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## Accelerate: Economic Development Strategy and Prosperity Plan for the I-69 Thumb Region

George Erickcek

*W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, [erickcek@upjohn.org](mailto:erickcek@upjohn.org)*

Bryan Bommersbach

*W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Don Edgerly

*W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Brian Pittelko

*W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Claudette Robey

*W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, [robey@upjohn.org](mailto:robey@upjohn.org)*

*See next page for additional authors*

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### Authors

George Erickcek, *W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Bryan Bommersbach, *W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Don Edgerly, *W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Brian Pittelko, *W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Claudette Robey, *W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research*

Jim Robey, *Mohr Partners*

### Upjohn Author(s) ORCID Identifier

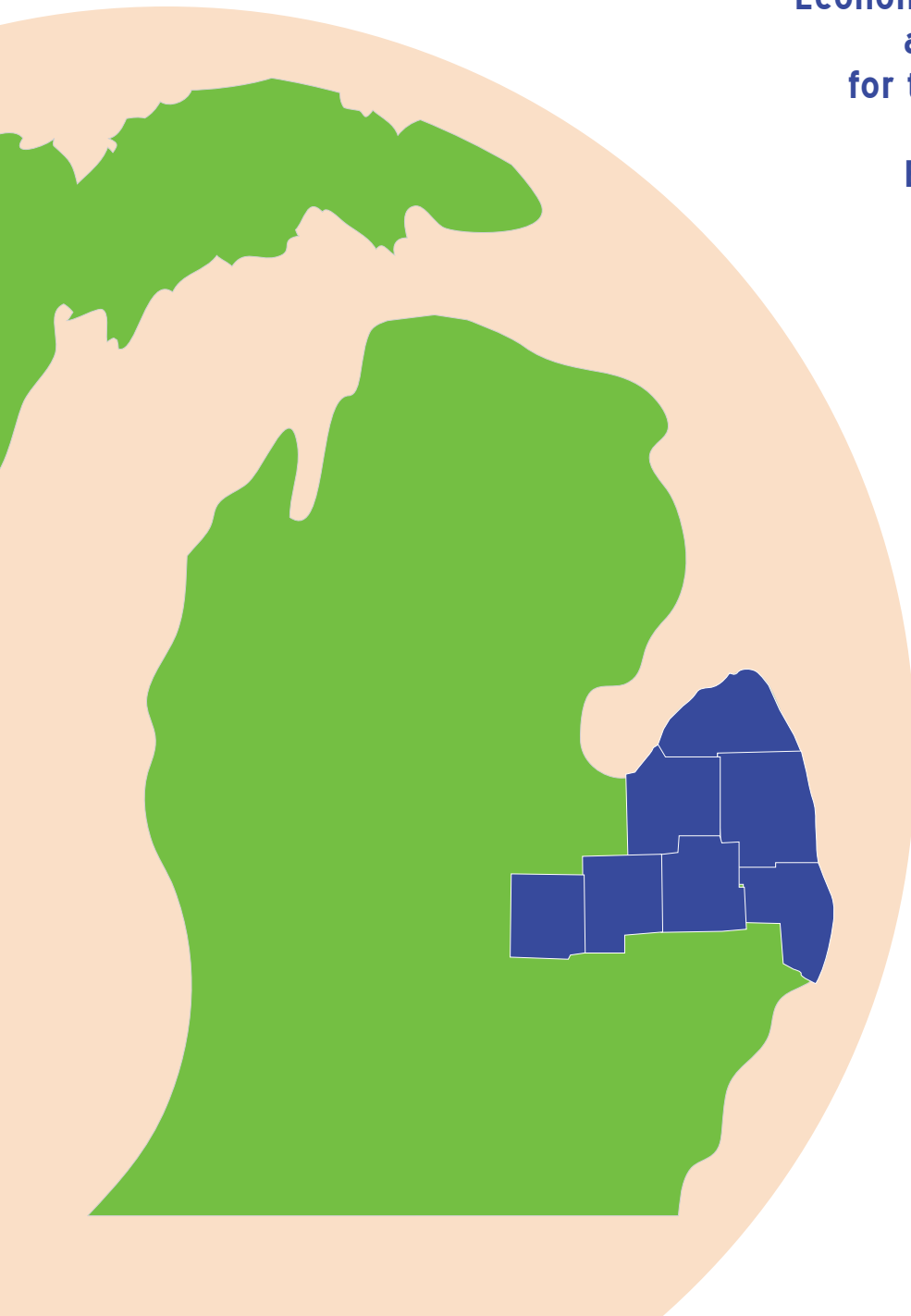
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4668-2567>



**Economic Development Strategy  
and Prosperity Plan  
for the I-69 Thumb Region**

**Executive Summary**

**December 8, 2014**





## Acknowledgments

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George A. Erickcek

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Jim Robey

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Carmine P. Avantini

Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce

Justin Sprague

This report could not have been completed without the guidance and assistance of the members of both the Region 6 Steering Committee (List 1) and the CEDS Steering Committee (List 2). The membership of these active committees represent almost all aspects of the business and government services sectors in the region, including economic development, education, workforce development, planning, transportation, and government administration.





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**Accelerate** is the culmination of a collaborative planning process for a seven-county area spearheaded by the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce and the Genesee Lapeer Shiawassee (GLS) Region V Planning & Development Commission, resulting in a coordinated Federal Economic Development Strategy and State Prosperity Plan. This document ties together the U.S. Economic Development Administration Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Region 6 Prosperity plans into a single, unified plan expressing a shared economic vision for Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, St. Clair, Tuscola, Huron, and Sanilac counties. Accelerate creates an economic roadmap for unified actions in the region leading to new jobs, international marketing opportunities, and investment. These actions will both strengthen and diversify the regional economy. The roadmap will also help guide the coordinated efforts by local communities across the seven counties in a manner that will positively impact the region as a whole.

ac·cel·er·ate  
to cause something to happen sooner or more quickly



## Planning Process

**As required by** each funding agency, this plan has been driven by its steering committee. The federal requirements for a CEDS steering committee are that at least 51 percent of the committee is represented by the private sector. For this reason, the CEDS steering committee has 20 members across Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, and St. Clair counties

with 5 representatives from each county, 3 of which represent the private sector.

The Regional Prosperity steering committee also has roughly 20 representatives that primarily represent the public sector, service providers, and the education sector. For the purposes of this plan, each county also had an advisory committee to the larger steering committee.

The county advisory committees met monthly to review data, participate in the SWOT session, assist with project identification and prioritization, and make plan recommendations to the larger steering committee. Final plan approval will be a recommendation from the advisory committees to the steering committee who will ultimately recommend approval by each county's board of commissioners.

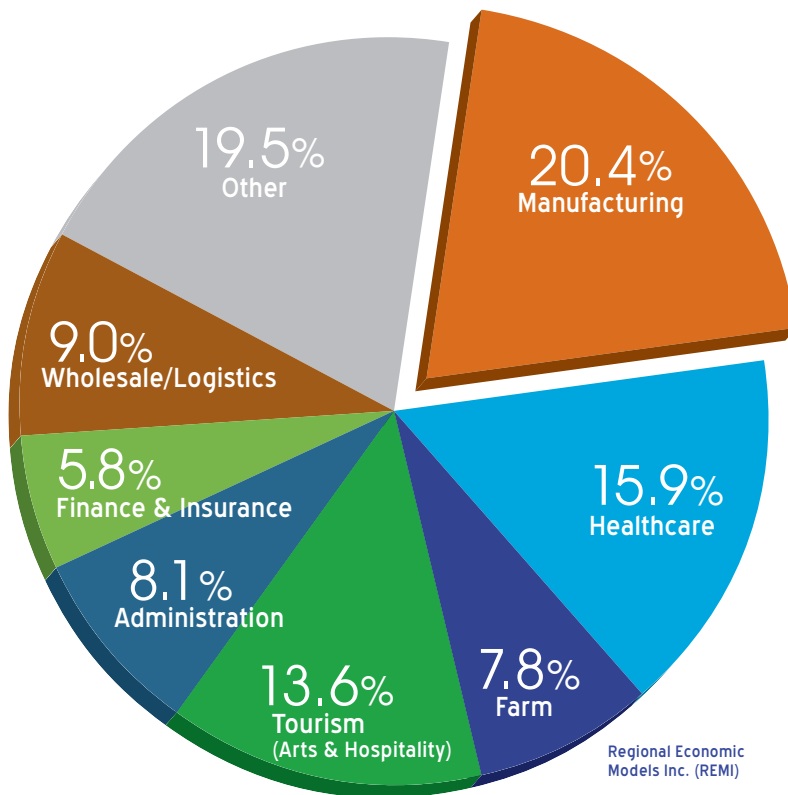




## Regional Profile

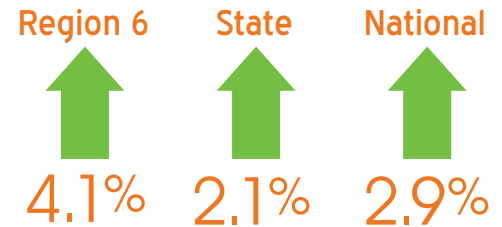
# By the Numbers: Economic Landscape

### Export Industries



### Employment

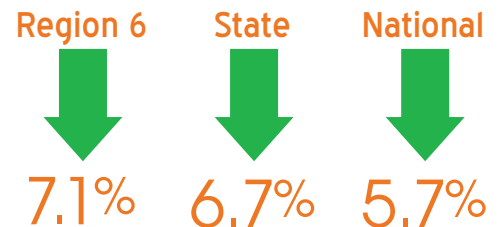
Period covering 2009-2013



Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Employment and Wages

### Unemployment

\*As of September 2014



Bureau of Labor Statistics



### Household Income

Households Simply Surviving\* **25%**

**17%** Households Living in Poverty

\*Based on statewide A.L.I.C.E. (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained Employed) Project by the Michigan Association of United Ways

### Commuting Patterns



Source is U.S. Census Bureau, Census on the Map, 2011



## Economic Landscape

### The Region 6

landscape of the I-69 Thumb region is very diverse, including thousands of acres of productive farmland, hundreds of miles of shoreline, major international

transportation routes, revitalized metro areas, and several vital smaller cities. Despite the region's diversity, its residents and businesses

share many of the same opportunities, assets, and challenges that can be more effectively acted upon by a coordinated effort.

During the recession, the region's unemployment rate topped 16 percent. In August of 2014, the unemployment rate dipped to 7.1 percent, but nearly 28,000 residents still remained unemployed.

The loss of employment opportunities in the region has hindered population growth and decreased consumer spending, causing economic hardship to thousands of families. A full quarter of the households living in the I-69 Thumb region are Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained Employed (A.L.I.C.E.), struggling in poverty or simply surviving on budgets that allow for no savings.

But the region is not an economic island. As many as 147,200 of its working residents commute outside of the region to work, while 65,000 individuals who reside outside of Region 6 drive into the I-69 Thumb region to work.

Employment trends in the seven-county region are improving. The area's four largest sectors—healthcare, retail, government, and manufacturing—account for less than 50 percent of the region's employment base, yet many employers are having difficulty finding quality workers; the future employment gains in the region will be aided by qualified workers.

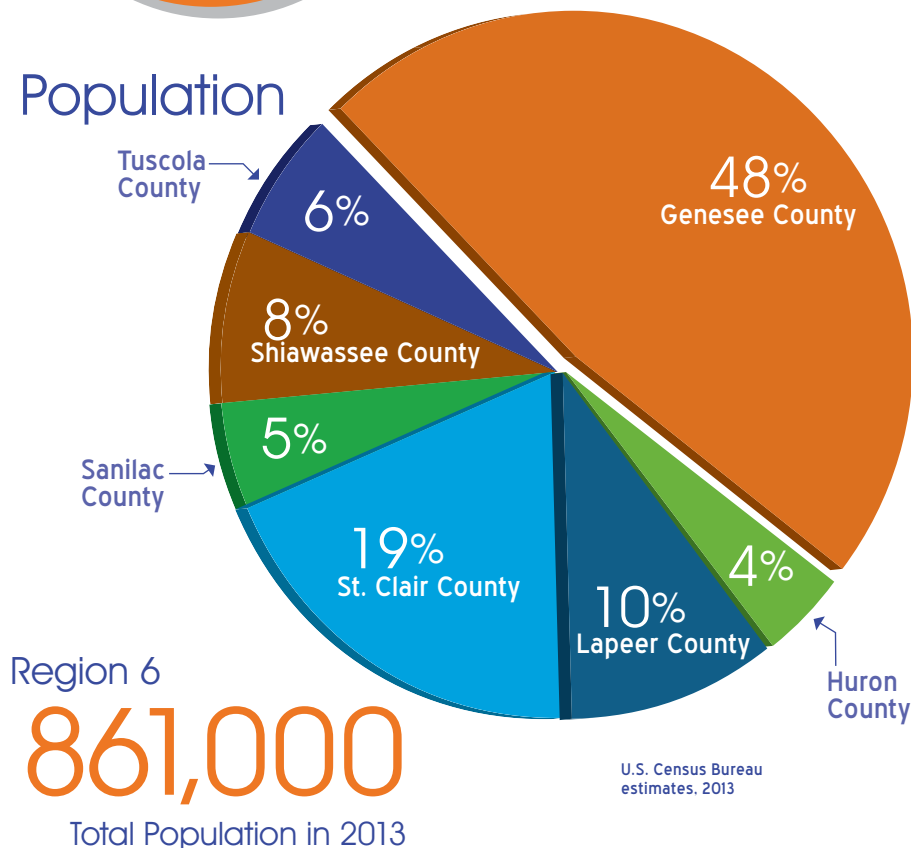




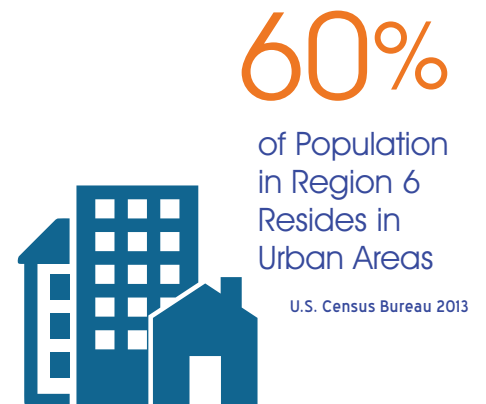
## Regional Profile

# By the Numbers: Demographics

## Population



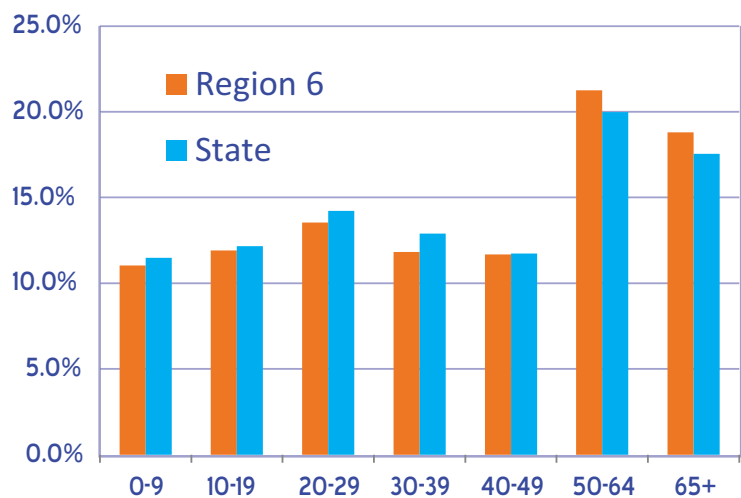
## Land Distribution



## Percent Growth by Age

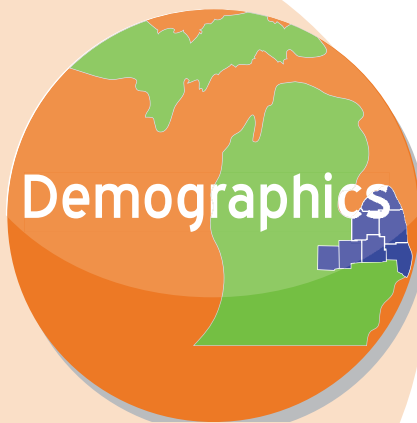
Projected Population of 20-29 year olds in 2020

**13.5%**



Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI)





**In 2013, an** estimated 861,000 individuals lived in Region 6. Nearly 50 percent of the region's population resides in Genesee County, with another 19 percent living in St. Clair County. Overall, nearly 60 percent of the region's residents live in urban areas, which account for only 7.0 percent of the region's land area. Slightly below the state and national

percentage, African Americans represent just less than 11 percent of the region's total population and primarily reside in Genesee County (93 percent). Evenly distributed across the region, Hispanics make up 3.2 percent of the region's total population; Asians and Native Americans account for less than 1.0 percent of the region's population.

As is true throughout the nation, the region's population is aging. By 2020 the region will be losing many of its more experienced workers through retirement, thus creating the real possibility of a skills shortage. In addition, the number of senior residents living in the area will only increase, generating a changing level of demand for government services. However, even with the aging of the baby boomers, the working age population in the region has held steady from 1990 to 2010.



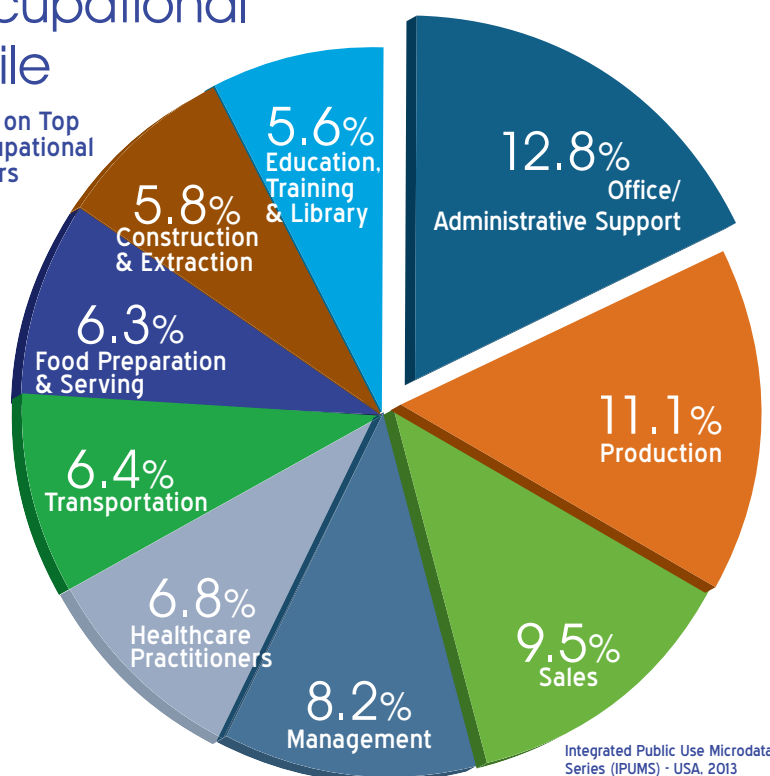


## Regional Profile

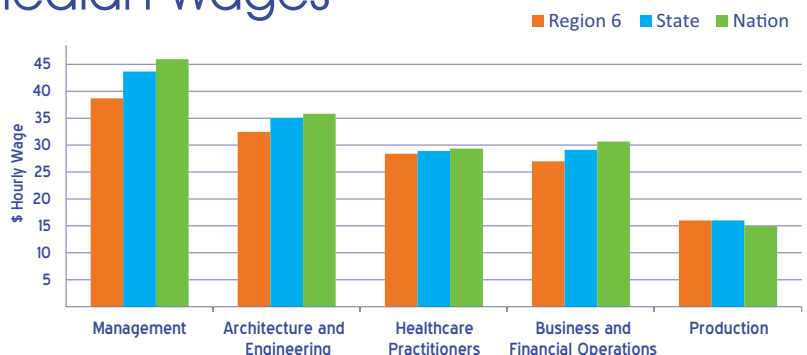
# By the Numbers: Labor and Talent

## Occupational Profile

\*Based on Top 9 Occupational Clusters



## Median Wages



## Education Levels



**24%** Jobs requiring B.A. or higher

Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW), 2012

**18.2%** Population with a B.A.

U.S. Census Bureau Quality Workforce Indicators (QWI), 2012

## Labor Forecast

2013-2030



**.6%** Manufacturing



**4.5%** Construction



**1.3%** Real Estate



**1.6%** Professional



**1.9%** Accommodation & Food



**1.8%** Healthcare

Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI)

## Labor and Talent

### Agriculture,

logistics, equipment/electronics, and tourism are key sectors for the I-69 Thumb region. Due to its proximity to the greater Detroit region and Ontario, Canada, it is important

for the region's economic development stakeholders to explore avenues to further develop its unique strategic assets and industries. In order for our region to

become more economically resilient, strategic goals must include the development of an entrepreneurial, talented workforce and an efficient infrastructure that meet the needs of existing regional businesses so that they can compete on a global basis.

