

# EAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

### 2026-2030

River Road Byway (Iosco County)



Source: EMCOG Staff



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Participating Regional Economic Development (RED) Team Members

Throughout the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process, the Regional Economic Development (RED) Team member, the advisory committee for the CEDS, were asked to participate and provide input. The following members and their affiliation to EMCOG were able to provide assistance in this endeavor. A complete list of RED Team members can be found in Appendix I.

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Rich Van Tol, Bay Arenac ISD

Bill Wright, Citizen-at-Large

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# EDA PRIORITIES

## **Infrastructure**

Capitalize on East Michigan's existing transportation assets (roads, rail, port facilities, airports. etc.) and make strategic investments in regional infrastructure, including water, sewer, and telecommunication infrastructure that improve the region's economic competitiveness.

## **Workforce**

Build on the collaboration among East Michigan's primary and secondary education (Prek-12), higher education, adult education, skilled trades, and workforce development organizations to create a strong talent pool to support the region's current and future employers.

## **Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

Leverage East Michigan's higher education institutions, major industries, medical complexes, and innovation assets to establish the region as a center for technology-based entrepreneurship and small business growth.

## **Economic Development**

Grow east Michigan's economy through economic development activities (business retention, expansion, and recruitment) and marketing efforts that enhance the region's image as a place to do business while ensuring that the area can withstand and recover from short or long-term changes in economic conditions, including effects from industry contractions or economic impacts from national disasters.

## **Manufacturing**

Support economic development planning or implementation projects that encourage job creation, business expansion, technology and capital upgrades and productivity growth in manufacturing, include efforts that contribute to the competitiveness and growth of domestic supplier or the domestic production of innovative, high-value projects and production technologies.

## **Placemaking**

Embark on local and regional initiatives to strengthen the quality of place in each of East Michigan's communities to create an attractive environment for residents, tourists, and those returning to or relocating to Michigan.

## **Health**

Support efforts to improve regional prosperity by fostering healthy communities and a high quality of life, through initiatives such as better access to rural health care services, expansion of the rural healthcare workforce development, access to healthy food and enhancement of healthcare clusters. These efforts may include but not be limited to the provision of medical equipment and training for first responders and medical personnel throughout the region.

## **Housing**

Improve the variety, types, quality, and number of housing units within the East Central Michigan region to accommodate the shortage of affordable housing, to meet the needs of the residents of the region.

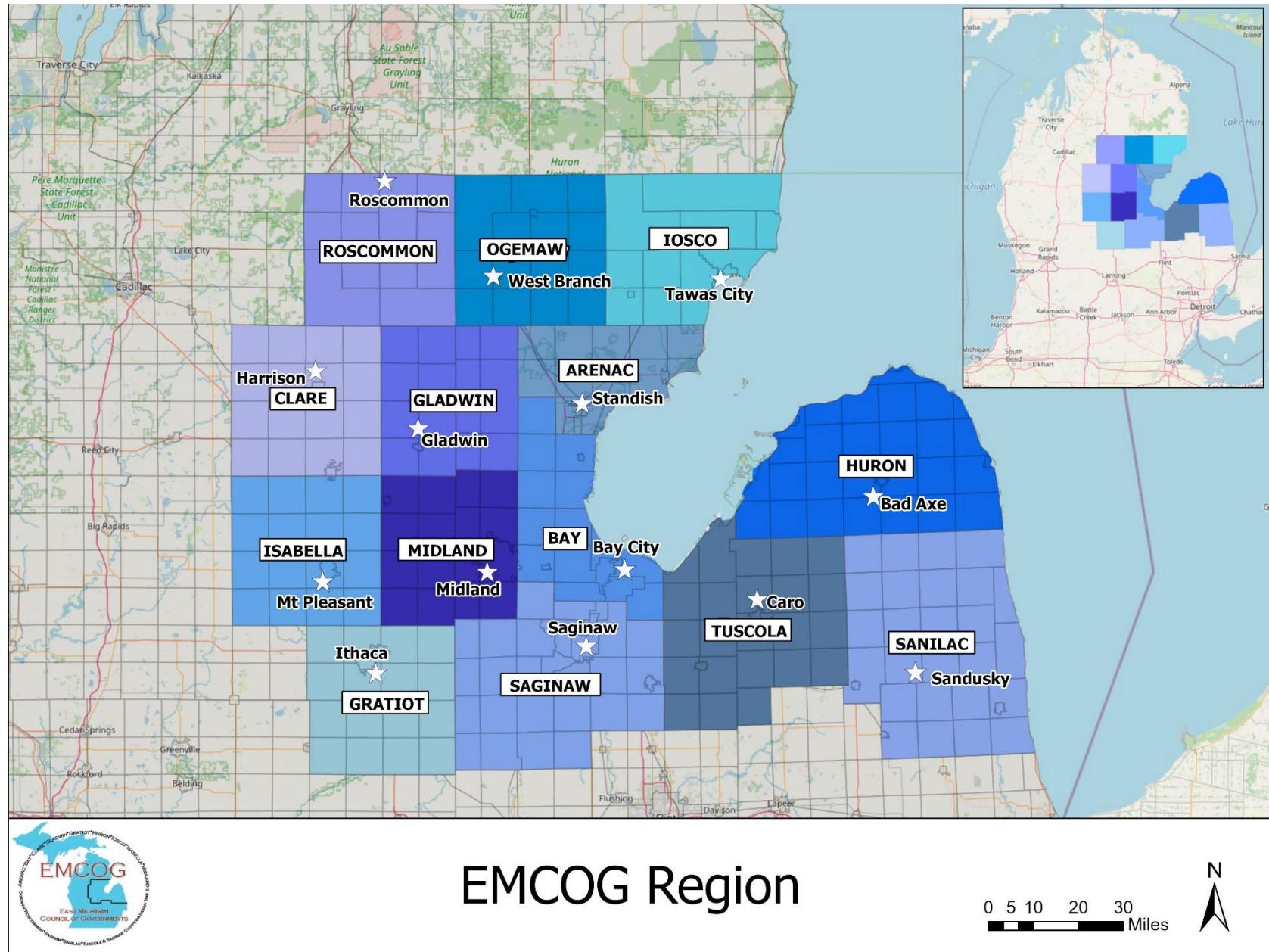
## INTRODUCTION-WHAT IS EMCOG

The East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) is a multi-purpose, multi-jurisdictional voluntary association created of, by and for local governments. It was originally established in 1969 by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (USDOC/EDA) as a federal economic development district (EDD) under Title IV of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965. The region was later recognized by the State of Michigan as a Regional Planning Agency in 1972 under P.A. 281 of 1945 as amended and was then internally restructured in 2009 as a Council of Governments (COG).

EMCOG serves a 14-county region of east central Michigan which encompasses the three urban centers of Bay, Midland and Saginaw Counties. Geographically EMCOG covers over 337 local units of government including 14 counties, numerous cities, villages, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe (SCT) as well as multiple school districts and special districts. EMCOG serves the counties of Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Iosco, Isabella, Midland, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola as well as the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

The Agency's primary purpose is to collaboratively assist local governments in planning for common needs, counseling on utilization of appropriate implementation processes, promotion of cooperation based on mutual benefit, coordinating for sound regional development, local technical assistance and securing grants-in-aid. At all times EMCOG remains neutral in its deliberations. EMCOG works to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint informed decisions.

As the USDCO/EDA federal Economic Development District, the East Michigan Council of Governments ("EMCOG") is required to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy ("CEDS") every five years. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. The CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity. It is also a legal requirement of the EDA that officially designates the EMCOG region as eligible for EDA funding of public works and development projects for a three-year period.



EMCOG is the federal economic development district (EDD) for the 14 counties as created by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The principal function of the EDD is to annually prepare the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update for the region in accordance with EDA's rules, regulations and guidance. A complete rewrite of the CEDS document is done every five (5) years. The Council's Regional Economic Development (RED) Team is designated as the approving body for the annual update. The document is also submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Concurrence with the CEDS document enables members to remain eligible to receive federal USDOC/EDA funding should they have an EDA-qualified project.

EMCOG staff work with state and federal agencies, including USDA, USDOC/EDA, FEMA, MDOT, MDOT/TAMC, MDNR, EGLE, EPA, LEO-Office of Rural Prosperity, MEDC etc., to assist applicants in securing grant funding from throughout the region.

EMCOG is governed by the dues-paying members from within the region. There are currently 17 dues-paying members, with a 5-member Executive Committee. Additionally, a Regional Economic Development (RED) Team, made up of municipal representatives, businesspersons, and members from the general public assist in the administration and updates of the CEDS. There are currently 61 members to the RED Team.

## OVERVIEW OF CEDS PROCESS

EMCOG is funded by the U. S Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) under a 3-year grant. The grant includes an approved scope of work. This scope of work centers primarily upon the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Regional Economic Development (RED) Team is responsible for the oversight of the CEDS rewrite as well as annual reviews. In January 2025, the EMCOG staff began the rewrite of the 2021-2025 CEDS in accordance with EDA guidelines.

During the rewrite of the 2021-2025 CEDS, EMCOG staff met virtually and in person with the participating RED Team members to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) factors, rewrite the Action Plan, and identify/update the Project List. Upon completion of the SWOT analysis, input from both the RED Team and the public was sought to identify high priority SWOT factors. These factors are found in the body of the CEDS, and all SWOT factors are identified in Appendix II. Participating RED Team members are identified in Table 1.1. The complete RED Team membership is found in Appendix I.

EMCOG staff provided RED Team members with a copy of the prior 2021-2025 CEDS Action Plan and asked that they review and discuss the Plan for a potential amendment. Staff reminded members that the updated goals in the Action Plan match the goals identified in the planning grant between EMCOG and the EDA. The 2021 Action Plan strategies, initiatives, and updates were then reviewed and updated

during multiple virtual RED Team meetings. The areas of focus were modified from the 2021 CEDS to be consistent with the current EDA planning grant and are as follows: Infrastructure, Workforce, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Economic Development, Manufacturing, Placemaking, Health, and Housing. Goals regarding these areas were then added to the Action Plan (beginning on page 25).

Upon completion of the CEDS draft, it was made available for the 30-day public review, posted on the EMCOG website, publicized in local media, and emailed directly to numerous regional stakeholders. Edits were made accordingly, based on the comments made during the review period. The final CEDS was adopted unanimously by the EMCOG Council on January 16, 2026.

## **REGIONAL PROFILE**

The East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) is located in East Central Michigan and includes 14 counties and one (1) Indian Nation (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe). The 14 counties include Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Iosco, Isabella, Midland, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola. The region is primarily rural with several major hubs in Saginaw, Midland, Bay City, and Mt. Pleasant. The EMCOG region is 8,607 square miles in area, which is the largest planning region in the State of Michigan. The region includes 337 municipalities (14 counties, 32 cities, 45 villages, 245 townships, and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe).

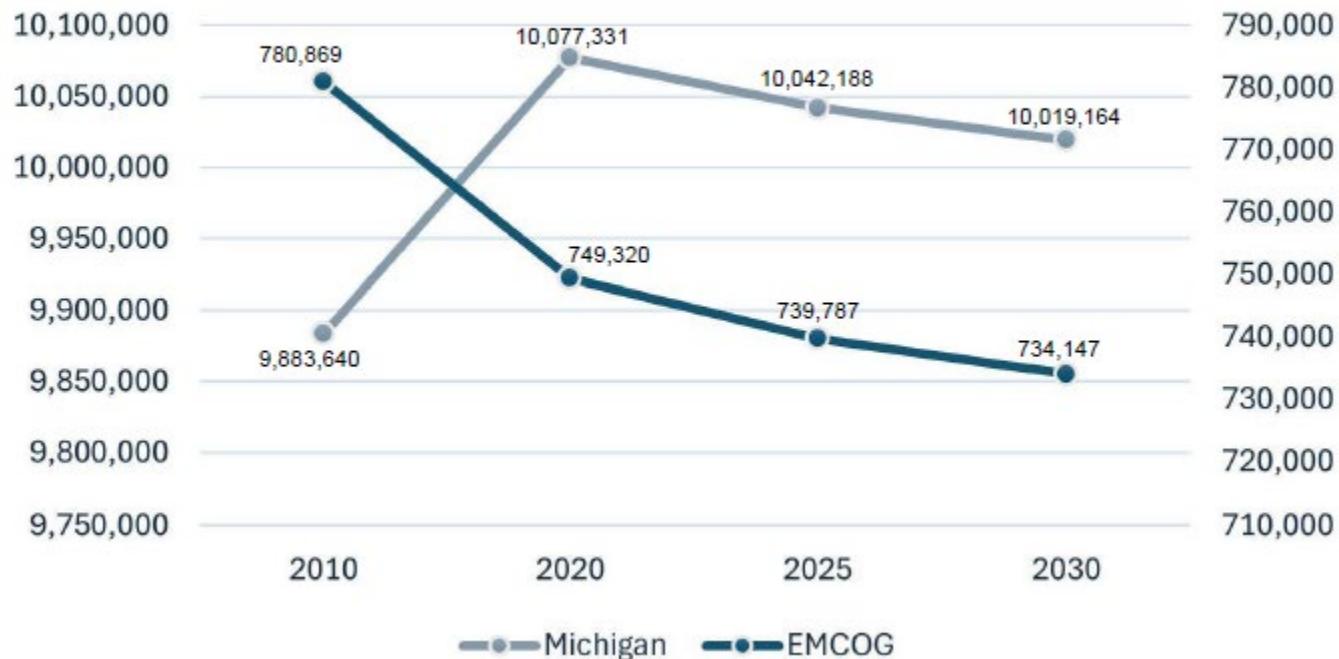
### **Population**

The population of the EMCOG region in 2010 was 780,859 and was 749,320 in 2020 for a decrease in population of 31,539 or 4.3 percent. The population is anticipated to decrease further in 2025 and 2030 with the 2030 population estimated at 734,147, which is a reduction of 15,173 or 2.0 percent. Overall, from 2010 to 2030 the EMCOG region is projected to have a net decrease of 46,722 or a 6.0 percent decrease in population. The shrinking population is caused by several factors including but not limited to lower birth rates, higher rates of emigration than immigration. The emigration of students leaving the region has been an issue for many years and there is a growing effort to try and keep these students in the region after graduation.

