

the review

November / December 2021

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league



COMMUNITY
Excellence Award

ROCHESTER HILLS

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The City of Rochester Hills was honored with the League's 2021 Community Excellence Award on September 24 in Grand Rapids during our annual Convention. Pictured l-r: Chief of Staff Maria Willett, Planning and Economic Development Director Sara Roediger, Economic Development Manager Pamela Valentik, and Mayor Bryan Barnett. Photo by Rudy Malmquist.

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AUDREY J. FORBUSH

Direct: (810) 342-7014

aforbush@plunkettcooney.com



ROCHELLE L. CLARKE

Direct: (810) 342-7020

rclarke@plunkettcooney.com

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the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 94, Number 6

We love where you live.

The Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities.

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The Review relies on contributions from municipal officials, consultants, legislators, League staff and others to maintain the magazine's high quality editorial content. Please submit proposals by sending a 100-word summary and outline of the article to Kim Cekola, kcekola@mml.org.
Information is also available at:
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Social Infrastructure Builds Community Wealth

Most people know what it means when something's got "good bones." If it's a house, it's a good layout, solid foundation, quality construction, and materials. Just like in the human body, the bones are the physical framework, the infrastructure necessary to support and shape the entire entity.

But that's just a skeleton, not a living thing. The body has another, equally essential infrastructure: nerve and circulatory systems that bring life to the flesh and sustain it.

The same is true of a city, village, or township. You can have the best roads and bridges, efficient power grid, and dependable water and waste management. But if you haven't also created and nurtured the social networks and shared spaces that breathe life and connection into that body, you've got nothing but a bag of bones.

Infrastructure is a hot-button topic right now. Pretty much everyone agrees on the first type—the "bones," if you will—as essential to any viable city, village, or town.

But not everyone agrees on what social infrastructure even is, let alone how to create it or whether it's necessary to the success and sustainability of our communities.

In the most general sense, social infrastructure can be defined as services like healthcare, education, housing, and public transportation. But it goes much deeper and wider than that. It is everything and anything that helps create and sustain the collective public life within our municipalities, connecting stakeholders and strangers alike into a living, thriving, dynamic whole.

Think about the places—libraries, parks, community centers, farmers markets and schools—where people gather to share ideas and resources.

Think about the programs and activities—community gardens, sporting events, concerts, and street fairs—where both neighbors and visitors are welcome to freely mix and meet.

Think about the networks of people—the organizations, civic groups, volunteers, and service workers—who provide and maintain those shared spaces and activities.

All these are vital elements of social infrastructure, creating that vast, intangible thing we call public life. Can you imagine a city or village without those things? Maybe you can, but I don't think you'd want to live there.

For the past decade, the League has talked a lot about placemaking and the need to create high-value places to enrich and energize our communities. But an exclusive country club or gated community is not the same thing as a public library or multimodal path. We must also ensure that the spaces and places we create are welcoming and useful to everyone—healthier, safer, more equitable, and less polarized.

When we do that, we are building true community wealth: a resilient and adaptable social infrastructure that can address our ever-changing social and economic needs.

But whose responsibility is it to provide all that? Public resources are limited. Often our municipalities are challenged just to keep the lights on and the clean water running. Civic organizations and business partners can help. Community members can do much of the heavy lifting if they're engaged in the process and invested in the results.

If we all invest in a strong, healthy social infrastructure, we will move a long way toward healing the ills of the modern urban body: social isolation, injustice, uneven and unequal access. As local leaders, we can't do it all. But we can certainly light the way.

The League's recent in-person Convention in Grand Rapids is one way we're helping illuminate for our members a path toward Community Wealth Building. The event was chalk full of ideas that foster equitable communities in ways that enhance the human experience for everyone. Please see our highlights on pages 26-31.



Daniel P. Gilmartin
League Executive Director and CEO
734.669.6302; dpg@mml.org



Building Community Wealth by Reducing Energy Burdens

Q&A with Michigan Saves

As the Biden administration prepares to pour billions of dollars into municipal coffers through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and other pending legislation, local governments are considering investments that will provide a sustained return on improved quality of life for residents. Some local leaders are complementing infrastructure projects with other proposals that reduce energy burdens by providing residents with lower incomes and small businesses with access to capital for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Michigan Saves, the nation's first nonprofit green bank, understands the power of clean energy sources and wants everyone—no exceptions—to have access to their benefits. The League posed the following questions to Michigan Saves about its energy saving programs and how they contribute to building community wealth:



Michigan SavesSM

Q Local governments are evolving their placemaking work to community wealth building as a method for increasing the quality of life of residents, especially people in marginalized groups, including low incomes. Your work focuses on creating opportunity through energy efficiency and clean energy that is accessible to all Michiganders. Can you define the concept of energy burden and energy poverty?

A Energy poverty is when a household does not have the resources for sufficient heating, cooling, lighting, or electric appliances, or expends an excessive amount of its income on energy costs to the detriment of other needs.¹ Households experiencing energy poverty face challenges such as inadequate housing, wealth barriers, and high energy burdens, which are characterized by a disproportionate percentage of household income going to energy costs.

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) determined that a majority of single- and multifamily households with low incomes (income at or below 80 percent of area median income) experienced higher energy burdens than the average household in the same city.² The median low-income household's energy burden was 7.2 percent—more than twice as high as the median U.S. energy burden (3.5 percent).³

Q What communities are most impacted by energy poverty?

A The ACEEE found that households with low incomes in the Southeast and the Midwest regions faced the highest average energy burdens. Energy poverty disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and people of color, as well as rural residents, causing or exacerbating several health and safety issues creating a vicious cycle that accelerates the decline of a household's quality of life.

¹ Portland State University. July 12, 2019. "Shifts to Renewable Energy Can Drive Up Energy Poverty, Study Finds." *ScienceDaily*. Accessed September 20, 2021. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190712151926.htm

² Ariel Dreihobl and Lauren Ross. April 2016. Economic Development Manager Pamela Valentik, "Lifting the High Energy Burden in America's Largest Cities: How

Energy Efficiency Can Improve Low Income and Underserved Communities." Washington, D.C.: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Accessed September 20, 2021. http://energyefficiencyforall.org/sites/default/files/Lifting%20the%20High%20Energy%20Burden_0.pdf

³ Dreihobl and Ross, 3–4.

Q What are some of the underlying causes of energy poverty?

A Inadequate housing and failing equipment are two primary causes of energy poverty. For example, high utility bills due to poor insulation; lack of air sealing; and old, inefficient heating and cooling equipment can reduce household income available for other critical needs like food, transportation, and medical care. But energy poverty extends beyond that. Water leaks and excess moisture can produce mold, which can cause respiratory issues and aggravate asthma in children. Air leaks can increase exposure to allergens and exacerbate asthma. Knob and tube wiring, present in many older homes, can create potential fire hazards. Failing equipment—like a broken furnace—can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning and fire hazards. These health and safety issues are emblematic of energy poverty and lead to increased costs in healthcare, increased absences from work and school, and elevated living expenses.

Q Why is energy poverty an important concept to understand as it relates to wealth building?

A People who have high energy burdens face other financial challenges like expensive insurance rates, limited access to affordable loans due to poor credit scores, and low wages. These financial challenges are compounded with health and safety issues and ultimately result in decreased access to safer, more energy-efficient housing; reduced food security; and elevated stress and anxiety. While reducing costs of housing, energy, and healthcare is essential, wealth building is impossible without secure, good-paying jobs. And here's where a keen opportunity exists.

According to the Center for American Progress, clean energy investments create three times more jobs than equal investments in fossil fuels.⁴ By default, small businesses, which encompass 99.9 percent of all businesses in the U.S., are making these clean energy investments, creating the jobs, and building a green economy.^{5,6} In all, a clean energy economy creates a multiplier effect, where small businesses are hiring local residents who then earn a good wage installing the energy efficiency and renewable energy measures that improve the housing stock in the community, which lessens the energy burdens, increases property values, and improves health outcomes.

Q How does Michigan Saves address this need?

A The ACEEE noted that “access to up-front capital is one of the many barriers to energy efficiency for low-income single- and multifamily households.”⁷ Providing access to capital to home and business owners and closing market gaps has been a core principle of Michigan Saves since our founding in 2009.

Over the last 12 years, we leveraged public dollars to enable private investments of more than \$325 million in energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements, which has saved Michigan home and business owners millions on their utility bills. Thus creating a long-term return on investment while improving the comfort and value of their homes and businesses. We've grown our unsecured residential loan by working with our network of authorized lenders to offer lower interest rates, extended terms, and expanded access. In fact, 56 percent of our residential projects have been completed in communities with low to moderate incomes. In a nutshell, Michigan Saves makes it easy and affordable for homeowners, business owners, and communities to finance investments in clean energy to reduce their energy burden.

Q What are some ideas Michigan Saves has for communities that are interested in using their ARP funds to build community wealth by reducing energy poverty?

A First, consider funding a revolving loan program for income-qualified homeowners who need to make improvements but cannot qualify for traditional loans. Michigan Saves, with funding from DTE Energy, is managing a program in Wayne and Washtenaw Counties called the Revolving Loan and Rebate Program, for customers between 200 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Homeowners within this income range earn too much to qualify for free federal weatherization funds and most utility income-qualified programs but do not have enough income, or perhaps good enough credit, to qualify for traditional financing. This customer segment exists within every community and is overlooked when it comes to energy assistance programs. The early returns on this program are very exciting. Of the 94 projects that Michigan Saves has funded with low-interest loans, 24 loans have been repaid in full against only two defaults, dispelling the perception that

⁴ Robert Pollin, James Heintz, and Heidi Garrett-Peltier. June 2009. “The Economic Benefits of Investing in Clean Energy: How the Economic Stimulus Program and New Legislation Can Boost U.S. Economic Growth and Employment.” Amherst: Center for American Progress. Accessed September 27, 2021. http://peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/green_economics/economic_benefits/economic_benefits.PDF.

⁵ U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. 2020. 2020 Small Business Profile. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Small Business Administration.

Accessed September 27, 2021. <https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/04144224/2020-Small-Business-Economic-Profile-US.pdf>.

⁶ Dean Phillips. July 21, 2021. “Statement of the Hon. Dean Phillips on SBA's Role in Climate Solutions.” Committee on Small Business. Accessed September 27, 2021. <https://smallbusiness.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3868>.


⁷ Dean Phillips, “Statement”

homeowners at this income level are not willing or able to repay loans. Since Michigan Saves cannot serve every resident with our traditional credit-based loan, this revolving loan fund fills an important need in the market. Communities can complement Michigan Saves' work and provide access to capital for a greater number of residents by creating their own revolving loan programs.