Manufacturing is expected to continue to lose employment in the future, but at the same time, many of the re-

gion's manufacturers cannot find workers with the technical skills needed to remain competitive. Persuading young adults to train for high-demand occupations in industries that are expected to decline is a major challenge facing the region in the immediate future. Coming to terms with a looming regional talent shortage identifies the need for additional business-directed training programs and better information regarding the skills required by employers, so that more of these job openings could be filled by residents rather than commuters.

The region's economic base employment is becoming more diversified. In 1990, manufacturing employment accounted for more than 30 percent of the region's economic base; now it accounts for less than 20 percent. Farming, leisure and hospitality's share of the base remains stable. Education and healthcare are growing due to increasing customer demand, aging demographics, and expanding technology. However, the big finding is that employment in smaller sectors, from logistics to professional services, has become a growing part of the region's economic base.



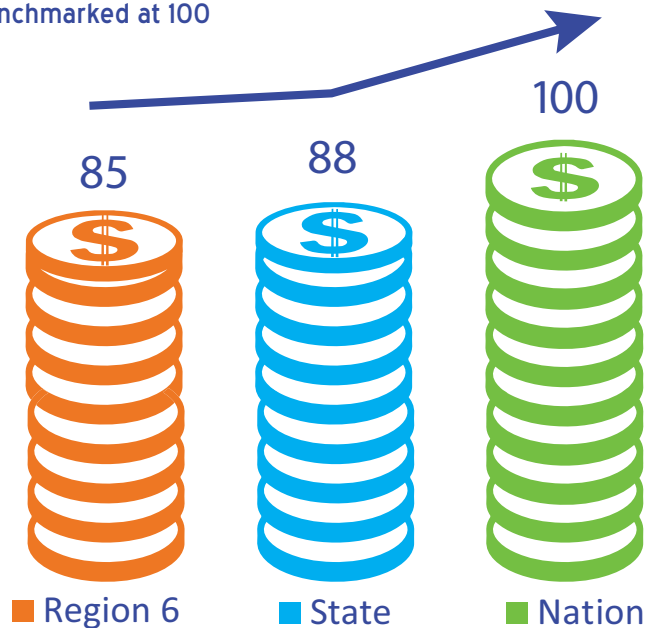


## Regional Profile

# By the Numbers: Quality of Life

### Cost of Living/ Consumer Price Index

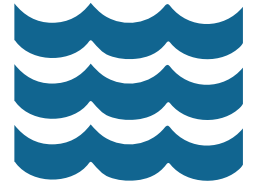
\*Benchmarked at 100



Sperling's Best Places, 2013

## 200+

Miles of Great  
Lakes Shoreline



## 10

Colleges &  
Universities

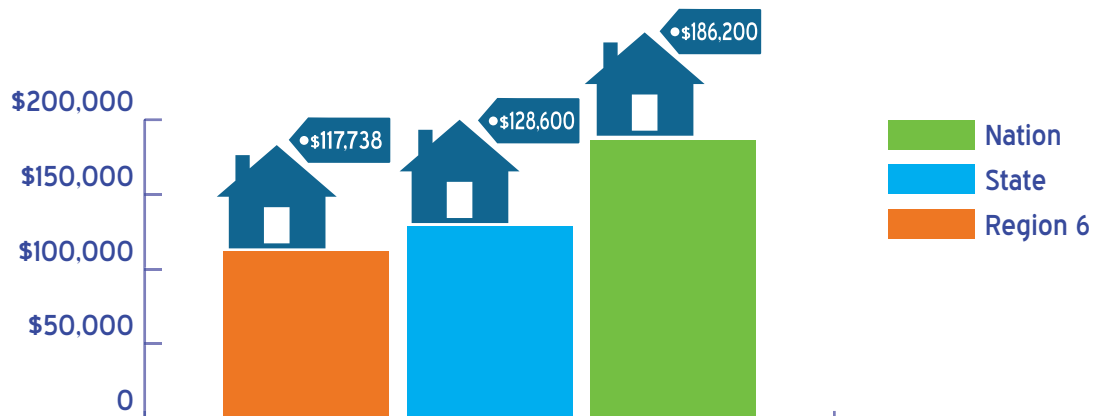
## 93,700+

Acres of Parks



Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Region 6  
county and city Departments of Parks and Recreation

### Median Home Cost



U.S. Census Bureau, 2012





## Quality of Life

### The region's

economic developers are positive about the future of the region. The area's blend of rural and urban settings and its location on the shores of Lake Huron provide a quality of life that is competitive to any other area.

The region's strongest economic assets include:

- Developable land along I-69 International Trade Corridor
- The Karegnondi water intake pipeline, projected to pump up to 85 million gallons of "raw" water daily from Lake Huron through Sanilac County, St. Clair County, Lapeer County, and Genesee County

- Class I rail access to Canada
- The Bishop International Airport, serviced by four national air carriers—American, Delta, Southwest, and United—offering the lowest average airfare in the state
- Excellent higher education training institutions such as the University of Michigan-Flint, Kettering University, Baker College, Mott Community College, St. Clair Community College, and several other satellite college campuses

Finally, the region's nurturing approach to economic development creates an environment that is welcoming to all types of businesses. Such an environment includes excellent K–12 schools, over 200 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, an extensive parks system, superb cultural resources, solid transportation networks, broadband, and an attractive overall quality of life.





## Goals and Objectives

### The six regional

goals identified to guide implementation of the Region's investment in strategic projects, programs, and activities under the Accelerate Plan are shown in Table 10. They tie together both the CEDS and Regional Prosperity programs, creating a unified vision for the seven-county region.

Accompanying the goals are related objectives that will provide direction toward implementation and further define the results being sought through the project goals. A more detailed breakdown of the Lead Agencies and Partners responsible for implementation of related goals and objectives is found in the accompanying Implementation Plan that follows this report. The Lead Agencies and Partners are tied to each of the Goals and Objectives, along with associated resources and an anticipated timeframe for completion.

### Accelerate to Action

At the outset of this planning effort, it was the consensus of opinion with partners across the region that this must not be a plan that "sits on a shelf." Participants at the SWOT and charette sessions indicated that they had been through similar public involvement/planning efforts and

that there had been limited results. A great deal of time and effort has been dedicated by the Accelerate Plan partners, and they are committed to continued progress and results. It was also agreed that implementation cannot rely solely on government efforts and funding; that continued regional cooperation among partners and private-sector support would also be needed for success.

The first step toward moving forward, then, is the identification of Vital Projects that correspond to the goals and objectives developed through the planning process. Each of the Accelerate categories associates projects from the Vital Projects Matrix, which consolidates and prioritizes projects submitted by the regional partners, with the appropriate goals and objectives. Since these projects were already designated as high priority projects for the region by the steering committee, efforts now focus on assembling the regional and other resources needed for implementation.

Moving forward, key components of the Action Plan include:

- 1) Ensuring the continued commitment and participation of regional partners in the coming years;
- 2) Implementing successful joint projects by regional agencies;
- 3) Continuing the success of the Regional Economic Development Collaboration;
- 4) Maintaining a high level of communication among partners; and
- 5) Creating Action Teams to focus on the implementation of specific objectives and vital projects.

By necessity, such a large undertaking will require continuous monitoring, communication, and support for the designated Action Teams. This support will have to come from a regional agency that is well versed in development of the Accelerate Plan, such as the GLS Region V Planning and Development Commission.

## Accelerate Performance Measures

Performance measures were developed to monitor the progress of the action plan and are organized and presented by the identified goals listed below. They are not meant to be used as evaluation tools for individual initiatives. Moreover, it must be cautioned that these performance measures are subject to forces outside the control or influence of the action plan. For example, a downturn in the national economy would significantly affect nearly all of these performance measures independently of the impact of the implemented action plan.

## Projects Linking the Region

To meet requirements of the CEDS and Regional Prosperity plans, and also begin moving toward implementation, a call for projects was issued to all communities and agencies in the seven-county region. A standard project request form was emailed out and the Region 6 planning staff received over 75 potential projects. The Region 6 Steering Committee was then asked to prioritize all of the projects, ranking them using specific evaluation criteria that included the plan goals resulting from the charette along with the following:

- Does it address an identified regional goal?
- Does it have regional impact?
- Does it promote global competitiveness?
- Is it innovative?
- Does it create new jobs?
- Is it in an economically distressed area as measured by the unemployment rate or per capita income?
- Does it have a solid level of community support and collaboration?
- How ready is the project? Are matching funds in place? Is a private company committed to the site? Are cost estimates prepared?

The submitted projects were assembled into a table, along with corresponding prioritization based upon the above criteria. After the steering committee met to review the projects, the consultants were then asked to consolidate like-projects and prepare a revised table with only the “Vital Projects”—those obtaining the highest scores from the steering committee. Since each submission had to identify the applicable goal for the project, it was then possible to transfer each Vital Project over to the Action Plan.



## Develop and retain a talented workforce so regional businesses can compete on a global basis

Performance Measure .....▶ The economic strength of the region will continue to come from the development and growth of existing companies, a large part of which is related to their ability to attract and retain quality employees.

Track the number of graduates from training programs, certificates, and degrees at the high school (ISD), community college, and university levels that are in high demand by the business sector

Track the number of high school graduates that go on to a post-secondary education or training program

Track internet postings for high-demand/high-skilled occupations and length of time the jobs have been posted

### Objectives

- Identify current and future workforce needs of employers.
- Provide a range of education opportunities to high school students and graduates including non-traditional centers of innovative programs.
- Create a regional system of connecting workers and employers with programs, best practices, and networks.
- Continue to work together to create and strengthen relationships developed through the Accelerate planning process to promote and develop education/training opportunities.
- Influence legislation, policy, and budget to promote practices and systems that help produce a talented workforce.

### Vital Projects

- Many employers in the region are struggling to find qualified workers to fill available positions. The goal would be to develop a strategy to assist employers in finding qualified workers and to fill the skills gap that exists for some of the available jobs.
- Create a program that better connects the business community in need of current and future talent with K-12/ISD and higher education, including awareness of career opportunities (e.g., job fair, co-op), curriculum development, vocational training centers, etc.
- Create a pool of funds, managed by a consortium of educators, intended to provide grants to support career pathway-oriented projects. The projects to be funded would be vetted in the form of a competition or application process. The goal is to seed fund projects that build on the concepts of career pathways in K-12 and college.
- Make available targeted skills training to employers on-site for their workforce and supervision.

## Infra-structure Goal

Develop, create, and maintain an efficient infrastructure that will enable the region to compete in a global marketplace

### Performance Measure .....

Quality infrastructure will enable regional industries to operate efficiently and transport their products using a dependable transportation system.

Map the areas in the region that have access to broadband coverage

Monitor highway capacity

Map and track the usage of water for industrial purposes along the Karegnondi water intake pipeline

Monitor improvements in railroad capacity and performance in the Thumb region

### Objectives

Prepare a long-term capital improvement plan for infrastructure.

Identify gaps in the infrastructure for the region.

Improve transportation and broadband access to areas of the region that are underserved.

Enhance access to healthcare and wellness programs.

### Vital Projects

Development of a fiber network that serves the entirety of the I-69 Thumb region.

Expand and enhance infrastructure: rail, water, sewer, and natural gas.

Funding to acquire and operate a deep-water port that would include the construction of a warehouse to store product, installation of trans-loading equipment, extension of the on-site rail spur, and other site improvements.

Phase 2 development of an intermodal cargo area, Bishop Airport—expand air cargo operations. This development includes land acquisition, taxiways, utilities, building improvements, and ramp areas.

Funding to convert a CN rail property yard into a trans-loading facility for agricultural and other products. This facility would have warehouses, conveyer systems, and possibly cold storage. Costs include preliminary acquisition, engineering, and construction.

## Regional Collaboration Goal

Strengthen existing and create new collaborative partnerships to operate effectively as one voice for regional economic success

Performance Measure .....

With such a large and economically diverse region, it is important for all partners to work together as a single entity to conserve resources and maximize results.

Develop a communication strategy to track ongoing efforts to implement vital projects in the region

### Objectives

- Develop an information initiative for local citizens, businesses, developers, companies, and residents.
- Ensure that the Accelerate Plan continues to move toward implementation and does not “sit on a shelf.”
- Solicit participation from all partners in the region.
- Pursue new funding sources to support regional projects.
- Identify opportunities for efficiency and impact within regional programs.
- Enhance regional cooperation opportunities with Binational partners to promote trade, transportation and economic growth.

### Vital Projects

- The Mass Transportation Authority (MTA) proposes to become a regional transportation authority. MTA is seeking funding to allow coordination and partnering with organizations along the I-69 corridor, including local chambers of commerce, public and private transportation providers, employers, and medical facilities to coordinate transportation needs. MTA anticipates moving workers along the I-69 corridor for employment opportunities including, but not limited to, the Karegnondi Water Pipeline Project, Lapeer manufacturing industry, and the Meijer Distribution Center.
- Create a comprehensive plan for targeted sites throughout the I-69 Thumb region that makes them more attractive for development, including master planning, target industrial analysis, conceptual building design, and virtual buildings.
- Workforce hiring/training, new market development, fiber access, real estate/facilities, infrastructure, supply chain, organization of manufacturers to address needs of industry cluster development.



## Economic Development Goal

Develop an ecosystem for creating, attracting, expanding, and retaining businesses throughout the region

### Performance Measure .....

Continued economic sustainability in the region will come from competitive outreach to new companies, along with the creation and growth of existing businesses.

Track the annual change in the number of business establishments and job creation in the region

#### Objectives

Quantify available and qualified workforce; establish and improve upon training programs in the global market place.

Create industry targeted strategies including advanced manufacturing, information technologies, medical technologies, value-added agriculture, etc.

Better prepare the region for business inquiries by enhancing marketing materials, promotion, and business prospect/client responsiveness.

Enhance the support network for start-up businesses.

Support and embrace global engagement by making exports and trade a mainstream activity in Region 6.

#### Vital Projects

The growth of Michigan agriculture and food processing has begun to create new economic development opportunities associated with value-added processing, packaging, and distribution.

Maximize agribusiness opportunity, value-added processing, marketing, and outreach based on the developed agribusiness strategy to grow and support the regional ag industry.

A fund will be developed to develop and support private-sector projects within Region 6 that require environmental studies, as well as generate a return to the fund in the form of tax increment financing. This program will build off of the successful St. Clair County Site Assessment Program.

Development of a fund that allows businesses throughout Region 6 to access funding for start-ups/growth.

Regional Angel Fund development and work with existing lenders to assist small businesses to get the capital support they need.

Increase the number of firms who are ready

## Tourism Goal

Develop tourism to enhance the regional economy

### Performance Measure .....

Tourism is one of the key sectors of the region that can be developed to diversify the economic base and better insulate it against future downturns.

Track the annual change in quarterly employment in the hospitality industry, which includes food services, lodging, and recreation/arts/culture activities in the region

Monitor occupancy rates for the region's hotels, motels, and other lodging places

Track number of deer hunting licenses issued for use in the region

### Objectives

Continue to market tourism within and outside the region, including parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Improve lodging and convention facilities for the region to support the tourism industry.

Measure the effectiveness of marketing and promotion efforts.

Improve access to technical assistance and financing for tourism-related businesses.

### Vital Projects

Preparation of a regional tourism development marketing plan that inventories tourist facilities, events, and programs while identifying strategies to build upon that base and enhance marketing efforts.

Locate a "resort" in a state or local park.

Promote locally/regionally-produced products.

Development of a fund that allows businesses throughout Region 6 to access funding for start-up/growth.



## Quality of Life Goal

### Create a unique identity and sense of community for the region

#### Performance Measure .....

The ability of the region to attract and retain both companies and employees will be directly related to the quality of communities and related amenities for entrepreneurs and employees.

Monitor region-wide efforts to develop a brand that integrates the Thumb with the I-69 Corridor

Develop an effective communication strategy to promote cooperative ongoing regional efforts to successfully brand the region

#### Objectives

Enhance the viability of downtown centers throughout the region.

Encourage redevelopment in downtowns using private investment and philanthropy.

Improve the physical image of the region, especially along key corridors and community entryways.

Promote the region to former Michiganders and immigrants looking to return to the state and raise a family.

Enhance the image of the region both internally and externally.

#### Vital Projects

Development of a fund that allows communities to develop GIS systems on a countywide basis or to create an innovative partnership to expand sharing of existing and future equipment across county lines.

A multi-faceted marketing strategy that promotes the key assets of Region 6 to identified target industries.

Continue the branding, communications, and marketing campaigns and regional asset promotion already underway.

Create a regional downtown facade loan program, such as those in the City of Imlay City and the City of Lapeer. The fund would provide lowcost financing for facade improvements to the exterior of buildings in traditional downtowns throughout the seven counties of the I-69 Thumb region.





**Economic Development Strategy  
and Prosperity Plan  
for the I-69 Thumb Region**

**The Full Report**

**December 8, 2014**

**Acknowledgments**

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## The Plan

**Accelerate is the culmination** of a collaborative planning process for a seven-county area spearheaded by the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce and the Genesee Lapeer Shiawassee (GLS) Region V Planning & Development Commission, resulting in a coordinated Federal Economic Development Strategy and State Prosperity Plan. This document ties together the U.S. Economic Development Administration Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Region 6 Prosperity plans into a single, unified plan expressing a shared economic vision for Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, St. Clair, Tuscola, Huron, and Sanilac counties. Accelerate creates an economic roadmap for unified actions in the region leading to new jobs, international marketing opportunities, and investment. These actions will both strengthen and diversify the regional economy. The roadmap will also help guide the coordinated efforts by local communities across the seven counties in a manner that will positively impact the region as a whole.

## Planning Process

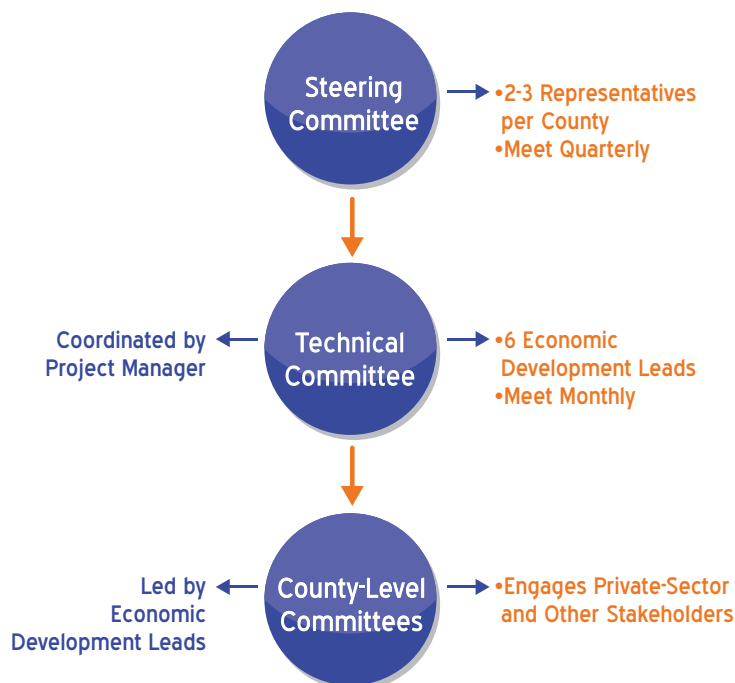
As required by each funding agency, this plan has been driven by its steering committee. The federal requirements for a CEDS steering committee are that at least 51 percent of the committee is represented by the private sector. For this reason, the CEDS steering committee has 20 members across Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, and St. Clair counties with 5 representatives from each county, 3 of which represent the private sector.

The Regional Prosperity steering committee also has roughly 20 representatives which primarily represent the public sector, service providers, and the education sector. For the purposes of this plan, each county also had an advisory committee to the larger steering committee as shown in Figure 1.

The county advisory committees met monthly to review data, participate in the SWOT session, assist with project identification and prioritization, and make several plan recommendations to the larger steering committee. Final plan approval will be a recommendation from the advisory committees to the steering committee who will ultimately recommend approval by each county's board of commissioners.

**Figure 1**

### Regional Prosperity Committee Structure



## Accelerate a Strategy for the Region

This report could not have been completed without the guidance and assistance of the members of both the I-69 Thumb Region Prosperity Steering Committee (List 1) and the CEDS Steering Committee (List 2), listed separately

below. As shown, the membership of these active committees represent a majority of the business and government services sectors in the region, including economic development, education, workforce development, planning, transportation, and government administration.

