

the review

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

March/April 2009

Great Lakes Urban Exchange **Inspiring Millennials**

Sarah Szurpicki
cofounder and director

How Consolidation **Transformed**
Indianapolis

Achieving A **Regional Vision**
For Traverse Bay

Houghton and Hancock
Two Cities, One Community



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On the Cover

Sarah Szurpicki, cofounder and director of the Great Lakes Urban Exchange (GLUE). Please see cover story on page 11.

Cover photo by Anna Bruchmann



the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League.

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Executive Director's Message

By Daniel P. Gilmartin

Regionalism Can Be a Tricky Topic

In recent weeks I have found myself enthusiastically advocating for additional regional tools that would allow local governments to effectively plan for service consolidations and additional public and private partnerships. I have also found myself taking a more critical stance of those who wrongly believe that regional service delivery alone will cure all of the structural economic maladies that challenge local governments in our state today. It can be a delicate dance to be sure.

If you set aside the political and cultural hurdles that often stand in the way of regional cooperation (sometimes the term itself just seems loaded) there is no denying that there remains many untapped opportunities for collaborative efforts between units of local government here in Michigan. It is interesting to note that the most frequently shared services in Michigan, according to the Centers for Regional Excellence are: fire fighting/rescue, water and sewer, ambulance/EMS, public transit, 911/radio communication, water metering and billing, parks & recreation, watershed management, senior centers, property assessing, building inspection, recycling, emergency/disaster response planning, and libraries.


Deciding which uses are best for which areas can be a difficult task, so the League decided to dedicate this issue of *The Review* to regionalism...in all of its glory!

What I have come to believe is that the real opportunity for regionalism lies in the fact that it can take on different forms to meet the diverse challenges that governments confront at all levels. Just as there are different strokes for different folks, there are varying uses for regionalism in different settings as well. In this issue we will look at regionalism across the gambit.

Our cover story focuses on the utilization of regionalism from a long-term strategic viewpoint. The Great Lakes Urban Exchange (GLUE) is the grand idea of two twenty-somethings who had simply had enough of the negative rust belt talk and decided to start an online network of young, knowledge workers in an effort to jumpstart dozens of local economies across the Great Lakes basin. It will be fun to see how GLUE takes off in the years to come and the effect it will have in shaping urban policies.

You can also check out how west Michigan is channeling its business attraction energies behind a regional economic development plan aimed at bringing real change to a vast geographic footprint. Or you can read what's going on in the Grand Traverse Bay area where they have been setting records for citizen participation in the six-county area. This immense regional conversation will play an important role in determining how the entire area will grow in the decades ahead. And if it's information on "good, old fashioned roll up your sleeves and get to work on consolidating government services" that you seek then we have plenty of models in and around Michigan that we have highlighted for you too.

There are three types of consolidation: functional, geographic, and political. The most difficult consolidation to achieve is political; that is, merging two or more separate units of government into a new government. The only place in our state to achieve such an unprecedented consolidation is in Upper Peninsula. The cities of Iron River and Stambaugh consolidated with the village of Mineral Hills in 2000. To find out more about Michigan's only three-entity consolidation, please visit our website www.mml.org.

Most of all, I hope that the stories in this issue will cause the readers to rethink their views on what regionalism means and how its many faces might be put to use in their own areas. I hope you enjoy it! 



People to People Connections

By Arnold Weinfeld



Allentown, Pennsylvania row houses. Photo by Amy Barr

Collaboration. What does it mean to policymakers? For some, it means local governments need to share more services to save taxpayer dollars. Over the last several years, what with continuing state budget deficits and reductions in revenue sharing, state legislators, in particular, have wrapped themselves in the flag of local government service sharing and collaboration. They talk about wanting local governments to consolidate, collaborate, and cooperate, only to find out that many local units already do share services—quite a lot, in fact. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) actually keeps a pretty good catalog of such ventures not only in southeast Michigan but across the state on their website.

On the other hand, only a few brave souls have opened their eyes to addressing the real barricades to achieving the

biggest bang for the buck when it comes to service sharing... amending certain state regulatory laws such as Public Act 312 or various cooperation acts that would allow locals to better control costs when they seek to combine public safety services. Until then, I guess we'll continue to nibble around the edges.

Regional Excellence

One of those edges has been the Centers for Regional Excellence (CRE) program. This program, funded primarily through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, recently awarded nine communities grants of up to \$25,000 over the next two years for collaborative projects between local governments that make their communities better places to live, work, and play. The projects range from public safety to tourism to community business development. This is the second round of grants awarded through the CRE program.

But instead of waiting on policymakers to change laws or the state or federal government to hand out money, there are collaborative strategies communities can adopt that will allow them to grow and prosper without a handout from big brother or the accompanying eyes looking over their shoulder.

Pin Pricks in Tampa Bay

Creative Tampa is an organization with no offices, no budget, and no employees. It is a strategic network that connects the connectors. Peter Kageyama, founder of Creative Tampa Bay, used a process called “civic acupuncture” to move community groups and city government institutions toward collaboration. Civic acupuncture refers to utilizing small projects to institute large change.

Here in Michigan we would think that a community like Tampa Bay would have no problem attracting and retaining business or a young talented workforce. But perception is not reality, as Peter Kageyama witnessed when he sought to build a more exciting and creative community, geared toward attracting millennials and jobs for the 21st century. Through a series of projects, Peter worked to establish a network that included municipal functions as well as the business community, the cultural community, and the philanthropic community. By bringing these various disparate parts of his community together, he discovered that it was the smaller things, the pin pricks (civic acupuncture) that were beginning to making a difference.

Social Connections in Allentown

Or perhaps we can learn something from Allentown, Pennsylvania, which like many Michigan communities once thrived as a manufacturing center but then suffered a catastrophic demise of its economy when steel crashed. Sean Safford, assistant professor of organizations and strategy at the University of Chicago, brought forth the perspective of a researcher as he told Allentown's story. Allentown found the importance of civic and social connections in supporting the traditional business economic networks in leading the way to its economic turnaround. It reemerged, and today boasts many “sunrise” industries that promise a thriving economy in the knowledge-based world.



Tampa, Florida. Photo by James Willamor, CLTblog.com



Peter Kageyama




Sean Safford

Why? According to Sean, in Allentown the “community” got the right people together quickly and acted decisively to shift their economic path. This feat was made possible in part due to the strong civic/social connections within the community. Unlikely venues like the Boy Scouts board, college/university groups, and other arts and cultural organizations provided Allentown the bridges it desperately needed to connect people during the economic crisis. In Allentown, their strong civic/social networks allowed them to recreate those connections; this network served as the “back-up” plan when economic connections were decimated. In Allentown, the present-day economic leaders are actively involved in civic networks.

What Does This Mean for Michigan?

What do these stories hold for our communities as we seek to find ways to move our economy forward? I think it again shows that local officials hold the keys to building success. No matter how big or how small the community you come from, you know people and you know people who know people. These connections can pave the way to establishing new partnerships. Think of the anchor institutions within your community right now...school; bank; hospital; foundation; museum...I’m sure there are more that I’m not mentioning. Each and every one of these provides opportunity for local officials to establish positive collaborative relationships, relationships that are needed in both good times and bad.

The League’s public policy initiatives strongly support collaboration not only between local units, but just as importantly, between locals and those entities that make up the entire community from the for-profit sector to foundations to community organizations. Together, we can build communities that will lead Michigan for years to come. 

Arnold Weinfeld is director of public policy & federal affairs for the Michigan Municipal League. You may contact him at 517-908-0304 or aweinfeld@mml.org.

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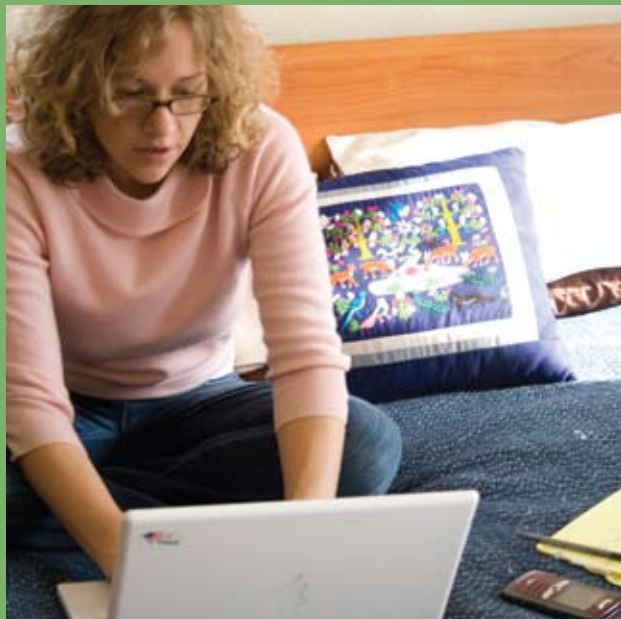


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Profile: Sarah Szurpicki



Sarah is a Detroit-area native who, in early 2007, “boomeranged” back after eight years in Boston, DC, and New York, and now lives in Royal Oak.

She graduated from Harvard University with a BA in environmental science and public policy in 2003, where her studies focused on public participation and activism in environmental science.

Sarah is a co-founder and Director of GLUE, the Great Lakes Urban Exchange, an online networking and journalism effort to build regional identity and share information among young urban leaders from cities around the Great Lakes region.

