

# Public Participation Plan for Southeast Michigan



## **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

# Public Participation Plan for Southeast Michigan

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## Abstract

This Public Participation Plan describes the objectives, strategies, and tools to engage Southeast Michigan residents in SEMCOG's regional planning work. This is a revision of SEMCOG's January 2020 Public Participation Plan. Translation of this document is available upon request free-of-charge. For assistance, contact the SEMCOG Information Center at [infocenter@semcog.org](mailto:infocenter@semcog.org) or (313) 961-4266.

Este Plan de Participación Pública describe los objetivos, estrategias y herramientas para involucrar a quienes residen en el sudeste de Michigan en el trabajo de planificación regional de SEMCOG. Esta es una revisión del Plan de Participación Pública de enero de 2020 de SEMCOG. Se encuentra disponible una traducción de este documento de forma gratuita si se la solicita. Para obtener asistencia, póngase en contacto con el Centro de Información de SEMCOG a través de [infocenter@semcog.org](mailto:infocenter@semcog.org) o al (313) 961-4266.

تصف خطة مشاركة جمهور العامة الأهداف والاستراتيجيات والأدوات التي تسمح لسكان جنوب شرق ميشيغان بالمشاركة في عمل التخطيط الإقليمي التابع لمجلس حكومات جنوب شرق ميشيغان (SEMCOG). هذه الوثيقة هي مراجعة لخطة مشاركة جمهور العامة الخاصة بمجلس حكومات جنوب شرق ميشيغان (SEMCOG) لشهر كانون الثاني/يناير 2020. تتوفر ترجمة هذه الوثيقة مجاناً عند الطلب. للحصول على المساعدة، اتصل بمركز معلومات مجلس حكومات جنوب شرق ميشيغان (SEMCOG)، على البريد الإلكتروني [infocenter@semcog.org](mailto:infocenter@semcog.org)، أو على الرقم (313) 961-4266.

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Permission is granted to cite portions of this publication, with proper attribution. The first source attribution must be "SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments." Subsequently, "SEMCOG" is sufficient. Reprinting in any form must include the publication's full title page. SEMCOG documents and information are available in a variety of formats. Contact SEMCOG's Information Center to discuss your format needs.



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## Acknowledgements

SEMCOG convened a Public Participation working group with a cross section of member local governments and other stakeholders on February 16, 2023. The goal of this meeting was to share best practices for outreach and involvement of the public in transportation decision-making. The resulting discussion informed the revision of SEMCOG's *Public Participation Plan*. The following individuals participated either online or in-person:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Adam Owczarzak	City of Madison Heights
Allison Racisz	SEMCOG
Artina Carter	Huron-Clinton Metroparks
Bailee Pasienza	SEMCOG
Brad Bates	Shelby Charter Township
Carissa Markel	Road Commission for Oakland County
Chris Williams	SEMCOG
David Benjamin	Sustainable Energy Delivery
Deanna Donahoo	MDOT
Don VanSyckel	Macomb County
Donald Hubler	Macomb ISD
Edward Hug, Jr.	SEMCOG
Ericka Alexander	Detroit Transportation Corporation
Ian Thompson	SEMCOG
James Budny	Grosse Ile Township
James VanSteel	MDOT - Metro Region
Jenya Abramovich	SEMCOG
John Waterman	Programs to Educate All Cyclists (PEAC)
Jonathan Kinloch	Wayne County
Julia Ruffin	Oakland County
Julijana Misich-Rasawehr	Shelby Charter Township
Katherine Grantham	SEMCOG
Kim Markee	Charter Township of Waterford
Larry Eugene Gray, Jr.	Charter Township of Commerce
Lindsay Wallace	St. Clair County
Lindsey Kerkez, P.E.	SEMCOG
Lindsey Nystrom	Fernleaf
Matt Galbraith	MDOT - Metro Region
Meredith Fryer	MDOT
Michael Misteravich	City of Richmond
Michael Spence	SEMCOG
Michele Fedorowicz	SEMCOG
Mike Davis, Jr.	MDOT - University Region
Monique Owens	City of Eastpointe
Norman Schenck	Lake Erie Transit
Richard Bayus	MDOT
Ryan Madis	Village of Ortonville
Sarah Plumer	Huron-Clinton Metroparks
Sebastian Previti	Charter Township of Washington
Sheila Tomkowiak	City of Grosse Pointe
Sheryl Theriot	SEMCOG
Stacy Cobb-Muniz	City of Eastpointe



Stephen Brudzinski	SEMCOG
Sydney Jackson	SEMCOG
T.J. Connolly	Road Commission for Oakland County
Trevor Layton	SEMCOG
Valerie Kindle	City of Harper Woods

As a follow-up to this discussion, SEMCOG staff visited Programs to Educate All Cyclists at the invitation of John Waterman, Executive Director. The purpose of this visit was to learn more about the transportation and communication needs of people with cognitive disabilities. PEAC staff and program participants walked SEMCOG staff through some of their greatest challenges, as well as how several of these can be mitigated. Key takeaways from this visit are included in the section of this document: Reaching People with Special Needs.

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## About this Public Participation Plan

### What is the Public Participation Plan?

This *Public Participation Plan* describes the objectives, strategies, and tools to engage Southeast Michigan residents in SEMCOG's regional planning work. It is a guide for staff to use for the major plans described in this document, as well as other regional initiatives. SEMCOG will periodically update the *Public Participation Plan*.

SEMCOG's public participation and public comment process for updating the *Public Participation Plan* follows these steps (Figure 1):

- Revisions to the *Public Participation Plan* are developed in consultation with a focus group and/or other interested parties, pursuant to Title 23 of United States Code (USC) Section 134, Metropolitan Transportation Planning, before the draft document is submitted for public review and comment.
- The draft *Public Participation Plan* is provided for review and comment to SEMCOG's consultation agencies, as listed in SEMCOG's [Consultation Agency Process](http://www.semco.org/publications) ([www.semco.org/publications](http://www.semco.org/publications)).
- The draft *Public Participation Plan* is presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties for a **45-day** public comment period.
- The draft *Public Participation Plan* is made available during the **45-day** public comment period on SEMCOG's website, at SEMCOG offices, and via social media. Information on where and how to access these documents is included in the public notice. The draft *Public Participation Plan* is made available in alternative formats and languages upon request.
- All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Executive Committee prior to taking action on the draft *Public Participation Plan*.
- The Executive Committee takes action on the draft *Public Participation Plan*.

Upon Executive Committee approval, the *Public Participation Plan* is produced and made available on SEMCOG's website, at SEMCOG offices, and via social media. The *Public Participation Plan* is also made available in alternative formats and languages upon request.

### Goals of the Public Participation Plan

SEMCOG uses the *Public Participation Plan* to:

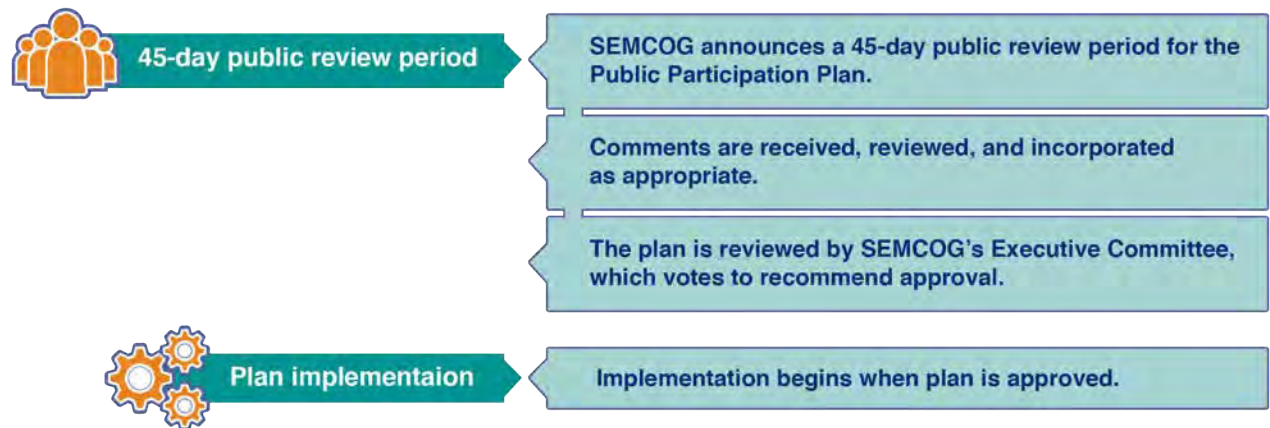
- Educate the public about the regional planning process and how they can participate in it.
- Define the tools SEMCOG uses to effectively engage the public in regional planning efforts.
- Describe the tools SEMCOG uses to educate stakeholders when implementing plans.
- Identify measures of effectiveness for SEMCOG's public engagement.



Consistent with all SEMCOG plans, the *Public Participation Plan* undergoes a regular process for revisions and approvals. The *Public Participation Plan* is unique as the only SEMCOG plan requiring a 45-day approval window, as depicted below.

Figure 1

**45-Day Public Participation Plan Approval Process**



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## Welcome to SEMCOG

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### Our Vision

*All people of Southeast Michigan benefit from a connected, thriving region of small towns, dynamic urban centers, active waterfronts, diverse neighborhoods, premier educational institutions, and abundant agricultural, recreational, and natural areas.*

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SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, is a voluntary association of local governments bringing together all levels of local government in Southeast Michigan. Southeast Michigan is comprised of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.

