

DRAFT

January 2020

Public Participation Plan



SEMCOG

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

SEMCOG . . . Developing Regional Solutions

Mission

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

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

DRAFT

Public Participation Plan

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Abstract

This *Public Participation Plan* describes the objectives, strategies, and tools to engage Southeast Michigan residents in SEMCOG’s regional planning work. This is a revision of SEMCOG’s December 2015 *Public Participation Plan*. Translation of this document is available upon request free-of-charge. For assistance, contact the SEMCOG Information Center at infocenter@semcog.org or (313) 324-3330.

Este *plan de participación pública* describe los objetivos, estrategias y herramientas para involucrar a los residentes del Sudeste de Michigan en el plan de trabajo regional de SEMCOG. Esta es una revisión del *plan de participación* de diciembre de 2015 del SEMCOG. La traducción de este documento está disponible si se pide y sin costo alguno. Para obtener ayuda, contacte al centro de información del SEMCOG a infocenter@semcog.org o (313) 324-3330.

خطة المشاركة العامة (Public Participation Plan) هذه تصف الأهداف، الإستراتيجيات، والوسائل لمشاركة سكان جنوب شرق ميشيغان في عمل التخطيط الإقليمي لمجلس حكومات جنوب شرق ميشيغان (SEMCOG). هذه مراجعة لخطة المشاركة العامة (Public Participation Plan) الخاصة بمجلس حكومات جنوب شرق ميشيغان (SEMCOG) لشهر كانون الأول (ديسمبر) 2015. ترجمة هذا المستند متوفر عند الطلب و مجاناً. للحصول على مساعدة، إتصل بمركز معلومات مجلس حكومات جنوب شرق ميشيغان عبر البريد الإلكتروني infocenter@semcog.org أو على الرقم (313) 324-3330.

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

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SEMCOG convened a Public Participation Focus Group with a cross-section of member local governments and other stakeholders on October 17, 2019. The goal was to share best practices of reaching out to and involving the public in decisions. The resulting discussion informed this revision of SEMCOG's *Public Participation Plan*. The following individuals participated:

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- Mary Blackmon, Vice President, Wayne RESA
- Robert Buechler, Treasurer, Fort Gratiot Township
- Robert Cannon, Township Supervisor, Clinton Township
- Stephanie Carroll, Manager of Business Development and Community Relations, City of Auburn Hills
- Marlene Chockley, Township Supervisor, Northfield Township
- Michael Cousins, OHM-Advisors
- Colton Dale, Community Engagement and Development Specialist, City of Oak Park
- Jazmine Danci, Director of Marketing and Community Development, City of Romulus
- Terey DeLisle, Services to Enhance Potential
- Lisa Dilg, NTH Consultants, Ltd.
- Kristofer Enlow, Trustee, Lyon Township
- Amy Hillman, Assistant to Supervisor, Holly Township
- Eric Jackson, Citizen
- Jeff Jenks, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Huntington Woods
- Roger Kadau, Media Communications Director, City of Romulus
- Steve Kennedy, Councilmember, City of South Lyon
- Valerie Kindle, Councilmember, City of Harper Woods
- Gwen Markham, Commissioner, Oakland County
- Elizabeth Nelson, Councilmember, City of Ann Arbor
- Ashok Patel, Project Manager, City of Detroit
- Al Prieur, Deputy Supervisor, Bedford Township
- Kojo Quartey, President, Monroe County Community College
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- Eric Sabree, Treasurer, Wayne County
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About this Public Participation Plan

What is the Public Participation Plan?

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

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

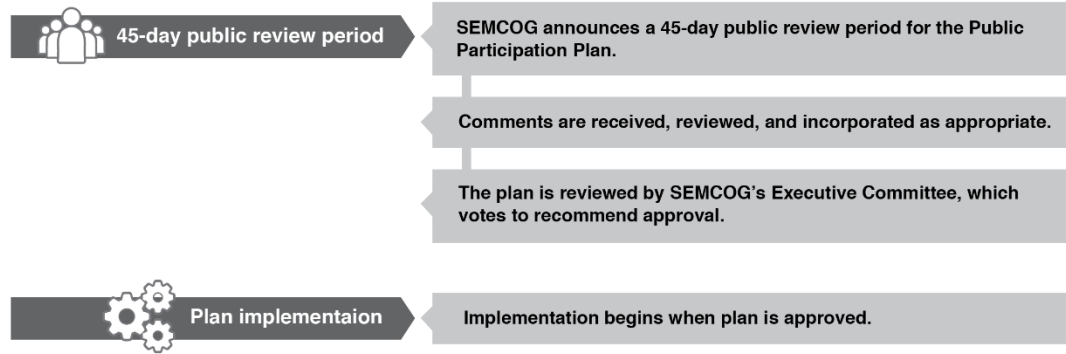
- Revisions to the *Public Participation Plan* are developed in consultation with a focus group or other interested parties, pursuant to Title 23 of United States Code (USC) Section 134, Metropolitan Transportation Planning, before the draft document is submitted for public review and comment.
- The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

Goals of the Public Participation Plan

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

Figure 1

45-Day Public Participation Process for Public Participation Plan



Welcome to SEMCOG

SEMCOG's Vision

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

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

Southeast Michigan has an area of 4,600 square miles. Each day, the SEMCOG region's 4.7 million people traverse this area for work, school, worship, recreation, shopping, medical care, etc. For some, most activities take place close to home. For many others, daily life requires significant travel. An individual who lives in Ferndale may work in Auburn Hills, go to the dentist in Southfield, attend a concert in Detroit, hike a trail in Brighton, and visit family in Mount Clemens. That individual may or may not require accessible accommodations to reach his/her destination. One of Southeast Michigan's greatest strengths is the diversity of services and attractions offered by the region's 231 communities.

