Northwest Lower Michigan Region # 10

2021

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Produced by Networks Northwest
for

Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee and Wexford Counties

Preface

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, referred to as the "CEDS", is the result of the community of Northwest Lower Michigan convening to define and improve the regional economic conditions that affect communities in their local economic development efforts.

The process undertaken for the development of the CEDS is that of seeking collaborative open communication amongst the region's Economic Development Organizations and economic development stakeholders. The business community, employers, employees, elected & appointed officials and the public at large are afforded the opportunity to provide comment on the plan and process through a required thirty day public review period upon completion of the draft document.

The CEDS process was initiated in late 2020 with the development of a scope of work within the Networks Northwest Community Development Department. The scope of work outlined a process to be undertaken that contracted with our local Economic Development Organizations (EDO's) for the recruitment of Task Force Members that would lend expertise and knowledge to the process. The EDO's would disseminate information to the local County level as well as to the regional level task force group and Community Development Staff.

Community Development Staff duties were process facilitation, meeting preparation and timeline management, research and information gathering, document section and appendix preparation, and review and approval proceedings for the completed CEDS.

A full account of the document development process can be found in Appendix A.

Acknowledgments

We want to express our gratitude to the following organizations for assistance with the process and development of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

We also wish to express gratitude to the Economic Development Administration for their guidance and funding assistance to the project.

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Address inquiries regarding this publication to: Networks Northwest Community Development Department

P.O. Box 506
Traverse City, MI 49685
(231) 929-5000
www.NetworksNorthwest.org

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Introduction

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy should align and support the Vision and Mission of the supporting agencies. Networks Northwest has been a convener of discussions involving economic development within our region for over four decades. The Vision and the Mission of the organization seek to support our region's communities through collaboration.

VISION STATEMENT - We envision a diverse and resilient economy in northwest Michigan with vibrant unique communities.

MISSION STATEMENT - Our mission is to build stronger communities and enhance the quality of life in Northwest Michigan by providing a regional framework for effective collaboration among integrated service networks and by directly providing services related to talent, business, and community development.

Regional Geography

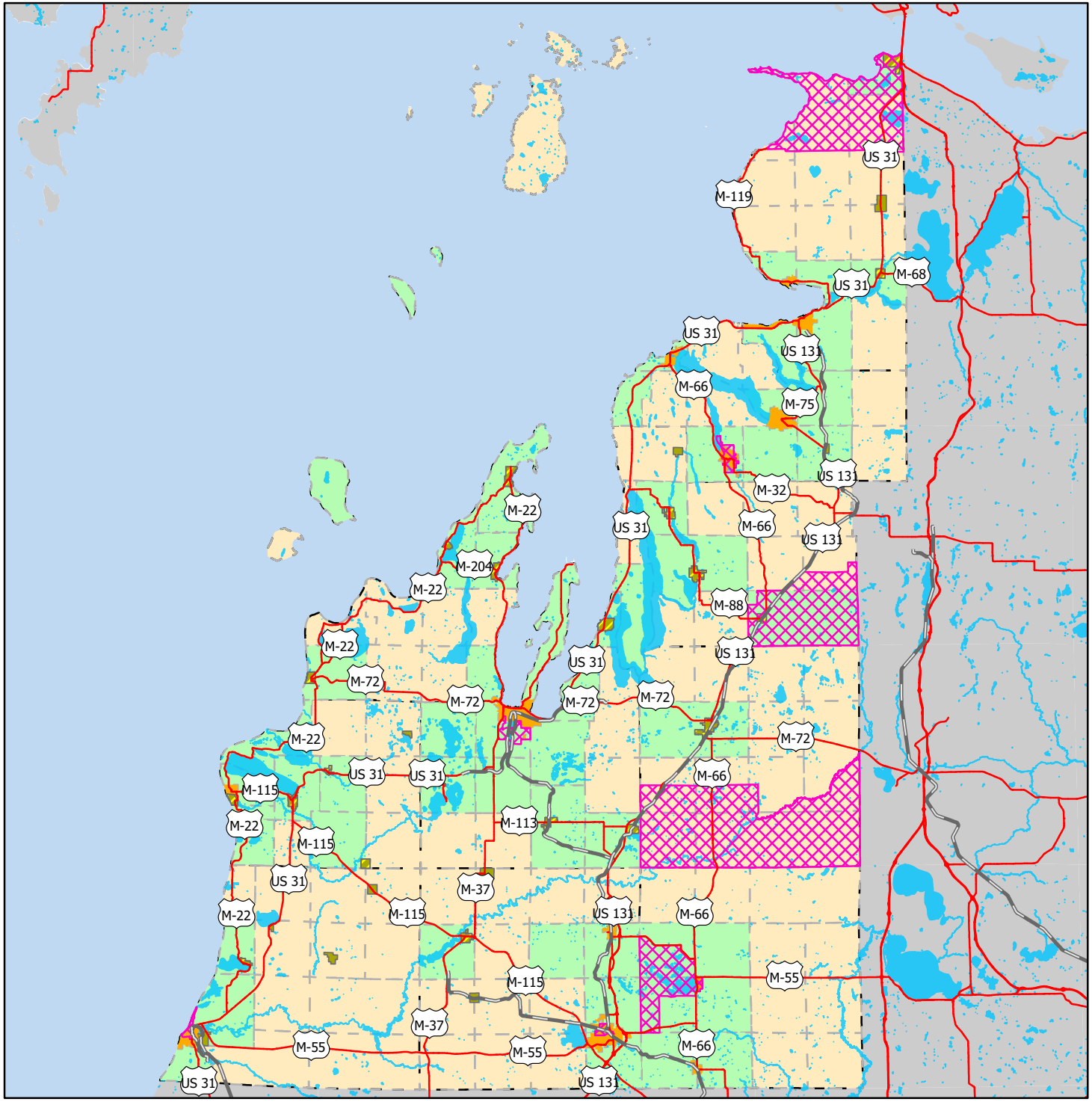
A popular tourist destination, Northwest Michigan is home to several small to medium-sized communities extensive state and national forests, lakes and rivers, and a large portion of Lake Michigan shoreline. The region has a significant seasonal population much like other regions that depend on tourism as an important industry in the region.

Northwest Lower Michigan is a ten-county region encompassing Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford Counties. There are several growth and investment areas in the region with Traverse City and Cadillac considered metropolitan areas by the Census Bureau based on their respective population densities. Outside of these urban areas, a rural atmosphere, with villages, parks, farms, orchards, vineyards, forests, and coastal lands all contribute to the local and regional economies.

There are 190 incorporated political jurisdictions in the ten-county region, which are organized as village, township, city, and county governments. The most prevalent unit of local government in the region is township government with a total of 139 in northwest Lower Michigan. In addition to general purpose local governments, there are numerous special purpose local governments. There are three federally recognized Native American Tribes, forty-one school districts, four intermediate school districts and three community colleges. Special districts and authorities such as downtown development authorities, transit authorities and library boards also overlay and sometimes overlap the general purpose geopolitical boundaries.

The map on the accompanying page displays the communities within the Northwest Lower Michigan Planning Region # 10. Individual County maps for each of the 10 counties located in our region can be found in Appendix B.

Northwest Lower Michigan Region # 10



Legend

- Highways
- Railroad
- Hydrology
- Great Lakes
- Qualified Opportunity Zone
- G&I Areas Cities
- G&I Areas Villages
- All Villages
- Surrounding G&I Twps.
- All Townships
- NW MI Counties
- Counties Outside Region

N

Miles

0 5 10 20

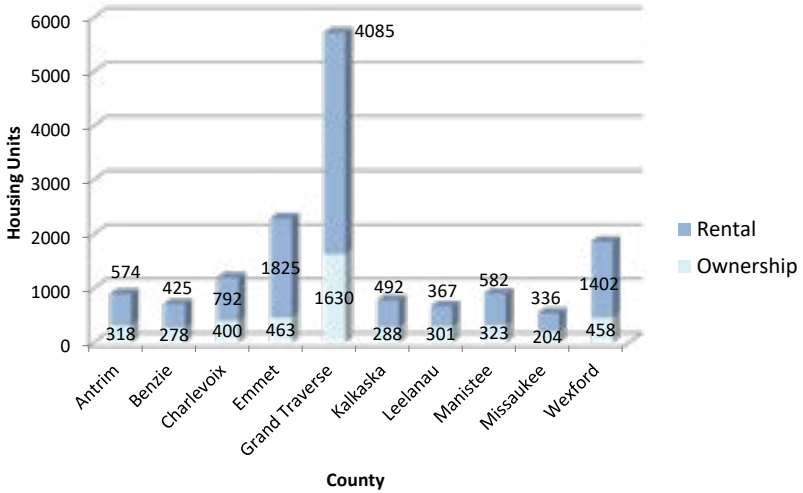
Map produced by Networks Northwest Community Development 5/25/2021

A Summary of the Economic Conditions in Northwest Michigan

The CEDS summary background information for the northwest Michigan region answers the question "What have we done?" It describes the current economic conditions (see Appendix C) and helps present a clear understanding of the relevant economic issues. The data presented in the summary background and appendices is important to connect with the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis discussed later in the CEDS.

