



Region 8 Prosperity Committee Meeting Agenda

MEETING DATE: April 7, 2016
MEETING TIME: 2:30 pm
MEETING LOCATION: W.E. Upjohn Institute
300 S Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

1. **Call to Order & Introductions**
2. **Action:** Approval of the Agenda
3. **Action:** Approval of the Minutes
4. **Action:** Election of Chair
 - a. Nominations:
 - i. Michael Evans
 - ii. Ken Jones
5. **Citizen Comments**
6. **Discussion:** Monthly Financial Report
7. **Discussion:** Regional Initiatives
 - a. Updates on state projects with RPI involvement
8. **Discussion/Action:** Project Selection
 - a. Review project preferences expressed and choose project area
9. **Discussion:** Long-Term Vision for Prosperity Committee/Organization
 - a. Discuss the future of RPI
10. **Committee Member Comments**
11. **Action:** Adjournment

***Next Meeting: May 5, 2016 at
The Van Buren County Technology Center
250 South Street, Lawrence, MI 49064***

Southwest Michigan RPI Collaborative Committee

March 3, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Therese Cody, Ben Damerow, Michael Evans, Bridgette Jones, Jason Latham, Deb Miller, Dan Peat (delegate of Corey Carolla) Jon Start

Committee Members Absent: Dennis Berkebile, Jill Bland, Corey Carolla, Barbara Craig, Luann Harden, Grant Fletcher, Kenneth High, Lynn Johnson, Ken Jones, Pat Karr, Jan Karazim, Shelley Klug, Juanita Miller, David Reid, Ron Reid, Richard Remus, Barbara Rose, Rachel Wade

Also Present: Lee Adams, John Egelhaaf, Rebecca Harvey

Call to Order

Start called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Introduction of Members

Introductions of Committee members and guests were made.

Approval of Agenda

Start stated that Dennis Berkebile has resigned his position as Chair requiring that a discussion of elections be added to the agenda. It was agreed that the matter would be added as an agenda item after 'Citizen Comments'.

It was then noted that a quorum of the Committee was not present and so there could be no formal action to approve the agenda. The Committee members present agreed to move forward with the agenda as amended.

Approval of Minutes

It was again noted that a quorum of the Committee was not present and so there could be no formal action to approve the February 4, 2016 minutes. The Committee members present agreed that the draft minutes were acceptable as presented.

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Citizen Comments

No citizen comment was offered.

Election of Chair

Start explained that Dennis Berkebile had recently announced his resignation as Committee Chair and that the nomination/election of a new chair was in order. Given the lack of a quorum present, it was noted that the election of a new chair could not be held. It was agreed that a request for nominations would go out to the Committee membership and that nominations would be accepted by email for an election at the April meeting.

Education Session: *Transportation Funding*

Jason Latham of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) presented an educational program on transportation funding and MDOT's transportation program development process. With the use of a power point presentation and handouts, Latham addressed the following: MDOT's approach to managing highway investments; federal/state revenues available; investment strategies; call for projects; condition strategies; project selection and submittal; and the Five-Year Transportation Program.

Referencing service life maps, the following was noted:

- In 2007, 93% of state roads were classified in 'good condition'.
- In 2012, only 86% were considered in 'good condition'.
- Transportation funding is not keeping up with the deterioration of the roads.
- The gas tax has remained at the same level for years; more fuel efficient cars have greatly impacted revenues for road maintenance.

Latham explained that an MDOT road project generally involves one year for data collection - - 2 years for environmental impact analysis - - and 2 years for design . . . which means that the 5-Year Plan scheduled for adoption in two weeks will generally be identifying 2022 projects.

Through Committee discussion of the presentation, the following was noted:

- The quality of our roads impacts the region's ability to attract business/jobs.
- As a region we must get better at preventing our roads from falling into 'bad' condition.

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- I-94 is a major business corridor in the country with regional economic impacts.
- 'Freight-related funding' is also being accessed to address upgrades to I-94.
- Limited funding means a focus on roadway maintenance and not building capacity. . ie, no big projects are envisioned.
- Transportation funding is beginning to forward Michigan's 'placemaking' message by focusing dollars on urban corridors that connect centers/nodes.

General Committee discussion ensued regarding how the RPI can impact the process. In recognition of the public input challenges, it was agreed that the 'message' should be broadened and that the RPI could have a voice in helping to identify targeted or strategic improvements that would be tied to regional prosperity.

General deliberation continued regarding Michigan's educational opportunities on 'placemaking' and the value of using a 'charrette' approach in mapping solutions. Evans opined that finding the right type of engagement is the key . . the RPI could focus on becoming the best at such an approach and bring that skill to the 'regional table'.

Regional Initiatives

Evans: reported that the new GED standards (2013-2014) are resulting in improved graduation rates and increased movement toward college enrollment.

Start: the draft of the State's mobility study will be released soon; development of a 20-year plan for the Amtrak corridor is underway.

Financial Report and 2016 Budget

Egelhaaf referenced the 2016 Financial Report and provided an overview of the new format. He noted that the 2016 Budget reflects the prioritized work program developed by the Committee in February.

He then referenced the RPI Project Funding Schedule 2015-2016 generated to reflect the grant awards and expended/unexpended grant dollars for the six project grants awarded in 2015.

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Funding to Local Partners

Egelhaaf/Adams provided an overview of the 2016 RPI Project Selection outline developed by the Executive Committee. It was noted that the following three options are suggested:

- 1 – Follow **the same RFP process** as was used in 2015.
- 2 – Follow **a flexible RFP process** where proposals are solicited across the three ‘goal areas’.
- 3 – Design a project that will focus on yielding **a single regional flagship project**.