The State of Michigan experienced an increase of population from 9,883,640 in 2010 to 10,077,331 in 2020, which is an increase of 193,691 people or a 1.2 percent increase. However, from 2020 to 2030 the population is anticipated to decrease by 58,167 or 0.6 percent. Overall, from 2010 to 2030 the State of Michigan is projected to have a net increase of 135,524 or a 1.4 percent increase in population.

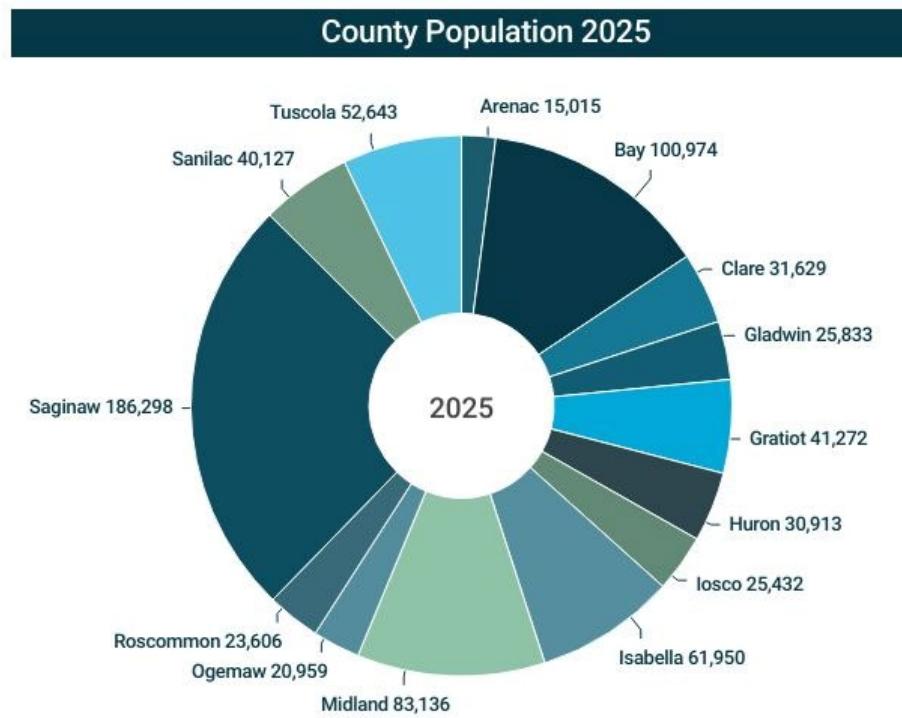
2010-2030 Population Trends: EMCOG Region and State of Michigan

## Population



Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025-2030.

It should be noted that the population of the EMCOG region is not evenly distributed. The population clusters are in Bay, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw Counties. These four (4) counties contain 58 percent of the EMCOG region. On the following page is a pie chart showing the 2025 population breakdown.

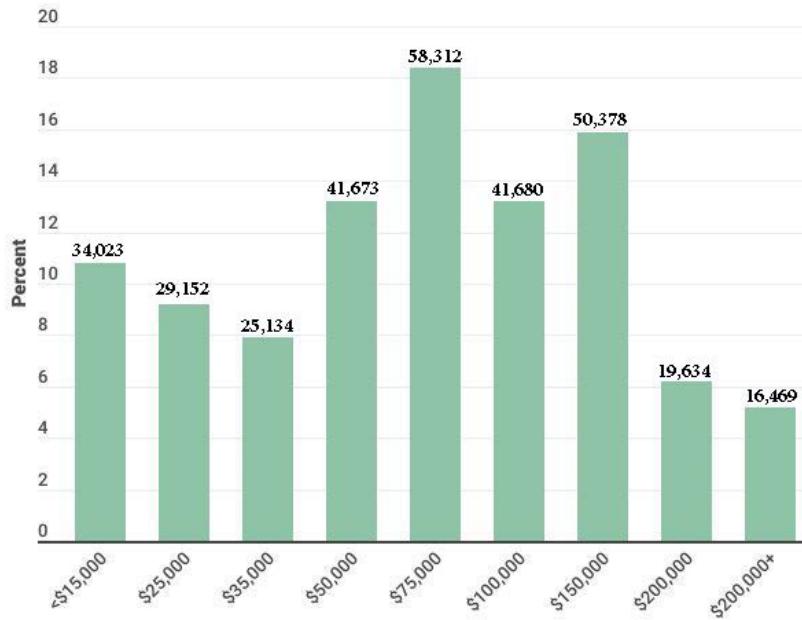


Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025.

## Household Income

Household income in the region is heavily concentrated in the \$35,000-\$149,999 range, with the largest concentration of 58,312 households in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 range, representing 17.9% of households. Income ranges of \$75,000-\$99,999 and \$100,000-\$149,999 also have many households, with the \$100,000-\$149,999 range comprising 14.1 percent of the total household and the \$75,000-\$99,999 range 13.6 percent of the total households. The two smallest ranges are the \$150,000-\$199,999 and \$200,000+ ranges. Combined they comprise only 12.2 percent or 36,103 of the households. With the high number of residents earning less than \$100,000, homeownership is becoming more difficult for first-time homebuyers. The table on the following page highlights the number of households in each of the income ranges.

## 2025 Household Income



Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025.

## Home Ownership

Comparing the region's housing ownership levels to the State of Michigan's, the region has a slightly higher homeownership rate than the state and the vacancy rate is nearly 50 percent higher. The homeownership and rental percentages are taken from the homes that are occupied and do not include the vacant housing units.

## Home Ownership

EMCOG Region



Michigan

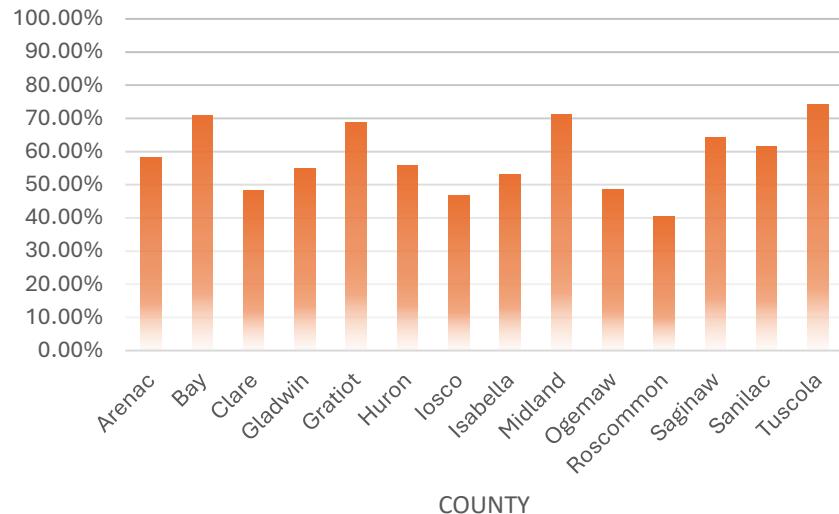


Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025

On the following page are several charts highlighting the ownership and vacancy rates in the EMCOG region. Homeownership rates of occupied housing units are between 40 and 75 percent of all housing units, including vacancies. The percentage of rental units varies with a low of 9 percent in Roscommon County and 35 percent in Isabella County. The Isabella County number is skewed with the number of rental units that are occupied by the students of Central Michigan University (CMU). The number of vacant units varies greatly ranging from 7 percent in the counties of Bay, Gratiot, and Midland to over 50 percent in Roscommon County.

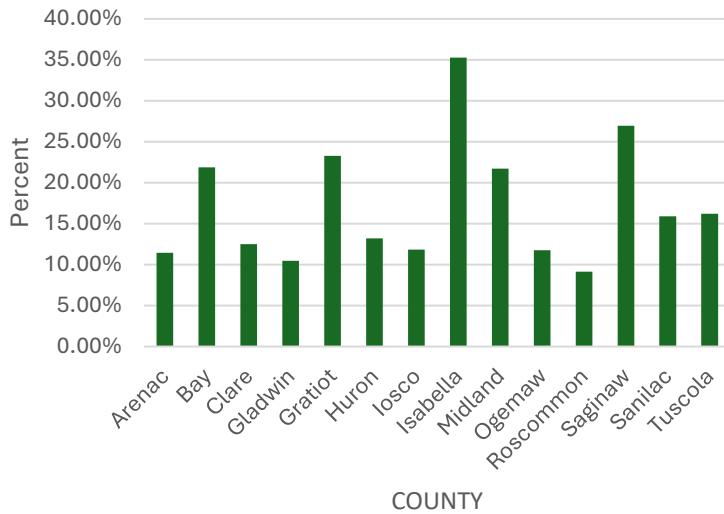
Roscommon County and other northern counties in the region have a much higher vacancy rates due to the number of secondary homes owned by people from outside the region. Traditionally, these secondary homes were used as vacation homes by families from southern Michigan and used for recreational purposes. In recent years, investors have been purchasing property in these counties and are using it as rental property. Both Airbnb and Vrbo rentals have increased rapidly in number in those communities where secondary homes were prevalent. This has been a real issue in those communities as the homeownership option for families is being reduced. Not only are these investors purchasing homes at a high rate, but they are paying more than market value for the properties, further making homeownership more difficult for first-time homeowners.

## HOME OWNERSHIP OCCUPIED HOUSING



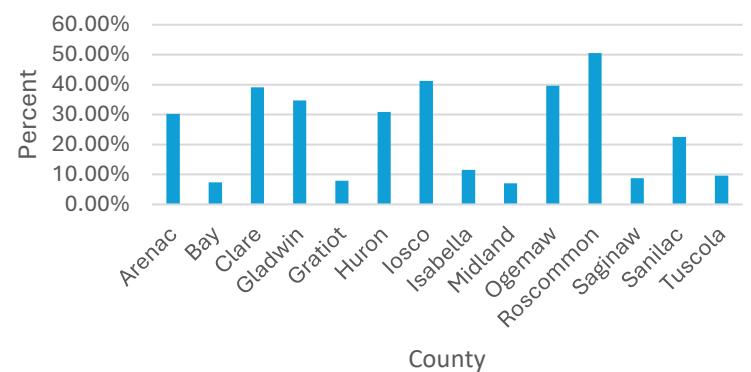
Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025

## Renter Occupied Housing



Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025

## Vacancy Rate



Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020, ESRI Forecasts 2025

## Education

The EMCOG Region had 119,212 children between the ages of 5 and 18, with 310,500 total households. Of these, 164,679 children aged 3 and above are enrolled in school. Public schools serve most students, with enrollment totaling 96,565, distributed across kindergarten (7,059), grades 1–4 (27,076), grades 5–8 (28,996), and grades 9–12 (33,434). Private schools educate 12,503 students, with enrollment consisting of kindergarten (1,540), grades 1–4 (4,375), grades 5–8 (3,754), and grades 9–12 (2,834).

Educational resources across the region include 413 elementary and secondary schools, 87 public libraries, and 68 parks, all of which contribute to supporting the student population. This data highlights not only the strong reliance on the public school system but also the significant role private schools and community resources play in the region's educational environment. This also reflects the matter of different levels of resources being provided by the school systems. It is difficult to mirror school districts within the same county, let alone in 14 counties.

Educational attainment in the EMCOG region is led by high school graduates, with 31.4% of the population holding a high school diploma as their highest level of education. While 21.2% have completed some college but have not earned a degree, 14.5% have attained a bachelor's degree, and 11.8% hold an associate's degree. Graduate or professional degrees account for 8.2%, indicating a smaller but notable segment with advanced education. Lower levels of attainment include those with a GED (4.7%), no diploma after some high school (6.0%), and less than a 9th-grade education (2.2%).

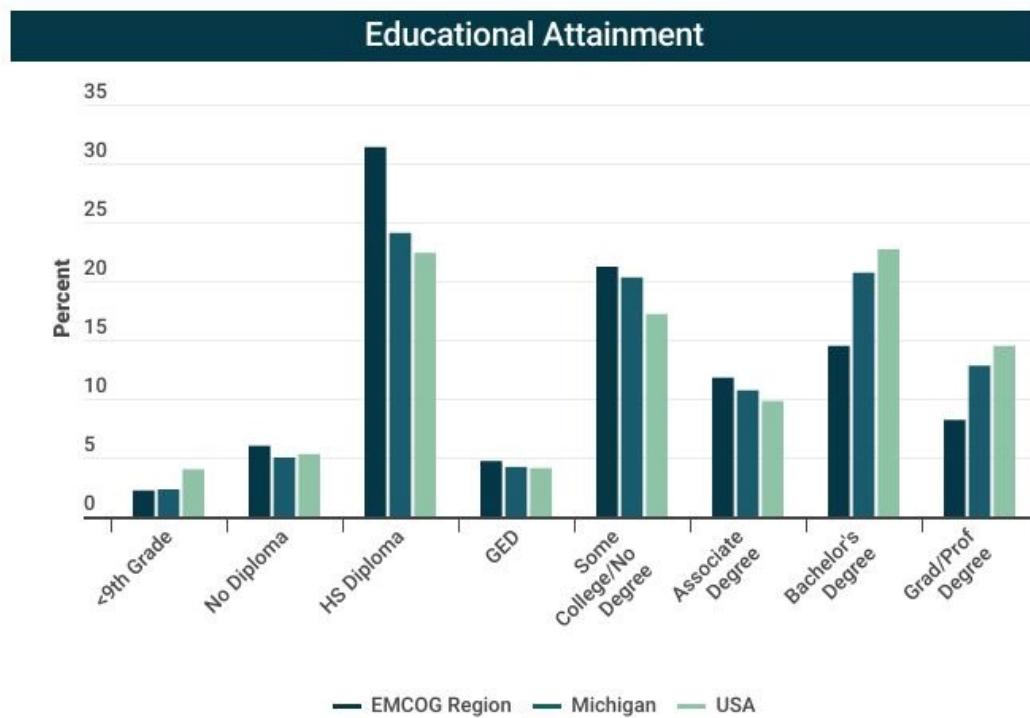
When comparing the EMCOG region to the state of Michigan and the United States (see the chart below), those with a High School Diploma is the most common level of education in all three geographies. Some College/No Degree is higher in the region compared to Michigan and USA, while bachelor's degree and Graduate/Professional Degree levels are higher in the USA compared to Michigan and the region.

