

Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization

Citizen Advisory Committee

Informational Packet



Transportation Plan Update Meetings
2006-2007

Citizen Advisory Committee
Transportation Plan Update

6:00 p.m.

Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization

*Tuesday, November 21, 2006
Room 318, Evansville Civic Center*

Meeting Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Committee Goals and Guidelines
- III. Overview of Transportation Planning and the Transportation Plan Update Process
- IV. Identification of Goals for the Transportation Plan
- V. Discussion of future meetings and next steps

Citizen Advisory Committee Members

Barbara Dicken
Bill Pedtke
Christopher Cooke
Dan Armstrong
Darlene Wefel
Doug Briody
Fred Padget
James Morley
Janet James
Jim Daniels
John Wolk
Julie Martin
Linda Cleek

Lisa Emory
Marcia Learned-Au
Martin Rowland
Mick Conati
Mike O'Daniel
Nibby Priest
Nino Cochiarella
Rick Barter
Russ Woosley
Shawn Hayden
Shirley James
Susan Harp

Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization Staff

Brad Mills.....	Executive Director
Seyed Shokouhzadeh.....	Deputy Director, Chief Planner
Craig Luebke.....	Transportation Planner
Laura Lamb.....	Transportation Planner
Erik Llewellyn.....	Transportation Planner
Vishu Lingala.....	Transportation Planner
Dave Stensaas.....	Transportation Planner
Kari Akin.....	Accountant, Grants Manager

Goals and Guidelines for the Citizen Advisory Committee

The Evansville MPO looks to the following **goals** for the Citizen Advisory Committee:

1. Provide a forum for area citizens to discuss their ideas regarding transportation issues with local officials and other concerned citizens.
2. Enhance the update process for the Long Range Transportation Plan by examining the direction of our local and regional transportation system and to have citizens make recommendations to aid in the formation of a future system that is safe, efficient, equitable, and financially feasible.
3. Foster a better public understanding of the transportation planning process and increase opportunities for citizens to participate in the process.

Questions/Comments?

The following **guidelines** are established to achieve positive results from the work of the Citizen Advisory Committee:

1. Each meeting will have a set format and schedule, with designated opportunities for CAC members to ask questions, comment, and discuss topics.
2. All CAC members have the right to be heard, which will be respected by the MPO staff and all CAC members.
3. In seeking consensus on issues that are being discussed, the majority opinion will prevail when selecting among alternatives.

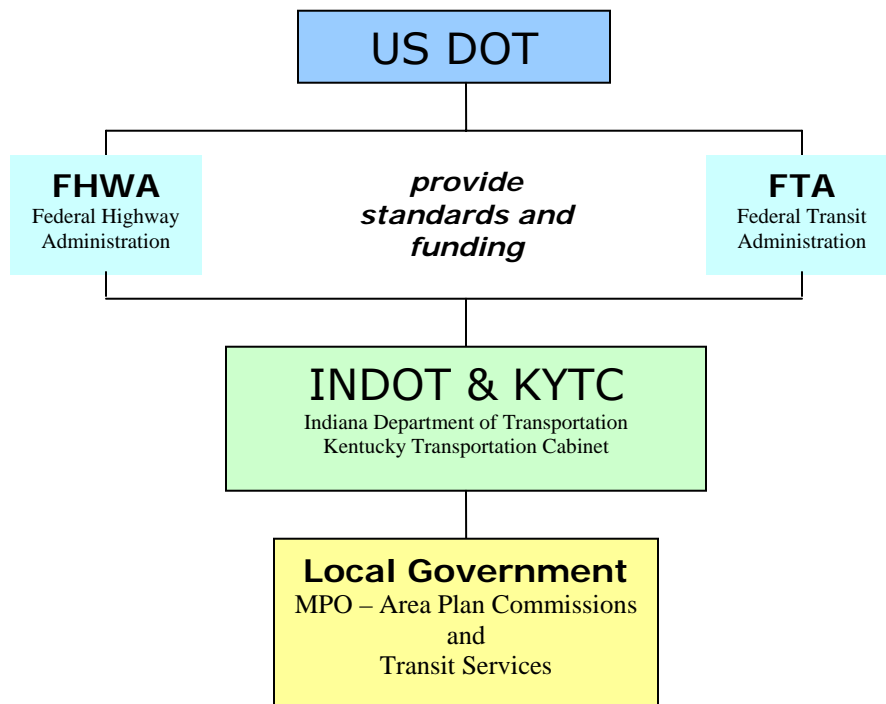
Questions/Comments?

