

## Section A. Organization Information:

### 1. Brief summary of organization's history:

In 2009, the Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) of Bay, Midland and Saginaw Counties collaborated to form what is now Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau (the regional bureau) and the Great Lakes Bay Region Quality of Life Council, also known as the Go Great Foundation (the foundation).

The vision was to enable these three CVB corporations to operate under one regional umbrella, to reduce overhead expenses by eliminating duplication of efforts, increase program investments and invest in sense of place product development (aka: tourism economic development). Looking at data comparing the base year of 2009 (the last full fiscal year prior to any reorganization occurring) to 2018 (last audited financial data available) you will see that the vision has been exceeded.

The following chart shows information regarding the overall structure of the Bay County CVB, Midland County CVB and Saginaw County CVB organizations. Each of these organizations operate as 501 (C) 6; not for profit organizations. Each CVB owns its own assets, employs one full time travel expert at its location and is responsible to develop and finance tourism economic development projects within its county borders working with the Go Great Foundation. Please note that the Go Great Foundation is referenced with economic development under each of the individual County CVB Board governance functions. All marketing and advertising efforts are accomplished by the regional bureau.

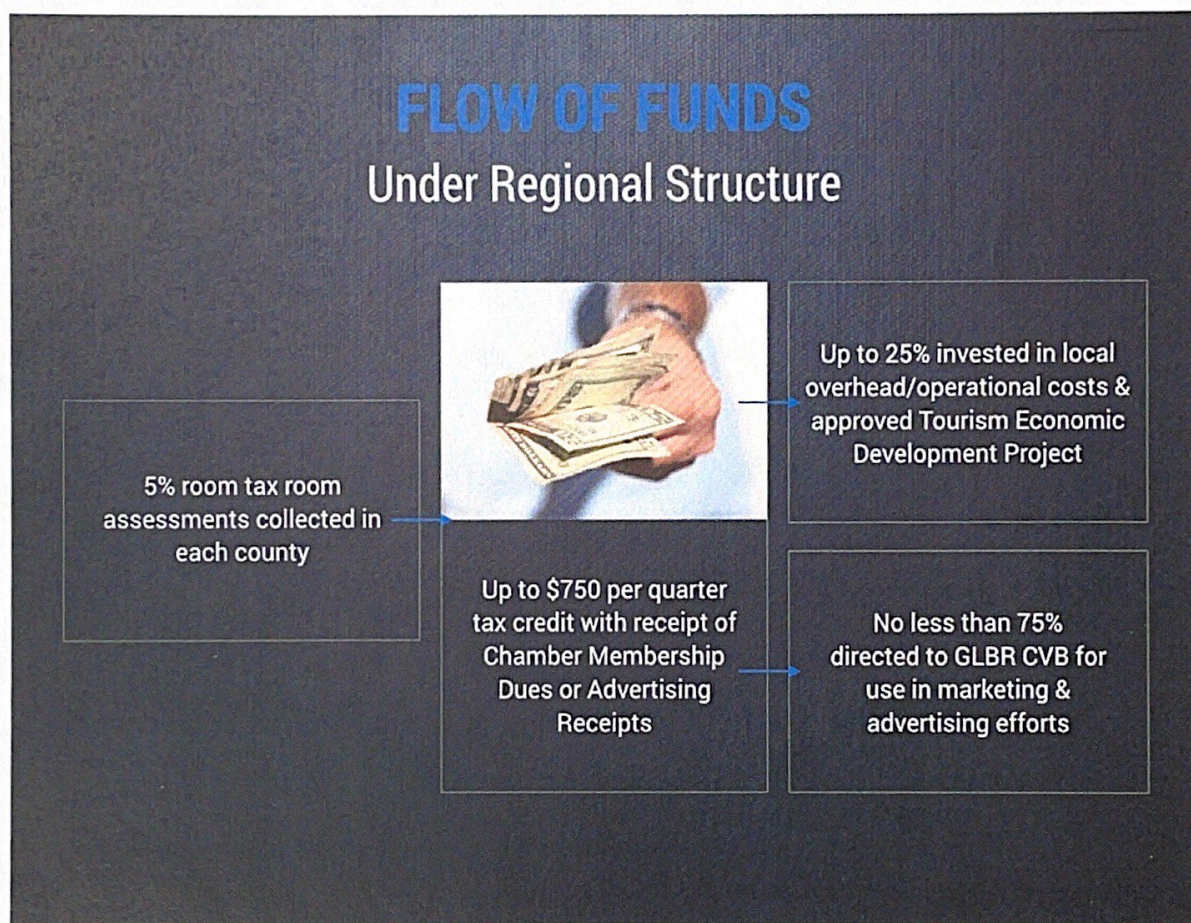


**Chart One** provides a summary of financial information regarding how each County CVB is funded and how money flows to fund County CVB overhead expenses, tourism economic development investments and the regional bureau. It starts when a person checks into a lodging facility within one of our three counties. This person is charged the cost of the room, plus state sales tax of 6%, and a 5% assessment/tax on the cost of the room. The lodging facility forwards this 5% assessment/tax to its respective County CVB. The County CVB divides this money for two purposes.

Purpose One: This portion (25% of the total) is reserved for County CVB operations and tourism economic development programs within the County borders.

Purpose Two: This portion (75% of the total) is reserved for the Regional CVB to fund marketing and advertising that drives overnight tourism to the Region.

Chart One:





**Charts Two and Three** provide information for each County CVB, the assessment/tax rate, total customer spending at County lodging properties and the amount collected by each County CVB in the years 2009 and 2018. You will note the rate difference between 2009 and 2018. The rate was equalized in 2012. To more easily understand the growth that has taken place, please reference the total hotel customer expenditures' columns.

Chart Two:

| 2009 BASE YEAR COLLECTIONS |      |                                   |                    |
