
| 1. Distribute Digital Literacy Content and include internet safety content |
| 2. Inventory of all locally/regionally offered programs and services provided by public |

| |
|--|
| and private groups |
| 3. Facilitate Technology Summit and incorporate Community Based Technology Awareness Program as a feature; partner with Area Agency on Aging, other community groups |
| 4. Initiate a Community Computer Refurbishment or Recycling Program |
| 5. Develop a Technology Mentorship Program |
| Use Priorities |
| 1. Develop a Farmers' Network |
| 2. Develop a comprehensive broadband training program for small and medium sized businesses that includes web and social media classes |
| 3. Develop comprehensive municipal broadband strategy |
| 4. Online Identification of Broadband Services at Key Economic Sites |
| 5. Improve Education through Digital Learning |

Community Placemaking

SWMPC has been an active host in Michigan State Housing Development Authority’s (MSHDA) MiPlace Partnership program to educate local officials and community stakeholders on the economic value of Placemaking. The first round of these training sessions targeted local officials in the Cities of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph. In total, 42 leaders attended this two-day event which took place on February 13th and March 6th. The first half of this event consisted of a classroom-style lecture on the concept developing communities into places that people want to “live, work, and play” in, while the second half was a workshop setting that engaged attendees on concepts for future projects. These concepts ranged from the construction of non-motorized trails to the development of a year-round market for local foods in downtown Benton Harbor. Local leaders are still considering the feasibility of some of the concepts generated at this workshop.

SWMPC is currently coordinating with the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce in southern Berrien County on hosting a custom-made placemaking presentation similar to the event hosted in Benton Harbor/St. Joseph last spring. This presentation addressed emerging issues that affect economic development in the area, such as the community’s shrinking and aging population and its large share of non-resident workers.

Harbor Country is a collection of small towns near the Michigan-Indiana border; its population is relatively older than the rest of the region with a high concentration of retirees and second home owners. There is a suspected dearth of affordable housing for service sector workers in the area and

potential challenges to developing higher density housing that caters to this segment of the workforce. MSHDA and Michigan State University (MSU) provided relevant content for this session that can help the leaders of Harbor Country make informed decisions as they confront these important community issues.

Regional Food Systems

Southwest Michigan's location advantages and existing agricultural infrastructure make it an ideal area for growing a vibrant regional food economy. SWMPC is interested in assisting the region's small and mid-sized agribusiness enterprises to capitalize on these conditions and the growing movement locally-sourced foods. Since the publication of the CEDS, planners at SWMPC have been active participants in research and educational opportunities offered by MSU's Center for Regional Food Systems, learning from best practices and innovations across the State. SWMPC supports MSU's recently published "Michigan Good Food Charter", which states the following objectives to achieve by 2020:

1. Michigan institutions will source 20 percent of their food products from Michigan growers, producers and processors.
2. Michigan farmers will profitably supply 20 percent of all Michigan institutional, retailer and consumer food purchases and be able to pay fair wages to their workers.
3. Michigan will generate new agri-food businesses at a rate that enables 20 percent of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan.
4. Eighty percent of Michigan residents (twice the current level) will have easy access to affordable, fresh, healthy food, 20 percent of which is from Michigan sources.
5. Michigan Nutrition Standards will be met by 100 percent of school meals and 75 percent of schools selling food outside school meal programs.
6. Michigan schools will incorporate food and agriculture into the pre-K through 12th grade curriculum for all Michigan students and youth will have access to food and agriculture entrepreneurial opportunities.

SWMPC is currently engaging with regional food system stakeholders to determine what is required to reach the objectives in this Charter in addition to other local plans related to growing southwest Michigan's food economy.

The SWMPC staff has developed a draft proposal for market and supply chain analyses which could bridge some of the information gaps in this equation. These studies are expected to provide small and mid-sized

agribusinesses with competitive intelligence that will highlight a range of current opportunities and identify shared challenges across the sector. SWMPC has identified a number of potential funding sources for which these studies could be completed, including: Michigan's regional foods planning grant (November 2014), technical assistance grants from the U.S. EDA, and foundation assistance among others.

