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MICHIGAN'S 14 STATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

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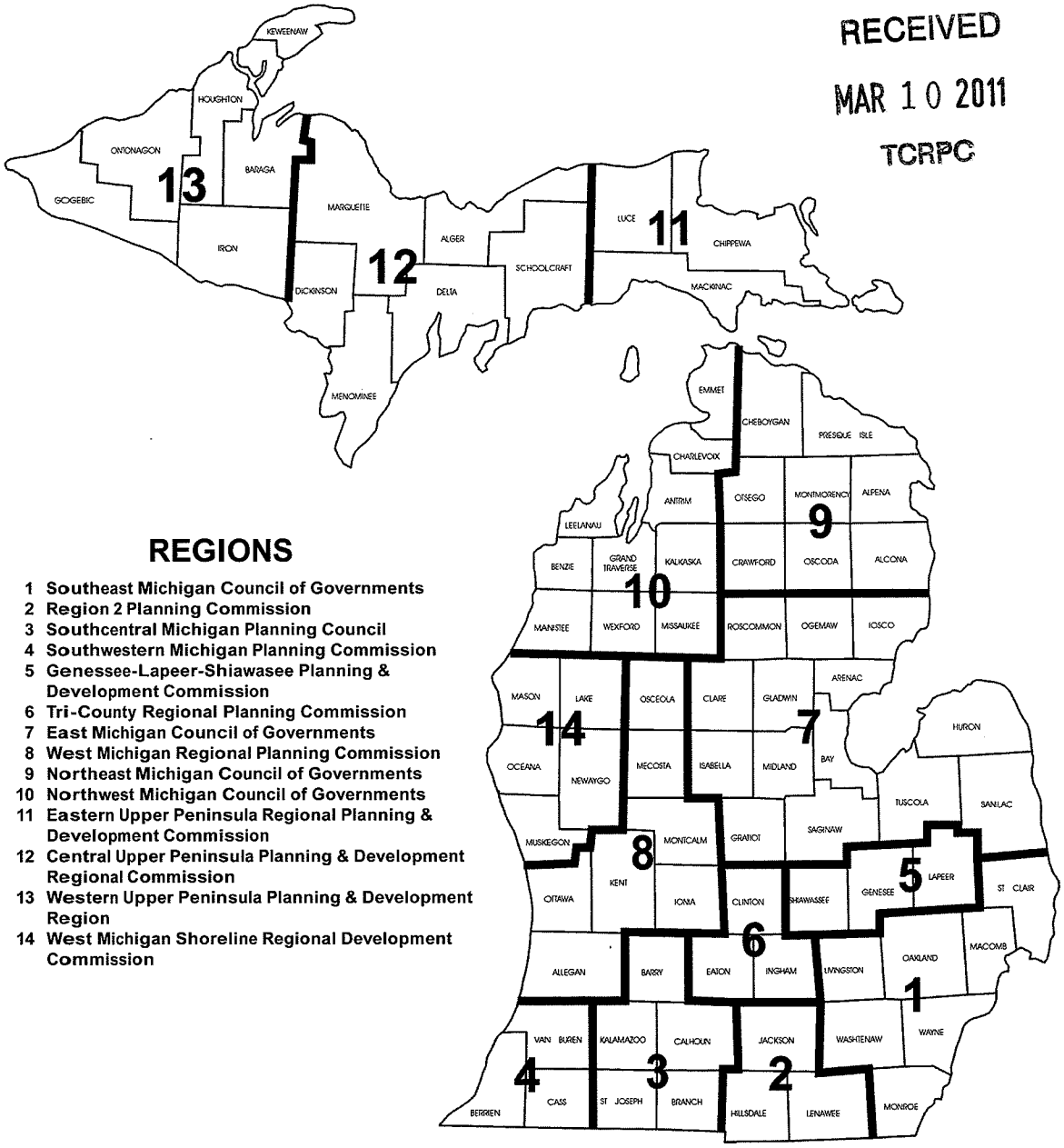

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REG. 6 – Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Susan M.C. Pigg, *Executive Director*

History & Background

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is based in Lansing, and serves Ingham, Clinton and Eaton Counties in mid-Michigan's Greater Lansing area. TCRPC formed in 1956 under PA 281 of 1945, is one of the first metropolitan planning organizations in the United States. With the first director, a two-person staff, and a budget of $27,000, TCRPC completed its first base-mapping project and a U.S. Geological Survey groundwater study with its first federal planning grant in 1959. TCRPC continues to provide transportation, land use, economic development, environmental planning and zoning services to communities throughout the Lansing tri-county region. TCRPC's projects have included water use studies, housing programs, public facility inventories, hazard mitigation plans, health and welfare reports, solid waste management plans, open space plans, local master plans, subdivision regulations, and aerial photography.

