

2020 Southeast Michigan Transportation Planning Certification Review

Covering the Detroit and Ann Arbor Urbanized Areas

Report Issued October 28, 2020
by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration



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Acronyms

AAATA	Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority – The Ride
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BWATC	Blue Water Area Transportation Commission
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMP	Congestion Management Process (formerly the CMS)
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
DOT	United States Department of Transportation
DDOT	Detroit Department of Transportation
EGLE	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
EJ	Environmental Justice
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FAST Act	Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GPA	General Program Account
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
JARC	Job Access and Reverse Commute
LEP	Limited English Proficient
LRP	Long Range Plan (also known as Metropolitan Transportation Plan)
M-1 RAIL	Operator of QLINE
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century Act
M&O	Management and Operations
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
MITSC	Michigan Intelligent Transportation System Center
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOVES	Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan (also known as Long Range Plan or Regional Transportation Plan)
PASER	Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating
RCTO	Regional Concept of Transportation Operations
RTA	Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan
RTCC	Regional Transit Coordinating Council
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan (also known as Metropolitan Transportation Plan)
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users of 2005
SCCOTS	St. Clair County Transportation Study
SEMCOG	Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
SHSP	Strategic Highway Safety Plan
SMART	Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation
SOV	Single Occupant Vehicle
SIP	State Implementation Plan
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

TAMC	Transportation Asset Management Council
TDP	Transit Development Plan
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
Title VI	Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TMACOG	Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments
TMIP	Travel Model Improvement Program
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TSM	Transportation Systems Management
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
USC	United States Code
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
UZA	Urbanized Area
VMT	Vehicle Miles of Travel
WATS	Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
WWAVE	Western-Washtenaw Area Value Express
YOE	Year of Expenditure

Preface

“The Secretary shall ensure that the metropolitan planning process of a metropolitan planning organization serving a transportation management area is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal law.”

[23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5)(A)(i) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5)(A)(i)(e)]

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify each region’s metropolitan transportation planning process at least every four years. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a desk review of planning products (in advance of the on-site review), an on-site review, and creation of a report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. The certification review is not a review of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) staff; rather, it is a review of the planning process conducted by all participating agencies (local agencies, State, and transit operators) charged with cooperatively carrying out the planning process. The review focuses on compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO, the State, local agencies, and transit operators as they conduct the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance its effectiveness. Examples of additional opportunities for review and comment include review of the unified planning work program (UPWP), the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP), and air-quality conformity determinations. These other processes are considered in the certification review process. The report and findings are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed.

Executive Summary

Southeast Michigan transportation planning process meets Federal requirements, with improvements recommended.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly certify the transportation planning process for urbanized areas over 200,000 population every four years, per 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303. The review conducted during 2020 determined that the process in Southeast Michigan meets the requirements of Federal law.

Corrective Actions

No corrective actions were identified.

Recommendations

- SEMCOG should continue with their efforts to raise the awareness and provide information on the FACs on their website and in their planning documents.
- As use of the new STIP software evolves, partners should continue to work together to create a TIP listing report which meets the needs of the MPOs and applicable Federal requirements.

Commendations

- SEMCOG's quick transition to providing online content and sustained efforts to provide relevant content to their members and the public is to be commended. They should continue this impressive effort.
- The transportation planning partners of Southeast Michigan are to be commended for the variety of resources and initiatives which go beyond the Federal requirements.
- The working relationships and on-going, regular meetings among the RTA and the transit providers is a significant benefit for collaboration. While it began before COVID, the ongoing open lines of communication has been strengthened. This is a benefit for SEMCOG, RTA, the transit agencies and the general public.

Introduction

Purpose

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Southeast Michigan is the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). Within the SEMCOG Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), there are three urbanized areas (UZA's) of over 50,000 population – Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Port Huron. According to the Census, the population within the SEMCOG Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) was 4,703,593 in 2010, a decrease from their population of 4,833,493 in 2000. See Figure 1 below for population changes between 2000 and 2010.

Figure 1. 2000 and 2010 Census Population

Area	2000 Pop.	2010 Pop.	Change	% Change
SEMCOG MPA	4,833,493	4,703,593	-129,900	-2.7%
Detroit UZA	3,903,377	3,734,090	-169,287	-4.3%
Ann Arbor UZA	283,904	306,022	+ 22,118	+7.8%
Port Huron UZA	86,486	87,106	+ 620	+0.7%

See Figures 2 and 3 on the following two pages for a map of the region and an illustration of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) structure.

Scope

The federally required transportation planning certification review is an assessment of the transportation planning products and process conducted by all partners charged with cooperatively carrying out the transportation planning process required in 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and how they meet the federal requirements.

In addition to engaging the public, partners in the planning process for Southeast Michigan include, but are not limited to:

- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- Local governments in the seven-county region
- Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA)
- Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT)
- Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)
- St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS)
- Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)
- Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Methodology

The review consisted of a desk audit, a virtual review via MS Teams was conducted August 26 – 27, 2020, and two virtual public comment sessions via MS Teams conducted September 17, 2020.