|----------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| COMMUNITY                  | RATE | TOTAL HOTEL CUSTOMER EXPENDITURES | CVB COLLECTIONS    |
| Bay County CVB             | 2%   | \$7,812,350                       | \$156,247          |
| Midland County CVB         | 2%   | \$13,771,800                      | \$275,436          |
| Saginaw County CVB         | 5%   | \$20,574,100                      | \$1,028,705        |
| <b>TOTALS</b>              |      | <b>\$42,158,250</b>               | <b>\$1,460,388</b> |

Chart Three:

| 2018 TOTAL HOTEL CUSTOMER EXPENDITURES AND CVB COLLECTIONS |      |                                   |                    |
|--|------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| COMMUNITY  | RATE | TOTAL HOTEL CUSTOMER EXPENDITURES | CVB COLLECTIONS    |
| Bay County CVB   | 5%   | \$16,597,760                      | \$829,888          |
| Midland County CVB   | 5%   | \$22,010,520                      | \$1,100,526        |
| Saginaw County CVB   | 5%   | \$38,032,860                      | \$1,901,643        |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  |      | <b>\$76,641,140</b>               | <b>\$3,832,057</b> |



**Chart Four** provides information for each County CVB overhead expense reduction metrics:

Chart Four:

| 2009 vs 2018 OVERHEAD EXPENSES     |                        |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| COMMUNITY                          | 2009 Overhead Expenses | 2018 Overhead Expenses |
| Bay County CVB                     | \$177,770              | \$69,158               |
| Midland County CVB                 | \$220,020              | \$140,936              |
| Saginaw County CVB                 | \$319,400              | \$173,875              |
| TOTALS                             | \$717,190              | \$383,969              |
| *54% decrease in Overhead Expenses |                        |                        |

**Chart Five** provides information for each County CVB marketing investments (the funding that flows to the Regional CVB):

Chart Five:

| 2009 vs 2018 MARKETING INVESTMENTS      |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| COMMUNITY                               | 2009 Marketing Investments | 2018 Marketing Investments |
| Bay County CVB                          | \$34,946                   | \$721,877                  |
| Midland County CVB                      | \$26,878                   | \$829,288                  |
| Saginaw County CVB                      | \$728,600                  | \$1,370,833                |
| TOTALS                                  | \$790,424                  | \$2,921,998*               |
| *370% increase in Marketing Investments |                            |                            |

The foundation is currently funded by each County CVB as a result of the savings in overhead expense, the elimination of duplication of efforts, and through contributions, gifts and grants received for specific foundation efforts.



