

# Public Participation Plan

June 2014

Major Revision June 2017

Minor Revision October 2021



## Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

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# WATS Public Participation Philosophy

WATS believes implementing an effective and equitable vision for Washtenaw County's transportation system depends on a well-informed, ongoing discussion with the public.

WATS public involvement strategy must adapt to the evolving landscape of transportation policy, design, and technology. Communication should be succinct, well-crafted and relevant to the needs at hand; using all necessary tools to bring the public's voices, regardless of physical or cognitive ability, to the decision makers who shape their community.

WATS values input from all members of the community, and will ensure their feedback is considered in the transportation planning process.

WATS financed the preparation of this document through grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation and contributions from local government, public transit, and educational unit members of the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation.

# What's WATS?

## BACKGROUND

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) is an inter-governmental agency responsible for transportation planning in Washtenaw County. The agency is mandated by federal law to carry out the "3C" (continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive) transportation planning process to guide the expenditure of State and Federal transportation funds in the County. **Map 1** displays the planning area that encompasses the entirety of Washtenaw County and the urbanized area.

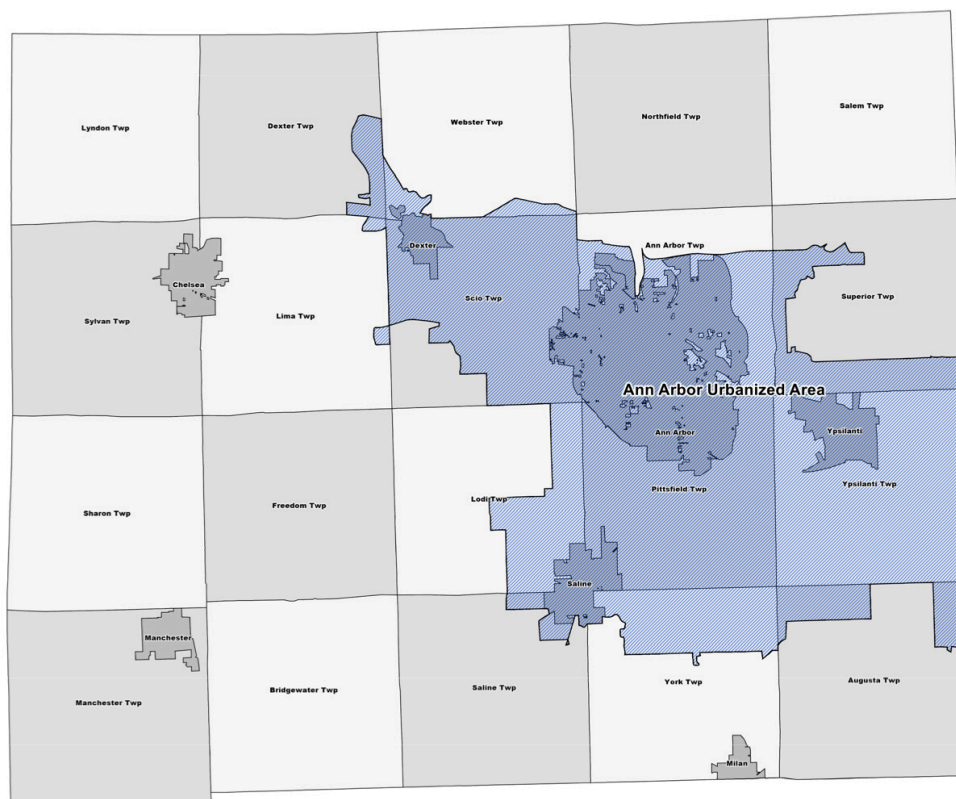
WATS has three standing committees, discussed on page 6. The Policy Committee is made up of elected and appointed officials that work together to shape the future of transportation in Washtenaw County.

Their funding decisions influence funding of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit routes and services, roadway decisions and other enhancements to the transportation system.

## YOUR OPINION MATTERS

- Your unique experiences and involvement ensures that transportation solutions address the issues most important to you.
- Help decide how your tax-dollars will be spent on transportation.
- Transportation planning is more than cars, truck, and bikes. Transportation affects our economy, our environment, our health, and our safety.

## MAP 1: PLANNING AND URBANIZED AREA





# Introduction

## PURPOSE

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) was developed to outline the tools and techniques that WATS staff will use to encourage public participation throughout the transportation planning process. WATS strives to move transportation decision making authority closer to the citizens of Washtenaw County in order to be responsive to state and local needs.

All residents and stakeholders are encouraged to make comments or suggestions at any time throughout the year. WATS will provide as many opportunities for the public to participate as feasible.

Periodically, WATS staff will solicit public comments for a specified time during the development of certain projects and core products, discussed on pages 7-8.

## CONNECTING WITH WATS

Attend a Meeting

You can find a complete list of meetings online at [miwats.org/watscalendar](http://miwats.org/watscalendar).

Follow Us on Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Learn about WATS

Visit our website at [miwats.org](http://miwats.org) or stop by our office.

Subscribe to Our Newsletter

This monthly email newsletter allows subscribers to receive WATS updates and news straight to their inbox.

Call Us

We are always happy to hear from you! Call us at (734) 994-3127.



# WATS Committees

## JOIN US FOR A COMMITTEE MEETING!

WATS has two standing Committees. The Policy and Technical Committees meet monthly to discuss transportation plans, issues facing the region, and process necessary changes requested by agencies. The Federal Aid Committees (FAC) and the Small Urban Committee is called upon as needed to ensure a program of projects can be delivered.

WATS Technical and Policy committee meetings are open to the public and offer public comment time at the beginning of each meeting. Attending meetings will make the general public more informed as to what goes on in the transportation planning process. Providing feedback at Committee meetings will also give WATS staff input as to how to improve the planning process. Some comments may not have previously come to the attention of agency representatives. Meetings may be held virtually in the event of a local or statewide emergency declaration. All meeting materials can be found under the Committee tabs on the WATS website at [miwats.org](http://miwats.org).

### WATS POLICY COMMITTEE

The WATS Policy Committee is made up of local elected or appointed officials from member communities throughout Washtenaw County. These officials work together to shape the future of the transportation modes in the County. Their funding decisions influence sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit routes and services, roadway decisions and other enhancements to the transportation system.

### WATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The WATS Technical Committee is made up of technical staff from member communities throughout Washtenaw County. The Technical Committees discusses and focuses on projects, and develops recommendations for the Policy Committee to take action on.

### WATS FEDERAL AID COMMITTEES

The Federal Aid urban and rural subcommittees develop Washtenaw County's federal aid program for the review and approval by the WATS Policy Committee. WATS developed an application for project prioritization which places more emphasis on linking the goals of the LRP to project development. Federal Aid Committee meetings are held as needed to ensure a program of projects can move forward.

### SMALL URBAN COMMITTEE

The Small Urban Committee meets once every two years to develop the program for federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to areas with an urbanized population of 5,000 to 49,999. This committee is made up of eligible applicants including road agencies, transit and cities.

# Core Products and Public Participation

## CORE PRODUCTS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are three core products that WATS is federally required to develop and submit for public comment as part of the planning process. Each of these products require public participation to ensure effective planning takes place.

1. **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP)** - Creates a 25-year vision for the transportation network. The Plan can be amended 3 times a year.
2. **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** - This 4-year project based document lists all transportation projects in the county along with the anticipated costs and funding sources for each project. The Plan can be amended 3 times a year.
3. **Unified Planning Work Program (UWP)** - This Plan is a 1-year description of expected products and activities for WATS.

### Meeting Notices

All meetings of the WATS Policy and Technical Committees are open to the public and held at sites which comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. If meetings are held virtually due to a local or statewide emergency declaration, closed captions will be available in real time for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as for those who have cognitive, learning, or other disabilities. All meeting notices will be posted at least 7 days in advanced on the WATS website, at the WATS office, and on social media.

### Announcements

WATS will strive to use the most effective methods of communication to inform the public of the development of transportation planning products, such as the LRP or the TIP. These methods may include news releases, notices on the WATS website, and social media posts. These methods may also include flyers in areas such as public libraries, parks, or on public transit.

### Outreach

WATS will strive to encourage involvement of persons who have been traditionally under-served, as well as to meet the requirements related to Environmental Justice in the development of transportation planning products. WATS will strive to notify stakeholder groups and organizations who represent the interests of: the elderly, the disabled, the non-motorized user, minority populations, and low-income populations.

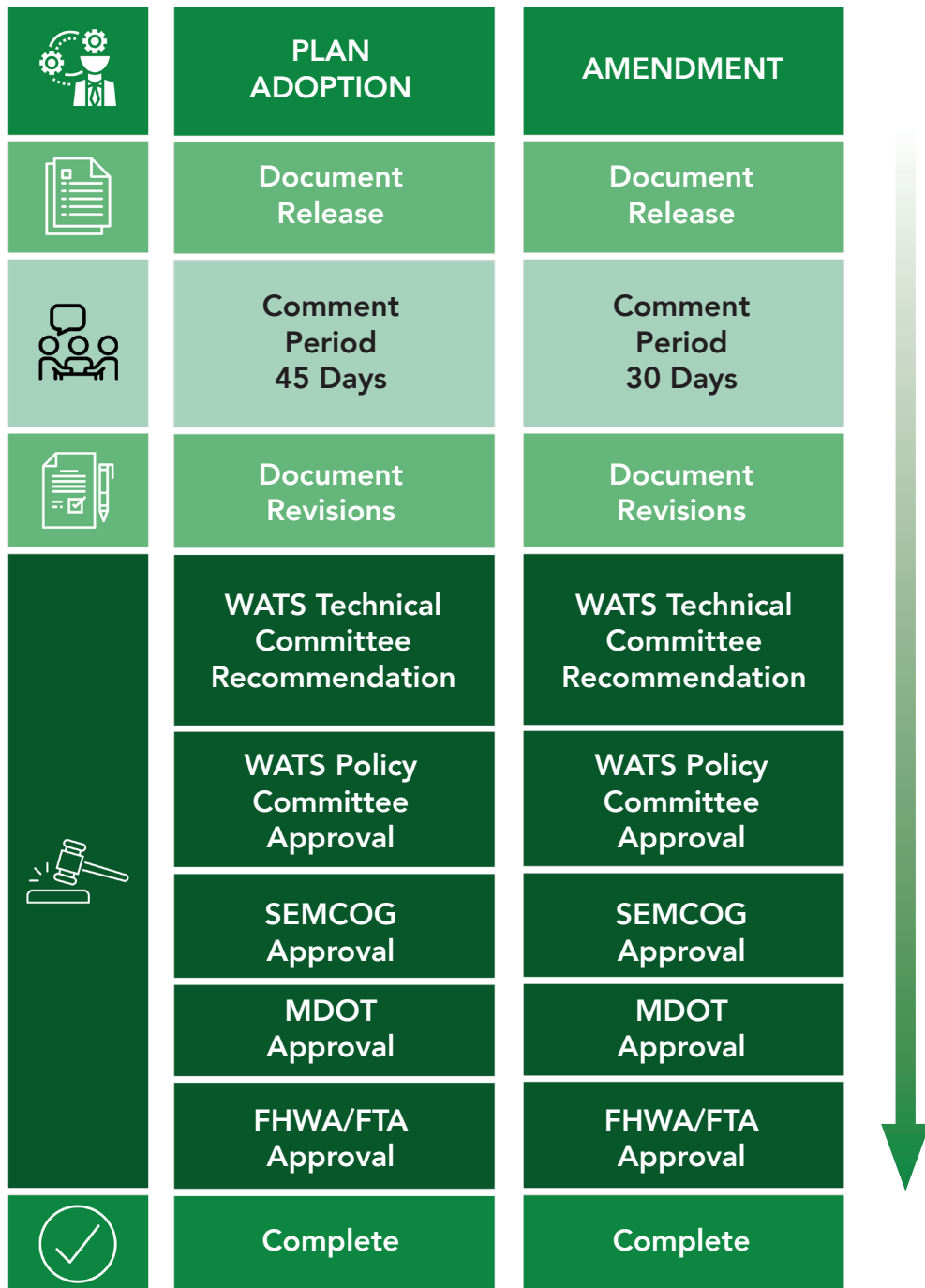
### Public Comments

The public can comment on projects at WATS and SEMCOG meetings, which have dedicated comment opportunities. The public may also submit comments to the WATS office in person or in any other form of communication (letters, phone, email, etc). All public comments received will be summarized and forwarded to the WATS Policy and Technical Committees prior to any formal action to adopt a plan. A copy of all comments will be available for public review, if requested.

