

# NATS

DRAFT FOR  
PUBLIC  
COMMENT



Fiscal Year  
2026



SWMPC

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION

## Acknowledgements

The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f) of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation

## Title VI Assurance

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) hereby gives public notice that it is the organization's policy to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any Federal Aid Highway program or other activity for which the SWMPC receives Federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the SWMPC. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the SWMPC Title VI Coordinator within one hundred, eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint Forms may be obtained from the SWMPC office, on the website at

[https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/title\\_vi\\_complaint\\_form\\_1.pdf](https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/title_vi_complaint_form_1.pdf) at no cost to the complainant, by calling John Egelhaaf at (269) 925-1137.

## Accessibility Accommodations

Accommodations are available upon request to persons with disabilities who require alternately formatted materials to ensure effective communication and access to programs. For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations, please contact Kimberly Gallagher at 269-925-1137 or [gallagherk@swmpc.org](mailto:gallagherk@swmpc.org)

## Please Contact SWMPC for Questions, Concerns, or Comments

376 W. Main Street  
Suite 130  
Benton Harbor, Michigan, 49022  
(269) 925-1137  
[info@swmpc.org](mailto:info@swmpc.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	4
Federal Requirements and Planning Factors .....	5
NATS Study Planning Area and Membership.....	8
Federal Transportation Legislation – State and MPO Impacts.....	10
State Planning Emphasis Areas .....	13
Local Transportation Planning Initiatives.....	14
Unified Funding Sources.....	20
Work Elements and Budget.....	22
1 Program Administration/Coordination .....	24
1.1 Program Management and Support .....	24
1.2 Interagency Coordination .....	26
1.3 Professional Development and Technical Training .....	28
1.4 Unified Work Program (UWP).....	29
1.5 Air Quality Conformity .....	30
2 DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING .....	31
2.1 Transportation System Data Collection .....	31
2.2 Data Mapping and Analysis .....	33
2.3 Asset Management.....	34
2.4 Functional Classification System Updates .....	38
2 Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting.....	39
2.1 Transportation System Data Collection .....	39
2.2 Data Mapping, Analysis, and Reporting.....	41
2.3 Asset Management .....	42
2.4 Functional Classification System Updates .....	47
2.5 Travel Demand Modeling.....	48
3 Transportation Planning.....	49
3.1 Planning Technical Support to MPO Members.....	49
3.2 Public and Stakeholder Outreach .....	51
3.3 Transportation System Security & Emergency Preparedness .....	52
3.4 Human Services Transportation Coordination.....	53
3.5 Long Range Transportation Planning .....	54
4 Transportation Improvement Program .....	56
4.1 TIP Amendments.....	56
4.2 Obligation Status Monitoring and Reporting.....	58
5 Safe and Accessible Multimodal Planning .....	59
5.1 Safe and Accessible Multimodal Planning .....	59
APPENDICES.....	60
Appendix A: Resolution of Approval.....	60
Appendix B: NATS Committee Members .....	61
Appendix C: NATS MPO Staff .....	63
Appendix D: Comments on the Draft 2026 Unified Work Program .....	64
Appendix E: Cost Allocation Plan and Indirect Cost Rate .....	65
Appendix G Non-Discrimination Policy Statement .....	78
<b>Appendix H: Subrecipient Risk Assessment .....</b>	<b>80</b>



# INTRODUCTION

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are federally designated entities responsible for transportation planning in urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or more. Their primary role is to develop long-range plans and prioritize transportation projects to qualify for federal transportation funding. The South Bend Urbanized Area is unique in that it is served by two MPOs. The Indiana portion, including South Bend and Elkhart, is managed by the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). Meanwhile, the Michigan portion—known as the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Urbanized Area—is overseen by the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS), which is staffed by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC). SWMPC serves as the federally recognized planning agency for the Michigan section of the South Bend and Elkhart Urbanized Area.

In November 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law. This \$1.2 trillion, five-year legislation authorizes substantial investment in the nation's roads, bridges, public transit, and rail systems through 2026. The IIJA continues and expands upon the programs initiated under previous federal surface transportation laws such as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). It emphasizes flexible, performance-based planning to meet current and future transportation challenges.

As required by the IIJA and earlier regulations, MPOs must develop a Unified Work Program (UWP) each fiscal year. The FY 2026 UWP outlines all federally funded transportation planning activities to be carried out in the NATS planning area by SWMPC. The UWP facilitates coordination among local, regional, and state partners, and serves as a prerequisite for receiving federal transportation planning funds. Additionally, it functions as a vital management tool, enabling SWMPC to allocate resources effectively and ensure compliance with federal planning requirements.

Funding for MPO activities is primarily provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), supplemented by a 20% local match contributed by MPO member agencies. This cost-sharing arrangement is mandated by federal law and is distributed equitably among participating members, who also appoint representatives to the NATS MPO's Technical and Policy Committees.

Under federal law (23 USC §134), MPOs must implement a "3C" planning process—continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive—while ensuring their plans and programs address national transportation priorities. The FY 2026 UWP has been developed in alignment with both federal and state planning requirements and incorporates strategies to address the ten federal planning factors and the seven national goals established under the Federal-Aid Highway Program.

## **Federal Requirements and Planning Factors**

Federal legislation governing the MPO process (23 USC 134) requires MPOs to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process, and provide consideration and implementation of projects, strategies and services that will address the federal planning factors as specified in the IIJA and previously in the FAST Act and MAP 21. The transportation planning activities and budget for the 2065 UPWP are developed to address these factors and other state and federal requirements.

### **Federal Planning Factors**

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

### **Federal-Aid Highway Program Goals:**

1. Safety
2. Infrastructure Condition
3. Congestion Reduction
4. System Reliability
5. Freight Movement and Economic Vitality
6. Environmental Sustainability
7. Reduced Project Delivery Delays

Each of these areas is addressed through various work program tasks/subtasks included for FY 2026, as shown in the table below:

FAST Act Planning Factors	Economic Vitality	Improve Safety	Increase System Security	Increase Access & Mobility	Environment, Energy, & Quality of Life	System Integration Across Modes	Efficient System Operation	System Preservation	Resiliency & Reliability	Travel & Tourism
Program Administration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Air Quality Conformity					x					
Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting										
Transportation System Data Collection	x	x		x			x	x	x	x
Data Mapping, Analysis, and Reporting	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Asset Management	x	x		x			x	x	x	
Functional Classification System Updates							x	x	x	
Transportation Planning										
Planning Technical Support to MPO Members	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Non-Motorized Planning	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ)				x	x	x	x			
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)		x					x	x		
Transit Planning	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Long Range Transportation Planning										
	x									
Environmental Quality					x					
Freight Planning	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Performance measures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Travel Demand Model	x			x	x				x	x
Technological Innovation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Economic Development Linkage	x									
Public and Stakeholder Outreach							x			
Special Plans and Studies										
Human Services Transportation Coordination			x	x	x	x	x			
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

To achieve these tasks the NATS MPO works closely with partner agencies including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), local elected leadership, local planning and public works directors, the business community, and citizens across the jurisdictions within the metropolitan planning area. As part of the planning process, the MPO develops the region's long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). SWMPC staff serve as a guide regarding the MPO process and requirements. All project funding decisions are made by local officials through an open public meeting process at NATS.

The NATS Fiscal Year 2026 Unified Work Program (UWP) describes all of the transportation and supporting planning activities that are anticipated to be carried out by NATS staff during the period of October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026. This document is adopted annually in cooperation with MDOT, and MPO members to ensure that the most pressing regional transportation issues within the planning region are being addressed.

The UWP includes:

- A detailed description of the programs, projects, and tasks that the MPO plans to undertake in FY 2026.
- A budget for how much funding will be assigned to each program area.
- Deadlines for completion of the deliverable items in each task.
- A listing of resources (partner agencies or otherwise) that the MPO will use to accomplish the tasks.

## NATS Study Planning Area and Membership

At a minimum, a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) must cover the urbanized area and contiguous geographic areas likely to become urbanized within the next 20 years. The Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) covers the Michigan portion of the South Bend, Indiana, urbanized area and the Elkhart, Indiana urbanized area as designated by the United States Census. The NATS planning area is defined by an area that includes communities in both Berrien and Cass Counties. The NATS MPO includes the following jurisdictions who each have voting representation on the NATS Policy Committee:

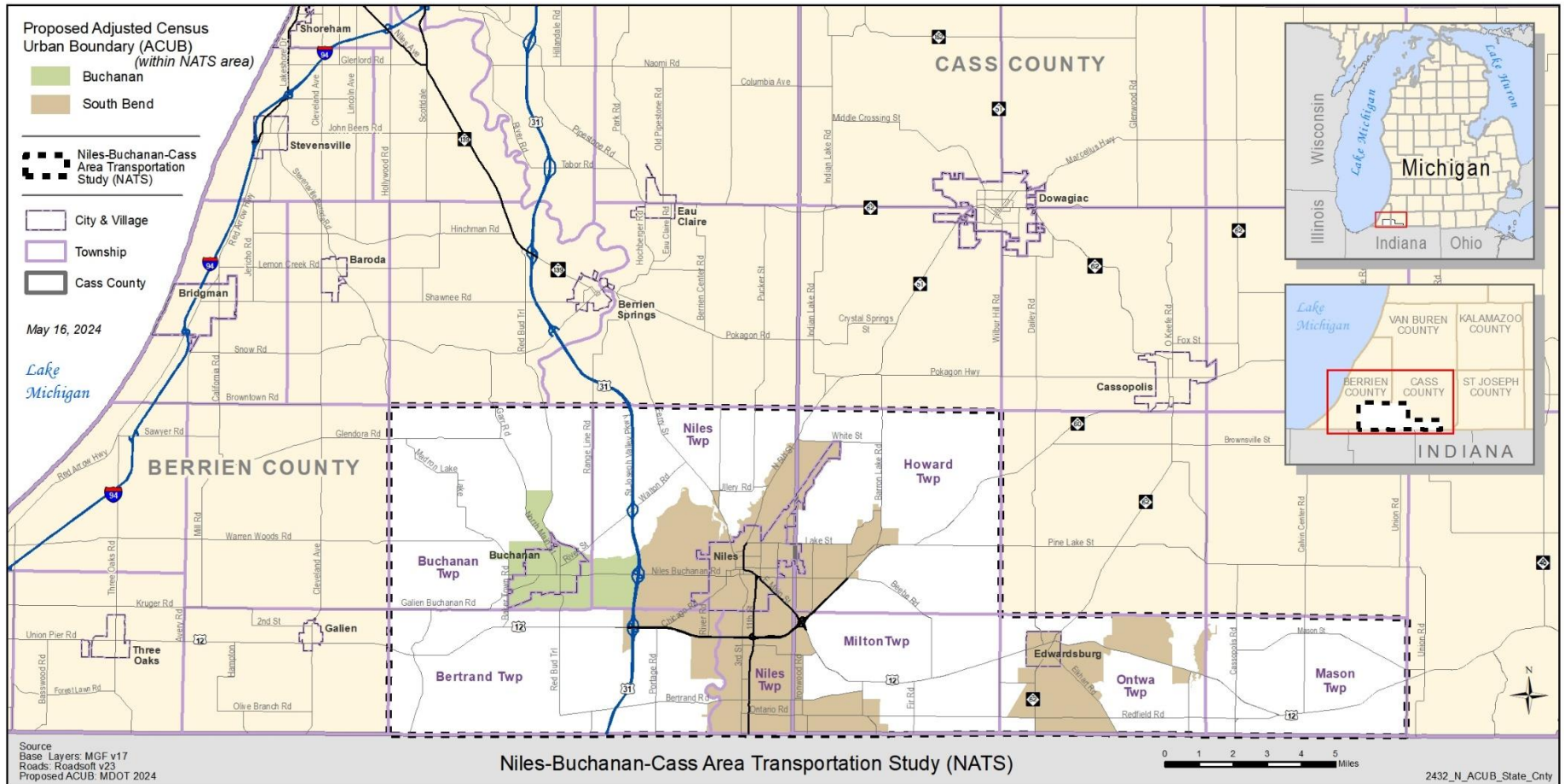
Cities/Villages:	Townships:
City of Buchanan	Bertrand Charter
City of Niles	Buchanan Charter
Village of Edwardsburg	Howard Charter
	Mason
	Milton
	Niles Charter
	Ontwa

In addition, the following agencies are voting members of the NATS Policy Committee:

- **The Berrien County Road Department and Cass County Road Commission:** The agencies that maintain roads on behalf of townships within Berrien or Cass County. The Berrien County Road Department is represented on the Policy Committee by the Berrien County Board of Commissioners.
- **Public Transit Providers:** Include **Niles Dial A Ride**, a designated urbanized public transit provider serving the City of Niles, Niles Township, City of Buchanan and portions of Buchanan Township.
- **Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce:** An economic development agency for the greater Niles area
- **Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT):** Has voting representatives from the Coloma Service Center, the Southwest Region Office, and Statewide Planning
- **Berrien County and Cass County:** Are each represented by members of the county planning commission, and board of commissioners.
- **The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians:** Has territory in the NATS planning area (currently no active representative).

A map of the NATS planning area is shown on the following page





# FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION – STATE AND MPO IMPACTS

The IIJA is a five-year surface transportation bill that includes \$550 billion in new Federal investment over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 for infrastructure, including roads, bridges, mass transit, water, and broadband. Some of the policy changes included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that directly affect the Metropolitan Planning Program are reflected in the following sections:

## **Metro Planning (Section 11201)**

- **Public Participation** Encourages MPOs to use social media and web-based tools to foster public participation and to solicit public feedback during the transportation planning process.
- **Housing** Encourages MPOs to better coordinate transportation planning with housing, including housing as a planning factor in the scope of planning, as part of optional scenario planning.
- **Travel demand data and modeling (Section 11205)** Requires DOT to support State/MPO travel demand data and modeling, including a study, data, and an evaluation tool.
- **Increasing Safe and Accessible Transportation Options (Section 11206)** Requires MPOs to use  $\geq 2.5\%$  of funds apportioned for Metropolitan Planning (PL) to carry out activities to increase safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes for people of all ages and abilities, including adoption of Complete Street Standards or policies, development of a Complete Streets prioritization plan, and other planning documents that achieve these goals.

