

Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS)

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Agency Background

Every urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 must have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation to qualify for federal highway or transit assistance. The MATS is the MPO for the Midland Urbanized area.

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) relies on the MPO to ensure that highway and transit projects that use federal funds are products of a credible planning process and meet local priorities. USDOT will not approve federal funding for urban highway and transit projects unless they are on the MPO's program. Thus, the MPO's role is to develop and maintain the necessary transportation plan for the area to assure that federal funds support these locally developed plans. The IIJA is essentially a continuation of the FAST Act, MAP-21, SAFETEA-LU, TEA-21 and the ISTEA, which have strengthened this responsibility by placing the MPO in a primary role for the programming of transportation projects to be carried out in any given year. The MPO has also been given the responsibility to involve the public in this process through expanded citizen participation efforts. Since the MPO is made up of those agencies responsible for carrying out transportation programs in the region, the process puts all agencies into partnership with one another to carry out the programs.

The Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS) is a single purpose agency that focuses specifically on transportation planning issues, fulfilling federal requirements to maintain funding for its transportation network.

Organizational Structure and Functional Responsibilities

MATS is governed by a Policy Committee that includes various elected and appointed officials from the transportation planning area plus other members from the Michigan Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Policy Committee is generally expected to meet once a month and the meetings are open to the public. At these meetings current transportation issues are discussed and status reports on transportation studies and projects are given. After these discussions are completed, policy actions are taken that include adoption of the Unified Work Program (UWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) also known as the Long Range Transportation Plan, revisions to these documents, and adoption of resolutions related to current transportation issues. The Policy Committee generally relies on the advice of the MATS Technical Committee, which reviews in detail the activities of MATS and provides recommendations to the Policy

Committee. The Technical Committee is composed of technically-oriented representatives that include various transportation, planning, engineering and other interests in the area. It also includes representatives from MDOT. The Technical Committee is generally expected to meet once a month and the meetings are open to the public.

Continuing technical support to the transportation planning program is provided by the MPO staff. The staff conducts studies and oversees projects as directed by the MATS Policy Committee, and as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MDOT. The staff reports findings to the MPO Committees and participates in other community wide efforts. The combined work of the MPO staff and the participating staff of other member organizations provides the information needed to make program and policy decisions.

Staffing for MATS includes two full-time (2 FTE) staff members, the MATS Director and Transportation Planner. The following is a brief statement regarding the duties and responsibilities of each employee position for the Midland Area Transportation Study:

Director

The Director is a full-time, wage position. The Director is responsible for the development, supervision and management of MPO activities. In fulfilling the above role, the Director's time is divided between indirect (management and administrative activity) and direct (technical work). The Director performs various work elements/activities listed in the annual Unified Work Program (UWP). The UWP identifies transportation issues and problems facing the Midland area and also specifies work tasks to address these issues and a proposed budget associated with those issues. Also included in the UWP is information relevant to funding sources, budget summaries, completion schedules and indirect costs. The Director wages are treated as a direct expense.

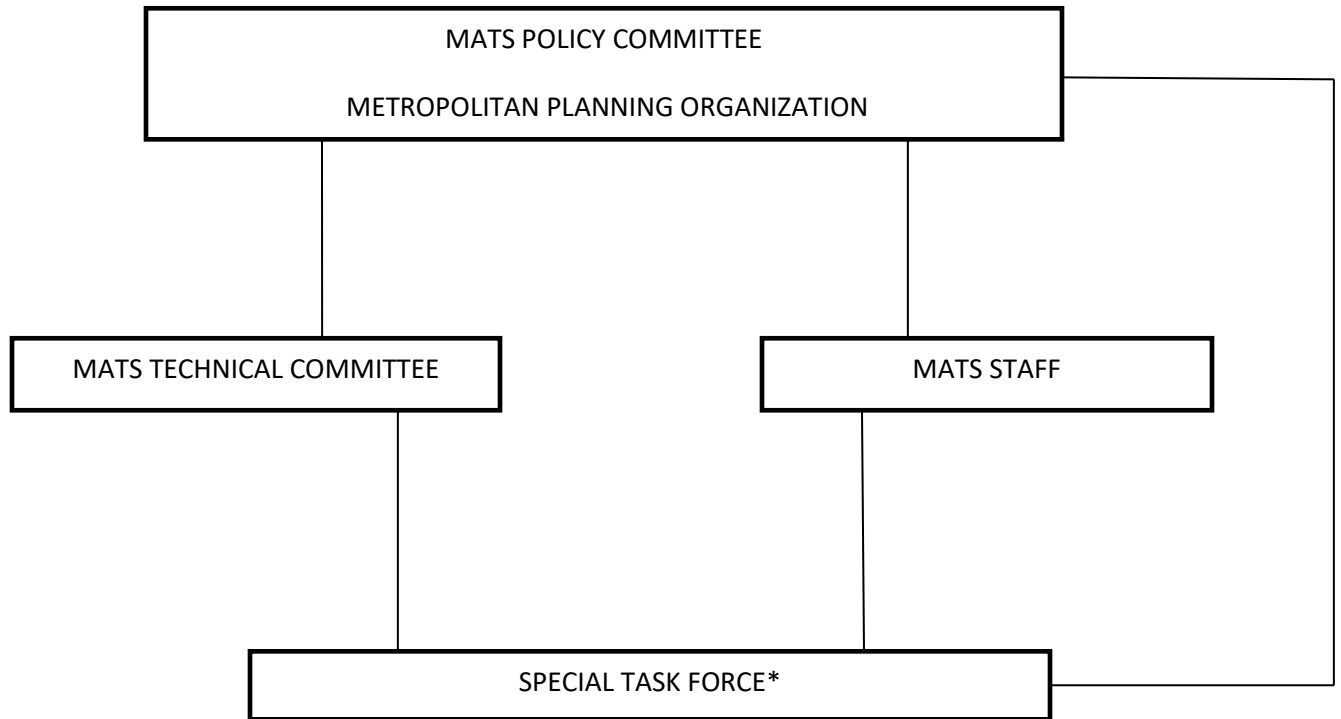
Transportation Planner

The Planner is a full-time, wage position. The Planner is principally responsible for technical activities with time allocated among the various work elements identified in the Unified Work Program. In addition to this technical role, the Planner has select administrative and GIS responsibilities. The Planner is responsible to the MPO Director. The Planner's wages are treated as a direct expense.

MATS utilizes the assistance and efforts of local agencies, including the City of Midland, Midland County Road Commission and Dial A Ride Transportation (DART) in order to effectively and efficiently address the federal planning requirements as well as local issues and programs. MATS, if possible, will reimburse these agencies for services and activities related to the UWP, including but not limited to collection of traffic counts, other transportation infrastructure data or asset

management data; work related to transit planning, Transportation Improvement Program or Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

MATS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*Formed when required for specific projects or studies