Recent Economic Development Activities

Project List Updates

No changes to the CEDS project list as of October 2014.

Economic Development Initiatives Updates

Sprout Initiative: Cultivating a thriving agricultural region comprised of prosperous agribusiness enterprises and well-paying jobs is a high priority in the 2013 CEDS. In 2014 and beyond, SWMPC will work with local organizations and business owners to identify the opportunities and impediments to growth in the agribusiness sector. The Sprout Initiative will serve as the umbrella initiative for all food system economic development work in the region and each project under this initiative will be designed to complement other programs occurring regionally and nationally.



Among the various goals of the Sprout Initiative, the first step is to conduct a 50-mile market analysis. Within southwest Michigan's 50-mile radius from its geographic center resides a population of 1,355,435 and includes the cities of Kalamazoo, Portage, Holland, South Bend, Goshen, and Michigan City. With the centrality of this study area among these urban centers, it is expected that there will be an abundance of opportunities for the promotion of locally-produced foods. In coordination with this market study, SWMPC also expects to conduct a supply chain analysis of the various producers, processors, distributors, retailers, and

institutional consumers in order to determine where the challenges and weaknesses lie in the chain. Once both of these analyses are complete, data will be shared with the region's food system stakeholders in a succinct and accessible format.

Michigan Work Ready Communities:

In 2014 the State of Michigan announced the Michigan Work Ready Communities (MIWRC) initiative to increase the number of high school students achieving the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as well as the number of employers recognizing this certificate as a valuable credential for future employees. This certificate is earned by a student taking a series of three WorkKeys assessments which determine proficiency in applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information; skills that are essential for most jobs in this age.

Southwest Michigan's CEDS has been updated to acknowledge its support of the MIWRC initiative and the commitment of area employers to hire local talent possessing the NCRC credential. SWMPC will support this emerging initiative through information sharing and program advocacy among municipal leaders.

CEDS Program Updates

CEDS Committee Changes

Between 2013 and 2014, there have been two changes to the composition of the CEDS committee. Due to staff turnover, Nicole Rodden-Bowen of the City of Benton Harbor's Community Development Department was replaced by Marja Winters. Similarly, Jill Bland replaced Jennifer Owens as the representative of Southwest Michigan First.

Strategic Planning Updates

The 2013 CEDS action strategy has been reviewed and there are no updates on the strategic elements of the CEDS to make at this time.

List of CEDS Editor’s Revisions

- Added information on public transportation services in Cass and Van Buren Counties (Pg. 40)
- Updates to the Regional Economic Development Dashboard (Pg. 83)

Tracking the Progress of Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Southwest Michigan’s economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, and Kinexus (the region’s workforce development entity), all play a role in supporting business start-ups and established enterprises through all stages of growth. SWMPC cooperates with all of these organizations when data is requested, whether it is for traffic counts, environmental data, or mapping assistance. SWMPC’s contact with business leaders is typically consists of providing educational content (as with the Employer Internship Training Program), advisory assistance on grant proposals or land use questions, or through the facilitation of the Michigan’s Great Southwest Sustainable Business Forum (MGSSBF).

Establishment Churn is the preferred method for determining the progress toward this goal; however, the churn data published in the original 2013 CEDS is still the most current data provided in the *StatsAmerica: Innovation Index* tool. Based on the most current Business Pattern data for counties in EDD (published in June 2014) each of the three counties saw little change in their total number of establishments.

Figure 10: Three County Change in Total Establishments, 2011-2013

| County | # of Establishments 2011 | # of Establishments 2013 | % Change |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Berrien | 3,623 | 3,610 | -0.4% |
| Cass | 734 | 737 | +0.4% |
| Van Buren | 1,300 | 1,270 | -2.3% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Business Patterns 2011 & 2013

Goal 2: Employer Involvement in Education

In future updates of the CEDS, SWMPC will begin tracking the number of employers in the region that have declared their commitment to hiring students earning National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC) as one measure for the advancement of this goal.