Southeast Michigan has an area of 4,600 square miles. Each day, the 4.8 million people who live in the SEMCOG region – along with visitors and tourists – need to move around this area for work, school, worship, recreation, shopping, medical care, etc. For some, most activities take place close to home. For many others, daily life requires significant travel. An individual who lives in Ferndale may work in Auburn Hills, go to the dentist in Southfield, attend a concert in Detroit, hike a trail in Brighton, and visit family in Mount Clemens. That individual may or may not require accessible accommodations to reach their destination.

Each day, millions of trips are made throughout the region by car, bus, bicycle, carpool, and/or walking. As a collaborative organization representing government agencies from all over Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG strives to enable access to all the necessities and amenities the region offers. As such, SEMCOG plans and policies strive to reflect the evolving and interconnected interests of each of its urban, suburban, rural, and small-town communities. Similarly, the diversity of people and needs within our communities must be recognized, and SEMCOG plans and policies further strive to promote equity for people of all ages, backgrounds, identities, and abilities.

There is not a one-size-fits-all answer to regional planning. Data provide the foundation for all of SEMCOG's planning work, and SEMCOG's *Regional Development Forecast* integrates a comprehensive array of sources to describe the future needs of Southeast Michigan. **Solutions must be innovative**, as limited financial and environmental resources demand actions that work in the present without mortgaging the future. Generational turnover shows that lifestyle preferences and priorities change, which means **strategies must be responsive**. A **holistic approach is vital** to sound decision-making. It is important to understand that the impact of a project in one community can also impact neighboring communities. It is equally important to understand that initiatives falling into one category (e.g., transportation, community and economic development, water quality) will impact other aspects of life.

The following figures – which data from SEMCOG’s 2050 Regional Forecast – illustrate some key attributes of Southeast Michigan, now and in the future. Each community is unique. SEMCOG’s Regional Forecast supports SEMCOG data and mapping resources such as Community Profiles and Forecast Explorer, which local leaders use in making effective decisions for their communities. Understanding the assets, strengths, and challenges of a community in relation to its neighbors and the surrounding region

Figure 2

**Demographics: 2050 Forecast of Population and Jobs in Southeast Michigan**

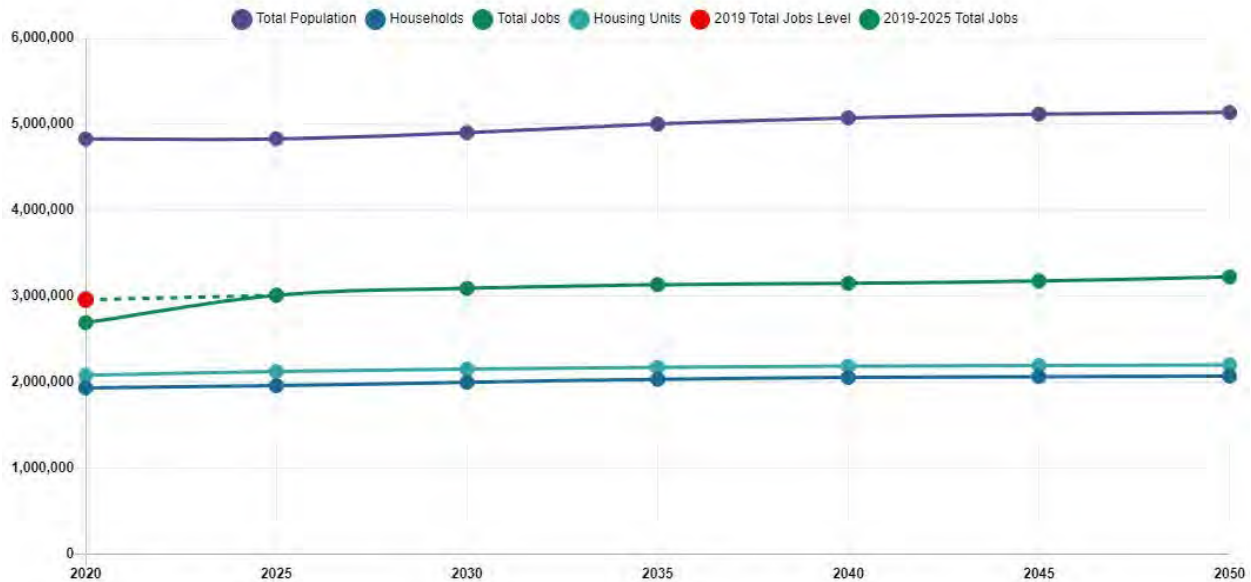


Figure 3

**Demographics: Forecast of Population and Households**

	2020	2050	Change 2020 - 2050	
			Number	Percent
Total Population	4,830,489	5,138,535	308,046	6.4%
Household Population	4,755,890	5,045,028	289,138	6.1%
Group Quarters Population	74,599	93,507	18,908	25.3%
Population Age 0-17	1,033,646	977,122	-56,524	-5.5%
Population Age 18+	3,796,843	4,161,413	364,570	9.6%
Housing Units	2,083,813	2,204,119	120,306	5.8%
Household Size	2.46	2.43	-0.03	-1.2%
Households	1,936,635	2,074,416	137,781	7.1%
With Children (Age 0-17)	554,140	540,805	-13,335	-2.4%
Without Children (Age 0-17)	1,382,495	1,533,611	151,116	10.9%
With Seniors (Age 65+)	581,771	769,982	188,211	32.4%
Without Seniors (Age 65+)	1,354,864	1,304,434	-50,430	-3.7%

Population in the region will reach 5.1 million people in 2050, with 6.5% cumulative growth from 2020, relatively slow compared to 14.5% anticipated growth nationwide. While immigration and domestic migration are projected to recover, the cause of the slowing population growth in the region over the next 30 years will be the downshift in natural population growth. The number of births will no longer exceed deaths. Natural population growth will change from an increase of 9,728 residents in 2024 to a decrease of 2,773 in 2050. Understanding demographic shifts like this one is critical to effective planning.

Figure 4

### Demographics: An Aging Region

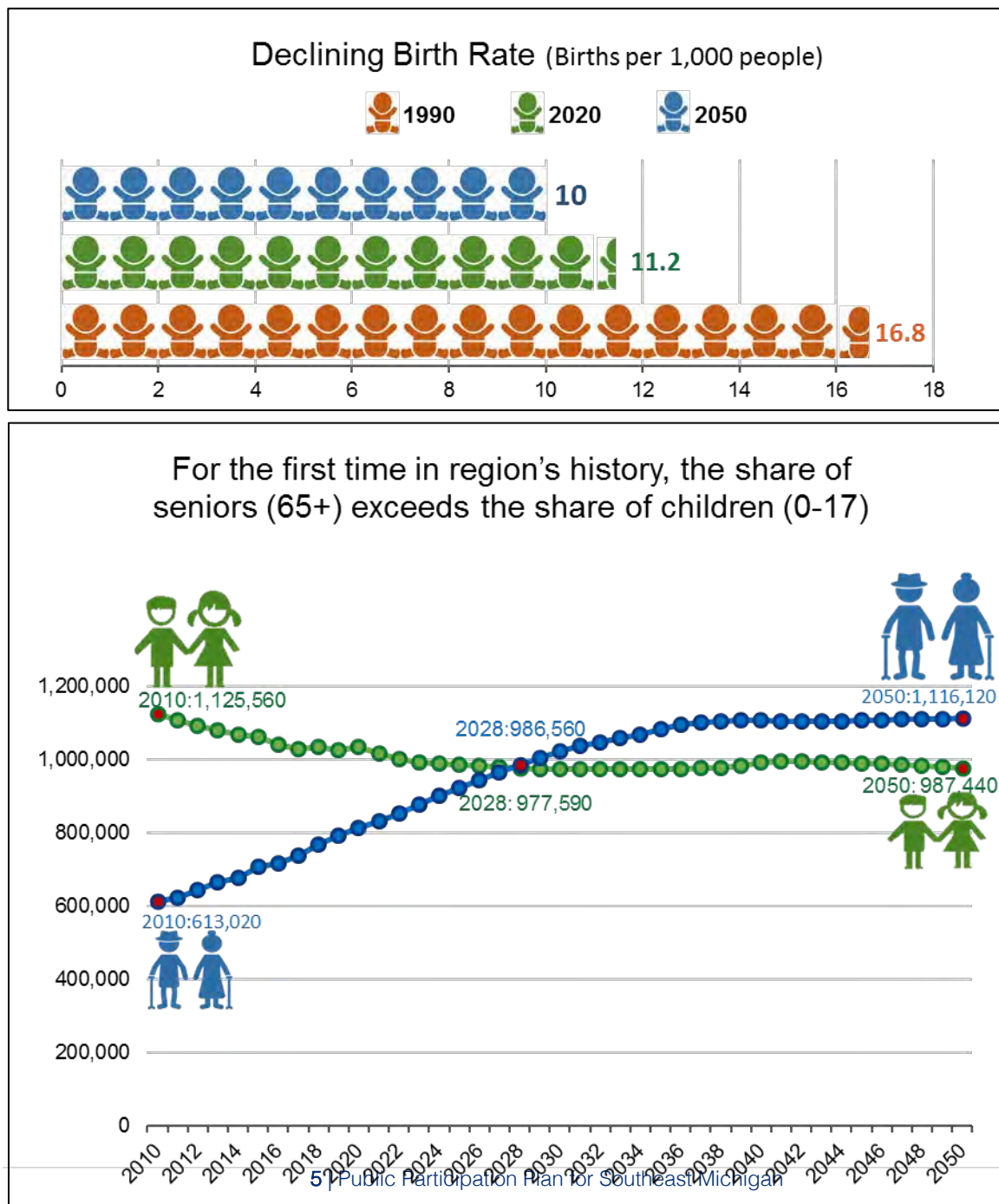
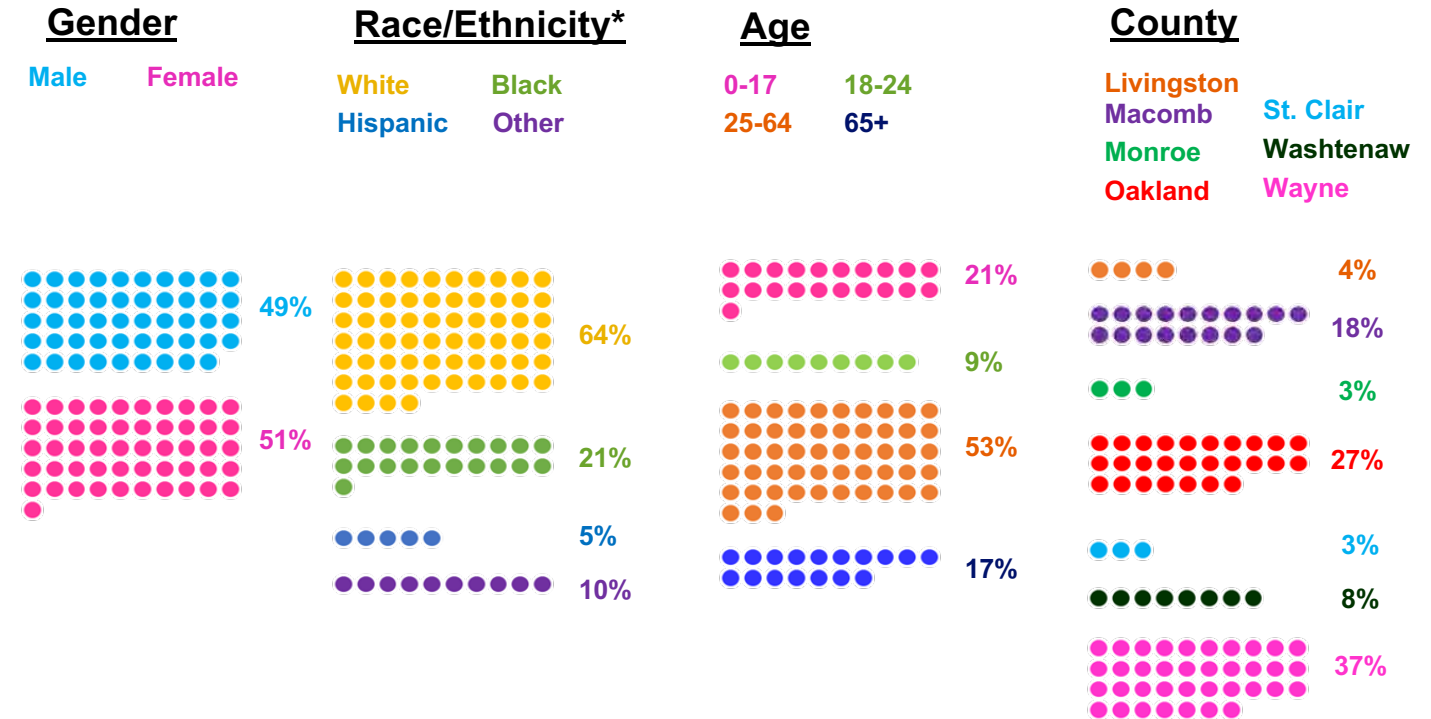


