

# Agenda

## West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee Meeting

Herman Miller Design Yard  
375 West 48th St.  
Holland, MI 49423

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
August 15, 2016

1. Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Minutes - Attachment
4. Project Review Committee Report - Attachment
5. October 3 Voting Meeting, GVSU L. William Seidman Center – Grand Rapids
6. Adjourn

## Minutes

West Michigan Prosperity Alliance  
Steering Committee  
June 20, 2016

Ludington, MI

### **1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by John Weiss.

Present: John Weiss - GVMC  
Erin Kuhn - WMSRDC  
Kevin Stotts - Talent 2025  
Rick Chapla - The Right Place  
Doug Wood - Orchard View Public Schools  
Jim Sandy - Mecosta County Development Corp.  
Ed Garner - Muskegon Area First  
Andy Johnston - Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
Anne Armstrong Cusak - Office of Governor Snyder  
Kiesha Guy - Muskegon Oceana Community Action Partnership  
Paul Griffith - Michigan Works! West Central  
Dave Bee - West Michigan Regional Planning Commission  
Doug Wood - Orchard View Community Education  
Jacob Maas - West Michigan Works!  
Andy Johnston - Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
Crystal Young - West Shore Community College  
Roger Safford - HNTB  
Jennifer Owens - Lakeshore Advantage  
Dan Rinsema-Sybenga - Muskegon Community College  
Brenda Nyhof - Allegan Adult Education  
Jim Fisher - Padnos  
Bill Raymond - Ottawa County Community Action  
Dan Peterson - 8Cap  
Bill Huizenga - U.S. Congressman

### **2. Public Comment**

None

### **3. Request by Muskegon Port**

Erin Kuhn reported on the success of the Muskegon Port project and the upcoming Port Day, July 26. The Port of Muskegon group is requesting funding from the RPI for 1/3 (approx. \$2,500) of the Public Relations / Communications costs for the event.

**MOTION - To Award the Muskegon Port Project 1/3 of their Public Relations Invoice (approx \$2,500). MOTION - Jim Sandy. SUPPORT - Jim Fisher. MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **4. Dashboard Update**

Rick Chapla updated the group on the Dashboard project. The dashboard will gather economic, social and environmental data. The project is in its last call for comments phase and should be completed by September.

#### **5. Call for Projects**

Erin Kuhn reported on the Call for Projects. The Region IV West Michigan Prosperity Alliance is unique in how RPI regions use their funding. Region IV puts the majority of dollars back into the local economy by funding regionally significant projects. The initial call went out the end of May and requests are due by July 17. All requests will be reviewed according to established criteria and those that most closely match will be presented at the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at the GVSU Seidman Center to be voted on. Total grant allotment = \$213,000.

Criteria for projects are:

- Long term sustainability
- Regional impact
- Opportunity for varied skills
- Regional strengths and challenges
- Public / private partnerships

#### **6. Special Guest Congressman Bill Huizenga**

Andy Johnston introduced Congressman Bill Huizenga.

Congressman Huizenga acknowledged the importance of the lakeshore area to all of Michigan and bi-partisan efforts to protect & improve both the ecosystem and economic vitality.

Issues covered include:

- Dredging
- The Badger Ferry
- Regional Cooperation
- Committee Work in Congress

#### **7. Adjourn**



# Memo

To: WMPA Steering Committee  
From: Steve Bulthuis  
Date: August 5, 2016  
Re: WMPA 2016 project finalist recommendation

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On June 1 a call for proposals was issued announcing the availability of \$213,000 in funding for projects that would advance the prosperity of the 13-county WMPA area. Applicants were asked to demonstrate how their nomination would address the five criteria established by the Steering Committee (prior to the first year of funding):

1. Long-term impact and sustainability
2. Regional impact – proportion of the Region potentially impacted by the project
3. Provide employment opportunities to people with a variety of skill levels in a variety of employment sectors
4. Recognizes Region's strengths and challenges
5. Project promotes and supports public and private partnerships

Thirteen projects were submitted seeking funding totaling \$517,350:

<b>Submitter</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
Doug Wood	Adult Education Connection: Connecting Inter-generational Educational Services	\$35,780
Paul Sachs	Spoonville Trail	\$40,000
Ron DeCook	Grand Rapids-Chicago Rail Study & Service Development Plan	\$25,000
Ryan Coffey	Hardy Pond Trail	\$20,000
Robert Spohr	Feasibility Study Agricultural Incubator	\$30,000
Colleen Buckley	Digital Works	\$75,070
Dan Rinsema-Sybenga	College Degree and Recognized Credential Alignment	\$60,000
Steve Bulthuis	Sustainable Funding Strategy for West Michigan Watersheds	\$59,000
Dan Manning	Connected Community Engagement Program	\$45,000
Matt Chapman	Grand River Revitalization	\$45,000
Jonathan Wilson	Port of Muskegon Communications & Marketing Strategy	\$20,000
Erin Kuhn	West Michigan Water Systems Plan	\$10,000
Jonathan Wilson	Preliminary Design Engineering for a Regional Utility Force Main	\$52,500

An evaluation committee comprised of Paul Griffith, Erin Kuhn, Dave Bee, Bonnie Gettys, Andy Johnston, Jennifer Owens, Jacob Maas and Steve Bulthuis scored the applications using an evaluation system related to the five criteria.

