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Newsletter of McLean County Regional Planning Commission

Message from the Chairman and Executive Director

This annual report highlights some of the progress made collectively and individually by this Commission and its planning partners towards the completion of a number of important area projects that enhance the Region's quality of life and will benefit its residents for many years to come. It also notes progress made in carrying out strategies outlined in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan as well as other area comprehensive plans.

We thank our community leaders and planning partners for their vision and leadership in advancing the quality of life in this region, and for their continued support for long range planning to guide these efforts.

On behalf of our commissioners and staff, we extend our best wishes for a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carl F. Teichman, Chairman



Paul E. Russell, Executive Director

FALL 2010 ISSUE

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2010 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Summarized in this annual report is progress made by the region's planning partners in the planning and implementing of area projects. It reports on progress made on priority initiatives of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan, and provides an overview of progress made on related projects during the past year. It describes some of the activities carried out by McLean County Regional Planning Commission as part of its ongoing work program, which is guided in part by the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.

REGIONAL PLAN PRIORITIES

Progress has been made on a number of priority initiatives identified in the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan during this first year following completion of the plan. These initiatives are briefly described in Figure A, with the current status summarized in Figure B. These priority initiatives will continue to be the focus of planning efforts in succeeding years.

PROJECT UPDATES

The following pages highlight some of the planning and related work carried out in our region over the past year.

Main Street Revitalization Planning

Discussion and planning continues regarding revitalizing Main Street through Bloomington and Normal. The Main Street redevelopment Plan (*Main Street: A Call for Investment*), which was adopted by Bloomington and Normal in 2007 following a significant public involvement process, presents recommendations for land use and development regulations, street design, and alternative transportation.

These recommendations were formulated with five distinct purposes in mind: 1) Improve the appearance of the corridor and adjacent development; 2) improve way-finding to institutions, Downtown Bloomington and Uptown Normal; 3) encourage residential and economic development; 4) make the corridor more



Artist rendering of the Uptown Normal multimodal transportation center

pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly; and 5) maintain efficient movement of vehicular traffic.

Initial efforts following adoption of the plan focused on the land use and development regulations component. Featured was the preparation of a draft form-based code to guide and regulate development consistent with the plan. The draft code was subsequently refined to reflect input from business owners along the corridor for consideration by the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, with the McLean County Chamber of Commerce assisting in this process.

With the financial and technical support of the Illinois Department of Transportation, recent efforts have begun to focus on the street design and alternative transportation components. Efforts are underway pursuant to ac-

tions by this Commission's Transportation Committees to engage a consultant to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the transportation-related components of the plan. Consultant selection should be completed by the end of 2010. Work is expected to begin on the feasibility study in early 2011.

Uptown Normal Redevelopment

2010 saw the groundbreaking of the multimodal transportation center in Uptown Normal. The center will serve as a transportation hub for high speed rail, intercity and local bus service, airport shuttle and taxi service. The facility is scheduled for completion in June 2012.

The CVS pharmacy at Uptown Crossing opened its doors August 1st

as part of the JSM Crossing's four-story mixed use development. The project includes first floor commercial development, with the remaining floors being leased as student apartments.

For more information on Uptown Normal development visit: www.uptownnormal.com.

Downtown Bloomington Redevelopment Plan

In February, the Bloomington Planning Commission voted to approve the Downtown Bloomington Strategy as prepared by Farr Associates of Chicago. The strategy includes an illustrative master plan, zoning and land use recommendations, parking policy framework, transportation component and implementation strategy. The implementation strategy for the plan is separated into short-term, medium- and long-term time frames.

For further details on the Downtown Bloomington strategy visit: www.downtownbloomington.org.

West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership

In March, the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership (WBRP) opened its offices at 800 W. Washington Street as a headquarters for the ongoing project. A housing forum was held in May and gathered representatives from various local organizations to discuss the current housing situation in West Bloomington and determine what steps should be taken moving forward.

WBRP has a housing committee that meets two to three times per month to review progress of projects and address concerns. The project also holds association meetings monthly to discuss and plan upcoming events and ideas.

