

Agenda

West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee Meeting

**1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
September 30, 2015**

MDOT

**1420 Front Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504**

1. Welcome
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of June 22 Minutes - Attachment
4. RPI What Comes Next – Attachments: Memo from Administrative Committee & September 2 Administrative Committee Minutes
5. Discussion of WMRPC letter of June 24 – Attachment
6. Discussion of Future Meetings
7. Adjourn

DRAFT
Minutes

West Michigan Prosperity Alliance
Executive Committee
June 22, 2015
Noon
Harbor View Marina
Ludington, MI

1. CALL TO ORDER:

John Weiss called the meeting to order at Noon

Present: John Weiss, GVMC
 Lt. Governor Brian Calley
 Lisa Calley
 Roger Safford, MDOT
 Rich Chapla, The Right Place
 Valerie Byrnes – Barry County Economic Development Alliance
 Kathy Maclean – Ludington / Scottville Chamber of Commerce
 Bill Pink – Grand Rapids Community College
 Bill Raymond - Ottawa County Michigan Works
 Jim Fisher – Padnos, Inc.
 Lisa Stich – West Shore Community College
 Kathleen Sullivan – Adult Learning Partners of West Michigan
 Doug Wood - Orchard view Public Schools
 Dave Bee – West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
 Dan Peterson - Eight Cap
 Erin Kuhn – WMSRDC
 Steve Bulthuis – MACC
 Ed Garner – Muskegon Area First
 Paul Griffith – Michigan Works West Central
 Dan Rinsema-Sybenga – Muskegon Community College

2. Minutes – MOTION – To Approve the Minutes. MOVE – Fisher. SUPPORT – Byrnes. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Lunch

4. Bill Pink – Grand Rapids Community College

John Weiss introduced Bill Pink the new representative from GRCC.

MOTION – To Accept Bill Pink as a Steering Committee Member. MOVE – Rinsema-Sybenga. SUPPORT – Griffith. MOTION CARRIED.

5. Recognition of Sponsors

John Weiss thanked Kathy Maclean for all her help organizing the event; as well as the support of the Harbor View Marina, Mason County Growth Alliance, West Shore Community College, Ludington Beverage Company, House of Flavors Restaurant, Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Ludington / Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce.

6. Project Updates

- a. Erin Kuhn – Muskegon Port
 - i. Update
 - ii. Cobb Plant Closing 2016
 - iii. Delisting as area of concern
 - iv. EPA grant & RPI
 - v. Forums (4)
 - vi. Regional Importance
 - vii. Agriculture & Manufacturing

- b. Paul Griffith - Broadband Internet Access
 - i. Update
 - ii. Connected Communities
 - iii. Rural Areas – no broadband
 - iv. Dan Manning / Tom Stevenson – Connect Michigan
 1. Assessment of infrastructure
 2. Adoption of program
 3. Use
 4. County Update

- c. Steve Bulthuis / Wendy Ogilvie – Lake Michigan Clean Water
 - i. Quality and watershed groups
 - ii. MACC / GVMC / WMSRDC
 - iii. Project Overview
 - iv. Sustainable funding resources
 - v. Kick-off meeting 6/23/15 Eberhard Center in Grand Rapids
 - vi. \$89,000 RPI grant
 - vii. State's water strategy
 - viii. One unified approach

7. Lt. Governor Brian Calley & Julie Calley

- a. Adopted Budget
- b. MEDC
- c. Local Port
- d. Pilot Programs in Detroit, Flint, Saginaw, Pontiac
- e. Transportation
- f. Structurally unemployed
- g. Access to resources not close
- h. More people held jobs than normal population
- i. Health & Human Services combined
- j. Helping people change
- k. Boundaries, etc. / collaboration
- l. Dollars are not the purpose
- m. Regionalism is good as long as it does not result in changes, which is a challenge
– SHOULD BE – Regionalism is fine as long as it best serves the people

8. Other

9. Adjourn – 1:45 p.m.

Memorandum

To: West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee

From: West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Administrative Committee

Date: September 3, 2015

Subject: 2016 Regional Prosperity Initiative

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) Administrative Committee met on September 2, 2015 to begin the process of identifying actions to undertake in 2016. It is anticipated that the State of Michigan will fund the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) in 2016 at the same level as the two previous cycles; that applications will be due on November 1, 2015; and that grant recipients will be announced around January 1, 2016.