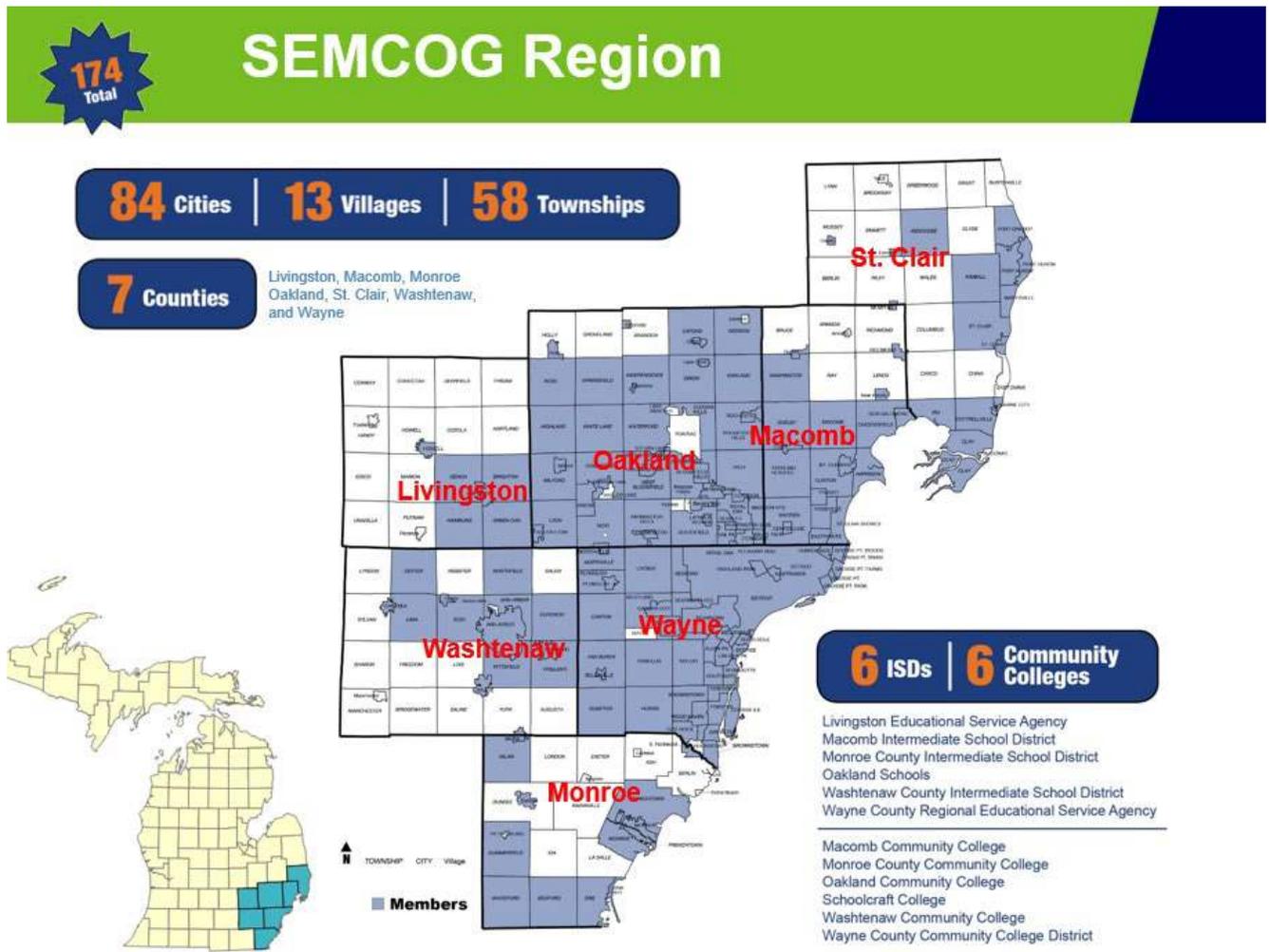
Routine oversight, such as attendance at meetings, day-to-day interactions, and review of work products also provides information upon which to base the certification findings.

Certification Report

For each finding, this report will document the current status and regulatory basis.

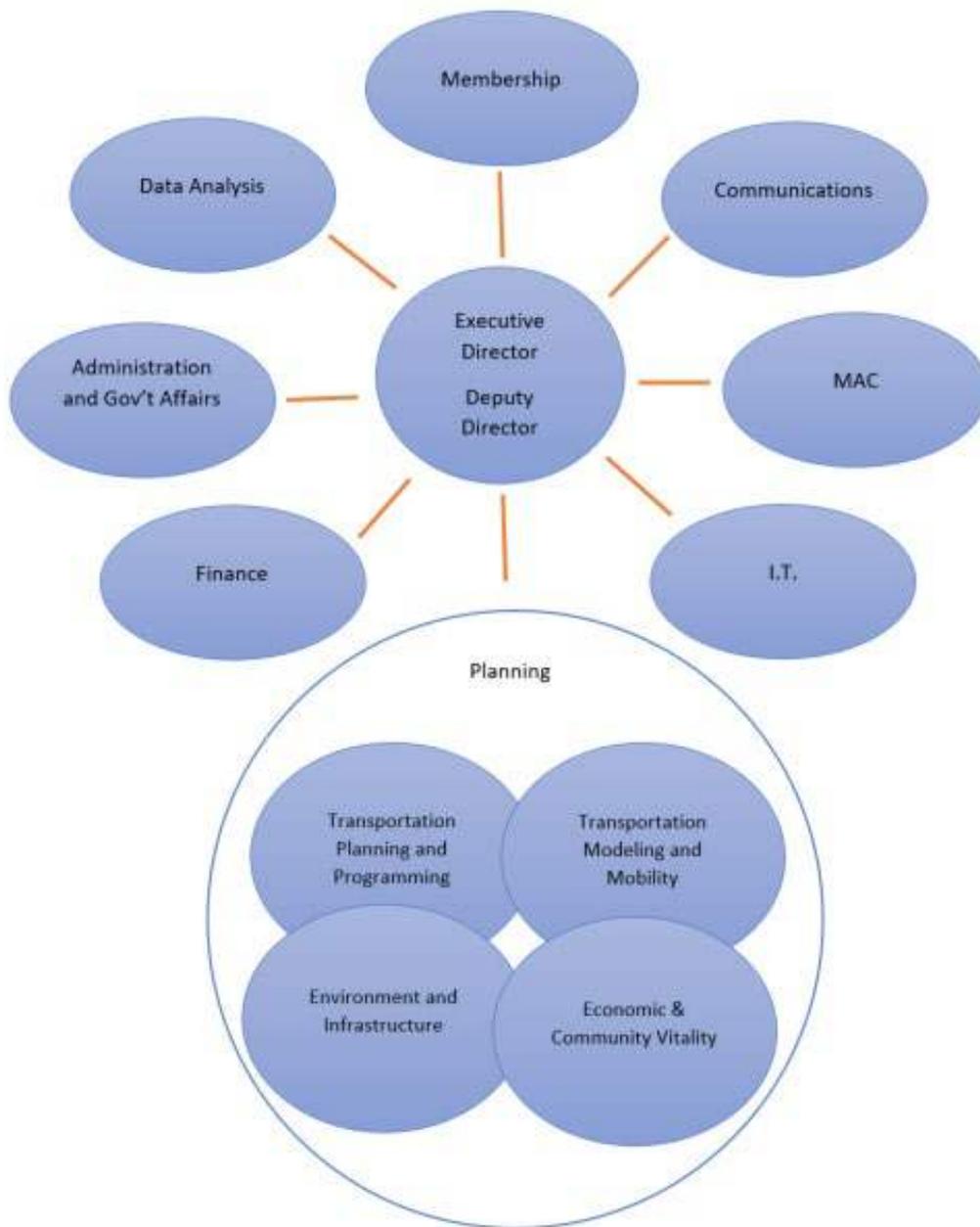
- **Current Status** – Defines what is currently being done regarding each planning topic. These are statements of fact which define the conditions found during the review and provide the primary basis for determining the corrective actions, recommendations, and/or commendations, if any, for each planning topic.
- **Findings** – Findings of the planning process take one of three possible forms, as described below. Because many planning topics are interlinked, some findings may reference documents or requirements relating to topics other than the one being covered.
 - **Commendation** – a process or practice that demonstrates innovative, highly effective, well-thought-out procedures for implementing the planning requirements. Elements addressing items that have frequently posed problems nationwide could be cited as noteworthy practices. Also, significant improvements and/or resolution of past findings may warrant a commendation.
 - **Recommendation** – issued when planning activities meet the statutory and regulatory requirements but are either out-of-date or need improvement to fully implement the metropolitan transportation planning process. The expected outcome is a change that would improve the process, though there is no Federal mandate.
 - **Corrective Action** – a serious situation that fails to meet one or more requirements of the transportation planning statute and regulations, thus seriously impacting the outcome of the overall process. The expected outcome is a scheduled change that brings the metropolitan planning process into compliance with a planning statute or regulation; failure to respond will likely result in a more restrictive certification.
- **Regulatory Basis** – Defines where information regarding each planning topic can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

