

# St. Joseph seeks ways to prepare for future shocks

By JOHN MATUSZAK - HP Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, July 24, 2014 6:00 am

ST. JOSEPH - The city of St. Joseph is launching "Resilient St. Joseph," an effort to improve the community's ability to thrive in the face of future shocks to its natural and economic environment.

Residents are invited to join local leaders and elected officials 5:30-9 p.m. Thursday, July 31, at St. Joseph High School's Student Center to officially kick off the public participation portion of this community process.

Through this project, the city will update its master plan and lay the groundwork for transportation improvements, economic development programs, and neighborhood improvement efforts.

Speakers will include Michele Lonergan from Local First of Grand Rapids; Michigan's state climatologist, Jeff Andresen; Dr. Lorraine Cameron from the Michigan Department of Community Health; Marcy Colclough from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission; and community planners from Land Information Access Association, a nonprofit organization focused on increasing community and economic resilience.

This is part of a larger effort called Resilient Michigan. Other participating communities include Monroe, Ludington, East Jordan and Grand Haven.

Through a master planning process, St. Joseph will address issues such as preserving natural resources, building the local economy and managing the impact of changes in climate.

By planning with resilience in mind, communities can reduce their vulnerabilities to wild swings in the economy, extreme weather events and other forces that can cause long-term economic and human hardships.

Valued at over \$100,000, the Resilient St. Joseph project is being paid for by a grant obtained by LIAA from the Kresge Foundation. The City of St. Joseph is also contributing more than \$40,000 to help pay for professional planning support, research, technical assistance, and policy development.

Public involvement is a major component of the planning process and a key to its success, according



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Shoppers browse among the stores in downtown St. Joseph on Wednesday. City leaders want to make sure land planning reflects climate change.

to organizers. All citizens are encouraged to get involved and help create a vision for the future of their community.

Public involvement workshops are planned for Aug. 13, Sept. 24 and Oct. 22. Times and locations for the scheduled public gatherings - as well as more information about the project, including documents on climate and population - are posted on the project website, [www.resilientmichigan.org/st\\_joe](http://www.resilientmichigan.org/st_joe).

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