Housing

Housing is one of our most basic human needs: where we live affects our health, wealth, access to opportunity and quality of life. Without safe, adequate, affordable housing, individuals face serious challenges to meeting their basic needs. When area residents struggle to meet their basic housing needs impacts are felt throughout the community. On our roads, residents commute further between work and home, in our schools, we struggle with declining enrollment as young families leave our communities to find more affordable housing; and in our businesses, which lose customers when residents have less disposable income due to high housing and transportation costs.



Projected Rental/Ownership Housing Unit Need by NWMI County

Source: Networks Northwest

Shortages of affordable housing exist throughout the Northwest region of Michigan, and because of this, many families live farther from jobs, schools, and shopping to find homes they can afford. Housing shortages also occur when developers focus on building large single-family homes which have been profitable for developers in the past but do not meet the needs of the community. Focusing on building single-family homes limits the potential for building other types of housing in the region such as rental units, mixed use developments, smaller houses for senior citizens, and housing for those with disabilities.

Finally, costs are being driven up by suppliers unable to keep pace with the demand and by an unprecedented increase in construction costs of land, labor and materials, particularly in high-growth areas of Michigan.

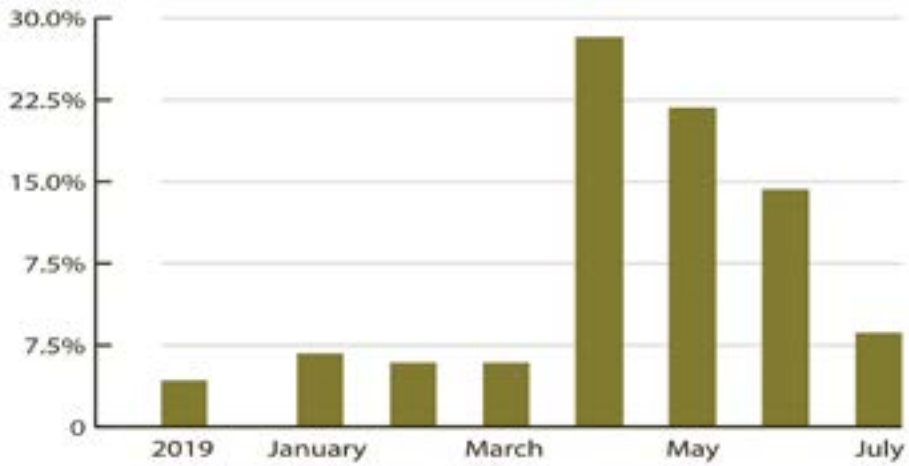
The good news is that the region is served by numerous public agencies, nonprofits, and private sector interests that endeavor to address the full impact of these affordable housing challenges.

Workforce Talent - Capacity, Attraction and Retention

The following sets of data show information about our local workforce. This data shows us that:

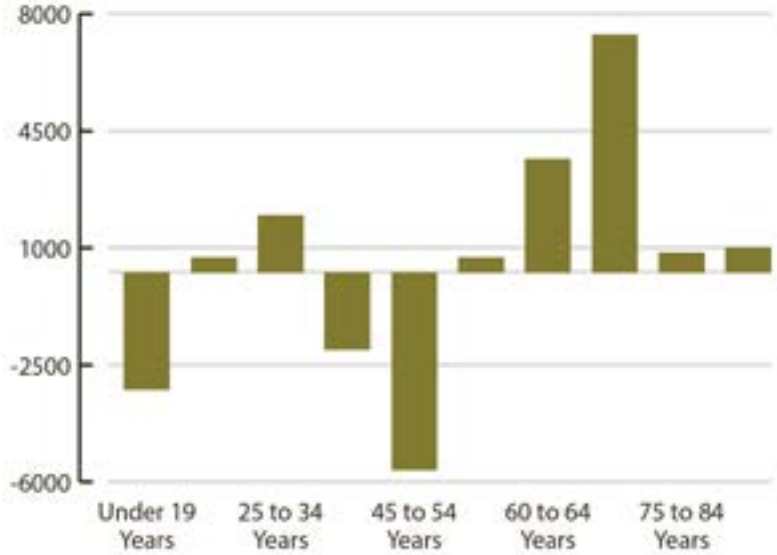
- Unemployment rates spiked in April 2020 but have been steadily declining ever since.
- Approximately 24% of the region's workforce have "Some College, No Degree" as their highest level of education; more work should be done to determine actual credentials held by the workforce, regardless of whether a college degree is attained.
- The working-age population has declined in the past five years. Since the number of those under the age of 19 has also declined, we expect that this trend will continue in the future. At the same time, retirement and near-retirement age groups have increased so significantly that the overall population has increased.

The year 2020 has shown the first significant spike in unemployment since the great recession, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unemployment rate for all of 2019 was 4.1% for the region, with January 2020 through March 2020 showing similar numbers. The spike in April 2020, the height of business shut-downs, registered 27.4%. Fortunately, this number has been steadily declining ever since.



NWMI Unemployment, year 2020

Source: Fourth Economy

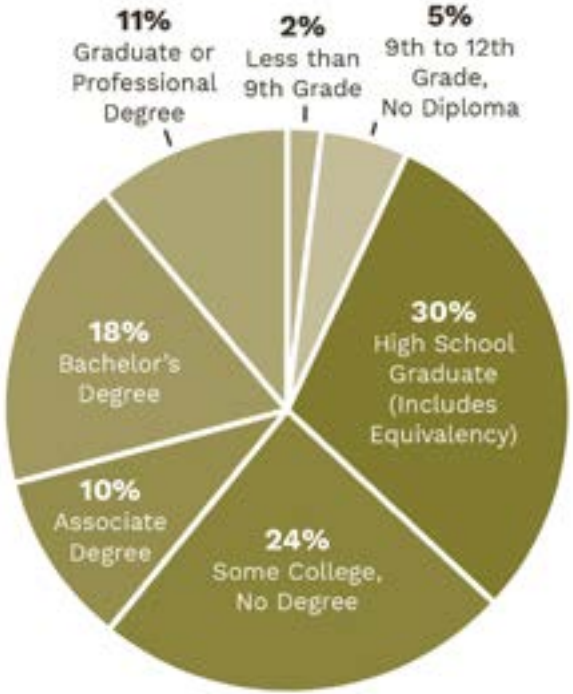


NWMI Age Cohort Fluctuation Since 2013

Source: Fourth Economy

Approximately 60% of the population has less than an Associates Degree. While that may fit with the overall distribution of projected job demand by educational attainment, it is not sufficient for high-wage, high-demand jobs. In addition, the category "Some College, No Degree" does not accurately reflect the shorter-term credentials that may be held by local talent.

Since 2013, the population ages 35 to 54 has decreased significantly. At the same time, all population groups over the age of 55 have increased. The population under 19 years has decreased as well, indicating continued future decreases of working-age populations.

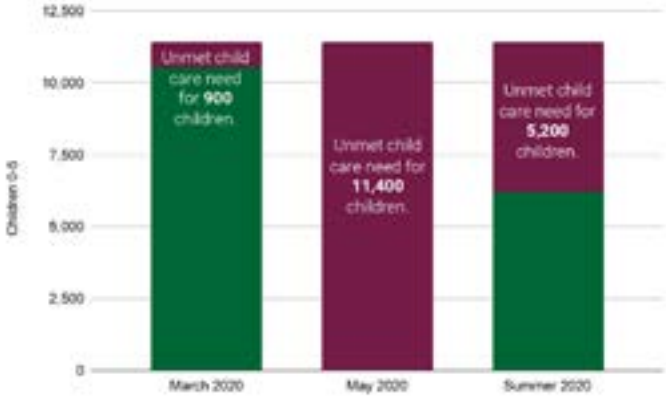


NWMI Education Distribution

Source: Fourth Economy

Child Care

There are approximately 11,400 children aged 0-5 with all parents in the labor force in Northwest Michigan (NWMI). Even before COVID-19, there was already a gap in childcare capacity of about 900 children. The closure of child care providers creates immediate impacts and damages the workforce. A recent analysis by the Center for Progress indicates that as much as 41% of capacity statewide could be lost long-term without strong federal support. This could leave thousands of parents in the region without child care options, which for many will be a barrier to employment.



