

Appendix III - Master Plan Comments Received

October 23, 2009, from Village of Grand Beach Planning Commission

Plan is well researched and documented. The insertion of the “The People Say...” comments from the electronic survey and other sources complimented the text nicely

November 9, 2009, from Don Ryman (County Commissioner and liason to the Planning Commission)

See attached letter in its entirety

November 23, 2009, from Cass County Planning Commission

- A fresh, new approach to a county-wide master plan
- Educational and gave guidance to the townships and municipalities
- Gave topics to consider in completing a master plan with definitions or terms or explanations of the status today, survey input, goals set and objectives for each area
- Maps were a little hard to read and interpret (too small in size)
- Is a web survey biased toward higher education/income respondents?
- What was the response rate for the SWMPC survey?
- States that Berrien was the 5th highest increase in per capita income but also 27th highest in unemployment – counterintuitive?
- It would be useful to know why construction increased 13% - assume it is tied to real estate/leasing increasing by 22%?
- I would be concerned with the impact on cities and villages of moving offices to a “County Campus”. These offices act as anchors in those cities/villages
- P. 24 – no mention of Four Winds
- P. 43 – In new market discussion, no mention of alternative energy
- P. 35 – No mention of assisted living, growth industry
- P. 36 – survey respondents are 92.6% homeowners, whereas County is 62.1% homeowners...biased responses
- P. 40 – no mention of high speed train service to Chicago although there is clear recognition that Chicagoland is integral to the County
- P. 42 – Niles figure seems way out of line (\$8 v. \$1.3 for county)
- P. 45 – solid waste from out of County and out of State – is this sustainable?

December 2, 2009, from Indiana Michigan Power:

Comment regarding future industrial landscapes: several critical factors in identifying these including access to rail, large & relatively flat land areas, highway access, utilities and/or potential for extension and high voltage transmission lines. Three additional areas should be added:

1. The area between Coloma and Watervliet along I-94
2. Meadowbrook/Yore Area
3. An area just east of I-196, exit 4 (Riverside Exit)

January 12, 2010, Berrien County Planning Commission Public Hearing

No public comments were made during the public hearing. Adoption resolution passed January 12, 2010.

January 28, 2010, Berrien County Board of Commissioners

No public comments were made, Adoption Resolution passed January 28, 2010.

To: Berrien County Planning Commission

November 9, 2009

Comments of Don Ryman on 9/9/2009 draft of Berrien County Master Plan.

I have been rather heavily involved with the two previous Master Plans- the 1975 Plan as a Planning Commission member, and the most recent Plan as the Berrien County Commission liaison member to the Berrien County Planning Commission.

When I originally came on the Commission (January 1967 as a member, a few months later as the second Chair of the Commission) we were working diligently on the first Master Plan, which was finally published in 1975. Tom Sinn was Planning Director, and our Planning Consultant was Jack Driker of Birmingham, Michigan, a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Design when Walter Gropius was Dean.

We were intense about that Plan, because it was the first ever Land Use Plan for Berrien County. It was influenced by the fact that we expected large scale growth in the population of Berrien County which never materialized.

I left the Planning Commission in 1975. I came back as liaison in 1995, the year I first took office as a Berrien County Commissioner. Since then I have put in an

additional 15 years with the Berrien County Planning Commission.

From 1961 to 1967, and in the 1980s, I was a member of and Chair of the City of Buchanan Plan Commission. During that time the Buchanan Plan Commission was involved with two master plans, a new zoning ordinance, and a later amendment of that ordinance to provide for planned unit developments (PUDs)

Comments: A strong feature of the proposed Plan is that it is comprehensive. Almost all planning considerations are addressed, whether or not we agree with the conclusions. The good thing about this is that the planning considerations become a matter for discussion.

(1) Page 1, second paragraph: It is stated that "The County Master Plan is different from a local master plan in that it focuses on policy, not on individual properties or development objectives." This puzzles me. I had thought that both the County Plan and local plans to an extent focus on all three. The major difference is that the County Master Plan covers these items on a larger scale.

(2) Page 3. I am not sure I agree with the distinction between Urban and Small City/Village. It is my observation that some parts of Bridgman (sp), Buchanan, Coloma, etc. are quite urban, while some parts of St. Joseph, Benton Harbor and Niles border on the rural. Further, many parts of the more populous Townships in Berrien County are urban in nature. The distinction runs

into trouble with the arbitrary classifications of Cities, Villages, Townships and Charter Townships in the Michigan Statutes, which the political units in Berrien County have selected for political and other reasons.