Figure 2. Map of the SEMCOG Metropolitan Planning Area



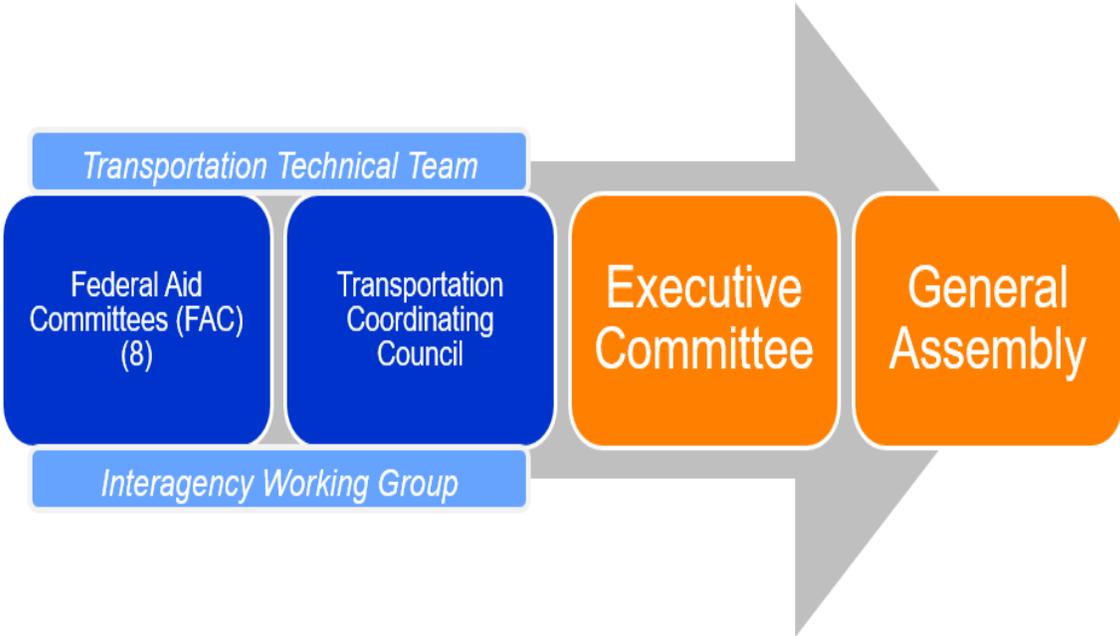
Source: SEMCOG

Figure 3. SEMCOG Organizational Structure



Source: SEMCOG

Figure 4. SEMCOG Transportation Decision Making Process



Source: SEMCOG

Findings

I. Federal Aid Committees (FACs)

Current Status

The Federal-Aid Committees (FACs) were established by SEMCOG to involve the local area governments in the transportation decision-making planning process. There is a FAC in each of the seven counties of SEMCOG and the City of Detroit. The FACs are comprised of representatives of local officials and governments, transit agencies, and MDOT. The FACs function within the local governance structure of the county where they are located and are responsible for prioritizing transportation investments to recommend to SEMCOG.

The FACs play an important role within the SEMCOG planning process in the selection and recommendation of projects from their counties into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and transportation improvement program (TIP). The FACs review and approve projects for several federal-aid program funds allocated to the counties including Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG) and National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). Although the FACs operate independently on project selection, SEMCOG works closely with the FACs on the impact of projects on performance targets and meeting the investment needs of the metropolitan area.

SEMCOG has improved the visibility and availability of information on the FACs on their website. SEMCOG's website has a link to the FACs with point of contact information under their section on "Transportation" and information on the FACs role in the in the planning process in the descriptions on the RTP, TIP, public participation plan, and Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan.

Findings

RECOMMENDATION: SEMCOG should continue with their efforts to raise the awareness and provide information on the FACs on their website and in their planning documents.

SEMCOG staff is encouraged to develop additional means of raising awareness and accessibility to Federal Aid Committee structure, schedules and products. Possible actions include:

- Continue to define and document what the minimum requirements of FACs entail in MOUs between SEMCOG and the FACs (such as voting structure, minimum meeting frequency, availability of meeting minutes, public involvement procedures, etc.)
- Continue efforts on the dedicated "Federal-Aid Committee" page within the SEMCOG website. Include each FACs membership and contact information, by-laws, decision-making procedures, general meeting schedule and minutes of previous meetings, plus other key documents used by the given FAC.
- Continue to incorporate FAC meeting times and agendas into SEMCOG's online events calendar.
- Document how the FACs initiatives contribute to achieving the goals and performance measures for the region.
- Further incorporate FACs into the region's Public Participation Plan.

Regulatory Basis

The “Federal-Aid Committee” term and structure is unique to Southeast Michigan and is not found in Federal regulations. Public involvement is required as part of the planning process per 23 CFR 450.210. The FACs play an important role in meeting of state and regional targets related to performance-based planning regulations.

II. Online Education Opportunities

Current Status

SEMCOG staff has transitioned to extensive online content available to the community and their members. The SEMCOG staff have been instructors for a variety of training opportunities for many years, typically for in-person instruction. In the Spring of 2020, they quickly transitioned to more expansive online educational content on a variety of relevant topics, including transportation. Online content is stored on their website at “archive of on-demand webinars”. For example, between March 2020 and the end of September 2020, there were thirty-three online classes conducted, and subsequently stored on their website.

Findings

COMMENDATION: SEMCOG’s quick transition to providing online content and sustained efforts to provide relevant content to their members and the public is to be commended. They should continue this already impressive effort.

Regulatory Basis

Public involvement is required as part of the planning process per 23 CFR 450.210. Specific means of public engagement vary by MPO and are not prescribed in regulations.

