

TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning for People in Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties of mid-Michigan Since 1956



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TCRPC's First 2011 Newsletter!

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Special points of interest:

- Now Available! New Aerial Photos and LiDar Data
- TCRPC Staff Highlight
- New Urban Service Management Study
- TCRPC and MSU Practicum Students

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is a multi-purpose regional entity that was formed in 1956 and was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the tri-county region by federal law in 1973.

The TCRPC supports the region of mid-Michigan by planning for and coordinating intergovernmental solutions to transportation, land use, environmental and economic development issues by providing technical assistance to local governments and meeting the

needs of communities across the region.

The TCRPC is responsible for and committed to providing excellence in administering and providing staff support to local municipalities to comply with many federal and state mandates. TCRPC performs significant planning and programming of all federally funded transportation projects.

TCRPC is a credible source for a wide range of data and information including maps, aerial photographs, census data, traffic volumes and demographic

analysis that can be used for both public and private business planning.

In 2011, the TCRPC will provide a quarterly newsletter to keep you informed on regional activities.



Please visit our newly designed website: www.mitrpc.org!

Now Available! Aerial Photography and LiDar Data for our Region!

TCRPC received an award from the National Map: Imagery and Elevation Maps program of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2010 and the data is now available! TCRPC partnered with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to bring high-resolution imagery

and elevation data to the people of mid-Michigan. In total, the projects amounted to over \$300,000 dollars in new geographic data for the tri-county area. TCRPC was awarded an additional \$160,000 to acquire high-resolution elevation data using Light Detection and Ranging Technology. Both

data sets are critical to a variety of local and county functions. To see maps and request data, please contact Dan Dillinger, TCRPC Information Systems Planner for more information at ddillinger@mitrpc.org.

Urban Services Management Study Released!



Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) initiated a multi-phased land use scenario analysis to assess a *regional vision* through the **“Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future”** project, which remains an integral part of TCRPC’s and many of its respective entities’ programs since 2003. Many goals were established while developing a shared vision of future land use and development patterns, including the desire to identify an urban service management area for the Greater Lansing region.

The Urban and Rural Service District Boundary (URSD/USB) Committee was challenged with this task and has recently completed a study summarizing recommendations to shape the boundaries of our region’s urban services. The URSD/USB Committee has been meeting for several years now to collaboratively develop criteria for an urban service boundary. The initiative’s mission is to keep urbanized areas viable; to protect farmland, open space and rural quality of

life; to preserve priority conservation areas; to utilize existing infrastructure; and to cost-save through cooperation and efficiency. TCRPC staff will be promoting these initiatives and encouraging each member community to reassess their boundary according to specific criteria in the study. For additional information, please contact Harmony Gmazel, TCRPC Land Use Planner, at hgmazel@mitcrpc.org or visit www.greaterlansingurbanservice.org for more information.

Updating the Region’s Highway Monitoring System

TCRPC staff have been busy updating data for local Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) samples. HPMS is an annual nationwide effort to gather and monitor information on the condition and usage of our nation’s highways. Ultimately, this information is provided to Congress for their consideration in developing highway programs and funding levels.

TCRPC’s role is to work with local agencies to gather needed traffic counts on some 125 sample sections throughout the re-

gion, and to report on a variety of related traffic trends. In addition, TCRPC staff perform annual field monitoring reviews to update relative conditions of pavement surfaces as well as land use and environmental characteristics of the sample sections. All of this information is provided to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), who compiles HPMS data statewide and provides an annual report to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), who in turn, reports to Congress.

HPMS data is also used locally for monitoring purposes. Significantly, HPMS traffic count data is used to normalize the tri-county travel demand model vehicle miles of travel (VMT), vehicle hours of travel (VHT), and speeds, as key components in air quality conformity analysis as required. TCRPC relies heavily on our local partners to provide needed traffic counts on an annual basis to make this effort a success! Contact Steve Skinker, TCRPC Transportation Planner, at sskinker@mitcrpc.org for more information.

“HPMS data is used by Congress to establish authorization and appropriation of federal-aid highway funds to individual states under TEA-21”

A TCRPC Staff Profile: Paul Hamilton, Chief Transportation Planner



Paul Hamilton has over 30 years of experience as a regional planner and has been the lead transportation planner at the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission since November, 1985. Paul received his B.S. degree summa cum laude in Environmental Studies and Political Science from Western Michigan

University and holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Oregon in Geography, Political Science and Urban and Regional Planning where his studies focused on public policy, planning and the physical environment. Paul has attended numerous short courses in transportation planning

methods and procedures through the National Highway Institute, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. Paul has a special interest in non-motorized transportation facilities, climate change and scenario planning.

