



TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Mid-Michigan's Future Together Since 1956

NEWSLETTER

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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION!



TCRPC has held collaborative public meetings for 60 years. Here, we see participants from the early 1980s.

Happy 60th Anniversary Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC)! Created in 1956, with a formal agreement between Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, the TCRPC “exists to serve and assist the local units of government in planning for the orderly and efficient development of the Tri-County Region.” Sixty years ago, leaders from all three counties recognized that our area was facing several related problems of regional significance. The multiplicity of 78 local government units were each charting their own paths forward, and appeared on a collision course with each other at their borders. It was apparent that without regional coordination, the transportation and municipal services networks would continue to expand without connections between them.

A regional plan could assure seamless connectivity, but what about the authority of each municipality to govern itself in the interest of its own citizens? There is enabling legislation that allows for collaboration, however, legislation that mandates cooperation between municipalities has had mixed success. The TCRPC, said its founders, is “by law, an ADVISORY agency.” If regional plans were to be financially and politically feasible, how could TCRPC be sure that its planning proposals would represent the goals and objectives of a majority of citizens? The response was to involve citizens and local governmental officials directly in regional planning. For the past 60 years, with the TCRPC as its vehicle, the Greater Lansing Tri-County Region has collaborated to develop, update, and implement sustainable, resilient regional plans. As set out in the agency’s first objectives, the relationship continues to appeal to the “good sense and long-run self-interests of governments and private groups throughout the Region.”

The theme of this newsletter is “Then and Now.” For our anniversary year, we will continue to share our history with you. We will have celebratory events and a proper 60th Anniversary event near the end of the year. As we look forward and plan for a more sustainable future, we will look back, too, because knowing our past is important to charting our future. TCRPC celebrates the 60th anniversary of our region’s collaboration now, in 2016, with pride and a sense of history.

GIS TECHNOLOGY THROUGH THE YEARS

There is a long history of technological advancement at the TCRPC, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS). In 1985, this new system to TCRPC was called the Comprehensive Resource Inventory Evaluation Systems (CRIES). As TCRPC progressed into the early 90s, the GIS system used was developed by Michigan State University (MSU) called C-MAP. This system required two computer screens—one with color which displayed the map and one displayed the data behind the map using a DOS system, dBASE. Instead of a mouse, GIS layers were manually digitized with a device called a puck. This puck was attached to varied sized digitizing tablets and traced points, lines and polygons off a hard copy map.

By the late 1990s, TCRPC had progressed from a manual digitizing approach to heads-up digitizing using ESRI's ArcView and Caliper's TransCAD products. Eyes were directed towards the computer screen instead of the digitizing

tablet, which was no longer required. Aerial and LiDAR imagery became more affordable and available to use in GIS as well.

Though TCRPC maintained ArcGIS and TransCAD through the 2000s and 2010s, now GIS and mapping is main stream through the Internet, open source GIS, and search engine maps. Some have moved from office GIS software to GIS online which enables access on other devices. What will GIS and mapping look like 60 years from now?



TCRPC GIS specialists utilize a puck. (c.1990)

LAND USE PROGRAM & PEOPLE

Ken Hall is the latest addition to the TCRPC staff, filling a role as regional Land Use Planner for our agency. He joins us with a degree from MSU's School of Planning, Design, and Construction and recent experience as a flood plain program coordinator for the City of Lansing. TCRPC has been providing expert reviews and advice on land use plans to municipalities in our region since 1956. According to an early bulletin published by the TCRPC, "Planning advice to local communities is an important function of regional planning because it helps promote sound growth through local planning programs." By the 1960s, TCRPC was the go-to source for planning that extended beyond local municipalities. Publications like *The House We Live In* were regional policy plans that integrated broad goals with public opinion. It includes recommendations to stimulate coordination between governmental units and highlights the uniqueness amongst area communities. It was the first of many such plans to lay out a regional vision for growth and development.

Back then, TCRPC housed an extensive library of federal government publications such as floodplain maps and census count booklets that staff planners used to help local communities plan for their futures. TCRPC still maintains a collection of historic land use data for our region that includes maps, aerial photography, plan documents, and research reports. But, federal data is available online now. The land use planner position evolved from a technical researcher to an expert on land use planning practice, a facilitator of regional-level plans, and a leader in identifying and sharing best practices for sustainable development. Ken will work with the Growth Trends Steering Committee and its work groups, including the Urban and Rural Services Management task force and Greening Mid-Michigan. He will help area land use planners integrate more sustainable land use planning concepts into local ordinances and practices as well as facilitate regional visions and consensus on wise land use and natural resources management.