# Core Products and Public Participation

Figure 1 outlines the adoption and amendment process for WATS' three core products and shows the relationship of the public comment period to document approval.

**FIGURE 1: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT PROCESS**

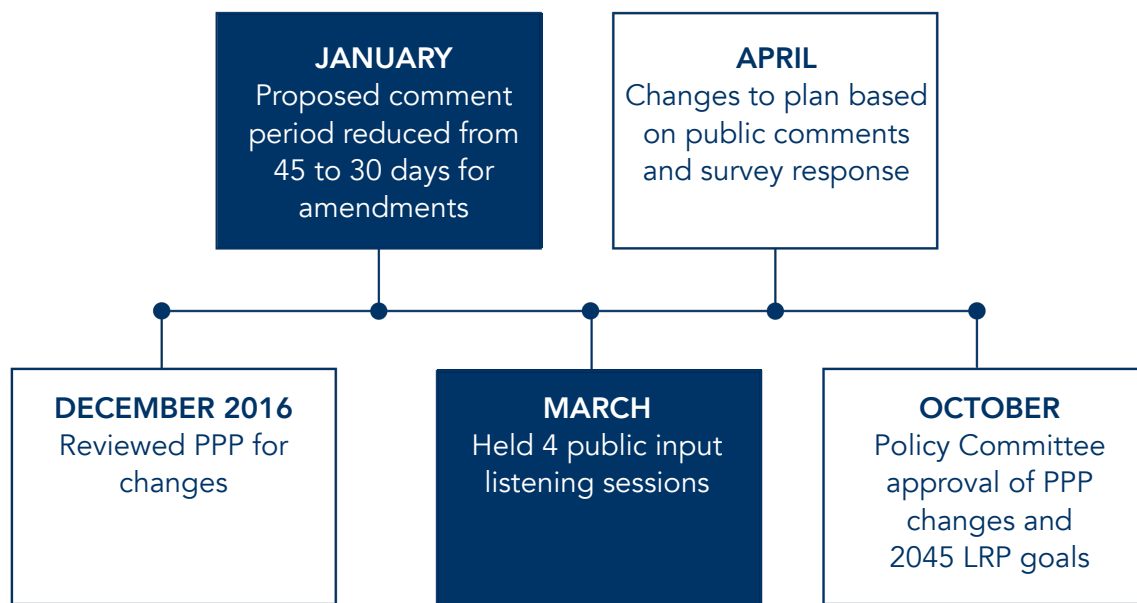




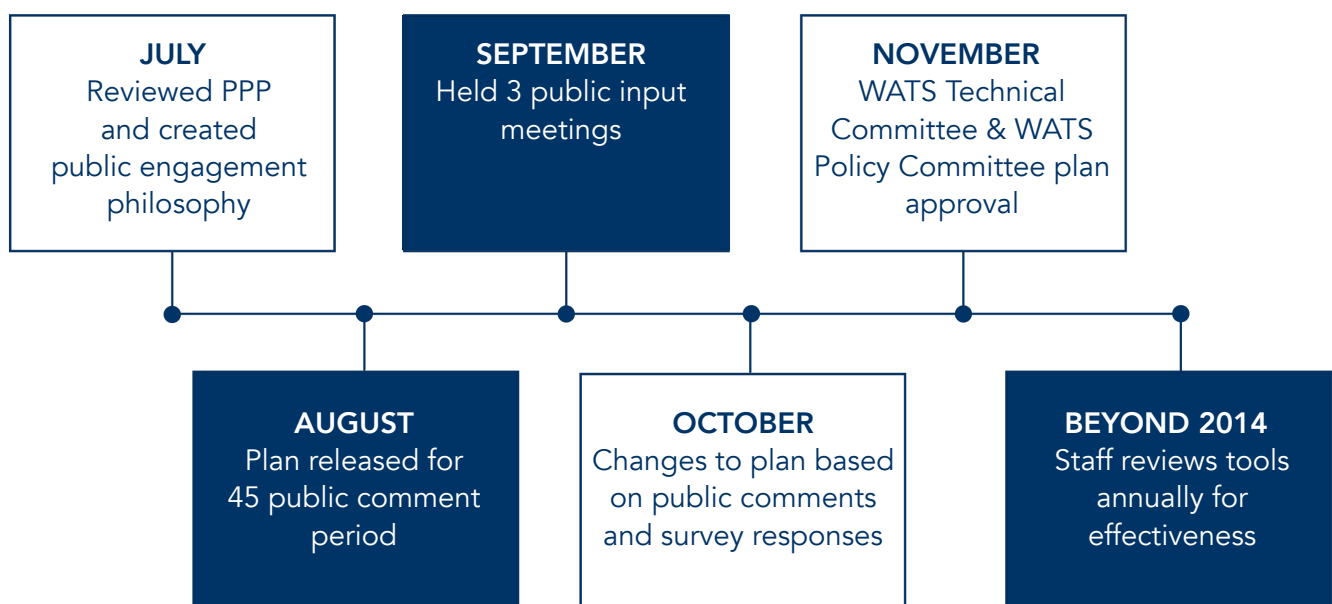
# Public Participation Plan Development

This Public Participation Plan was initially developed in 2014, and then revised in 2017 as part of the 2045 LRP development. The following graphics outline these processes. In addition, the plan was updated in 2021 to include minor revisions during the 2023-2026 TIP development.

**FIGURE 2: 2017 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN REVISION**



**FIGURE 3: 2014 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT**



# Public Participation Plan Development

## PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

When this plan was first created in 2014, WATS sought feedback from the public to develop the most effective forms of engagement strategies. This section provides a brief overview of what was heard from the public in 2014. In 2017, staff made revisions to the plan that included going back to the public to ensure the conclusions from 2014 were still valid.

### Conclusions from 2014

WATS received 95 responses from an online survey and held three public input meetings to gain information on the following:

- Ways to receive information
- Communication methods
- Style of in-person meetings

**Receive Information** - Online, printed media, and broadcasts were by far the most important ways in which people received information. WATS will use online media sources such as MLive, the WATS website, and community newsletters.

