

**Michigan House of Representatives  
Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee  
March 1, 2023**

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**Introduction**

The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) is one of Michigan's fourteen regions and serves communities in the counties of Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Osceola, and Ottawa (Region 8). While Region 8 is the second most populated region in Michigan, the WMRPC is one of the smaller (maybe the smallest) of Michigan's regional planning agencies, with a staff of three and a 2023 budget of \$285,000. The WMRPC is a 33-person commission made up of county and municipal elected officials and administrators, businesses, higher education, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations.

**U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

The WMRPC is an Economic Development District (EDD) that receives EDA funding every year to maintain a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and to identify community projects that align with EDA's goals. Through this process, EDA has provided grants totaling \$48 million through the CEDS process to cities, villages, and townships for public works projects that promote manufacturing and job creation. Communities have expanded water and sewer, built roads, and developed industrial parks that recognize the connection between public infrastructure and the success of the private sector.

**Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)**

The WMRPC serves as the primary link between communities and MDOT to share information, distribute funds, and administer several programs.

- The WMRPC administers the Rural Task Force Program which works with counties, townships, small cities and villages (populations of less than 5,000), and transit agencies to program projects and fairly distribute available state and federal transportation funds.
- The WMRPC administers the Small Urban Program which allocates transportation funds to areas with populations between 5,000 and 50,000 people.
- The WMRPC administers the Transportation Asset Management Program which annually evaluates the physical condition of the Region's transportation network.
- The WMRPC works closely with MDOT on planning projects and public participation.
- The WMRPC facilitates three Corridor Committees that meet quarterly to bring all of the necessary people around the same table to address transportation issues. Committees are comprised of MDOT officials, cities, villages, townships, counties, road commissions, law enforcement, businesses, economic development organizations, school districts, and many others.

### **Collaboration & Communication**

The most important role of the WMRPC is to encourage collaboration and communication between member communities, state and federal agencies, the private sector, and others. This is done through WMRPC meetings, CEDS Committee meetings, Rural Task Force meetings, Corridor Committee meetings, in-person visits to communities by the Director, newsletters, a website, and many other ways of interaction. The highlight of every meeting is a roundtable where information is shared.

### **Planning and Community Resources**

The WMRPC performs a variety of tasks to support our communities including:

- Population projections
- Regional reviews of grant applications, land use plans, and recreation plans
- Assistance in developing plans
- Support for grant applications and programs
- Maintain a list of grant and loans opportunities for communities
- Maintain a politically neutral forum for communities to participate
- Linking grant programs to communities' needs
- Serving on a variety of boards as a neutral resource
- One-on-one meetings with community administrators and leaders
- Source for distributing information

### **Funding Distribution**

The 2023 budget revenues of \$285,000 come from three sources:

- Federal – 42 percent (temporary increase from CARES Act)
- State – 42 percent
- Local – 16 percent

### **Contact Information**

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To find out more about Michigan's 14 regions, visit [miregions.org](http://miregions.org).