

ANNUAL REPORT



*For the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
from January 1 to December 31, 2006*

SWMPC 2006 STAFF

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

This report contains the annual summary of work performed by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission. We hope the summary stirs your interest in the work of southwest Michigan's regional planning organization. The Commission has been providing planning expertise to Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties for more than forty years. The work listed in this summary is a snapshot of the kind of resources we strive to bring to the region.

The Commission changed its name in 2006 from the Southwestern Michigan Commission. This small change was intended to stress our commitment to the value of planning. We believe that sound resource stewardship requires skilled planning. Vital and sometimes scarce resources that fit into this category include human resources, natural resources, and funding. Through properly executed planning, the SWMPC works to understand how local decisions can be sensibly linked together into sustainable, region-wide planning. The SWMPC has advocated this kind of responsible, efficient use of resources since its inception.

In 2006 the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission remained dedicated to providing "credible, credentialed, and connected" planning expertise.

Sincerely,
David Bly, Chairman

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is one of fourteen Planning and Development Regions in the State of Michigan and one of approximately five hundred in the United States. In Michigan, regions were created under a 1968 Governor's Executive Order.

The SWMPC was officially organized in 1973 by resolutions of the Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren County Boards of Commissioners. The Commission was first staffed in 1974.

In addition to serving public and private entities within Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties by providing technical or management assistance, the SWMPC acts as an intergovernmental forum to address regional issues. The SWMPC addresses issues and administers programs which its membership deems appropriate and which are in keeping with locally established area-wide planning and development goals.

For more information about the SWMPC, please visit our website at:

www.swmpc.org

LOCAL SERVICES

Purpose – Provide outreach to build support for wise planning and awareness of vital regional development issues. The diversely skilled SWMPC staff provides a range of support. These efforts regularly lead to program initiatives that address local needs.

- Local Services
 - Regional collaboration efforts with: the Berrien County Emergency Management Committee; Red Arrow corridor communities; human service organizations in the region; Safe Routes to School promotion
- Grants
 - Written & Awarded* - Bangor CDBG \$418,000 infrastructure improvements; MSU Prosperity Team Initiative \$25,000; Kodak foundation \$2,000; Centers for Regional Excellence \$25,000
 - Administration* - Closed Bangor Depot Renovation CDBG grant; assisted Bangor City with Black River Heritage Trail MDNR implementation; assisted with application between VBPT, SHASS, & Mental Health for senior transportation through Area Agency on Aging
- Natural Resources
 - Paw Paw River Watershed Management Plan development; Public Education Program in stormwater management for 26 communities; resource mapping for communities within Galien River Watershed

PLANNING & INFORMATION SERVICES

Purpose – The SWMPC provides customized planning and information services to local governments and organizations including comprehensive and land use planning, research and analysis, GIS mapping, surveys, recreation planning, grant writing, and grant administration.

- Master & Recreation Planning
 - Pipestone Township; Hartford City & Township; Cass County; consultation provided to Berrien Springs, Benton Harbor, Weesaw and Chikaming Townships; developed a Smart Growth master plan review checklist for Van Buren Planning Commission.
- Natural Resources Planning
 - Presentations for Galien River, Black River, Paw Paw River watershed steering committees; workshop assistance to gather stakeholder input for St. Joseph River Watershed; hosted Watershed Management Short Course (with VBCD); newsletter on Low-Impact Development; created volunteer inventory for Paw Paw River Watershed (with VBCD & BCD); attended Great Lakes Summit; green infrastructure training in W. Virginia.
- Information & Data
 - Populated website with regional data (census; traffic counting; etc) & fielded calls and email requests for same; South Haven consultation on agricultural incubators; hosted regional green infrastructure meeting; presentation at Berrien Springs Rotary.
- Other Plans
 - Van Buren & Cass County Ten Year Plans to End Homelessness; began collaboration with Univ. of Michigan on agricultural incubator study; began regional green infrastructure study.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Purpose – The SWMPC is an Economic Development District of the EDA to: 1) give technical assistance and support others in planning and implementing economic development projects that diversify and strengthen the district's economy; 2) maintain economic and demographic databases and respond to requests from public and private users; and 3) support a local economic development process capable of meeting the planning, coordination and implementation requirements of the district.

