

NEWSLETTER

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WE'RE TAKING A CLOSER LOOK



Urban strategist Michele Reeves takes a tour of East Lansing with community members to evaluate potential opportunities for economic growth.

The Greater Lansing Regional Prosperity Initiative (GLRPI) for the Capital Region's Tri-County area had an exciting second year. Now we look ahead to continued efforts in 2016. In December, the GLRPI applied for continued funding support of their activities, as well as additional funding to support new initiatives. Activities include continued focus on Talent, Education, Transit, Economic Development and Placemaking. GLRPI requested the maximum award amount of \$375,000. The Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget is reviewing applications and will announce awards in January 2016.

The GLRPI furthered regional outreach by partnering with Imagine Mid-Michigan, a collaboration between Portland State University's Urban Sustainability Accelerator Program, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), and area leaders in health, housing, land use, environment, economics, local government, and private development. This partnership was able to provide two unique opportunities for our region with presentations from urban strategist Michele Reeves of Civilis Consultants and Charles Mahron of Strong Towns. Michele spent a week in November taking a close look at ten different locations throughout the Tri-County Region, culminating in usable strategies tailored to our region's sustainable growth and redevelopment efforts. Charles gave a presentation to elected officials and city managers discussing the fiscal impact of tax-based revenue.

Read Michele Reeves' Report and Regional Toolkit:

http://mitcrpc.org/NewsRelease/Revitalization%20Toolkit%20TCRPC_lowrez.pdf.

See Charles Mahron's Presentation:

<http://mitcrpc.org/NewsRelease/CM%20Thank%20You%20doc.pdf>.

Keep an eye on MICapitalRegion.com, follow [@MICapitalRegion](https://twitter.com/MICapitalRegion), and like [MICapitalRegion on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MICapitalRegion) for meeting schedules and event updates. Please contact Associate Economic Development Planner Rachel Elsinga at relsinga@mitcrpc.org if you have questions about GLRPI. To learn more about Imagine Mid-Michigan events and work plans, contact Executive Director Susan M.C. Pigg at spigg@mitcrpc.org.

TIP DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY

TCRPC is a Metropolitan Planning Organization. Thus, a major responsibility is to program federally funded transportation projects by year and funding category. Projects seeking federal funding must be selected through a public process, and be included in the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

TCRPC issued a call for projects in November. Local road agencies submitted approximately 170 projects, in addition to some 150 projects submitted by transit agencies. TCRPC staff evaluated road projects for eligibility and provided a preliminary score based on program criteria. These projects were then considered by committees on January 15, where yearly priorities were recommended for a variety of federal

funding categories included urban, small urban, rural, plus some specialized programs.

Recommended highway and transit projects will be brought through the TCRPC committee process in February and will be incorporated in the TIP, which will be submitted to the Michigan Department of Transportation by July 1.

Check our website at <http://mitcrpc.org/trp.htm> for results of the January 15 meeting and to see additional opportunities for public comment. Scheduled committee meeting dates where the proposed projects will be reviewed are also posted. All TCRPC meetings are open to the public and welcome comments. TCRPC will act on projects February 24.

THE TRANSPORTATION FAST ACT IS NOW LAW!

With surprisingly few fireworks in early December, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The five year reauthorization bill totals over \$300 billion, including about \$281 billion for surface transportation. The FAST Act is the first notably long term reauthorization since 2005 federal transportation legislation



was passed. The bill represents a huge milestone for the House and Senate. Critics question the

source of additional funding that was required to make up the gap between current gas tax revenues and the bill's spending levels. To pass a long term bill with at least a modicum of growth in available funding meant cobbling together gas tax revenues and other "payfors." In the case of the FAST Act, additional funds came from using the Federal Reserve's "surplus" funds, selling oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and a number of other sources. By choosing

to close the funding gap by means other than raising the gas tax means that the cliff will be that much higher in five years when the FAST Act expires. It will be interesting to see what this means for reauthorizing the FAST Act down the line.

In early January 2016, Congress released a \$57.6 billion spending package for Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) programs for fiscal year 2016, as part of the larger Omnibus funding package. The THUD bill adopts the policies and funding levels from the newly-passed FAST Act. The plan also reversed cuts from the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Transportation to maintain the current \$500 million funding level. This is good news for our region as we seek TIGER funds in support of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit system. The THUD package continues a restriction on double trailer trucks on the national highway system, even though it was in both the House and Senate appropriations bills. Transit commuters earned a huge win, as the bill restores some parity between parking and transit benefits and makes the change permanent.

COORDINATED BIDS SAVE MONEY

For the third year in a row, the Lansing Board of Water and Light is readying the joint solicitation proposals for the purchase of chemicals on behalf of the Mid-Michigan Joint Purchasing Consortium. The Consortium was brought together and is coordinated through the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and includes water and wastewater utilities throughout mid-Michigan. The coordinated bid process provides the opportunity for higher volume purchasing power to the participating communities. As a result, all the participating communities have experienced cost savings in each year of the program, and anticipate additional savings with

the 2016 contracts. Lansing Board of Water and Light, East Lansing-Meridian Water and Sewer Authority, Delhi Charter Township, East Lansing Wastewater, and the Cities of Adrian, Ann Arbor and Jackson participated in 2015. Combined savings to date are estimated at over \$200,000 compared to the traditional process of each community bidding separately.

The solicitations will be sent in early February for 2016 contracts. If you have any questions or would like additional information contact Christine Spitzley, Chief Environmental Programs Planner at (517) 393-0342.

YOUR WATER GUIDE IS HERE

The Tri-County Water Policies & Programs Guide has been completed!