NWMI Childcare Need

Source: Fourth Economy

Pandemic

In the spring of 2020, the State of Michigan issued orders to temporarily restrict in-person work, travel, and gatherings in public places in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus and to protect public safety. Michigan was one of many states to do so. As a result, significant economic disruption occurred throughout Northwest Lower Michigan that affected businesses, families, and local units of government. A Covid-19 Impact Analysis prepared by Fourth Economy identified the following economic impacts associated with government's response to COVID-19:

- It is estimated that 23% of workers were able to work from home during the pandemic.
- Nearly 24% of workers in the region were not able to work from home which led to furloughs and terminations.
- The tourism sector is a major employer in Northwest Michigan and was hit hard by the pandemic leading to lasting impacts due to the global pandemic. The region has seen a decline in travel and hotel occupancies, leading to the cancellation of the 2020 National Cherry Festival in Traverse City, Michigan.

Climate Change

Climate Scientists have presented objective data concerning expected changes to our region. The following data and figures were gathered from the National Conference of State Legislatures, with a document titled "Michigan-Assessing the Costs of Climate Change". During the past century, Michigan's average temperature has risen by 3.9 Degrees. Models indicate that Michigan could become hotter and drier throughout this century. By 2030, Michigan summers will resemble those of present-day Ohio. Precipitation is also projected to increase by 20 percent to 40 percent in the Midwest. However, the increase in summer and winter temperatures will outweigh the predicted increase in precipitation causing an overall drier climate in Michigan that:

- Threatens the integrity of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence shipping route.
- Will cause northward migration of plant and animal species, effecting state hunting, fishing, wildlife, and nature tourism industries.
- Is likely to affect agriculture and forestry.

One major indicator of rising Michigan temperatures is the reduction of ice cover on the great lakes during winter months. Grand Traverse Bay's winter ice coverage has steadily decreased. Prior to 1950 Grand Traverse Bay would ice over eight of ten winters. Since the early 2000's the bay has iced over three of ten winters.

The Great Lakes are also likely to experience changes in surface temperature, evaporation rates, surface currents and ice cover affecting water levels. Some models predict that water levels in the Great Lakes will decline 1.5 feet to 8 feet by 2100, disrupting commercial shipping infrastructure, recreational boating and hydroelectric power production.

SHIPPING AND MANUFACTURING IMPACT

Manufacturing, the largest economic sector in the state, contributes approximately 18 percent of the gross state product and depends on the seaway for cost-effective transport of goods. If water levels continue to drop along the route, expensive channel dredging will be necessary. It is estimated by 2030, dredging along the entire Great Lakes-St. Lawrence shipping route could cost up to $154 million annually.9

If Great Lakes water levels decrease as expected, system connectivity along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence route could decline by 25 percent. This could cause an annual economic loss of almost $1.5 billion in foreign trade for ports in Detroit, Muskegon and Huron. The increased dredging needs in just the Port of Detroit may result in annual losses of $142 million and more than 1,500 jobs. The entire state could lose an additional $2.6 billion and 13,000 jobs from lost imports and exports.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

Flooding events predicted to occur more often as climatic changes produce more heavy rainstorms threaten the entire population. Michigan contains 36,000 miles of rivers and streams that may overflow, causing significant damage.

High Water Erosion of Shoreline- Manistee County
Source: Networks Northwest

AGRICULTURE

A recent Michigan State University report calculated that agriculture and related industries added $63.3 billion to Michigan's economy. The report further estimated that 725,000 people are directly employed in the industry and that it presents high future growth potential.

Rising temperatures and higher precipitation levels have been shown to increase soil erosion. Researchers estimate that soil erosion causes losses of nearly twice the value of crops produced. If precipitation levels rise, Michigan could see annual economic losses from soil erosion up to $20.7 billion.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Michigan offers a wide array of wildlife-related and outdoor activities. An estimated 3.5 million people or 35 percent of the Michigan population participate in fishing, hunting or wildlife observation. A total of $3.3 billion was spent on these three activities in 2001. Tourism generated profits of more than $14.4 billion, and 157,200 jobs are directly related to tourism. Snow sports also contribute substantially to Michigan's economy. According to the Michigan Snowmobile Association, an average snowmobiler spends $150 per day on a trip; many trips last five days or more. The sport contributes more than $1 billion to the state economy. The 16 ski facilities in the state generated nearly $50 million in 2002. All are at risk due to climate change.

Broadband

Today, the success of a state has become dependent on how well it is connected to the global economy and how those connections are leveraged to improve the quality of life for its residents, the sustainability and growth of its businesses, the delivery of services by its institutions, and the overall economic development of its communities. Broadband has become a foundation for economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness, and a better way of life.

The following is a snapshot of Michigan's broadband landscape:

- Michigan ranks 30th among other states and territories for broadband availability. An estimated 368,000 rural Michigan households do not have access to broadband.

Farm - Antrim County
Source: Networks Northwest

- Nearly 2 million Michigan households (48%) have access to only one fixed, terrestrial Internet service provider
- Just over $2.5 billion in potential economic benefit is left unrealized among those households not connected.
- Approximately 93.7% of households in non-rural areas have access to broadband with a speed of at least 25/3 Mbps while only 75.3% of rural households have access to similar connections. Rural broadband availability in Michigan has not kept pace with availability in non-rural areas.
- Tele-medicine application is estimated to add $522,000 to rural economies. Tele-medicine also reduces hospitalizations for nursing home patients and generates savings for Medicare.
- Communities without access to real-time data experience 25% higher rates of injuries and crime.
- In a study of manufacturers, 40% stated they were able to add new customers and 57% realized cost savings because of their broadband connections.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the fundamental facilities and systems serving a country, state, county, township, or city and is necessary for its economy to function. Infrastructure includes roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, dams, transit, aviation, railways, energy and schools. Infrastructure is the foundation of our

everyday lives and touches all parts of how we live, work and play in Michigan. It is the backbone of Michigan's economy.

Our transportation system (roads, bridges, transit, rail, etc.) allows Michiganders to travel to work every day, or up north for summer weekends by the lake. Water systems deliver drinking water to our homes, communities, and businesses. School buildings provide a safe place for our children to learn. Sewer and treatment systems protect our neighborhoods from floods, and our lakes, rivers, and beaches from raw sewage, E. coli and other toxins.

Unfortunately, most of Michigan's infrastructure is old, outdated and in need of repair. In older Michigan cities, some systems date back to the late 1800s. For close to a decade now the state has suffered from a poor economy, resulting in Michigan under investing in infrastructure. The following summaries and data were retrieved from the "2018 Report Card for Michigan's Infrastructure", prepared by the American Society of Civil Engineers, Michigan Section.

BRIDGES

Michigan's over 11,000 bridges are critical connections in our surface transportation system, providing crossings over waterways, roads and railroads. A deteriorating and inadequate highway transportation system costs Michigan motorists billions of dollars every year in wasted time and fuel, injuries and fatalities caused by traffic crashes, as well as wear and tear on their vehicles. Approximately 1,234 bridges (11%) of the state's 11,156 bridges are structurally deficient.

DAMS

Michigan's approximately 2,600 dams support water supply, irrigation, hydro-power, and in some cases, recreation. There are 140 high hazard potential dams in the state. (Hazard potential is not an indication of the dam's condition, but an indication for the potential for loss of life and property damage if the dam were to fail.) According to condition assessment data in the National Inventory of Dams, the state's high hazard dams have an average rating of "fair," scoring about 79 on a 100-point scale. According to the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission Report, $225 million is needed in additional state funding over the next 20 years to manage our aging dams in Michigan to avoid dam failures similar to the 2020 failures of the Edenville and Sanford dams in Midland Michigan.

DRINKING WATER

Michigan is nearly surrounded by the Great Lakes, which contain 21% of the world's fresh water, and is served by multiple subsurface aquifers. Yet certain drinking water system "owners" (e.g., municipalities) face scarcity concerns, contamination, and aging treatment/distribution systems that are not aligned with drinking water user needs. According to Public Sector Consultants and 21st Century Infrastructure Commission reports, failure to adequately plan for and fund drinking water infrastructure could lead to major crises affecting millions of the State's residents.

ENERGY

Michigan's energy systems generally meet current needs. The status is threatened by increasing energy dependence and demand for high service reliability coupled with aging infrastructure, lack of investment to preserve function, exposure to physical and cyber threats, congestion, and dependence on externally sourced fossil and nuclear fuels.

RAIL SYSTEMS

Michigan's rail system has approximately 3,600 miles of track that are operated by 26 private railroad companies. Roughly 33 million tons move into the state and 22 million tons move out of the state by rail, with 436,240 tons moving within our region. Freight rail movements are projected to increase 49.8%, to 148 million tons, by 2030. Public dollars fund public at-grade crossing improvements and some very limited capital improvements.

Sanford Dame Failure - Midland County (outside region)

Source: Insider (Kelly McLaughlin)

ROADS

Based on a 2019 assessment, 40% of Northern Michigan paved roads are rated in poor condition, 31% rated in fair condition, and just 29% are rated in good condition. In 2015, Michigan's governor signed into law a road-funding package that relies on a combination of increased user fees, registration fees and general funds. These funds will assist state and local governments in moving forward with numerous transportation projects.

