



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

The Quarterly

SWMPC
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Benton Harbor, MI 49022
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REGIONAL PLANNERS HONOR **Richard Remus**

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) has selected Richard Remus to honor with the 2016 Welch-Lackey Leadership Award.

At the April 19th meeting of the SWMPC Board, held at Southwest Michigan College, John Egelhaaf Executive Director at SWMPC honored Richard Remus with the Welch-Lackey Leadership Award.

In announcing the award, John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Executive Director, commented, "Mr. Remus has been a very active board member who has stepped in to assist the planning commission on many occasions. He has done exceptional work with his help restructuring the SWMPC financial reporting as well as his excellent representation of the SWMPC on the Regional Prosperity Initiative."

Mr. Remus has served as SWMPC Citizen Representative since 2007. He also has served as SWMPC Alternate Treasurer. He is active on the Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce board and Lake Michigan College Alumni Board. He also is a dedicated husband and father to his family.

The SWMPC is the regional planning agency for Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties and presents the Welch-Lackey Leadership Award each year in honor of former Commissioners George A. Welch and William F. Lackey. These men served the Commission in times of great personal difficulties, yet continued throughout



to represent the spirit of public service and to further the goals of intergovernmental cooperation. Their contribution to the communities they served embodies the leadership qualities essential to the preservation of our citizen form of government.

Board members vote by secret ballot from nominees submitted by the SWMPC staff as members currently exemplifying such qualities.

We would like to welcome new staff to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission Office.

- **Ryan D. Fellows** is an Associate Planner and he will be working on economic development and master planning.
- **Brandon Kovnat** is an Associate Transportation Planner and he will be working on transportation planning.
- **Jerrid Burdue** is our summer Transportation Planner Intern.

Upcoming Transportation Workshops

Rural Communities Join the Discussion That Drives Michigan's Transportation Future!



Understanding how rural transportation projects can be funded is sometimes a challenging process. If you have a transportation project that you would like funded in your community,

do you know what opportunities exist? MDOT and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) would like to help. On Monday, May 23rd from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. the SWMPC will host a meeting of rural elected officials to learn more about the way that MDOT funds transportation projects. Additionally, the meeting is an opportunity for the SWMPC to poll the attendees on the specific needs in their communities.

A survey of your local transportation needs can be completed online by following this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/rruraltransportationsurvey>. This same survey will be made available at the meeting itself if you prefer to complete a paper version. When we have compiled the surveys, the SWMPC will follow up with those who completed them to discuss your projects and what your options are for finding funding.

This meeting has been planned so that if you are interested in staying, an open house will immediately follow (from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.) where MDOT

will discuss how it sets priorities for statewide funding. During that meeting you can lend your voice to influence MDOT's priorities for the state's Long Range Transportation Plan that is currently being drafted.

The meetings will be held at the SWMPC offices at 376 West Main Street, Suite 130, Benton Harbor, MI.

You are invited to the State Long Range Plan Public Open House

Would you like to know how MDOT sets priorities for funding transportation projects? Would you like to have a voice in setting those priorities? In collaboration with MDOT the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) will host a meeting where you can discuss these topics with MDOT planners. MDOT is in the middle of building its State Long Range Transportation Plan and the time is right for you to influence what the final version will include. Please join us for an open house on Monday, May 23 between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. The same formal presentations will be made at 5:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. that evening.

The open house will be held at the offices of the SWMPC at 376 West Main Street, Suite 130, in Benton Harbor, MI. If you have questions in advance of the meeting, please contact call at: 269-925-1137 x1512 or by email at egelhaafj@swmpc.org. Also, you can call MDOT at 517-373-2227 for further information.

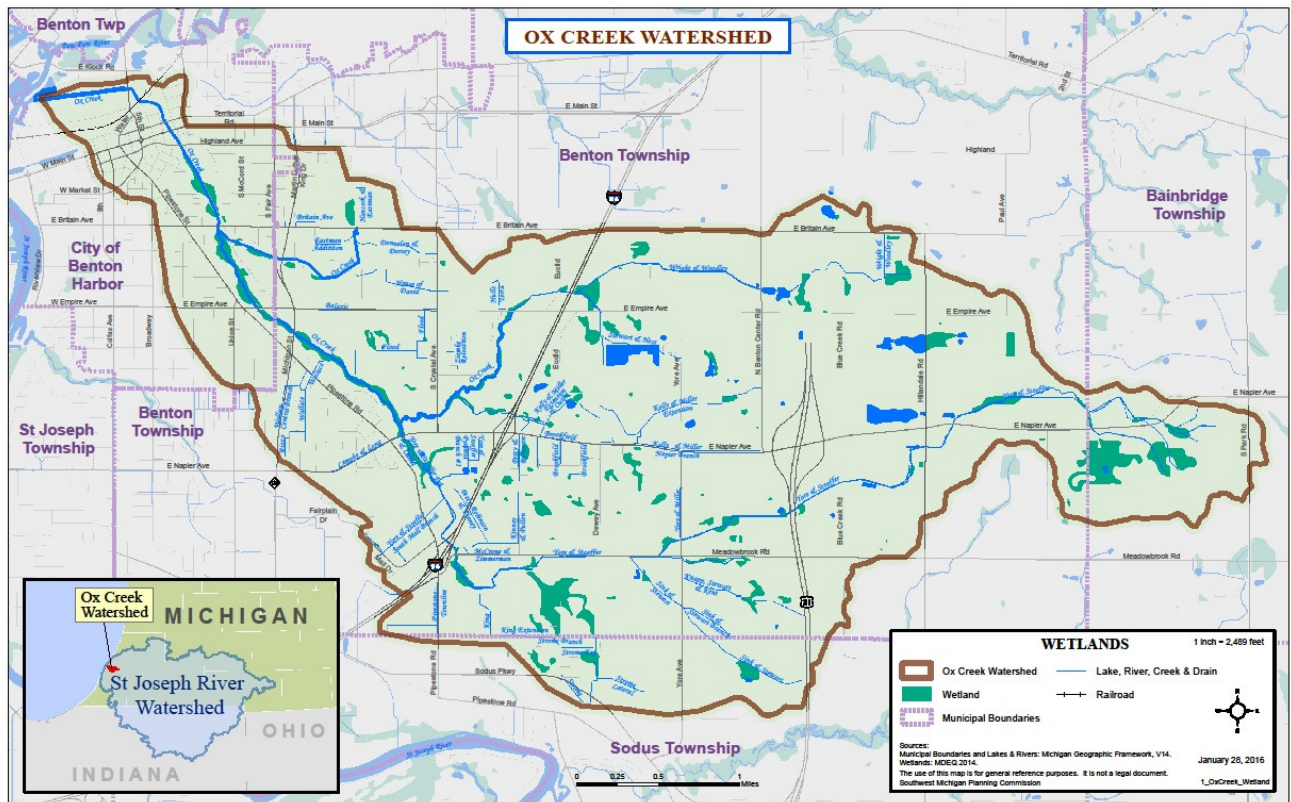
Gautam Mani our Associate Planner will be working for the Federal Highways Administration.