Saginaw Valley State University Gateway (Saginaw County)



Source: SVSU

The data shows a strong base of high school completion with many pursuing higher education within the region, though fewer reach advanced degrees. This suggests opportunities for workforce development programs to encourage transitions from partial college experiences into degree completion, while also addressing the smaller group with limited formal education.



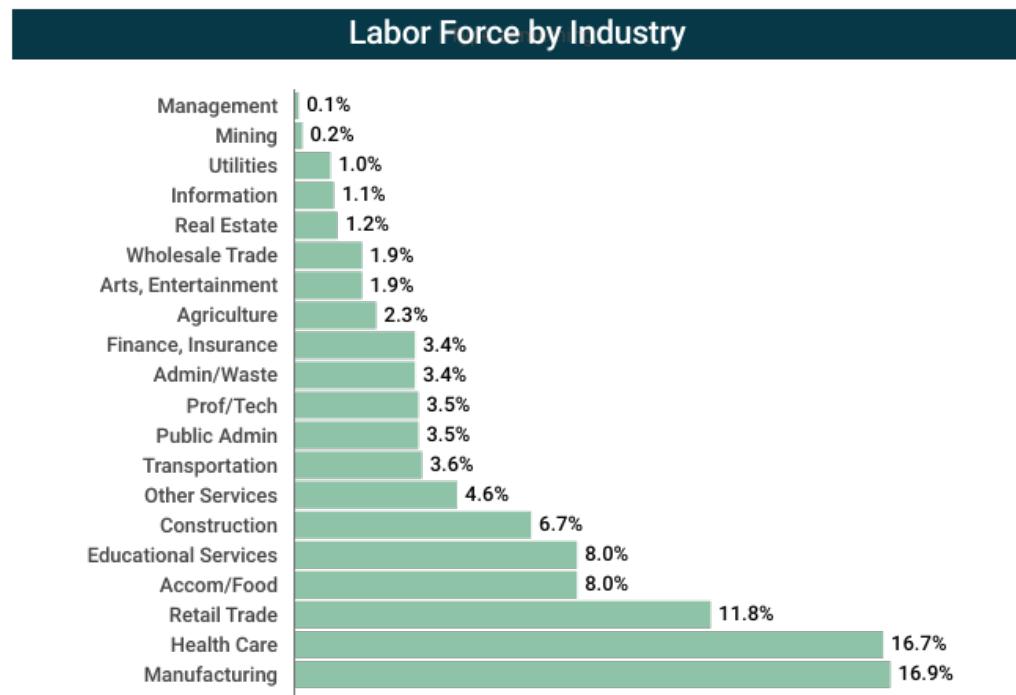
Source: ESRI forecasts for 2025. U.S. Census 2010 and 2020. Census data converted by ESRI into 2020 geography.

## Employment

The workforce has been identified both as a strength (affordable business climate, and solid manufacturing base) and a weakness (not enough high paying jobs with good benefits) and has a significant impact on the region's growth and success. Based on ESRI estimates for

2025, there is a total of 26,434 businesses that employ 324,205 people within the region. A majority of the employees are white collar at 55 percent, followed by blue collar at 26.8 percent, and the service industry with 18.2 percent.

Breaking this down by industry the top three sources of employment in the region are manufacturing (16.7%), health care (16.7%) and retail trade (11.8%). The table below further highlights the labor force for the region.



Source: ESRI forecasts for 2025 and 2030. U.S. Census 2010 and 2020. Census data converted by ESRI into 2020 geography.

As previously stated, Manufacturing (16.9%) and Health Care (16.7%) are the two largest employers, together accounting for over one-third of the labor force. These industries play a significant role in providing employment and are key drivers of the regional economy. Close behind is Retail Trade (11.8%), which reflects the importance of consumer goods and services.

Several mid-range industries include Accommodation and Food Services (8.0%) and Educational Services (8.0%), which are equally strong contributors to employment. These sectors reflect both the service economy and the need for workforce development. Identified as a weakness (see appendix II), the lack of construction workers in the region makes up only 6.7 percent of the workforce. Another weakness as identified in the table found on page 24 is the lack of public transportation, this is identified with only 3.6 percent of the workforce working in transportation.

As part of the SWOT analysis opportunities for the region were identified. Among those potentially improving workforce areas include tourism/recreation (accommodation/food), technology (professional/technical), downtown development/redevelopment (art/entertainment, retail trade, and other services), and housing (construction). As the region works towards these opportunities to continue to grow and develop, it is very possible to see a slight shift in multiple workforce areas.

## Agriculture

The EMCOG region is mostly rural with agriculture being a primary industry for the region. Both livestock and crops are prevalent throughout the region. The livestock includes a significant amount of beef and dairy cattle, pigs, and poultry. The major crops for the region include corn, sugar beets, potatoes, and beans. The region also includes numerous apple orchards throughout the region as well as pumpkin and cucumber farms.

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture the EMCOG region there were 9,446 farms in the 14-county region. This was a drop of 311 farms from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. There was also a drop in total acres from 2,704,632 to 2,640,462, which was a loss of 64,170. During this period, the average farm size increased by 25 acres. The loss of farms occurred in seven (7) counties, and the loss of acres occurred in nine (9) counties. The three counties of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola had the most farms and acres devoted to farming and all three counties had an increase of farms

from 2017 to 2022. Sanilac and Tuscola Counties had an increase in farm acreage, while Huron County had a loss of farm acreage.<sup>1</sup>

ZFS Facility in Ithaca (Gratiot County)



Source: ZFS Ithaca

<sup>1</sup> 2022 Census of Agriculture

## Infrastructure

Aging infrastructure is identified both as a weakness and a threat to the region. With both an aging road system and water/sewer systems throughout the region many municipalities have identified the upgrading of these systems to be a concern. Unfunded mandates to replace lead water service lines have added additional strain to the budgets and capital improvement plans for impacted local communities. Broadband remains an issue with many of the northern counties having underserved or unserved areas.

In 2025 EMCOG staff completed the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) Condition Assessment for approximately 50 percent of the eligible roads for federal funding in the 14-county region. (Each year 50 percent of one-half of the federally eligible roads are assessed, with the other 50 percent done the following year.) The PASER rating system has six categories in which to identify the road conditions.

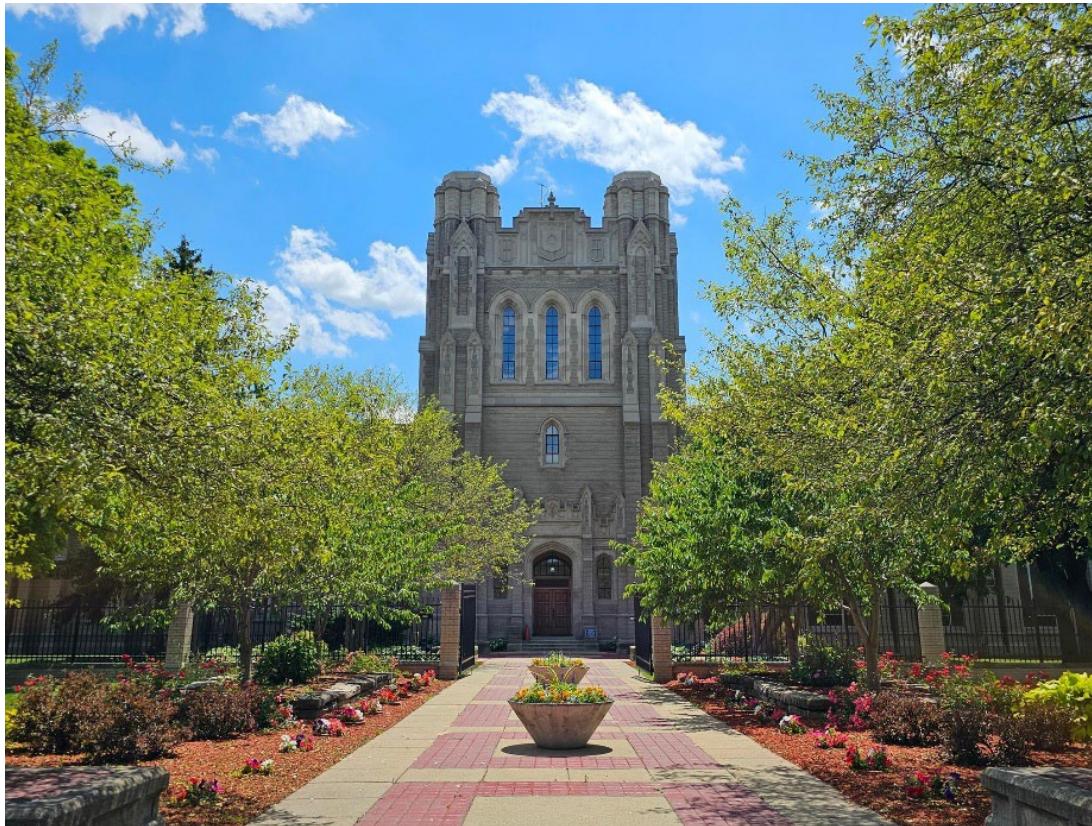
Beginning with the roads in the worst shape, the six categories are: reconstruction, structure improvement & leveling, preservation maintenance, preservation treatments, little or no maintenance, and no maintenance required. A total of 2,493.82 miles were assessed in the EMCOG Region in 2025. Structural improvement & leveling, the second worst rating assessment, was identified most often, with 810.28 miles or 32.49 percent of the roads receiving this assessment. The worst assessment classification, reconstruction, was identified the least often on 72.37 miles or only 2.9 percent of the roads. The table below is an overview of the assessed mile.

EMCOG PASER Miles - 2025		
Classification	Total Miles	Percentage of Miles
1-2: Reconstruction	72.37	2.90%
3 - 4: Structural Improvement & Leveling	810.28	32.49%
5 - 6: Preservative Maintenance	493.97	19.81%
7: Preservative Treatments	312.62	12.54%
8: Little or No Maintenance	689.19	27.64%
9 - 10: No Maintenance Required	115.39	4.63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,493.82</b>	<b>100%</b>

Infrastructure is not only impacted by normal wear and tear but can also be impacted by other factors such as weather. An example of this is the 2020 flood in Gladwin/Midland Counties which resulted in the loss of four dams in the two counties. The 2020 flood also resulted in damage of roads and bridges throughout the region and specifically in the five counties (Arenac, Gladwin, Iosco, Midland, and Saginaw) most directly impacted by the flood.

The replacement of these dams (Edenville, Sanford, Secord, and Smallwood Dams) is currently underway and has been a source of concern since the 2020 storm/flood. The loss of these dams has not only had an impact on the infrastructure, but it has also impacted tourism and recreation, housing, and the local economy of the region. Many homes were lost, and with the loss of the lakes, many property owners have yet to return to the region. Public infrastructure is the backbone of the region, and without it many aspects of the local economy cannot exist.

City of Saginaw Water Treatment Facility (Saginaw County)



Source: Jamie Forbes STARS

Life Preserver Station at Van Etten Lake (Iosco County)



Source: Nancy Howse

Iron Belle Trail



Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Other forms of infrastructure include solar farms, wind farms, and numerous non-motorized trails throughout the region, including but not limited to the Iron Belle Trail, the Southern Links Trail, and the Pere Marquette Trail.

## Recreation/Tourism

A major source of economic activity can be attributed to recreation and tourism. Outdoor recreational activities bring many visitors to region. Lake Huron borders the region to the east. The eastern counties of Iosco, Arenac, Bay, Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola have a combined shoreline totaling 528 miles. Together with the local lakes and streams, fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, and swimming are just a few of the amenities that are enjoyed on the water. The Huron section of the Huron-Manistee National Forest is in the northern part of the EMCOG region. It is 437,287 acres or 683 square miles in area. Camping, hunting, Over the Road Vehicles (ORV), and sightseeing are enjoyed by many visitors from around the state.

The EMCOG region is also home to numerous museums, a children's zoo, an outlet mall, specialty shops in multiple cities in the region, and numerous shopping centers bringing many visitors from outside the region.

Turnip Rock and Thumbnail Point (Huron County)



Source: Justin Schnettler at Business Soil

## Transportation

EMCOG is the largest regional planning agency in the state with 14 counties that total over 8,600 square miles. Access to or from the region is possible by land, water, or air. The primary means of land transportation is by automobile, but it also includes non-motorized trails and walkways. There are also Over the Road Vehicle (ORV) trails located in the northern counties in EMCOG. The road system includes federal and state and federal highways with one (1) interstate highway (I-75), three US highways (US 10, US 23, and US 27/127), and fourteen (14) state highways. However, county and local roads make up a majority of the roads within the region. There are over 14,800 road lane miles eligible for state and federal funding in the 14-county region.

Travelling throughout the region by water can be accomplished by several means. Lake Huron forms the eastern border to the EMCOG region. Being a part of the Great Lakes, Lake Huron provides access to the Atlantic Ocean through the St Lawrence River. Some of the major rivers in the region include the Au Sable, Black, Cass, Chippewa, Saginaw, Shiawassee, Tittabawassee, Tobacco. These rivers also provide a source of recreation for kayaks and canoes.

There are also numerous airports throughout the region. While many of the airports are local, some are regional, and several are international. MBS International Airport is located in Saginaw County with Delta, United, and American Airlines all flying out of MBS. Foreign airlines also utilize MBS Airport. The second major airport is Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport. This airport is used for general aviation purposes, which does not include commercial flights. It should also be noted that Covenant Healthcare in Saginaw has a helipad for medical helicopters.

