

SUMMARY OF I-69 THUMB REGION - REGIONAL PROSPERITY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The I-69 Thumb Region Regional Prosperity Steering Committee met at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at the Ferris Wheel in Flint.

Chairperson Lucas opened the meeting at 10.30 a.m.

I. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

Chairperson Lucas stated that there will be a change in the line-up of the agenda as Katie Curnow has another appointment and must leave soon.

II. Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, Katie Curnow

a. I-69 Thumb Region Website

Ms. Curnow thanked everyone that filled out the surveys, the feedback was appreciated. The website went live recently and everything is built to scale. Ms. Curnow presented the website and reviewed the biggest changes and stated that she is looking for photos and stories, even if you are not sure about it send the photos and stories to her anyway. Discussion ensued.

III. CIB Planning, Justin Sprague

a. Update on DMAP Housing Report Focus Groups

Anna Pinter introduced Sarah Crane from UM-Ann Arbor and stated that Ms. Crane was from the DMAP office who funded this grant.

Justin Sprague stated that they received a lot of feedback from the focus groups.

What was learned on the Buyers side:

- Much of the population is at the limit of what they can afford.
- Residents still have high levels of debt. (credit cards, student loans)
- Some buyers have been able to save for cash down payments.
- 47% of the workforce within the region is traveling to work outside the region.

What was learned on the Builders side:

- A very tight labor market has constrained the construction industry by adding cost and delays to the construction timeline. Many new builds average 7-10 months to complete.
- Regulatory environment is adding major costs to the construction process of 20%-30% in some cases before the foundation is poured.

- The number of building permits is on the rise across the region, but not at the rate they should be.
- In 2004, the cost of new construction was between \$115 and \$130 per sq. ft.
- In 2018, the cost of new construction was between \$170 and \$200 per sq. ft.
- There is a need for a uniform and consistent development review process across the region.

Discussion ensued.

b. Project Idea Discussion

If a project were to be done at the regional level that relates to streamlining of the review process it should be along the lines of the guidelines and best practices.

It was recommended that the next phase of this project should be a rate cost review study.

IV. UM-Flint EDA Center, Paula Nas

a. Updates

Paula Nas stated that MI Start Smart is in the testing stage. Her team is creating a short promotional video and hope to show it at the next meeting.

Ms. Nas introduced one of the UM-Flint research assistants.

The research assistant stated that she wanted to share the three (3) most interesting things she found while doing some research.

- In the region over the last year there was a steady decrease in Unemployment.
- Percentage of population 65 and older in our region is above both the Michigan average and the national average.
- Cost of Living all over the region is well below the national average.

V. Partnership Projects Update

a. Tourism (Community Website Grant, Art in Place, First Impressions)

Anna Pinter stated that last week an email went out to the communities announcing the Community Website Grant. There will be nine (9) \$1,000 grants to help a community to either update or create a new website.

Art in Place grant opportunity has \$10,000 available in funding. Funding will be for two (2) or three (3) communities. The idea is for a community to work with an artist that will do a piece of art in place.

First Impressions Tourism (FIT), two (2) communities will be selected for this project.

b. Education

Anna Pinter stated that there is \$27,500 in 2018 funding for Education. The Education Action Team will discuss projects. The goal is to have this money spent by March 2019.

Anna Pinter thanked Ms. Paula Nas for hosting the I-69 Thumb Region Steering Committee.

- VI. Next Meeting
 - a. Wednesday, June 13, 2018 at TBD
Anna Pinter stated that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 13, 2018, place to be determined.

Chairperson Lucas adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

- VII. Tour of Ferris Wheel (optional)
The committee took a tour of the Ferris Wheel.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debby Compton, Secretary
GLS Region V