

MEETING NOTES

Michigan Association of Regions
July 29, 2014
Boulevard Inn & Bistro – Library Room
521 Lake Boulevard
Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085

John Weiss, Executive Director of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, facilitated a meeting of Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) grant recipients. Don Stypula introduced Mr. Weiss at 10:10 a.m. Lunch was served at 11:00 a.m. and the meeting lasted until 12:55 p.m.

People in attendance included:

- Amy Malmer, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
- Lee Adams, Southcentral Michigan Planning Council
- John Egelhaaf, Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission
- Linda Preston, Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission
- Derek Bradshaw, GLS Region V Planning and Development Commission
- Susan Pigg, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
- Jane Fitzpatrick, East Michigan Council of Governments
- Dave Bee, West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
- Diane Rekowski, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
- Robert Heilman, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
- Matt McCauley, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
- Jeff Hagan, Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission
- Joel Schultz, Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission
- Kim Stoker, Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region
- Erin Kuhn, West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
- Don Stypula, Michigan Association of Regions
- Dalrois McBurrows, Michigan Department of Transportation
- Chris Harkins, Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget
- Jillian McLaughlin, State of Michigan, Governor's Office
- Sara Wycoff, State of Michigan, Governor's Office
- John Weiss, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

John Weiss began the discussion by discussing the grant application process for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA/Region 4) that included four eligible applicants. The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) applied as the fiduciary along with the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC), the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC). The process was very open and is more of a journey that

began with different people meeting and building relationships. Several large meetings have occurred and a 25-person Steering Committee was appointed by the different sectors. The Steering Committee met in June in Ludington, and a week later met in Grand Rapids to hear from Governor Snyder. Other significant meetings included one held in conjunction with the Governor's 2014 Economic Summit in Grand Rapids and a pre-grant meeting at Fifth-Third Ball Park in Grand Rapids. A big part of the process is the identification of five projects of regional significance. Criteria were developed and projects were solicited from a very broad range of people and sectors. Next year, the WMPA will work to help implement the selected projects. Dave Bee from the WMRPC and Erin Kuhn from the WMSRDC agreed with Mr. Weiss' assessment of the program as a positive experience for everyone involved.

Lee Adams, from the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SCMPC), and John Egelhaaf, from the Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC), described the process used in the Southwest Prosperity Region (SPR/Region 8). This region also had several eligible applicants. The SWMPC is the applicant. At the beginning the Region met with resistance. They used a moderator and had a "getting to know you" process. They focused on process and collaboration. They are developing a transformation agenda and identifying ideas to move 4-5 projects forward.

Matt McCauley, from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG), described the Northwest Prosperity Region's (Prosperity Region 2) process that includes the augmentation of an existing plan. Each of the Plan's 10 chapters is a stand-alone piece that leads to the "Framework for our Future" and focuses on 32 centers of development. The process includes one-on-one interviews and an organizational piece that includes combining the COG and the Michigan Works Board to form a 63-person Regional Prosperity Board.

Diane Rekowski, from the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) described how NEMCOG coordinates the CDC (not always the case). The CEDS focuses on Clusters and Strategies and has several sub-categories including chambers, placemaking, and trails. The biggest outcome for the Northeast Prosperity Region (Prosperity Region 3) is that the Northeast Michigan Business Leaders are at the table. There is an August 15 deadline for the subcontractors.

Derek Bradshaw, from GLS Region V Planning and Development Commission, described the process for the East Michigan Prosperity Region (Prosperity Region 6). The Region focuses on the I-69 Corridor and the process includes talking to people. To show that it is not just a Flint initiative the Chair of the Region is from the thumb. Outcomes will include four projects that are coordinated with the CEDS and involve many partnerships.

Jane Fitzpatrick, from the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG), described the process for the East Central Michigan Prosperity Region (Region 5). One challenge is that the boundary is different and portions of EMCOG are covered by other regions for the Regional Prosperity Initiative. Region 5 has hired a consulting team to assist in the

process. Over 300 invitations were sent for a roundtable. Workforce and Adult Education are interested in the process. Manufacturers seem to have little interest in the process since they are uncertain of the process. There is a geographic challenge that includes Midland-Saginaw-Bay counties versus everybody else.

