

V · I · S · I · O · N · S

Newsletter of McLean County Regional Planning Commission

To Our Planning Partners And Citizens Of McLean County:

The past two years following the completion of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan have brought significant progress toward meeting a number of the plan's objectives for sensible growth, as well as in meeting other objectives identified in the Commission's overall work program for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2002.

This Annual Progress Report reviews the Regional Plan and its top priorities and outlines the principal actions taken to date by this Commission and its planning partners in addressing those priorities. It also briefly describes other activities completed during the past year consistent with the Commission's work program. Additionally, it summarizes Commission finances and provides a glimpse of activities planned for the coming year.

Feel free to contact us with questions or comments. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Buchanan Paul Russell

Richard Buchanan,
Chairman

Paul Russell,
Director

2002 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

This is the second annual progress report on implementing the recommendations of the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.

The Regional Plan provides a framework for continuing regional cooperation in pursuit of socially, economically and environmentally healthy communities. Toward this end, the plan identifies a series of priority strategies which outline supporting actions to be considered by local governments during the years immediately following their adoption of the plan in 2000.

These strategies were developed using a collaborative approach with participation by all levels of government and by a wide range of citizen and private interests.

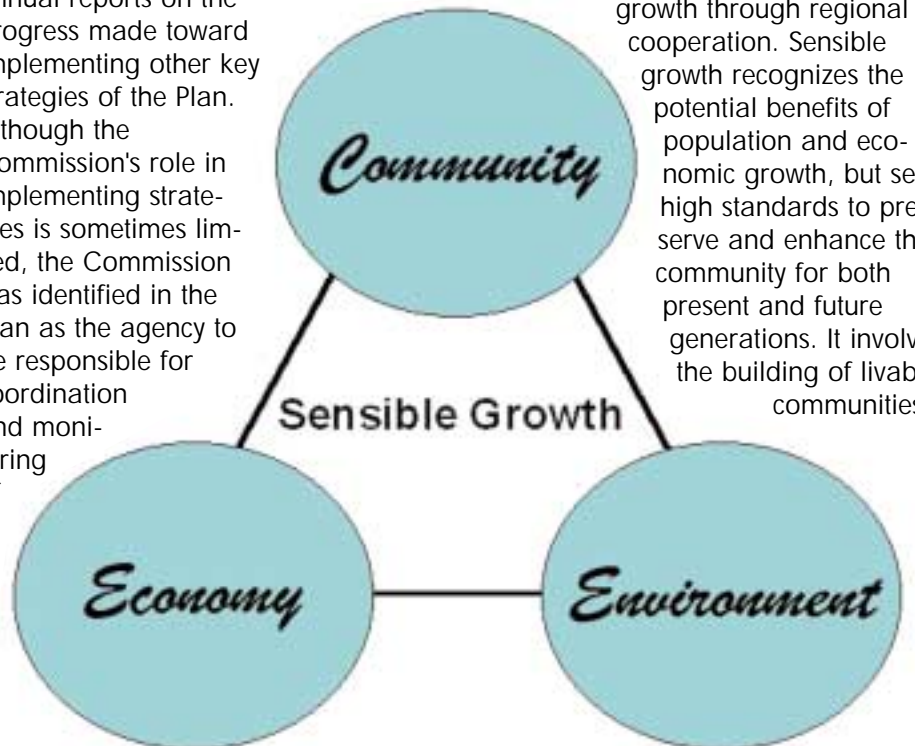
One of the plan's priority strategies was the completion of annual reports on the progress made toward implementing other key strategies of the Plan. Although the Commission's role in implementing strategies is sometimes limited, the Commission was identified in the plan as the agency to be responsible for coordination and monitoring of

progress, including preparation of annual progress reports.

This progress report provides an overview of the plan, including its top priorities and key components of land use, transportation and community facilities. It also summarizes the progress made by all concerned on strategies scheduled to be addressed during the past two years. In addition, this report describes other activities completed during the past year by this Commission. A brief overview of the Commission's finances associated with this work is also included, along with an outline of the principal new planning activities scheduled for the coming year.

