



HIGH WATER **MARK**

DECEMBER 2025

Midland Business Alliance Advisory Committee on Infrastructure

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Community Update



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Detroit District

Video Available

A video recording of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Detroit District community update on September 24 is available online. The public presentation included the Corps of Engineers progress on its flood risk management study of the Tittabawassee River Watershed in Midland County, which is still in its early stages.

After the presentation by the Corps of Engineers, the local sponsors – the County of Midland, City of Midland and Midland Business Alliance (MBA) Advisory Committee on Infrastructure – also provided their flood reduction and resiliency updates. Q&A from the audience is at the end of the video, which can be viewed [here](#).

Speakers from the Corps of Engineers were Eric

by Brad Kaye, city manager. The MBA Advisory Committee on Infrastructure's two co-chairs, Lee Ann Keller and J.W. Fisher, provided an overview of the process and continuing efforts along “two lanes” – the long-term and short- to mid-term projects. The event's emcee was Tony Stamas, MBA president and CEO.

Some of the topics covered by the local sponsors included projects to improve resiliency and reduce the impact of flooding, such as new rain and river gauges, the redesign of some county drains, snag and debris removal, Concept 5 work and other infrastructure projects to improve storm and sanitary sewer performance and reduce flooding.

Ellis, project manager for the Tittabawassee River/Midland Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study, and Michael Grazioli, hydraulic engineer. The County of Midland was represented by Joe Sova, drain commissioner, and Jenifier Boyer, emergency management coordinator. The City of Midland's flood reduction efforts were outlined

The Corps of Engineers covered the second study, expanding the investigation of the Tittabawassee River Watershed and its flooding. This multi-year General Investigation (GI) study is focused on managing flood risks to life and safety, reducing damages to property and determining the cost-benefit analysis and feasibility of potential projects.

Thank you...

...to the speakers for an informative night, to the audience's attention and questions, to Northwood University for hosting us and providing refreshments and to MCTV for also sharing the video program with the community. We hope you watch the video if you weren't able to attend.



Want more information about the flood study, flood reduction and resiliency efforts, and preparedness?

Visit the four study partners' websites below.



[Learn More](#)



[Learn More](#)



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Know Your Hazard, Learn Midland's Flood Story

***by Ryan Smith, AICP, CFM
Community Development Planner
City of Midland***

This is the first in a series of articles to help residents understand the Midland community's flood risks and responsibilities.

Flooding is not just a possibility in Midland, it is part of our history. From the Tittabawassee River to smaller creeks and drains, flooding has affected nearly every part of our community at one time or another. The historic flood of 1986 first showed many residents how vulnerable Midland could be. Later floods in 2017 and 2020 reinforced that lesson, with the Tittabawassee River inundating homes, businesses and entire neighborhoods.

Flood insurance is available to ALL property owners and renters in Midland through the National Flood Insurance Program. Because Midland has participated in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) since 1992 and holds a Class 5 rating, all policies purchased in the city receive a 25 percent premium discount. Midland was the first – and still is the only – community in Michigan to achieve a CRS Class 5 rating. This rating provides city residents with the lowest flood insurance rates in the state.

Know Your Hazard

The City Planning Department maintains flood maps, elevation certificates and flood history records. These tools allow residents to see whether their property lies in the Special Flood Hazard Area, how high floodwaters are expected to reach and whether past improvements have been documented. Knowing your risk is the foundation for preparedness.

Protect People

Floods are dangerous because they move quickly and unpredictably. The City's outdoor warning sirens, emergency alerts and media broadcasts provide warnings, but residents must be ready to act. Families should identify safe evacuation routes and designate a meeting point outside of flood-prone areas.

Protect Property

Flood damage can be reduced with proactive steps. Elevating furnaces and water heaters, sealing foundation cracks and moving valuables to higher levels all help minimize losses. The Planning and

Building Departments can provide one-on-one advice to property owners about additional retrofits, including possible grant opportunities. Drop by City Hall to have your questions answered or to schedule an on-site visit with staff certified in floodplain management.

