

# 2018 TAMC Culvert Data Collection Pilot Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Thank you for your interest in the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) Culvert Data Collection Pilot Project! We know you likely have many questions and hope you are able to find your answer here, in this Frequently Asked Questions document. If you are participating in this pilot project as either a local road agency or a regional planning organization (RPO)/metropolitan planning organization (MPO), you will find answers to common questions in the following areas:

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We will update this document regularly when we determine answers to any of your existing unanswered questions and when we receive new questions from you. If you do not find your answer here, we encourage you to send us your questions to Scott Bershing ([sjbershi@mtu.edu](mailto:sjbershi@mtu.edu)) or Chris Gilbertson ([cggilber@mtu.edu](mailto:cggilber@mtu.edu)) at the Center for Technology & Training (CTT).

## About Participation and Commitment

How do local road agencies officially commit?

To commit to the culvert data collection pilot project, contact Scott Bershing at [sjbershi@mtu.edu](mailto:sjbershi@mtu.edu). You can also reply to the e-mail that he sent on Friday, April 13, 2018. You will need to send him your response by the deadline, which is May 14, 2018.

How do we know if our local road agency is in Round 1 or Round 2?

You will find this information in the letter that your agency received on April 13, 2018.

When do Round 2 local road agencies need to commit?

Round 2 local road agencies need to commit by the same deadline as Round 1 local road agencies, which is May 14, 2018. We need all commitments by this date.

If a local road agency commits before May 14, 2018, can they begin collection right away?

Yes!



What would happen if a local road agency committed to participating in the pilot project but was unable to provide all of the data by July 30, 2018?

Local road agencies will receive reimbursement based on the centerline miles of road where all culverts are collected and submitted prior to July 30, 2018.

Are only local road agencies eligible for the pilot? Our agency, which is a planning organization, may be interested in having our staff conduct culvert ratings.

Only local road agencies are eligible for the culvert data collection pilot project funds. Planning organizations can take on a support role in the project by providing services to local road agencies to the extent that their current work plan and budget allows. Alternatively, planning organizations may act as field collection staff in support of a local road agency involved in the pilot; however, payment for these services should be negotiated with the individual local road agency directly.

How will the culvert data be used and/or is any data sharing agreement necessary?

There is no special agreement for this culvert data collection pilot. Participants will need to understand that this will be treated like Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) data collection and, thus, intended for public use. Information gathered will be detailed in a final report for further review and analysis by the TAMC and the state of Michigan.

## About the Startup Funding

Will the fixed \$10,000 for county road commissions or \$5,000 for cities/villages be awarded as a lump sum?

The \$10,000/\$5,000 available for startup funding will be reimbursed for expenses up to \$10,000 for county road commissions and up to \$5,000 for cities/villages on a time and material basis. Invoices for labor, services and equipment will need to be submitted through your planning organization.

If the entire amount is not needed for startup funding, can the remaining portion be used toward data collection? Is there a listing of the items that are eligible under the startup funding?

Startup funding can be used toward data collection expenses such as labor, services, and minor tools or equipment necessary to do or prepare for data collection. Examples of acceptable equipment include a windows tablet or laptop to use as a data collector, a bright flashlight and camera for documenting culvert conditions, personal protective gear such as flotation or rescue devices that would be necessary for swift water inspection of culverts, and laser level or laser range finder to measure distances and elevations. Questions about acceptable uses of startup funding should be directed to Roger Belknap, TAMC coordinator at the Michigan Department of Transportation, [BelknapR@michigan.gov](mailto:BelknapR@michigan.gov).

What documentation is required for startup funding?

Local road agencies must submit receipts and a detailed activity summary report containing labor hours for training to their planning organization. In turn, the planning organization will include these expenses with their Cost Breakdown by Activity and Regional Program Invoice Template for Asset Management.

When can we start purchasing equipment? How do we get reimbursed and what is the time frame for reimbursement?

As soon as your local road agency sends in a commitment to participate, you can begin purchasing equipment for the pilot project. You will receive reimbursement for your equipment purchases when we get your invoice, which you must submit through your planning organization by the end of the 2018 fiscal year (September 30, 2018). Any invoices received after September 30, 2018 will not be paid.



## About the Reimbursement

Is there a guaranteed dollar amount per mile for Round 2 local road agencies?

No, determination of a per-centerline-mile reimbursement for Round 2 local road agencies depends upon who is committing to participate from the Round 1 and Round 2 local road agencies. After the May 14 commitment deadline, we will be able to inform Round 2 local road agencies what their reimbursement rate will be.