The seven proposals receiving the highest scores are:

Project	Rank	Amount Requested
Port of Muskegon Communications & Marketing Strategy	1	\$20,000
Connected Community Engagement Program	2	\$45,000
College Degree and Recognized Credential Alignment	3	\$60,000
West Michigan Water Systems Plan	4	\$10,000
Hardy Pond Trail	5	\$20,000
Sustainable Funding Strategy for West Michigan Watersheds	6	\$59,000
Preliminary Design Engineering for a Regional Utility Force Main	7	\$52,500

All of these proposals contained evidence of a strong collaboration of partners, a sound idea or purpose and the possibility of having a significant impact on the region. **The evaluation committee recommends that representatives of these projects be invited to present their proposals at the community forum in October.**

The evaluation committee also discussed the reality that if all the projects noted above were to be fully funded, an additional \$53,500 would be necessary beyond that which is already allocated for projects in the FY2016 WMPA budget. There was some discussion about reallocating resources from other areas of the FY2016 WMPA budget to make that possible. We hope we can explore that possibility more at our meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please feel free to contact me at 616-395-2688.

## NOMINATION FORM FOR WEST MICHIGAN PROSPERITY ALLIANCE PROJECT FUNDING

Please return to:

**Steve Bulthuis**

301 Douglas Avenue

Holland, MI 49424

(616) 395-2688

Fax (616) 395-9411

E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency :GRCC, MuskegonCC, West Shore CC, MontcalmCC

Project Title: College Degree and Recognized Credential Alignment

Name of Proposer\*: Julie Parks, Grand Rapids Community College

Telephone Number and E-Mail address : 616-234-3714, JParks@grcc.edu

Amount Requested: \$60,000 (\$15,000 per school)

Expected Completion Date: June 30, 2017

\*Person authorized to submit nomination on behalf of organization/agency

### Proposed Project Location:

**Project Description** – Use the space below to describe your project and how it will address the five criteria noted on the previous page.

The four Community Colleges in Region 4 play an important role in shaping the work force of the future, particularly in the skilled trades areas in support of local manufacturers, a key regional strength and employment sector in West Michigan representing over 141,100 jobs as indicated in Talent 2025's 2015 Talent Demand report. Add to this an unemployment rate of under 4%, and it becomes clear that we must create a skilled workforce to retain current manufacturers and attract new companies to the area.

Each college has recently invested in new training equipment through a variety of recent grants. Room for improvement exists to better serve local and regional employers by more cohesive curriculum and alignment with national certificates across the region however. This proposal seeks to address this issue by allowing the four colleges to engage each other in the following curriculum areas. These are curriculum areas currently targeted by GRCC's M-CAM Department of Labor grant.

1. Multi-skilled technician (Industrial Maintenance, Mechatronics, Robotics).
2. Precision Machining and CNC
3. Welding (automated systems as a part of this).
4. General Manufacturing Production

These are curricular areas that provide a wide range of employment possibilities from just beyond entry level to highly skilled positions. This would impact manufacturing companies' talent supply and prospective trainees from every corner of Region 4, as the service areas of the four combined colleges draws from every location within Region 4. The engagement that this project would facilitate would include

1. Bringing together faculty from the four areas from our four colleges to discuss current curriculum and credentials and agree on curriculum that could be more standardized and tied to national certifications with a summary report produced.
2. Implementing credentials through licensing, lab inspections etc to make like credentials available throughout Region 4.
3. Bringing employers in to give feedback on credentials and more cohesive curriculum.
4. Funding a marketing/recruitment strategy in partnership with Discover Manufacturing employer members to get students in these four programs.

### Tentative Project Budget

1. Certification startup costs – \$25,000
2. Marketing expense to attract students and employers to unified program areas - \$25,000
3. Travel and meeting to facilitate faculty and employer meetings - \$10,000

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E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency: **Connect Michigan**  
Project Title: **Connected Community Engagement Program**  
Name of Proposer\*: **Eric Frederick**  
Telephone and E-Mail address : **(517) 994-8024**, [efrederick@connectmi.org](mailto:efrederick@connectmi.org)  
Amount Requested: **\$45,000**  
Expected Completion Date: **12/31/2017**

**Proposed Project Location:** All counties in the West Michigan Prosperity Region

## **Project Description –**

[Connect Michigan](#) works with communities across the state to assess their existing broadband technology environment, identify their broadband-related needs and develop action plans to address these needs and take advantage of current and future opportunities. Using benchmarking data that has been gathered through Connect Michigan's broadband mapping and research activities, the Connected Community Engagement program drills down to regional and local levels to facilitate community technology planning. Through this program, communities work to expand the availability, adoption, and use of technology toward creating a more productive and technology-savvy population, a better business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, enhanced education, and more efficient government.