Each day, millions of trips are made throughout the region by car, bus, bicycle, carpool, and walking. As a collaborative organization representing government agencies from all over Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG strives to enable access to all the necessities and amenities the region has to offer. Plans and policies reflect the evolving and interconnected interests of urban, suburban, rural, and small-town areas.

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

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

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

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

- Under the State of Michigan designation of Planning and Development Regions pursuant to Michigan Act 281 of 1945 as amended, SEMCOG carries out multipurpose regional planning.
- As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), pursuant to Title 23 of United States Code (USC) Section 134, Metropolitan Transportation Planning, SEMCOG is responsible for transportation planning. This responsibility includes coordinating implementation of regional plans by operating agencies.
- As the designated agency under Section 208 of the Federal Pollution Control Act of 1972, SEMCOG is responsible for maintaining the regional water quality plan.
- As the designated air quality planning agency under the Clean Air Act amendments of 1977, SEMCOG is responsible for development and revisions to the State Implementation Plan to meet air quality standards.

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

Figure 2
Southeast Michigan Demographic Facts



4.7 million residents • 1.9 million households

Age 0-19: 26% • Age 20-34: 19% • Age 35-64: 41% • Age 65+: 14%

Non-Hispanic:

White: 68% • Black: 21% • Asian: 4% • Multi-racial: 2% • Other: < 1%



Infrastructure

Home to the largest single-site wastewater treatment plant in the United States

13,000 road-stream crossings

25,000 miles of public roads

3,000+ miles of bikeways, walkways, and routes

2,900 bridges



Economy

2.8 million jobs

Largest industries: automotive manufacturing, health care, engineering and research

Per capita income: \$29,000



Environment and Recreation

Access to 20% of the world's surface fresh water.

180,000 acres of public parks

500 miles of trails and greenways

450 miles of water trails



Travel

100 million miles that people travel each day on roads

4,000 miles of all-season truck routes

2,300+ miles of fixed-route bus service

Organization

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

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

Regional Planning in Southeast Michigan

How ideas become plans, and how plans become implemented

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

Key players, partners

The list that follows includes some of the key partners and players that SEMCOG engages with as of the writing of this plan. It may not be all-inclusive.

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

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

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

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

Watershed planning organizations – Alliance of Downriver Watersheds, Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC), Anchor Bay Watershed, Clinton River Watershed Council, Friends of the Detroit River, Friends of the Rouge, Friends of the St. Clair River Watershed, River Raisin Watershed Council, Friends of the Shiawassee River, Huron River Watershed Council.

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

Keeping Up with SEMCOG

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

- Attend a public meeting. All SEMCOG meetings are open to the public and posted on [SEMCOG's calendar](#).
- Access agendas and meeting minutes [online](#).
- To receive public notices and our quarterly magazine (*Semscope*), join our mailing list by sending a request to communications@semcog.org.
- Read our biweekly newsletter ([Regional Update](#)). Current issue is on our homepage under "The Latest."
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).
- Subscribe to our blog at www.semco.org/News-and-Events/Blog.
- Listen to our [podcast](#).
- Watch our [videos](#).
- Visit our website at www.semco.org.

SEMCOG's Commitment to Title VI

SEMCOG's Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

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

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

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

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

Understanding and Participating in SEMCOG's Planning Activities

Public Participation Process for SEMCOG Plans

To ensure regional plans are reflective of and responsive to the needs Southeast Michigan residents, SEMCOG employs an inclusive public participation process. While the specifics in each plan's development timeline can vary, there are several key elements that remain consistent for all SEMCOG plans.

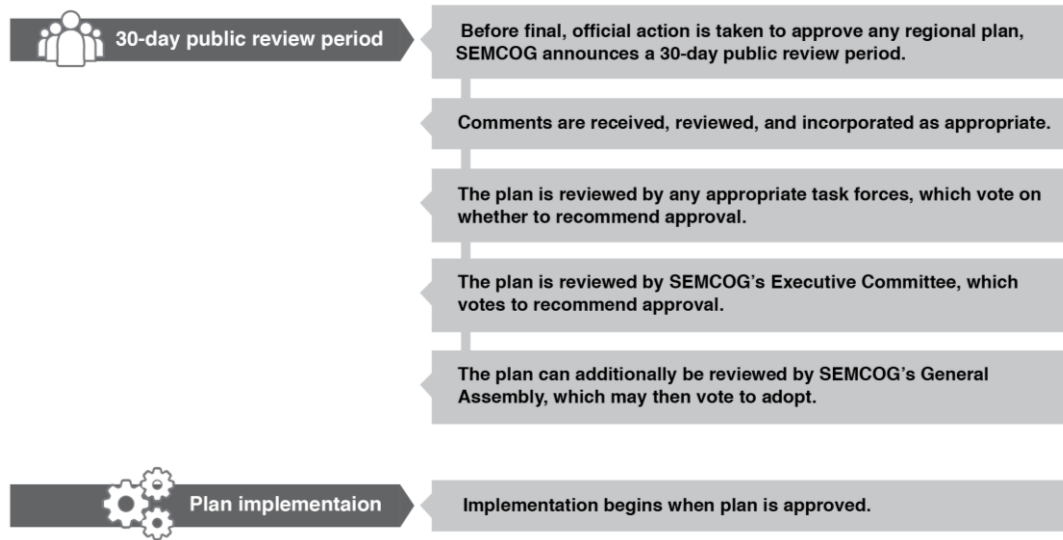
SEMCOG plans seek participation from stakeholders and the public. Many of these plans also use public engagement tools for public input before the standard comment period. SEMCOG values these efforts and will provide at least 30 days for public review and comment before taking final action to approve or adopt. This *Public Participation Plan* defines a major decision as the official adoption of the plans listed below, which are briefly described in the following pages.

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

SEMCOG's public participation and comment process for all of the plans described here, except for the *Public Participation Plan*, is as follows (Figure 3):

- Prior to the formal public comment period, SEMCOG will engage the public as plans are developed, using one or more of the tools described in the Tools section of the *Public Participation Plan*. (Page 17)
- SEMCOG will inform the public and interested parties of the formal comment period using the Public Notice procedures and other tools, at least **30 days** prior to the date scheduled for final action to approve or adopt.
- Information will be presented for review and comment by the public during the **30-day** public comment period on SEMCOG's website, at SEMCOG offices, and on social media. Information on where and how to access documents for review will be included in the public notice.
- All comments received and the response to comments are documented and provided to the Executive Committee or General Assembly, whichever body takes final action on the plan.

Figure 3

30-Day Public Participation Process (all plans except the Public Participation Plan)

Reaching Persons with Special Needs

SEMCOG has established procedures to make information available to those with special needs. SEMCOG meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations. All meeting agendas and notices contain information on how individuals with disabilities requiring assistance can request reasonable accommodations at meetings, including sign-language interpreters. SEMCOG's website is compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. SEMCOG has also translated documents, including the *Regional Transportation Plan*, into Spanish, Arabic, and Braille, and will continue to do so upon request.

SEMCOG Plans that Use the Public Participation Process

Air Quality Conformity

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

Air Quality Conformity is developed as part of the RTP and TIP updates, in which case public participation and public comment procedures for the RTP or TIP updates will be followed as described in this document. *Air Quality Conformity* is also updated as required by certain amendments to the RTP or TIP, in which case public participation and comment procedures for amendments to the RTP or TIP will be followed as previously described.

Read the [Air Quality Conformity](#) analysis. (Look for it under RTP amendments.)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan for Southeast Michigan

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

Read the [Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan for Southeast Michigan](#).

Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan

SEMCOG, with its partner organization, the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), has created *Partnering for Prosperity: The Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan* that meets the requirements of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). It incorporates EDA guidelines and strategic priorities in a dynamic document that provides a roadmap for effectively investing the region's resources and seeking new means to diversify and reposition the economy, create jobs, strengthen and refocus human capital, develop and promote natural and community assets, improve business climate, and maintain and enhance the necessary infrastructure to achieve the maximum economic impact and global competitiveness.

The strategy leverages Southeast Michigan's unique resources and assets, builds upon existing programs, brings stakeholders together, and explores opportunities.

Read more about the [Economic Development Strategy](#).

Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan

This framework guides preservation of natural areas and future implementation of green infrastructure in Southeast Michigan. The vision benchmarks the amount of green infrastructure in the region, visions future green infrastructure opportunities, and recommends strategic implementation approaches. The vision details the various benefits of green infrastructure, including economic value, water quality, air quality, and recreation.

Read the [Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan](#).

Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan

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

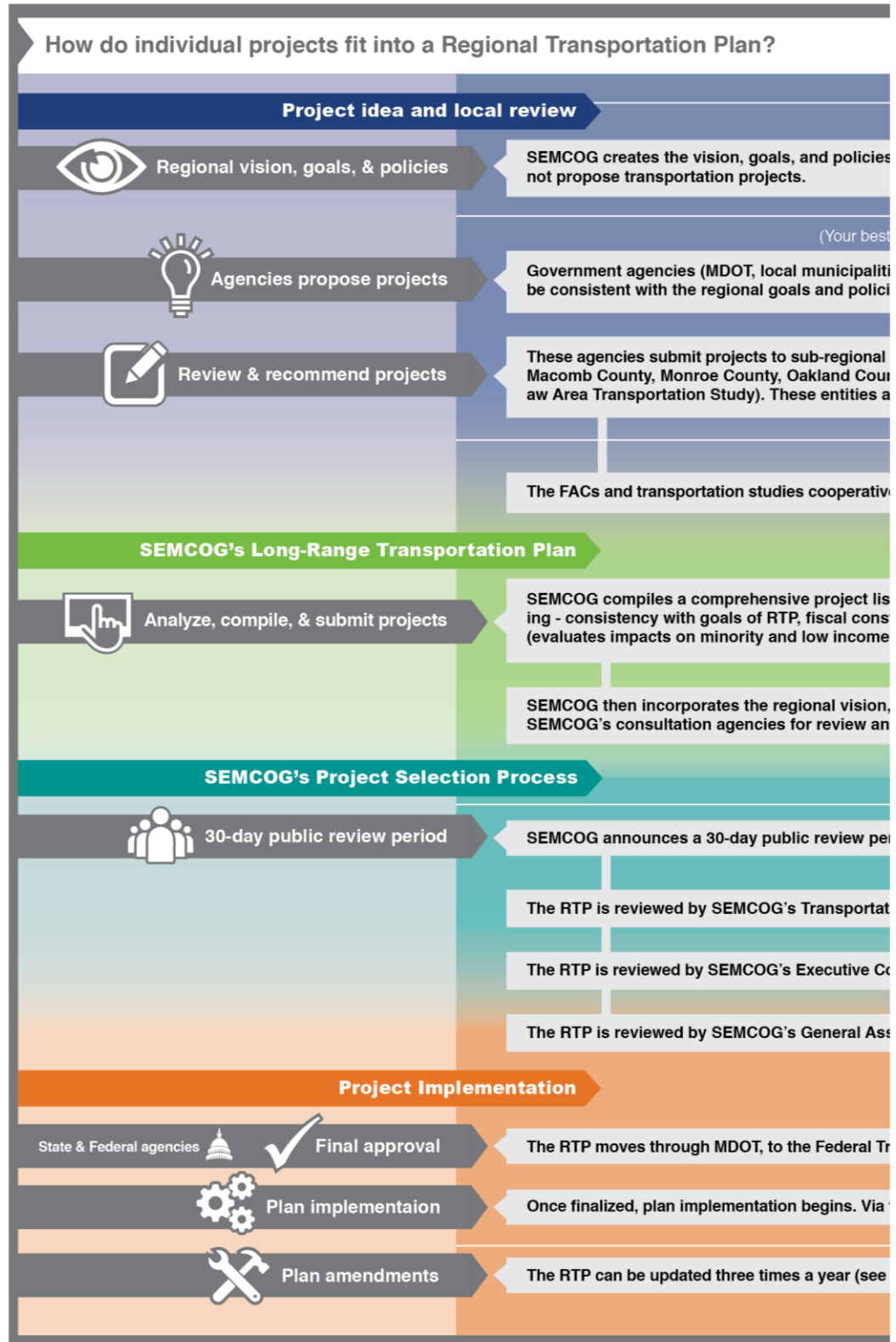
Read more about the [Parks and Recreation Plan](#).

Regional Housing Needs and Neighborhood Resiliency Strategy for Southeast Michigan

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

Read the [Regional Housing Needs and Neighborhood Resiliency Strategy for Southeast Michigan](#).

Figure 4
Regional Transportation Plan Public Participation and Public Comment Process



How do I participate in the process?


PUBLIC MEETINGS & COMMENT OPPORTUNITY 
(This is your best opportunity to provide input on the regional vision, goals, and policies for the RTP)

for a Regional Transportation Plan, which sets the direction of local project planning. SEMCOG does

PUBLIC MEETINGS & COMMENT OPPORTUNITY 
opportunity to provide input on specific projects or ideas is by contacting the local agency before it submits them)

es, county road agencies, and transit agencies) propose transportation projects. These projects are to es developed by SEMCOG.

entities for review and prioritization. These include Federal-Aid Committees (Detroit, Livingston County, ty, and Wayne County) and transportation studies (St. Clair County Transportation Study and Washten re composed of representatives from local units of government, transit agencies, and MDOT.

PUBLIC MEETINGS & COMMENT OPPORTUNITY 
(This is your best opportunity to provide input on specific projects)

ely recommend projects that meet regional goals and satisfy local needs and submits them to SEMCOG.

t from the FACs and transportation studies. SEMCOG evaluates the projects according to criteria includ- traint, air quality standards, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture, environmental justice populations), and environmental sensitivity.


analysis, and project list into a draft Regional Transportation Plan. The draft plan is shared with d input.


PUBLIC MEETINGS & COMMENT OPPORTUNITY 

iod for the RTP.

(10 seats on the Transportation Coordinating Council are reserved for non-government groups and private citizens) 

ion Coordinating Council, which votes on whether to recommend approval.

ommittee, which votes to recommend approval. 

sembly, which then votes to adopt the Regional Transportation Plan. 

ansit Administration, and the Federal Highway Administration for final approval.

he four-year Transportation Improvement Program, projects are scheduled and work can begin.

PUBLIC MEETINGS & COMMENT OPPORTUNITY 

TIP section for more information).

Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Southeast Michigan is a long-term blueprint for investing federal, state, and local transportation dollars in our transportation network. The plan identifies and analyzes transportation needs of Southeast Michigan and creates a framework for project priorities. The RTP is developed in cooperation with cities, county road commissions, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and transit operators. These groups are represented on county Federal-Aid Committees (FACs) and Transportation Study Areas, which are responsible for identifying projects for consideration in the RTP. More information and contacts for the SEMCOG region's FACs and transportation studies can be found on SEMCOG's [website](#).

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

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

Opportunities to amend the RTP occur three times a year to ensure it remains consistent with changing priorities. It is completely updated every four years according to the process outlined in Figure 4.

Consultation agency outreach

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

Although there is overlap between the consultation agency and public engagement processes, the two efforts are separate. The primary difference is the target audience for consultation agencies is comprised of formal groups and organizations, while public outreach is directed towards individuals. Agencies involved in the consultation outreach are planning partners across the region in various capacities including natural resources, education, conservation, environmental justice, community and economic development, tribal interests, freight, transit, border crossings, aviation, and more (the key players and partners outlined on page 6). Consultation with these various agencies and planning partners is an opportunity to discuss needs of the larger community, compare and coordinate planning approaches, and communicate about the vision for the overall transportation system that crosses multiple jurisdictions.