Joel Schultz, from the Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission (CUPPDRC), described the process for the Central UP Prosperity Region (Prosperity Region 1b). They are having monthly meetings with 35 people and are working to identify strategic initiatives and projects. The six counties already collaborate and the Region is housed with Workforce Development.

Kim Stoker, from the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR), described the process for the Western UP Prosperity Region (Prosperity Region 1a). They began by asking what are we looking for and what is Michigan looking for from this process. WUPPDR and the Western UP Prosperity Region are taking on many roles and have letters of support from 70 organizations. Expansion to all six counties is one activity and defining prosperity is another. Mr. Stoker feels Michigan created a mess and that the State should address their issues first. They have hired a person to determine how many organizations to interview and to define missions and service areas. There are too many CVB's and chambers. Seeing a lot of light from the process and having lots of meetings. Nobody had any idea of all of the assets.

Susan Pigg, from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), described the process for the South Central Prosperity Region (Prosperity Region 7). They started after the second round of grants. There are five entities in the Leaders Team: Chamber of Commerce, LEAP, Michigan Works, TCRPC, MSU & LCC. The CDC and CEDS Committee have been combined and are working on a review of what is important. It is a geographically small region and is familiar with their resources. The process is pulling in non-profits and others to discuss and identify prosperity. They have hired Munetrix to develop the Dashboard. They are having a roadshow to take the ideas to the area for feedback. The private sector does not seem as interested/involved in the process as the public sector. A "Grand Event" will be the final opportunity for input.

Jeff Hagan, from the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission (EUPRPDC), describe the process for the Eastern UP Prosperity Region (Prosperity Region 1c). They are sharing management between the Region and Workforce Development – Mr. Hagan is taking on both roles. Consolidation will occur through staff attrition. The area's existing strategies are still important. They have a 20 person advisory board and a 63-person stakeholder group.

Next, John Weiss asked what lessons people had learned and if there were any suggestions for the next round. He expressed that it was difficult to limit the Steering Committee to the "worker bees" that would commit the time and effort needed to finish the process. He also spent a lot of time making sure that expectations met reality. Dave Bee and Erin Kuhn both expressed that the effort could continue even if funding was discontinued since everybody enjoys the process and benefits from collaboration. Mr.

Bee expressed that he did try to get the group to have more detailed criteria and a project submission forms since Regions have been gathering projects for decades, but he did not push the issue and has gotten a lot better at not arguing over such details.

John Egelhaaf stated that the Region had been more insular in the past. He proposes a much larger meeting to get the group to open up more.

Jane Fitzpatrick felt the initiative was a discovery process, and that while collaboration is occurring there are silos and that some will always resist others in the group.

Susan Pigg stated that there is a strong core of economic developers and questioned how to measure prosperity.

Derek Bradshaw expressed surprise that other areas were struggling like Genesee County and Flint.

The meeting was then turned over to Sara Wycoff and Chris Harkins. The State has set aside \$3.5 million for FY 2015. Last year \$3.3 million was requested and \$2.5 million was allocated. They described the difference between one-time funding and ongoing funding. The State is updating the application process and will want to know what everyone is doing and what the benefits are. Feedback on the future application is "keep it simple". Applications will be available October 1, 2014 and will be due November 1, 2014. There will only be one round of applications this year and funding will begin January 1, 2015. The Prosperity Team will be available for presentations in August. Jane Fitzpatrick asked who approves plans (answer was 2/3 vote of collaborative). Ms. Wycoff emphasized that state agencies should be partners in the process, not drivers of the process. More involvement is needed from MEDC, MDNR, MDARD – this will happen in 2015. MDOT is a good partner. Ms. Wycoff stated that Prosperity Regions are now the buzz. All regions are planning on participating in 2015.