Sarah and GLUE co-founder Abby Wilson developed the concept for the Great Lakes Urban Exchange during the summer of 2007, as an outgrowth of comparative conversations about their experiences coming home to similarly challenged post-industrial cities.

After a year of incubating with the Brookings Institution, GLUE is now a project of the Tides Center.

“Being heard is a reward in itself. If you, a city leader, can make your young leaders feel heard, you’ll make strides in locking those young leaders into your community. You’ll also bolster your reputation for being participatory and transparent—openness and transparency are values YKWs (young knowledge workers) love. “

Thoughts On Civic Engagement

The focus of established leadership should be on identifying, empowering, and rewarding the “do-ers” who are already living in our metropolitan communities. Detroit is years away from being able to attract the YKWs who move to New York because they want to plug themselves effortlessly into a community and lifestyle that already exists, ready-made. The YKWs who are currently making their homes in Detroit are there because they want to be active participants in, contributors to, and shapers of their communities. They want to be part of positive change.

Like the “first adopters” sought by the fashion industry, aren’t these the kind of YKWs we should be working to “attract and retain?” Michigan cities should be celebrating these individuals, and marketing themselves to more people like them. The message shouldn’t be, “There’s so much to do here—I swear!” It should be, “Here, you can play a role in creating the future.” If the YKWs who are here are rewarded with leadership roles in their communities, whether in the public or private sector, the word will spread. As anyone familiar with Michigan’s history around the turn of the (19th) century will recall: nothing moves people in like opportunity.

Cover Story

Songs in the Key of Mega-Regional Collaboration

by Sarah Szurpicki



Great Lakes Urban Exchange (GLUE), a coalition comprised of post-boomer urbanists located in the "rust belt," was founded to promote the power, aide in the positive transformation, and address the shared challenges of similarly storied older industrial cities situated in the Great Lakes watershed. Among the ranks of GLUE coalition members are community organizers, urban planners, artists, environmentalists, entrepreneurs, and students living and working in more than twenty cities in ten states.

Values, Values, Values

I subscribe to the notion that we urgently need young talent to establish their homes here in Michigan because we need them to eventually occupy positions being vacated by retiring baby boomers, to start businesses, to support a service industry, to send their kids to our public schools, and to champion our cultural institutions—to do the things that people in communities do. But there is also an even more urgent need that only the younger generation can fill: Michigan's communities need to be infected by their values.

Where once some of us might have adorned jean jackets with pins that said "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute!" (and by "some of us," I mean me) we now are trained to think about reducing our carbon footprint by taking public transit, designing green homes, carpooling rather than private jetting, and feeding our inner locavore.

People around my age have grown up with the progressive values that our cities need, both to thrive, and to be attractive to the young people who share those values. We are pro-tolerance, pro-diversity, pro-sustainability, pro-equity. There are some lessons that exacted a great emotional toll on our parents; my generation has the benefit of the lesson without the learning. While we still feel the effects, we're not hampered by the emotions incurred—anger, guilt, or otherwise—by the riots and white flight of the '60s and '70s. We weren't there.

Glue sculpture by Lou Iannone, made entirely of recycled cardboard.

GLUE is a community that engages in four major types of activities, operates on four main principles, and adheres to seven values in major cities around the Great Lakes region.

Activities

1. Promote the concept of mega-regionalism and the importance of urban revitalization.
2. Develop a community of individuals and organizations who would benefit from participation in a mega-regional network focused on urban change.
3. Develop tools, share resources, and facilitate conversations that empower change agents to engage in the network, and to engage better in their communities.
4. Advocate for policies that promote healthier and more prosperous futures for Great Lakes cities.



Celebrating the launch of GLUE's website and bronze pouring



GLUE cofounders Abby Wilson and Sarah Szurpicki

Principles

1. **Urbanism:** Cities are our world's economic drivers. Decision makers cannot afford to underestimate their value nor overlook their needs.
2. **Regionalism:** Great Lakes urban centers need to overcome outlooks of despair and isolation by forging a shared perspective and developing strength in numbers.
3. **Storytelling:** White papers alone cannot propel an agenda. No need is expressed more powerfully than via human narrative.
4. **Building Networks:** Connecting people and institutions will foster regional collaboration and transfer examples of success throughout the region.

Values

1. Information sharing
2. Transparency
3. Inter-sector/inter-city cooperation
4. Mainstreaming good ideas, big and small
5. The active solicitation of multiple perspectives
6. Long-term, sustainable thinking and action
7. Tolerance and inclusion across policy fields



Sarah with colleagues from the Michigan Suburbs Alliance

GLUE Cities

Akron, OH; Buffalo, NY; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; Columbus, OH; Dayton, OH; Detroit, MI; Des Moines, IA; Duluth, MN; Erie, PA; Flint, MI; Fort Wayne, IN; Grand Rapids, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Lansing, MI; Louisville, KY; Milwaukee, WI; Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN; Pittsburgh, PA; Rochester, NY; St. Louis, MO; Toledo, OH; Youngstown, OH



A Catch-22

In December, GLUE conducted a poll of our members, asking what issues GLUE should prioritize in 2009.

- 93 percent of respondents believe that public transportation should be a priority.
- 94 percent feel the same way about promoting walkability and decreasing sprawl.
- 89 percent think we should care about promoting cooperation between municipal governments, especially between central cities and their suburbs.
- 69 percent want us to work on government transparency.

GLUE really has its work cut out. Besides the fact that our members have high expectations, this shows me that people who have chosen to live in a "rust belt" city want city amenities and features that will actually make our cities more sustainable and more democratic. The things that will make our cities better are the same things that will make young people want to live here; if they live here, they'll help to create the things that will make our cities better. It's like Field of Dreams—without the baseball-playing ghosts. One would be hard pressed to conceive of a more appealing catch-22.

The Same Boat

Our industrial legacy means that most of our cities face the same challenges, varying only by degrees. Our survey revealed no meaningful divide about issues along geographic lines. The 94 percent of our members who support greater walkability are from all the GLUE cities, including Michigan's. Our cities' residents are in agreement about (at least some of) the elements that would improve life here.

Too often, government, politics, and even non-profits are proprietary and exclusionary. Maybe it's because we haven't settled into our roles, and our projects are perpetually underfunded, but initiatives led by young people are rarely hampered by self-defeating competitiveness.

At GLUE's inaugural conference one year ago, participants climbed aboard a yellow school bus, for an "alternative" tour of our host city, Buffalo, NY. Two members of the Buffalo

contingent served as our main tour guides. They often paused to defer to other Buffalonians on the bus—"You work in this neighborhood, why don't you take over," or "You run the Village Association. How did this neighborhood turn around?" Beyond their admirable humility, their willingness to pass the baton demonstrated that these Buffalonian young leaders, while operating in diverse sectors, felt confident that they shared a view of Buffalo, its challenges, and its strengths—and that they would represent the city's "condition" with attention to similar details.

For instance, no one on that bus missed Anthony's implication of institutionalized racism when he said, "It is a travesty that this waterfront park is in this state." Nobody suggested that a park near a richer, and whiter, neighborhood, would exist in the same state of neglect. And, most importantly, nobody believed that Buffalo's long-term success isn't partly dependent on its ability to create safe, usable green spaces for more than just its more affluent children.






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Competition Is Entrenched But Outdated

After our bus tour of Buffalo, participants repeated, "That looked just like Cleveland." Or Pittsburgh. Or Flint. They saw Milwaukee, Detroit, and Lansing in the vacancy and reuse, declining industry and new technology, old ethnic neighborhoods and new immigrant communities, and the slowly re-densifying downtown districts of Buffalo. It was as if they were staring into a mirror. Rather than seeing in Buffalo a competitor for young talent, we saw a partner.

In our new "flat world," there's no way that one of our mega-region's cities will be successful while the others fail. Businesses are more likely to land in Flint if they know that their supply needs can be met in Cleveland and Toledo, their marketing and technology needs in Detroit, and their financial needs in Chicago. Our new industries should be coordinated mega-regionally; our political weight should be channeled for Great Lakes Compact-style legislation mobilization (may I suggest: Great Lakes Light Rail?).


The next generation of leaders, through technology, organizations like GLUE, and their own prerogative, will be networked in a way to make this mega-regional cooperation real. But we cannot afford to wait for them to come into power.

As Michigan enters its ninth year of recession, it's clear that the rest of the country has written us off. The U.S. won't



be able to similarly ignore an organized mega-region that is the source of 29 percent of the country's public and private research and development, 33 percent of its bachelor degrees, and 33 percent of its gross state output. Our success is dependent on whether we can harness the values of the next generation and the strength of our mega-regional status, which should be described thusly: powerhouse. Mega-regionalism has to be more than a concept or even a community. It has to be a real alignment of assets and economic, social, and political strategies to solve our many real problems.

As we say at GLUE, welcome to the mega-regional family.

- 1 The Belle Isle Observatory, Detroit
- 2 Adaptive re-use in St. Louis
- 3 Milwaukee Art Museum
- 4 Wicker Park, Chicago 



Photos by Sarah Szurpicki

Sarah Szurpicki is a director for GLUE. You may reach her at sarah@gluespace.org. For more information on GLUE, visit www.gluespace.org.



