



Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

A Semi-Annual Progress Report

for HUD Grant #MIRIP005611 January through July, 2013

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The Mid Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability is progressing well and there is extensive activity and accomplishment in all nine project areas of the Program during this report period of January 2013 through August 2013. In addition to each project area's many events, meetings and successes, the overall Program hosted a Consortium gathering of over 120 people at the new Alive! Health and Wellness Center associated with Hayes-Green-Beach Hospital in Charlotte, MI. We coordinated free transit and shared rides to assure participation from throughout the three county region. The afternoon included presentations and updates on the Program projects, showcased sustainability initiatives in Eaton County, and attendees participated in a regional forum to develop local action steps to identify and implement more sustainable practices. The next Consortium gathering will be in Ingham County in September. We will conduct some table top exercises soliciting ideas for sustainability initiatives and regional prosperity and showcase Ingham County sustainability initiatives. The second week of Charrettes community and technical sessions will focus on community developed designs for selected areas within the Michigan Avenue Grand River Avenue demonstration corridor.

Projects 1 & 2: Affordable Housing Study and Plan

The Affordable Housing Study data report includes demographic socio-economic and housing characteristics of 19 communities in the region, identified as representative of other regional communities. Analyses were adjusted to accommodate local variations in nationally available data. The Housing Experts interviews were finalized and the participants from all three counties included those with affiliations in the professional real estate industry, housing for minorities and refugees, loan and finance providers, private development corporations, municipal managers and administrators, transit providers, Habitat and other non-profit housing needs agencies.

The Housing study data collected to date was summarized and a report provided for use in the Corridor Charrettes Planning project 7 which identified some key housing issues along the Grand River Ave/Michigan Ave corridor and recommended suggestions for improving affordability as the design progresses.

Special Housing Issue Listening Sessions were held in communities throughout Eaton County with more than 40 different participants sharing their local views on housing issues. Similar meetings (5) were held in Clinton County with about 55 participants. The next set of 4-6 meetings are being scheduled for Ingham County. Some local hosts-sponsors were identified in August.

Project 3: Community Reinvestment Fund

The Community Reinvestment fund Task Force met to review and approval round II grantees and those mini-grants were awarded in public ceremony at the meeting of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commissioners. Outreach and information materials were developed and posted to the website. Outreach sessions (7) and Community Engagement sessions describing the Community Reinvestment fund and encouraging participation on local planning (14) were held during the recent quarter. The Task Group members are working with Round I grantees to assure they meet the project completion and reporting requirements as they near completion of their one year award. Round II has been announced and applications being accepted. Telephone conferences, online information, and a number of neighborhood based



information sessions were held to improve access to these mini-grants and encourage low income and underserved populations to apply.

Project 4: Energy Study

Progress on Determining the Building Portfolio for the energy study progressed this reporting period with the Student group who has created a distribution of buildings to sub-type and target with the energy study. Consumers Energy and the Lansing Board of Water and Light are working with the task force to share energy data and/or develop appropriate proxy data for development of a corridor energy baseline. Example audit participants are being solicited now and release forms are being created for individual meters on commercial and residential buildings. The Task Force has held some discussion meetings to draw many energy partners to the same table and will host a widely promoted event in September with presentations by the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, a nationally recognized program.

Project 5: Regional Urban Services Management Area

The Urban Services Management Committee met monthly during this period. They developed a contract for creation of a video that will promote the URSM study results and discussed dissemination of the information.

Project 6: Greening Mid-Michigan

Meridian Township has updated a website with lists of green projects places and organizations (mygreenstar.org) and held several regional meetings held to explore creating a regional 'green' calendar that would take fees from some existing sources as well as facilitate other collaborations.

The Tri-County Environmental Leadership Awards were hosted by the Regional Association of Recyclers and they award Kathy Donahue, of the TCRPC staff, as the environmentalist of the year for her work with the Sustainability project, her service on the Meridian Township Environmental Commission, and her support of other green initiatives region-wide.

A curriculum for Intergovernmental Parks and Recreation Planning training sessions has been developed and sessions are being scheduled for the fall with area municipal parks representatives.

Filming has begun on a set of promotional videos, like Public Service Announcements, about the region's green infrastructure and sustainable green resources.