TRI-COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CORNER

At the 2016 Annual Dinner Meeting in January, the Commissioners caucused by major member areas, issued nominations, and elected executive officers for the year. Now serving are **Ken Fletcher** (Delta Township/Eaton County), as Chair; **Robin Lewis** (CATA/Lansing) as Vice Chair; **Brian McGrain** (Ingham County) as Treasurer; and **Gail Watkins** (Clinton County) as Secretary. Then, in accord with the by-laws, Chairperson Fletcher appointed all other Commissioners to our standing committees. The committees of Finance, Program and Grant, Transportation Review, and Growth Trends Steering—with TCRPC staff support—meet

regularly to recommend Commission action on the items within their purview. The Finance Committee has already been busy. In March, they considered a preliminary draft of a TCRPC FY2017 budget and recommended that the Commission adopt it. With this early draft, we can give member municipalities an estimate of next year's member dues early in their budgeting process. Upon the Committee's recommendation, the Commission has adopted a draft preliminary budget that holds membership dues to the same level as last year.

WATCH THE EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Kids enjoying the Children's Water Festival in 1995.

elementary students from area schools and provided an interactive, informative field trip about the importance of our environment, water resources, and students' role in protecting and conserving it. Participants experienced hands-on activities led by local water management professionals. Over the years, hundreds of professional volunteers provided presentations to students, emphasizing the importance of water-related careers.

From the beginning, the GMB strived to provide an excellent event experience. In 2015, staff was approached by the MSU Science Festival coordinators looking to learn from

In 1995, TCRPC and the Groundwater Management Board (GMB), a group that TCRPC facilitates and staffs, hosted the first Children's Water Festival in Michigan. In total, 17 festivals were held over 20 years. The festival served over 35,000

our festival experiences. The MSU Science Festival reaches over 30,000 people per year, and was seeking water-focused presentations for elementary students. The result was a partnership that led to the Children's Water Festival being permanently incorporated into the MSU event.

This opportunity allowed the GMB to redirect its efforts while still achieving the goal of water education for youth. TCRPC Senior Environmental Planner Erin Campbell presented to three area schools at the MSU Science Festival in March this year. Other GMB volunteers also participated; it has merged into a beneficial partnership. The public portion of the MSU Science Festival will be held throughout campus April 12-24, 2016. Visit <http://sciencefestival.msu.edu/> to learn more.



Senior Environmental Planner Erin Campbell presents "Total Topography" at the 2016 MSU Science Festival.

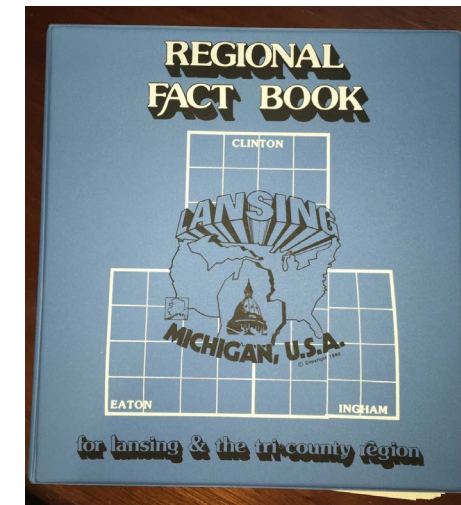
ENVISIONING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Appointed in 1986, by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, the TCRPC has served as our region's Economic Development District (EDD). This designation has provided the region with planning dollars through the maintenance and annual collaborative update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In addition, the EDD has leveraged continuous eligibility for numerous federal investment programs over the past 30 years.

How it does so has continually evolved to better fit with the current economic climate.

The 1990s welcomed the creation of the RED (regional economic development) Team: a collaboration of local leaders and economic development professionals who met to assess regional development needs. By the early 2000s, the regional need for a more formalized economic development organization grew. Thus, the RED Team morphed into the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP, Inc.). Since its inception, LEAP, Inc. has served as the Region's state designated Community Development Collaborator (CDC), enabling our region access to state-funded economic initiatives. Today's economy demands even more from its professionals: a sustainable regional economic vision created and supported through a collaborative forum. The Greater Lansing Regional Prosperity Initiative (GLRPI) serves this purpose. It is our region's economic voice in creating sustainable best practices. GLRPI meets regularly at TCRPC offices and around the Region to discuss current economic development matters, facilitated by TCRPC and LEAP, Inc.

