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# Regional Planning & Community Development 2010 Work Plan

## Introduction

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) is a ten-county public agency providing workforce development, economic development, and planning services in Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford Counties. This Work Plan outlines the projects, programs, and services that the NWMCOG Regional Planning Department will address throughout the calendar year. The Work Plan is developed with approval from the NWMCOG Planners Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC) and by the NWMCOG Board of Directors. The Work Plan's performance is measured by monthly reports completed by regional planning staff for distribution at the NWMCOG Board and its Planners Review and Advisory Committee.

Questions about the NWMCOG's Regional Planning and Community Development Work Plan should be directed to Matt McCauley, Director for Regional Planning and Community Development at (231) 929-5061 or by email at [mccauley@nwm.cog.mi.us](mailto:mccauley@nwm.cog.mi.us).

## Regional Planning and Community Development Department Goals:

- To provide technical assistance and education related to all aspects of planning – economic development, land use, transportation, watersheds, energy, environment, and housing, to empower local decision-making capabilities to improve quality of life in the region.
- To actively encourage communication, coordination, and information dissemination in the region.
- To act as a neutral convener and administrator of locally driven initiatives and partnership programs.

The Regional Planning and Community Development Department coordinates and supports planning activities across ten counties by:

- Operating as the regional census repository and providing relevant data and public perception information for a variety of topic areas related to regional quality of life and community development
- Providing computer mapping/Geographic Information Services for a variety of public and private uses
- Offering technical assistance and resources for economic development, land use, transportation, and environmental management activities
- Providing a forum for stakeholders within the region to explore common concerns and address them in a coordinated manner
- Developing and implementing regional and sub-regional projects that meet community needs and that foster regional community and economic development
- Organizing and facilitating education seminars and in-service trainings on topics of local interest, and creating and managing projects and programs

## 2010 NWMCOG REGIONAL PLANNING &amp; COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN

**I. Information, Communication, and Coordination****Foster exploration of common issues.**

Staff will convene meetings, assist with project or program development, assist with grant-writing, and implement programs that address issues of “greater than local” concern by community request.

**Convene Planner’s Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC) meetings**

Staff will organize and facilitate meetings that serve as a networking and learning forum for area planners.

**Convene Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) meetings.**

Staff will organize and facilitate meetings that serve as a networking and coordinated strategic planning and implementation forum for solid waste and resource recovery specialists in the ten-county area.

**Convene Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meetings.**

Staff will facilitate an Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) that will promote and enhance economic development activities in Northwest Lower Michigan.

**Convene Housing Task Force (HTF) meetings.**

Staff will organize and facilitate meetings that serve as a networking and coordinated strategic planning and implementation forum for affordable housing stakeholders in the ten-county area.

**Respond to requests for data and data analysis.**

NWMCOG receives and disseminates a wide variety of government-produced and proprietary data to local governments and the public.

**Host trainings on topics of interest identified by the PRAC or other regional stakeholders**

Staff will arrange or conduct informal in-service presentations or trainings for current issues, concerns, and special topics of regional interest as needed or by request. Most workshops will be held under the moniker “New Designs for Growth Learning Academy.”

**Sponsor regional planning awards program.**

Staff will manage this program which celebrates exceptional planning and development projects and services from nominations by communities in a variety of categories recognizing planning professionals, elected and appointed officials, planning projects and developments.

**Participate in planning meetings throughout the region.**

Staff will attend and/or convene meetings to provide a communication link or to coordinate various projects serving common needs among counties. Examples include regional solid waste meetings, transportation committees, housing committees, GIS committees, Emmet County Planners Forum, 2010 Census, law enforcement, watershed management, storm water, economic development, farmland and open space, etc.

**II. Transportation****Serve as a regional technical liaison between the region and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)**

Staff will communicate with MDOT, and coordinate and facilitate projects and provide data and technical assistance to local communities through a distinct Annual Transportation Work Plan established with MDOT. Special projects may include corridor studies, access management studies, HPMS Program (traffic counts), grant writing, program guidance, and other technical assistance.

**Leelanau Scenic (M-22, M-109, M-204) Heritage Route Implementation/Technical Assistance**

Staff will work with communities along the corridor in Leelanau County to implement enhancement, road safety, education, and preservation projects that fulfill the goals and objectives as stated in the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Management Plan

**M-119 Tunnel of Trees Heritage Route Implementation/Technical Assistance**

Staff will work with communities along the M-119 corridor in West Traverse, Readmond, Friendship, and Cross Village Townships to implement enhancement, road safety, education, and preservation projects that fulfill the goals and objectives as stated in the M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route Management Plan.

**M-37 Old Mission Peninsula Route Implementation/Technical Assistance**

Staff will work with the community along the M-37 corridor in Peninsula Township to implement enhancement, road safety, education, and preservation projects that fulfill the goals and objectives as stated in the Old Mission Scenic Heritage Route Plan.

**Grand Traverse Area Land Use and Transportation Study (The Grand Vision)**

Staff will provide technical assistance for active working and policy groups seeking to implement the Grand Vision.

**Asset Management**

Staff will work with individual counties towards the implementation of asset management statewide to enhance the productivity of investing in Michigan's roads and bridges through coordination and collaboration among state and local transportation agencies.

**TC-TALUS**

Staff will work with TC-TALUS to provide an administrative framework and supportive services for TC-TALUS. Additionally, both entities wish to cooperatively provide transportation and land use planning services in the TC-TALUS service region.

