

MotorCities National Heritage Area Recommended Amendment to the GMP

As MotorCities National Heritage Area (MotorCities) approaches its 10th anniversary as a designated National Heritage Area and as we continue to work towards becoming self-sustaining, we believe it is an opportune time to amend our General Management Plan (GMP).

MotorCities' mission remains the foundation for the National Heritage Area - to preserve, interpret and promote the automotive and labor heritage of the State of Michigan through programs and activities that are designed to increase tourism throughout the State; develop and deploy educational and informational programs that tell the story of the American automobile industry and labor in our region; and encourage revitalization through conservation.

The planning process that resulted in the current operating GMP considered several alternatives and solicited feedback from the public. The alternatives were presented to the public in a series of meetings throughout the MotorCities region and Alternative 5 - the Hybrid Approach - was eventually selected as the plan for MotorCities.

The Hybrid Approach defined three resource management zones within the MotorCities National Heritage Area with differing types and densities of automotive and labor heritage resources and programs, and activities would be the most intense where resources were most highly concentrated. The largest zone - the Heritage Region - is a large inclusive area that encompasses parts of multiple counties and defines the perimeter of MotorCities National Heritage Area. MotorCities would focus on educational initiatives and seek to enhance regional identity in this zone. The second zone - Stewardship Communities - included those jurisdictions where multiple and significant automotive heritage resources were located. MotorCities would focus on conservation and revitalization, including identification and effective use of resources in community development. The third zone - Hub Districts - is located wholly within Stewardship Communities and are areas where resources are most densely concentrated. MotorCities would focus on the visitor experience by designating existing interpretive venues as gateways for visitors. The fourth zone - Affiliates - included important resources that were outside the boundaries of the MotorCities National Heritage Area, but could collaborate on marketing and educational initiatives.

MotorCities believes that there is a strong sense of disconnect between the designed plan and the reality of implementing of that plan. The Hybrid Alternative has:

- Created confusion among partners, stakeholders, and the public , as to who is a part of the region, and how they can participate in MotorCities activities;
- Created inequalities in MotorCities' ability to effectively undertake and deliver programming;
- Created a very top-down management entity and people in the region do not see themselves as meaningful contributors to MotorCities unless they are directly connected to the MotorCities' office; and,
- Created feelings of exclusion and alienation among the people and venues in the region.

Therefore, MotorCities seeks to amend the GMP and institute the Expanded Region Approach (Alternative 4 in the GMP) as the operating mechanism for the MotorCities National Heritage Area. Under the Expanded Region Approach, MotorCities would be defined as a region in southeastern and central Michigan that encompasses nearly all resources related to automotive and labor heritage. This approach will:

- Allow all in the region to feel included under the MotorCities “umbrella”;
- Allow MotorCities to be responsive to the desires and needs of our partners, stakeholders, and the public who have voiced concerns regarding their role. It is intended that MotorCities will assist and facilitate our partners, stakeholders, and the public in their interpretation, education, and revitalization initiatives and actions;
- Necessitate that MotorCities’ programs reach out across the region’s footprint, thus increasing the sense of belonging and inclusion among the people and venues in the region; and,
- Increase the opportunities available to develop partnerships that will result in MotorCities becoming self-sustaining.

Stewardship Communities would continue to exist and it is anticipated that their role would expand from undertaking revitalization efforts to include active, grassroots participation in all three MotorCities’ program areas - interpretation, education, and revitalization.

The Expanded Region Approach has great breadth and inclusion across a large region whose residents share a common history.