

the Evansville MPO *Express*

Transportation Planning Updates for Henderson, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties

Regional Impacts of the New Infrastructure Bill

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, provides many new opportunities for local public agencies (LPA) to improve transportation. The bill provides \$550 billion in new spending on the nation's infrastructure over the next five years. The IIJA represents the largest amount ever spent by the federal government to help communities prepare for and mitigate damage from extreme events that are projected to become more common due to climate change. A few of the programs that can impact the MPO region include the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) and the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program.



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Evansville MPO



Henderson • Vanderburgh • Warrick

The Carbon Reduction Program is a new funding source targeting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The goal of the program is to fund a wide range of projects designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from on-road highway sources, including installation of infrastructure to support the electrification of freight vehicles or personal cars, to constructing Bus Rapid Transit corridors, to facilitating micro-mobility and biking. The CRP is a formula program which means funds are apportioned to the MPO urban area annually by formula calculations set out in the IIJA.

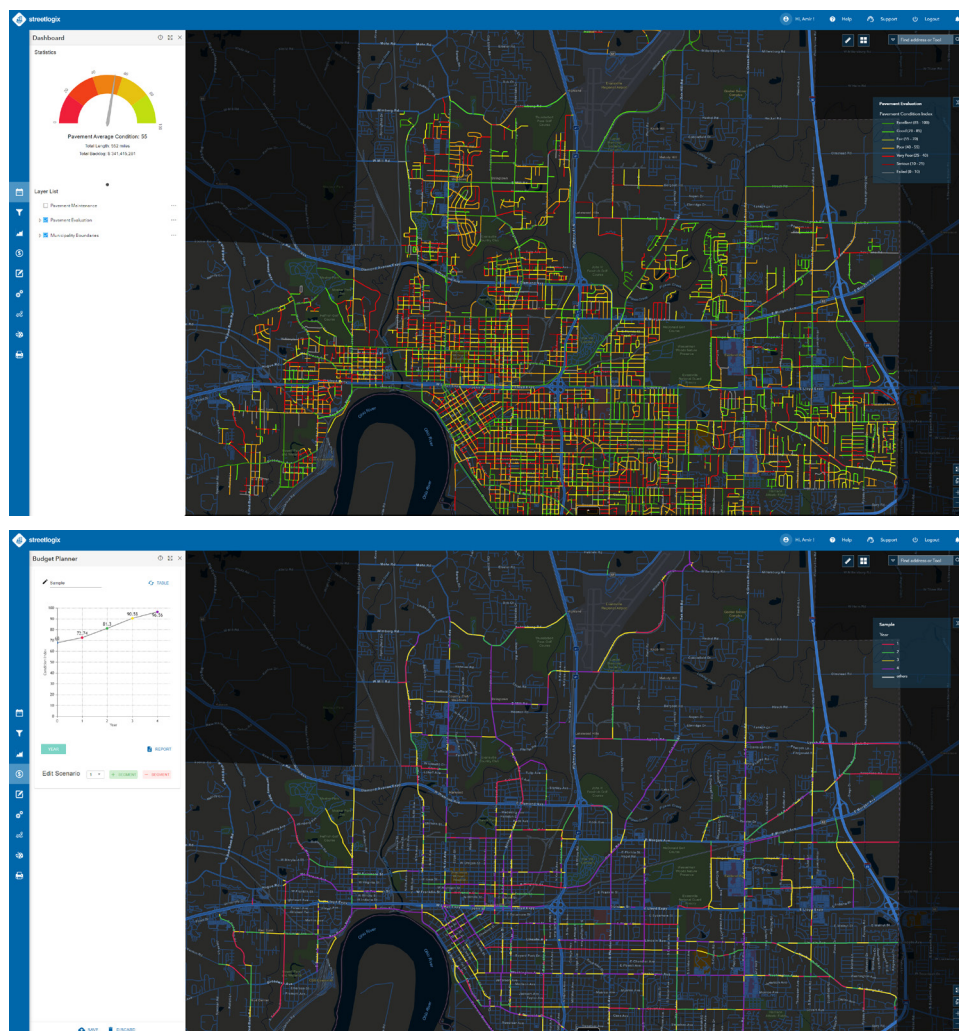
With bridges throughout the United States in need of repair or replacement, the Bridge Investment Program aims to provide funding for a dedicated grant program to replace and repair bridges and culverts. The program will set aside more than

\$12 billion in funding over the next four years, with the goal to support projects to improve bridge and culvert condition, safety, efficiency, and reliability.