An emerging opportunity for communities is electrification, which is "the process of replacing technologies that use fossil fuels with technologies that use electricity as a source of energy."⁸ Some examples of electrification technology are solar photovoltaic and battery storage systems, geothermal and air source heat pumps, electric water heaters, and electric appliances. With buildings accounting for nearly 40 percent of carbon emissions in the United States, we must decarbonize our buildings to mitigate the impacts of climate change.⁹ However, full electrification is expensive and elusive and likely decades away. Communities can get a head start by creating community solar projects, like the City of East Lansing or the Village of L'Anse have done. While both projects are fully subscribed and are achieving excellent results, the L'Anse project is unique because the village reserved over half of the solar panels for income-qualified customers who are now saving \$20 to \$30 a month on their electric utility bill.¹⁰

Finally, communities can support workforce development programs that train individuals from underserved areas to install the improvements that will drive the clean energy economy. There is significant demand in the building trades for carpenters, HVAC technicians, electricians, and other skilled trades, which will only grow in the future. The skills

learned in these programs lead to stable, well-paying, and in-demand jobs. Communities can partner with the State of Michigan, vocational schools, community colleges, and neighborhood associations to eliminate the barriers to entry that may exist for residents in underserved communities. Communities can inspire a diverse workforce that brings clean energy improvements to those residents with the highest need, creating a new paradigm where the underserved and vulnerable are the first to reap the benefits, not the last.

ARP funding presents communities with a unique opportunity to support those residents with inadequate housing, wealth barriers, and high energy burdens. By lifting up those in need and making clean energy investments within the community, we can reduce energy poverty and build community wealth. 

Learn more about Michigan Saves

- Visit www.MichiganSaves.org.
- Follow Michigan Saves on social media.
 - twitter.com/MichiganSaves
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Mary Templeton is the president and CEO of Michigan Saves. You may reach her at mtempleton@michigansaves.org or 517.331.9470.

Todd Parker is the director of programs at Michigan Saves. You can reach him at tparker@michigansaves.org or 517.331.9464

⁸ Kathyne Cleary. December 5, 2019. "Electrification 101." Resources for the Future. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.rff.org/publications/explainers/electrification-101/>

⁹ Environmental and Energy Study Institute. n.d. "Buildings and Built Infrastructure." EESI: Environmental and Energy Study Institute. Accessed September 28, 2021. <https://www.eesi.org/topics/built-infrastructure/description>

¹⁰ Michele Bourdieu. June 17, 2020. "L'Anse Village Community Solar Benefits from EGLE's Award-winning Low to Moderate Income Solar Program. KeweenawNOW. Accessed September 27, 2021. <http://keweenawnow.blogspot.com/2020/06/lanse-village-community-solar-benefits.html>

Pillars of Community Wealth Building

We define community wealth building as strategies that build community and individual assets, creating resilient and adaptable systems to address social and economic needs. The League will work with our partners to provide thought leadership, training, advocacy, resources, and best practices to build community wealth. Sustainability is one of the key pillars needed to enhance the human experience for all.



The League has compiled the resources on its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page in support of our members as we move together toward a better understanding of racial injustice in our communities, and our role in correcting it.



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Making Hard-to-Understand Issues Understandable

Complex issues like the Lead and Copper Rule emphasize the need for strategic communications planning

By Rich Donley & Michelle Franzen Martin

In a small municipality in Michigan, where many of the homes predate the Second World War, officials decided to distribute door hangers to let residents know that their water service line needed to be checked. Verifying the service lines, which takes just a few minutes, lets municipalities know exactly how many homes have lead service lines, and how many lines will need to be replaced under the state's revised Lead and Copper Rule.

The door hanger led to many questions. And residents turned to a local Facebook group—not the city—to find the answers.

"I am unclear what they are looking at or looking for."

"[The guy passing out the door hanger] said the water department needs to look at my water heater."

"I heard they will replace it for you, but your taxes will increase."

"I've lived here 27 years and changed the house to copper then. This is not the first time they have done this."

The flurry of misinformation on social media was compounded by a lack of understanding.

Michigan's revised Lead and Copper Rule has renewed

public interest in the dangers of lead—and with it, has raised questions from residents about water safety, lead service line replacement, and test results. Certainly, it's a complicated issue. And like other complicated issues, it requires clear messaging and a solid communications plan.

In May, Detroit-based integrated marketing firm MCCI, along with our client partners from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department and Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office, presented a webinar for the Michigan Municipal League on making hard-to-understand issues understandable. The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department serves more than 200,000 accounts in a city population of nearly 680,000; the Water Resources Commissioner serves 69,000

customer households across Oakland County.

Facing a complex issue in your municipality? Here's how to develop and implement a solid communications plan.

Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule of 2018

The Lead and Copper Rule requires communities to replace all their lead service lines in 20 years—by 2041—unless otherwise approved by EGLE. The Michigan rule also has the most comprehensive service line inventory requirements in the country, requiring water systems to identify lead service lines and notify residents that receive their drinking water through lead pipes. The state has been going above and beyond to collect more water samples than required under statute to better understand where pipes need to be replaced. While pipes are being replaced, there are ongoing efforts to ensure corrosion control for lines that are known or suspected to have lead exposure.

MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

Start with A Slice of 'R' Pie

Good communication starts with research. Often, municipalities and other organizations get tangled in the tactics—distributing door hangers, for instance—and lose sight of the end objective, including what they are saying or why they are saying it. That's why you should start with



research—the first step in what professional communicators call RPIE, a model that comprises research, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Research doesn't need to be expensive or scientific. You don't necessarily have to hire a market research company or pore over endless amounts of data. But you should have a good understanding of any misinformation or presumptions that already exist about what you are trying to communicate.

Many residents across Michigan have never heard of the Lead and Copper Rule—and even those who have heard of it have different levels of understanding. Just as it's important to educate residents and other stakeholders about an issue, it's equally important to be sure your messengers—municipal employees and others who interact daily with residents—understand it as well. And that starts with finding out what people already know about an issue and understanding what they would like to know. It also requires determining what information needs to be addressed or corrected, and to include it in your communications.

Where do you find research? Start on social media. Read what people are saying. Then look at media coverage on the issue, both locally and regionally, and take the time to read what other communities are telling residents. You also can take short surveys and polls online, via email, or over the phone. And don't forget to talk to your greatest ambassadors—your employees, the people who every day are working in the field or taking calls from customers. Ask what they are hearing and what they are being asked.

After you gather your research, put together a content analysis to identify trends and themes, and list any red flags. This will help you determine your What, Who, and Want:

- What issues or opportunities are you trying to solve?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- What do you want them to do?

Whatever you do, don't overthink your research—but never skip doing it. This important step is crucial to the planning stage.

Put the 'P' in Purpose

A solid communications plan—informed by your research—should include goals, measurable objectives, strategies, and tactics. It also should incorporate what you are going to say, using clear, concise messaging that has a purpose. Think of goals as your road map. They provide direction and focus.

While you likely won't share your goals with the public, your internal team should know them.

For example, your goal might be “to become the trusted resource for residents to understand and take action on the municipality's lead line replacement program.” It's important for everyone on your team to share the same goal. How do you reach your goal? By setting measurable objectives that are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, and time-specific. When it comes to the Lead and Copper Rule, a measurable objective could be that “90 percent of residents agree to replace the private portion of their service line

by year-end.” Setting goals and objectives leads to your strategies and tactics. Think of strategies as your blueprint, e.g., “to leverage relationships with block clubs to distribute information about the Lead and Copper Rule.” Then think of the tactics as your building materials: They could be the materials you provide to the block clubs, such as door hangers or fliers.

What should those door hangers, fliers, and other communications say? They should be based on your research findings and include messaging that has both an overarching (umbrella) message and supporting points. Messages should be proactive—what residents should know about the service line verification process, for example—and deliver on a purpose.



What do you want people to do: Visit a website? Sign up for a community event? Be sure your purpose has a call to action.

Also remember that there's more than one way to reach people. Not everyone will be at a block club meeting. Not everyone will read an article in the local newspaper. And not everyone is on social media. You'll see evidence of that as you move into the implementation and evaluation phases.


The I's (and E's) Have It

You're now ready to take action. This is where you implement your strategic, research-based communications plan and roll out your messaging through the various deliverables you defined during the planning stage. Be sure to follow your timeline of your tactics, and don't lose sight of the audiences you are trying to reach. It's also important to know whether people are taking action—something that will help you determine whether you're reaching your objectives. And that's where the evaluation phase comes in.

A good communications campaign isn't about the outputs. It's not how many times you posted on social media or how many fliers you created. It's about the outcomes: Was your audience informed? Did they take action? Did they change their behavior? Measure against the objectives identified in your plan. Did "90 percent of residents agree to replace the private

To hear more on ways to communicate complex issues, watch the Michigan Municipal League's May 20, 2021 webinar, "Making Hard-to-Understand Issues Understandable," co-presented by MCCI's Rich Donley and Michelle Franzen Martin with their client partners the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department and Oakland County Resources Commissioner's Office.

portion of their lead line by year-end?" If so, great. If not, ask yourself why and then refine your plan.

If you're not reaching your objectives, you should adjust your messaging, strategies, and tactics. Even the best-laid plans sometimes will need to change, and that's not necessarily a reflection of your work. Especially with complex issues, you always should be prepared to regularly evaluate and update your communications plan and messaging. 

Rich Donley, APR, is president at MCCI. You can reach him at 313.481.4700 or rdonley@mccicorp.com.

Michelle Franzen Martin is an account director at MCCI. You can reach her at 313.481.4700 or mmartin@mccicorp.com.



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THE PUSH AND PULL OF CLIMATE CHANGE

By Beth Gibbons and Susan Ekoh



By now you have likely watched a news segment, read an article, or viewed an infographic that is declaring the Great Lakes region to be the climate haven of the future. In each case, these media clips—which range from dour and serious to tongue in cheek—propose that within the next century, throngs of people will be moving to Michigan to escape climate change impacts like sea level rise, drought, fires, and hurricanes that are wreaking havoc across the rest of the country.

In fact, our northern climate, distance from marine coasts, and abundant water suggest there is a lot of opportunity for Michigan and the whole Great Lakes region in a changing climate future. Equally, declining populations in parts of the Great Lakes region present opportunities for climate in-migration. In-migration offers a pathway for the labor force needs to be met, sustaining economic growth and development of the region. At the same time, there is work to do to ensure that our communities are prepared to capture this potential influx of population and potential change in industries coming into our state and region.

