

# Southeast Michigan Designated Management Agency Program Annual Report: FY 2022-2023



## **SEMCOG** . . . *Developing Regional Solutions*

### **Mission**

SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, is the only organization in Southeast Michigan that brings together all governments to develop regional solutions for both now and in the future. SEMCOG:

- Promotes informed decision making to improve Southeast Michigan and its local governments by providing insightful data analysis and direct assistance to member governments;
- Promotes the efficient use of tax dollars for infrastructure investment and governmental effectiveness;
- Develops regional solutions that go beyond the boundaries of individual local governments; and
- Advocates on behalf of Southeast Michigan in Lansing and Washington

# Southeast Michigan Designated Management Agency Program Annual Report

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## Abstract

As the designated water quality management agency (DMA) for Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG has been actively involved with water resource planning since the 1970s. To support DMA responsibilities and the Clean Water Act, SEMCOG developed the *Water Resource Plan for Southeast Michigan* in 2018. The plan builds upon two prior plans – the 1978 and 1999 Water Quality Management Plans for Southeast Michigan. In 2023, SEMCOG published the Water Infrastructure Planning Guide, the most recent addendum to the 2018 Water Resources Plan. SEMCOG continues to advocate for water resource and water infrastructure initiatives, implement regional policies and actions, and collaborate with stakeholders across the region to improve water quality. This report details SEMCOG's water resource and infrastructure planning activities over the past fiscal year and highlights the importance of the DMA partnership in creating resilient water resource systems.

Preparation of this document is financed in part through grants from and in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and other federal and state funding agencies as well as local membership contributions and designated management agency fees.

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## Acknowledgements

We thank our designated management agency partners for supporting water resource planning activities across the region:

- Ann Arbor
- Bedford
- Brighton
- Chelsea
- Detroit
- Dexter
- Downriver Utility Wastewater Authority
- Frenchtown Charter Township
- Great Lakes Water Authority
- Grosse Ile Township
- Grosse Pointe Farms
- Hartland
- Howell
- Ira Township
- Livingston County
- Lyon Township
- Macomb County
- Manchester
- Marine City
- Marysville
- MHOG Sewer and Water Authority
- Milan
- Milford
- Monroe County
- Monroe Metro Sewer Authority
- Mount Clemens
- New Baltimore
- Oakland County
- Port Huron
- Richmond
- Romeo
- Saline
- South Huron Valley Utility Authority
- South Lyon
- St. Clair
- St. Clair - Algonac
- St. Clair County
- St. Clair Sewer & Water Authority
- Sterling Heights
- Trenton
- Village of Holly
- Warren
- Washtenaw County
- Waterford Township
- Wayne County
- Wixom
- Wyandotte
- Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority

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## Executive Summary

### Background

As the designated water quality management agency for Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG has been actively involved with water resource planning since the 1970s. The federal Clean Water Act required the completion of the *Water Quality Management Plan for Southeast Michigan* in 1978 and established the Designated Management Agency (DMA) program. The DMA program continues to support regional water resource planning activities and is partially funded through our local agency partners. A DMA is an agency or community with responsibilities related to the goal of achieving clean water in Southeast Michigan.

The 2018 *Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan* builds upon the two prior plans – the 1978 and 1999 versions of the *Water Quality Management Plan for Southeast Michigan*. The 2018 plan builds on regional initiatives and focuses on integrated water resource management, including advancing the blue economy, natural resource protection and enhancement, and water infrastructure systems. It also includes a recommended action to: Evaluate and review the structure of SEMCOG's Designated Management Agency program that supports regional water planning efforts.

While the historical DMA program focused primarily on wastewater infrastructure and services, this program was updated in 2019 to reflect SEMCOG's integrated water resource planning activities more broadly across drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater.