Transportation Planning Overview

Transportation Planning is a process of identifying problems and opportunities in transportation and developing alternative solutions that can be implemented by decision makers. Transportation professionals place a high priority on getting you to and from your destinations safely and on time. They are also committed to preserving our communities, forests, and farms, and keeping our air and water clean.

Transportation decision-making attempts to solve current transportation problems while avoiding future problems. Transportation Planners try to figure out how to get you to and from your destination safely and on time not only today, but also 5, 10, and even 20 years from now. To give you the best transportation choices, transportation planners work with many different public and private groups that provide housing, schools, parks, and jobs.

The Government and Transportation Decision-making:



A metropolitan planning organization, or MPO, is the public organization with responsibility for developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of 50,000 or more in population. MPOs are established by agreement of the Governor and local governments within an urbanized area. The Evansville MPO is the designated MPO for the Evansville–Henderson Urbanized Area.

The role of MPOs is to provide short and long-term solutions to transportation and related concerns at the metropolitan/regional scale. A policy board, which is comprised of local elected officials and other government representatives, including federal and state transportation officials, sets the MPO's policies. A technical advisory board comprised of community representatives and professional staff from various departments of local public agencies helps the MPO to accomplish its technical tasks.

The role of the MPO in transportation planning:

- Creation of a regional Long Range Transportation Plan
- Development and maintenance of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and TIP report
- Helping to develop transportation enhancements (e.g. greenways)
- Other activities to efficiently utilize roadway space

What exactly does EMPO do?

Monitor and Plan for:

Highway Projects: Including construction of new roads and bridges, improvements to existing road and bridges, and some types of maintenance at the state, county and municipal level.

Public Transit Projects: EMPO works to secure federal grants for and provide planning aid to both METS (Metropolitan Evansville Transit System) and HART (Henderson Area Rapid Transit).

Pedestrian/Bicycle Projects: Including seeking funding for greenway projects and helping to develop safe bicycle routes on area roads.

Air Quality and CMAQ Projects: Since ozone levels are a problem in Vanderburgh County, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects are sought to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion.

Railroad Crossings and Activities: EMPO monitors area rail crossing and railroad activities.

Traffic Monitoring and Studies: EMPO monitors area traffic conditions and uses that information to analyze and develop possible improvements in the transportation system.

Various Other Studies: Including areas such as efficient freight movement, site/subdivision/rezoning reviews and environmental assessments, etc.

State Departments of Transportation are the largest units of government that develop transportation plans and projects. They are responsible for setting the transportation goals for the state (e.g. State Transportation Improvement Program; State Highway Safety Plan). To do so, they work with all of the state's transportation organizations and local governments. They are responsible for planning safe and efficient transportation between cities and states. The Evansville MPO works with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) in its planning activities.

The Federal Government (US DOT) oversees the transportation planning and project activities of the MPOs and state DOTs. The US DOT also provides training, research products, and advice on a variety of transportation topics. The Federal Government supplies much of the funding needed for transportation planning and projects. At least every two years, the Federal Government approves a program of projects submitted by State DOTs that includes projects proposed for federal funds.

The MPO is directed by two types of federal legislation in its planning activities.

- One type is federal surface transportation legislation. The 2035 Transportation Plan is being developed in accordance with the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)*.
- The second piece of significant legislation for the MPO's regional planning activities is the *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA)*. While *SAFETEA-LU* provides the funding and flexibility to make transportation improvements, the *CAAA* ties transportation improvements to air quality.