The WMPA Administrative Committee is requesting that each of the WMPA Steering Committee members review the definition of prosperity, and the goals and actions defined during the 2014 cycle of the RPI. The following pages include three areas: (1) Prosperity in West Michigan, (2) Organization Issues, Goals, and Actions, and (3) Regional Issues, Goals, and Actions. Please refamiliarize yourself with these three areas and consider if they represent your thoughts on prosperity in West Michigan.

1. Prosperity in West Michigan

Defining “prosperity” in West Michigan is the equivalent of creating a “vision statement” in a more traditional planning process. While West Michigan tends to fare better than the State of Michigan as-a-whole, there is always room for improvement and the fact that West Michigan tends to perform better than Michigan does not account for why several parts of West Michigan continue to struggle with higher unemployment and poverty rates. The following statement serves as a vision for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance and the definition of prosperity in West Michigan.

West Michigan’s residents enjoy a quality of life that includes measurable features, but also includes assets that cannot be measured with numbers and lists. The population continues to grow due to the Region’s quality of life, thriving economy, and attractiveness to a diverse and well-educated population. Unemployment rates across the Region are lower than Michigan’s and median incomes are higher. Residents have appropriate degrees and training to match the needs of employers, as well as opportunities for lifelong learning and advancement. West Michigan has a diverse population that includes all ages and cultures.

Communities and their public facilities are well-maintained and receive a sustainable level of local, state, federal, and private support. Communities receive adequate funding to maintain facilities and programs that promote a quality of life that residents and businesses desire. In West Michigan, collaboration and cooperation between governmental units and others is the accepted way of providing the highest level of services in a sustainable manner.

The success of business and industry is essential to West Michigan’s prosperity. Not only

does West Michigan provide a competitive environment for businesses to financially succeed, but the quality of life is so high that business leaders want to live and locate their businesses in the Region. Additionally, the quality of workers and the entrepreneurial spirit of West Michigan make the Region a natural fit for successful businesses. West Michigan's diverse economy secures the Region's future – manufacturing a range of products from automotive parts to food products helps West Michigan avoid the peaks and valleys often associated with manufacturing. In addition to manufacturing, the area has a complete range of employment opportunities that include health care, finance and business, education, tourism, retail, agriculture, natural resources, public service, and many others.

West Michigan is a very affordable place to live. A combination of above average household incomes, a range of well-maintained housing types, short commute times to employment opportunities and services, and a range of transit options contribute to the Region's affordability.

Education's role in the Region's prosperity is essential. Public and private opportunities exist from pre-school through college with lifelong learning opportunities in-place to meet the needs of residents and employers. Public schools receive community and state support and prepare students for a range of opportunities from jobs to higher education. Adult education from certificates to a full range of college degrees is available throughout the Region for the Region's residents and to people from outside the Region interested in obtaining an affordable and high-quality education. Programs are in-place to make staying in West Michigan attractive.

Finally, individuals have regular opportunities to enjoy West Michigan's natural and cultural resources to lead a well-rounded life. Recreational opportunities include local parks, state parks, a network of trails, state and federal game areas, Lake Michigan, inland lakes, rivers, and other outdoor opportunities exist across the Region and provide year-round pleasure to residents and visitors. Entertainment districts, thriving downtowns, museums, cultural events and activities, festivals, and other attractions also provide recreational opportunities and keep people living and working in West Michigan.

2. Organization Issues, Goals, and Actions

This section of the Regional Prosperity Plan identifies issues, goals, and actions specific to the organizational structure of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA). Currently, the WMPA is a loosely organized alliance of organizations that does not have any staff, permanent budget, bylaws, policies, etc. If the WMPA chooses to move forward (past Fiscal Year 2015) it will need to answer several questions identified in the following issues. These issues will be a large part of the WMPA's efforts during the second year of the Regional Prosperity Initiative.

Issue #1 – There are many public, non-profit, and private organizations focusing on community and economic development, education and training, and other related efforts in the Region served by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance. The ability for these organizations to collaborate in a meaningful manner is challenging.

Goal #1 – The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance will continue to facilitate the collaboration of community and economic development, education and training, and other related agencies.

Actions

- Seek funding for FY-2015 to continue working with Michigan's Regional Prosperity Initiative.
- Determine if long-term and sustainable funding can be secured to permanently establish the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.
- Work to formalize the administrative needs of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (bylaws, policies, etc.)

Issue #2 – There is a lack of adequate resources to meet the wide range needs of the various sectors located within the 13 county region served by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

Goal #2 – Maintain an up-to-date list of potential projects needed to promote prosperity across West Michigan.