### List 1

#### The I-69 Thumb Region Steering Committee

Role on Committee	Name	Organization
<b>Genesee County</b>		
Economic Development	Jason Caya, Director	Flint Reinvestment
	Kristina Johnston	Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce
	Janice Karcher, Vice President	Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce
	Deb Loader	Flint Reinvestment
Education	Denise Belt, Director of CTE	Genesee Intermediate School District
	Moses Bingham	Mott Community College
	Donna Burmeister	Genesee Intermediate School District
	Tom Crampton, Executive Dean	Mott Community College - Regional Technology Initiatives
	Keely Mounger	Genesee Intermediate School District
Government	Paul Brake, City Manager	City of Grand Blanc
	Jamie Curtis, Chairman BOC	Genesee County Board of Commissioners
	Alan Himelhoch, Chairman-GCMPC	Genesee County Metro Planning Commissioner
	Megan Hunter, Chief Planner	City of Flint
	Amy McMillan, Director	Genesee County Parks & Recreation
	Dayne Walling, Mayor	City of Flint
	Jeffrey Wright, Drain Commissioner	Genesee County Drain Commissioner
Planning	Derek Bradshaw, Director Coordinator	Genesee County Metro Planning
Transportation	Ed Benning, Manager	MTA
	Mary Ann Ketels	MTA
Workforce Development	Robert Matthews, Executive Dean	Mott Community College - Workforce and Career Development
	Isaiah Oliver, Regional Career Liason	Mott Community College
<b>Huron County</b>		
Government	Clark Elftman, County Commissioner (Chair)	Board of Commissioners
	John Nugent, County Commissioner	Board of Commissioners
	Dave Peruski, County Commissioner	Board of Commissioners
	Steve Vaughan, County Commissioner	Board of Commissioners
Transportation	Neal Hentschl, Manager	Huron County Road Commission
	Ken Jimkoski, Manager	Transit Authority
<b>Lapeer County</b>		
Economic Development	Patricia Lucas, Executive Director	Lapeer Development Corporation
Government	Cheryl Clark, Commissioner	Lapeer County Board of Commissioners
	Dyle Henning, Commissioner	Lapeer County Board of Commissioners
Transportation	Ryan Doyle, Highway Engineer	Lapeer County Road Commisson
	Carol Wegher, Director	Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority

Role on Committee	Name	Organization
<b>Sanilac County</b>		
Government	Kathleen Dorman, County Administrator	Sanilac County
	Justin Faber, Commissioner	Sanilac County
	John Hoffmann, Commissioner	Sanilac County
	James Ruby, Commissioner	Sanilac County
Transportation	Robb Falls, Engineer/Manager	Sanilac County Road Commission
<b>Shiawassee County</b>		
Economic Development	Justin Horvath, President/CEO	SEDP
Education	Troy Napier	Baker College of Owosso
Government	TJ Clark, County Administrator	Shiawassee County
	Robert McLaren, County Commissioner	Shiawassee County BOC
Transportation	Lawrence S. Alpert, Executive Director	Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency
	Dean Welte, Director	Shiawassee County Road Commissioner
<b>St. Clair County</b>		
Economic Development	Dan Casey, CEO	Economic Development Alliance
Education	Gloria J. Henry, Principal/GED Site Admin	Port Huron Area School District
	Patricia Leonard, Dean of Students/Grants	St Clair Community College
Government	William Kauffman, County Administrator/Controller	St Clair County
Planning	Geoffrey Donaldson, Senior Planner	St Clair County Metro Planning Comm
	David Struck, Executive Director	St Clair County Metro Planning Comm
Transportation	Jim Wilson, General Manager	Blue Water Transportation Commission
<b>Tuscola County</b>		
Economic Development	Stephen Erickson, Director	Tuscola County Economic Dev Corp
	Vicky Sherry, Communications Director	Tuscola County Economic Dev Corp
Education	Karen Easterling, Campus Director	Baker College of Cass City
Government	Matthew Bierlein, Commissioner	Tuscola County BOC
	Michael Hoagland, County Administrator/Controller	Tuscola County
	Craig Kirpatrick, Commissioner	Tuscola County BOC
Transportation	Mike Tuckey, Secretary/Clerk	Tuscola County Road Commission
<b>Multi-County</b>		
Economic Development	Jane Fitzpatrick, Program Manager	East Michigan Council of Governments
	Carl Osentoski, Executive Director	Huron and Sanilac County Economic Development Corp
	Nate Scramlin, Community Assistance Team Specialist	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Government	Rex Ainslie, Regional Manager	Michigan Department of Natural Resource
	Scott Corrin, Economic Specialist	Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development
	Sidney Grinnell, Chairperson	GLS Region V PDC
	Julie Hales-Smith, Commissioner	GLS Region V PDC
Transportation	John Barsalou, Deputy Airport Director	Bishop International Airport
Workforce Development	John Bierbusse, Executive Director	Macomb–St. Clair Michigan Works
	Colby Spencer-Cesaro, Research Director	Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan (WIN)
	Craig Coney, President / CEO	Genesee–Shiawassee Michigan Works
	Lisa Katz, Executive Director	Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan (WIN)
	Jody Kerbyson, Executive Director	Thumbworks
	Bernice Kerner, MIS & Special Projects Coordinator	Macomb-St. Clair Michigan Works
	Tricia Walding, Project Manager, Research & Policy	Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan (WIN)



## List 2

### The CEDS Steering Committee

Role on Committee	Name	Organization
<b>Genesee County</b>		
Public Sector	Paul Brake	City of Grand Blanc
	Isaiah Oliver	Mott Community College/Flint Community Schools
Private Sector	Terence Broussard	Genesee Packaging
	Win Cooper	Cooper Commercial
	Bernie Scibienski	PMC Group
<b>Lapeer County</b>		
Public Sector	Dennis Collison	Imlay City
	Oliver Turner	Village of Almont
Private Sector	Mike Burke	CSB Bank
	Ray Clemens	Ray C's Cycle and Sport
	John Matonich	Rowe Professional Services Co.
<b>Shiawassee County</b>		
Public Sector	Michael Blackledge	Vernon Township
	Amy Roddy	City of Durand
Private Sector	Troy Angst	Rugged Liner
	Kevin Feuka	C2AE
	Mark Morrison	Fifth Third Bank
<b>St. Clair County</b>		
Public Sector	Brian Mahaffy	St. Clair Township
	Robert Usakowski	Kimball Township
Private Sector	Dan Forsyth	SEMCO Energy
	Robert Peters	Robert Peters Consulting
	John Steffy	Architectural Design



## Accelerate the Economic Landscape of Region 6

The Region 6 landscape of the I-69 Thumb region is very diverse, including thousands of acres of productive farmland, hundreds of miles of shoreline, major international transportation routes, revitalized metro areas, and several vital smaller cities. Despite the region's diversity, its residents and businesses share many of the same opportunities, assets, and challenges that can be more effectively acted upon by a coordinated effort.

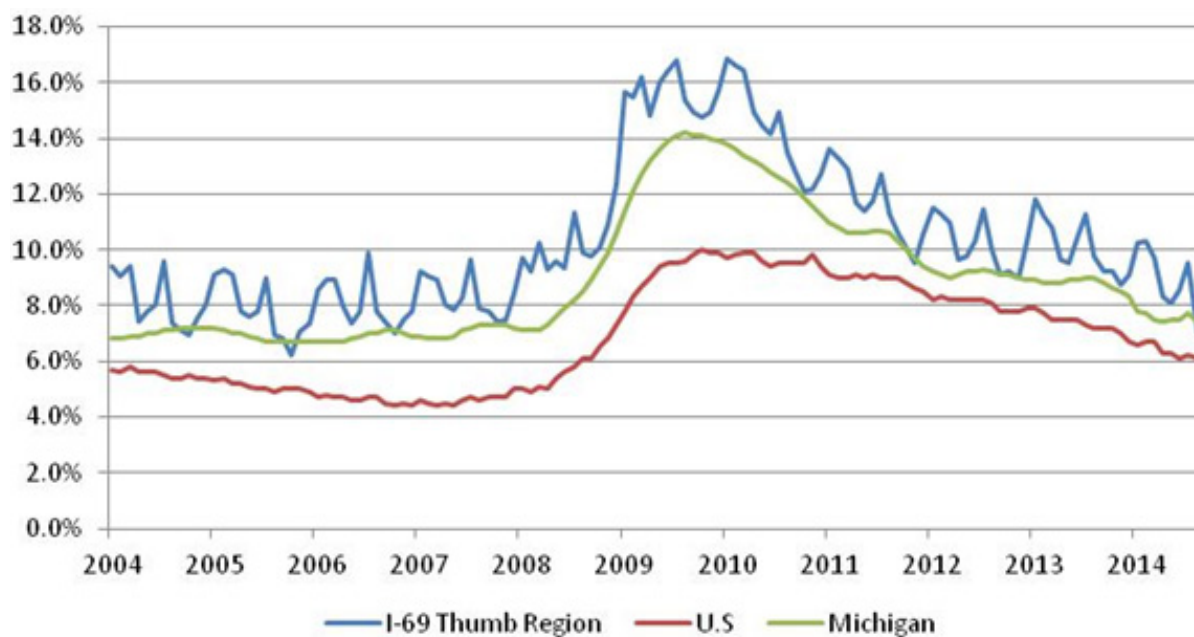
During the recession, the region's unemployment rate topped 16 percent (Figure 2). In 2013, the region's unemployment rate still stood at a high 10.1 percent, with

nearly 40,000 residents being unsuccessful in their job searches. In August of 2014, the unemployment rate dipped to 7.1 percent, but nearly 28,000 residents still remained unemployed.

In 2013, the region's employers added just over 1,600 workers from the previous year, largely because of employers in Genesee County creating 2,200 jobs. However, since 2007, just before the start of the Great Recession—December 2007 to June 2009—the region's employers had eliminated nearly 20,000 jobs, 7 percent of their workforce (the red line in Figure 3). Statewide, employers eliminated 2.4 percent of their workforce. Nationwide, employment by place of work has decreased a slight 0.8 percent. The number of employed residents in the seven-county region, which is also shown in Figure 3, dropped by nearly 50,000 individuals, a 12 percent drop since 2007. In comparison, during the same time period, December 2007 to August 2014, the number of employed residents in the state fell by a smaller 5.6 percent and, nationwide, it has inched up by 0.2 percent.

**Figure 2**

### I-69 Thumb Region Unemployment Rate



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

As can be clearly seen in Figure 3, there are more employed individuals living in the region than are working for employers in the region. In 2013, the number of employed residents reached just over 350,000, while just under 250,000 individuals were employed in the region, a difference of nearly 100,000. Approximately one third of this difference is due to the number of self-employed individuals who live in the region. In 2013, just under 33,000 individuals, 9.3 percent of all employed residents in the region, were self-employed. These individuals are not counted in the employment by place of work statistics. In fact, we do not know their place of work, although it is likely that most work in the region. Still, the region's economic vitality depends both on the growth of employment opportunities in the region as well as the attractiveness of the region for individuals who commute outside of the region to work. Since commuting is a cost, efforts should be made to keep the region's quality of life as positive as possible.

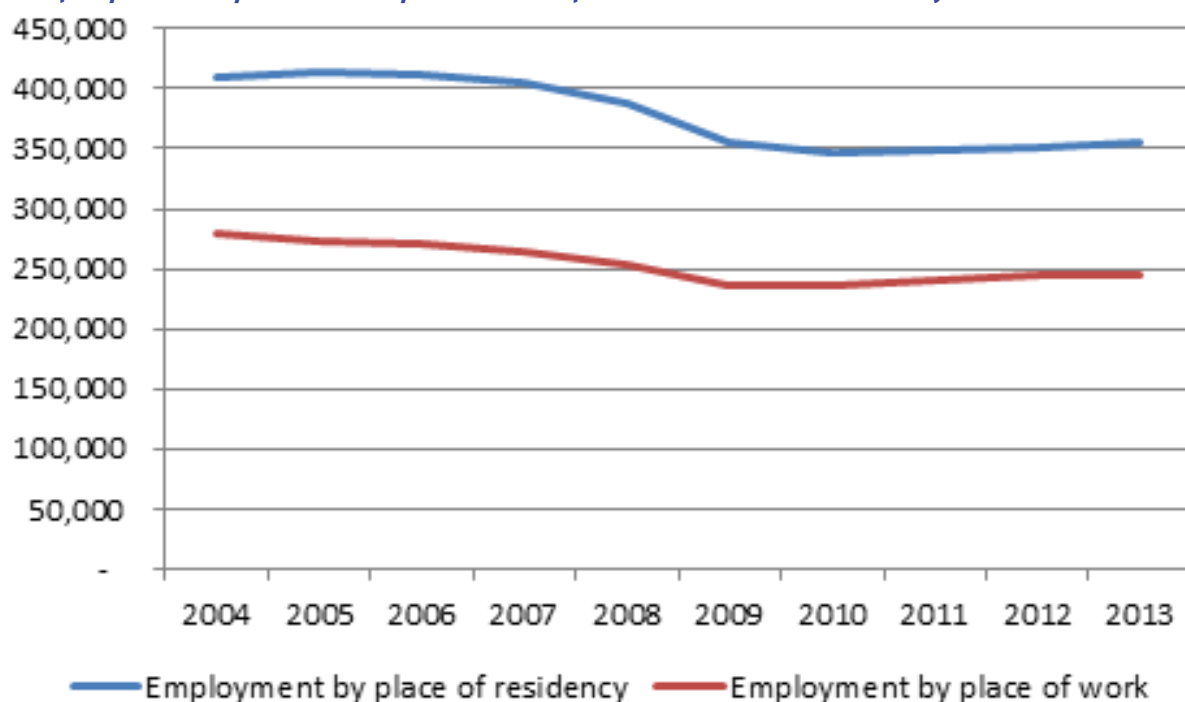
The loss of employment opportunities in the region has hindered population growth, decreased consumer spend-

ing, caused economic hardship to thousands of families, and increased the demand for services from government agencies and nonprofit service providers that were already stretched thin.

Map 1 shows unemployment rates for the census tracts of the I-69 Thumb region, using the U.S. Bureau of Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2008–2012 five-year averages, depicting the region's economically distressed areas. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) uses two primary methods for qualifying economically distressed areas: (1) if an area has an unemployment rate at least one point above the national average or (2) if the per capita income is 80 percent of the national average. The national unemployment rate across that time period was 9.3 percent, so any area with a rate of 10.3 percent or higher would qualify, according to EDA. Map 1 shows areas with an unemployment rate of 10.2 percent or lower, or not distressed (lightest shade). Although any tracts with a rate of 10.3 percent or higher would qualify as distressed, the severity of the unemployment situation

**Figure 3**

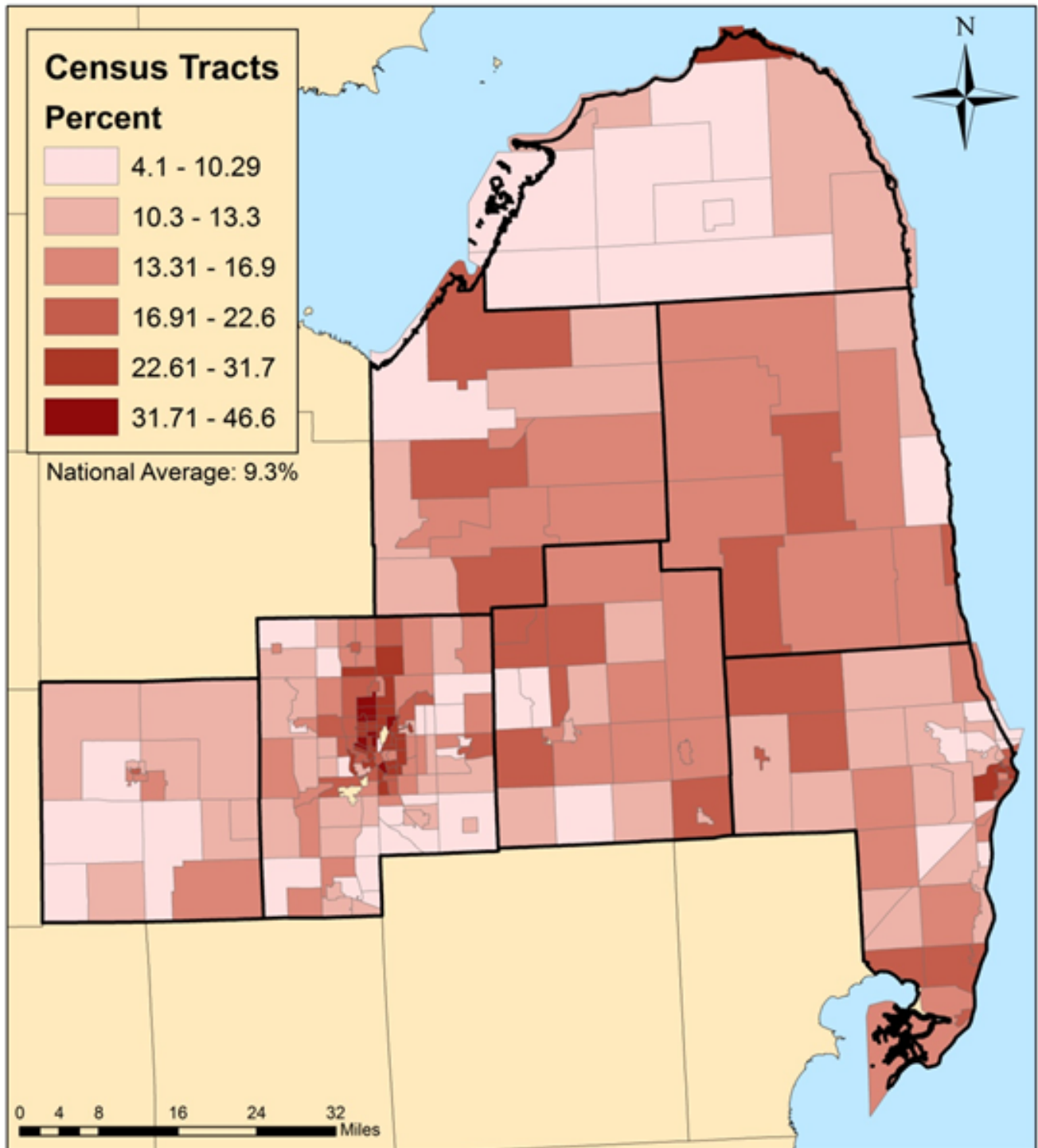
### Employment by Residency and Workplace in I-69 Thumb Region



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Map 1

### Economically Distressed Areas of Prosperity I-69 Thumb Region



SOURCE: American Community Survey (ACS), 2012

in the region is also depicted (darker shades). Some tracts that are displayed as not distressed on the map qualify in other ways, such as having low per capita income.

While the federally determined poverty rate is an often-used measure of economic distress, it is not a good indicator of the larger number of the region's households that are simply surviving economically. The statewide Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained Employed (A.L.I.C.E.) project sponsored by the Michigan Association of United Ways is one of the first attempts to identify the number of households that are simply surviving economically. A.L.I.C.E. is based on a locally determined household budget necessary for survival. As shown in Figure 4, a full quarter of the households living in the I-69 Thumb region are A.L.I.C.E., simply surviving on budgets that allow for no savings or vacations. This is on top of the 17 percent of the region's households that are struggling in poverty.

The economy of the region is very diverse, which should increase its resiliency to economic shocks de-

spite its poor performance in the last recession. As shown in Figure 5, the region's four largest sectors—healthcare, retail, government, and manufacturing—account for less than 50 percent of the region's employment base.