To Make Our Cities Healthier, THINK REGIONAL

By Jeff Gerritt



Most of America lives in large metropolitan areas with economies the size of nations. Yet governments—local, state and national—behave as if it's the wild, wild West, a land of isolation, unconnected settlements, and battles over resources.

Those days are gone. The United States is no longer a nation of farms or singular cities and suburbs, but one of interconnected metropolitan regions that cross city, county and even state lines. Local governments must become more regional in how they deliver services, tax residents, and plan investments and developments.

Covering only 12 percent of the land, the nation's 100 largest metro areas produce two-thirds of the jobs and three-quarters of the economic output, reports the Brookings Institution's MetroPolicy study.

Far Left: Since 1970, downtown Indianapolis has become a vibrant mix of retail, residential, office, stadium, and entertainment developments. Photo by Craig Stevens

Center: The new \$675 million Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis was financed by a nine-county food and beverage sales tax passed in 2007. Photo by hyku

Right: The Soldiers and Sailors Monument Circle in the center of Indianapolis. Photo by Matt Barton

These metros, ranging in population from 500,000 in Lansing to 19 million in New York City, are home to two-thirds of Americans. They harbor the roads, railways, shipyards and airports that connect the nation's metropolitan economies to each other and to the world.

Still, our political boundaries—and our political thinking—are more suited to the America of covered wagons and small farms. In Michigan and other midwest states, for example, pint-sized township governments, developing out of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, now provide unnecessary layers of government that impede efforts at regional cooperation.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government rewarded regional planning with financial incentives in transportation, housing, environmental and other block grants. Those efforts were largely abandoned in the 1980s and 1990s, even as the need for urban policies that worked across municipal boundaries grew.

Encourage Cooperation

Now more than ever, with sky-high gas prices, global warming and crumbling roads, the nation must work regionally to meet its energy, environmental and economic needs. The federal government should ensure—again, through financial carrots—that local metropolitan planning organizations coordinate regional transportation and land-use planning.

"The success of the nation is at stake," said Mark Muro, policy director for the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program. "There's clearly a federal role in ensuring that metropolitan areas are organized to deliver."

The Brookings report, "MetroPolicy: Shaping a New Federal Partnership for a Metropolitan Nation," offers sound advice on how the federal government can push metropolitan unity, including financial assistance that rewards regional and interstate cooperation, technical assistance and funding to regions that start new collaborative efforts, and federal "challenge" grants for the boldest and most innovative proposals for metropolitan governance.

State governments ought to provide similar incentives to local governments. Former Grand Rapids Mayor John Logie has proposed a metropolitan rebate, for example. Local governments in regions that agree to consolidate significant government services would get back part of the state income tax collected from that region. However they're delivered, economic incentives are needed to nudge local governments to work together.

Consolidation Pays Off

Following an abysmal absence of federal leadership, locally elected leaders from both parties have taken the lead on regional issues. Portland, Minneapolis and Indianapolis, for example, have followed distinct, locally driven routes to regionalism. All three metropolises have benefited with relatively healthy regional economies and strong central cities.

All politicians should aim to preserve the invaluable assets of a central city. In Indianapolis, it was Republicans, especially then-Mayor Richard Lugar, who led a successful local effort called Unigov to consolidate local governments.

As in most urban regions, sprawl and white flight hurt the central city of Indianapolis during the 1960s. The surrounding suburbs were growing, but in a hodge-podge manner. Indianapolis and its sleepy downtown were sometimes called "India-no-place" or "Nap Town."

On January 1, 1970, with the help of new state legislation, Unigov consolidated Indianapolis and Marion County government, except for a handful of excluded cities. The central city limits expanded to include all of Marion County.

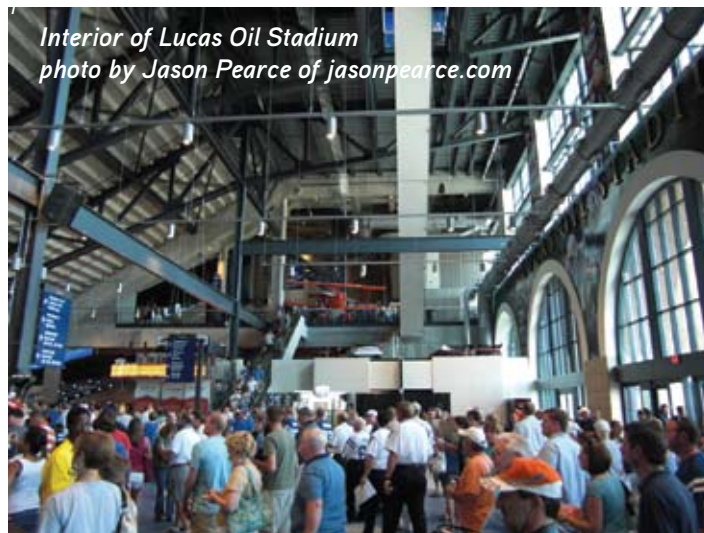
Peterson said there's no political will to expand the city's boundaries again, but Unigov has taught the people and politicians of central Indiana to think beyond their borders.

Unigov wasn't a panacea for the county's economic and social problems. Nor did it undo the stark inequities between the old city of Indianapolis and the rest of the county. Eleven school districts, with uneven resources and graduation rates, remained autonomous, as they do today. Indianapolis didn't consolidate police services until 2005. Fire services are still not fully merged.

But most government services were consolidated. Even more important, Unigov created a shared tax base and destiny. With a population of 785,000, Indianapolis is one of the nation's few growing big cities.

Indianapolis' Example

Downtown Indianapolis has perhaps benefited most from Unigov, which has steered large-scale investments to the city's center and branded itself the Amateur Sports Capital of the World. The 160,000 jobs in downtown Indianapolis at least doubles Detroit's downtown job total, even though Indianapolis has fewer people. The new \$675 million Lucas Oil Stadium, which will host Super Bowl XLVI in 2012, was financed with a nine-county food and beverage sales tax passed in 2007.



*Interior of Lucas Oil Stadium
photo by Jason Pearce of jasonpearce.com*

"Unigov is probably the largest single determinant of Indianapolis' fate," said Deputy Mayor Nick Webber. "When Lucas Oil went up, there wasn't a question in this community about where we build it. Unigov had set that stage: You support your core city."

That may be a little hyperbolic, but Unigov has helped create a regional ethic in Indianapolis. City and civic leaders hope to build on the stadium tax's success by developing a transit system for nine-county central Indiana, including rapid transit bus or light-rail service.

"We're getting back to the point we were 40 years ago," said former Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson. "We're still better off than most places, but the wealth disparities between the county and suburbs are getting extreme."

Slow the Sprawl

Efforts at regional government are still in their infancy. Portland and Minneapolis may be the nation's strongest examples.

With an elected regional government that since 1979 has overseen an urban growth boundary, Portland arrested urban sprawl. A population increase of 25 percent in metro Portland resulted in only a 1.5 percent increase in developed land. The growth boundary around Portland has shielded outlying forests and farmland and pushed development back into the central city. By contrast, the population of southeast Michigan has increased 4.3 percent in the last 30 years, while the area of developed land has increased more than 40 percent. Meantime, the central city of Detroit lost population and jobs at an alarming rate.

Anyone who has visited Portland, Minneapolis or Indianapolis lately knows they are in far better shape than Detroit—the poster child for a divided region—and most other older central cities. Their regions likewise do better, because central cities project a region's identity and image, as well as control most of the transportation networks, educational and cultural institutions, and physical assets such as water and sewer lines.

A regional political culture has social and civic benefits, too. It's probably no coincidence that Portland and Minneapolis-St. Paul have the highest adult volunteer rates, along with Salt

Lake City, among all U.S. big cities. Governments working together for a common good could help repair America's tattered social fabric.


Voters Pose Stumbling Block

Political leaders with a vested interest in the status quo will continue to resist change. In Michigan, such change must include making it easier for large townships to become cities and revamping, if not eliminating, most of the state's 1,242 township governments. A bill last year by Rep. Paul Condino, D-Southfield, would have helped by stripping townships of the power to collect property taxes, administer elections and assess property. But future efforts to transfer powers from townships to counties must compensate counties for added responsibilities by shifting township tax and special assessment revenues to them.

Politicians are not the only barrier to regional cooperation. To their credit, local elected leaders in southeast Michigan have negotiated dozens of shared agreements for police, fire, telecommunications, recreation and other services. Even township governments are sharing services, especially fire departments, or contracting them with other units. Unfortunately, politicians who push these sensible measures are often opposed—even recalled—by citizens who believe hometown identity and local control are threatened.

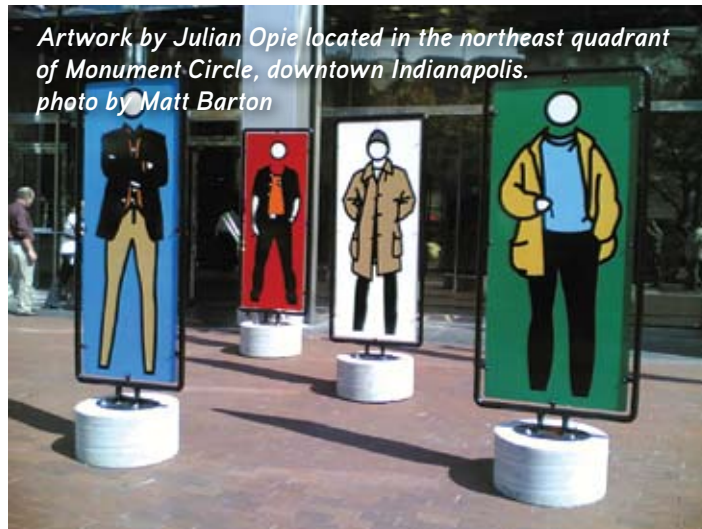
"There's a disconnect," SEMCOG Executive Director Paul Tait said. "Voters want

better services without paying more taxes, yet they tend to punish elected officials who try to do that by merging services with their neighbors."