**Communication Methods** - Personal networking, word of mouth, telephone calls and/or conversations were the most important communication styles for survey respondents. WATS will continue to work towards a more personalized approach to communication.

**Meeting Style** - The most preferable meeting style was the focus group for survey respondents. This is the most inclusive type of engagement strategy and one that WATS staff strive to use more often.

### Conclusions from 2017

As part of the 2045 LRP plan development process, WATS went back to the public to gauge any change in communication preferences. WATS held input meetings in Dexter, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti during March 2017. The same three questions were asked regarding communication and the preferences for communication methods did not change from 2014.




# Engagement Techniques

## WATS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The following engagement techniques were developed with the public during the 2014 and 2017 Public Participation Plan processes. Together these techniques create a toolbox of strategies WATS can use to engage the public, including to Inform, Consult, Deliberate, and Co-Create. **Figure 4** depicts these techniques by level of engagement. WATS strives to utilize the most effective engagement techniques as possible throughout the transportation planning process.

**FIGURE 4: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES BY ENGAGEMENT LEVEL**

	INFORM	CONSULT	DELIBERATE	CO-CREATE
TOOLS	Website Social Media Fact Sheets Publications Newsletter	Public comment Public meeting Questionnaires	Workshops and Advisory Committees	Panels Networks Alliances
PURPOSE	Increase knowledge on issues and decisions concerning it	Obtain feedback on decisions	High level participation in idea generation	Shared ownership
WATS RESPONSIBILITIES	Provide public with information to understand issues	Welcome input, and indicate how input affected the outcome	Engage in 2-way conversations, factor in thoughts and comments into decisions	Relevant input incorporated into decisions to maximum extent possible


**INCREASING LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT**

# Public Engagement Toolbox: Inform

## Purpose

To facilitate increased knowledge of the issue and the decisions concerning it.

## WATS Responsibility

WATS will provide the public with the information required to understand the issue.

## Overview

For the target audience, WATS efforts to Inform are the most passive form of public engagement. This strategy simply involves targeted dissemination of information to the public. Goals may range from notification of WATS meetings and activities, to providing material to broaden the public's knowledge around a transportation issue.

Examples of WATS activities where Informing is the most appropriate form of public involvement include:

- Planning process brochures
- Upcoming meeting notices
- Open houses
- Bringing initial attention to an issue

## Strategies for Informing the Public

WATS uses the Inform strategy as a starting point for bringing the public to meetings and announcing comment periods. The WATS blog, social media accounts, newsletter, and website provide updates regarding comment periods and upcoming projects.

PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES	
Media Outreach	Blog Posts
Legal Notices	Library Distribution
Press Releases	Posters/Flyers
Paid Newspaper Ad	Fact Sheets
Paid Social Media Ad	Newsletters
Radio	Calendar of Events
Featured Stories	Social Media Posts
Email Announcements	Direct Mailings



**Washtenaw Area Transportation Study**

Local agencies are proposing changes to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Comments will be accepted until Sept. 30 to [flowerss@miwats.org](mailto:flowerss@miwats.org). [miwats.org/tip](http://miwats.org/tip)



**1st Call for FY 2022 TIP Project Changes**

Send comments to  
[flowerss@miwats.org](mailto:flowerss@miwats.org) by Sept. 30

All comments and questions will be provided to the WATS  
Technical and Policy Committees



[miwats.org/tip/](http://miwats.org/tip/)

**138**  
People Reached

**7**  
Engagements

[Boost Post](#)



# Public Engagement Toolbox: Consult

## Purpose

To seek advice and/or information from people with specific expertise, such as obtaining feedback on analysis and alternatives.

## WATS Responsibility

WATS will provide the public with clear and coherent information regarding the issue(s), welcome the public's thoughts on the topic, and indicate how their input affected outcomes.

## Overview

For the target audience, WATS efforts to Consult are focused on obtaining comments and information back from the public on a particular set of issues. Goals may range from speaking with a WATS staff member at a public meeting, responding back to a solicited survey or posting to the WATS social media platforms.

Examples of WATS activities where Consulting is the most appropriate form of public involvement include:

- Comment form/response sheets
- Online survey questions

PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES	
Online Discussions	Hosted Discussions
Focus Groups	LRP Comments
TIP Comments	Questionnaires
Public Meetings	Twitter Town Halls
Online Idea Forums	Public Comment Opportunities
Crowd Sourcing	Virtual Town Halls

## Strategies for Consulting the Public

WATS uses the Consult strategy to solicit comments for specific projects or products. Public meetings, focus groups, and survey questionnaires all help provide an open feedback loop between the public, WATS staff, and WATS Committees.



# Public Engagement Toolbox: Deliberate

## Purpose

Stakeholders and the public will be involved in more in depth issues and solution development.

## WATS Responsibility

WATS will engage in two-way conversations to make certain that the public's thoughts, voices, and concerns are factored into proposed solutions/decisions.

## Overview

For the target audience, WATS efforts to Deliberate are focused on seeking out meaningful interactions by going to the public to gain ideas and insights into the issues. Goals may range from meeting people at coffee shops, talking to people at bus stops, or creating specialized committees.

Examples of WATS activities where Deliberating is the most appropriate form of public involvement include:

- Citizen Advisory Committees
- Coffee hours
- Attendance at community events/fairs

PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES	
Workshops	Deliberative Polling
Advisory Committees	Pop Up Meetings in Busy Locations
Festivals	Community Based Organization Discussions

## Strategies for Deliberating with the Public

WATS uses the Deliberate strategy to solicit comments for specific projects or products. Pop-up meetings in busy locations help WATS staff reach a large audience of diverse individuals all in one location. Advisory Committees and community based organization discussions allow WATS to reach groups and stakeholders who represent the interests of traditionally under-served residents, such as the elderly, the disabled, minority populations, and low-income populations.



# Public Engagement Toolbox: Co-Create

## Purpose

Shared ownership between the organization and the stakeholders as the community meaningful involved in discussion, development, and outcomes of a decision.

## WATS Responsibility

WATS will rely on relevant stakeholders input in combination with organizational expertise to incorporate recommendations into decisions to the maximum extent possible.

