

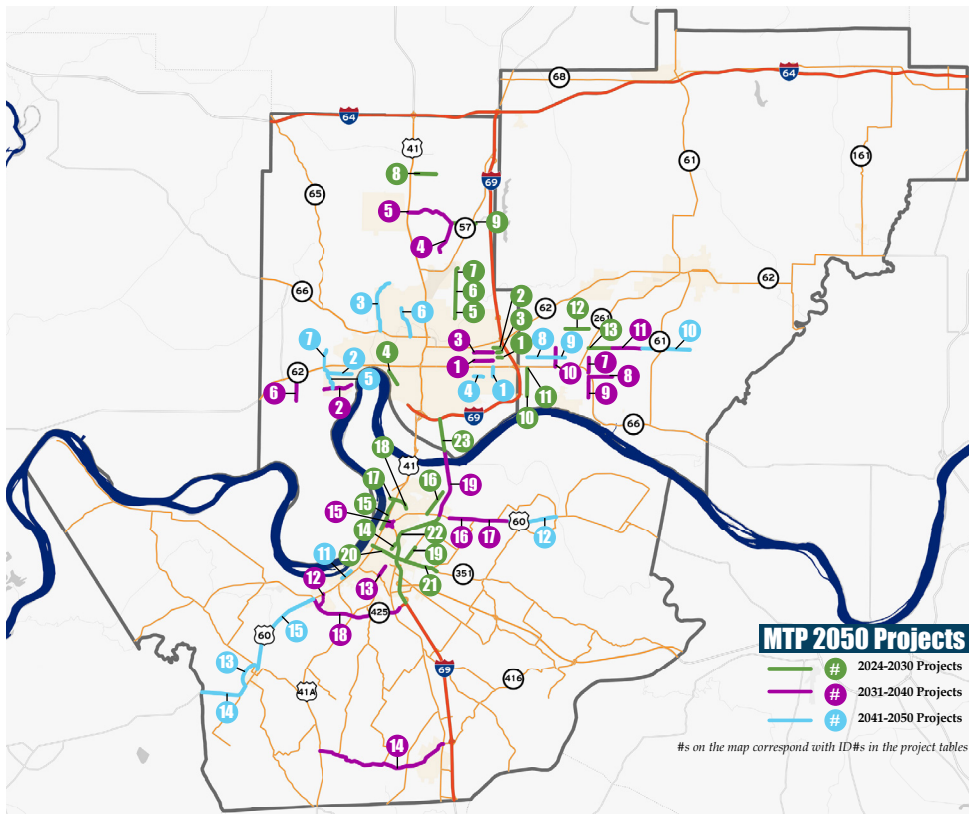
# the Evansville MPO *Express*

Transportation Planning Updates for Vanderburgh, Warrick and Henderson counties

## The Evansville MPO Has A New MTP and TIP

In early 2022, the Evansville MPO began updating the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to a target year of 2050 to replace the MTP 2045. The planning process began with an online public survey that allowed participants to select their top three overall transportation priorities, as well as their top priorities for roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. In all, 424 responses were collected.

For every MTP update, the MPO brings together a group of individuals with diverse interests and backgrounds from the three-county planning area to form the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC met throughout the planning process to help guide the development of the MTP 2050.



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Evansville MPO



Henderson • Vanderburgh • Warrick

The MTP 2050 includes 57 roadway projects estimated to be in the range of \$539-\$704 million. Projects were selected based on public input, review of the MTP 2045 and other locally developed plans, existing conditions and trends, LPA conversations and needs, and review by the CAC.

Along with the MTP 2050 update, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was updated to fiscal years 2024-2028. The TIP identifies funding for transportation projects over the immediate short-term of five years. Public involvement opportunities for the TIP were held together with the MTP. Projects from

the MTP 2050 will be moved into the 2024-2028 TIP once funding is available and the projects are actively under development.