### **\*Update June 6, 2018**

TAMC approved a rate of \$30/per centerline mile for Round 2 local agencies. A letter was sent to all participating Round 2 agencies informing them of this. The letter also provided the potential total level of funding for their agency based on their agency's Certified Act 51 mileage.

Can we submit data for a portion of our road system, for example just primary roads?

Yes, you will receive the same per-centerline-mile reimbursement for any roads that you inspect whether they have culverts or not. Local road agencies can decide to collect and submit all or some of their road network. For example, a county with 500 miles of road may choose to collect and submit data for several of their townships. The county will be reimbursed for centerline miles in those townships (collection area) for which all data was collected. Keep in mind that the final report will compare your startup funding to what you submitted for your data collection.

Also, just a reminder that TAMC has an objective to locate all culverts 12" to 20' in size (culverts beneath the Bridge definition). Therefore, TAMC encourages participants to locate and evaluate these smaller culverts in addition to larger sized culverts in order to maintain a complete data set.

Will data submitted after July 30th be reimbursed?

No, local road agencies will only be reimbursed based on the centerline miles they submit prior to the close of business on July 30, 2018.

Are there separate invoice forms for PASER collection and the culvert data collection pilot project?

Yes, there will be separate forms, but they will be very similar.

### **\*Update June 8, 2018**

The culvert pilot requires agencies and RPO/MPOs to account for culvert pilot activities separate from PASER activities. An updated invoice form is available on the TAMC webpage here:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/tamc/Asset\\_Management\\_Program\\_Invoice-Reporting\\_Forms\\_2018\\_625066\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/tamc/Asset_Management_Program_Invoice-Reporting_Forms_2018_625066_7.pdf)

What is the time frame for reimbursement?

Reimbursement will be made after MDOT receives the invoice you submitted through the planning organization. All invoices are due by the end of the 2018 fiscal year (September 30, 2018).

Are there any issues with MDOT's contracts policy for expenses over \$25,000?

There should not be any conflict with MDOT's contract policy as long as the invoices contain the required documentation as prescribed by MDOT Contract Services and referenced elsewhere in this FAQ. The TAMC will be amending the Unified Work Program contracts with the appropriate planning organizations for reimbursement purposes. You will be required to provide proper receipts and proof of payment for any direct expenses incurred over \$2,500.

### **\*Update June 8, 2018**

TAMC confirmed on June 7, 2018 an agreement between the MPO/RPO and MDOT Contract Services is required when the pass through costs exceed \$25k. The TAMC has developed a template for this agreement in order to



expedite the processing and reimbursements; this template has been shared with planning organizations that have local agency reimbursement budgets greater than \$25,000. For questions about this requirement, please contact Roger Belknap at [BelknapR@michigan.gov](mailto:BelknapR@michigan.gov).

## About Collection Teams

Will the individuals who are doing the inspections have to be certified, or can anyone who watches the webinars and participates in the trainings do the inspections? Also, can we train our interns to do the inspections?

Selecting the data collection crew members is the local road agency's decision. Crew members do not need to be certified, and there is no certification for this pilot project.

PASER reimbursement requires a two (2)-person crew. Does culvert inventory and rating require a two-person crew as well?

For safety and accuracy of culvert measurements, we recommend a two-person crew for inspecting the culverts. However, this is not mandatory.

Can culvert data collection be outsourced to an outside engineer?

Yes. You may also be able to reach an agreement with your planning organization.

### **\*Update June 8, 2018**

Please refer to the note above. If the sub-contracted work done by the consultant will exceed \$25,000, an agreement between the MPO/RPO and MDOT Contract Services is required.

What is the role of the planning organization? Will they be distributing the funding and/or hosting data? Will they be providing any other services? And, how is the planning organization to verify the costs reported by the local road agencies?

The planning organizations are primarily reviewing requests/invoices from the local road agencies and approving requests for reimbursement. Culvert asset management expenditures will be reimbursed through the project authorization with each planning organization following the standard reporting and invoicing procedures. The Center for Shared Solutions (CSS) will provide planning organizations with a summary of centerline miles of roads collected in each local road agency's collection network that can be used for reimbursement.

After the May 14 deadline identifies who is committing to participate in the culvert pilot project, the TAMC will notify the planning organizations and will work on an amended Unified Work Program. **Data from the culvert pilot will be sent directly from the local road agencies to the CSS, so planning organizations will not need to be an intermediary for the culvert data.** Information on what was collected for the per-centerline-mile reimbursement can be shared by the CSS with planning organizations for invoice verification.