Actions

- Develop and update project criteria to promote the submission of appropriate projects.
- Seek funding to assist in the implementation of projects.
- Prioritize projects to make the best use of limited resources.

Issue #3 – Overlapping goals, lack of coordination between organizations, lack of uniform service delivery, and the compartmentalization of services (silos) limit the capacity of the WMPA to move forward.

Goal #3 – Develop and maintain an up-to-date set of goals that serve the entire Prosperity Region.

Actions

- Use this Regional Prosperity Plan as the basis for these goals (see next section).
- Regularly review and update the goals to continue moving forward.
- Encourage entities to incorporate these goals into their planning initiatives.

Issue #4 – Leadership will be required to continue to move forward. Public and private leadership as well as local and state leadership were mentioned.

Goal #4 – Utilize the WMPA as a tool to grow leadership opportunities and relationships between public and private organizations.

Actions

- Maintain the WMPA Steering Committee
- Continue to involve the larger Alliance to build public and private relationships and leadership opportunities.
- Seek opportunities to expand ways for the larger Alliance to be involved in the Initiative.

Issue #5 – Concern of developing another layer of regional government.

Goal #5 – Build and promote the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance in a manner that encourages collaboration without the need for additional administrative layers or organizations.

Actions

- Work with existing eligible organizations to determine capacity of these organizations to move the WMPA forward.
- Identify potential collaborative projects that the eligible organizations could accomplish to create additional capacity.
- Adopt a sunset clause to allow the Alliance to monitor its progress and long-term usefulness.

3. Regional Issues, Goals, and Actions

This section of the Regional Prosperity Plan identifies issues, goals, and actions that relate to the communities and organizations within the 13 county region served by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA). Since these communities and organizations are independent and not controlled by the WMPA, the goals and actions are more general and serve as recommendations instead of directives. The WMPA will use whatever resources are available in the future to help realize these goals and actions.

Issue #1 – While West Michigan has lower unemployment and poverty levels (when compared to Michigan as-a-whole) there are areas within the Region and segments of the population that do not benefit from these trends.

Goal #1 – The Region will strive to address economic distress for the entire population.

Actions

- Work with each of the 13 counties to ensure that an adequate level of economic and community development are in-place to promote the economy.
- Identify a minimum level of service that each county should provide, and identify potential sources of funding for maintaining these services.
- Identify existing gaps in economic and community development services.

Issue #2 – Higher education and job skills are lower in West Michigan than needed for the Region to achieve success.

Goal #2 – Promote lifelong learning in West Michigan using the public and private K-12 systems, Intermediate School Districts, colleges and universities, workforce development agencies, and private businesses.

Actions

- Public and private K-12 institutions, as well as Intermediate School Districts, will strive to provide the base for a solid lifelong learning experience chosen by each individual to match their strengths and desires.
- Colleges and Universities will strive to provide affordable educational opportunities needed by West Michigan’s population and businesses.
- West Michigan will strive to provide the jobs and the community infrastructure necessary to

keep people in the Region.

Issue #3 – Threats to West Michigan’s natural resources (water, air, forests, agriculture, etc.) are seen as an issue that can impact our prosperity for generations.

Goal #3 – The Region will preserve and enhance its natural resources.

Actions

- West Michigan will protect its water and other natural resources by supporting existing organizations and identifying any gaps that exist related to enhancement of the Region’s natural features.
- Seek to protect farmland by helping farmers thrive in West Michigan by expanding value-added agricultural opportunities.
- West Michigan will work with the State of Michigan and the Federal Government to ensure every opportunity is seized to preserve the Great Lakes.

Issue #4 – Maintaining public infrastructure and services is difficult as costs rise and revenues to state and local units of government decline.

Goal #4 – Promote the efficient maintenance and improvements of West Michigan’s public assets.

Actions

- Work with leadership and the public to ensure that our public infrastructure is treated as an ongoing investment.
- Utilized every available resource to promote improving public infrastructure.
- Work with the private sector to promote the relationship of thriving communities and thriving businesses.

Issue #5 – Collaboration cannot be a one-time initiative that changes with administrations.

Goal #5 – West Michigan will strive to create a sustainable approach to collaboration.

Actions

- West Michigan will support collaboration with, or without, the involvement of the State of Michigan or the Federal Government by seeking a low-cost and sustainable approach to collaboration.
- West Michigan will continue to seek ways to efficiently promote prosperity for the entire population.
- West Michigan will continue to maintain a list of projects of regional significance.

