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THEME: Michigan Land Use

Michigan Land Use Leadership Council Issues Report

In August 2003, the Land Use Leadership Council, appointed by Governor Jennifer Granholm and co-chaired by former Governor William Milliken and former Attorney General Frank Kelley, released its final report, "Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future."

The Council report contains more than 160 recommendations organized around four major categories: infrastructure & community services, land resource-based industries; planning & development; and revitalization of urban areas.

The following summary highlights key recommendations from the report.

Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

- The state should create market-rate and affordable housing options in urban and rural areas by:
  - Encouraging Smart Housing Zoning Codes that simplify urban redevelopment processes, encourage mixed use and income levels, and expand housing choices
  - Promoting Location Efficient Mortgages that expand homebuyers' purchasing power by granting them income credits for living close to public transportation
  - Expanding the Michigan Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program to help people with lower incomes become homeowners
  - All local units of government should include a housing element in their master plans that provide the basis for inclusionary zoning and affordable housing as a required sub-element.
  - The state should adopt policies that ensure a continuous supply of appropriately zoned land and appropriate public infrastructure for a wide variety of housing choices.

About the Council

The Land Use Leadership Council was charged by the Governor with:

1. Identifying the trends, causes, and consequences of unmanaged growth and development.
2. Providing recommendations to the governor and the legislature designed to:
   - minimize the negative economic, environmental, and social impacts of current land use trends
   - promote urban revitalization and reinvestment
   - foster intergovernmental and public-private land-use partnerships
   - identify new growth and development opportunities
   - protect Michigan's natural resources, including farmland and open space
   - better manage the cost of public investments in infrastructure to support growth.

Create Walkable Neighborhoods

- The state should complement local government's efforts to create "green infrastructure," such as creating inner-city trails, pathways, open space and parks, promoting public access to and enjoyment of urban waterfront assets, and using tax-reverted lands to create open space that encourages development, and also by developing public and private partnerships (e.g., Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and the Southeast Michigan Greenways).

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- The state should support local "Safe Routes to School" programs that encourage safely walking and biking to school.

Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration

- The legislature should authorize two or more jurisdictions to form a joint planning commission and create a legally binding joint plan for growth.
- The legislature, the governor, and regional and multijurisdictional entities should advocate for the development of stronger partnerships between public, private, and institutional organizations in efforts to promote urban redevelopment and compact and mixed-use designs and discourage low-density greenfield development.
- The state, foundations, and stakeholder organizations should support public participation in land use decision-making through the exchange of ideas and information, including a public education campaign that includes concepts to help citizens:
  - Better understand the implications of continuation of land use trends, the benefits of planned development in general, the benefits of alternative design schemes that focus on density rather than minimum lot sizes
  - Better understand the balancing of public, institutional, and private interests
  - Recognize the value and benefit of publicly owned lands on our collective quality of life, economic vitality, and environment
  - Improve individual land stewardship
  - Preserve historic and cultural assets.

Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

- The state should create incentives for communities to engage in natural, historic, and cultural feature preservation planning.
- The state should authorize and strongly encourage the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), county road commissions, and local communities to use alternative road design standards that minimize environmental and community character impacts.
- State, county, and local standards for improved road corridors should be encouraged to include nonmotorized accommodations, native landscaping, and stormwater retention, and should be sensitive to the surrounding environment, especially in historic and scenic areas.
- The state should support public and private efforts to create and maintain "livable" urban areas by:
  - Determining the applicability of neighborhood early warning information systems used in other states to address blight in Michigan urban areas, and funding demonstration projects that apply the principles of programs identified as successful
  - Adopting legislation that would encourage local governments to adopt civil remedies to municipal code violations and allow the establishment of an expedited process to adjudicate alleged violations outside the criminal court system
  - Expanding Michigan's spot blight condemnation statute to include commercial and industrial property and to recognize the time required to market such properties.

Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost-Effective

- The state should adopt Land Bank Fast Track Authorities or similar legislation to assist in the assembly of land needed for redevelopment.
- The state should work with private sector and local communities to define a set of redevelopment readiness standards by which local governments may measure and promote their ability to compete for private redevelopment investment and state technical and financial assistance.
- The legislature should unify and modernize Michigan's four planning enabling acts and three zoning enabling acts.
- The state should encourage state and local governments to review, and where appropriate, eliminate those

COMMUNITY NEWS & VIEWS STAFF

Rex L. LaMore — Executive Editor
John Melcher — Associate Executive Editor
Faron Supanich-Goldner — Managing Editor
Kassandra Ray-Smith — Graphic Design/Secretary
Mary Cotton — Administrative Assistant

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regulatory barriers that add to the cost of or effectively discourage a variety of types of housing production and/or existing housing stock.

Mix Land Uses

- State and federal infrastructure funding should be prioritized to encourage mixed-used development.
- The state should provide incentives favoring the development of housing above existing retail in downtown and suburban areas.
- The state should enhance ways for municipalities and private developers to fund, finance, construct, operate, and maintain mixed-use parking structures with compatible commercial space on the first/ground level that also supports compact, walkable urban centers and minimizes the negative impacts of surface parking lots.
- The state should encourage residential mixed-use and mixed-use zoning.

Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas

- The legislature should permit local units of government cooperatively and voluntarily to identify and establish Agricultural Production Areas (APAs), which are geographic areas designated by local units of government that consist primarily of agricultural production. Voluntary enrollment of farmland in an APA allows landowners to receive certain benefits, such as priority for protection from incompatible uses that may otherwise result in direct or indirect conversion of farmland, property tax reductions on farmland, eligibility enhancement for other farmland preservation programs, and exemptions from some special assessments and real estate transfer taxes.
- The legislature should provide tax incentives to small, non-industrial forestland owners to encourage keeping this land in and managed primarily as forestland.
- The state should work to expand the federal/state partnership under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which pays farmers to establish and maintain buffer strips along watercourses. The program is currently limited to the Saginaw Bay, River Raisin, and Lake Macatawa watersheds. Expansion of CREP would enable Michigan to leverage federal funding at a minimum ratio of 4:1 for the life of the federal farm bill.
- The state should provide incentives for all affected parties in order to develop and maintain trailways and to avoid the interruption of trailways vital to recreation and tourism interests. In addition, the state should encourage a statewide linked system of trails and recreation, as outlined in the Michigan Trailways Act.

Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices

- The state should recognize that our cities need a diverse set of mobility options. In partnership with the federal and local governments, the state should support modern, cost-efficient, multimodal transportation systems to assure that our urban areas are accessible, attractive, and efficient for people of all ages, incomes, and physical abilities.

Strengthen and Direct Development Toward Existing Communities

- The state should direct public investments for offices, facilities, and programs to urbanized areas.
- The state should recognize certain communities as "commerce centers" because of their fundamentally urban/suburban and commercial character, and the fact that infrastructure is already in place. The state should target its resources to support redevelopment and growth within these existing commerce centers.
- The state should establish a technical assistance capacity within one entity in state government, and encourage local governments to create the same entity, to provide a central point of contact for private sector investors, local government, and community organizations to access and use available state and federal urban revitalization programs.
- The state should encourage renovation and reuse of existing buildings through the development and delivery of an education/training program on the use and enforcement of Michigan's Rehabilitation Code for Existing Buildings.

Take Advantage of Compact Development Design

- State and federal infrastructure funding should be prioritized to encourage compact development.
- The state should reduce overall land consumption by fostering more dense residential development through encouraging minimum allowable housing densities of four units per acre for single-family housing and ten units per acre for multifamily or attached housing commensurate with available water, sewer, and road infrastructure.
- The state should encourage counties and local governments to use local zoning ordinances to provide for a range of cluster development options in appropriate residential and mixed-use zones, and encourage developers to use these cluster development options by providing appropriate incentives such as allowing higher density and/or a streamlined development review process.

The 100-page full report of the Michigan Land Use LeadershipCouncil is available online at **www.michiganlanduse.org/finalreport.htm.**

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Ethical Dilemmas of Land Use Policy

Rex L. LaMore

Many citizens throughout Michigan are engaged in a far-ranging discussion of land use that could determine the nature of our democracy and the quality of life in our communities well into the next millennium. This debate has historic roots in the early years of the Republic and results from present day sociological and technological changes that could not have been foreseen by our founding fathers.

This debate has local, national and international implications and has the potential to affect each and every community in our state. The central theme of this discourse is: What is the public's interest and authority in determining the current and future use of private lands?

Two strongly held social values conflict when the issues of land use are discussed. On the one had, this nation holds the democratic belief that citizens have a right to participate in the issues that affect their lives. On the other hand, our free market economy is based on the principle that if you own it, you control it and have the right to decide how to use it.

Private ownership of land and subsequent private decisions about its use empower property owners with absolute dominion over land. However, private land use decisions affect the quality of life in communities now and in the future. It can therefore reasonably be argued that they reflect a broader public interest.

This broader public interest has been in part the legal bases for land use planning laws that seek to mitigate the absolute authority of private land owners. These two social values represent different conceptions of what ownership of the land implies in a democratic society.

The fundamental ethical dilemma presented by these conflicting values was highlighted by Timothy Beatley in *Ethical Land Use* (1994), when he argued that what is essentially in doubt is who owns the land. If private property in land seen primarily in terms of personal freedom and as a largely inviolable right? Or is private property to be viewed as privilege bestowed by society and therefore legitimately subject to the conditions and stipulations laid down by a broader public interest?

The importance of the ethical dilemma in Michigan has increased significantly over the past few decades. A modestly growing population base with expanded mobility, a greater awareness of the importance of preserving an ecological balance between man and the environment, the perceived threat to agricultural production and rural lifestyles due to the loss of agricultural lands to other forms of land use, the proliferation of local governments, the changing nature of the state's economy, and lifestyle changes are just a few of the social phenomena contributing to the heightened pitch of this public debate.

To resolve this ethical dilemma successfully, we must challenge some of our core beliefs as a society while reaffirming others. Central to this reconciliation, and largely ignored in the ongoing public debate to this point, is the question of social equity.

The concept of social equity in land use decisions raises such issues as *justice* and *fairness* as well as the more practical implications such as who decides, who pays and who benefits. The unique character if land complicates the question of social equity because current land use decisions can affect future land use decisions.

For example, a current land owner may decide to sell off top soil of a particular parcel of land. Today's decision to sell this soil will most likely affect the future capacity of that particular parcel of land to be used in agricultural production.

The intergenerational character of land (that is, the recognition that current land use decisions affect the options of future land use decisions) challenges our belief in the absolute authority of current landowners to exercise their personal freedom to decide the current uses of land.

Social equity in land use policy requires us to consider the impacts of decisions not only in terms of fairness and justice to the current land owner by also

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to potential future landowners. The rising market value of agricultural lands may affect the capacity of future farmers to engage in this form of economic activity.

