

Water Strategy Framework for Implementation

Priority Area: Support investments in commercial and recreational harbors

The Water Strategy includes a set of recommendations to support investments in commercial and recreational harbors. The Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Office of the Great Lakes provide technical assistance to port communities and work with ports, maritime interests, industry, and planning groups to guide and support port development proposals and projects. Michigan is also an integral member of the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers that worked cooperatively within the region to develop the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Maritime Transportation System Strategy. In addition, the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission appointed in April 2016 will develop a set of recommendations and identify strategic best practices and financing options to modernize the state's transportation, water and sewer, energy, communications infrastructure, including commercial ports and harbors.

The MDNR in collaboration with the Waterways Advisory Commission work to support sustainability of recreational harbors to ensure public access and support Michigan's public boating system. The MDNR identifies and assesses recreational harbor capital outlay and dredging needs and priorities on an ongoing basis. Each year projects are reviewed and prioritized based on the highest and most urgent needs with funding allocations focused on health, safety, and welfare projects. Recently, the MDNR surveyed all of the Grant-in-Aid communities and state operated harbors to develop a comprehensive assessment of their future harbor capital outlay and dredging needs for the next five years to help direct future investments. In addition, the MDNR now requires a five year plan to be submitted by communities to qualify for future waterway grants to encourage longer term community planning centered around the harbor. To assist communities with long-term sustainability planning, the OGL, MDNR, and MEDC have also been working with university partners to develop a small harbor sustainable management strategy.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- As an integral member of the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, Michigan will work cooperatively within the region to implement the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Maritime Transportation System Strategy.
- The MDOT, MEDC, and OGL will work closely to develop an implementation plan that identifies specific actions Michigan will undertake as part of the Maritime Strategy, including working with federal agencies and other relevant parties to adequately maintain and improve the navigation infrastructure, identify new marine transportation opportunities, and incorporate marine transportation into the planning and investment programs of state departments.
- The MDOT, MEDC, and OGL will further define key actions necessary to support investments in ports and connectivity with trans-modal facilities based on findings of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission.
- The MEDC, MDOT, MDARD and OGL will provide technical assistance to port communities and work with ports, maritime interests, industry, and planning groups to guide and support port development proposals and projects.
- The MEDC and MDOT will work with the legislature to develop legislation that will address the needs of both public and private marine terminals and port-related properties.
- The MDNR will complete the needs assessment of all public Grant-in-Aid harbors.

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- The MDNR will assess current and future recreational boating trends by conducting various surveys in collaboration with the Michigan Boating Industry Association.
- The MDNR will develop and implement a sustainable fiscal model based on the needs assessment and future boating trends that will allow the MDNR to continue to support the recreational harbor program while reducing overall infrastructure needs.
- The MDNR will develop and sustain vibrant marketing strategies to promote public boating and its impact on tourism.
- The MDNR will ensure that policies for equitable public boating remain relevant to further sustainability of Michigan's public boating system.
- The OGL, MDNR, and MEDC will work collaboratively with university partners to streamline and enhance technical assistance to communities to improve and facilitate investment in recreational harbors that support their sustainability.
- The State will continue to advocate for the use of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to dredge Michigan's commercial and recreational harbors.

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