The SS4A discretionary program will provide \$5-6 billion in grants over the next five years. Funding supports regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program supports the Department's National Roadway Safety Strategy and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways. The main objective of the SS4A grant is to improve roadway safety by supporting communities in developing comprehensive safety action plans, and implementing projects and strategies that reduce transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries as identified in the action plans.

MPO & LPAs Transition to New Pavement Management Platform Software

Starting in July, the Evansville MPO will be using a new pavement management platform - Streetlogix. Streetlogix is a web-based system that allows for more customized reporting and easy access to data for the MPO and Local Public Agencies (LPA) within a user-friendly GIS environment. The platform will allow the MPO and LPAs to work cooperatively on the same pavement asset database, making the interaction between agencies more seamless. The ESRI integration also allows the MPO and/or LPAs to add multiple layers of data, layers like traffic counts, crash data and environmental justice layers, to better identify locations in need of pavement maintenance or repair. Most importantly, the software is capable of quickly creating maintenance plans enabling the LPA to run and review different scenarios as they work to optimize capital improvement program budgets. This transition to Streetlogix will promote more frequent involvement in the regional pavement management system from all agencies.



Upcoming Funding Opportunities for Roadways and Transit

July - FHWA

In July, the Evansville MPO will distribute a Call for Projects to Local Public Agencies (LPAs) in the Indiana and Kentucky Urbanized Area for federal funding. Funds awarded will cover construction for fiscal years 2025 and beyond for Kentucky and fiscal years 2028 and beyond for Indiana. Once distributed, LPAs can submit projects that are eligible for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, Transportation Alternative funds, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds, and the new Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). Applications will be due sometime in July with an anticipated announcement of awards in September.

September - FTA

In September, the Evansville MPO will distribute a Call for Projects to non-profit organizations for FTA Section 5310 Funding. Section 5310 funding can be used to support transportation projects for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The funding must first go toward the acquisition of vans and buses. Any remaining funding allocated to the MPO can be used for operating assistance by the non-profit agencies. Applications will be due in September, with awards being announced in October.

MTP and TIP Updates

Earlier this spring, the Evansville MPO began updating the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to a target year of 2050 to replace the MTP 2045. In June, a public survey was conducted to gather insights regarding the type of transportation projects the public was most interested in seeing in the community. Through numerous outreach efforts, the Evansville MPO was able to reach 424 people that provided their input through the survey process. The top-three overall transportation priorities are improvements to roadways, pedestrian facilities, and greenways.

For every MTP update, the MPO brings together a group of individuals with diverse interests and backgrounds from the three-county area to form the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC gathers several times throughout the planning process to help guide and inform the plan. The next step in the MTP update is to form this committee to begin developing the Plan's Vision, Goals and Objectives based on the public survey results. Later, meetings with Local Public Agencies (LPAs), the CAC and public will help determine specific projects to be included in the plan.

Along with the MTP 2050, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be updated to fiscal years 2024-2028. The TIP identifies funding for transportation projects over the immediate short-term of five years. After these documents are complete, projects from the MTP 2050 will be moved into the 2024-2028 TIP once funding is available and they are actively under development.

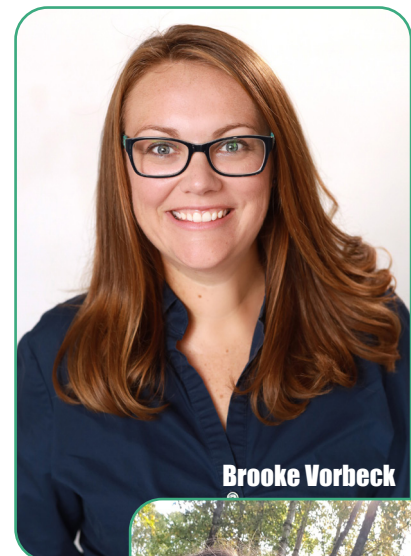
New Faces at the EMPO!