Similarly, preserving large tracts of land for agricultural production or open space may increase the value of remaining residential property, thus increasing the cost of housing for potential new homeowners. Currently one quarter of all households nationally are estimated to confront a housing cost burden. Increasing land cost by reducing the availability of land could significantly increase this problem.

The ethical dilemmas presented by the development of land us policy are complex and far-reaching. While the public's interest in determining the current and therefore future uses of land may seem clear, the resolution of the ethical dilemma affirming either our democratic values or our belief in the personal freedom of individuals to exercise their private interest in land use is not so clear.

We can assert with some confidence, however, that the ethical principles, we choose to uphold today in creating a public policy on land use will affect the option of future generations in their pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

Suggested Reading

1. Beatley, Thomas. 1994. *Ethical land Use: Principles of Policy and Planning*, The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore,Maryland.
2. Hendler, Sue (ed.). *1995. Planning Ethics.* Center for Urban Policy Research: New Brunswick, New Jersey.
3. Wachs, Martin (ed.). 1995. *Ethics in Planning.* Center for Urban Policy Research: New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Dr. Rex L. LaMore is Director of the Michigan State University Community and Economic Development Program and a member of the faculty of the Urban and Regional Planning Program at MSU. He teaches ethics and politics in planning.

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WE HAVE CHANGED!

Over the past year we have been involved in a major transition. The Community & Economic Development Program, formerly a unit of the Urban Affairs Programs' Center for Urban Affairs, has moved its administration to the Urban and Regional Planning Program in the College of Social Science.

This transition to one of the nation's premier accredited Urban and Regional Planning Programs offers us a variety of opportunities to strengthen our scholarship of outreach engagement to communities throughout our state and nation. While we bid a fond farewell to the MSU Center for Urban Affairs we look forward to an exciting future in our new home.

In celebrating our transition we extend an invitation to all our friends and colleagues to share with us your remembrance and experiences with the Center for Urban Affairs over the past 35 years, and its impact on your life and work. We will compile these and share them on our website and in future newsletters.

Send to: cottonm@msu.edu, phone (517) 353-9555 or fax (517) 484-0068.

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The Right to Sprawl

Lester Graham

Governments are trying to figure out the best way to deal with urban sprawl. Legislators and planners are considering all kinds of approaches to manage the growth of cities. But, some say government really has no business trying to stop the market forces that are driving the rapid growth.

Through the public process, states that are grappling with urban sprawl end up hearing from everyone involved. While the media and environmental groups tend to look at the problems of congestion and loss of green space and farmland due to the rapid growth at the edges of cities, others see the growth as driven by what people want – it's natural growth, even organic. In fact, many property owners, builders and developers, see government interference as "un- American," as testimony from this public hearing in Michigan shows.

"As an American, I strongly believe in our citizens' rights to pursue life, liberty and property." "Centralized planning did not work in Russia, Cuba, North Korea or anywhere else they've attempted it." "Are we gonna mandate where they're going to live? Is this gonna be America?" "The land should be controlled by the individual who has paid for the land and pays the taxes on the land and should be able to do with that property what he wants to do." "Our Constitution tells us about the preservation of private property rights."

There's something deeply rooted in the American cultural ethic that bonds people to the land – or more precisely – to their land. It might be leftovers of the concept of Manifest Destiny where, in the words of one essayist, land ownership was associated with wealth and tied to self- sufficiency, political power, and independent "self-rule." This seems to be especially true of people who live in rural areas, or are only a generation or two removed from the farm.

Amy Liu is with the think-tank, the 'Brookings Institution.' She says when states start looking at growth management techniques, commonly called "Smart Growth," landowners and builders become suspicious.

"There is a belief that the government needs to get out of the way of the market. And so the idea of having government intervene in the real estate market and consumer choice is considered un-American."

And property rights advocates quickly become dogmatic about their beliefs and resist any kind of restrictions on use of land.

In the same way, some environmentalists consider sprawl to merely be a matter of greedy developers and builders wanting to make money no matter what the cost to the environment, green space, or farmland. They sometimes ignore the fact that consumer demand for larger lots and larger houses, as well as convenient shopping, is much of the driving force behind urban sprawl.

Liu says many on each side of the urban sprawl debate are inflexible.

"You know, I think that there are definitely reasons why the environmentalists can be extreme and why the property rights advocates can be extreme."

And generally, the two sides are talking right past each other.

Ann Woiwode is with the environmental group, the Sierra Club. She says the opponents of "Smart Growth" say they don't want government interference, but she says they don't talk that way when they're in need of roads, fire protection, good schools, and other government services. Woiwode says "Smart Growth" doesn't mean unreasonable restrictions.

"I'm not trying to take anybody's rights away and I don't think that's the appropriate approach. What in any society part of being a society is that we collectively decide how we're going to make decisions that affect the entirety of the community."

And while Woiwode and other environmentalists are in favor of making sure green space is preserved, most of them acknowledge that growth is inevitable. They say they just want to make sure it's the right kind of growth.

Amy Liu at the Brookings Institution says not every growth management plan makes sense. Some of them only look at benefiting the environment and ignore market forces, the desire that many people have for a bit of land and a home to call their own.

"There are certainly growth management policies that don't work, that strictly limit development-growth boundaries and are therefore anti-growth. I think the growth management policies, the Smart Growth policies that do work are those that really do try to anticipate and accommodate growth in a metropolitan area in a way that is going to promote economic development, that is fiscally sustainable, that is environmentally sustainable, and that actually allows low-income working families and middle-class and upper-income families to enjoy that growth."