PLAN OVERVIEW

The regional comprehensive plan presents a guide for sensible growth through regional cooperation. Sensible growth recognizes the potential benefits of population and economic growth, but sets high standards to preserve and enhance the community for both present and future generations. It involves the building of livable communities



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that feature distinctive identities with people friendly designs and many social and cultural amenities. It also involves promoting economic growth to provide the jobs and tax base that can help support these amenities. Sensible growth also occurs in harmony with the natural landscape and environment.

The regional comprehensive plan provides a framework for continuing regional cooperation in support of sensible growth. The plan recognizes that many growth issues involve multiple jurisdictions and may require cooperative approaches to achieve optimal solutions. Therefore, a collaborative approach with participation by all levels of government and by a wide range of citizen and private interests was used to develop this plan.

This regional approach was enhanced through the use of citizen committees representing a wide range of public and private interests to focus on the different elements of the plan. More than 100 persons from many walks of life served as an advisory body to the McLean County

Regional Planning Commission, drawing upon the work of previous citizen-based visioning committees to help guide the preparation of this plan.

Priority Strategies

The citizen committees identified goals, objectives, policies and strategies designed to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the McLean County Region. The goals, objectives, policies and strategies were developed for nine elements of the plan as follows:

- x Natural Environment
- x Historic Preservation And Urban Revitalization
- x Economic Development
- x Population
- x Housing
- x Land Use
- x Transportation
- x Community Facilities And Services
- x Implementation

The plan uses the goals and objectives to assess existing characteristics and trends and to formulate strate-

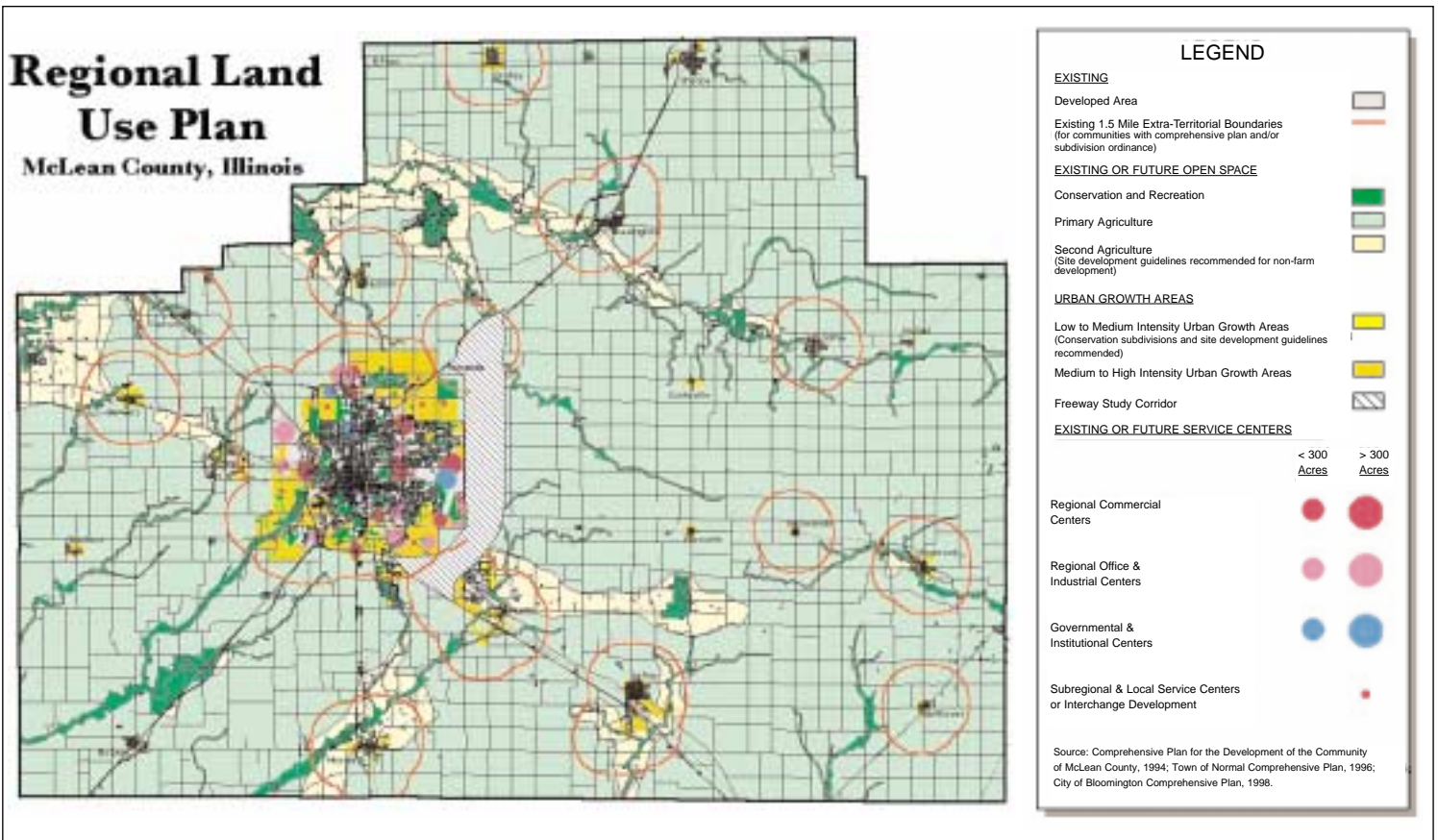
gies, plans and policies for each element.