For more information on WBRP visit: www.main.westbloomington.org.

Historic Route 66 Trail

An additional 4.8 miles of trail was constructed in 2009-2010. A 3.7 mile stretch of trail was constructed along the Route 66 Corridor from Fox Creek

Figure A

Priority Initiatives of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan

- Identify communities, neighborhoods, and business districts to be targeted for revitalization activities and funding.
- Periodically review and update land use plans and ordinances to provide for more compact development patterns in urban areas to achieve more efficient use of land, energy, environmental, and fiscal resources.
- Create a comprehensive water resource management plan that addresses current and future water quality and quantity needs.
- Investigate the creation of a transit district to support expanded and enhanced public transit service throughout the Bloomington-Normal metro area.
- Consider alternatives for local governments to share costs and revenues from property and sales taxes resulting from future economic development.
- Support the development of a comprehensive digital database and directory of McLean County natural resources to provide an improved guide for making development-related decisions.
- Create a comprehensive and up-to-date inventory of historic and archaeological resources throughout McLean County to provide an improved basis for preservation efforts.
- Explore the costs, benefits, and alternatives for providing inclusionary housing in McLean County communities.
- Review the current structure of development fees to help ensure efficiency and equity in the provision of community facilities and services throughout McLean County.

Drive in Bloomington to the Village of Shirley. The project was made possible by a grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Approximately 1.1 miles of trail was constructed in Chenoa southward from Illinois Route 24. This section of trail was made possible by a grant aided by the offices of U.S. Senator Richard Durbin.

In October of 2010, the County of McLean was awarded an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant in the amount of \$1.5 million for engineering and construction of approximately 2.55 miles of trail from near Henry Street in Normal to County Highway 29 in Towanda. A Transportation Enhancement Generating Economic Recovery Grant (TIGER II) request was submitted for funding the construction from Shirley to McLean but was not funded.

Additional opportunities for funding of the trail will be pursued in 2011.

Route 66 State Trail Executive Committee

MCRPC staff continued their involvement on the State Trail Executive Committee. The Committee represents counties and municipalities that promote the development of a statewide off-road trail along the Route 66 Corridor. In 2010, the Committee published a concept plan for establishing a statewide trail. The lead agencies of the initiative are the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Development Reviews

