Michigan Department of Transportation State Transportation Improvement Program Public Participation Plan 2026-2029

Introduction

Public participation or involvement is a fundamental requirement of the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) transportation planning process. From goal setting to prioritizing projects to environmental clearance, the public plays an important role in shaping Michigan's transportation system.

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) provides a road map for ensuring that the public's voice is not only heard but makes a difference in moving transportation in Michigan forward by identifying the most effective methods for engaging the public during the development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This document describes and outlines this public participation process, how the STIP fits into MDOT's statewide transportation planning process, and how residents and stakeholders can get involved.

The federal requirements for a PPP are specified in 23 United States Code (U.S.C.). The U.S.C. clearly requires not only a documented process, but also implementation of that process for the State Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP) and the STIP. As stated in 23 CFR 450.210 (a):

"In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, the State shall develop and use a documented public participation process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points."

Federal Regulations for the STIP

The federal regulations related to participation in transportation decision-making can be found in 23 CFR 450.210. Also linking the transportation planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135; 42 U.S.C. 7410 et seq.; 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304; and 49 CFR 1.85 and 1.90. These regulations leave the methods for carrying out participation to the discretion of each state; however, participation processes must provide:

- Early and continuous opportunities for involvement.
- Public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Timely information on transportation issues, processes and procedures.
- Reasonable access to technical and policy information.
- Electronically accessible and available public information via the web.
- Adequate notice of involvement opportunities at key decision points.
- Methods for considering and responding to public input.
- A course of action for seeking out and considering the needs of traditionally underserved groups.
- Periodic review and evaluation of the participation process.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires each state highway agency to develop a STIP that must list all federally funded highway and transit projects, as well as all regionally significant transportation projects that are not federally funded. The STIP is administered in accordance with the following federal requirements: All surface transportation projects that utilize resources from programs funded under 23 U.S.C. and 49 U.S.C. Part 53, except the programs identified in 23 CFR 450.216 (g), are included in the STIP. The STIP also includes a metropolitan planning process that is consistent with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.216.

Michigan's Statewide Transportation Planning Process

The statewide transportation planning process is carried out in accordance with the provisions of federal legislation, 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135; 42 U.S.C. 7410 et seq.; 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304; 49 CFR 1.85 and 1.90, and NEPA. Procedures to be followed in the development of all federal-aid highway actions processed in Michigan are under the provisions of 23 CFR 450, which guides the scope of the statewide transportation planning process. Before discussing the strategy for this PPP, it is important to define the statewide transportation planning process and required documents for the state of Michigan. This statewide transportation planning process is multi-layered and responsive to both state and federal requirements, as described in the following paragraphs and as illustrated in the chart below.

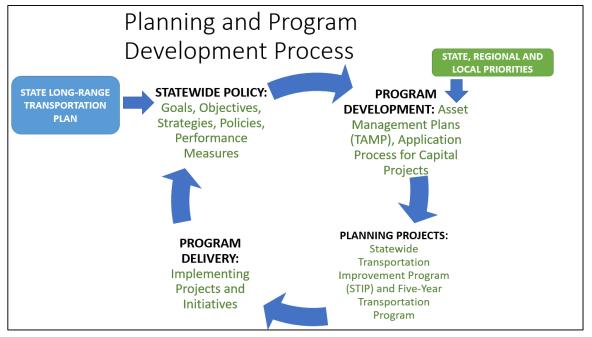


Figure 1- Planning and Program Development Process chart showing the connection between the SLRTP, Five-Year Transportation Program, and STIP.

State Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP): Michigan is required by federal law to prepare a <u>SLRTP</u> that covers a 25-year planning horizon for the development and implementation of a multimodal transportation system. The SLRTP serves as a policy

document that establishes a vision and associated priorities for transportation in Michigan, and provides the analysis needed to make decisions about the future. These priorities are translated into projects and planned out for the near-term in the Five-Year Transportation Program (5YTP) and then the STIP. All projects listed in the 5YTP and STIP contribute to achieving one or more of the objectives stated in the SLRTP. Michigan Mobility 2045 is the State of Michigan's SLRTP. For the first time, the SLRTP is fully integrated with the federally required State Freight Plan and State Rail Plan. In addition, a Statewide Active Transportation Plan and Statewide Transit Strategy are included. This overall effort is a family of five separate plans integrated into one transportation vision for Michigan. More information on Michigan Mobility 2045 can be found at the plan website.

Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP): MDOT's TAMP is a federally required policy document that describes the asset management processes by which MDOT makes its program and project decisions for pavements and bridges on the National Highway System (NHS), using national performance measures linked to systemwide investment strategies. To ensure implementation, the agency has integrated the TAMP into its planning processes such that it informs project selection for the 5YTP and the STIP. These planning decisions are specifically guided by the TAMP's investment strategies and asset management processes. Doing this allows MDOT to make progress toward achieving its targets for asset condition and performance of the NHS.

Five-Year Transportation Program (5YTP): The <u>5YTP</u> includes information about MDOT's near-term funding picture and transportation projects on the trunkline system that will start construction within the next five years. It provides the foundation for short-range planning and program development and is a rolling five-year program document, updated annually. The 5YTP is provided to the state Legislature prior to March 1 each year, as required by law. The STIP is developed from this foundation.

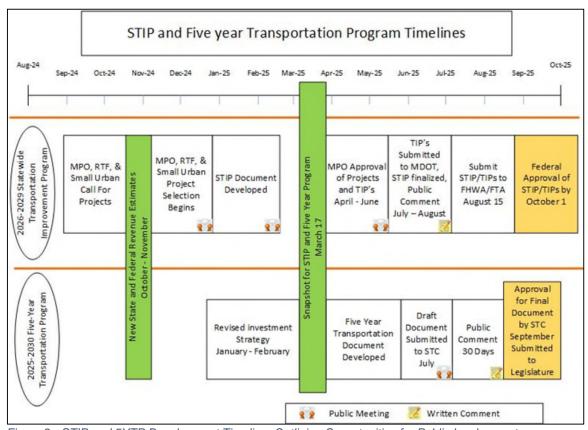


Figure 2 - STIP and 5YTP Development Timeline, Outlining Opportunities for Public Involvement.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): The STIP is a federally mandated planning document that includes a list of surface transportation projects to be funded with federal funds. The document covers a period of four years and is updated every three years. The STIP project list covers the non-urbanized area in Michigan. Urbanized areas with a census designated population of 50,000 or more people are covered by a metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Each MPO is responsible for developing their own Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The STIP includes the projects in the 5YTP, the rural or non-urbanized area projects (road and transit), and includes the MPO TIP projects by reference.

In addition to the list of projects, the STIP contains information on federal requirements for state and metropolitan planning, statewide transportation goals, and a detailed financial plan. The STIP must:

- 1. Be consistent with the SLRTP,
- 2. Be fiscally constrained (projects cannot exceed available revenue),
- 3. Cover at least four years,
- 4. Provide opportunity for public input, and
- 5. Meet air quality conformity regulations.

Amending the STIP: The STIP and TIPs must be amended periodically to add or remove projects, to adjust funding sources or cost estimates, and to update project scoping information. Amendments to the rural STIP projects are made available to the public via the MDOT website. MPO TIPs are also amended regularly but have different calendars for these amendments. Check with your local MPO for a listing on their website. A map of Michigan's 15 MPOs is on the next page.