The planning process described above resulted in the identification of more than 300 strategies which were evaluated and condensed by the committees into a limited number of top priorities.

The identified strategies were considered in developing plans for land use, transportation, selected community facilities and services, and implementation.

Land Use Plan

The land use plan reflects the growth policies identified in adopted area plans as well as the relevant strategies identified by the citizen committees. Accordingly, the plan provides for a system of interconnected conservation and recreation areas consistent with the McLean County Regional Greenways Plan. It also designates other areas outside of urban growth areas for primary or secondary agriculture, depending upon the general soil and terrain characteristics. The plan provides for



relatively compact and contiguous development within and adjacent to incorporated communities, with growth occurring in and around Bloomington-Normal, smaller municipalities in the western two-thirds of the County and in the selected rural growth areas. It also provides for regional service centers in Bloomington-Normal and for sub-regional service centers in the downtowns of the Region's smaller communities, in the neighborhoods of Bloomington-Normal, and at selected highway interchanges.

Transportation Plan

The transportation plan provides for the extension of transportation facilities to serve planned growth areas. The street and highway plan provides for the southward extension of Mitsubishi Motorway on the west side of the urban area and for the upgrading of Towanda-Barnes Road to expressway standards on the east side of the urban area. It also identifies the immediate need for a feasibility study for a freeway bypass connection between I-55 and I-74 on the east side. Other improvements and extensions to the urban classified and the rural road systems are also identified to meet future needs consistent with the Regional Land Use Plan.

The transportation plan also addresses alternative modes of transportation and provides for numerous extensions to the existing trail system in the urban area and throughout the County, including the proposed Route 66 Bikeway. The plan for alternative modes also identifies potential future transit service for planned regional and sub-regional service centers in the urban area.

Community Facilities Plan

The community facilities and services element addresses water service; sewer service; schools; parks and recreation; solid waste; fire, police and emergency services; and,

public utilities. The plan incorporates the regional water system proposal from the 1994 County Comprehensive Plan and supports the concept of regionalization of wastewater treatment consistent with adopted local land use plans. It also identifies future park land needs and identifies emergency service area boundaries as well as presenting strategies for each of the facilities and services considered in the plan.