## **Priorities Based on Federal Requirements.**

The UWP is one of several NATS planning documents referred to as a core document. This classification signifies that an MPO must produce or approve a document to receive federal and state funding. NATS core documents include the Unified Work Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan, Public Participation Plan, Human Services Transportation Plan, Title VI Program, Performance measures, Transit Asset Management Plan, and Public Transit Agency Safety Plan. These documents are integral to shaping tasks and activities throughout the year. Below are the FY 2026 priorities for CUUATS staff based on federal requirements:

- Develop the Draft and Final UWP FY 2027

- Develop the draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2055
- Track and publicly document the progress of the performance measures in the Performance Measures Report Card
- Amend (as needed) the Transportation Improvement Program FY 2026-2029
- Develop the FY 2025 Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects
- Track and document federal performance measures
- Update the Public Participation Plan

The table below identifies the various planning documents and their associated timelines.

Planning Document	Website Address	Update Period	Current Adoption/ Completion	Next Review Adoption/ Completion
Unified Work Program	<a href="https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_uwp_2025final.pdf">https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_uwp_2025final.pdf</a>	Annually	May 2024	May 2026
Long Range Transportation Plan	<a href="https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_2050_long_range_plan_approved.pdf">https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_2050_long_range_plan_approved.pdf</a>	Every 4 Years	June 2023	June 2027
Transportation Improvement Plan	<a href="https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_20232026_tip_final.pdf">https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_20232026_tip_final.pdf</a>	Every 3 Years	June 2022	June 2025
Public Participation Plan	<a href="https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/public_participation_plan_2017_1.pdf">https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/public_participation_plan_2017_1.pdf</a>	Every 5 Years	Updated June 2020	June 2025
Human Services Transportation Plan	<a href="https://michigancoordinationplans.com/region-4">https://michigancoordinationplans.com/region-4</a>	Every 5 Years	Updated June 2024	June 2029
Federally Obligated Projects	<a href="https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_jobnet_obligation_report_2024.pdf">https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_jobnet_obligation_report_2024.pdf</a>	Annually	December 2024	December 2025
Performance Measure Safety Targets	<a href="https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_performance_measures_20241229.pdf">https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_performance_measures_20241229.pdf</a>	Annually	November 2024	November 2025

Planning Document	Website Address	Update Period	Current Adoption/ Completion	Next Review Adoption/ Completion
Performance Measures Pavement and Bridge Targets	<a href="https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_performance_measures_20241229.pdf">https://swmpc.org/downloads/nats_performance_measures_20241229.pdf</a>	Every 2 Years	May 2025	2027
Transit Asset Management Plan	<a href="https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/dart_asset_management_plan_202629_1.pdf">https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/dart_asset_management_plan_202629_1.pdf</a>	Every 4 Years	March 2025	March 2028
Public Transit Safety Plan	<a href="https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/dart_ptasp_july_2024.pdf">https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/dart_ptasp_july_2024.pdf</a>	Annually	March 2025	May 2026

## State Planning Emphasis Areas

Annually, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) issues the planning emphasis areas to be addressed in Michigan's metropolitan planning organizations' future work programs. Each of the Planning Emphasis Areas and has been thoughtfully considered as this UWP was developed. These planning areas are described below:

### State of Michigan Planning Program Emphasis Areas

1. Maintenance of the FY 2026-2029 TIP
  - Incorporation of performance-based planning in project selection
  - Four years of projects listed in TIP (for each MPO program areas)
  - Correct utilization of GPAs, in alignment with the guidance document (should the MPO utilize GPAs)
2. Continued involvement and feedback in JobNet application enhancements
3. Continue to ensure transit projects are accurately shown in the TIP and fiscally constrained. through coordination with local transit agencies and MDOT Office of Passenger Transportation.
4. As needed, continue to review, evaluate, and update public participation plan (PPP) to ensure the following:
  - Clear project map/data listing
  - Consideration of virtual options for public participation
  - Title VI processes and connection to public involvement
  - Ensuring transparency and providing open access to the planning, decision making, and project evaluation & selection processes. These processes should be available to the public and easy to understand (digestible format) on the MPO website.
5. Ensure compliance with Transportation Performance Measures (TPM) requirements, including working with MDOT on data needed to identify how MPO is working to meet adopted targets.
6. Continue to focus on partnerships utilizing a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) approach to transportation planning



## Local Transportation Planning Initiatives

### **Performance-Based Planning and Programming and the Identification of Performance Measures**

MAP-21 requires implementation of performance-based plans and programs, as well as the formal use of performance measures. NATS will work cooperatively with MDOT to set performance measures and targets. To further address this emphasis area, NATS will:

- Stay engaged in Michigan initiatives and national training opportunities.
- Incorporate performance measures and targets into goals and objectives.
- Document the expected benefit of projects in TIPs and LRTPs and how they will contribute to accomplishing performance targets.
- Evaluate the benefits/performance of TIP and LRTP projects to determine progress towards performance targets.
- Better align project selection criteria for TIPs / MTPs with performance measure targets

### **Consideration of Livability and Sustainability in the Transportation Planning Process**

SWMPC staff will continue to work with our transportation partners to analyze access to essential services (employment, health care, schools/education, and recreation). Some methods we may employ to accomplish this are:

- Identify criteria for underserved populations (low income, minorities, elderly, LEP, Disabled) and essential services (health care, schools, supermarkets, employment centers, voting/polling places, courthouses, recreational areas, motor vehicle departments).
- Map existing connectivity.
- Identify gaps in connectivity and create solutions. Develop and implement analytical methods to identify gaps in connectivity in existing and developing transportation systems and determine potential solutions.
- Participation Plans. Evaluate the effectiveness of Participation Plans for engaging disadvantaged communities in the decision-making process.
- Participate in updating the regional Coordinated Human Service Public Transportation Plan as needed.
- Bike/Ped facilities. Assess the safety and condition of bike/pedestrian facilities.
- Evaluate compliance with ADA, particularly around schools, concentrations of disadvantaged populations, social services, medical, and transit facilities.

### **Integration of Housing, Transportation, and Economic Development**

Consult with state and local entities responsible for land use, economic development, housing, management of road networks, or public transit, and other appropriate public or private entities.

Work towards developing regional goals for the integration of housing, transportation, and economic development strategies to:

- Better connect housing and employment while mitigating commuting times.
- Identify the location of existing and planned housing and employment, and transportation options that connect housing and employment.
- Align transportation improvements with housing needs, such as housing supply shortages, and proposed housing development.
- Align housing and transportation planning to address needs related to household incomes within the NATS planning area.

### **Regional Models of Cooperation**

NATS continues to strengthen collaboration among its member jurisdictions on transportation projects. As the designated staff for both the NATS and TwinCATS Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), SWMPC also provides planning services for the rural areas of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. This dual role enables SWMPC to foster coordinated, region-wide transportation planning across urban and rural areas.

Because NATS falls within the South Bend Transportation Management Area (TMA), collaboration with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)—the MPO for that area—is also a priority. These cross-border partnerships help align goals, share resources, and improve connectivity between Michigan and Indiana communities.

In addition to local and regional partnerships, SWMPC works closely with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ensure that all transportation planning complies with state and federal requirements.

Transportation planning conducted through the NATS MPO is one component of SWMPC's broader regional planning responsibilities. This structure creates opportunities for synergy between transportation and other planning disciplines, such as environmental, economic development, health, and community planning, including master plans and recreation plans.

SWMPC actively participates in multiple regional initiatives and partnerships, including the Strategic Leadership Council (SLC), Be Healthy Berrien (BHB), Friends of Berrien County Trails, and other collaborative groups. These initiatives often intersect with transportation planning, benefiting from and contributing to SWMPC's comprehensive understanding of the regional transportation network.

SWMPC is committed to improving coordination among governing agencies, with a focus on aligning planning efforts with measurable performance targets. This alignment strengthens the connection between planning, programming, and implementation.

## **Multimodal Planning**

With federal, state, and MPO member agencies, SWMPC staff will ensure continuing, comprehensive, and collaborative intermodal transportation planning, ensuring that individuals of all social and economic backgrounds have access to the transportation system. Staff will continue its work to improve and expand access to walking and biking infrastructure.

## **Advancing Quality Public Transit Service**

Current public transportation services in Berrien County fall short of meeting the needs of residents, workers, and businesses. Data analysis, community outreach, and previous studies consistently highlight key issues: service is fragmented across four transit agencies, difficult to navigate, often unaffordable, and lacking coverage during critical times and in key areas. Notably, there is no direct transit connection between the county's two largest urban centers—St. Joseph/Benton Harbor and Niles—and 48% of the population in the TwinCATS urbanized area has no access to transit service.

To address these deficiencies, several core needs have been identified:

- **Service Expansion:**  
Nearly half (49%) of the Benton Harbor–St. Joseph urbanized area lacks transit service. There is a clear need to expand coverage countywide, especially in underserved urban and rural activity centers.
- **Improved Communication:**  
Many residents are unaware of existing transportation options. Enhanced communication strategies are necessary to ensure the public can access and understand available services.
- **Greater Connectivity:**  
The system must support seamless travel within and beyond Berrien County by better integrating with other transit modes and regional systems, enabling access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment.
- **Enhanced Service Quality:**  
Current wait times for Dial-a-Ride services—often one to two hours—in Benton Harbor, the City of St. Joseph, Benton Township, and St. Joseph Township are unacceptably long. Reducing these wait times is critical to improving reliability and user experience.
- **Equitable and Efficient Service Design:**  
A countywide transit system must be equitable, effective, and responsive to diverse community needs. This includes designing a mix of services that address the mobility needs of youth, seniors, low-income households, people with disabilities, and choice riders.
- **Securing Local Match Funding:**  
Additional local funding is essential to fully leverage the federal transit funds allocated to the Benton Harbor–St. Joseph Urbanized Area. Without an adequate local match, the region risks leaving federal dollars on the table.

In FY 2026, SWMPC staff will undertake a series of planning activities aimed at addressing these challenges. Efforts will focus on identifying service gaps, evaluating system design alternatives, enhancing coordination among transit providers, and pursuing sustainable funding strategies to improve transit across Berrien County.

### **Preserving the Existing Road Network**

As of 2024, 57 percent of the federal-aid roads within the NATS planning area were rated in poor condition, indicating a significant need for investment to restore pavement quality. In addition, many roads currently classified as being in fair condition are at risk of further deterioration without timely preventative maintenance.

Given these challenges, it is increasingly important for NATS to keep its member jurisdictions informed about pavement conditions, emerging pavement management practices, and available funding opportunities. Ongoing communication and collaboration will be critical to supporting effective maintenance strategies.

To improve and preserve the regional road network, NATS will continue to prioritize projects that offer the greatest benefit and address the most critical needs. Strategic investments will be guided by data and informed by performance measures, which will help evaluate the long-term effectiveness of these efforts.

### **Pavement Data Collection**

For over a decade, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) has led regional efforts to collect pavement condition data on the federal-aid road system. This critical work will continue in FY 2026.

In addition to conducting data collection, SWMPC staff coordinate several key components of the process, including:

- Organizing multi-agency personnel who ride in the data collection vehicle during field surveys
- Determining which segments of the road network will be surveyed
- Administering reimbursements to local agencies for staff participation, when requested
- Processing the collected data internally
- Submitting finalized data to the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC)

SWMPC also works with local jurisdictions to gather pavement data from non-federal roads and forwards that information to TAMC for inclusion in the statewide transportation asset database.

The data collected through these efforts is essential for developing and refining pavement condition performance measures. Monitoring progress toward these measures will help guide future investment decisions and ensure accountability in maintaining the region's road network.

## **HPMS**

MDOT is required to submit Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data to fulfill federal reporting requirements under Title 23 U.S.C. S.315. HPMS has a variety of uses by FHWA, including reports to Congress; transportation performance measures; apportionment of federal highway funds; highway statistics; research; and economic models, among others. MDOT requests MPO assistance with the HPMS process due to relationships with local road agencies and familiarity with the non-trunkline roadway system. Relative to the state's HPMS responsibilities, MPOs will support MDOT in its federal reporting obligations for the HPMS data collection program. MPOs will work with the HPMS team to update the sample file provided by MDOT in September of the year and will be asked to return the updated information by April 1st of the reporting year. The MPO will review sample sections along the non-trunkline roadway system only for data items that need updating. MPOs will attend training, as needed. The MPO may work with local road agencies in the effort to update the sample data.

## **Travel Information Unit**

MPOs will support MDOT by aggregating, compiling, and storing non-trunkline traffic count data which is collected for ease of access by MDOT to that data. MPOs will be made aware of the timetable for the annual HPMS update request to facilitate timely submission of the data. MPOs are asked to provide MDOT each year with a listing of where traffic counts are anticipated to be collected for the MPO program so that MDOT will not duplicate counts at the same locations and the greatest number of traffic counts on non-trunkline and local roads can be accomplished.

## **Model Inventory of Roadway Elements (MIRE)**

Under federal reporting requirements, Model Inventory Roadway Elements (MIRE) Fundamental Data Elements (FDE) is a federal reporting requirement for safety roadway data under federal statute §924.17. MPO and local agency participation in the MIRE data collection process is considered part of the requirements in fulfilling data collection responsibilities to MDOT. MPOs are asked to coordinate with their local agencies and MDOT staff to perform annual maintenance and validation of six (6) data items. The six data items that local agencies and MPO staff will be requested to review will be: surface type, number of through lanes, access control, median type, facility type, and traffic control. The review of these data items will be done in Roadsoft. Deliverables to MDOT will be exported from Roadsoft.

## **Safety Planning**

A core emphasis of the FAST Act is the continual aggressive safety agenda. The MPO has and will continue to coordinate with MDOT regarding their Strategic Highway Safety Plan initiative to develop a regional and local process to identify safety problems by working with the Berrien County Road Department and other local agencies to address those known areas/locations where safety could be improved. This planning process is part of U.S.DOT/ FHWA effort to develop a National Strategy on Highway Safety – Toward Zero Deaths (TZD). The National Strategy is a data-driven effort focusing on



identifying and creating opportunities for changing American culture to improve highway safety through engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services (4 E's). The MPO will continue to advance in the coordination and cooperation with a broad range of multidisciplinary stakeholders to improve conditions for transit, freight, pedestrians, bicycles, and transportation network safety by assisting agencies in applying for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and other related transportation safety funds.

# UNIFIED FUNDING SOURCES

All work, including MPO staff time and consultant studies, listed in the UWP are funded by one or more of the following funding sources.

## **Federal Highway Administration Funding PL-112 and Federal Transit Administration Funding 5303**

NATS receives federal funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for transportation planning.