Since adoption of the updated water resource plan five years ago, SEMCOG has worked to implement the plan through a series of projects and regional initiatives. By collaborating closely with local partners and stakeholders, SEMCOG has established the Water Infrastructure Task Force and developed the *Water Infrastructure Planning Guide*, an addendum to the 2018 water resources plan. These initiatives, along with the annual One Water campaign, aim to enhance water quality, affordability, education, and funding throughout Southeast Michigan.

This report details these initiatives and future priorities recognizing the importance of the DMA partnership in creating resilient water resource systems.

### How does the DMA program work?

Under the DMA program, SEMCOG collects a fee/financial contribution from DMAs to support regional water resource management planning activities. These activities are part of SEMCOG's annual Work Program and Budget, which is approved by SEMCOG's Executive Committee and General Assembly.

### How are the DMA fees calculated?

The methodology for the new fee allocation is based on the continued annual budget of \$290,000 that was established in the 1980s. The fee includes an equal distribution (one-third each) of the annual budget across wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater – reflective of SEMCOG's work program. Service area for wastewater and drinking water is defined as the estimated area within each county that has publicly available sanitary sewer or drinking water. Stormwater service area is derived from the 2020 Census-defined urbanized area. Fees for major wastewater treatment plants and Type I water treatment plants are based on permit information, including average daily flow (WWTPs) and

design capacity (WTPs) from the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE).

## DMA program activities and benefits

The DMA program helps support SEMCOG's water resource and environmental work program activities. It also leverages SEMCOG staff capacity for grant applications and match for federal and state grant funds. Additionally, it facilitates outside stakeholder participation opportunities for SEMCOG staff. Participation in the program helps direct SEMCOG's work and supports each county's capacity and work to meet its own permit requirements and obligations. Activities that the DMA program supports are also directed towards supporting member compliance activities related to stormwater, drinking water, and wastewater requirements:

- Facilitating regional water resource planning across partners and jurisdictions
- Developing the regional One Water public education campaign
- Updating the *Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan*
- Developing the [Water Infrastructure Planning Guide](#)
- Participating in various stakeholder groups locally or statewide addressing water resource topics
- Reviewing and commenting on proposed legislation at the state and federal levels; coordinating with partner agencies on common approaches and feedback
- Participating in regional watershed management planning groups
- Coordinating stormwater management and technical assistance services to local agencies, including road agencies, and the challenges associated with stormwater permit requirements
- Facilitating the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water work group meetings
- Developing and contracting for stormwater training activities, such as Illicit Discharge Elimination and Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping
- Developing and promoting water-related educational materials, videos, social media messages, and other related topics
- Developing framework for regional infrastructure coordination activities that align with the Michigan Infrastructure Council coordination effort
- Facilitating the Huron-to-Erie Drinking Water Monitoring Network and seeking opportunities to increase drinking water collaboration opportunities
- Participating in Great Lakes Water Authority activities, including workgroups and committees

This report provides further details and background on fiscal year 2022-2023 water resource planning activities.

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## Watershed-Related Committees and Activities

SEMCOG has participated in multiple meetings with local governments, State of Michigan and federal agencies, academic institutions, not-for profit organizations, foundations, and other stakeholder groups to assist in Watershed planning. The following list details partners SEMCOG has worked with over the year, or attended meetings being held by these partners:

- Friends of the St. Clair River
- Friends of the Rouge
- Clinton River Watershed Council
- Huron River Watershed Council
- Friends of the Detroit River
- Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA)
- Alliance of Rouge Communities
- Alliance of Downriver Watersheds
- Great Lakes Commission
- University of Michigan
- Michigan State University Extension
- Lake St. Clair CISMA
- Oakland County CISMA
- Macomb County
- Oakland County
- Washtenaw County
- Livingston County
- Wayne County
- St. Clair County
- Monroe County
- Land Information Access Association (LIAA)
- Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
- Michigan SEA Grant
- Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
- Downriver Community Conference (DCC)
- Michigan Association of Planning (MAP)

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## Water Quality-Related Assistance and Services to Local Governments

Over the last fiscal year, SEMCOG has been actively involved in providing water-quality and infrastructure-related assistance to local governments in Southeast Michigan. Staff presented climate resiliency and infrastructure coordination work at conferences and seminars throughout the fiscal year. Additionally, SEMCOG actively participated in green stormwater infrastructure panels, showcasing commitment to improving water quality and sustainability in the region.