New federal and state policies are needed that recognize and reinforce the regional nature of America's urban centers. In the dawn of the 21st century, the nation's cities, states and regions can no longer afford governments that don't reach beyond their borders. 

On the net: www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/06_metropolicy.aspx

This article first appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* on August 10, 2008. Reprinted with permission.



*Artwork by Julian Opie located in the northeast quadrant of Monument Circle, downtown Indianapolis.
photo by Matt Barton*

Jeff Gerritt is an editorial writer and columnist for the *Detroit Free Press*. His editorial-page series on urban America—Cities Now and Tomorrow—can be found at www.freep.com/cities.



Grand Traverse Bay, Region on the Rise

By Andrea Messinger

Photo courtesy of TART trails

From growing pains to a blueprint for change, The Grand Vision regional planning effort set the national record for per capita participation in a regional public planning study and is securing prosperity and quality of life for future generations.

Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Kalkaska and Wexford counties, home to the unassuming communities of my youth, are now considered the fastest growing region in the Midwest. Experiencing an explosive 26 percent growth rate in the last decade, the area's population is supposed to double within 40 years.

When our editorial team needed someone to research the Grand Vision regional planning effort for this issue, I just had to jump in—what was my tip-of-the-mitt cooking up this time?

Ironic Beginnings

Though The Grand Vision was ultimately a highly collaborative project, it actually stemmed from a disagreement over a proposed transportation project. In the aftermath of the disagreement, community leaders with diverse backgrounds came together in search of joint solutions to this and other regional disputes.

Thirty-four local leaders selected a consulting firm, Mead & Hunt, that recommended a proposal that included scenario planning as a form of public input. This approach required tremendous participation from area residents and collaboration on all levels with the goal of fully engaging dozens of stakeholder groups and thousands of residents, business leaders, government officials, church leaders, non-profit organizations and schools from the six-county region, ultimately forming The Grand Vision defined as: “a planning effort designed to develop a citizen-led blueprint for growth that will secure the future prosperity and quality of life in the region for generations to come.”

The following groups were integral to fulfilling the scenario planning process and launching the Grand Vision Scorecard to tremendous public support:

The Public Involvement Committee (PIC)—An organized group of dedicated volunteers that collaborate with the consultant team to ensure broad citizen involvement from all six counties in the project study area.

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments—As the regional planning agency, this group plays a critical supporting staff role by engaging local government officials in the counties around Grand Traverse County.

TC-TALUS—An appointed governmental body with authority for establishing key transportation priorities in the urbanized area around Traverse City. It is comprised of representatives of government and non-profit groups related to transportation.

Mead & Hunt—Consultant specializing in strategic visioning, scenario planning, traffic surveying and modeling, economic modeling, community planning, project management, and marketing and outreach.



Photo by Andrew McFarlane

Literally thousands of people have already participated in workshops, served on volunteer committees, and engaged through the website. The consultants, who have worked in many of the nation's major metropolitan areas, say they have never seen this kind of public participation—anywhere.

The Grand Vision website, February 2009



Photo courtesy of TART trails

Scenario Planning: It's a Group Thing

Scenario planning presents the public with an opportunity to consider several possible futures. The scenario planning process started with citizen planning workshops to envision different scenarios for the future and to model how these scenarios would move traffic, develop land and supply housing. The goal was to end up with a handful of scenarios to put on a Grand Vision Scorecard that would be widely distributed throughout the area to collect resident feedback.

First Things First, The Grand Vision Decision

In October 2008, the Grand Vision Scorecard was introduced. It put forth four different scenarios for growth (as generated from the scenario planning process), and gave citizens of the region the opportunity to provide input on what they like best about the different scenarios.

From the four original scenarios, one consensus vision for the future emerged, named the "Grand Vision Decision." From this critical point, a widely supported growth plan that will drive the direction of the region will arise.

The Grand Vision blog reported 12,141 people completed the scorecard in October, establishing a new national record for per capita participation in regional public planning studies and providing a wealth of input for the project's future.

The goal was to end up with a blueprint that takes into account today's national and international issues, such as climate change and the rising price of oil, but would have the adaptability to adjust to unforeseen issues decades into the future.

Preparing to Launch

Almost one in 10 people across the six-county region took the time to share their ideas and priorities for shaping The Grand Vision.

Preliminary analysis of the scorecards identified key trends and areas of consensus emerging and described significant characteristics for each of the four proposed land use and transportation growth scenarios.

The scorecard also asked a dozen multiple-choice questions and provided space for personal comments. More than 9,000 written comments emerged.



Photo courtesy of TART trails



Photo by Andrew McFarlane



Grand Vision Planning Meeting photo by Andrew McFarlane

Working in conjunction with Mead & Hunt, John Fregonese, president of Fregonese Associates, the Oregon-based firm that led public scenario planning workshops, has identified several clear themes that have emerged and should be included in the preferred scenario.

- Minimize pressure and growth in rural areas through focusing new development in villages and cities.
- Include regional bus service connecting cities and villages, and urban transit options in more developed areas. "Significant roadway expansion alone would not likely be met with support," Fregonese said. "There is a strong sentiment that residents do not see additional road building or widening of existing roads as the top priority for using transportation investments."
- Provide a mix of housing types and locations that offer a range of choices for current and future residents.
- Direct positive growth to the towns and villages of the region. Regional bus or other transit is integral.

- Keep the urban footprint small. Cities like Traverse City and Cadillac will intensify with more housing options. Cities and villages alike will be more pedestrian and bike friendly, with a focus on year-round travel via these options. "It is abundantly clear that residents want to see additional spending on bike and walk facilities," Fregonese said.

More details and complete scorecard results, along with maps and preliminary recommendations for key transportation projects, will be included in the draft Grand Vision to be released in February. Additional public input will be sought on the draft plan, with a final Grand Vision expected to be complete in April 2009.

This "Grand Vision" will serve as a blueprint for the community leaders and government officials charged with its implementation, and will drive the direction of growth for the region for decades to come. Implementation tools will be developed over the summer and finalized by September 2009.

To find out more about the Grand Vision, please visit www.grandvision.org. 

Andrea Messinger is legislative/communications coordinator for the League. You may reach her at 517-908-0302 or amessinger@mml.org.

Regional Thinking in West Michigan Earns Multiple Benefits

By Greg Northrup



Photo by Brian Kelly

Helping residents achieve job competency

Attracting new employers with data showing that local workers are ready for the modern workplace.

Seeking \$60 million to make it all happen.


All of this was made possible in west Michigan because enough people caught on to the benefits of regional thinking.

A regional mindset in west Michigan didn't happen overnight. The notion of looking at west Michigan's future from a broad, regional perspective began in 1998 when business and community leaders from Grand Rapids, Holland, and Muskegon met to talk about working together on regional issues. The West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) was formally organized in 2000 to create a shared vision for the region for the next 25 years. WMSA adopted the vision "to be a best place to live, work,



learn and play in the Midwest" and is guided by the mission "to be a catalyst for regional collaboration." Today, the West Michigan region is defined as eight counties—Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa—which include more than 219 units of government, 77 school districts,

three metro planning organizations, and countless businesses and institutions.

But what we realized in west Michigan is that, while all these separate and autonomous entities are important, each can benefit by working together. We noted that residents already think and act regionally—73 of Michigan's 83 counties



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showed an increase in inter-county commuting in the 2000 census. It became obvious that our planning and thinking had to be regional in scope to match the lifestyles and activities of residents.

The goal of collaboration is a “win-win” solution, ensuring a solution of maximum and equal benefit to all parties. Individual units of government, businesses, and nonprofits will still maintain their autonomy. In collaboration, individual goals are not muted; they are realized with greater and broader effect.

Workforce Credentialing

A survey of community and business leaders throughout the region showed that the ability of local residents to attain necessary education and job skills was a common concern. Businesses wanted a skilled local work force, and local governments wanted to attract and retain employers. It made sense to work together.

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) and its partners announced plans in April 2008 to offer the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) to provide a standard definition for a “qualified job candidate.” ACT Inc.’s National Career Readiness Certificate is a nationwide workforce credentialing initiative that allows recipients to demonstrate competence in the key foundational skills necessary for virtually every job, and at the skill levels required for the particular jobs of interest to them. Through 2007 and the first quarter of 2008, west Michigan had issued more than 11,000 certificates—a higher per capita success rate than any other region in the country. That success drove the effort to expand it in the region, and even led to the state of Michigan to adopting the program statewide.

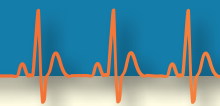
As this initiative demonstrates, collaboration can be contagious. The NCRC effort is part of the next phase of the WorkKeys Innovation, which in turn is part of WMSA’s WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) project. That project began in 2006, when west Michigan was one of 13 regions in the country

“In collaboration, individual goals are not muted; they are realized with greater and broader effect.”