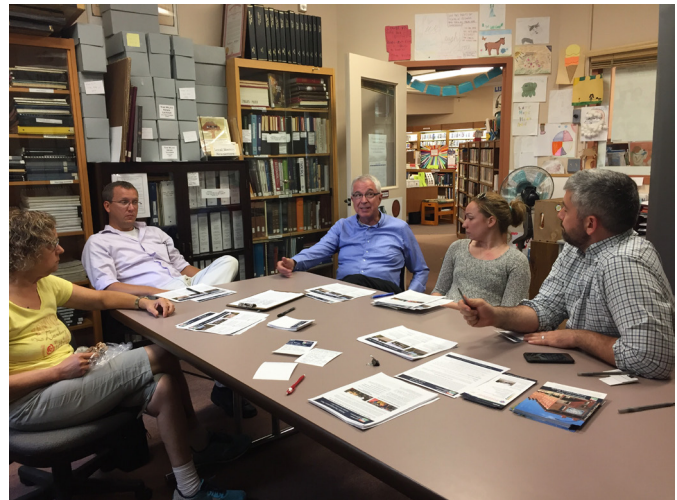
## Overview

For the target audience, WATS efforts to Co-Create are focused on sharing ownership of the creation of ideas and policies with informed stakeholders. Goals may range from having targeted interactions with key officials and community groups to creation of citizens' advisory committees.

## Strategies for Co-Creating with the Public

The co-creating strategy can be used to fully incorporate citizens into the decision-making process from the beginning. Charrettes allow citizens, designers, and others collaborate on a vision. They provide a forum for ideas and offer the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. This strategy is ideal as it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan or product.

PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES	
Consensus Building	Charrettes
Panels	Informal/Formal Coalitions
Formal Partnerships	Participatory Decision-Making





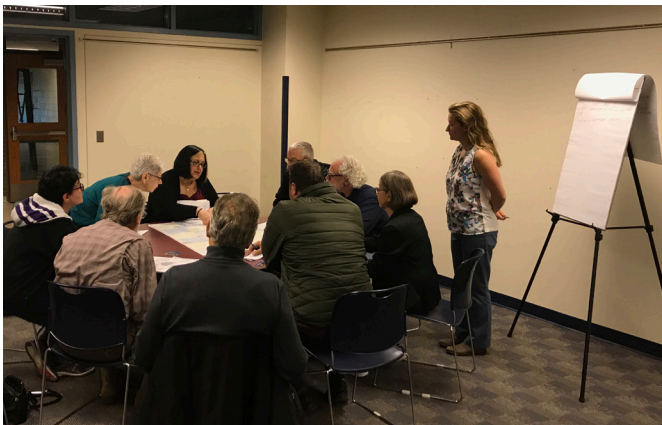
# Engaging Rural Communities

WATS engagement efforts focus on the ability of users to have regular access to the Internet, such as smart phones and Internet connections in a home. However, regular and reliable Internet access is not available county-wide. Sole reliance on Internet engagement strategies are not an effective method for all areas of Washtenaw County. WATS strives to reach more citizens in this area of the county.

## Strategies for Engaging Rural Communities

Strategies to engage rural communities include using public spaces such as town hall meetings, community civic clubs, schools, and libraries.

PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES	
Town Hall Meetings	Discussions at Community Civic Clubs
Meeting at Schools and Libraries	Pop Up Events
Informal Coalitions	Talk to Local Businesses
CAPT/DART and SWWCOG	Community Meetings
Online Idea Forums	Public Comment Opportunities
Crowd Sourcing	Virtual Town Halls



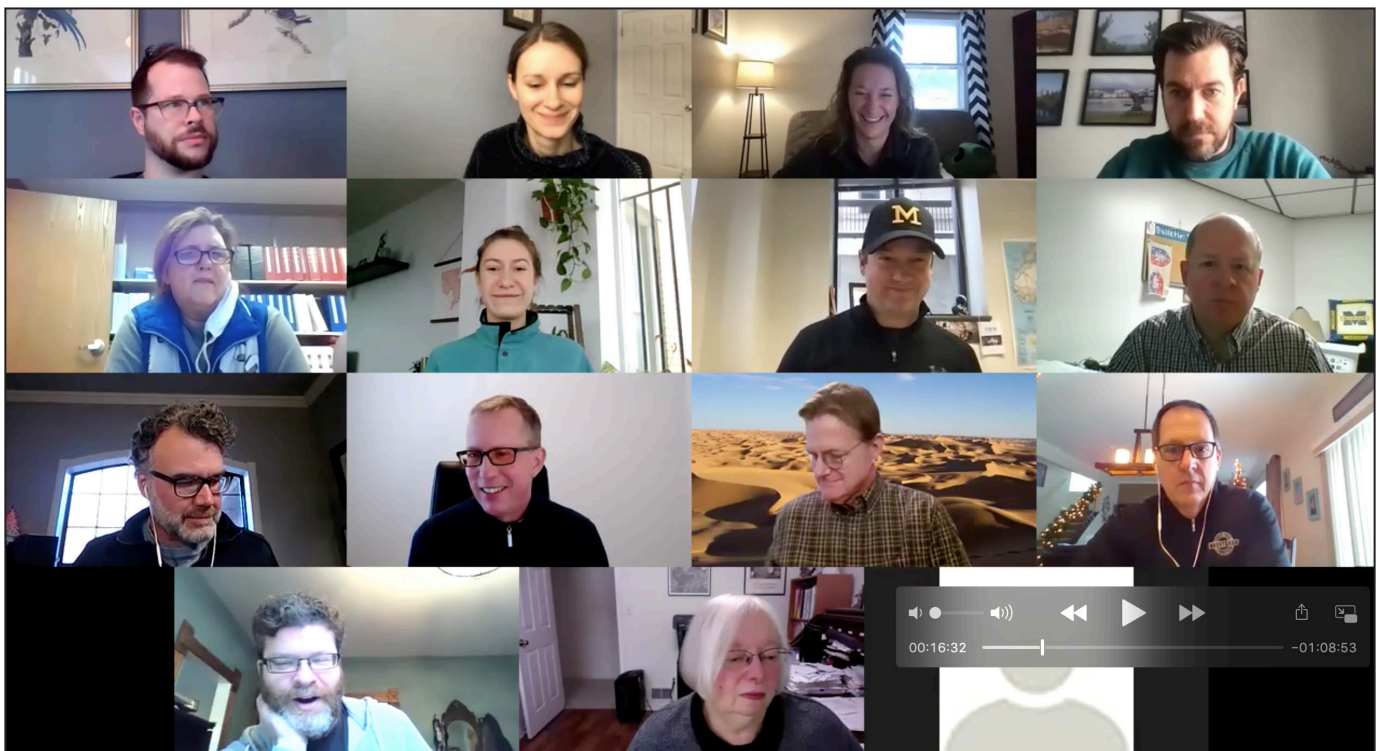


# Virtual Public Engagement

Virtual public engagement allows WATS to supplement face-to-face information sharing with technology. Innovative virtual strategies provide a platform to inform the public and receive feedback. These strategies, while not always ideal, can create efficiencies in how information is shared and public input is collected. Virtual engagement methods can not only accelerate planning and project development processes, they also provide an alternative strategy when face-to-face methods are restricted or unsafe.