And finding that balance in a world where politics and competing interests sometimes muddy the best intentions will be the real trick, as states try to define what "Smart Growth" will mean for people pursuing the American dream of owning their own home.

Lester Graham is Senior Editor/Producer for The Great Lakes Radio Consortium (GLRC). Reprinted with permission.

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Michigan Metropatterns Examines Growth and Development in Michigan Cities

Myron Orfield and Thomas Luce

In April 2003, Myron Orfield and Thomas Luce of Amerigis produced the *Michigan Metropatterns* report to document trends in Michigan metropolitan areas that threaten their economies, environment and quality of life, and to foster open dialogue about potential solutions.

The report was produced with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Archdiocese of Detroit, Frey Foundation, Ezekiel Project/Diocese of Saginaw, ISAAC (Kalamazoo), MOSES (Detroit), Michigan Local Government Management Association, Michigan Municipal League Foundation, and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Lansing).

The following is excerpted from the Executive Summary of *Michigan Metropatterns.* The full report is available online at www.amerigis.com.

Michigan is at a crossroads.

The state is facing complex social and economic challenges, including a budget crisis that will be felt by every community across the state. But Michigan is also poised to make meaningful reforms in how it manages growth, supported by an increasing recognition that the state's current development patterns are threatening its economic competitiveness and quality of life.

In fact, Michigan's future health and economic performance is directly related to the social, fiscal and physical condition of its cities, villages and townships, particularly those in metropolitan areas. More than four of every five Michigan residents live in the Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Kalamazoo, Flint and Saginaw regions and the communities in and around Traverse City. These regions have distinct histories, economies and natural features, but they also have much in common when it comes to regional development.

The state's central cities are seriously troubled, and a growing number of suburbs is experiencing similar strains. Low-density development is threatening valuable farmland and natural habitat on the urban edge and straining local budgets. The rising waves of protest against congestion, disappearing open space and the costs associated with growth suggest that no group – not even the wealthiest suburbs – is fully satisfied with the status quo.

Development patterns in Michigan's metropolitan areas provide good reason to be concerned about the future. But there are actions leaders at all levels of government can take to turn things around.

Here are the report's main findings:

All Types of Communities are Hurt by the Way Michigan is Growing

The state's central cities are struggling. As a group, for example, they must cope with poverty rates more than twice their regions' average with local tax bases that are less than half of the average. Their infrastructure is aging and their populations are declining or growing only slightly.

Social and fiscal stresses are not limited to central cities. Nearly two-thirds of people living outside central cities find themselves in communities struggling with social or fiscal stress. One group of suburbs and secondary cities is experiencing problems typically associated with large cities, including weak tax bases and significant and growing poverty in their schools. Another group of outlying places has fewer social needs, but is facing the costs of inadequate infrastructure with low tax bases and modest household incomes. Even many fast-growing, middle-class suburbs are struggling to provide needed schools, roads and sewer systems with slow-growing tax bases.

Just a small share of the population lives in affluent suburbs with expensive homes and plentiful commercial development. But even these places are experiencing the negative effects of unmanaged growth, including the loss of valued open space and increasing traffic congestion. Like all communities, they share the extra costs of state government programs needed to address highly concentrated poverty and infrastructure investments that encourage wasteful land development on the urban edge. Many of Michigan's natural areas are threatened by sprawling development.

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Michigan's Growth Patterns Create Serious Social and Fiscal Disparities

Fiscal inequality

- Local governments in Michigan have radically different property tax bases they can tap to pay for needed public services. Across the regions, the highest-taxbase places have anywhere from three to eight times the revenue-raising capacity of the lowest-tax-base places. The pressure to raise revenue has driven a wasteful competition for tax base among local governments.
- Fiscal disparities among local governments can be expected to widen as planned changes in the state's revenue-sharing program reduce aid to older communities facing growing social and physical needs.
- Unbalanced growth increases the overall costs of important public services like schools. For example, while districts in declining areas are closing schools to adjust for falling enrollment, many fast-growing suburban districts are building expensive new facilities to keep up with a stream of new students.

Sprawl

- Despite slow population growth in most areas, sprawling development in Michigan's regions is consuming more and more open space. From 1970 to 2000, the amount of developed land increased as much as 10 times faster than population.
- Many of the communities experiencing rapid population and job growth have little housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households, a fact that limits the opportunities of these households and reinforces existing patterns of segregation.

Social separation

- Segregation in Michigan's schools is also limiting the life opportunities of many of its children. The degree of income segregation in schools is high, and it increased in the late 1990s in every region in this study.
- Racial segregation in schools is also severe. During the late 1990s it held steady or increased in every region but Detroit, where, despite a slight drop, racial segregation remains high both compared to other Michigan regions and to large metropolitan areas across the U.S.
- Race and poverty remain highly correlated. Across the regions in this study, students of color are anywhere from two to 10 times more likely than white students to attend high-poverty schools, hurting their chances for educational success.

Reform Is Needed to Chart a Different Course

Without changes to the development forces shaping the state, there is every reason to believe social and economic disparities will continue to grow, with an ever-larger island of stress in the core of regions, and a ring of sprawl devouring even more land around it. Public policies contribute to these problems, and public policies – implemented both in the short and long term – can help solve them:

- **Tax reforms** can stabilize stressed communities and assure that all residents receive at least a minimum level of public services.
- **Regional land-use planning** can help communities revitalize stressed neighborhoods, conserve open space and limit costly new sprawl-inducing infrastructure.
- **Metropolitan partnerships** can more effectively address issues that cross municipal boundaries, ensure the efficient delivery of public services and provide a forum for all communities to participate in regional decision-making.