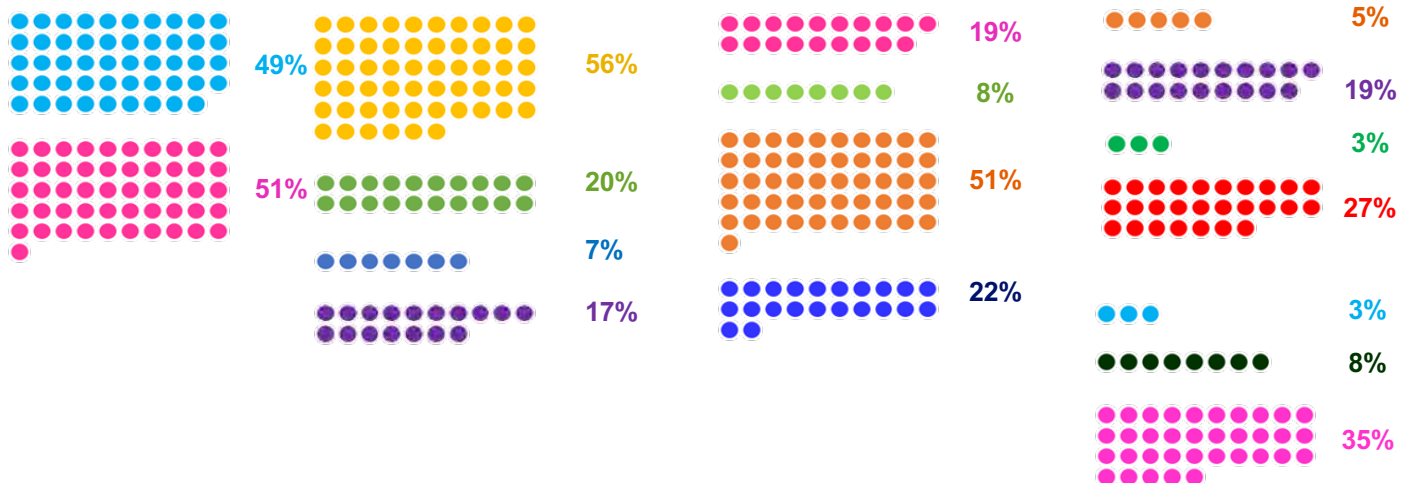


Figure 5  
**Demographic Shifts: 2020-2050**

**2020**



**2050**



\*Note: White, Black, and Other races consist of Non-Hispanic individuals

## Organization

Reflecting the mission set forth in SEMCOG's bylaws, the agency's functions include:

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

Further, SEMCOG is designated by state and federal agencies to perform various planning and intergovernmental functions:

- Under the State of Michigan designation of Planning and Development Regions pursuant to Michigan Act 281 of 1945 as amended, SEMCOG carries out multipurpose regional planning.
- As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), pursuant to Title 23 of United States Code (USC) Section 134, Metropolitan Transportation Planning, SEMCOG is responsible for transportation planning. This responsibility includes coordinating implementation of regional plans by operating agencies.
- As the designated agency under Section 208 of the Federal Pollution Control Act of 1972, SEMCOG is responsible for maintaining the regional water quality plan.
- As the designated air quality planning agency under the Clean Air Act amendments of 1977, SEMCOG is responsible for development and revisions to the State Implementation Plan to meet air quality standards.
- SEMCOG recently received the regional designation of Broadband Navigator for Southeast Michigan from the Michigan Office of High Speed Internet, reflecting the importance of broadband in day-to-day life and as a broader infrastructure system.

In addition to the responsibilities for designated planning functions, various local, regional, State, and federal agencies seek SEMCOG involvement in other activities.

SEMCOG is governed by individuals on its General Assembly, which is comprised of elected and appointed officials from all member communities, who serve as delegates and alternates. The General Assembly meets three times a year to adopt the annual work program, annual budget, and approve regional plans.

SEMCOG's main policy-making body is the Executive Committee, a representative subset of General Assembly delegates and alternates. This committee reviews regional studies and takes action on plans, policies, and recommendations. It typically meets six times per year. All Executive Committee and General Assembly meetings are open to the public. Meeting dates are available on SEMCOG's website.

## Regional Planning in Southeast Michigan

### How ideas become plans, and plans are implemented

SEMCOG incorporates data, expertise, intergovernmental participation and decision making, and public involvement to develop, adopt, and implement regional plans for transportation, environmental quality, and economic development.

### Core Values

SEMCOG is a voluntary association of local governments fostering cooperative efforts in order to move Southeast Michigan forward. The core values below are the basis on which we perform our work.

- **Visionary** – We work holistically, inspiring innovative regional and local solutions.
- **Collaborative & Inclusive** – We are respectful, approachable, and embrace different perspectives to meet the diverse needs of our region.
- **Strategic** – We are intentional, yet flexible in order to leverage opportunities.
- **Integrity** – We are committed to the ethical and honest stewardship of our fiscal, natural, and built resources.
- **Knowledgeable** – We strive for excellence through sound data and research and continuous learning, ensuring we are a credible and influential voice for Southeast Michigan.

### Key players and partners

The list that follows includes some of the key partners and stakeholders that SEMCOG engages:

**Federal agencies** – Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. National Parks Service.

**State agencies** – Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Michigan State Police (MSP).

**Regional agencies** – Area Agency on Aging, Automation Alley, Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau, Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, Great Lakes Water Authority, Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority.

**Sub-regional transportation agencies** – Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (The Ride), Blue Water Area Transit (Ride the Wave), County road agencies, Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), Detroit Transportation Corporation (Detroit People Mover), Federal-Aid Committees (FACs), Lake Erie Transit (LET), Livingston Essential Transportation Service (LETS), MoGo, Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA), St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS), Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), Transportation Improvement Association, University of Michigan Parking & Transportation Services, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS), Wayne County Airport Authority.

**Watershed planning organizations** – Alliance of Downriver Watersheds, Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC), Anchor Bay Watershed, Clinton River Watershed Council, Friends of the Detroit River, Friends of

the Rouge, Friends of the St. Clair River Watershed, River Raisin Watershed Council, Friends of the Shiawassee River, Huron River Watershed Council.

**Others** – Citizens United for Better Services, Consulate General of Canada, consultation agencies (listed in appendix to *2045 Regional Transportation Plan* and SEMCOG's [Consultation Agency Process](#)), educational institutions, general public, local governments, Michigan Fitness Foundation, Programs to Educate All Cyclists (PEAC), Southeast Michigan Community Alliance, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), tribal interests.