If a public meeting is not able to be held in-person due to local or statewide emergency declarations, WATS will ensure that all virtual options include real-time closed captions for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as for those who have cognitive, learning, or other disabilities.


PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES	
Online Meetings	Real-Time Polling
Online Questionnaires	Social Media Posts
Virtual Town Halls	YouTube Informative Videos
Webinars	E-Newsletter
Online Idea Forums	Blog Posts



# Visualization Techniques

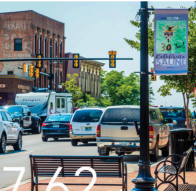
One of the most effective forms of communication is through visualization efforts. Visualization can be interactive; image or text based; or include other graphic techniques that strengthen the awareness of transportation issues. Techniques may include the use of presentations, aerial photography, GIS software, charts, graphs, artist renderings, brochures and mapping.

This plan sets a policy target of spending **15%** of available federal funds on the environment.

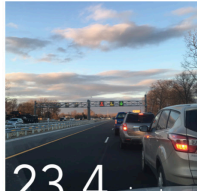
**15%** 

PROJECT	LOCATION	PROPOSED WORK	YEAR	TOTAL COST	AGENCY
Pontiac	at Seven Mile	Improve Intersection Operations	2020	\$750,000	WCRC
North Territorial Rd	at Pontiac Trail	Improve Intersection Operations	2021	\$750,000	WCRC
Fuller/Maiden/E. Medical Center		Reconstruction	2023	\$20,400,000	Ann Arbor
Plymouth	US-23 to Broadway	Safety-ops	2026-2030	\$315,789	Ann Arbor
State	I-94 to Huron	Safety-ops	2026-2030	\$315,789	Ann Arbor
Washtenaw	US-23 to Huron	Safety-ops	2026-2030	\$315,789	Ann Arbor
Huron River Dr	At Mast/Joy	Improve Intersection - Traffic Operations	2026-2030	\$1,500,000	WCRC

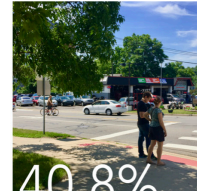




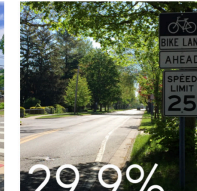
**7.62** minutes  
Daily Per Vehicle Delay



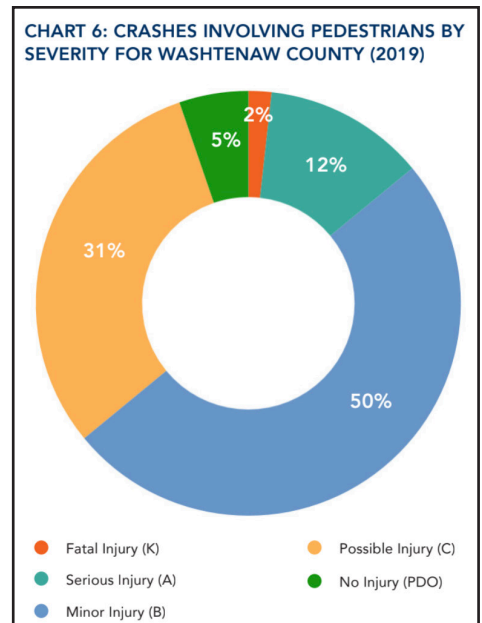
**23.4** minutes  
Average Commute Time



**40.8%**  
Pedestrian Facility Coverage



**29.9%**  
Bicycle Facility Coverage



**Legend**

**Non-Motorized Counts**

Count Type

- Mobile
- Manual
- Permanent
- Video Feed

Daily Use

- > 2,000
- 1,500
- 1,000
- 500


Disclaimer: This map does not represent annual average daily traffic. Shown are the highest counts to date and may not reflect the most recent count at

**65**  
Mobile Count Sites

**44**  
Manual Count Sites

**3**  
Permanent Count Sites

**1**  
Video Feed Count Sites



July - October  
2019 | 2020  
**152,922 | 227,282**

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

**48%**  
**INCREASE**

Data collected from Dexter Mill Creek Park and B2B connection near DPW

# Measuring Engagement Levels

## ENGAGEMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

WATS tracks engagement as part of the performance based planning methods. Interactions online, both active and passive, are measured as well as the number of attendees at standing and special meetings. Performance based planning is a relatively new component of transportation decision-making, but is seen as increasingly important as new and innovative engagement strategies become available.

WATS can also measure the effectiveness of public participation strategies to determine if these strategies are reaching the intended audience and which strategies have the greatest response rate. For example, the number of people engaged at a pop-up meeting can be compared with the number of public comments that were generated from that meeting. WATS will strive to evaluate the results of public participation in the most effective manner according to the most recent best practices.

BASELINE (2017)		TARGET	
<b>975</b> INTERACTIONS	Active Online Engagement	↑	Active Online Engagement
<b>4,684</b> INTERACTIONS	Passive Online Engagement	↑	Passive Online Engagement
<b>10</b> ATTENDEES	Offline Engagement Standing Meetings	↑	Offline Engagement Standing Meetings
<b>160</b> ATTENDEES	Offline Engagement Special Meetings	↑	Offline Engagement Special Meetings



# SEMCOG and Title VI

## WATS AND SEMCOG

WATS works with the Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of Southeast Michigan, to establish the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for the region.

WATS completes the Transportation Management Area (TMA) requirements for the Ann Arbor urbanized area and all of Washtenaw County while SEMCOG fulfills the MPO requirements for the region, including air quality conformity analysis and demographic projections.

