



# The Quarterly

## SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION

*Planning that is Credible, Credentialed, and Connected*

### SWMPC

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## WELCOME OUR NEW STAFF

### **Jill Leale**

Jill's focus at the SWMPC will be in the field of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Jill has a Bachelor of Science degree from Grand Valley State University and a Master of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin. Jill has been working as a GIS specialist for the past six years and the past five years has worked for the Minerals Management Service in New Orleans, Louisiana. Jill enjoys playing tennis in her spare time and is very happy to be in Michigan.



### **Chris Palmer**

Chris is our new Associate Planner and his duties will include Economic Development, Master Planning and Recreation Planning. Chris is from Detroit and has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wayne State University and has worked in planning for several years. Chris was a planner in Arizona, New Mexico and Vermont prior to his move to southwest Michigan. Chris loves to travel the world, enjoys listening to music and works on his motorcycle in his spare time.



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### **Southwest Michigan Trails Summit**

June 25, 2009 from 6-8:30 p.m.

MDOT Southwest Facility 1501 E. Kilgore Rd. Kalamazoo, MI

Please join the SWMPC and MDOT for a kick off meeting to initiate the development of a comprehensive, regional Non Motorized Transportation Plan for MDOT's Southwest Region (Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties). For a project description visit: [www.swmpc.org/smart\\_plan.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/smart_plan.asp).

# WATER QUALITY AND LAND USE

## New Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan Highlights Green Developments in Southwest Michigan

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission served on a committee which assisted with the development of the new statewide manual for Low Impact Development (LID). The manual includes technical and policy guidance specific to Michigan conditions. **Local governments, engineers, developers, and builders** can refer to the LID manual as a guide on how to apply LID to new, existing and redevelopment projects, as well as for transportation related projects.

LID's goal is to mimic a site's pre-development hydrology by using techniques that slow water down, spread water out and soak water into the ground.

### Southwest Michigan Green Developments Featured in New Manual

1. Pokagon Band, Elder Housing-Dowagiac, MI
  2. Western Michigan University Business, Technology and Research Park-Kalamazoo, MI
  3. Saugatuck Center for the Arts-Saugatuck, MI
  4. Lions Park - Bangor, MI
  5. Longmeadow Development-Niles Township, MI
- For more information on these and other green developments visit: [www.swmpc.org/lid.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/lid.asp)

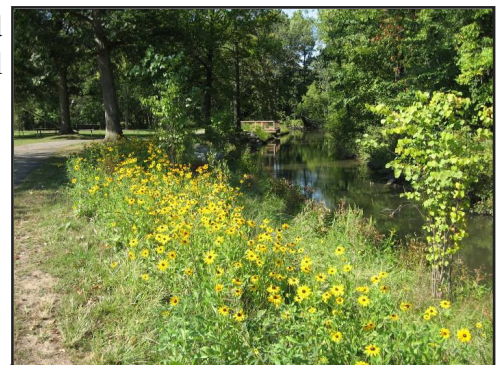
### Water—Slow It Down, Spread It Out, Soak It In

LID is an approach to developing land which protects southwest Michigan's greatest asset - **WATER**. The LID approach protects natural features through site design and preserves natural drainage patterns as much as possible. Water is slowed down, spread out and soaked in as much as possible to mimic pre-development hydrology. This is in contrast with the conventional method of development where water is moved off the site as quickly as possible (usually in a pipe) to the nearest water body. The conventional method pollutes streams and lakes and increases flooding severity and frequency.

**Where should LID be used?** LID can be applied to new development, urban retrofits, and redevelopment/revitalization projects at many scales. At a small scale, LID techniques can be used to better handle rainfall for a single family lot through rain barrels and rain gardens. At a larger scale, proper site design in combination with landscaping and infiltration techniques distributed throughout a development will cumulatively improve water quality and reduce runoff.

### LID techniques can include the following:

1. Open Space and Sensitive Area Preservation (wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, sand dunes, etc.)
2. Bioretention Areas/Rain Gardens
3. Grassed Swales (instead of curb and gutter)
4. Native Plant Landscaping
5. Permeable/Porous Pavement
6. Reduced Impervious Surfaces
7. Disconnected Downspouts (rain barrels)
8. Green or Vegetated Roofs



Native plants help reduce erosion and sediment flowing directly into the Black River and provide for a more scenic view.

**Lion's Park-Bangor, MI**

### Is LID a worthy investment?

LID can save developers money by reducing infrastructure costs. In addition, LID protects our water and natural resources. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released *Reducing Stormwater Costs Through Low Impact Development (LID) Strategies and Practices*, reporting on cost comparisons for 17 different case studies across the country. EPA results demonstrate the cost advantages of LID practices, when compared with traditional development patterns using conventional stormwater management techniques.

If you would like to learn more about LID and the benefits to businesses and homeowners please visit [www.swmpc.org/lid.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/lid.asp).