Gautam had a few things to say about his experiences at the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission:

It is a bittersweet moment for me as I leave Southwest Michigan. I am extremely excited for the opportunities ahead for me, but will thoroughly miss all of you for the support you have given me these past almost-four years. It has been a privilege to work with and serve you, the citizens of Southwest Michigan, in tackling transportation problems. I have learned a great deal from all of you, and please know that you have all contributed to me reaching this point. The Southwest Michigan Region and the Planning Commission will always represent highlights of my life.

While working at the Federal Highway Administration in Albany, NY, I will be assisting all of the metropolitan planning organizations in the state of New York with their needs. The challenges that we have faced here with NATS and TwinCATS have given me insight into the transportation challenges we face, and I look forward to using the invaluable experience all of you have given me here. I can't say it enough: Thank You.

Productive Lands and Cleaner Water Workshop



On January 27th, 2016 the SWMPC hosted an informative workshop with planners Marcy Hamilton and Kristopher Martin. The workshop took place at the MTEC Building in Benton Harbor, Michigan. At this event we were able to educate a large audience about farming best practices and also incentives available to farmers to build healthier soil and reduce polluted runoff into our drains, streams, rivers and lakes. The presentation also included topics on water quality, wetlands, USDA conservation practices and Michigan's Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). There was also a special demonstration showcasing the benefits of non-tilled versus tilled soil that may convince farmers to try no-till on their land.

This workshop was part of a larger effort to reduce pollution in Ox Creek, the Paw Paw River, St. Joseph River and Lake Michigan.

Although there are multiple threats to water quality in Ox Creek, Hamilton says this project is looking at the two biggest problems occurring upstream, sediment from agricultural operations and storm water run-off from the hundreds of acres of existing pavement, especially around the Orchards Mall area. One part of the project aims to educate farmers about best management practices that reduce or even eliminate soil running off their fields and then affecting water quality. Another part of the project involves transforming a portion of Wightman & Associates parking lot into a rain garden as a demonstration of how to reduce storm water runoff and provide beneficial habitat simultaneously. In addition to SWMPC and Two Rivers Coalition, other local organizations working in partnership on the Ox Creek project include the Berrien Conservation District, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Sarett Nature Center and Wightman & Associates.

To view the presentations from the workshop : <http://www.swmpc.org/oxcreek.asp>



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*The SWMPC Mission is to promote a sustainable high quality of life through
facilitation of sound planning and decision making*

Save Paper by Receiving our Newsletter Electronically: email rosep@swmpc.org

Calendar of Events 2016

SWMPC Staff

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Jerrid Burdue,
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May	June	July
16 th 9:00 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**	4 th Natural Shoreline Workshop at 11 am	4 th SWMPC Office Closed
24 th 1:00 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*	9 th Natural Shoreline Workshop at 4:30 pm	18 th 9:00 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**
30 th SWMPC Office Closed	20 th 9:00 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**	26 th 1:00 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*
	28 th 1:00 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*	

*NATS Meeting location: 1345 E. Main Street, Niles, MI

**TwinCATS Meeting location: Kinexus , 499 W Main St, Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Anchor Rooms A+B

For more information visit: www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp

SWMPC Board Meeting Schedule

SWMPC Full Commission Meetings	SWMPC Administrative Committee Meetings
<i>Location: Southwest MI College Lyons Building Room 141 Dowagiac, MI</i>	<i>Location: SWMPC Conference Room Benton Harbor, MI</i>
July 19, 2016 9:30 am	June 14, 2016 9:30 am
October 18, 2016 9:30 am	September 13, 2016 9:30 am
	December 13, 2016 9:30 am

SWMPC 2016 Spring Edition