WATS assists in demographic projection development by reviewing project data with Washtenaw communities and providing updated local data to SEMCOG. SEMCOG and the St. Clair County Transportation Study provide planning services to the rest of the region, including Detroit.



## TITLE VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires no population is discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, or nationality. To comply with Title VI, WATS developed a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan, which identified significant populations of Chinese, Korean, and Spanish speaking populations throughout Washtenaw County. WATS partnered with the University of Michigan Linguistics Department to develop a Title VI Complaint forms and WATS responsibilities documents in Chinese, Korean, and Spanish (available on the WATS website [miwats.org](http://miwats.org)), be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page. This plan outlines the process that a person would take to have items translated for them. Since WATS is not the MPO and SEMCOG is the responsible MPO for the region, WATS follows SEMCOG's Title VI Plan which can be found at [semcog.org/TitleVI](http://semcog.org/TitleVI).

### Native American Populations

Washtenaw County does not contain a Native American reservation and is no longer home to significant populations of Native Americans. With increased focus on Native American consideration in the transportation planning process, WATS will consult with Michigan Tribal leadership to review the Long Range Transportation Plan and other applicable WATS products.



# Environmental Justice

## WATS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

### Federal Environmental Justice Directive

In 1994, Presidential Executive Order 12898 directed every federal agency to identify and address the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and low-income populations”. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Environmental Justice (EJ) initiatives involve the potentially affected public in developing transportation projects that serve Environmental Justice (EJ) populations without sacrificing safety or mobility of the community.

WATS is responsible for completing an EJ analysis on all federal transportation investments for Washtenaw County. WATS EJ analysis identifies protected populations and requires that the impacts of transportation improvements be documented and evaluated to ensure that all populations are impacted fairly.

### Revised EJ Process in Washtenaw County

WATS revised its Environmental Justice population definition to better reflect the distribution of disadvantaged communities. The previous measure defined the Environmental Justice area as all Census Tracts above the county-wide average of minority residents or poverty level. In practice, the EJ area was more than half the county, too large for targeting disadvantaged communities. Washtenaw County’s university population further complicated the previous method, given the large number of well educated minority immigrants and low income students supported by student aid or family.

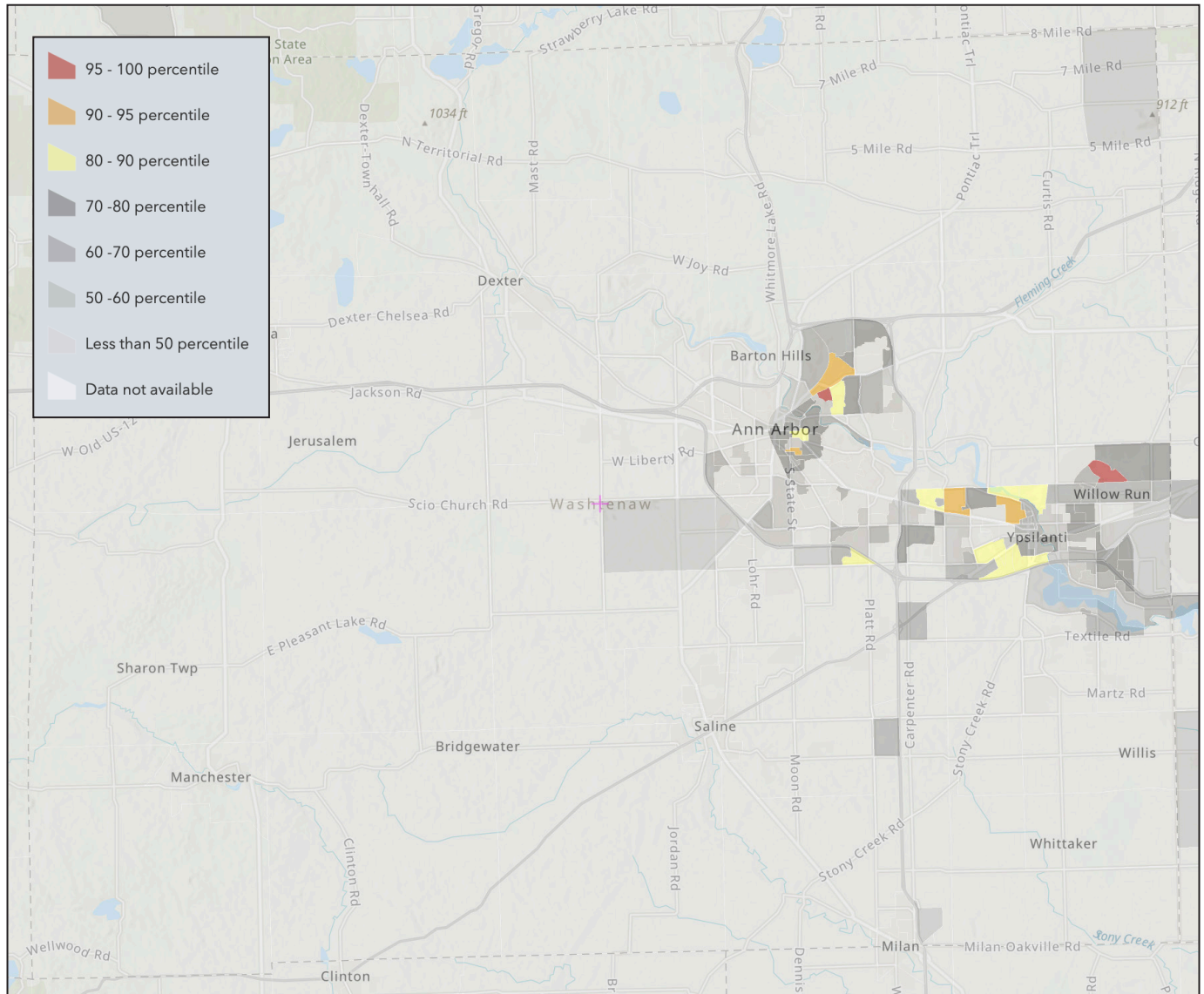
The update combines the proportion of low income and minority residents in each census tract, and sorts the list of tracts based on this measure from largest (greatest share of minority and low income residents) to smallest. The top 20% define the Environmental Justice area. This reduces the impact of students and well educated immigrants on the measure, instead prioritizing areas where residents are both minority and low income. This method reflects best practices from the Environmental Protection Agency’s EJ Mapper tool.