MBS International Airport



Source: MBS Website

## SWOT ANALYSIS

The Regional Economic Development (RED) team was utilized to provide the input on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) rewrite. The RED Team members are comprised of local businesspersons, elected public officials, municipal employees, and private citizens in the region.

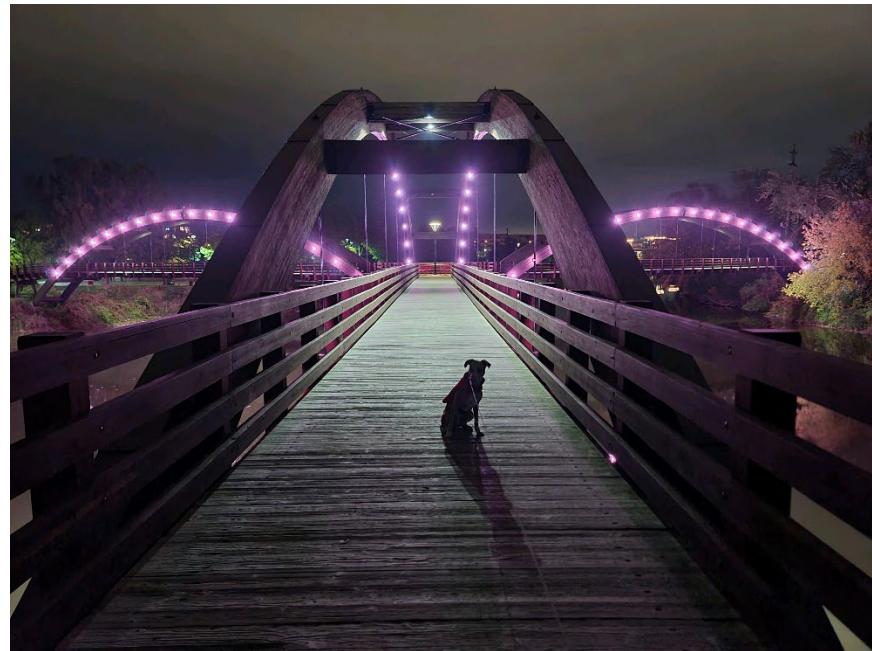
SWOT categories were defined by the following:

- Strengths-factors that provide a positive impact to the region; and
- Weaknesses-factors that prevent the region from succeeding; and
- Opportunities-external factors that provide the region with a potential advantage; and
- Threats-external factors that can limit the success of the region.

The SWOT analysis began with requesting that the RED Team members submit what they considered to be strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats to the region or their locality. After their responses were submitted, these factors were then reviewed at a RED Team meeting, which was a public meeting. At that meeting, the RED Team members were able to eliminate and/or combine multiple responses. This revised list was then reviewed by EMCOG staff. The entire list of responses is found in Appendix II.

Following the adjustments, an email was sent out to over 300 contacts within the EMCOG region requesting them to identify the five (5) most important factors in each of the four (4) SWOT categories. These contacts include municipal officials, both elected and selected, businesspersons, non-profit employees, and residents within the fourteen-county region. After tabulating the results of the survey, the ten (10) factors that were identified most often are included in the table below.

The City of Midland's Tridge over the Tittabawassee and Chippewa Rivers



Source: Rodney Nanney, Charter Township of Union

## SWOT Priorities

SWOT Priorities	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress toward regional collaboration</li> <li>2. Natural resources and lots of outdoor assets</li> <li>3. Relative to other areas, cost of living</li> <li>4. Lots of higher education options, including career &amp; technical education (access to community colleges/universities)</li> <li>5. Farm production</li> <li>6. Affordable business climate</li> <li>7. Solid manufacturing base</li> <li>8. Centrally located in the State of Michigan</li> <li>9. Recreation (non-motorized and walking) trails located throughout the region</li> <li>10. Lake Huron</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Declining and aging population/workforce</li> <li>2. Not enough talent to meet the local demand</li> <li>3. Childcare deserts</li> <li>4. Public transportation is not regional</li> <li>5. Education systems are unable to attract/retain teachers; disrupts growing local talent</li> <li>6. Local governments (townships/villages/cities/counties) struggling</li> <li>7. Not enough high paying jobs with good benefits</li> <li>8. Poverty rate</li> <li>9. Lack of affordable/senior housing</li> <li>10. Aging infrastructure</li> </ol>
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scaling services, regionally collaborating (versus just by township, city, or county)</li> <li>2. Area/regional tourism</li> <li>3. Housing grants based on income</li> <li>4. Grants to help region</li> <li>5. Innovation in technologies and businesses within the region can result in spin-off businesses. As similar businesses cluster, more talent will be attracted to the region.</li> <li>6. Skilled workforce to transition into more technical and control positions</li> <li>7. Capture the multitude of college-age students attending the many colleges in the region to live/work in the region</li> <li>8. Redevelopment of closed schools and churches</li> <li>9. Complete economic development strategies for communities to revitalize downtowns/business districts</li> <li>10. Update master plans/zoning ordinances/recreation plans</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inflation and rising cost of living, including health care costs</li> <li>2. Housing market instability, trends, and options</li> <li>3. Availability of state and federal funding</li> <li>4. Continued preference of green sites over redevelopment of brownfield sites</li> <li>5. Continued loss of population/student population</li> <li>6. Aging population</li> <li>7. Economic development is hard to fund</li> <li>8. Blight control and enforcement</li> <li>9. Unfunded state mandates</li> <li>10. Aging infrastructure</li> </ol>

## ACTION PLAN

The CEDS plan is designed to be multifaceted and to cover different areas that impact economic development in the region. Strategic initiatives in the Plan are organized under eight goals: infrastructure, workforce, innovation and entrepreneurship, economic recovery resiliency, manufacturing, placemaking, health, and housing. The Plan should be viewed as one of many tools in the economic and community development toolbox for The East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) Council members, the Regional Economic Development (RED) team, staff, local government officials, interest groups and citizens from throughout the region while meeting the requirements set forth by the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

## **Mission Statement**

The East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) provides a multi-purpose, multi-jurisdictional regional forum which discusses issues of mutual interest and concern and develops recommendations and plans to address those issues. All of this in hopes of leading to a common goal of improving the quality of life for the residents of the east central region of Michigan and the EMCOG region. At all times, EMCOG remains neutral in its deliberations.

## **Vision Statement:**

East Central Michigan strives to develop a resilient and adaptive 14-county regional economy, by investing in economic and workforce development, supporting vital infrastructure, preserving the outstanding quality of life, and encouraging economic opportunity for all.

## **Goals:**

### **Goal 1: Infrastructure**

Capitalize on East Michigan's existing transportation assets (roads, rail, port facilities, airports. etc.) and make strategic investments in regional infrastructure, including water, sewer, and telecommunication infrastructure that improve the region's economic competitiveness.

### **Goal 2: Workforce**

Build on the collaboration among East Michigan's primary and secondary education (Prek-12), higher education, adult education, skilled trades, and workforce development organizations to create a strong talent pool to support the region's current and future employers.

### **Goal 3: Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

Leverage East Michigan's higher education institutions, major industries, medical complexes, and innovation assets to establish the region as a center for technology-based entrepreneurship and small business growth.

### **Goal 4: Economic Development**

Grow East Michigan's economy through economic development activities (business retention, expansion, and recruitment) and marketing efforts that enhance the region's image as a place to do business while ensuring that the area can withstand and recover from short or long-term changes in economic conditions, including effects from industry contractions or economic impacts from national disasters.

### **Goal 5: Manufacturing**

Support economic development planning or implementation projects that encourage job creation, business expansion, technology and capital upgrades and productivity growth in manufacturing, include efforts that contribute to the competitiveness and growth of domestic supplier or the domestic production of innovative, high-value projects and production technologies.

### **Goal 6: Placemaking**

Embark on local and regional initiatives to strengthen the quality of place in each of East Michigan's communities to create an attractive environment for residents, tourists, and those returning to or relocating to Michigan.

### **Goal 7: Health**

Support efforts to improve regional prosperity by fostering healthy communities and a high quality of life, through initiatives such as better access to rural health care services, expansion of the rural healthcare workforce development, access to healthy food and enhancement of healthcare clusters. These efforts may include but not be limited to the provision of medical equipment and training for first responders and medical personnel throughout the region.

### **Goal 8: Housing**

Improve the variety, types, quality, and number of housing units within the East Central Michigan region to accommodate the shortage of affordable housing, to meet the needs of the residents of the region.

## Goal 1:Infrastructure

Capitalize on the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG's) existing transportation assets (roads, rail, port facilities, airports, etc.) and make strategic investments in regional infrastructure, including water, sewer, and telecommunication infrastructure that improve the region's economic competitiveness.

Strategy: Adopt and incorporate the Michigan Infrastructure Council's recommendations for integrated asset management, which ensures more efficient use of public dollars, sustainable community planning, and resilient infrastructure management.		
Initiatives	Description	Status
Ensure that community comprehensive development plans incorporate hazard mitigation plans and other regional planning documents to make sure plans and agencies are in alignment.	Comprehensive plans/master plan drafts are submitted to EMCOG staff for review and are checked for mitigation plan references.	Ongoing
Update and maintain a regional asset inventory of physical resources that support the region's target sectors.	EMCOG annually performs Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) on federal aid and local roads as part of the EMCOG MDOT overall work program.	All Counties in EMCOG complete PASER every year. Some only the Federal-Aid eligible roads, others, the entire County road system.
Fill essential gaps in the regional transportation network to support the growth of existing businesses and the attraction of new companies.	EMCOG staff works closely with MDOT and local public transit agencies as part of EMCOG's MDOT contractual work (RTF, MPO collaboration etc.)	Ongoing
Explore opportunities to incorporate smart and sustainable technological innovations into infrastructure improvement projects.		Bay County Road Commission (BCRC), Bay City and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) are working with Bay City Bridge Partners to optimize the traffic lights along the Wilder Road corridor to minimize stoppages and lost time, while maximizing traffic flow and fuel savings.
Saginaw River Shoreline Remediation Effort to positively impact all 14 counties within EMCOG and beyond and creating a multimodal transportation hub.	Work closely with the US Army Corps of Engineers (US ACE), the US Dept of Transportation, and EGLE to determine if it is feasible to deepen the Saginaw River to St. Lawrence Seaway depth of 27'.	

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Develop a region-wide broadband strategy to increase the availability of broadband infrastructure in the region, especially in rural and underserved communities		
Convene public and private sector leaders to understand and inventory existing efforts underway to expand telecommunications services in the region.		Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) continues to be a part of the next grant conversation.
Leverage the 2018 Michigan Broadband Roadmap strategic plan, as well as state and federal funding resources, to accelerate broadband projects in the region. (Capacity is often an obstacle for rural communities trying to move forward with technology action plans. Economic development partners should support these efforts by serving as a project lead or assisting with finding project leads.)		EMCOG coordinates with counties that are participating in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. Staff also forward all correspondence that is received to the Full Council and participating counties/members. Four applications for BEAD funding were submitted that impacted Ogemaw County residents.
Coordinate with Connected Nation Michigan (Connect Michigan) to develop technology action plans for the region's communities.		Ogemaw County EDC has participated in the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) conversations for the past 3 years.
Strategy: Support county governments as they work towards securing their materials management plan (MMP) approval from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).		
Each county will be responsible for developing a Materials Management Plan (Plan) to address this item as stipulated by EGLE.	Each county will be responsible for developing a Materials Management Plan (Plan) to address this item as stipulated by EGLE.	Each county will be responsible for developing a Materials Management Plan (Plan) to address this item as stipulated by EGLE. This may also be done as a regional grouping of counties.

Initiatives	Description	Status
<b>Strategy: Explore options to expand and improve multi-modal shipping and transportation infrastructure throughout the region.</b>		
Assist the short line rail system, which is privately owned, to fund repairs in the EMCOG region.	Improve the rail system to allow small manufacturing and the agriculture industry to move out products and bring in supplies.	
Back efforts to maintain and improve the region's highways, local roadways, and airports.		
Explore ways to make better use of water-based transport for goods movement, especially for the agriculture, construction, and utilities sectors.		
Saginaw River Shoreline Remediation Effort to positively impact all 14 counties within EMCOG and beyond and creating a multimodal transportation hub.	Work closely with the US ACE, the US Dept of Transportation, and EGLE to deepen the Saginaw River to St. Lawrence Seaway depth of 27'	
Ensure the region's waterfront infrastructure meets the needs of residents, businesses, and developers to support healthy downtowns and talent attraction.	Work with communities bordering Lake Huron/ Saginaw Bay to identify potential projects to address fluctuating water levels.  Work with communities on or near rivers or other public waterways to address contamination issues to ensure bodies of water remain healthy for residential and recreational use.	Two grants through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have been secured by EMCOG to work with the communities bordering Lake Huron.
Saginaw River Shoreline Remediation Effort's Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy using Saginaw River sediment and clay as fill as defined by the US ACE Beneficial Use Mandate.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
<p>Take a proactive and forward-looking approach to explore infrastructure improvements needed to support local and regional airports, public transportation agencies, and associated commercial establishments. Identify those airports that need Class A road access.</p>	<p>Survey all local and regional airports in the region to identify those airports in need of Class A road access.</p> <p>Continue to work with Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) on the Midtown Transit Gateway Project and lay groundwork for increased collaboration between public and transit organizations improving mobility and rider experience across the region. Move towards the passage of a countywide public transit millage in Saginaw County.</p> <p>Encourage for preservation of existing General Aviation airport runways, taxiway, and other infrastructure threatened by outdated federal rules that force unnecessary and counter-productive downgrades to service capacity (runway length, taxiway width) in exchange for federal funding.</p>	<p>MBS in Saginaw received Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement funds in 2023. MBS received \$5,636,628 to rehab a runway and install a runway visual guidance system.</p> <p>The BCRC works with Bay Future, Chamber of Commerce, townships and state representatives to identify new companies, those expanding or considering leaving (job retention) Bay County, due to insufficient road, water, or sanitary sewer facilities.</p> <p>The City of Mt. Pleasant Regional Airport in Isabella County recently completed an airport expansion feasibility study. The Airport's Joint Operations and Management Board (made up of representation from the City, County, Union Township, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and Middle Michigan Development Corp.) is focused on implementing a proposed 1,000-foot runway extension and associated improvements needed to serve the needs of large local employers with aircraft types as identified in the plan.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Ensure the region's water, sewer, and storm water systems meet the needs of the region's businesses and residents, while protecting the natural environment.		
Research and explore dedicated funding mechanisms for watershed protection and restoration.		<p>A regional grant via the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for the upper Tittabawassee watershed was secured and several elements completed in answer to the flooding of 2020.</p> <p>Harbor Beach secured an EDA Grant to assist in upgrading an existing water main to allow for business expansion.</p> <p>Bay County Department of Water and Sewer received bonding approval of up to \$15 mil to construct two (2), five-million-gallon raw water tanks to provide redundancy and additional repair time, should the water treatment plant temporarily shut down.</p> <p>Consumers Energy provides funding for middle schools to include watershed definition, protection and restoration in their curriculums.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
<p>Coordinate with local property owners and local municipal officials including but not limited to elected officials, public works staff, community and development staff, and housing representatives, to identify opportunities for housing developments.</p>	<p>Coordinate with Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and their 2022 Statewide Housing Plan through Regions E, G, and H.</p>	<p>From June 2023 through May 2025, EMCOG was the lead agency for Region G and its Regional Housing Partnership and worked with numerous municipalities and state agencies on housing issues.</p> <p>Union Charter Township is currently implementing a water system improvement project funding in part by a \$10 million grant from the State of Michigan Drinking Water Revolving Fund. This project is designed to add capacity for anticipated population growth.</p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> Continue efforts made in the 2015 CEDS to increase comprehensive and more efficient transit systems, including nonmotorized networks, to support mobility across the region.</p>		
		<p>EMCOG staff work with regional transit agencies through the Rural Task Force (RTF) process as well as being a member of MDOT Bay Region's Bike/Ped Committee.</p> <p>Huron Transit Corporation received \$10 million towards a new transit facility, replacing the existing facility. Project is estimated to be \$32 million, which includes land acquisition and construction of the facility.</p>