EDUCATION FACILITIES

The condition of Michigan's education facilities varies widely both across the state, and within individual regions and districts. Access to funding for school facility improvements is largely based on the size of the local property tax base. The condition of Michigan's K through 12 schools varies based on a region's propensity to support property taxes for schools, and the value of the region's taxable property. Overall, Michigan's schools have stabilized and shown slight improvements in enrollment numbers and facility funding.

SOLID WASTE SYSTEMS

Overall, Michigan's collection, transfer and disposal infrastructure is robust, with approximately 27 years of landfill disposal capacity remaining. Michigan is beginning to actively shift its overall solid waste philosophy toward a sustainable materials management approach to create economic opportunities through waste diversion, beneficial reuse, and recycling programs.

STORM WATER SYSTEMS

Michigan lacks a systematic approach to inventorying, operating and maintaining a storm water infrastructure, and few communities have dedicated funding sources for storm water systems.

Suttons Bay
Stormwater Improvement
Source: Networks Northwest

BATA - Traverse City
Source: Networks Northwest

TRANSIT SYSTEMS

While a majority of Michigan's residents have access to some form of public transportation, the reliability and availability of these services to many areas are inadequate, and some rural systems are unable to adequately meet transit demands. All ten counties in the region have some form of transit service through public transit agencies and specialized providers. Transit may be limited in some areas in both terms of the service area and/or the individuals served. Federal funds for rural services are awarded to Michigan and programmed by the Michigan Department Of Transportation (MDOT).

WASTE WATER SYSTEMS

Michigan is surrounded by four of the five Great Lakes, and the state's 3,288 miles of shoreline are fed by 11,000 inland lakes, 51,000 miles of river systems and 6,500,000 acres of wetlands. It is essential that these valuable assets are protected, and our $15 billion water economy is sustained by proper operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of our wastewater infrastructure. Michigan has been making great strides in asset management with assistance from the Department of Environmental Quality's Storm water, Asset Management, and Wastewater grant funding.

AVIATION

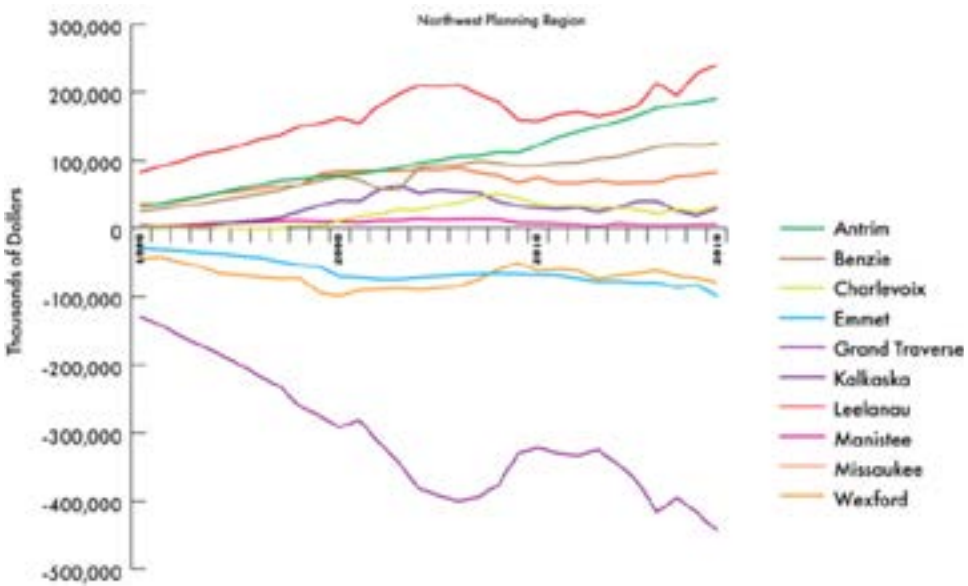
The region has two airports classified as "small non-hub airports" and numerous "local basic" and "unclassified" airports throughout the region. The bulk of capital funding improvements to the aviation system are provided with federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The conditions and overall safety of the aeronautical infrastructure has been well monitored and maintained through an asset management concept described in the Michigan Aviation System Plan.

Regional Economic Analysis

The following pages outline various economic analyses conducted as part of this CEDS planning process. These include the inflow and outflow of workers and wages, location quotients, industry shift-share and retail gaps. Collectively, these anecdotal analyses provide a clearer picture of the region's industries and workforce, which provide the various Economic Development Organizations and Networks Northwest the information needed to make effective decisions towards a sustainable economy.

Inflow & Outflow of Wages

One important data point in understanding the economy for a defined area is where people work versus where they live. This can illustrate a range of phenomena that can further explain the various counties' character and existing conditions. A wages inflow and outflow chart, Figure 1 below, displays this work location and residence location relationship for the 10 counties part of Network's Northwest's planning region. A further description of the wage flow can be found in Appendix D. The flow of workers throughout the region can also be found in Appendix D. All data obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.



Net Residence Adjustment by County for NW Lower Michigan

Inflow is the money earned by residents who work outside of the county.

Outflow is the money earned at jobs within the county by people living outside the county.

Net Residence Adjustment is the result of subtracting gross earnings outflow from gross earnings inflow.

Location Quotient Analysis

The location quotient analysis is a measure of how concentrated an industry is in the local economy. Knowing the LQ score for various industries can help the municipality: 1) to determine which industries make the local economy unique, 2) to identify which industries the locality is exporting, 3) to identify emerging export industries that are starting to bring economic activity into the local market, and 4) to identify export industries that have the potential to threaten the region's economic base.

Location Quotient = (Local Industry Employment / Total Local Employment) / (National Industry Employment / Total National Employment)

The results of this Location Quotient Analysis, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, can be found in Appendix E.

Shift-Share Analysis

The shift-share analysis is used to show the growth of major industries for a particular area, in this case counties, and how each industry has changed as a proportion of all local employment. The tables in this section display each of the major industries, their total employment for the respective county from 2010-2019, the degree to which that total has changed in the last decade, as well as the percent share of employment that each industry represents and how that has changed over the decade. The results of the shift-share analysis, provided by the Michigan Regional Economic Analysis Project (REAP), can be found in Appendix F. All data obtained from the Michigan Regional Economic Analysis Project.

Retail Gaps

The retail marketplace profile shows the degree to which the region is importing and exporting certain goods and services. A positive retail gap (demand exceeds supply) indicates residents in the community must leave the area (10-county region) to acquire this good or service. This would be considered an import industry. A negative retail gap indicates that people from outside of the region come to the region to purchase a particular good or service (supply exceeds demand). This is called an export industry.

Fairly consistent with heavily tourism-based communities, northwest Michigan has a negative retail gap for almost all of their retail goods and services, with a few exceptions. Most of the import goods and services are in retail industries now heavily dominated by on-line retailers. The full retail marketplace profile can be found in Appendix G. All data obtained from ESRI Business Analyst.

Top 5 Industry Sub-Sectors by County

ANTRIM
Crop Production
Machinery Manufacturing
Accommodation
Unclassified
Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing

CHARLEVOIX
Plastics & Rubber Product Manufacturing
Accommodation
Utilities
Computers & Electronic Product Manufacturing
Amusements, Gambling and Recreation

GRAND TRAVERSE
Textile Product Mills
Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing
Machinery Manufacturing
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores
Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores

LEELANAU
Beverage & Tobacco Manufacturing
Crop Production
Construction of Buildings
Unclassified
Miscellaneous Store Retailers

MISSAUKEE
Animal Product Production
Forestry & Logging
Wood Product Manufacturing
Truck Transportation
Gasoline Stations

BENZIE
Accommodation
Food Manufacturing
Gasoline Stations
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores
Amusements, Gambling, and Recreation

EMMET
Accommodation
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores
Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing
Amusements, Gambling and Recreation
Construction of Buildings

KALKASKA
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Crop Production
Unclassified
Gasoline Stations

MANISTEE
Forestry & Logging
Gasoline Stations
Amusements, Gambling, and Recreation
General Merchandise Stores
Utilities

WEXFORD
Forestry & Logging
Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing
Truck Transportation
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a method of charrette facilitation that seeks to identify information from stakeholders familiar with the subject matter. It is reliant upon open communication that identifies:

STRENGTHS: are a region's relative competitive advantages and often are internal in nature

WEAKNESSES: are a region's relative competitive disadvantages and are also often internal in nature

OPPORTUNITIES: are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress often external in nature

THREATS: are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline and also often are external in nature

The analysis should drill down beyond the base of the subject for intricacies that are identified through knowledgeable stakeholders. The SWOT Analysis performed for the 2021 update to the CEDS called upon the expertise presented by the following Regional Task Force Members.