Minutes

West Michigan Prosperity Alliance
Administrative Committee
September 2, 2015

GVMC

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by John Weiss.

Present: John Weiss - GVMC
 Roger Safford - MDOT
 Dave Bee – West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
 Erin Kuhn – WMSRDC
 Steve Bulthuis – MACC
 Paul Griffith – Michigan Works West Central
 Jacob Maas – Michigan Works
 Angie Barksdale – Michigan Works

2. What's Next For RPI?

John Weiss recapped what the RPI has done up till this point. The State is expected to maintain funding levels for the upcoming year. The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance is seen as a leader in the RPI effort. John asked what everyone's thoughts were to reenergizes the initiative.

- Dave Bee reported on \$5,000 worth of work done for coalition building between regions. The group agreed Dave should submit the bill as it is work done towards the RPI goals and was included in the budget.
- Roger Safford summarized an email in which he suggests more work on creating a dashboard, strengths, framework, etc. Creating a compelling vision will pull people into the initiative so it's not just project based.
- Jacob Maas agreed there is an opportunity to create some uniform metrics, get more focused and drive change at the subcommittee level. Spend a year to get focused and set metrics before further funding. He also suggested a Talent Summit.
- Steve Bulthuis suggested opening up the process for Round Two of funding to new projects and/existing projects.
- John Weiss reported energy policy is big now.
- Erin Kuhn stated having a clear vision and dashboard metrics, diving deeper and looking at infrastructure were important. Clarify the vision and have subcommittees focus on them. She suggested a 13 county study on infrastructure,

water plants, capacity, etc. in digital format. She would like to identify how we can make what the WMPA has done last beyond Gov. Snyder's last term.

- A 13 county recreational inventory was suggested.
- Jacob Maas reported what was done in each region is different. Their dashboards are different. The metrics are not apples to apples.
- John Weiss summarized refinement, clarification and expansion of plan and then fund initiatives that fall within those parameters.
- Paul Griffith suggested collecting data on the number of people not receiving a high school diploma or GED. The impact would be to raise awareness.
- Angie Barksdale said the issue is communication of data, including metrics that will move the needle on the number of underemployed, number of those without GED or diploma, mental health dollars, etc. The RPI becoming sustainable is to get the information out rather than focusing on projects, and then we can go back to our platforms and organizations to work towards that.
- Paul Griffith gave an example of the medical assistant program that is available through Michigan Works and taking that throughout the region, creating an on-demand response to employment needs.
- John Weiss stated the RPI could be a convener on issues like that to get the stakeholders together regarding areas critical to the overall prosperity of the region.
- Erin Kuhn said the WMPA should go after an IMCP grant regarding industrial clusters and giving them a boost from federal agencies (food processing industry, growers, manufacturers, distributors, etc.)

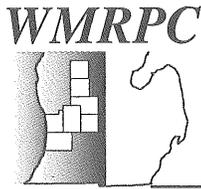
3. Action Items

- Next meeting bring recommendations on what to do
- Everyone should draft up thoughts and circulate to this group through email
- RPI could also have another large public meeting
- Dave will send a summary of the MAR meeting
- The issues and goals have already been identified in the plan. We need to develop goals around that and act as a conduit to get the information out to the masses.

4. Next Meeting

- Steering Administrative Sub Committee – Sept. 30 11:30 – GVMC Lunch
- Full Steering Committee – Sept. 30 – 1:00 p.m. – MDOT
- Page #30 & 40 of the Plan will go out with the agenda. The rest can be done through email. (Dave or Steve to summarize)

5. Adjourn – 4:30 p.m.



WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

1345 Monroe Avenue NW ♦ Suite 255 ♦ Grand Rapids, MI 49505 ♦ (616) 774-8400 ♦ www.wmrpc.org

June 24, 2015

Mr. John W. Weiss, Executive Director
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
678 Front Ave. Suite 200
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

Subject: Regional Prosperity Initiative

Dear Mr. Weiss,

On June 23, 2015 the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) formally adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow for improved collaboration between the two Regional Planning Agencies. Additionally, the two agencies formed an Alliance to enhance communication and collaboration between the two agencies.

The Alliance is led by a team comprised of the Chair of each agency, the Past Chair of each agency, and the Executive Director of each agency. This Alliance was formed at the beginning of 2015 and has met several times to learn more about the similarities and differences of the two agencies. Additionally, the Executive Directors now attend the meetings of the policy bodies to enhance communications between the two agencies. All of this is in addition to the normal communications and collaborative efforts that have existed for decades between the two agencies (Michigan Association of Regions meetings, joint projects, staff training, etc.).