## Goal 2: Workforce

Build on the collaboration among primary and secondary education (Prek-12), higher education, adult education, skilled trades, and workforce development organizations to create a strong talent pool to support the region's current and future employers.

Strategy: Utilize the region's outstanding higher education institutions for talent retention and recruitment.		
Initiatives	Description	Status
Capitalize on the growing remote worker trend to encourage talent to relocate or remain in the region. Host networking and social events to connect the remote worker community.		
Expand Central Michigan University's (CMU's) and SVSU's successful "Coming Home" talent attraction strategy to include additional colleges and universities in the region. Strengthen the campaign's online presence and encourage remote networking opportunities.	Host events that encourage students to continue their education/training.	The events have expanded to include community colleges, other universities, and MichWorks Region 7b. The events also included the 2 <sup>nd</sup> career community as well.
Encourage collaboration among the region's civic leadership programs. Bring young leaders together to discuss regional issues and challenges; young people that are more engaged in their communities are more likely to stay in the region and be invested in long-term prosperity for the region.		<p>Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties have collaborated on a marketing tool focused on talent attraction. The initiative is called Michigan's Forgotten Coast.</p> <p>Conversations are taking place in Ogemaw County for non-voting seats on some of the local boards for experience in business and communication.</p> <p>Gratiot Young Professionals Network has a highly successful group of 80 members, ages 21-40, who are seeking ways to connect to their community.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Communities interested in setting up a leadership program should explore resources provided through the Association of Leadership Programs; as well as from existing programs in the region.		
Leverage the Go Great Website (GoGreat.com), other CVB websites, and the websites of other regional partners within the 14-county region to serve as the quality of life/sense of place materials to share with candidates and potential residents.		
Support Nontraditional Higher Education Student Populations	Enhance recruitment, retention, and support services for non-traditional student populations including veterans, graduate students, first-generation students, and non-traditional learners. Partner with higher education institutions, veteran service organizations, skilled trade centers, and adult learning providers to design programming that supports career transitions, reskilling, and wraparound services for these unique groups. These efforts will help align education pathways with workforce demand, while also improving access and equity across the region's talent pipeline.	
Strengthen PreK–Workforce Pipelines	Develop seamless workforce development pipelines that begin in early childhood education and continue through K-12, postsecondary, and into employment. This includes expanding career exploration, dual enrollment, and early middle college programs; increasing employer engagement in curriculum design; and building awareness of regional high-demand career paths from an early age. Aligning education systems and industry more closely will ensure long-term talent development across East Michigan.	

Initiatives	Description	Status
Integrate Artificial Intelligence Education and Training Across the Workforce Pipeline	Support regional efforts to embed artificial intelligence (AI) education and training into workforce development strategies across K-12, higher education, and adult learning systems. This includes professional development for educators, curriculum partnerships with AI-focused organizations, and industry-aligned training programs that prepare students and workers for AI-driven job functions. Special emphasis should be placed on digital literacy, ethical use of AI, and upskilling incumbent workers whose roles may be reshaped by emerging technologies. Establishing regional AI readiness will help ensure East Michigan remains competitive and adaptable in a rapidly evolving labor market.	
Initiatives	Description	Status
Support initiatives to increase childcare supply and access across the EMCOG Region.		
Strategy: Explore programs that support and encourage remote or hybrid options for workers as the trend evolves.		
Capitalize on the growing remote work or hybrid options for workers trend to encourage talent to relocate or remain in the region. Host networking and social events to connect the remote worker community.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Ensure that workforce development, economic development, and the private sector are working together to address the region's workforce needs.		
Work with employers to develop alternative and flexible internship and experiential learning opportunities that do not require students to be onsite.	<p>Michigan Works! Region 7B &amp; Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! have partnered together to host the MiCareer Quest Middle Michigan event which brings 80+ employers together with over 5000 10<sup>th</sup> grade students to provide an experiential hands-on career exploration opportunity for all the schools within their 11-county region.</p>	<p>MichWorks 7b, consisting of Iosco, Gladwin, Arenac, Roscommon, and Ogemaw Counties, is now an apprenticeship intermediary. They are working with businesses to identify and create apprenticeship opportunities with the WS Department of Labor to support those apprenticeships.</p> <p>Ogemaw County has created three (3) new apprenticeships and MichWorks7b is working on twelve more.</p> <p>Childcare apprenticeships are a big venture and have been supported with an Early Childcare Innovation Grant through Develop Iosco.</p> <p>MichWorks 7b Young Professionals program has brought high school students and local businesses together for the summer of 2025. Students are doing 6–8-week internships with local businesses.</p> <p>Mi Career Quest Middle Michigan is an event done each year that brings business and students together to showcase potential workforce opportunities for students upon graduating.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
<p>Effectively communicate the workforce training needs of the private sector to higher education to ensure that programs with the highest need remain available to students (Strategy 5.1.2).</p>		<p>Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC) secured and enacted a regional workforce training grant with higher education partners at Delta and Mid Michigan College, training a significant number of incumbent workers in a variety of training topics.</p> <p>This event takes place in the Going Pro Talent Fund program. This is a state-wide initiative that is filtered through all Michigan Works Consortiums. Going Pro Talent Fund grants are written bi-annually.</p> <p>The Central Michigan Manufacturers Association (CMMA) has a highly successful Industry/Education roundtable where industry leaders meet monthly with Career Technical Education (CTE) staff from Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot and Isabella to be sure curriculum matches employer needs and to introduce students to job opportunities in the area.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Strengthen programs that build a skilled and resilient workforce, such as cross-training and upskilling employees.		
Build on the success of Delta College's Fast Start program and Mid Michigan College's programs to support just-in-time workforce training.	<p>Mid Michigan College created new short-term training programs that they can identify.</p> <p>Mid Michigan College is working with the Huron ISD and has established an early middle college program. (There are no colleges in the Thumb region, and this is a great opportunity for post-secondary education.)</p>	The Ogemaw County EDC continues to work with Alpena Community College (ACC), Kirtland Community College, and MMDC to develop classes for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
Increase awareness of virtual job fairs and events among the private sectors.		
Pursue innovation grants to support the region's goals, which can include curriculum creation, project-based certification programs, equipment staff, and pilot programs. Explore opportunities to establish facilities in the region to support initiatives.		
Support the Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan, including AI, to help more Michiganders earn a skills certificate or degree, Increase access to opportunities to grow the middle class, and support businesses and entrepreneurs through tailored talent solutions by creating the framework for modern skills, expanded industry-driven training, and early career pathways to prepare talent for critical roles.	<p>Michigan's workforce is undergoing a major transformation, with an estimated 2.8 million jobs being reshaped over the next 5–10 years due to technology, automation, and artificial intelligence. However, nearly one-third of Michigan workers currently lack basic digital literacy skills, despite 89% of jobs requiring them. National statistics underscore the urgency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13% of U.S. adults have no digital skills; 18% have limited skills</li> <li>• 20–26% of adults score at the lowest levels of literacy, hindering digital content understanding</li> <li>• Digital non-participation is highest among non-working and low-skilled adults, creating a cycle of unemployment and skill erosion</li> </ul>	Michigan Works! Agencies are partnering together on a Regional Innovation Project which will address apprenticeship, digital literacy, AI adoption and workforce training curriculum, and career exploration.

Initiatives	Description	Status
<b>Strategy: Developing human capital and the workforce</b>		
Support alignment of educational programs with the needs of local industries and provide training in emerging fields.		
Support opportunities for practical skill development and career advancement.		
Provide assistance to the extent practicable for those seeking to navigate the job market and access opportunities.		

### Goal 3: Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Leverage the EMCOG region's higher education institutions, major industries, medical complexes, and innovation assets to establish the region as a center for technology-based entrepreneurship and small business growth.

Strategy: Work collaboratively with lenders, angel investors, and venture capitalists to improve access to capital for small businesses, especially in rural and underserved communities.

Initiatives	Description	Status
Urge lenders to develop creative and flexible programs to increase lending to small businesses.	Create alternatives for small business support and options for the business without a perfect financial history through traditional and non-traditional sources.	Multiple agencies, such as MichWorks 7b and the county EDCs have loan and/or grant programs in place to assist local businesses.
Deepen relationships with investor networks, including venture capitalists, outside of the EMCOG region, including other parts of Michigan, the Midwest, and nationally.	EMCOG to work with local agencies to provide demographic information on the region by utilizing a database for the region's communities, businesses, agencies, etc. (General information is free for everyone, while specific demographic data information is free for dues-paying members, but there is a cost to non-dues paying members.)	General demographic information is currently available in the Data Hub section of the EMCOG website (emcog.org).
Expand the EMCOG East Central Michigan Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to include all 14 counties in the EMCOG region. Encourage and promote the fund to small and rural businesses throughout the region, especially those owned by people of color.	The State of Michigan must agree to allow the expansion of the RLF from the two counties of Bay and Saginaw to the 14-county EMCOG region.	The State of Michigan was the original grantee for the RLF from EDA. EMCOG was the sub-grantee to the State with EDA maintaining oversight. Both EDA and the State must agree to the modification before there can be any modification.

Strategy: Encourage partnerships between the region's higher education institutions and the public and private sector to spur innovation.

Continue to work with the region's major employers and medical complexes to attract Research & Development (R&D) spending from Michigan universities and colleges.	Reach out to local and state colleges and universities, major employers, and medical facilities in the EMCOG region to identify innovative activities.	Prioritize outreach by EMCOG to colleges and universities, with a follow-up targeted outreach by partners at the regional economic development agencies (Middle Michigan Development Corp., Bay Future, Saginaw Future, etc.) to major employers and medical facilities.
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Initiatives	Description	Status
Promote and encourage companies to continue to utilize local medical lab services available to private businesses.	Utilization of the local health departments and local universities/colleges for services previously being provided by the State labs.	SVSU's testing lab and prototype development programs are currently being utilized by the region's businesses.
Support catalyst and transformative projects between the public and the private sectors, such as the infrastructure investments		The Medical Diamond Project is underway in Downtown Saginaw.
Advance AI Innovation and Adoption in Regional Industry and Entrepreneurship	Promote the responsible development, testing, and adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies by regional businesses, entrepreneurs, and research institutions. Encourage partnerships between industry and higher education to foster AI-driven research, prototype development, and small business applications. Support the creation of shared resources such as AI labs, collaborative workspaces, and technical assistance programs that help small and mid-sized businesses integrate AI tools. This initiative aims to position East Michigan as a hub for ethical and inclusive innovation while ensuring that emerging technology benefits the entire regional economy.	
Strategy: Build on the region's entrepreneurship and innovation assets to support business growth across the region. Expand the region's toolkit to nurture and grow second-stage companies.		
Cultivate industry niches and clusters throughout the region to promote economic diversification.	Identify key industries throughout the region and promote the identification of business cluster and industry niches to state agencies (MEDC), business trade agencies, and publications.	
Coordinate with universities to ensure seamless technology transfer and support entrepreneurs pursuing grant opportunities.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
<p>Create a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem map indicating various programs, initiatives, and assets to drive new business activity. Tailor resources specifically to the needs of traditionally underserved communities.</p>		<p>St. Clair County EDA with the support of the MEDC has established the Eastern Michigan Small Business Network, providing resources to all three Thumb counties.</p> <p>Central Michigan University Resource Center (CMU-RC) has space at the Saginaw Farmer's Market facility. The CMU-RC co-working and entrepreneurship facility in Mt. Pleasant's Smart Zone adjacent to CMU recently completed a complete refit/renovation of their facility designed to expand their capacity to serve area entrepreneurs.</p>
<p>Encourage the development of shared facilities and resources, such as maker's spaces, tool libraries, and coworking spaces. Support free, highspeed Wi-Fi at these facilities to support entrepreneurs and develop a collaborative environment.</p>	<p>Consider both shared working spaces and business incubators.</p>	

Initiatives	Description	Status
<p>Strategy: Support and promote second-stage companies as they transition out of incubator and accelerator programs. Ensure entrepreneurs have the resources they need to grow their businesses as they transition technology out of universities (technology transfer).</p>		
<p>Consider developing a coworking space that allows flexible lease terms for second-stage companies. Ensure the facility has the technological infrastructure and business support services needed to develop these companies.</p>		<p>Central Michigan University Resource Center (CMU-RC) is expanding services and outreach in the greater Mt. Pleasant, Midland, Saginaw, and Bay City areas. The CMU-RC has space at the Saginaw Farmer's Market facility. The co-working and entrepreneurship facility in Mt. Pleasant's Smart Zone adjacent to CMU recently completed refit/renovation of their facility designed to expand their capacity to serve area entrepreneurs.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Continue to support and invest in childhood (PreK-12) education, especially in rural and underserved communities. Build comprehensive programs around science, technology, engineering, arts, and math to ensure students are prepared for the jobs of the future.		
Encourage career exploration in PreK-12 programs throughout the region in coordination with the private sector.		<p>MMDC was involved in a regional planning effort around childcare in surrounding communities under the MMDC umbrella.</p> <p>A Thumb Area Regional Child Care Planning Coalition Action Plan was created for Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties.</p> <p>Ogemaw EDC has been a part of a Regional Childcare Initiative grant. They held provider appreciation events, town hall meetings, surveyed providers, businesses, and shareholders to create action plans for Ogemaw County.</p> <p>Ogemaw County has also been a part of three (3) Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) grants, including Develop Iosco's Quad program that will be launching a Childcare Managed Service Organization (MSO).</p> <p>Michigan Works! Region 7B has partnered with multiple schools to hire Career Navigators who work directly with 8-12th grade students on Career Exploration, career readiness, job shadows, talent tours, and work-based learning/paid work experiences to help youth better understand the opportunities that are available to them within the region and the associated Career Pathway.</p>

#### Goal 4: Economic Development

Grow the EMCOG Region's economy through economic development activities (business retention, expansion, and recruitment) and marketing efforts that enhance the region's image as a place to do business while ensuring that the area can withstand and recover from short or long-term changes in economic conditions, including effects from industry contractions or economic impacts from national disasters.