The Middle of the Grand River Organization of Watersheds (MDGROW) tabulated and reviewed the results of a needs assessment conducted last June. Based on the results, stakeholders want assistance with river/water related recreational activities and access to presentation materials. Quarterly newsletters are being developed. An inventory of the existing heritage Water Trail began with meetings with area leaders and a review of current trail position.

Project 7: Sustainable Corridor Design Portfolio

Our region held a huge and very successful Charrette Event May 1-May 9, 2013 to develop a grand, regional vision for our region's "main street". The events drew together as many as a thousand participants to general presentations, workshops, visioning and focus group meetings, and open house events to share and help develop a regional vision for our busiest corridor- the Grand River Avenue/Michigan Avenue corridor. This demonstration corridor passes through 10 municipalities from our most rural villages and farmland, undeveloped townships, suburban areas, past Michigan State University and into our urban core up to the State Capitol in Lansing. The National Charettes Institute (NCI) staff and their sub-contractors from Dover Kohl Associates conducted pre-charrettes work sessions on the phone and in person, visiting with community leaders, technicians, and community leaders. They worked with TCRPC staff and our partners, particularly at MSU, to collect data and conduct analyses of the regional corridor. Area municipal partners provided representatives, shared space for events and activities, and promoted public participation. Michigan State University staff and students, and Michigan State Housing Development Authority funding provided trained extension educators to



assist in facilitating technical sessions. Our growing regional network of non-profit and community based organizations brought in public participation. The area news media covered the events with television news spots, large newspaper stories, and radio talk show interviews with participants, facilitators, businesses, and residents. The resulting Vision for the region is in the form of presentations, drawings, and summary draft text which will serve as a basis for the next, more detailed "Design Charrette" week to be held October 22-29, 2013.

Project 7: Student practicum-The students worked with professors and TCRPC staff, and the village of Webberville to develop and deliver a draft Downtown Area Development Plan. They presented the plan to Community Leaders and also met with and shared it during Charrettes meetings for the Grand River Avenue Corridor.

Project 7: Community Workshops and Audit tool- The MSU team researched options for a sustainability tool that would work using a cell phone. An online tool for assessing a community's land use sustainability, from a mostly zoning and master plan ordinance perspective, is in development.

Project 8: Complete Streets

Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Coalition (Mid MEAC) convened the Smart Commute Planning Committee to develop the next events for June. The Walk Bike Task Force meetings were held and the Capital Community Bike Share program development continued. Valet Parking services were provided at public festivals and events. The Walkability Audit was expanded to include another community.

The Michigan Fitness Foundation prepared for a Regional Transportation Forum for March 7 which included a successful event to explore intermodal connectivity in some areas of the regional corridor. They also continued their work to develop a Bicycle Friendly Business District in Lansing by sharing a revised Bike Friendly fact sheet and met to seek a tie in to the Capital Area Bike Share program.

Project 9 (Online Communications Portal): SEE www.midmichigansustainability.org

Website design for the portal was beta tested and went live at the end of April and, after testing, was transferred to a publically available server. Efforts to develop a regular system for inserting content have been ongoing all summer. The Portal work group of TCRPC staff, Health Departments staff, Michigan State University project partners and Michigan Energy Options (MEO), the sub-recipient, have met a number of times and offered advice/critiques of the draft portal website and developed a RFP for a health impact assessment online tool and an energy usage assessment tool which will be hosted on the Portal site.

Meetings with technical staff of three County Health Departments and Health Impact Assessment project leaders at MSU to identify possible software platforms and applications for the HIA tool on the Portal. A request for qualifications and proposals was developed and distributed/posted to seek development of online tools for the portal, particularly an energy assessment tool and a Health Impact Assessment tool. Two qualified responses were received and selected- one for an energy assessment tool and another for an online Health Impact Assessment tool. In coordination with work by the Ingham County Health Department under a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Health Department and TCRPC staff have been conducting an analysis and identification of impacts assessment measures by examining the plan development processes used by two of the Sustainability program task forces, the Housing Study and Plan Development Task Force and the Greening of Mid-Michigan Task Force. Through surveys, workshops and discussions of measures and impacts of development on health, paired with health department databases of health indicators for local residents, the Health Impact Assessment tool is being developed and will be accessible and usable on-line for citizens, planning staff, and developers to use in considering and estimating the impacts on public health of proposed land use developments.