### How EJ Will Be Evaluated

The updated measure ranks Census Tracts by the combined average of percent minority and percent low income residents within each tract  $((\% \text{ Minority} + \% \text{ Low Income})/2)$ . The EJ area is the area defined by the 80th percentile of tracts. WATS will also monitor project impacts to neighborhoods at the 90th and percentile. As part of this assessment, WATS will track the amount of federal transportation funds being invested in EJ areas.

# Environmental Justice

## MAP 2: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS



# Opportunity Index

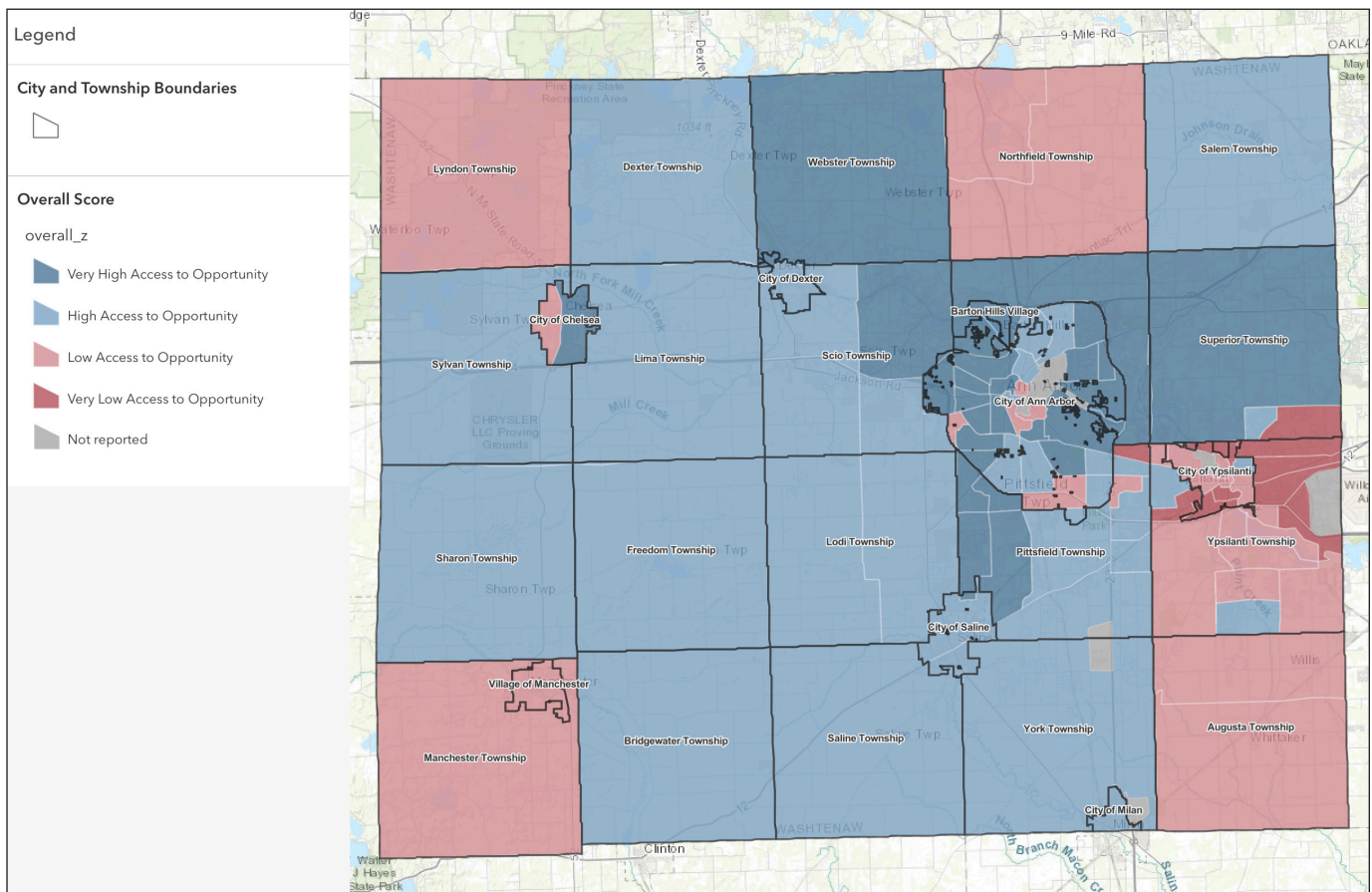
## Washtenaw County's 2020 Revised Opportunity Index

Led by the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development and University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions Team, the Opportunity Index tool was developed to identify which communities have access to structural privilege and which do not. The Opportunity Index measures access to opportunity in Washtenaw County by combining 16 indicators into five categories: health, job access, economic well-being, education and training, and community engagement and stability. Census tracts receive an overall opportunity score based on the average of the five category scores. The opportunity score in each category is based on how outcomes for residents in that census tract compare to the county-wide average.

## How the Opportunity Index Will be Evaluated

WATS will track the amount of transportation funds being invested in Census tracts that receive an overall score of "Low" and "Very Low" access to opportunity. These amounts will be reported to the Technical and Policy Committees as part of any update to project programming.

## MAP 3: WASHTENAW COUNTY OPPORTUNITY INDEX



# Summary

The Public Participation Plan outlines specific strategies to ensure early and continuing involvement of the public in the transportation planning process and in the development of WATS core products. An effective planning process cannot take place without the involvement of the public, community groups, and other organizations. An informed, ongoing discussion with the public helps foster the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (“3C”) planning process.

Public input helps WATS staff and policy decision-makers better understand specific needs of the community. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in meetings and other engagement efforts to provide input and voice their opinions. Public comment periods of 45 days will be provided prior to the WATS Policy Committee adoption of core products, such as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The earlier you can get involved in the transportation planning process, the more of an impact you will have.

WATS strives to facilitate early participation using the most effective engagement strategies available including to Inform, Consult, Deliberate and Co-Create with the public. WATS will utilize all necessary tools to ensure a wide and diverse range of public opinion is involved throughout the transportation planning process.

Questions, comments, or suggestions? Contact WATS at [wats@miwats.org](mailto:wats@miwats.org) or (734) 994-3127.