III. Value-Added Efforts

Current Status

The metropolitan transportation planning process has several required products and processes (e.g., development of a TIP, public outreach process, development of a long-range plan, etc.). However, there is latitude for agencies to approach transportation planning from a variety of perspectives and incorporate a variety of planning factors. SEMCOG, WATS, SCCOTS, and their partner agencies have approached transportation planning in a manner which incorporates elements of performance-based planning and the development of a variety of studies and resources which expand many of the Federal planning factors.

Findings

COMMENDATION: The transportation planning partners of Southeast Michigan are to be commended for the variety of resources and initiatives which go beyond the Federal requirements.

These resources add value to the process and area available for the public and partner organizations in evaluating the transportation system. Examples include:

- Work on resiliency (SEMCOG)
- Trail rating (SCCOTS)
- Emphasis on equity (WATS)
- Performance measures work (SEMCOG and WATS)
- Collaboration with private sector partners on autonomous vehicles planning (SEMCOG)
- Modeling support for project development such as I-375 NEPA work (SEMCOG)
- Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan (SEMCOG)

Regulatory Basis

The scope of the planning process is described in 23 CFR 450.306 and includes the below 10 “planning factors” as well as a discussion on a “performance-based approach” to planning. Each MPO and State DOT places different emphasis on these planning factors, but all are expected to be addressed in some manner in the metropolitan transportation planning process. This is an indication of the breadth of issues related to transportation planning.

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism.

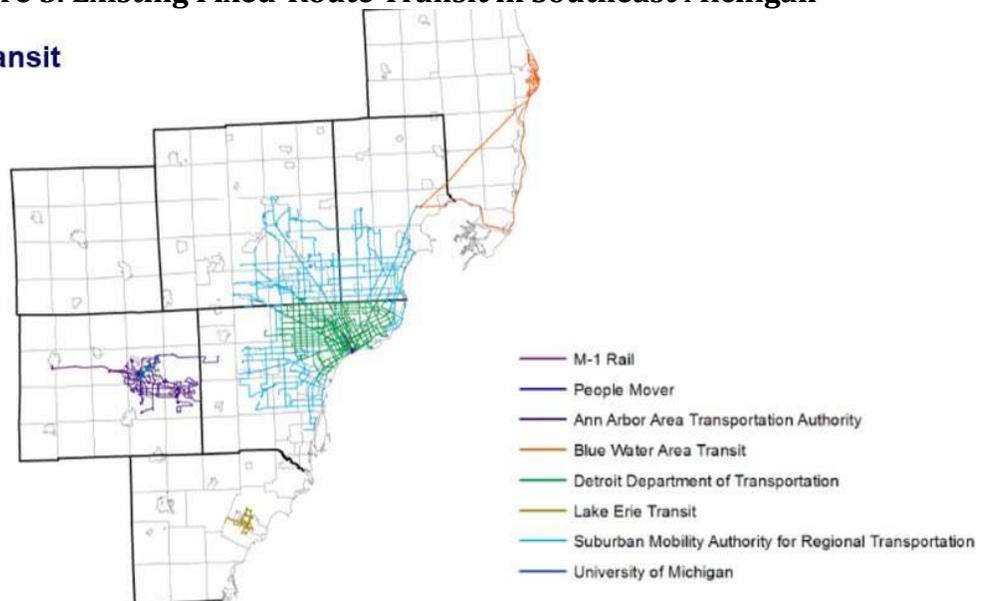
IV. Regional Transit Planning

Current Status

The partnership of SEMCOG, the Regional Transportation Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA), and the eight transit providers (six bus and two rail systems) continue to coordinate to provide transportation service in the metropolitan area in which residents and visitors rely upon each day. Figure 5 is a map of the fixed-route systems. As part of their responsibilities for transportation planning for the entire region, SEMCOG has a role in transit planning and related coordination for areas not covered by the RTA. The RTA has facilitated discussions with the transit providers which has allowed for collaboration and sharing how they are dealing with COVID-19. They have also shared the impact of COVID and steps they were taking to ensure a safe environment while using the transit system.

Figure 5. Existing Fixed-Route Transit in Southeast Michigan

Existing Fixed-Route Transit Southeast Michigan



Source: SEMCOG

SEMCOG and RTA share office space and this has allowed for close collaboration and assistance with oversight of the operations of RTA during leadership transition. SEMCOG provides assistance to regional transit providers and other partners through data, technical assistance, grant development, and education initiatives. SEMCOG collaborates with the transit providers to meet the performance-based planning requirements regarding the required agreements and establishing performance measures and targets. The transit providers have developed their transit asset management plans and are working to satisfy the required public transportation agency safety plan by the end of the year 2020, the updated FTA deadline.

In partnership with Southeast Michigan's transit providers, SEMCOG conducted a regional on-board transit survey of all the fixed-route transit systems in Southeast Michigan. Over 18,000 riders were surveyed, riding at various times during weekdays on the region's eight transit systems. The information collected provides valuable information on travel patterns and demographics of transit riders. This data is extremely important for regional transit planning and the transportation

investment decision-making process. For example, SEMCOG learned from the transit survey data that without regular bus service, over 66,000 riders indicate they would not be able to make the trips they need to on a daily basis throughout the region.

Since the last certification review, transit initiatives have included: improvements to the fare payment system, improvements to connections from the suburbs to downtown Detroit, the rebranding of service, and on-demand service connections to fixed-route bus service. These include the DART card, SMART's FAST Service, DDOT ConnectTen and AAATA's FlexRide.

Current Regional Planning Activities

- **Regional Master Transit Plan update**
 - No millage request to support additional funding for transit will advance in 2020.
 - The next election that is available for the RTA to request funding is November 2022 (note: SMART renewal is currently anticipated in August 2022).
 - 2016 RMTP is the most recently adopted master plan. It needs to be updated to:
 - Include updates made by the region's transit providers.
 - To present mobility concepts and solutions that include the most contemporary thinking on the topic.
 - To match the RTA's Regional Transit Vision.
 - Update anticipated summer 2021
- **Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan: OnHand**
 - Evaluate transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes throughout the RTA Region.
 - Assess existing transportation services to understand how well they match people's travel needs.
 - Develop strategies to improve transportation for the target population.
 - Develop planning and program management process that is consistent with federal Section 5310 funding guidelines.
- **Mobility Oriented Development Study**
 - Introduce "mobility-oriented development" as a framework for fostering sustainable community development around rapid transit corridors.
 - Provide guidance on ways that local governments can leverage improved regional transit to benefit and grow their communities.
 - Define the mobility connections that will make transit along these corridors convenient to potential customers well beyond the immediate station area.
 - Develop targeted action plans for the economic development and mobility enhancements that will best complement regional transit service.
- **Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail Technical Study**
 - RTA is leading this effort as part of the locally preferred alternative for the Michigan Avenue transit study
 - Conduct a risk-based cost assessment of the Regional Rail project as it was scoped in the 2016 RMTP
 - Include cost estimates for extending the proposed service west to Chelsea, and terminating the service at the Michigan Central Station in Corktown
 - Identifying risk mitigation strategies where applicable