(3) Page 5. I don't understand Figure 3.

(4) Page 7. What does the khaki color in the more populous areas stand for?

(5) Page 21. I don't understand Figure 1.

(6) Page 21, next to last paragraph: the major economic driver, or a major economic driver?

(7) Page 22. For those of us who grew up in World War II, collaboration means cooperating with the Nazis. Since the Nazis killed my schoolmates Dick Henry, Bill Richards, Bob Oberster, Carl Cline, and Warren Henry, I am very sensitive about this. When people use the word collaborate, it reminds me of these unnecessary deaths. The Webster's New World Thesaurus indicates approximately 55 synonyms, beginning with cooperate. I would prefer that one of these be used, rather than collaborate.

(8) Page 23, bottom of first column. If New Buffalo is part of the Chicagoland Area, so is the rest of Berrien County, regardless of what the New Buffalo Chamber of Commerce may claim.

(9) Page 25. I have been given to believe that there are some lands in Northern Berrien County which are unique for the whole United States for growing certain type of fruits. If this is true, it should be mentioned under Farmland and Open Space Preservation, Page 26.

(10) Page 29. I don't see on the Map the chartreuse color set out on the Legend.

(11) Page 33. Another "collaborative"

(12) Page 39, first paragraph. Historical Note: Fort St. Joseph was not located along the lakeshore; it was located on the St. Joseph River, on the south side of present day Niles. Western Michigan University is presently conducting an archeological dig under the direction of Professor Nassaney at the site. Frances Parkman got the location wrong on a map in his "Pontiac's War", written in the 19th century. This has led to some subsequent confusion. This somewhat minor error by an author living and writing in Boston shouldn't keep anyone from reading "Pontiac's War". (Frances Parkman is better known for his book "The Oregon Trail")

(13) Page 39. Second Paragraph, fifth line: The proper name is Niles-Buchanan-Cass Traffic Study; not Niles Area Transportation Study.

Second Paragraph, seventh line: State gas taxes are distributed to, not through.

Right side of page: "Other noteworthy trends" should be "Other noteworthy items"; I would add the following items at the bottom:

. On U.S. 31, the Snow Road Interchange was originally planned by the Planning Commission to be at Shawnee Road. This was changed to Snow Road by MDOT without consulting with the Engineer Manager of the Berrien County Road Commission, or anyone else familiar with traffic flows in Berrien County. Shawnee Road runs all the way west to Bridgman, where there is a connection to I-94; Snow Road goes west to nowhere. This blunder should be corrected by adding a U.S. 31 interchange at Shawnee Road.

.The Niles-Buchanan area uses the South Bend Regional Airport, rather than the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport, because it is 10 minutes rather than 40 minutes away

.Planning for Berrien County should take into account that it borders directly on Indiana. Many of the relationships of the southern cities, townships and villages are with the South Bend area. For planning purposes, the Michigan-Indiana State Line should be ignored.

(14) The township lines are not all there on the map on Page 40.

(15) Transit Operations, Page 41. The lack of transit operations connecting into Indiana and Cass and Van Buren Counties should be discussed.

(16) Page 42, Objectives and Strategies. High Speed Rail, connecting Chicago and Detroit and Grand Rapids over the Amtrak and CSX lines, should be discussed.

(17) Trends, Page 44. How does the providing of generators at pump/lift stations make a negative visual impact?

(18) There needs to be added a section on the location of County facilities. Under the Michigan statutes, the Plan Commission is required to approve any new site locations for County facilities.

Since the County Seat was removed to its present remote location in St. Joseph in 1894, this location has been a sore subject with the residents in the lower tier of Cities, Villages and Townships. Prior to the change, everybody was roughly 12 miles from the County Seat; now the people in the lower tier municipalities must travel 27 miles to the County Seat. The people in the northern part of the County deny there is a problem, because it doesn't affect them. The result: We have two Courthouses, the North County Courthouse in St. Joseph, and the South County Courthouse in Niles, at substantial extra annual operating cost. We should be looking to concentrating all the County operations in the center of the County, as they were originally placed at Berrien Springs in 1839. This could save millions of dollars.

Some of the North County residents have said that since it has been that way for 115 years, it shouldn't be changed. I

would remind them that the country had slavery for 250 years before it was outlawed by the 13th Amendment in 1865. It is never too late to correct a wrong.

In part in planning we should be looking to an idealized future- that is, what could be done if there were no financial or political road blocks to the proposed action.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Ryman". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Don Ryman