The MOU takes our efforts to the next step in collaboration by recognizing that each agency has different strengths. Without increasing capacity in either agency, the MOU creates opportunities for communities within both regions to tap into the strengths of each agency. For example, if Mecosta County (served by the WMRPC) wishes to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan, it can now contract with the WMSRDC (which currently has expertise in developing these plans) to develop a high-quality plan without requiring the WMRPC to hire and train additional staff. Other examples relate to writing land use and recreation plans, performing transportation studies, and performing other activities that cross community, regional, and even RPI boundaries – since no set of boundaries can address every issue.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To assist planning efforts in community and economic development, provide a regional forum for sharing information and ideas, and promote cooperative solutions to regional issues.

Mr. John Weiss
June 24, 2015
Page 2

I am sure that everybody can agree that this type of collaboration aligns with Michigan's RPI goals. While the benefits of such a program are clear, the costs associated with performing the necessary tasks impact the overall budget of the WMRPC. The WMRPC has a very tight budget and must account for how time is spent with our long-time grant providers such as the US Economic Development Administration, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and our member communities. If, at the end of FY 2015, the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance's budget allows for reimbursement of the costs associated with developing the Alliance and the MOU, and if the Steering Committee approves, it would help us to continue to expand this collaborative effort. The WMRPC feels it is an expense that shows the true spirit of the RPI.