Now More than Ever, Reform is Possible

These regional strategies offer a powerful agenda for Michigan at a time when the negative consequences of unbalanced growth are mounting. Across the state, expensive road projects have threatened both established communities and open space. Bruising annexation battles over tax base have wasted limited public resources. Local zoning policies have left communities voiceless on activities in neighboring communities that affect them. Older communities are feeling the pressures of growing social strain and the bite of state fiscal policies that favor growing places over established ones. More and more Michigan residents are feeling the pain caused by these patterns.

Regional solutions have become even more important at this time of economic stress – the state's worst fiscal crisis in decades – because they offer concrete tools to increase regional efficiency and make the best use of limited public resources. Given these trends, and a chorus of increasingly supportive voices in the state capital, it is time to take action. An opportunity like this is unlikely to emerge again for another generation or longer.

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Sprawling Cities, Sprawling Waistlines

Lester Graham

Public health officials are calling for changes in how we design communities. They say poorly designed development contributes to higher obesity rates, the early onset of diabetes, and other health problems.

For the past few decades most suburban developments have been about convenience. Shopping should be just a short drive away. . . parks, just a short drive away. . . school just a short drive away. Four-lane highways have replaced two lane streets to relieve congestion. If you're in a car, other than dealing with the headaches of traffic, getting places isn't that bad.

But. . . if you're on a bike. . . or walking. . . crossing those multi-lane roads at busy intersections is daunting for adults. . . let alone children. And often, sidewalks are built, but sometimes they just end. A lot of times, sidewalks in a sprawling area never really go anywhere. So, people don't ride their bicycles or walk to destinations. It's just not convenient. . . and sometimes it's downright hazardous.

Ellen Bassett is with the Urban and Regional Planning Program at Michigan State University.

"Because we're building things further and further apart without connectivity that doesn't avail people to walk or to use their bicycles; they have to drive everywhere. We're creating environments where people exercise less, are less and less active."

And the result has contributed to a decline in the overall fitness of Americans. That's most evident in children. Kids today are fatter. The rate of obesity is up. Early onset of diabetes is up. Part of that is due to kids watching too much television. . . sitting around playing computer games. . . and so on. But. . . not being able to ride a bike to school. . . or being able to walk to the park to play soccer. . . contributes to health problems because kids don't get enough exercise in their daily routines.

Richard Killingsworth is the director of Active Living by Design. The program works to incorporate physical activity into everyday lives through the way we design communities. Killingsworth says somewhere along the line we came to accept that it made sense to stop walking places and instead drive to the health club.

"Now we've embraced the notion that we drive to destinations to do physical activity as opposed to having it as a part of our everyday lifestyle. So, we've essentially built an environment that accommodates something that is not physically active and accommodates one mode of transportation, that's the automobile."

Killingsworth consults with urban designers, encouraging them to think about more than whether it's a convenient drive. . . but to think about whether a neighborhood is designed to make it a convenient walk to school. . . or the park.

"We've built upon the notion that the car is king and it should be the only way and unfortunately we cannot sustain that for much longer. We need to look at other viable modes and as we build, if we build more compactly, a viable mode and a more efficient mode clearly would be walking or bicycling."

And, increasingly, urban planners are being urged by physical fitness experts to think about public health. They say making sure there's a network of sidewalks and bike paths that actually connect the community's destinations is worth the cost.

Risa Wilkerson is with the Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports. She's taken an active interest in land use planning. She says it's cheaper to design communities that encourage physical activity than it is for society to pay the health care costs caused by too little exercise. She argues she's not asking for that much.

"That children have sidewalks that are buffered between the road with a row of trees and grass, that the parks are connected to the schools and to homes and that people could walk to get a gallon of milk if they chose to or to go down and visit their neighbor at the local coffee shop and they wouldn't have to get into their automobile for a quarter-of-a-mile trip."

Wilkerson says health care costs are skyrocketing. Designing communities that encourage walking or bicycling are investments in prevention of the health problems caused by too little exercise. She adds the health care costs of poorly designed areas is just the beginning.

"And then you've got pollution costs from automobile emission. It goes on and on in terms of, you know, the savings if we get people out walking or biking – cleaner air. If you put all of those together, I mean there's just – it's a phenomenal case to make."

Advocates of incorporating more sidewalks, bike paths, and safer intersections into new developments says local governments should also look at existing suburbs too. . . to see if those neighborhoods can't be retro-fitted to include a few sidewalks and safe crossings that can connect shopping, schools, and parks to homes. That way the walk of the day can be a little farther than just from the front door to the car in the driveway.

The GLRC is a news service committed to revealing the relationship between the natural world and the everyday lives of people in the Great Lakes region. Online at www.glrc.org.

Lester Graham is Senior Editor/Producer for The Great Lakes Radio Consortium (GLRC). Reprinted with permission.

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North Lansing

Bette Downs

Sometimes certain words grip the populace. Overworked, they eventually revert to casual use. But what about "cool," the teen crowd's adjective for approval? Rather than fade away, "cool" has taken its place in the adult vocabulary. We now have "cool" cities.