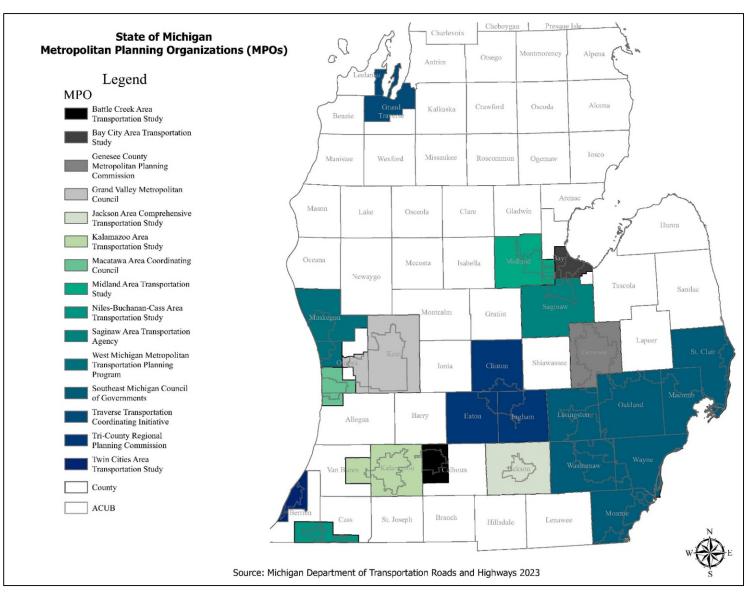


Figure 3- Map of MPO Metropolitan Planning Areas

Get Involved

MDOT's mission of "serving and connecting people, communities and the economy through transportation" can only be accomplished when customers are identified and brought into the planning process. A record of all comments received is maintained by the public information and hearings officer.

All public involvement pertaining to the STIP will be in accordance with federal regulations found in 23 CFR 450.210:

- All notices will be made at least 15 days prior to the scheduled event.
- MDOT will use its public website, a Gov Delivery e-mailing list, and social media accounts for notification.
- MDOT will pay special attention to identifying and involving the underserved, minority, and low-income populations by holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, making materials available in alternative formats and languages upon request, and providing translators where there is an identified need.
- Comments regarding the STIP should be submitted during the designated public comment period. General comments to MDOT are always welcome.

MDOT is committed to providing multiple opportunities for public review and comment before finalizing the STIP. The final 30-day public comment period begins July 15, 2025. MDOT has developed the MI Transportation Program Portal, which is a GIS web application that allows the public to view STIP project locations and provide comments on those projects. A link to this tool can also be found on the STIP website. The following table and chart display a variety of public involvement and stakeholder input opportunities for the STIP, including several in-person meetings as described below.

Action (Who)	Public Activity (What)	Public Comment Method (Where)	Timeframe (When)	Notification Method (How)	Use of Input (Why)
MDOT	Draft STIP PPP released for review and comment.	Written comments submitted via web form, e-mail, or US mail. www.Michigan.gov/ST !	July - August 2024	Draft PPP is posted on MDOT website for a 45-day statewide public review and comment period.	Identify the most effective methods for engaging the public in the development of the STIP.
MDOT	Notification of the 2026- 2029 STIP development and public participation process to tribal and local government agencies.	Participation in upcoming meetings and written comment periods.	August - September 2024	E-mail STIP PPP to tribal and local government agencies.	Engage tribal governments and local governmental agencies in the STIP development process.
MDOT	Notification of the 2026- 2029 STIP development and public participation process to trail and nonmotorized groups, and stakeholder groups.	Participation in upcoming meetings' written comment periods.	August - September 2024	E-mail STIP PPP to trail, nonmotorized, and stakeholder groups.	Engage trail, nonmotorized, and stakeholder groups in the STIP development process.
MDOT	Connect to MDOT region-level public involvement opportunities.	MDOT region offices provide information on the STIP at project- level public meetings held in region areas.	August - December 2024	Region public meetings: MDOT sends notification via news releases, social media, and email distribution to stakeholder group e-mail subscriptions.	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.

Action (Who)	Public Activity (What)	Public Comment Method (Where)	Timeframe (When)	Notification Method (How)	Use of Input (Why)
MDOT	Connect to rural task force (RTF) stakeholders.	MDOT Statewide Planning Section staff provide information, presentation on STIP at RTF meetings as agenda item.	August - December 2024	MDOT sends information via e- mail, requests to be on RTF agenda as presentation/discussion item.	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.
MDOT	Connect to MPOs	MDOT Statewide Planning Section staff provide information, presentation on STIP at MPO committee meetings and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Association meetings as agenda	August - December 2024	MDOT sends information via e- mail, requests to be on MPO agenda as presentation/discussion item.	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.
MDOT	Connect to County Road Association of Michigan (CRA) and Michigan Association of Regions (MAR).	MDOT Statewide Planning Section staff provide information, presentation on STIP at MPO meetings as agenda item.	August - December 2024	MDOT sends information via e- mail, requests to be on agenda as presentation/discussion item	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.
MDOT	Connect to Small Urban Program.	MDOT Statewide Planning Section staff provide information, presentation on STIP at small urban meetings as agenda item.	August - December 2024	MDOT sends information via e- mail, requests to be on Small Urban Committee agenda as presentation/discussion item.	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.