## Keeping up with SEMCOG

Here are a few convenient ways to stay engaged and participate in SEMCOG's ongoing work:

- Visit our website at [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org); check out the latest mapping and information tools in the Data and Maps section.
- Attend a public meeting. All SEMCOG meetings – including committees, task forces, “office hours” to discuss regional planning topics, and working groups – are open to the public and posted on [SEMCOG's calendar](#).
- Access agendas and meeting minutes [online](#).
- To receive public notices, join our mailing list by sending a request to [communications@semco.org](mailto:communications@semco.org).
- Read and subscribe to our biweekly newsletter, [Regional Update](#)). Current issue is on our homepage under “The Latest.”
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).
- Subscribe to [read articles by SEMCOG staff experts](#) on various topics.
- Listen to SEMCOG's [podcast](#).
- Watch our [videos](#).



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## SEMCOG's Commitment to Title VI

### SEMCOG's Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. SEMCOG further assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. Furthermore, SEMCOG will not exclude persons based on age, religion, or disability. More specifically, SEMCOG assures that efforts will be made to prevent discrimination through the impacts of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. Additionally, SEMCOG will take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency. In the event SEMCOG distributes federal-aid funds to another governmental entity, SEMCOG will include Title VI language in all written agreements and will monitor for compliance. SEMCOG's Title VI Coordinator is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing required reports, and other SEMCOG responsibilities as required by 23 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 200 and 49 Code of Federal Regulation 21. Complaints of discrimination under Title VI will be promptly addressed by the SEMCOG Title VI Coordinator.

SEMCOG's Title VI webpage ([www.semco.org/Title-VI](http://www.semco.org/Title-VI)) has more information, including:

- SEMCOG's policies regarding translation and interpretation services;
- SEMCOG's Title VI Plan;
- SEMCOG's Title VI Complaint Form; and SEMCOG's Limited English Proficiency Plan.

**Each of these items is available in English, Spanish, and Arabic; translations into other languages are available free-of-charge upon request.**

### SEMCOG's Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Statement of Principle

#### **We are better together**

At SEMCOG, we embrace and celebrate the collective sum of our unique experiences, knowledge and talents, innovation, and self-expression, which strengthens our organization. We all have a role to play in cultivating and preserving a place of belonging. We at SEMCOG define diversity as the presence of differences across a wide range of backgrounds, identities, experiences, and viewpoints. To us, equity means fair, just and impartial treatment, opportunity, access, and engagement for all. We see inclusion as an environment that values, respects, and welcomes all perspectives, especially ensuring underrepresented groups are included. Together, it is our goal to promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision for a connected, thriving Southeast Michigan. *Learn more at <https://semcog.org/about-semcog/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>*

#### **Reaching Person with Special Needs**

SEMCOG has established procedures to make information available to those with special needs. SEMCOG meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations. All meeting agendas and notices

contain information on how individuals with disabilities requiring assistance can request reasonable accommodations at meetings, including sign-language interpreters. SEMCOG's website is compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. SEMCOG has also translated documents, including the *Regional Transportation Plan*, into Spanish, Arabic, and Braille, and will continue to do so upon request.

In the winter of 2023, SEMCOG staff visited Programs to Educate All Cyclists (PEAC) to learn more about the transportation and communication needs of people with cognitive disabilities. PEAC staff and program participants walked SEMCOG staff through some of their greatest challenges, as well as how several of these can be mitigated. Takeaways from this discussion include:

- Inclusive planning and engagement
  - Individuals with cognitive impairments comprise roughly 4-5% of the population. For context, SEMCOG prepares public education materials in Spanish to accommodate the region's Spanish-speaking population, and 4% of Wayne County residents speak Spanish at home (the highest rate in the SEMCOG region).
  - When engaging with stakeholders - particularly those with cognitive impairments - it is essential to be deliberate and strategic when asking questions and following up.
  - Since reading and math difficulties are relatively common, an audio component to plans and products may help.
  - Crosswalk timers frequently do not allow many pedestrians enough time to cross.
  - When a question or concept doesn't land, it is crucial to re-phrase and simplify rather than repeat. If the information still doesn't land, offer to discuss after the meeting.
  - Pros of hybrid meetings: convenience, accessibility, facilitator with cognitively impaired can mute as needed to answer questions and ensure engagement without disrupting the meeting.
  - Cons of hybrid: we don't see stakeholders with disabilities (making them less represented)
  - When developing policy, consider translating to separate, simpler "language" before trying to engage on topic with stakeholders.
  - PEAC is working to emphasize Disability Pride, differentiating between the facts of cognitive impairment (has trouble with reading, writing, and math) v. the stigma (a person with cognitive impairment can't contribute).
  - It is important to have multiple representatives from underrepresented groups to increase comfort and engagement.
- Challenges to workforce participation for people with cognitive disabilities include transportation, exceeding hours limit to receive needed benefits.
- Transportation challenges include "mean" roads and places, which are characterized by: honking and yelling, fast cars, lack of sidewalks, poorly planned bus stop placement, curb cuts for landscaping but not pedestrians, turning vehicles do not look for pedestrians.
  - "Nice" roads and places (particularly transit stops) include: complete streets cleared of snow and ice, quieter, slower, side streets, shelter from extreme weather, seating, trash bins, bike racks.

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# Understanding and Participating in SEMCOG's Planning Activities

## Public Participation Process for SEMCOG Plans

SEMCOG employs an inclusive public participation process for each of its regional plans and policies. While the specifics in each plan's development timeline can vary, there are several key elements that remain consistent for all SEMCOG plans. Most plan development processes incorporate public engagement tools for input before the standard comment period. SEMCOG values these efforts and will provide at least 30 days for public review and comment before taking final action to approve or adopt.

This *Public Participation Plan* defines a major decision as the official adoption of plans such as those listed below, several of which are briefly described in the following pages.

- Environmental and infrastructure-focused efforts: *Air Quality Conformity*, *Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan*, *Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan*, *Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan*, and *Water Infrastructure Policies and Actions*.
- Regional economic development: *Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan* and *Regional Housing Needs and Neighborhood Resiliency Strategy*.
- Transportation initiatives: *Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan for Southeast Michigan*, *Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan*, *Southeast Michigan Transportation Safety Plan*, and *Transportation Improvement Program for Southeast Michigan*.
- *Regional Development Forecast*, Unified Work Program, and SEMCOG Budget.
- *Public Participation Plan*.

SEMCOG's public participation and comment process for all of the plans described here, except for the *Public Participation Plan*, is as follows:

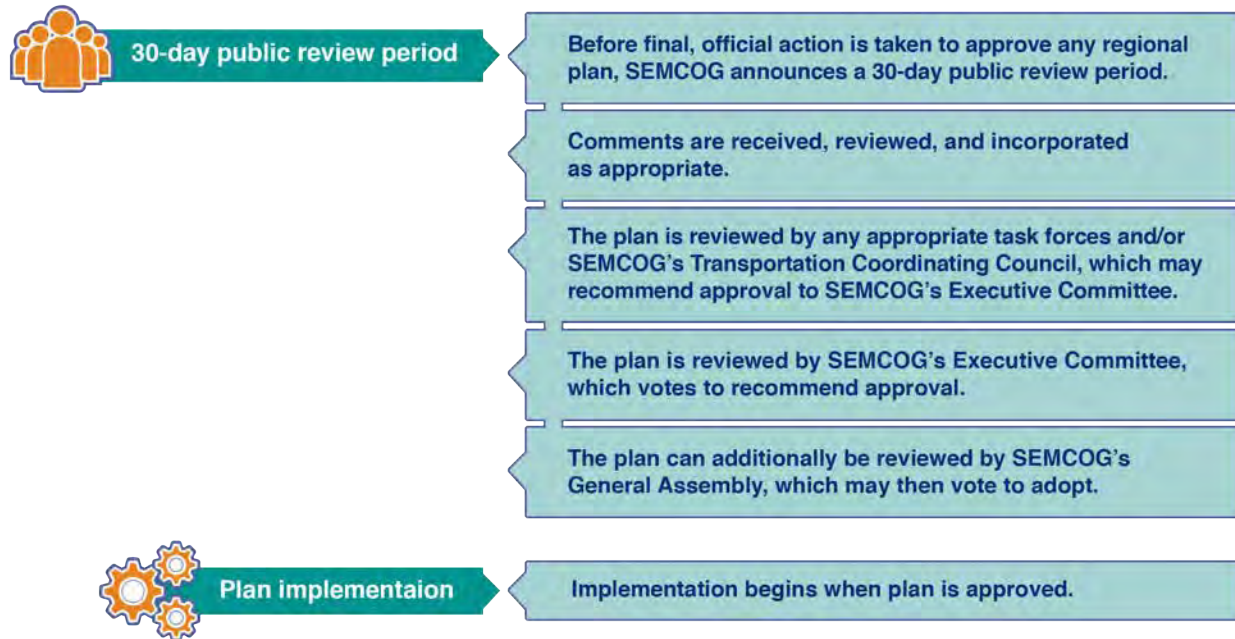
- Prior to the formal public comment period, SEMCOG will engage the public as plans are developed, using one or more of the tools described in the Tools section of the *Public Participation Plan*.
- SEMCOG will inform the public and interested parties of the formal comment period using the Public Notice procedures and other tools, at least **30 days** prior to the date scheduled for final action to approve or adopt.
- Information will be presented for review and comment by the public during the **30-day** public comment period on SEMCOG's website, at SEMCOG offices, and on social media. Information on where and how to access documents for review will be included in the public notice.