## REGIONAL AND STATE

### Green Jobs Conference Announced

The Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (MDELEG) announced a day-long "Green Today, Jobs Tomorrow" conference to be held on **Monday, May 11, 2009**, at the Lansing Center, which will focus on workforce and economic development for MI's emerging green economy. This conference will bring together business, education and training, labor, environmental, faith-based, policy advocacy partners, and stakeholders who are currently working on nurturing a green economy and talent base in MI.

"We will be showcasing MI as a state that is embracing green economy in a number of innovative ways by engaging partners and stakeholders to share information about the existing and emerging green jobs economy in MI", said Stanley "Skipp" Pruss, Director of MDELEG. "We have a workforce and economic development strategy to position MI for substantial future investment in a new energy economy."

[www.michigan.gov/greenjobsconference](http://www.michigan.gov/greenjobsconference).

### Getting Your Message Out: Unleash the Power of Story and Social Media

Do you want to build awareness of your program within the community to promote a particular attitude, behavior, or policy change? The answers to these questions can be found in the stories you, your customers, and media tells.

The one day work session will focus on:

1. Building Social Marketing Into Your Organization's Outreach Efforts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
2. Lunch with Journalists-What is Newsworthy?
3. Stories and Strategies

**Date:** Thursday April 30, 2009

**Time:** 8:00am - 4:30pm

**Cost:** \$25.00 (breakfast and lunch included)

**Location:** Van Buren Conference Center  
Lawrence, MI

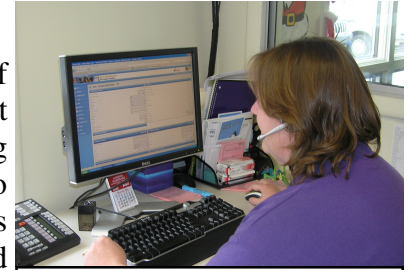
To register for this event please visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/tyslawarency>

### Transit Agencies Go On-Line To Improve Coordination

Eight public transit agencies in southwest Michigan have been working together during the last year to purchase and train on a new web-based computer system to improve their operations, customer service and coordination with human service agencies.

Up until now, six of the eight transit agencies were using paper and pen to keep track of riders and trips. Record keeping made it more difficult for accurate reporting to local, state and federal agencies. The web-



Van Buren Public Transit is going on-line to increase efficiency, improve customer service, and reduce staff time for reporting.

based system, called Dial-A-Ride Online, has the ability to schedule and route vehicles. The system can create up-to-the-minute reports to track ridership and other information which will assist with increasing operational efficiency. The system will keep track of riders and their needs. For example, if a rider has a wheelchair, the system will automatically put the rider on a bus that accommodates wheelchairs.

The following transit agencies in SWMPC's service area are using the new web-based system:

1. Berrien Bus
2. Buchanan Dial-A-Ride
3. Cass County Public Transit
4. Twin Cities Area Transit Authority
5. Van Buren Public Transit

Outside of SWMPC's service area, the following public transit agencies also partnered to purchase the new web-based system:

1. St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
2. Branch Area Transit Authority
3. Kalamazoo Metro Van Paratransit Service

To learn more about this project please visit

[www.swmpc.org/ncst.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/ncst.asp).



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### April

- 4<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. Van Buren County  
Electronic Recycling Day  
(Paw Paw)
- 8<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m. Two Rivers Coalition  
(Geneva Township Hall)
- 14<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m. MEANDRS  
(Dowagiac Conservation Club)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Berrien County Electronic  
Recycling Day
- 20<sup>th</sup> 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS
- 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. Cass County Electronic  
Recycling Day (Cassopolis)
- 27<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. Senior & Veterans  
Expo (Mattawan)
- 28<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m. NATS

### May

- 11<sup>th</sup> Green Today, Jobs  
Tomorrow (Lansing, MI)
- 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m. Two Rivers Coalition  
(Geneva Township Hall)
- 18<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. TwinCATS
- 19<sup>th</sup> 12:00 p.m. Trails Webinar  
Planning & Signing Bike  
Routes
- 26<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m. NATS

### June

- 6<sup>th</sup> Berrien County Electronic  
Recycling Day
  - 10<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m. Two Rivers Coalition  
(Geneva Township Hall)
  - 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. TwinCATS
  - 23<sup>rd</sup> 1:30 p.m. NATS
  - 25<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m. Kick Off Meeting for  
Non-Motorized Plan  
(Kalamazoo)
- NATS=Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area  
Transportation Study meets in Niles  
**TwinCATS**=Twin Cities Area  
Transportation Study meets in Benton Harbor

[www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp)

### 2009 Board Meeting Schedule

#### SWMPC Full Commission Meeting

*Location: Van Buren Conference Center-Lawrence, MI*  
 April 21, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.  
 July 21, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.  
 October 20, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

#### SWMPC Administrative Committee Meeting

*Location: Vincent Place Conference Room-Benton Harbor, MI*  
 June 16, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.  
 September 15, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.  
 December 15, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.