Action (Who)	Public Activity (What)	Public Comment Method (Where)	Timeframe (When)	Notification Method (How)	Use of Input (Why)
MDOT	Connect to rural transit agencies.	MDOT Statewide Planning Section to provide information to agencies via e-mail.	August - December 2024	Via MDOT Office of Passenger Transportation e-mail subscription.	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.
MDOT	Provide draft STIP for 30-day public comment.	Written comments submitted via web form, e-mail, or US mail. www.Michigan.gov/ STIP	July - August 2025	Prior to comment period, MDOT sends notification via news release, social media, and email distribution to stakeholder group subscriptions.	Comments are analyzed and summary included in final STIP document. Project requests are forwarded to appropriate MDOT staff or local agencies as needed.

Document Availability: In accordance with federal requirements, the STIP is published with reasonable notification of its availability for review through regionally significant newspapers, public outreach throughout the state, MDOT region offices, various social media outlets (including X, Facebook and Threads), and MDOT's website.

Consultation With Native American Tribal Governments: MDOT considers the concerns of Native American tribal governments that have jurisdiction over land within the state. The department provides meaningful and timely consultation with 12 federally recognized sovereign Native American tribal governments on a regular basis and prior to certain types of department actions. MDOT's tribal affairs coordinator serves as a point of contact for Native American tribal governments to facilitate communication and problem resolution on transportation-related topics. Coordinating with Native American tribes is an essential part of determining

transportation needs and the environmental impacts and mitigation of proposed projects.

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) states that "no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity." Sites for participation activities, as well as the information presented, must be accessible to persons with disabilities. ADA requires specific participation, particularly for developing para-transit plans, such as:

- Outreach by developing contacts, mailing lists, and other means of notification.
- Consultation with disabled individuals.
- The opportunity for public comment.
- Accessible formats.
- Public hearings.
- Summaries of significant issues raised during the public comment period.
- Ongoing efforts to involve persons with disabilities in planning.

Anti-Discrimination: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, together with related statutes and regulations, provide that "no person shall on the ground of race, color, and national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funds. The entire institution, whether educational, private or governmental, must comply with Title VI and related federal civil rights laws, not just the program or activity receiving federal funds."

Executive orders (EOs) regarding environmental justice and outreach to persons with limited English proficiency are also regulated under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Environmental Justice: EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994, states that "each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." Traditionally underserved groups, such as low-income and minority populations, must be identified and given increased opportunity for involvement to ensure effective participation.

Limited English Proficiency: EO 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, 2000, requires that recipients of federal financial aid must ensure that the programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to persons with limited English proficiency.

Online Comment Form and E-mail Communications: Individuals can submit comments via an online comment form, which will be available on the STIP website, or by e-mail to Monica Monsma, public involvement and hearings officer, at MonsmaM@Michigan.gov.

Social Media: MDOT welcomes public comment on the draft STIP via social media as well, including X (@MichiganDOT), Facebook (@MichiganDOT) and Threads (@MichiganDOT).

Subscribe to an E-mail List: If you would like to be notified of upcoming engagement opportunities, join either an MDOT region or statewide news releases e-mail

subscription service via Gov Delivery. MDOT uses this service to provide relevant and useful information to subscribers statewide. You can sign up online by visiting the MDOT Gov Delivery site. Please note that not all e-mail subscriptions are available via text messaging.

In-Person and Virtual Meetings: MDOT strives to make it easy for the public to get involved in the transportation planning process. When feasible, MDOT will present information to the public at already-scheduled public meetings, such as MPO meetings, to maximize the reach and effectiveness of sharing information with interested citizens. Information on upcoming meetings can be found at www.Michigan.gov/MDOT in the "News and Information" section.