At this time, only one employer (Autocam Corporation) is officially listed as supporting this credential, while the three-county goal is to have 204 employers in support of NCRCs. Kinexus, the region’s workforce development organization is currently organizing a leadership team made up of county officials, economic development leaders, education leaders, and businesses to begin addressing how this program can be expanded in the region.

Goal 3: Cluster-based Strategies

SWMPC is currently working with regional partners on a draft proposal that will highlight opportunities and challenges in southwest Michigan’s agribusiness sector. Specifically, this proposal will consist of market and supply chain analyses within the region’s agribusiness, food processing, & technology cluster. It is the expectation that this proposal, if approved, will increase establishments, profits, employment, and wages within the cluster. The figure below provides a current snapshot of the region’s agribusiness, food processing & technology cluster. SWMPC plans track growth in this industry as data from the Sprout Initiative is shared with public.

Figure 11: Southwest Michigan Ag, Food Processing & Tech industry cluster data, 2012

| Geography | Cluster Establishments | Cluster Employment | Cluster Wages |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Southwest Michigan | 261 | 4,460 | \$131,735,848 |
| Berrien County | 110 | 1,578 | \$40,936,214 |
| Cass County | 31 | 357 | \$15,497,599 |
| Van Buren County | 120 | 2,525 | \$75,302,035 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) and Purdue Center for Regional Development (cluster definitions).

Figure 12: Total Market Value of Farm Products Sold in Southwest Michigan, 2012

| Geography | Total Market Value of Products Sold |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Southwest Michigan | \$543,365,000 |
| Berrien County | \$161,542,000 |
| Cass County | \$187,159,000 |
| Van Buren County | \$194,664,000 |

Source: 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture

Goal 4: Modernizing Infrastructure

Goal #4 focuses primarily on modernizing infrastructure assets that relate to innovation such as broadband infrastructure, business incubators, and shared-use workspaces for prototyping, but can also include traditional infrastructure like roads and sewer systems.

Make Art, Share Space

In early 2014, SWMPC engaged with the MSU Regional Economic Innovation (REI) Center, Michigan's EDA University Center, to bring a team of students to southwest Michigan for their Urban Planning practicum course. Students were contracted to produce a report on the potential for a shared space for design projects in the City of Benton Harbor's Arts District. The report, titled *Make Art, Share Space* (see Appendix C) explored the viability of both makerspaces (a term typically used for centers that facilitate technology hacking projects) and art incubators. Such a facility would offer resources and materials for talented individuals to develop their skills in these mediums in a communal environment; the expectation being that this type of environment would help the flow of knowledge and ideas, while developing a more innovative and entrepreneurial community.

The *Make Art, Share Space* report is still under consideration by local leaders and organizations for its fit among the numerous other competing priorities within the economically-distressed City of Benton Harbor. Most challenging of all the details in this project is the issue of who would be responsible for the administration, supervision, and maintenance of such a facility.

Broadband Initiative

Since the publication of ConnectMichigan's *Connected Community* Reports in 2013, SWMPC has been engaging with stakeholders on how to best tackle the region's issues of broadband access, adoption, and use.

While much of the region's urbanized areas are serviced by some form of broadband, anecdotal reports abound of the lack of service in the region's rural areas. The best broadband infrastructure data that is currently available has been published on ConnectMichigan's website. This data indicates that between 97-99% of all residents in the region have access to broadband of some sort, citing census block-level data provided by the region's Internet Service Providers. The inconsistency between the service area maps and anecdotal

reports from credible experts indicates that further examination is necessary. SWMPC could potentially follow a model like the one implemented by ConnectSI in southern Illinois to and validate addresses claiming to be unserved. Those residents who believe they are unserved would be encouraged to provide their address through a web portal, potentially offered at a public library and ISPs could follow-up on if they are able to provide a connection to that location. Confirmed unserved locations would be documented on the website, providing new data for the next mapping update.