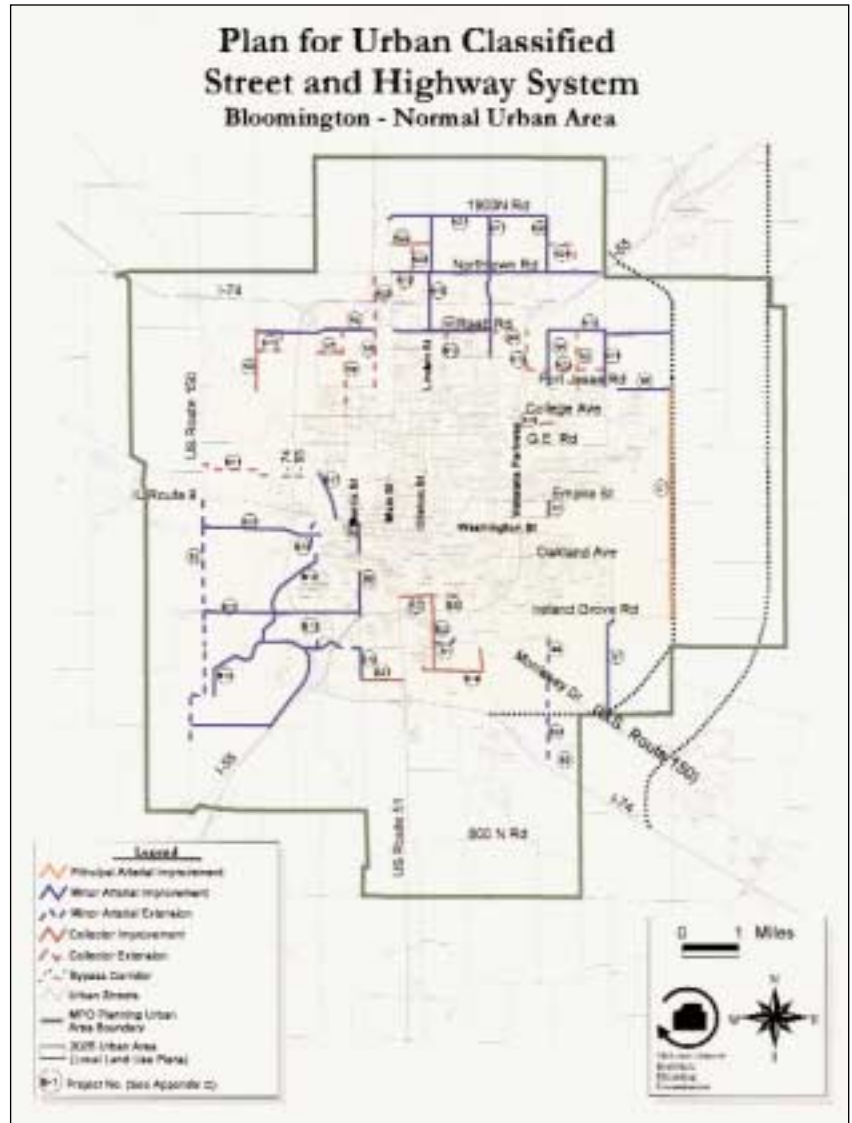
Implementation Plan

Finally, the implementation plans identify the actions that will be needed to carry out the Priority One strategies identified for each element of the plan. The implementation plans also identify the responsibilities and approximate time frames during

which those actions will be considered. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that some strategies will require further study to determine appropriateness and whether the potential benefits will justify any costs. The implementation plans are designed to lead to these determinations.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Progress has been made on all seventeen Priority One strategies identified in the Regional Plan, including a number of continuing and recurring activities. Actions taken to date toward implementing each Priority One strategy are listed in Figure 1. Also listed is a brief description of each strategy, the completion status, and any remaining or



**Figure 1
Implementation Status of Priority 1 Strategies From
the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan**