**Strategy:** Promote economic resiliency within the region by supporting and growing existing businesses, as well as industry cluster development. A strong, diversified economy will help the region withstand and recover from economic cycles.

Initiatives	Description	Status
Ensure business support and cluster development is not limited to medium and large businesses. The EMCOG region has a number of cottage industries and small-scale businesses that are an essential component of the regional economy, especially in rural areas.	Encourage municipalities to review their zoning ordinances to support local business growth, including the flexibility to support home-based business start-ups.	Numerous municipalities throughout the EMCOG region have updated their zoning ordinance to include flexible provisions for home-based limited businesses. The provisions encourage development of new start-up businesses and cottage industries in the community.
Ensure that economic, community, and workforce development organizations are representative of the region.	Identify each county's top economic development efforts that are being made and promote those efforts on <a href="http://emcog.org">emcog.org</a> .	
Work with local municipalities and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to identify and promote prime development sites within the EMCOG region.	Work with municipal representatives and Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) to identify and prepare sites for promotion as prime development sites.	
<b>Strategy:</b> Support and encourage local businesses and entrepreneurship		
Implement tax breaks, grants, or other financial perks to attract new businesses and encourage the expansion of existing ones.	Identify state and local programs that could be used to attract/retain local businesses and promote them throughout the region.	
Update local master plans and zoning ordinances to include more innovative and creative zoning districts (mixed-use districts, home-based businesses, etc.) to exist as permitted or special uses without negatively impacting the surrounding properties.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
Provide connections to available federal, state, and local (public and private) business development programs, mentorship opportunities, and workshops to empower entrepreneurs and help small businesses thrive.	Local and regional economic development agencies and local chambers of commerce work with EMCOG staff in order to assist in connecting entrepreneurs to available programs and support services.	
Encourage residents to “buy local” and highlight local businesses through local business promotions, events, government-sponsored programs and marketing campaigns.		
<b>Strategy: Investing in infrastructure and public services.</b>		
Invest in roads, bridges, public transportation systems, airports, and seaports to enhance connectivity and accessibility.	Work with existing and future companies to determine the need for Class A road access, water and sanitary sewer needs.	The BCRC works with Bay Future, Chamber of Commerce, townships and state representatives to identify new companies, those expanding or considering leaving (job retention) the county, due to insufficient road, water or sanitary sewer facilities. Charter Township of Union is developing plans to improve existing roads within and around underutilized industrial land to class A all-season roads.
Invest in essential services like water and wastewater treatment plants and ensure reliable energy supplies.		Charter Township of Union is currently completing \$11 Million in municipal water system capacity upgrades and plans to reapply for state funding for similar capacity upgrades to the municipal wastewater treatment system.
Support the expansion of high-speed internet access to attract and support technology-intensive industries.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
Implement beautification projects, offer incentives for property redevelopment, and create appealing downtown areas to attract businesses and residents.		Charter Township of Union offers site improvement and beautification grants to encourage business improvements in our DDA Districts.
<b>Strategy: Fostering collaboration and partnerships</b>		
Build strong partnerships between local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and community groups.		BCRC has partnered with Bay Future, Chamber of Commerce, State representatives and senators, our current U.S. Representative, Michigan Tech, Michigan State, SVSU, Delta College, Marquette Business District TIFA, Bay City, Auburn, Midland, townships, private businesses (recycled scrap tire vendors and application contractors for rubber- modified asphalt and chip seal) and probably more!
Leverage public resources and private sector investment to undertake infrastructure projects and other economic development initiatives.		BCRC has partnered with EGLE, Michigan Tech and private businesses (vendors and application contractors) to develop the recycled scrap tire market for rubber-modified asphalt and chip seal.
Collaborate with neighboring regions to address shared challenges and promote regional economic development.		
<b>Strategy: Implementing targeted interventions and monitoring process</b>		
Outline specific strategies, goals, and objectives to guide initiatives.		
Understand the specific needs and challenges of the local economy and its residents.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
Identify and develop industries that offer unique advantages and opportunities for the community.		
Regularly assess the effectiveness of initiatives and make adjustments as needed to ensure sustainable growth.		

## Goal 5: Manufacturing

Support economic development planning or implementation projects that encourage job creation, business expansion, technology and capital upgrades and productivity growth in manufacturing, include efforts that contribute to the competitiveness and growth of domestic supplier or the domestic production of innovative, high-value projects and production technologies.

Strategy: Limit environmental impact while expanding manufacturing opportunities throughout the region.		
Initiatives	Description	Status
Promote a manufacturing environment that is focused on enhancing visibility, engagement, and collaboration within the industry.		
Support reduction of negative environmental impacts while maintaining efficiency and profitability. These practices aim to minimize waste, conserve energy, and use resources responsibly.		
Focus on showcasing product quality, building relationships, and leveraging technology.		
Support utilization of the Brownfield Redevelopment Program and the Brownfield Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Program to encourage redevelopment of existing manufacturing sites.		
Complete assessment of existing brownfield sites.		
Work with local municipalities and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to assist in the identification and promotion of prime development sites within the EMCOG region.	Work with municipal representatives and Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) to assist in the identification and promotion of prime development sites.	BCRC has worked with MEDC in the past three years on two major projects \$6.0 mil and \$5.3 mill, the former to upgrade road to benefit Michigan Sugar, the latter a major agricultural and transient traveler corridor.
Strategy: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency Initiative		
Collaborate with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and utility companies to reduce energy footprint, while maintaining sustainability.		
Utilizing best practices, reduce energy footprint without impacting production.		

## Goal 6: Placemaking

Embark on local and regional initiatives to strengthen the quality of place in each of East Michigan's communities to create an attractive environment for residents, tourists, and those returning to or relocating to Michigan.

Strategy: Continue to invest, and encourage investment in downtown and main street development, especially in small and rural communities throughout the region. (Promote the region's downtown and main streets through different campaigns and events to draw people downtown.)

Initiatives	Description	Status
Market urban infill development opportunities, whether for pocket parks, urban gardens, or new commercial or residential construction. Leverage regional Land Bank databases to identify vacant lots. Prioritize sites that are in communities that are in Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC).		Huron County Land Bank secured a grant to demolish downtown buildings in the Village of Sebewaing to create a park and kayaking launch on the river. Elkton created a pocket park downtown.
Support communities that pursue the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) RRC Program. Assist with capacity building to support small communities that lack staffing to complete the program.		
<b>Strategy: Create a collaborative brand identity that reflects the Region</b>		
Expedite recovery in the Great Lakes Bay Region, a strong brand identity is needed that reflects the values of the Region and articulates what the Great Lakes Bay Region is, and what visitors can expect.	Expedite recovery in the Great Lakes Bay Region, a strong brand identity is needed that reflects the values of the Region and articulates what the Great Lakes Bay Region is, and what visitors can expect.	Expedite recovery in the Great Lakes Bay Region, a strong brand identity is needed that reflects the values of the Region and articulates what the Great Lakes Bay Region is, and what visitors can expect.
<b>Strategy: Develop the Great Lakes Bay Region as a more desirable destination for visitors</b>		
Continue to develop the destination and its assets will support continued recovery and the ongoing strength of the visitor economy by developing experiences, supporting business development, and growing the offerings of the Region.	Continue to develop the destination and its assets will support continued recovery and the ongoing strength of the visitor economy by developing experiences, supporting business development, and growing the offerings of the Region.	Continue to develop the destination and its assets will support continued recovery and the ongoing strength of the visitor economy by developing experiences, supporting business development, and growing the offerings of the Region.

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Adopt a comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement focus		
<p>Engage stakeholders in a meaningful and ongoing manner that emphasizes collaboration, engagement and partnership. Michigan Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau's (MGLBRCVB's) team will be able to share the impacts of the visitor economy and continue to grow it with traditional and non-traditional partners. This type of focused, collaborative engagement will support recovery and the long-term health of the destination.</p>		
<p>Strategy: Leverage the spectacular outdoor amenities in the region to improve quality of life for residents and tourists, as well as for talent retention and recruitment. (Advocate and support the cleanup of waterways and recreational areas to promote sustainability and environmental stewardship. Engage economic development partners, including nonprofits, from across the region to increase the number of water access points.)</p>		
<p>Expand recreational access to Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron.</p>		<p>Harbor Beach added a new pier at Pack Street allowing improved access to Lake Huron.</p> <p>BCRC assisted Bay County in upgrading and renovating the Linwood Park in Fraser and Kawkawlin Townships. Bay County facilitated grants and contractors to complete the work. This park has a boat launch that directly accesses Saginaw Bay. The BCRC provided engineering services and budgeted to pave the parking area in 2026.</p>
<p>Leverage higher education and other public-private partnerships to increase awareness around the region's natural resources amenities.</p>		

Initiatives	Description	Status
<p>Support conservation efforts and the expansion of the rail trails network, river trails, and parks throughout the region.</p>	<p>Promote accessible outdoor recreational uses including but not limited to the Iron Belle Trail (IBT) and canoe/kayak runs on regional rivers.</p>	<p>EMCOG collaborates with the Saginaw Bay Land Conservancy on a regular basis.</p> <p>The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe (SCIT) funded a collaborative effort to plan for water quality improvements and development of a trail along the Chippewa River in Isabella County.</p> <p>The BCRC (all counties are) is obligated to spend 1% of its allocated Michigan Transportation Fund dollars on non-motorized facilities (all road commissions are obligated to do this). All paved township trailways were (and will continue to be) repaved with these BCRC funds. The BCRC mows and sweeps the trails. The BCRC is currently in negotiations with the DNR to maintain the Fraser Township Trail.</p> <p>Through MATS, the BCRC had one of five projects selected as part of a Pilot Project by MDOT to work with a consultant to develop a process for others, state-wide, to follow when completing a TAP grant application for trailways.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Support community's efforts in enhancing/maintaining outdoor recreational amenities such as the Lake Huron Coastline and municipal parks and recreational facilities.	EGLE grants have been awarded to the region for Coastal Leadership Academy (CLA) workshops in counties bordering Lake Huron. Multiple communities have been awarded DNR grants to update outdoor recreational facilities.	
<b>Strategy: Build the capacity of the internal GO Great team</b>		
For the Region to recover and grow, MGLBRCVB's team will need to adapt to the new environment and support the industry in doing the same.		
<b>Strategy: Support industry capacity building</b>		
As the industry recovers from the impacts of the pandemic, it is important for MGLBRCVB's team to lead, guide and support industry partners in both adapting to the "new normal" and developing ongoing practices and approaches that address reduced workforce, inclusion, and sustainability, amongst other things.		
<b>Strategy: Grow the visitor economy through event and business attraction opportunities</b>		
Both leisure and sporting events have experienced strong demand and business meetings continue to grow. The Great Lakes Bay Region has an opportunity to strategically capitalize on this market to expedite the recovery of the industry in a collaborative way.		

## Goal 7: Health

Support efforts to improve regional prosperity by fostering healthy communities and a high quality of life, through initiatives such as better access to rural health care services, expansion of the rural healthcare workforce development, access to healthy food and enhancement of healthcare clusters. These efforts may include but not be limited to the provision of medical equipment and training for first responders and medical personnel throughout the region.