For those locations where it is determined to be not economically feasible to bring in a wired broadband connection, installing infrastructure for a fixed wireless connection may be a better option. In order to accomplish this, a vertical assets survey should be conducted in areas without service in order to identify existing structures that the infrastructure could be affixed.

Goal 5: Talent Attraction and Retention

It is one of southwest Michigan's goals to attract and retain young, talented workers (i.e. degree holders and skilled labor) by creating and marketing the type of communities that these individuals are looking for. According to the American Planning Association's May 2014 *Investing in Place* survey, by a 2-1 margin respondents believe that in the age of the new economy, investing in communities over recruiting companies is the key to growth. This means that building places that offer amenities like multi-modal transportation options, affordability in housing, vibrant downtowns, and a variety of recreational opportunities is essential for attracting workers in the new economy.

Workers in the Millennial generation (those born in the early 1980s through early 2000s) are far more likely to relocate for job opportunity than other generations and are less likely to be encumbered by the typical conditions that tie them to one location. Current data shows that Millennials are waiting to have children until later in life and fewer are burdened by a mortgage, typically leaving them more mobile than other generations of workers. Data gathered on young degree holders in the region from the American Community Survey provides one measure for tracking this goal; however, it should be noted that this does not encompass entirety of "talented" workers, as it leaves out skilled laborers and those with other certifications.

Figure 13: Degree Holders (Bachelor’s or higher) Ages 25-34 in Southwest Michigan, 2009-2012

| Geography | Degree Holders 2009 | Degree Holders 2012 | Net Change |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Southwest Michigan | 6,478 (out of 30,926) | 6,565 (out of 30,956) | +87 |
| Berrien County | 4,381 (25.7%) | 4,433 (25.4%) | +52 |
| Cass County | 690 (12.9%) | 703 (13.8%) | +13 |
| Van Buren County | 1407 (16.5%) | 1,429 (17%) | +22 |

Source: US Census Bureau – American Community Surveys 2009 & 2012, 5-year estimates

SWMPC’s activities in pursuit of this goal consist of efforts to provide more early-professional opportunities through the Employer Internship Training Program and active participation in the Michigan State Housing Development Authority’s (MSHDA) “MiPlace Partnership” program. The MiPlace program is a Placemaking training curriculum targeted to local elected and appointed officials and provides education on current trends and economic data that supports investment in attributes that contribute to an increased quality of life. This includes looking at existing assets, nodes, and corridors within a community and reimagining their use as something higher and better. For example, potentially revitalizing a row of single-use storefronts and allowing for mixed uses with residential above.

Appendices

Appendix A: Region 8 Prosperity Plan

http://www.swmpc.org/downloads/rpi_plan_final.pdf

Appendix B: Internship Coordinator Contact Guide

Southwest Michigan’s

Internship Coordinator Contact Guide

For southwest Michigan’s Employer Internship Training Program

Southwest Michigan’s Workforce Investment Board

| | |
|--|--|
| Kinexus (southwest’s Michigan Works! administrator) | |
| Alex Grumbine | (269) 927-1064 ext. 1183 |
| <i>Director of Business and Industry</i> | grumbinea@kinexus.org |

Participating Colleges and Universities of Southwest Michigan

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Lake Michigan College (LMC) | |
| Lanre Ajayi | (269) 927-8704 |
| <i>Manager of Work-Based Learning</i> | lajayi@lakemichigancollege.edu |
| Programs and Majors offered at LMC | http://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/pgm |

| | |
|---|---|
| Michigan State University - Institute of Agricultural Technology (MSU) | |
| Stacey Rocklin | (269) 927-8772 |
| <i>Regional Program Coordinator</i> | rocklin@msu.edu |
| Programs offered at MSU Institute of Ag Tech: | |
| Viticulture Certificate | http://www.canr.msu.edu/majors/viticulture_lake_michigan_college |
| Applied Plant Science Certificate | http://www.canr.msu.edu/majors/applied_plant_science_lake_michigan_college |