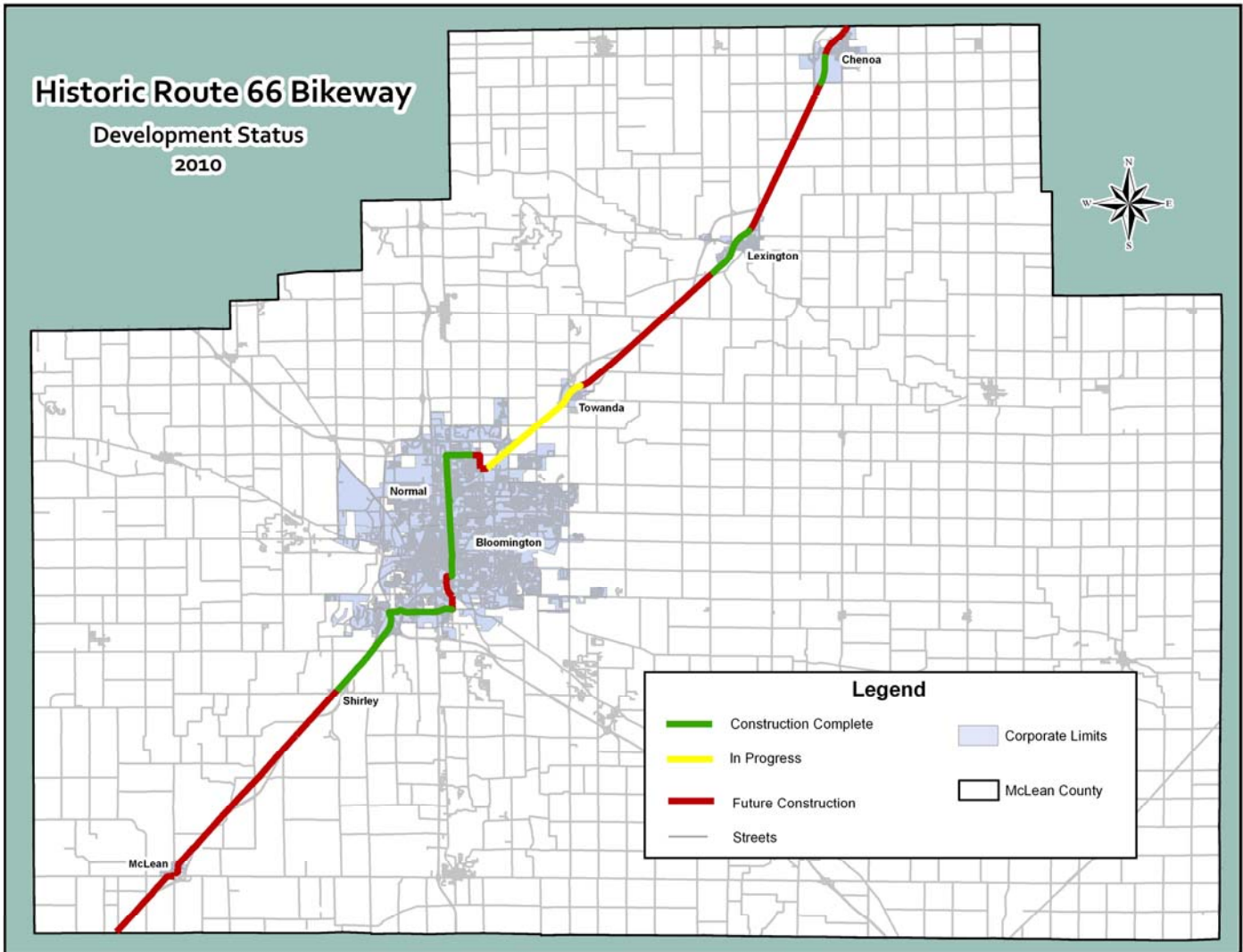
In fiscal 2010, six development projects of five acres or more were reviewed by the Intergovernmental Development Committee for consistency with local and regional comprehensive plans. The committee consists of local and regional engineers and planners from the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, County of McLean and McLean County Regional Planning Commission. These project reviews are submitted to local government entities for consideration in the local review process.

Figure B
Status of Priority Initiatives
McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan
November, 2010

Priority Initiative	Status
Target revitalization activities	The Main Street Corridor through Bloomington and Normal has been and continues to be targeted for revitalization, along with Downtown Bloomington, Uptown Normal, and the West Bloomington Neighborhood.
Update plans and ordinances	The McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan was completed approximately one year ago. Efforts have begun to update the Long Range Transportation Plan for the Bloomington-Normal urban area. Other area comprehensive plans will likely be updated following the release of 2010 census data later next year.
Create water resource management plan	The general findings of the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium Study, which was completed in 2009, were incorporated into the Regional Plan. No major follow-up work has been initiated to date, although Bloomington and Normal have both taken steps to increase their respective capacities to deliver potable water.
Investigate creation of transit district	This is being researched as part of the current update of the Long Range Transportation Plan for the Bloomington-Normal urban area, which will be completed over the next 18 months.
Consider cost and revenue sharing	This is not included in the current year's work activities.
Update natural resource inventory	Efforts are currently underway to develop a digital natural resource inventory of McLean County, which will consist of an atlas with descriptive text.
Inventory historic/archaeological resources	This is not included in the current year's work activities.
Investigate inclusionary housing	This is not included in the current year's work activities.
Review/update development fees	This is not included in the current year's work activities.

Projects are rated from "A" (highest) to "E" (lowest) based on

the number of minimal and optional features provided. Project modifica-



tions are also recommended by the committee and the McLean County Regional Planning Commission when applicable.

Of the projects reviewed during the fiscal year, five were approved by the appropriate governing bodies, and one was withdrawn. Of the approved projects, one received an "A" rating while four each received a rating of "C".