Strategy	Description	Actions Taken to Date by MCRPC and/or Planning Partners	Completion Status	Remaining or Follow-up Tasks
Complete Regional Water Study	Identifies actions and timelines for implementation.	Committee reestablished, coordinated with Tazewell County officials, aquifer capability established and preliminary costs developed by consultant.	In progress	Finalize technical and financial plans.
Prepare Farmland Preservation Study	Develop a program that considers alternative preservation methods.	Incorporated as a component of "McLean County Land Development Guide," Advisory Committee established, committee coordination of preliminary conservation subdivision plan, held conservation design workshop, published newsletters on farmland preservation and conservation subdivisions, coordinated with consultants.	In progress	Complete/publish Guide, promote conservation design.
Publicize Soil Conservation Programs	Promotes existing programs and methods for conservation.	Coordinated with soil conservation specialists in design of preliminary conservation subdivision plan. Published newsletter on this and related topics.	Complete	Incorporate concepts in future plans as appropriate
Prepare Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance	Creates a model TND Ordinance tailored to local needs to provide a guide for mixed use and traditional neighborhood design.	Intergovernmental development of model ordinance, refinement and adoption of ordinance by Town of Normal.	Complete	Further refinements, adoptions, and administration
Initiate Downtown Business Retention/Development Program	Tailors programs for downtown areas.	Completion of downtown revitalization plans by Bloomington and Normal. Formation of Bloomington cultural district, completion of Normal downtown multi-modal study, pursuit of grants for downtown projects, participation on downtown committees, coordination with McLean County Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council of the Bloomington-Normal area.	Continuing	Capital improvement programming and coordination
Direct Urban Growth	Directs growth to proposed growth areas and evaluates joint review process for regionally significant development proposals.	Revised process for joint review of major development projects to provide improved coordination and to incorporate recommendations from McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan.	Complete	Continue to provide joint project reviews, and monitor and refine review process.
Enhance Cooperative Business Recruitment and Retention	Supports related activities of the Economic Development Council of the Bloomington-Normal Area.	Participation on Work Force Issues Committee of McLean County Chamber of Commerce. Coordination with EDC staff on the research and dissemination of economic development related information.	Continuing	Continue to expand and improve access to database
Identify Balanced Economic Development Sites	Identifies and promotes central city sites as well as fringe area sites for commercial and industrial development.	Coordination with EDC staff on the research and dissemination of economic development related information.	Continuing	Continue to expand and improve access to database
Consider Cost/Revenue Sharing	Considers alternative means for local governments to share development costs and revenues from property and/or sales taxes generated from future economic development.	Research initiated on practices in use from around the nation.	In progress	Complete research, report results in newsletter
Conduct Population Survey	Provides for public surveys and discussions on growth alternatives.	Survey completed by Growth Advisory Committee, report published.	Complete	Incorporate results in future plans and projects as appropriate
Encourage Housing Redevelopment	Encourages redevelopment of housing in existing neighborhoods.	Published newsletter and two brochures on this topic, participated in annual "Old House Fair," participate in Community Advocacy Network Affordable Housing Task Force.	Complete	Incorporate concepts in future plans and projects as appropriate
Adopt Site Development Guidelines	Protects environmental resources where non-farm residential development is permitted.	Identified elements to be incorporated in McLean County Land Development Guide, initiated model erosion control ordinance.	In progress	Adopt guidelines for local use, publish report
Support Comprehensive Planning	Promotes comprehensive planning and public understanding and support for comprehensive plans and the planning process.	Preparation of Normal Long Range Development Plan and Lexington Comprehensive Plan.	Normal complete; Lexington in progress	Complete Lexington Plan, update/prepare other comprehensive plans.
Promote Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning	Promotes transit/people friendly design and coordinated design review.	Revised joint review process to encourage transit and people friendly design, incorporated concepts into long-range plans.	Complete	Continue to encourage incorporation of concepts in plans and projects
Utilize Access Management	Uses access management strategies to grant or deny access to major streets and roads.	Identified need, secured grant and selected consultant to prepare joint access management policy, plan and ordinance.	In progress	Coordinate, review, refine, adopt
Develop Alignment Corridor Studies	Provides for development of studies as needed.	Secured funding for East Side Corridor Feasibility Study, formed steering committees, selected and monitored consultant.	Complete	Collectively select and preserve corridor, initiate other studies as needed
Prepare Annual Progress Reports	Annual review and report on progress made toward implementing the comprehensive planning strategies.	Prepared first two annual progress reports.	Complete	Next due Fall, 2003

Technical Assistance

Commission staff provide technical assistance to local governments and organizations in McLean County through service on various committees and through responding to information requests. Commission staff participate on a number of committees which address different community issues, including affordable housing, development review, ordinance review, stormwater management, transit, work force issues and traffic calming.

The Commission also provides assistance to local governments in administering the solid waste program and in preparing grant applications to address specific needs.

As a sub state clearinghouse, the Commission also reviews and comments on applications for state and federal funding of eligible capital improvement projects.

Education And Outreach

Education and outreach efforts report on planning issues and concepts to local governments, developers and the public. The intent is to increase understanding and to promote discussion and consideration of alternative solutions to community development problems. Activities include production of newsletters, informational brochures, slide and video presentations and press releases, as well as maintenance of the

Commission library and web site.

In the last year, staff have placed additional emphasis on the use of the Commission website as a tool for public information regarding ongoing projects, such as public review of the Transportation Improvement Program. The website is also used to enhance staff activities in providing technical assistance through public outreach, as in the East Side Corridor Transportation Facility Feasibility Study, for which a dedicated section of the website has been created and maintained.

FINANCES

The Commission's revenue of over \$1,024,000 was received through a variety of sources as illustrated in Figure 2. Funding is provided by federal and state grants, technical service contracts and regional service agreements.