As mention above, the region is not an economic island: Many of its working residents, 47 percent, commute outside of the region to work—147,200 individuals (Table 1). In

Table 1

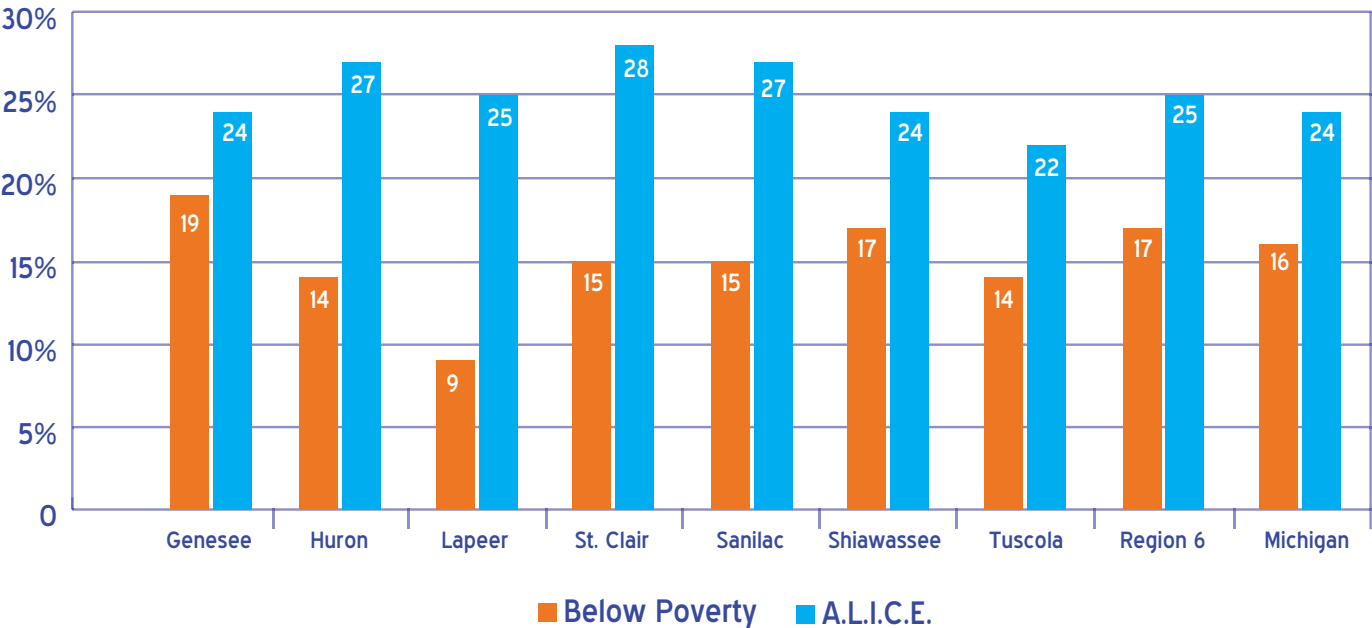
Commuting Patterns in I-69 Thumb Region

County	Total	Employed in the Thumb		Employed in the I-69 Corridor		Employed Outside Region 6	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Genesee	138,210	2,506	1.8	80,816	58.5	54,888	39.7
Huron	14,464	9,154	63.3	281	1.9	5,029	34.8
Lapeer	31,035	1,475	4.8	11,917	38.4	17,643	56.8
St. Clair	67,630	2,146	3.2	27,754	41	37,730	55.8
Sanilac	13,018	6,797	52.2	1,631	12.5	4,590	35.3
Shiawassee	27,634	99	0.4	10,440	37.8	17,095	61.9
Tuscola	18,416	7,064	38.4	1,112	6	10,240	55.6

SOURCE: U.S. Census, Census on the Map

Figure 4

Household Income–Percent of Households Living in Poverty and A.L.I.C.E.



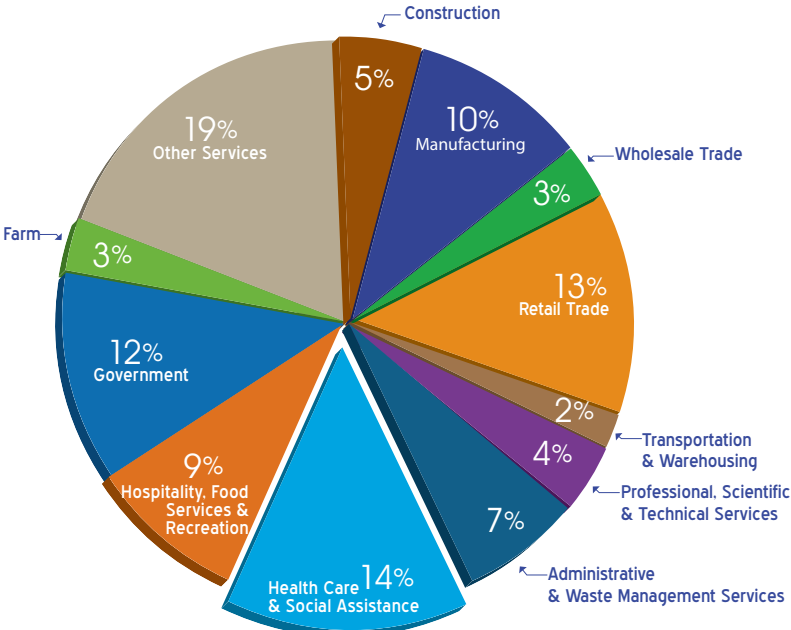
SOURCE: A.L.I.C.E. Report. <http://www.unitedwayalice.org/michigan/>

fact, in Lapeer, St. Clair, Tuscola, and Shiawassee counties, a majority of the counties' employed residents commute outside of the region to work (Map 2). At the same time, 65,000 individuals who reside outside of Region 6 drive into the I-69 Thumb region to work, filling 28.5 percent of all jobs in the region. In large part, the effectiveness of the region's labor market will depend upon the efficiency of labor market information—job openings and skill requirements—to be immediately accessible across county lines.

In summary, the employment trends in the seven-county region are improving. In fact, many employers are now hiring and are finding it difficult to find quality workers; the future employment gains in the region will be aided by qualified workers. At the same time, the region's economic developers are positive about the future of the region because of the excellent economic assets that the region offers, including developable land along I-69, the Karegnondi water intake pipeline, rail access, and excellent training institutions in the region and near its borders. Finally, the region's blend of rural and urban

settings and its location on the shores of Lake Huron provide a quality of life that is competitive to any other area.

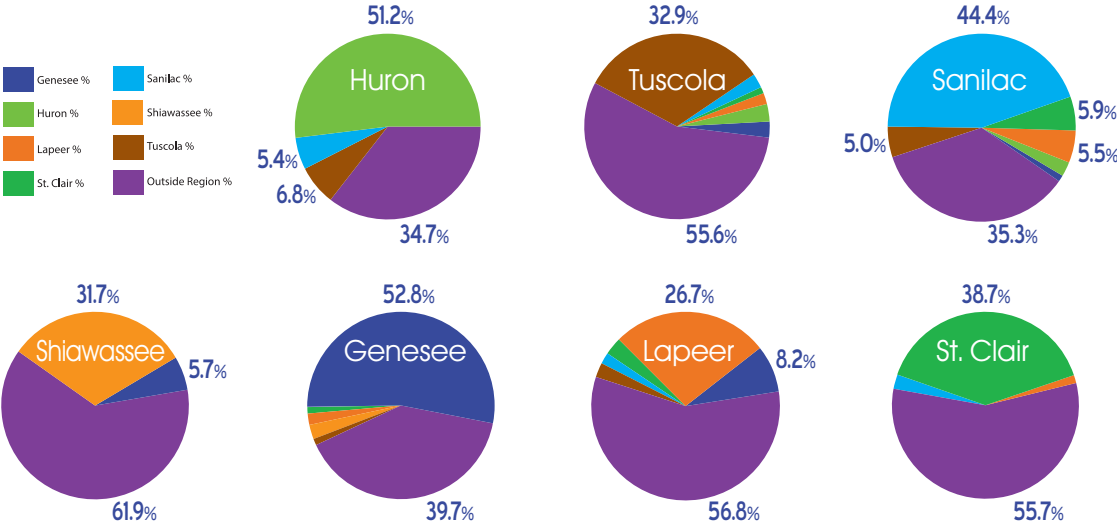
**Figure 5**  
**Industrial Composition of the Region's Economy, 2014 (%)**



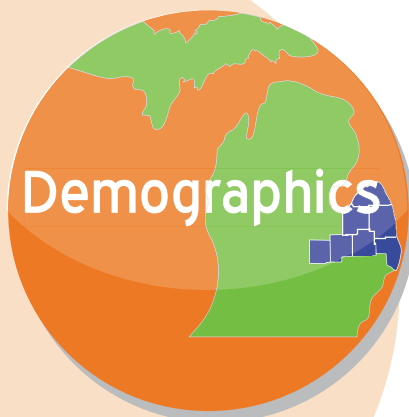
SOURCE: Regional Economic Models Incorporated (REMI) model maintained by the Upjohn Institute

**Map 2**

**Place of Work for Residents of Prosperity I-69 Thumb Region**



SOURCE: U.S. Census, Census on the Map



**In 2013, an** estimated 861,000 individuals lived in the region, in which the population declined by 2.1 percent from 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Moreover, from 2000 to 2010, the total population in the region decreased by 22,000 residents or 2.4 percent. Nearly 50 percent of the region's population

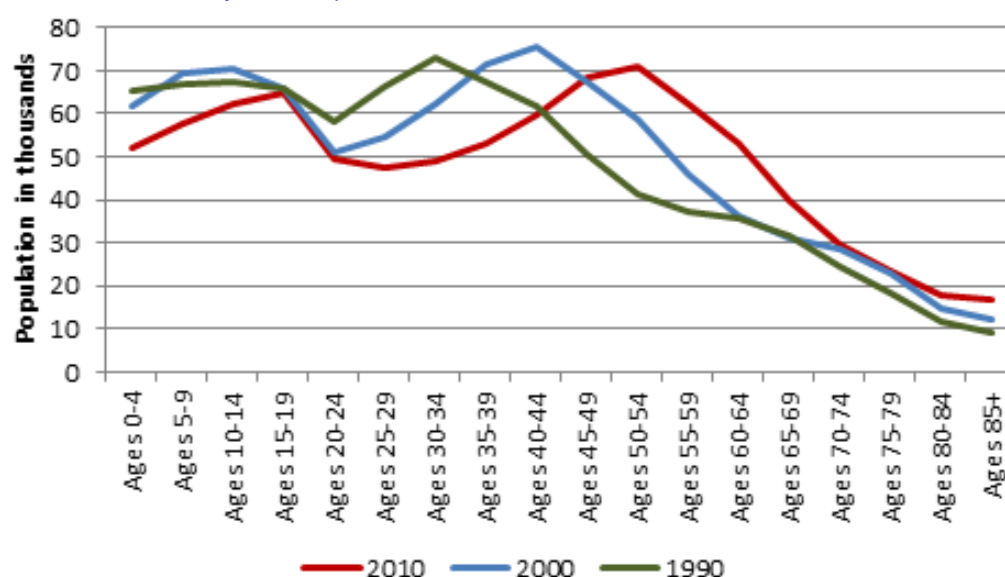
lives in Genesee County, with another 10 percent living in St. Clair County. Overall, nearly 60 percent of the region's residents live in urban areas, which account for only 7.0 percent of the region's land area.

African Americans represent just below 11 percent of the region's total population and they are highly concentrated in Genesee County, where 93 percent of the region's African American population resides. Hispanics are equally distributed across the region and make up 3.2 percent of the region's total population. Asians and Native Americans account for less than 1.0 percent of the region's population, each, and are evenly distributed across the region.

The region's population is aging, as is true throughout the nation. As can be seen in Figure 6, the large "baby boomers" generation is advancing in years and leaving a much smaller generation in its wake. In 1990, the number of baby boomers between the ages of 30 and 34 years was 26 percent larger than the number of younger residents between the ages of 20 and 24 years. In 2000, the number of baby boomers, who were between the ages of 40 and 44, was 38 percent greater than the number of individuals between the ages of 25 and 29 years. In 2010, the number of baby boomers who were between the ages of 50 and 54 years

**Figure 6**

### I-69 Thumb Region Population Profile



SOURCE: U.S. Census

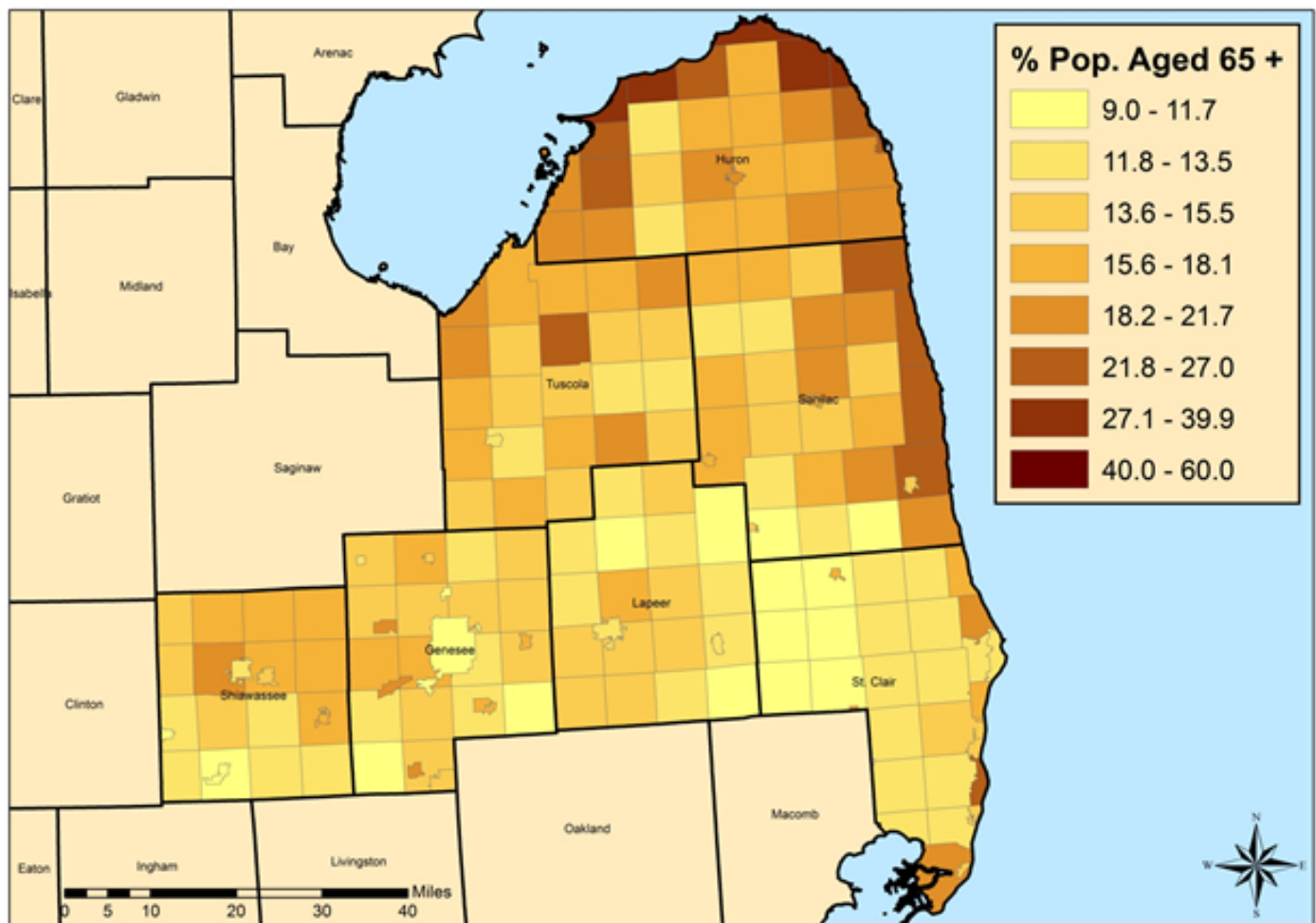


was 44 percent greater than those between the ages of 30 and 34 years. It is important to note, however, that even with the aging of the baby boomers, the working age population in the region has held steady from 1990 to 2010. By 2020, however, the region, like much of the nation, will be losing many of its more experienced workers through

retirement, thus creating the real possibility of a skills shortage. In addition, the number of senior residents living in the region will only increase, generating a changing level of demand for government services (Map 3).

Map 3

### Percentage of Population Age 65 and Older, I-69 Thumb Region, 2010



SOURCE: U.S. Census



## Forecast

## Accelerate Workforce, Education, and Economic Resilience for the I-69 Thumb Region

**During the** past 12 months ending in August of 2014, the region's household employment situation has improved: the number of employed residents increased by nearly 8,000 residents and the ranks of the unemployed dropped by just under 11,000. This still means, however,

that nearly 3,000 residents left the labor force, even though its unemployment rate dropped to 7.1 percent. Many of these individuals moved out of the region or retired; however, if the region is following state and national trends, too many have simply given up looking for work.

The harsh economic conditions facing many of the residents in the seven-county region is best told by the negative change in the number of persons in the workforce and not its high unemployment rate (Table 2). From 2009 to 2013, the number of persons in the region's labor force—employed and unemployed residents—dropped by nearly 26,000 persons, despite the region's unemployment rate declining from 15.6 percent to 10.1 percent during the four-year “recovery.” The number of employed residents grew by fewer than 300 persons during the four-year period.

In 2013, the number of employed residents, 355,400, in the region outnumbered the number of persons working in the region for an employer, 245,400, by 45 percent. This large difference reflects both the fact that many residents commute outside of the region to work as was shown above and that self-employed workers are counted by residency but not by place of work. In 2013, the estimated number of

self-employed persons in the I-69 Thumb region was slightly below 33,000 and the number of residents commuting outside the region to work was slightly above 147,000.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 2**

### Labor Market Situation

Year	Unemployed	Employed	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate (%)
2004	36,341	409,832	446,173	8.1
2005	35,152	412,970	448,122	7.8
2006	36,201	412,192	448,393	8.1
2007	36,907	405,315	442,222	8.3
2008	43,782	387,568	431,350	10.1
2009	65,622	355,109	420,731	15.6
2010	58,058	347,060	405,118	14.3
2011	45,917	349,512	395,429	11.6
2012	40,074	352,067	392,141	10.2
2013	39,787	355,366	395,153	10.1
<b>Change</b>				
'04 to '13	3,446	(54,466)	(51,020)	
'09 to '13	(25,835)	257	(25,578)	

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Using a definition of employment that includes self-employed individuals in addition to wage and salary earnings, it is clear that employment trends in the region were sluggish from 2004 to 2013 (Table 3).

Manufacturing employment fell at a 4.1 percent annualized rate from 2004 and 2013, and is expected to continue to lose employment in the future but at a slower pace. At the same time, however, many of the region's manufacturers cannot find workers with the technical skills needed to remain competitive. Persuading young adults to train for high-demand occupations in industries that are expected to decline, in general, is a major challenge facing the region in the immediate future.

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that the number of persons commuting in and out of the region, the number of employed residents, the number of persons working for an employer, and the number of self-employed residents are derived from three separate sources and do not add up exactly.

Table 3

## I-69 Thumb Region Employment Trends and Forecast, 2000 to 2030

	2004	2007	2013	2020	Average Annual Change, 2004–2013	Average Annual Change, 2013–2030
Utilities	2,252	2,511	2,018	1,621	-1.2%	-3.1%
Construction	21,714	19,169	15,529	21,138	-3.7%	4.5%
Manufacturing	52,621	43,667	36,198	34,607	-4.1%	-0.6%
Wholesale trade	13,010	13,290	12,435	13,069	-0.5%	0.7%
Retail trade	51,418	51,496	46,851	49,679	-1.0%	0.8%
Transportation and warehousing	8,014	9,552	9,053	9,231	1.4%	0.3%
Information	6,081	6,686	7,083	6,740	1.7%	-0.7%
Finance and insurance	13,220	14,961	15,731	15,480	2.0%	-0.2%
Real estate and rental and leasing	10,245	10,532	10,522	11,510	0.3%	1.3%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	16,384	14,412	13,353	14,965	-2.2%	1.6%
Administrative and waste management services	22,056	21,039	23,738	26,730	0.8%	1.7%
Educational services	7,454	6,970	7,110	7,934	-0.5%	1.6%
Health care and social assistance	45,545	49,045	49,081	55,624	0.8%	1.8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	6,808	6,771	6,873	7,467	0.1%	1.2%
Accommodation and food services	27,266	28,551	26,121	29,708	-0.5%	1.9%
Other services, except public administration	22,276	21,765	21,229	22,918	-0.5%	1.1%
Farm	10,016	10,196	9,602	8,496	-0.5%	-1.7%
Government	52,362	51,980	45,102	46,293	-1.6%	0.4%
Total	392,807	386,572	361,619	387,299	-0.9%	1.0%

SOURCE: BEA and REMI Forecast

## Employment and Demographic Forecast for the I-69 Thumb Region

### Employment Forecast

Selected services and construction are expected to enjoy solid rates of employment gains in the coming years, 1.0 percent per year or higher. Construction is forecasted to grow at a robust 4.1 percent from 2013 to 2020, partially because this industry sector is coming out of a major historical slump. The selected services include real estate (associated with construction), professional, administrative, leisure and hospitality, and, not surprisingly given the aging population, healthcare.