- **Detroit to Ann Arbor (D2A2) Express Bus Pilot**
Began service in March 2020 right as COVID-19 international pandemic began. Service has been placed on hold.
- **On-Demand Booking App Pilot**
- **SMART Comprehensive Operations Analysis (Fixed Route)**
- **SMART Comprehensive Operations Analysis (Paratransit)**
- **City of Detroit Transportation Master Plan** (covers multiple modes of transportation)
- **AAATA Technology Pilots**

Findings

COMMENDATION: The working relationships and on-going, regular meetings among the RTA and the transit providers is a significant benefit for collaboration. While it began before COVID, the ongoing open lines of communication has been strengthened. This is a benefit for SEMCOG, RTA, the transit agencies and the general public.

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.322 sets forth requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a key product of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Among the requirements are that the MTP address at least a 20-year planning horizon and that it includes both long and short-range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated and multi-modal system.

V. TIP Information

Current Status

The SEMCOG TIP, covering state fiscal years 2020-2023, programs all Federally-assisted surface transportation projects throughout the region. The TIP meets the fiscal constraint requirements for FY20-23 in that all projects in the region do not exceed the Federal amounts available for each fiscal year. The TIP incorporates highway and transit performance measures and demonstrates that projects are prioritized to keep assets in a state of good repair. The TIP is also consistent with SEMCOG's adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

MDOT recently upgraded its STIP software platform, JobNet, to add efficiency to its STIP management process. Michigan MPOs, including SEMCOG, incorporate their TIP information and amendments into the software platform. The SEMCOG public website makes available the FY20-23 TIP as first approved. However, as SEMCOG and MDOT go through rounds of amendments, SEMCOG is unable to identify a current listing of programmed projects to interface issues with the new MDOT software, JobNet. Members of the public using the SEMCOG website are unable to access and identify an up to date listing of where Federal surface transportation dollars are programmed in their area. While the Federal team recognizes that the rollout of new software is not instantaneous or creates unforeseen issues, Michigan MPOs need to facilitate a current Federal surface transportation program of projects. This can either be done through a project listing on an MPO website or a MPO can link to a MDOT page making the information easily accessible for the public.

Findings

RECOMMENDATION: As use of the new STIP software evolves, partners should continue to work together to create a TIP listing report which meets the needs of the MPOs and applicable Federal requirements.

Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (j) set forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under 23 CFR 450.326, the TIP must meet the following requirements:

- Must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years.
- Surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations, are required to be included in the TIP.
- List project description, cost, funding source, and identification of the agency responsible for carrying out each project.
- Projects need to be consistent with the adopted MTP.
- Must be fiscally constrained.
- The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.

Appendix A: Certification Review Notification Letter



U.S. Department
of Transportation

July 17, 2020

Federal Highway Administration
315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Federal Transit Administration
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Mr. Donald Hubler, Chairperson
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
1001 Woodward Ave, Suite 1400
Detroit, MI 48226

Mr. Todd White, Director
Bureau of Transportation Planning (B340)
Michigan Department of Transportation
Lansing, MI 48909

Southeast Michigan Transportation Planning Certification Review

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to conduct certification reviews in transportation management areas (TMAs) every four years. Through this review process, we will highlight best practices and identify opportunities for improvements. The certification process will rely extensively on knowledge gained from our routine involvement in the planning process, as well as public input, and the exchange of information during meeting with planning partners. A final report is anticipated this coming Fall.

As a part of this review, we will be meeting with transportation planning staff of the Southeast Michigan region on August 26 and 27, 2020; these meetings will be conducted via virtual means. An opportunity for public comment on the planning process in the region will also be incorporated into the review.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Andy Pickard, FHWA, at andy.pickard@dot.gov or Ms. Susan Weber, FTA, at susan.weber@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

**RUSSELL L
JORGENSEN** Digitally signed by
RUSSELL L JORGENSEN
Date: 2020.07.21
11:21:52 -04'00'

Russell L. Jorgenson, P.E.
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Sincerely,

**KELLEY
BROOKINS** Digitally signed by
KELLEY BROOKINS
Date: 2020.07.15
07:31:41 -05'00'

Kelley Brookins
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

sender initials (ADMIN ONLY)

By e-mail

cc: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG
Tom Bruff, SEMCOG
Ben Stupka, bstupka@rtamichigan.org, RTA
Ryan Buck, WATS
David Struck, SCCOTS
Mr. Mikel Oglesby, Oglesbym@detroitmi.gov, DDOT
Robert Cramer, SMART
Matt Carpenter, mcarpenter@theride.org, AAATA
Garry Bullock, GBulluck@thepeoplemover.com, DTC
Greg Kellog, GKellogg@livgov.com, LETS – Livingston County
Mark Jagodzinski, mjag@letbus.com, LETS/LCETS – Lake Erie Transit
David McElroy, BWATC
Craig Newell, MDOT
Eric Mullen, MDOT
Anita Boughner, MDOT
Richard Bayus, MDOT
Andy Brush, MDOT
Andy Pickard, FHWA
Mark Lewis, FHWA
Mark Dionise, FHWA
Mike Ivey, FHWA
Russ Jorgenson, FHWA
Ted Burch, FHWA
Victor Austin, FTA
Mark Kane, FTA
Susan Weber, FTA

File Directory: O:\FHWA Records\TRAP Transportation Planning\TRAP 19 Metropolitan
Planning Organizations (MPO)\

File Name: SE MI cert notification_AP_JUL172020.docx

Appendix B: Public Meeting Notice and Comment Form

The notice below was posted on the SEMCOG website. It was available in English, Spanish, and Arabic.



Federal Highway Administration
315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Federal Transit Administration
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Public Notice

We want to hear from you!

Tell us your thoughts on the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan

as part of the Transportation Planning Federal Certification Review

- [عربي \(Arabic\)](#)
- [Español \(Spanish\)](#)

Your input is requested! An opportunity is available to comment on the transportation planning process in the Southeast Michigan region. This is part of a review that will assess compliance with Federal regulations pertaining to the transportation planning process conducted by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), the Michigan Department of Transportation, public transportation providers, and local and regional units of government in the area. We look forward to hearing from you!

Written comments will be accepted until September 25, 2020.