### Green Infrastructure and Coastal Resiliency

In 2022, SEMCOG partnered with the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP) to secure a Michigan Coastal Management Grant. Their joint effort focused on conducting Green Infrastructure Assessments for Coastal Resilience in Southeast Michigan. The goal of this project was to build coastal resilience in Southeast Michigan and help to preserve coastlines and mitigate the impact of flooding on coastal communities. Through this grant, the project team identified high-priority, publicly owned properties where green infrastructure implementation would be feasible.

SEMCOG and the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP) received a Michigan Coastal Management Grant to assess, plan, and enhance coastal resilience in Southeast Michigan. The project team collaborated with more than 50 local agencies to identify high-priority public properties and created 48 concept plans for potential green infrastructure projects, with 34 for upland restoration in the coastal zone and 14 for shoreline restoration. This initiative presents over \$20 million in investment opportunities, restores two miles of shoreline, and reduces annual stormwater runoff by 1.6 million gallons. The Site Analysis Approach from the [CWP Urban Stormwater Retrofit Practices Manual](#) was employed to evaluate sites for green infrastructure implementation, with additional data collected using ArcGIS Field Maps-equipped tablets. Explore SEMCOG's [Green Infrastructure Assessments for Coastal Resilience Storymap](#) for more information and to view concept plans.

Throughout the 2023 fiscal year, SEMCOG provided evidence-based recommendations to enhance coastal resilience through the [Green Infrastructure Assessments for Coastal Resilience report](#). The report summarized these findings along with the [concept plans](#), underlining the importance of integrating green infrastructure into coastal resilience planning. These concept plans will be eligible for future funding opportunities. After the concept plans were developed, SEMCOG reached out to the local communities with concept plans to talk about next steps for the projects, identify funding opportunities, and answer questions. SEMCOG presented this project at both the Center for Watershed Protection National Conference and the Ohio Stormwater Conference.

## One Water Campaign

SEMCOG, in partnership with Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), launched the One Water Campaign for Southeast Michigan in 2019. The goal of this campaign is to attain greater awareness and mutual shared responsibility for water resources and to create public support for investments in water resources and infrastructure asset management.



Keep it fresh. Keep it flowing.

The One Water campaign is coordinated with Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week, a decades-old water quality partnership between SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water, and the State of Michigan. To broaden the reach of the One Water campaign and connect regional and statewide efforts, SEMCOG worked collaboratively with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) on the development of key messages for Great Lakes and Fresh Water week 2023. In these development meetings, SEMCOG supported the State of Michigan's proposed theme of "Make a Splash" for this year. SEMCOG worked with the State of Michigan's team throughout the spring of 2023 to develop messaging for the week and coordinate various efforts.

In 2023, the One Water campaign emphasized the critical issues of water workforce and water affordability. Participants from SEMCOG's Water Infrastructure Task Force stressed the importance of these topics and helped to guide messaging for the 2023 campaign. The shortage of skilled water industry personnel is one of the most significant challenges facing the water industry. The water industry is expected to lose approximately 30% of its workforce by the end of this decade. Southeast Michigan's water infrastructure providers will encounter increasing challenges in recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce to manage and maintain water infrastructure systems. Changing precipitation patterns, coupled with aging infrastructure, have driven up the costs of water services. Many residents in the region are facing financial constraints, making it challenging for them to afford essential water services. As a result, ensuring equitable access to clean and safe water for all residents has become a pressing social and economic concern. The campaign sought to raise awareness about this issue, promote affordability resources, and prevent water disconnections for vulnerable populations. Two new videos were developed for the 2023 campaign, promoting careers in water by highlighting members of the water workforce across the region. SEMCOG conducted interviews with members of the water workforce from diverse facilities, including the Marysville Wastewater Treatment Plant, Farmington Hills Public Works, and Milford Public Works.