### Demographic Forecast

Total population in the region is expected to remain flat during the next five years with the average age expected to increase (Figure 7). From 2010 to 2020, the number

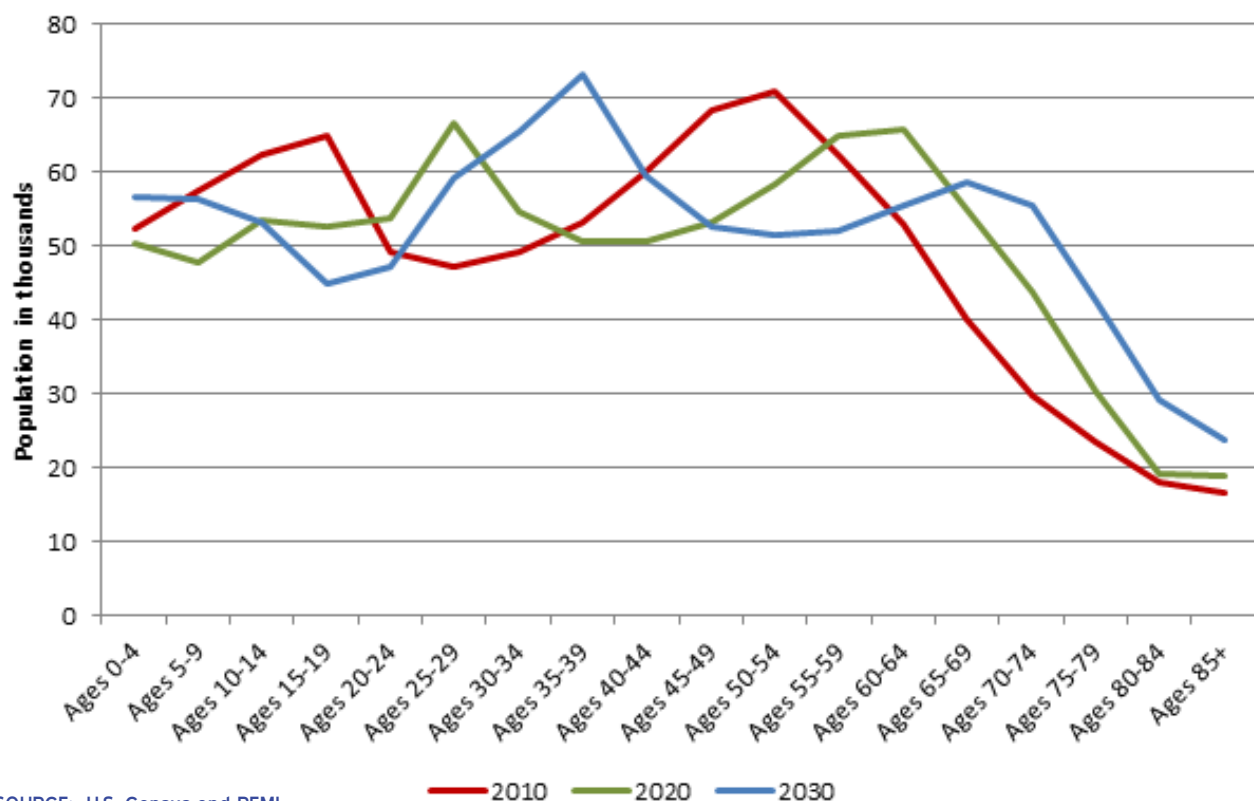
of residents older than 65 years is expected to increase by 30 percent and by an additional 25 percent during the following decade (Table 4). By 2020, the number of residents older than 65 will be greater than the region's youth population. The region's working-age population will hold relatively constant in the future; however, the region may be facing a talent gap as more of its experienced workers transition into retirement.

### Talent

There is growing evidence that the region is facing a talent shortage. Currently, the region is "importing" commuters into the region; however, this is a lost opportunity for its residents. With more business-directed training programs and better information regarding the skills required

Figure 7

Population Forecast for I-69 Thumb Region



SOURCE: U.S. Census and REMI

**Table 4**

## Population Trends and Forecast

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	Percent Change	
						10 to 20	20 to 30
age 65+	95,542	109,464	127,824	167,200	209,809	30.8	25.5
25 to 55	398,133	435,631	411,278	398,980	413,810	-3.0	3.7
0 to 15	199,617	201,960	172,115	151,462	166,005	-12.0	9.6
Total	693,292	747,055	711,217	717,642	789,624	0.9	10.0

SOURCE: BEA and REMI

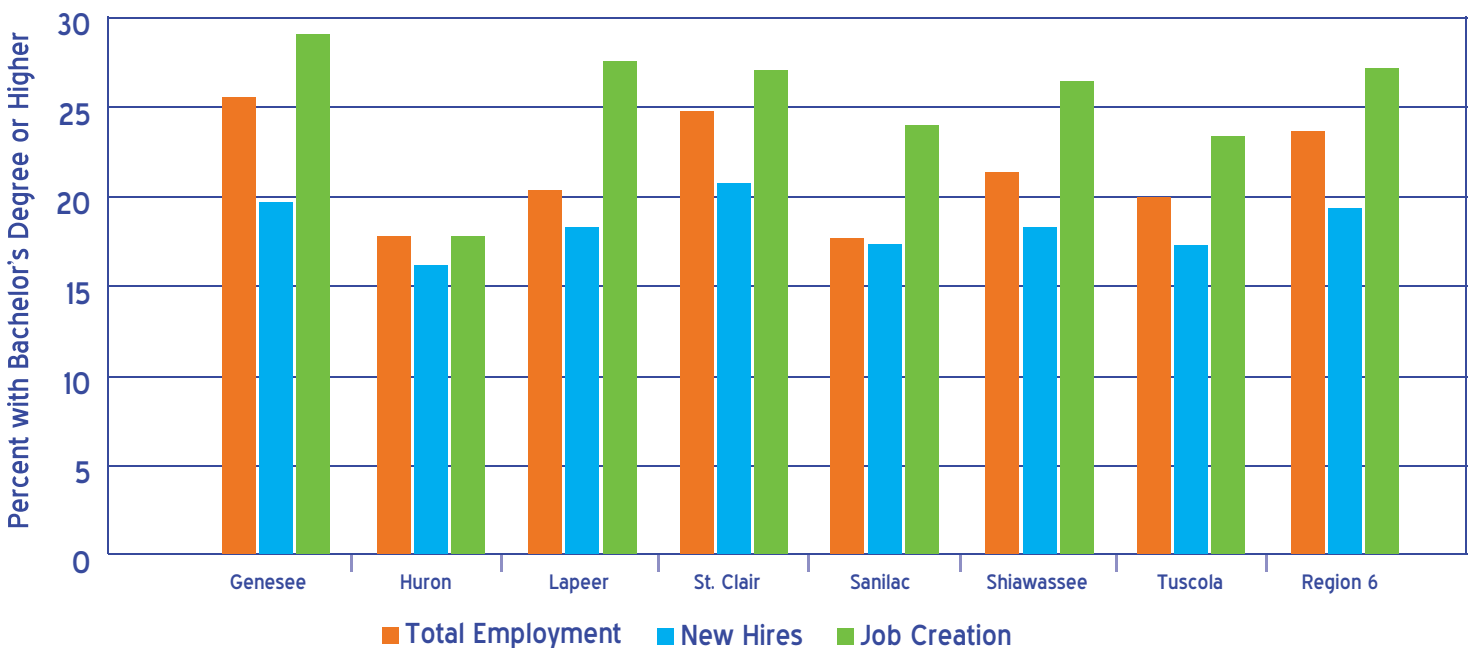
by employers, more and more of these job openings could be filled by residents.

The education levels expected by employers for the positions that they are creating are higher than the education attainment levels of the region's residents between the ages of 25 and 64 years, as shown in Figures 8 and 9. In

short, 24 percent of the region's new jobs require a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas only 18 percent of the region's working-age adults hold a bachelor's degree. In fact, only 18.2 percent of the region's young adults, between the ages of 24 to 34, held a bachelor's degree in 2012.

**Figure 8**

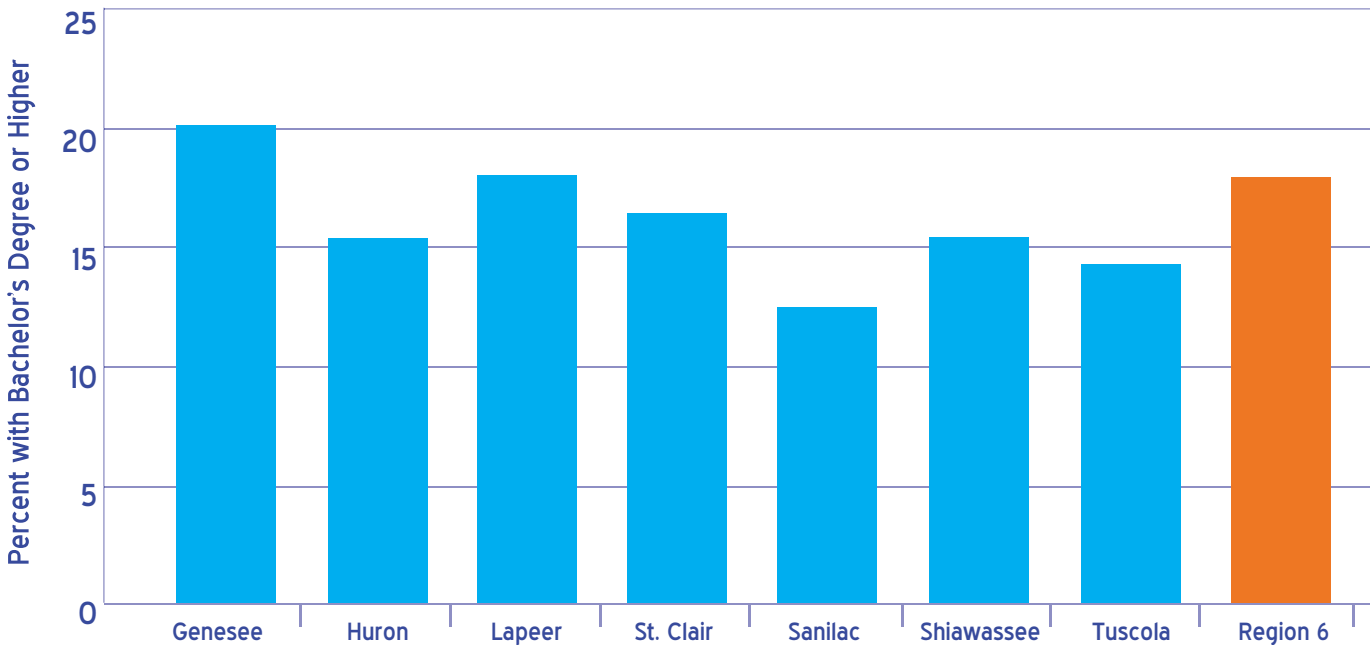
## Educational Attainment of the Workforce 25 and Older, 2012



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics QCEW

Figure 9

## Educational Attainment of Persons 25 to 64 Years of Age, 2012



SOURCE: U.S. Census American Community Survey

## Economic Resiliency

Resiliency is defined as both a quality and a process. The quality of resiliency is defined as being elastic—having the power or ability to return to the original economic situation after a major event or shock. The process for a region to become more economically resilient is more difficult to define. Two paths are often suggested. The first is to “keep to your knitting and weather the storm.” For the state of Michigan this has been sound advice, as the auto industry has rebounded and many—not all—of the jobs lost in the Great Recession have returned in some regions. Of course, this path is more than just hoping that your industries and industrial clusters will rebound; it also focuses on the development of an innovative environment that encourages product development and investment in the region’s traded clusters.

The second path is bolder, and therefore, riskier. It calls for the region to identify emerging industries and to aggressively diversify the region’s economy. Unfortunately, community vision and planning activity do not necessarily induce business investment if the markets are not fully developed.

Our approach is a hybrid of the two approaches, in that strategic goals include the development of a talented workforce and an efficient infrastructure that meet the needs of existing regional businesses so that they can compete on a global basis and weather the next economic downturn. At the same time, the plan calls for the development of a more robust regional tourism sector to encourage innovation and to create a unique sense of community that can promote more locally-owned entrepreneurship and businesses.

## Regional Setting

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in its U.S. Cluster Mapping Project has placed the entire region in the Greater Detroit Economic cluster. In doing so, EDA has identified six major trade clusters:

- **Automotive**—105,839 workers and includes Automotive Parts, Gasoline Engines and Engine Parts, Motor Vehicles, Small Vehicles, Military Vehicles and Tanks, and Metal Mills and Foundries
- **Marketing, Design, and Publishing**—34,748 workers

and includes Advertising Related Services, Other Marketing Related Services, Design Services, and Publishing

- Metalworking Technology—44,180 workers and includes Metalworking Machinery, Machine Tools and Accessories, Hand Tools, Fasteners, and Metal Processing
- Plastics—26,345 workers and includes Plastic Products and Plastic Materials and Resins
- Upstream Chemical Products—7,736 workers and includes Organic Chemicals, Inorganic Chemicals, Industrial Gas, and Agricultural Chemicals
- Upstream Metal Manufacturing—14,142 workers and includes Iron and Steel Mills and Forging, Metal Processing, Metal Products, and Wires and Springs

While helpful, the analysis ignores the region's agricultural, logistics, equipment/electronics, and tourism sectors that are identified as key sectors for the I-69 Thumb region. Therefore, while it is important to remain knowledgeable about the economic development opportunities that are present in the region, due to its location next to the greater Detroit region and Ontario, Canada, it is equally important for the region's economic development stakeholders to explore avenues to further develop its unique strategic assets and industries.

## Changing Economic Base

A region's economic base comprises the economic activity that brings in new money from outside its borders. Traditionally, the region's manufacturing has been considered the core economic base activity of a region and it still is. Increasingly, however, it is sharing the stage with selected service activity. Moreover, tourism has already been a part of the region's economic base.

It has long been argued that a diversified economic base provides more stability and greater resiliency to the region's economy. The argument is based on the investment principle of having a diversified stock portfolio. The value of some stocks has been known to move independently of each other and, therefore, decrease the level of volatility of

the overall financial holdings. Unfortunately, economic sectors appear to be more closely tied to each other, meaning that when autos or the financial sector take a hit, all sectors are negatively impacted. The sole exceptions are education, which has a counter-cyclical pattern—individuals go back to school to get more training in a recession—and healthcare, which is growing due to increasing customer demand, aging demographics, and expanding technology.

The region's economic base employment appears to be becoming more diversified. In 1990, manufacturing employment accounted for more than one third of the region's economic base; now it accounts for less than 20 percent. Farming's share of the economic base has remained stable, which is also the case for leisure and hospitality. Healthcare is growing in importance to the region's economic base. However, the big finding is that employment in other smaller sectors, from logistics to professional services, has become a growing part of the region's economic base (Table 5).

The bad news is that this makes the job of the region's economic developers more difficult in that it is harder to identify the region's economic base—those firms that drive growth in the regional economy. Two service firms could look identical; however, one is serving local clients while the other is serving national or international customers.

Table 5

### Economic Base—Percent of Workforce Producing Goods or Services for Customers

Industry	1990	2010
Manufacturing	36	18
Healthcare and social assistance	12	16
Farm	12	11
Tourism	12	14
Wholesale and logistics	7	9
Professional and business services	4	3
Management and administration	2	7
Education services	2	5
Miscellaneous services	4	5
Other sectors	10	13

SOURCE: REMI

This requires a more nurturing approach to economic development, creating an environment that is welcoming to all types of businesses. Such an environment would include quality K–12 schools, colleges, a skilled workforce, solid transportation networks, broadband, and an attractive overall quality of life.

## Economic Development Activity in the Region

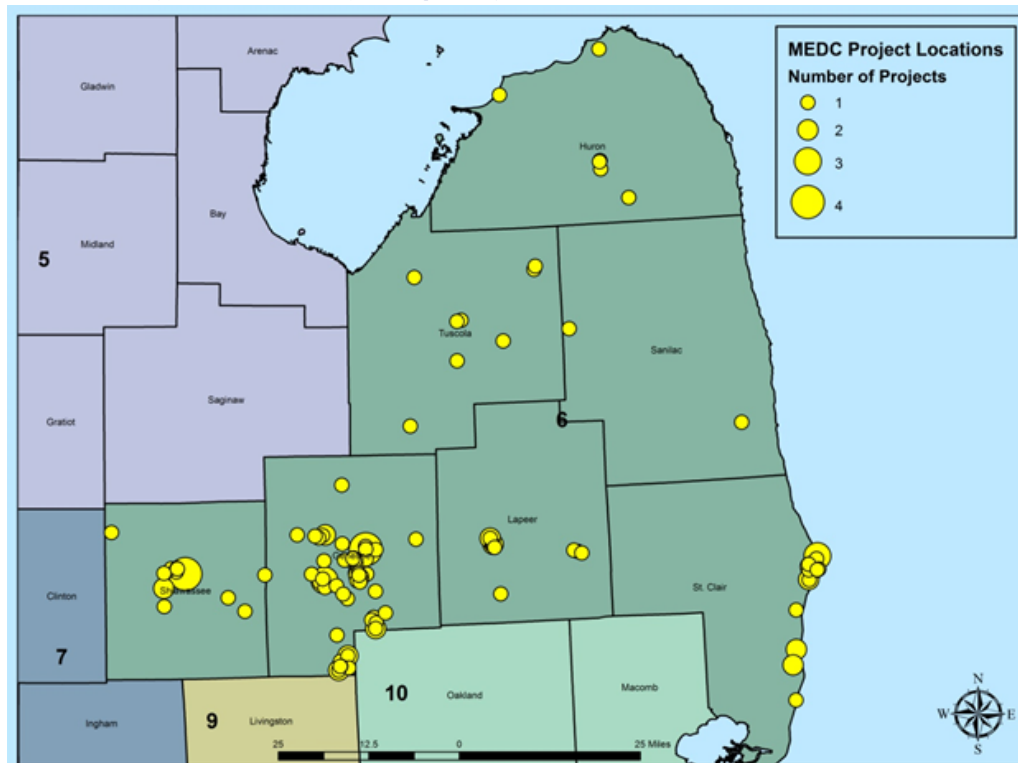
From 2011 to the present, there have been 128 publicly supported private projects in the I-69 Thumb region that have created 4,877 jobs. These projects were assisted by nearly \$190 million in public funding, according to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). These projects were not only in the region's traditional sectors, such as automotive, but they also diversified the region's economic base. In the automotive sector, the proj-

ects included the 2013 expansion of Rassini Brakes, LLC, an auto supplier that created 62 jobs through the support of more than \$4.4 million in public support, and the expansion of Magna Electronics in 2011, which created 385 jobs through the assistance of \$13.8 million in public investment. Both projects were located in Genesee County. In Huron County, the Gemini Group Inc. received \$18.4 million in public support and generated nearly 300 jobs in 2011. In Shiawassee County, Williamston Products Inc. generated 76 jobs with the assistance of \$391,000 in public funding, and SMR in St. Clair County created 366 jobs with a \$40 million project that received \$11.3 million in public support.

Projects in the region's agribusiness sector have also received public support. Tuscola Dairy Farmers of America Inc. created 25 jobs through its expansion that was supported by \$1.5 million in public support. In 2013, Pinnacle Foods invested \$14.3 million in a processing facility that

Map 4

### MEDC Projects in Prosperity Region 6, Fiscal Years 2011–2015



SOURCE: MEDC and the Upjohn Institute

generated 30 full-time jobs and 500 seasonal jobs and received \$2.4 million in public support.

State public financial support also assisted companies in life sciences—Senderra RX Partners, LLC and Insight Institute of Neurosurgery in Genesee County; hospitality—OHMI Port Huron, LLC in St. Clair County; and logistics and warehousing—Genesee Packaging Inc. in Genesee County.

Map 4 highlights the location of business expansions in the region that received more than \$20,000 in state public support.

### Economic Linkages

It stands to reason that what happens in the national and international marketplace matters to the seven-county region. Closer to home, what happens in the Detroit Metropolitan Area impacts the region, as shown in Table 6. A new auto assembly plant in the Detroit area that employs 3,000 workers would generate an estimated 330 jobs and \$31 million in personal income in the four-county I-69

Table 6

### Economic Linkages between Detroit and I-69 Thumb Region

Economic Activity in Detroit	I-69 Corridor	Thumb Area
3,000 auto assembly jobs		
Employment	330	40
Personal income	\$31.0 million	\$3.7 million
3,000 management jobs		
Employment	160	16
Personal income	\$20.0 million	\$2.1 million

SOURCE: REMI and the Upjohn Institute  
Note: Personal income includes commuters

Corridor region, and 40 new jobs and \$3.7 million in new personal income in the three-county Thumb area.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, our two sub-regions are also economically tied together as shown in Table 7. If a large metal fabrication plant opens in the Thumb and employs 1,000 workers, it would generate an estimated 80 jobs in the I-69 Corridor region through its supply chain and the consumer purchases of its workers. If the plant located in the I-69 Corridor region instead, it would generate 14 additional jobs in the Thumb. The difference between the two impacts reflects the size of the manufacturing base in the two regions: The I-69 region simply has more potential suppliers than the Thumb region. A similar analysis is also shown for food production. Of course, this example is true if new suppliers do not relocate due to the plant opening.