Photo courtesy of the City of Holland

West Michigan's Vital Signs



The 2008 update to the West Michigan Regional Indicators is an interim step as we prepare to refine regional data selections and establish benchmarks with other regions around the U.S.

Details of each indicator can be found at www.wm-alliance.org.

WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL INDICATORS	REGIONAL TREND OVER TIME	COMPARED TO MICHIGAN	COMPARED TO UNITED STATES	IN THE PAST YEAR
PER CAPITA INCOME	Positive	Worse	Worse	Not keeping pace
EMPLOYMENT RATE	Neutral	Better	Better	Not available*
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Not available*	Worse	Worse	Not available*
SELF EMPLOYED PROFESSIONALS	Not available*	Better	Better	Not available*
FREE AND REDUCED PRICE LUNCH	Negative	Worse	Not available	40% receiving FRPL
CLOSED BEACH DAYS	Positive	Not available	Not available	56 fewer closed beach days
TOXIC RELEASE INVENTORY	Positive	Not available	Not available	Down by 167,000 pounds
INCOME BY RACE & ETHNICITY	Negative	Worse	Worse	Widening gap
VOTER PARTICIPATION	Positive	Better	Not available	Voter turnout is increasing
NO HEALTH CARE COVERAGE	Negative	Better	Not available	14% uninsured
CRIME RATE	Positive	Better	Not available	Violent crime is down
TEENS NOT IN SCHOOL	Positive	Better	Better	Down by nearly 2 percentage points
HOUSING COST BURDEN	Negative	Better	Better	Increasing at all levels

* Population samples used by the US Census in the American Community Survey changed in 2006 compared to 2005. New populations such as prisoners, senior center residents and dorm room residents were included. This makes year to year comparisons unavailable.

Visit www.wm-alliance.org for more information and available county-level data.

DEVELOPED BY



WEST MICHIGAN
**STRATEGIC
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to receive \$15 million from the U.S. Department of Labor WIRED program to apply innovative ideas to develop regional economies. A key reason for west Michigan's selection was a demonstration of regional collaboration.

In the past eight years, we have seen multiple benefits from regional thinking. In addition to the WIRED project, WMSA and its various partners are working to benefit the region through numerous collaborative efforts:

- **Green Infrastructure**—an effort to identify and protect the region's natural assets;
- **Internship Portal**—an online resource to connect the region's employers with student interns;
- **Green Jobs Regional Skills Alliance**—preparing workers for jobs in the green energy sector;
- **Clean Cities Initiative**—developing an alternative fuels corridor in the region.


Measuring Quality of Life

Perhaps most importantly, WMSA is working to measure quality of life on a regional basis. Based on regional input and best practices in other regions of the country, we developed a set of 15 regional indicators. These 'vital signs' are a way to keep tabs on the sustainability of the region on an ongoing basis. The indicators measure the social, economic, and environmental health of the region and help municipal, business, and nonprofit leaders see the big picture through detailed data.

Regional indicators are intended to:

- Maintain and improve sustainable quality of life
- Prioritize our regional challenges
- Track trends
- Influence allocation of resources
- Stimulate factual discussions
- Spur collaboration
- Encourage a regional mindset
- Trigger dialog and make decisions.

Hundreds of indicators were reviewed; those that met established sustainability criteria were kept. They will now be monitored annually.

That's a good lesson. There's a natural tendency to localize information. But thinking regionally actually has significant local benefits. We don't confine our daily activities of living, working, learning and recreation to one place. We shouldn't confine our thinking either. We need to continually see the big picture, to think, act and compete regionally. Once we do, the opportunities for productive collaboration will be endless. 

Greg Northrup is president of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance. You may reach him at 616-356-6060 or northrupg@wm-alliance.org.

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IT'S THE PEOPLE



Field Report

by Caroline Weber Kennedy

Special thanks to Karyn Hanks, Dave Olson, and Carlton Crothers for background content.

Two Cities, One Community



Portage Bridge linking two cities, one community.

This issue of *The Review* focuses on regionalism—the successful results really of the basic elements of cooperation and collaboration. If you were at the 2008 Convention, you saw one of the best examples of this during the Community Excellence Awards competition presented by Michigan's two northern-most cities: Houghton and Hancock.

A Shared History

Houghton and Hancock are both picturesque, both lush with natural beauty and historical architecture. Divided by the Portage Canal and linked by the Portage Bridge, the two cities have long reveled in rivalry; a common enough phenomenon attributed to public school sports competitions. An anthropologist might better explain how such an enjoyable ritual of growing up seems to have resulted in actually stunting the growth of such communities, creating exaggerated differences and boundaries.

It is these boundaries—having taken on an undeserved reality—that Houghton City Manager Scott MacInnes and Hancock City Manager Glenn Anderson sought to overcome. In so doing, they began a new chapter in history.

The New Reality

The year is 2003 and the area's assets are now Michigan Technological University (MTU) and Finlandia University, producing a wealth of talented, high-tech and creatively minded young people. The two cities, MTU and the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance joined forces to compete for one of 12 Michigan SmartZone designations, awarded through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Their successful collaboration resulted in a Michigan Tech Enterprise SmartZone designation (MTEC).

SmartZones provide incubator space for technology-based firms, entrepreneurs and researchers in proximity to the community assets best able to assist these endeavors. Combined, Houghton and Hancock have the resources of two universities and four incubator locations. Separately, they would have competed directly against each other and all other state applicants with half the resources. Together, they succeeded not only in winning the designation but in truly capitalizing upon that opportunity.

Long-Tail Economic Theory

The area offers an arguably unsurpassed quality of life. A sentiment shared by most of the state goes something like this: if only we can find jobs, there's nowhere else we'd rather be. So, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Young, talented people are here and they want to stay. We have learned the new economy succeeds on the long-tail theory of economic growth. This means rather than Michigan's traditional industrial manufacturing base with one employer providing hundreds to thousands of jobs, the new economy succeeds with many diverse and small employers; creativity combined with technology is today's winning combination. The H2 SmartZone produces exactly that.

Rags to Riches in Five Years

Five years is an eye-blink. Fashion doesn't even change that much in five years; hoodies are still around, as are retro


hip hugger bell-bottoms. In those same short years, the H2 SmartZone created 12 start-up companies leading to 160 new family-sustaining jobs in the area.

Three vacant buildings within the two cities were renovated to provide not only traditional incubator space, but a type of second-phase space, an incentive to these fledgling companies to grow—and stay—in the community.

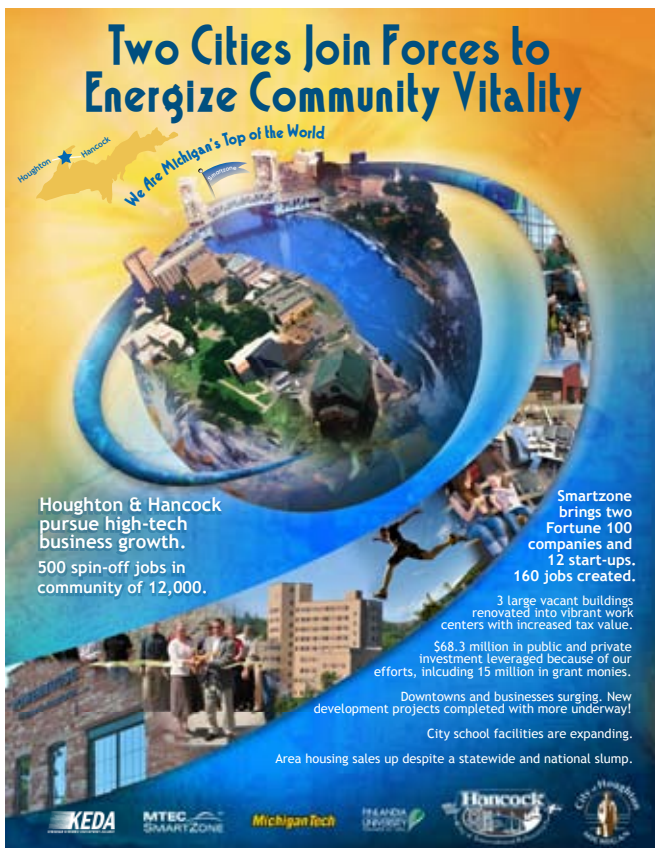
Ford Motor Company and General Electric came to capitalize on the SmartZone, linking engineering students to engineering projects for the two Fortune 100 Companies. Both companies were exploring the possibility of developing volume engineering work overseas, but H2 is helping them to grow these jobs in Michigan.

More than 410 new jobs were created in the SmartZone, including 12 companies employing more than 160 people in three incubators. Four companies were recognized among the 50 fastest growing companies in Michigan in 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007.

The results from Michigan's "Top of the World" are truly phenomenal. And while friendly rivalries still exist, together the H2 communities are one undeniable force. Two cities, one community is their loud and proud mantra.