Local governments carry out many transportation planning functions, such as scheduling improvements and maintenance for local streets and roads. METS (Evansville-Vanderburgh County) and HART (Henderson) transit systems are both operated by city departments as well.

Fact: Although the Federal Government and the State DOTs spend billions of dollars annually for transportation, which represents only about 10 percent of transportation investments. Roughly 90 percent of transportation investment decisions are made by the private sector.

☞ Your role in the Planning Process ☞

Without your ideas, and those of the public at large, state and local governments cannot have a true understanding of our community needs. Transportation officials alone cannot get all the needed information. You may know information that is more current or detailed than is available to transportation professionals. You may also have a unique perspective that makes it important for you to be involved. You certainly have opinions that should be considered by planners and decision makers.

As a member of the Evansville MPO Citizen Advisory Committee you have an important role in helping to shape the policy framework of the Long Range Transportation Plan. You will be doing this through helping the MPO staff to set goals and objectives for the Plan, and by reviewing and commenting on alternative methods to prioritize transportation projects. And you will be asked to suggest additions or changes to the program of transportation projects that will be included in the Plan. You will also review and comment on the Draft Transportation Plan prior to it being reviewed by the MPO Technical and Policy Committees.

The Long Range Transportation Plan and the TIP

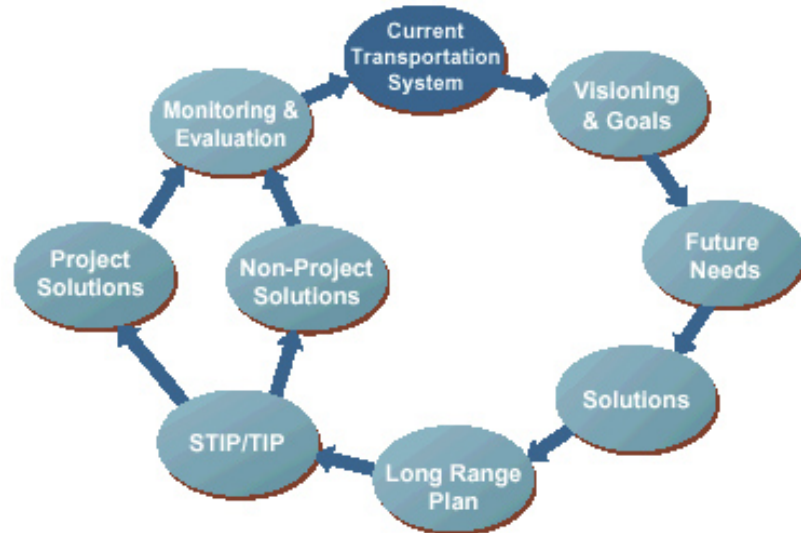
In accordance with federal requirements, the MPO planning process involves the development of a transportation plan and an annual transportation improvement program (TIP) report. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly require that every urbanized area, as a condition to the receipt of federal transportation funding, have a transportation planning process that results in a transportation plan consistent with the planned development for the area.

The transportation plan analyzes the current and future transportation needs and provides long-range plans/solutions for the urbanized area. The TIP must specify federally funded transportation projects to be implemented during the next four year period based upon realistic estimates of available revenues, and identify the costs, funding sources, and implementation schedules associated with each transportation project. Furthermore, projects included for funding in the TIP must be consistent with the adopted transportation plan.

Plan Content

The Long Range Transportation Plan for the Evansville–Henderson urbanized area contains both policy and project recommendations, and details of projects that have been selected for inclusion in the Plan.

The Planning process:



This figure demonstrates the fundamental steps in creating a long-range transportation plan, starting with an examination of the current transportation system. From there we look to goals and future needs to create alternative solutions for our transportation system.