2. Brief statement of organization's mission and goals:

The Great Lakes Bay Region Quality of Life Council, aka: Go Great Foundation, serves as the fiduciary providing funds for tourism economic development projects and activities within Bay, Midland and Saginaw Counties that are facilitated by the three County CVB organizations. The mission of the foundation is to benefit the citizens and guests of Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region by identifying and remediating gaps within the leisure time activity and sense of place space. This is accomplished through product development efforts, services and education. Projects are identified that serve to improve the quality of life and sense of place for regional citizens, guests/visitors and also serves to attract talent and retain our citizenry.

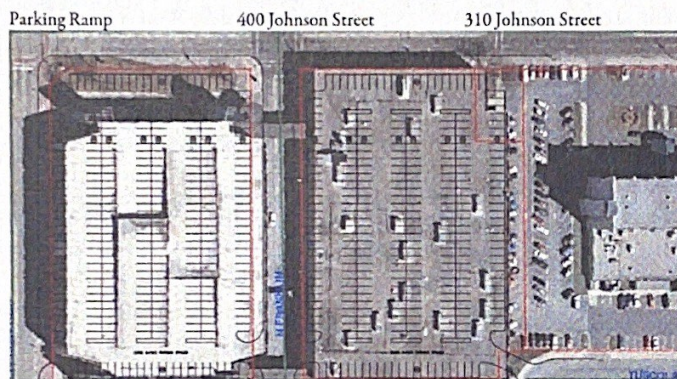
*Note: Sense of place is important for both residents and visitors alike. Sense of place is a facet of quality of life and includes characteristics and perceptions that people have about their community. Tourism Economic Development puts forth efforts to improve the sense of place, thus improving the quality of life for the residents and visitors and improving community perception.*



3. Description of current programs, activities and accomplishments:

- a. The Go Great Foundation, partnering with the Saginaw County Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCCVB), has a proven track record. The first project deployed was the purchase and razing of the former Crown Plaza Hotel and International Center in downtown Saginaw. These two properties were in disrepair and were challenged with ongoing criminal activities while being located adjacent to The Dow Event Center. The 1.2 million-dollar investment made by our organization and working with the Saginaw Land Bank Authority and the County of Saginaw, allowed for these blighted properties to be removed. This investment paved the way for Saginaw Future, Inc., the County of Saginaw, the Dow Event Center and SMG, Inc. to partner with Spence Brothers, Inc. to build an outdoor Event Park and band shell. The facility is named the Huntington Event Park. Now this once blighted area is an active entertainment venue in the heart of Saginaw's downtown entertainment district and has spurred additional investments within this area. We were proud to have played a financial and leadership role in this effort.

From this:

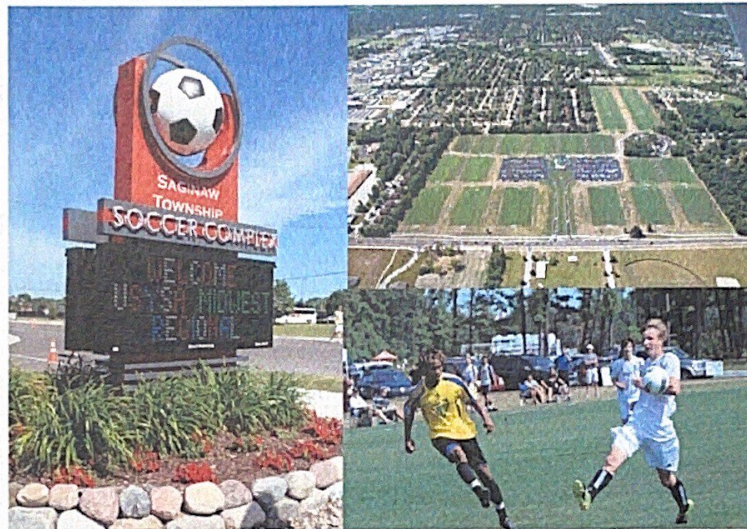


To this:





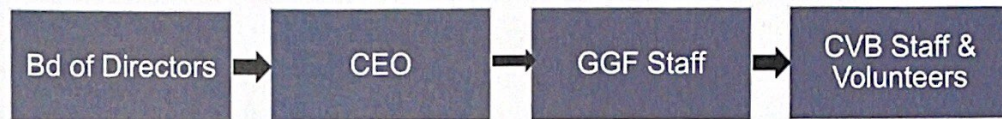
- b. The Go Great Foundation, partnering again with the SCCVB, focused on the expansion of the Saginaw Township Soccer Complex. The complex was expanded from 16 contiguous fields to 21 contiguous fields. As part of this expansion, drainage systems were updated, a new road was added, and a second parking lot was constructed. This expansion enabled the SCCVB to bid for the U.S. Youth Soccer Midwest Regional Championship in 2012 and again in 2019. These events included 215 teams of both boys and girls ages 13 to 19 to compete in this premier soccer competition. Each tournament had a direct spending amount in excess of 12 million dollars. This is not including the multiplier effect benefitting our region, but actual dollars spent that benefitted our youth, created jobs and benefited our leisure assets such as hotel, restaurants, attractions, events, grocery stores and gas stations, etc. In addition, Saginaw Valley State University was successful in attracting several 4-year students to their campus. Before their event participation, these students said they would not have considered SVSU as a university choice.





4. Organizational chart, including board, staff and volunteer involvement:

Go Great Foundation



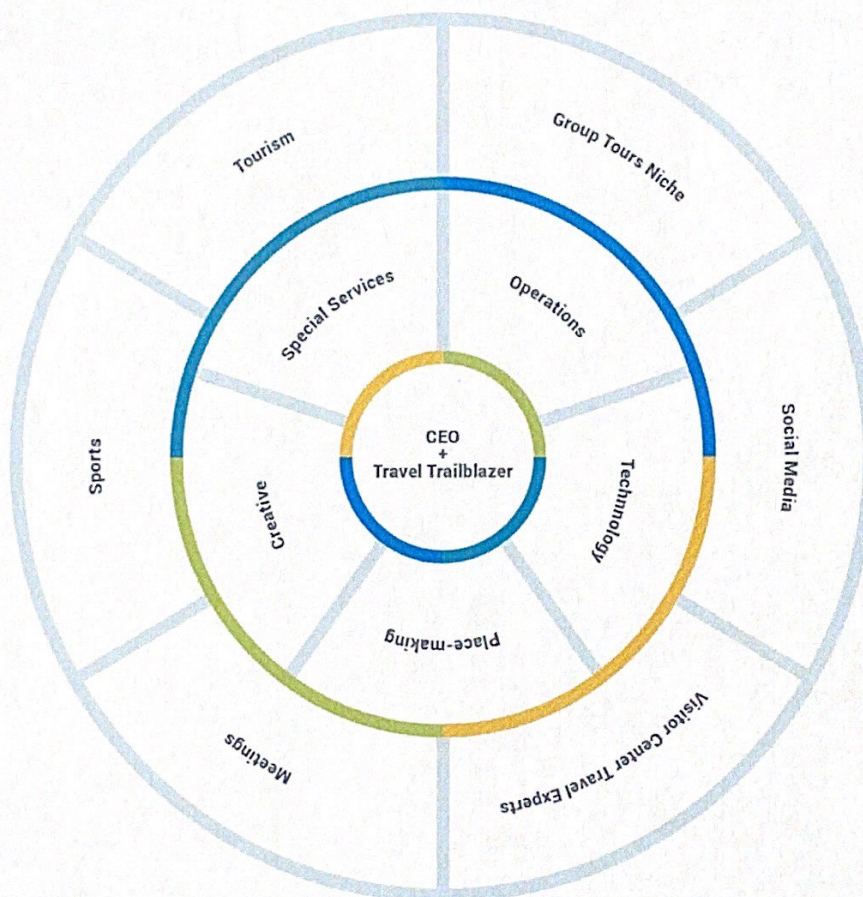
Scott Carmona  
Tim Shelton  
Nancy Parker