Connect Michigan's Community Engagement program guides communities through an assessment of their existing broadband and technology landscape, using criteria set as a part of a national "community certification" model. The program helps train regional team leaders and supports the formation of community broadband planning teams made up of various sector representatives.

The Connected program is comprised of four primary steps; 1) Identify community champions and gather local stakeholders, 2) Assess the local broadband/technology landscape, 3) Identify gaps and develop a technology action plan, and 4) Implement projects to increase access, adoption, and use of broadband and technology and achieve Connected Certification. By participating in the Connected Community process, communities benefit through assessment, benchmarking, planning, and certification; residents and local businesses benefit through expanded access to relevant technology; and the private sector benefits by cultivation of a more investment-friendly environment and increasingly tech-savvy customer base desiring a greater level of online engagement.

Connect Michigan has been working with individual counties within the West Michigan Prosperity Region since 2012, forming cross-sector Community Broadband Teams and developing Technology Action Plans initially in [Barry](#), [Mecosta](#), and [Osceola](#) counties. In 2014, Connect Michigan applied for and was selected as a priority Regional Prosperity project to continue our work in these three counties and expand this work to the remaining counties in the region throughout 2015. During this period, in-process engagements were accelerated and new Community Broadband Teams were formed in Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana counties. A summary and current status of these projects is included as an attachment below.

As information needs, broadband awareness and the sophistication level of our community teams have grown, our Connected program has also evolved to support these demands. Earlier this year, Connect Michigan and Connected Nation (our parent non-profit organization) released an enhanced and updated version of our process to help communities conduct their broadband assessments more effectively by gathering additional community data in a more efficient manner. This new methodology is currently being implemented in Muskegon and Kent counties as the first such communities in the state and two of the first across the country. Other West Michigan counties, including Mason, Mecosta and Osceola, have requested to implement this new methodology to extend their broadband planning with Connect Michigan.

Our proposal for the 2016 West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative is to continue our "Connected Community" work in 2017 at both the county and regional level to address local broadband and technology issues, help accelerate broadband expansion, and establish/expand the broadband planning process throughout the region. More specifically, we expect to conduct the following:

- Complete the Broadband Assessments and Technology Action Plans for those counties which are currently in process by the end of 1Q2017.
- Pursue and launch a Connected Community engagement with Ottawa County, the only county in the region not yet engaged (assuming sufficient interest and local leadership can be identified).
- Expand the assessment and planning process in previously engaged counties by implementing the new enhanced Connected methodology, including but not limited to Mason, Mecosta, Osceola and Barry counties.
- Participate in county Broadband Team meetings on issues, projects, and actions to improve their broadband capabilities and execute their Technology Action Plans.
- Develop a consolidated West Michigan Regional Broadband profile and Action Plan based on input from participating counties and regional-level broadband findings and economic development plans.

As a result of the program, each county in the region will develop a Technology Action Plan, and will have in place an empowered local team of stakeholders to implement projects resulting from the planning activities.

Broadband and related technologies are essential for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Rural areas without adequate infrastructure, populations lacking digital literacy skills, and businesses unaware of the benefits of technology adoption will continue to be left out of the digital economy. Connect Michigan's Connected Community Engagement Program ensures communities have the knowledge, connections, and resources available to leverage broadband for improved community and economic development.

**What is the long-term impact & sustainability of this project?**

With the ever-increasing shift of information and services to digital technology, broadband has become an essential utility to enable our residents, businesses and public institutions to function and prosper in an online world. From educating our children to delivering our healthcare to managing our businesses, broadband access to the internet is having a profound impact on nearly every aspect of our lives. This project provides the basis for understanding and planning for the critical access, adoption and use of broadband for private and public use across Region 4 and establishes a planning process for the continuous advancement of broadband into the future.

**What is the regional impact – the proportion of the Region potentially impacted by the project?**

As indicated, this project is targeted toward all 13 counties in Region 4, capitalizing on the work and success we've seen in the counties where the Connected Community program has already been implemented. The pervasive need and use of broadband spans all counties, municipalities and sectors across the Region and this project will include and support each of them.

