

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the NATS LRTP are to guide the development of the 2040 LRTP, the NATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the overall transportation planning processes in the planning area. A brief explanation of these terms is provided below:

- Goals-Generalized statements which broadly relate the physical environment to values
- Objectives-Specific, measurable statements related to the attainment of goals

MAP-21

Under MAP-21, Congress has begun to outline a more performance based transportation system that will make State DOTs, MPOs, and local road agencies more accountable for the development and maintenance of the federally funded transportation system. What this means for the NATS MPO local agencies, is that any federal funds used on roadways, bridges, transit systems, in the NATS MPO will need to develop MPO performance targets in relation to the national performance measures set by US DOT. The following timeline has been developed and is important to outline to the reader to understand that as agencies set forth their measures, the NATS MPO will need to amend their planning documents to conform to the new regulations.

- US DOT - will have **18 months** after the start of the MAP-21 in October 2012 to develop national performance measures.
- State Performance Target - Within **one year** of the US DOT final rule on performance measures, States will set performance targets in support of those measures. States may set different performance targets for urbanized and rural areas. To ensure consistency each State must, to the maximum extent practicable
 - Coordinate with an MPO when setting performance targets for the area represented by that MPO; and
 - Coordinate with public transportation providers when setting performance targets in an urbanized area not represented by an MPO.
- MPO Performance Targets - Within **180 days** of States or providers of public transportation setting performance targets, MPOs are to set performance targets in relation to the performance measures. To ensure consistency, each MPO must, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate with the relevant State and public transportation providers when setting performance targets. The targets are required in the Long Range Transportation Plan according to §1201; 23 USC 134(i)(2)(B)]. Performance Measures will be addressed in the next sections of this plan.

As of the completion of this plan, US DOT had not released national performance measures but has released the MAP-21 Planning Factors and National Performance Goals which must be incorporated into the development of the plan and most notably in the Goals and Objectives.

NATS REGIONAL VISION

By 2040, the NATS regional transportation system will make progress to provide for a safer and more efficient movement of people and goods to support a robust and growing local and regional economy. The transportation system will offer a variety of mode choices to all people for intra- and inter-regional travel. Consideration of the impact of these modes on the natural and built environment must be well-balanced with the provision of an acceptable level of mobility and accessibility. A multimodal system conserves natural resources and helps promote the integrity of neighborhoods and the entire region.

The NATS transportation network of roads, bridges, transit systems, rail lines, and trails, are the visible components of the work that transportation planning encompasses. The other areas that are more difficult to see are coordinating land use planning, economic development, environmental planning, safety, and congestion reduction. The goals and objectives seek to combine the visible and less visible components of transportation planning into a fully functioning system. Accordingly, NATS seeks to provide the transportation infrastructure and modes necessary to produce the highest quality of life and opportunities for its residents. This section will focus on the MAP-21 Planning Factors, National Performance Goals, and how the NATS Goals and Objectives align with these factors.

The goals and objectives that follow were developed using the following process:

- An initial review of the goals and objectives contained in the 2035 LRTP by MPO staff
- Conducting two public input sessions with members of the public held on October 12, 2011 and October 19, 2011
- Continuous discussions at MPO Committee meetings held in 2012 and 2013
- Review of federal regulations and state transportation documents
- NATS Policy Committee approval in January 2013
- Public Comment sought on Goals and Objectives in February 2013

It is important to note that the NATS goals and objectives are not in priority order.

GOAL 1 – Enhance Economic Vitality of Southwest Michigan

Objective: Improve competitiveness of the regional economy by expanding efficient and improved multi-modal facilities, modes, and linkages, promoting reliable and timely access to employment and service centers for workers, and preserving and strengthening the existing economic base.

GOAL 2 – Produce a Regional Transportation System that Connects People Safety with Their Destinations

Objective: Provide a system that contributes to access to a variety of destinations such as: cultural attractions, recreational facilities, open spaces, employment, and housing to fulfill needs for a healthful, satisfying living environment.

GOAL 3 – Provide an Environment that Promotes Livable Communities and Environmental Responsibility

Objective: Produce a transportation system that contributes to an attractive, convenient living that minimizes air and water quality impacts.



MDOT working to rebuild trunkline roadways.

GOAL 4 – Maintain Existing Transportation Assets

Objective: Maximize the quality of transportation system through sound long-term maintenance strategies, operational improvements, and technology.

GOAL 5 – Produce a Safe Transportation System

Objective: Support projects that reduce crashes for motorized and non-motorized users and produce a transportation system where people have safe transportation choices.

GOAL 6 – Ensure the Equitability and Accessibility of the System

Objective: Promote greater accessibility to transportation for individuals of all backgrounds and all abilities.

To ensure that the MPO is aligning itself with the federal focus areas on transportation, the MPO staff completed Table 5 to highlight the integration of the federal focus areas in the MPO study area.

Table 5 - Aligning NATS MPO Goals with MAP-21 Planning Factors

| MAP-21 Planning Factors | NATS Goals |
|--|------------|
| Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency. | 1, 2, 6 |
| Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. | 5 |
| Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users | 5, 6 |
| Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight. | 2, 6 |
| Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns. | 1, 2, 6 |
| Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight. | 1, 2, 5 |
| Promote efficient system management and operation. | 1, 2, 4 |
| Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system. | 4 |