TCRPC & MSU Partner in Planning Practicum



It is rare in planning to have an opportunity to look back and gauge our level of success. But this semester, TCRPC had an opportunity to do just that when it became a “client” of the Michigan State University Urban & Regional Planning Program’s Senior Practicum

Project. TCRPC’s Groundwater Management Board and Wellhead Protection program received the project ser-

vices of six students on the verge of starting their professional careers in planning. The students evaluated the implementation of recommendations made in 2000 to improve local groundwater and wellhead protection (WHP) in our region. Their work scope in-

cluded interviews, researching and reviewing relevant planning documents, creating a Wellhead Protection Audit Tool, and completing a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis for each community. Planners from the region’s communities shared their expertise and insights on local wellhead protection. On April 7, the students presented their findings and recommendations to the Groundwater Management Board and Groundwater

Technical Advisory Council. Information gained from this project will serve as a valuable resource for making future decisions regarding local groundwater resources.

Contact Christine Spitzley, TCRPC Environmental Programs Planner, at cvspitzley@hotmail.com for more information.

Developing Strategies to Assist Agri-Business

TCRPC is collaborating with Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties and the Land Policy Institute of MSU on strategies to strengthen agricultural business opportunities in our region. We host some of the most agriculturally productive land in Michigan in an industry that remains stable despite our challenging economy. Though our agricultural business sector is characterized mostly by locally-owned, family-run entrepreneurial businesses, opportu-



nities do exist to create jobs and economic growth. An Agri-Business Economic Development Strategy is identifying the opportunities and barriers to agriculturally based business

development in our region. With participation from area residents, agricultural business owners and others, we are developing a plan to help agri-business with regional policies

and strategies to preserve productive farmland and agri-business viability. Analysis of our agricultural economy is nearly complete. Input from a series of listening sessions is being compiled. A survey of farmers is underway. For information contact Christine Hnatiw, TCRPC Economic Development Planner, at chnatiw@mitcrpc.org or take the survey at <http://surveymonkey.com/s/TriCountyAg>

Development Projects Fit in a Regional Strategy

TCRPC has issued a Call for Projects for all planned and ongoing economic development projects in the region. TCRPC has been designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the tri-county region, and

acts as a liaison to local governments, non-profits and the EDA. Under this designation, TCRPC must maintain the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the tri-county region. Economic development projects must be listed in the CEDS in order to qualify for EDA funding. The

CEDS is a living document that is updated every five years, or as needed. For additional information about EDA assistance, please contact Christine Hnatiw, TCRPC Economic Development Planner, at chnatiw@mitcrpc.org or visit www.mitcrpc.org.



United States Department of Commerce
Economic Development Agency

Snow Boarding, Surf Boarding.... Now Dash Boarding!

"So, as we form our regional dashboard let us know what measures of success or indicators of progress you think are important to our life here in the tri-county region."

Measuring success and failure, measuring the distance to success or the speed of progress...these are all part of a new twist on the old planning concept, "Failing to plan is planning for failure." The new Governor has given us his idea of a scorecard for Michigani-ans. It's called MiDashboard and you can find it at

www.michigan.gov/midashboard. As you scroll through the site, you will see topics like "health and education," "economic strength," and "value for government." Click on each link to see indicators and information that tell you how Michigan performs in areas that affect us and our families.

At the very least, MiDashboard

hopes to provide a quick thumbs up or thumbs down on Michigan's quality of life, education, and economy. Some agencies, like the Department of Management and Budget, have integrated a dashboard into a reporting process that provides a succinct monthly status of the state's major information technology projects under way. Their 'dashboard' provides decision makers with an analysis tool and communication vehicle for proactive planning and risk mitigation.

A dashboard offers measures of success and progress. But, like the dashboard of the car, setting the direction is the driver's task. In the Greater Lansing tri-county

area, TCRPC sets the direction through the "Regional Growth: Choices for our Future," a regional vision and ongoing plan with regional themes and principles for transportation, environmental, land use and economic development. Now, along with a variety of organizations and municipalities, we are discussing a "regional dashboard." A regional dashboard would help us all successfully meet state goals for the MiDashboard. And, it could be a valuable tool in our regional community as we plan for future success. So, as we form our regional dashboard let us know what measures of success or indicators of progress you think are important to our life here in the tri-county region. Let's plan for success!



Elimination of Zoning Boards and Commissions Effective July 1, 2011

Please be aware that Section 301 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006 (MCL 125.3101 et seq) became effective in 2006 and removes all power from zoning boards/

commissions as of July 1, 2011. If your municipality has an existing zoning board or commission, zoning powers of those bodies must be transferred to a lawfully established planning commission

empowered under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. This does not apply to Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBAs). Please contact your municipal attorney for more information.

Don't Miss These Training Opportunities!

Designing Healthy Livable Communities Conference - 2011

June 6: 1:00 – 5:00 p.m./June 7: All day at the Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI
Contact Diane Drago (517) 663-5147 or ddrago@dmsevents.com to register.

Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA)

July 12-15, 2011: At Flint Holiday Inn Gateway Centre at 5353 Gateway Centre, Flint, MI
See conference registration materials at www.mtpa-mi.org.