The initial success of the SmartZone created community momentum. Just as the school-age rivalries once produced some negative and damaging relationships, their collaboration created a startling new self-image. As elected officials, it is important to recognize that your community has its own self-concept and self-esteem, just like people. Negative talk erodes it, and it's not just some vague and nebulous concept... it's a damaging reality. Try creating an "alternative narrative" by spreading good news like a bad virus. It's easier than ever via computer. Remember that the initial success in H2 wasn't generated by two cities, but by two individuals who formed a positive relationship symbolizing what the two cities could do. The bottom line comes down to individuals like you, following through on ideas. The League can direct you to resources and contacts to help make viable economic ideas into reality. 

For more information on MTEC, SmartZones, etc., please go to mtecsmart.com.



Michigan Stakes Out its Own Chapter in Growing New Urbanism Movement

by Leslie E. Kettren



This is lively downtown Holland. While shopping malls are failing all across Michigan—downtowns are making a comeback! These are positive signs that New Urbanism is a desirable alternative type of development. Photo by Greg Holcombe

There is an exciting new organization in Michigan—the Michigan Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism (MiCNU)—aimed at stopping sprawl and re-establishing compact, walkable and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

Stopping Sprawl

In order to accomplish our mission, we believe in the promotion of education, networking and outreach. Some of our closest partners are the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Association of Planning, and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. MiCNU is not a grassroots organization. Our members are primarily professionals in the architecture, planning, and building

trades. Our role is to work alongside our partners, not to supplant or compete with them.

What is “New Urbanism”?

The Congress for the New Urbanism was founded in 1993 by a group of architects to promote alternatives to sprawl. New Urbanism—sometimes called “smart growth”—uses design concepts and tools that provide solutions to unsustainable urban and suburban growth patterns (sprawl). Some of the specific principles include mixed-use housing, preservation of the historic built environment and surroundings that improve bicycling, walking, and use of public space.

Growth of New Urbanism

In recent years, interest in new urbanism has increased as the social and economic effects of sprawl have become more fully understood. MiCNU stands for the restoration of existing urban centers and the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods. We recognize that the physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems, but neither can economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health be sustained without a coherent and supportive physical framework. This framework involves designing communities for pedestrians and public transit as well as for the car. The best urban spaces are framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrates local history, climate and ecology.



Suttons Bay

MiCNU's Goals

To that end, MiCNU is dedicated to reclaiming our blocks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, villages, cities, and the environment. How do we accomplish this? MiCNU is doing more than talking about improving the quality of our communities. MiCNU has a three year plan to get the ball rolling through education, networking and outreach. In our first year, we are actively involved in introducing form-based codes to Michigan communities.

Form-Based Codes MiCNU's First Initiative

Michigan needs zoning reform. The built and natural environments demand it, and so do the demographics and markets. Zoning codes that have been adopted in the last 60 years strongly favor spread-out single-use development. The biggest culprits that lead to sprawl are minimum lot sizes, building setbacks, parking requirements, street width standards, and restrictions that separate uses.

Hardly anyone defends conventional codes anymore at professional conferences or in publications—yet they persist. Conventional zoning (also called euclidean zoning), is very difficult to change because the status quo is so powerful. Zoning has made the public wary of new development because the built environment that has been created through this zoning is of low quality; it does not encourage walking or alternative forms of transportation or

add to cultural, social and entertainment offerings, which improve the quality of life.

So along comes form-based codes—a new tool available to planners. Ten years ago there was little alternative to conventional zoning. Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. Form-based codes have brought about a wave of research and development into new coding techniques. Nationwide, more than 150 communities have adopted these codes. In Michigan there are at least five communities that have adopted a form-based code and another 20 communities that are working on or considering a form-based code.



Suttons Bay



Suttons Bay

Where Form-Based Codes Work

One of the first communities to adopt a form-based code was Columbia Pike in Arlington, Virginia in 2003. Since then, the aging commercial strip corridor has begun a transformation into a hip urban center. The new code has enhanced both public and developer confidence in what will be built. This is taking place despite poor timing—the code had not been in place for long when the nation entered a housing slowdown and recession.

Montgomery, Alabama is another example. The city adopted a SmartCode in 2006, which is a form-based code that keeps the urban areas compact and the rural lands open. Montgomery now has two traditional neighborhood developments under construction in addition to infill projects in their downtown.



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Sutton's Bay was one of the first communities in Michigan to adopt a form-based code. These small storefronts along St. Mary's Avenue, many with second story residences, were nonconforming under the former, euclidian style zoning ordinance. Photo by Leslie Sickterman

It's not just the quantity of development that matters, it's the quality. These places are getting better physically. The codes recently adopted in Grand Rapids and Birmingham are too new to judge. But in discussions with city officials—optimism abounds!

What this means is that planners no longer have the excuse that form-based codes are exotic, untested, and difficult to implement. If Michigan is to deal with the housing, energy, and global environmental problems, zoning reform is a necessity. Now is the best time to tackle this issue—when the real estate markets are slow.

Summary

Although MiCNU and form-based codes are new to Michigan, the idea and philosophy of new urbanism has been here for a decade. More than ever, we need to act now. Recent research shows that Michigan is losing its young and talented population to places that offer a better quality of life. Our organization is working actively, in partnership with the League, to help redesign Michigan's communities in becoming more people friendly places. If you are interested in joining us in this effort, please contact MiCNU at michigan@cnu.org. 





Suttons Bay

Form-Based Codes

Certified Training is coming to Michigan!

Form-Based Code training, a three-session curriculum, is approved for AIA and AICP continuing education/certification maintenance credits. This curriculum will serve as a "starter" for ongoing training and education in the principles of New Urbanism. The program is as follows:

- FBC 101: Introduction to Form-Based Coding, offered April 1-2, 2009.
- FBC 201: Preparing a Form-Based Code, offered May 18-19, 2009.
- FBC 301: Completing, Adopting and Administering the Code, offered July 13-14, 2009.

This program is offered by the Form-Based Code Institute in partnership with the MML, MiCNU and MSHDA. For more information, visit http://www.mml.org/events/training/calendar/form-based_codes.html

Leslie E. Kettren, AICP, PCP, is the president of the Michigan Chapter of Congress for the New Urbanism. You may reach her at michigan@cnu.org.



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Michigan Center for New Urbanism Also Pushes for Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhoods

by Phillip Meyer, AICP

In July, the U.S. Green Building Council launched its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) pilot program, created with Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and the Natural Resources Defense Council. The program certifies sustainable development projects—infill, brownfields, and greenfields—ranging from 1.6 acres to 1,500 acres.

Previously adopted LEED standards focused primarily on the design and construction of individual buildings. Proposed LEED-ND standards will focus on neighborhood location and on the design and construction elements that bring buildings together into a neighborhood. LEED-ND also focuses on relating the neighborhood to its larger region and landscape.

Smart Location and Linkage

The first category of design criteria within LEED-ND deals with smart location and linkage. The intent of this category is to recognize and encourage development within or near existing communities or public transportation infrastructure. Individual criteria include prerequisites (necessary for any credit) of smart location, proximity to water and wastewater infrastructure, care in dealing with imperiled species, wetland and water body conservation, farmland conservation, and avoidance of floodplains. Credits are available in such areas as brownfield redevelopment, reduced automobile dependence, accessing a bicycle network, proximity to housing, schools and jobs, and restoration of habitat.

LEED Certification

In order to be LEED certified, a project must meet certain criteria to be awarded points for environmentally sensitive design. The individual construction components of a project are worth points. As points accumulate, a project can reach a sufficient number to be recognized as LEED-certified. Certification has four levels: Certification (40-49 points), Silver Certification (50-59 points), Gold Certification (60-79 points), and ultimately Platinum Certification (80-106 points). The Christman Building, the Lansing offices of the League, is the first double LEED Platinum Certified building in the world (meaning it was certified in more than one category).

Neighborhood Pattern and Design

The second category of criteria deals with neighborhood pattern and design. It is the intent of this series of criteria to promote communities that are physically connected to each other and developments that are connected to other neighborhoods and development beyond the bounds of a particular proposed development. Prerequisites for this category of criteria are having an open, connected community with compact development. Credits are available for providing such features as a diversity of uses and housing types, affordable housing, walkable streets, reduced parking needs, an interconnected street network, universal accessibility, community involvement, and local food production.

Green Construction and Technology

The third category of criteria deals with green construction and technology. The prerequisite in this category requires that a project reduce pollution from construction activities by controlling soil erosion, waterway sedimentation and airborne dust generation. Credits are available in this category for such activities as providing LEED certified green

buildings, energy efficiency, reduced water use, reuse of historic buildings, minimizing site disturbance, stormwater management, on-site energy generation and solar orientation, waste management, and light pollution reduction.

LEED-ND Supports New Urbanism

In 2009, the promotion of LEED-ND is a major effort of the Michigan Chapter of Congress for the New Urbanism (MiCNU). The LEED-ND program, in concert with other new urbanism efforts, signals an exciting new tool for Michigan in building sustainable, livable communities. For more information, please consult the Pilot Version of LEED-ND on the U.S. Green Building Council website at www.usgbc.gov.

Phillip Meyer, AICP, is community and development director for the City of Holland, and west region director for the Michigan Chapter of Congress for the New Urbanism (MiCNU). You may reach him at p.meyer@cityofholland.com.



Greener Communities. Greener Michigan.

Keeping the Lights On: Novi Energy Audit



With the cost of doing business around the globe on the rise, residents, businesses and governments are examining ways to reduce costs. One way municipalities are trimming their bottom line is by performing energy audits.