Last September, Michigan's Governor Jennifer Granholm initiated a plan to help make the State's cities cool. She believes economic health requires a substantial base of 25-to-34-year-olds and she seeks ways of attracting and keeping them. A statewide advisory panel will begin the process under the guidance of David Hollister, director of a new Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Richard Florida in his recent book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, tells us that a new group has emerged, 38 million people who "occupy the power centers of industry, media, and government as well as the arts and popular culture." Representing 30 percent of the nation's work force, this creative class, a major source of economic growth, prefers places that are "diverse, tolerant, and open to new ideas"– cool cities. What's good for the creative class could be considered good for young adults since the two inevitably overlap.

A segment of Lansing, described as Old Town but more broadly called North Lansing, offers amenities the creative class demands and many of Old Town's programs have particular appeal for young people.

In a lush stretch along the Grand River, art galleries mingle with businesses. The Otherwise Gallery is next to October Moon, a practical boutique. Haze Inc., a studio, boutique, and gallery, is next to Castanier, public realtors.

A marker in the midst of Old Town identifies John Burchard as a pioneer who built Lansing's first cabin. Arriving in 1843, Burchard constructed a dam on the Grand River. Later he drowned in its turbulent waters but other settlers shared his vision and developed a thriving center of factories and businesses. Deterioration followed but the settlers left a legacy of ltalianate and Romanesque Revival buildings that shelter Old Town's burgeoning enterprises. Energy and motivation for today's resurgence flow from several organizations. The earliest, the North Lansing Community Association, was one of the first of Lansing's growing number of neighborhood groups, now numbering 48. The historic Intercity Rail Comfort Station on Grand River Avenue became NLCA' s headquarters.

NLCA thrived during the Model Cities era. A component of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program, Model Cities brought an influx of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTAs). They staffed the Community Design Center, a think tank that fit the evolving think tank concept. The Design Center spawned multiple activities in a symbiotic relationship with NLCA.

Richard Kibbey, a long time Lansing activist/leader was one of CDC's eight VISTAs, created a widely viewed slide show demonstrating North Lansing's potential. "CDC staff listened to people," he says. "They engaged in socially responsible planning based on the concerns of the community."

The Design Center operated a school which offered high school students classes in drafting and many found jobs with City and County agencies. VISTAs redesigned and renovated the Comfort Station.

In 1975, the Design Center prepared documentation which led to designation of North Lansing on the National Register of Historic Places, thus preserving the unique historic buildings present in North Lansing for future generations.

Volunteer Kathy Christensen at Brian Bishop Exhibition, Otherwise Gallery

With the phasing out of Model Cities in 1975, activities diminished but NLCA continues. Tom Powers, long time owner of North Lansing's Furniture and Antiques emporium, serves as president, Beverly Miller as vice-president.

Building on North Lansing's recognition as a historic district, the Old Town Commercial Association, established in the '90's, administers Old Town Main Street through its board of directors, executive committee, and staff together, OTCA and Main Street promote and assist a range of businesses and events. Major activities include Santa's Sampler and the Festival of the Sun. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, OTCA welcomes new members. Multiple private and government funds supplement income from dues and special events.

The Otherwise Gallery and the Creole Gallery easily qualify as the most visible enterprises in Old Town. The nonprofit Old Town Business and Art Development

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Robert Busby
Director, The Creole Gallery

Association (OTBADA) operates the Otherwise Gallery which features artists "whose work represents a mix of progressive styles, social commentary, and experimentation." The Gallery regularly sponsors concerts, performing artists, poetry readings, and visual art. Two major events, the Jazz Fest and the Blues Fest, occur annually. The super-energetic Terry Terry is president of OTBADA.

In 1976, Creole Gallery's director, Robert Busby, purchased two buildings with rare cast iron facades at 1219 Turner Street and, in 1986, he purchased 1216-1218 Turner, once the Creole Cigar Co., and now the Creole Gallery. State-of-the-art equipment makes the Creole an ideal spot for varied events. Michigan State University's Professors of Jazz and Drum Drum, a band whose members come from Australia and New Guinea, appeared there recently. Renowned trumpeter Wynton Marsalis led the Professors of Jazz there last spring.

"It was exciting," says Laura Millard communications director for Old Town Main Street. "I didn't have a ticket but you could hear the music outside and the street was crowded with jazz lovers."

Part of the success of Old Town flows from relationships that extend beyond its borders. In August, the United Automobile Workers Region 1-C exhibited works of its members at the Creole Gallery. Co-sponsored by MSU's museum and labor education programs, the exhibition strengthened Old Town's University connection established earlier by the Professors of Jazz.

Last summer Lansing's Riverwalk Theater joined the Creole Gallery to introduce the Black Box Theater, dedicated to presentation of "off-beat, small casts, and original [works] or seldom-produced classics." Black Box opened with Strindberg's "The Stronger and Cocteau's Human Voice."

Also, last summer the Otherwise Gallery held a silent auction of works exhibited there. Money raised helps support CASA (Court Appointed Advocates) a nonprofit agency serving foster children.

North Lansing's fortunes have risen and fallen but throughout its history entrepreneurs have recognized the grace and versatility of its 19th and early 20th century buildings and this awareness has led to many adaptive uses.

When Robert Busby bought his cast iron front buildings, the first floor was used as a residence. His purchase erased the fears of NLCA's members about the future of the historic structures. Busby operated the Two Doors Down Gallery there from 1979 to 1989. Today, shoppers can purchase unusual clothing there at la 'Mesha' Rumes and Lace.

The Nature Conservancy has spacious quarters at the skillfully renovated Estes Furniture building with its original banisters and name outlined in tile at the entrance. The Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau occupies the former Estes warehouse.