IIJA legislation requires MPOs to use 2.5% of their PL funds to carry out activities to increase safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes for people of all ages and abilities, including adoption of Complete Street Standards or policies, development of a Complete Streets prioritization plan, and other planning documents that achieve these goals.

## **Local Jurisdiction Funding**

All federal grant funds require at least an 18.15 percent non-federal match. The MPO requests funding from the fourteen participating member jurisdictions on a proportionate fair share basis using the population from the 2020 Bureau of Census population figures. The NATS Technical Committee and Policy Committee are responsible for approving the budget.

### **FY 2026 FHWA & FTA Federal and Local Budget**

Source	Federal	Match	Total
CPG Funds	\$164,665	\$36,514	\$201,179

## FY 2026 Local Match Calculation

Jurisdiction	Population (2020)	Percentage of Total Population	Share of CPG Local Match
Bertrand Township	2,611	4.65%	\$1,698
Buchanan Township	3,436	6.12%	\$2,235
Howard Township	6,275	11.18%	\$4,082
Mason Township	2,841	5.06%	\$1,848
Milton Township	3,128	5.57%	\$2,034
Niles Charter Township	14,417	25.69%	\$9,380
Ontwa Township	5,600	9.98%	\$3,644
City of Buchanan	4,300	7.66%	\$2,797
City of Niles	11,988	21.38%	\$7,807
Village of Edwardsburg	1,304	2.32%	\$847
Pokagon Band	199	0.35%	\$128
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,109</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$36,514</b>

*Source: Population based on 2020 Census*

# WORK ELEMENTS AND BUDGET

To effectively monitor the progress and spending of the NATS MPO, the FY 2026 Unified Work Program (UWP) is organized into five key work categories. Each category reflects a core function necessary for meeting federal requirements and advancing local transportation planning goals.

## 1. Program Administration

This category includes all administrative and support tasks essential for the efficient functioning of the NATS MPO. Activities may include fiscal management, staff coordination, reporting, and general program oversight.

## 2. Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

This work area encompasses the collection of transportation-related data—such as traffic counts—as well as mapping, GIS tasks, and data analysis. It supports decision-making by ensuring timely and accurate reporting and visualization of transportation trends.

## 3. Transportation Planning

This category supports technical assistance to member jurisdictions, public engagement, management of special studies or plans, and updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). It serves as the foundation for future investment decisions.

## 4. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP includes all federally and state-funded transportation projects within the NATS planning area. Work under this category involves selecting and prioritizing projects, preparing the TIP document, tracking project progress, and managing amendments.

## 5. Safe and Accessible Multimodal Planning

This area focuses on planning for non-motorized modes. It includes technical support to local communities, public outreach, data collection, and activities that promote safer, more accessible transportation options for all users.

**Budget by Work Element**

Work Element	Amount
<b>1.0 Program Administration</b>	\$61,314
<b>2.0 Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting</b>	\$26,870
<b>3.0 Transportation Planning</b>	\$67,205
<b>4.0 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b>	\$26,365
<b>5.0 Safe and Accessible Multimodal Planning</b>	\$19,425
<b>Total</b>	\$201,179

*\*The totals shown here are actual totals, rounded to the nearest dollar. Thus, they may appear inconsistent throughout the document by an amount no more than \$1.00.*

The following section describes each work category in further detail, with subcategories for each major work element. It provides an objective for each subcategory and the major procedures and tasks that will be carried out. It also gives a list of outcomes with a timeline that can be used as a basis for tracking staff work and budget. The timeline will either specify the quarter in which the outcome will be complete, the frequency of the task, or list the outcome to be done on an as-needed basis. As needed means that at this time, we cannot predict exactly when or how frequently we might undertake these tasks.



# 1 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION/COORDINATION

## 1.1 Program Management and Support

**Objective:** Conduct administrative activities necessary for the efficient operation of the NATS MPO, as well as support to the Policy and Technical Committees, program administrative and managerial activities, financial monitoring and reporting, interagency coordination, and miscellaneous administrative support

**Procedures and Tasks:** Administration activities are undertaken to ensure MPO compliance with applicable federal and state regulations and ensure a successful MPO, which can carry out all of the other work tasks contained in the UWP. Program management and support includes:

- **Committee Support and Administration** Staff will develop Committee meeting materials such as agendas, minutes, committee member brief talking points and special correspondence as requested by members. Staff will review membership and bylaws, and work on special tasks as requested by members. Key objectives for this task include monitoring of the membership of the committees and the amending of bylaws as needed. Staff will continue to develop the Committee information for members to use as a reference guide and update the SWMPC website to make meeting materials more readily accessible to committee members.
- **Administering the MPO committees:** Manage the Policy Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and Walk and Roll Subcommittee, which includes developing meeting materials (agenda, minutes, and presentations), providing committee education through presentations and handouts, revising the committee handbook, and updating the NATS website. Prepare and distribute information material regarding MPO & staff activities.
- **Reviewing and updating documents:** This includes an annual review of both the Policy and Technical Advisory Committee bylaws to ensure they are up to date and provide clear roles and procedures for the MPO committees. This also includes a periodic review and update of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that NATS maintains with MDOT, the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), and the Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA). Maintaining and preparing records and documentation necessary for certifying the Planning Process for conformance with applicable State and Federal guidelines and regulations.
- **Preparation of reports to state and federal partners:** The preparation of reports regarding transportation planning activities funded through PL112 and Section 5303. It includes an annual report and quarterly progress reports, which document NATS accomplishments. It also includes annually submitting the disadvantaged business enterprise report and the title VI reports to MDOT to ensure compliance with all relevant regulations.
- **Accounting and Budget:** This includes tracking the spending of the NATS budget and reporting expenditures to MDOT, as well as any other task related to the fiscal management of the MPO.

- **Program-related Personnel Management Activities:** This includes performance evaluations, position descriptions and hiring, and exit interviews. Program-related training courses, seminars, workshops, staff meetings and management improvement activities.

Outcome	Timeline
Preparation of Policy Committee and Technical Committee Meeting Materials such as agendas and meeting minutes	Monthly
Maintenance of Committee web pages	As Needed
Updates to Committee email contact lists	Quarterly
Review and revisions to Policy Committee and Technical Committee Bylaws	Annually
Preparation of presentations to Committee members on transportation topics	Monthly
Monitor and review federal and state laws, policies, guidelines, and technical studies. Preparation of summaries, briefing other agencies on the impacts of proposed changes in transportation laws.	Ongoing
Upkeep of correspondence, files, records, and newspaper files of all NATS activities for public review. Documentation of meetings attended and public notices soliciting public involvement.	Ongoing
Quarterly Progress Reports on financial and planning activities to the Michigan Department of Transportation.	Quarterly
Maintenance of FY 2026 financial records.	Monthly
Activity and financial reporting to Michigan Department of Transportation	Quarterly
Development/update of formal agreements between various local agencies, transit providers and MDOT with respect to NATS.	Ongoing
Program financial monitoring, program management and administrative activities	Ongoing
Completion of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises reports.	Second Quarter
Review of 2025 financial records, including work on FY 2025 audit.	Second Quarter

## 1.2 Interagency Coordination

**Objective:** Work with state, federal, and regional partners on common goals and issues affecting transportation in the wider region, state, and nation.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Staff participates in a variety of programs where they collaborate with other organizations to work toward common goals. Staff engage with the following organizations:

- **Westrain:** SWMPC will chair and participate in the Westrain Collaborative, which seeks to preserve, promote, and improve passenger rail service in West Michigan.
- **Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA):** An association of public organizations and agencies, which are responsible for transportation planning activities throughout Michigan. Staff also work with a subgroup of the MTPA comprised of smaller MPOs to address the unique challenges faced in areas with a smaller population and limited resources.
- **Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA):** Provides leadership, resources, support, and technical assistance to advocate and strengthen public transportation in Michigan. Staff attends the Legislative Conference and the MPTA annual conference to; develop and maintain communication with federal, State, and local governments and exchange information and ideas to improve public transit.
- **Be Healthy Berrien:** A partnership of organizations interested in improving health in Berrien County. Staff provides insight into how transportation can be used as a tool for promoting active lifestyles.
- **The Twin Cities Harbor Conservancy:** With the elimination of the St. Joseph River Harbor Authority, a group of stakeholders has been meeting regularly to discuss the future of the harbor including governance and potential developments.
- **Michigan's Great Southwest Strategic Leadership Council:** A council made up of business, non-profit, and community leaders who work on improving quality of life in Berrien County.
- **University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) Consultative Panel:** SWMPC serve on the counsel that advises the REI University Center faculty and staff on the overall project objectives and scope of work. The REI is a program of Michigan State University that works to improve the economy in Michigan's most vulnerable communities.
- **The Quad State Directors:** Meetings of the directors of Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and SWMPC
- **Berrien County Broadband Internet Task Force:** A task force made up of regional community leaders who are working on expanding the broadband infrastructure, which is vital to economic development, education, and overall quality of life.
- **Michigan 2050 Trails Plan Steering Committee:** A collaborative initiative to create a roadmap for the next 25 years of trail development in Michigan. The vision for Michigan trails is to connect communities, promote health and wellness, and fuel economic prosperity.

Outcome	Timeline
Attend and participate in:	
Michigan Association of Regions meetings	Bi-Monthly
Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA), Michigan Public Transportation Association (MPTA), Michigan's Great Southwest Strategic Leadership Council, Be Healthy Berrien, The Twin Cities Harbor Conservancy, Region 8 Regional Prosperity Initiative, and the University Center for Regional Economic Innovation Consultative Panel, Berrien County Broadband Task Force, Michigan 2050 Trails Plan Steering Committee.	Monthly
Quad State Directors, Westrain	Quarterly
MTPA and MPTA annual conferences	Annually
Provide additional support to the above organizations	As Needed
Written comments on other studies as appropriate	As Needed
Preparation and distribution of various maps, program guidelines and other transportation or Land use materials for outside groups or agencies	As Needed
Public presentations as requested	As Needed

### 1.3 Professional Development and Technical Training

**Objective:** Keep staff trained in the latest regulations, rules and procedures related to transportation planning.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Professional development and training are fundamental components of maintaining a qualified, up-to-date professional staff. As new regulations and guidance are developed, staff will seek out resources to ensure compliance. This will include staff attending training sessions hosted by state and federal agencies on new rules, regulations, and guidance for topics that include performance-based planning and programming. In addition, staff will attend relevant conferences and workshops to learn about the best practices in transportation planning. Whenever possible, staff will use webinars, online courses, and other digital resources for training to reduce the cost of travel.

Outcome	Timeline
Staff trained in the latest techniques and best practices in the field of planning.	Continuous
Monitoring and reviewing new federal and state legislation regarding transportation planning regulations, transportation systems funding, and other relevant transportation regulations	Continuous
Attend state or federally sponsored trainings on new regulations and rules	As Needed
Attendance at conferences and workshops for professional development and training of staff	As Needed
Use of digital educational tools to stay apprised of the latest developments in transportation planning	As Needed



## 1.4 Unified Work Program (UWP)

**Objective:** Develop NATS’s Unified Work Program (UWP) for Fiscal Year 2027, as well as monitor the implementation of the FY 2026 work program and make amendments as necessary.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Staff will consult with the FHWA, MDOT, and the MPO committees to identify appropriate work elements for the 2026 UWP. MDOT staff will determine what level of federal funding (PL112, Section 5303, etc.) will be allocated. NATS staff will then determine the appropriate assignment of these funding allocations to the various work elements and determine the amount of local matching funds that will be requested. Staff will make amendments to the 2026 UWP if new funding sources are granted.

Outcome	Timeline
Pre-2027 Unified Work Plan meeting	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Development of the FY 2027 Unified Work Program and Budget in conjunction with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Amendments to the 2026 UWP	As Needed
Complete and submit the 2025 Final Acceptance report to MDOT	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter

## 1.5 Air Quality Conformity

**Objective:** The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) established the mandate for better coordination between air quality and transportation planning. The CAAA requires that all transportation plans and transportation investments in non-attainment and maintenance areas be subject to an air quality conformity determination. The purpose of such determination is to demonstrate that the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) conform to the intent and purpose of the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The intent of the SIP is to achieve and maintain clean air and meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Therefore, for non-attainment and maintenance areas, the LRTP and the TIP must demonstrate that the implementation of projects does not result in greater mobile source emissions than the emissions budget.

On October 1, 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set the primary and secondary national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone at 70 parts per billion (or 0.070 parts per million). In 2018, Berrien County was designated non-attainment for the 2015 ozone standard. Because Berrien County is in non-attainment, SWMPC must follow conformity guidance for all transportation projects within the county.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Staff will work with MDOT, EGLE, FHWA, and EPA during FY 2026 relative to implement any necessary air quality planning efforts to address Berrien County's air quality designation. A new conformity document will be required in FY 2026 as part of the approval of the FY 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan. Respond to MDOT calls for the development of projects to reduce air quality emissions under the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program, if applicable. Continue to prioritize projects for the Carbon Reduction Program. Continue to monitor the validity of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction performance measure and the impacts for MPO planning.

Outcome	Timeline
Coordinate the Berrien County MITC-IAWG	Continuous
Provide assistance to MDOT for regional transportation conformity analysis	Continuous
Facilitate conformity analysis through the committee process	Continuous
Ensure regionally significant projects are reviewed	As Needed
Conduct public participation for conformity analysis determination	As Needed
Facilitate Conformity analysis of amendments to the 2026-2029 TIP	As Needed

## 2 DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING

### 2.1 Transportation System Data Collection

**Objective:** Collect data on the state of the transportation network, including traffic counts, Highway Performance Management System (HPMS) data, Model Inventory of Roadway Elements (MIRE), and any other data requested by MDOT.

#### **Procedures and Tasks:**

**Highway Performance Monitoring System Data and Model Inventory Roadway Elements (MIRE) Data**  
SWMPC will participate and provide support to the Michigan Department of Transportation to meet federal reporting obligations for the Highway Performance Monitoring System data collection program. Work will include:

- Updating sample file spreadsheets and GIS files provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation
- Reviewing sample sections along the non-trunkline roadway system for data updates
- Attending Highway Performance Monitoring System training workshops
- Aggregating, compiling, and storing Non-Trunkline (Federal Aid/Non-Federal Aid) and Local Roads traffic count data collected throughout the year by Local Agencies (CRC's, Cities, Villages, etc.) under the MPO's jurisdiction in preparation for said data to be submitted to MDOT on an annual basis for HPMS reporting to FHWA and the 2026 MIRE FDE requirement of count based AADTs on all public roads.
- MPO staff will be prepared for MDOT's annual Non-Trunkline and Local Roads Traffic Count Data Submittal Request and respond to the request in a timely manner for HPMS reporting to FHWA and the 2026 MIRE FDE Requirement of count-based AADTs on all public roads

SWMPC staff will coordinate with local agencies and MDOT staff to perform annual maintenance and validate and populate six critical data items: surface type, number of through lanes, access control, median type, facility type, and traffic control. The review of these data items will be conducted within Roadsoft, and deliverables to MDOT will be exported from Roadsoft.