- [Water Workforce – Helping the Community](#)
- [Water Workforce – Endless Possibilities](#)

On June 5, 2023, SEMCOG staff, in partnership with EGLE and GLWA, held a [webinar](#) titled "Water: Connected for Life." This webinar kicked off Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week and the start of the One Water campaign. In addition, the significant changing of Southeast Michigan's of water workforce concept was further amplified in an [article titled "Building the Future: Water Infrastructure Careers"](#) by SEMCOG planner Grant Brooks on June 2, 2023. One Water messages and content were broadcast on various media sources throughout Southeast Michigan. The blog has received 43 views to date.

The 2023 campaign was successful, having a high reaching engagement impact across the region. Videos were also promoted on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Television advertisements were additionally used to advertise the One Water videos on local TV stations FOX 2, WDIV 4, WDIV 4.3

METV, TV20, and CW50. These videos featured representatives and leaders from Southeast Michigan water service providers and organizations. SEMCOG shared [social graphics](#) on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram throughout the Great Lakes and Fresh Water week. Graphics were created for use on social media. These were designed to be engaging and informative. They were shared with SEMCOG members and One Water partners for use in their social media channels and promoted with paid posts.

More than 90 orders were placed from communities throughout Southeast Michigan. Tip cards contain important facts regarding fats, oils, and greases; flushable wipes; and the importance of water workforce participation. Cards were paired with *One Water* giveaway items to both educate residents as well as give them some of the tools necessary to engage in stewardship actions.

In August, 2023, SEMCOG published the [2023 Implementation Report: One Water Public Education Campaign](#). This report emphasizes two critical issues in Southeast Michigan: the looming water workforce shortage and the increasing challenge of water affordability. The impending workforce reduction poses a significant threat to the region's water infrastructure, while rising water costs create financial difficulties for residents. This report underscores the need for immediate action to address these challenges and secure a sustainable future for the region. Preparation of this document is financed in part through grants from and in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration; and other federal and state funding agencies as well as local membership contributions and designated management agency fees.

To view One Water materials and find other helpful information on wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water, visit [mionewater.com](http://mionewater.com). This website contains educational videos, social media posts, tip cards, an interesting blog series on all three topics, and more.

## Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water

The [Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water](#) group is comprised of SEMCOG members, including representatives from local communities and counties, in addition to representatives from watershed councils, not-for-profit agencies, the private sector, and water resource professionals. The purpose of this group is to facilitate information sharing to coordinate public education, and to leverage resources on water quality, stormwater management, and green infrastructure implementation. The [Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water Annual Report](#) (2022-2023) was produced to summarize SEMCOG public education activities.

The Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water meeting was held in FY 2022 on December 1, 2022. At this meeting, the partners group discussed the One Water Campaign, the Water Infrastructure Task Force, Coastal Resilience projects, SEMCOG's new GREEN Initiative, and regional partnership updates.

## Illicit Discharge and Elimination Program (IDEP)

SEMCOG, in partnership with ECT Consulting, held two in-person Illicit Discharge Elimination Program Trainings in 2022. Each training was identical, however, offered twice to accommodate schedules. These trainings included [IDEP Alert Observer Training](#), [IDEP Investigator Training](#), and [Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping Training](#). IDEP Alert Observer and Investigator training sessions were offered both on October 18 and November 10 and had over 200 attendees in total. The Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping training session was held on October 19, 2022, and had a total of 95 attendees. These trainings were developed to help support MS4 Phase II Stormwater

permit compliance for SEMCOG members and local communities. These trainings help to educate public works staff on how to identify potential pollutants while out in the field, and how to properly report and treat these pollutants. SEMCOG also provides training certificates to participants.

## Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



The ability to leverage outside funding for the region is driven by our ongoing water resources planning work, supported through the DMA program.