Economic development is no longer mutually exclusive to economic development professionals. Leaders in work force development, higher education, transit, environment, public health, land use, social services, K-12 education, public administration, and private businesses and developers are working together to ensure the prosperity of the Tri-County Region. This is the new face of economic development.



The Regional Fact Book for Lansing & the Tri-County Region was a binder created by TCRPC in 1981, filled with regional data and demographics, used to attract talent and new businesses to the Region. Now, GLRPI uses the Regional Prosperity Dashboard, MICapitalRegion.com.

SUE SAYS... HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

This year, the TCRPC celebrates its 60th year of facilitating regionalism in the Lansing Tri-County Region. As TCRPC enters its 60th year, I am celebrating the 6th year in my relationship as its Executive Director. Cooperation and collaboration...these relationships are good in concept. Nevertheless, in practice, we see many such relationships come and go. Relationships are hard. They take a lot of dedication, focus, and work. Advice like “don’t go to bed angry” is not so useful for maintaining a collaborative relationship. But, other bits of relationship wisdom can be surprisingly helpful as we maintain and improve our regionalism.

Dr. Paul Hokemeyer, J.D., a licensed family therapist, says that the classic struggle of all relationships is finding the right calculus in the togetherness-and-autonomy equation. He says partners need to allow each other the space to be

themselves without trying to control them. Susanna Sung, psychotherapist, insists that the most important thing that increases the likelihood of a relationship lasting is to share the same values. Since 1956, the TCRPC’s Commissioners and staff have worked hard on regionalism. Area leaders, citizens, and communities have chosen regional cooperation as an efficient approach that appeals to practical people. We respect the differences between our communities even as we recognize our shared identity as a region. And, we value cooperation. Our leaders have a history of valuing collaboration with other communities. Regional cooperation and collaboration, just like any good relationship, takes hard work to establish and maintain. Here is to another year of being great together! Happy Anniversary TCRPC.

Susan M.C. Pigg, CEcD, TCRPC Executive Director

Don’t Miss These Opportunities!

Does your community have FEMA dollars waiting for you? — These dollars could be yours if your community adopts the Tri-County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Go to <http://mitcrpc.org/lup.htm> for more information. Or, if you have questions, contact Land Use Planner Ken Hall at (517) 393-0342 or khall@mitcrpc.org.

Transportation Asset Management Conference — Center for Technology and Training presents on April 13, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Double Tree Hilton in Detroit. (<http://ctt.nonprofitsoapbox.com/2016tamc-spring-conference>)

DeWitt Community Showcase — April 14, from 5 to 8 p.m. at DeWitt High School (<http://www.dewittschools.net/home/community-showcase>)

50 Business Trends for 2016 — Hosted by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) on April 19, from 8-9:30 a.m. at the LRCC. (<http://lansingchamber.site-ym.com/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=793410&group=>)

Building Michigan Communities Conference — April 25-27, at the Lansing Center (<http://buildingmicommunities.org/>)

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Conference — hosted by The Office of Highway Safety Planning April 29-30, in Mt. Pleasant. (http://www.lmb.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=960:2016-pedestrian-and-bicyclist-safety-conference&catid=155&Itemid=451)

Arts Night Out Kick-Off Event — The Arts Council of Greater Lansing invites you to Old Town Lansing May 6, at 5 p.m. (<http://www.lansingarts.org/Events/ArtsNightOut.aspx>)

Adopt a River — Board of Water & Light and Impression 5 Science Museum (I5) present on May 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at I5. (<http://www.impression5.org/Visit/SpecialEvents/AdoptARiver2016.aspx>)

Bicycle Friendly America Conference — Presented by MSU May 19, 2016, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center. (http://www.lmb.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=969&Itemid=23)

TCRPC Planners’ Brown Bag Lunch Series — The next Planner Brown Bag event will be on May 20. We will take a summer break and resume on September 23 at locations in the region to be announced. Stay tuned to <http://mitcrpc.org> for updates.

Southern Clinton County Municipal Utilities Authority Open House — May 26, from 5 to 8 p.m. at 3671 W. Herbison Rd., DeWitt. (<http://www.sccmua.com/Default.aspx?tabid=3531>)

Third Annual Breakfast of Champions — Presented by Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness May 26, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Radisson Hotel, Lansing. (<http://mihomeless.org/index.php/component/rseventspro/event/6-third-annual-breakfast-of-champions>)