Service Area & Organization

TCRPC serves a region that includes 453,603 residents in a land area of 1,707 square miles. The Lansing/East Lansing area is the geographical center of the region, with urbanized townships, rural townships, cities and villages comprising the remainder of the region. The Commission Board of Directors is comprised of nineteen voting members representing Clinton County, Eaton County and Ingham County Commissioners and Road Commissioners from all three counties. It also includes transit authority representatives, members from cities and urban townships and the Michigan Department of Transportation. Non-voting members include one person from the Eaton and Ingham County Board of Commissioners, and the Mayor of Lansing. TCRPC has a staff of fourteen with a budget of nearly $1.5 million that directly provides service to the region through a number of programs.

Principal Services

TCRPC's programs encompass five major areas: the environment, economic development, land use, transportation and a regional data center. Within the environmental program, TCRPC staff members Christine Spitzley and Erin Campbell serve three significant committees: the Groundwater Management Board, the Groundwater Technical Advisory Council, and the Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management. These committees include multiple jurisdictional partners, including local governments, public utilities, school districts, state and federal resource agencies and interested citizen groups. The economic development program is led by TCRPC staff member Christine Hnatiw, who serves the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee. This committee includes both public and private sector representatives. The land use planning program is staffed by Harmony Gmazel, AICP who facilitates activities developed in the area's Regional Growth: Choices for our Future initiative. These projects are currently being implemented through the work of three committees: the Urban Service Boundary Committee, the Land Use and Health Resource Team and the Greening Mid-Michigan project. Paul Hamilton directs the transportation program, and staff members Steve Skinker, Hary Prawiranata, Laura Tschirhart, and Paul Dionne recently completed the region's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Local, county, state and federal road projects are planned through TCRPC, with millions of dollars provided to the region by state and federal programs. Finally, TCRPC maintains a regional data center with staff member Dan Dillinger. The center provides agencies, organizations, residents and businesses with demographic and visual/spatial data related to the region and its planning activities. In addition to these standard programs, TCRPC staff work closely with local governments and regional partners to identify programs and grants that will further the mission of the region.

Noteworthy Projects

Many programs and projects have been recognized as models for successful regional planning as well as critical to our region's success. For example, TCRPC has hosted the Regional Economic Development Team which was recognized by the State Department of Commerce and the Federal Economic Development Administration. The Children's Water Festival is another highly successful program that has been held for fifteen years on the campus of Michigan State University. Organized and hosted by TCRPC, this event provides environmental science classes related to water stewardship for approximately 1,800 fourth, fifth and sixth graders from the region each year. The Festival has been honored with a Certificate of Tribute by the Governor's Office. More information on the Water Festival and environmental programming can be found at these links: www.mywatersheds.org, www.h2ofest.org, and www.capitalgroundwater.org.

TCRPC has undertaken many impressive projects over its long history. Recently, the creation of Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future received accolades as a "national best practice" in transportation and land use scenario planning. This initiative provides a preferred vision for growth and development in the Greater Lansing tri-county region, with an emphasis on reinvestment in city and village core areas, while protecting natural areas, agricultural and recreation lands. The Regional Growth project provides not only a glance back to historic development trends in the region, but looks to the future with principles that shape land use decision-making into sustainable growth. The Regional Growth project is incorporated into every program area at TCRPC and in the Commission's transportation, land use planning and zoning activities, while promoting principles that strengthen the mission of the Commission's environmental, economic development and regional data center projects. A majority of the 50 local jurisdictions that hold planning and zoning power in the region have adopted resolutions in support of the Regional Growth project, and its principles of sustainable growth at the local level. It is through the principles of the Regional Growth project that TCRPC's land use planning program is promoting projects such as a vision for regional green infrastructure (Greening Mid-Michigan) www.greenmid-michigan.org and efforts to identify an Urban Service Boundary for the urbanized areas of the region. www.greaterlansingurbanservice.org. The Regional Growth project is currently being renewed and updated under the direction of a Steering Committee made of local elected officials, planners and community development professionals. ❑