## About the Required Data Collection Elements

Are the required data collection elements finalized for the pilot project?

Yes. The data collection elements required for this pilot project are:

- 1) Inventory data for all culverts in the collection area:
  - Material Type
  - Asset Collection Date (applies to condition evaluation)
  - Shape
  - Skew Angle



- Length
  - Width
  - Height/diameter
  - Depth of Cover
  - Roadway Surface Type
  - Inventory ID (automatic with Roadsoft)
  - GPS Coordinates (automatic with Laptop Data Collector)
  - Photographs are optional
- 2) Condition data for culverts in the collection area:
- Condition assessment is required for all culverts in the collection area for local road agencies that have already completed the majority of their inventory.
  - Local road agencies that are collecting for the first time and do not have an existing inventory may forego condition assessment to focus on locating culverts.
- 3) Network export of the collected area including centerline miles collected. A tool will be available in Roadsoft for this.
- 4) Daily Data Benchmarking Logs (required for Round 1 local road agencies, optional for Round 2 and 3 local road agencies)
- 5) Invoicing details for the planning organization, summary of data collection activities (Employee, # of Hours, Dates) for startup funds

Are the data collection elements consistent with the state's infrastructure pilot?

Yes, the elements are consistent, but they are not exactly the same.

## About the Data Collection Tools

Does Roadsoft have to be used for data collection, or can we use a GIS system or other systems?

You do not have to use Roadsoft; however, the training associated with the pilot will use Roadsoft. You can use other systems, and the TAMC will review each on a case-by-case basis. If you have used another system, you may be able to migrate your data into Roadsoft depending upon what system you used and whether it has the same fields. The CTT is available to help with that process. Regardless of what system you use, you will need to verify that it is compatible with the requirements of the statewide central database as established by the Center for Shared Solutions in order to submit your data and get reimbursed.

TAMC Coordinator Roger Belknap indicated that a ruggedized tablet was considered as a recommended purchase for collecting data. Can you provide more information about that?

The CTT has been testing the MobileDemand xTablet T1600 Ruggedized tablet ([www.ruggedtabletpc.com](http://www.ruggedtabletpc.com)). It runs the Roadsoft Laptop Data Collector program well and has a number of features well suited for this project. Contact Amy Garman, MobileDemand North Region Inside Sales, at 1-319-739-3219 or [agarman@mobiledemand.com](mailto:agarman@mobiledemand.com). Mention that this will be for the Michigan TAMC Culvert Pilot Project and Amy will offer a discount. The TAMC is not advertising or promoting this particular tablet; it is listed here for informational/reference purposes only.



## About the Data Collection

Do you know how long it will take to collect this data?

Current estimates from engineers who have collected similar data in the field indicate that it may take 20 minutes to collect required data and move to the next culvert site in a system where all the culverts have been previously located. A major role of the pilot is to collect benchmarking data on collection time.

What is considered a “culvert” for this collection?

Culverts for the purposes of this pilot are defined as linear drainage conduits underneath a public roadway that are not considered “bridges” by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In general, the FHWA considers a “bridge” as having a combined span of more than twenty feet, which would include listing on the National Bridge Inventory. Culverts are differentiated from storm sewers in that they are straight-line conduits that are open at each end, and do not include intermediate drainage structures (e.g., manholes, catch basins). Only culverts found within Public Act 51 Certified Roads are eligible for collection as part of this data collection effort; culverts found beneath private driveways or commercial drives are not eligible for inclusion or reimbursement. All culverts that are 12 inches in diameter or larger should be included in your collection; local road agencies can collect smaller culverts at their own discretion.

What is considered an open-end tube? For example, are equalizer culverts or fully-submerged culverts considered open-end tubes?

A culvert is considered an open tube if there is no manhole or other buried inlet structure on any part of it. Submerged culverts would be appropriate for this project.

How should we deal with a location that has multiple culvert barrels that are working together in one place?

Would we consider it one culvert with multiple barrels or multiple culverts?

You can use the following as guidance. Local road agencies that have already collected data using a different set of collection rules should feel free to maintain consistency with those rules. For local road agencies that have not developed collection rules relating to multiple barrels, the following guidance should be helpful.

- 1) If the culvert shares common structural components (e.g., foundation walls, end wall structures) that do not allow replacement of one barrel without disturbing the others or replacing common entrance units, it should be considered one culvert with multiple barrels (see examples below).



- 2) If a single barrel can be replaced without having to replace the other units or replace associated structures, it should be logged as multiple culverts (see below).