All comments received and the response to comments are documented and provided to the Executive Committee or General Assembly, whichever body takes final action on the plan.

SEMCOG employs an inclusive public participation process for each of its regional plans and policies. While the specifics in each plan's development timeline can vary, there are several key elements that remain consistent for all SEMCOG plans. Most plan development processes incorporate public engagement tools for input before the standard comment period. SEMCOG values these efforts and will provide at least 30 days for public review and comment before taking final action to approve or adopt.

Figure 6

### 30-Day Public Participation Process for most SEMCOG plans



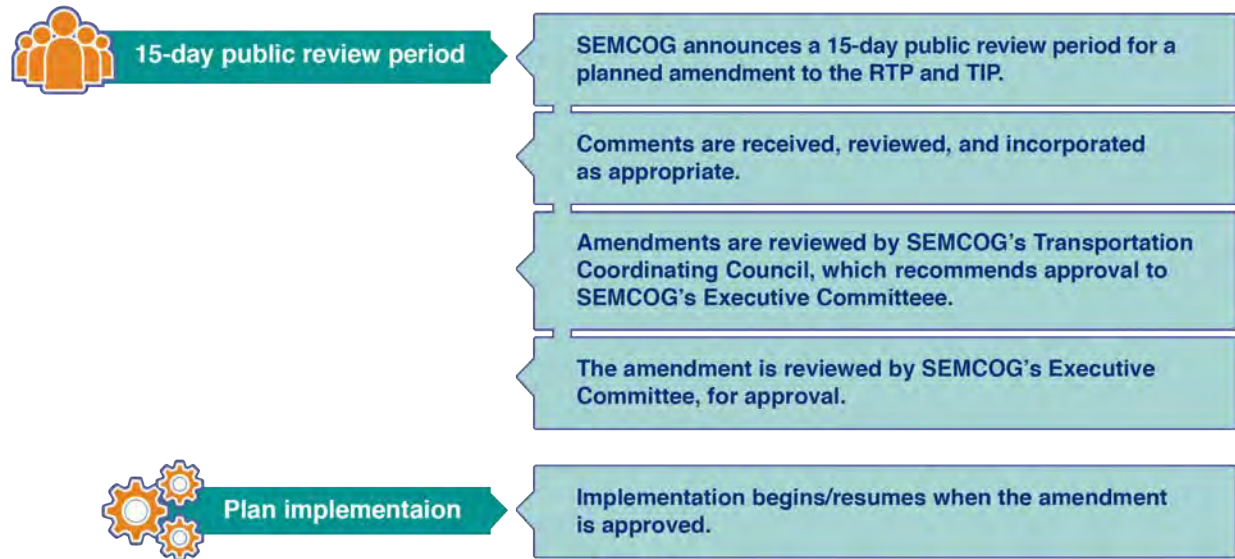
### Public Participation Process for Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan amendments

Several times each year (three to five), SEMCOG considers amendments to the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) and *Transportation Improvement Plan* (TIP). These amendments typically relate to shifts in costs and/or schedules on previously approved projects. Since project costs and timelines initially approved in the TIP often need to be adjusted, these amendments help to maximize efficient and effective use of transportation funding and complete projects as quickly as possible. To prevent unnecessary project delays for TIP and RTP approvals, SEMCOG conducts a minimum 15-day public comment period for TIP and RTP amendments.



Figure 7

**15-Day Public Participation Process for RTP and TIP amendments**



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## SEMCOG Plans with Public Participation Process

This section describes a selection of SEMCOG plans which are subject to SEMCOG's Public Participation Process. NOTE: this is not an exhaustive list of SEMCOG plans, and all plans subject to Executive Committee and/or Executive Committee approval require a version of the public participation processes described above.

### Air Quality Conformity

The *Air Quality Conformity* analysis is a companion to the *Regional Transportation Plan* and *Transportation Improvement Program*. It documents the process used by SEMCOG for making the transportation-related conformity determination for the RTP and TIP for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). The conformity determination is required by the federal Clean Air Act and is consistent with the air quality goals established in state air quality implementation plans (SIP). SEMCOG's conformity finding is based on criteria and procedures in the Environmental Protection Agency's Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93) and satisfies all applicable conformity requirements. Conformity ensures that projects in the RTP/TIP will not cause new air quality violations, worsen any existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

*Air Quality Conformity* is developed as part of the RTP and TIP updates, in which case public participation and public comment procedures for the RTP or TIP updates will be followed as described in this document. *Air Quality Conformity* is also updated as required by certain amendments to the RTP or TIP, in which case public participation and comment procedures for amendments to the RTP or TIP will be followed as previously described. *Learn more under amendments at <https://semcog.org/transportation-improvement-program-tip>.*

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan for Southeast Michigan

This plan supports pedestrian and bicycle travel. It includes both on-road facilities such as bike lanes and wide shoulders, as well as off-road facilities such as sidewalks, shared-use side paths, and independent shared-use paths (trails). These forms of transportation can contribute to increased mobility, safety, transportation choices, recreation, placemaking opportunities, economic development, and health of residents – things that are vitally important to individual communities and the Southeast Michigan region. At the regional level, it emphasizes regional corridors to better identify the needs of bicycle and pedestrian travel. At the local level, it provides guidance for nonmotorized planning. The document is incorporated into SEMCOG's comprehensive *Regional Transportation Plan* and *Transportation Improvement Program*, providing regional analysis that identifies assets, deficiencies, and opportunities for enhancements. *Learn more at <https://www.semcog.org/bicycle-and-pedestrian-mobility>.*

### Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan

SEMCOG, with its partner organization, the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), has created *Increasing Shared Prosperity for a Resilient Economy: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan* that meets the requirements of the U.S. Economic Development

Administration (EDA). It incorporates EDA guidelines and strategic priorities in a dynamic document that provides a roadmap for effectively investing the region's resources and seeking new means to diversify and reposition the economy, create jobs, strengthen and refocus human capital, develop and promote natural and community assets, improve business climate, and maintain and enhance the necessary infrastructure to achieve the maximum economic impact and global competitiveness.

The strategy leverages Southeast Michigan's unique resources and assets, builds upon existing programs, brings stakeholders together, and explores opportunities. *Learn more at <http://www.semcog.org/Plans-for-the-Region/Economic-Development>.*

## **Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan**

This framework guides preservation of natural areas and future implementation of green infrastructure in Southeast Michigan. The vision benchmarks the amount of green infrastructure in the region, visions future green infrastructure opportunities, and recommends strategic implementation approaches. The vision details the various benefits of green infrastructure, including economic value, water quality, air quality, and recreation. *Learn more at <https://semcog.org/land>.*

## **Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan**

The *Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan* was developed to ensure that the region's recreation system meets the quality of life, health, and accessibility needs of its residents and visitors, as well as local and regional economic development and environmental priorities. The *Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan* contains regional policies to address common challenges and supports a systems approach to park planning, development, maintenance, and programming. *Learn more at <https://www.semcog.org/parks-and-recreation>.*

## **Regional Housing Needs and Neighborhood Resiliency Strategy for Southeast Michigan**

SEMCOG created the *Regional Housing Needs and Neighborhood Resiliency Strategy for Southeast Michigan* to address housing needs and neighborhood resiliency in a holistic framework. The strategy focuses on policy and local action recommendations that respond to the region's housing issues, as well as challenges to neighborhood stability, condition of housing stock and fair housing opportunities, and availability of affordable housing that provides access to jobs and services. The strategy identifies recommendations that address the region's housing needs and promote resilient neighborhoods. SEMCOG and its partners should advocate for these recommendations; local and regional action recommendations can be customized by local and regional jurisdictions for neighborhood-level solutions to improve desirability, stability, and resiliency of local housing markets. *Learn more at <http://semcog.org/desktopmodules/SEMCOG.Publications/GetFile.ashx?filename=RegionalHousingNeedsAndNeighborhoodResiliencyStrategyForSoutheastMichiganNovember2012.pdf>.*

## **Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan**

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Southeast Michigan is a long-term blueprint for investing federal, state, and local transportation dollars in our transportation network. The plan identifies and analyzes transportation needs of Southeast Michigan and creates a framework for project priorities. The RTP is developed in cooperation with cities, county road commissions, the Michigan Department

of Transportation, and transit operators. These groups are represented on county Federal-Aid Committees (FACs) and Transportation Study Areas, which are responsible for identifying projects for consideration in the RTP. More information and contacts for the SEMCOG region's FACs and transportation studies can be found on SEMCOG's [website](http://www.semco.org) ([www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org)).

The RTP contains policies and projects to guide regional investment over the next 20-30 years. It is reviewed and updated every four years. Projects in the RTP are implemented through their inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is the list of projects proposed to be constructed in the first four years of the RTP. Southeast Michigan has many transportation needs and limited dollars. The plan identifies where investments are planned to occur. In addition to improving the transportation infrastructure, these investments support economic investment, improve safety, increase accessibility, improve and enhance the environment, and are consistent with the other regional plans and policies adopted by SEMCOG.

Projects to maintain and improve Southeast Michigan's pavement, bridges, transit, safety, traffic operations (technology), walking and bicycling facilities, freight, border crossings, and air quality are included in the RTP. In selecting and developing these projects, the impacts on accessibility, environmental protection, green infrastructure, and economic development are considered.

Opportunities to amend the RTP typically occur three times a year to ensure it remains consistent with changing priorities. It is completely updated every four years. *Learn more at* <https://semco.org/rtp>.

## Consultation Agency Outreach

The goal of the *Consultation Agency Process* is to provide expanded involvement opportunities to participate in the planning process for specific public and private agencies and officials responsible for planning activities related to or with interest in the transportation system. The consultation process includes early involvement, direct outreach, information and data sharing, plan comparison, and evaluations that meet federal regulations.

