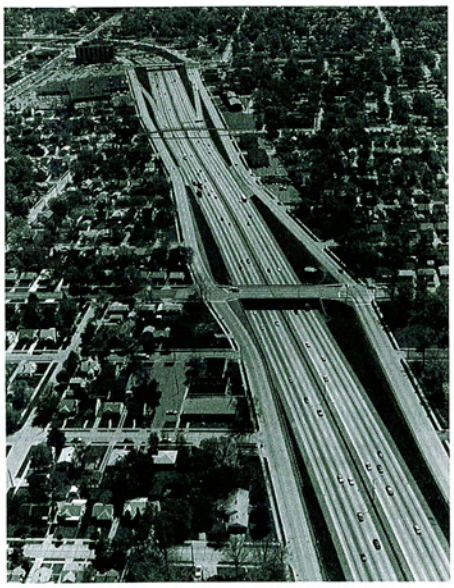
A chronology of planning issues

Sixty years of planning in Michigan; 60 years of change; 60 years of progress; 60 years of status quo. Community planners were present through it all, from the public works projects of post WWII, to involvement with urban renewal, to finding alternatives to traditional zoning and development methods. In the 60 years since the parent organization, MSMPO, formally organized, Michigan transformed from a burgeoning industrial powerhouse with a population of 5,256,106 in 1940, to a state with a 2000 population upwards of 9 million, teetering at the precipice between economic despair or a turnaround, which will position us as a leader in the global economy.

While many of the issues 40, 50, and even 60 years ago are still issues communities and planners grapple with today, planners continue to fight the battle for a balanced approach to land use. We demonstrated a resilience, a tenacity, and a nimbleness, that enabled us to respond to rapidly changing conditions over the last 60 years, and if history is any indicator, we will stay the course and influence dramatic land use and social policy that will transcend both the successes and failures of the past, and place Michigan firmly at the top of the heap.

To remind you how planners, both professional and appointed officials alike, participated in the evolution of our fine state, take a look at a brief history of the events of the last six decades. Sometimes for good, sometimes not, but if nothing else, times goes on, and new planners will come behind us, building on our successes, fixing our mistakes, and creating solutions of their own.



In 1956, the U.S. Congress passed the multibillion-dollar Federal Aid Highway Act to create interstate highway systems linking all state capitals and most cities of 50,000 population or more.Through this act, construction of I-96 connecting Detroit and Lansing was made possible. Shown here in 1977, I-96 meets Grand River in Detroit.

1945-1950: digging out from WWII years; beginning of public works planning; Capital Improvement Programs; recreation planning; and planning enabling legislation.

1950-1955: massive public works programs; much concern over extension of sewer and water service from central cities to suburban townships; annexation concerns; debate, concerns, and drafting of new and revised enabling legislation affecting township, county, and regional planning; subdivision platting; national Housing Act of 1954 (slum prevention and urban renewal).

1955-1960: Council of Government movement (COGS) begins in Detroit area; Federal Aid Highway Act; recreational planning; downtown parking problems; industrial park development; adoption of the first township planning act in 1959; and the beginning of environmental concerns (i.e. water quality and national Air Pollution Control Act of 1955).

1960-1965: redeveloping urban centers, urban renewal, urban social problems, outdoor recreation, annexation, environment, and water-related problems and water resource management.

1965-1970: creation of HUD in 1965; regional planning commissions, new Plat Act, historic preservation act; planning tied to natural environment (requirement of environmental impact statements); race and class tensions escalate; Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) established in 1966.

1970-1975: environmental planning legislation (Michigan Shorelands Protection Act- 1970, Michigan Natural Rivers Act-1970, and Michigan Solid Waste Management Act amendment-1971; national Clean Air Act- 1970, and national Coastal Zone Management Act -1972); EPA established in 1970.

1975-1980: historic preservation; recreation planning; rural preservation; economic development programs proliferate to combat deteriorating local economies; Headlee Amendment adopted by voters on the statewide ballot in 1978 fueled by a popular revolt against runaway property taxes.

1980-1990: Main Street programs; sprawl; private property rights: GIS as a planning tool; Downtown Development Authorities and Tax Increment Financing; affordable housing; continued outward migration eviscerates Michigan's older central cities.

1990-1995: historic preservation, national transportation enhancement programs (ISTEA-1991); more sprawl; walkable communities; agriculture preservation; outdoor signage; enhanced

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Top 10 Annual Conference topics

Michigan Association of Planning was originally established in 1945 to provide information about community planning practices through education and 60 years later, the focus remains strong. Members have met annually in the name of education since 1945, and by 1949 the annual meetings became our Annual Conference. This first conference was held in Ann Arbor where participants discussed concerns with parking structures.

Over the years, educational topics have at times repeated themselves, while strategies for improving intergovernmental planning, transportation, economic development, and infrastructure were discussed and refined.

The top 10 Annual Conference topics for the last decade include:

1995 - MICHIGAN'S TREND FUTURE

Beginning in the early 1990s, Michigan Association of Planning studied and analyzed land use trends in Michigan. The findings of these studies were presented. Attendees learned about transportation trends, agricultural land use patterns, and Michigan tourism.

1996 - COMBATING URBAN SPRAWL

The first joint conference between MSPO and MAPA featured the acclaimed author of *Geography from Nowhere* and *Home from Nowhere*, James Howard Kunstler, who spoke about sustainability, better neighborhood development, and open space preservation.

1997 - JOURNEY INTO THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

Our keynote speaker explored social, economic, technical, and political trends that impact our future planning endeavors.

1998 - WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

Solutions to creating safe, friendly places where residents can walk, shop, and live were explained by national expert, Dan Burden.

1999 - GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Growth Management Institute shared how to empower community residents and leaders in the planning process, and how to become better equipped to manage growth.

2000 - NEW URBANISM

Led by national experts, in this interactive session attendees participated in a design charrette and applied tips and techniques to improve site design.

2001 - SMART GROWTH

APA President Paul Farmer and local experts spoke about how Michigan can work to protect and strengthen our communities' quality of life.

2002 - COMMUNITY CULTURE

Conference attendees viewed a private screening of an inspiring film, "Downside Up." The film demonstrated how a contemporary art museum breathed new life into a dilapidated town. The session concluded with discussion by the director of the film and the town's mayor, explaining how their community surmounted difficult hurdles and strengthened their community.

2003 - MICHIGAN LAND USE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (MLULC)

After the MLULC finalized its recommendations, members of the council shared their experiences in structuring goals and writing strategies for Michigan's future.

2004 - FORM-BASED CODES

Form-based codes place more emphasis on the design of a structure rather than the use of the structure. National experts explained how this tool can be used in Michigan's communities to "Make Great Places Happen."

2005 - EMINENT DOMAIN

Only months after the Supreme Court decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*, conference attendees learned the implications of the decision from one of the lead attorneys involved with the case.

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community and stakeholder input into the planning process; passage of Propos A (cutting property taxes).

1995-2000: Smart Growth; Urban Growth Boundaries; New Urbanism/ traditional neighborhood design; Brownfield Redevelopment; TDRs and PDRs; corridor planning.

2000-2005: form-based codes; walkable communities; private property rights, open space and farmland preservation; the land use/transportation connection; *Michigan Land Use Leadership Council Report*; Great Lakes Water issues; regional cooperation and multi-jurisdictional planning; legislative advocacy; partnering and collaboration between land use stakeholders and state agencies; revenue sharing cuts affect municipal services; Detroit's population plummets to below one million; Renaissance Zones created in 2002.

The question begs: Should we embrace new planning ideas sooner?