

Fact Sheet

June 2021

In the spring of 2021, the Midland Business Alliance (MBA) Board of Directors approved the formation of a task force to examine any infrastructure issue that impacts the quality of life and economic vitality of the Midland area. As its first task, this [MBA Advisory Committee on Infrastructure](#) was charged with finding the best ways to work with local, state and federal partners to address longstanding flooding issues that impact the citizens, business community and economic development in the Midland area. Two areas of concern are the sanitary sewer issues in Midland and the legacy challenges of flooding throughout Midland County and surrounding areas.

History of Flooding

The city of Midland receives the waters from four river systems: the Tobacco River and Tittabawassee River to the north and the Pine River and Chippewa River to the west. The waters of these four rivers and their tributaries meet at the confluence of the Tittabawassee and Chippewa in downtown Midland.

Significant rains and floods have occurred in the Midland area in 1986, 1996, 2013, 2017 and 2020. On May 19, 2020, the Edenville Dam and Sanford Dam were breached after days of heavy rains, causing catastrophic flooding in the village of Sanford, the city of Midland, and properties up and down the river system. Flash flood emergencies were issued, approximately 10,000 Edenville, Sanford and Midland residents were evacuated, and more than 2,500 homes were damaged or destroyed, with losses estimated at more than \$200 million in this single flood event. Time and again, these floods have negatively impacted individuals, jobs, economic growth, property values and tax revenues in Midland and across the Tittabawassee River Watershed.

First Task: Reduce Flood Frequency and Severity

The MBA Advisory Committee on Infrastructure has the goal of finding and developing innovative, long-term options that could lessen the frequency and reduce the severity of flooding in the Midland area. While future flooding cannot be eliminated completely, the committee is focused on making lasting improvements and improving resilience by working with the City of Midland, Midland County and surrounding counties, area citizens, businesses and organizations, and other local, state and federal stakeholders, like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The committee is focused on environment-based flood mitigation measures, which potentially could include the creation of wetlands, natural floodplains, and eco-sensitive approaches to slow the flow rate of rivers, creeks and streams during significant rain events.

Key Tasks and Initiatives

- **Engineering services** – The first step is to learn “what we don’t know” and gain valuable insight from experts. Engineers and scientists will help with data accumulation, a review of past flood and hydrological studies, technical assistance, and development of sound concepts for potential flood mitigation and infrastructure improvements.
- **Community involvement** – An important goal is to create broad and wide community engagement and participation from individuals, community groups and leaders, neighborhoods, businesses and various organizations. This will include townhall meetings, community workshops and regular communication.
- **Advocacy and partnerships** – The committee will engage with federal, state and local leaders, agencies and offices. This includes working closely with the City of Midland and Midland County officials, with surrounding counties, and with agencies and organizations such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and the Four Lakes Task Force. The committee will also advocate for support from our state and federal representatives and senators.
- **Conservation** – Collaboration with conservation and environmental organizations for floodlands is important to finding beneficial solutions.
- **Finance** – The committee will advocate for government support and other innovative financing of future projects.

Funding and Support

Many local foundations and businesses have already made donations to support the committee’s research, flood study and initial planning efforts. The committee functions under the Midland Business Alliance Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization. This allows the committee to gather donations and funding specifically to help support the research, planning and execution of flood mitigation and resilience efforts. The committee has a fiduciary role with any donations/funds, meaning that it must demonstrate the careful, responsible use of monies entrusted to the initiative. Committee expenditures follow normal budgetary protocols, with oversight from the MBA Board of Directors and the MBA President and CEO.

Timeline

Solutions won’t come overnight. In fact, mitigation efforts are likely to take years. But the first steps involve an engineering study.

The committee is in the initial planning phase, working with Midland County officials and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The committee plans to select an engineering firm(s) to collaborate with the Corps of Engineers on a study and report on the existing watershed and

potential flood mitigation projects. The start date and duration of the study is to be determined.

The study results may include potential projects like improvements to sanitary sewer systems, drain improvements, or the development of wetlands, natural floodplains and conservation easements. But the recommendations from the experts – and the community – will drive the types of infrastructure improvements that are considered.

Throughout the process, area citizens and other local, state and federal stakeholders will all play key roles in determining the best pathway forward. Eventually, the proposed solutions will need to successfully move through government funding processes. As you can see, this will be a long-term effort.

More Information

Watch the local news media for updates on the committee's progress. We will also share information at these locations:

www.MBAmi.org/FloodStudy

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