Regional Task Force Members

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Betsy Evans	Chairperson Planning Commission	Benzie County
Caitlyn Berard	President	Cadillac Chamber of Commerce
Carla Gribbs	Regional Manager	DTE Energy
Dave White	Commissioner - District 6	Emmet County
David Emmel	President	Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
Dyllan Walker	Process Safety Engineer	Packaging Corporation of America
Eric Grandstaff	Broadband Consultant	Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
Evelyn Szpliet	Apprenticeship & Business Resource Network Manager	Networks Northwest
Jessica Lovay	Community Development & Grants	Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
Jessie Mitchell	Business Development	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Kedra Balderach	Executive Director	Builders Exchange of Northwest Michigan
Lisa Leedy	Director of Grants	Grand Traverse Economic Development
Marc Miller	Director of Economic Development	Manistee Chamber of Commerce
Mark Lagerwey	Associate Director of Business Development	Baker College of Cadillac and Alliance for Economic Success
Mike Allison	President	Antrim Co. Economic Development Corp.
Rod Summers	Senior Business Advisor	The Center-Traverse City
Sakura Tokano	Director of Community Assets & Impact Investing	Rotary Charities
Scott Hardy	Realtor	Threewest
Scott Menhart	Chief Information Technology Officer	Traverse City Light and Power
Steve Largent	Boardman River Program Director	Grand Traverse Conservation District
Steve Schnell	Charlevoix County Housing Ready Program Director	Housing North
Warren Call	President & CEO	Traverse Connect

SWOT Analysis Methodology

The SWOT Analysis was held via zoom meeting platform as pandemic guidelines prohibited in-person interaction at the time of the process. Community Development staff organized ahead of the planned meetings in order to become familiar with the meeting platform options.

Two meetings were planned over two consecutive days. The first meeting was set to discuss the strengths, weaknesses and threats to our region, with the second meeting set to discuss the opportunities. Utilizing the breakout room feature, a single staff member joined 4-5 Task Force Members and facilitated discussion and took notes.

Similar to the summary background meeting, a list of topics was shared with Task Force Members through staff for discussion. A list of facilitation questions was developed beforehand by staff to stimulate conversation. The same questions were utilized by all staff to maintain commonality for each of the separate discussions.

After the first meeting staff shared and combined notes, removing duplication. The notes from the first meeting were then shared with the Task Force Group Members prior to the second meeting. Upon completion of the second meeting staff again combined notes and shared results with Task Force Members.

SWOT Analysis Results

The SWOT Analysis provided an almost overwhelming amount of information. The topic headings below provide a limited summary of the overall discussion and points. A complete breakdown of all the results of the SWOT Analysis can be found in Appendix H.

TALENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our region supports talent through collaborative efforts for education/training. Wages of the region are not as competitive with other areas of the State/Nation, leaving employees seeking increased wages and changing jobs locally, limiting ability for companies to retain employees. Broadband limitations in many areas lead to a less competitive advantage for remote workers. Diverse range of industrial sectors offers ample opportunity for varied employment.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION, DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

Most municipalities are supportive of new business, and the region is seeing growth in jobs that benefit from technology, research and development. There are prevalent industry sector conflicts particularly among tourism and manufacturing sectors. There are many resources available to assist business owners to grow.

HOUSING

Housing is in short supply and high demand with costs exceeding what 40-50% of the population can truly afford. Education efforts on issues are reaching community leaders and local government is starting to react by shifting policy. Traction is gaining for support from the State, but legislation directed at removing local control is concerning.

EDUCATION

The region has quality school systems and the local high schools are collaborating with Community Colleges and Technical Schools to offer guidance for training and employment opportunities at an earlier age. Limited large companies in the region does hamper efforts to engage for greater employment position categories.

CHILD CARE

Lack of affordable childcare is widely present in region, and becomes a barrier to work, particularly for mothers. Low family income affects children social-emotional, cognitive and academic outcome, if no guardian/sitter is present. Companies are beginning to take notice and some offer policy shifts that present childcare options.

GOVERNANCE

Local government is often a barrier to business, either through lengthy approval processes, untrained staff and elected officials. Lack of civility leads to polarization hindering collaboration. Many State & Federal programs cater to more "urban" areas. Programs such as RRC, Opportunity Zones, and formal staff/board training can improve governance.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Lack of interstate network, many water bodies that must be circumvented and degrading infrastructure impact mobility of goods and people. Maintaining harbors, expansion of rail for both freight and passenger travel and a desire for people to live towards urban centers can improve upon issues.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Limited broadband network, but collaborative efforts to improve service areas is beneficial. Aging roadways, water/sewer lines and limited stormwater capacity can prevent sound infill development. Many State and Federal programs are underway that can assist communities with performing upgrades to systems.

LAND USE

Land use policy has limited density of population, has exacerbated separation of uses and has hindered growth in many areas. Education efforts that inform staff and decision makers of more modern approaches for inclusion of housing density, form based code "design over use", and expedited approval processes are available and are being utilized in some communities.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Coastal erosion, increased temperatures on cold water streams and flood events are impacting communities. Resiliency planning is occurring and shifting policy.

Economic Development Support Efforts

Efforts undertaken by Economic Development Organizations in Northwest Lower Michigan are underway that provide opportunities for support of economic development efforts. These efforts can be classified in three primary categories:

1. Data and supporting information that direct and focus efforts by identifying trends and benchmarked success in specific sectors.
2. Inventorying of properties, corridors and infrastructure that can be marketed as development areas and opportunities.
3. Marketing Platforms that share information in a single location to perspective job seekers, employers and developers.

GROWTH AND INVESTMENT AREAS

To identify communities within Northwest Michigan that are prepared for new development, a community asset inventory was conducted by Networks Northwest in 2010 in conjunction with the Growth and Investment Network. The survey collected responses from cities, incorporated and unincorporated villages, townships, and planned growth areas in Northwest Michigan. Survey results were used to develop criteria for selecting areas from the region that were best positioned to accommodate future growth patterns anticipated for Northwest Michigan over the next 25 years. While many assets are needed for new growth and investment, there are five essential criteria common to communities throughout the nation that support growth and investment potential. These five criteria were used in the selection of areas for additional analysis regarding growth and investment readiness, trends, and capabilities:

- Operational municipal water system
- Operational municipal sewer system
- Adopted mater plan that recommends a defined higher density downtown core for development and investment
- Zoning ordinance that codifies higher density development in the downtown core
- Available governmental officials and staff to create effective growth- and investment-oriented policies and efficiently process requests and permits

OPPORTUNITY ZONES & MARKETING PACKAGES

Created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, are a federal economic development tool focused on improving the outcomes of communities across the country, especially in areas that have suffered from disinvestment over many years. Opportunity Zones are designated low-income census tracts where tax incentives are available to groups or individuals who invest in an Opportunity Fund and hold their capital gains in Opportunity Zone-related assets or property. There are Opportunity Zones in eight of the ten counties in the northwest region of Michigan. By investing in Opportunity Zones, investors stand to gain a temporary deferral on their capital gains taxes if they hold their investments for at least five years and a permanent exclusion from a tax on capital gains from the Opportunity Zones investments if the investments are held for ten years. For more information on Opportunity Zones go to https://miopportunityzones.com/.

There are eight opportunity zones located within our Northwest Michigan region. The opportunity zones are currently each being included in a marketing packet that once assembled will outline the availability of development incentives for their specific geographic areas. Of importance to note, is the necessity to establish an Opportunity Fund. The Opportunity Fund once established sets the stage for use of these opportunity zones.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR INVENTORY

An update of the 2014 corridor inventory for the 31 communities that have sewer, water, broadband, zoning and planning staff. The finished product will rank the 31 areas according to State, Regional or local significance. The update will include a redesign of the materials that will be incorporated into other aspects of the overall economic development support structure.

DEVELOPMENT SITE OPPORTUNITY INVENTORIES

Through the 2020 MEDC Innovation Grant, Networks Northwest conducted a comprehensive region- wide site inventory and initial readiness assessment of all sites greater than ten acres with water, sewer, broadband and zoning infrastructure in the region. The results uncovered thirty-two "business friendly" parcels with ten acres or more, commercial or industrial zoning, municipal water and sewer and broadband speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 2Mbps upload. Parcels are located in Wexford, Manistee, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, Emmet, Charlevoix and Antrim counties with an average acreage of twenty acres per parcel.

STATEBOOK DATA API INTEGRATION WITH NETWORKS NORTHWEST WEBSITE

StateBook provides trusted, sourced data to improve location analysis. The data allows you to compare locations to identify the most strategic opportunities for investment, confirm project viability, and mitigate risk across disparate data sources, multiple geography levels and over time.