#### **Traffic Data**

Staff will coordinate the traffic count program with MDOT and the local road agencies to ensure the best count coverage while reducing duplication. The collected counts will give a clear picture of traffic levels throughout the region and will be used for travel demand modeling.

Outcome	Timeline
Respond to requests from the public and MPO members for traffic count information	Continuous
Updated traffic counts on roads where development has occurred or land use has changed.	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Monitor existing traffic volumes on the federal aid roadway system throughout the NATS study area for use in project development in accordance with the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)	Continuous
Coordination with local road agencies to obtain MIRE data and submit to MDOT.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
Collect Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data, which is used for national trends and for air quality conformity monitoring.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Collect and compile traffic counts from local road agencies and forward data to MDOT.	1 <sup>st</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter

## 2.2 Data Mapping and Analysis

**Objective:** Effectively research, maintain, monitor, and analyze a wide variety of data and information needed for the comprehensive transportation planning process.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Facilitate better data-driven decision making by communicating the results of transportation data analysis. Present transportation analysis to MPO members and the public using maps and graphics to make transportation issues easier to understand. Prepare necessary technical reports on a wide variety of transportation issues that will influence the MPO and our participating agencies' overall planning coordination.

Staff will continue to create online mapping tools in addition to creating hard copy maps upon request. Staff will also publish reports on performance measures and other topics of interest for MPO members. System performance data encompasses all information necessary for good decision-making, including traffic counts, safety, demographics, economic indicators, and land use.

Outcome	Timeline
Identify, collect, and maintain data sets, focusing on the data necessary for transportation system performance, as well as socioeconomic, demographic, land-use, and environmental analysis.	Continuous
Mapping of land use, transportation systems, crashes, economic data etc. to facilitate decision-making.	Continuous
Annual report on federal and local performance measures and targets	3rd Quarter
Catalog of data sets for use in GIS applications and other types of analysis.	Continuous
Improve proficiency in ARCPRO & ARC GIS Online Software.	Continuous
Assemble data, issue reports, and update agency webpage content on topics of regional significance.	Continuous
Create or update online/interactive mapping applications to display data on land use, transportation, environmental, and socio-economic factors.	Continuous
Provide mapping applications for our members and public to communicate data in a user-friendly format.	Continuous
Maintain inventories of environmentally sensitive areas and analysis of environmental mitigation for wetlands, land use/cover, historic sites, or other sensitive areas.	Continuous
Non-motorized Inventory Updates	Continuous
Highway Performance Monitoring System Data Submission	April

## 2.3 Asset Management

**Objective:** The objective of this work element is to support the work program of the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) by coordinating data collection and analysis with local agencies including the development to of local Asset Management Plans.

The resources allocated to the Metropolitan/Regional Planning Organization (MPO/RPO) from the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) annual budget shall be utilized to assist in the completion of the TAMC Work Program. All work shall be consistent with the policies and priorities established by the TAMC. All invoices submitted for reimbursement of Asset Management activities shall utilize Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) standard invoice forms and include the required information for processing. The MPO/RPO shall complete the required products and perform tasks according to the timeframes and directives established within TAMC's data collection policies, which can be found on the TAMC website (<http://www.michigan.gov/tamc>). The MPO/RPO will emphasize these tasks to support the largest PA 51 agencies (agencies that certify under Public Act (PA) 51 a minimum of 100 centerline miles of road) within the planning area when resources are limited. Reimbursement for data collection is provided from the fiscal year of which data was collected. The fiscal year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30.

The following tasks are reimbursement eligible activities.

### TASKS

#### I. Training Activities

- A. Attendance at training seminar(s) on the use of Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER), Inventory-based Rating System for unpaved roadways and Culvert Asset Management.
- B. Represent MPO/RPO at TAMC-sponsored conferences and seminars.
- C. Attending TAMC-sponsored Investment Reporting Tool (IRT) training seminars.
- D. Attending TAMC-sponsored Asset Management Plan Development training seminars.

#### II. Inventory and Condition Data Collection Participation and Coordination

##### A. Federal Aid System:

- 1. Organize schedules with PA 51 agencies within MPO/RPO's boundary for participating in Federal Aid data collection efforts; ensure all participants of data collection have access to State of Michigan travel reimbursement rates.
- 2. Coordinate, participate and facilitate road surface data collection on no less than one-half of the Federal Aid System in accordance with the TAMC Policy for the Collection of Roadway Condition Data on Federal Aid Eligible Roads and Streets.
- 3. Collect unpaved roadway condition data on approximately half of any unpaved Federal Aid eligible roadways using the Inventory-based Rating System developed by the Michigan Technological University's Center for Technology and Training.

**B. Non-Federal Aid (NFA) System:**

1. It is required that the RPO/MPO make a formal call for interest for NFA data collection reimbursements to their respective PA 51 agencies annually, and that requests by PA 51 agencies are submitted to their respective RPO/MPO by October 1 each year to assist in the coordination of data collection priorities of the following data collection season. The RPO/MPO will allocate reimbursements for NFA data collection to PA 51 agencies according to the resources available to them in the manner that best reflects the priorities of their area and supports the TAMC work.
2. Coordinate NFA data collection cycles with PA 51 agencies with an emphasis on the top 125 agencies.
3. Ensure all participants of data collection understand procedures for data sharing with TAMC as well as TAMC policy and procedures for collecting NFA data.
4. Participate and perform data collection with PA 51 agencies on an as- needed basis for the data collection of Non-Federal Aid roads when requested.
5. The RPO/MPO will allocate funding for Non-Federal Aid data collection to PA 51 agencies according to the resources available to them in the manner that best reflects the priorities of their area and supports the TAMC work in accordance with Section VII (C).

**C. Bridge and Culvert Inventory and Condition Data Collection**

1. Provide administrative and technical assistance to PA 51 agencies and MDOT for reimbursement of TAMC funds for participation in data collection efforts for culvert inventory, condition assessment and data submission.
2. PA 51 agencies must submit a written request for reimbursement; the request should include a total estimate of costs (actual costs claimed must not exceed the estimated costs) for the data gathering, trained/certified team members' time, and vehicle use. It is required that the RPO/MPO make a formal call for interest for bridge and culvert collection reimbursements to their respective PA 51 agencies annually, and that requests by PA 51 agencies are submitted to their respective RPO/MPO by October 1 each year to assist in the coordination of data collection priorities of the following data collection season. The RPO/MPO decision on what requests for reimbursement are approved may consider available budget, absence, or age of bridge data to be collected and the last year of reimbursement to the road agency for that bridge data set.

**III. Equipment**

- A.** Ensure rating teams have the necessary tools to complete the federal aid data collection activity by maintaining a laptop compatible with the Laptop Data Collector and Roadsoft programs, a functioning Global Positioning System (GPS)

unit, and other required hardware in good working order. For system requirements please visit [System Requirements | Roadsoft](#)

- B.** Communicate any equipment needs and purchases with the TAMC Coordinator; laptops are eligible for replacement on a recommended three-year cycle.
- C.** Coordinate with your MDOT TSC to secure an MDOT vehicle and/or request MDOT staff participation in the collection of federal aid road data.
- D.** Ensure the vehicle includes reflective markings and flashing beacon. It is recommended that all rating crew members wear reflective safety vests.

#### **IV. Data Submission**

- A.** Develop and maintain technical capability to manage regional Roadsoft databases and the Laptop Data Collector program; maintain a regional Roadsoft database that is accurate and consistent with local agency data sets.
- B.** Coordinate Quality Assurance/Quality Control activities and data submission tasks according to protocols established in TAMC Data Collection Policies for Federal Aid and NFA Roads.
- C.** Monitor and report status of data collection efforts to TAMC Asset Management Coordinator through monthly coordinator calls and/or monthly or quarterly program updates that are mailed with invoices.
- D.** Provide links on agency websites and reports to the TAMC website, interactive maps, and dashboards for the dissemination of roadway data.

#### **V. Asset Management Planning**

- A.** Monitor status of Transportation Asset Management Plans.
- B.** Provide technical assistance and training to PA 51 agencies during the development of local Asset Management Plans using TAMC templates when applicable; coordinate these tasks with an emphasis on the Top 125 agencies.
- C.** Prepare a draft status report of PA 51 agency Asset Management activities and plans within MPO/RPO boundary by September 30 of each year.

#### **VI. Technical Assistance**

- A.** Provide technical assistance to local agencies in using the TAMC reporting tools for planned and completed infrastructure investments or any other TAMC Work Program Activity.
- B.** Integrate PASER ratings and asset management into project prioritization criteria:
  - 1. Analyze data and develop road preservation scenarios.
  - 2. Analyze performance of implemented projects.



Outcome	Timeline
Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating data collected on federal aid eligible roads	May- November
Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating data collected on non-federal aid eligible roads	May- November
Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating data submission	1st Quarter
Annual Local Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating Condition Reports	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Quarterly reports submitted with invoices to TAMC Coordinator.	Quarterly
Local Asset Management Status Report	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Call for NFA Reimbursement	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter

## 2.4 Functional Classification System Updates

**Objective:** Review the National Functional Classification (NFC) based on changes to traffic counts and local development to determine if updates are required. Assist road agencies with the NFC reclassification process.

### Procedures/Tasks:

**National Functional Classification** The National Functional Classification is a system of classifying all streets, roads, and highways according to their function. The National Functional Classification determines federal-aid eligibility of roadways. Act 51 road jurisdictional agencies must approve any revision to a National Functional Classification route under their jurisdiction. SWMPC will coordinate National Functional Classification revisions with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the appropriate agencies within their Metropolitan Area Boundary.

- Work with local jurisdictions and the Michigan Department of Transportation to determine new classifications if needed.
- Propose and adopt recommendations.

### 2020 Urban Area

After the U.S. Census Bureau releases the 2020 Urban Area's data, Michigan Department of Transportation staff will prepare informational materials and meet with each Metropolitan Planning Organization in the state. These meetings will consist of jurisdictional agencies proposing and reviewing National Functional Classification (NFC) revisions to the Act 51 certified public roads within the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study planning boundary. The Michigan Department of Transportation staff may request materials such as traffic counts, worksheets, maps, local letters of concurrence, signed resolutions, and Act 51 certifications to process the proposed NFC revisions. Michigan Department of Transportation staff will review the proposed revisions. If MDOT is in concurrence, the proposals would then be submitted to Federal Highway Administration for final review.

Outcome	Timeline
Continue to work with local jurisdictions and Michigan Department of Transportation to determine if NFC revisions to Act 51 certified public roads within the NATS area are required.	1st quarter
Provide technical assistance to local road agencies in the reclassification process.	As needed
Fulfill Michigan Department of Transportation requests for materials such as traffic counts, worksheets, maps, local letters of concurrence, signed resolutions, and Act 51 certifications to process the proposed NFC revisions.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter

## 2 DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING

### 2.1 Transportation System Data Collection

**Objective:** Collect data on the state of the transportation network including traffic counts, Highway Performance Management System (HPMS) data, Model Inventory of Roadway Elements (MIRE), and any other data request by MDOT.

#### **Procedures and Tasks:**

**Highway Performance Monitoring System Data and Model Inventory Roadway Elements (MIRE) Data**  
SWMPC will participate and provide support to Michigan Department of Transportation to meet federal reporting obligations for the Highway Performance Monitoring System data collection program. Work will include:

- Updating sample file spreadsheets and GIS files provided by Michigan Department of Transportation
- Reviewing sample sections along the non-trunkline roadway system for data updates
- Attending Highway Performance Monitoring System training workshops
- Aggregating, compiling and storing Non-Trunkline (Federal Aid/Non-Federal Aid) and Local Roads traffic count data collected throughout the year by Local Agencies (CRC's, Cities, Villages, etc.) under the MPO's jurisdiction in preparation for said data to be submitted to MDOT on an annual basis for HPMS reporting to FHWA and the 2026 MIRE FDE requirement of count based AADTs on all public roads.
- MPO staff will be prepared for MDOT's annual Non-Trunkline and Local Roads Traffic Count Data Submittal Request and respond to the request in a timely manner for HPMS reporting to FHWA and the 2026 MIRE FDE Requirement of count based AADTs on all public roads

SWMPC staff will coordinate with local agencies and MDOT staff to perform annual maintenance and validate and populate six critical data items: surface type, number of through lanes, access control, median type, facility type, and traffic control. The review of these data items will be conducted within Roadsoft, and deliverables to MDOT will be exported from Roadsoft.

#### **Traffic Data**

Staff will coordinate the traffic count program with MDOT and the local road agencies to ensure the best count coverage while reducing duplication. The collected counts will give a clear picture of traffic levels throughout the region and will be used for travel demand modeling.

Outcome	Timeline
Respond to requests from the public and the MPO members for traffic count information	Continuous
Updated traffic counts on roads where development has occurred or land use has changed.	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Monitor existing traffic volumes on the federal aid roadway system throughout the NATS study area for use in project development in accordance with the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)	Continuous
Coordination with local road agencies to obtain MIRE data.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Collect Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data, which is used for national trends and for air quality conformity monitoring.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Use the data collected to support the development of technical analysis tools as required by the planning process.	Continuous

## 2.2 Data Mapping, Analysis, and Reporting

**Objective:** Effectively research, maintain, monitor, and analyze a wide variety of data and information needed for the comprehensive transportation planning process.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Facilitate better data-driven decision making by communicating the results of transportation data analysis. Present transportation analysis to MPO members and the public using maps and graphics to make transportation issues easier to understand. Prepare necessary technical reports on a wide variety of transportation issues that will influence the MPO and our participating agency's overall planning coordination.

Staff will continue to create online mapping tools in addition to creating hard copy maps upon request. Staff will also publish reports on performance measures, and other topics of interest for MPO members. System performance data encompasses all information necessary for good decision-making, including traffic counts, safety, demographics, economic indicators, and land use.

