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MEMORANDUM

TO: Port/Rail/Transportation Strategic Planning Committee

FROM: Judith Kell, Grant Coordinator

RE: Synopsis of Port Information

DATE: April 3, 2012

Below please find a short synopsis of the material that I am sending to you for your review prior to the April 11, 2012 meeting.

The issue of port development has been studied by a variety of groups during the last two decades. The Muskegon 2000 Lakefront Development Plan developed by the Lakefront Task Force Development Committee of the Muskegon Economic Growth Alliance included a vision for the redevelopment of the Muskegon Lake lakefront from Pere Marquette Park on the west to Veterans Memorial Causeway on the east. One of the crucial elements of the Plan was the re-establishment of Muskegon as a recognized Great Lakes port, which it was until the early 1970's. In the early 1960s and 1970s Muskegon had more than 200 foreign and domestic ship visits per year.

Many of the recommendations in the Lakefront Development Plan were implemented including the Cross Lake Ferry, the development of Heritage Landing, the GVSU Water Research Institute, the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center (MAERC), the U.S.S Silversides Maritime Museum and other ventures. The Plan included other developments such as farmers and seafood marketplace, and other amenities that have not yet come to fruition.

The recommendation of the re-establishment of Muskegon as a commercial port appears to have gained some traction in 1998 as MEGA requested that legislation be introduced creating a Port Authority. It would be helpful to have the stakeholders provide a brief history as to what transpired at this time period as the legislation did not appear to have been introduced and the issue of the port and future port development become dormant after some of the recommendations of the Plan were implemented such as the Cross Lake Ferry.

In 2010, Muskegon Area First developed a Port of Muskegon Team in an effort to inform the public and stakeholders about the value of the Port of Muskegon. The Muskegon Area First Team assembled information regarding Muskegon Lake, the railway service to the Port of Muskegon, the nearest highways linking major cities, and a list of twelve business operations operating in the Port of Muskegon. The Muskegon City Commission resolved that the City of Muskegon would become a member to the Michigan Port Collaborative with a commitment to prepare a community and regional asset inventory in conjunction with Muskegon Area First and the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce in 2010.

The West Michigan Port Operator established a website outlining the services that they provide. They have been involved in the Port of Muskegon team with Muskegon Area First.

Mr. Brian Mulnix of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission published a paper in 2010 discussing the port development in Muskegon. This paper was distributed to you at the March 3, 2012 organizational meeting.

Over the past 14 years there has been an ongoing interest in both the Port of Muskegon as well as the development of a Port Authority for the Port of Muskegon. There have been studies conducted, a Port Collaborative developed, a need identified, and recommendations made, but not implemented. A Port Authority has been successful in some other Great Lakes cities such as Milwaukee, but not as successful in other communities.