In December, the Guide was presented to the Groundwater Management Board (GMB). It is a unique effort that, for the first time, brought together experts in groundwater, drinking water, land use, surface water, and wastewater from Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties to examine in depth how well they are working together to protect mid-Michigan's water resources. These experts reviewed everything from agriculture to wetlands and throughout considered how each system and program is interconnected and interdependent.

The Guide is intended as an informational tool and guidance document for decision



makers and the citizens of the Tri-County Region. Each chapter contains a narrative that provides a topic overview, main programming components, an outline of gaps and concerns and key resources. Each chapter also includes a correlating table that identifies central programs/activities. The table outlines standards, resources, actions, funding, evaluation, coordinating agencies and timelines for each identified program/activity. (Side Note: For ease of reference, each chapter is color coded.)

To see the Tri-County Water Policies & Programs Guide, go to www.mitcrpc.org/env.htm. If you have questions about the Guide, contact Chief Environmental Programs Planner Christine Spitzley at cspitzley@mitcrpc.org.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone that participated in our holiday drives in November and December—they were both a success! We were happy to be able to provide aid to regional families in need.



TRI-COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CORNER

The TCRPC Board enjoyed a well-attended meeting on December 17, 2015, their last regular one of the calendar year. Despite the holiday schedule, most of the Commissioners participated along with a number of guests from the public and partner agencies. The Commission enjoyed an informative presentation and conducted some standard business.

At the meeting, Commissioners heard a report on the region's recent aerial photography fly-over and saw examples. Presenters Laura Tschirhart, TCRPC Transportation Planner and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist and Everett Root, a State of MI geographer, explained how the flyover was done and they discussed and demonstrated the results. TCRPC has facilitated regional flyovers every five years since the 1960s. Photography of our region, with the leaves off the trees and no snow cover, is an important tool for land use planners, emergency services providers, developers, utilities servicers, and others. Sharing the same photography across the region helps us all work well together. This time, sharing the cost and coordinating the timing of the flights across our three counties along with other regions of the state, gave us all the opportunity to acquire higher resolution photos and establish images that are consistent region

wide, all at a lower cost.

Also at this meeting, per the Finance Committee recommendation, the Commissioners accepted the Fiscal Year 2015 Audit report provided by Abraham & Gaffney, P.C. Certified Public Accountants. The report indicated a solid financial position for TCRPC. There were no negative findings. The Commissioners also received and placed on file the normal monthly finance reports for November. These are available at www.mitcrpc.org.



Upon recommendations of the Transportation Review Committee, the Commissioners approved an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a newly funded Ingham County Roads project. However, they tabled action on a request to alter a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality project pending further information. The next meeting is the Annual Dinner Meeting on January 27, 2016.

SUE SAYS...HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2016 will be another terrific year for TCRPC. Together we will mark milestones and celebrate important anniversaries. The U.S. Park Service will turn 100 this year. The Beach Boys album *Pet Sounds* turns 50, and I will begin my sixth year as Executive Director. In October, it will be 90 years since Winnie-the-Pooh first starred in his own collection of stories by A.A. Milne. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the first Tweet "Just setting up my twtr," from Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey. He made social media history and the message has been re-tweeted more than 66,000 times. Celebrate TCRPC's active social media communications by liking us on [Facebook](#) or following the regional travels of [Tibbles the Tri-County Troll](#).

Most exciting for us is that 2016 will mark TCRPC's 60th year! Founded in 1956 by the leaders of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties,



TCRPC has provided countless reams of data, technical reports and secured millions of federal funds for our region. We worked with our members, businesses, residents and others to develop and implement plans for a more sustainable, livable region. We have marked progress and enjoyed many successes along the trail of regional planning. And, even as we mark milestones and celebrate anniversaries, we will continue forward facilitating problem solving, providing a cooperative forum for community development, and improving opportunities for wise growth and economic prosperity in Michigan's capital, Tri-County Region.

Susan M.C. Pigg, CEcD

TCRPC Executive Director

Don't Miss These Opportunities!

TCRPC IS HIRING! We are looking for a Land Use Planner to take over our Land Use Program. Position details are at www.mitrpc.org. Submit cover letter, TCRPC Job Application (available at www.mitrpc.org), and resume demonstrating qualifications to: TCRPC, Land Use Planner Position, 3135 Pine Tree Rd. Ste. 2C, Lansing MI 48911 or email a single .pdf file to reception@mitrpc.org. **All submissions must be received by February 19, 2016 at 4 p.m. EOE.**

Webinar Series: The Business of Sustainability — February 18, 2 p.m. (<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/5295006478065861122>)

Public Art for Communities Grant Program — deadline for submission is 4:00 p.m. February 19, 2016 (www.purelansing.com/publicart)

Quiet Water Symposium — March 5 at the MSU Pavilion (<http://www.quietwatersymposium.org/>)

4 College Scholarships available through the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA) — Two deadlines: March 15 and May 1 (http://www.mi-wea.org/list_of_awards_and_scholarship.php)

2016 Michigan Municipal League Conference — March 22-23 at the Lansing Center (<http://www.mml.org/sites/Event.aspx?EventKey=L-C16&WebsiteKey=6c903230-4a06-4cc8-8cd2-d7c66df022f1>)

MWEA's Michigan Watershed Summit — March 29 at Eagle Eye Banquet Facility (<http://www.viethconsulting.com/Calendar/moreinfo.php?eventid=37272>)

TIBBLES IN 2016

In another adventure that took him throughout the region, Tibbles traveled along with urban strategist Michele Reeves as she toured the three county seats as well as key corridors in the region. Follow Tibbles the Travelin' TCRPC Troll as he travels along with our planners at <http://www.twitter.com/TravelinTroll>.



Tibbles enjoying Courthouse Square in Charlotte, MI.