In the spring of 2020, the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) began working with partners across the Great Lakes to explore what's needed to prepare the region to receive climate migrants. This work is bringing together diverse voices and perspectives—from demographers and climatologists to natural resource managers and community-based organizations—and laying the foundations for socially just, environmentally sound, and climate prepared growth in the region.

“...in order for us to be prepared to receive climate migrants and new businesses, our state needs to take rapid action to prepare for the impacts of climate change...”

“Municipalities and their elected and appointed leaders are facing a time of change, upheaval, and opportunity.”

The Science of Population Change

The first year of work revealed that the study of climate migration is at a very early phase, especially in the U.S., and even more so when asking about the places people will migrate to. At its core, demography is a simple science. To understand the population of a place, you only need to know three things: how many births, how many deaths, and how many people move. But, figuring out when and why people move is not a simple science. To predict how many people will move to the Great Lakes region—and Michigan specifically—we need to know what makes people move. To answer this question, ASAP is working with Dr. Matt Hauer from Florida State University to expand a climate-induced migration model to consider ‘push factors’ beyond sea level rise.

Calculating Push Factors

Dr. Hauer’s current climate migration model predicts that 13.1 million people living in coastal areas that will be completely underwater in 2100, will certainly need to move. In addition to those 13.1 million people, the model predicts that there will be 45 million people living along the U.S. coast who will experience flooding from sea level rise on their property at least once per year, by 2100. That prediction is based on a modest estimate of three feet of sea level rise. The most recent report on global climate change from the United Nations indicates that it is now likely that sea level rise will exceed three feet by mid-century (without significant reduction in carbon emissions). Based on Dr. Hauer’s model of 13.1 million people in motion, Washtenaw County is expected to gain an additional 50,000 migrants. These are people who are moved by climate forces, who would not otherwise be migrating into the county. Presently, Dr. Hauer’s model does not accommodate the potential migration of those 45 million people at risk of regular flooding, it does not accommodate the nearly 40 million people reliant on Lake Mead and Lake

Powell (the largest reservoirs on the Colorado basin and site of vanishing water levels), or the impact of the 70–80 percent water cuts being considered across California’s Central Valley in response to severe water shortages.

Through our work at ASAP, we hope that by the end of this year we will have been able to identify what some of these climate-induced migration thresholds look like for other regions of the U.S. and we can plug that new information into Dr. Hauer’s migration model, providing a climate in-migration estimate by county for all of Michigan.

How We Prepare for Change/Generating Pull Factors

Climate migration into Michigan is not just about climate calamity in other parts of the country. As Michiganders, we know that this state has a lot to offer! We are already seeing speculative land purchasing by the soybean and corn industry throughout northern Midwest states; we know breweries from the West are actively seeking out water-rich production locations; and the combination of cost and risk in places like California, Arizona, and Florida is driving shifts in real estate investment to our urban real estate markets. All of this contributes to a unique opportunity to address where infrastructure, social services, and environmental stewardship are currently falling behind, and position Michigan communities to springboard into a future of economic success.

Yet, in order for us to be prepared to receive climate migrants and new businesses, our state needs to take rapid action to prepare for the impacts of climate change that we are already feeling and will continue to feel here. From the northern coast of Lake Superior to the Detroit River banks, increased storm severity, extended heat events, and fluctuations in lake levels must be addressed through improved infrastructure; social programs built to respond to and protect the most vulnerable; and individual, neighborhood, and community scale actions that make our communities more resilient to climate impacts.


We also need to prepare the mindset of our community members and leaders to receive new residents and a new vision for our future. Local leaders must be prepared to encourage community cohesion by welcoming the new community members into our lives and places. This includes promoting shared values and culture, and overcoming a fear of change, to embrace an opportunity of growth and community evolution.

Municipalities and their elected and appointed leaders are facing a time of change, upheaval, and opportunity. Preparing for the impacts of climate change, be it severe floods, power disruption, high-capacity irrigation system installations, algae blooms—and the list goes on—cannot be separated from the obligations of standard responsibilities of protecting the safety, health, and wellbeing of a community. We need to guarantee that social, economic, and environmental benefits are equitably distributed, while ensuring that existing injustices are corrected, rather than exacerbated by climate in-migration.

“Local institutions have both a heightened burden and opportunity to prepare for climate migration. Communities in the region may poise themselves to gain back population and economic growth while reinforcing larger climate resilience efforts and addressing historic, entrenched issues—like economic segregation—that harm growth. Partnerships with other cities or peer institutions, academic institutions, and philanthropic and for-profit organizations will be key.”

Climate and Demographic Change in the Great Lakes Region: A Narrative Literature Review of Opportunities and Opportunity Barriers, American Society of Adaptation Professionals, March 2021

To learn more about ASAP’s climate migration and opportunities work visit: <https://adaptationprofessionals.org/exploring-climate-migration-in-the-great-lakes>.

For more on in-migration to the Great Lakes Region and Michigan: <https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-environment-watch/water-could-make-great-lakes-climate-refuge-are-we-prepared>. 

Beth Gibbons is the executive director of ASAP. She has a degree in urban planning from University of Michigan and has spent the past decade working on climate adaptation in the Great Lakes region and across North America. She serves on the National Advisory Committee of the University of Michigan’s College of Engineering Climate and Space Program and is a co-author on the 5th National Climate Assessment (due out in 2022). You may contact her at 734.219.3529 or bgibbons@adaptpros.org.

Susan Ekoh is a PhD candidate at the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science & Forestry. Her research is focused on climate-induced mobilities within, and from cities. She is an Adaptation Fellow at ASAP. You may contact her at sekoh@adaptpros.org.



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R. Brent Savidant, planning director, City of Troy



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Michigan communities have an opportunity to re-emerge from the pandemic as co-creators of a bright, new future that puts people and local communities first.



Bridge Builder microgrants support innovative work that intentionally & creatively brings people together, while socially distant, and repairs broken relationships in the community. You can see the 2021 Bridge Builders at <https://mmlfoundation.org/bridge-builders-microgrants-awarded-statewide/>



BRIDGE BUILDERS
neighborhood microgrants

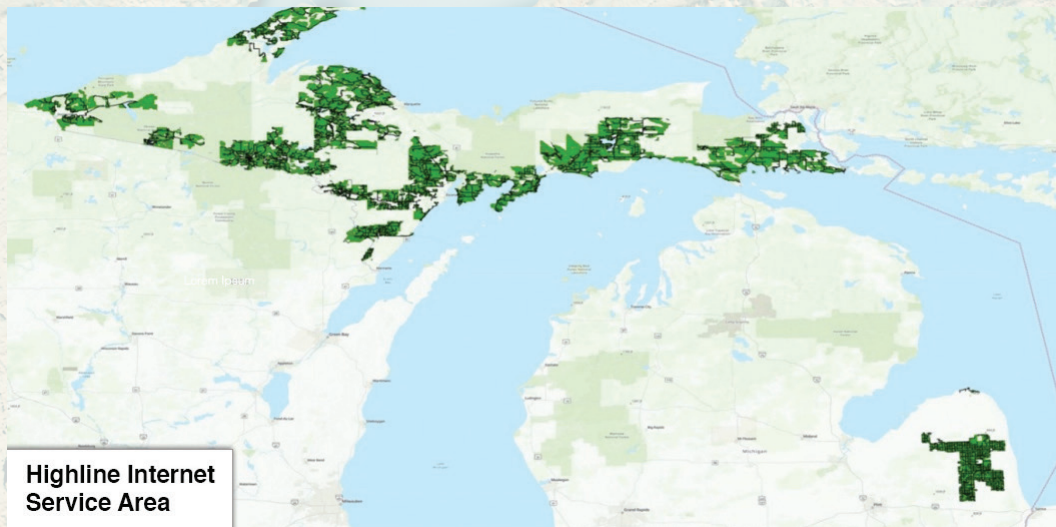


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main street microgrants

Pledge your support for Bridge Builders in Michigan communities at mmlfoundation.org/donate.

Upper Peninsula & The Thumb

*Get Blazing Fast Internet Service This Year,
Closing the Digital Divide*



Many of Michigan's communities still lack affordable access to true high-speed Internet services, but the Upper Peninsula and Thumb are about to leap ahead in a big way.

Highline Internet, a new service launched in the Upper Peninsula and Thumb by Georgia-based ITC Broadband, is bringing real high-speed Internet to the regions at a price of \$99 per month. Highline's service will have download speeds of 1 Gigabit per second (1000 Mbps) and upload speeds of 1 Gigabit per second (1000 Mbps), greatly surpassing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) definition of high-speed Internet as having minimum speeds of 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream.

middle-mile infrastructure (noun)

: lines connecting the network's main backbone with the end points where residents and businesses hook up to the Internet

Highline is building more than 6,000 miles of fiber-to-home connections with help from the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunities Fund. Engineering and construction work is underway, and the company expects to begin delivering service to customers in the 4th quarter of this year.

This fiber-to-the-home network will help to fill a need for real high-speed Internet service in Michigan, where "last mile" connections remain scarce in rural areas, creating a digital divide between these areas and those with larger populations.

The rural digital divide has serious consequences in people's lives. High-speed Internet service helps residents find work, improve their education, and participate fully in today's digital economy. Businesses with high-speed Internet have a competitive advantage over those that don't, and they find it easier to attract talent, including young graduates who prefer areas with strong connectivity. High-speed Internet also is playing an increasingly important role in health care. It has even been demonstrated to increase home values and higher agricultural yields (*Impact of Broadband Penetration on U.S. Farm Productivity, Office of Economics and Analytics, FCC, 2021*).

last-mile infrastructure (noun)

: the last “leg” that connects individual homes and businesses to middle-mile infrastructure.

Municipalities now also find themselves with another reason to pursue fiber-to-the-home Internet: The surge in remote work and schooling in the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to stay in some form, spelling a rare opportunity for rural areas to attract residents and boost tax revenues.

“Highline Internet is committed to putting the Upper Peninsula and Thumb of Michigan first in bringing the power of reliable, real high-speed fiber Internet to households currently unserved, underserved, and unhappily served across the region, enabling our future customers to thrive with a real Internet connection,” said Bruce Moore, president and general manager of Highline Michigan.


To launch the service, Highline is tying into statewide middle-mile infrastructure already built by Ann Arbor-based Merit Network, which has been promoting broadband access in rural areas through its Michigan Moonshot initiative with the Quello Center at Michigan State University.