Free Energy Evaluation

In December of 2007, the city of Novi partnered with the state of Michigan to identify opportunities for reducing energy cost and consumption. Novi was one of 32 local governments that took part in the free introductory energy evaluation, performed by the Energy office of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG).

Over the course of 2007, the city of Novi spent \$675,187 on energy. Electricity accounted for 73 percent of

the total cost at \$491,606 while natural gas was responsible for the remaining 27 percent at \$183,581.

A representative from the Energy office of DLEG toured the city, inspecting nine city buildings, including the Civic Center, Police Station, Department of Public Works (DPW) garage, Fire Stations 1, 2, and 4, Meadowbrook Commons (Novi's Senior Housing Community), Novi Ice Arena, and a DPW lift station.

At each building, the DLEG representative toured the facility with an expert from that property and a visual inspection of mechanical equipment, HVAC systems, temperature controls and lighting was performed. On average, the city buildings ranked very close to the average Energy Cost Index (ECI) for similar Michigan buildings.

Energy Conservation Recommendations

DLEG made several recommendations towards some energy conservation

opportunities (ECOs) such as compact fluorescent lamps, and a drinking fountain. Among major ECOs, occupancy sensors, high bay lighting retrofits, and energy management systems (EMS) were recommended.


As a part of the 2008-09 budget, recommendations and improvements were made to city council concerning energy cost saving improvements for the Civic Center, Police Station, DPW garage, Fire Stations 1 and 4 and the Ice Arena. In all six buildings, the following implementations were made:

- installation of high efficiency fluorescent lighting systems, and
- replacement of the standard T12 light fixtures with T8 fixtures.

This simple switch may result in a 30 percent savings. Upgrades to the Novi Civic Center include:

- replacing all of the recessed lighting with compact fluorescent bulbs,
- insulating water heaters and installing pipe insulation, and
- adjusting the heating and cooling temperatures.

Other cost saving techniques include:

- energy efficient outdoor lighting on the Civic Center campus,
- a high efficiency furnace replacement at the DPW garage,
- high efficiency HVAC motors and fan belts to be installed at the fire stations,
- an Energy Management System on the new boiler system at the Police Station, and
- occupancy sensors at the Novi Ice Arena. 

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From the Road

by Al McGeehan



New Buffalo

It was true way back then and it remains true to this day—the health and the desirability of any civilization can best be measured by the richness and vibrancy found in its cities. Cities are best defined by the opportunities, experiences, excitement and diversity found in their main downtown public and private spaces. That statement was accurate two thousand years ago, when all roads led to the eternal city, Rome. It was true when Paris was the center of art, culture, government and education. And, it remains a constant today, even in a much smaller city such as New Buffalo, Michigan.

“Whoa, come on now, that’s quite a leap,” you may be thinking. However, I would respond, “Is it?” Every city or village, regardless of its era or its size, serves the same function for residents and visitors. New Buffalo’s downtown comes to mind when thinking about southwest Michigan. That was true one hundred years ago when Chicago “discovered” New Buffalo as a great place to be. It’s even more accurate today as downtown New Buffalo is the epicenter of renewed focus, new investment and new construction.

Led by its energetic new mayor, Gary Ramberg, the city council and City Manager Charles Dobbins, the city and its businesses and residents are working toward a downtown streetscape planning initiative and bringing in new development.

In my capacity as the west Michigan regional coordinator for the League, I recently had a wonderful visit with the good folks in New Buffalo. Even with January snow swirling about, I could clearly see that “location, location, location” was of singular significance to the interest in downtown New Buffalo. The answer today, as it was a century ago, is water. Lake Michigan lies at the foot of downtown New Buffalo’s Main Street. Through the snow I saw the lake, spied recently completed upscale residential construction, and best of all, saw right in the heart of downtown’s construction in progress, which only piqued my curiosity as to what was coming next.

Mayor Ramberg was only too willing to paint a verbal image of the wonderful new mixed-use project that was taking shape behind him. “Village Square” is a new three story, mixed-use project that when completed will create 45,000 square feet of new downtown retail and residential space. Several commercial tenants are already committed to being among



Mayor Gary Ramberg by Village Square, a new mixed-use project in New Buffalo.

the first to open new businesses. Two hundred new parking spaces for tenants, storeowners and customers will be created on both an outside surface and a parking structure.

This new project follows other significant development projects that have already seen substantial investment. New Buffalo is currently undertaking a virtual transformation of its highly regarded waterfront. Dunescape Villas, The Peninsula Project, and Light Harbor Moorings are new upscale residential opportunities that are not only on the waterfront, but also downtown. There is no doubt that these new upscale residences will lure Chicago folks to investing and living in downtown New Buffalo. Even better is the fact that when its new railroad station and 200-foot-long platform is completed on April 15, New Buffalo will celebrate a new era of quality passenger rail service. Dare we say “commuter” rail service connecting downtown New Buffalo with downtown Chicago? This quality connection may be the deciding factor on the part of many current “summer” residents to stay in and enjoy the rich quality of life found in New Buffalo year round.

While for many decades New Buffalo has lived in the shadow cast by the Chicago skyline, New Buffalo civic and business leaders and their neighbors want us to know that they are not Indiana. They are not Chicago. They are Michigan at its very best.

In the past “all roads did lead to Rome.” Today roads throughout southwest Michigan lead to a great place to live, work, and play. They lead to New Buffalo.

Even in the middle of a frigid Michigan winter, New Buffalo is hot! 

Al McGeehan is the mayor of the city of Holland and the west Michigan regional coordinator for the League. You may reach him at 616-355-1314 or a.mcgeehan@cityofholland.com.

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Legal Spotlight

By Sue Jeffers

When Is a Governmental Employee Immune from Intentional Tort Liability?

This column highlights a recent judicial decision or Michigan Municipal League Legal Defense Fund case that impacts municipalities. The information in this column should not be considered a legal opinion or to constitute legal advice.

Facts:

Wayne County Sheriff's Deputy Kelly investigated prostitution offenses in the department's "morality unit." On February 11, 2004, Kelly was conducting surveillance in Detroit and observed conduct by Amanda Odom which prompted her to call for backup. The vehicle in which Odom was riding was stopped; the officers drew their guns; and Odom and the other passengers were handcuffed and questioned. When confronted, Odom asserted her innocence and provided explanations of her activities. Despite the explanations, Kelly issued a criminal citation. Ultimately, the charges were dismissed because of insufficient evidence.

Odom sued Kelly alleging the intentional torts of false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. Kelly claimed to be governmentally immune.

In 1984, the Michigan Supreme Court held in *Ross v Consumers Power Co (On Rehearing)* that governmental employees enjoy qualified immunity for intentional torts if the employee 1) raises immunity as an affirmative defense and 2) establishes that the challenged acts were undertaken during the course of employment and the employee was acting (or reasonably believed he was acting) within the scope of his authority; that the acts

were undertaken in good faith; and that the acts were discretionary in nature. Subsequently, the Legislature adopted the governmental tort liability act (GTLA), which outlined a new test for immunity under subsection 2 of the GTLA. Subsection 3 of the GTLA, however, provides that the GTLA maintains "the law of intentional torts as it existed before July 7, 1986."

Question:

What test is to be applied to determine if a governmental employee is immune from liability for an intentional tort?


Answer according to the trial court

The trial court concluded that Odom was proceeding under a gross negligence theory rather than an intentional tort theory. Nonetheless, the court did not explicitly follow the test as outlined in subsection 2 of the GTLA and instead found that a factual question remained whether Kelly had probable cause to arrest and prosecute Odom, precluding dismissal by the judge.

Answer according to the Michigan Court of Appeals

The Michigan Court of Appeals held that intentional torts had been alleged. However, the court analyzed the case under subsection 2 and affirmed the trial court's decision.

Answer according to the Michigan Supreme Court

The Michigan Supreme Court held that the trial court and the court of appeals had applied the wrong tests. It indicated that since intentional torts had been alleged against the governmental employee, subsection 3 of the GTLA was applicable and that the test outlined in *Ross* was the appropriate analysis. The Court remanded to the trial court to apply the test as outlined in *Ross*. 

Odom v Wayne County, No. 133433
(December 30, 2008)

Sue Jeffers is associate general counsel for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6306 or sjeffers@mml.org.

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2. Regional seminars are an excellent opportunity for newly elected officials to meet with regional colleagues.
3. Regional cooperation is critical with respect to lobbying for local issues, and regional seminars provide an ideal opportunity to learn more about how to work as a coalition and to forge valuable relationships.
4. Regional seminars represent an ideal opportunity to learn firsthand from other officials what works (and what doesn't) in their communities.
5. Regional seminars are planned by local officials, for local officials and include current, critical regional issues. This year's themes are:
 - Cultural economic development
 - Green issues
 - Designing walkable communities
 - Establishing entrepreneurial communities
6. Fees are contained by League underwriting and sponsorship subsidies so that all who are interested are able to attend.
7. Regional seminars are the starting point for entering the Community Excellence Awards.