Written Comments via Postal Service: Written comments regarding the draft STIP can be mailed to the MDOT public involvement and hearings officer at:

Monica Monsma, Public Involvement and Hearings Officer Environmental Services Section Michigan Department of Transportation P.O. Box 30050 Lansing, MI 48909

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Term
5YTP	Five-Year Transportation Program
CRA	County Road Association of Michigan
EOs	Executive orders
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
MAR	Michigan Association of Regions
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
MPO	Metropolitan planning organization
NHS	National Highway System
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RTF	Rural task force
SLRTP	State Long-Range Transportation Plan
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
TAMP	Transportation Asset Management Plan
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
U.S.C.	United States Code

Helpful Links

<u>Michigan Transportation Planning Association Map of Metropolitan Planning Organizations</u>

MDOT Rural Task Force Program

Rural Task Forces Boundary Map

Michigan Association of Regions

MDOT Small Urban Program

MDOT State Transportation Improvement Program

MDOT Five-Year Transportation Program

MDOT Regional Service Areas and Facilities Map

State Long-Range Transportation Plan

MDOT - Title VI Nondiscrimination

Public Comments

MDOT invited the public to provide comments on the federally required draft PPP from June 28, 2024, to Aug. 15, 2024. Fourteen public comments were received. Input on the draft PPP helps to provide a road map for assuring that the public's voice is not only heard but makes a difference in moving Michigan forward.

Environmental Impacts

Comment 1: Try to preserve trees, wildlife, critters, and wildflowers as much as possible.

Response: MDOT will assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions and evaluates the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions. Learn more at National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (michigan.gov) and <a href="Environmental Environmental Env

Agency Coordination

Comment 1: I would love to see MDOT work with the City of Lansing, Lansing Board of Water and Light and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission to plant shade trees along M-99 in the right of way, especially the southwest portion. There are large portions with few, if any, trees at all. Although it is primarily a commercial corridor, it runs parallel to many residential and renter neighborhoods. More trees reduce pollution, create a visual sightline of tighter streets (which ideally slows down traffic), and provide more shade for people who utilize mass transit.

Response: This comment was shared with Roadside Development and the Lansing Transportation Service Center.

Public Outreach and Public Participation Plan

Comment 1: As more people are working from home, especially in rural areas, a special effort needs to be made to reach out to them and identify their transportation needs. This should include older retired citizens.

Response: MDOT is developing new outreach strategies to help identify transportation needs.

Comment 2: So many acronyms. I can't even understand the document! Poor formatting where the column headers are not on each page. You have to be an expert to understand this report. Maybe reformatting and not using acronyms would be a great improvement if you want public feedback.

Response: A glossary of acronyms and column headers were added to the public participation plan.

Contractors, Construction and Detour Impacts

Comment 1: Hire established contractors. The Mackinac Bridge project running two to three weeks behind the deadline was inexcusable. I hope they were fined for everyday past the deadline.

Response: This comment was shared with the Mackinac Bridge Authority.

Comment 2: M-115 in Cadillac west needs two-lane traffic headed north on Fridays, then two-lane traffic going south on Sundays. Always congested and dangerous.

Response: This comment was shared with MDOT's North region.

Comment 3: General:

As a citizen of this township, the Tahquamenon River bridge is a vital link to the community of Paradise and access to the popular vacation destinations of Tahquamenon Falls, Whitefish Point historical site, and multiple campgrounds. M-123 is the only direct access to Paradise from communities south and east (i.e., Sault Ste. Marie). Should this bridge be placed out of service because of critical structural integrity, it would leave visitors, residents and emergency services no direct route to and from the area.

Google Maps:

From Paradise, the direct route to Sault Ste. Marie is currently 61.5 miles (one hour, two minutes).

From Paradise, the direct route to the Mackinac Bridge is currently 66.5 miles (one hour, six minutes).

Should the structure be deemed unsafe for travel, the next best routes will be:

From Paradise to Sault Ste. Marie: 104 miles (one hour, 48 minutes - an increase of 42.5 miles, which is one hour, 46 minutes).

From Paradise to the Mackinac Bridge: 103 miles (one hour, 50 minutes, an increase of 41.5 miles, which is one hour, 48 minutes).

Devastating Effects:

The effects of the non-use of this bridge would be considered devastating for the local economy, tax revenue base, township services, tourism industry, citizens who rely on medical services in Sault Ste. Marie, emergency medical services, fire, sheriff and highway patrol access, and property values. It would create a tremendous burden on those working in points east and south of the Paradise area.