SEMCOG partnered with the EPA to establish a green infrastructure subaward program, funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The program's primary goal is to provide funding to counties, cities, villages, townships, intermediate school districts, and community colleges for constructing green infrastructure techniques that yield environmental benefits, with a primary focus on reducing stormwater runoff volume. The SEMCOG Green Stormwater Infrastructure Program plays a vital role in implementing small-scale green infrastructure techniques, contributing to both regional and local stormwater management goals. Additionally, it aims to build capacity within several disadvantaged communities at the local level.

To date, SEMCOG has allocated GLRI funds to 15 local agencies for green stormwater infrastructure projects. These initiatives are spread across parks, transportation corridors, waterways, neighborhoods, and government facilities, aiming to reduce over 12 million gallons of runoff annually. Recipients include:

- Clinton Township
- Independence Township
- City of Madison Heights
- City of Rochester Hills
- Pittsfield Township
- City of Center Line
- Clinton Township (Second project)
- City of Dearborn
- City of Grosse Pointe Park
- Huron River Watershed Council (with Walled Lake and Wixom)

- City of Northville
- Oakland County Water Resources Commission
- City of River Rouge
- City of Southfield
- City of Trenton

SEMCOG took proactive steps to support communities that had applied for GLRI grants, helping coordinate proposed green infrastructure projects. Staff provided guidance in selecting suitable sites and calculating the estimated annual runoff for retrofit purposes. Additionally, SEMCOG ensured effective collaboration with the EPA to align GLRI projects and proposed site locations.

## Environmental Exchange



Environmental Exchange is a monthly newsletter highlighting environmental news, grants, and best practices for SEMCOG members to learn about and stay up to date. The newsletter has 411 subscribers, to date. The following issues of Environmental Exchange were published from Fiscal Year 2022-23.

- [July 2022](#)
- [August 2022](#)
- [September 2022](#)
- [October 2022](#)
- [November 2022](#)
- [January 2023](#)
- [February 2023](#)
- [March 2023](#)
- [April 2023](#)
- [May 2023](#)
- [June 2023](#)

## SEMCOG Blogs

SEMCOG publishes blogs highlighting regional environmental successes. The following blogs were published during FY 2022-2023.

- [2022 Regional Showcase project merges environmental, fiscal sustainability](#)
- [SEMCOG launches GREEN Task Force, seeks your input](#)
- [Top 5 Lessons Learned at the Southeast Michigan Regional Trails Summit](#)
- [Materials Management Planning: A Revised Approach to Solid Waste and Recycling Management](#)
- [World Wetlands Day](#)
- [Competitive DNR Grants to Fund Improvements at 13 Southeast Michigan Parks](#)
- [Growing Together – Southeast Michigan Commits to a GREEN Future](#)
- [Building the Future: Water Infrastructure Careers](#)
- [Touring Recreation and Conservation Assets in Monroe and Downriver](#)

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## Analysis of Legislative and Regulatory Proposals

SEMCOG participates in state workgroups on various environmental regulatory proposals (rules, policies, etc.) in addition to regularly reviewing draft environmental legislation. Examples of SEMCOG's legislative and regulatory support activities include:

- Support and collaboration regarding federal funding and legislative priorities;
- Comments on federal funding legislative priorities, including the Statewide Septic Code, the Clean Water SRF Program, Stormwater Utility legislation and participated in discussions surrounding the water affordability/water assistance legislation;
- Work on water asset management topics and providing input on various infrastructure council initiatives;
- Convening county partners to review stormwater management criteria and application of future precipitation estimates;
- Convening partners and providing comments to EGLE on the draft Water Resource Division Climate Change Plan
- Partnership in the Coalition for a Strong and Prosperous Michigan with numerous other agencies recommending funding priorities for statewide ARPA funds;
- Participation in NOAA's climate equity roundtables, which resulted in NOAA selecting SEMCOG as a partner to implement the new [U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#). This 3-year partnership brings NOAA technical expertise and resources to plan for changing precipitation across our region; and
- Continues to participate in Southeast Michigan's Aging Infrastructure Committee.