Outcome	Timeline
Update data necessary for transportation system performance, socioeconomic, demographic, land use, and environmental analysis.	Continuous
Mapping of land use, transportation systems, crashes, economic data etc. to facilitate decision-making.	Continuous
Annual report on federal and local performance measures and targets	3rd Quarter
Catalog of data sets for use in GIS applications and other types of analysis.	Continuous
Improve proficiency in ARCPRO & ARC GIS Online Software.	Continuous
Identification of changes in land use plans and assessment of their impacts on transportation.	Continuous
Create or update online/interactive mapping applications to display data on land use, transportation, environmental, and socio-economic factors.	Continuous
Provide mapping applications for our members and public to communicate data in a user-friendly format.	Continuous
Maintain inventories of environmentally sensitive areas and analysis of environmental mitigation for wetlands, land use/cover, historic sites, or other sensitive areas.	Continuous

## 2.3 Asset Management

**Objective:** Provide technical assistance to the Asset Management Council (TAMC) as required by Public Act 499 of 2002.

The resources allocated to the Metropolitan/Regional Planning Organization (MPO/RPO) from the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) annual budget shall be utilized to assist in the completion of the TAMC Work Program. [All work shall be consistent with the policies and priorities established by the TAMC.](#) All invoices submitted for reimbursement of Asset Management activities shall utilize Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) standard invoice forms and include the required information for processing. The MPO/RPO shall complete the required products and perform tasks according to the timeframes and directives established within TAMC's data collection policies, which can be found on the TAMC website (<http://www.michigan.gov/tamc>). The MPO/RPO will emphasize these tasks to support the largest PA 51 agencies (agencies that certify a minimum of 100 centerline miles of road) within the planning area when resources are limited. Reimbursement for data collection is provided from the fiscal year of which data was collected only. The fiscal year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30.

The following are procedures and requirements in support of the TAMC.

### **VII. Training Activities:**

- A.** Attendance at TAMC sponsored training seminar(s) is a reimbursable expense for MPO/RPO and PA 51 agencies including:
- Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER)
  - Inventory-based Rating System for unpaved roadways and Culvert Asset Management.
  - Investment Reporting Tool (IRT)
  - Asset Management Plan Development
  - TAMC Conferences

### **VIII. Inventory and Condition Data Collection Participation and Coordination**

#### **A. Federal Aid (FA) System:**

1. FA data collection is a reimbursable expense for MPO/RPO and PA 51 agencies.
2. Organize schedules with PA 51 agencies within MPO/RPO's boundary for participating in FA data collection efforts; ensure all participants of data collection have access to State of Michigan travel reimbursement rates.
3. Coordinate, participate and facilitate road surface data collection of the FA, per Act 51 agency, in accordance with the [TAMC Policy for the Collection of Roadway Condition Data](#).
4. The RPO/MPO will reimburse local agencies for FA data collection to PA 51 agencies.
5. Collect unpaved roadway condition data on approximately half of any unpaved FA eligible roadways using the Inventory Based Rating (IBR)

System developed by the Michigan Technological University's (MTU) Center for Technology and Training (CTT).

6. Consider FA and Non-federal Aid (NFA) data collection on approximately half of the road network together for efficiency in data collection. A best practice is to also collect data on both networks at the same time, reducing travel time and optimizing data collection.

**B. Non-Federal Aid (NFA) System:**

1. NFA data collection is a reimbursable expense for MPO/RPO and PA 51 agencies.
2. It is required that the RPO/MPO make a formal call for interest for NFA data collection reimbursements to their respective PA 51 agencies annually, and that requests by PA 51 agencies are submitted to their respective RPO/MPO by October 1 each year to assist in the coordination of data collection priorities of the following data collection season. The RPO/MPO will notify the PA 51 agencies of funding available and allocate reimbursements for NFA data collection to PA 51 agencies according to the resources and funding available in the manner that best reflects the priorities of their area and supports the TAMC work.
3. Coordinate NFA data collection cycles with PA 51 agencies with an emphasis on the top 123 agencies.
4. Collect unpaved NFA roadway condition data using the Inventory Based Rating (IBR) System developed by the MTU CTT.
5. Ensure all participants of data collection understand procedures for data sharing with TAMC as well as [TAMC Policy for the Collection of Roadway Condition Data](#).
6. Consider FA and NFA data collection on approximately half of the region road network together for efficiency in data collection. A best practice is to also collect data on both networks at the same time, reducing travel time and optimizing data collection.

**Culvert Inventory and Condition Data Collection**

1. Culvert inventory and condition data collection is a reimbursable expense for MPO/RPO and PA 51 agencies.
2. It is required that the RPO/MPO make a formal call for interest for culvert inventory and data collection reimbursements to their respective PA 51 agencies annually, and that requests by PA 51 agencies are submitted to their respective RPO/MPO by October 1 each year to assist in the coordination of data collection priorities of the following data collection season. The RPO/MPO will notify the PA 51 agencies of funding available and allocate reimbursements for culvert inventory and data collection to PA 51 agencies according to the resources and funding available in the manner that best reflects the priorities of their area and supports the TAMC work.
3. Coordinate culvert inventory and condition data collection cycles with PA 51 agencies with an emphasis on the top 123 agencies.
4. Ensure all participants of data collection understand procedures for data sharing with TAMC as well as [TAMC Policy for Collection of Culvert Inventory and Data Condition](#).

### **III. Equipment**

- a. Ensure rating teams have the necessary tools to complete the FA data collection activity by maintaining a laptop compatible with the Laptop Data Collector and Roadsoft programs, a functioning Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, and other required hardware in good working order. For system requirements please visit [System Requirements | Roadsoft](#)
- b. Communicate any equipment needs and purchases with the MDOT Asset Management Section Manager; laptops are eligible for replacement on a three-year cycle only. Requests and invoices should include the year of the last purchase.
- c. Coordinate with your MDOT Transportation Service Center (TSC) Regional Pavement Engineer to secure an MDOT vehicle and/or request MDOT staff participation in the collection of FA road data.
- d. Ensure the vehicle includes reflective markings and flashing beacon. It is recommended that all rating crew members wear reflective safety vests.

### **IV. Data Submission**

- a. Develop and maintain technical capability to manage regional Roadsoft databases and the Laptop Data Collector program; maintain a regional Roadsoft database that is accurate and consistent with local agency data sets.
- b. Coordinate Quality Assurance/Quality Control activities and data submission tasks according to protocols established in TAMC Data Collection Policies for Federal Aid and NFA Roads.
- c. Monitor and report status of data collection efforts to TAMC Coordinator through coordinator calls and/or program updates that are mailed with invoices.
- d. Provide links on agency websites and reports to the TAMC website, interactive maps, and dashboards for the dissemination of roadway data.

### **V. Technical Assistance**

- a. Provide technical assistance to PA 51 agencies in using the TAMC reporting tools for planned and completed infrastructure investments or any other TAMC Work Program Activity.
- b. Provide assistance to PA 51 agencies in the development of their Asset Management Plans.
- c. Integrate PASER ratings and asset management into project prioritization criteria:
  - i. Analyze data and develop road preservation scenarios with an emphasis on a mix of fixes vs. worst first.

### **Invoicing**



TAMC will require RPO/MPO to clarify and document invoices by each of the TAMC tasks listed below. The MDOT invoice form includes directions on how to fill out the invoice and what specific information is required on the invoice for it to be processed. The outline below includes the general activities that fit within each work task. Invoices which are insufficient will be returned to the RPO/MPO for correction prior to payment authorization. Invoices shall be submitted by the end of the MDOT fiscal year.

**I. Training Activities:** Please identify the training session(s) attended during the reporting period. Include travel/wages to and from sessions.

## **II. Data Collection**

**A) Data collected on FA Roads:** Attach daily work logs, include any applicable travel/wages, and include geographic area covered in the collection. Ensure data submitted to the TAMC.

**B) Data collected on NFA Roads:** Attach daily work logs, include total miles rated at applicable rate as well as geographic area covered in the collection. Ensure data submitted to the TAMC.

**C) Data Collection for Culverts:** Attach daily work logs, include total number of culverts inventoried and rated at applicable rate as well as geographic area covered in the collection. Ensure data submitted to the TAMC.

**IV. Equipment & Vehicle Rental:** Provide a list of equipment purchased and date of last purchase. Provide date of MDOT vehicle(s) rented and the reason for the rental.

**V. Data Submission Activities:** Include a detailed summary of activities related to managing regional Roadsoft databases and the Laptop Data Collector program, QA/QC of data from collection efforts, and activities related to submitting data files to TAMC via the Investment Reporting Tool application. Ensure all data collected with or without for the TAMC is submitted to the TAMC in a timely manner.

**VI. Technical Assistance:** Include a detailed summary of activities related to assistance provided to PA 51 agencies in using the TAMC reporting tools for planned and completed infrastructure investments or any other TAMC Work Program Activity.

Outcome	Timeline
Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating data collected on federal aid eligible roads	May- November
Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating data collected on non-federal aid eligible roads	May- November
Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating data submission	1st Quarter
Annual Local Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating Condition Reports	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
Quarterly reports submitted with invoices to TAMC Coordinator.	Quarterly
Local Asset Management Status Report	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Call for NFA Reimbursement	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter

## 2.4 Functional Classification System Updates

**Objective:** Review the National Functional Classification (NFC) based on changes to traffic counts and local development to determine if updates are required. Assist road agencies with the NFC reclassification process.

### **Procedures/Tasks:**

**National Functional Classification** The National Functional Classification is a system of classifying all streets, roads, and highways according to their function. The National Functional Classification determines federal-aid eligibility of roadways. Act 51 road jurisdictional agencies must approve any revision to a National Functional Classification route under their jurisdiction. SWMPC will coordinate National Functional Classification revisions with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the appropriate agencies within their Metropolitan Area Boundary.

- Work with local jurisdictions and Michigan Department of Transportation to determine new classifications if needed.
- Propose and adopt recommendations.

### **2020 Urban Area**

After the U.S. Census Bureau releases the 2020 Urban Area's data, Michigan Department of Transportation staff will prepare informational materials and meet with each Metropolitan Planning Organization in the state. These meetings will consist of jurisdictional agencies proposing and reviewing National Functional Classification (NFC) revisions to the Act 51 certified public roads within the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study planning boundary. The Michigan Department of Transportation staff may request materials such as traffic counts, worksheets, maps, local letters of concurrence, signed resolutions, and Act 51 certifications to process the proposed NFC revisions. Michigan Department of Transportation staff will review the proposed revisions. If MDOT is in concurrence, the proposals would then be submitted to Federal Highway Administration for final review.

Outcome	Timeline
Work with local jurisdictions and Michigan Department of Transportation to determine if changes to the NFC classifications are required.	2nd quarter
Provide technical assistance to local road agencies in the reclassification process.	As needed
Fulfill Michigan Department of Transportation requests for materials such as traffic counts, worksheets, maps, local letters of concurrence, signed resolutions, and Act 51 certifications to process the proposed NFC revisions.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter

## 2.5 Travel Demand Modeling

**Objective:** Assist MDOT and the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) in the preparation of the travel demand model to be used in the 2055 Long Range Plan.

**Procedures and Tasks:** In 2018, MACOG in coordination with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC), expanded the model to include the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) in Michigan and into the rural counties of the MACOG region (Kosciusko and Marshall Counties).

The current hybrid model spans an area of approximately 2200 square miles and is structured into 900 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs), providing a detailed framework for analyzing transportation patterns. The model includes around 2900 centerline miles, offering comprehensive coverage of the region's roadway network.

In 2026 staff will work with MACOG and MDOT to review future economic, demographic, and land use predictions to ensure the model input data accurately reflects estimated growth/decline patterns in the region. Once the travel model is completed, staff and the technical advisory committee members will review the model results to ensure that the predictions make sense for the region. Staff will work with local road agencies to identify possible capacity projects for MACOG to test with the model. A focus of alternative project analysis will be applying the model in a way that explores solutions to the transportation deficiencies of the region, outside of/in addition to expansion of capacity deficient corridors.

Outcome	Timeline
Continue to work with local communities on reviewing the predictions of future socioeconomic Data	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter
MPO committee approval of forecast year SE data	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter
Review results from the base year model and future model.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
Identify projects to test in with the model	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter

## 3 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

### 3.1 Planning Technical Support to MPO Members

**Objective:** Provide technical assistance to the public and MPO members; including public transit providers, local jurisdictions, MDOT, and federal agencies.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Technical assistance is a constant work item for the SWMPC and includes planning activities such as impact studies, master plan reviews, corridor reviews, or other coordination or data collection tasks to assist other organizations in implementing transportation-related projects. This work item will also include assisting members in preparing documentation for funding applications. Staff will provide technical assistance in the following areas:

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning:** Staff strive to examine non-motorized transportation from the perspective of all users. Activities may include assisting in the evaluation the federal-aid network, or a portion thereof, for the installation of bike lanes, wayfinding system planning and coordinated signage, preparation of grant applications for pedestrian or bicycle projects, preparation of printed materials that promote pedestrian and bicycle transportation and cooperative education/enforcement efforts with local law enforcement agencies related to pedestrian and cyclists. This task will also include evaluating connections and integration between passenger transportation and active transportation networks, including first and last-mile connections.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ):** Staff assists with the administration of the CMAQ program, including convening meetings and monitoring the status of CMAQ projects. As air quality standards change, staff keep MPO members apprised of any changes that affect CMAQ funding and eligibility.
- **Carbon Reduction Program:** Staff will promote and assist with the programming and administration of the Carbon Reduction Program, including convening project selection meetings and monitoring the status of projects utilizing Carbon Reduction funding.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP):** Staff will promote the HSIP program and assist with applications. This includes providing safety data and analysis for use in project applications.
- **Transit Planning:** To enhance and continue the development of an efficient and effective transit service in Berrien County area. This activity will provide the avenue to perform in-depth studies of transit-related problems in operations/management and service planning. Staff will perform any unanticipated work including activities resulting from the interpretation and/or implementation of certain IIJA Act requirements by FHWA/FTA and/or MDOT, results from the NDAR Certification Review, or any new state or federal transportation legislation that may be put in place. Specifically, this could include activities related to working with MDOT and NDAR in the review and development of performance targets and/or activities resulting from new guidance released from FHWA/FTA or development of specific performance measures by MDOT.