Race Street, which juts out at an angle from Grand River Avenue, marks the path of the eponymous mill race that served the old mills along the river. Now developers offer office space that opens on terraced paths and gardens.

Mary Sharp, M.D., at October Moon for book signing of An Unexpected Joy

A popular night spot, the Temple Club, was built as a Methodist church in 1905, then became the Bethlehem Temple. Another night spot, Rendezevous on the Grand, began as a bank, became a drug store, then an artist's studio.

Gently restored Turner-Dodge House and Heritage Center once the home of two families intertwined through marriage, has become a cultural center owned and operated by the City of Lansing. Activities range from a children's History Camp to garden weddings. Friends of Turner-Dodge House, a 501(c)(3) organization, has taken its place as one of the ongoing groups working to enhance North Lansing's treasures.

With unwavering diligence, Tom Powers, Robert Busby, and Terry Terry have pursued the shared goal of a revitalized North Lansing. During the '90's, an infusion of funds has led to its revival, continuing to bolster the Main Street program and bring it to fruition. Today a blend of businesses, the arts, the lively arts, and recreation along with a residential assortment of upscale condominiums, lofts, and single homes has led to its revival.

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Farmland and Community Alliance Explores "What Michigan Wants"

The Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance (MFCA) will use a $60,000 grant from People and Land (PAL) to build upon its "What Michigan Wants" project and further engage citizens in local discussions about land use preferences.

A similar grant received in 2002 helped MFCA – a Michigan Farm Bureau affiliate dedicated exclusively to farmland preservation – develop a survey called "What Michigan Wants." The survey has respondents rate their preferences to a series of 80 pictures that represent different land use patterns and development designs.

The newest PAL grant will enable MFCA to scale down and modify the survey so that it can be used at local levels to stimulate discussions about the types of land uses people would prefer in their own communities.

"In conducting the 'What Michigan Wants' survey over the past year, we learned that even more valuable than a blanket, statewide analysis of the results are the local discussions," said Kurt Norgaard, MFCA Research, Outreach and Program consultant. "They say a picture's worth a thousand words, and when people can visualize confusing terms like 'mixed-use' or 'high-density' and actually talk about them, you easily get a thousand words and more.

"You're invoking people's emotions and their passions, and something one person says may trigger a thought by another person. It's a higher level of engagement where people also learn about themselves in the process."

MFCA will use its Land Use Action Network of county Farm Bureau Land Use committees to determine where local meetings should be held to facilitate the discussions.

Norgaard expects the project, known as "Clear Visions," to provide valuable public input for local decision-making.

"Looking at zoning information on paper is a lot different than seeing an image of what a certain zoning pattern might actually look like," he said. "The Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance believes better information makes for better decision-making locally, and the 'Clear Visions' project provides communities with key information."

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Another component of the grant will allow MFCA to target a new set of people – the next generation of homebuyers. The organization will work with Soji Adelaja, the John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Land Use Policy at Michigan State University, who is developing a student practicum to focus on land use preferences among young people.

"Baby boomers were the most common respondents to our 'What Michigan Wants' survey, but we also want to know what younger generations like and dislike," said Norgaard. "Would their preferences for high-density developments, for example, match those of their parents or grandparents?"

Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, PAL is a funding source for organizations working on land use education, leadership development, planning model identification and land use policy. The MFCA grant was one of 18 grants totaling more than $1.3 million awarded in December by PAL.

For more information, contact:
Kurt Norgaard at the MCFA, (800) 292-2680,
or knorgaard@mfcaonline.com

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Ann Arbor Voters Approve Parks and Greenbelt Proposal

Kurt Norgaard

By a 2-to-1 margin November 4, Ann Arbor voters passed Proposal B, extending an existing 0.5-mill parks levy to 30 years and committing two-thirds of the annual revenue toward purchasing development rights on open land on both sides of the city limits. In neighboring Ann Arbor Township, voters passed a complementary measure, approving 3-to-1 a new 0.7-mill levy devoted solely to the purchase of development rights on high-risk parcels just outside the city.

A coalition of farmers, environmentalists and municipal leaders working together was crucial to Proposal B's success, according to Dexter Township farmer Dale Lesser, co-chair of the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau Land Use Committee.

"The environmental community can get out the votes, but the farmers have to show a true interest that this is something they want and which is good for agriculture," Lesser said. "It's cheaper for a community to preserve open space and ag land in the long run than it is to provide services for all the homes that could be built there. And a big supporter was the mayor of Ann Arbor himself."

Building that broad base of support will be crucial to the success of farmland preservation statewide, according to Jim Fuerstenau, director of the Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance (MFCA).

"The success of these proposals in Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township highlight the fact that people support farmland preservation – and that they're willing to pay for it," Fuerstenau said. "This represents a direction we need to move in, where the community and those charged with taking care of the farmland resource are working together."

A nonprofit organization affiliated with Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), MFCA fosters farmland preservation by providing information and services to communities and landowners, with an emphasis on cooperation between farmland preservation and urban revitalization interests.

"We'd like to congratulate those who have worked hard to pass this proposal. Farm Bureau and MFCA members can feel very proud," said MFB President Wayne H. Wood about the Ann Arbor votes. "Part of our mission has been to educate the citizens of Michigan on the importance of farmland preservation and the wise use of that valuable resource called land.

"We feel good about the fact that we've made some headway in that educational process and look forward to using this as an example of local communities addressing the issue of sprawl."

Kurt Norgaard, Ph. D., is Research, Outreach, and Program Consultant for the Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance.