**How will the project provide employment opportunities to people with a variety of skill levels in a variety of employment sectors?**

A key element of broadband planning through the Connected Community program is broadband “adoption”, or providing sufficient resources and training opportunities for people to develop the digital skills necessary to effectively use and leverage the internet. Identifying and expanding digital literacy training programs, building greater awareness of the value of broadband, and ensuring publicly-available access to broadband-enabled computers are key factors in growing the skills necessary for people to compete for jobs in today’s economy. Broadband access and internet skills also offer great new potential for “teleworking” or working remotely via a broadband connection. This capability offers the opportunity to pursue employment with companies that allow teleworking across all sectors, which may not have been possible previously due to commuting distances or need for relocation. And the digital skills developed through community training programs help make local residents more competitive for any job where broadband-based systems and applications are used.

**How does this initiative recognize and address the region’s strengths and challenges?**

While the need for broadband is everywhere, the reality is that there are gaps in the current broadband infrastructure across Region 4 where broadband access is lacking, where more digital literacy training and publicly-available computers are needed and where better use of broadband applications, websites and online services should be available. At the core of the Connected Community program, we conduct an extensive Assessment of the current broadband landscape in each county/community to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of their support of broadband technology. This Assessment then serves as the basis for developing a tailored Action Plan to address those weaknesses and continue the ongoing advancement of broadband access, adoption and use for that community.

**How does this project promote and support public and private partnerships?**

The Connected Community program is centered around the formation of a cross-sector team of local leaders or stakeholders, who serve as the broadband planning team for the community. Facilitated by Connect Michigan personnel, this team typically includes representatives from key public organizations (government, EDA, Chambers of Commerce, schools and colleges, libraries, public safety, etc.) and private firms (local business owners, broadband service providers, etc.) who share a goal of improving their operation and their community through broadband expansion. Through the Connected Community assessment and planning processes, these members develop new partnerships to explore broadband-related issues in the community and pursue creative solutions in addressing these concerns.

## West Michigan Prosperity Region (Region 4) - Connected Community Status by County

		As of July 15, 2016						
County	Connected Status	Community Champion	Connect Michigan Advisor	Kickoff meeting date (actual or planned)	Assessment Completed	Action Plan Developed	Recognition Event Held	Comments / Issues
Allegan	Assessment Completed - Action Plan in Place	Jim Pitsch Salem Township Supervisor	Dan Manning	12/2/2014	2/29/2016	In Process	Fall 2016	Assessment completed and reviewed with the Allegan County Cities, Townships and Villages quarterly meeting on Feb 29. Assessment score is 94 out of 120; Allegan County has not yet qualified for certification. Action Plan has been drafted and will be finalized at next Broadband meeting in 3Q. Fiber-to-the-Home initiatives in Laketown Township and Holland Bureau of Public Works are active.
	Assessment Completed - Action Plan in Place	Travis Alden Chamber President (replaced Valerie Byrnes)	Dan Manning	11/9/2011	5/15/2012	2/28/2013	4/17/2013	Recent meeting with new Chamber leaders (Travis Alden and Cynthia Vujea) may lead to restoration of the Barry County Broadband team. Great candidate to implement our enhanced Connected process. Need for better fiber infrastructure and more providers to increase broadband availability and speeds in this residential county.
Ionia	Assessment In Process	Morgan Carroll The Right Place	Dan Manning	10/6/2015	In Process	TBD	TBD	Broadband surveys for organizations/businesses and residents have been conducted throughout the first half of 2016 with specific support from the Ionia Chamber and the Ionia ISD. Initial Assessment results will be reviewed at our next Broadband Team meeting with local broadband providers on August 18. Recognized need for expanded infrastructure and higher speeds throughout the county.

Kent	Assessment In Process	Rick Chapla The Right Place	Dan Manning	11/6/2015	In Process	TBD	TBD	Large Kent County Broadband Team of community stakeholders and providers has been formed, with several meetings held in 2016. Enhanced Connected broadband surveys are now being conducted for residents and various sectors of businesses and organizations. Presentations have been made to the county commissioners, municipality leaders and the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce (Issue Summit on June 17). Initial survey and assessment results will be reviewed at our next meeting in Aug/Sept.
Lake	Assessment Completed - Action Plan in Place	Larry Lewis Lake County Business Center	Tom Stephenson	6/24/2014	9/19/2014	12/16/2014	4/9/2015	Second phase of their broadband survey was conducted during the summer of 2015. Social media workshops for local businesses have also been held. Connected Nations's "DRIVE" digital literacy training portal has been launched to provide education on broadband and computer technology. Currently working with the local Rotary Club to assist the team on their priority projects.
Mason	Certified Community	Spence Riggs Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce (replaced Kathy Van Dries)	Tom Stephenson	2/6/2015	3/15/2016	4/30/2016	7/19/2016	Mason County has recently completed their broadband assessment and Technology Action Plan and will be formally recognized as our newest Certified Community on July 19. Social media workshops for and cyber security seminars have been held for local businesses. Team has met with Frontier representatives to discuss the Connect America Fund build-out and expansion program in Mason County. Mason County has also asked to participate in our enhanced Connected process.
Mecosta	Certified Community	Jennifer Heinzman Executive Director Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce	Tom Stephenson	12/15/2012	6/6/2013	6/6/2013	9/25/2013	Currently engaged in launching social media workshops for local businesses and cyber security seminars. Team added digital literacy training and computers to senior citizen center. Casair has installed fiber to the home in several communities in Mecosta County and is supply gigabit speed (1,000 Mbps) service. Jennifer, Michelle Rasmussen, and Tom are working in a campaign to promote Mecosta County as a 'Gigabit' community. Requested to participate in our new Connected program in 2017.

<b>Montcalm</b>	Assessment In Process	Kathy Jo VanderLaan The Right Place	Dan Manning	10/21/2015	In Process	TBD	TBD	The Connected Community program is being conducted in concert with the Montcalm Economic Alliance. Organization Broadband Survey has been developed and has been deployed across the county during the first half of 2016. Results of this survey and initial view of their broadband assessment will be shared at the next Economic Alliance meeting on July 20. Broadband access across the county is very strong, with pervasive coverage and high speeds provided through recent expansion by Casair.
	Assessment In Process	Jonathan Wilson Muskegon County Economic Development	Dan Manning	8/13/2015	In Process	TBD	TBD	The Muskegon County Broadband team is the first county in the state to implement our enhanced Connected process. Broadband surveys have been deployed for residents and various business sectors throughout the county. Over 1300 responses to the Residential Survey have been received to support their overall broadband assessment, which will be reviewed during our next meeting on July 28. Resulting action plans will be developed in 3Q16.
<b>Newaygo</b>	Certified Community	Karen Baird Todd Blake Colleen Lynema Jon Schneider	Tom Stephenson	8/6/2014	6/9/2015	7/20/2015	11/10/2015	Newaygo County successfully completed their Connected assessment and action plan in 2015 and was formally recognized as a Certified Community in November. Team has launched social media workshops for local businesses and cyber security seminars. The staff of the Stream has been investigating the adoption of Connected Nation's Digital Works Jobs Training program.
	Assessment In Process	Stan Rickard City Manager City of Hart	Tom Stephenson	7/9/2014	5/15/2016	TBD	TBD	Stan Rickard is the new Broadband Team champion. The team has re-engaged in 2016 to finish their assessment. A Technology Action Plan needs to be developed as a result of their assessment results. Representatives from Frontier will discuss their current planned build out in Oceana County under the Connect America Fund.
<b>Oceana</b>								

Osceola	Certified Community	Dan Massy Community Development Coordinator	Tom Stephenson	9/18/2012	2/21/2013	4/18/2013	6/20/2013 (original) May 2016 (certified)	After establishing their original Technology Action Plan back in June 2013, Osceola County achieved Certification status in May of 2016. Team successfully launched a broadband survey that resulted in significant build out in the vast majority of un-served and underserved area. The team has also conducted both cyber security seminars and social media workshops for local businesses. The City of Evert is using a broadband survey to develop a business case for Casair to build a fiber to the home network in the Evert area and supply 'gigabit speeds (1,000 Mbps)'. Osceola County requested to participate in our new Connected process.
Ottawa	Team to be Formed	Possibly Becky Lehman, Technology Director, Holland Board of Public Works	Tom Stephenson	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Need to identify appropriate and interested stakeholders and community champion to adopt the Connected program. Our new enhanced Connected process would be a good fit to conduct an effective and efficient broadband assessment for Ottawa County.

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(616) 395-2688  
Fax (616) 395-9411  
E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency :Newaygo & Mecosta counties  
Project Title: Hardy Pond Trail  
Name of Proposer\*: Ryan Coffey  
Telephone Number and E-Mail address : (231) 924-9677  
coffeyry@anr.msu.edu  
Amount Requested: \$20,000  
Expected Completion Date: December 22, 2016  
\*Person authorized to submit nomination on behalf of organization/agency

**Proposed Project Location:**

**Project Description** – Use the space below to describe your project and how it will address the five criteria noted on the previous page.

Please see attached pages.

## ***Project Overview***

The State of Michigan boasts many notable outdoor adventure venues that cater to a variety of user stakeholder groups: snowmobiling, hiking, paddle sports and ORV infrastructure is well established in both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas. At the same time, mountain biking, snow biking, and all-weather hiking enthusiasts enjoy several remarkable, yet shorter courses scattered throughout the State, but no trails in this category can be found anywhere in the world at this scale—until now.

The Hardy Pond trail will be a truly unique adventure sports destination for people from around the state, region, nation and world that promotes West Michigan's the triple bottom line—financial, social and environmental performance measures. While "pond" often conjures up images of small, quiet, idyllic blue patches of water, Hardy Pond boasts over 50 miles of shoreline and over 4,000 acres of fresh water! The Hardy Pond enjoys a long history as a premier recreational destination for tourists and residents alike.

Now fully five years in planning, the Hardy Pond trail will span over 47 miles along the banks of the Hardy Pond upon the majestic Muskegon River as it winds through Mecosta and Newaygo counties, crossing the massive Hardy Dam, the third largest earthen dam in the world. This project is strategically located within 45 minutes of Grand Rapids, 3 hours from Detroit, and 3 1/2 hours driving time from downtown Chicago.



~ Proposed Hardy Pond Trail along the Muskegon River

## ***Collaboration***

This highly collaborative and ambitious initiative involves Mecosta and Newaygo County officials (administrators, commissioners and parks officials), three township supervisors, Consumers Energy, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and West Michigan Mountain Biking Association, the Newaygo Nationals Association, both county Economic Development and Convention and Visitors Bureau offices, two Chambers of Commerce, Spectrum Health/Tamarac, Nestle Waters North America,

MI Works!, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, Michigan State University faculty members and other key partners. The Hardy Pond trail promises to put West Michigan on the world stage for adventure sports destinations when completed, hosting both sanctioned and unsanctioned mountain biking competitions and several related winter activities.

### ***The Trail***

The Hardy Pond trail is a non-motorized, multi-use, natural surface trail. It is designed as a large scale loop system, a bold and unique endeavor which will include:

- ▶ A dramatic and challenging 47.5-mile mountain biking and pedestrian adventure loop trail designed, engineered and endorsed by the prestigious IMBA. It will be one of the largest loop trails of its kind anywhere in the world that will be managed by the Mecosta and Newaygo county parks boards and maintained through revenues and fees generated from the trail.
- ▶ The proposed trail will be located exclusively on land owned by Consumers Energy and is virtually unspoiled with stunning water views, challenging valleys, and 23 proposed bridges along the trail, making it unique among all trail systems in North America. This professionally engineered, constructed, maintained, and managed trail will take two full years to complete, and requires Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approval.

### ***Key Features of the Hardy Pond Trail:***

- ▶ 47.5-mile mountain biking and pedestrian adventure loop trail.
- ▶ Will feature water views, valleys, and 23 bridges linking several existing township, county, state and private campgrounds.
- ▶ Positions our area as truly unique adventure sports destination for visitors worldwide.
- ▶ Provides a regional economic engine, which will create several dozen new jobs.
- ▶ Demonstrates widespread government, agency and private support across stakeholders.
- ▶ Provides an important stage for adventure sports competitions.
- ▶ Will connect to The Edge Pathway System and the North Country Trail, with a planned connection to the White Pine Trail State Park.
- ▶ Provides direct access to the Muskegon River for multi-sport events.

### ***Economic Impact***

The \$1.2 million Hardy Pond Trail project enjoys a wide range of local and regional support, including an important pre-funding investment of \$300,000 by Newaygo and Mecosta counties for the construction of the trail. These monies were committed by their respective Board(s) and will serve as a catalyst for

additional momentum and investment by area foundations, corporate partners, government entities and private investors.

In addition to providing an incredible attraction to biking and hiking enthusiasts of all ages and abilities, a comprehensive economic impact study conducted by Michigan State University's Center for Economic Analysis reveals that, as a result of this project, the West Michigan region can expect:

- ▶ An annual increase in economic activity of over \$4.15 million per year.
- ▶ An annual increase of nearly 105,000 visitors.
- ▶ The creation of 70 new jobs.

### ***Need***

The Hardy Pond trail is nearing the end of its development phase and is preparing to submit a FERC application through Consumer's Energy for approval to move into the construction phase of the project. An environmental impact assessment study conducted by an independent environmental engineering firm is required as part of our FERC application and is its largest, most cost-prohibitive requirement. The cost of the environmental impact assessment study is \$30,000. We are asking the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance to please consider funding our two counties with \$20,000 to assist us with the development of this ambitious and game-changing project that will help transform our communities into an outdoor adventure destination for our West Michigan region. Thank you for your consideration.

# West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Call for Projects

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) is again soliciting projects from across its 13-county region. To learn more about the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance and view the list of projects submitted for the last call, please visit <http://gvmc.org/wmrpa.shtml>.

## **Project Call and Selection Process**

1. Complete the attached form and send to Steve Bulthuis (contact info. on form) **no later than July 15, 2016.**
2. A review committee will evaluate each project nomination based on the following criteria:
  - a. Long-term impact & sustainability of project
  - b. Regional Impact – proportion of the Region potentially impacted by the project
  - c. Provide employment opportunities to people with a variety of skill levels in a variety of employment sectors
  - d. Recognizes Region's strengths and challenges
  - e. Project promotes and supports public and private partnerships
3. In August the WMPA Steering Committee will review the list of recommended finalists and select those projects whose sponsors will be invited to make a presentation at a community forum.
4. Project sponsors will present their project at a community forum in September (specific date/time/location TBD) where attendees will have the opportunity to vote on the projects.
5. The WMPA will announce funding decisions by September 30, 2015. Funding will be available immediately.

## **Other Considerations**

1. WMPA has budgeted approximately \$213,000 for this project call. While there is no limit on the amount that can be requested, the WMPA desires to fund multiple projects in the region that promote regional prosperity

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(616) 395-2688  
Fax (616) 395-9411  
E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency: County of Muskegon/Muskegon Area First  
Project Title: Preliminary Design Engineering for a Regional Utility Force Main  
Name of Proposer\*: Mark Eisenbarth, County Administrator  
Telephone Number and E-Mail address 231-724-6520  
Eisenbarthma@co.muskegon.mi.us  
:Amount Requested:\$52,500  
Expected Completion Date: January 2017  
\* Person authorized to submit nomination on behalf of organization/agency

**Proposed Project Location: Muskegon**

**Project Description –**

The WMPA funds would be utilized to finance half of the Preliminary Design Engineering work associated with the proposed construction of a 20-mile long Muskegon County Wastewater System to Coopersville Force Main. The PDE work is one of five tasks that comprise the estimated \$ 2.6 million in professional engineering services required to implement this regional utility project.

The MCWS to Coopersville Force Main is the long-term solution in accommodating the increasing volumes and intensities of wastewater generated by the rapidly growing dairy processing operations of Continental Dairy Facilities, LLC and Fairlife, LLC. To date, these two dairy Companies' combined investments in facilities and machinery & equipment acquisition exceed \$423 million. Their collective employment count is about 237 jobs. With a multiplier of 7.39 for this type of ag/food processing, these two Companies are responsible for creating over 1,500 indirect jobs in the regional economy. Over the last two years, 117 people were hired by the two dairy Companies. Of that total, 73 percent were low and moderate income persons.

These two dairy Companies' operations are regional in scope. The milk is sourced daily from dairy farms located in 35 counties throughout Lower Michigan. The employees that work at these two Companies reside in 8 West Michigan counties that surround Coopersville: Ottawa, Muskegon, Kent, Allegan, Newaygo, Mecosta, Montcalm and Kalamazoo.

The schedule for the proposed \$ 25 million MCWS to Coopersville Force Main project includes completing the design work by May 2017, beginning construction in August 2017 and going on-line with the new sanitary sewer & lift station by November 2018.

The MCWS currently serves 15 cities & townships in Muskegon County and has excess capacity to serve the two dairy Companies as they expand over the long-term. If you have questions concerning this proposed project or funding request, please contact me.

# West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Call for Projects

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) is again soliciting projects from across its 13-county region. To learn more about the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance and view the list of projects submitted for the last call, please visit <http://gvmc.org/wmrpa.shtml>.

## **Project Call and Selection Process**

1. Complete the attached form and send to Steve Bulthuis (contact info. on form) **no later than July 15, 2016.**
2. A review committee will evaluate each project nomination based on the following criteria:
  - a. Long-term impact & sustainability of project
  - b. Regional Impact – proportion of the Region potentially impacted by the project
  - c. Provide employment opportunities to people with a variety of skill levels in a variety of employment sectors
  - d. Recognizes Region's strengths and challenges
  - e. Project promotes and supports public and private partnerships
3. In August the WMPA Steering Committee will review the list of recommended finalists and select those projects whose sponsors will be invited to make a presentation at a community forum.
4. Project sponsors will present their project at a community forum in September (specific date/time/location TBD) where attendees will have the opportunity to vote on the projects.
5. The WMPA will announce funding decisions by September 30, 2015. Funding will be available immediately.

## **Other Considerations**

1. WMPA has budgeted approximately \$213,000 for this project call. While there is no limit on the amount that can be requested, the WMPA desires to fund multiple projects in the region that promote regional prosperity

## NOMINATION FORM FOR WEST MICHIGAN PROSPERITY ALLIANCE PROJECT FUNDING

Please return to:

**Steve Bulthuis**

301 Douglas Avenue

Holland, MI 49424

(616) 395-2688

Fax (616) 395-9411

E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency: County of Muskegon/Port Advisory Committee

Project Title: Port of Muskegon Communications & Marketing Strategy

Name of Proposer\*: Jonathan Wilson

Telephone Number and E-Mail address 231-724-8861  
wilsonjo@co.muskegon.mi.us

:Amount Requested:\$20,000

Expected Completion Date: January 2017

\* Person authorized to submit nomination on behalf of organization/agency

### Proposed Project Location: Muskegon

**Project Description** – Use the space below to describe your project and how it will address the five criteria noted on the previous page.