Outcome	Timeline
Sharing of expertise and knowledge with appropriate agencies and the public	Continuous
Answer agencies' questions about transportation funding options and assist with the application processes.	Continuous
Improve research, collection, management, and integration of safety data.	Continuous
Assist local agencies with grant identification, grant application writing, and submittal.	As Needed
Mange the CMAQ program by holding meeting to make amendments and program additional funding	As Needed
Providing safety data for use in HSIP applications	As Needed
Support local agencies by providing technical assistance on projects supported by federal infrastructure discretionary grants	As Needed
Support efforts to expand the use of electric public transportation vehicles, including through public private partnerships and collaboration with other Michigan agencies.	On-going

### 3.2 Public and Stakeholder Outreach

**Objective:** Follow the SWMPC Public Participation Plan when carrying out all planning activities by informing the general public, local officials, and the NATS committee members about transportation-related issues and MPO activities, and providing the opportunity for public involvement in all transportation-planning initiatives undertaken by NATS.

**Procedures and Tasks:** A robust and ongoing public involvement process is a vital component of successful transportation planning. The SWMPC Public Participation Plan provides guidance for this by requiring the following: providing complete information to the public and stakeholders, timely public notice of NATS meetings, public comment periods, full public access to key decisions and decision-making processes; and support for early and continuing involvement of the public in all planning and programming activities. For all planning initiatives, staff will engage in numerous activities to encourage public involvement. Appropriate means of announcement, such as newspaper notices, direct mailings, the SWMPC website, and social media, will be used as appropriate. Staff will continue its efforts to make NATS documents and meeting materials easily accessible online. Staff will also use a variety of education and outreach methods to help promote public awareness of transportation issues and NATS involvement. All public outreach efforts will be documented and reviewed to make improvements to the process. Staff will also periodically review the Public Participation Plan and make updates to ensure the plan reflects the best practices in public engagement.

Outcome	Timeline
A well informed public who are able to have their wishes reflected in the work NATS conducts.	Continuous
Documentation of the public involvement process.	Continuous
Documentation of public notices placed to solicit public involvement in planning initiatives.	Continuous
Articles written for the SWMPC newsletter.	Quarterly
Educational materials to promote awareness of transportation issues.	As Needed
Soliciting public feedback through comment forms, surveys, and other methods.	As Needed
Hosting public meetings to facilitate discussion between staff and members of the public.	As Needed
Maintaining a list of stakeholders and interested parties.	Continuous
Review of the SWMPC Public Participation Plan	Annually

### 3.3 Transportation System Security & Emergency Preparedness

**Objective:** The purpose of this task is to identify and advance strategies that increase the security of the transportation system.

**Procedures and Tasks:** One of the goals of the NATS 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan is to develop a transportation system which is safe and secure for all of its users. Staff will continue to coordinate with local road agencies and transportation providers to identify system security and emergency preparedness plans which are currently in place. Staff will also coordinate with the Berrien County Emergency Services Department, which has been working with local units of government to prepare plans and strategies for emergency response. Staff assistance will be offered to NATS members to identify strategies regarding mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Outcome	Timeline
Coordination with local road agencies and NDAR in the development of appropriate emergency relief and disaster preparedness strategies for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.	Ongoing
Participate in meetings of the Berrien County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) as well as other entities focused on mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts related to transportation.	Monthly



### 3.4 Human Services Transportation Coordination

**Objective:**

Foster livable communities by ensuring public transportation and mobility options are accessible and integrated throughout the study area.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Continue to address the importance of transportation needs for the older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income residents in conjunction with ongoing public transit, paratransit, mobility management, and community-based transportation planning activities. This task will include assisting organizations to help establish or expand community-based transportation services, including active transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, senior services center transportation, and veteran transportation. Staff will provide coordination, outreach, and technical assistance to the local human health service agencies including: Disability Network of Southwest Michigan, Berrien County Health Department, Area Agency on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Riverwood Mental Health, Spectrum Health, local governments, human service agencies, and community organizations that seek to enhance and extend safe mobility for the older adults, individuals with disabilities and low income residents.

Outcome	Timeline
Analyze MDOT Public Transit Management System (PTMS) reports to monitor the performance of Niles Dial A Ride for mobility-impaired populations.	Continuous
Consult and coordinate with mobility-impaired advocates to develop funding and project approaches that address access issues.	Continuous
Compile data on obstacles to access and mobility and assist in the preparation of informational materials for community education on access and mobility issues.	Continuous
Create and administer surveys as needed.	As needed
Develop strategies to create efficiencies in transportation services for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.	Continuous
Assist local sponsors in developing grant applications.	As Needed
Provide technical assistance to MDOT when needed regarding mobility planning guidance and processes	As Needed
Facilitate ways for different transportation providers to interact	Continuous

### 3.5 Long Range Transportation Planning

**Objective:** Promote strategies and transportation projects that fulfill identified long-term goals and objectives in NATS 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan.

**Procedures and tasks:** NATS adopted its 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) in 2023. The LRP has a minimum 20-year planning horizon, contains both short and long-range strategies, is updated at least every four years (based on NATS planning area being an air quality non-attainment area). Within 2026, SWMPC staff will continue to promote strategies and transportation projects that fulfill identified long-term goals and objectives.

#### **Environmental Quality**

SWMPC staff will continue to educate committee members on the new research and information presented from FHWA, EPA, and others regarding climate, air quality, and water quality. Key objectives will be to include recent research and best practices into the NATS planning process. SWMPC staff will focus on implementation of the air quality standard for ozone. SWMPC staff will also improve documentation and consideration of environmental consultation with outside environmental agencies including federal, state, and local partners.

#### **Freight**

Coordinate with the businesses and key agencies in developing a better comprehensive understanding of the various air, water, road, and rail freight distribution points in Berrien County. The key objective of this work area in FY 2026 will be to continue to seek input from freight stakeholders to identify freight issues/concerns in the NATS area.

#### **Performance Measures**

SWMPC staff will continue to monitor the release of federal performance measures and align NATS measurement of the success of LRP projects with these new measures. SWMPC staff will disseminate information on performance measures to the committees and discuss incorporation of these measures into the next long range plan. The key objective of this task will be to ensure that NATS policies and procedures align both with unique local needs and federal and state planning processes.

#### **Technological Innovation**

MPO staff will conduct research and inform committee members regarding emerging clean energy solutions and intelligent transportation systems (ITS). Specific areas to be investigated include bicycle sharing, car sharing, transit bus conversions, Smartphone applications, information displays on the transportation network, and technologies for motor vehicle accident avoidance. A key objective of these tasks will be to make sure committee members are educated on the latest technology trends when making decisions about transportation funding.

### **Economic Development Linkage**

MPO staff continues to inform economic development stakeholders in Berrien County about the transportation planning process and will continue to catalog the needs of economic development agencies regarding transportation. A key goal of this work task will be to tie future transportation investments to workforce and business needs through a common set of goals for the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

### **Non-Motorized Planning**

MPO staff will promote non-motorized planning with the goal of achieving transportation infrastructure that meets the travel needs of all community members, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transit, people with disabilities, older adults, and young children. In doing so, staff hopes to support the safety and accessibility of area residents while encouraging healthy and environmentally sustainable travel modes.

Key objective areas of this task will be to provide assistance to communities on how they can incorporate non-motorized planning efforts in their community, seek out competitive grant funding for non-motorized projects, and continue to educate their residents and business owners on the benefits of a multi-modal transportation system. Staff will also provide assistance in the implementation of approved federally and state-funded non-motorized projects.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Monitor federal guidance on performance measures	On-Going
Assess additional data needs for Performance Based Planning and Programming	
Assist local agencies with Statewide TAP grant application process	On-going
Continued development of policies, strategies and identification of transportation projects that fulfill identified long-term goals and objectives in 2050 LRP.	On-Going
Assist local agencies with non-motorized issues, plans, and projects.	On-Going
Continue the development of a System Performance report and the data needed to support the report.	Annually
Various correspondence and meetings with all interested agencies	As needed
Review and revise the Complete Streets Policy as needed	Annually

## 4 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

### 4.1 TIP Amendments

**Objective:** Process amendments to the 2026-2029 TIP, as necessary.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Staff will accept and process amendments to the TIP, including changes to currently listed projects, deletions of projects, and new project additions. This task involves ensuring all State and federal regulations are followed, such as conformity with air quality standards and financial constraints. Staff will also ensure amendments follow NATS amendment policy, the public participation plan, and the complete streets policy. When necessary, staff will send out a call for projects and convene separate meetings to reprogram local agency projects to use newly available federal funds. Staff will revise the TIP amendment process as necessary to make the process transparent, simple to follow, and easy to use. As amendments are made, the most up to date TIP project list will be uploaded on the website. In addition, staff will look for ways to make the TIP table of projects simpler to read with MPO members and the public. Staff will also insure that TIP projects are uploaded into JobNet and accurately maintained.

Outcome	Timeline
---------	----------

Conduct bimonthly amendment coordination meeting with MDOT	Bimonthly
Manage the TIP amendment process	As Needed
Timely submittal of amendment requests to MDOT	As Needed
Develop, publish, and distribute amendments to the FY 2026-2029 TIP document.	Bimonthly
Ensure there is a current list of all projects in the TIP available on the SWMPC website.	Continuous
Improve proficiency in programing projects into various JOB NET development phases.	Continuous
Participate in regional and state discussions to develop methods to streamline the TIP process	As Needed
Review of administrative adjustments and amendment procedures for Transportation Improvement Programs.	Annually

## 4.2 Obligation Status Monitoring and Reporting

**Objective:** Track the status of all projects in the TIP to ensure projects are obligated and completed on schedule.

**Procedures and Tasks:** Staff will create project update sheets for all FY 2025 and FY 2025 projects in the NATS TIP. These sheets will be used to solicit monthly updates from agencies with projects. This allows staff to keep the MPO committees informed on the status of all projects. Staff will monitor the remaining FY 2025 obligation authority from MDOT to keep the MPO committees informed so that the obligation authority does not run out before all NATS projects are obligated. Each year, staff will produce a report on the status of projects in the TIP, indicating when projects went over the estimate or produced bid savings. Staff will explore ways to report on the TIP projects that are easy to understand for MPO members and the public. This includes putting more information about projects on the SWMPC website using maps and photos to better visualize where projects are occurring and what type of work will be completed.

Outcome	Timeline
Monitor and report progress regarding the implementation of projects in the TIP.	Monthly
Monitoring of projects in the FY 2026-2029 TIP	Continuous
Full utilization of bid savings	Continuous
Updating project data on the SWMPC website	As Needed
Update MPO Performance Measures targets.	Annually
Development of the annual Federally Obligated Project Report	1st Quarter

## 5 SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE MULTIMODAL PLANNING

### 5.1 Safe and Accessible Multimodal Planning

**Objective:** Develop a transportation system that expands safe and accessible transportation options.

**Procedures and Tasks:** MPO staff will promote non-motorized planning to enhance access to activity centers (e.g., commercial areas, schools, parks and recreation, and employment centers) by ensuring transit service and safe, low-stress pedestrian routes and bike facilities are available, accessible, and connected. Staff will use a variety of techniques to provide assistance to communities on how they can incorporate non-motorized planning efforts in their community, seek out competitive grant funding, and continue to educate their residents and business owners on the benefits of a safe, accessible multimodal transportation system. As an essential planning partner that assists communities in building a vision to expand safe, accessible transportation options, there is also a need for assistance in implementing projects. Accordingly, this work task will provide assistance to local agencies and units of government for the implementation of projects and programs that are vital to the future of our regional transportation network in Berrien County. The high-priority projects that reflect this are:

- Berrien County Trails Master Plan
- Mc Coy Creek Trail (expansion to connect to Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail)
- Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail (expansion from Berrien Springs to St. Joseph/Benton Harbor)
- Cass County, Cassopolis Vandalia Trail
- Edwardsburg Non-Motorized Planning
- Marquette Greenway (NRPC, New Buffalo, Grand Beach, New Buffalo Twp., MODT, Amtrak)
- Red Arrow Linear Park (Berrien County Road Department, Chikaming Twp, New Buffalo Twp, Lake Twp, Bridgman City)

Outcome	Timeline
Update data for bikeways, and pedestrian facilities data	On-Going
Assist with obtaining right-of-way and initiating construction	As Needed
Public Engagement - Open House, Press Releases, Consultation with Partner Agencies.	Ongoing
Facilitate opportunities to promote and plan for improved and expanded options for transit, carpooling, walking, and biking.	Ongoing
Consultation with partner agencies for Berrien County Trails Master Plan	Monthly

NOTE: For additional non-motorized planning tasks see Work Element 3.4 and 3.5

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Resolution of Approval



## Appendix B: NATS Committee Members

NATS operates through two primary committees: the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Policy Committee.

The Technical Advisory Committee is composed of technical staff and subject matter experts who provide data-driven recommendations and technical guidance. Their role is to support the planning process by advising the Policy Committee on transportation issues, project priorities, and proposed improvements.

The Policy Committee serves as the decision-making body, offering policy-level guidance, direction, and final approvals for all elements of the continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process. This process is led by the designated planning organization responsible for coordinating transportation planning efforts within the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation. All decisions made by the Policy Committee are based on careful review and consideration of the recommendations provided by the Technical Advisory Committee, ensuring an informed and collaborative approach to regional transportation planning.