| | |
|--|---|
| Southwestern Michigan College (SMC) | |
| Brent Brewer | (269) 687-5642 |
| <i>Community Outreach Coordinator</i> | bbrewer01@swmich.edu |
| List of programs offered at SMC: | http://www.swmich.edu/academics/areas-of-study |

| | |
|--|---|
| Western Michigan University-Southwest (WMU) | |
| Robin Ross | (269) 934-1516 |
| <i>Student Service Coordinator</i> | robin.a.ross@wmich.edu |
| List of programs offered at WMU-Southwest: | http://wmich.edu/southwest/academics/ |

Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) of Southwest Michigan

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Berrien County RESA | |
| Mona Hunter | 269-471-7725 x 1320 |
| <i>CTE Assistant</i> | mona.hunter@berrienresa.org |
| Browse RESA's programs by district: | http://www.berriencte.org/pathways/ |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lewis Cass ISD | |
| Mikki Spagnoli | (269) 445-6224 |
| <i>Transition Coordinator/CTE Director</i> | mspagnoli@lewiscassisd.org |
| List of CTE programs offered at Cass ISD: | http://lewiscassisd.org/departments/career_technical_education/career_pathways/ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) | |
| Dave Anderson | (269) 539-5303 |
| <i>Placement Coordinator</i> | danderson@vbisd.org |
| List of CTE programs offered at VBISD: | http://www.vbisd.org/domain/87 |

Appendix C: Make Art, Share Space Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The MakeArt ShareSpace practicum team conducted a study with the intent of exploring art incubators and makerspaces. The practicum team researched these two types of facilities to better understand their purpose, functions and viability as an economic development tool for Benton Harbor, Michigan while working in conjunction with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC). The recommendations from this report intend to stimulate both community involvement and the city's economy.

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to answer the following three questions. Is Benton Harbor in need of alternative economic development options? What elements and characteristics compose these types of creative spaces? How might an art incubator, makerspace, or hybrid make-art space be incorporated into Benton Harbor's Arts District?

The report consists of an extensive profile covering historical facts, the Arts District, and socioeconomic data of the city; research of established art incubators and makerspaces throughout the country to gather characteristics and business practices; a literature review, and an analysis of available sites within the city.

Findings

Benton Harbor is worse off economically than the surrounding Tri-County Region (Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties) and the State of Michigan. In comparison to the Tri-County Region and the State of Michigan, Benton Harbor has a less valuable housing stock, a population with low educational attainment, and a population with little access to amenities including private vehicles, internet, etc. The city is located on Lake Michigan, neighbors the City of St. Joseph, and has an established Arts District and arts culture despite its economic hardships.

After assessing Benton Harbor, the practicum team studied art incubators and makerspaces. Art incubators have been established with a focus on the development of artists. They provide tools individual artists may not be able to afford, space for creation, and guidance for independent establishment once artists leave the incubator. Makerspaces are facilities where community involvement and creative

expression are nurtured and honed. Members of these facilities use technology, tools, and shared supplies while interacting and collaborating.

Recommendations

With consideration given to Benton Harbor itself, including its Arts District and socioeconomic realities, along with understanding the benefits of both art incubators and makerspaces, the Team concluded that the development of a space incorporating elements of both types of facilities would be the most useful allocation of resources. This space, henceforth referred to as the MakeArt ShareSpace (MASS), will place great emphasis on community involvement, educational opportunities, and the development of new arts-related businesses.

The Team's research led to recommendations on proposed building space, financial costs, community involvement, and the formalization of the arts district.

Recommendations of the report include formalizing the Arts District by defining it in Benton Harbors Master Plan. Determine the costs of MASS including fixed and variable, and acquire funding for those costs through the form of grants. Renovate and utilize the existing structure located at 200 Paw Paw in Benton Harbor.

The team also recommends forming partnerships with a local arts association, college, and/or community anchor.