Since 1966, Merit has served the networking needs of 12 of Michigan’s public universities and also serves over 400 affiliate member organizations. Federal BTOP funding allowed Merit to build more than 2,000 miles of fiber that integrated into its 4,000-mile network. Much of this is what’s called “middle-mile” infrastructure—lines connecting the network’s main backbone with the end points where residents and businesses hook up to the Internet.

- Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and Thumb set to get very high-speed Internet service this year.
- All-fiber network will pass over 50,000 homes at conclusion of all phases.
- New service from Highline Internet will have download and upload speeds of 1 Gbps.
- Highline is working with Merit Network of Ann Arbor to find opportunities to expand broadband Internet access.

Middle-mile infrastructure is where much of the difficult work lies in delivering Internet access far and wide, especially to rural regions. Places with low population density like the Upper Peninsula and Thumb pose a particular challenge. For this reason, municipalities, and cooperatives have taken advantage of Merit’s extensive fiber optic and provide dark wave services broadband infrastructure.

The Highline expansion represents an important step in delivering real Internet service to Michigan communities in the Upper Peninsula, the Thumb communities, and beyond, said Joe Sawasky, president and CEO of Merit Network. “Expansion of our middle-mile network in the early 2010s by leveraging federal investments to create an open access fiber network and provide dark wave services helped us further our mission of providing high-performance network services to community anchor institutions, municipalities, counties, and other local governments in rural and remote regions,” Sawasky said.

Highline is actively seeking public and private partnerships with local communities to accelerate the availability of 1 Gigabit Internet connectivity to underserved communities throughout the entire state of Michigan. 

To learn more about Merit, or to reach out to explore partnerships, email moonshot@merit.edu.



HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE Can No Longer Be Ignored if We Want to Sustain OUR COMMUNITIES

By Valerie Kindle



There has been a lot of talk lately across federal and state governments about the need to invest in infrastructure. That is a welcome relief to many municipalities but, perhaps more importantly, the conversation also has started to turn toward addressing “human infrastructure.”

The human infrastructure of a place involves things like healthcare, childcare, education, and job training. Overall, it’s about the well-being of a community because it focuses on the well-being of a community’s members.

In Southeast Michigan, the City of Harper Woods encompasses only 2.6 square miles. The amount of utility-type infrastructure is relatively small compared to other communities. But the latest census counted over 15,000 residents, many of them renters or homeowners facing property maintenance and upkeep for the first time in their lives. Harper Woods is a community ready to have an ongoing conversation on ways to assist homeowners and renters on how to maintain their property, including discussing how to make available the tools and education they might need to do so.

Many people are starting to realize that there also needs to be further conversations throughout the state around skills training for good-paying jobs. For example, Harper Woods recently experienced several power outages. Many people will point to the utility infrastructure, but it is a human infrastructure problem, as well. The electric companies are struggling to maintain a workforce that can do the work to ensure power lines aren’t at risk from storm damage. DTE has been known to recruit people from all over the world who have the skills for the work that needs doing. Addressing the human infrastructure needs of a community could help provide that workforce locally. Offering more skills training to the members of a community so they can become self-sufficient means the human infrastructure can build and support the hard infrastructure. It’s time for communities to look at how these two types of infrastructure are tied together. You cannot build and sustain one without the other.

The City of Harper Woods Believes...

The city's business is service to our community.


- That our service to the community should be helpful, caring, and responsive.
- That the success of the city organization is dependent on teamwork, mutual respect, and commitment to the following values:
 1. Participation by all segments of the community.
 2. Effective communication within and among our constituents.
 3. Integrity in everything we do.
 4. Innovation in meeting the present and future needs of the city.
 5. Accountability to our elected officials and the trust our citizens have placed in them.
 6. Responsibility for the services entrusted to us.
 7. Pride in what we do, always striving to serve in the best interest of the community as a whole.

People should be concerned about the wellbeing of residents in neighboring communities because we all benefit when everyone flourishes. It's a long-standing practice for municipalities to have mutual aid for police and fire incidents. That way, if one community becomes overwhelmed by an emergency, municipal leaders know their neighbors will come

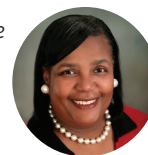
to their assistance. Could there be mutual aid for human infrastructure, too? Municipal boundaries mean a lot more to community leaders than they do to community members. People might live in one place, work in another, get a service from a third, and shop in a fourth. The boundaries don't matter in people's lives. So, should the lines matter when it comes to investing in human infrastructure?

Poverty, when it strikes due to a nationwide downturn, knows no boundaries. People often step up to help their neighbors get through. Can those boundaries be torn down when times are generally good as well? As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice to one is an injustice to all."

This is not just a big city or suburban problem. Small, rural towns in northern Michigan often are facing similar issues. No matter what community you are in, residents need enough to eat, a warm bed to sleep in, and access to healthcare. Without the basics of life to support the human infrastructure, the hard infrastructure is put at greater risk.

So, as additional investments are made to take care of the lights, the water, and the roads, Harper Woods—and many communities across the state—also are ready to have a deeper conversation about investing in the human infrastructure. 

Valerie Kindle is the mayor of the City of Harper Woods. You may contact her at 313.343.2500 or vkindle@harperwoods.net.



Resolution in Support of Transformative & Restorative Justice – October 19, 2020 (excerpt)

WHEREAS, the mission of the City of Harper Woods is expressly for the benefit of the governed and in service to our residents;

WHEREAS, the City of Harper Woods strives for justice, equity, and compassion in all human relations;

WHEREAS, the City of Harper Woods should serve as a beacon of peace, liberty, and justice for all;

WHEREAS, allowing injustice to go unchallenged violates the mission of our City;

WHEREAS, tragic and violent deaths have occurred because of institutionalized racism and police brutality that disproportionately impacts African Americans and persons of color;

WHEREAS, the City of Harper Woods Public Safety Department is committed to excellence in law enforcement, the preservation of life, and officers are held to the highest standards of loyalty, integrity and honesty, and are expected to work toward critical responsibilities including de-escalation, crisis intervention, and community policing;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of Harper Woods recognizes that we must advance substantive law enforcement policies to create a community that ensures the rights of all our residents;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of Harper Woods will do whatever is within our power to protect the residents of this City from all forms of oppression;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of Harper Woods will work with organizations and our community toward justice, with the recognition of the interconnected nature of racism and systemic oppression based on socio-economic status, ability, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and language;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of Harper Woods recognize the fight for diversity, accessibility, equality, equity, and civil rights continues, and we urge all people to demand justice against racist and discriminatory practices;

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Congratulations Rochester Hills

Reimaging, Reinventing & Renewing Auburn Road

The City of Rochester Hills is the winner of the 2021 Community Excellence Award (CEA). Affectionately known as “The Race for the Cup,” it is the highest and most prestigious award bestowed on a League member community. The winning community is selected through a combination of an outside panel of judges, online voting, and ballot-box voting by League members attending our annual Convention. “We are honored to have been selected by our peers,” said Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett. “We are really lucky to live in what we think is one of the greatest communities in Michigan. To take this home for our staff and our residents is a huge honor for our community.”

Project Details

Rochester Hills completed a comprehensive renewal of a neighborhood first settled in the early 1820s. The “Brooklands” is an area with a storied history that was overdue for improvement and beautification. After decades of discussion, deliberate planning took place, and the transformation of the Brooklands’ primary thoroughfare, Auburn Road, began in 2019. Auburn Road is an aged commercial roadway, surrounded by single-family homes. The project sought to transform the corridor into a safe and attractive place for vehicles and pedestrians with the goal of creating a more walkable environment, encourage (re)development opportunities, increase parking, incorporate art and landscaping, and develop public open space. This project has served as a catalyst for community redevelopment, igniting investment and a true entrepreneurial ecosystem for businesses. The result is a safer, more connected and walkable corridor that supports economic development, spurs people to engage, and renews community pride.

Creativity and Originality

Art features were incorporated to both calm traffic and to create a distinct place. Emmons Plaza was uniquely designed to include the city's first splash pad with colorful design elements to be a draw for neighborhood children. Additionally, artistic gateway centerpieces were installed to signify the Brooklands' new unifying identity. Interspersed along the roadway median, sculptural threads identifying street names invoke the hills, creeks, and rivers which weave together the greater Rochester Hills community. Each roundabout tells a story, weaving natural forms and contemporary materials to create emblematic representations of this neighborhood's history and future endeavors.

As a whole, the streetscape design speaks to the interconnectivity that binds a neighborhood and its constituents. It respects the past but looks to the future. It is inventive but logical, new yet familiar. It is innovative by nature. Perhaps the most creative element of the corridor is captured in the street art that is installed at 25 locations, on Auburn Road itself. A collaboration with the local schools, the city worked with the local art agency to develop a student art contest depicting "What community means to me." With nearly 500 student submissions, first a jury, then the general public narrowed down the submittals to the final 25 winners who had their creations enlarged to 7-foot diameter circles that are oriented towards the pathways up and down the half mile corridor.

Community Impact

Streets like Auburn Road often act as elements of division—inhabitable to neighborhood pedestrians in favor of overwhelming vehicular traffic. Streets like Auburn Road were laid out during the auto boom of yesteryear—built by prioritizing speed and ease of transport rather than the local quality of life. Streets like Auburn Road must be updated to become more modern, and culture driven—to become a device for connectivity within the neighborhood, rather than a thoroughfare that divides. With a technologically forward-thinking approach and a heavy emphasis on remaining "Innovative by Nature," the revamped Auburn Road corridor sets an admirable new precedent for the future of neighborhood development within the region by taking a multifaceted approach to transportation, access, and design.

By focusing on a pedestrian centric ideology that utilizes boulevard style drive lanes and on-street parking, traffic is inherently contained and calmed, making the corridor safer to those on foot and in cars. Highlighted by integrated green infrastructure elements and repetitive, patterned landscaping, this half mile corridor maintains an inviting identity with sustainable and aesthetic interests. The crown jewel of the corridor is the Emmons Plaza located within the newly closed section of Emmons Avenue. This new space designated for community events, public gatherings, family picnics, or lazy afternoons is a one-of-a-kind neighborhood feature with points of interest for everyone—including the city's first splash pad.

Impact: Improvements Realized | Investors Taking Note | Property Values Rising

These improvements have resulted in a noticeable difference in activity along the corridor. People are out walking their dogs and riding their bikes. Business owners have commented on how many people they've met since the project has been completed, even though they've been in operation for over a decade. Residents feel safer letting their kids walk to the nearby middle school or to Brain Freeze, the neighborhood ice cream shop. The positive impacts are also financially tangible as investment continues in the Brooklands. A number of property owners have invested in facelifts to their properties, and the city has approved a three story, mixed-use building, the first new development in the corridor in years. And the investment doesn't stop along the corridor: the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor are seeing an eight percent annual increase in property values and have experienced an increase in almost 40 percent more than the city as a whole in the last two years.