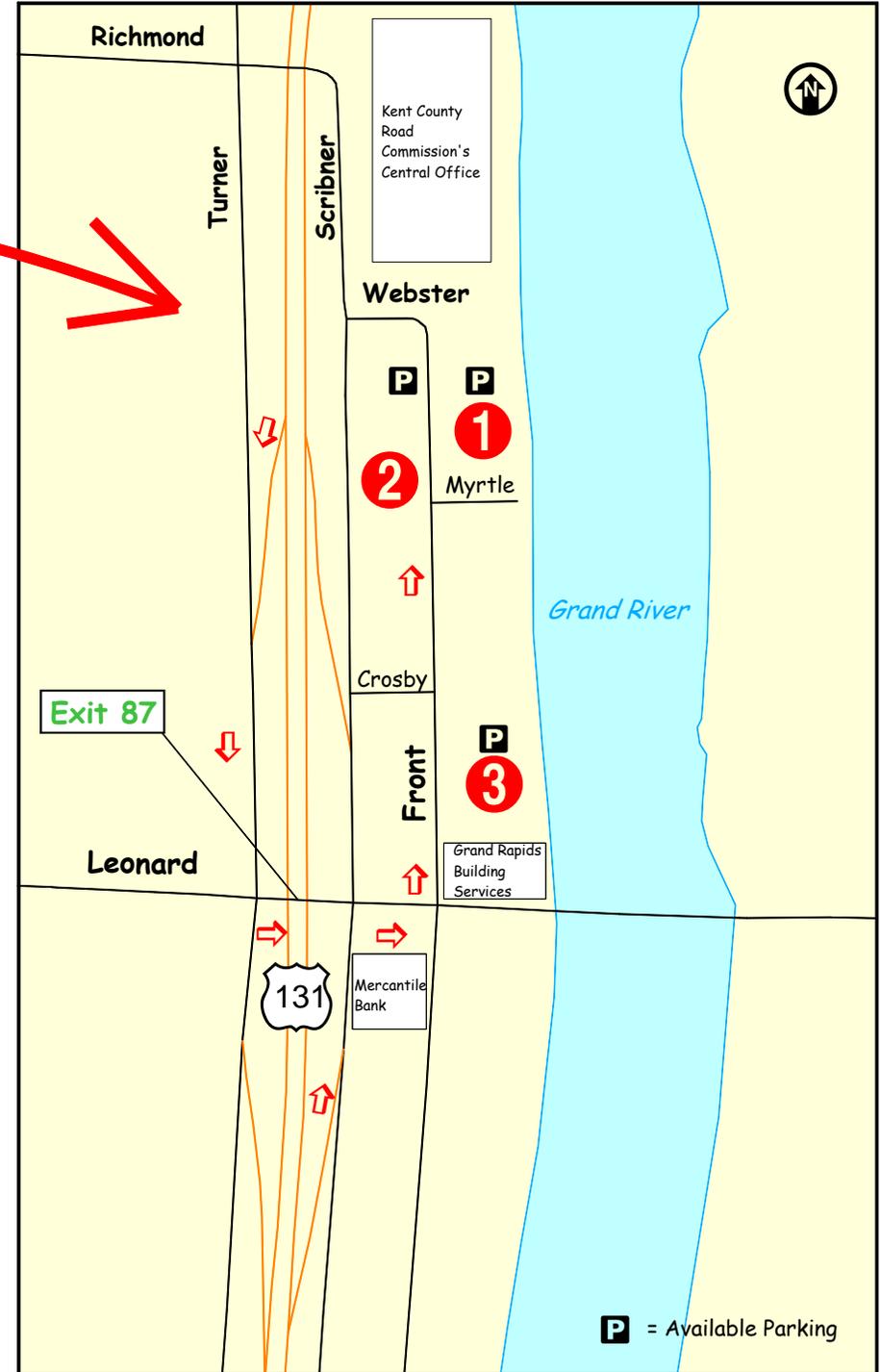
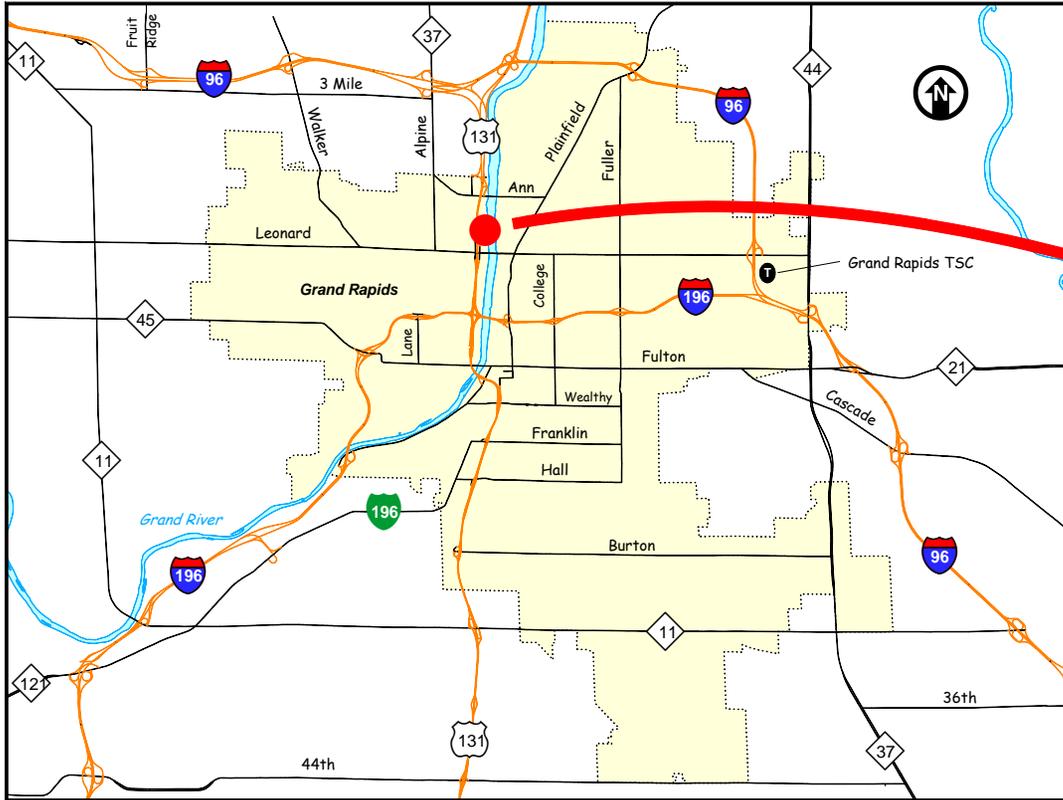
Please contact me if you have any questions. I will forward a copy of the MOU to your attention so that you can share it with the Steering Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Johansen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

John Johansen, Chair
West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

Grand Region Office & Maintenance Facilities



Directions:

From US-131, take Exit 87 (Leonard Street).
 Travel east on Leonard Street to Front Avenue.
 Head north on Front Avenue to access the following Grand Region facilities:

- 1** = Grand Region Office & West Michigan TOC (1420 Front Avenue)
- 2** = Automotive & Equipment (A&E) Building (Accessible from Scribner & Front)
- 3** = Grand Region Maintenance (1240 Front Avenue)



Contact:
 Grand Region Office (616) 451-3091
 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 1420 Front Avenue NW, Grand Rapids MI 49504

P = Available Parking