Planning Factors

SAFETEA-LU mandates the incorporation of eight Planning Factors into the metropolitan transportation planning process, and requires that the constrained long-range plan address these eight Planning Factors:

1. Support the economic vitality of the United States, the States, and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the State, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Air Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six criteria of air pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), ozone (O₃), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), particulate matter (PM), and lead (Pb). Areas that exceed any of the NAAQS are designated as "non-attainment" areas, classified according to the severity of air quality problems.

Vanderburgh County was previously classified as being in "marginal ozone non-attainment," but in 2005 was re-classified as a "maintenance" area for ozone. Warrick County was also classified as a "maintenance" area for ozone in 2005. Ozone is a colorless gas which occurs naturally in the upper atmosphere, where it acts as a protectant by filtering the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. When formed at lower altitudes, however, ozone is a noxious pollutant that can break down body tissue in humans and contributes to a number of pulmonary diseases.

Ozone is formed in the lower atmosphere from constant reactions between Oxygen (O₂), Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), and volatile organic compounds/hydrocarbons which are fueled by sunlight. Motor vehicles are a primary source of the compounds that act as the precursors to ozone formation, particularly hydrocarbon, which is a by-product of gasoline combustion. Ozone levels are highest in the summer, when weather is warmest, sunlight most intense, and traffic levels highest.

Also in 2005, Vanderburgh County, Warrick County, and Montgomery Township in Gibson County, were designated as being in non-attainment for particulate matter under 2.5 microns in diameter (PM 2.5). Particulate matter is a mixture of solid particles and liquids found in the air. These particles come in a wide range of sizes and can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time. PM 2.5 results from fuel combustion by motor vehicles and other sources, as well as the transformation of gaseous emissions such as SO₂, NO_x, and VOC. Particulate matter irritates the membranes of the respiratory system, causing disease, decreased lung function, alterations of the body's defense systems, and premature mortality. Sensitive groups include the elderly, children, and individuals with pulmonary diseases such as asthma.

Current and Future Transportation Needs

The current state of the transportation system can be described in qualitative and quantitative terms. At present, the MPO can measure automotive travel on road segments with automated traffic counters, and we perform manual intersection studies. We use that information to determine, in part, what our planning objectives should be. The MPO has also distributed an informal opinion survey (questionnaire) to attempt to understand how local residents perceive various aspects of the transportation network. The results of that survey can help us to understand where the public would most like to see changes in the

transportation system, which can lead to policy recommendations in the Transportation Plan.

Data: One of the key quantitative measures that we use to gauge our current and future transportation system needs are demographic trends. Census data is the main source of data that is used to project population and employment trends throughout the timeframe of the Plan. Other socio-economic factors are considered as well, including *household size* and *vehicles per household*, and these are used to create models of what the transportation network will look like at different years in the future. A figure showing the projected population and employment figures for the MPO's planning counties is included on the following page.

Transportation questionnaire: EMPO posted an informal opinion survey on our website beginning in August, 2006, and distributed this survey at the Civic Center in Evansville during recent months. Also, this original version of the survey is linked to the United Neighborhoods of Evansville's website. Survey respondents were asked to rate 12 items pertaining to the current transportation system and 10 strategies to improve upon the current transportation system; and to rank 9 items regarding the local quality of life. Finally, respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the transportation system.

117 surveys have been included in this table, 18 of those being completed by individuals who indicated that they did not have regular access to a personal motor vehicle for typical travel. The preliminary results of this survey are shown in a table on a following page. A short-form of this survey has been created and is currently being advertised on our website as well as the website of *Downtown Henderson*, and is currently in print distribution in Evansville. The short-form was also taken to two area grocery stores to solicit personal responses. S

Funding the Transportation Plan

Federal-aid highway funds are authorized by Congress to assist the States in providing for construction, reconstruction, and improvement of highways and bridges on eligible federal-aid highway routes. Funding categories which are defined through legislation and fund the *2035 Transportation Plan* projects include: Interstate Maintenance, National Highway System (NHS), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Bridge Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Enhancement (TE).