Kelsey Fisher, Grade 6, shared her piece titled "We're In This Together." According to Kelsey, to build a community we have to work together. The hand is a symbol one whole community of togetherness, holding hands, working together, high fives, and loving one another.



COMMUNITY Excellence Award



Replicability

Outdated, unsafe commercial corridors with haphazard access are only too common across the state. The key to replicating a project like this is being intentional about securing stakeholder input from the onset and keeping them engaged and informed. The city wanted to take the future of this corridor into its own hands and began with a simple corridor study that involved various stakeholders, most notably representatives of the residential neighborhood and business community as well as city council representation to determine how best to enhance the area in the best interest of all involved. Including these key stakeholders from the beginning of this planning effort proved extremely beneficial as the project evolved from a road reconstruction project to a truly transformative placemaking initiative which has proven to help reinforce the sense of community in the Brooklands neighborhood. It became crystal clear early on that taking over jurisdiction of the road from MDOT would be the easiest way for the city to achieve its goals and help ensure the long-term success of the corridor.

Avery Miller shared with the crowd her piece titled "Unity and Community." This piece represents what community means to her by how the hands are all working together to form the word unity. Although they are all different colors, they all are equally important and vital to the overall piece of artwork. Just as in a community, everyone, no matter how different they are, they are important in making up our community.

For more information on the Community Excellence Awards, visit cea.mml.org.

COMMUNITY Excellence Award

Vote Here!

THANK YOU 2021 CEA FINALISTS

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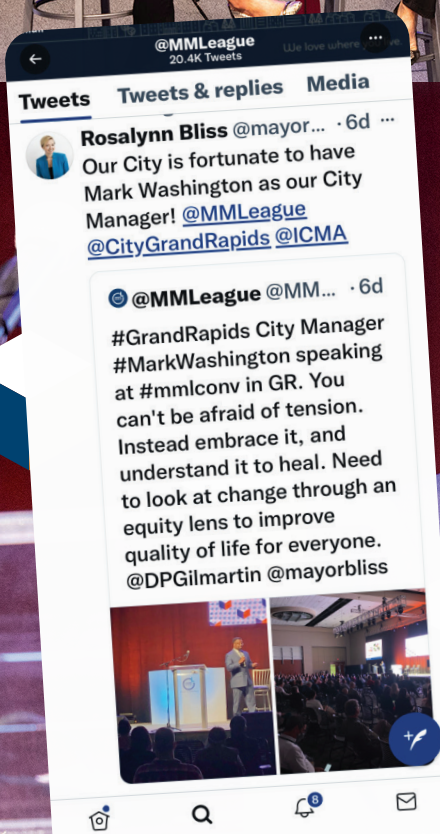
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Spark a Community Revival Through Trust & Belonging

MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE CONVENTION 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Panel Discussion: People Powered Bridge Building.



Grand Rapids City Manager Mark Washington.

MML CNV 2021

“This was my 30th MML conference. In many ways, this past week’s gathering was the best. Maybe it’s the era of COVID, but it just felt great to see everyone. The sessions were informative and the breathing exercise is a lifetime benefit! Wednesday evening’s band singing Adele was Pure Michigan!

I returned to Meridian Township today just feeling a little better about life and our community. Please know your unparalleled efforts are appreciated. ”

FRANK L. WALSH | MANAGER | MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP



ArtPrize installation in the Amway Grand.

The League’s annual Convention was held in conjunction with Grand Rapids’ ArtPrize. ArtPrize began nearly 12 years ago as an experiment—a totally new event, unlike anything the world had ever seen. ArtPrize is an all-volunteer, artist-led initiative focused on creating projects and events in unique spaces. Since its inception, millions have participated, sparking countless conversations about what art is and why it matters. Art plays an integral part in forming community identity and creating connections. Arts and culture is one of the key pillars identified by the Michigan Municipal League that fosters Community Wealth Building.



A Walk in the Park—The Importance of Parks & Rec during a global pandemic local tour.



Creating a Virtuous Cycle with the City Business Collaborative panel discussion.



Thank you to all of our members who attended our first in-person Convention since 2019.



Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM).



Breakout session: Updating the Master Plan.



Networking at the welcoming reception.



First-time Convention attendees reception.



Michigan Black Caucus-Local Elected Officials (MBC-LEO).



Boyer City Manager Mike Cain giving the Pledge of Allegiance during the MML Board of Trustees meeting.

Our sessions and local tours were carefully crafted to foster community wealth building and leave attendees feeling optimistic, empowered, courageous, and open-minded. Of particular focus was the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve the quality of life for residents through the American Rescue Plan, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the American Families Plan. Taken together, these federal dollars amount to more than \$6 trillion of investment in physical and social infrastructure. Local governments will be the gatekeepers for many of these resources and their decisions will have the single greatest impact on the future of their community since the industrial revolution.



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(l to r) Barbara A. Ziarko, Councilmember, Sterling Heights, League Vice President; Monica Galloway, Councilmember, Flint, League President.



New League Trustees (left to right) Joshua Meringa, Joshua Atwood, Tim Wolff, and Valerie Kindle get sworn in.

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For more information on the League's Board of Trustees, visit www.mml.org/about/mmlboard.htm.



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- Peter Dame, City Manager, Grosse Pointe
- Carla J. Filkins, Mayor, Cadillac
- Patrick Sullivan, City Manager, Northville
- Mark Washington, City Manager, Grand Rapids

Terms Expire in 2023

- Robert Clark, Mayor, Monroe
- Stephen J. Gawron, Mayor, Muskegon
- Robert La Fave, Village Manager, L'Anse
- Deborah Stuart, City Manager, Mason
- Keith Van Beek, City Manager, Holland

Terms Expire in 2024

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- Rebecca Chamberlain-Creanga, Councilmember, Troy
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CAP CON 2022

We Share a Future

By Craig D'Agostini

As the country struggles through the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government has implemented a number of programs designed to help communities recover economically and invest in critical infrastructure needs. The Cares Act of 2020 and, more recently, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), are chief among these programs—and they both include provisions for investment in broadband.

You may be in the process of determining how best to spend these available (but ultimately limited) dollars. If you're working specifically to determine how to approach broadband, talking with the Internet service providers in your community is a great place to start. The extent and sophistication of our network, the Gig+ Internet speeds and other innovative telecommunications services we offer and our programs to close the digital divide are key elements of any broadband plan—and they're already in place in more than 530 Michigan communities.



Lift Zones provide students with a safe place to study and access remote learning.

State-of-the-Art Michigan Network

Comcast's 37,879 miles of network in the region allows us to deliver residential download speeds up to 1.2 Gbps in just about all the communities we serve. We also operate more than 20 million WiFi hotspots nationwide—around 2 million in the region—which allow connectivity on the go. Comcast Business offers speeds up to 100 Gbps and a suite of advanced telecommunications services.

Over the past decade, Comcast has invested more than \$30 billion in its network nationwide to increase capacity and reliability and deliver the best possible customer experience, not just to meet our customers' current needs, but to stay ahead of future demand.


Connecting Low-Income Americans to the Internet



Internet Essentials enables cities, school districts, and community-based organizations to connect low-income students to the Internet to support distance learning.

In urban and suburban areas, “access” to service is typically not an issue, because there's network infrastructure nearby that can deliver broadband service. On the other hand, “adoption” (acquiring available Internet services or devices that provide data connections at home) is an issue for income-constrained households, even if they have access to service. Comcast's Internet Essentials program is about “adoption” for HUD or HUD-assisted housing residents, children participating in the National School Lunch Program, low-income veterans, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. The program provides participants broadband Internet service at home, free digital literacy training, and an option to purchase a low-cost computer. Since the program launched in 2011, it has connected more than 10 million Americans to the Internet at home—around 720,000 here in Michigan alone. To further close digital gaps, in 2020, Comcast announced its “Lift Zone” program. Lift Zones are WiFi-enabled safe spaces in community centers where students can come for distance learning and to do homework, and adults can come to learn digital skills and search for employment. There are already more than 40 Lift Zones in Michigan with more on the way.

We Live and Work in Your Community

Comcast serves more than 530 communities in Michigan, providing broadband and other advanced telecommunications services each and every day. What's more is that our employees live and work in these communities, so we share a future. 

Craig D'Agostini is the vice president of Government & Regulatory Affairs at Comcast.



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A First Long-Term Look at the Latest Census Numbers

By Richard Murphy

We got our first look at the Census 2020 counts in mid-August, providing a snapshot in time of counts: number of people, and their race and ethnicity, and number of housing units, and whether they are occupied or vacant. By now, everyone has had a chance to look at their own local numbers, with concern in some cases: this most unusual Census happened in the first turbulent months of the COVID-19 pandemic hitting Michigan, and we'll likely have years of research and legal action before we know how that affected the count.

With the numbers we have, though, we can start looking at patterns across the state and thinking about what they mean for the League's work. Comparing these 2020 counts to 2010's numbers can give an idea of change, but to take a longer view of patterns we've also pulled 1970 numbers to look at a 50-year window. These numbers, and a higher-resolution map of the whole state, are available at https://www.mml.org/resources/2020_census.html.

We offer here some of our observations, with a big grain of salt: this analysis is only looking at broad categories and at the most general possible measure of total Census count. We'd like to hear your thoughts on what resonates in this discussion, and what we might be totally off-base on. Reach out to the Labs team at cilab@mml.org and let us know how this relates to what you see happening on the ground, and what you see as the needs, concerns, or opportunities for your community going forward.

