

## Frequently Asked Questions

June 2021

Here are some FAQs about the Midland Business Alliance, the MBA Advisory Committee on Infrastructure, and the planning for flood mitigation and improved resiliency.

### ***Q. When you say “infrastructure,” does that mean you plan to build bridges and roads?***

**A.** There are many kinds of infrastructure that aren’t the traditional bridges and roads we tend to think of first. When it comes to flood events, infrastructure improvements might include the development of natural wetlands and floodplains that could allow floodwater to spread out in a controlled manner. (These potentially could be used for recreation at other times.) It might be improving a county drain, for example. Or it could include ways to make communities more resilient to flooding, such as sanitary sewer system upgrades, new building designs, zoning and planning with flood mitigation in mind, and so on. The results of the flood study and expert recommendations will point us in the direction of infrastructure ideas that could make a positive difference in Midland County and the region.

### ***Q. Is this the same thing as the Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) or the City of Midland’s 2017 Storm & Sanitary Sewer Study?***

**A.** While there are several initiatives and projects underway, the MBA Advisory Committee on Infrastructure mission is broader and “covers more ground.” First, the MBA Board of Directors gave us a broad mandate to examine any infrastructure issue that impacts the quality of life and economic vitality of the Midland area. As our first task, we are focusing on reducing the frequency and severity of flooding across Midland County, building resiliency, and providing solutions to the sanitary storm water problems Midland residents have experienced all too often.

The [FLTF](#) is focused on rebuilding the dams and restoring the lakes. While we are supportive of their efforts to repair the dams, we have a different mission. However, we will benefit from the data that the FLTF engineers have already generated about the Tittabawassee River Watershed. We appreciate this data and knowledge sharing.

[Midland’s study](#) on the city’s storm and sanitary sewer situation is an ongoing project. The purpose is to reduce the risk of basement backups by improving the overall sanitary sewer collection system in the city. This “Concept 5” draft sewer improvement plan was recently approved by the Midland City Council. We are encouraged by the efforts of the City of

Midland, and we will all work together to find common solutions to the historical storm and sanitary sewer problems.

There are also many dedicated groups working to help people and businesses rebuild the communities affected by the 2020 flood. We support these heroes – individuals, businesses and organizations – who have made a difference to so many.

***Q. Why would the Midland Business Alliance be interested in getting involved with flood mitigation?***

**A.** The MBA is an organization that includes several functions, including the chamber of commerce and the economic development arm. We live and work in mid-Michigan and want to see the region get the upper hand on these unrelenting floods. Flooding hurts citizens, businesses, jobs, tourism, agriculture, property values and overall economic development. We certainly have the interest in this topic, like many others do.

We also have some unique attributes. We are able to advocate for the Great Lakes Bay Region with state and federal government officials, agencies and legislators. We can help make sure that our region is not forgotten for project funding and other resources. The volunteers who make up this advisory committee have experience in infrastructure, construction, engineering, health systems, community service, as well as local, state and national government. These committee members have networks to leverage when information and support are needed.

We also know this could be a large project that crosses not just one but many county lines. We are prepared to collaborate outside of the lines.

***Q. What does the “Tittabawassee River Watershed” mean?***

**A.** A watershed is an area of land that contains a group of rivers and streams that all drain into a specific larger body. In this case, it would be the streams, creeks and tributaries of the Pine River, Chippewa River and Tobacco River that drain into the Tittabawassee River. (In turn, the Tittabawassee flows into the Saginaw River and then the Saginaw Bay.)

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources “Tittabawassee River Assessment,” the watershed covers 2,471 square miles, including all or even small parts of the following counties: Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, Ogemaw, Osceola, Roscommon and Saginaw. The main stem of the Tittabawassee River is more than 90 miles long, with more than 600 miles of contributing tributaries. Located in the center part of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, this watershed is the fifth largest in the state.

***Q. Some of the committee members are listed as “ex officio.” What does that mean?***

**A.** Several committee members, including ones from Midland County, the City of Midland and the FLTF are described as “ex officio.” In our case, that term means that they are part of the committee in their official roles, but they are not voting members. They are recognized as critical stakeholders, with knowledge and expertise that is invaluable. In some cases, recommendations from our committee may need to be considered by their respective governmental organizations.

***Q. Are you collecting money?***

**A.** Multiple local foundations and businesses have already made donations to the Midland Business Alliance Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization. This means that we have the necessary funds should state or federal agencies require local support for certain projects.

The committee has a fiduciary role with any donations/funds, meaning that it must demonstrate the careful, responsible use of monies entrusted to the initiative. Committee expenditures follow normal budgetary protocols, with oversight from the MBA Board of Directors and the MBA President and CEO.

***Q. How long will this take?***

**A.** We are in the very earliest stages. At this time, we are discussing pre-study steps with City of Midland and Midland County officials, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal and state agencies. There will be many steps before the study, including hiring an engineering firm(s) to collaborate with the Corps of Engineers. Because government budgeting processes are involved, there will be different dates when funding “windows” open and close. We will have more information soon about when the study may begin. One thing is for sure, the study, planning, funding and execution of potential projects will be a long-term process.

***Q. Where can I get more information?***

**A.** We will share information with the local news media, and this information will be included on the advisory committee’s webpage: [www.MBAmi.org/FloodStudy](http://www.MBAmi.org/FloodStudy). Plus, you can find the Midland Business Alliance on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).