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METROPATTERNS, continued from page 8

About the authors:

Ameregis is a research and geographic information systems (GIS) firm that documents the evolving development patterns and the growing social and economic disparities within U.S. metropolitan regions. Ameregis is dedicated to integrating GIS mapping and traditional research methods to inform decision-making at all levels. With its partner, Metropolitan Area Research Corporation (MARC), Ameregis assists individuals and groups in fashioning local remedies that address these concerns.

Myron Orfield, Ameregis President and founder, is a leader in the use of GIS technology to influence public policy. Orfield has published articles on land use, fiscal policy, and regional governance. His books include Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability (Brookings Institution: 1997), and American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality (Brookings: 2002). Orfield also served as a legislator in the Minnesota House of Representatives and the State Senate.

Thomas Luce is Ameregis' Research Director. Dr. Luce has a twenty-year record of research on economic development and fiscal issues in American metropolitan areas.

The entire *Michigan Metropatterns* report may be downloaded from the Ameregis website at www.ameregis.com. For more information about Ameregis, visit their website, send email to *ameregis@ameregis.com* or call (612) 379-3926.

CEDP UPDATES

Planning Students Complete Policy Analysis Reports

In December 2003, students enrolled in a policy analysis course offered by the Urban and Regional Planning Program at Michigan State University completed reports on topics of current interest to Michigan communities. Student groups prepared papers and presentaions on topics including Cool Cities, Green Infrastructure, Neighborhood Early Warning Systems, and Michigan's Smart Zones Initiative. Several of these are summarized below.

Cool Cities

Governor Granholm recently launched a "Cool Cities" initiatve to help Michigan communities to improve their ability to attract and retain the creative young workers that generate the greatest growth in today's economy.

This report examines the cool cities phenomenon, highlighting ways in which communities across the nation have implemented strategies to improve their quality of life, and describing the Michigan program and its initial progress.

Smart Zones

The State of Michigan recently implemented the Smart Zones program to stimulate and encourage technology-based economic development in the state.

This policy report outlines the efforts of Michigan's SmartZones and assesses these zones based on the product life cycle theory. A review was conducted on the technology based economic development programs in the State's of Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois.

NEWS

Neighborhood Early Warning Systems (NEWS) collect and manage data about the property in communities, to identify areas of increasing blight. Such systems are intended to provide information to members of the community in order to enable blight prevention and revitalization efforts to be more effective.

Students compared early warning systems from other states to make recommendations for ways Michigan policymakers might support effective NEWS programs.

For more information about these papers, you may contact the authors through Dr.Rex LaMore, (517) 353-9555.

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Now, as Governor Granholm, Director David Hollister, and their advisory panel search for ways to make Lansing a cool city and thereby strengthen the state's economy, North Lansing could become a model for other Michigan communities. Specific strategies over the years have contributed to the area's many achievements. North Lansing and later Old Town have progressed:

1. when a combination of local, state, federal, and private funds have fueled their programs,

2. when creative people (the new creative class) have directed their programs,

3. when planners have pursued programs that appeal to creative people.

Richard Florida has firmly established the concept of the creative class through his extensive research. By including wildly expanding computer technology, he has drastically increased the creative class, giving us quantity.

Rembrandt probably never heard of a cool city or a creative class. Monet probably never had either. Future evaluation of Old Town and the larger North Lansing will reveal whether this cool enclave with its many members of the creative class can contribute to the economic growth envisioned by Governor Granholm and, at the same time, produce quality that compares favorably with the jewels of the past.

Bette Downs is a regular contributor to Community News and Views. She lives in East Lansing.

Nominations Sought for 2004 Community and Economic Development Award

The Michigan State University Community and Economic Development Program (MSU CEDP) invites nominations for the 2004 Community and Economic Development Award. Since 1996, the MSU EDA University Center, a project of the MSU CEDP, has presented the Community and Economic Development award for notable achievement in community and economic development. The purpose of the award is to recognize excellence in both action and scholarship in Michigan. Eligible applicants include practitioners in community settings at any level, as well as students, faculty and research staff of Michigan colleges, universities, and research institutes. Self-nomination is permitted. Nominations are accepted in two categories:

- **Academic Scholarship**, dealing with research that contributes to a new understanding of theory or practice in a given field of community or economic development; and
- **Best Practice**, designed to recognize practitioners who are doing innovative and effective community development work in distressed areas.

To be considered for the award, an applicant may complete the nomination form and return it to the address below, along with supporting documents that describe and document the quality of the nominated work. Support might consist of research findings (please include brief abstract), program descriptions, promotional brochures, press coverage, or similar material sufficient to serve as a basis for evaluating the activity on its merits.

The deadline for nominations for the 2004 award is May 4, 2004. The MSU Community and Economic Development Program's Faculty Board of Advisors will review the nominations and will confer the Award at the 2004 Summer Institute conference.

2004 CED Award Nomination Form

Award Category (check one): Academic Scholarship _____ Best Practice _____

Name of Nominated Organization or Project:

_____

Name of Nominee(s): _____

Nominator (if different): _____

Your Contact Information	**Nominee Contact Information:**
Address _____	_____
_____	_____
City/ST/ZIP _____	_____
Phone _____	_____
E-mail _____	_____

Attach Description of Nominated Work and Any Supporting Documents (photographs, newsletters, press clippings, etc.)

Mail completed form and supporting documents to:

CEDP Award Program, MSU CEDP, 1801 W. Main Street, Lansing, MI 48915

Or fax to (517) 484-0068

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