The Evansville MPO is excited to introduce two new faces in the office!

Brooke Vorbeck started full-time with the Evansville MPO as an Environmental Scientist on July 1. She's from Henderson, Kentucky and has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering Technology from Murray State University. Brooke comes to the EMPO from the private sector where she worked as an Environmental Scientist completing tasks such as NEPA environmental documentation, gathering and analyzing environmental data, environmental site assessments, and mitigation monitoring and reporting. She also managed hazardous materials/hazardous waste compliance. She is a NREP (National Registered Environmental Professionals) Registered Environmental Manager. At the MPO, Brooke is working on incorporating more environmental considerations into the transportation planning process

focusing on sustainability and resiliency. Brooke loves spending her free time at the ball fields supporting her nieces and nephew.

Nicole Chandler is working this summer for the Evansville MPO as an intern through the IU McKinney Climate Fellowship program. She was born and raised in Evansville, IN. After graduating from F.J. Reitz High School, she went to school in South Carolina and earned her Bachelor's degree in Marine Science. After working various jobs including The Coastal Carolina University Marine Science lab manager, a fisheries observer in Alaska, and a Microbiology lab tech at Mead Johnson, she decided to go back to school. She is now enrolled at IU pursuing two graduate degrees in Environmental Science and Public Affairs. This summer, Nicole is researching sustainability and resiliency in EMPO documents, practices, and regulations. In her spare time Nicole likes to read, hike, roller-skate, and swim.



Brooke Vorbeck



Nicole Chandler

Innovating Red Flag Investigations

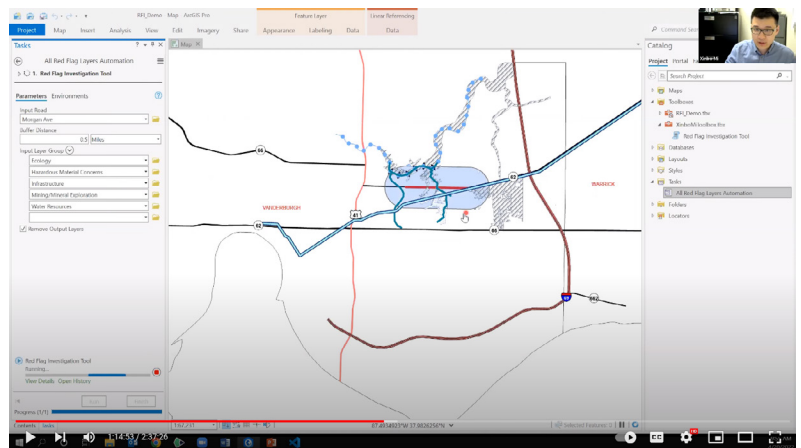
The Evansville MPO has developed a tool to automate the red flag investigation process, which provides a general overview of the environmental condition of a project area, highlights areas that may need additional environmental work or coordination, and identifies areas that may need to be avoided to minimize impacts to areas like Superfund sites and/or wetland mitigation sites.

Before, red flag investigations would require a manual tabulation of multiple GIS data layers and could become time-consuming.

This new tool, based on ArcGIS Pro, automates the whole process using Python programming. With this new tool, the user only needs to draw a line in the map representing where the project is and hit "run". The tool will automatically take care of the rest and generate PDF reports for all red flag layers, with customized file name, customized report title, map frame containing the relevant information, and legends with the number of features considered for each red flag category.