Two virtual meetings will be held on September 17 via Microsoft Teams:

- [11 a.m. - noon](#)
- [5-6 p.m.](#)

Address comments to:

Susan Weber
Federal Transit Administration, Region V
200 West Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606
e-mail: Susan.Weber@dot.gov

or

Andy Pickard
Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division
315 West Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933
e-mail: Andy.Pickard@dot.gov

Appendix C: Discussion with Planning Partners

A discussion between FTA, FHWA, and a variety of staff engaged in carrying out the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan was held on August 26 and 27, 2020 via a virtual meeting. The agenda and attendance are listed below.

Federal Review Team participants included:

Victor Austin, FTA Headquarters

Mark Kane, FTA Region 5

Andy Pickard, FHWA Michigan Division

Angelica Salgado, FTA Region 5

Andrew Sibold, FHWA Michigan Division

Susan Weber, FTA Region 5

Planning Certification Review for Southeast Michigan:

Agenda for Discussion with Planning Partners

Facilitator for each topic is indicated.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020

- 1:00pm – Kickoff / Review general structure of planning in SE Michigan (30 minutes) [Andy Pickard, FHWA]
- 1:30pm - Federal Aid Committees (45 minutes) [Victor Austin, FTA]
- (2:15pm – break)
- 2:30pm - Metropolitan Transportation Plan (45 minutes) [Susan Weber, FTA]
- (3:15pm – break)
- 3:30pm - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (1 hour) [Mark Kane, FTA]
- (4:30pm – end for the day)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020

- 1:00pm - WATS and SCCOTS focus (60 minutes) [Andy Pickard, FHWA]
- (2:00pm – break)
- 2:15pm – Transit focus (60 minutes) [Susan Weber, FTA]
- (3:15pm – break)
- 3:30pm – Clarifications and closing (60 minutes) [Victor Austin, FTA]
- (4:30pm – end for the day)

Attendance

Name		Agency	August	
Last	First		25 th	26 th
Pickard	Andy	FHWA-MI	X	X
Sibold	Andrew	FHWA-MI	X	X
Lewis	Mark	FHWA-MI	X	X
Weber	Susan	FTA	X	X
Austin	Victor	FTA	X	X
Kane	Mark	FTA	X	X
Salgado	Angelica	FTA	X	X
Stupka	Ben	Regional Transit Authority		X
Pressprich-Gryniewicz	Sarah	SMART		X
Donahoo	Deanna	DDOT		X
Taylor-Henderix	Mikki	DDOT		X
Fischer	Elias	DDOT		X
Yang	Forest	DDOT		
Metzinger	John	AAATA		X
Bulluck	Gary	DTC – People Mover		X
Perry	LaTrinda	not provided		X
Buck	Ryan	Washtenaw Area Transportation Study	X	X
Wallace	Lindsay	St. Clair County Transportation Study	X	X
Plumer	Sarah	Road Commission for Oakland County	X	X
Schell	Walter	Macomb County Department of Roads	X	X
Akinyemi	Dayo	Detroit Department of Public Works	X	
Brown	Chisara	Detroit Department of Public Works	X	
Mullen	Eric	MDOT Statewide Planning	X	X
Newell	Craig	MDOT Statewide Planning	X	X
Boughner	Anita	MDOT Statewide Planning	X	X
Bayus	Richard	MDOT Statewide Planning	X	X
White	Todd	MDOT Statewide Planning	X	X
Sharlow	Brad	MDOT	X	X
Beck	Katie	MDOT	X	X
Wittl	Donna	MDOT		X
Fainaru	Will	MDOT	X	X
Taylor	Roy	MDOT		X
Edwards	Julie	MDOT Metro Region	X	X
Schultz	Jim	MDOT Metro Region	X	X
Davis	Mike	MDOT University Region	X	X
Mallick	Sayeed	SEMCOG	X	X
Bourgeau	Alex	SEMCOG	X	X
Abramovich	Jenya	SEMCOG	X	X
Brudzinski	Steve	SEMCOG	X	X
Brydon	Trevor	SEMCOG	X	X
Pawlik	Brian	SEMCOG	X	X
Chen	Jilan	SEMCOG	X	X
Hug	Ed	SEMCOG	X	X
Ignasiak	Christina	SEMCOG	X	X
Jordan	Misty	SEMCOG	X	X
Karll	Kelly	SEMCOG	X	X
Vettraino	Kevin	SEMCOG	X	X
Lomako	Kathleen	SEMCOG	X	X
Klove	Chris	SEMCOG	X	X
Masud	Saima	SEMCOG	X	X
Williams	Chris	SEMCOG	X	X
Klifman	Tyler	SEMCOG	X	X

Name		Agency	August	
Last	First		25 th	26 th
Feng	Liyang	SEMCOG	X	X
Bruff	Tom	SEMCOG	X	X
Tracy	Kevin	SEMCOG	X	X
O'leary	Amy	SEMCOG	X	X

Appendix D: Status of 2016 Certification Findings

Below is the status of findings from the 2016 certification review, as provided by SEMCOG staff.

Corrective Actions:

No corrective actions were cited.

Recommendations:

- SEMCOG should improve the transparency, accessibility, and consistency of information regarding the Federal Aid Committees role in transportation planning in Southeast Michigan.

SEMCOG Response

Status: **Completed**

SEMCOG has enhanced several media and tools to make clearer the understanding, roles and responsibilities of the Federal Aid Committees (FACs), including:

- SEMCOG's [Public Participation Plan \(December 2015\)](#), pp. 5 and 24.
- SEMCOG website, <https://www.semco.org/rtp>,
 - FAC Contact List (Chair, Websites and future meeting dates), <https://www.semco.org/rtp#4052470-federal-aid-committee-information>
- SEMCOG [Regional Transportation Plan](#) and [Transportation Improvement Program](#) reports

SEMCOG also plans to update its [Citizens' Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan \(May 2003\)](#) which outlines the broad picture of regional transportation planning in Southeast Michigan, describes the activities of SEMCOG and its partners (including the FACs), and shows concerned citizens how they can participate in the transportation-planning process. This will be followed up with a transportation funding assistance workshop (SEMCOG University) in 2019 that will include the roles of the FACs in the planning process.

- The SEMCOG General Assembly should reaffirm the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) prior to fall 2017.

SEMCOG Response

Status: **Completed**

- [Signed memorandum, September 2017 SEMCOG Executive Committee \(approved resolution\)](#) reaffirming the 2040 MTP (attached, pp. 3-8)

Recommendations (continued):

- SEMCOG and MDOT need to implement the policies and practices of the adopted GPA Guidance Document. This will include consistent application of the GPA categories, programming policies, and reporting mechanisms to ensure GPA projects meet Federal regulations and planning practices.