SEMCOG interacts with many of these agencies on an ongoing basis to ensure its plans/programs are aligned. This collaboration with consultation agencies continues through plan implementation. SEMCOG consultation agencies are listed in the *Consultation Agency Outreach Process*, as well as the [2045 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan: Appendix](#).

Where can I find more information about the RTP?

The complete RTP is available on www.semco.org/RTP. The TIP project list, also available on SEMCOG's website (www.semco.org/transportation-improvement-program-tip), allows users to find all approved projects. Proposed project additions and deletions are available for review on SEMCOG's website during public comment periods.

More specific information about the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan and how to participate are provided in SEMCOG's *Guide to Transportation Planning*.

There are numerous federal and state laws, rules, and policies that impact both the level of funding available and how that funding can be used. Allocation of transportation dollars must adhere to the requirements of the federal or state agency that grants funding. Learn more [here](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/index.cfm) (https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/index.cfm).

Read the current [Regional Transportation Plan](#).

Southeast Michigan Traffic Safety Plan

Southeast Michigan's success in maximizing the mobility of people and goods depends upon making the transportation system as safe and efficient as possible. The *Southeast Michigan Traffic Safety Plan* identifies the region's key safety needs and guides investment decisions to achieve significant reductions in fatalities and serious injuries. It is a data-driven, four-to-five year comprehensive plan that establishes regional goals, objectives, and key emphasis areas; it integrates the four Es – engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services (EMS). Like the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Southeast Michigan*, the document is incorporated into the *Regional Transportation Plan* and *Transportation Improvement Program*.

Read the [Southeast Michigan Traffic Safety Plan](#).

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Policies in the *Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan* (RTP) are implemented through projects in the *Transportation Improvement Program*. Opportunities to amend the TIP occur three times a year to ensure it remains consistent with changing priorities. Synchronized with RTP updates (when applicable), project additions and deletions for the TIP may be submitted to SEMCOG three times per year by the region's FACs and transportation studies. Upon approval, SEMCOG submits them to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Where can I find more information about the TIP?

Approved TIP projects can be found on SEMCOG's [website](#). Proposed project additions and deletions are available for review on SEMCOG's website during public comment periods. More specific information about the transportation planning process in Southeast Michigan and how to participate is provided in SEMCOG's *Guide to Transportation Planning*.

SEMCOG's public participation process for Southeast Michigan's Transportation Improvement Program satisfies the Federal Transit Administration's public participation process for public transit agencies receiving federal funding in the SEMCOG region.

Read the current [Transportation Improvement Program](#).

Unified Work Program and SEMCOG Budget

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

Access the current [Work Program](#).

Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan

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

This plan focuses on the major aspects of water planning in Southeast Michigan – the Blue Economy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure. It emphasizes an integrated water resource planning approach to restore and improve water resources, as well as identify efficiencies and optimize investments to protect public health in the region.

Read the [Water Resources Plan for Southeast Michigan](#).

Outreach Strategies and Tools

Figure 5

Public Involvement Activities Revolve Around these Strategies and Tools



The *Public Participation Plan* documents how individuals can participate in major plans for which SEMCOG is responsible. This section documents the many tools available to SEMCOG for engaging the public (Figure 5). All tools are transferrable to any of the four public involvement activities outlined below. The list of strategies and tools continually evolves.

Educate and Publicize

SEMCOG informs the public on regional issues, visioning, and decision-making. The goal is to create a shared vision through two-way interaction.

SEMCOG also works to increase awareness and promote participation by reaching out to regional stakeholders and the general public using a variety of tools. A key component of this public involvement activity is assisting members in meeting their public involvement obligations. Because it is most effective working with local governments (e.g., township boards, city councils, and county road commissions), SEMCOG works with these entities to help identify projects of local concern and benefit.

Blog

SEMCOG Think Regional – Act Local blog enables SEMCOG to comment on issues important to the organization and its members in a conversational tone. These issues include transportation, environment, community and economic development, regional data, and member accomplishments. Blogs are usually written by the staff expert, with communications support. The blog is easily accessible from the home page of SEMCOG’s website or directly at www.semco.org/blog; there is also a subscription feature for the blog that allows those who subscribe to receive notification when a new blog is posted. Blogs are posted on social media and can also be mentioned in SEMCOG’s biweekly newsletter, *Regional Update*.

Data visualization

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

Encourage individual actions

SEMCOG’s What You Can Do programs offer information on efforts to encourage specific individual actions that complement its planning work (<https://www.semco.org/what-you-can-do>).

- **One Water** – This program builds on SEMCOG’s prior success with stormwater education. It was created to attain a greater public awareness and shared responsibility for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater. The goal is to educate people throughout the region that by taking care of and investing in our interrelated water systems, we can keep our water fresh and flowing. By working with partners throughout the region and through the use of various media tools, One Water has brought education on this critical topic to millions of residents.
- **What You Can Do to Improve Your Commute** (Commuter Connect) – This program is designed to help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by reducing the number of vehicles on the road. SEMCOG provides a free online matching service for people interested in sharing the ride to work or using other alternative commutes. Media campaigns, such as the Commuter Challenge,

promote this service to the public. Other promotions occur on-site at local businesses and events, as well as on SEMCOG's website and social media pages.

- **What You Can Do to Keep the Air Clean (Ozone Action)** – This program announces Ozone Action days when weather conditions are likely to combine with pollution to create elevated amounts of ground-level ozone, a threat to human health and the environment. On those days, individuals are requested to participate in voluntary emissions reduction initiatives (e.g., carpooling) to keep air cleaner in their corner of the world. Announcements are made via the media, SEMCOG's website and social media pages, and via local member governments' websites.
- **What You Can Do to Protect Our Waterways (Stormwater)** – SEMCOG has created and promotes a public education campaign to assist local governments in meeting federal requirements for stormwater public education. Six key messages for the general public reinforce awareness of water quality issues and actions that the public can take to improve water quality in the region. SEMCOG's website and social media pages promote this information and best practices.
- **What You Can Do to Walk.Bike.Drive. Safe** – Pedestrians and bicyclists are much more likely to suffer an injury or fatality in a traffic crash than drivers. This program promotes actions for people who walk, bike, and drive to keep Southeast Michigan's roads safer for all travelers. By working with partners throughout the region and through the use of various media tools, Walk.Bike.Drive. Safe has brought education on this critical topic to millions of residents.

Federal-Aid Committee (FAC) meetings

These county-level organizations recommend all county, city, and village transportation projects for funding (the City of Detroit also has a federal-aid committee). Their scheduled meetings represent a major decision point in the transportation planning process. SEMCOG works with and provides funding to these committees to help publicize and facilitate public involvement. Information on FACs can be found on www.semco.org.

Glossary of transportation terms and acronyms

A comprehensive glossary of transportation terms is available on SEMCOG's [website](#).

Guide to Transportation Planning

A *Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan* has been developed, revised, and widely distributed by SEMCOG, local member governments, transportation study areas, and transit agencies throughout the region. The guide explains the transportation planning process in simplified terms, identifies the critical public input opportunities, and describes transportation funding sources. This guide is also available on SEMCOG's website.

Infographics

Complex, numerical messages, or information can often best be represented by a combination of words and graphics. Infographics can draw attention to a meaningful piece of information. They can be used in print and online publications as well as social media.

Information requests

SEMCOG assists its members and the public in accessing regional planning information. All SEMCOG publications are available to the public, both on the website and in printed form, upon request. Trained staff monitors requests to SEMCOG's Information Center accessible to the public via phone (313-324-3330) and email (infocenter@semco.org). Response time is most often within 24 hours of receipt of request for information.

In-person contact

In many instances, the best way to reach a key audience is by direct, in-person contact. This can mean meetings, visits, impromptu conversations at events, etc. A phone call, text, or personal email can achieve a similar result.

Lobby display

In SEMCOG's 14th floor public access lobby, this video display provides timely information about SEMCOG to members/visitors.

Local board meetings

SEMCOG encourages citizens to become aware of agenda items coming before their local governing bodies. Local planning begins at these meetings, and public involvement is an important part of the local process. Often, these meetings are broadcast on community television, which means the content reaches a larger audience than those who are in attendance. This process is outlined in SEMCOG's *Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan*.

Marketing materials

Physical products, such as posters and brochures, can be produced to disseminate key messages. They are beneficial for sending a message to a broader audience, and enhance our value with members and partners. They are also useful electronically on the web and social media.

Media advisories

These are notifications to the media of impending SEMCOG public meetings (e.g., Transportation Coordinating Council, Executive Committee, General Assembly). They are invitations to the media to attend the meeting and report on the proceedings. Media advisories are also posted on SEMCOG's website and on social media.

Media relations

It is important to develop working relationships with local media, and SEMCOG has done that expertly. SEMCOG's website, designed to facilitate quick access to SEMCOG data, is regularly used by reporters. In addition to print media coverage, SEMCOG also appears on television and radio. Appearances on public affairs talk shows, both on local network affiliates and cable, and public service announcements are effective ways to get messages to a large number of people. Increasingly, we have also engaged our member local governments in placing messages on their websites, along with speaking at televised city council and township board meetings, and using our social media channels for all announcements. The use of our own video is ongoing and expanding, when appropriate.

News conferences

A news conference is a scheduled event that gathers the media together to disseminate specific information. News conferences should be carefully considered and only used in very important instances.

News releases

News releases are developed by SEMCOG on a regular basis announcing important regional information. The distribution list includes a wide range of local and regional newspapers, including those that cover the region's diverse populations. Upcoming policy actions by SEMCOG's Executive Committee and General Assembly are always announced to the press. News releases are also posted on SEMCOG's website, on SEMCOG's social media pages, and on other electronic repositories including Automation Alley, as appropriate.

Media coverage of SEMCOG activities, including transportation planning, is evident throughout the region. A top priority is to reach the region's diverse populations, and especially groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in the transportation planning process. We continually seek additional electronic media sources to help deliver our messages.

Newsletters

Similar to *Regional Update* (see description below), issue-area newsletters such as *Environmental Exchange* are a useful way to target messages to a particular group of stakeholders.

Opinion articles

With initiatives where increased visibility to important opinion leaders such as legislators and the public is the strategy, getting our standpoint directly into media publications with a letter or an op-ed is a strong approach. It is necessary to have a very strong message to present. These opinion articles can also be used on social media.