A contract has been established with StateBook through Networks Northwest for the development of a data API, which will directly integrate the navigable and customizable user interface into the Networks Northwest website. End users have been familiar with existing data API platforms that have been in use with the our website for years. The newly integrated data API from Statebook will now expand the types of data available. It will:

- Allow for customizable data for specific geographies and time-frames.
- Allow the end user to place multiple types of data and time-frames in graphs, tables, charts and maps.
- Allow the end user to download the raw data or any of the representative data figures (i.e. graphs, tables, charts, maps).
- Allow Networks Northwest to benchmark the data series against other data series and years directly on the website.

PLANNING & ZONING GUIDE UPDATES

With 190 incorporated political jurisdictions in our region, it can be difficult to obtain the appropriate local government contact, locate a website or form or navigate a development approval process. In response to these difficulties Networks Northwest developed Zoning & Permitting Guides. Originally developed in 2012, the guides undergo period updates to ensure the information within them is current and relevant. The guides provide points of contact for Federal, State and Local entities which may have some aspect of approval or permitting for a development process, while also providing web-links to websites, regulatory & policy documents as well as forms. The guides also provide a flow chart for standard approval processes in order to display likely necessary steps for approval. The latest Zoning and Permitting Guides were updated during the first quarter of 2021.

THRIVE NORTH WEBSITE

ThriveNorth.com was created to be an easy-to-use resource catering to those interested in economic development in Northwest Lower Michigan. The website contains everything from community and regional economic data, growth and investment information, knowledge of Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs, to help with a local planning commission permitting process. The website is streamlined for use by active real estate investors, developers, business owners and entrepreneurs. ThriveNorth.com serves the ten-county region of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee and Wexford counties.

Action Plan & Strategic Direction

The Action Plan and Strategic Direction outline an agreed upon vision with a set of goals and objectives that strive to adjust policy, inform local units of government, connect businesses with supporting entities, and improve efforts in areas of housing, education, childcare, talent, infrastructure and business development among others.

Methodology

PROCESS

As a continuation from the SWOT Analysis stage of the process, the Action Plan was reliant upon the input of the Regional Task Force Members. The SWOT Analysis led to the drafting of goals and objectives that were supported by strengths in the region and could be expanded upon by opportunities. The items did meet several of the weaknesses and threats head-on, but rather than dwell on solving issues borne of those categories, it is known that successful implementation efforts leverage what is successful and achievable.

A meeting was called of the Regional Task Force and the members were provided a draft of the goals and objectives. Constructive criticism was encouraged of the group and necessary revisions were outlined for both structure and content. Staff took the information provided by the Task Force and synthesized it into drafted goals and objectives. A ranking sheet was created that would be provided to the Task Force Members in order to prioritize the goals and rank the objectives, the top 5 goals were sought of each group member.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

One of the most important aspects of this process and document is the ability for implementation of the goals and more specifically the objectives contained within. The implementation strategy is reliant upon the plan participants and other regional stakeholders including local government officials, non-profits, educators, business and industry owners in taking ownership of goals and objectives that they can reasonably find measures for support and success in gaining traction for implementation. The strategy is reliant upon the selecting of priority goals, defining responsible parties and setting a reasonable time-frame.

Action Plan Vision Statements

The SWOT Analysis led to the development of vision statements for the primary topics. The vision statements present an overarching look and generalized synopsis of the idealized environment supported by identified strengths and improvement through opportunities. Regional topics with accompanying vision statements follow:

TALENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The region's workforce will be prepared to meet industry demands at both the regional and global level. Individuals seeking to develop employable skill sets will have ample resources to do so. Community members with an array of backgrounds and interests will have opportunities to participate in and contribute to the regional economy.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION, DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

The Northwest Lower Michigan region will be a highly sought after location for businesses to start up and grow. Businesses from other parts of the country will see the clear benefits of relocating to the region. Through policies, incentives and collaborative partnerships, the business community will thrive in an ever-changing global economy. There will be a strong relationship between the public and private sector.

HOUSING

Housing in Northwest Lower Michigan will offer a variety of affordable housing types. Local land use regulations, public-private partnerships and resource allocations will remove housing shortages as a barrier to economic growth. Community members representing various ages, incomes and lifestyles will be able to find housing to meet their needs.

EDUCATION

The education provided in Northwest Lower Michigan will prepare community members to succeed in a competitive marketplace. Educators will work with the business community to ensure curriculum's are responsive to workforce needs. A variety of educational training programs and learning opportunities will help individuals with different workforce interests acquire the skills they need to succeed.

CHILD CARE

The region's employees will not have to consider child care as a barrier to participation in the workforce. Quality child care will be affordable for a range of

income levels and accessible throughout the region.

GOVERNANCE

The region's economy will be supported by effective, well-trained local officials. Governmental processes will encourage public participation, will follow legal and ethical guidelines and will promote sustainable economic development practices. Local governments, counties, Networks Northwest, the State of Michigan and the federal government will cooperate in identifying and remedying the region's economic shortcomings.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Transportation in the region will be safe and efficient. Road networks will be well-maintained and will support motorized and non-motorized mobility. The region's points of interest will be accessible without the need for a personal vehicle.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Roads, ports, rail lines, dams and broadband will all be continuously maintained and improved to support commerce. The region's infrastructure will be efficiently sited and managed.

LAND USE

Land use patterns in the region will support economic, social and environmental sustainability. The region will maintain its natural character while meeting the demands of a growing population. Spatial efficiencies will ensure that infrastructure costs, travel times and development in greenfields are all reduced. The region's built environment will have as little impact as possible on nature.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The region will adapt its built environment to be sustainable, thereby mitigating the negative effects of a changing climate. Housing, infrastructure, critical facilities and businesses will be able to withstand short and long term shocks to their systems.

Goals & Objectives

As outlined in the action plan process, development of a robust list of goals and objectives was achieved. These goals and objectives were then placed in a ranking sheet and prioritized by the participating Task Force Members. A complete list of the goals and objectives within the ranking sheet can be found in Appendix I.

PRIORITIZED GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the ranking of goals and objectives by the Regional Task Force Members, staff combined the information. The specific goals were weighted based upon the direct rankings by one or more members of the Task Force identifying a goal as a priority. Once the appropriate order was achieved for the goals based upon the input received, the objectives were reviewed and the prioritization of objectives was also completed for each goal that was selected as a priority.

It is important to note as a reminder that all goals and objectives considered by the Task Force Members are located in Appendix I. Contained within the following pages are the prioritized goals and objectives that are viewed as realistically attainable within a manageable time-frame by stakeholders within our region.

TABLE LAYOUT METHODOLOGY

The tables on the following pages contain the prioritized gaols and accompanying objectives. The table headings are summarized below:

Goal: Specific goals developed through the planning process are found in this column. The goals were synthesized by staff and Task Force Members with prioritization occurring through the Task Force Members. The goals are numbered by priority.

Objective: Objectives accompany each goal and are the actual directive for the implementation task. The objectives were prioritized by the Task Force Members and are provided in prioritized order following each goal.

Responsible Party: The Responsible Party is charged with implementation of the individual objectives. This does not mean that they are solely responsible, but rather they play a role of leading the effort, organizing and/or have resources at their disposal that can meet implementation needs.

Time-frame: Time-frame for the implementation processes are estimated on a three tier system:

- Short-Term (1 year or less)
- Mid-Term (2-3 years)
- Long-Term (3 years or longer)

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME-FRAME
Prioritized # 1: Deliver broadband services to more residences and business throughout the region.	Follow best management practices and examples set by other rural sectors within the United States that have successfully increased broadband coverage.		
	Support broadband initiatives and work-groups across the region and provide opportunities for those groups to network.		
	Connect Federal, State and non-profit broadband funding opportunities to local governments and officials.		
	Benchmark local communities that have shown success in broadband within the region.		
	Annually update the 10-acre development potential site inventory which identifies parcels that have utilities including broadband and other infrastructure necessary to support business and industry.		
	Support the emerging conceptualization of broadband as a public good.		
	Increase competition in the sector by developing a stimulus for telecommunications companies that are currently unable to compete in the marketplace.		
	Manage improvements in technology, especially AI, to avoid further gaps in technological access and its benefits.		
	Hold regular meetings with business leaders to understand remote worker needs and potential improvements.		
	Direct users to areas of existing broadband.		
	Support public Wi-Fi programs in urban cores.		
Prioritized # 2: Develop and support programming that promotes affordable housing efforts at the state, regional and local levels.	Work on the state level to expand housing programs and develop new and innovative tax structures to encourage year-round housing development. Ensure Michigan communities have local control over their housing regulations including commercial use of former residences as short-term rentals.		
	Advocate for more funding mechanisms for rural communities beyond the Redevelopment Ready Communities program.		
	Update state legislation and grant programs to meet the unique housing needs in Michigan's rural communities. These are typically smaller projects that may need utility expansion and have a higher per-unit cost but lower median incomes and a lower walk score.		
	Encourage more communities to establish their own local area housing solutions teams of stakeholders who are decision makers who can take action on housing goals. Local housing solutions teams can more accurately assess the specific local housing needs and better take action to solve those issues.		
	Expand Neighborhood Enterprise Zone and Opportunity Zone tools for use in more communities.		
	Implement the Housing North "Housing Ready Checklist" in each community, which parallels the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program.		
	Assist local communities in the region to thoroughly study their unique housing needs so that they can best implement solutions.		
	Continue to raise awareness of all housing issues through housing advocates like Networks Northwest, Housing North, and local housing solutions teams such as Charlevoix County's Housing Ready Program and Little Traverse Bay Housing Partnership.		
	Support and incentivize renewable energy and energy efficiency programs for all households, especially workforce, lower-income and senior housing to help reduce long-term costs of housing and ensure a healthy safe home.		
	Create more emergency shelter solutions.		