Although there is overlap between the consultation agency and public engagement processes, the two efforts are separate. The primary difference is the target audience for consultation agencies is comprised of formal groups and organizations, while public outreach is directed towards individuals with or without affiliation. Agencies involved in the consultation outreach are planning partners across the region in various capacities including natural resources, education, conservation, environmental justice, community and economic development, tribal interests, freight, transit, border crossings, aviation, and more. Consultation with these various agencies and planning partners is an opportunity to discuss needs of the larger community, compare and coordinate planning approaches, and communicate about the vision for the overall transportation system that crosses multiple jurisdictions.

SEMCOG interacts with many of these agencies on an ongoing basis to ensure its plans/programs are aligned. This collaboration with consultation agencies continues through plan implementation. SEMCOG consultation agencies are listed in the *Consultation Agency Process*, as well as the [2045 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan: Appendix](#). *Learn more at* <https://www.semco.org/desktopmodules/SEMCOG.Publications/GetFile.ashx?filename=ConsultationAgencyProcessJanuary2020.pdf>.

## Where can I find more information about the RTP?

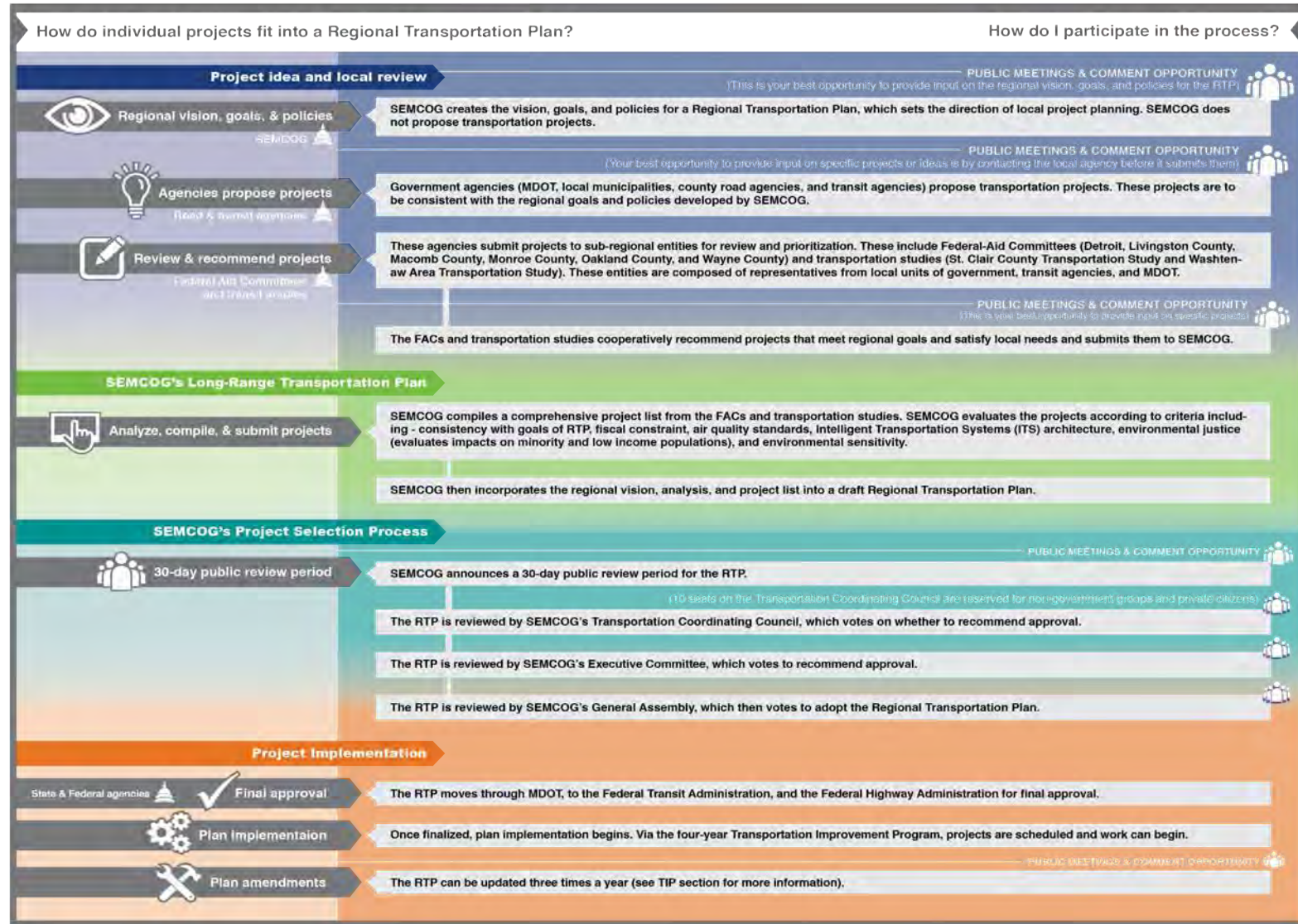
The complete RTP is available on [www.semco.org/RTP](http://www.semco.org/RTP). The TIP project list, also available on SEMCOG's website ([www.semco.org/transportation-improvement-program-tip](http://www.semco.org/transportation-improvement-program-tip)), allows users to find

all approved projects. Proposed project additions and deletions are available for review on SEMCOG's website during public comment periods. More specific information about the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan and how to participate are provided in SEMCOG's [Guide to Transportation Planning](#). There are numerous federal and state laws, rules, and policies that impact both the level of funding available and how that funding can be used. Allocation of transportation dollars must adhere to the requirements of the federal or state agency that grants funding. *Learn more at [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing\\_book/index.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/index.cfm).*



Figure 8

## Detailed Process for Regional Transportation Plan





## Southeast Michigan Transportation Safety Plan

Southeast Michigan's success in maximizing the mobility of people and goods depends upon making the transportation system as safe and efficient as possible. The *Southeast Michigan Transportation Safety Plan* identifies the region's key safety needs and guides investment decisions to achieve significant reductions in fatalities and serious injuries. It is a data-driven, four-to-five year comprehensive plan that establishes regional goals, objectives, and key emphasis areas; it integrates the four Es of safety: engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services – and the Safe System Approach elements – safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds, and post-crash care. Like the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Southeast Michigan*, the document is incorporated into the *Regional Transportation Plan* and *Transportation Improvement Program*. Learn more at <https://www.semcoq.org/safety>.

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Policies in the *Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan* (RTP) are implemented through projects in the *Transportation Improvement Program*. Opportunities to amend the TIP occur three to five times a year to ensure it remains consistent with changing priorities and conditions. Synchronized with RTP updates (when applicable), project additions and deletions for the TIP may be submitted to SEMCOG several times per year by the region's FACs and transportation studies. Upon approval, SEMCOG submits them to the Michigan Department of Transportation. Approved TIP projects can be found on SEMCOG's [website](#). Proposed project additions and deletions are available for review on SEMCOG's website during minimum 15-day public comment periods. More specific information about the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan and how to participate is provided in SEMCOG's *Guide to Transportation Planning*. SEMCOG's public participation process for Southeast Michigan's Transportation Improvement Program satisfies the Federal Transit Administration's public participation process for public transit agencies receiving federal funding in the SEMCOG region. Learn more at <https://www.semcoq.org/plans-for-the-region/transportation/transportation-improvement-program-tip>.

## Unified Work Program and SEMCOG Budget

The Work Program and Budget describes the work to be accomplished by SEMCOG and its partner agencies in a given fiscal year, and includes the budgets and funding sources. This document is designed to respond to needs of the region as identified by SEMCOG membership. As the work program is implemented, many of the resulting products are developed with input from SEMCOG task forces and its Transportation Coordinating Council. Plans are approved at the Executive Committee and/or General Assembly. SEMCOG's meeting structure provides ample opportunity for input from a variety of interested parties through diverse membership and meetings, which are open to the public; include public comment opportunities; are posted on SEMCOG's web and social media sites; and are featured in *Regional Update*, SEMCOG's biweekly newsletter. Learn more at <https://www.semcoq.org/what-we-do>.

## Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan

As the designated water quality management agency for Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG has been actively involved with water resource planning since the 1970s. The most recent *Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan* builds upon two prior plans – the 1978 and 1999 Water Quality Management Plans for Southeast Michigan. While this plan builds upon these plans and ongoing

regional initiatives, its focus is on integrated water resources management, including advancing the blue economy, natural resource protection and enhancement, and water infrastructure systems. This plan focuses on the major aspects of water planning in Southeast Michigan – the Blue Economy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure. It emphasizes an integrated water resource planning approach to restore and improve water resources, as well as identify efficiencies and optimize investments to protect public health in the region. The [\*Water Infrastructure Policies and Actions\*](#) articulate the timely need for action and specific opportunities to address. This work builds upon the 2018 *Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan*. Learn more at <https://www.semcog.org/water> and <https://www.semcog.org/wipg>.

## Strategies and Tools

The *Public Participation Plan* documents how individuals can participate in major plans for which SEMCOG is responsible. This section documents the many tools available to SEMCOG for engaging the public. The list of strategies and tools continually evolves.

### Educate and Publicize

SEMCOG informs the public on regional issues, visioning, and decision-making. The goal is to create a shared vision through two-way interaction. SEMCOG also works to increase awareness and promote participation by reaching out to regional stakeholders and the general public using a variety of tools. A key component of this public involvement activity is assisting members in meeting their public involvement obligations. Because it is most effective working with local governments (e.g., township boards, city councils, and county road commissions), SEMCOG works with these entities to help identify projects of local concern and benefit.