Podcasts

SEMCOG's Regional Ahead podcast enables SEMCOG to engage in conversations on issues important to the organization and its members in a conversational tone. This podcast is easily accessible from the home page of SEMCOG's website (www.semco.org/podcast); subscription to the podcast is available on the primary platforms for the medium that allows those who subscribe to receive notification when a new podcast is posted. Podcasts are posted on social media and mentioned in SEMCOG's biweekly newsletter, *Regional Update*. Transcripts are available on the webpage.

Portable display panels

These panels are for use inside or outside of the office. They are portable. They are used to display special messages and/or pictures that help illustrate concepts in a plan.

Presentations

In many instances, the best way to reach a key audience is to stand before them and present the information. This can be done via PowerPoint or other tools.

Project-specific public involvement

Some projects require more in-depth study and, as part of the study process, public meetings and hearings are conducted. These types of public meetings and public hearings are well-publicized in local newspapers and other media. Many of the studies are monitored by SEMCOG. Information on many specific projects can be obtained on SEMCOG's website or by emailing, calling, or writing SEMCOG's Information Center.

Public notices

Public notices at SEMCOG fall into two categories – public meeting notice and public comment period.

Public meetings are announced via a public notice (and other appropriate tools, e.g., social media) for regional plans and other initiatives. These meetings seek specific input on regional plans before the plan is drafted, usually begin with a presentation, and conclude with interaction and comments from those attending. Findings inform plan development.

The **public comment period** is announced for regional plans, amendments to those plans, and the annual budget and work program.

The timing for a public notice is 30 days before a SEMCOG plan is formally adopted, and 45 days for the *Public Participation Plan*. The public notice includes dates/times for all meetings where the plan will be discussed and voted upon, as well as information on other ways to comment. Public notices are mailed to the entire SEMCOG mailing list, included in *Regional Update*, and posted in SEMCOG's office, website, and on social media.

Public outreach

A top priority is reaching the region's diverse populations, and especially groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in the transportation planning process. We are improving our visibility in the areas where these populations reside with mobile displays, special mailings, and television appearances. We are also fostering stronger relationships with groups representing diverse populations and seeking their input earlier.

Reaching persons with special needs

SEMCOG has established procedures to make information available to those with special needs. SEMCOG meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations. All meeting agendas and notices contain information on how individuals with disabilities requiring assistance can request reasonable accommodations at meetings, including sign-language interpreters. SEMCOG's website is compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. SEMCOG has also translated documents, including the Regional Transportation Plan, into Spanish, Arabic, and Braille, and will continue to do so upon request.

Regional Update newsletter

SEMCOG's biweekly *Regional Update* newsletter, is the organization's primary member communication vehicle. It provides timely information of regional interest 25-26 times a year. Articles include notice of SEMCOG meetings, SEMCOG Universities, reports, data, news releases, public notices, legislative updates, items of regional interest sent to SEMCOG by partner organizations, membership information (e.g., new members, member accomplishments, members in the news, etc.). While *Regional Update* is sent to SEMCOG members as well as other stakeholders and the media, it is also available for the public on our website and on social media.

Reports/Quick Facts

All regional plans are electronically housed on www.semco.org. The Quick Facts report is used mostly for data analysis reports which tend to be shorter.

SEMCOG meetings

SEMCOG holds meetings on a regular basis, including but not limited to its General Assembly, Executive Committee, other committees, and various task forces. Building on a tradition of involving the public in planning decisions, SEMCOG facilitates coordination of the region's stakeholders in developing regional plans and policies. As these plans and policies are developed and updated, draft versions presented to SEMCOG's General Assembly, Executive Committee, and task forces are available on SEMCOG's website, social media, and upon request. Agendas convey the content of the meeting and are posted on SEMCOG's website, on social media, and sent to the media. All meetings are open to the public.

SEMCOG University workshops and webinars

SEMCOG University is a series of free workshops for local elected leaders and others. SEMCOG members can take advantage of a variety of training opportunities free-of-charge, close to home, and in several formats, including webinars. Many of these training workshops focus on transportation-related topics. All are announced in advance using a variety of tools and are open to the public.

Semscope magazine

Semscope is a quarterly magazine written, designed, published, and mailed by SEMCOG for its members, others interested in regional issues, and the public. It complements *Regional Update*, but differs in frequency and scope. While *Regional Update* provides short, timely articles, *Semscope* provides in-depth coverage of regional issues, serving as a reference, educational tool, and membership vehicle. It is sent to members, posted on social media, and available on our website.

Social media

SEMCOG uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to engage and educate the public. SEMCOG jobs are also posted on LinkedIn. SEMCOG will consider other forms of social media as they are developed, and as they are appropriate for the messages and conversations we want to have with the public.

Speakers' bureau

SEMCOG's trained staff makes public presentations regarding the regional planning process to groups upon request. Using maps identifying geographic concentrations of populations protected by Environmental Justice regulations, SEMCOG continues making contact with groups representing those traditionally underrepresented in the planning process. SEMCOG requests time at regularly scheduled meetings to make presentations on regional issues. Comments are solicited and recorded.

Special mailings

SEMCOG has a comprehensive mailing list of about 7,000 people. All people who comment or provide input to SEMCOG are added to the mailing list. *Semscope*, the quarterly magazine, is emailed to the entire list, as are all public notices. Special mailings regarding public meetings and events are mailed to those who have asked for information. In addition, various organizations and persons who represent the region's diverse populations were added to the list.