Strategy: Improve quality of life by using alternative means of transportation.		
Initiatives	Description	Status
Reduce the use of motorized vehicles by utilizing alternative methods of traveling.	Increase the number of non-motorized pathways, including bicycle lanes and sidewalks.	Charter Township of Union, City of Mt. Pleasant, and Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe are continuing to gradually expand regional pathway networks, including extension of the regional north-south pathway planned to connect the Village of Shepherd through Mt. Pleasant north ultimately to the City of Clare and the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail.
Strategically align with and leverage the existing Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) developed by local health departments.	CHIPs share a common focus on improving maternal, infant, and child health, strengthening mental health services, addressing chronic disease, and expanding access to care. Full list of each CHIP for the region below.	CHIPs are updated every 3–5 years and guide public health programming, funding, and community collaboration.
Creation of a comprehensive asset map that identifies existing resources, reveals service gaps, and fosters cross-sector collaboration.	Build online pages sharing the information housed on MiHIA's health data dashboard. This data-informed tool will empower stakeholders to align efforts, target investments, and build capacity—ensuring that every initiative is rooted in local strengths and responsive to community needs.	Preliminary work and design of the dashboard pages have begun. Surveys to stakeholders will go out in January 2026 and be ongoing as this will be a dynamic repository for information. ( <i>NOTE: 211 is a partner in this project as the dashboard and asset map is a tool for service providers and local governments. 211 is a resource for people seeking services.</i> )

Initiatives	Description	Status
Expand access to health care services, especially in rural areas	<p>Collaborate with health departments, federally qualified health centers (FQHC) and hospital systems to address barriers, such as transportation, provider shortages, and limited specialty care. Targeted investments will support mobile health units, telehealth infrastructure, and rural clinic expansion.</p>	<p>Great Lakes Bay Health Centers building new clinical space in Bay City. They recently purchased a new mobile clinic to complement existing mobile dental clinic.</p> <p>Expansion of School-Based Clinics by Sterling Area Health Center &amp; Great Lakes Bay Health Centers.</p> <p>CMU Rural Health Equity Institute deploying HRSA funding for greater access to telehealth services for providers.</p>
Invest in regional healthcare clusters by facilitating cross-county collaboration, resource sharing, and innovation hubs.	<p>Develop integrated community hubs (both physically and virtually) to create centralized, accessible spaces where residents can connect with essential health, childcare, and social services.</p> <p>Support local development of community information exchanges (CIE) to create a community-led ecosystem where multidisciplinary partners use shared technology and language to deliver coordinated, person-centered care.</p> <p>Hubs foster collaboration among local agencies, reduce barriers to care, and strengthen community resilience by meeting families where they are with coordinated, wraparound support.</p>	<p>Two hubs are being created by using repurposed spaces.</p> <p>The Sunrise Community Resource Center is a repurposed elementary school in Standish, and the Bay County Health Department is repurposing a former furniture store. Both hubs focus on expanding access to public health, behavioral health services and early childhood support.</p> <p>United Way of Bay County is in early stages of launching their CIE, Saginaw County is in development.</p> <p>Arenac County has a 54-person multi-collaborative that meets 10 times each year to share and coordinate strategies.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Improve access to healthy food	<p>Advance innovative programming around nutrition and chronic disease prevention by expanding food distribution networks, supporting local agriculture, and promoting healthy food retail in underserved areas. Initiatives will include farm-to-clinic programs and nutrition education campaigns.</p>	<p>The Northeast Michigan (NEMI) Food network—connects schools with local farms, expands produce prescription programs, and increases access to fresh food in rural communities and includes pop-up markets and community supported agriculture programs. Current grant is funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund and from USDA.</p> <p>The Saginaw Food Club &amp; Kitchen will allow members to purchase food with points—fresh foods are less points than processed foods. This facility is under construction.</p> <p>Greentree Food Co-op in downtown Mt. Pleasant has expanded operations to offer many healthy food choices within walking distance of multiple low-income neighborhoods.</p>
Advance regional prosperity and quality of life by implementing place-based health initiatives that respond to local needs, reduce health disparities, and foster sustainable community wellness	<p>Leverage MDHHS' Healthy Community Zones (HCZ) program. The program funds community-led efforts that improve food security, create healthy built environments, support thriving children and youth, and enhance social cohesion—the connections between residents, organizations, and the broader community.</p>	<p>Four Saginaw-based organizations received more than \$1.5 M for an initial 18 months of funding from MDHHS: The Saginaw Food Club and Kitchen, Covenant Medical Center, Urban Raquet Sports Foundation and MiHIA. MiHIA received \$500K with the potential of receiving 4 more years of funding.</p>

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strengthen the healthcare workforce	<p>Support healthcare workforce development goals by partnering with educational institutions and health systems to train and retain medical professionals. This includes scholarships, clinical placements, and continuing education for nurses, EMTs, and community health workers.</p>	<p>Northwood University's First Responder Appreciation Program offers tuition discounts for continuing education for active and retired law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMTs—who are pursuing undergraduate degrees through the Adult Degree Program or graduate degrees through the DeVos Graduate School. The program recognizes prior learning and professional experience, allowing participants to earn college credit for work-life experience, training, and community service.</p> <p>SVSU Office of Community Engagement is reopening to ensure that students' practical experiences, especially those in the College of Health and Human Services, are responsive to the community and completed within the region.</p> <p>CMU Medical Education Partners have expanded the number of medical residents and continue to expand specialty offerings.</p>

## Goal 8:Housing

Improve the variety, type, quality, and number of housing units within the EMCOG region to accommodate the shortage of affordable housing and meet the needs of the residents of the region.

Strategy: Identify and leverage resources to increase housing production and impact of housing initiatives		
Initiatives	Description	Status
Maximize the impact of investment dollars by leveraging developers' resources with the resources available through the government, foundations, lending institutions, employers and other interested parties.		
Work with communities to identify zoning and planning methods to increase housing opportunities.		All local governments are required under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to incorporate plans for housing into any Master Plan update.
Strategy: Utilize resources to help stabilize housing situations and secure housing for the most vulnerable households		
Identify potential resources for housing rehabilitation programs throughout the region.		
Explore programs that may provide security deposits for rental assistance.		
Explore programs that may provide down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers.		
Utilize Coalition to End Homelessness		
Strategy: Establish entity responsible for leading long-term housing efforts in the region and within individual counties/municipalities and expand local organizational capacity to assist the region's housing efforts		
Work with local housing professionals to create a long-term housing organization that could spearhead the EMCOG region's housing efforts.		
Strategy: Develop education and outreach campaign to help support housing initiatives		
Create and/or use existing housing education initiatives to develop an education and outreach program for housing advocacy objectives.		

Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Market the region's residential development opportunities to encourage residential development, including leveraging data related to potential residential development sites and potential development partners		
Develop a marketing plan to promote the region's development opportunities.		
Initiatives	Description	Status
Strategy: Create housing services resource center or build upon existing tools		
Create a website to be utilized as a resource center.		
Strategy: Convene partners working to address housing shortages throughout the region to understand community needs, inventory current initiatives, and share best practices.		
Work with state and federal agencies to help define a third category of community besides the rural and urban designations allowing middle-sized communities to be more competitive for the funding of projects.		

## REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT LIST

Project Name	Location	Description	Initiating Agencies	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Status
Regional (Midtown) Transit Gateway	Saginaw Valley State University	Connect two transit authorities (Bay County and Saginaw County) with a Midtown Transit Gateway at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU). This transformational project also creates an opportunity for other transit agencies in the region and around Michigan to make connections at this transit substation.	Saginaw Valley State University	\$600,000	US Department of HUD, SVSU	Planning Stage
Lake Huron Environmental Research State	Bay City	Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) intends to build an interdisciplinary Environmental Science Research Station on a 6-acre parcel of property along the Saginaw River in Bay City.	SVSU	\$24,000,000	Federal, State, and SVSU	Planning Stage
Saginaw Medical Diamond	City of Saginaw	Mixed-use development that will include medical education facilities, medical office space, office space, retail space, apartments, hotel, downtown park, and a restaurant.	City of Saginaw	\$250,000,000	City of Saginaw, Saginaw County, federal/state appropriations, private contributions	Started
Advanced Manufacturing Center (Phase II)	Charter Township of Union (Isabella County)	Creation of the Advanced Manufacturing Lab, designed to meet Industry 4.0 standards.	Mid-Michigan College	\$12,200,000		Construction Completed
Single Stream Regional Processing Facility	Isabella County	Isabella County is designing a single-stream recycling center that will include the participation of eight counties.	Isabella County			Planning Stage
Clare-Gladwin Regional Education Service District (RESD) Diesel	City of Clare	Renovate an existing structure and convert it to a Diesel Training Center for high school, college, and adult students.	Clare-Gladwin RESD	\$3,200,000	State Grant (Career and Technical Education Grant)	Complete

Project Name	Location	Description	Initiating Agencies	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Status
Clare-Gladwin Regional Education Service District (RESD) Diesel	City of Clare	Renovate an existing structure and convert it to a Diesel Training Center for high school, college, and adult students.	Clare-Gladwin RESD	\$3,200,000	State Grant (Career and Technical Education Grant)	Complete
Alma College Center for Business Innovation, Incubation, and Development	City of Alma	Rehabilitation of vacant building space to become a business resource hub in Downtown Alma. Resources include educational, prototype, and general business assistance.	City of Alma	\$2,000,000	Federal earmark	Planning Stage
Support Improved Transportation Options	Freeland	Support increased air service initiatives in partnership with MBS International Airport and Great Lakes Bay Region Convention and Visitors Bureau (GLBRCVB) by pursuing Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) and other opportunities			Federal Grants, State Grants, MBS, local businesses,	
Clare-Gladwin Regional Education Service District (RESD) Diesel	City of Clare	Renovate an existing structure and convert it to a Diesel Training Center for high school, college, and adult students.	Clare-Gladwin RESD	\$3,200,000	State Grant (Career and Technical Education Grant)	Complete
Enhance Recreation Opportunities	Saginaw County	Work with facility owners to apply for grants for enhancements to support new sport hosting opportunities.			Federal Grants, State Grants, and Local Foundations	
Water Treatment Facility	West Branch	Construction of a water treatment facility for treatment of iron, hard water, nitrates, and arsenic.	City of West Branch	\$1,531,400	EDA, MEDC	January 1, 2026 is anticipated opening.
Wastewater Treatment Plant	Village of Cass City	New plant to process wastewater.	Village of Cass City	\$16,000,000	USDA-RD	
Alma Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	City of Alma	Wastewater Treatment plant improvements that are projected to make are new clarifiers, tertiary filtration, aeration improvements, as well as installation of a SCADA System.	City of Alma	\$20,000,000	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)	Design Stage

Project Name	Location	Description	Initiating Agencies	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Status
Water Expansion Project	Pine River Township	Extending water infrastructure to serve high-commercial areas to major	Pine River Township			Planning Stage
Lake Huron Public Beach Access	Arenac County	Develop beaches in northern Arenac County to provide opportunities for local residents and visitors of Arenac County to enjoy the Great Lakes Shoreline.	Arenac County Economic Development Committee	\$1,500,000	Federal, State and Local Funds	Planning Stage
Saginaw Bay Blue Trails	Arenac County	Install Bluewater Trail markers/restroom facilities at sites as designated on Michigan Saginaw Bay Bluewater Trail to promote facilities available along Lake Huron shoreline.	Arenac County Economic Development Committee	\$150,000	Coastal Zone Management, State funds	Planning Stage
Housing Development Projects	City of Au Gres	Assist New Dawn Senior Living (501C(3)) with phase 2 of Senior Housing Development	City of Au Gres	\$2,500,000	State/Local Funds	Planning Stage
Community Center Development	City of Au Gres	Construct conference center, fieldhouse, indoor turf areas, track, recreation facilities, and infrastructure on Au Gres School Campus to promote year-round recreation activities and economic opportunities in Arenac County.	Au Gres/Sims Schools	\$10,500,000	Federal, State and Local Funds	Planning Stage
Arenac County Fair Grounds	City of Standish	Continue Arenac County Fairgrounds development, currently underway and development of camping facilities	Arenac County	\$1,500,000	State/Local Funds	Planning Stage
Child Care Centers	Arenac County	Assistance to create safe environments and desperately needed child-care facilities/services in Arenac County.		\$150,000	State/Local Funds	Ongoing
Transportation Infrastructure Innovations	Bay County	Bay County Road Commission has partnered with EGLE, Michigan Tech and private businesses (vendors and paving contractors) to assist development of a recycled scrap tire market for rubber-modified asphalt and chip seal.	Bay County Road Commission (BCRC)	\$2,000,000+	State (EGLE), MTU/Local Funds	On-Going
Flood Control	Kawkawlin Township	Installation of 3,690 feet of storm sewer along with a pump station to alleviate flooding along S. Linwood Beach Road.	Kawkawlin Township	\$1,940,000	State of Michigan	Planning Stage

Project Name	Location	Description	Initiating Agencies	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Status
Bay Area Water Treatment Plant	Bay County	Bay County Department of Water and Sewer received bonding approval for up to \$15 mil to construct two (2), five-million-gallon raw water tanks to provide redundancy and additional repair time, should the water treatment plant temporarily shut down.	Bay County Dept. of Water & Sewer (BCDWS)	\$15,000,000	County Bonds/ Local Funds	In-Process
Crooked Bridge Riverwalk Renovation Project	Bay City	Replacement of aging decking/railing, and reconstruction of ADA-compliant fishing bump outs along Saginaw River; removal of invasive species and plant native species to enhance stormwater infiltration and shoreline resilience; installation of signage and LED lighting, along with other amenities.	City of Bay City	\$1,200,000	MDNR, Bay City, and EGLE (requested)	Planning Stage
Gladwin County Fire Well Project	Gladwin County	Install eight (8) large diameter wells with power backup to supply fire tankers throughout the County.	Gladwin County	\$1,500,000	MEDC (CDBG)	Design Stage
Dam Repair/ Replacement Project	Gladwin/Midland Counties	Edenville and Sanford Dams were breached and Second and Smallwood Dams damaged in 2020 flood. Project is to replace/restore dams.	Four Lakes Task Force			In Process
Creekside Meadows Mixed-Use Housing Development	Roscommon County	Develop a greenfield property into a 202-unit neighborhood with apartments, townhomes, duplexes, single-family home, a small hotel, and a senior care facility.	Village of Roscommon	\$3,000,000 (Phase I)	MSHDA, Brownfield Housing TIF, State Appropriation	Pre-development Stage

Diesel & Heavy Equipment CTE Facility at the John C Mangus Center, Harrison, Michigan (Clare County)

Exterior View



Source: Clare Gladwin RESD

Interior View



Source: Clare Gladwin RESD

## ANNUAL EVALUATION

The annual evaluation of the CEDS provides input on the status of the implementation of the CEDS and gives direction on changes that may be applicable.