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME-FRAME
Prioritized # 3: Utilize a mix of funding mechanisms to support local initiatives.	Support funding to local Economic Development Organizations for support of local projects and processes.		
	Through collaborative partnerships, develop regionally supported projects through shared fundraising initiatives.		
	Provide incentives for infill development where existing infrastructure exists. Tax abatements and TIFF programs should be explored to focus development in these locations.		
	Provide recognition that many local units of government are overburdened and underfunded for maintaining of full-time professional staff.		
Prioritized # 4: Collaborate with local units of government to implement policies and programs that support affordable housing development.	Streamlining the permitting process;		
	Work with communities to ensure local zoning ordinances support housing development. These may include: • Allowing for higher density and infill housing; • Allowing for more housing types that include "missing middle" housing (multi-unit houses such as duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes, town-homes, mixed-use, and accessory dwelling units); • Creating incentives for multi-unit housing projects that reduce requirements for setbacks, minimum dwelling size, lot size, parking, and building height requirements if additional housing units are created for year-round use; and • Allowing more senior and supportive housing opportunities within each zoning district.		
	Provide more tools for local communities to create housing incentives using tax incentives as well as grant programs to create more housing opportunities.		
	Support ordinances, policies and their enforcement to ensure housing is safe and adequate.		
	Encourage more counties to activate a county land bank and create housing projects using those available tools. Incentivize Land Bank Authority use of Tax Increment Financing (TIFF) to create housing.		
	Work with local jurisdictions to amend zoning, policies and other practices. This may include the development of regional best practices, case studies and recommendations for local units of government.		
Prioritized # 5: Take advantage of the region's Opportunity Zones to spur economic growth.	Develop and circulate technical guidance to aid local units in developing opportunity funds.		
	Promote opportunity zones through the ThriveNorth website.		
	Make community leadership aware of the incentives provided to and by opportunity zones.		
	Ensure community leaders are aware of the opportunity zones within their communities.		

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME-FRAME
Prioritized # 6: Provide educational and skills training opportunities that prepare individuals to successfully contribute to a diverse regional economy.	Continue to build upon trades programs at schools.		
	Encourage collaborative partnerships between business leaders and schools, especially for skilled trades.		
	Provide more career outlook information to K-12 students prior to graduation to encourage job seeking and training opportunities in industries needing talented workers.		
	Assess the feasibility of locating a satellite university campus in the region - need to talk to community colleges on what's there, what needs to improve - research, grant funding, entrepreneurship opportunities, different/increased partnerships.		
	Grow the prevalence of remote learning options to impart greater access to education and skills training.		
	Continue to encourage partnerships between the region's community colleges, technical schools and high schools.		
	Periodically review and adapt school curriculum's to match industry trends, both regional and global.		
	Support a range of education options including, but not limited to, public schools, private schools, arts programming, training for skilled trades, apprenticeships, co-op opportunities and other non-traditional programming.		
	Link community members wanting to finish their high school degree to high school equivalency test preparation (GED) resources.		
Prioritized # 7: Continue to grow the industries that make the local economy unique while also introducing industries that would diversify the region's economic makeup.	Target job growth in certain industry sectors to meet local demands. An example of this would be growth in the construction industry to help meet the current housing demand.		
	Continue to attract businesses that are easy to relocate, have a low impact on the built environment and pay quality wages.		
	Expand the region's economic base by developing businesses that match the region's character or provide value added goods or services. Examples may include, but are not limited to, farm-to-table restaurants and outdoor recreation manufacturing.		
	Benchmark rural communities similar to the region that have adapted well to the shift towards technology and its implications for various industries.		
	Utilize business incubators as a way to support innovation in the local economy.		
	Coordinate with local units of government to identify opportunities to streamline regulatory processes and increase flexibility.		
	Act to remove existing constraints to the tech industry's growth in the region (broadband, skilled workforce, affordable housing).		
	Develop assistance programs for local businesses to compete with national chains.		
	Expand collaboration amongst local business owners.		
	Target cluster development around the region's strongest industries.		
	Offer no-strings-attached incentives to embolden businesses to relocate to the region.		
	Promote industrial sector density in areas adjacent or intermixed with residential workforce housing options.		
	Support industries as the global marketplace shifts to Industry 4.0. This may consist of studies and collaborative workgroups to understand how Industry 4.0 will affect supply chains, the workplace and consumer needs.		
	Promote clustering of like industries to foster innovation and collaboration. (former goal 8)		
	Promote density for industrial sectors in appropriate areas of infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband and transportation).		

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME-FRAME
Prioritized # 8: Through programming, policy updates and partnerships, ensure adequate childcare to support the region's workforce.	Set the child care subsidy rate based on the actual costs of child care and not based on a percentage (75%) of the market rate as reported by child care providers		
	Pay child care providers based on attendance (clarify - needs more flexibility for parents' expenses).		
	Assess the feasibility of making childcare a deductible expense to subsidize employees' childcare.		
	Invest in the workforce similar to bonuses paid out during the Covid-19 pandemic. Set up wage boards to establish fair wage rates similar to compensation studies conducted in the private sector.		
	Implement and improve before and after school child care programs.		
	Engage stakeholders to develop a vision for universal child care under the notion that child care is a public good and warrants public investment. This should be followed by a business model or action plan.		
	Increase the use of contracts and grants by child care providers – Reward quality child care providers with grants and contracts.		
	Support development of shared services to ensure quality care, high standards, access to other sources of funding and to take advantage of the combined purchasing power.		
Prioritized # 9: Attract, develop and retain a talented workforce in a diverse regional economy.	Collaborate with businesses in the region to develop employee incentive programs that may include childcare assistance, subsidized housing or skills training to improve talent retention.		
	Target skill training programs towards growing industries, or those in the region struggling to hire employees.		
	Create a centralized hub of information and resources for community members wanting to transition into a different career.		
	Connect community members with information regarding job training and skill development opportunities.		
	Provide support to community members wanting to attain a National Career Readiness Certificate or similar trainings that promote employable skill sets.		
Prioritized # 10: Convene the Networks Northwest Economic Development Council with county representatives to discuss lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and share the resulting findings with the regional community through various means.	Gather and interpret data regarding the impact COVID-19 had on the region's housing market including short term rentals, home purchases and other data that are more specific than a standard census study.		
	Develop benchmarks for business resilience based on lessons learned.		

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME-FRAME
Prioritized # 11: Plan for and implement land use patterns that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.	Allow higher density housing in close proximity to employers and in urban cores.		
	Support policy that promotes infill development and brownfield redevelopment.		
	Community planning should look to existing development patterns, infrastructure and the availability of space within urban and suburban cores and direct redevelopment and reuse in these locations, thereby supporting higher density.		
	Land use policy should direct the interaction of the built environment to the user, not direct the full separation of uses within the built environment. Land use policy should look to "form" over "function".		
	Land use policy should direct regulatory measures to support varied uses within the same building and zoning district.		
	Support compact dense development over costly urban sprawl.		
	Promote multi-modal transportation that includes bike routes, trails and mass-transit options to provide interconnection and transportation options.		
	Utilize environmentally sensitive areas for passive recreation when possible.		
	Focus planning policy on the proper interaction of areas for housing, workplace and necessary transportation infrastructure.		
Prioritized # 12: Support best practices and their implementation at various levels of government.	Work towards achieving a balance of regulation and development that supports business and workers, while protecting property, lifestyle and the natural environment. This should be met through policy developed within community Master Plans.		
	Open dialogue and discussion with the State of Michigan RRC Program leadership in order to adjust the program to fit the needs of rural communities.		
	Develop and share models and best practices for master plan policy and zoning ordinance regulation with counties and local municipalities.		
	Encourage consistent communication across different levels of government and different governmental departments.		
	Identify direct issues and redundancies between government levels and departments, and support policy shift to make correction.		
	Provide sample walk-through development process sheets to guide applicants.		
	Focus community leadership on "implementation strategies" of community plans and documents.		
	Support inclusion of local units of government in MEDC's RRC program.		
	Assign responsible parties and time-lines for direct implementation of specific goals.		
Prioritized # 13: Plan, implement and improve road networks throughout the region.	Support replacement of culverts and bridges that have met their lifespan.		
	Include road network transportation planning policy within Master Plans that coordinates with Federal, State and local transportation oversight agencies as well as the business community and residents.		
	Support infrastructure improvement funding for road network enhancements.		
	Institute traffic calming measures on targeted roadways, commercial corridors and downtown main streets.		
	Coordinate with Road Commissions to implement transportation flow improvements that may include changes in signal timing or the addition of round-a-bouts, turn lanes and passing lanes.		