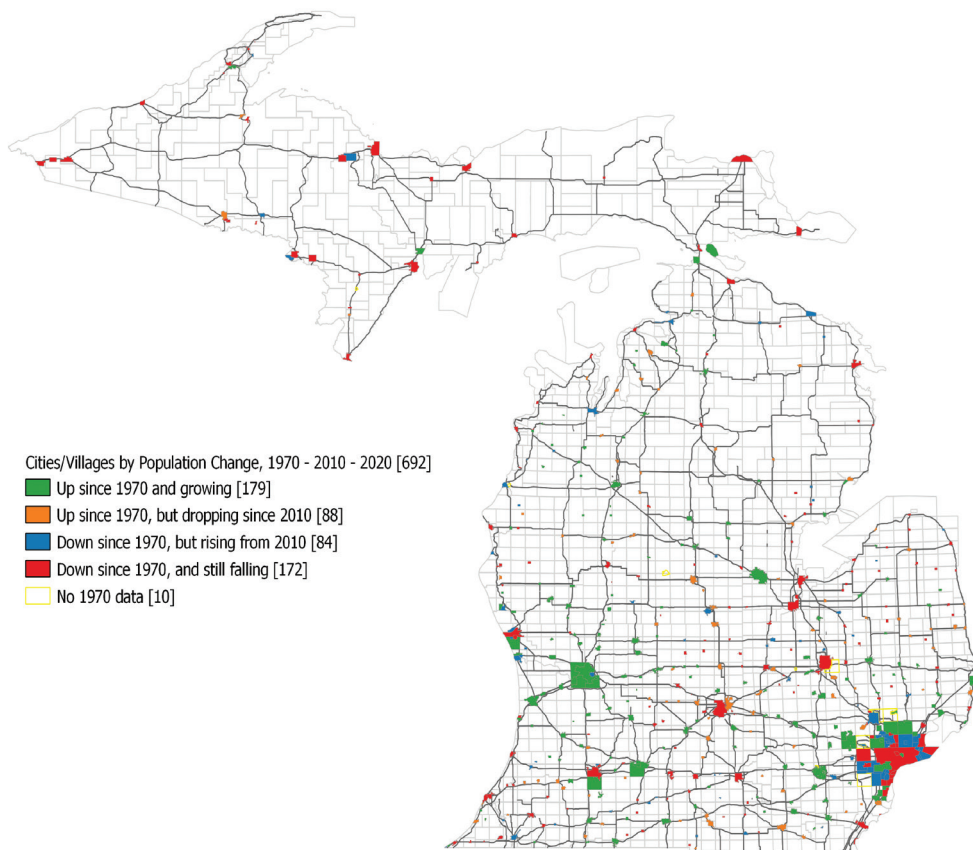
¹ Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (1996), and Andrew Highsmith's *Demolition Means Progress* (2015) are must-reads on how the combined forces of racism and public policy drove the long decline of Michigan's largest and wealthiest cities.

Population Down

Nearly a third of our members have seen their populations shrink both over the past 50 years and since 2010. Many of these communities have been enthusiastic adopters of local-option funding tools, development incentives, and approaches like placemaking. That they are still facing population declines shows that self-help approaches are not enough on their own: more action is needed at the state level to stabilize and support community wealth building in these communities.

The well-trod story of Michigan's industrial decline is visible in those numbers, with many of the traditional manufacturing powerhouses of the I-75 and I-94 corridors losing population. These communities continue to be harmed by the state and federal policies that have driven deindustrialization and disinvestment. Not only do they face the structural challenges common to all our members, such as Michigan's broken municipal finance system, but also have to contend with the costs of vacancy, oversized infrastructure, and industrial contamination that were left behind while businesses and residents were subsidized to relocate to the suburbs.¹

Similarly, our Upper Peninsula communities continue to shed population, with two-thirds of cities and villages in the U.P. having lost residents on both timeframes. As with their siblings to the south, these communities have suffered from long economic shifts. Unlike in those cities, residents haven't just moved to the next community or county over: the U.P.'s 2020 Census numbers are the lowest since 1900. While tourism boosts these numbers during the summer months, that doesn't translate into the permanent jobs or residents needed to sustain these places—some communities report the opposite, that the seasonal demands of the tourism economy keep housing out of reach of year-round residents.



The Lake Michigan coastal communities don't usually come to mind as shrinking communities, but many of them have seen population declines on both short and long-term horizons, with some down 25 percent or more of their 1970 population. These population drops may reflect the concerns we've heard from many of those members, that as vacation homes and now short-term rentals consume an increasing share of the housing stock, they don't have places for long-term residents to live. As with some of the U.P. communities, the seasonal tourism-based economies of these coastal towns may be thriving, but that isn't always translating to prosperity for residents.

Population Up

The flipside of the data is that a similar number of communities have gained population on both the 50-year and 10-year horizons. It's easy to interpret growing population as success, but these communities' growth comes with its own challenges. The last half-century of development has been very resource intensive in terms of land consumed and infrastructure required per capita. These development patterns lead directly to pain points like traffic congestion and surface flooding, and also face large maintenance bills as they age.

**Nearly a third of our members
have seen their populations
shrink both over the past
50 years and since 2010.**



CENSUS

Newer suburbs make up much of the numbers in metro areas across the state, including the second-ring suburbs of Detroit. These communities' growth reflects the housing and highway construction patterns of the late-20th century—the other side of the public policy actions that pulled people out of traditional cities. In many cases, these cities were still seeing vacant land subdivided and built on in the 1990s and 2000s, with homes still occupied by the original owners. These communities should plan to address the challenges that mid-century neighborhoods in central cities and first-ring suburbs have faced: when kids leave home, residents age, and homes and infrastructure reach the end of their initial life and require major capital reinvestment, will there be new residents moving in and ready to pay for that reinvestment?


Some of the growth reflects regional economic patterns. Nearly every city and village in Kent County and Washtenaw County, for example, show population growth. Grand Rapids itself has recovered from earlier population declines to best its previous peak population, and Ypsilanti is growing from a 2010 low, both having suffered from earlier deindustrialization. High public-investment “eds & meds” (education and health care) economies in these regions have set the stage for local efforts in placemaking and growth to be successful. These communities face a different set of growth challenges, such as allowing for new housing options in existing neighborhoods to avoid displacement, and modifying streets to support transit, biking, and walking as safe and effective transportation options.

The corridors between and radiating out from major economic centers have also seen a lot of growth in smaller cities and villages. These places offer attractive traditional main streets and neighborhoods as well as the convenient car commutes of nearby highway investments. These communities may struggle to maintain a local identity while growing as a bedroom community: the League's place-making toolkit and the “belonging” aspect of community wealth building can both be useful approaches for this challenge.

Down—But Up?

The last third of our communities are split into places that have grown since 1970 but lost population in the last decade, and places that have lost population on the 50-year timeframe but grown since 2010. These categories can both be found across the state, but one group jumps out clearly.

The inner-ring suburbs of metro Detroit are the most significant cluster of communities seeing growth since 2010 after decades of previous population declines. In some cases, these are large changes that have seen headlines: Dearborn gained more people than any other city in the state, and Hamtramck had one of the largest percent gains, both besting their 50-year marks; Melvindale, Farmington, and Dearborn Heights all added at least 10 percent to their 2010 populations, and several other communities added over 1,000 residents. Even where these inner-ring suburbs added only a percent or so, though, the change in direction at such scale seems significant.

This shift is likely a combination of the regional economy growing even as Michigan has yet to address the needs of our largest city's residents. Anecdotally, the inner-ring communities are gaining both residents moving out of Detroit neighborhoods and those moving into the region, including through international migration, in tandem with generational shifts as younger residents re-inhabit homes vacated by aging long-time owners. These demographic shifts pose interesting challenges for local leaders who hope to remain engaged with their residents. 

Richard Murphy is a policy research labs program manager for the League. You may contact him at 734.669.6329 or rmurphy@mml.org.

Sue Jeffers is a legal consultant to the League. You may contact her at sjeffers1@me.com.

Presumption of Reasonableness Recognized in Municipal Ratemaking Case

Jamila Youmans (plaintiff) challenged certain municipal utility rates and the ratemaking practices of the Charter Township of Bloomfield and filed suit in 2016. The trial court entered an order certifying the case as a class action and appointed plaintiff as the sole class representative. Plaintiff's complaint included claims for violation of section 31 of the Headlee Amendment and also for the "arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable" nature of those rates and the ratemaking process. With respect to the claim for violation of the Headlee Amendment, the trial court held that under the test set forth in *Bolt v City of Lansing*, 459 Mich 152, the plaintiff failed to demonstrate that the disputed charges constituted unlawful tax exactions. With respect to the claims re: establishment of rates, the plaintiff attacked the basic ratemaking methodology and specific determinations of components of the rates.

The trial court ruled in favor of the Township with respect to the Headlee Amendment claim, reasoning that under the test set forth in *Bolt v City of Lansing*, 459 Mich 152, the plaintiff failed to demonstrate that the charges constituted an impermissible "tax."

As for the claims which had been brought under the heading *assumpsit for money had and received*, the trial court held for the plaintiff on some counts and the township on others. Subsequent hearings were held re: remedies which ultimately resulted in Plaintiff being awarded \$9.58 million in "refunds." Both parties appealed.

The Michigan Court of Appeals began its opinion by noting that *assumpsit for money had and received* as a form of action had been abolished in 1963 but that the remedies are available under the law of unjust enrichment which permits restitution for an "unjust retention of a benefit owed to another." The Court noted that, in ratemaking cases, a focus on unjust enrichment is encapsulated in the rebuttable presumption that a municipality's utility rates are reasonable. The Court cited numerous Michigan cases which have recognized the "longstanding principle of presumptive reasonableness of

municipal utility rates" and that "ratemaking is a legislative function that is better left to the discretion of governmental body authorized to set rates." The Court found that plaintiff failed to provide evidence that the rates as a whole were unreasonable, and that the township retained excessive and unjust benefits that were owed to her as required for a claim of restitution.

The Court upheld the trial court's dismissal of plaintiff's claim that certain utility charges were unlawful exactions under section 31 of the Headlee Amendment. The Court found that the plaintiff failed to carry her burden of demonstrating that the disputed rates are impermissible taxes. In its discussion as to whether the rates were user fees or taxes, the Court stated: "On the strength of the entire record, we hold that the Township's act of raising a prudent level of both revenue and capital and operational reserves through the disputed rates—including revenue to fund its OPEB obligations, the costs of providing fire protection services to the community, expenses related to the county storm-drain systems, and necessary capital improvements—primarily serves valid regulatory purposes."

Youmans v Charter Township of Bloomfield, No. 348614, March 2, 2021

Sonal Hope Mithani (Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C.) filed an amicus curiae brief with the Court of Appeals on behalf of the Michigan Municipal League Legal Defense Fund and the Michigan Townships Association.

Editor's Note: On July 2, 2021, the Michigan Supreme Court denied leave to appeal, "because we are not persuaded that the questions presented should be reviewed by this Court."

Houghton Pier Placemaking Project



Governor Gretchen Whitmer joined the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to announce economic assistance for projects approved by the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF) Board in June 2021.

Statewide, Whitmer and the MEDC say the projects will create 350 new jobs in Michigan and retain 400 high-wage positions, support the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and facilitate transformational development projects in Southwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

"Today's projects help us continue to jumpstart Michigan's economy by creating hundreds of good-paying jobs, reinvigorating our hospitality industry, and supporting vibrant communities across Michigan," said Governor Whitmer. "Through today's significant investments and initiatives, we are reminding the world that the ingenuity and innovation of Michigan's people and businesses remains unmatched."