#### Articles by staff experts

SEMCOG articles enable staff to share information and analysis on issues important to the organization and its members. These issues include transportation, environment, community and economic development, regional data, and member accomplishments. Articles are easily accessible from the home page of SEMCOG's website or directly at [www.semco.org/blog](http://www.semco.org/blog); there is also a subscription feature that allows those who subscribe to receive notification when a new article is posted. Blogs are posted on social media and can also be mentioned in SEMCOG's biweekly newsletter, *Regional Update*.

#### Data visualization

SEMCOG Data and Maps feature an array of interactive maps with multimedia content to tell the story of a particular set of data or a specific initiative. Examples of resources include SEMCOG's Crash Locations map, which can be customized by users for crash locations, crash severity; year, month, weekday, and time; road characteristics; and type/key facts; and the Community Explorer map, which enables the user to view and sort data from SEMCOG's popular Community Profiles in a more robust way. Access this information at <https://www.semco.org/data-and-maps>.

#### Encourage individual actions, aka "What You Can Do" initiatives

SEMCOG's What You Can Do programs offer information on

- **Shop Local** – SEMCOG works with our member communities to promote investment in the local economy. Shop Local videos show a glimpse a few of the countless shopping, dining, and entertainment experiences available to Southeast Michigan's residents and visitors. In partnership with member communities, these videos help

<p>efforts to encourage specific individual actions that complement its planning work (<a href="https://www.semcog.org/what-you-can-do">https://www.semcog.org/what-you-can-do</a>).</p>	<p>promote the shopping, dining, and entertainment options throughout the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protect Our Waterways</b> (Stormwater) – SEMCOG has created and promotes a public education campaign to assist local governments in meeting federal requirements for stormwater public education. Six key messages for the general public reinforce awareness of water quality issues and actions that the public can take to improve water quality in the region.</li> <li>• <b>One Water</b> – This program builds on SEMCOG’s prior success with stormwater education. It was created to attain a greater public awareness and shared responsibility for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater. The goal is to educate people throughout the region that by taking care of and investing in our interrelated water systems, we can keep our water fresh and flowing. By working with partners throughout the region and through the use of various media tools, One Water has brought education on this critical topic to millions of residents.</li> <li>• <b>Improve Your Commute</b> (Commuter Connect) – This program is designed to help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by reducing the number of vehicles on the road. SEMCOG provides a free online matching service for people interested in sharing the ride to work or using other alternative commutes. Media campaigns, such as the Commuter Challenge, promote this service to the public.</li> <li>• <b>Keep the Air Clean</b> (Ozone Action) – This program announces Ozone Action days when weather conditions are likely to combine with pollution to create elevated amounts of ground-level ozone, a threat to human health and the environment. On those days, individuals are requested to participate in voluntary emissions reduction initiatives (e.g., carpooling) to keep air cleaner in their corner of the world. Announcements are made via the media, SEMCOG’s website and social media pages, and via local member governments’ websites.</li> <li>• <b>Walk.Bike.Drive. Safe</b> – Pedestrians and bicyclists are much more likely to suffer an injury or fatality in a traffic crash than vehicle occupants. Via various media tools such as video and social media, this program promotes actions for people who walk, bike, and drive to keep Southeast Michigan’s roads safer for all travelers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Federal-Aid Committee (FAC) meetings</b></p>	<p>These county-level organizations recommend all county, city, and village transportation projects for funding (the City of Detroit also has a federal-aid committee). Their scheduled meetings represent a major decision point in the transportation planning process. SEMCOG works with and provides funding to these committees to help publicize and facilitate public</p>

	involvement. Information on FACs can be found on <a href="https://semcog.org/federal-aid-committees">https://semcog.org/federal-aid-committees</a> .
<b>Glossary of transportation terms and acronyms</b>	A comprehensive glossary of transportation terms is available on SEMCOG's <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Guide to Transportation Planning</b>	<i>A Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan</i> has been developed, revised, and widely distributed by SEMCOG, local member governments, transportation study areas, and transit agencies throughout the region. The guide explains the transportation planning process in simplified terms, identifies the critical public input opportunities, and describes transportation funding sources. This guide is also available on SEMCOG's website ( <a href="http://www.semcog.org/publications">www.semcog.org/publications</a> ).
<b>Infographics</b>	Complex, numerical messages, or information can often best be represented by a combination of words and graphics. Infographics can draw attention to a meaningful piece of information. They can be used in print and online publications as well as social media.
<b>Information requests</b>	SEMCOG assists its members and the public in accessing regional planning information. All SEMCOG publications are available to the public, both on the website and in printed form, upon request. Trained staff monitors requests to SEMCOG's Information Center accessible to the public via phone (313-324-3330) and email ( <a href="mailto:infocenter@semcog.org">infocenter@semcog.org</a> ). Response time is most often within 24 hours of receipt of request for information.
<b>In-person contact</b>	In many instances, the best way to reach a key audience is by direct, in-person contact. This can mean meetings, visits, impromptu conversations at events, etc. A phone call, text, or personal email can achieve a similar result.
<b>Lobby display</b>	In SEMCOG's 14th floor public access lobby, this video display provides timely information about SEMCOG to members/visitors.
<b>Local board meetings</b>	SEMCOG encourages citizens to become aware of agenda items coming before their local governing bodies. Local planning begins at these meetings, and public involvement is an important part of the local process. Often, these meetings are broadcast on community television, which means the content reaches a larger audience than those who are in attendance. This process is outlined in SEMCOG's <i>Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan</i> .

<b>Marketing material – printed</b>	Physical products, such as posters and brochures, can be produced to disseminate key messages. Available in multiple languages, these assets are beneficial for sending a message to a broader audience, and enhance our value with members and partners. They are also useful electronically on the web and social media.
<b>Media advisories</b>	These are notifications to the media of impending SEMCOG public meetings (e.g., Transportation Coordinating Council, Executive Committee, General Assembly). They are invitations to the media to attend the meeting and report on the proceedings. Media advisories are also posted on SEMCOG’s website and on social media.
<b>Media relations</b>	<p>It is important to develop working relationships with local media, and SEMCOG has done that.</p> <p>SEMCOG’s website, designed to facilitate quick access to SEMCOG data, is regularly used by reporters. In addition to print media coverage, SEMCOG also appears on television and radio. Appearances on public affairs talk shows, both on local network affiliates and cable, and public service announcements are effective ways to get messages to a large number of people. Increasingly, we have also engaged our member local governments in placing messages on their websites, along with speaking at televised city council and township board meetings, and using our social media channels for all announcements.</p>
<b>News conference</b>	A news conference is a scheduled event that gathers the media together to disseminate specific information. News conferences should be carefully considered and only used in very important instances.
<b>News releases</b>	<p>News releases are developed by SEMCOG on a regular basis announcing important regional information. The distribution list includes a wide range of local and regional newspapers, including those that cover the region’s diverse populations. News releases are also posted on SEMCOG’s website and social media pages.</p> <p>Media coverage of SEMCOG activities, including transportation planning, is evident throughout the region. A top priority is to reach the region’s diverse populations, and especially groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in the transportation planning process. We continually seek additional electronic media sources to help deliver our messages.</p>
<b>Newsletters</b>	Along with <i>Regional Update</i> (see description below), issue-area newsletters such as <i>Environmental Exchange</i> are a



	useful way to target messages to a particular group of stakeholders.
<b>Opinion articles</b>	With initiatives where increased visibility to important opinion leaders such as legislators and the public is the strategy, getting our standpoint directly into media publications with a letter or an op-ed is a strong approach. It is necessary to have a very strong message to present. These opinion articles can also be used on social media.
<b>Podcasts</b>	SEMCOG's Regional Ahead podcast enables SEMCOG to engage in conversations on issues important to the organization and its members in a conversational tone. This podcast is easily accessible from the home page of SEMCOG's website ( <a href="http://www.semco.org/podcast">www.semco.org/podcast</a> ); subscription to the podcast is available on the primary platforms for the medium that allows those who subscribe to receive notification when a new podcast is posted. Podcasts are posted on social media and mentioned in SEMCOG's biweekly newsletter, <i>Regional Update</i> . Transcripts are available on the webpage.
<b>Portable display panels</b>	These panels are for use inside or outside of the office. They are portable. They are used to display special messages and/or pictures that help illustrate concepts, programs, and events.
<b>Presentations</b>	In many instances, the best way to reach a key audience is to stand before them and present the information. This can be done via PowerPoint or other tools.
<b>Project-specific public involvement</b>	Some projects require more in-depth study and, as part of the study process, stakeholder meetings and hearings are conducted. These types of public meetings and public hearings are promoted via SEMCOG's website, public notices, newsletters, partner communications, social media, and sometimes via paid promotion. Many of the studies are monitored by SEMCOG. Information on many specific projects can be obtained on SEMCOG's website or by emailing, calling, or writing SEMCOG's Information Center.
<b>Public notices</b>	<p>Public notices at SEMCOG typically fall into two categories – public meeting notices and public comment period.</p> <p><b>Public meetings</b> are announced via a public notice (and other appropriate tools, e.g., social media) for regional plans and other initiatives. These meetings seek specific input on regional plans before the plan is drafted, usually begin with a presentation, and conclude with interaction and comments from those attending. Findings inform plan development.</p>