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME-FRAME
Prioritized # 14: Promote rail as an effective mode of transportation and commerce.	Support efficient realignment of rail corridors to benefit efficiency and industrial users.		
	Include railroad transportation planning policy within Master Plans that coordinates with Federal, State and local transportation oversight agencies as well as the business community and residents.		
	Support continued funding of rail-road infrastructure.		
	Support the expansion of freight rail where appropriate.		
	Support the expansion of passenger rail with appropriate connections to the Traverse City, Petoskey and Cadillac regions in Northwest Lower Michigan and urban areas of Southern Michigan.		
	Renovate transportation systems using best practices, innovative materials, designs and approaches to roadway systems.		
	Adapt roadway systems to meet the needs of new and innovative types of vehicles such as hydrogen vehicles and electric vehicles, delivery drones, autonomous vehicles, vehicle sharing and vehicles utilizing artificial intelligence.		
	Adapt app-based services to the rural settings in Northwest Michigan that provide new options for community members with limited transportation options available.		
	Advocate for increased state funding to support preventive maintenance of roads, trails, bridges and dams.		
	Design roadways that embrace "Complete Streets" best practices for pedestrian and non-motorized travel.		
	Connect communities throughout the region with non-motorized trail connections.		
	Promote development patterns that reduce the need for a personal vehicle to access points of interest and resources.		
	Work with counties and local units of government to ensure that when infrastructure is developed or redeveloped that it anticipates advances in transportation technology (e.g. autonomous vehicles).		
	Implement trails, bike paths, sidewalks and other transportation avenues for non-vehicular traffic that consider mobility in a context of transportation and recreation.		
	Connect cultural sites, parks, residences and commercial areas through non-motorized paths.		

Evaluation Framework

A best laid plan is only as successful as the implementation that occurs under the direction of the plan goals. Implementation can only truly be achieved if the plan has a component for measuring the success of the implementation efforts. The following information will guide region's stakeholders as we implement the plan and measure the success of that implementation.

Measuring Success

Measuring successful implementation efforts is outlined to follow a multi-pronged approach through this framework. The utilization of communication through meeting discussions, the monitoring of data and utilization of integrated data platforms, and efforts in economic development support activities will all play a part in determining how successful we as a region are with these implementation efforts.

It is important to note that efforts are not always immediately successful. There will be some objectives that may need to be approached differently, necessitating revision of the idea to define a different method of approach. These types of revisions should be met with conscious realization that although success was not achieved, much was learned regarding approach, so the effort was not a failure.

MEETINGS & COMMUNICATION

The establishment of prioritized goals and ranked objectives by the Task Force Members, with responsible parties and time-frames set for each, provides the first avenue toward measuring success. The Regional and County Level Task Force Groups are encouraged to continue to convene through the coming years. Discussions at these meetings will surely include various subjects, but one theme that should carry from this CEDS forward is a discussion of the short-term goals and what steps have been taken by responsible parties in meeting the objectives under those goals.

As a group, Task Force Members and the organizations they represent should advise on adjustments to objectives if a certain approach is not successful. They should also offer to lend expertise or direct assistance if they are able and familiar with an approach that make be useful. Continuation of and participation at Task Force meetings will outline successes and difficulties with implementation efforts allowing for the first measuring of success.

BENCHMARKING TRENDS

Appendix A offers an in-depth view of each individual county's trends within our region. The data displays figures on population, employment, median income, poverty rates, and individual industry sub-sectors growth or decline among several other datasets. Trend lines were added to each graph and percent change for the most recent years of data in the tables was calculated. The establishment of this data over a time-frame of almost fifteen years allows for benchmarking of the data.

As the CEDS is updated periodically, additional years of data (as available) should be included in the graphs and tables. Inclusion of this data will allow for new trend lines to be placed and for percent change columns to be updated. Monitoring of the adjustment of trend lines and percent change provides a good method of measuring success against specific data categories.

The use of the new StateBook API integrated into our website will provide an opportunity to establish the benchmarks to the most recent data. As datasets are updated they will be included in the platform, allowing for almost immediate updating of the trends.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GOALS AND/OR ADJUSTMENT OF TIME-FRAMES

Lastly, an obvious measurement of success stems from the completion of objectives that leads to the necessity to establish new goals and/or adjustment of objectives and time-frames. These measures of success will stem from meeting and communicating, but are separated as they will move beyond the need for revision of an objective or identifying a different approach to meeting success.

As goals and objectives are met, they should be cataloged in an appendix in order to track through future revisions for a true understanding of how the region has embraced the CEDS and the implementation of the goals and objectives.

Regional Economic Resilience

A region's ability to prevent, have foresight for and weather an economic disruption is a pathway to regional economic resilience. Economic resilience is defined by the EDA as

- the ability to recover quickly from a shock,
- the ability to withstand a shock, and
- the ability to avoid a shock all together.

STEADY-STATE INITIATIVES

Northwest Lower Michigan has on-going efforts that meet the definition of Steady-State Initiatives. These initiatives are long-term efforts that position the region to tackle economic disruptions:

- Engaged in CEDS Process: Local EDO's and stakeholders are actively engaged in the CEDS development and update process. The Action Items developed through consensus are borne of the Summary Background, SWOT Analysis and achieve a strategic direction.
- Focus on Innovation Clusters: Local EDO's and economic development support organizations are actively working to focus industry clusters that will seek to support and develop innovation.
- Support for Business Incubators: Local EDO's and economic development support organizations are actively incubating and recruiting businesses for the region, building upon strong industrial sectors in our counties.
- Maintain data availability (API & GIS): Networks Northwest, local units of government and non-profits are working to maintain GIS data within established databases for use by development community, business leaders and residents. Networks Northwest is continually maintaining an integrated data API and expanding data resources as new sources become available.

RESPONSIVE INITIATIVES

Northwest Lower Michigan has on-going efforts that meet the definition of Responsive Initiatives. These initiatives are how economic development organizations respond to a region's recovery needs following an incident (Covid 19 has provided that threshold for recovery at this time).

- Action Plan Prioritization with Responsible Parties & Time-frames: Local EDO's have worked diligently on the CEDS process during the recovery time-frame of the Covid 19 pandemic. This unique opportunity to experience economic downturn while planning for the CEDS, has brought about unique Action Items that address recovery.
- Establishing Local Task Force Groups for Communication: The establishment of the Local Task Force Groups as undertaken as an initiative pre-pandemic has now truly shown the benefit of the open channels of communication. Impacts at a local level are discussed and disseminated to the Regional Task Force and partners that can shape how to be reactive.
- Maintaining Information Networks: The ability to share data and information is not new in this recovery period, but the ability to share is emphasized as important to the ability to learn from other successes and failures quickly while acting in recovery mode.

Action Plan Implementation

COVID 19 RESPONSE ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The Covid 19 Response Economic Resilience document developed by Fourth Economy in May of 2020 outlines appropriate actions for economic resilience that need to be captured within this CEDS. As we are now entering Phase 4, Economic Resilience with a Mid to Long Term time-frame (1-3 years and beyond) we find ourselves emerging from the many governmental mandates which disrupted lives and business.

There is a 3 step approach proposed in the document that outlines:

Step 1: Assess the community's civic infrastructure and capacity to respond to on-going needs.

Step 2: Enact regular performance monitoring of key economic indicators

Step 3: Evaluate community confidence

With Steps 1 and 2 largely met through this CEDS, it is Step 3 that may require a commitment to surveying the general population, businesses, civic institutions, non-profits and others as we continue to emerge from the pandemic and work to achieve resilience.

Sources

ALL APPENDICES
PREPARED BY NETWORKS NORTHWEST WITH DATA FROM:
-US CENSUS BUREAU
-BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
-BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS
-MICHIGAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS PROJECT
-ESRI BUSINESS ANALYST
-STRATEGY POL

TALENT STRATEGY, STRATEGIC POLICY CONSULTANTS

A PICTURE OF HOUSING IN NORTHWEST MICHIGAN, PREPARED BY NETWORKS NORTHWEST

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ECONOMY (MICHIGAN) ASSESSING THE COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES, PREPARED WITH A MULTITUDE OF SOURCES

2018 REPORT CARD FOR MICHIGAN'S INFRASTRUCTURE, PREPARED BY THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS-MICHIGAN SECTION

NETWORKS NORTHWEST ROADMAP TO RESILIENCE (PHASE 4), PREPARED BY FOURTH ECONOMY

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