Table 7

### Economic Linkages between the Thumb and the I-69 Corridor Region

Industry	Thumb	I-69 Corridor
Farming	1,000	30
Fabricated metals production	1,000	80
Fabricated metals production	14	1,000
Food production	1,000	125
Food production	20	1,000

SOURCE: REMI and the Upjohn Institute

<sup>2</sup> These estimates are generated by the computer economic impact model developed by Regional Economic Models Incorporated (REMI). The model has been carefully reviewed in major academic journals and is considered the standard for the field.



## Public Involvement

A critical component to any planning effort is public involvement. It is important to reach as many potential stakeholders as possible. Although it is not possible to include all would-be stakeholders, this planning effort utilized several means of public outreach.

Outreach included the formation of several committees that met monthly, a pre-SWOT survey, multiple SWOT analyses, stakeholder interviews, and a listening tour.

Stakeholders varied from the public at-large to public sector leaders (municipal, K–12), private-sector industry leaders, nonprofit service providers (workforce, higher education, healthcare, economic developers), state agencies (MEDC, MDNR, MDOT), and federal officials. The results of the public outreach effort are discussed in the next section.

## Pre-SWOT Survey

As part of the kickoff of public outreach, a pre-SWOT survey was prepared and distributed throughout the seven-county I-69 Thumb region. The purpose of the survey was to gain input on the current importance of impactful economic development indicators throughout the region. The survey was distributed to nearly 500 individuals representing the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, with 211 responses yielding a solid 42 percent response rate. The distribution of the survey respondents, by sector, is shown in Table 8. It is important to note that nearly 55 percent of the responses came from the business community.

Table 8

### Respondents to the Pre-SWOT Survey

Answer choices	Responses (%)
Economic development	10.95
Education and training	8.57
Transportation/infrastructure	8.10
Business	54.76
Healthcare	2.86
Government	22.38

Table 9

### Priority Ranking of Factors that Impact Economic Development

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	Average Ranking
Infrastructure/Transportation	20.00% 42	14.76% 31	10.95% 23	11.90% 25	12.86% 27	8.10% 17	6.67% 14	2.38% 5	4.29% 9	2.86% 6	1.43% 3	0.48% 1	1.43% 3	1.90% 4	210	10.58
Business Climate	19.05% 40	14.76% 31	11.90% 25	15.24% 32	11.90% 25	9.05% 19	4.29% 9	5.71% 12	1.43% 3	2.86% 6	1.43% 3	1.43% 3	0.95% 2	0.00% 0	210	10.79
Job Creation	18.57% 39	12.86% 27	11.43% 24	4.29% 9	10.00% 21	5.24% 11	6.19% 13	9.05% 19	9.52% 20	5.71% 12	3.33% 7	2.86% 6	0.95% 2	0.00% 0	210	9.81
Talent/Workforce Development	10.95% 23	16.19% 34	15.24% 32	15.24% 32	6.19% 13	7.62% 16	9.05% 19	4.76% 10	5.24% 11	3.33% 7	3.33% 7	1.90% 4	0.48% 1	0.48% 1	210	10.19
Quality of Life/Well Being	5.71% 12	7.14% 15	7.14% 15	6.67% 14	7.62% 16	9.52% 20	11.43% 24	10.48% 22	11.43% 24	9.05% 19	3.81% 8	6.67% 14	2.86% 6	0.48% 1	210	8.14

## SWOT Analyses

Several methods were used to obtain perceptions from the I-69 Thumb region community on the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities within the region. A total of three SWOT input sessions were held across the region in June and July and at the regional charette held in October. The intent of the sessions was to gain regional insight, but more importantly to establish a regional identity. This is the first time the seven counties of the I-69 Thumb region have truly interacted on all matters of economy, workforce development, education, infrastructure, transportation, and many other regional identifiers. What was evident throughout the sessions was the level of commonality between each county. Figure 10 depicts a word cloud summary of strengths identified in each SWOT session.

Table 10  
Word Cloud



## Listening Tours

A primary goal of the Regional Prosperity Initiative is to provide the foundation necessary for federal, state, and local government agencies to work more effectively. In the process of generating this report, 44 separate government

tal, transportation/planning, nonprofit, and educational organizations were interviewed along with nine area economic development and workforce development organizations that receive both public and private funding. These organizations and agencies were asked to identify the strengths and challenges facing the region, as well as its assets.

## Strengths

Many of the regional stakeholders interviewed cited the existence of strong networks and collaboration with other organizations as a major strength. In fact, it is imperative that existing partnerships are not harmed through the creation of the I-69 Thumb region. For example, St. Clair County has a strong and beneficial partnership with neighboring Macomb County and other SEMCOG counties.

The same relationship is true with Tuscola County and Saginaw County to its west. In fact, one of the six goals of this report is to enhance existing partnership and collaboration efforts.

Second, the region’s community colleges—Mott Community College and St. Clair Community College, along with Baker College—were highlighted as valuable partners in working to provide the technical training needed by employers. At the same time, the region’s intermediate school districts (ISDs) were also mentioned as providing key technical training programs and important links between high schools and the region’s community colleges. The region also houses the University of Michigan at Flint and Kettering University. The

region’s three Michigan Works Agencies were also identified as a strength of the region. In short, the region’s education and training community, despite its limited capabilities and resources, has been striving to make training opportunities available to its residents.

Finally, the diverse mix of a rural, suburban, and urban environmental setting was often mentioned. The region is viewed as an area where there are plenty of good communities to raise families.

## Challenges

The major challenge most organizations cited was a lack of funding to provide services to meet growing demand. Many agencies were proud of the cost-saving collaborations that they have entered with partners, as well as cost-reduction efforts completed on their own. Still, the need for services including transportation, education, training, and economic development assistance—especially for infrastructure improvements—far outstrips available funds.

The second challenge that the service providers hear from their business customers is a lack of available skilled workers. At the same time, several of the organizations cited concerns that employers were paying insufficient wages and were underestimating the cost of turnover and the loss of quality work due to their low wages.

From the interviews it became clear that while the organizations have developed strong collaborations with partnering organizations in the same or in an adjoining county, most did not identify the I-69 Thumb region as a distinct region. The three-county Thumb area shares a strong identity, as do the four counties that make up the I-69 International Trade Corridor. However, the newly created I-69 Thumb region is viewed as the combination of two existing regions, at best. Moreover, Lapeer and St. Clair counties, in particular, have greater ties with the Detroit Metropolitan Area than with Flint. It is not that Flint was viewed unfavorably, as much as the counties never had a strong reason to partner with Genesee County up until this time.

Finally, although overall the region's transportation assets are viewed as a strength, the poor quality of rail service in the Thumb region is becoming a barrier to development.

The quality of the rail at some locations requires the train to travel at very slow speeds.

## Assets

The region's strongest assets are its transportation linkages, with the exception of rail service in the Thumb. Interstate 69 is viewed as the transportation backbone for the region. In addition, I-75 and I-94 provide access to the Greater Detroit area. Rail service to Canada via the Canadian National Railway and connecting CSX service in Flint provide businesses with Class I train service. The Bishop International Airport provides direct flights to seven locations through four national air carriers—American, Delta, Southwest, and United. Moreover, it offers the lowest average airfare in the state and exceptional convenience.

The construction of the Karegnondi water intake pipeline began in June 2013 and is expected to be completed in 2016. The line extends through Sanilac County, St. Clair County, Lapeer County, and Genesee County, pumping up to 85 million gallons of water per day from Lake Huron. The water line offers stability in cost and quality of potable water and also economic development opportunities to businesses that are interested in using "raw" untreated water.

Although talent issues are being raised by employers, the region's college and education system was often cited as a strong asset, as was the area's workforce.



## Goals and Objectives

### The six regional

goals that have been identified to guide implementation of the region's investment in strategic projects, programs, and activities under the Accelerate Plan are shown in

Table 10. They tie together both the CEDS and Re-

gional Prosperity programs,

creating a unified vision for the

seven-county region. Accompanying

the goals are related objectives that will

provide direction toward implementation and further define the results being sought through the project goals. A more detailed breakdown of the Lead Agencies and Partners responsible for implementation of related goals and objectives is found in the accompanying Implementation Plan that follows this report. The Lead Agencies and Partners are tied to each of the Goals and Objectives, along with associated resources and an anticipated time frame for completion.

## Accelerate to Action

At the outset of this planning effort, it was the consensus of opinion with partners across the region that this must not be a plan that “sits on a shelf.” Participants at the SWOT and charette sessions indicated that they had been through similar public involvement/planning efforts and that there had been limited results. A great deal of time and effort has been dedicated by the Accelerate Plan partners, and they are committed to continued progress and results. It was also agreed that implementation cannot rely solely on government efforts and funding; that continued regional cooperation among partners and private-sector support would also be needed for success.

The first step toward moving forward, then, is the identification of Vital Projects that correspond to the goals and objectives developed through the planning process. Each of the Accelerate categories associates projects from the

Vital Projects Matrix, which consolidates and prioritizes projects submitted by the regional partners, with the appropriate goals and objectives. Since these projects were already designated as high-priority projects for the region by the steering committee, efforts now focus on assembling the regional and other resources needed for implementation.

Key components moving forward with the Action Plan include:

- 1) Ensuring the continued commitment and participation of regional partners in the coming years;
- 2) Implementing successful joint projects by regional agencies;
- 3) Continuing the success of the Regional Economic Development Collaboration;
- 4) Maintaining a high level of communication among partners; and
- 5) Creating Action Teams to focus on the implementation of specific objectives and vital projects.

By necessity, such a large undertaking will require continuous monitoring, communication, and support for the designated Action Teams. This support will have to come from a regional agency that is well versed in development of the Accelerate Plan, such as the GLS Region V Planning and Development Commission.

## Accelerate Performance Measures

Performance measures were developed to monitor the progress of the action plan and are organized and presented by the identified goals listed below. They are not meant to be used as evaluation tools for individual initiatives. Moreover, it must be cautioned that these performance measures are subject to forces outside the control or influence of the action plan. For example, a downturn in the national economy would significantly affect nearly all of these performance measures independently of the impact of the implemented action plan.

Table 10

## Accelerate Regional Goals and Objectives

	Goals	Objectives
Education	Develop and retain a talented workforce so regional businesses can compete on a global basis.	<p>Identify current and future workforce needs of employers.</p> <p>Provide a range of non-traditional education opportunities to high school students and graduates.</p> <p>Create a regional system that connects workers and employers with programs, best practices, and networks.</p> <p>Promote and develop education/training opportunities. Influence legislation, policy, and budget to promote practices and systems that help produce a talented workforce.</p>
Infrastructure	Develop, create, and maintain an efficient infrastructure that will enable the region to compete in a global marketplace.	<p>Identify gaps in the infrastructure for the region.</p> <p>Prepare a long-term capital improvement plan for infrastructure including water, sewer, energy, and fiber.</p> <p>Improve transportation and broadband access to areas of the region that are underserved.</p> <p>Enhance access to healthcare and wellness programs.</p>
Regional Collaboration	Strengthen existing and create new collaborative partnerships to operate effectively as one voice for regional economic success.	<p>Develop an information initiative for local citizens, businesses, developers, companies, and residents.</p> <p>Ensure that the Accelerate Plan continues to move toward implementation and does not “sit on a shelf.”</p> <p>Solicit participation from all partners in the region.</p> <p>Pursue new funding sources to support regional projects. Identify opportunities for efficiency and impact within regional programs.</p>
Tourism	Develop tourism to enhance the regional economy.	<p>Continue to market tourism within and outside the region, including parks and recreation facilities and programs.</p> <p>Improve lodging and convention facilities throughout the region to support the tourism industry.</p> <p>Measure the effectiveness of marketing and promotion efforts.</p> <p>Improve access to technical assistance and financing for tourism-related businesses.</p>
Economic Development	Develop an ecosystem for creating, attracting, expanding, and retaining businesses throughout the region.	<p>Quantify available and qualified workforce; establish and improve upon training programs.</p> <p>Create industry targeted strategies including advanced manufacturing, information technologies, medical technologies, value-added agriculture, etc.</p> <p>Better prepare the region for business inquiries by enhancing marketing materials, promotion, and business prospect/client responsiveness.</p> <p>Enhance the support network for start-up businesses.</p>
Quality of Life	Create a unique identity and sense of community for the region.	<p>Enhance the viability of downtown centers throughout the region.</p> <p>Encourage redevelopment and renewal in downtowns using private investment and philanthropy.</p> <p>Improve the physical image of the region, especially along key corridors and community entryways.</p> <p>Promote the region to former Michiganders and immigrants looking to raise a family.</p> <p>Enhance the image of the region both internally and externally.</p>



## Develop and retain a talented workforce so regional businesses can compete on a global basis

### Performance Measure .....

Track the number of graduates from training programs, certificates, and degrees at the high school (ISD), community college, and university levels that are in high demand by the business sector

Track the number of high school graduates that go on to a post-secondary education or training program

Track internet postings for high-demand/high-skilled occupations and length of time the jobs have been posted

The economic strength of the region will continue to come from the development and growth of existing companies, a large part of which is related to their ability to attract and retain quality employees.

### Objectives

Identify current and future workforce needs of employers.

Provide a range of education opportunities to high school students and graduates including non-traditional centers of innovative programs.

Create a regional system of connecting workers and employers with programs, best practices, and networks.

Continue to work together to create and strengthen relationships developed through the Accelerate planning process to promote and develop education/training opportunities.

Influence legislation, policy, and budget to promote practices and systems that help produce a talented workforce.

### Vital Projects

Many employers in the region are struggling to find qualified workers to fill available positions. The goal would be to develop a strategy to assist employers in finding qualified workers and to fill the skills gap that exists for some of the available jobs.

Create a program that better connects the business community in need of current and future talent with K-12/ISD and higher education, including awareness of career opportunities (e.g., job fair, co-op), curriculum development, vocational training centers, etc.

Create a pool of funds, managed by a consortium of educators, intended to provide grants to support career pathway-oriented projects. The projects to be funded would be vetted in the form of a competition or application process. The goal is to seed fund projects that build on the concepts of career pathways in K-12 and college.

Make available targeted skills training to employers on-site for their workforce and supervision.

## Infra- structure Goal

Develop, create, and maintain an efficient infrastructure that will enable the region to compete in a global marketplace

### Performance Measure .....

Quality infrastructure will enable regional industries to operate efficiently and transport their products using a dependable transportation system.

Map the areas in the region that have access to broadband coverage

Monitor highway capacity

Map and track the usage of water for industrial purposes along the Karegnondi water intake pipeline

Monitor improvements in railroad capacity and performance in the Thumb region

### Objectives

Prepare a long-term capital improvement plan for infrastructure.

Identify gaps in the infrastructure for the region.

Improve transportation and broadband access to areas of the region that are underserved.

Enhance access to healthcare and wellness programs.

### Vital Projects

Development of a fiber network that serves the entirety of the I-69 Thumb region.

Expand and enhance infrastructure: rail, water, sewer, and natural gas.

Funding to acquire and operate a deep-water port that would include the construction of a warehouse to store product, installation of trans-loading equipment, extension of the on-site rail spur, and other site improvements.

Phase 2 development of an intermodal cargo area, Bishop Airport—expand air cargo operations. This development includes land acquisition, taxiways, utilities, building improvements, and ramp areas.

Funding to convert a CN rail property yard into a trans-loading facility for agricultural and other products. This facility would have warehouses, conveyer systems, and possibly cold storage. Costs include preliminary acquisition, engineering, and construction.



## Regional Collaboration Goal

Strengthen existing and create new collaborative partnerships to operate effectively as one voice for regional economic success

Performance Measure .....▶

With such a large and economically diverse region, it is important for all partners to work together as a single entity to conserve resources and maximize results.

Develop a communication strategy to track ongoing efforts to implement vital projects in the region

### Objectives

Develop an information initiative for local citizens, businesses, developers, companies, and residents.

Ensure that the Accelerate Plan continues to move toward implementation and does not "sit on a shelf."

Solicit participation from all partners in the region.

Pursue new funding sources to support regional projects.

Identify opportunities for efficiency and impact within regional programs.

Enhance regional cooperation opportunities with Binational partners to promote trade, transportation and economic growth.

### Vital Projects

The Mass Transportation Authority (MTA) proposes to become a regional transportation authority. MTA is seeking funding to allow coordination and partnering with organizations along the I-69 corridor, including local chambers of commerce, public and private transportation providers, employers, and medical facilities to coordinate transportation needs. MTA anticipates moving workers along the I-69 corridor for employment opportunities including, but not limited to, the Karegnondi Water Pipeline Project, Lapeer manufacturing industry, and the Meijer Distribution Center.

Create a comprehensive plan for targeted sites throughout the I-69 Thumb region that makes them more attractive for development, including master planning, target industrial analysis, conceptual building design, and virtual buildings.

Workforce hiring/training, new market development, fiber access, real estate/facilities, infrastructure, supply chain, organization of manufacturers to address needs of industry cluster development.



## Tourism Goal

Develop tourism to enhance the regional economy

### Performance Measure .....

Tourism is one of the key sectors of the region that can be developed to diversify the economic base and better insulate it against future downturns.

Track the annual change in quarterly employment in the hospitality industry, which includes food services, lodging, and recreation/arts/culture activities in the region

Monitor occupancy rates for the region's hotels, motels, and other lodging places

Track number of deer hunting licenses issued for use in the region

### Objectives

Continue to market tourism within and outside the region, including parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Improve lodging and convention facilities for the region to support the tourism industry.

Measure the effectiveness of marketing and promotion efforts.

Improve access to technical assistance and financing for tourism-related businesses.

### Vital Projects

Preparation of a regional tourism development marketing plan that inventories tourist facilities, events, and programs while identifying strategies to build upon that base and enhance marketing efforts.

Locate a "resort" in a state or local park.

Promote locally/regionally-produced products.

Development of a fund that allows businesses throughout Region 6 to access funding for start-up/growth.



Develop an ecosystem for creating, attracting, expanding, and retaining businesses throughout the region

Performance Measure .....▶ Continued economic sustainability in the region will come from competitive outreach to new companies, along with the creation and growth of existing businesses.

Track the annual change in the number of business establishments and job creation in the region

Objectives

- Quantify available and qualified workforce; establish and improve upon training programs in the global market place.
- Create industry targeted strategies including advanced manufacturing, information technologies, medical technologies, value-added agriculture, etc.
- Better prepare the region for business inquiries by enhancing marketing materials, promotion, and business prospect/client responsiveness.
- Enhance the support network for start-up businesses.
- Support and embrace global engagement by making exports and trade a mainstream activity in Region 6.

Vital Projects

- The growth of Michigan agriculture and food processing has begun to create new economic development opportunities associated with value-added processing, packaging, and distribution.
- Maximize agribusiness opportunity, value-added processing, marketing, and outreach based on the developed agribusiness strategy to grow and support the regional ag industry.
- A fund will be developed to develop and support private-sector projects within Region 6 that require environmental studies, as well as generate a return to the fund in the form of tax increment financing. This program will build off of the successful St. Clair County Site Assessment Program.
- Development of a fund that allows businesses throughout Region 6 to access funding for start-ups/growth.
- Regional Angel Fund development and work with existing lenders to assist small businesses to get the capital support they need.
- Increase the number of firms who are ready

## Quality of Life Goal

### Create a unique identity and sense of community for the region

#### Performance Measure .....

Monitor region-wide efforts to develop a brand that integrates the Thumb with the I-69 Corridor

Develop an effective communication strategy to promote cooperative ongoing regional efforts to successfully brand the region

The ability of the region to attract and retain both companies and employees will be directly related to the quality of communities and related amenities for entrepreneurs and employees.

#### Objectives

Enhance the viability of downtown centers throughout the region.

Encourage redevelopment in downtowns using private investment and philanthropy.

Improve the physical image of the region, especially along key corridors and community entryways.

Promote the region to former Michiganders and immigrants looking to return to the state and raise a family.

Enhance the image of the region both internally and externally.

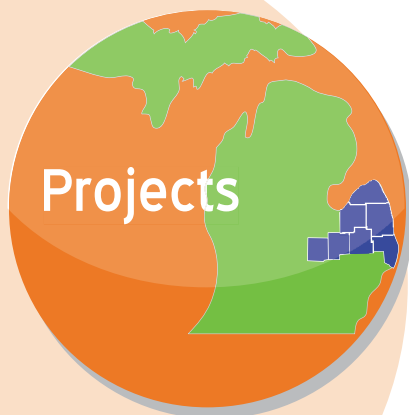
#### Vital Projects

Development of a fund that allows communities to develop GIS systems on a countywide basis or to create an innovative partnership to expand sharing of existing and future equipment across county lines.

A multi-faceted marketing strategy that promotes the key assets of Region 6 to identified target industries.

Continue the branding, communications, and marketing campaigns and regional asset promotion already underway.