	<p>A <b>public comment period</b> is announced for regional plans, amendments to those plans, and the annual budget and work program.</p> <p>The timing for a public notice is 30 days before a SEMCOG plan is formally adopted, 45 days for the <i>Public Participation Plan</i>, and 15 days for RTP and TIP amendments. The public notice includes dates/times for all meetings where the plan will be discussed and voted upon, as well as information on other ways to comment. Public notices are mailed to the entire SEMCOG mailing list, included in <i>Regional Update</i>, and posted in SEMCOG's office, website, and on social media.</p>
<b>Public outreach</b>	<p>A top priority is reaching the region's diverse populations, especially groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in the transportation planning process. We are improving our visibility in the areas where these populations reside with public education initiatives, special mailings, and television appearances. SEMCOG develops and maintains relationships with groups representing diverse populations.</p>
<b>Reaching persons with special needs</b>	<p>SEMCOG has established procedures to make information available to those with special needs. SEMCOG meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations. All meeting agendas and notices contain information on how individuals with disabilities requiring assistance can request reasonable accommodations at meetings, including sign-language interpreters. SEMCOG's website is compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. SEMCOG has also translated documents, including the Regional Transportation Plan, into Spanish, Arabic, and Braille, and will continue to do so upon request.</p>
<b>Regional Update newsletter</b>	<p>SEMCOG's biweekly <i>Regional Update</i> newsletter is the organization's primary member communication vehicle. It provides timely information, such as notice of SEMCOG meetings, SEMCOG Universities, reports, grant opportunities, data, news releases, public notices, legislative updates, items of regional interest, membership information (e.g., new members, member accomplishments, members in the news, etc.). <i>Regional Update</i> is sent to SEMCOG members as well as other stakeholders and the media; recent issues and a subscription link are also available on our website.</p>
<b>Reports and Quick Facts</b>	<p>All regional plans are electronically housed on <a href="http://www.semco.org">www.semco.org</a>. The Quick Facts report is used mostly for data analysis reports which tend to be shorter.</p>
<b>SEMCOG meetings</b>	<p>SEMCOG holds meetings on a regular basis, including but not limited to its General Assembly, Executive Committee, other</p>

	committees, and various task forces. Building on a tradition of involving the public in planning decisions, SEMCOG facilitates coordination of the region's stakeholders in developing regional plans and policies. As these plans and policies are developed and updated, draft versions presented to SEMCOG's General Assembly, Executive Committee, and task forces are available on SEMCOG's website, social media, and upon request. Agendas convey the content of the meeting and are posted on SEMCOG's website, on social media, and sent to the media. All meetings are open to the public. NOTE: All voting on SEMCOG policy must be conducted in-person, in keeping with Michigan's Open Meetings Act. Virtual meeting access is often available, but voting must take place in person.
<b>SEMCOG University workshops and webinars</b>	SEMCOG University is a series of free workshops for local elected leaders and others. SEMCOG members can take advantage of a variety of training opportunities free-of-charge, close to home, and in several formats, including webinars. Many of these training workshops focus on transportation-related topics. All are announced in advance using a variety of tools and are open to the public. SEMCOG's website features a schedule of upcoming events and recordings, when possible. <i>Learn more at <a href="https://semcog.org/semcog-university">https://semcog.org/semcog-university</a>.</i>
<b>Social media</b>	SEMCOG uses Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to engage and educate regional stakeholders. SEMCOG considers other forms of social media as they are developed, and as they are appropriate for the messages and conversations we want to have with the public.
<b>Speakers' bureau</b>	SEMCOG's trained staff makes public presentations regarding the regional planning process to groups upon request. Using maps identifying geographic concentrations of populations protected by Environmental Justice regulations, SEMCOG continues making contact with groups representing those traditionally underrepresented in the planning process. SEMCOG requests time at regularly scheduled meetings to make presentations on regional issues. Comments are solicited and recorded.
<b>Special mailings</b>	SEMCOG has a comprehensive mailing list of interested parties in regional planning. All people who comment or provide input to SEMCOG are added to the mailing list. Special mailings regarding public meetings and events are mailed to those who have asked for information. In addition, various organizations and persons who represent the region's diverse populations were added to the list.

<b>Targeted email</b>	<p>SEMCOG uses Informz/Higher Logic, an email marketing tool, to send mailings to a range of audiences. It has a variety of advantages, including targeting of specific groups, tracking of analytics, archiving of messages as webpages, and website-like formatting options.</p>
<b>Video</b>	<p>Use of video to send SEMCOG messages has increased in recent years. It has been used tell the story of regional plans such as the <i>Parks and Recreation Plan</i>, <i>Regional Transportation Plan</i>, and <i>Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan</i> as well as comprising an integral part of SEMCOG's public education campaigns. Videos are housed on SEMCOG's YouTube channel and shared widely on social media and community TV stations.</p>
<b>Website</b>	<p>SEMCOG's website is the ultimate repository of most of the tools described here, containing important information about SEMCOG data, policies, and projects. All of SEMCOG's policy documents and technical reports are available on the website, and most can be downloaded in PDF. Hard copies of all SEMCOG publications are available upon request. The website includes information found in <i>Regional Update</i> and SEMCOG news releases, such as upcoming policy actions. Promoting materials in other tools is designed to drive the reader back to the website to read the complete document or for additional information. Items that are new on the website should be promoted via the other tools to, in turn, drive readers back to <a href="http://www.semco.org">www.semco.org</a>. The website calendar includes public meetings and workshops held by SEMCOG. Public notices are posted on the website home page carousel.</p>

## Listen

In addition to providing information to the public, SEMCOG is also interested in obtaining specific input on regional issues, visioning, and decision-making. Collaborative discussions have the most influence during the earliest phases of planning work.

<b>Community visioning</b>	SEMCOG occasionally holds community visioning sessions designed to receive input on transportation and other issues from the public at-large. These sessions have proven to be effective in creating interest in transportation planning among the public. All such meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times and are well publicized by SEMCOG, via mass mailing, on website, and on social media.
<b>Email</b>	SEMCOG's public involvement opportunities include an email address – <a href="mailto:infocenter@semcog.org">infocenter@semcog.org</a> - where comments regarding regional issues can be made. SEMCOG will continue to provide a variety of ways for the public to comment on transportation and other regional issues.
<b>Meetings and office hours</b>	All SEMCOG meetings open to the public are posted at SEMCOG's offices, announced in <i>Regional Update</i> , posted on the website, and available through SEMCOG's social media vehicles. SEMCOG staff are available to meet and discuss regional data and planning topics via "office hours" when meeting time is not sufficient. This availability may be promoted via SEMCOG media tools in the midst of participation processes, though requests can be made anytime to <a href="mailto:infocenter@semcog.org">infocenter@semcog.org</a> .
<b>Official public comment processes</b>	SEMCOG conducts formal public comment processes by publicizing public comment periods and meetings related to developing and amending documents such as the <i>Regional Transportation Plan</i> , <i>Transportation Improvement Program</i> , <i>Public Participation Plan</i> , and <i>Annual Operating Budget and Work Program Summary</i> . The processes are described in detail in the Understanding and Participating in SEMCOG's Planning Activities section of this document.
<b>Project-specific public involvement</b>	Some projects require more in-depth public involvement to directly inform the plan. In those instances, project-specific public forums and/or meetings may be held. The purpose of these meetings is to gather specific information related to the topic/plan to be used in creating the plan.
<b>Public comment periods at SEMCOG business meetings</b>	All SEMCOG meetings are public meetings and are publicized on SEMCOG's website. Citizens are invited to comment at the beginning of each of these meetings during the established

	<p>“Public Comment” agenda item. All SEMCOG meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations.</p>
<b>Surveys</b>	<p>SEMCOG utilizes surveys in a number of ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Pulse of the Region”</b> surveys are used to regularly engage the public on topics related to SEMCOG programs and initiatives. It allows SEMCOG to create news by publicizing the survey, getting the public to participate, and reporting the results. It further enables SEMCOG to engage its members to help promote these surveys through their communication channels. Typically, surveys remain open for one-two months. Results are used as input into appropriate plans.</li> <li>• <b>Membership surveys</b> are conducted by SEMCOG every other year. These surveys help to evaluate SEMCOG member satisfaction with SEMCOG services as well which regional issues are of most relevance.</li> <li>• <b>Evaluation surveys</b> are distributed to gauge interest, experiences, and satisfaction for SEMCOG events.</li> <li>• <b>Specially targeted and/or statistically significant surveys</b> are conducted by research consultants to reveal more detailed perceptions on regional issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Social media</b>	<p>As described above, SEMCOG sends information on social media. SEMCOG also monitors engagement (including comments) on social media to learn more about perspectives and respond to concerned stakeholders.</p>
<b>Web-based meetings and Tele-Town Halls</b>	<p>SEMCOG may use telecommunications-based tools, such as Zoom, to complement the traditional in-person public meeting.</p>



## Evaluate

SEMCOG evaluates the public involvement process, ensuring that SEMCOG is effective in facilitating full and open access to the regional planning process for all citizens. SEMCOG continues to add tools to its public involvement process as technology evolves and as appropriate to SEMCOG's mission.

<b>Annual documentation</b>	Annual public involvement efforts are documented in SEMCOG's Work Program Completion Report.
<b>Evaluation surveys</b>	See above in "Surveys" under "Listen."
<b>Focus groups</b>	A focus group is a group of people who have been brought together to discuss a particular subject in order to solve a problem or suggest ideas. SEMCOG may use focus groups in developing plans or other initiatives, such as its website.
<b>Media metrics</b>	SEMCOG evaluates the success of its various media tools (social media, video, targeted email, etc.) using various metrics. These may include views, open rates, comments, clicks, likes, etc.
<b>SEMconnect</b>	SEMCOG's membership database enables recording of all public comments that can be easily extracted in a multitude of ways for individual projects. All public comments and interactions (public meetings, focus groups, etc.) are recorded in this database.

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## Plan Availability

This plan, like all SEMCOG plans, is available on SEMCOG's website ([www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org)) in the [Publications Database](#), with printed copies and translations available upon request.

## **SEMCOG Officers 2023-2024**

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