Annette M. Rummel

Ann Doyle

Multiple people

Go Great Staff Chart





## Section B. Purpose of Grant:

1. Statement of needs/problems to be addressed, description of target population and how they will benefit:

In collaboration with DOW, Consumers Energy, the Go Great Foundation and others, the problem that this grant request will serve to resolve is transformation of the primary entrance (the front door) to the City of Saginaw. The area to be addressed is currently foreboding, underutilized, unsafe and blighted. This project will rectify this situation and pave the way for additional investments and developments within this area of the City of Saginaw.

The target populations include adjacent businesses, nearby residents, an adjacent church, the City of Saginaw Entertainment district (Huntington Event Park, Dow Event Center, Saginaw Club, Temple Theatre, Saginaw Children's Zoo, Mid-Michigan Children's Museum, etc.), Saginaw City and County police departments, Michigan Department of Transportation, the Saginaw County Parks Department, Saginaw Bay Land Conservancy, Fishermen, and visitors to the City of Saginaw.

The existing front door to the City of Saginaw:





To this type of area:



The benefits each of these target populations will enjoy are:

- Improve the impression (especially the first impression) of the City of Saginaw
- Re-unite Saginaw's north and south sides divided by I-675
- Creation of an inviting walkable space (especially for the hundreds of employees of the Michigan Unemployment Office to downtown restaurant facilities (existing and future) and as an exercise area.
- Transformation of an area that is currently foreboding, underutilized, unsafe and blighted into a well-lighted, universally accessible, cultural, entertainment, recreational and welcoming space
- Improved safety as a result of the space being lighted, well-kept and cared for
- Resolves illegal parking within this space
- Reserves space for the existing trails system as a future trail hub
- Provides river's edge fishing access points at one of our nation's best walleye fisheries
- Visitors will be attracted off I-675 and delight in the history shared with art, projections, changeable ambient lighting, the tone and atmosphere created and activities that occur at this new and improved Saginaw City Center Urban park

This project improves quality of life by creating a sense of place and meets our economic development requirements for the community and for tourism.



2. Description of project goals and objectives (measurable, if possible) and statement as to whether this is a new or ongoing part of the sponsoring organization:

The Henry Marsh Bridge-Cement Sky project is a new project within the Go Great Foundation's ongoing economic development strategy.

In July of 2017, the Go Great Foundation, in partnership with each County CVB, completed a study entitled Great Lakes Bay Regional Destination Asset Analysis. Data for this study was gathered from the following sources: Bay, Midland and Saginaw County's Economic Development Organizations, Chamber of Commerce Organizations, Young Professional Networks and from Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance. We also leveraged land use plans from each of the 3 counties to develop study results. The study provided insight into gaps within our destination's asset base. The Henry Marsh Bridge-Cement Sky project goals include addressing three areas specifically identified within this report:

- **A weakness:** Lack of critical mass within downtown Saginaw. Downtown Saginaw does not currently offer a selection of bars, restaurants and nightlife to generate a critical mass of activity. This impacts the pre and post spending from events occurring at the Huntington Event Park, Dow Event Center and deters young professionals and others from frequenting, residing and doing business within the City's center.
  - **Becomes a strength** by providing a venue, located at the City center's "front door" that is inviting, provides an exciting welcoming atmosphere that can be seen by traffic on I-675 and serving as an enticement for people to visit. This site will encourage current customers to the Huntington Event Park, Dow Event Center and entertainment district to enjoy pre and post event activities and linger longer spending more time and money. The Henry Marsh Bridge-Cement Sky project will contribute an additional asset to the needed critical mass within downtown Saginaw and spur additional entrepreneurial investments.
  - **Measurement** will be captured by traffic counts at the I-675 exit areas and use counts of events and activities will be recorded.
  - An example of how this area could be utilized is pictured below:





- **A weakness:** Lack of a critical mass of festival and event offerings within Saginaw's city center area. While the market does provide a limited collection of unique events, the events that do take place are primarily focused on accommodating locals and not attracting visitors from outside the region.
  - **Becomes a strength** by providing an entertainment overflow venue for major events organized at the Huntington Event Park and Dow Event Center. This area will also be used by small venue events such as food truck festivals, military, school and family reunions, receptions, outdoor wedding venue, art shows, educational and awareness presentations by the Saginaw Children's Zoo, Saginaw History Museum, Mid-Michigan's Children's Museum, etc. This area could also be used for sports such as skateboarding, pickleball, fishing, hockey and for tournaments and leisure time activities such as chess and checkers. There are many additional uses for this highly visible public space.
  - **Measurement** will be captured by the number and breadth of events that take place.
  - An example of how this area could be enjoyed is pictured below:



**SECRET SKATE PARK**



- **A critical link for the future:** The Henry Marsh Bridge-Cement Sky project is situated and suited to deliver the critical link and hub for the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail and the Harger Line Rail Trail. Continuous progress on linking the region's recreation, parks and nature-oriented assets is being accomplished by various community alliances. The Henry Marsh Bridge-Cement Sky project will ensure that this location is reserved and prepared once the trail's alliance reaches this area.
  - **The strength** is the continued collaboration between the groups working to make a difference within our region and the top-of-mind awareness of the needs of these other groups. We can resolve what might, at the very least, be a challenge, or worse a barrier to other groups accomplishing their future goals. Additionally, continued activation of the natural assets will only enhance the appeal of the community.
  - **Measurement** will be captured by the number of people who frequent this area for recreational purposes and [hyperlink to the trail website](#).
  - An example may regarding how these trails may be lined is pictured below:

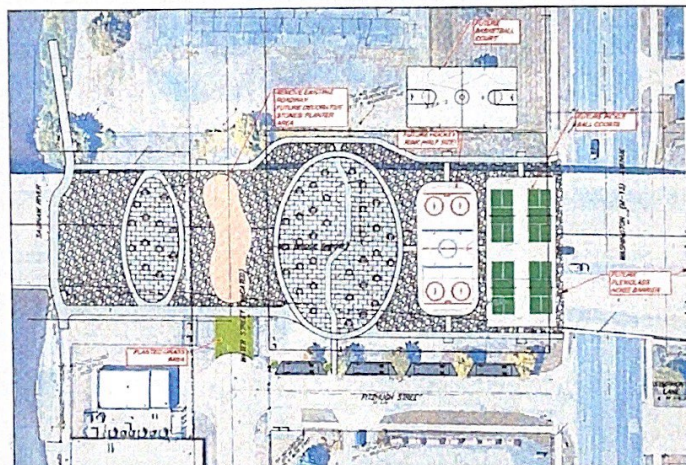
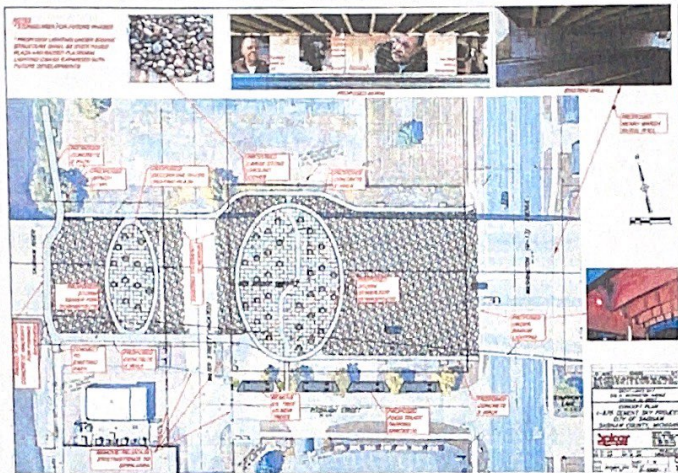




### The Henry Marsh Bridge-Cement Sky project description:

An urban park will be created by cleaning up the two-acre parcel of land, lighting it with colorful LED lights, installing a permeable surface that is universally handicap accessible and artwork to honor former Mayor Henry Marsh by showcasing a depiction of his life.