Create a regional downtown facade loan program, such as those in the City of Imlay City and the City of Lapeer. The fund would provide lowcost financing for facade improvements to the exterior of buildings in traditional downtowns throughout the seven counties of the I-69 Thumb region.



**To meet** requirements of the CEDS and Regional Prosperity plans, and also to begin moving forward toward implementation, a call for projects was issued to all communities and agencies

in the seven-county region. A standard project request form was emailed out and the Region 6 planning staff received over 75 potential projects. The

Region 6 Steering Committee was then asked to prioritize all of the projects, ranking them using specific evaluation criteria that included the plan goals resulting from the charter along with the following:

- Does it address an identified regional goal?
- Does it have regional impact?

- Does it promote global competitiveness?
- Is it innovative?
- Does it create new jobs?
- Is it in an economically distressed area as measured by the unemployment rate or per capita income?
- Does it have a solid level of community support and collaboration?
- How ready is the project? Are matching funds in place? Is a private company committed to the site? Are cost estimates prepared?

The submitted projects were assembled into a table, along with corresponding prioritization based upon the above criteria. After the steering committee met to review the projects, the consultants were then asked to consolidate like projects and prepare a revised table with only the “Vital Projects,” those obtaining the highest scores from the steering committee. Since each submission had to identify the applicable goal for the project, it was then possible to transfer each Vital Project over to the Action Plan.

## AGRIBUSINESS

### Business Ecosystem

#### Develop an Agribusiness Strategy for the Region

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 17 • Medium: 4 • Low: 2

The growth of Michigan agriculture and food processing has begun to create new economic development opportunities associated with value-add food processing, packaging and distribution. The eastern Michigan region comprised of I-69 International Trade Corridor and MI Green Thumb stands to benefit significantly based on its location, supply base, workforce, sites and infrastructure. The region includes significant agricultural production as well as tremendous assets for innovation, logistics, and manufacturing. In order to gain input and position for new ag and food opportunities, an advisory group is being formed. Activities of this group will include: Investigate state strategies related to the scope of this group (MEDC, MDARD, MDOT and others); Review inventory of regional assets including sites, workforce, finance/incentives/, infrastructure, education, and marketing programs; Establish relationships with leaders of Michigan ag check-off groups and determine goals of these groups (including findings of MDARD-funded value capture studies); Support the creation and implementation of a regional ag/food economic development marketing strategy

#### Implementation and Marketing of Agribusiness Strategy

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: I-69/Thumb Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 13 • Medium: 8 • Low: 1

Maximize agribusiness opportunity, value-add process, marketing and outreach based on the developed agribusiness strategy to grow and support the regional agriculture industry

## ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

### Business Ecosystem

#### Region 6 Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 10 • Medium: 7 • Low: 5

Funding for the development and support of private sector projects within Region 6 require environmental studies as well as generate a return to the fund in the form of tax increment financing

#### Region 6 Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 8 • Medium: 12 • Low: 3

Develop a fund to support private sector projects within Region 6 that require environmental studies. This program will build off of the successful St. Clair County Site Assessment Program. Goals of the program will include encouraging the cleanup of contaminated sites by infusing funds into the initial environmental investigation, as well as promoting projects that generate future tax base and create jobs. Funds can be used to conduct Phase I or Phase II environmental studies; hazardous material surveys; baseline environmental assessments; work plans; Brownfield plans. Fifty percent of all funds will be available to each of the seven counties on a per capita allocation basis; the remaining 50% of funds will be dispersed by a designated Brownfield authority for high-impact projects within the region. For high-impact projects, criteria will be developed to define eligibility. If a project is deemed eligible, the designated Brownfield authority must approve the project. For the county-based funds, an eligible Brownfield authority will approve projects using commonly agreed criteria, applications, and policies. All projects approved through this program will include the requirement that applicants enter into reimbursement agreements. The goal of the program is to support projects that generate a return to the fund in the form of tax increment financing.

#### Environmental Site Assessments

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 7 • Low: 8

Development of a fund that can be utilized for assessments of sites throughout Region 6

## FINANCE

### Business Ecosystem

#### Investment Capital Fund

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 11 • Low: 4

Development of a fund that allows businesses throughout Region 6 to access funding for startup/growth

## GIS

### Business Ecosystem

#### Geographic Information System

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 8 • Low: 6

Development of a fund that allows communities to develop GIS systems on a county-wide basis

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#### Development of New Industrial Park in Kimball Township

Location/Impact: Local

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 6 • Medium: 9 • Low: 8

Funding for the building of an industrial park which would include land acquisition, wetland mitigation, extension of water and sewer lines, construction of Class A industrial roads and other site improvements and road upgrades

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#### Parmenter Road Industrial Park Development

Location/Impact: Parmenter Road (½ mile north of M-71 and 8 miles west of the I-69 corridor)

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 6 • Medium: 6 • Low: 10

Complete build out of a 64 acre Certified Industrial Park with the infrastructure, including roads and utilities. Utilities currently are run to site. Platting process will be completed in 2015.

---

#### Development of New Industrial Parks in Lapeer County

Location/Impact: City of Lapeer and Mayfield Township

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 5 • Medium: 12 • Low: 6

Development of industrial parks in the City of Lapeer would benefit from age of the proximity to I-69. There is a property within the city that would be an ideal location for the industrial park. Additionally, there has been some discussion of developing property adjacent to the DuPont-Lapeer Airport in Mayfield Township. Infrastructure would have to be installed for the developments, including roads, water and sewer lines. These projects may require environmental studies, wetlands identification, boundary surveys, trees removal and rough grading of the property. Additionally, marketing materials to promote the parks would be developed.

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#### Land Bank

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 8 • Low: 10

Development of a program that allows communities to utilize this tool for targeted projects.

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#### Entrepreneur Services and Expand SBA “Get To Yes,” Etc.

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 7 • Low: 7

Establish regional angel fund development; work with existing lenders to assist small businesses to get the capital support they need

---

#### Large Acreage/Brownfield Logistics Accelerator Project

Location/Impact: City of Flint

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 13 • Low: 7

Establish pre-approval for development projects, implementation of a PUD Zoning classification; construct a new facility on site to support the regional agribusiness strategy and advanced manufacturing strategy to develop locations that are infrastructure ready

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#### Development of a Spec or Industrial Incubator Building in Lapeer County for Manufacturers or Logistics Companies

Location/Impact: Lapeer County

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 6 • Low: 14

Develop industrial space in Lapeer County

---

#### Brownfield Redevelopment

Location/Impact: City of Vassar/Tuscola, Lapeer, Genesee, and Saginaw Counties

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 4 • Low: 15

Brownfield redevelopment of 211 Sherman Street, an industrial site in the City of Vassar

---

#### Regional Pre-Seed Fund

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 12 • Low: 1

Access to capital is critical for new business enterprises. It can very difficult to get a bank loan, secure venture capital or angel investment for a startup business. Consequently, many business ventures fail from access to capital at the earliest stage of company development. The State of Michigan created the 21st Century Jobs Fund in 2005, which provided up to \$1 billion for a variety of programs intended to grow the entrepreneurial climate of Michigan. A critical component of this program was the Michigan Pre-Seed Fund, which was managed by Ann Arbor Spark under contract. Recently, this fund has been replaced by a new program: Invest Michigan program provides seed funding to startup companies who are developing unique technologies in a variety of industries, from Pharmaceutical to energy storage systems. The seed funds are typically capped at no more than \$200,000 in convertible debt or loans. The intent of this proposed project is to create a companion fund for Region 6. An investment board would be created to vet applications from startup companies.

---

#### Business Incubator

Location/Impact: Region, with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 9 • Low: 4

Development of a fund that can be utilized to support business incubators throughout Region 6

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#### Regional Data Initiative/Mapping Systems

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 9 • Low: 6

Generate a platform to collect and share data to advise strategy development amongst regional partners (i.e. Data-driven Detroit)

---

#### Business Attraction

Location/Impact: Genesee County/Statewide

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 9 • Low: 10

Genesee County/statewide (attraction of projects worldwide)

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### Seed Capital Fund

Location/Impact: Genesee County/Statewide (Attraction of Projects Worldwide)  
CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 8 • Low: 11  
Seed capital funding for innovation/restoration

---

### Downtown Market Study

Location/Impact: Village of Millington  
CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 7 • Low: 13  
Development of a fund that can be utilized to support studies throughout Region 6

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### Brownfield Redevelopment

CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 9 • Low: 11  
Brownfield redevelopment of 8481 State Street in Millington. Project would allow the establishment and use of the site by a major retailer

---

### Create Industrial Park

Location/Impact: 3 - Lashbrooks  
CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 7 • Low: 13  
Create an Industrial Park (utility and street improvements) - Lashbrooks

---

### Multi-Unit Housing Development, Mixed Income, Seniors

Location/Impact: All  
CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 3 • Low: 15  
Look for opportunities to increase multi-unit/mixed use housing opportunities throughout downtowns

---

### Kitchen Incubator in Lapeer County

Location/Impact: Lapeer County  
CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 9 • Low: 12  
Work with the Lapeer Center Building staff to develop a kitchen incubator. Provide economic development services to include client intake and referral, small business counseling, assistance with developing a business plan and/or a marketing plan. The Lapeer Center Building staff will provide kitchen incubator space and coordinate use of the facility with prospective tenants.

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### Governmental Facility Development/Improvement

Location/Impact: Regional, with Individual County Sites  
CEDs Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 4 • Low: 17  
Development of a fund that can be utilized to support facility projects throughout Region 6

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### Downtown Flint Incubator

Location/Impact: Genesee County and Beyond  
CEDs Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 10 • Low: 11  
Rent entrepreneur and employer training spaces; provide certification programs to meet skills gap

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### Almont Elementary School Adaptive Reuse

Location/Impact: 401 Church, Almont, Lapeer County  
CEDs Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 8 • Low: 14  
Perform feasibility study for the adaptive reuse of the old Almont Elementary School. One of the uses being investigated is reusing existing classrooms and kitchen as a business incubator or senior center for the residents of Almont

---

### Blight Elimination Framework – Anchor Participation

Location/Impact: City of Flint/Genesee County Land Bank  
CEDs Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 8 • Low: 11  
Continue efforts to remove all blight within the city of Flint within 5 years

---

## MARKETING

### Identity

#### Regional Marketing & Business Recruitment

Vital: Yes  
Location/Impact: Regional  
CEDs Rank: High  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 13 • Medium: 7 • Low: 2  
A multifaceted marketing strategy that promotes the key assets of Region 6 to target industries

---

#### Regional Branding

Vital: Yes  
Location/Impact: All  
CEDs Rank: High  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 12 • Medium: 9 • Low: 2  
Continue the branding, communications, and marketing campaigns and regional asset promotion already underway

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#### “Buy Local” Campaigns

Location/Impact: All  
CEDs Rank: High  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 8 • Medium: 6 • Low: 9  
Promote locally/regionally produced products

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### Regional Facade Loan Fund

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 7 • Low: 8

A few Downtown facade loan programs, such as the City of Imlay City and the City of Lapeer, provide low cost financing for facade improvements; funds may be available to businesses to make improvements to the exterior of buildings in traditional downtowns throughout the seven counties of Region 6

---

### Facade Improvement

Location/Impact: Regional, with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 6 • Medium: 9 • Low: 7

Development of a fund that can be utilized to support improvement projects throughout Region 6

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### Sports Complex

Location/Impact: Hill Road Corridor located in Mundy Township between Fenton Road and Van Slyke Road. The largest parcel (90+ acres) sits behind, or north of, the businesses along Hill Road with outlets that connect with Hill Road and Van Slyke Road. Once developed to its full potential the impact would be in Genesee County and Flint.

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 7 • Low: 14

Develop a multi-faceted sports complex consisting of lighted baseball and softball diamonds along with soccer fields and a track for running or walking around the circumference of the 90 acre parcel. The complex would be utilized for potential tournament competition and youth sporting activities. Construction of such a project would spur local employment adding approximately 20-30 jobs in the construction of the infrastructure which would consist of water, sewer, electrical and road construction. Once built and operational the complex would add to the local economy by hosting tournaments from out of town entities, which would require lodging and dining options for the visiting teams. The region would flourish because between events attendees and their families would be looking at the local offering for entertainment i.e., Sloan Museum, Crossroads Village. Such a project would impact tourism, economic development, quality of life, workforce and infrastructure improvements

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### Atwood Stadium Refurbishment

Location/Impact: Located in the City of Flint on the Campus of Kettering University

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 7 • Low: 15

In order to preserve the utility and legacy of Atwood Stadium for the benefit of the Flint community, Kettering University and the Friends of Atwood Stadium, a volunteer coalition of community members, are actively seeking support for the campaign for Atwood Stadium. This would address the urgent need for a field-turf renovation and bring restrooms, locker rooms and concession stands up to code

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### Vacant Historic Shiawassee Street School Housing Conversion

Location/Impact: 106 S. Shiawassee (located within the DDA district of downtown Corunna)

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 7 • Low: 15

Conversion of the school to approximately 26 upgraded residential loft dwellings

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### Capitol Theatre Restoration

Location/Impact: Flint, Genesee, Regional Draw

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 6 • Low: 18

The restored and active theatre will feature entertainment that attracts visitors, residents and businesses

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### Cass City Cultural Center Restoration

Location/Impact: Village of Cass City

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17

Restoration of the Cass City Cultural Center which is a historical building

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### Walking Trail

Location/Impact: City of Caro

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 7 • Low: 14

Complete the walking trail by receiving a Right of Way from MDOT

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### Seymour Road Bike Path

Location/Impact: Seymour Road Corridor from Miller Road North to Main Street Flushing

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 6 • Low: 16

Develop a bike path on both sides of Seymour Road

---

### Regional Facade Improvement Grant Program

Location/Impact: Communities in the Region

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 8 • Medium: 7 • Low: 8

A few downtowns in the region have facade improvement programs, such as the City of Imlay City, City of Lapeer, Village of Almont and Village of North Branch. Typically, traditional downtowns that have downtown development authorities can create a grant program using tax increment financing, i.e. property taxes collected from existing buildings and personal property within the district. However, the five-year trend of reductions in property values has stripped many DDA's of funding. This program would provide a regional pool of funds that can be matched against private investment to make improvements to the exterior of buildings in traditional downtowns throughout the seven counties of Region 6.



## Fiber

### Infrastructure

#### Fiber

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 15 • Medium: 4 • Low: 3

Development of a fiber network that serves the entirety of Region 6

#### Regional Fiber (Business Parks) Development

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 10 • Medium: 10 • Low: 2

Extend ISD Fiber to business parks and other key locations (Lapeer model)

#### Broadband Expansion in Lapeer County

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Countywide

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 9 • Low: 7

Work with the ISD to install fiber to business parks in Lapeer County. Rural communities in Lapeer County do not have the level of broadband availability to serve their residents. Broadband enhancements are needed to ensure complete coverage in communities that are part of the I-69 International Trade Corridor, a designated Next Michigan Development Corporation. The request here would be for funding to improve and expand broadband access through infrastructure development and service upgrades in conjunction with service providers.

#### High Speed Internet Access for Almont

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Village of Almont

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 8 • Low: 8

To bring high speed internet to the residents and businesses of Almont

#### IT Cluster Development

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact:

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking:

High: 0 • Medium: 4 • Low: 15

#### Broadband Access Solutions

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 12 • Low: 2

Funding to improve and expand broadband access through infrastructure development, establishment of community computer centers, and service upgrades in conjunction with service providers

#### Fiber Optic Deployment/Marketing/Pilot

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Huron/ Sanilac/ Tuscola

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 7 • Low: 6

Develop pilot "Fiber to the Farm"

#### City of Fenton LDFA Fiber Project

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Fenton

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 5 • Low: 13

Expand fiber optic throughout the Fenton LDFA district

## RAIL

### Infrastructure

#### Rail and Natural Gas Infrastructure

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Huron/ Sanilac/ Tuscola

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 13 • Medium: 8 • Low: 2

Expand and enhance infrastructure rail and natural gas

#### Development of New Amtrak

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 12 • Low: 9

Fund the construction of a new Amtrak/Intermodal Station that would offer opportunities for a serviceable intermodal center, associated industrial and commercial development, increased parking and infrastructure in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

#### Development of Rail Spurs along the CN National Rail Line and Local Rail Lines to Facilitate Development

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 11 • Low: 10

This infrastructure may facilitate development in the county by providing another mode of transportation to firms located in Lapeer

## PORT

### Infrastructure

#### Creation of Deepwater Port

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional and State

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 14 • Medium: 6 • Low: 3

Identify funding to acquire and operate a deep water port which would include the construction of a warehouse, installation of trans loading equipment, extension of the on-site rail spur and other site improvements

## AIR

### Infrastructure

#### Intermodal Phase 2 Development

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Flint, Flint Township, Genesee County

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 11 • Medium: 9 • Low: 1

Phase 2 development of Intermodal Cargo area through expansion of air cargo operations; development includes land acquisition, taxiways, utilities, building improvements and ramp areas

## AGRICULTURE LOADING FACILITY

### Infrastructure

#### Development of Agricultural Trans Load Facility

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 11 • Medium: 9 • Low: 3

Funding to convert a CN rail yard into a trans load facility for agricultural and other products. This facility would include warehouses, conveyor systems and possibly cold storage. Costs include preliminary acquisition, engineering and construction.

### Infrastructure

Location/Impact: Grand Blanc Township

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 8 • Medium: 7 • Low: 8

Fund new road to connect Baldwin Road to I-75, referred to as the Dort Highway Connector. Project is the result of implementation of the Genesee County Freight and Connectivity Study, Genesee County Long Range Transportation Plan and the Technology Village Area Plan within the Master Plan for Grand Blanc Township.

#### Expand M-24 to Four Lanes in Southern Lapeer County

Location/Impact: Southern Lapeer County

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 9 • Low: 10

Expand M-24 to four lanes in southern Lapeer County to finish the expansion started in the early 2000s

#### Completion of Wilder Road to Class A Status from Imlay City Road to the I-69 Interchange

Location/Impact: City of Lapeer and Mayfield Township

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 7 • Low: 11

Upgrade Wilder Road, from Imlay City Road south to the I-69 Interchange, for access to businesses in Lapeer County.

#### Parmenter Road “Class A” Upgrades

Location/Impact: Within City of Corunna Corporation limits. Parmenter Road from M-71 South to City of Corunna Corporate Limits

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 7 • Low: 11

Upgrades to approximately 3,700 ft of Parmenter Rd, including railroad crossing upgrades, to an all-season route to improve access, via M-71 to/from I-69, a major Midwest industrial corridor with national and international connections.

### Development Site Infrastructure

Location/Impact: Regional with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 10 • Low: 5

Completion of site preparedness activities on targeted sites; implementation of infrastructure (water, sewer, road, power, gas) improvements for future developments

#### Corporate Hangar Area Development

Location/Impact: Flint, Flint Township, Genesee County

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 8 • Low: 7

Development of northeast area of Bishop Airport for possible corporate hangars; includes design and construction of associated infrastructure, including utilities, taxiways, and ramp areas

### Infrastructure

Location/Impact: Grand Blanc Township

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 6 • Medium: 9 • Low: 8

Sanitary sewer upgrade to accommodate sewer capacity in developing area of medical, research and development, and light industrial uses

#### Convert Wilder Road from I-69 to Imlay City Road to an All-Season “Class A” route

Location/Impact: Wilder Road from I-69 to Imlay City Road, impacting the City of Lapeer and Lapeer Township

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 5 • Medium: 11 • Low: 7

This project would connect I-69 to Imlay City Road by converting Wilder Road to an all-season, designated route. This means: the route would be all-season, and therefore not restricted during frost laws; 53’ trailer lengths and heavier loads would be legal; currently, most truck traffic is required to use M-24 to access Genesee St/Imlay City Road, which is a congested route with poor turning conditions for truck traffic

### Infrastructure

Location/Impact: Grand Blanc Township

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 7 • Low: 12

Realignment of Pollock Road

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### Circus Park Development

Location/Impact: Vienna Township

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 8 • Low: 11

The Elf Khurafeh Shriners envision a New Circus Park utilizing 104 acres of land facing I-75 in Clio, Michigan to provide a multi-purpose safety and emergency center for Mid-Michigan residents. Park would serve as a local and regional medical center increasing access to healthcare, personal growth opportunities, recreation, and hope for the future for all children and families without regard to race, color, creed, sex or sect, disability, national origin or ability of a patient or family to pay.