Coordinating legislative and policy reviews involves participating in numerous committees and associations that help establish water resource policies. These groups are identified here:

- **Water Asset Management Council**
- **Michigan Section, American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA)**
  - Asset Management Committee

- Annual Conference Planning Committee
  - **Michigan Water and Environment Association (MWEA)**
    - Asset Management Committee
    - WEF Stormwater Committee
    - Government Affairs Committee
  - **Great Lakes Water Authority**
    - Public Education and Outreach Work Group
    - Water Quality Monitoring Work Group
    - Watershed Hub Work Group
  - **Michigan State University Extension/ Michigan Sea Grant**
    - Water School Training Workshops
    - Sea Grant Advisory Committee
  - **Detroit Reforestation Group**
  - **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Coastal Resilience Advisory Team**
  - **GLCA Coastal Wetland Conservation Framework Advisory Team**
  - **Southeast Michigan Watershed Report Card Advisory Team**
  - **Great Lakes Integrated Science Assessment**
  - **Oakland County Trail, Water, and Alliance Work Group**
  - **State of Michigan Council on Climate Solutions Workgroups**
- 

## Regional Water Resources and Environmental Planning

The *Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan* guides much of SEMCOG's work and is supported and influenced by SEMCOG's members. Recent activities and initiatives that reflect priorities in the plan include the Water Infrastructure Task Force and *Planning Guide*, the One Water public education program, the annual update of the Flood Risk Tool, Infrastructure Coordination efforts, climate resiliency work to develop a Regional Resiliency Framework, and preparation for a Regional Resilience Improvement Plan. Additionally, environmental and water resource priorities are integrated into other SEMCOG regional plans and work program activities, including the Regional Transportation Plan, the Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan, and the Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan.

### Water Infrastructure Planning Guide

SEMCOG continued its Water Infrastructure Task Force into the fiscal year. Comprising a diverse group of experts, policymakers, and community leaders, the task force's primary mission was to collaboratively address the region's water challenges and develop actionable strategies for enhancing water infrastructure resilience. During the fiscal year, SEMCOG achieved significant milestones in its publication of Southeast Michigan's [Water Infrastructure Planning Guide](#) and [Water Infrastructure Policies and Actions](#), developed with guidance from the Task Force. SEMCOG successfully published the [Water Infrastructure Planning Guide](#) on March 23, 2023, a comprehensive document aimed at providing municipalities and communities with essential guidance for strategic water infrastructure development. The Policies and Actions articulate the timely need for action and specific opportunities to address. Both of these documents act as companion documents to the [Water Resources Plan](#), focusing on infrastructure. This guide offers valuable information, including best practices, innovative technologies, and funding opportunities to improve water infrastructure resiliency and efficiency across the region. In response to the growing urgency of water-related issues, SEMCOG facilitated

workshops, seminars, and virtual meetings to foster dialogue, gather feedback, and gain valuable insights from various communities, ensuring the guide aligns with their unique needs and challenges.

## Infrastructure Coordination

During this fiscal year, SEMCOG actively engaged with multiple stakeholders, including Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), Army Corps of Civil Engineers (ACEC), and the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC), to institutionalize a regional infrastructure coordination process. This involved conducting meetings and background research to ensure effective coordination and integration of climate resiliency planning into the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (RTP) development processes. SEMCOG also prepared and presented updates on the infrastructure coordination workshop and upcoming regional resiliency plan at the Executive Committee meeting, reflecting their commitment to transparency and collaboration with key decision-makers.

SEMCOG's efforts culminated in hosting the Infrastructure Coordination Workshop in April 2023, collaborating with MDOT and MIC to solicit collaborative work and improve the coordination of infrastructure projects across public and private sectors, showcasing their dedication to efficient resource investment.

## Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Tracking Tool for Post-Construction Standards Compliance

SEMCOG, in coordination with Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner (OCWRC), developed a [MS4 \(Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System\) Post-Construction Tracking Tool](#) to support local agency compliance with NPDES MS4 Phase II Stormwater Permit requirements. Post-construction refers to stormwater standards required for new developments and redevelopments, specifically establishing how stormwater is managed from these projects. This [tool](#) is available to all local agencies within the SEMCOG region who are required to comply with these related post-construction standards within their NPDES stormwater permits.

The [tracking tool](#) utilizes ArcGIS Survey 123 to capture required project and stormwater management calculation details. The [tool](#) is designed for county, community, and consultant input to collect individual project development post-construction plan review data. SEMCOG summarizes the information for each permittee and provides that information back in a report format to each contributing local agency who then submits to EGLE as part of their compliance reporting. The [tool](#) requests local agencies to input basic location information for new and redevelopments, detailed engineering pre-development/post-development site criteria, and quantities of stormwater managed. The tool supports MS4 permit compliance with consistent reporting format and details. This is a [vital tool](#) for local agencies to demonstrate the success of alternative approaches to typical permit requirements. As of September 2023, four counties and twenty-six communities have submitted data.

## Environment and Ecosystem Services Tool

As part of the regional transportation planning process, SEMCOG conducts an environmental sensitivity analysis for all transportation projects. To enhance and update this analysis, SEMCOG is working [Highland Economics](#) (HE) to develop an Environment and Ecosystem Services Tool. This tool will provide an online planning - level service to local agencies, incorporating more recent environmental data and initiatives to inform project selection. Users of the tool will be able to map

potential project areas and provide inputs on required site details for a transportation, development, or redevelopment project. The tool will estimate the potential environmental and ecosystem impacts of that project, including stormwater runoff, water quality, recreation, urban heat island, habitat, and air quality. In addition, the tool will offer guidance for potential best management practices and mitigation opportunities, while highlighting estimated returns on investments for reducing impacts related to project development. The online tool is expected to be completed by Summer 2024 and will roll out for public use at that time.

## GREEN Initiative

SEMCOG developed its Southeast Michigan Growing our Resilience, Equity, and Economy with Nature (GREEN) Initiative. With a focus on implementation, Southeast Michigan GREEN provides a regional framework that demonstrates the impact of local projects, positioning them for successful funding and partnership opportunities. This initiative is driven by the goal to ensure that public benefits of green infrastructure are resilient, equitable, and improve the quality of life in Southeast Michigan communities.

SEMCOG convened the GREEN Task Force to guide this initiative forward. The initiative was led by co-chairs Bryan Barnett, Mayor of Rochester Hills, and Abdullah Hammoud, Mayor of Dearborn. Task force members include representatives from local governments and state agencies, land conservancies, and recreation providers, along with healthcare, utilities, and business leaders.

The task force was charged with increasing the quantity, quality, and connectivity of our green infrastructure network and ensuring that public benefits of green infrastructure are equitable and resilient. Over the course of three meetings, the task force met three times, and members discussed their visions for the region's future and current efforts to implement GREEN strategies. Public input, expert focus groups, and analysis of recently updated land cover data all helped to guide the task force to establish regional metrics and targets for all aspects of the region's green infrastructure network, including green stormwater infrastructure, resilient natural landscapes, and protected public land.

In coordination with the GREEN task force, SEMCOG developed their [GREEN Dashboard](#). This dashboard aims to share SEMCOG's data and resources with its members, while understanding more about project opportunities and needs in the region. Additionally, SEMCOG produced its [GREEN Report](#) as a product of the GREEN Task Force. This report declares the framework's consensus-based and data-driven metrics to enhance the quantity and quality of the region's green infrastructure network, while identifying policies, priority areas, and planning resources to support future implementation.

The next phase of the GREEN Initiative is developing a pilot analysis of large-scale green infrastructure opportunities in the region. This is being completed as part of the Regional Resiliency Framework currently in progress.