- Collaboration
 - Tri-County Planners; Michigan Association of Regions (MAR); MSHDA; State "Cities of Promise" program; Harbor Shores development; Quad State Directors (MI, WI, IL, and IN)
- Staff Education
 - Great Lakes Summit; Healthy Communities Conference; "Stormwater Best Management Practices" training; Legislator's Forum (Cass County); EDA Development District meeting; MAR Conference
- Information Dissemination
 - Single Point of Contact requests for clearinghouse review; data requests on area employment; SWMPC database updates; presentation on nature of growth in SW Michigan; presentation on regionalism in government; data updates to SWMPC website
- District Administration
 - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) development & completion; peer review of East Central Michigan Planning & Development Region; EDA district evaluation

US-12 HERITAGE TRAIL PROGRAM

Purpose - The SWMPC provides professional planning assistance and administration to the US-12 Council, and communities of the US-12 Heritage Trail, which traverses through eight southern Michigan counties.

- Printed Materials
 - Article contributions for *Travel Michigan* magazine, *Southwest Michigan* magazine, *The New York Times*, *Michigan History*, the *Herald Palladium*; facilitated toolkit and community film premier of "*Moccasins to Main Street, a Journey Down the Old Chicago Road*"; press release for US-12 garage sale; garage sale kits to chambers, govt. units, & tourism bureaus; acquired sponsorship to partially fund cost of rack card; travel writer produced narrative content for US-12 website; template for online event submission by US-12 communities; research and acquisition of historical & current US-12 photos
- Continuing Education
 - Website training, architecture, graphics, content; Driving Heritage Tourism conference
- Grants/Information
 - Distribution of grant opportunities to key stakeholders; initial planning for 2007 National Auto Heritage Area conference; collaborated with Preserve America to build a grant submission for future "Beach Town Heritage Trail"
- Administration
 - Monthly database updates with key partner contacts; US-12 Council minutes & meeting materials

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Purpose - This program serves local governments outside the urban areas, and MDOT through multi-modal transportation planning needed for local and state-level decisions.

- Administration
New transportation planner hired; agreement to share planning data with Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) for Grand Beach area; developed revised public involvement policy; restructured traffic count program
- Collaboration
Michigan Transportation Planners Association (MTPA); NIRPC; Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG); Regional Concept for Transportation Operations (RCTO); Southwest Michigan Alliance for Regional Trails (SMART); involved in statewide effort to develop non-motorized plan & website; assisted in VBPT executive director search, facilitated a Client Mobility Coordination Committee
- Information Dissemination
Improved transportation section on SWMPC website; joint meeting with Coloma TSC for elected & appointed officials; meeting on non-motorized funding opportunities; Asset Management data reporting; organizational assistance to VBPT for millage campaign
- Planning Products
Study of Van Buren public transportation; nine-county non-motorized trail map; charrette for public comment on BL-94 in Benton Harbor; transit technology implementation with Van Buren & Berrien transit

RIDESHARE

Purpose - This program encourages the use of various modes of transportation, which include; carpooling, vanpooling, biking and public transit in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties. This is accomplished through coordination and educational outreach to employers, jobseekers, caseworkers, schools and the general public

- Continuing Education
Community Transportation Association conference; research on using vanpools to augment existing public transit
- Collaboration
Facilitated public transit steering committee meetings in Van Buren County; rural transportation planning collaborative; area schools (relative to "school pool" programs); DHS, MichiganWorks! Community Mental Health, MDOT, KPEP, Gateway, Michi-Van, transit agencies
- Administration
Distributed Rideshare brochures at key locations; press releases on benefits of carpooling vis-à-vis high gas prices

URBAN AREA TRANSPORTATION

Purpose - Federal legislation requires for State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and public transportation operators to conduct a continuing, comprehensive and coordinated transportation planning and programming process in metropolitan areas and States. As the designated MPO for the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS) and the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS), the SWMPC, in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and member municipalities, develops and refines transportation plans and policies by analyzing social, economic, environmental, health, safety, welfare, and mobility impacts.

Member municipalities of TwinCATS include: the Cities of Bridgman, Benton Harbor, and St. Joseph, Villages of Shoreham, Stevensville, and Grand Beach (satellite), and Townships of Benton Charter, Lake, Lincoln, Royalton, Sodus, and St. Joseph Charter

Member municipalities of NATS include: the Cities of Buchanan and Niles, Village of Edwardsburg, and Townships of Bertrand, Buchanan, Howard, Milton, Niles, and Ontwa.