Initial engineering plan was accomplished by Spicer Engineering as depicted below:





### 3. Plans to accomplish goals and objectives:

The Michigan Department of Transportation has provided their verbal approval for this project citing similar projects within the State of Michigan. Once we had obtained this preliminary approval, efforts were made to understand the scope of this project.

The Spicer Group was retained to conduct an engineering study of the area. The Spicer Group team members possess extensive experience working with the Michigan Department of Transportation, already having the knowledge regarding all regulations for projects of this type. The work already accomplished includes:

- Preparation of a base map (boundaries, topography information, utility surveys, etc.) of the proposed project site.
- The team conducted research regarding existing infrastructure at the site including utilities, piling locations, bridge substructure height, storm water discharge, electrical connections, water surface elevations, existing floodplain limits, ordinary high-water mark, easements, property limits, and identifying the MDOT right of way.
- We worked together to gather input from the public and developed a preliminary plan view concept for the project based on this input.
- The team developed a preliminary estimate of costs.

Spicer Group team members continue to work with this project. The Spicer Group team has also committed to work on this project with engineering of lighting and installation of the base materials.

The Michigan Department of Transportation requires that a municipality be ultimately responsible for any enhancement project within a roadway easement area. The City of Saginaw has initially agreed to accept responsibility for use, oversight and maintenance of this area once the urban park is established. All documents will be finalized prior to project investment. Additionally, as part of this effort, a maintenance fund to assist with sustainability costs will be established and both DOW and Consumers Energy have offered to receive this urban park space as part of their volunteer maintenance efforts.

**The aforementioned steps have already been paid for and accomplished.**

To advance this effort further, funding commitments must be confirmed. The Saginaw County CVB is financially committed to this effort but is required by the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners to collaborate with outside entities to finance the project. Once funding has been secured, the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners will be asked to provide their approval to move forward with this project. The project's concept currently enjoys broad-based support by Commissioners.

Once all approvals are gained, the project will begin.



4. Timetable for implementation:

- Funding commitments finalized no later than April 2020
- MDOT/City of Saginaw finalize approvals and contracts, May 2020
- Gain Saginaw County Board of Commissioner approval, June 2020
- Groundbreaking, June/July 2020
- Project complete and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony no later than September 30, 2020



5. Other organizations participating in the project and their roles:

- A. DOW has committed to provide the needed recyclable materials to be blended with the materials to form the permeable base for this 2-acre area. They are working in efforts to secure the materials for this project on an at cost or complimentary basis as well.
- B. DOW Gives is the volunteer group of DOW employees who have volunteered to help with the maintenance of the area ensuring it is clean. This project will work to incorporate recycling opportunities as an aspect of this effort. An example of what could be placed at the site is pictured below:



- C. Consumers Energy has committed to work with the illumination of this area and to provide lighting expertise, as well as have a group of employees who have volunteered to help with the maintenance of the area ensuring it is clean.
- D. Saginaw County Parks and Recreation has committed to work with this project to ensure the trail hub is properly positioned and that the Saginaw River is accessible for maximum fishing pleasure.
- E. The City of Saginaw has committed to take long-term responsibility by signing an agreement with Michigan's Department of Transportation to oversee this area.



- F. The Saginaw Bay Land Conservancy has committed to work on this project, ensuring that it compliments other urban park areas with maintenance and potentially adding enjoyable amenities. An example may include the honeybee hotel pictured below:

