

# 2023 ANNUAL REVIEW

Michiana Area Council of Governments



# INTRODUCTION

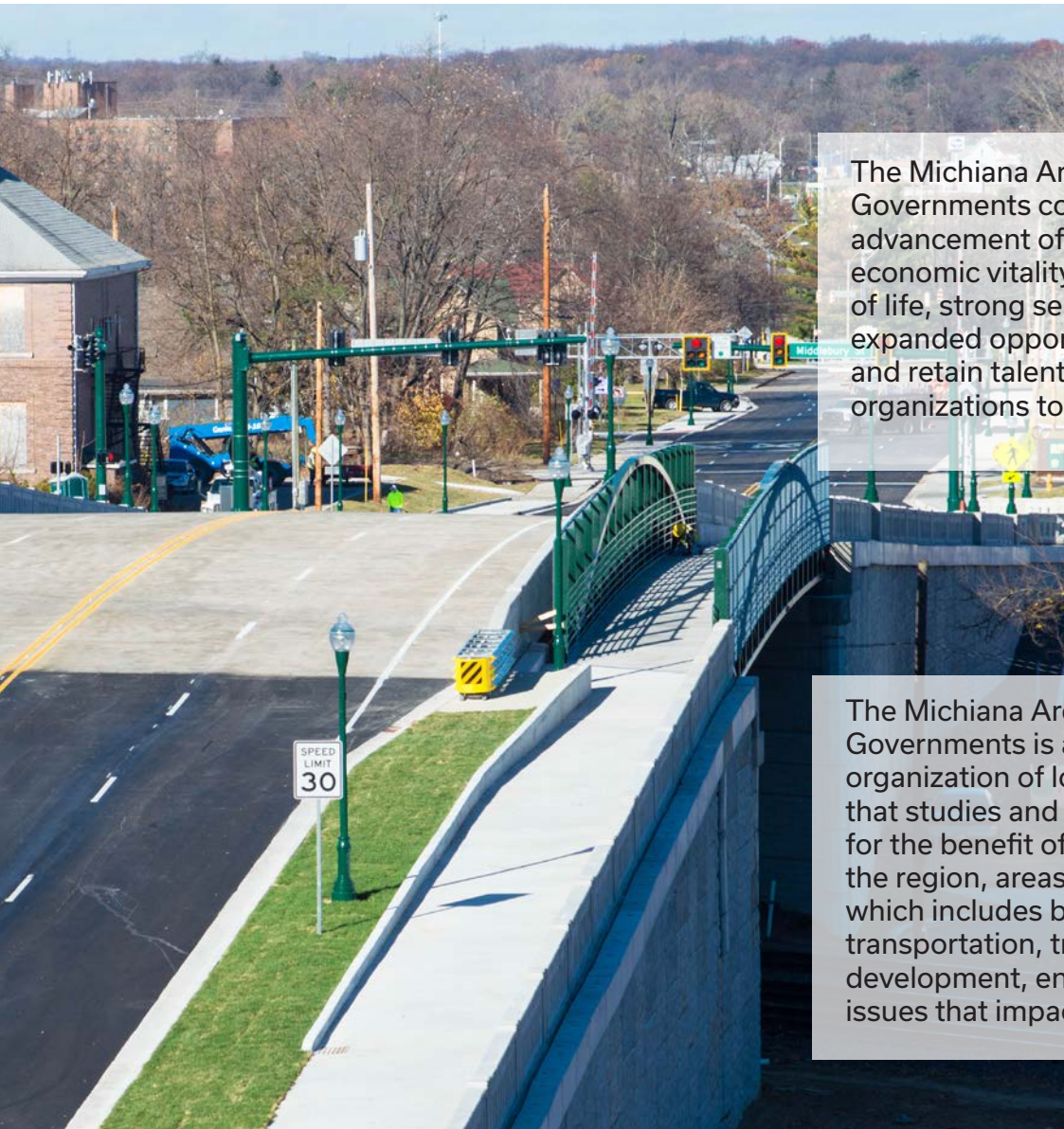
In 2023, our dedicated staff members demonstrated exceptional commitment and expertise, achieving significant milestones across various topics. From implementing new interactive data dashboards, to successfully receiving new grants to expand opportunities. Through their collective efforts, our staff members have not only elevated our organization's impact but also strengthened our ability to serve the communities of our region for years to come.

## VISION

The Michiana Area Council of Governments contributes to the advancement of the Region's economic vitality, enhanced quality of life, strong sense of place, and expanded opportunities that attract and retain talented individuals and organizations to the Michiana Region.

## MISSION

The Michiana Area Council of Governments is a voluntary organization of local governments that studies and attempts to resolve, for the benefit of each member and the region, areas of inter-local issues, which includes but is not limited to transportation, transit, economic development, environment, and other issues that impact the region.





# TRANSPORTATION



**\$14.5 million**

was awarded to 29 communities in the Community Crossings Matching Grant



**9 Projects**

for a total of \$32.1 million went to construction. (6 Rural - \$16.3 Million and 3 Urban - \$15.7 Million)



**\$7.8 million**

was awarded on 2 new projects through INDOT's Rural Call for Projects



In 2023, several core transportation plans were adopted.

- The state fiscal year (SFY) 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which serves as the implementation tool for Michiana on the Move, was approved on April 12, 2023. The TIP is a living document providing a schedule and cost of 62 local road and transit projects, as well as state-sponsored projects.
- The Michiana on the Move: 2050 Transportation Plan, the region's strategy for transportation investment over the next 20 years, was approved on October 1, 2023. The plan identifies over 145 roadway projects including new road construction, additional travel lanes, road reconstruction, center turn lanes, intersection improvement, and grade separations. Additionally, 340 miles of shared-use trails and other active transportation facilities are identified.
- MACOG received a \$500,000 Grant to develop a Regional Safety Action Plan focusing on strategic and prioritized approaches to reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries within the four-county region. Work will begin on the plan in 2024, analyzing data, engaging with the public, and prioritizing recommendations to achieve the region's safety goals.

# Interactive Data Dashboards

This past year MACOG went live with 4 new or updated dashboards, meant to provide data and information on various parts of our transportation network. These dashboards are meant to be used by professionals as well as members of the public interested in knowledge and understanding of how the transportation network is being used and functions.

## Trail Counts Dashboard:

MACOG in 2023 utilized 9 permanent and 2 mobile MULTI post counters to monitor bike and pedestrian bidirectional traffic, providing crucial insights for park planning and encouraging healthier lifestyles. This [data collection](#) helps in understanding usage patterns, supporting public health initiatives, and promotes active transportation.

## Traffic Count Dashboard:

MACOG collects [traffic data](#) at nearly 4,500 locations, on local and state roads, every three-years using road tube and video methods. These methods provide comprehensive traffic information, including volume, vehicle type, speed, direction, turn movements essential for transportation planning and engineering studies.

## Regional Crash & Vulnerable Road User Crash Dashboards:

MACOG debuted the [Regional Crash Dashboard](#) in the spring of 2023. This includes both serious injury and fatal crashes all across the MACOG Region. As of the end of 2023, nearly 5,000 crashes have been cleaned and entered into the database for stakeholders and the public to view. Similarly, in the fall of 2023, a [crash dashboard for vulnerable road users](#) also debuted, showing crash locations involving bicyclists, pedestrians, and horse & buggies. This dashboard accounts for all types of injury crashes, as well as property damage only crashes. Both dashboards will help communities better understand and address safety concerns in our region.

You can find all these dashboards at: [maps.macog.com](https://maps.macog.com)

# Data Bike for the Region

MACOG purchased an e-bike, cameras and software to create a Data Bike. The data bike will initially be used to map and document the current conditions of all the trails throughout the MACOG area. This information will be made publicly available in 2024 and can then be used for planning current and future maintenance needs. Much like our roadways, the trails that make up our Crossway Trails system are an asset to our communities and the data bike will allow them to be managed through asset management planning.



**1,892**  
traffic locations were counted. 1,012 with video footage and 880 with road tube.



**215.8**  
centerline miles of roadway pavement condition was rated for 17 communities.



**21**  
Asset Management Plans were updated with MACOG's support



**844,300**  
trail users were counted from 11 trail count sites with a daily average of 2,322





# TRANSIT



**358,224**

Interurban Trolley  
Passenger Boardings



**29,532**

Trolley Access Trips with  
337 unique riders



**4**

New Flyer Xcelsior  
35 foot buses were  
delivered



**6,045**

passes were sold  
using the Token Transit  
app. 52% of all pre-  
purchased trolley  
passes

The Interurban Trolley provided more than 350,000 passenger boardings on the Trolley. This is a 4% increase from 2022 and the highest annual ridership since 2020. The Trolley Access Service also experienced the highest ridership since 2019 with a total of nearly 30,000 trips. This is also about a 4% increase in trips from 2022.

In addition to maintaining existing services and finalizing the CONNECT Transit Plan (see next page), staff continued to enhance public transit with these projects.

- This year was the second full year of Token Transit, which allows passengers to purchase passes from their phones. In 2023, over 6,000 passes were sold on the app, which is a 200% increase in pass sales from last year.
- The Interurban Trolley ordered 4 New Flyer buses to replace and expand our fleet. These buses were delivered at the beginning of 2024.
- The Trolley Access service received 3 new accessible vans to replace older vans that had reached the end of their useful lives.

# Enhancing Transportation for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities


In 2022, MACOG issued a call for projects for funding from the Federal Transit Administration, Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310). This funding is directly allocated to the South Bend Urbanized Area, and as the MPO, we manage the program. Non-profit organizations in the South Bend Urbanized Area were able to apply for vehicles that support programs providing transportation services to seniors and/or individuals with disabilities. MACOG awarded four organizations with funding to purchase 7 vehicles. In 2023, the vehicles were delivered.

**Section 5310 Awards:**  
Logan Center - \$107,947  
Real Service - \$107,947  
Aids Ministries - \$53,973  
Corvila - \$187,910

**Total:**  
**\$457,778**

# CONNECT Transit Plan Approved

In 2022, MACOG and the South Bend Public Transportation Corporation (Transpo) partnered to develop the CONNECT Transit Plan, the region’s first combined 10-year plan for the future of transit. At the end of 2022, MACOG released the Recommendations Report, outlining the short-term and additional funding networks for both systems. Extending into 2023 for the final phase, MACOG and our partners met with approximately 350 people in focus group meetings, open houses, presentations, and Transit Stops. In addition to in-person interactions, we received nearly 500 surveys that provided extensive feedback on the recommendations from the CONNECT Transit Plan. In total, between all three phases, there were more than 55 events, and just over 2,300 interactions with the public, including more than 1,500 survey respondents. The final report was approved by the MACOG Policy Board and the Transpo Board of Directors in March and April of 2023.



**350**  
People attended  
CONNECT Transit Plan  
Recommendations Report  
outreach events in 2023



MACOG and Transpo spent most of 2023 reviewing the recommendations and creating a plan of action to implement the short-term network modifications. This plan of action includes analyzing where stops will be changing, determining bus schedule changes, and upgrading the fleet and equipment needed to smoothly transition the system. More information on the implementation of the short-term network will be provided in 2024.



**500**  
CONNECT Transit Plan  
surveys were received  
with feedback and  
recommendations in 2023



# SUSTAINABILITY



**\$4.2 million**

was awarded to the  
MACOG region for EV  
charging infrastructure

## MACOG Receives Over \$4M to Boost Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The Federal Highway Administration announced the region will receive over \$4.2 million to fill gaps in electric vehicle charging infrastructure in rural areas and disadvantaged communities in the region. In 2024, there will be an opportunity for private and non-profit organizations to apply to be a site host.

- 14 Level 2 “destination” stations in rural areas and 18 in urban areas.
- Small towns hosting Level 2 stations may include Argos, Bristol, Bremen, Culver, Middlebury, New Carlisle, North Liberty, Syracuse, Walkerton, and Winona Lake. Three Level 3 fast charging stations at the South Bend International Airport, and along US-30 in Plymouth and Warsaw. Construction is planned for Level 2 stations in mid-2025, while the larger Level 3 projects are slated for early 2026.
- MACOG was one of 47 applicants awarded nationally, and the only in Indiana.





# AmeriCorps Members Serve the Region in Year 2

AmeriCorps at MACOG launched in fall 2022. AmeriCorps members work on environmental sustainability and economic resilience topics for local governments, non-profits, and other stakeholders. In Year 1 and 2, the entire program budget was covered by federal funds and service sites.

A total of 28 individuals served with AmeriCorps in 2023.

- 10 members completed service in Year 1
- 8 members continued serving from Year 1 into Year 2
- 10 new members started service in Year 2

The 11 Service sites in 2023 were the Beacon Resource Center; City of Goshen, Department of Environmental Resilience & Stormwater; City of Elkhart, Elkhart Environmental Center; enFocus, Inc.; Green Bridge Growers; MACOG - Active Transportation, Clean Transportation; Seed to Feed - Church Community Services; Shirley Heinze Land Trust; South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership; St. Joseph River Basin Commission; and the Tolson Center for Community Excellence.




**28**  
individuals served with AmeriCorps


# Brownfields Program Maintains Momentum

Brownfields redevelopment accomplishments from 2019 - 2023 were highlighted through a report published at [www.macog.com/brownfields.html](http://www.macog.com/brownfields.html), including the construction of an affordable housing project underway on the former Arnolt site in Warsaw. In 2023, MACOG invested more than \$390,000 for brownfields assessment. This funding was utilized for targeted areas in South Bend and Elkhart, plus resolving environmental uncertainties for affordable housing projects in Goshen and Warsaw. Furthermore, MACOG used the grant to prepare a new site in the Town of Syracuse for the construction of a new public library. Outside of the active EPA Assessment grants, MACOG pursued other opportunities to move sites forward:

- Applied for \$1.5M in additional EPA assessment funding
- Helped secure a \$4M loan for the City of Elkhart to clean up the C.G Conn site
- Enrolled the Roundhouse site in Elkhart’s Benham neighborhood in the EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment program for two rounds of assessments
- Enrolled the 515 Hug Street site in Elkhart in the TBA program for assessment



**11**  
AmeriCorps Service Sites in 2023



**\$4 million**  
loan secured for the City of Elkhart to clean up the C.G Conn Site



# St. Joseph River Basin Commission



25

watershed education presentations



266

new water quality samples analyzed; sampling expanded to add 2 counties



\$104,250

from 4 grants awarded to our partners in LaGrange & Steuben Counties to support strategic water quality monitoring

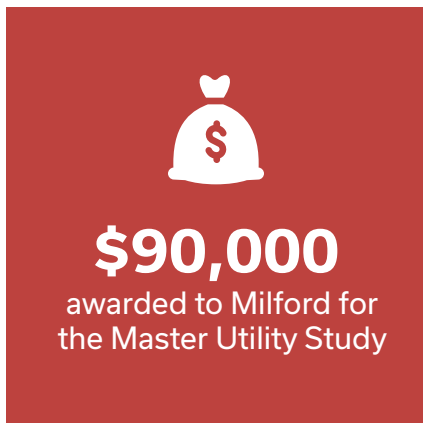
- Four of the 25 presentations were Hoosier Riverwatch training sessions that resulted in over 20 newly certified Hoosier Riverwatchers.
- \$104,250 in new funding awarded through four grants to our partners in LaGrange & Steuben Counties to support strategic water quality monitoring in the headwaters of the river basin.
- Over 50 field measurements were taken to calibrate 7 new water level monitoring devices for automated continuous data collection. This data will be used by engineers to develop more cost effective flood mitigation strategies for a flood-prone neighborhood in St. Joseph County.
- 12 new records of water quality gathered from 12 ongoing biological monitoring sites sampled.
- Two new water quality monitoring programs started:
  - LaGrange County: 11 new monitoring sites sampled generating 66 new water quality samples analyzed
  - Steuben County: 10 new monitoring sites sampled generating 200 new water quality samples and 2,200 new measurements