Long Range Transportation Plan

During 2010, Commission staff continued preparations for the next update of the Long Range Transportation Plan, anticipated for completion in June 2012. Tasks included data development, enhancement of the travel demand model, and consultation with the Federal Highway Administration re-

garding plan goals and requirements, particularly with respect to the integration of local land use planning initiatives into the transportation planning process. The Long Range Transportation Plan provides a 25-year framework for transportation system planning and resource management, and includes a financial plan for implementation of planned infrastructure improvements.

Travel Demand Model

The Bloomington-Normal Travel Demand Model is installed and running. This analytical tool is used to assist the local jurisdictions in assessing current and proposed traffic scenarios. The model network of streets is updated with new information on a continuing basis and integrated with other

data to maintain currency. The East Side Highway study second phase allowed for a program update of the model. Along with updating the model, planners at MCRPC have come together with other regional planning commissions around the state to create a user group for Illinois. This group provides a forum for modelers and planners to collaborate and exchange ideas in current traffic modeling.

Transportation Improvement Program

Each year in cooperation with state and local governments the Commission prepares the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a five-year plan for transportation investment in Bloomington-Normal and the surrounding metropolitan planning area of the county. The TIP provides a cata-

log of planned transportation infrastructure improvements, based on street, road and bicycle projects programmed over the next five years by McLean County, the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The TIP also includes budgeted and planned capital and operations investments by local transit providers, including Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System, SHOW BUS and social service agency programs.

In addition to the federally-funded projects, the TIP provides information on locally funded transportation projects, offering the public a comprehensive resource on the cost of transportation system improvements, and the source of programmed funds.

Human Services Transportation Plan

Commission staff continue to coordinate the Human Services Transportation planning and implementation process introduced under the Federal



Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System Transportation Center

SAFETEA-LU transportation legislation. This includes ongoing meetings of urban and regional committees and management of the application process for certain Federal grant programs, including programs for seniors and persons with disabilities, the Job Access-Reverse Commute program, and

the New Freedom program for expanded services compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Updates of both the urban area and regional plans were adopted in Spring 2010.

Major Transportation Development Projects

During FY 2010, the Commission continued its involvement with and monitoring of several major transportation infrastructure projects, each with substantial anticipated impact on the community.

East Side Highway Study

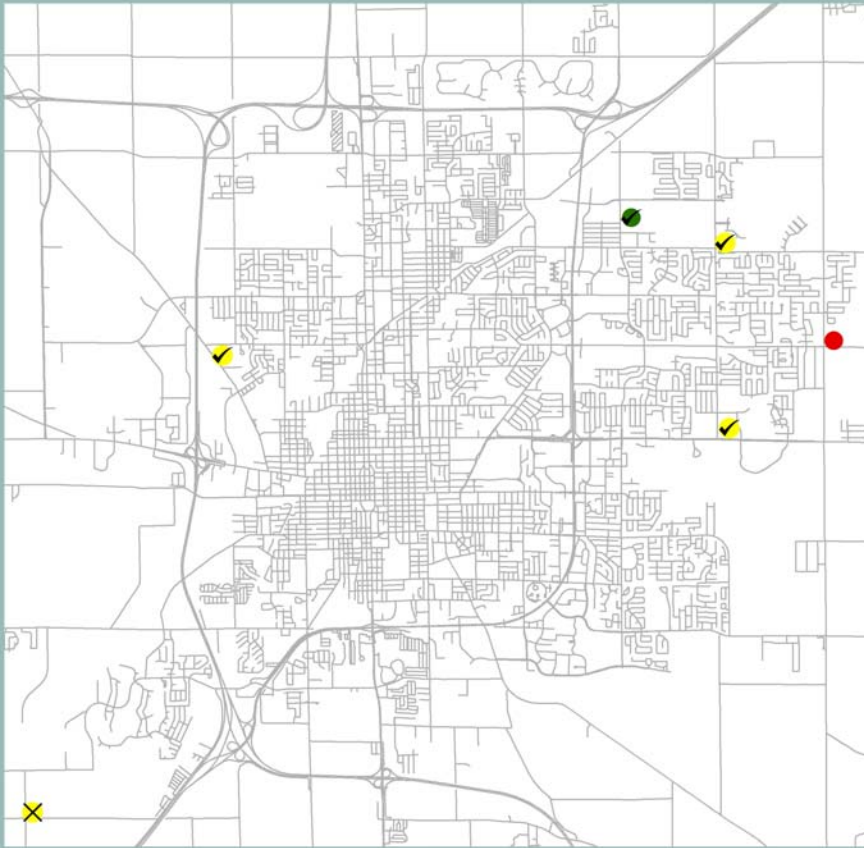
Early in 2010 the final report on the corridor study for the East Side Highway project was submitted to the Project Study Group (PSG), which includes representatives of the local governments, the Commission, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The report, the culmination of an extensive study process incorporating substantial public participation, defines a potential highway corridor on the east side for a highway that meets the goals of accommodating anticipated growth and addressing future mobility and safety needs.