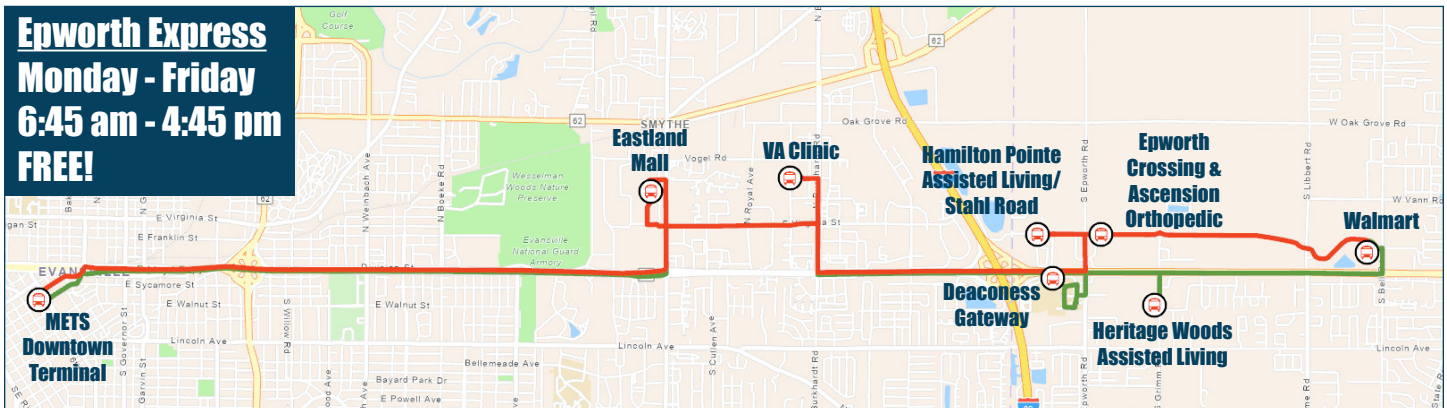
The Evansville MPO Policy Committee approved both the MTP 2050 and 2024-2028 TIP on March 9, 2023. The FHWA reviewed and determined that the documents are in compliance for Conformity standards.

# Epworth Express Adds a Free Transit Option

Missing Pieces Community Development Corporation (CDC) began operations of Epworth Express in October 2022 as a way to increase transit options, with a focus on seniors and individuals with a disability. The ten-hour daily route connects residents to multiple healthcare options, pharmacies, food, and jobs. It's the only route in the region that connects downtown Evansville directly to multiple destinations in the Newburgh area.

Missing Pieces utilizes a 14-passenger, wheelchair accessible bus to run on the Epworth Express route. The route starts at METS' downtown terminal at 6:45 am every morning, Monday through Friday. The midpoint of each one and half hour trip is the Newburgh Walmart, approximately 45 minutes after it departs downtown, before heading back. The route ends the day at 4:45 pm at the downtown terminal. Epworth Express does

not operate between 12:45 pm and 1:45 pm each day for cleaning and sanitation of the vehicle. Missing Pieces does not charge for this service and provides an opportunity for riders to connect with METS and WATS routes for additional destinations in Evansville and Warrick County.



## 2023-2027 Coordinated Plan Update

After a yearlong process that started early in 2022, the MPO has completed an update to the region's Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan. Often referred to as simply the Coordinated Plan, it is a requirement of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in order for the region to continue to be eligible for Section 5310 funding. Section 5310 funding can be used by METS, HART, and area non-profit organizations for projects that improve transportation options for seniors and individuals with a disability.

The 2023-2027 Coordinated Plan includes updated demographic data, new information about the region's transportation providers, and recommendations and implementation strategies to

improve transportation options for seniors and individuals with a disability through 2027. Two public surveys, meetings with the Regional Transit Advisory Committee, one-on-one discussions with previous Section 5310 recipients, and two public open houses helped the MPO develop the plan and ensured that those most in need of transportation options were included in the planning process.

The implementation chapter of the Coordinated Plan includes recommendations for METS, HART, and area non-profits to implement over the next five years to help improve transportation options for seniors and individuals with a disability. It also includes an implementation table that the MPO can use as a starting point for future Section 5310 applications through

2027. The table includes between three and seven vehicle acquisitions each year and operating assistance to expand transportation options.

The 2023-2027 Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan can be found on the Evansville MPO website on the Publications & Links page under the Multi-Modal tab: <http://www.evansvillempo.com/Links.html>.



# Community Crossings Matching Grant Updates



The Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) program is an INDOT-led initiative aimed at providing funding for local road and bridge projects. The program was introduced in 2016 with the goal of improving roadway networks throughout the state and ensuring the safety and efficiency of local roads. It provides matching funds to local governments for eligible infrastructure projects.

The program has had a significant impact on communities throughout Indiana and has enabled the completion of essential roadway projects that would normally face funding constraints. The impact of the CCMG program can be seen throughout the Evansville MPO area. It enables Local Public Agencies (LPAs) to address infrastructure needs such as road resurfacing and bridge rehabilitation.

To maximize the benefits of the Community Crossings program, the LPAs in the Evansville MPO region have been proactive in identifying

and prioritizing roadway projects that their respective communities need. Warrick County has been a beneficiary of the CCMG program since it began. According to Bobby Howard P.E., Warrick County Engineer, "Since its inception in 2016 we have been awarded over \$6.1 million dollars. We are able to improve an additional 50 miles of roadway with these funds. Without these funds, Warrick County's roadway network would be deteriorating faster than it could be improved. I believe this program has greatly benefited Warrick County and the communities within that have utilized this funding."