In Houghton, the Pier Placemaking Project will transform an underutilized waterfront into an active community space that services the city by creating downtown recreational and community gathering places.

As part of the project, the city will expand its public space, access and interface along the Portage Canal Waterway through the reconstruction of a parking area, expansion and linkage of a waterfront trail system and construction of a pier.

The project will boast placemaking amenities including various landscape features, built-in utilities for events and future build out. The space will also serve as a venue for a variety of community events, live music, and the farmers market.

Additionally, with Houghton's recent designation as a port of call for Great Lakes cruising lines, this pier will allow visitors to disembark the cruise line in the heart of downtown and be introduced to the vibrancy of the area, encouraging future trips to the region and additional private investment as a result.

The MSF Board today approved a Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities grant agreement in the amount of \$4,035,010 for the city of Houghton to complete the

Pier Placemaking Project. The city of Houghton also plans to contribute 22 percent of the project costs, totaling \$1,160,010.

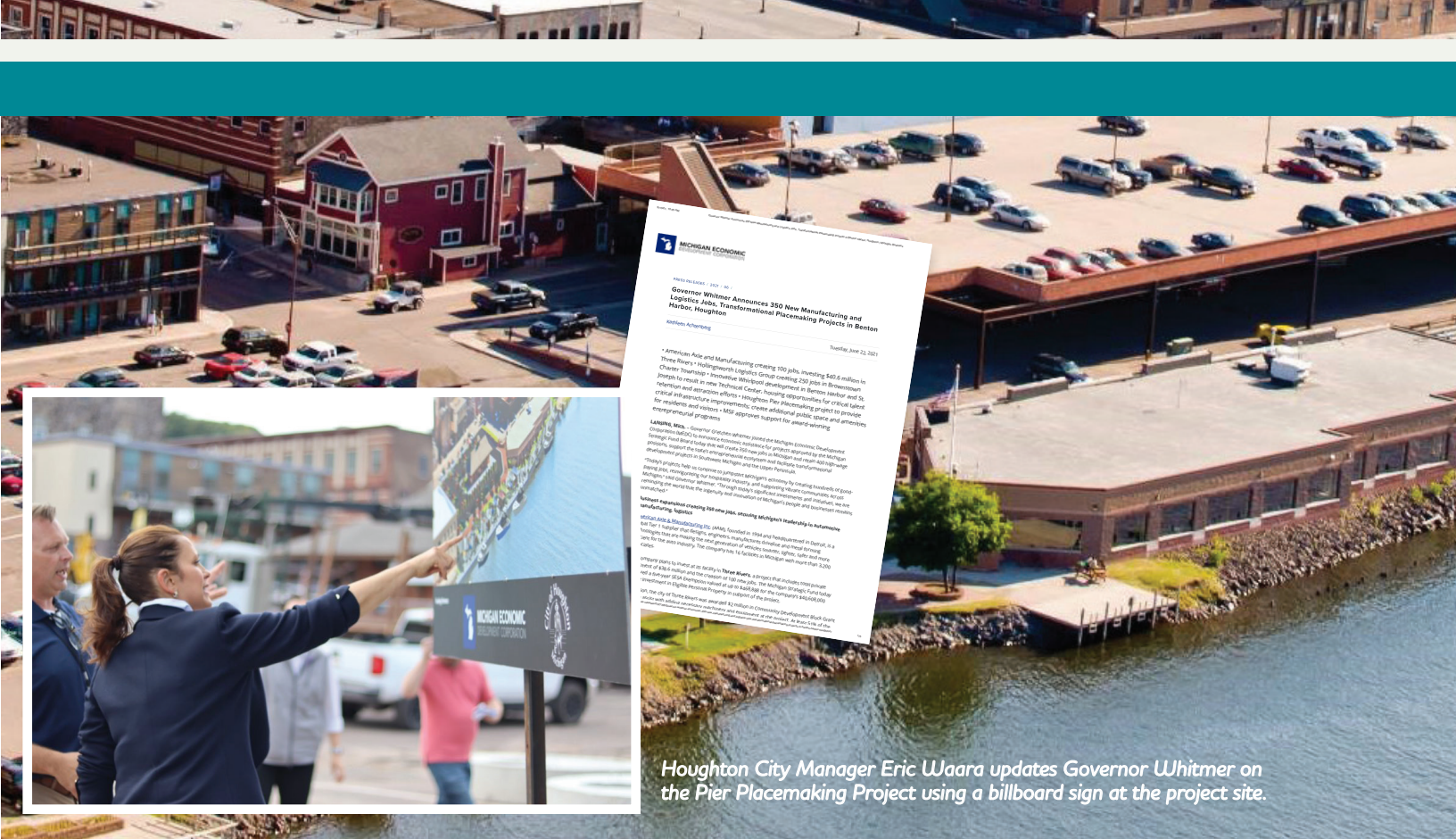
"The City of Houghton is extremely thankful to the MEDC for their support for this project and excited to see it move forward to construction," said Robert Backon, mayor of Houghton. "The place that will be created in our downtown has been long-envisioned and now that it will be realized, our businesses, residents, and visitors will be able to gather and enjoy our downtown in new ways. Outdoor spaces like the pier are vital in bringing our community together. The trying times we faced this past year showed us how having these resources is critically important for everyone's health and wellbeing as people can safely get outside, see each other, and make those human connections."

"It's been a long and winding road through this project's ideation, funding, design, permitting—then COVID turned everything upside down for a while. We in Houghton appreciate MEDC standing by us throughout all the bumps in the road. Now this important project can get underway and be a big part of another step forward in the evolution of downtown Houghton," said Eric Waara, Houghton city manager.

The project aligns with MEDC's strategic focus on developing attractive places through innovative placemaking, while helping to market the state by encouraging future travelers to visit Houghton's downtown region.

Additionally, the project supports the city's master plan, which identifies the need for improved safety and accessibility to the waterfront trail, establishing an all-seasons gathering place for community events, creating relaxing areas for people to gather, enhancing the waterfront and existing public attractions, while generating greater green space, parking, and waterfront activity in the central downtown.

<https://www.michiganbusiness.org/press-releases/2021/06/governor-whitmer-announces-350-new-manufacturing-and-logistics-jobs-transformational-placemaking-projects-in-benton-harbor-houghton/>



Houghton City Manager Eric Waara updates Governor Whitmer on the Pier Placemaking Project using a billboard sign at the project site.



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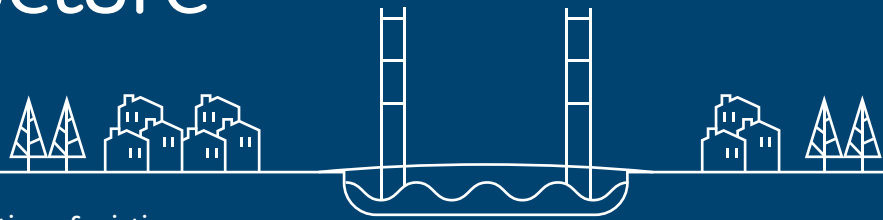


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Federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act

By Rick Haglund



The Act was still being considered by the House at the time of printing.

Communities beset with decrepit bridges, crumbling roads, aging water and sewer systems, and spotty Internet connections could get a huge lifeline from the federal government. The far-reaching \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure and Jobs Act intends to give states and local governments an unprecedented infusion of cash to help them upgrade infrastructure they, in many cases, had to put off for decades because of a lack of resources.

“This marks the largest federal investment in infrastructure in nearly a century and will have a sweeping impact in Michigan and across the nation,” said John LaMacchia II, the Michigan Municipal League’s assistant director of state and federal affairs. Michigan is slated to receive about \$10.7 billion from the Act over five years, to rebuild roads and bridges; invest in public transit and broadband internet; build more charging stations for electric vehicles; protect against climate change and cyberattacks; ensure clean drinking water; and upgrade airports. Here’s a breakdown of its major components from a White House summary:

- Based on the federal highway funding formula, the state is expected to receive \$7.3 billion in federal highway aid and an additional \$563 million for bridge replacement and repairs over five years. Michigan has 1,219 bridges and 7,300 miles of highway in poor condition. The White House said money allocated to bridges is “the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system.” The state also can compete for nearly \$30 billion more in funding for economically significant bridges and other projects that would “deliver substantial economic benefits to communities.”
- Michigan will receive at least \$100 million to connect more Michigan residents to high-speed, broadband Internet. The White House said 14 percent of Michigan residents do not subscribe to an Internet service, and 4 percent of Michiganders do not have access to broadband. High-speed Internet has become increasingly important in the age of COVID, which has boosted remote learning and work. About 2.5 million Michigan residents—one in four—also will be eligible for a federal program that helps low-income families afford often-pricey Internet access.

- Local governments and the state are expected to receive more than \$1 billion in aid to address climate change, cyberattacks, extreme weather events, and replace lead drinking water pipes. The state can expect to receive \$23 million to protect against wildfires, \$24 million to stop cyberattacks, and \$1.3 billion to ensure Michigan residents have safe drinking water.
- Michigan also is expected to receive \$1 billion to improve public transit and \$110 million to build electric vehicle charging stations. The state also will be able to apply for \$2.5 billion in grant funding to expand the nation’s electric vehicle charging network. Michigan airports also would receive \$363 million to improve their aging facilities.

LaMacchia and others praised Sen. Gary Peters for introducing and helping to pass the Storm Act, which creates a \$500 million revolving loan fund to help communities deal with rising water levels, coastal erosion, and flooding caused by an increasing number of severe weather events. The Act is part of the larger federal infrastructure package. “Climate change is generating more frequent severe storms, leading to the unprecedented flooding we’ve experienced recently in Detroit,” Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan said, adding that the Storm Act will be “an important new tool to help Great Lakes cities build resilience to flooding, erosion, and other severe storms.” Detroit and neighboring Dearborn were two of the hardest hit cities in a series of pounding rainstorms that struck the state this summer. The White House said Michigan was hit with 19 extreme weather events between 2010 and 2020, causing \$5 billion in damage.

Ferndale Mayor Melanie Piana, a former League president, said the Infrastructure Act includes much-needed aid to municipalities that “have been waiting a long time to rebuild a lot of their infrastructure.” Among other things, she said the Act adds flexibility to the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, making it easier for smaller municipalities to qualify for money to improve public transit, roads and bridges, and build pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. “Safety is a big concern of small municipalities,” she said. “We don’t want to rebuild the same way. We need to address all different modes of getting around.” Piana is particularly excited about new federal spending to address climate change by investing in electric vehicle infrastructure. “I think this is really about building resilient communities across Michigan,” she said.