3

AmeriCorps members served with the SJRBC along with 1 intern

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Grant Administration Services in Rural Communities

Throughout 2023, MACOG's Community Development Department played a pivotal role in providing grant writing and grant administration services to rural communities within our region.

- In Milford, MACOG provided essential grant administrative services including facilitating public hearings and overseeing the financial management and the closeout process for the development of the Town's Water Infrastructure Utility Plan (Master Utility Study) that was from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) planning award of \$90,000 from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) in 2022.
- In 2022, the Town of Middlebury was successful in receiving an EDA award to relocate and improve the Hardwoods Lift Station. MACOG will be providing grant administrative services to help the Town manage the construction process, anticipated for spring 2024, and navigate the federal grant administrative requirements.
- MACOG continued its collaborative partnership with Kosciusko County and the participating three communities to navigate through the Hoosiers Enduring Legacy Program (HELP) award received from OCRA in 2021. MACOG played a pivotal role in guiding the County to finalize the development and approval of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) in early 2023.
- Following the approval of the SIP, MACOG helped the Towns of Mentone, Milford, and Pierceton to prepare and submit their respective construction grant applications, to which all received an award notification in February 2024.






# Planning in the Region

In 2023, MACOG’s Community Development Department actively contributed to shaping the future of the region through comprehensive initiatives. Notably, MACOG guided the City of Plymouth to develop an updated comprehensive Plan called “Plymouth Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan.” This process began in the fall of 2022 and achieved approval and adoption by the City Council on December 11, 2023. Crafted collaboratively with a diverse steering committee, inclusive of community members and stakeholders, this effort ensures alignment with Plymouth’s collective vision.

Equally impactful is the approval of the Kosciusko County Parks Master Plan by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in May 2023. Developed in close collaboration between MACOG and the Kosciusko County Parks and Recreation Board, this Plan lists a number of projects to help guide the Board to plan and program for high-quality parks and recreational services, enhancing the quality of life in Kosciusko County.

Looking ahead to 2024, ongoing planning initiatives, including the Culver Comprehensive Plan and the New Carlisle Comprehensive Plan, are poised to bring meaningful changes to their respective communities, with both scheduled for completion in the spring of 2024. Collaboratively developed plans for Marshall County, Kosciusko County, and St. Joseph County reflect MACOG’s mission to foster regional cooperation and address unique community needs. As these plans come to fruition, they play a vital role in enhancing the overall quality of place in the region, affirming MACOG’s dedication to sustainable development and continuous improvement in the communities we serve.



**4 Plans**  
2 Completed,  
2 Plans in-progress



**989**  
Surveys completed

**428**  
People engaged  
in meetings



# ADMINISTRATION

## Public Engagement

It is important to MACOG to stay connected to the community and give the public as many opportunities as possible to connect with us. With each new year we are working to reach more people as well as working to share the best and most relevant information.

Between new metrics, consolidating, and making quality over quantity, our post total reach numbers are lower than last year, however with a plan in place, we are sure the MACOG social media presence in 2024 will continue to grow.