The CEDS will be reviewed annually and updated if appropriate. During this review, the CEDS Annual Performance Report will also be completed, as required by the EDA. This will include an assessment of the goals, strategies, and initiatives, as identified in the Action Plan, and an update on the projects identified in the CEDS.

Throughout the year, Regional Economic Development (RED) Team members will also discuss the Action Plan and projects identified within the CEDS in an effort to maintain a vibrant, living document. If applicable, the CEDS may be adjusted by the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) RED Team.

Fire Up Fest in mt. Pleasant (Isabella County)



Source: Dan Gaken

City of Beaverton War Memorial (Gladwin County)



Source: Scott Govitz

**APPENDIX I**  
**Regional Economic Development (RED) Team**

Name	Title	Agency
Jamie Antku	Director of Planning & Zoning	Bridgeport Township
George Aultman	President	Vantage Plastics
Cathy Baase	Board Member	Michigan Health Improvement Alliance
Brenda Bachelder	Director of Business & Econ. Dev.	MichWorks 7B, Roscommon County EDC
Bob Balzer	Community Affairs Manager	Consumers Energy
Heather Bauman	Director	The WELL Outreach
Jerry Becker	Emergency Management Dir.	Clare County
Chuck Bennett	City Manager	City of Brown City
Amy Bidwell	Executive Director	Saginaw Transit Authority Regional Services (STARS)
Amanda Brake	Section 8 Coordinator	Mt Pleasant Housing Commission
Shelly Brown	Finance Officer	Greater Gratiot Develop
Ann Bruzewski	Vice President	Great Lakes Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau
Terri Close	Township Supervisor	Hampton Township
LeeAnne Comer	Director of Business Services	MichWorks 7B Clare County
Aaron Desentz	City Manager	City of Mt. Pleasant
Zygmundt Dworzecki	Board Member	Tuscola EDC
David Faber	City Manager	City of Sandusky
Jamie Forbes	Director of External Affairs	Saginaw Transit Authority & Regional Services (STARS)
Tony Fox	Regional Director	SBDC (Clare, Gratiot, and Isabella Counties)
Lex Hallberg	Assistant Director of Community Affairs	Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU)
Carly Hammond	City Council Member	City of Saginaw
Mary Catherine Hannah	County Administrator	Saginaw County
Tim Heiden	Village Administrator	Village of Peck
Allison Heinrich	Director of Clare County and Office Executive	Mid Michigan Development Corporation
Kimberly Hines	City Manager/Consultant	City of Gladwin/Gladwin County
Eric Johnson	Career & Technical Education Coordinator	Clare-Gladwin RESD
John Kaczynski	Vice President for Government and Community Affairs	SVSU
Torrie Lee	Superintendent	Buena Vista Charter Township
Jim Lillo	Supervisor	Bay County Road Commission

**APPENDIX I**  
**Regional Economic Development (RED) Team**

Name	Title	Agency
Beth London	Assistant Director of Public Services	City of Saginaw
Demetra Manley	Executive Director	Saginaw Area Transportation Agency
Christopher Martin	Executive Director	Develop Iosco
Ed Masters	Supervisor	Spaulding Township
Michelle McGregor	Community Development Officer	Buena Vista Charter Township
Karen Moore	Chairperson	Gladwin County Board
Kati Mora	President and CEO	Mid Michigan Development Corporation
Rodney Nanney	Community and Economic Development Director	Charter Township of Union
Pam O'Laughlin	Chief Operations Officer	MichWorks 7B
Penny Payea	Director of Business Services and Economic Development	MichWorks 7B, Ogemaw County EDC
Bryce Paulsen	Loan Specialist	United States Department of Agriculture
Lori Phelps	County Administrator	Clare County
Jennifer Pierson	Director of Business Services and Economic Development	MichWorks 7B, Arenac County EDC
Debbie Powell	City Manager	City of Cass City
Manuela Powidayko	Director of Planning and Community Development	City of Mt Pleasant
Jennifer Riggs	Executive Director	Develop Iosco
Erik Rodriguez	Public Relations Director	Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
Annette Rummel	Chief Executive Officer	Great Lakes Convention & Visitors Bureau
Lisa Salgat	Board Member	Arenac County Board
Samantha Schnettler	Executive Director	Huron and Sanilac EDC
Chris Shannon	Township Manager	Bridgeport Township
Heidi Tracy	Chief Executive Officer	Michigan Health Improvement Alliance
Rachel Vallad	Board Member	Arenac County Board
Rich Van Tol	Supervisor, School-Home-Community Partnerships	Bay Arenac ISD
Bill Wright	Citizen at Large	
Kasey Zehner	Vice President	Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

## APPENDIX III

### Frequently Used Acronyms

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>1. Progress toward regional collaboration</p> <p>2. Natural resources &amp; lots of outdoor assets</p> <p>3. Relative to other areas, cost of living</p> <p>4. Lots of higher education options, including career &amp; tech ed. (access to community college/universities); affordability is a challenge</p> <p>5. Abundant things to do for families</p> <p>6. Close knit community</p> <p>7. Federal Natural Refuge</p> <p>8. Farm Production</p> <p>9. Volunteer Fire Department</p> <p>10. Strong transportation network of waterways, rail, and air</p> <p>11. Affordable business climate</p> <p>12. Diverse population</p> <p>13. Higher education training on growing careers in region</p> <p>14. Travel patterns of workers employed within the region show our population working inside the region</p> <p>15. Solid manufacturing base</p> <p>16. Colleges can set up new training opportunities quickly</p> <p>17. Centrally located in the State of Michigan</p>	<p>1. Declining and aging population/workforce</p> <p>2. Still too much individualism (not enough regionalization as resources dwindle)</p> <p>3. Not enough talent to meet the demand</p> <p>4. Childcare deserts</p> <p>5. Health care (unaffordable/medical debt)</p> <p>6. Public transportation is not regional!</p> <p>7. Toll bridges in Bay City (disrupts regional investments, cost of doing business)</p> <p>8. Education systems are unable to attract/retain teachers; disrupts growing local talent</p> <p>9. College affordability, career tech. ed.</p> <p>10. Local governments struggling (townships, cities and counties)</p> <p>11. Not enough high paying jobs with good benefits</p> <p>12. Need Saginaw County Leadership</p> <p>13. Leadership effectiveness</p> <p>14. High mobility of workforce</p> <p>15. Low wages compared to other areas of the country</p> <p>16. Poverty rate</p> <p>17. K-12 education</p>	<p>1. Scaling services, regionally collaborating (versus just by township, county or city)</p> <p>2. Economies of scale</p> <p>3. Area/regional tourism</p> <p>4. Climate refugees</p> <p>5. Housing grants based on income</p> <p>6. Grants to help region</p> <p>7. Leadership in County</p> <p>8. Federal funding impacting federal refuge</p> <p>9. Large employment draw</p> <p>10. Innovation in technologies and businesses within the region can result in spin-off businesses. As similar businesses cluster, more talent will be attracted to the region.</p> <p>11. Skilled workforce to transition into more technical and control positions</p> <p>12. Better utilization of state lands and forests.</p> <p>13. Capture the multitude of students of college age attending the many colleges in the region to live and work here.</p> <p>14. Artificial intelligence (AI)</p>	<p>1. Inflation and rising cost of living, including health care costs</p> <p>2. Screen time &amp; devices impact on education and future talent pool, i.e., neurological disruptions in language/ literacy and social-emotional learning/student behavioral health</p> <p>3. Substance use trends</p> <p>4. Suicide trends/behavioral health</p> <p>5. Housing market instability, trends, and options</p> <p>6. Climate change/environmental disasters/natural disasters</p> <p>7. Climate refugees (gentrification)</p> <p>8. Farm production</p> <p>9. PA 233 (Renewable Energy and Energy Storage)</p> <p>10. Continued preference for green sites over redevelopment of brownfield sites</p> <p>11. Availability of state and federal funding</p> <p>12. Continued loss of population and student population</p> <p>13. Incomplete dam reconstruction</p>

## APPENDIX III

### Frequently Used Acronyms

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>18. Large network of non-profit agencies throughout the region</p> <p>19. Recreation (non-motorized and walking) trails located throughout the region</p> <p>20. Tourism</p> <p>21. Lake Huron</p> <p>22. Pockets of affordable housing in region (Saginaw/Bay/Gratiot Counties)</p> <p>23. Strong small business support (SBDC, SEDC, etc) and affordable rents for start-ups</p> <p>24. Public library in Saginaw is attractive to local youth</p> <p>25. Local professional sports teams</p> <p>26. Great leadership programs in region</p> <p>27. Long-term local government officials</p> <p>28. Excellent state and federal elected officials</p>	<p>18. Lack of affordable/senior housing</p> <p>19. Lack of contractors/subcontractors</p> <p>20. (Illegal) drugs</p> <p>21. Local recreation areas are not attractive due to lack of funding</p> <p>22. Aging infrastructure</p> <p>23. Weekend/holiday traffic</p> <p>24. State highways are two-lane, restricting traffic flow</p> <p>25. Rental property owners (both commercial and housing) do not reinvest in property</p> <p>26. Land banks do not work with local governments</p>	<p>15 Large foundations focus and invite opportunity with specific grants to address SWOT and invest more widely in the entire region</p> <p>16 Redevelopment of closed schools and churches</p> <p>17 Create/utilize county land banks for housing</p> <p>18 Complete economic development strategies for communities to revitalize downtowns (business districts)</p> <p>19 Update master plans/zoning ordinances/recreation plans</p> <p>20 Expand EV charging stations</p> <p>21 Local and regional airports potential expansion</p> <p>22 Historic properties</p> <p>23 Work with new talent in areas as they settle in</p> <p>24 Right sizing state highways and local roads</p>	<p>14. Low birth rates</p> <p>15. Aging population</p> <p>16. Economic development is difficult to fund</p> <p>17. Declining k-12 enrollments leave funding issues for some schools; therefore, the quality and opportunity are not equal in the region</p> <p>18. Lack of diverse industry throughout the region</p> <p>19. Limited access to freeways in regions</p> <p>20. Blight control and enforcement</p> <p>21. Pine River remediation</p> <p>22. Unfunded state mandates</p> <p>23. Bay City Bridges</p> <p>24. Aging infrastructure</p> <p>25. COVID recovery</p> <p>26. Balance between community benefits and developers</p>

## APPENDIX III

### Frequently Used Acronyms

1797	Transit Job Form	EGLE	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
1799	Local Job Form	EMCOG	East Michigan Council of Governments
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic	EMHSD	Emergency Management Homeland Security Division
AC	Advance Construction	EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ACS	American Community Survey	EPE	Early Preliminary Engineering
ACUB	Adjusted Census Urban Boundary	ESRI	Environmental Systems Research Institute
ADARS	Act 51 Distribution and Reporting System	FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
APWA	American Public Works Association	FAR	Final Acceptance Report
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act	FDE	Fundamental Data Elements
BCATS	Bay County Area Transportation Study	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
BCRC	Bay County Road Commission	FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
BEA	Bureau of Economic Analysis	FMIS	Fiscal Management Information System
BRIC	Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities	FTA	Federal Transit Authority
BTP	Bureau of Transportation Planning	FWS	US Fish & Wildlife Service
CARES	The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act	GIS	Geographic Information System
CDBG-DR	Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery	GPA	General Program Accounts
CDC	Center for Disease Control	GPS	Global Positioning System
CDFA	Council of Development Finance Agencies	HARA	Housing Assessment & Resource Agency
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	HIP	Highway Infrastructure Program
CMU	Central Michigan University	HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
CNAM	Canadian Network of Asset Managers	HPMS	Highway Performance Monitoring System
CRRSAA	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act	IBR	Inventory-Based Rating System
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise	IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
DNR	Department of Natural Resources (depending on context can refer to US DNR or Michigan DNR)	IMS	Intermodal Management System
DOE	Department of Energy	IRT	Investment Reporting Tool
EDA	U.S. Economic Development Administration	LAP	Local Agency Program
EDC	Economic Development Commission or Corporation	LEO	Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
		LFFE	Local Federal Fund Exchange

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### Frequently Used Acronyms

LOTTR	Level of Travel Reliability	PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
MAR	Michigan Association of Regions	PRRP	Pandemic Response and Resiliency Program
MATS	Midland Area Transportation Study	PTI	Planning Time Index
MDARD	Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development	PUMA	Public Use Microdata Area
MDNR	Michigan Department of Natural Resources	RED Team	Regional Economic Development Team
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation	RESD	Regional Education Service District
MIC	Michigan Infrastructure Commission	R-O-W	Right-of-Way
MiCAMP	Michigan Communities Association of Mapping Professionals	ROWE PSC	Rowe Professional Services Company
MIO	Michigan Infrastructure Office	RPA	Regional Planning Agency
MIRE	Model Inventory of Roadway Elements	RPI	Regional Prosperity Initiative
MNRTF	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	RPO	Regional Planning Organization
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization (A Transportation organization)	RSQE	Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics
MSP	Michigan State Police	RTF	Rural Task Force
MSU	Michigan State University	RTTP	Regional Transportation Planning Program
MTPA	Michigan Transportation Planning Agency	SATA	Saginaw Area Transportation Authority
MTU	Michigan Technological University	SCIT	Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
NACo	National Association of Counties	SEMCOG	Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
NAICS	North American Industrial Classification System	SL RTP	State Long-Range Transportation Plan
NEMSCA	Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency	SSBCI	State Small Business Credit Initiative
NEMCOG	Northeast Michigan Council of Governments	STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant
NEVI	National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program	STP	Surface Transportation Program
NI	Non-Infrastructure	SVSU	Saginaw Valley State University
NTFA	Non-Trunkline Federal Aid Program	T/A	Technical Assistance
OPS	Operations	TAMC	Transportation Asset Management Commission
PAB	Program Advisory Board	TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
PASER	Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating	TMA	Transportation Management Area
PE-S	Preliminary Engineering Structures	UM	University of Michigan
		USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
		USDOC	United States Department of Commerce
		WAMC	Water Asset Management Council

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