The intent of this rule is to differentiate between two installation and replacement situations in the database: If a user sees **one culvert location with multiple barrels** in the database, this would denote that the unit needs to be replaced and/or maintained together as a unit and that options do not exist to replace only one barrel without significant work and expense. If a user sees **multiple culverts** in the database, this would denote that one or more of the units could be replaced while leaving the others in service.

Is there a rating system similar to the PASER system that will be used for this culvert data collection pilot project?

Yes, this project will rely on a modification the Federal Highway Administration system. Rating guide sheets are included on the TAMC website ([www.michigan.gov/tamc](http://www.michigan.gov/tamc)).

What culvert rating guidance will be applicable for this pilot?

We will be providing you with the necessary culvert rating guidance for your data collection effort at the trainings during the week of April 30.

There are many more data elements in the Roadsoft LDC's Culvert module that we do not need to provide. Can we customize this module's view for the pilot project?

At the trainings during the week of April 30, you will learn how to hide elements in the Roadsoft LDC's Culvert module that are not needed.

The roadway surface type is already in the Roadsoft Road module. Do we need to collect this data again?

No.

Do we have to do surveying or provide elevation?

No, surveying and elevation are not required.

What if we have all the data in Roadsoft but are missing one or two pieces of information, would the data be valid?

Inventory data that was collected previously can be submitted if it is still representative of the culvert. Rating data should have been collected in the last five years. Missing *mandatory* data elements would require a subsequent field visit to collect.

## General Questions

Was this part of Public Act 82 of 2018?

Yes.

Is there additional funding anticipated for the fiscal year 2018-2019 state budget for additional culvert collection?

At this time, it is unknown whether additional funding will be available. A key part of this culvert data collection pilot project is to determine what might be needed to fund a statewide data collection effort.

Are we on our own for collecting data, or is the TAMC or MDOT planning to help with the data collection?

Local road agencies must do this data collection on their own. The TAMC and MDOT will not be providing data collection assistance; however, the TAMC will provide guidance and training.

The 21st Century data is sensitive and cannot be shared. But, the data collected in this pilot seems similar to our PASER data, which is made publicly available. Will the data collected during the pilot project be public and made available to regions for the public?

Once the report is released, the data will be made available.

Why are the deadlines so strict? Is there any way to get an extension?

The deadlines were set due to the time frame that was set for the TAMC by the Legislature. The \$2 million is only for the 2018 fiscal year, which ends on September 30, 2018, and the funds do not carry over into the next fiscal year. We realize this will be a challenge for everyone. Please remember that this is a pilot project.

Where can I find the training webinar recordings?

The webinar recordings can be found at <http://ctt.mtu.edu/tamc-culvert-pilot>

How do I set up my tablet so that Roadsoft LDC works with the internal GPS?

Instructions to configure the tablet internal GPS and connect it to Roadsoft LDC can be found at <http://ctt.mtu.edu/tamc-culvert-pilot>

Since the data must be collected in July, do we need to have everything done within this fiscal year?

The answer is yes. Data Collection and work performed after July 31 will not be reimbursed. Therefore, it is recommended that invoices for the Culvert Mapping Pilot project be submitted before September 30. MPO/RPOs are able to submit separate invoices specifically for the Culvert Mapping Pilot to ensure all reimbursements are made in timely fashion and before the funds expire. Again, please use the revised invoice forms that are attached that accounts for the Culvert Mapping Pilot separately from PASER and other asset management work items.

How long will it be before we can get reimbursed?

This question is relative to the amount of information the local agency provides to the MPO/RPO. If the local agency provides the required reporting documents, such as copies of receipts for purchases and labor expense reports, and data collection logs, then the MPO/RPO will have the necessary documentation to submit an invoice to TAMC on behalf of the local agency. The TAMC will then pay the invoice to the respective MPO/RPO, and then the local agency is reimbursed by the MPO/RPO. It is important to use the revised invoice forms as this will ensure the invoice gets processed timely. If local agencies don't provide the required documentation, or the invoices do not contain the necessary back up that explains the costs incurred, then the timeframe for reimbursements is delayed until documentation is verified by TAMC.



Will the amount of money that each of the agencies receive going to show as revenue for the MPO's? Is there a way to only show the administrative fees for auditing purposes?

It was mentioned that MAR dues are based upon revenues of planning regions; it is advisable to contact MAR and your agency's auditor to make sure these funds are identified as Pilot Project reimbursement funds, and not part of the agency's typical income.