LaMacchia said it's difficult to point to just one or two aspects of the Infrastructure Act as being particularly important to Michigan. "If our infrastructure wasn't so far behind the times, I might be able to pick one. Our need is tremendous," he said. Communities should think holistically in how they spend the money, he said, combining with other financial resources. They're also receiving \$4.4 billion in aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), some of which can be used for infrastructure. Other ARP money can be spent creating more affordable housing, which will be critical in attracting workers to build infrastructure projects.

"If we're going to get people to work here, we've got to make sure they've got a place to live," LaMacchia said. Boyne City Manager Michael Cain agreed, saying jobs are going begging in his community because of a lack of affordable housing. "It's huge. That's probably one of the biggest barriers for future growth in Northwest Michigan. It's a real roadblock."

Some experts have expressed worries there will be so much federal infrastructure money flowing to state and local governments that road building, water and sewer construction companies, and others won't find enough labor to handle all the new work. But Mike Nystrom, executive vice president of the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association,

said those concerns are overblown. His association's 500 members have long made workforce development a priority, he said. They've also become more efficient over the years, doing more work with fewer people. "There's not a contractor out there turning away work because of a lack of workers," Nystrom said.

And Michigan won't be getting a great deal more money in road funds in the Infrastructure Act than the state has been receiving in recent years, Nystrom said. The \$7.8 billion in federal highway and bridge funds the state is slated to get over five years is about \$1.7 billion more than Michigan received during the past five years. A bipartisan state infrastructure report in 2016 said Michigan needed \$2 billion a year for 20 years to fix its roads. "We're cautious," he said. "Everyone thinks it's going to be some sort of panacea, and everything is going to get fixed. That's just not going to happen."

True, but it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for municipalities to rebuild much of their aging infrastructure and become more sustainable, vibrant communities. 

Rick Haglund is a freelance writer. You may contact him at 248.761.4594 or haglund.rick@gmail.com.



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ServeMICity

Act now. Shape the future.



Reverse the Decline. Invest in the Future.

Our communities are being offered an extraordinary opportunity to build back better, together. With additional support and resources, some of the most catalytic, transformational, and surprising opportunities may have the opportunity to be realized.



20%
of Michigan communities returned federal stimulus in 2020

CARES ACT

The Michigan Municipal League leveraged \$100,000 for \$33 million

\$100K

\$33
MILLION

GOAL

Help the League's members prioritize recovery funding in ways that are catalytic, improve economic security and community well-being, and leverage additional resources and partners.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN



STATE OF MICHIGAN
\$6.4
BILLION



MICHIGAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
\$4.4
BILLION

Additional funding **\$1 trillion**

HOW CAN ServeMICity HELP?

- **Short-term technical assistance:** help answering questions, accessing funding, evaluating spending options, and meeting reporting requirements.
- **Deeper strategic assistance:** use community data to prioritize investments options, maximize opportunity and impacts.

For information on how you can partner on the ServeMICity effort, contact Shanna Draheim, Director, Policy Development, Michigan Municipal League at servemicity@mml.org.

Q. Can you clarify the timeline for submitting a charter amendment or revision to the governor for review?

A. The governor's office requests that all charter *amendments* be submitted to its office at least 60 days prior to the filing deadline and recommends all proposed charter *revisions* be submitted at least 90 days prior to the filing deadline. Proposed amendments and *revisions* can be sent via email to Gretchen.Whitmer@michigan.gov.

See the League's Fact Sheets on Charter Amendment and Charter Revision at www.mml.org/resources/publications/one_pagers/onepagers.htm.

Q. Can a village trustee get paid to perform work for the village (such as plow streets)?

A. It's not unheard of for a village trustee to do paid work for a village. However, there are considerations to factor in when a trustee is employed by the village, such as the trustee is in essence his/her own supervisor (or one of seven supervisors). The potential scenario should be reviewed by your village attorney. There is a state statute regarding this, known as Incompatible Public Offices, which states: A city, village, township, or county having a population of less than 40,000

may, by council action, authorize a public officer or public employee to perform other additional services for the unit of government, with or without compensation. MCL 15.183(4)(c).

See the League's Fact Sheets on Ethics—Incompatible Public Offices at www.mml.org/resources/publications/one_pagers/onepagers.htm.

Q. When a councilmember asks to be on public record, or makes a comment, do we have to put it in the minutes?

A. The Open Meetings Act only requires that the minutes include "the date, time, place, members present, members absent, any decisions made at a meeting open to the public, and the purpose or purposes for which a closed session is held. The minutes shall include all roll call votes taken at the meeting." (MCL 15.269) Whether or not you include any discussion or comments will depend on your charter and council rules of procedure.

The League's Information Service provides member officials with answers to questions on a vast array of municipal topics. Call 800.653.2483 or email info@mml.org.



ELECTED OFFICIALS ACADEMY Upcoming In-Person and Virtual Trainings

League educational events provide up-to-date information on major issues and concerns relating to local government.

Check out upcoming events below which can also be found on the League's event calendar mml.org/events

NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS OFFERINGS

- **Lansing**—Wednesday, December 1, 2021
- **Virtual**—Thursday, December 9 & Thursday, December 16, 2021
(Must attend both sessions.)
- **Virtual**—Saturday, January 15, 2022
- **Ann Arbor**—Thursday, January 20, 2022

CORE & ADVANCED WEEKENDER

- **Midland**—Friday & Saturday, February 11-12, 2022

Upcoming 2021-2022 League Trainings—Save the Dates!

Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys

By Tom Schultz & Lauren Tribble-Laucht

You might be surprised to learn that the MML supports two organizations working hard behind the scenes to further the interests of municipalities in Michigan on the legal front. The Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys (MAMA) is an organization that is open to membership for lawyers who represent cities, villages, and townships and that provides a variety of services for all municipal attorneys practicing in Michigan.

MAMA offers educational programs, networking, and a wide variety of information-sharing opportunities designed for attorneys in public and private practice who counsel Michigan's local communities. It is an important "go to" resource for attorneys who represent communities all over the state of Michigan and its members share a depth and breadth of knowledge gained from years of representing municipalities. MAMA members are able to network and share knowledge at in-person and virtual events as well as on a listserv hosted by MML. In 2010, the Academy of Municipal Attorneys was established for those who want to attain and be recognized for the highest level of accomplishment in municipal law in Michigan.

MAMA has proved to be a particularly useful resource for bringing together attorneys from around the state who are faced with similar issues and are subject to similar timelines for addressing them. A good example is the recent spate of lawsuits that have erupted around election time each year dealing with marijuana initiatives of various sorts. Member attorneys share thoughts and even documents filed with local and state courts. The process works with ordinance drafting and common Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests as well.

Separately, the MML Legal Defense Fund (LDF) provides support to communities in Michigan involved in significant litigation or other forms of controversy that could affect the organization, operation, powers, duties, or financing of Michigan municipalities. Formed in 1983, the LDF is designed to assist, but not replace, the municipal attorney, and offers assistance directly to local communities at the discretion of its Board of Directors. Usually, that assistance comes in the form of amicus curiae briefs filed on behalf of the MML in state and federal courts and financed in whole or in part by the LDF. An amicus curiae brief—literally, a "friend of the court" brief—is a way of presenting a court faced with an issue of relevance to municipalities with arguments, information, and authority that can assist the court by providing a broad perspective of the case in terms of the impact on municipalities generally, as well as the municipality directly involved in the litigation. There is no automatic right to file an amicus curiae brief; the court's permission must be sought by filing a motion for leave to file the brief. The LDF is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of the President and Executive Director of the Michigan Municipal League and the Board of Directors of MAMA.

Any city, village, or township that is a member of the MML may also join the LDF. Membership fees are based on League dues and most member communities do take advantage of this membership opportunity. LDF members may request LDF assistance by (a) adopting a resolution requesting assistance by the municipal governing body; or (b) submitting a letter from the municipality's chief executive officer (or his/her designee) to the LDF Board asking for assistance.



Applications for help are evaluated based upon whether the particular litigation or controversy involves important questions of law, the favorable disposition of which could provide substantial benefit for a significant number of Michigan local governments; the extent to which the disposition of the litigation or controversy at its current level would serve as a persuasive precedent in similar future litigation or controversies before Michigan courts or other adjudicative bodies; and whether aid is currently being provided in other litigation or controversies involving substantially similar issues or questions of law.

In cases where it decides to participate, the LDF typically retains an attorney—usually a specialist in appellate work and/or the specific subject matter of the case—to prepare and file the amicus brief with the court. Over the years, the LDF has built a positive reputation within the court system by contributing the important perspective of municipalities as a whole.

Sometimes a court will invite the LDF to participate through an amicus brief, in effect requesting input from the MML. In 2008, in an unprecedented act, the court requested that the League's amicus counsel participate in oral argument in a case involving municipal labor law issues. The cases the LDF has participated in range in issues from governmental immunity/liability to billboards, taxation, and zoning.

While not all the results are necessarily favorable to municipalities, the majority of cases in which the LDF has participated have either resulted in a victory for municipalities or provided a catalyst for subsequent legislative action when appropriate. The LDF also keeps a library of briefs that have been filed as a resource for members.




MAMA

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL ATTORNEYS

*Encouraging the advancement
and enhancement in the
practice of municipal law*

www.mama-online.org



We are proud to provide these services to support our membership and to support the communities that we represent. 

Tom Schultz is a shareholder in the law firm of Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, PC. He is the immediate past president of MAMA and LDF. You may contact him at 248.489.4100 or tschultz@rsjalaw.com.

Lauren Tribble-Laucht is the city attorney for Traverse City. She is the MAMA and LDF president. You may contact her at 231.922.4404 or LTLaucht@traversecitymi.gov.



michigan municipal league

1675 Green Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

2021 COMMUNITY Excellence Award FINALIST

City of East Lansing The Daytime. Nighttime. Anytime. Place Project.

To support businesses with meeting public health order requirements and to increase opportunities for consumers to engage in the local economy, the City of East Lansing is implementing a series of outdoor placemaking strategies to increase available outdoor dining options, curbside pickup options, and participation in city programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project uses placemaking strategies to solve very complex problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these strategies were designed to address the many challenges confronted by the pandemic, the city hopes that the Daytime. Nighttime. Anytime. Place Project will result in long-term, community-driven changes in downtown East Lansing.

