



## Resource Agency Consultation

The 2005 federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires states to develop their long-range statewide transportation plans in consultation with state, tribal and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation. The consultation process includes a comparison of the draft plan to state and tribal conservation plans or maps, if available, and to inventories of natural and historic resources, if available. In addition, SAFETEA-LU requires states to include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas in which to carry out these activities in their long-range statewide transportation plans. This discussion may be found in the *2035 MI Transportation Plan Environmental White Paper*. These provisions are retained in 2012 federal surface transportation legislation, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

This report provides a summary of the consultation activities the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) undertook with environmental resource agencies in developing the revision to the state long-range transportation plan, the *MI Transportation Plan*. A separate report discusses the consultation with Michigan's 12 federally recognized Tribal Governments.

As part of the outreach effort in revising the *MI Transportation Plan*, MDOT extended an invitation to the following state and federal resource agencies to participate in a Webinar on June 21, 2012:

### 1. Federal Agencies

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- United States Forest Service (U.S. Forest Service)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Services
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

### 2. State Agencies

- Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)
- Department of Environmental Quality - Air Quality, Permits, Wetlands, Water Quality (DEQ)
- Department of Natural Resources - Wildlife, Fisheries (DNR)
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)

As a result, five agency representatives participated in the Webinar, including representatives from the EPA, the U.S. Forest Service, the DEQ, and the U.S. Fish and



Wildlife Service. Two themes emerged during the Webinar. First, agencies expressed interest in seeing more geographic information system (GIS) information on environmental constraints within the corridors of highest significance. Secondly, the EPA expressed interest in future rural transit initiatives and transit planning.

At the conclusion of the Webinar, participants were asked to complete an online survey. The survey also was e-mailed to all the invited resource agency staff. The survey asked the resource agency staff to comment on plan priorities, new initiatives within their agency, any changes in legislation, the availability of new data, and any other input they might like to offer on the transportation planning process. Three resource agencies responded to the survey.

Survey respondents ranked the five Stewardship Objectives from the State Long-Range Transportation Plan in order of importance to their agencies. The rankings were as follows (with 1 being the highest):

1. Preservation of the existing transportation system including the roadside environment
2. Overall environment and aesthetics (ambient quality of life concerns such as air quality)
3. Land use coordination
4. Transportation service coordination
5. Strengthening the state's economy

The survey results also indicated that state wetland and water laws may change in the near future. It is hoped the changes result in streamlining the permit process. Michigan does not yet have stream mitigation requirements, but these are also likely in the near future. The DEQ is working on a strategic plan that should be complete this year. MDOT's representative also recommended that MDOT continue to expand its GIS capabilities and apply them to future planning documents. In response to this latter comment, see the [Environmental White Paper](#) for an environmental constraints summary of the Corridors of Highest Significance. This information was developed using GIS technology. MDOT will continue to advance its use of GIS technology in the analysis of transportation plans.