- Program Management
Collaborated with MDOT, FHWA, FTA, and MPO member municipalities to generate: 2007 Unified Work Program; Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and Long Range Transportation Plan; Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) conference committee assignment; vastly improved transportation section on SWMPC website
- Database Management
Traffic count data collection; Asset Management PASER road ratings
- Long Range Planning (LRP)
Socio-economic data verification; road network, traffic analysis zones, and network attribute review; new SWMPC Participation Plan developed; collaborated w/ MDOT to develop a streamlined LRP update and timeline; green infrastructure planning for environmental mitigation; consultation plan development
- Short Range Planning
Developed new TIP application form for FY 2008-11; coordinated multiple amendments to FY 2006-08 TIP; assisted TCATS & Niles Dial-A-Ride w/information requests and funding issues; facilitated Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) process for Berrien & Cass Counties; coordinated Asset Management data collection process; nine county non-motorized map
- Other Planning
Collaborated w/Citizens for Progressive Change, Cornerstone Alliance, MDOT, and City of Benton Harbor to facilitate charrette workshop for BL-94 project; coordinated and attended Asset Management training

2006 WELCH-LACKEY AWARD

VICTORIA CHANDLER

*Planning
that is credible,
credentialed
and connected.*

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
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**SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION
 2006 MEMBERS**

OFFICERS

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Vice Chair: Victoria Chandler, Berrien County Commissioner
Secretary: Frances Sage, Van Buren Citizen Representative
Treasurer: Donald Gast, Berrien Citizen Representative
Alternate Treasurer: Yemi Akinwale, Berrien Citizen Representative

BERRIEN COUNTY

Georgia Boggs, Citizen Representative
 Thelma Branch, Citizen Representative
 Victoria Chandler, County Commissioner
 Agnes Conway, Supervisor, New Buffalo Township
 Wilce Cooke, Mayor, City of Benton Harbor
 Marge Durm-Hiatt, Alternate Supervisor, Niles Township
 Ron Ferguson, Benton Charter Township Supervisor
 Richard Fintze, County Citizen Representative /Planning
 Juan Ganum, Alternate Mayor, City of Niles
 Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Supervisor
 John Newcomer, Citizen Representative
 Paul Pantaleo, Alternate Supervisor, Oronoko Township
 Gloria Payne, Townships' Representative
 Donald Ryman, County Commissioner
 Marletta Seats, County Commissioner

Mary Jane Skinner, Citizen Representative
 Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Supervisor
 Virginia Withrow, Alternate Mayor, City of St. Joseph
 Mamie Yarbrough, County Commissioner

CASS COUNTY

David Carnegie, Citizen Representative/Planning
 Cathy Goodenough, County Commissioner
 Alice LaHaie, Citizen Representative
 Walter Lehmann, Township's Representative
 Robert Powers, Citizen Representative
 Linda Preston, Townships' Representative
 Johnie Rodebush, County Commissioner
 James Sayer, Chairman, County Citizen Representative
 James Snow, Alternate Mayor, City of Dowagiac

VAN BUREN COUNTY

Dorothy Appleyard, Mayor, City of South Haven
 David Bly, Townships' Representative
 Louise Engle, Citizen Representative
 Harold Johnson, County Commissioner
 Jason Jones, Citizen Representative
 Jeff Radtke, Citizen Representative/Planning
 Daniel Ruzik, Supervisor, Antwerp Township
 John Tapper, County Commissioner

POKAGON BAND OF POTAWATOMI INDIANS

John Miller, Tribal Chairman

2006 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Discrepancy between revenues & expenses is caused by projects whose fiscal years do not correspond with the calendar year end and whose '06 expense had not yet been invoiced.

Revenues by Source:

Federal	\$333,747
State	\$231,501
Fees	\$11,252
Local-County	\$60,862
<u>Local-Other</u>	<u>\$100,963</u>
TOTAL REVENUES	\$762,441

Expenditures by Program:

Urban Transportation	\$242,093
Regional Transportation	\$98,697
Community Economic Development	\$6,342
Planning and Information Services	\$190,013
Rideshare	\$13,154
US-12	\$62,606
<u>SWMPC General Commission</u>	<u>\$30,087</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$712,992