Regional public and private community leaders have been working diligently to further the development of the Port of Muskegon as a regional logistic hub and economic asset to the region. The Port of Muskegon has been an active commercial port for nearly 200 years, and is the deepest port along Michigan's west coast. The port services short sea shipping in the Great Lakes, and increasingly the remainder of the United States and the world through the nation's river and lock systems. The Muskegon Port is serviced by a variety of multi-modal assets including highway truck routes, multiple rail access points, and local international airports. It includes all four transportation infrastructure legs, and has the potential to serve as a major regional logistic hub.

In October 2014, this effort received a major boost when the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance identified the Port of Muskegon as its top priority project. WMPA provided \$31,500 to support the Port of Muskegon Infrastructure and Organizational Analysis project. These funds assisted in raising an additional \$31,000 of local and private dollars, and secured a \$62,500 Economic Development Administration grant. Results from the Infrastructure and Organizational Analysis will be revealed in July 2016. In addition to the Infrastructure and Organizational Analysis, partners, under the guidance of the Muskegon County Port Advisory Committee, have completed several studies and due diligence that further show the economic and community benefits of the Port of Muskegon. These include:

- Shipping Route Studies – Detailed cost benefits of shipping to Europe (via Cleveland) and Asia (via Milwaukee).
- Economic Impact Study – Our RPI region (Region 4) would receive an additional \$243.2 million in direct & indirect output produced by an additional 1,348 direct & indirect workers earning an additional \$70.1 million each year.
- Vision 2020 – A series of community forums organized by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission to provide information and a platform for a unified vision that will guide sustainable development and utilization of Muskegon Lake's economic, environmental, residential, and recreational assets.

The successful development of a regional logistic hub will require additional marketing strategies as identified in the recently completed Infrastructure and Organizational Structure Analysis. The County of Muskegon Port Advisory Committee would like to request \$20,000 from WMPA to support efforts to move forward with this project. This funding will be matched with \$40,000 in funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation and be used to develop additional shipping through non-traditional markets such as agricultural goods, and scheduled short sea shipping that will further support the development of the Port of Muskegon.

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E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency :  
Project Title:  
Name of Proposer\*:  
Telephone Number and E-Mail address :  
Amount Requested:  
Expected Completion Date:  
\*Person authorized to submit nomination on behalf of organization/agency

**Proposed Project Location:**

**Project Description** – Use the space below to describe your project and how it will address the five criteria noted on the previous page.

# West Michigan Prosperity Alliance

## Call for Projects

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(616) 395-2688

Fax (616) 395-9411

E Mail: [sbulthuis@the-macc.org](mailto:sbulthuis@the-macc.org)

Name of Organization/Agency : W. Mich. Shoreline Reg. Development Com.

Project Title: West Michigan Water Systems Plan

Name of Proposer\*: Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

Telephone Number and E-Mail address : 231-722-7878 [ekuhn@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ekuhn@wmsrdc.org)

Amount Requested: \$10,000

Expected Completion Date: September 30, 2017

\*Person authorized to submit nomination on behalf of organization/agency

### Proposed Project Location:

**Project Description** – Use the space below to describe your project and how it will address the five criteria noted on the previous page.

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance 13-county region is serviced by a numerous publicly operated water systems including drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and green infrastructure. These systems are vital to the region's environment, economic development, and public health.

West Michigan water resources and communities face challenges with current growth patterns and the effect of climate change. The University of Michigan and Michigan State University predict increasing temperatures, longer growing seasons, drier soils and related stormwater runoff that will result in warmer surface waters, higher nutrient levels and degraded water quality. With a region that is becoming increasingly more dependent on the blue economy industries, water-based recreation and eco-tourism, there is a great need to build resilience, manage risk and plan water systems for the future. Several West Michigan communities have embraced energy saving and water reduction programs, but planning a generally performed within the institutional silos of the past. West Michigan communities have expressed the need and a willingness to collaborate across the 13-county West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Region to identify best planning practices for water systems resiliency to help community and businesses reduce water usage, conserve energy, manage risk and develop a strong regional economy.

The West Michigan Water Systems team includes the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, Grand Valley State University, Annis Water Resources Institute, West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, local unites of government, county drain commissioners, waters system operations, and regional economic development leaders (such as The Right Place & Muskegon Area First). These partners will work together to identify the status of existing water systems and create an integrated water systems planning framework that will carry on to develop solutions and to address water systems challenges now and into the future.

The WMSRDC is requesting \$10,000 from the WMPA. WMSRDC is also seeking \$150,000 from the Great Lakes Protection Fund to assist with development of the project. The \$160,000 budget will be used to conduct an inventory of the existing water systems within the 13-counties; develop a geo-coded survey instrument, GIS mapping layers of the water systems in the region, and decision support system; and create regional goals, objectives, and ecological outcome metrics.