CITY OF FLINT DEDICATED STAFFING CAPACITY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Dedicated Staffing Capacity project trained people for Flint's EV plans. The City of Flint led this initiative, working with GST Michigan Works, Mott Community College, the University of Michigan Flint Office of Economic Development, and Kettering University. This project set out to answer the question:

What was stopping Flint from acting on the opportunities the EV transition creates?

The answer was not a shortage of ideas, but a shortage of people with time to write the grant application, answer the call from a company reviewing a site, or get colleges and employers into the same room. With support from the MiVTTP program, the Michigan Association of Planning delivered eleven and a half hours of on-site training to the City of Flint staff and officials who review charging sites, capital budgets, and new development.



WHY FLINT

Flint helped build the American auto industry. As that industry shifts to electric vehicles, the jobs are changing, along with the skills workers need and the places companies choose to invest. Flint's leaders set a goal to prepare residents, workers, and companies for that shift, with education and job training at the center. They also saw the transition as a chance to change how people outside Flint see the city. Consumers Energy, Flint's electric utility and a member of the planning team, has committed to net zero carbon emissions from its electric operations by 2040 and to powering one million electric vehicles across its service area by 2030. That means more chargers to site and more electrical upgrades to plan in Flint.

Flint already has much of what this transition needs. Mott Community College and the University of Michigan-Flint are there to train the workforce. The Flint Mass Transit Authority runs the bus system, and GST Michigan Works connects job seekers with employers. What the city has lacked, however, is staff time and knowledge to coordinate them. Charging sites and electrical upgrades need approval through City Hall, and each one needs someone equipped with the skillset to help see it through. Training the people who make those decisions was the first step in the process.

HOW WE GOT HERE: The MiVTTP Process

MiVTTP is led by the University of Michigan's Economic Growth Institute (EGI) and Michigan Clean Cities (MICC). The work follows three phases:

Phase 1: Listening Sessions: The MiVTTP team hosted comprehensive listening sessions to gather community feedback on local electrification needs and economic transition opportunities. Participants represented a broad cross-section of the community, from elected officials to community organizers.

Phase 2: Strategic Planning: EGI facilitated strategic planning sessions with a diverse group of Flint leaders from local government, utilities, transit, economic development, workforce development, and education using the Allovance Method. The community submitted nine project proposals, which were evaluated against five weighted strategic priorities. Three were recommended for Phase 3 implementation based on their high strategic value and feasibility, including the Dedicated Staffing Capacity project.

Phase 3: Workforce Solutions and Technical Assistance: The MiVTTP team worked to scope the three prioritized projects, establishing clear deliverables, timelines, and execution parameters. Dedicated Staffing Capacity was one of these projects and supported staff time and knowledge for coordinating workforce partners, pursuing grants, and responding to development inquiries. MiVTTP arranged three on-site training sessions from the Michigan Association of Planning to build on the skills of city staff and officials.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Each of the three sessions covered a type of decision city staff and officials face as EV projects arrive: planning and budgeting for new infrastructure, ruling on zoning requests, and managing legal risk. All three were held in Flint and have been completed.



The Master Planning Process and Capital Improvements Programs: This session covered how to write, update, and fund two documents that shape what gets built in Flint. The master plan sets the city's long-term vision for land use and growth. The capital improvements program schedules the public projects the city will pay for and when. Charging stations, electrical upgrades, and sites prepared for new employers have to appear in both before they can be funded and built.

Advanced Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA): The ZBA rules on projects the zoning ordinance does not clearly address. That includes many EV projects, because older zoning rules often do not include charging stations. This session used recent court rulings and case studies to inform decisions that follow the law and are more likely to withstand a legal challenge.

Risk Management and Utility Basics: Communities are being sued over planning and zoning decisions more often. This session covered conflicts of interest, how to use judgment during a project review without creating legal risk for the city, and what a developer can reasonably expect from the city. The goal is approvals that are less likely to be overturned in court and a review process that companies considering Flint can rely on.