SEMCOG Response

Status: Completed/Ongoing

- SEMCOG continues to coordinate (with MDOT and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Association) and implement the Michigan Statewide General Program Account (GPA) Guidance document (dated January 16 2017, modified June 7, 2018).
 - Much of the implementation of the GPA guidance has been incorporated into the JobNet TIP project management system.
- SEMCOG should have a documented Consultation Process that is separate and discrete from the Public Participation planning process and Environmental Mitigation. The process should be developed in cooperation with the Consultation agencies to ensure timely review and response to request by all parties. SEMCOG should consider participating in statewide discussions to develop a Consultation Plan template for use by MPO's across the state.

SEMCOG Response

Status: Completed/Ongoing

- SEMCOG has documented its Agency Consultation Engagement Process (attached)
- As part of its RTP and TIP development
 - SEMCOG conducted an Agency Consultation Webinar on October, 25, 2017 as part of its Plan development process. (attached)
 - SEMCOG issued outreach letters (attached)
 - Consultation contacts/correspondences are managed in SEMCOG's association management system (Semconnect).
 - SEMCOG coordinated contacts with MDOT (through MTPA) and Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS).

- SEMCOG also plans to update its Public Participation Plan and Citizens' Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan to include details on the consultation process.

Recommendations (continued):

- The RTA, in cooperation with SEMCOG, should continue to monitor and update the Action Plan that SEMCOG developed in 2013. The RTA should also work with the transit operators and SEMCOG to update the Regional Transit Authority Master Agreement with Public Transportation Providers to reflect the current state of affairs in the Region. In many ways this Agreement serves as an Action Plan for planning, service coordination and funding prioritization amongst the transit providers. The relevancy of the Agreement is called into question by the review team as it identifies action items that are scheduled to take place in the past. An addendum may be the best vehicle to preserve the intent and progress realized from the original Agreement while incorporating future activities.

SEMCOG Response

Status: **Completed**

Since the last Planning certification the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) has grown significantly as an agency and has meet all but one of the overall planning and policy actions that were presented in the last review (i.e., submission of an Asset Management Plan is the only outstanding item, see Action Plan items). Additionally, the RTA is a fully functioning body that has incorporated both Federal and State, legislatively mandated (PA 387 of 2012), planning procedures over the course of the past 3 fiscal years. The agency has learned from the experiences each year and continues to strive to improve the manner in which it coordinates with its planning partners.

Finally, in 2018, the RTA was assessed during its triennial review process conducted by Lisa Joiner (FTA). The RTA provided responses to the FTA in early January 2019 and are awaiting further direction.

Appendix E: Summary of Written Comments Received

Attendees at the September 17 public involvement meetings are listed below. These were conducted online at 11am and 5pm that day.

11:00am

Andrew Sibold (FHWA)
Victor Austin (FTA)
Andy Pickard (FHWA)
Todd Scott (Detroit Greenways Coalition)
Kevin Vettraino (SEMCOG)
Susan Weber (FTA)
Don Hubler (SEMCOG Chair)
Douglas Schultz (Roan professional services)

5:00pm

Andrew Sibold (FHWA)
Victor Austin (FTA)
Andy Pickard (FHWA)
Susan Weber (FTA)
Richard Bayus (MDOT)
Tom Bruff (SEMCOG)
Emily Lake (WATS)
Trevor Brydon (SEMCOG)
Christina Ignasiak (SEMCOG)
Suzann Flowers (WATS)

Written comments received are listed below.

Comment 1 (received via email on 9/24/20)

How do you expect people to comment in the planning process when there is not a link to or any information about the process itself?

It seems your outreach for comment is ineffective.

Monica Trojniak

Comment 2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

My name is Don Hubler, Chair of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

I currently serve as an elected school board member for both local and county school districts and an educational representative on SEMCOG's Board.

The fact that a member from our educational bloc has been elected Chair of SEMCOG demonstrates our region's inclusiveness in diverse perspectives in membership and leadership.

I first became involved with SEMCOG over 20 years ago as a representative from a community where I served as the director of public works and water department superintendent. The reason why I and many other locally elected community members continue our involvement in SEMCOG is the value we find in the support of regional development and planning.

This is demonstrated in the fact that the Transportation Coordinating Council (TCC) has earned the trust of our region by consistently providing a forum for public comment and concerns, coordinating with our planning partners and a history of balancing approval of projects that meet our region's goals.

I'm confident that you have seen the professionalism of our staff who continue to conduct research and provide data that supports broadly considered decisions. The Chair of the Transportation Coordinating Council, Pat Williams and Vice-Chairperson, Steve Wietecha are representative of the quality of leadership and willingness to serve from our region's membership. It takes years of demonstrating effective results to build the trust of communities and to continue to draw the highly qualified community members to serve on the Council and bring a high level of professionalism to the operational process.

It's critical to listen to all stakeholders to balance the development of our region's resources, it's even more important that you maintain the trust of those communities to have continued active and diverse involvement in that process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make comment.

Donald Hubler
Chair, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Comment 3



DetroitGreenways.org – P.O. Box 32013, Detroit, Michigan 48232
info@detroitgreenways.org, (313) 649-7249

September 25, 2020

To: Andy Pickard (Andy.Pickard@dot.gov)
Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division
315 West Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: Our comments on the transportation planning process in the Southeast Michigan region

The SEMCOG/TAP program operates very well based on our experience. The process is very transparent, is regularly improved, and the staff take a strong interest in making sure these projects are successful.

That said, the major concern with the non-motorized planning process is disconnected from the majority of SEMCOG's transportation funding discussion. While non-motorized facilities can be included in most road projects and funded from the same funding sources (e.g. STPU, CMAQ), they're often pushed towards only using TAP.

While SEMCOG has put much effort into their bicycle and pedestrian planning, it remains disconnected from the primary road funding decision making. Funding requests are not scored or prioritized based on how they address or implement the non-motorized plans. Road designs get funded that are not safe for non-motorized users. The public cannot review projects in the TIP for how well they address non-motorized safety -- if they can read the cryptic TIP at all.

It seems SEMCOG delegates non-motorized safety decisions to their members and FACs. For instance, the Oakland County FAC continues to ignore non-motorized safety. 4R and RRR projects award zero points for improving non-motorized safety, e.g. road diets, bike lanes. STP projects get only 2 points out of 100. In fact, these funds could be used to add non-motorized facilities on non-Federal Aid roads, but the applications state they are not eligible.

