

Small Communities – Peer Group (Meeting 1: March 19)

Attendees (communities by County)

- **Wayne**
 - Harper Woods
 - Grosse Pointe Farms
 - Grosse Pointe, City
 - Grosse Pointe Park
 - City of Wayne
 - Allen Park
 - Belleville
 - Downriver Committee Conference – representing – Ecorse & Riverview
- **Oakland**
 - Farmington
 - Holly
 - South Lyon
 - Lyon Twp
 - Ortonville
 - Milford
- **Macomb**
 - Fraser
 - Warren
 - Utica
- **St Clair**
 - Port Huron Twp
 - Marysville
 - City of Yale
- **Washtenaw**
 - Saline
- **Livingston**
 - Howell
- **Monroe**
 - Monroe

Main Challenges

- **Brownfields and Legacy Contamination Sites – resources to redevelop**
 - Monroe – Coal Plant Closing impacts and strategies
 - Utica – 22 acre brownfield near Clinton River, parks, downtown (need help with EGLE). City wants to develop housing and can't get funding for clean up
 - Milford – need assistance for missing middle housing – have brownfields that could be suitable... community is built out with limited space

- Marysville – highlighted the MoPar closing and need for more planning – coal site redevelopment
- Aging Infrastructure
 - Theme by many
 - Ortonville and surrounding townships – inability to pay for coordination of Sewer; need assistance for funding
 - Howell – 20in pipe burst, over \$100k to fix.
 - Waste and drinking water, sewer, roads – need help in identifying and increases state and federal resources and commitment for local needs
- Data Centers
 - General theme and challenge – looking for resources
 - Majority of communities in the room have or are considering a moratorium
 - Saline highlighted the need for early coordination. They are currently struggling with the amount of expected traffic and trucks for the construction, which routing is slated to be along Main Street, which is US-12
 - General need for additional information/education/guidance
 - Specifically highlighted by Lyon Twp and Allen Park
- Downtown Strategies
 - Lyon Twp – marketing and messaging about the downtown (New Hudson) – small and in need of assistance
 - Utica – got rid of DDA – all tax capture went to businesses
 - Specific guidance and support for small downtowns – Yale – vacant building strategies – assistance in navigating state policy/resources
 - Marysville – NEED a defined downtown – wants to learn from others
 - Need for education and place for small downtowns to coordinate and learn from one another
 - This led into Successes (see below)
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- Miscellaneous –
 - Economic Development support – including diversification and transition resources
 - Human Resources & Staff Capacity challenges
 - Need resources for strategic planning and start up/small business assistance
 - Still challenges with “brain drain” – attracting and retaining talent
 - Both residents and community staffing
 - Challenge of losing good staff to larger communities – a lot of turn over
 - Long-term financial stability and planning for coordination of services
 - Public Safety was highlighted but a general theme of collaboration resources/ideas
 - Van Buren and Belleville – challenge of waste management and impacts of land fills

Successes / Highlights

- Farmington and Monroe highlighted their work with retirement and pension benefits
- Farmington – Semi-finalist for Great American Main Street
- Passionate staff who are energized – they are doing a lot and wearing multiple hats
 - o Success today – worry about burnout and lose of staff to larger communities, etc
- Main Street and downtowns are heart of the community – much successes
 - o South Lyon about to embark on a multiyear \$12 million redevelopment of main street
 - Exciting but worrisome for existing businesses
- Harper Woods – focus on building a Community Center – looking for resources
 - o Proud of Fraser Square Neighborhood and redevelopment of Eastland Mall
- Saline - \$2.7 million aquatic center
 - o Acquisition of the Davenport Mansion – very exciting!
 - o \$80 million Waste Water Treatment project
- Belleville – new city hall to open in April
- Warren – having success with new Land Bank
- Grosse Pointe, City – 97% occupancy rate downtown; adaptive reuse strategy
- Milford – Central Park Project
- Ortonville – very strong DDA (volunteered to work with Utica regarding best practices
 - o Having a strong TIFF

Training Opportunities

- Need for “Done for You Services”
 - o Business attraction Tools
 - o Training on new technologies – AI tools and how to utilize

Next Steps /Future Hosts

- Consensus – Group should meet quarterly (or three times per year)
- Volunteers for a late Spring/Summer meeting (meeting to include site visits, tours, and presentations from city/community staff)
 - o City of Farmington
 - o City of Howell
 - o City of Belleville
 - o Marysville