Design:

Bridge designs from 1950 were typically expected to last 50-70 years.^{4, 5} Today's bridges with proper construction techniques, quality controls, inspections and rigid maintenance plans can be designed to last 100-150 years.^{4, 5, 6} Features such as post-tension cabling, stainless steel reinforcement, epoxy coated bars pre-tensioning, post-tensioning to control and eliminate cracking, and high-performance concrete mixtures that were not available to engineers in the early 1950s.⁴ They can also incorporate safety features to protect personnel who also access the same bridge from vehicular traffic and inspection points for better maintenance.

Safety:

In the 1950s, safety was not a top concern at the time likely due to limited traffic of the day and little tourism. Today, there are two parks and one state park adjacent to the bridge. The bridge is two narrow lanes with no pedestrian, bicycling, ATV path, or snowmobile crossing available. All must share this bridge with commercial and vehicular traffic traveling at speeds of faster than 55 mph. Large commercial vehicles and RVs must pass with extreme caution due to the narrow lanes.

Summary:

If this bridge is not planned and replaced prior to declaration of loss of structural integrity now, it could be down for years while the state locates funding, begin engineering, conduct environmental impact studies, awards contracts, and completes the rebuilding process.

For the sake of the communities that rely on this bridge and the safety of non-vehicular persons that use this bridge, we strongly request and encourage MDOT to place this 74-year-old bridge on the STIP 2026-2029 plan for rebuilding to include wider traffic lanes and a pedestrian, bike, ATV and snowmobile pathways.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this comment.

¹ https://gis-mdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/mdot::2023-traffic-volumes/about

https://mdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=fb70725b2be04dc7b01703d 0b6c91bb6

https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=b9ad80dc38c0449daa428aa0a77 363f1

⁴ https://www.aspirebridge.com/magazine/2009Fall/perspective_freyermuth_fall09.pdf

Comment 4: The Tahquamenon River bridge on M-123 is a vital link to the community of Paradise, serving as a gateway to Whitefish Point and Tahquamenon Fall State Park. The bridge is crumbling. Its condition continues to deteriorate and its repair or replacement is urgent to Whitefish Township.

Comment 5: Yes, public input is greatly needed to replace this bridge in an expeditious manner that will allow at least one-way traffic. The underside of this bridge is rotting away. I hope MDOT will consider this a high-profile project and complete it in a timely manner. It would be fabulous to see the bridge widened and a snowmobile/ATV/pedestrian lane incorporated. Thank you.

Comment 6: Please fix the Tahquamenon River bridge to keep it safe. To make it even safer, please put an additional area for snowmobiles and ATVs, please!

Comment 7: Request repair-rebuild bridge over the Tahquamenon River in Paradise along M-123. The bridge is deteriorating, and this is a critical access point to Paradise and Whitefish Point, Tahquamenon Falls, the Shipwreck Museum, etc.

Response: Comments and questions regarding Tahquamenon River and bridges have been shared with Superior Region staff.

Comment 8: Consider a roundabout at Imlay City Road and Wilder Road. Trucks headed to Lapeer airport manufacturing facility (DuPont Lapeer Airport) are often stopped at the traffic light with little cross-traffic.

Response: This comment was shared with Bay region staff.

Comment 9: Our house is located on the southeast corner of this intersection. We **know** the roundabout will be built, eventually, but since we moved in September 2021, we have witnessed 23 accidents here, almost all involving someone on Oak not yielding to traffic flying down Lapeer Road at 55-plus mph. It would make a lot of sense for someone to step up and decide that traffic should either be slowed down on Lapeer Road or maybe implement a fourway stop until construction begins. One of these times there will be someone more seriously hurt, or worse. By the way, the 23 total does **not** include two separate incidents with motorcycle riders dumping their bikes in the intersection.

⁵ https://usbridge.com/the-lifespan-of-structurally-deficient-bridges-in-america/

⁶ https://www.aspirebridge.com/magazine/2012Spring/State_Spr2012_Web.pdf

Response: Imlay City Road is managed by the Lapeer County Road Commission, https://www.lcrconline.com/.

Comment 10: Good idea to improve the pavement markings on this stretch after the repaving work in 2023. The double row of centerline corrugations hides much of the paint marks during rain/wet periods and does not seem to be holding up well.

Response: Thank you for feedback regarding pavement markings.