During the Spring of 2010, Commission staff and other PSG representatives participated in the selection of a consultant team to proceed with the



Uptown Crossing in Normal

FY 2010 REVIEW AND APPROVAL STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF 5+ ACRES



Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

The Commission serves as the coordinating agency for the six-member regional GIS consortium (McGIS). Enhancements to GIS data, workflows, technology and integration with other business systems are ongoing activities of the consortium. These efforts allow public, private, business or government concerns quick and easy access to regional geographic information and resources through the central McGIS.org website portal.

The Commission is also working with Baker Engineering to finalize a comprehensive GIS Plan for the consortium members. This plan will document needs and outline strategies and actions for coping with the challenges for continued improvement and growth of the collaborative endeavor with optimal resource utilization.

Information Forum

Mayor James Brainard of Carmel, Indiana was the featured speaker at the Commission's fifth annual Information Forum in April at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Normal. "Creating Places Where People Want to Live and Do Business" was the title of the mayor's presentation. Over 130 people registered for the event.

Mike Boyd, president of the Boyd Group of Denver, Colorado has been selected as the 2011 speaker. He is nationally-respected airline and airport consultant who has made numerous national media appearances in addition to providing his services to the Central Illinois Regional Airport at Bloomington-Normal. The title of Mr.

next phase of study, which will include an environmental assessment and the determination of a highway alignment.

Normal Multimodal Transportation Center

During the summer of 2010, the Town of Normal broke ground for the Uptown Normal multimodal center, expected to be completed in 2012 (cover photo). The multimodal center will serve passenger rail, local transit and intercity bus services, and will also house municipal offices for the Town. The Commission is pleased to have supported the project, and the award

of the \$22 million TIGER grant which allowed construction to begin.

Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (B-NPTS) Facility

In FY 2010 the construction of the new transit facility on the west side of Normal continued, with completion of the facility in October 2010. The new transit headquarters consolidates transit staff, allows for fleet expansion, and modernizes transit operations. With the move to the new facility, B-NPTS enters a new phase of service enhancement and expansion.

McGIS Membership

- City of Bloomington
- City of Bloomington Township
- Town of Normal
- McLean County
- Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB)
- McLean County Regional Planning Commission

Boyd's presentation will be "How Regional Airports Can Support Community and Economic Development."

Website

MCRPC launched a redesigned website in early 2010 to offer a detailed view of the Commission and its activities. The site includes pages for each of the areas of the MCRPC's work including community planning, transportation planning, education and outreach, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Plans prepared by MCRPC are available on the website for public viewing.

We invite you to visit the Commission's website at www.mcplan.org to learn more about McLean County Regional Planning Commission and the work that it does for Bloomington, Normal and all of McLean County.



Commission Chairman, Carl Teichman, introduces Mayor James Brainard, who was the featured speaker at the 2010 Information Forum.