Build Responsibly

Floodplain development permits are required for construction, grading and filling within mapped flood zones. These permits ensure new projects are built to standards that reduce damage and prevent drainage problems for neighboring properties.

Protect Natural Functions

Floodplains are not wasted land. They store excess water, filter runoff, and provide wildlife habitat. Protecting these natural systems is a community responsibility. Simple actions like keeping storm drains clear and avoiding debris dumping protect the floodplain's ability to function as nature's first line of defense.

Midland's flood history proves that we must respect the hazard. By learning our history, knowing our property's risk and taking action today, we build a safer tomorrow.

For more information, visit the City of Midland's floodplain information [page](#).



Ryan Smith serves as a Community Development Planner for the City of Midland, Michigan, where he focuses on land use, long-term planning and floodplain management. He is one of three Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs) on staff and plays a key role in coordinating the City's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Community Rating System (CRS). Beyond his work in Midland, Ryan serves as the Region 3 Representative on the Board of the Michigan Stormwater and Floodplain Association, where he works with regional and state partners to advance flood awareness, promote sustainable infrastructure planning and strengthen community resilience across mid-Michigan.

DID YOU HEAR

On Michigan Public (NPR): “Some cities are turning to natural infrastructure to deal with extreme rain events”

In March 2021, Lester Graham reported on ways Grand Rapids, Michigan, was dealing with stormwater runoff. Tactics mentioned include underground stormwater storage, permeable surfaces, green space development, rooftop gardens, wetlands and rain gardens. You can listen to the program [here](#).

TELL YOUR NEIGHBORS

The MBA Advisory Committee on Infrastructure **High Water Mark** newsletter comes out quarterly – with extra editions when there’s breaking news. The library of back issues is available at MBAmi.org/FloodStudy.

Tell your friends to sign up for the newsletter at this [Constant Contact link](#). If someone forwarded this issue to you, sign up so we can send it directly to your inbox.

Do you have suggestions for future issues?

Write to us at ACOIMBA@MBAmi.org.

The Year in Review

Highlights from late 2024 through 2025

 **October 2024**

In 2024, the Advisory Committee worked with state legislators to help secure \$40 million in grants for the City of Midland to reduce flooding and improve infrastructure. With relatively

tight deadlines on these grants, we offered to employ Spicer Group engineers to work with the City staff – analyzing a long list of project options, looking for the projects with the highest impact, identifying those that could be completed within time limits, along with other criteria. Spicer Group presented the recommendations and rankings to the Midland City Council, which approved moving forward in October 2024. At the time of this writing, multiple firms recently delivered the engineering plans and estimates for this work. The City of Midland will conduct the normal bidding processes and expects the projects to get underway at the start of the 2026 construction season.

November 2024

On November 4, the commander from the Army Corps of Engineers-Detroit District came to Midland for a “signing ceremony.” The commander and officials from the local sponsors – the County of Midland, City of Midland and the Midland Business Alliance – all signed the agreement on the “second study,” called a General Investigation (GI) study.

Later that November, the GI study was kicked off with a three-day planning meeting that included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (with experts across many disciplines), federal and state agencies, the local sponsors, and community stakeholders. In late 2024 and early 2025, the local sponsors collected and shared historical flood damage data with the Corps of Engineers. Thank you to the many businesses and organizations who helped us collect that information.

March 2025

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Detroit District held a community open house in Midland to gather input from citizens. The open house took place at Midland City Hall and included a variety of “information stations” and interactive activities to learn from residents. The local sponsors also interacted with citizens, and several conservation-environmental groups also participated (Chippewa Nature Center, Little Forks Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy and Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network).

April-June 2025

In April, the Advisory Committee went to Lansing to meet with legislators. Then in June, we testified before the Michigan House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), presenting information on the Midland area’s flood reduction efforts.

Also in June, the Corps of Engineers-Detroit District announced that it received an additional \$1.2 million in federal funding under the Fiscal Year 2025 Work Plan to continue the GI study. If you remember, the GI study’s costs are split 50/50 between the Corps and the local sponsors. This additional \$1.2 million is on the Corps’ side of the 50/50 cost-share and shows the continuing federal commitment to our study.