## Website

**Unique Users: 54,276**

**Total Page Views: 197,607**

**[www.macog.com](http://www.macog.com)**



## 24 videos

were published with 989 total views

**Most watched video:**  
October Policy Board  
with 68 views.



## MACOGazette

an electronic bi-weekly newsletter

**Total Editions: 26**

**Total Emailed: 20,573**

**Ended the year with 784 subscribers**



## 100 Events

MACOG hosted or Co-hosted

**Connected with over  
2,000 participants**



## 42

News Releases and 56  
MACOG and Trolley  
News Articles were  
published



# Social Media

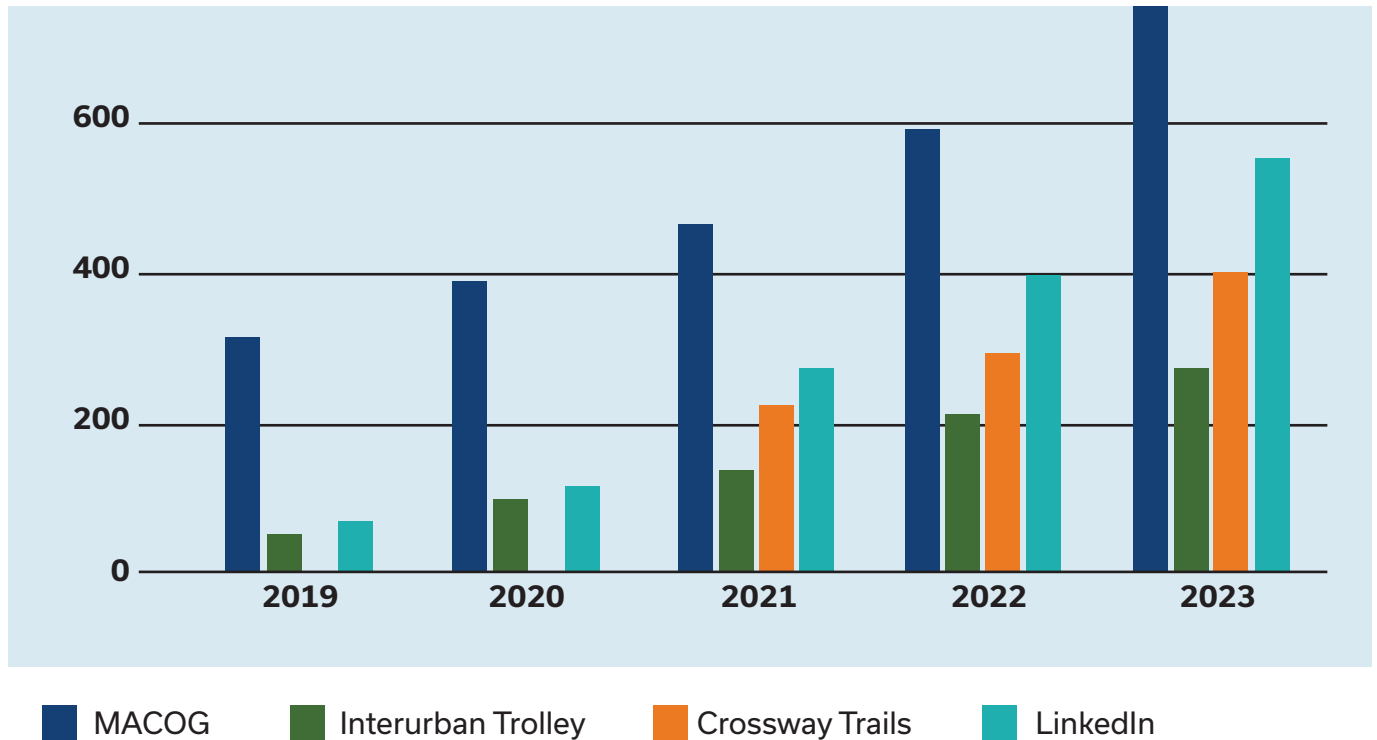
**MACOG**  
**1,275 Followers**  
 between  
 MACOG Facebook and  
 LinkedIn pages.  
 213 more than 2022.