*\*Ex-officio means nonvoting member. \*\* Consultant \*\*\* Alternate*

### Policy Committee Members

#### Officers

**Chair:** Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township

**Vice-Chair:** Sandra Seanor, Cass County Road Commission

#### Jurisdictions

**City of Buchanan,** Rich Murphy, Tony McGhee\*

**City of Niles (1),** Georgia Boggs

**City of Niles (2),** Serita Mason

**City of Niles (3),** Richard Huff

**Village of Edwardsburg,** Dawn Bolock

**Bertrand Township,** Butch Payton

**Buchanan Township,** Lynn Ferris

**Howard Charter Township,** Bill Kazprzak

**Mason Township,** Doug Feters

**Milton Township,** Susan Flowers

**Niles Charter Township,** Richard Cooper

**Ontwa Township,** Meryl Christensen

#### Public Transit

**Niles Dial A Ride Transportation,** Pepper Miller

#### Counties

**Berrien County Board of Commissioners (1),** Sharon Tyler

**Berrien County Board of Commissioners (2),** *Vacant*

**Berrien County Planning Commission,** John Humphry

**Berrien County Road Department,** Mark Heyliger

**Cass County Board of Commissioners (1),** Roseann Marchetti

**Cass County Board of Commissioners (2),** James Lawrence

**Cass County Road Commission,** Sandra Seanor

**Cass County Planning Commission,** Roseann Marchetti

#### Agencies

**MDOT, Coloma TSC,** Jonathon Smith

**MDOT, Southwest Region,** Adrain Stroupe, Josh Grab\*

**MDOT, Statewide Planning,** Jim Sturdevant, Richard Bayus\*

**Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians,** Robert Torzynski

#### Ex Officio

**FHWA, Michigan Division,** Andy Pickard

**FTA,** Cecilia Crenshaw

**MACOG,** Caitlyn Stevens

**SWMPC,** Kim Gallagher, Brandon Kovnat\*

## Technical Advisory Committee Members

### Officers

**Chair:** Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission

**Vice-Chair:** Joe Ray, City of Niles

### Jurisdictions

**City of Buchanan,** Tony McGhee, Rich Murphy\*

**City of Niles Public Works Department,** Joe Ray

**City of Niles, Community Development,** *Vacant*

**Jerry Tyler Memorial Airport,** Joe Ray

**Village of Edwardsburg,** Dawn Bolock

**Bertrand Township,** Butch Payton

**Buchanan Township,** Lynn Ferris

**Howard Charter Township,** Bill Kazprzak

**Mason Township,** Doug Fetters

**Milton Township,** Susan Flowers

**Niles Charter Township,** Richard Cooper

**Ontwa Township,** Meryl Christensen

### Public Transit

**Niles Dial A Ride Transportation,** Pepper Miller

\* Alternate

### Counties

**Berrien County Community Development,** Dan Fette

**Berrien County Road Department,** Kevin Stack

**Cass County Planning Commission,** Roseann Marchetti

**Cass County Road Commission,** Joe Bellina

### Agencies

**MDOT,** Coloma TSC, Jonathon Smith

**MDOT,** Southwest Region, Adrain Stroupe, Josh Grab\*

**MDOT,** Statewide Planning, Jim Sturdevant, Richard Bayus\*

**Kinexus,** *Vacant*

**Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians,** Robert Torzynski

### Ex Officio (non-Voting)

**FHWA,** Michigan Division, Andy Pickard

**FTA,** Cecilia Crenshaw

**MDEQ,** Air Quality, Breanna Bukowski

**MDOT,** Office of Passenger Transit, Fred Featherly

**MDOT,** Transportation Modeling, Jon Roberts

**MACOG,** Caitlyn Stevens

**SWMPC,** Kim Gallagher, Brandon Kovnat\*

## Appendix C: NATS MPO Staff

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
376 W Main St Suite 130  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
(269) 925-1137  
[www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org)

K. John Egelhaaf  
Executive Director  
[egelhaafj@swmpc.org](mailto:egelhaafj@swmpc.org)  
(269) 925- 1137 x 1512

Kimberly Gallagher  
Senior Planner  
[gallagherk@swmpc.org](mailto:gallagherk@swmpc.org)  
(269) 925-1137 x 1518

Brandon Kovnat  
Associate Planner  
[kovnatb@swmpc.org](mailto:kovnatb@swmpc.org)  
(269) 925-1137 x 1524

## **Appendix D: Comments on the Draft 2026 Unified Work Program**

Add comments received here.

## Appendix E: Cost Allocation Plan and Indirect Cost Rate

### Southwest Michigan Planning Commission Background

#### The Origin of the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is one of fourteen Planning and Development Regions in the State of Michigan and one of approximately five hundred in the United States. In Michigan, regions were created under a Governor's Executive Order in 1968.

The SWMPC was officially organized in 1973 by resolutions of the Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren County Boards of Commissioners. The Commission was staffed in 1974.

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) Board reflects representation across county, city, village, and township officials, in addition to citizen members who represent a variety of interests, including business, seniors, and minorities. Van Buren, Berrien and Cass counties are currently represented in all eligible capacities. Of the forty-two current appointments, eleven of the members are female and six of the members are from a minority group.

#### SWMPC Planning Overview

In addition to serving public and private entities within Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties by providing planning, technical, or management assistance, the SWMPC acts as an intergovernmental forum to address regional issues. The SWMPC addresses issues and administers programs which its membership deems appropriate, and which are in keeping with locally established area-wide planning and development goals. The SWMPC engages in outreach to build support for wise planning and awareness of vital regional development issues. A diversely skilled SWMPC staff provides a range of support to jurisdictions throughout the three-county region. These efforts regularly lead to program initiatives that address local needs. The needs that the SWMPC regularly responds to include customized planning and information services to local governments and organizations including comprehensive and land use planning, research and analysis, GIS mapping, surveys, recreation planning, grant writing, and grant administration.

The SWMPC is an Economic Development District of the EDA to: 1) give technical assistance and support others in planning and implementing economic development projects that diversify and strengthen the district's economy; 2) maintain economic and demographic databases and respond to requests from public and private users; and 3) support a local economic

development process capable of meeting the planning, coordination and implementation requirements of the district.

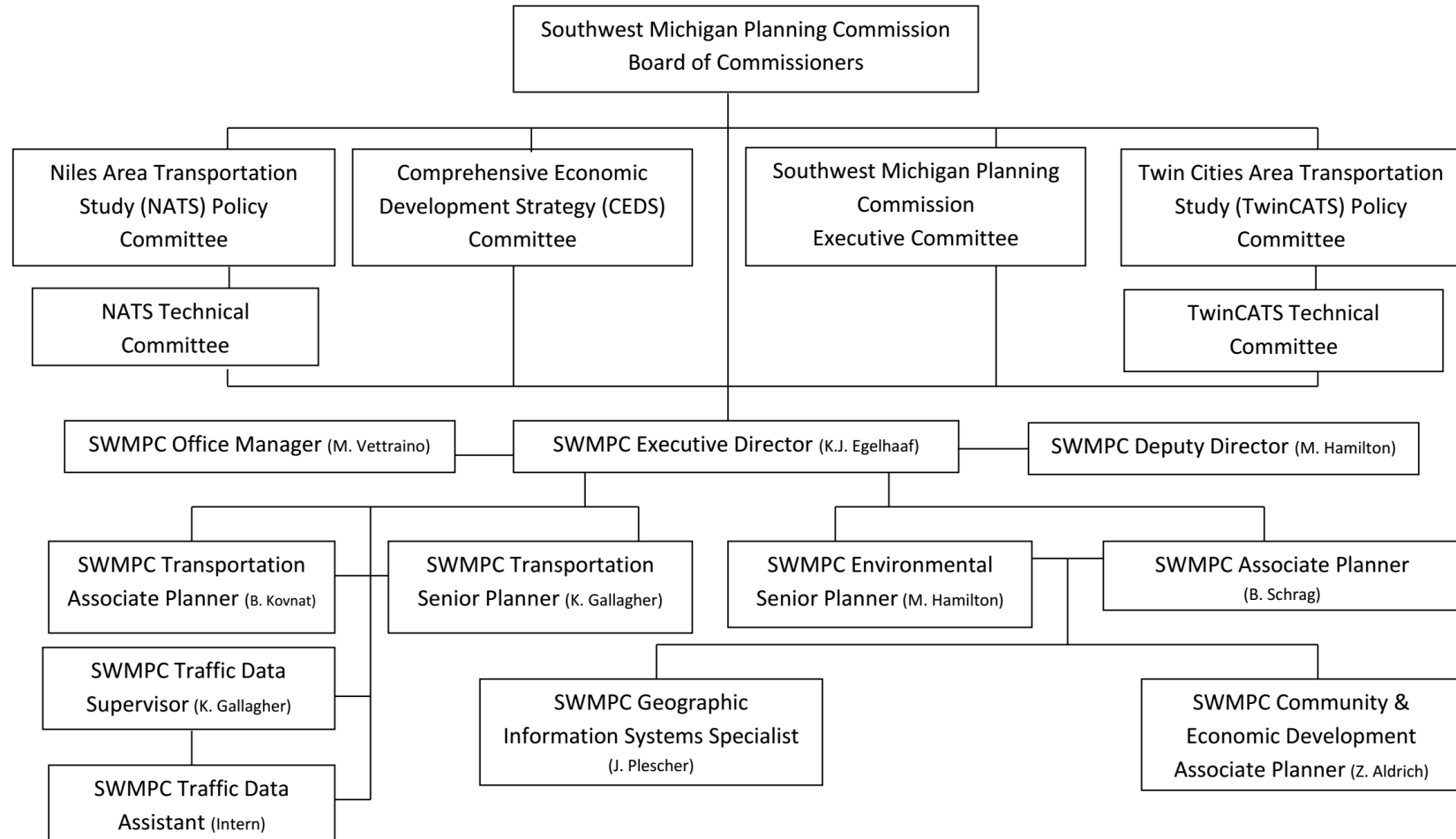
Federal legislation requires a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative process for transportation planning in all urbanized areas. To respond to that requirement, the SWMPC's responsibility is to develop and refine plans and policies by analyzing their social, economic, environmental, health, safety, welfare, and mobility impacts. The State has designated the SWMPC as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the two urban areas in our region; the Niles/Buchanan/Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) for the Niles/Buchanan/Cass area, and the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS) in the St. Joseph/Benton Harbor area.

The MPO planning process is a cooperative effort between the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and the member local governments (for NATS: the Berrien County cities of Niles and Buchanan, the village of Edwardsburg, the townships of Niles, Buchanan, and Bertrand, and the Cass County townships of Howard, Ontwa, and Milton; for TwinCATS: the Berrien County cities of Bridgman, Benton Harbor, New Buffalo and Saint Joseph, the villages of Grand Beach, Michiana, Shoreham and Stevensville, and the townships of Benton Charter, Chikaming, Lake, Lincoln Charter, New Buffalo, Royalton, St. Joseph Charter, and Sodus).

The SWMPC is also a resource for transportation planning assistance to the rural areas outside the metropolitan districts. Through these services the SWMPC provides assistance through road data, public transportation resources, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) assistance, heritage route management, ridesharing connections, and other customized needs.

# Organizational Structure

As of May 2024



## Job Descriptions

**Executive Director:** Under the direction of the SWMPC Board, implements and administers the policies and procedures established by the SWMPC in accordance with the state and federal legislative requirements. Responsible for management, administration, and professional work in the development, coordination, and execution of programs and projects, as well as supervision of personnel and administration of finances for various federal, state and local programs. Management, administration, and professional work is often assigned as direct expenses to specific programs.

**Senior Planner:** Performs administrative and professional work in the development, implementation, and coordination of SWMPC's local and regional planning programs. Duties involve administration, development and implementation of work program objectives, development and monitoring of budgets, and supervision of persons assigned. Work is performed under the general direction of the Executive Director.

**Associate Planner:** Under the supervision of the Executive Director, and Senior Planner, will develop plans and facilitate decision making in planning program areas or projects. Duties include the coordination of programs through communications, data gathering, computer analysis, report preparation, and organization and follow-up of meetings.

**Planning Aide:** Under the supervision of the Executive Director, Senior Planner, Associate Planner, will assist in the development of plans and facilitation of decision making in planning program areas or projects. Duties include assisting in projects through communications, data gathering and portrayal, computer input and analysis, report preparation, and organization and follow-up of meetings.

**Office Manager:** Under the direction of the Executive Director, administers and manages all aspects of SWMPC business and financial matters. Duties include operation and maintenance of the agency's computerized accounting system, receivables and payables, budget monitoring, financial reporting, benefits administration, and supervision of persons assigned.



## Definition of Terms

### Terms

**Acceptable Costs:** Costs that are necessary and reasonable for the proper and efficient performance and administration of SWMPC projects. They are ordinary and necessary as a cost for the typical operation of the project. The prices paid are considered to be at market prices for comparable goods. Costs are the result of prudent actions by SWMPC staff.

**Direct Costs:** Include costs that: 1) can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective and attributed to a project, 2) include compensation to employees for time devoted specifically to project performance, 3) include materials acquired, consumed, or expended for the purposes of the project, 4) equipment and other approved capital expenditures, 5) travel expenses to carry out a project.

**Provisional:** A temporary indirect cost rate applicable to a specified period which is used for funding, interim reimbursement, and reporting indirect costs on awards pending the establishment of a final rate for the period. (U.S. Dept. of Labor: *Guide for Indirect Cost Rate Determination*; August 2020, P. I-1)

**Indirect Costs:** include costs that are for a common or joint purpose for more than one project and are not easily assignable to projects specifically benefited.

**Indirect Cost Rate:** a method to determine the proportion of indirect costs each program should bear. A ratio of indirect to direct cost base.

### Cost Categories

#### **Current Fringe Benefit Policies**

The SWMPC fringe benefit policy consists of the following items derived from the Commission's Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook available to all employees at the time of hire.

**Social Security and Medicare Withholding Benefits:** The SWMPC adheres to Federal tax rulings and remits matching withholding benefits each pay period in each calendar year.

**Annual Leave and Sick Leave are Combined as Follows:** In the first category of leave accrual, an employee who has been with the SWMPC for between zero and five completed years must work a minimum of sixty-two hours to a maximum of seventy-five hours per (bi-weekly) pay period. That employee will be considered a full-time employee and will accrue five and a half hours per pay period for annual and sick leave.

In the second category of leave accrual, an employee at the end of their fifth year until their tenth year of employment will receive seven hours per pay period for annual and sick leave.

The third category of leave accrual is for employees at the end of their tenth year and beyond. Employees in the third category receive eight and a half hours per pay period for annual and sick leave.

The SWMPC does not distinguish between annual leave and sick leave. The two categories are considered a single account of accrued time. All employees may carry forward into the next year a maximum of one year's annual leave accrual. All excess time that is not taken will be forfeited except for employees with more than five years of experience. When employees have five or more years experience, the SWMPC will make an employee contribution to their retirement plan account in an amount equal to 37.5 hours of excess time not taken at their respective rate of pay.

**Paid Holidays:** The SWMPC provides twelve and one-half paid holidays per calendar year for its employees

**Pregnancy Leave:** SWMPC employees receive pregnancy leave up to 975 hours.

**Administrative Leave:** An administrative leave of absence cannot exceed six months. Accumulated annual leave must be used as part of the administrative leave. After depletion of the accumulated annual leave, there is not compensation for administrative leave.