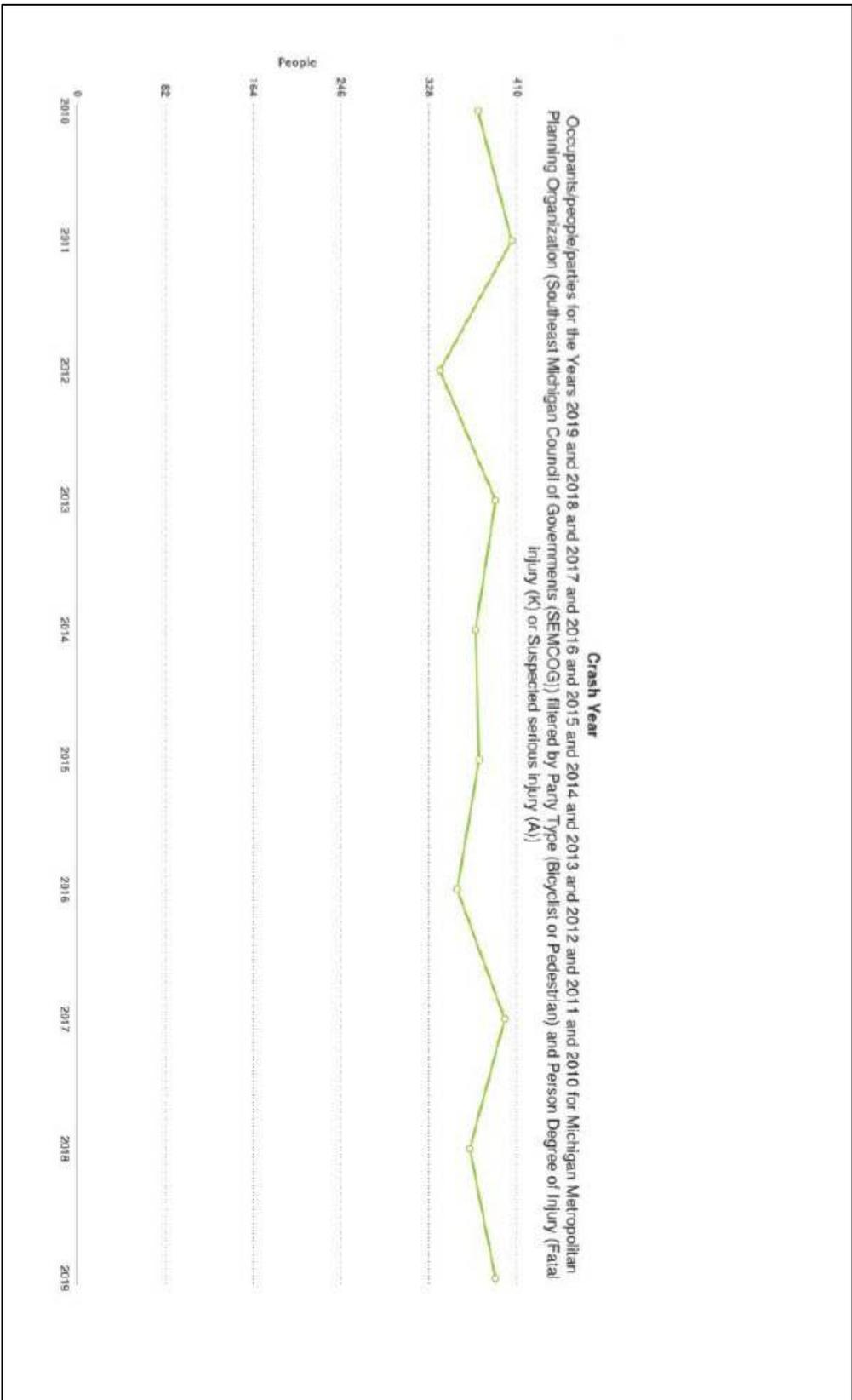
There's been no reduction in non-motorized fatalities or serious impairments within the SEMCOG region for the past 10 years. Clearly the status quo is not working (see attached graph). There needs to be more accountability for those who continue to fund unsafe road designs. While the SEMCOG Walk Bike Drive Safe campaign attempts to put the safety burden fully on the users, it's SEMCOG that must accept responsibility for funding infrastructure that is safe for all users.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Scott".

Todd Scott, Executive Director

Our **Vision** is a strong, healthy, vibrant City of Detroit and surrounding region where a seamless network of greenways, green spaces, blue ways and complete streets is an integral part of people's active lifestyle including day-to-day transportation and recreation.





U.S. Department
of Transportation

October 28, 2020

Federal Highway Administration
315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Federal Transit Administration
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Mr. Donald Hubler, Chairperson
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
1001 Woodward Ave, Suite 1400
Detroit, MI 48226

Mr. Todd White, Director
Bureau of Transportation Planning (B340)
Michigan Department of Transportation
Lansing, MI 48909

Southeast Michigan Federal Transportation Planning Certification Review: Final Report

Dear Mr. Hubler and Mr. White:

The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration have completed a review of the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan. The objective was to determine if the planning process in the region meets the Federal metropolitan transportation planning requirements of 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303. We found the process does meet the Federal planning regulations and therefore jointly certify the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan.

The details of the review and findings are contained in the enclosed report. We look forward to continuing to work with the transportation partners in the region to improve the planning process in Southeast Michigan.

If you have any questions, please contact Andy Pickard by email at andy.pickard@dot.gov or (517) 702-1827 or Susan Weber at susan.weber@dot.gov or (312) 353-3888.

Sincerely,

**RUSSELL L
JORGENSEN**

Digitally signed by
RUSSELL L
JORGENSEN
Date: 2020.10.26
14:50:48 -04'00'

Russell L. Jorgenson, P.E.
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Sincerely,

**KELLEY
BROOKINS**

Digitally signed by
KELLEY BROOKINS
Date: 2020.10.22
14:29:17 -05'00'

Kelley Brookins
Regional Administrator, Region V
Federal Transit Administration

Sender initials: GEF

Enclosures:

2020 SE Michigan cert review report

By e-mail

cc: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG
Tom Bruff, SEMCOG
Christina Ignasiak, SEMCOG
Ben Stupka, bstupka@rtamichigan.org, RTA
Ryan Buck, WATS
David Struck, SCCOTS
Lindsay Wallace, SCCOTS
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Robert Cramer, SMART
Matt Carpenter, mcarpenter@theride.org, AAATA
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David McElroy, BWATC
Craig Newell, MDOT
Eric Mullen, MDOT
Anita Boughner, MDOT
Richard Bayus, MDOT
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Andy Pickard, FHWA
Mark Lewis, FHWA
Mark Dionise, FHWA
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Ted Burch, FHWA
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Victor Austin, FTA
Mark Kane, FTA
Susan Weber, FTA

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