September 2025

The Detroit District returned to Midland for a community update on September 24. (See the

first article in this issue.)

We also launched the ***High Water Mark*** newsletter in September.

October 2025

Thanks to State Rep. Bill G. Schuette and our legislators in Lansing, a \$10 million grant for Midland's flood reduction infrastructure was included in the state budget.

We met with U.S. Senator Elissa Slotkin and her staff to tell the Midland area's story, our flood history, work with the Army Corps of Engineers and our needs in the coming years.

November 2025

We gave presentations in early November to update the Midland County Board of Commissioners and the Midland City Council.

Every Week, Every Month, We Press On

Members of the Advisory Committee meet weekly (some weeks, it's more than once). The full Advisory Committee meets monthly and includes representatives from the flood study's local sponsors. Members of the Advisory Committee, the City of Midland and the County of Midland typically meet with the Corps of Engineers every two weeks.

There are many more hours outside of these meetings, including making calls, contacting legislators, giving presentations to community organizations, gathering information and planning our next steps. This volunteer team and our local partners are committed to finding solutions to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding and to increase the community's resiliency.

It's worth it because we see real progress. And we look forward to even more progress in 2026 and beyond.

– Lee Ann Keller and J.W. Fisher,
Advisory Committee co-chairs

***Happy New Year from the MBA Advisory
Committee on Infrastructure!***

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Local foundations and businesses donated "seed money" to the Advisory Committee – and many have renewed their commitment – to support the committee's research, planning, flood studies and communication efforts. Join us in saying thank you to these generous

donors:

Charles J. Strosacker Foundation

Corteva Agriscience

Dow Company Foundation

Fisher Companies

Hemlock Semiconductor Corporation

Johnston Contracting

Midland Area Community Foundation

MyMichigan Health

Patricia and David Kepler Foundation

Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation

Three Rivers Corporation



UPCOMING EVENTS

2

DEC

Poseyville Preserve: Grand Opening

4:30 p.m.

Santa and Mrs. Claus are helping with the grand opening of Poseyville Preserve – home of Founders Crossing and the Alan W. Ott Family Pavilion. Hot cocoa and cookies, plus goody bags for the kids. Ribbon cutting

ceremony is at 4:30 p.m. on East Main Street, near Dow Diamond and the East End building. The preserve restores a riparian ecosystem along the Tittabawassee River that can absorb and filter floodwaters before they are released back into the river. The preserve includes a river overlook, fishing piers, a new pedestrian crossing over the river, pavilion area and walking and biking trails that connect with the Tridge, Main Street, Dow Diamond and Founder's Park. Learn more about Poseyville Preserve [here](#). Free.

Ecological Functions and Services of Managed Wetlands

6–7:30 p.m.

Chippewa Nature Center hosts an [Institute for Great Lakes Research](#) (IGLR) discussion of ecosystem “services” and “disservices” and how they are measured. Wetlands provide many ecosystem “services” (benefits that the environment provides for humans); however, the processes responsible can also provide “disservices” (disadvantages of a part of the environment). A part of Central Michigan University, the IGLR takes a multidisciplinary approach to understand the complex environmental issues affecting the Great Lakes basin. Faculty are experts on coastal wetlands, conservation genetics, fisheries, invasive species, limnology, aquatic population modeling, microbial ecology, landscape ecology and geographic information sciences. Learn more [here](#). Free.

— Coming in 2026 —

10
JAN

Weekend Land Maintenance Volunteer Group

10 a.m.–noon

Chippewa Nature Center volunteers meet the second Saturday of the month to maintain trails and public spaces. Activities vary and may include maintenance of planted trees, brush/trash cleanup or other stewardship projects. Learn more and register on [POINT](#). Additional date: February 14, 2026. Free.

We want the highest flood levels to be in our past ... and our highest levels of progress ahead of us.



MIDLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON INFRASTRUCTURE**

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