

West Michigan Shoreline Food Processing Initiative

WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE FOOD PROCESSING INITIATIVE GOAL

BUNDLE EXISTING LOCAL agriculture attributes with the benefits of expanding regional food processing capabilities. Position the results in a location to thrive. Food processing in Michigan has the potential for rapid growth especially in export markets.

VISION FOR GROWTH

There is a strong base of agricultural and food processing related activity throughout Michigan and West Michigan to include location and establishment of food processing operations, education training, and product development and incubation.

What is missing is a holistic view of the sector to include alignment and integration of synergistic strategies and opportunities.

In addition, the positive results of growing the industry can become a basis for addressing economic challenges in the region.

Michigan's 300 agricultural commodities can supply products for natural food providers, ready-to-eat products, and private label markets.

Export opportunities exist for raw products and processed foods that will drive economic growth.

American food products are highly sought in international markets because of their quality and safety.

Food products produced using renewable energy is a marketing trend with growth potential that matches Michigan's ability to meet this energy demand.

WHY MUSKEGON AND WEST MICHIGAN?

- Strategic access to prime fruit and vegetable growers and proximity to other agricultural suppliers.
- Access to underutilized waste water treatment capacity
- Michigan's fresh water capacity
- Michigan's growing renewable energy sector
- Logistic and distribution attributes — Western Michigan's largest commercial deep water port with easy access to rails and highways. Proposed Cross Lake Shipping provides direct links to western U.S. and Asian markets

The West Michigan Food Processing Initiative is supported by the Consumers Energy Foundation, Community Foundation for Muskegon County and other regional stakeholders.



HOW IT WILL WORK

IMPLEMENTATION

- Identify industrial processing locations-existing or potential
- Identify and link supply chain
- Identify target industries who plan to expand and export to Asia

EDUCATION/TRAINING

- Link to education partners including Michigan State University, Muskegon Community College, Grand Valley State University and others
- Identify labor pool needs
- Build food processing education curriculum with customization options as target industry sectors identified

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT INCUBATOR

- Link existing "kitchens" in Muskegon and other locations in region for product development
- Set up collaboration with culinary programs to locate test restaurant incubator for graduating chefs
- Expand food processing incubation center locations

LOGISTICS

- Promote Port of Muskegon as key agriculture port
- Assist development of Cross Lake Shipping service for new market growth
- Increase rail and shipping capacity for supply chain for a regional food processing cluster
- Assist with establishment of food hub and distribution networks.