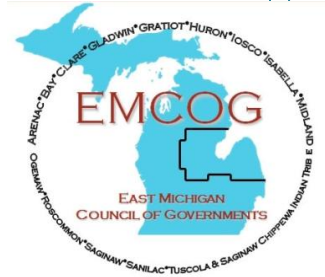


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Proposed **Strategies** for the Addendum to the EMCOG 2021-2025 CEDS

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

Prepared for the EMCOG Regional Economic Development Team

for Discussion by

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Introduction:

The following set of strategies are the result of a series of listening sessions conducted from December of 2021 through May of 2022 and the discussion of the resulting report ***“A Report of “What I Heard” from Listening Sessions on Regional Economic Recovery”*** during the September, 2022 RED meeting of the EMCOG Regional Economic Development Team (RED Team). See Appendix A for this report.

The pandemic and 2020 flooding and dam failures have and continue to reveal the vulnerabilities of our communities to these and any other types of disaster/interruption in the sustainability and growth of our communities and economy.

The listening sessions and subsequent discussion of the RED Team provided perspectives from a wide array of subjects depending on both the work focus of the participants as well as their own personal observations over the past couple of years. One perspective that was expressed by many is that both the COVID pandemic and the May 2020 flood and infrastructure failures peeled back what could be described as a thin covering over issues that had been in existence prior to 2020. The pandemic and May 2020 five-county disaster (Arenac, Gladwin, Iosco, Midland and Saginaw) made it difficult to ignore certain situations.

The following strategies are broad and general and reflect the seven (7) focus areas as delineated in the numerous listening sessions throughout region. Please keep in mind that these draft strategies are an addendum to the strategies within the existing 2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which the RED Team approved in January of 2021. In some cases strategies already exist in the CEDS which was developed during the first year of the pandemic (2020) so are not replicated here as part of an addendum. A copy of the current CEDS can be found at www.emcog.org within the Economic & Community Development page.

A. REGIONALISM: (see pages 5 through 8 of Appendix A of “A Report of What I Heard...”for the listening sessions report on Regionalism)

Regional boundaries are often confusing and our resiliency as a Region, no matter the challenge, is stronger if we have good Regional alliances.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 1:

The EMCOG Regional Economic Development (RED) Team will organize into subcommittees and/or working groups based on interests and affiliations throughout the Region to focus on key areas as outlined in the this recovery/resiliency addendum to the 2021-2025 CEDS; develop action items to implement the strategies; engage other stakeholders including our youth; and leverage with other partners, to formulate our regional needs.

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B. HAZARD MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS (see pages 9 through 13 of “A Report of What I Heard...” for the listening sessions report on Hazard Mitigation and Preparedness).

Whether the responses were to the COVID pandemic or to the May 2020 five-county flood disaster, there were a number of focus areas in the Region that had to spring into action without the benefit of an established platform to work from. Counties are required to have hazard mitigation plans which primarily focus on natural disasters rather than pandemics. In general, these plans focus on mitigating damages resulting from hazardous events rather than the long term response/readiness.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 2:

The Region will strive to assure that each County’s hazardous mitigation plan is integrated into all local planning documents such as master plans and parks and recreation plans as required by FEMA.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 3:

The Region will partner with FEMA and the Michigan State Police to provide educational and informational workshops and funding opportunities to the local municipalities within the Region regarding hazardous mitigation planning, response, recovery and resiliency.

C. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLACE MAKING (see pages 14 through 17 of “A Report on What I Heard...” for the listening sessions report on Community Development and Place Making)

The pandemic created a pivotal point for which a sense of place and one’s home became very important. The shift to remote working which it appears will continue beyond any restrictions from the pandemic begs the question of why are we here and where do we want to be? Along with the growth in remote working it was noted that workers also tend to want to work near where they live if their employment requires them to work onsite. For whom do we provide a quality of place? The 2021-2025 EMCOG CEDS already includes broad strategies to address the issues and needs as expressed in the listening sessions. The next steps will be to develop the action items to implement these strategies.

NOTE: These strategies are on page 15 of the existing CEDS.

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D. TALENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (See pages 18 through 21 of “A Report on What I Heard...” for the listening sessions report on Talent and Workforce Development).

Comments evolved around the importance from an economic perspective, that workers come from our Regional labor shed. As summarized in Appendix A the biggest issue from a workforce standpoint is finding and retaining workers during the post pandemic era. The Region needs to collectively attract and retain people or we will be exporting workers.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 4:

The Region will strive to both retain and attract the broad spectrum of talent needed to maintain and grow a sustainable and resilient economy through the provision of incentives to both entice people to stay and also entice people to move to the Region whether to work onsite or remotely.

E. TAKING CARE OF OUR PEOPLE: (See pages 21 through 25 of “A Report on What I Heard...” for the listening sessions report on Taking Care of Our People)

The COVID pandemic has raised the awareness of our residents’ needs including the cost of working. Certain needs have been underlying issues pre-pandemic that have grown more obvious and are more widely acknowledged: health care/access to healthy food; childcare; transit and housing.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 5:

The Region will partner with other stakeholders and the State and Federal Government to enhance the access to comprehensive **health care** and **healthy food** for all within the region and support those who are striving to make this happen.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 6:

The Region will work with federal and state and local agencies, including the development of incentives to provide comprehensive **childcare** for those in the workforce who must utilize childcare in order to work.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 7:

The Region will work with providers and stakeholders to develop a regional **transit** system that provides links to health care, places of employment, schools and colleges, the MBS Airport, passenger rail service and recreational places.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 8:

The Region will partner with the State of Michigan and regional/local organizations to facilitate and implement the MSHDA Statewide **Housing** Plan.

F. INFRASTRUCTURE: (See pages 26 through 29 of “A Report on What I Heard...” for the listening sessions report on Infrastructure)

An important observation throughout the Listening Session is the importance of our local government capital improvement plans as a tool for economic development. The existing 2021-2025 CEDS already addresses through broad based strategies much of what the Region should move forward on with action items, including the necessity of region wide above “adequate” broadband access (see Strategies 1.2.1 through 1.2.3 of the 2021-2025 CEDS).

Another area of broad discussion was transit as a basic need within the Region. Transit and the proposed strategy are included in the previous section (see proposed CEDS Addendum Strategy 7).

An additional strategy that evolved through the Listening Sessions and the process for determination of the use of ARPA funds has to do with the sustainability of capital improvements/infrastructure plans and projects.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 9:

The Region will work with local governments to expand the number of infrastructure providers who become Michigan Asset Management Certified and promote the inclusion of long term maintenance, resiliency to disasters as well as operating cost estimates into the capital improvements planning documents.

G. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (See pages 30 through 33 of “A Report on What I Heard...” for the listening sessions report on economic development)

The comments coming out of the Listening Sessions focus was on the holistic approach of economic development and that it is the talent that attracts capital and it is place making that attracts talent. The 2021-2025 CEDS includes broad strategies that can be implemented to address concerns from the Listening Sessions (See strategies 5.1 through 5.5 of that document. There is a focus area not specifically addressed in the CEDS that came up as as an area of concern expressed during the sessions: incentives for business/manufacturing as they relate to utilization of existing infrastructure and within established urban and rural communities.

CEDS Addendum Strategy 10:

The Region will work with the State, economic development organizations and communities throughout the Region to encourage redevelopment and siting of manufacturing and other business within areas where they can utilize existing infrastructure and are close to housing and ancillary businesses needed to be productive.