With few exceptions, the federal government does not pay for the entire cost of construction or improvement. Federal funds are normally "matched" with state and/ or local government funds to account for the necessary dollars to complete the project. The maximum federal share is specified in the legislation authorizing the program. Additional information on funding projects in the EMPO Study Area is available in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Some Commonly Used Transportation Terms and Acronyms

Access, Accessibility

The opportunity to reach a given destination within a certain time frame or without being impeded by physical or economic barriers. Also, the ability of vehicles or facilities to accommodate people with disabilities.

Arterial

A class of street serving major traffic movement that is not designated as a highway. There are principle and minor arterials which are designed to primarily provide mobility and are a higher class than local or collector streets which are designed to primarily provide access.

Attainment Area – An area considered to have air quality at least as good as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health standards established in the Clean Air Act.

Non-Attainment Area – An area considered not to have met these standards for designated pollutants. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a non-attainment area for others.

Conformity – Process to assess the compliance of any transportation plan, program, or project with air quality control plans. The conformity process is defined by the Clean Air Act.

Enhancement Activities – Activities conducted which enhance the transportation system. Examples of such activities include provision of facilities for pedestrians or cyclists, landscaping or other scenic beautification projects, historic preservation, control and removal of outdoor advertising, archeological planning and research, and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff.

Federal Aid Highways – Those highways eligible for federal assistance under Title 23 U.S.C., except those functionally classified as local or rural minor collectors.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation which funds highway planning and programs.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) - Agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation which funds transit planning and programs.

Indiana Department Of Transportation (INDOT) - The principal Indiana state funding agency for transportation planning, facilities and programs. INDOT is responsible for administering certain types of federal funds.

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) – The principal Kentucky state funding agency for transportation planning, facilities and programs. KYTC is responsible for administering certain types of federal funds.

Mobility

The ease with which desired destinations can be reached. Greater mobility usually means higher speeds and less accessibility.

Mode

The method used for personal travel or the movement of goods on a particular trip. Modes include automobile, bus, commuter rail, bicycle, walking, rail freight and trucking.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) – Limits established by the U.S. EPA for a pollutant in ambient, or outside, air that are the target in local air quality improvement or protection programs.

Ozone – Ozone is created in the lower atmosphere when hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides from vehicular exhausts and certain industrial emissions react in the presence of strong sunlight. Reduction of ozone produced by “mobile source emissions” (motor vehicles) is a major objective of the Vanderburgh County air quality plan. There is a layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere that shields the earth from harmful ultra-violet radiation.

Right-of-Way – The land (usually a strip) acquired for or devoted to roadway transportation purposes.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – Authorization act, signed in 2005, which funds Federal surface transportation programs for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

State Implementation Plan (SIP) – Documents prepared by the state and submitted to EPA for approval. SIP’s identify state actions and programs to implement designated responsibilities under the Clean Air Act.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – a work plan which must be developed at both the state and metropolitan levels. The TIP is a short-range program which must cover a minimum of four years. Projects listed in the TIP address goals of the Transportation Plan and lists priority projects and activities for the program area. If not included in a TIP, a project cannot receive federal or state funding assistance. The TIP provides the transportation projects that a public agency can reasonably expect to implement in a given time period with the federal funds available.

Urbanized Area – Area with a population of more than 50,000 meeting U.S. Census Bureau density standards. Includes a central city (Evansville) and surrounding areas (Vanderburgh and portions of Warrick, Henderson and Posey Counties) meeting set size or density criteria.

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) – The principal federal funding agency for transportation planning, facilities and programs. Includes the FHWA, FTA, Federal Aviation Administration, and Federal Rail Administration.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) – Federal agency responsible for issuing and enforcing air quality and emissions regulations and approving state implementation plans (SIP, see below). The EPA is also responsible for regulating water pollution, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, solid waste disposal, pesticides, radiation and noise pollution.

Please visit the EMPO website for a more comprehensive guide to transportation planning terminology, a document entitled *Transportation Talk* is available for download there. <http://www.evansvillempo.com/home.htm>