



# Chapter One

## Overview of Bay City Area Transportation Study





## BCATS and Transportation Planning

The Bay City area, as well as our state and nation, is held together by an extensive transportation network. The transportation system connects people to jobs, hospitals, schools, cultural and sporting events, parks, shopping centers, and to family members. It also provides a vital link in economic development and national defense by connecting seaports, airports, and railroads.

Therefore, legislation contained in [Section 134 \(a\) of title 23](#), United States Code indicates that it is in the national interest to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems. This system will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and through urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation related fuel consumption and air pollution.

The Bay City Area Transportation Study (BCATS) is the principal public agency, as per Section 134 (a), conducting regional transportation studies for the Bay City Urbanized Area. Urbanized areas are designated by census data from 2010 and will be adjusted in 2020 when census data is collected. BCATS, through an agreement with the Bay County Board of Commissioners, provides management and policy functions for the transportation planning programs as required by the **Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)**. BCATS provides transportation planning services on behalf of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the cities of Bay City and Essexville and the townships of Bangor, Monitor, Hampton, Portsmouth, Kawkawlin, and Frankenlust (see [map, page 15](#)). The MPO is established by federal law in all urbanized areas of the nation to carry out the "3C" (continuing, cooperative and comprehensive) transportation planning process. This process is required for the area to continue to receive U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) funding. Extensive USDOT funds are spent annually in the Bay City area for highway, bridge, transit, transportation enhancement and safety projects and improvements.

One major function of BCATS under federal law is to produce a transportation plan for the area. The transportation plan is used as a basis to guide the decision of where federal transportation funds should be spent. The transportation plan identifies the area's transportation needs through the year 2045 as well as projects, both funded and unfunded, and policies to meet those needs. The plan shall include both long-term and short-term strategies/actions, including but not limited to, operations and management activities that lead to the systematic development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demands. The transportation plan shall be reviewed and updated every five years in air quality attainment areas and at least every four years in non-attainment areas to confirm its validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast period. In updating a plan, BCATS shall base the update on the latest estimates and assumptions for population, land use, travel, employment, congestion and economic activity.

The BCATS is governed by a policy committee that includes various elected and appointed officials

---



from the transportation planning area plus other members from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Policy Committee generally meets on the third Wednesday of every other month and the meetings are open to the public.

The BCATS Policy Committee generally acts under the advisement of the BCATS Technical Committee. The Technical Committee reviews, in greater detail, the activities of BCATS and provides recommendations to the Policy Committee. The Technical Committee is composed of technically oriented representatives that presently include various transportation planning, engineering and other interests in the area. The Technical Committee generally meets on the second Tuesday of the week of every other month and is open to the public. The Policy and Technical Committee members are listed below.

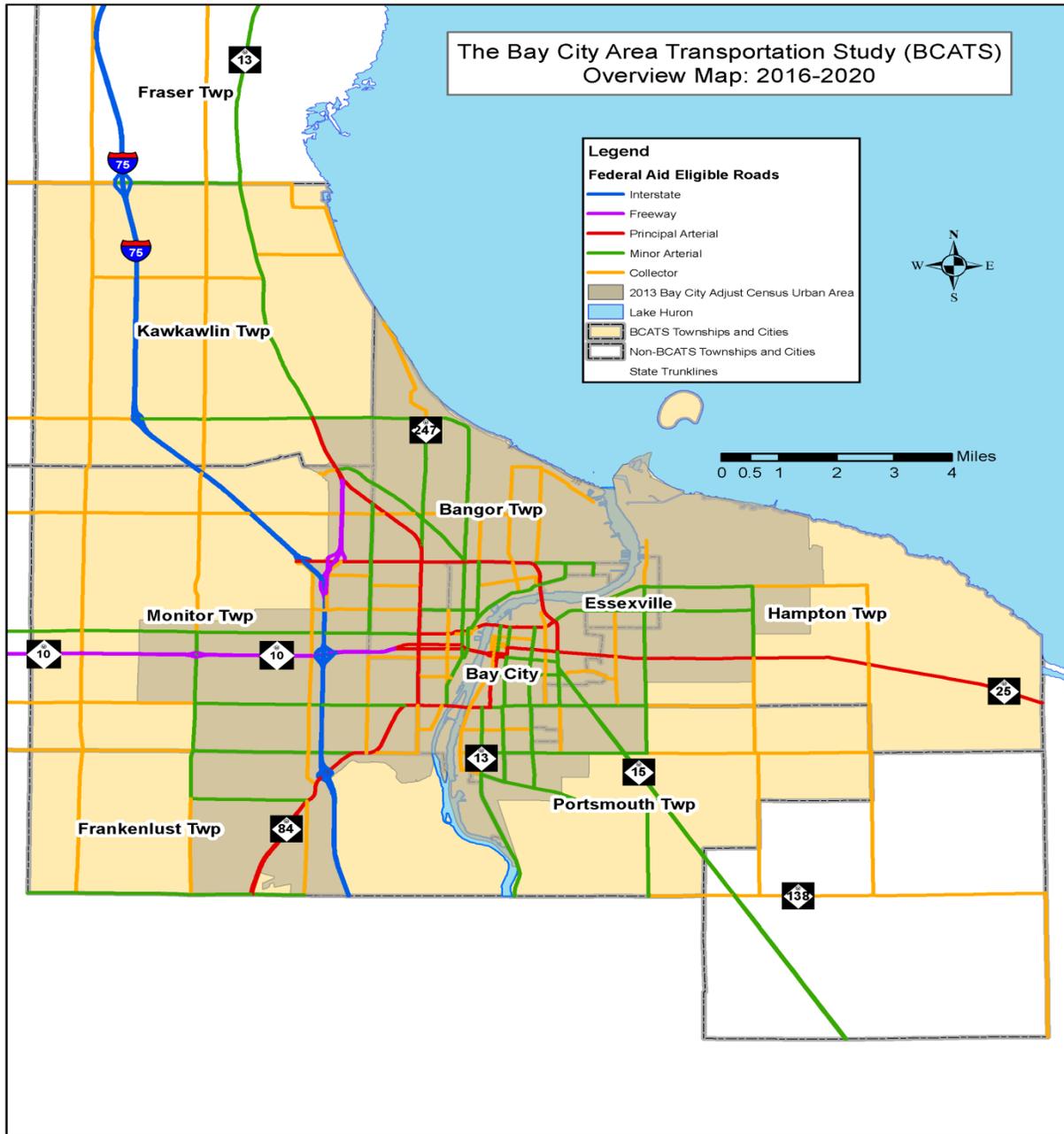
<b>BCATS Policy Committee Voting Members</b>	
Glenn Rowley, Supervisor	Bangor Township
Thomas Herek, Chairman	Bay County Commission
Vaughn Begick, Commissioner	Bay County Commission
James Barcia, Executive	Bay County Executive
Richard Gromaski, Chairman	Bay County Road Commission
Robert Redmond, Supervisor	Bay Metro Transit Authority
Kathleen Newsham, Mayor	City of Bay City
Larry Elliot, Commission President	City of Bay City
Russell Tanner, Mayor	City of Essexville
Sue Fortune, Executive Director	East Michigan Council of Governments
Ronald Campbell, Supervisor	Frankenlust Township
Steve Wisniewski, Supervisor	Hampton Township
Dennis Bragiel, Supervisor	Kawkawlin Township
Pamela Boyd, Statewide Planning	Michigan Department of Transportation
Kenneth Malkin, Supervisor	Monitor Township
Robert Pawlak, Supervisor	Portsmouth Township

Table 1: BCATS Policy Committee Voting Members



<b>BCATS Technical Committee Members</b>	
Jay Anderson, BCATS Director	Bay County Transportation Planning
Jim Lillo, Engineer-Manager	Bay County Road Commission
Eric Sprague, General Manager	Bay Metro Transit
Rachel Phillips, City Engineer	City of Bay City
Terry Moulthane, Planner	City of Bay City
Dan Hansford, City Manager	City of Essexville
David Engelhardt, Planner	East Michigan Council of
Andy Pickard, Transportation Planning Team	Federal Highway Administration
Jack Hofweber, Manager	MDOT / Bay Transportation Service Center
Ryan McDonnell, Engineer	MDOT / Bay Transportation Service Center
Jay Reithel, Regional Planner	MDOT / Bay Region
Matthew Pitlock, Planner	MDOT / Statewide Planning

Table 2: BCATS Technical Committee Members



Map 2: BCATS Overview Map



## **Introduction to the BCATS Transportation Plan**

The adoption of a long range plan for transportation is not a new concept for the Bay City area. BCATS has adopted long range plans since 1965. However, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA), SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21, the FAST Act and the prior transportation bills: ISTEA, and TEA-21, have significantly changed what the long range plan must look like and the issues to be addressed.

In the past, transportation planning and funding was segmented between highways and transit. It emphasized new construction over maintenance, and largely ignored funding availability. There was little related to non-transportation issues and was advisory at the local level. Under MAP-21, the process links highways and transit, emphasizes maintenance of existing infrastructure, requires that plans and programs be fiscally responsible, requires attention to improving air quality in urban areas, examines land use impacts of transportation decisions and moves much of the decision-making responsibility from the federal and state levels to the local level. Fundamental changes have been made to the way the transportation system is planned, how federal funds can be used for improvements and, most importantly, how and by whom decisions are made.

The FAST Act, MAP-21, SAFETEA-LU, and the CAAA are four recent pieces of federal legislation that directly impact the transportation planning process. The CAAA calls for a greater integration of transportation and air quality planning processes. It requires that transportation plans, programs and projects conform to state air quality plans, and it mandates a reduction of vehicle miles traveled and congestion levels in some areas not meeting air quality standards.

The goal of the transportation planning process is to improve the entire regional transportation system by emphasizing the preservation of the existing system. Projects and strategies for the transportation system will look to improve:

- The accessibility and mobility for people and goods
- Creating/enhancing connectivity between modes of transportation
- Increase the safety and security along the system for all users
- Promote an efficient manner of management and operation
- Encourage energy conservation
- Support economic vitality of the region and provide for consistency between transportation projects and the growth and development patterns.

Motorized and non-motorized safety improvement projects have been done, to a large extent, by individual implementing agencies as problems are identified. Efforts have also been made on the transit system to increase efficiency and safety. Protection of the environment and the social and economic well-being of the citizens concerning transportation projects are achieved through reducing transportation system costs, reducing environmental pollution and energy consumption, and



coordinating land use and transportation.

The Bay City area which has a good highway is experiencing congestion in some areas and moderate congestion in many other parts of the region. Roadway improvements are not being built fast enough, and the prospects for the congestion problem are only that it will get worse. The Bay City area does not face the same severity of the congestion problem as some larger cities, but the relative deterioration of conditions here is comparable to many of those larger cities.

The 2025 Transportation Plan report was developed from May 2001 to April 2002. The final version of the report was approved in June, 2002. The 2027 Transportation Plan was a minor update to extend the 2025 plan for a two year period, while a new Travel Demand Model was under development to synchronize the Bay City Area Transportation Study (BCATS) Metropolitan Transportation Plan with the Saginaw Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (SMATS) Metropolitan Transportation Plan after which the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, also known as the Long Range Transportation Plan, was developed between January 2006 and July 2007 to include information from the Tri-Cities Travel Demand Model and to include all aspects of the Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU signed by President Bush on August 10, 2005. The 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was developed from January 2011 to June 2012 and incorporated the updated Great Lakes Bay Region Travel Demand Model which identifies peak period deficiencies as well as the incorporation transit travel. The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was developed from August 2015 to March 2017 to take in to account information from the updated Great Lakes Bay Region Travel Demand Model that now includes the Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS) and aspects of the FAST Act.

The FAST Act builds on the program structure and reforms of MAP-21 with the transition to a performance and outcome-based program. The United States Transportation Secretary, in consultation with state DOTs, MPOs, and other stakeholders, will establish performance measures for pavement conditions and performance for the Interstate and National Highway System (NHS), bridge conditions, injuries and fatalities, traffic congestion, on-road mobile source emissions, and freight movement on the Interstate System. State DOTs along with MPOs will set performance targets in support of those measures, and state and metropolitan plans will describe how program and project selection will help achieve the targets. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) such as the Bay City Area Transportation Study, in cooperation with state and local transit authorities, have been required to produce long range transportation plans since 1965. Under the FAST Act, BCATS is required to develop both a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which encompass a broader spectrum of issues, including intermodal facilities and fiscal constraints. As a result, BCATS has developed this 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.



## The 2045 Planning Process

Previous transportation legislation provided broad guidelines for the process used in developing long range transportation plans. The FAST Act continues the tradition of allowing as much flexibility as possible. However, it does specify certain issues that the plan must address. Addressing these issues will result in a plan that significantly improves transportation decisions in the Bay City area including:

- The projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan.
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors) that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan. In addition, the locally preferred alternative selected from an Alternatives Analysis under the FTA's Capital Investment Grant program (49 U.S.C. 5309 and 49 CFR part 611) needs to be adopted as part of the metropolitan transportation plan as a condition for funding under 49 U.S.C. 5309 when required as a major capital investment project.
- Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.
- Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity increases based on regional priorities and needs. The metropolitan transportation plan may consider projects and strategies that address areas or corridors where current or projected congestion threatens the efficient functioning of key elements of the metropolitan area's transportation system.
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail, regardless of funding source, in nonattainment and maintenance areas for conformity 53 determinations under the EPA's transportation conformity rule (40 CFR part 93). In all areas (regardless of air quality designation), all proposed improvements shall be described in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates.
- A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and



maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this consultation.

- Identify pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 217(g).
  - Transportation and transit enhancement activities, as appropriate.
  - A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented.
    - For purposes of transportation system operations and maintenance, the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways (as defined by 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(5)) and public transportation (as defined by title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53).
    - For the purpose of developing the metropolitan transportation plan, the MPO, public transportation operator(s), and State shall cooperatively develop estimates of funds that will be available to support metropolitan transportation plan implementation, as required under Sec. 450.314(a)(1). All necessary financial resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the transportation plan shall be identified.
    - The financial plan shall include recommendations on any additional financing strategies to fund projects and programs included in the metropolitan transportation plan. In the case of new funding sources, strategies for ensuring their availability shall be identified. In developing the financial plan, the MPO shall take into account all projects and strategies proposed for funding under title 23, U.S.C., title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 or with other Federal funds; State assistance; local sources; and private participation. Starting December 11, 2007, revenue and cost estimates that support the metropolitan transportation plan must use an inflation rate(s) to reflect “year of expenditure dollars,” based on reasonable financial principles and information, developed cooperatively by the MPO, State(s), and public transportation operator(s).
    - For the outer years of the metropolitan transportation plan (i.e., beyond the first 10 years) the financial plan may reflect aggregate cost ranges/cost bands, as long as the future funding source(s) is reasonably expected to be available to support the projected cost ranges/cost bands.
    - For illustrative purposes, the financial plan may (but is not required to) include additional projects that would be included in the adopted transportation plan if additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become
-



available.

- In cases that the FHWA and the FTA find a metropolitan transportation plan to be fiscally constrained and a revenue source is subsequently removed or substantially reduced (i.e., by legislative or administrative actions) the FHWA and the FTA will not withdraw the original determination of fiscal constraint; however, in such cases, the FHWA and the FTA will not act on an updated or amended metropolitan transportation plan that does not reflect the changed revenue situation.

### **Participation Plan**

There must be adequate opportunity for public officials (including elected officials) and citizen involvement in the development of the transportation plan before it is approved by BCATS, in accordance with the requirements of FAST Act 23 USC 134 (g)(3)(A) and 23 USC 134 (i)(6)(A). Such procedures shall include opportunities for interested parties to be involved in the early stages of the plan development/update process. The procedures shall include publication of the proposed plan or other methods to make it readily available for public review and comment. The procedures also shall include publication of the approved plan or other methods to make it readily available for information purposes. The BCATS Participation Plan is included in Chapter 8 of this document and is also available as a stand-alone document on the BCATS home page <http://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Transportation/> adopted on October 23, 2014.

### **Conformity Determination**

In nonattainment areas for transportation related pollutants, the FHWA and the FTA, as well as BCATS, must make a conformity determination on any new/revised plan in accordance with the Clean Air Act and the EPA conformity regulations (40 CFR parts 51 and 93). Bay County was an attainment/maintenance area operating under limited maintenance requirements under EPA's 1-hour Ozone Standard. Since EPA has revoked the 1-hour Ozone Standard and replaced it with a newer standard, the former minimal maintenance requirements for the County under the 1 hour Ozone Standard have been removed with that action.

Bay County is in attainment for Ozone under USEPA's recently implemented 8-hour Ozone Standard. There is no requirement to conduct a conformity analysis for the County under this designation.

### **Projects not currently included in the Plan**

Although BCATS compiled the list of local projects with the aid of MDOT, local road agencies, transit operation agencies and the local communities, there will ultimately be projects that will arise that were not included in the Plan. There are two methods through which these projects will be able to receive



federal funds provided by the FAST Act.

First, a project may be eligible to be part of the Plan if it is determined to be consistent with the policies of the Plan and meets FAST Act requirements, such as fiscal feasibility, etc.

Second, the Plan may be formally amended to include a specific project through the BCATS committee process.