



# The Quarterly

## Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

*Planning that is Credible, Credentialed, and Connected*

### SWMPC

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### Save Your Community Money: Share Public Services



Communities from around the state have found that shrinking budgets and demand for services continue to be a tough balance, and a state program called Shared Public Services has been an option that communities are utilizing. This initiative, sponsored by the State of Michigan and the Michigan Municipal League, offers local governments and school districts access to resources to develop and implement shared public services. The initiative provides technical service, a funding source, and a statewide catalogue of shared services for communities to explore. Success stories for communities have involved equipment sharing, joint emergency dispatch, joint land use plans, salt purchase and storage, and shared school administration.

At the October 19, 2010 meeting of the SWMPC Board, a presentation regarding the Shared Public Services Initiative was given by Carol Steffanni and Patricia Lockwood from the Shared Public Services Initiative.

Mendon Community Schools and Centreville Community Schools have taken advantage of the cost savings by sharing a school superintendent. "We've been setting the stage for this the past few years without knowing it," said Julie Nemire, president of the Mendon Community Schools Board of Education. The two St. Joseph

County-based school systems have a history of collaboration and already share a food-service director, business manager, and a maintenance supervisor, she noted.

Southwest Michigan communities have also been working together to save money with collaboration. Examples include:

- Village of Decatur, Decatur and Hamilton Townships Master Plan
- Hartford City and Hartford Township Master Plan
- Cities of Coloma and Watervliet; Coloma Charter, Watervliet, and Hagar Townships Recreation Plan.

Website resources focus on how to get started, forms needed, shared services catalog, and success stories. Interested in saving your community money? Visit the Shared Public Services website:

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

### Contents

**Pg. 2 Funding Our Roadways**

**Pg. 3 Complete Streets**

# FUNDING OUR ROADWAYS

## Transportation Funding: Where Do We Go From Here?

In November 2010, the SWMPC hosted a transportation funding workshop where elected officials, local leaders, and the public learned and discussed the details of the of funding for transportation in Michigan. William Hamilton, Senior Fiscal Analyst for the House Fiscal Agency, a nonpartisan agency within the Michigan House of Representatives, spoke to over 80 attendees about where Michigan's transportation funding is headed. Hamilton discussed the decline in revenue and the complexity of funding our transportation system.



- Revenue from the Federal gas tax (18.4 cents per gallon) must be sent to the Federal government. MI can receive Federal gas dollars as long as the State has the 20% match for those funds. The State is facing a \$470 million shortfall in state funding that is needed to match federal transportation funds in fiscal year 2012. The gap was filled in 2011 by issuing bonds, which cannot be done again in future years.

- According to Hamilton, "Michigan Transportation fund (MTF) revenue peaked in FY 2003-04 at \$2.064 billion and has been declining each year since, primarily due to long-term declines in fuel tax revenue (less driving and more fuel efficient cars) and, more

recently, reductions in registration taxes (people may be trading down to less expensive vehicles). The MTF revenue estimate for FY 2010-2011 is \$1.807 billion - a reduction of \$257 million from FY 2003-2004".

David Worthams, Michigan Municipal League, sees transportation funding as a coordination issue. "The current responsibility for Michigan's transportation network lays with 83 county road agencies, 533 cities and villages, 79 transit authorities, and 14 airport authorities...Our elected officials should consider some way that we can encourage, at the least, coordination between these entities in order to generate more efficiency. In 2008, approximately \$47 million in transportation revenue was re-directed to state agencies to pay for the cost of collecting transportation taxes and fees. In addition, from FY 2002 and 2008 a total of \$68 million was transferred away from transit agencies to help bridge gaps in the state's general fund budget" (2009).

It is clear that Michigan is facing a transportation financial crisis and solutions need to be sought. SWMPC will be holding their Transportation Funding 201 workshop March 28, 2011, mark your calendars now!

To read Mr. Hamilton's Transportation Needs and Revenue Distribution report visit:

**[www.house.mi.gov/hfa/transportation.asp](http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/transportation.asp)**

## Staff Changes

We bid Elizabeth Luther good luck in her new position in Detroit, MI and welcome former Mobility Manager, Matthew Aslesen as our new Associate Planner. Aslesen will be taking over Ms. Luther's position at the SWMPC. You can contact him at [aslesenm@swmpc.org](mailto:aslesenm@swmpc.org) or by phone at (269) 925-1137 x 13.

# COMPLETE STREETS



## What a Complete Street Looks Like

This pedestrian crosswalk (bottom) has a safety median to allow pedestrians to safely stop in the middle of the street. Complete Streets are not limited to urban areas. This country road (top) provides a shoulder wide enough for pedestrians and bicyclists to use safely.

## Michigan Transportation Budget Gives Preference to Communities with Complete Streets Policies

In October of 2010, the Michigan Transportation Budget states that in evaluating and awarding Transportation Enhancement Grants (MDOT-TE), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shall give preference to applicants which have adopted complete streets policies. In addition, MDOT shall give preference to enhancement grant applications which further complete streets policy objectives. This is a step towards ensuring that our roadways accommodate all types of transportation modes and all types of users.

**[www.michigancompletestreets.wordpress.com](http://www.michigancompletestreets.wordpress.com)**

## What is a Complete Street?

According to the Michigan Complete Streets Coalition, Complete Streets policies ensure that engineers and planners design roadways to accommodate all users, not just motorists. A complete street allows pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and those with disabilities to easily and safely use roads in their communities. So what does a “complete street” look like? A complete street will look different in various communities, based on the communities’ residents. In many cases, this means curb ramps, audible or tactile signals for blind pedestrians, longer crossing times, smooth sidewalks and bike paths that are free of obstacles, and transit stops that people can access easily.



## What a Complete Street is NOT!

Without a bench or overhang (top), this pedestrian is forced to stand while waiting for a bus at a bus stop. The lack of a curb ramp makes it difficult for disabled persons to enter or exit the bus. A lack of sidewalk (bottom) forces pedestrians to create their own “goat path” in the nearby grass.

Photos and descriptions courtesy of Michigan Complete Streets



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## Calendar of Events 2011

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

### January

**13<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 p.m. The State of the Health of Berrien County (St. Joseph)  
**13<sup>th</sup>** 12:30 p.m. 360 Group (Dowagiac)  
**17<sup>th</sup>** SWMPC Offices Closed  
**24<sup>th</sup>** 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS  
**25<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m. NATS

### February

**1<sup>st</sup>** 9:00 a.m. Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (Benton Harbor)  
**21<sup>st</sup>** SWMPC Closed  
**22<sup>nd</sup>** 1:30 p.m. NATS  
**28<sup>th</sup>** 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS

### March

**1<sup>st</sup>** 9:30 a.m. Investment Reporting Tool Training (Lawrence)  
**22<sup>nd</sup>** 1:30 p.m. Joint TwinCATS/ NATS meeting (Berrien Springs)  
**28<sup>th</sup>** Transportation Funding 201 (Berrien Springs)

**NATS**=meets in Niles  
**TwinCATS**=meets in Benton Harbor

### 2011 Board Meeting Schedule

#### **SWMPC Full Commission Meeting**

*Location: Southwestern Michigan College  
 Mathews Room West-Dowagiac, MI*  
 February 1, 2011 9:30 a.m.

*Location: Southwestern Michigan College-Tentative*  
 April 19, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 July 19, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 October 18, 2011 9:30 a.m.

#### **SWMPC Administrative Committee Meeting**

*Location: Vincent Place Conference Room-Benton Harbor, MI*  
 March 15, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 June 21, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 September 20, 2011 9:30 a.m.  
 December 20, 2011 9:30 a.m.