City of Jackson, 2008 Cup Winner



“Race for the Cup” Community Excellence Award Competition

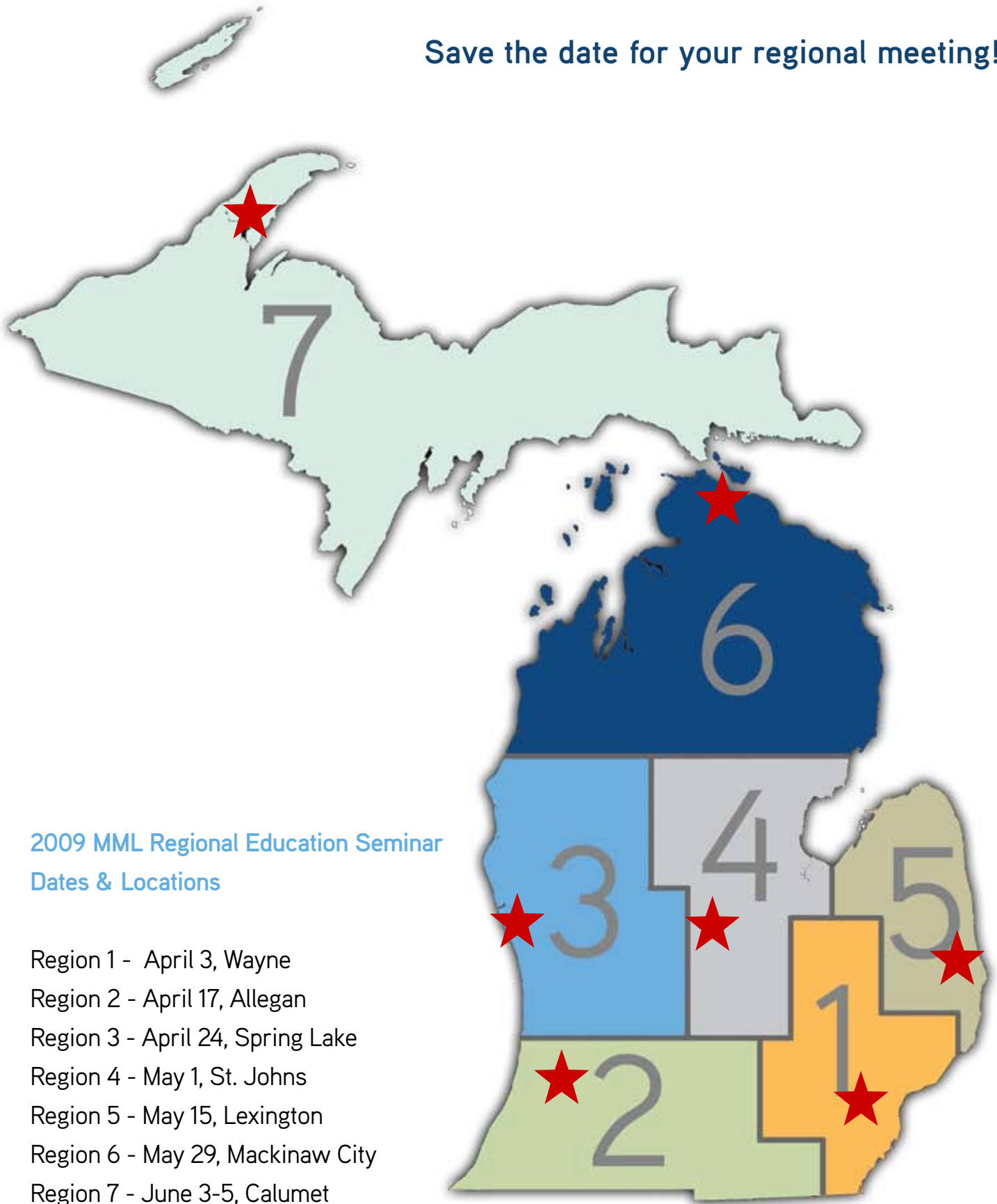
To Enter

The competition starts with a presentation at your Regional Education Seminar. Each entrant will have five minutes to present their project, which can include props, handouts, a PowerPoint, and/or a video. Your peers vote on-site and choose a winner for your Region. It's that simple. Past presentations have included: regional cooperation, infrastructure improvements, economic development, and arts and culture.

Convention

Regional winners move on to compete at the 2009 Convention in Kalamazoo, where they will have seven minutes to present their project, to the Convention delegation. Voting takes place onsite and the winning community will be announced during the Convention. The winner will be awarded the Community Excellence Award Cup to take home and display for one year, then hand it off to next year's winner at the 112th Annual Convention.

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Municipal Q&A

Coordinated by Mary Charles

Q: Our city elections are currently held in November of odd years. We could save quite a bit of money if we held our election at the same time as state and federal elections. What is the procedure for changing to the November even year election date?

Changes to the Michigan Election Law in 2003 (and again in 2004) restricted local control of election dates and mandated that all elections be held on one of four dates. November even year elections were not a choice.

Although the Act did provide for some adjustment, those options ran out on January 1, 2005. Further, cities whose elections were being held in November odd years date at the time the law was passed were not given the option of changing their election date.

Q: We typically hold a council workshop prior to our regular council meeting and include the notice for the workshop at the bottom of the regular meeting notice. Does this comply with the Open Meetings Act?

The Open Meetings Act only requires three things: who is meeting, when they are meeting, and where they are meeting. There may be other requirements in your charter or council rules.

The League's One Pager Plus on work sessions may also be useful. It can be downloaded from http://www.mml.org/pdf/opp/opp_work_sessions.pdf.

Q: Are we required to withhold Social Security and Medicare from councilmembers' compensation? They only receive \$900 a year.

Yes. Municipalities are also required to withhold income tax and provide a W-2 form.

Q: Do we have to hold a public hearing before passing a resolution?

The determining factor is not whether it is a resolution but the purpose of the resolution. For example, budgets are often adopted by resolution and the Uniform Budgeting Act requires a public hearing to be held prior to adopting a budget. Another example is the Zoning Enabling Act, which requires a public hearing before a zoning ordinance is adopted or amended.

Your charter and/or council rules may also require a public hearing on certain issues that are acted on by resolution.

Q: We are getting ready to advertise for part-time summer help. Can we include the phrase "residents only" in the ad?


No. The Residency Act (1999 PA 212) prohibits any local unit of government from requiring employees to be residents. It does not apply to volunteer or paid on-call firefighters, elected officials or unpaid appointed officials. We created a One Pager Plus on this issue, accessible on our website (www.mml.org/pdf/opp/act.pdf).

Q: I understand there is recent legislation regarding inspection on rental housing. Does the League have any information on this?

In December of 2008, PA 408 became law, making changes to the rental housing inspection statute as set forth in Housing Law. PA 408 moved through the Legislature as SB 635 of 2007. The bill, including changes from previous law, can be reviewed at: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2007-2008/billengrossed/Senate/pdf/2007-SEBH-0635.pdf>.

And, of course, the League has prepared a One Pager Plus on this also, accessible on our website (www.mml.org/pdf/opp/opp_rental_housing_inspection_law-2009_updates.pdf).

Q: It's our understanding that there have been some recent changes to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Does the League have any information on this?

There is now a whole page on our website devoted to various aspects of the Act (<http://www.mml.org/resources/information/personnel/fmlaupdate.html>). We hope you find it helpful. 

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Ithaca




The city of Ithaca, tucked conveniently in the heart of Michigan's Lower Peninsula along the US-127 university corridor, welcomes you to our small town charm, our rich agricultural heritage, and our National Historic District downtown. Drive a half-hour north of Lansing or a half-hour south of Mount Pleasant, and you'll find the perfect place to take a break for a few hours...or a lifetime.

Founded in 1855, Ithaca maintains much of its 19th- and early 20th-century historic character. Myriad historical buildings, monuments, and parks adorn our rolling landscape, preserving a respectful state of mind for generations to come. Of course, we welcome you to take a stroll through town and *experience* our history, not just see it! Grab a hot cup of coffee and you'll find plenty of friendly faces to chat with, or if you'd prefer, peruse some of the antiques and crafts available in town, our local winery, or our mouth-watering homemade baked goods...and we haven't even mentioned our traditional hardware and dime store! If you need to stretch your legs, our city parks feature a horse

racing track, barns and stables, rolling hills, forested walking and cross-country skiing trails, a popular sledding hill, and an outstanding children's playscape.

Ithaca offers enormous advantages for businesses looking for a convenient mid-Michigan location, and in conjunction with our economic development organization, Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., our town is the only one of its size to offer two Michigan Certified Industrial Parks, one of which is a Renaissance Zone. However, the location isn't just convenient for industry; residents here also commute to nearby university towns like Alma, Lansing/East Lansing, Mount Pleasant, Saginaw, Midland, Big Rapids, and Grand Rapids.

Through collaboration at all levels, Ithaca and the Gratiot County area are well-positioned to contribute to and capitalize on Michigan's future successes. Our innovative local practices include development of a ground-up, countywide master plan; participation with other Gratiot County communities in a cooperative airport authority; co-founding the Kellogg Foundation-backed Michigan Rural Network with other state of Michigan and non-profit organizations; and an efficient countywide central dispatch to keep our town and our neighbors safe.

We invite you to learn about Ithaca at www.ithacami.com, or by visiting us at Exit 117 or 119 on US-127. 

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Please send address and recipient corrections to Susan Vasher at MML, P.O. Box 1487, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1487; phone 800-653-2483; fax 734-662-8083, or email svasher@mml.org. Thank you.