Surveys

Pulse of the Region surveys are used as a means for SEMCOG to regularly engage the public on topics related to SEMCOG programs and initiatives. It allows SEMCOG to create news by publicizing the survey, getting the public to participate, and reporting the results. It further enables SEMCOG to engage its members to help promote these surveys through their communication channels. *Pulse of the Region* surveys can be as often as quarterly. Typically, surveys remain open for one-two months. Results are used as input into appropriate plans.

Targeted email

SEMCOG uses Informz/Higher Logic, an email marketing tool, to send mailings to a range of audiences. It has a variety of advantages, including targeting of specific groups, tracking of analytics, archiving of messages as webpages, and website-like formatting options.

Video

Use of video to send SEMCOG messages has increased in recent years. It has been used to tell the story of regional plans such as the *Parks and Recreation Plan*, *Regional Transportation Plan*, and *Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan* as well as comprising an integral part of SEMCOG's public education campaigns. Videos are housed on SEMCOG's YouTube channel and shared widely on social media and community TV stations.

Web-based mapping

SEMCOG's website includes a series of standard maps and the ability to create customized maps for any location in Southeast Michigan using information from the U.S. Census Bureau and many other sources.

Website

SEMCOG's website is the ultimate repository of most of the tools described here, containing important information about SEMCOG data, policies, and projects. All of SEMCOG's policy documents and technical reports are available on the website and most can be downloaded in PDF. Hard copies of all SEMCOG publications are available upon request. The website includes information found in *Regional Update* and SEMCOG news releases, such as upcoming policy actions. Promoting materials in other tools is designed to drive the reader back to the website to read the complete document or for additional information. Items that are new on the website should be promoted via the other tools to, in turn, drive readers back to www.semco.org. The website calendar includes public meetings and workshops held by SEMCOG. Public notices are posted on the website home page carousel.

Listen

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

Community visioning

SEMCOG occasionally holds community visioning sessions designed to receive input on transportation and other issues from the public at-large. These sessions have proven to be effective in creating interest in transportation planning among the public. All such meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times and are well publicized by SEMCOG, via mass mailing, on website, and on social media.

Email comments

SEMCOG's public involvement opportunities include an email address where comments regarding regional issues can be made. SEMCOG will continue to provide a variety of ways for the public to comment on transportation and other regional issues.

Meetings open to the public

All SEMCOG meetings open to the public are posted at SEMCOG's offices, announced in *Regional Update*, posted on the website, and available through SEMCOG's social media vehicles.

Official public comment processes

SEMCOG conducts formal public comment processes by publicizing public comment periods and meetings related to developing and amending the *Regional Transportation Plan*, *Transportation Improvement Program*, *Public Participation Plan*, and *Annual Operating Budget and Work Program Summary*. Other regional plans also have formal comment processes and are described in the Understanding and Participating in SEMCOG's Planning Activities and SEMCOG's Plans with 30-Day (minimum) Public Participation Process sections of this *Public Participation Plan*.

Project-specific public involvement

Some projects require more in-depth public involvement to directly inform the plan. In those instances, project-specific public forums and/or meetings may be held. The purpose of these meetings is to gather specific information related to the topic/plan to be used in creating the plan.

Public comment periods during Transportation Coordinating Council, Executive Committee, and General Assembly meetings

All SEMCOG meetings are public meetings and are publicized on SEMCOG's website. Citizens are invited to comment at the beginning of each of these meetings during the established "Public Comment" agenda item. All SEMCOG meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations.

Regional surveys

SEMCOG periodically conducts regional surveys to gather information from the general public about regional planning issues. Some surveys focus on specific issues such as transportation, transit, environmental, or economic development issues while others are general, designed to assess which planning issues have the biggest impact on overall quality of life. Customer surveys are periodically conducted by local agencies, especially transit agencies, to continually improve service. SEMCOG promotes these efforts via all of its regular communications vehicles.

Social media

SEMCOG uses Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to engage and educate the public. SEMCOG jobs are also posted on LinkedIn. SEMCOG will also consider other forms of social media as they are developed, and as they are appropriate for the messages and conversations we want to have with the public.

Tele-Town Hall

SEMCOG may use this telecommunications-based tool to complement the traditional in-person public meeting.

Visualization

SEMCOG uses available technology to the extent possible to convey regional plans visually. Such visualization techniques are designed to help the public better understand the context and impact of project proposals on their daily lives. Visualization techniques include interactive mapping; printed, small- and large-scale maps that allow comparison of proposals; aerial photographs, alone or with GIS mapping overlays; photographs, sketches, artist renderings, images, diagrams, charts, and other graphics; online maps; and Internet web-based content that is easy to read and available for download in standard software formats.

Evaluate

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

Annual documentation

Annual public involvement efforts are documented in SEMCOG's Work Program Completion Report.

Citizen evaluations

SEMCOG is expanding its use of citizen evaluations or short questionnaires designed to determine how best to reach the general public and with what type of information. These evaluations are available at meetings where public input is sought.

Focus groups

A focus group is a group of people who have been brought together to discuss a particular subject in order to solve a problem or suggest ideas. SEMCOG may use focus groups in developing plans or other initiatives, such as those for public education.

Response to comments

All comments received by SEMCOG are recorded, reviewed, and responded to by staff, and presented to decision makers. Where appropriate, comments are compiled and published.

SEMConnect

SEMCOG's membership database enables recording of all public comments that can be easily extracted in a multitude of ways for individual projects. All public comments and interactions (public meetings, focus groups, etc.) are recorded in this database.

Plan Availability

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

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2019-2020**

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