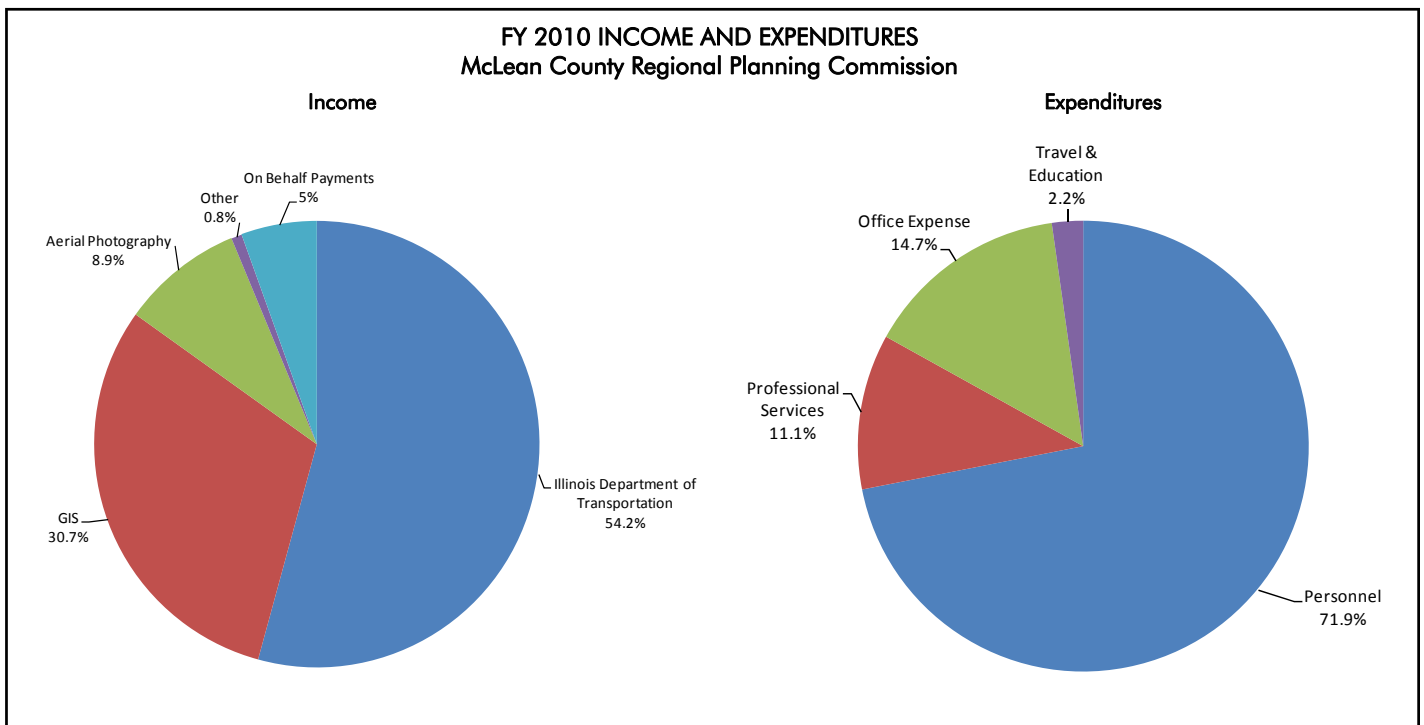
FINANCES

The Commission's revenue of \$631,125 was obtained from a variety of sources. Funding is provided by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), GIS revenues, a technical service agreement to complete an update to the regional aerial orthophotography, and interest and other miscellaneous

income sources. IDOT funds support transportation related programs. GIS revenues include recorder's fee funding and member contributions to support the regional GIS program.

Total disbursements of \$779,130 included personnel expenses, profes-

sional services, office expenses, and travel and education as shown on the chart below. ♦



This publication presents information on planning and development issues that impact the quality of life in the Community of McLean County. We can be reached by mail at 115 E. Washington St. #M103, Bloomington, IL 61701, by phone at (309) 828-4331, by fax at (309) 827-4773, or by e-mail at webmaster@mcplan.org.

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Season's Greetings



from the Members and Staff of
McLean County Regional Planning Commission