**Transit in the Region Study**

Staff will administer, in partnership with Bay Area Transit Authority, a coordination study that includes but is not limited to: an evaluation of existing BATA services; identification of new service centers including community college campuses and major retail/employment and residential centers; identification of new services to promote intermodalism with the regional trail system, park-n-rides, and inter-city buses; recommendations for new routes within urban center; recommendations for enhanced coordination with public transit agencies in four surrounding counties including new transfer centers, park-n-rides, and routes; creation of basic marketing plan to promote expanded services to new commuters and core riders.

**III. Land Use****New Designs for Growth**

Staff will design an outreach and education program, seek and secure additional funding, implement the program, and ensure the implementation of New Designs for Growth Guidebook principles.

**Provide GIS data and mapping services.**

Staff will provide GIS mapping services for both routine and special purposes per request of member counties and other entities, archive GIS records, and fulfill special needs and requests from non-member agencies and individuals in line with NWMCOG GIS and data sharing policies.

**Respond to requests for Master Plans and Recreation Plans**

Staff will provide planning services for both routine and special purposes per request of member counties and other entities.

## **IV. Economic and Community Development**

### **Serve as a liaison between the region and the U.S. Economic Development Administration**

Staff will work with local communities for the purpose of securing economic and community development funds from state and federal grants and loans.

### **Small Business Technology Development Center for Northwest Michigan (SBTDC)**

Staff will host and manage the Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC) program and deliver small business counseling and training services to existing companies and start-ups throughout the region.

### **Procurement/Exporting Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)**

Staff will provide bid specifications, consulting, and technical assistance to businesses to expand opportunities and create jobs through government contracting and exporting.

### **Prepare an annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report.**

Staff will prepare this annual report, which analyzes the region's economy, establishes economic development goals and objectives, and identifies projects and programs to achieve those goals. The report is prepared with input from the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Corporations, private businesses, and units of government.

### **Northwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum**

Staff will work with large and small businesses, public sector entities, colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, tribes, and nonprofit businesses to coordinate and implement tools for protecting quality of life, enhancing the bottom line, and promoting best management practices to create and preserve livable, sustainable communities.

### **Poverty Reduction Initiative**

Staff will support the efforts of the Poverty Reduction Initiative by providing data and coordination assistance.

### **Community Housing Choices**

Community Housing Choices wishes to increase affordable housing choices available in close proximity to existing communities and employment centers, in order to encourage healthy, sustainable communities. The CHC Program will work towards the development of programs and activities that address affordable housing for the area's workforce.

### **Regional Infrastructure Improvement Identification**

In anticipation of additional federal resources available for the purposes of infrastructure improvement, staff will identify regional infrastructure projects requiring additional funding.

### **Comprehensive Intelligent Development Strategy**

Staff will work with MSU to develop econometric and a co-learning plan for the development of economic development strategy focused around the Knowledge Economy.

### **From Grand Vision to Grand Action**

Staff will work with Rotary Charities, Michigan Land Use Institute, Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, TART Trails, TC-TALUS, and Northwestern Michigan College to develop action-based strategies that have come forth as a result of the Grand Vision, but are not included in the Grand Vision's direct scope of work. Activities will include assistance in areas of affordable housing, transit and trails, green infrastructure, promoting growth in existing development centers, and agriculture/food economy.

## **IV. Energy & Environmental Management**

### **Solid Waste Management**

Staff will work with counties regarding solid waste issues and provide assistance with management plan amendments and/or updates.

### **3e (Economy, Energy, & Environment)**

The 3e Planning Initiative will build local economic development capacity and enhance the goals of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by convening a local sector-based strategic initiative related to renewable energy and water resources.

### **Renewables for Local Governments Program**

The NWMCOG and SEEDS staff will assist two cohorts of local governments. The first cohort of governments will be the ten counties of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford. These counties will be the focus of grant activities in the first year of the grant, October 2009 – September 2010. County governments will be eligible for up to \$8,000 for an energy audit or equivalent service, plus up to \$40,000 for energy equipment and services. Staff will also be working with County “Green Teams” to better identify and communicate local energy efficiency goals.

### **Lake Charlevoix Watershed: Urban and Rural Solutions**

Staff will work with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to develop; schedule, and present training workshops for local officials and citizens on non-point source pollution prevention steps; joint planning efforts; and efforts towards enacting new or improved local zoning.

## **IV. Policy Initiatives**

### **Conduct policy research and development**

Staff will assist the Planner’s Review and Advisory Committee in developing and offering recommendations, resolutions, and position papers for action by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments Board of Directors. NWMCOG will partner with other stakeholders as necessary to educate, inform, or gather input from local communities about policy or legislative issues.

### **Partner with other regional planning agencies to promote policy initiatives**

Staff will work with local groups and the regional planning agencies in the state to promote policies of greater than regional interest. Similarly, if there are statewide initiatives that necessitate local attention, staff will present these issues to the Planners Review and Advisory Committee and the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments Board of Directors for review and action.

### **Represent the region’s interests in state and national level planning organizations.**

Staff will attend meetings and conferences at the state level including (but not limited to) those hosted by Michigan Association of Planning (MAP), Michigan Association of Regions (MAR), Michigan Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Michigan State University (MSU), Michigan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC), National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), National Association of regional Councils (NARC), and the Michigan Land Use Funders.