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### Infrastructure

Location/Impact: Grand Blanc Township

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 12 • Low: 7

New potable water distribution system within the Genesys Regional Medical Center to accommodate development of medical and R&D uses

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### Structure Demolition

Location/Impact: Regional with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 11 • Low: 7

Development of a fund that can be utilized for demolition projects throughout Region 6

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### Commercial District Improvements

Location/Impact: Pierson Road/Linden Road

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 10 • Low: 11

Demolish 4300 Pierson Road (old Ramada Inn); reconstruct Linden Road from Pierson to Carpenter Road to all season road

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### Extend Water Line between Imlay City and Almont

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 9 • Low: 12

Extend water line between Imlay City and Almont

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Location/Impact: Cass City Industrial Park

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 8 • Low: 10

Infrastructure upgrades

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### Thompson Road Water Main

Location/Impact: Thompson Road Corridor (Thompson Road between Jennings and Fenton)

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 7 • Low: 14

Construction of a water main, including storage tower

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Location/Impact: Caro Dam, Cass River, Caro MI

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 6 • Low: 14

Repair the Caro Dam main dam doors damaged by seasonal ice and snow

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### Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant

Location/Impact: City of Lapeer

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 10 • Low: 12

The Genesee Street reconstruction project has been initiated to improve a major east/west link with the City of Lapeer. Genesee Street was the predecessor to I-69 and was formerly operated by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) as M-21. This road begins on the west side of the State of Michigan, terminates on the east side, and is occasionally used as an alternate route to I-69. The segment proposed for improvement runs for approximately 3/4 mile to the south of the traditional downtown of Lapeer and also parallel to I-69, which is approximately two miles south of Genesee. The west boundary of the project area is M-24 and the east boundary is just east of Saginaw Street.

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### Development of St. Clair Water Tower

Location/Impact: Local & Regional

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 9 • Low: 13

Funding for the engineering and construction of a one million-gallon tank and improvements to the current water system

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### N. Shiawassee Street Reconstruction and Three Land Expansion

Location/Impact: N. Shiawassee Street from the bridge to Pine Street

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 7 • Low: 13

Expansion to three lanes along with utility upgrades

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### Add an Exit off I-69 at Clark Road

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 6 • Low: 16

Add an exit off I-69 at Clark Road

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### Construct New Water Main

Location/Impact: Davison Road

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 6 • Low: 14

Construct a new 12" water main on Davison Road (Lake Nepessing to Greensway Blvd)

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### Construct New Water Main

Location/Impact: Lake Nepessing

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 6 • Low: 14

Construct a new 12" water main on Nepessing from John Conley to Davison Road

---

### Install New Ground Storage Tank

Location/Impact: Southeast City Limits - Saginaw Street

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 5 • Low: 16

New ground storage tank 1 MG and pumps

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### Rehabilitate Storage Tank

Location/Impact: Rehabilitate Existing Elevated Storage Tank 750 Gallons  
CEDS Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 4 • Low: 18  
**Rehabilitate existing elevated storage tank 750 gallons**

---

### Pipeline Extension

Location/Impact: M-21 Corridor West/ Elms Road to Shiawassee County: M-13 Corridor South/Corunna Road to I-69  
CEDS Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 9 • Low: 14  
**Extend water pipeline**

---

### Public Safety Buildings

Location/Impact: M-24  
CEDS Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 7 • Low: 16  
**Public safety buildings**

---

### Genesee Street Reconstruction

Location/Impact: Genesee Street  
CEDS Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 7 • Low: 15  
**Genesee Street reconstruction from Millville to Harrison with bike lanes**

---

### New Drive connecting Research Drive to Tubspring Road

Location/Impact: Research Drive, Almont, Lapeer County  
CEDS Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 6 • Low: 17  
The installation of a an access drive from Research Drive to Tubspring Road in Almont to allow vehicles access to the light at Tubspring Drive and Van Dyke. This would promote both commercial and industrial development in the area.

---

### Genesee Street Reconstruction

Location/Impact: Genesee Street  
CEDS Rank: Medium  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 6 • Low: 16  
**Genesee Street reconstruction from M-24 to Saginaw Street with bike lanes**

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### Gould Street

Location/Impact: From M-71 to M-21  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 6 • Low: 13  
**Transportation improvement project**

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Location/Impact: Mayville Industrial Park

CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 9 • Low: 11  
**Infrastructure upgrades**

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### US-23/Thompson Road Upgrades

Location/Impact: US-23/Thompson Road interchange  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17  
**Upgrade US-23 interchange at Thompson Road**

---

### Increase Pump Capacity

Location/Impact: McCormick Street  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 5 • Low: 16  
**Increase firm capacity of the McCormick Pump Station to 4.0 MGD**

---

### Increase Pump Capacity

Location/Impact: Saginaw Street  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 5 • Low: 16  
**Increase firm capacity of the Saginaw Street Pump Station to 2.8 MGD**

---

### Replace Existing Water Main

Location/Impact: Genesee Street  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 5 • Low: 16  
**Replace an existing 6" water main on Genesee Street with a 12" water main between Millville and Harrison Street**

---

### Install New Ground Storage Tank

Location/Impact: Southeast City Limits - John Conley Drive  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 4 • Low: 17  
**New ground storage tank 1 MG and pumps**

---

### Extend Lake Nepessing Road to Oregon Street

Location/Impact: City of Lapeer  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 2 • Low: 20  
**Extend Lake Nepessing Road to Oregon Street**

---

### Replace Force Main

Location/Impact: McCormick to WWTP  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 6 • Low: 15  
**Replace an existing 12" force main from McCormick Life Station to WWTP for increased capacity**

---

### Construction of New Public Safety Facility in Lapeer South of I-69

Location/Impact: City of Lapeer  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 18  
**Construction of a new public safety facility in Lapeer south of I-69**

---

### Oxidation Ditch to Increase Capacity

Location/Impact: Waste Water Treatment Plant  
CEDS Rank: Low  
Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17  
**Add a third oxidation ditch to increase WWTP capacity to 3.4 MGD**

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### Clarifier to Increase Capacity

Location/Impact: Waste Water Treatment Plant

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17

Add a third clarifier to increase WWTP capacity

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### Increase Sludge Storage

Location/Impact: Waste Water Treatment Plant

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17

Increase sludge storage an additional 1,000,000 gallons of storage

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### Davison Road Reconstruction

Location/Impact: Davison Road

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17

Davison Road (Millville to Lake Nepessing) reconstruction with curb and gutter, sidewalk and bike lanes

---

### Construct New Lift Station

Location/Impact: Lake Nepessing/Davison Road

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 16

Construct a new lift station near Lake Nepessing/Davison Road to create a new sewer district at the west city limits

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### Purchase of Land for DPW

Location/Impact: 5950 Fox Street

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 4 • Low: 19

Purchase of a pole barn and six acres of land for use by DPW

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### Reconstruct DeMille

Location/Impact: DeMille Street

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 4 • Low: 17

Reconstruct DeMille (Blvd to M-24)

---

### Reconstruct DeMille

Location/Impact: DeMille Street

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 4 • Low: 18

Reconstruct DeMille (McCormick to Saginaw)

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### Extension of Path from DeMille Road to John Conley Drive, City of Lapeer

Location/Impact: City of Lapeer

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 2 • Low: 21

Extension of path from DeMille Road to John Conley Drive in the city of Lapeer

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## Partnerships

### Partnerships

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#### Regional Transit Coordination Study

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: I-69 Corridor from Ingham County to St Clair County, Lansing to Port Huron

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 9 • Low: 5

The Mass Transportation Authority (MTA) proposing to become a regional transportation authority is seeking funding to allow coordination and partnering with organizations along the I-69 corridor, including local chambers of commerce, public and private transportation providers, employers, and medical facilities to coordinate transportation needs for the purpose of moving workers along the I-69 corridor for employment opportunities including, but not limited to, the Karegnondi Water Pipeline Project, Lapeer manufacturing industry, and the Meijer Distribution Center.

---

#### Development Site Preparedness

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional with Individual County Sites

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 12 • Medium: 9 • Low: 2

Create a comprehensive plan for targeted sites throughout Region 6 that makes them more attractive for development, including master planning, pre-mitting target industrial analysis, conceptual building design, virtual buildings, etc.

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#### Combination "Meet the Buyer"/Manufacturing "Pitch & Catch" Trade Show

Location/Impact: Conducted at the Mott MTEC; manufacturing companies from Region 6 and the entire State of Michigan would be recruited to participate

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 8 • Medium: 10 • Low: 5

Combining the Region 6 economic development organizations' "Meet The Buyer" event with the Manufacturing "Pitch & Catch" Trade Show would enable companies to have an on-stage "Shark-Tank-Moment" to identify their products, raw product needs and areas of specialization. This unique Trade Show methodology has been pilot tested in the Thumb Area with great success. By blending the "Meet The Buyer" and "Pitch & Catch Trade Show" activities, the results would be strategically improved.

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#### Shared Services Leadership Alliance Regional Replication

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 8 • Low: 10

Leadership and shared service training that prepares partners to coordinate, collaborate, and work together to maximize efficiency and improve service delivery

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## PARTNERSHIP

### Partnerships Workforce Business Ecosystem

#### Advanced Manufacturing Collaboration

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: I-69/Thumb Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 13 • Medium: 8 • Low: 1

Workforce hiring/training, new market development, fiber access, real estate/facilities, infrastructure, supply chain, organization of manufacturers to address needs of industry, cluster development

## TOURISM

### Tourism

#### Resort Development in State Parks

Location/Impact: Huron and Sanilac

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 7 • Low: 12

Locate a “resort” in a state or local park

## TALENT

### Workforce

#### Finding Qualified Employees in the Region

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 14 • Medium: 5 • Low: 3

Develop a strategy to assist employers in finding qualified workers and to fill the skills gap that exists for some of the available jobs

#### Building the Talent Pipeline

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: Regional with Individual County Representatives

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 12 • Medium: 9 • Low: 2

Create a program that better connects the business community in need of talent with K-12/ISD and higher education, including awareness of career opportunities (e.g. job fair, co-op), curriculum development, vocational training centers, etc.

#### Manufacturing Summer Camp

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 10 • Medium: 10 • Low: 3

ThumbWorks! was contacted by a local manufacturer that produces parts for Stihl. They have an already developed summer camp that they provide curricula for and would assist us in implementing in our region. Here's the information they provided us with: The Stihl Manufacturing Technology Summer Camp goal is to ensure that students are properly introduced to modern manufacturing through tours, presentations, small projects, and a competitive manufacturing activity. The camp is a four-day process where middle and high-school students learn how to design and execute a manufacturing process, brainstorm and make decisions, and work as members of a manufacturing team. They also create production plans, improve processes, and learn quality assurance techniques.

#### TeenQuest/SYI Replication

Location/Impact: Full Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 8 • Medium: 11 • Low: 5

Replication of the TeenQuest and Summer Youth Initiative programs across all of Region 6

#### Career Pathway Improvement Program

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 9 • Low: 6

Provide grant funds to support career pathway oriented projects. The projects to be funded would be vetted in the form of a competition or application process. The goal is to seed-fund projects that build on the concepts of career pathways in K-12 and college, including projects that support STEM education; pilot programs that demonstrate potential to be replicated at a regional level.

#### Basic Skill Development Program

Location/Impact: Low Skill Adults in St. Clair County and Other Counties

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 6 • Medium: 9 • Low: 8

The BSDP would provide an alternative for adults who need upgrades in basic reading, English and math to increase their employability and/or readiness for training. The program would supplement current options. It would be free to those not eligible for Michigan Work! sponsored remediation programs and those not able to pursue traditional Adult Education programs for high school completion or GED due to structure and/or length. The program would be self-paced, open entry-open exit, modular computer based instruction. Facilitators would monitor progress, supplement the instructional materials and provide encouragement and support to learners.



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### Employability Skills Training Workshop Series

Location/Impact: St. Clair County and Region

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 5 • Medium: 11 • Low: 7

The free workshop program would be in 8-10 hours durations and be delivered in 2-5 sessions. The series would focus on a variety of soft-skills that impact employment potential and longevity. Topics would include: job search, resumes, cover letters, interviewing, employer expectations, teamwork, workplace protocol, self-management and planning, responsibility, etc. The series of workshops could also include career information and exploration.

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### Expanded Career Technical Education

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 5 • Medium: 6 • Low: 8

Expand availability of training for workers while incorporating input of the private sector

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### Workforce Education Center/Addition

Location/Impact: Fenton

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 11 • Low: 8

Addition/renovations to the Wagner Workforce Education Center (WEC) to accommodate increased services through partnership with Career Alliance and Michigan Works!, including upgrades to 16,000 square feet of additional space and upgrades to space, furniture, computer systems and basic facility upgrades.

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### Enhanced Training in Welding Technology

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 4 • Medium: 10 • Low: 9

Maximize student learning in the engineering technology field of welding by providing Lincoln Electric VRTEX 360 virtual reality arc welding training station in the Engineering Technology Lab at SC4

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### Target Employment Systems Project

Location/Impact: Genesee County/replication to others

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 12 • Low: 6

Truck Driver training, IT, CNC, Welding, Mechatronics, Design/EngTech; "Industry" image

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### Baker College's Mobile CNC Training Program

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 8 • Low: 9

Mobile technology training specific to CNC operation and programming to support local manufacturing workforce needs.

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### Experiential Learning/Training

Location/Impact: Genesee/Statewide

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 2 • Medium: 7 • Low: 13

Experiential learning/training

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### FIRST Robotics Community Center (FRCC)

Location/Impact: Kettering University Academic Building, Flint

CEDS Rank: High

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 15 • Low: 7

The FRCC project began in response to a need for programmatic support and facilities for local FIRST Robotics teams. The FRCC deepens Kettering's involvement by adding facility and equipment support for local FIRST teams and housing them on campus. The FRCC is expected to be ready to house up to 16 high school teams for the 2014-15 build season.

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### Training for Digital Manufacturing

Vital: Yes

Location/Impact: St. Clair County Community College - Acheson

Applied Technology Center, Port Huron, MI; Impact Area: Thumb Region Counties and the I-69 and I-94 Corridors.

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 12 • Medium: 6 • Low: 5

Addition of a 3D Fused Deposition Modeling printer system to the SC4 industrial Technology lab. By leveraging the newest transformative technology available, manufacturers can now deliver advanced performance in production-grade end-use parts and advanced functional prototyping. The Engineering Technology (ET) Department at St. Clair County Community College will use a state of the art 3D Fused Deposition Modeling printer system to advance manufacturing technology training along the I-69 and I-94 corridors and increase the region's prosperity through diversification of our manufacturing base.

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### Workforce and K-12/Higher Education

Location/Impact: Region 6: Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola Counties

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 11 • Low: 3

Region 6 has many entities that facilitate Pre GED, High School Completion and GED Preparation. However there are many participants that are confronted with barriers that keep them from being connected to much needed educational services. It is the intent of Region 6 to utilize any funding received to assist participants in our respective counties to overcome barriers, and help them accomplish their educational endeavors, and job seeking needs. Funding would be utilized to eliminate barriers such as geography/transportation, lack of awareness and misinformation, red tape (life coach), and to assist with high school completion and GED preparation.

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### Skill Builder Virtual Student Business Tours

Location/Impact: Region 6

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 9 • Medium: 8 • Low: 6

The project will be an extension of video-taped “tours” of businesses in Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac and Tuscola counties. Industry cluster companies from Genesee, Shiawassee and St. Clair counties will complete 10-12 video-taped virtual tours for use in Region 6 high schools to improve awareness of local job opportunities.

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### Flash-Driving Your Career Diary Project

Location/Impact: The Flash-Driving your Career Diary Project will operate in and impact the entire Prosperity Region 6 area.

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 7 • Medium: 7 • Low: 9

The Flash-Driving Your Career Diary Project will target young adults just entering high school. The project will supply pre-programmed flash drives designed to assist in building/maintaining a “career diary” and would include sections on employment, education, awards/achievements, etc. Regional resources would also be pre-loaded to improve every young adults awareness of options and opportunities

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### Training for Digital Manufacturing

Location/Impact: Regional

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 6 • Medium: 8 • Low: 7

This project involves the addition of a 3D Fused Deposition Modeling printer system to the SC4 industrial Technology lab. To enhance the training of students enrolling in the Engineering Technology (ET) degree and certificate programs at SC4 and others in the community.

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### TeenQuest Regional Replication and Expansion

Location/Impact: All

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 5 • Medium: 8 • Low: 10

Afterschool program model for replication or expansion

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### Business Division - Lab/Kitchen Upgrades

Location/Impact: Culinary Arts, Food Services Management, Baking and Pastry Arts

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 1 • Medium: 8 • Low: 12

Enrollment in the Culinary Arts, Food Services Management and Baking and Pastry Arts programs has grown and is at capacity in its current location. Upgrades to the lab/kitchen environment are needed to accommodate the increasing enrollment

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### Southern Lakes Branch Center (SLBC) Building Renovations

Location/Impact: SLBC/General Education Academic Program; OT, PT, Law Enforcement, IMS, EMT, Fire Safety

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 9 • Low: 14

Overall renovation, replacement and repurposing of the Southern Lakes site (FKA Consumers Energy Facility) to attain current educational standards and to maximize long term utility

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### Police Department

Location/Impact: Mayville

CEDS Rank: Low

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 0 • Medium: 4 • Low: 19

One full time officer

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### “Go back” Campaign for Continuing Higher Education and Certifications

Location/Impact: All

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 3 • Medium: 6 • Low: 10

Program to market and reach out to residents of the region who have some college credits, but have not graduated with a degree or certificate

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### Workforce Partnerships

#### Talent Tours and Marketing Campaign for Sector Attraction

Location/Impact: Region

CEDS Rank: Medium

Steering Committee Ranking: High: 12 • Medium: 9 • Low: 2

Manufacturing and agriculture sectors have a hard time attracting talent due to the lack of knowledge of the industry, misguided views of current industry characteristics, a lack of knowledge about the industry talent/hiring needs, etc. ThumbWorks! believe it is imperative to educate youth about what careers in those sectors are available in the region and educate parents, adult job seekers and educators. By creating a system that would allow students and/or adults to take Talent Tours of area manufacturing facilities and agribusinesses, we could change the conversation about work in that sector. It is also important to get to the educators/career counselors in the schools to give them a better perspective of careers in the region. Without first-hand knowledge of what types of positions businesses in the region are hiring for and the qualifications to becoming employed in available and future positions, they have a hard time “steering” students in the right direction as well. This project would fund professional development tours for students and adult job seekers and build relationships between the schools and the business sector where they may not already exist. A marketing campaign would also be helpful to get the word out to parents regarding wages, working conditions, talent needs in the region, education levels required etc., so that they can better lead their children into occupations that meet their interests/aptitudes and don’t require full four year degrees to make a great living.

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## Workforce Business Ecosystem

### Kettering University Student Automotive Research Area (KUSARA)

**Location/Impact:** The former Chevy in the Hole north of the Flint River on the campus of Kettering University in Flint, MI

**CEDS Rank:** Medium

**Steering Committee Ranking:** High: 4 • Medium: 10 • Low: 9

KUSARA will turn “Chevy in the Hole” into a vibrant and useful laboratory space for Kettering and the Flint community. KUSARA will serve as an automotive and motorsports proving ground where Kettering faculty, students, and industry partners will conduct research, host competitions, and participate in exceptional educational opportunities.

## Workforce Infrastructure

**Location/Impact:** Koylton Township, Kingston Community, Tuscola County

**CEDS Rank:** Low

**Steering Committee Ranking:** High: 0 • Medium: 5 • Low: 17

Demolish old elementary school, re-roof current elementary school

### Regional Legislative Caucus

Convening the entire delegation for inclusion and awareness within the plan. The creation of a regional caucus with the purpose of promoting policies that serve the region and enhance current initiatives. This caucus will then be able to advocate on behalf of components of the plan.

## Infrastructure

### Transportation Funding

**Vital:** Yes

**Location/Impact:** All

Create a political climate that supports an increase in comprehensive transportation through a multi-year multi-billion dollar investment

### Karegnondi Water Authority

**Vital:** Yes

**Location/Impact:** All

Development of a regional strategy for using the new Karegnondi Water Line as a means of business attraction, expansion, retention and specific industry sector development. Explore for opportunities to support extension of both raw and treated water to key production sites throughout the I-69 Thumb Region.

## Quality of Life

### Creation of an Innovation District

**Location/Impact:** City of Flint

Creation of an Innovation District incorporating McLaren, Kettering, Hurley, UM-Flint, Mott College, Baker, and former Flint East Plant for purposes of workforce development, jobs, and housing and commercial redevelopment.

### Chevy Commons

**Location/Impact:** City of Flint

Redevelopment of Chevy Commons into green space with surrounding high density redevelopment. Create a model of how to re-purpose old brownfield sites and generate significant commercial and housing development in the area

### Green Innovation Districts

**Location/Impact:** City of Flint

Flint’s new green innovation zone allows for green uses at a commercial level through re-use of vacant/abandoned property

## Economic Development

### Buick City Redevelopment

**Location/Impact:** City of Flint, I-69

Redevelopment of Buick City, the region’s largest brownfield, as incubator space. Geo-technical studies are needed to show how to build upon the slab.

