

PLEASE NOTE

In an effort to gather additional comments and suggestions during the 2040 Long Range Transportation Planning process the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission is making the working draft sections of the plan available to the public.

Additional data collection and analysis is still being conducted and this information will be included in the next draft which is to be released mid April 2013.

Questions or comments can be directed to:

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FUTURE METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA

During the development of this LRTP, TwinCATS committees reviewed population, housing, employment, and travel patterns to see where potential connections to the urban area may exist in the future, specifically at the 2020 U.S. Census count. While the MPO will be monitoring other factors as indicated, the dominant factor that will be monitored will be population. The U.S. Census urban areas are defined only by the population numbers. Federal Statute governs the planning boundaries for Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Specifically, Title 23 Part 450.38 states that:

(a) The metropolitan planning area boundary shall, as a minimum, cover the UZA(s) and the contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within the twenty year forecast period covered by the transportation plan described in §450.322 of this part. The boundary may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

Therefore, it is prudent for the MPO to monitor areas closely as the economy continues to recover in southwest Michigan and northern Indiana.

MONITORING FACTORS

As this LRTP was being developed, population, housing, employment, and travel patterns were reviewed for the base year of 2010 and were projected out to the plan end year of 2040. This information allows the MPO to monitor where development is being shifted to or where it is to be newly created. The specific factors that the MPO will use to monitor this information before the next Census count will be:

- Population
- Housing
- Employment
- Travel patterns

The MPO staff will use the American Community Survey (ACS) information which releases 1-year, 3-year and 5-year data products every year to monitor the above listed information. As the new Census information will not be released before the next long range plan update, the MPO will rely on the information changes that are supplied.

TRENDS

Between 1950 and 2000, Berrien County's population shifted away from incorporated cities and villages and into townships. Based on updated data from the 2010 Census, this trend has shown no sign of changing. In fact, Berrien County's overall population decreased between 2000 and 2010 and continues to fall below its highest level in 1980. The following maps show trends in population growth and projections.

Map _____ Show trends through maps (example MI sprawl)-with using SE data, combine the TAZ maps information to show a proportion of the population using dots.

- Base is 2010
- then 2020
- then 2030
- Final is 2040

GEOGRAPHIES

When the 2010 Census information was released, MPO staff expected to see connections to the existing urban areas. There had been some indications that the urban cluster in Coloma would extend south and connect to the northern portion of the TwinCATS MPO area through Benton Township. However, the population growth in this area seemed to be trending northward into Van Buren County, and away from the TwinCATS MPO. Therefore, the Coloma area was not proposed to be part of the 2010 adjusted census urban boundary or part of the planning boundary for the study area. This will continue to be an area that is monitored by the MPO staff as the urban area boundaries are very close in proximity to one another.

Another area that the MPO will be monitoring closely is along Berrien County's Lake Michigan coastline, specifically in the New Buffalo area. The Village of Grand Beach is already a satellite member of the TwinCATS MPO because it constitutes the Michigan portion of the Northern Indiana Planning Commission (NIRPC) planning area. However, Grand Beach was the only community in that portion of the County to experience population growth between 2000 and 2010, with the City of New Buffalo, New Buffalo Township and Michiana Village losing population. Therefore, the New Buffalo area was not proposed as part of the 2010 Adjusted Census Urban Boundary.

Current growth patterns indicate that the Metropolitan Area Boundary will not be expanding within the next twenty years, as the overall population of Berrien County continues to decline. Still certain communities will be monitored as they may continue to experience population growth

- Royalton Township grew 23% between 2000 and 2010.
- Baroda Township's declined between 2000 and 2010, but the village's population increased slightly and new development in this area indicates the possibility of population growth. The village is already a TwinCATS member.

Despite an overall population decline, there still is the possibility for pockets of growth, and a potential transformation of the TwinCATS planning boundary over the next 35 years. **The map of areas to monitor highlights the communities discussed above** that will be examined closely over the duration of this long range transportation plan.

DRAFT

Map____ Areas to Monitor for NATS Planning Area (This map is a place holder until the final map is developed)