**Military Leave:** Military leave is granted as a leave of absence per State and Federal rulings.

**Health Insurance:** The SWMPC provides health insurance coverage to all employees. Employees are eligible to apply for health insurance benefits for themselves as well as dependents as of their initial date of employment. The SWMPC pays 98 percent of the total cost of the premium for full-time employees who seek the coverage. Part-time SWMPC employees are eligible for health insurance but must pay a percentage of the premium based on what percentage of a full-time position their time represents plus the standard two percent cost share. The health insurance program provides both medical, hospital, and prescription coverage plus vision and dental insurance. The coverage is a "high deductible" type with a Health Savings Account (HSA). The deductible for the insurance is deposited into each employee's HSA account by the SWMPC. The entire amount is funded by the SWMPC.

**Disability Insurance:** The SWMPC provides short term disability coverage to all employees. Employees shall be eligible at their date of employment. The SWMPC pays the total cost of the premium for full-time employees who seek this coverage.

**Workman's Compensation Insurance:** The SWMPC provides workman's compensation insurance for all employees. Employees are eligible at their date of hire. In case of a work injury or illness an employee is eligible for workman's compensation benefits. The employee must use accumulated annual leave to the extent available for the first seven days of the disability after which time the workman's compensation insurance coverage shall begin without annual leave supplementation.

**Life Insurance:** The SWMPC provides life insurance coverage for all employees. Employees shall be eligible at their date of hire. The Commission pays the total cost of the premium for full-time employees who seek this coverage. The face amount of the policy shall be equal to the amount of the employee's annual salary and double in the event of accidental death as described in the health insurance policy provided by the carrier.

**Unemployment Compensation Insurance:** The SWMPC provides each employee with this State benefit. The cost is calculated using the State determination rate multiplied by the gross wage earned by each employee. The SWMPC pays the total cost and adheres to the State tax rulings of calculation and remuneration.

**Pension Fund:** Currently the SWMPC has 401 and 457 defined contribution plans available to all employees who work at least one thousand hours per year. New employees are enrolled on the annual enrollment date of January 1st provided that they have completed six months of full-time employment. The SWMPC contributes into the plan on behalf of each enrolled employee in the amount of 6.5% of the employee's annual salary or wage. Employee contributions are not mandatory. Employees enrolled shall be vested at the rate of twenty percent for each full year of vesting. The SWMPC calculates the contribution amount both at fiscal and calendar year end to reflect the accrual on financial statements. All accruals are reviewed by the pension advisors before any remittances are made. The SWMPC meets all tax rulings regarding dates of contribution, dollars contributed, and necessary tax forms.

**Travel:** SWMPC travel expenses include: mileage, meals, lodging, airfare, rental car. Typical purposes for incurring travel expense relate to the fact that we are a regional planning organization with a three-county geographic coverage. Attending events and meetings in-person requires travel. Additionally, SWMPC staff are professionals who need to remain

educated and professionally accredited. Statewide and national conferences are common ways for staff to remain educated.

**Board Expenses:** The SWMPC board is comprised of 24 members plus a single ex-officio member from one of the region's economic development organizations. The board members are compensated for mileage traveled to bi-monthly meetings. Executive committee members are additionally compensated as officers. Any members that receive per diem compensation as elected officials do not receive additional compensation from the SWMPC. The executive committee only meets when called, typically not more than once per year. SWMPC meeting costs include food/beverage, supplies necessary for presentations, any room rental costs, and two annual awards (plaques and trophies).

**Supplies and Material:** Items that are necessary for a particular project are assigned as a direct expense. Supplies include: computers and related computer equipment, cameras, office furniture, large format plotter. SWMPC letterhead, copy paper, copier toner, and general office supplies are considered uniformly necessary and are thus, assigned as indirect expenses.

**Occupancy Expenses:** The SWMPC pays a single monthly lease amount for its occupancy. Utilities (electric, trash removal, natural gas), repairs, and maintenance are included in the lease payment. The allocation of that cost is entirely to the indirect cost pool.

**Communications:** Internet and telephone costs are allocated to the indirect cost pool. During COVID it became necessary to subscribe to the best available virtual meeting platform. A portion of the cost of that subscription was written into the grant the SWMPC received from the US DOC EDA to develop a Regional Economic Recovery Strategy. One-half of the annual cost of Zoom was allocated directly to that project. That project concluded at the end of calendar year 2022. In 2023 and beyond, that expense is allocated to the indirect cost pool.

**Photocopying and Printing:** The SWMPC has a protocol for all copies and prints wherein each output is designated to the project it is associated with. In some cases, output is assigned to the indirect cost pool if it is of general purpose and not specific to a particular project. At the conclusion of each month, a report from our shared printer/copier allows us to understand how to allocate printer/copy expenses to specific projects or to the indirect cost pool.

**Outside Services:** The SWMPC regularly engages consultants and professional services. Those that are program-specific are allocated as direct expense. Other professional services that are of broad value include third-party information technology, and housekeeping. These services are allocated to the indirect cost pool.

**Capital Items:** The SWMPC threshold for capital expenses is \$5,000. All SWMPC purchases over that amount are capitalized and depreciated. Currently, all capital expenses are fully depreciated. Capital Expenses below the threshold are charged direct if part of a grant or allocated to indirect if not.

Capital expenditures are not separately allocated. They are included in the supplies and materials category. Those that are considered capital expenditures are allocated as direct expense to the projects that they are intended to serve.

**Depreciation Charges:** Capital purchases above the \$5,000 threshold are capitalized and depreciated in accordance with GAAP standards.

**Subscriptions and Membership Dues:** The SWMPC allocates subscriptions and memberships based on whether they are program-specific, in which case they are treated as direct expense, or if they have broad value, in which case they are allocated to the indirect cost pool. Subscriptions include: software licenses and industry publications. Memberships include: trade organizations that provide benefit back to the work of the SWMPC such as the American Planning Association and the Michigan Association of Planning.

**Conferences and Meetings:** Costs relative to staff training, skills improvement, and technical proficiency often include meetings, seminars, conferences, and workshops. Expenses are charged to this category as they relate to specific job responsibilities. These costs are generally direct expenses but can be assigned as indirect occasionally.

**Unallowable Costs:** The Michigan Department of Transportation master agreement with the SWMPC identifies the following costs as unallowable; “costs arising from the correction of errors and omissions attributable to the AGENCY.” No specific unallowable costs are referred to in the special award condition document for the two EDA projects in this report.

### **Other Expenses**

**Advertising:** Costs from advertising are assigned as direct costs if they are required to post meeting times, announce specific work products, or to solicit responses to a job posting for a specific program. Advertisements that serve the SWMPC in a general way are assigned as indirect costs

**Computer Services:** Computer services are currently supplied by an outside supplier. Services are assigned as direct if the particular piece of computer equipment or software is associated

with a single program. If the service is on a machine or software that is for general use it is assigned as an indirect expense.

**Conferences/Training:** Costs relative to staff training, skills improvement, and technical proficiency often include meetings, seminars, conferences, and workshops. Expenses are charged to this category as they relate to specific job responsibilities. These costs are generally direct expenses but can be assigned as indirect occasionally.

**Contents, Liability Insurance:** Coverage for the loss or damage of agency assets, general agency liability, and employee and commissioner bonding.

**Contractual Services:** Costs in the contractual services category are incurred for consultant services by outside agencies and individuals. Temporary project staff including internships are also placed in this category of expense and considered direct if they are specifically assigned to a single project. All costs under this category are considered direct expenses except for a temporary administrative staff or other general expertise.

**Commission Audit:** Costs associated with the annual Commission audit will be assigned as a direct cost charged to local revenues and are exempt from indirect cost. No audit costs are charged to federal funds.

**Postage:** Similar to telephone charges, postage is coded at the SWMPC postage meter. Thus, direct expenses are classified at the initiation of the charge and a summary of those expenses is created through a cyclical report.

**Equipment Maintenance:** Maintenance agreements on heavily used office machines including the main copier/printer, computer equipment are assigned as indirect expenses.

## Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Certificate



### United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

February 6, 2024

John Egelhaaf, Executive Director  
Southwestern Michigan Commission  
376 W. Main Street, Suite 130  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Re: Indirect Cost Rate Certificate

John Egelhaaf:

With this letter, the Interior Business Center (IBC), on behalf of the Economic Development Administration (EDA), a component of the Department of Commerce and your cognizant agency, acknowledges receipt of your Certificate of Indirect Costs for FY 2023 dated February 5, 2024. As a unit of state or local government that receives less than \$35 million in annual cumulative direct Federal funding, you are not required to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to EDA and, consequently, EDA will not review your submission at this time. For more information on this requirement, see 2 C.F.R. part 200, App. VII §D.1.b.

Your organization is required to develop an indirect cost rate proposal or cost allocation plan in accordance with 2 C.F.R. part 200 and retain it with related supporting documentation for audit. For more information on this requirement, see 2 C.F.R. part 200, App. VII §D.1.b. and 2 C.F.R. §200.333. EDA reserves the right to review this or future indirect cost rate proposals at a later time to ensure conformity with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. part 200. Typically, EDA will exercise this right if there is a relevant audit finding, a concern is raised by another government agency concerning a particular indirect cost rate, and/or if EDA finds an anomaly in an indirect cost rate proposal. In such circumstances EDA may review such an indirect cost rate proposal itself or through another Federal agency.

IBC is a shared service provider operating under the Department of the Interior. EDA has entered into an agreement with IBC to review and process Certificates of Indirect Costs on their behalf. EDA remains your cognizant agency and this letter, although issued from IBC, is EDA's acknowledgment of receipt.

Please contact IBC if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Wills  
Indirect Cost & Contract Audit Division Chief

Enclosure: Certificate of Indirect Costs

**U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration**  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

**CERTIFICATE OF INDIRECT COSTS**

This is to certify that I have reviewed the indirect cost rate proposal prepared and maintained herewith and to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(1) All costs included in this proposal dated 02/05/2024 **[identify date indirect cost rate proposal was finalized]** to establish indirect costs rate(s) for 01/01/23-12/31/23 **[identify start/end dates for the fiscal year covered by the indirect cost rate]** are allowable in accordance with the requirements of the Federal award(s) to which they apply and OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200) Unallowable costs have been adjusted for in allocating costs as indicated in the cost allocation plan.

(2) All costs included in this proposal are properly allocable to Federal awards on the basis of a beneficial or causal relationship between the expenses incurred and the agreements to which they are allocated in accordance with applicable requirements. Further, the same costs that have been treated as indirect costs have not been claimed as direct costs. Similar types of costs have been accounted for consistently and the Federal Government will be notified of any accounting changes that would affect the predetermined rate.

(3) The indirect cost rate calculated within the proposal is 56.6% **[identify rate(s)]**, which was calculated using a direct cost base type of salary and fringe **[identify type of direct cost base – Salary & Fringe, MTDC, etc.]**. The calculations were based on actual costs from fiscal year 2023 to obtain a federal indirect cost billing rate for fiscal year 2023.

(4) All documentation supporting the indirect cost rate identified above must be retained by the Recipient. This rate should be reviewed and validated as part of the Recipient's annual financial audit.

Subject to the provisions of the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986, (31 USC 3801 et seq.), the False Claims Act (18 USC 287 and 31 USC 3729); and the False Statement Act (18 USC 1001), I declare to the best of my knowledge that the foregoing is true and correct.

Organization Name: Southwestern Michigan Commission

Signature: 

Name of Authorized Official: K. John Egelhaaf

Title: Executive Director

Email Address and Phone: egelhaafj@swmpc.org; 269.925.1137 x 1512

Date of Execution: 02/05/2024



## CERTIFICATE OF INDIRECT COSTS

This is to certify that I have reviewed the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) submitted herewith and to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- 1) All costs included in this 2025 NICRA to establish billing or final indirect cost rates for FY 2025 are allowable in accordance with the requirements of the Federal award to which they apply and per 2 CFR 225, *(Formerly OMB Circular A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments)* "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirement for Federal Awards" Unallowable costs have been adjusted for in allocating costs as indicated in the cost allocation plan.
- 2) All costs included in the NICRA are properly allocable to Federal awards on the basis of a beneficial or causal relationship between the expenses incurred and the agreements to which they are allocated in accordance with applicable requirements. Further, the same costs that have been treated as indirect costs have not been claimed as direct costs. Similar types of costs have been accounted for consistently and the Federal Government will be notified of any accounting changes that would affect the predetermined rate.

I declare that the foregoing is true and correct.

Governmental Unit: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Signature:

Name of Official: K. John Egelhaaf

Title: Executive Director

Date of Execution:

## Appendix G Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

SWMPC is committed to compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related regulations and statutes. Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 declares it to be the policy of the United States that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”. Consistent with this policy, and in accordance with section 602 of Title VI, codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 2000d-1, the Department of Justice promulgated regulations prohibiting recipients of federal funds from “utilizing criteria or methods of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program as respects individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin.” 28 C.F.R. § 42.104(b)(2). The United States Department of Transportation later promulgated nearly identical regulations - See 49 C.F.R. § 21.5(b) (vii) (2).

Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, other nondiscrimination laws have been enacted to expand the range and scope of Title VI coverage and applicability:

THE UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AND REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION POLICIES ACT OF 1970 - which prohibits unfair and inequitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property will be acquired as a result of federal and federal-aid programs and projects.

THE FEDERAL AID HIGHWAY ACT OF 1973 - which states that no person shall, on the grounds of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance under this title or carried on under this title.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 - which states that no qualified disabled person shall, solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. This Act protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability.

THE AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1975 - which states that no person shall, on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This act prohibits age discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS RESTORATION ACT OF 1987, P.L.100-209 amends Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act - which made it clear that discrimination is prohibited throughout an entire agency if any part of the agency receives federal assistance.

THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) OF 1990 - which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities.

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency - which requires each federal agency to examine its programs and activities and to develop and to implement plans by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those programs and activities.

23 CFR PART 200 – Federal Highway Administration regulations Title VI Program and Related Statutes – which address Implementation and Review Procedures.

SWMPC assures that no person or groups(s) of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability/ handicap, and income status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs, services, or activities administered by the SWMPC, regardless of whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

SWMPC also assures that every effort will be made to prevent discrimination through the impacts of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. In addition, SWMPC will provide meaningful access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

In the event SWMPC distributes federal-aid funds to a sub-recipient, SWMPC will include Title VI language in all written agreements and will monitor for compliance.

SWMPC Title VI Coordinator - current Executive Director - is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing reports and other responsibilities as required by 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 and 49 CFR 21.

## **Appendix H: Subrecipient Risk Assessment**