



Chapter Eight

Regional Issues





Issues/Corridors of Concern

There are many issues facing the BCATS area that have a direct or indirect impact on the transportation system. This section is intended to identify these concerns and suggest appropriate actions to be considered. Listed below are various roadway corridors that are of special concern and need to be carefully monitored. The following list is not prioritized. Specific issues or concerns are identified for many of the corridors.

CORRIDOR LIMITS

Trumbull Street/Independence Bridge/Truman Parkway/Wilder Road (M-25/Center Avenue to I-75): Map 10, project 1

M-15 (Trumbull Street) currently ends on the south end of the intersection with M-25 (Center Avenue) in Bay City. Trumbull Street continues north of M-25 and crosses the Saginaw River (Independence Bridge) and becomes Truman Parkway. Truman Parkway curves to the west and becomes Wilder Road which connects to M-13 in Bangor Township and I-75 in Monitor Township. This corridor functions as a trunkline and BCATS is supportive of the efforts of the City of Bay City and Bay County Road Commission to work with MDOT to extend M-15 along the corridor to I-75 and turn over ownership of this corridor to MDOT. The Bay County Road Commission has recently improved the concrete sections of Wilder Road as well as coordinated with MDOT on traffic signal timing for Wilder Road. Trumbull Street is currently on the FY 2017-2020 TIP to be reconstructed to trunkline standards with the addition of a center turn lane. BCATS feels strongly that once Trumbull Street reconstruction is completed that the surface condition of the corridor would be optimal for a turnover to MDOT.

Liberty Bridge & Independence Bridge: Map 10, project 2

Both are bascule bridges over the Saginaw River that provide crucial links to the BCATS Area and are owned operated by the City of Bay City. The City of Bay City in an August 15th, 2016 Bay City Commission meeting discussed the nearly \$6 million in repairs that will be needed over the next five years on both bridges. Bay City is exploring all options to pay for these repairs including federal grants and a local millage. The Bay City Commission has even discussed having an economic impact study done to assess the effects of permanently closing one of the two bridges and leaving it in the up position for river traffic. A recent bill signed by Governor Snyder in June of 2016 will provide help to municipalities that have movable bridges by reimbursing them for operational costs of the moveable bridges.



M-25/Thomas Street & Jenny Street (Henry Street to M-13/Euclid Avenue) : Map 10, project 3

This corridor of twin 3 lane one way roads functions as a primary entrance to Bay City from the west and I-75. The Bay Area Chamber's Beautification Committee is continually working to improve this corridor and has proposed doing a study on carrying out a road diet along the corridor. BCATS is coordinating with MDOT and the Beautification Committee to consider any and all capacity changes that could be made along the corridor.

Mackinaw Road over US-10: Map 10, project 4

MDOT performed a series of interchange studies along US-10 in Bay County. The Mackinaw Road interchange is within the BCATS Area and the study concluded that the interchange is operating at a lower than desired level of service due to commercial growth at the adjacent industrial park and increased enrollment at Delta College that is also served by this interchange. The study for this interchange recommends a reconfiguration as either a tight diamond or the incorporation of modern roundabouts at the ramp endings. There is currently no funding available for this project.

Bay City to Midland Connector Trail: Map 10, project 5

Several options for a non-motorized path between Midland and Bay City have been discussed but little progress has been made. Close coordination with City of Midland, City of Bay City, Bay County, Williams Township, Monitor Township, and the Great Lakes Bay Region Trail Group will be necessary to find the best route.

Bay City to Saginaw Connector Trail: Map 10, project 6

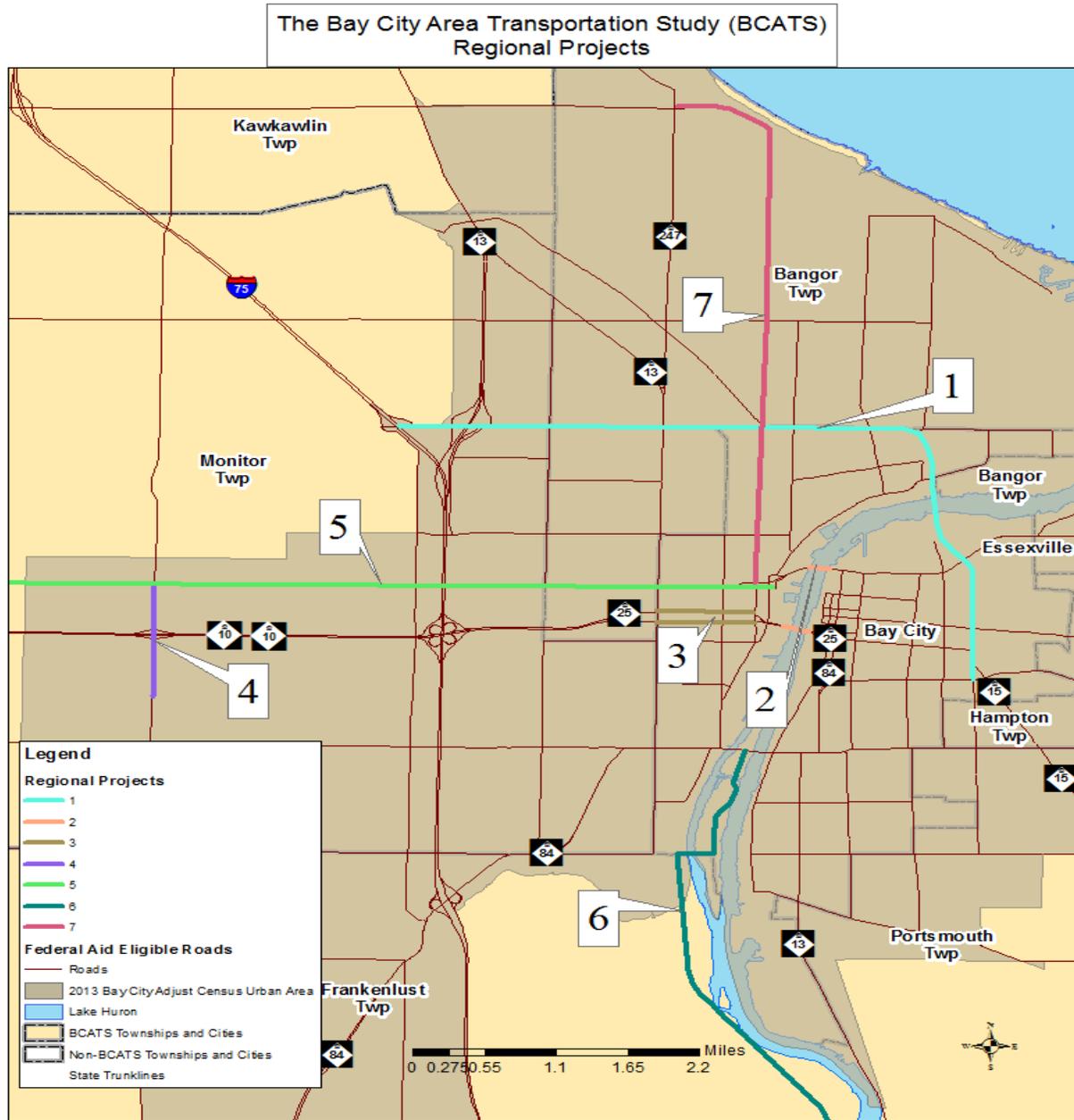
The trail connecting Bay City to Saginaw has been partially completed in Frankenlust Township. A 7-mile piece of the proposed 100 mile route was constructed in 2016. The trial link starts at Ojibway Island in Saginaw and runs along the old rail system to a trail head at East Hotchkiss road. The next part of the project is a bridge connecting the trail to the middle grounds in Bay City, which will then link to the River Walk/Rail Trail.

Bay City to the Bay City State Recreation Area - Henry Street & State Park Drive (Midland Street to M-247): Map 10, project 7

The current connection of the Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA) to downtown Bay City by non-motorized modes of transportation is currently inconvenient for bicyclists and pedestrians. The current route does not provide a direct link between downtown Bay City and the BCSRA and may prevent visitors to the BCSRA from taking bike trips to downtown Bay City or vice versa. Providing signage and infrastructure along Henry Street and State Park Drive would help highlight a direct link



between the two destinations for bicyclists and pedestrians alike. While the City of Bay City, Bangor Township, and Bay County are in support of this effort there is currently no funding identified to move this project forward.



Map 10: Regional Projects Map



Trends Affecting Regional Transportation

Increased Funding for Transportation

As the financial analysis chapter indicates, significant financial resources are necessary to maintain the existing system and make improvements as necessary. BCATS will continue to monitor the level of increased state funding that was approved by a series of laws in November of 2015. BCATS will also review, and endorse if deemed necessary, efforts that seek to increase funding for transportation.

Additionally, continued funding for the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) and Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative is vital for the continued growth of the region. EMCOG is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals and the public around a common vision of making a great region even greater. Since the Regional initiative was enacted by Governor Snyder, EMCOG has granted over 200,000 dollars each year for project promoting regional growth, and has provided service's to both urban and rural areas for enhancing the economy, improving transportation, protecting the environment, promoting place making, and technical and planning assistance.

Safety

BCATS's state and federal partners continue to stress the need for safety conscious planning and increased integration of safety into the transportation planning process. Efforts in this area can be increased to better understand data collected by local partners, data gaps that may exist, and how to weight safety in the project selection process. Support for local Safe Routes 2 Schools program will continue.

Regional Coordination

East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) has been tasked with assisting in the implementation of the Governor's Regional Prosperity Initiative. BCATS has and will continue to participate in and support EMCOG in this initiative. This has been a great opportunity to help promote transportation needs from a regional perspective that will help drive economic prosperity. BCATS also coordinates with its neighboring MPOs, Saginaw Metropolitan Area Transportation Study and Midland Area Transportation Study, on data collection, travel demand modeling, long range planning, and regional collaboration.



Improved Access to Public Transit

Regionalization of transit service continues to be a priority. The BMTA intends on taking the lead in this effort in the Great Lakes Bay Region. With State funding on the decline, it will be important to find key stakeholders in the region that may offer support in this effort.

Livability

Livability is the ability of transportation to provide a higher quality of life for citizens by providing access to a better road system, improve quality of life, enhances local economy, provides a safe system to navigate, and improve all modes of travel. Addressing livability issues in transportation planning, development and implementation ensures that transportation investments support both mobility and broader community goals. BCATS goals, performance measures, projects, and the above regional concerns when implemented and constructed will have these factors considered in the planning process. A detailed transportation network that connects and functions effectively will have a relevant impact on economic prosperity and quality of life. The following are ways BCATS can implement strategies to meet livability goals in the area.

1. Continue to network with other local industries and groups to design facilities that meet the needs of all users and modes of travel.
2. Promote projects that improve sustainability and the environment (BCATS goal five).
 - a. Bay County Road Commission is developing a database using GIS to collect all of their storm water infrastructure, which can help identify needs for improvements in the system.
3. Implement safety performances measures (PM 1) and suggestions from the regional traffic safety plan to inform investment decisions into safety projects.
 - a. Bay County has the highest percentage of senior citizens in Michigan, which will require BCATS to plan and implement senior citizen driver education classes and provide a quality transit system for those who can not drive.