## Climate Resilience

SEMCOG is engaged in numerous climate resilience projects within the region. As severe flooding events persist, SEMCOG is working to understand vulnerabilities in the region's transportation and infrastructure networks to determine best practices to address these challenges. Products of past Climate Resiliency studies can now be found on [SEMCOG's Climate Resilience webpage](#) and in the

[Water Infrastructure Planning Guide](#). These resources can help guide communities as they plan for these stressors.

During the past fiscal year, SEMCOG has been proactive in showcasing its climate resiliency efforts at various conferences and seminars. This included participation in the Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) pre-conference session in Flint and a panel discussion on water infrastructure at the InfraDay conference in Chicago. Furthermore, SEMCOG's activities were highlighted at the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Water Infrastructure Conference in Portland, Oregon, providing an opportunity to present its work on water infrastructure and engage in knowledge exchange with industry peers.

Additionally, SEMCOG contributed evidence-based recommendations to bolster coastal resilience through the Green Infrastructure Assessments for Coastal Resilience. The report synthesized these findings alongside concept plans, emphasizing the importance of integrating green infrastructure into coastal resilience planning, with potential eligibility for future funding opportunities. Following the development of these concept plans, SEMCOG reached out to local communities, discussing the next steps for the projects, identifying funding prospects, and addressing questions. SEMCOG also presented this project at both the Center for Watershed Protection National Conference and the Ohio Stormwater Conference.

Collaboration has been a key aspect of SEMCOG's efforts, as staff worked closely with the NOAA team on integrating equity work into flood risk and planning tools. SEMCOG also engaged with MDOT and other stakeholders to develop a scope of work for Stormwater and Infrastructure coordination. This collaboration culminated in the final meeting of the Water Infrastructure Task Force, where policies and actions for the *Water Infrastructure Planning Guide* were updated and approved. The year also saw SEMCOG's active involvement in several advisory and committee meetings, such as Rouge River Advisory Council, Middle Huron Partners, and Stormwater Hub Quarterly Advisory Group, where they discussed a wide range of topics related to resiliency and water management.

SEMCOG also met with various organizations, such as Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments (GLISA), Volpe, and MSU SeaGrant, to discuss the plan's integration into transportation planning work and Water School initiatives. The ongoing work with NOAA and Fernleaf teams aims to incorporate equity components into the Flood Risk Tool, further enhancing climate resiliency efforts. SEMCOG's commitment to climate resiliency planning extended to hosting workshops, webinars, and meetings.

To continue climate resiliency work, SEMCOG released a request for proposals and procured TetraTech with ICF as a subconsultant for a Regional Resiliency Framework project that will build on the GREEN work to develop a pilot area for large-scale nature-based solutions to flooding; develop a data resource of climate, rainfall, and resiliency data sets that can be used for resiliency analyses; and outline a programmatic approach that communities can utilize for resiliency work at the local level. This work will be completed in the next fiscal year.

## Outreach

In addition to the projects and efforts described above, SEMCOG works to share ongoing regional work at partner meetings, conferences, and seminars. In June, SEMCOG facilitated a webinar highlighting the benefits of CWP membership for their members. Staff also hosted a SEMCOG University on the DMA program, which further advanced efforts to strengthen the region's water infrastructure and educate SEMCOG partners on the fee allocation structure.

Over the past fiscal year, SEMCOG actively promoted its climate resiliency efforts by participating in conferences and seminars. These included the Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) pre-conference session in Flint, a water infrastructure panel discussion at the InfraDay conference in Chicago, and a presentation at the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Water Infrastructure Conference in Portland, Oregon.

SEMCOG also played a role in enhancing coastal resilience through the Green Infrastructure Assessments for Coastal Resilience, which featured concept plans emphasizing the importance of integrating green infrastructure. This work could potentially be considered for future funding opportunities. After developing these concept plans, SEMCOG engaged with local communities to discuss project progress, funding possibilities, and answer queries. This project was also presented at the Center for Watershed Protection National Conference and the Ohio Stormwater Conference.

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2023-2024

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