It was noted that the outline further provides ‘single project ideas’ for consideration based upon the priorities expressed by the Committee in February.

Andrew (Governor’s Office) stated that a proposal for one or two impactful projects would be received well by the State and would be likely to receive more generous funding.

Committee members expressed support for Option 3 - - a single regional project. It was suggested that such a project should be unique to the RPI and not repeat what is already being done elsewhere. Egelhaaf referenced the project criteria applied by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance to identify ‘projects of regional economic importance’. He noted the criteria are as follows:

- Long term impact/sustainability
- Regional impact
- Provides employment opportunities
- Recognizes regional challenges
- Promotes public/private partnerships

The members present expressed support for the single-project approach . . . and agreed that discussion should now focus on the selection of a project. Egelhaaf/Adams were directed to survey the Committee membership to 1) ask for project ideas, and then 2) ask for a response to the list of ideas generated. Such an approach was thought to allow for movement forward on the selection of a project outside of the limitations of the regular meeting schedule.

Member Observation: If a non-topic member can talk the topic . . . then we have an RPI brand.

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Strategic Planning

Committee members agreed that discussion of the long-term vision for the RPI and its movement to Tier 2 would be postponed to the April meeting when more Committee members are present.

Committee Member Comments

No Committee member comments were offered.

Adjournment

There being no further items for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Next Meeting: April 7, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. – W.E. Upjohn Institute, Kalamazoo

Broadband

Dan Manning from Connect Michigan provided the Prosperity Committee a "state of the region for broadband" presentation in February. Based on his presentation action is available to the RPI to identify gaps in our regional broadband coverage and explore tactics to fill those gaps. <http://www.connectmi.org/get-involved>

Connecting Education, Business, and Community Development to Enhance Talent

The region would, in many ways, increase the competitive value of area businesses through the retention and development of the local workforce while attracting talented workers from outside the region. Other regions in the state have developed coordinated efforts to align resources around talent in their region; most notably, leaders in the West Michigan Region created the Talent 2025 initiative (<http://talent2025.org/>). The Region 8 Prosperity Committee has the opportunity to combine RPI funding with local funding and expertise to create a unique effort designed to retain and develop the current and future workforce while attracting talent to the region. Furthermore, the project would help to convene partners from the many systems working to attract, develop, and retain students and workers in the region. If successful, this project will convene and leverage the outstanding existing resources and programs in the region to develop a strong singular focus designed to more strongly connect and enhance the transitions between the talent pipeline and businesses in the region.

Public Transportation Service Uniformly Oriented toward Client/User

A high functioning public transit system represents a bridge between employer needs for a reliable workforce and the rider's need for affordable, predictable, respectful transportation provision. MDOT has just begun to look at gaps in transit service between service areas. Their study is a step in the right direction but is merely scratching the surface of a much greater need. It is possible that coordination between transit service providers is achievable. What changes could be implemented that might create better linkages between service providers? And what changes could be implemented that might allow providers to better fit the needs of business? There are Incentives to Help Employers and their Employees Access alternative modes of Commuting to work: <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/programs/clearinghouse/commutebenefits/>

Rail (Freight, Passenger)

The network for rail in southwest Michigan represents a significant opportunity to move people and freight in a more effective and efficient way than it currently does. What are the needs of business and passengers (both existing and potential) in southwest Michigan? What changes can be made to better match the need to the service provided?

Some resources from MDOT on Passenger and Freight Rail:

Passenger Rail In the Chicago-Kalamazoo Corridor: <http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-11056-254087--,00.html>

The MDOT Freight Economic Development Program:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/FEDP_Summary_2014_476623_7.pdf

Regional Food System

Agriculture is an essential piece of the economy in southwest Michigan. Our ability to grow a wide variety of non-citrus fruit, vegetables, and commodity grains is unique. Some areas of our region grow the widest variety of produce outside of California. Our agricultural bounty is sometimes in stark contrast to pockets within our region with virtually no access to fresh produce. Our farmers should be prosperous and everyone in our region should have easy access to the food we grow. Can we build a fresh food network that connects all links in the food "value chain" across the entire southwest Michigan region?

MSU has a world class Center to Develop Regional Food Systems:

<http://foodsystems.msu.edu/about>

Tapping the Resources of Education to Solve Regional Challenges

Though we have been collaborating for two years we have never discussed the possibility of identifying issues and asking for university brain power to help collectively solve them. Perhaps the RPI can harness a portion of the immense student and professorial capacity of our education partners and apply them to specific regional issues like those identified above.

Through studios, labs, research practicum and a wide variety of other means, our education partners could provide vital findings back to RPI that could drive our future actions. This in and of itself could be an investment that RPI makes back to its college and university partners.

Results of the Project Survey

Project	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Regional Broadband	4	4	4	0	4	16	2.75
Career Pathways	2	4	3	3	4	16	3.19
Enhanced Talent	2	2	0	5	7	16	3.81
Public Transportation	2	2	5	6	1	16	3.13
Rail Study	5	3	2	4	1	15	2.53
Regional Food System	6	2	3	3	2	16	2.56
Tapping Education Resources	0	0	5	6	3	14	3.86

Project	1	2	3	4	5
Regional Broadband	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Career Pathways	12.5%	25.0%	18.8%	18.8%	25.0%
Enhanced Talent	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	31.3%	43.8%
Public Transportation	12.5%	12.5%	31.3%	37.5%	6.3%
Rail Study	33.3%	20.0%	13.3%	26.7%	6.7%
Regional Food System	37.5%	12.5%	18.8%	18.8%	12.5%
Tapping Education Resources	0.0%	0.0%	35.7%	42.9%	21.4%