Regional service agreements with Bloomington, Normal and McLean County support Commission activities and provide matching shares for local, state and federal planning funds.

Commission finances are often significantly impacted by contracts administered on behalf of local governments for technical services. This was again the case in Fiscal Year 2002 (FY 02), as revenue from these types of service contracts exceeded all other sources, followed by Illinois

Department of Transportation (IDOT) revenue. Technical service contracts accounted for nearly half of the total revenue. These revenues consist of funds provided by local governments and IDOT for outside consultants to complete projects such as the East Side Corridor Feasibility Study, aerial photography and cadastral (parcel) mapping.

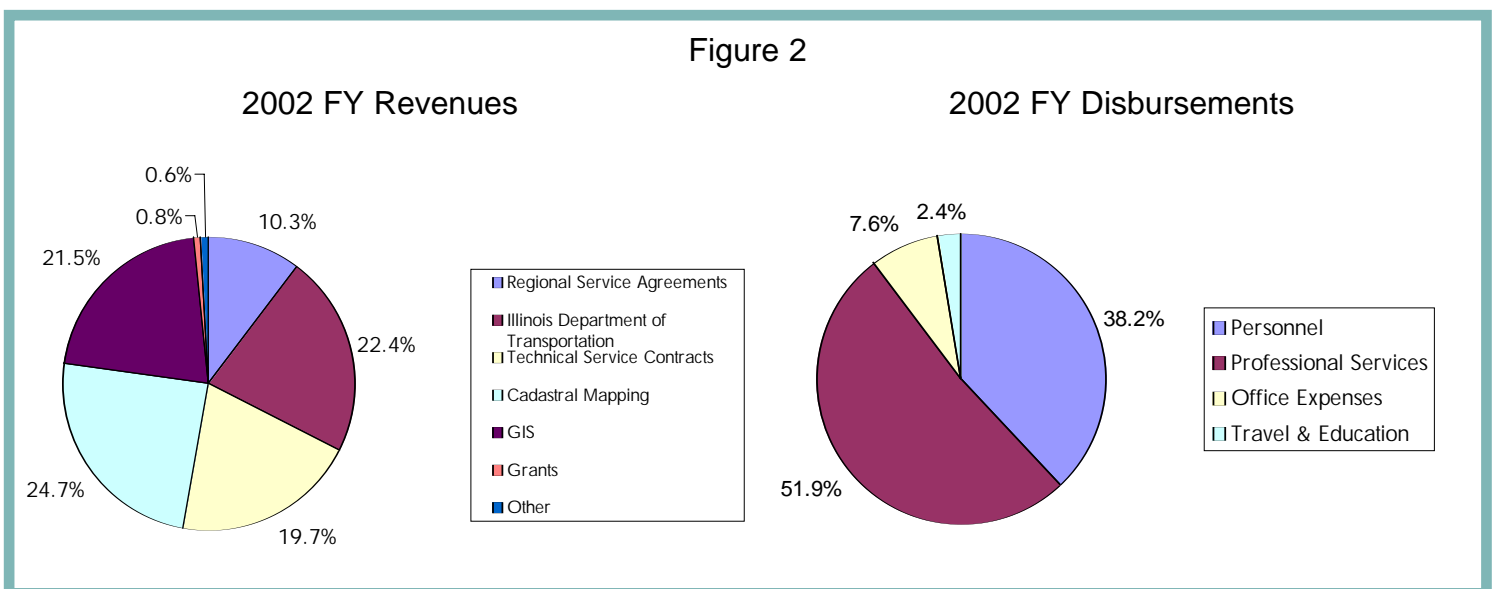
Total disbursements of over \$1,028,000 included payments to contractors from revenues received in the previous fiscal year. At fifty-two percent, professional service costs comprised the greatest portion of the Commission's disbursements, followed by personnel costs at thirty-eight percent. Professional services consisted primarily of the technical service contracts noted above.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Along with the completion or continuation of a number of FY2002 projects, the following new projects are included in the Commission's work program for the coming year:

- Development Impact Study
- Access Management Plan
- One to two Comprehensive Plan updates.

Figure 2



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 211 West Jefferson Street, Bloomington, IL 61701, by phone at (309) 828-4331, by fax at (309) 827-4773, or by e-mail at visions@mcplan.org.

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