This new tool was presented at the 2022 Kentucky Statewide Transportation Planning Meeting. If you are interested in knowing more about this tool or have questions, please contact Xinbo Mi at xmi@evansvillempo.com.

```
135 # This is used to execute code if the file was run but not imported
136 if __name__ == '__main__':
137
138     # Setting: Allow geoprocessing tools to overwrite existing datasets
139     arcpy.env.overwriteOutput = True
140
141     # Tool parameter accessed with GetParameter or GetParameterAsText
142     input_feature = arcpy.GetParameter(0)
143     input_feature_name = input_feature.name
144     buffer_distance = arcpy.GetParameterAsText(1)
145     input_group_multi = arcpy.GetParameter(2)
146     clean_map = arcpy.GetParameter(3)
147
148     # Remove output layers if there are multiple input layer groups, even though us
149     if len(input_group_multi) > 1:
150         clean_map = True
151
152     # Define the current project, map, layout and main folder
153     aprx = arcpy.mp.ArcGISProject("Current")
154     m = aprx.listMaps()[0]
155     lyt = aprx.listLayouts()[0]
156     project_path = aprx.filePath
157     main_folder = os.path.dirname(project_path)
```



McKinney Climate Fellows Program

The McKinney Climate Fellows, a workforce development program administered by IU's Environmental Resilience Institute, places undergraduate and graduate students with Indiana communities, local businesses, and nonprofits to provide solutions-based sustainability and environmental expertise. The initiative, which was recently expanded by a \$1.25 million grant from the McKinney Family Foundation, helps prepare students for a future in green careers while also providing meaningful assistance to organizations looking to advance sustainability goals. This year, the 39 McKinney Climate Fellows placements include seventeen nonprofit organizations, thirteen local governments, and eight private corporations. A record number of partners for the program, the list includes Cummins, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the Indiana

Forest Alliance, as well as the cities of Indianapolis, Bloomington, Fort Wayne, and Evansville among several others.

While here, Nicole Chandler, the Evansville MPO's 2022 McKinney Climate Fellow, will be responsible for taking a lead role in interpreting sustainability and resiliency regulations and guidelines for the MPO. Duties performed also include interacting with government and non-governmental agencies, assisting in the development of a resiliency and sustainability approach for the MPO planning documents, completing a vulnerability assessment to the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and summarizing climate related risks.

Section 5310 Program Management Plan & Coordinated Plan Updates

The Evansville MPO has updated their Section 5310 Program Management Plan and is in the process of updating the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan. These plans are required and must be periodically updated in order for the MPO to remain eligible for funding through the FTA Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with a Disability grant program. The MPO uses these funds to help non-profits, METS, and HART provide transportation options for transit-dependent populations beyond the fixed route systems.

The updated Section 5310 Program Management Plan (PMP) was approved by the MPO Policy Committee on May 12, 2022. The PMP identifies the policies and procedures that the MPO follows to administer the Section 5310 grant program. It also identifies the requirements that the transportation providers must follow in order for them to continue to be eligible for this funding through the MPO.

The 2018-2021 Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan is currently in the process of being updated to 2022-2025, with approval by the MPO Policy Board anticipated later this year. The Coordinated Plan identifies the transportation providers that currently offer transportation for seniors and individuals with a disability in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Henderson counties. Through two public surveys and discussions with human services agencies and the transportation providers, a list of the barriers, gaps, and needs will be developed. This will ultimately be

used to determine recommendations for improving transportation access for seniors and individuals with a disability. A list of the funding needs for each transportation provider over the next four years will be included, which will help in the distribution of Section 5310 funds moving forward.



HART has a new Superintendent

After almost 28 years working at Henderson Area Rapid Transit (HART), Brenda Wethington made the decision to retire on October 31, 2021. Brenda held several positions over her 28 years, including Bus Operator, Transit Supervisor, Acting Director, and Superintendent. We thank Brenda for her years of dedication and wish her the best in retirement.

Upon Brenda's retirement, Crystal Windhaus was chosen to be the acting interim Superintendent. After four and a half months, Crystal's interim title was removed and she officially became the new Superintendent for HART. Crystal has been driving buses since 2010 when she was a school bus operator for the local school system. In 2016 she began working

as a Bus Operator for HART. She's always enjoyed watching the sun come up in the morning and set in the evening on her routes. She also has a passion for helping riders and listening to their stories, no matter if they were the school children or adults. Crystal has spent her entire life in Henderson and is looking forward to continuing to improve HART's system to benefit the community.