**Interurban Trolley**  
**273 Followers**  
 on the Trolley page.  
 64 more than 2022.

**Crossway Trails**  
**407 Followers**  
 on Crossway Trails page.  
 115 more than 2022.

**+1,000** posts were made between all 4 pages

# Total Followers



## New MACOG Team Members

This year MACOG hired five new staff members. Early in the year, Raj Parikh joined as the new Transportation Analyst. Dana Weaver and Olivia Nix began in early summer as a Short-Range Planner and Community Development

Planner respectively. In the fall, both Joe Pallon and Gauri Mhatre joined as Transit Planners working with the Interurban Trolley. They have all been great additions to the MACOG team.



## Years Of Service Milestone

Johnnie Woggon celebrated 25 years at MACOG! Following not far behind is Russ Ragimbekov with 20 years. James Turnwald, Executive Director, celebrated 15 years of service, and Katie Dominguez five years. Congratulations and thank you to all!

Whether it be one year or 30 years, MACOG is grateful for all of their employees and the hard work they do.

Johnnie Woggon



Russ Ragimbekov



James Turnwald



Katie Dominguez



### YEARS OF SERVICE

**2 YEARS** Amber

**2 YEARS** Ashley

**2 YEARS** David

**2 YEARS** Dustin

**2 YEARS** Kate

**3 YEARS** Molly

**5 YEARS** Katie

**6 YEARS** Leah

**7 YEARS** Matt

**7 YEARS** Jeremiah

**8 YEARS** Donny

**9 YEARS** Caitlin

**13 YEARS** Carla

**14 YEARS** Zach

**15 YEARS** James

**20 YEARS** Russ

**22 YEARS** Debbie

**22 YEARS** Greg

**25 YEARS** Johnnie



# 2023 MACOG POLICY BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Senter - Chair  
Mayor, City of Plymouth

Cary Groninger - 1st Vice-Chair  
Commissioner, Kosciusko County

David Wood - 2nd Vice-Chair  
Mayor, City of Mishawaka

Phil Jenkins - Secretary  
Mayor, City of Nappanee

Mark Root - Treasurer  
Councilman, St. Joseph County

Jesse Bohannon  
Councilman, Marshall County

Mike Burroughs  
Commissioner, Marshall County

Matt Deitchley  
Deputy District Commissioner,  
INDOT LaPorte

Dwight Fish  
Councilman, City of Elkhart

Carl Baxmeyer  
Commissioner, St. Joseph County

Douglas Graham  
Councilman, Elkhart County

Kathy Groninger  
Councilwoman, Kosciusko County

Lori Hamann  
Councilwoman, City of South Bend

Gregg Hixenbaugh  
Councilman, City of Mishawaka

Todd Johnson  
Deputy District Commissioner, INDOT  
Ft. Wayne

James Mueller  
Mayor, City of South Bend

Rod Roberson  
Mayor, City of Elkhart

Jeremy Stutsman  
Mayor, City of Goshen

Joseph Thallemer  
Mayor, City of Warsaw

Suzanne Weirick  
Commissioner, Elkhart County

## MACOG STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
James Turnwald

DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
Zach Dripps

ADMINISTRATIVE  
Carla Herwarth  
Ashley Matthews  
Russ Ragimbekov  
Katie Dominguez

ACCOUNTING  
Debbie Gardner  
Molly Chenoweth

TRANSPORTATION  
Caitlin Stevens  
Dana Weaver  
Dustin New  
Raj Parikh

ENVIRONMENTAL  
Matt Meersman  
Kate Barrett  
Leah Thill  
Amber Werner

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Donny Ritsema  
Olivia Nix

TRAFFIC DATA  
Greg Slater  
David Harker  
Donald Cornelis  
Charles Kaufman  
William Takach  
Timothy Grueger

TRANSIT  
Johnnie Woggon  
Jeremiah Cox  
Gauri Mhatre  
Joe Pallon

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