Warrick County, including the cities and towns, has received just under \$14.8 million dollars since 2016. More recently Warrick County received \$2.9 million dollars in the first call for Projects of 2023.

The City of Evansville has also been a recipient of CCMG funds, receiving just shy of \$500,000 for

the first call of 2023, and around \$5.3 million dollars since the beginning of the program. These funds have aided the city in major roadway updates, according to the City Engineer, Mike Labitzke P.E. "The CCMG funds allow the City of Evansville to expand the level of roadway quality to its residents. Focusing on Arterial and Collector roads provides the best benefit cost to Evansville and its quality of transportation network. Over 33% more roadway lane miles have been completed on our network because of the CCMG program."

The CCMG program continues to support local infrastructure maintenance in the Evansville MPO area and throughout Indiana. In the most recent call, the LPAs within the MPO area were granted approximately \$4 million, marking the highest total received from a single call. Moreover, the rural LPAs supported by the MPO, which includes Gibson and Posey Counties, were awarded an amount of \$3.6 million.



# Safety Action Plans - A Step Towards Zero Deaths

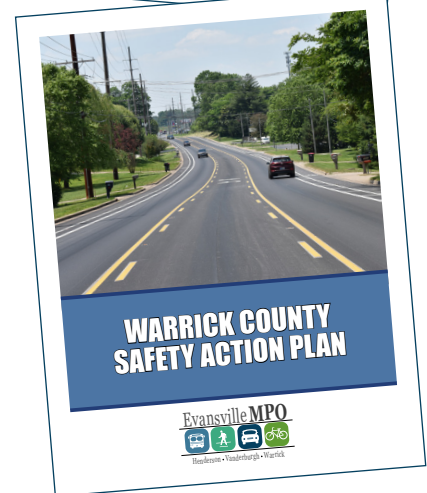
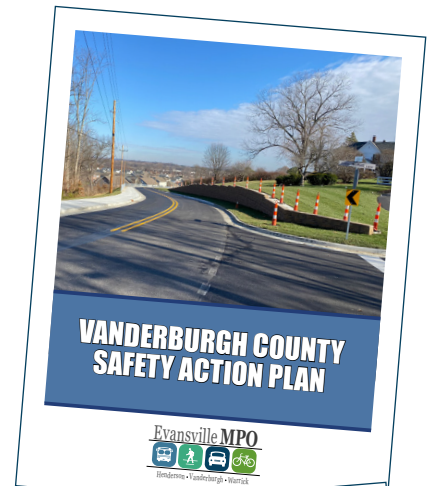
The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the new Safe Streets for All Discretionary Program. This program funds local, regional, and tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The program requires an approved Safety Action Plan to apply for Demonstration or Implementation Grants. The Evansville MPO prepared Safety Action Plans for both Vanderburgh and Warrick counties. Henderson County developed their own Safety Action Plan last year and GRADD (Green River Area Development District) was awarded a grant through the program to create a Safety Action Plan that will include the City of Henderson.

The Evansville MPO is committed to prioritizing safety in order to reduce the risk of death and serious injury that result from incidents on transportation systems in the region. The plans identify locations on the local road network that have experienced high crash rates and crashes involving fatalities and incapacitating injuries and outlines strategies to help achieve FHWA's Zero Deaths Vision. The data was analyzed at a countywide level using the 2016-2020 Indiana Crash Database ARIES. This countywide level analysis

was completed to determine locations that should be considered as focus areas. Additional detail and analysis are recommended beyond this countywide level plan for location specific crash analysis.

Stakeholder outreach included surveys and meetings in each county. Stakeholders included representatives from various city/county government agencies, law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency management agencies. Freight carriers were also engaged with a survey. State roads and intersections with state roads were not evaluated as part of the plan. Any comments that were received during the process on state roads were forwarded to INDOT, who was also present during the Stakeholder meetings.

The plans were approved by the Policy Committee during the May 11, 2023 meeting. The approved plans can be found on the Evansville MPO website on the Publications & Links page under the Planning tab: <http://www.evansvillempo.com/Links.html>. The approval of these Safety Action Plans allows the local government agencies to apply for a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Demonstration or Implementation Grant.



## Construction on Walnut Street Phase 2 is in Full Swing

Phase 2 of the road diet project on Walnut Street spans one mile between Weinbach Avenue and Vann Avenue. The project consists of reducing four travel lanes to three with the inclusion of a center left turn lane and various bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. A multi-use path will be constructed on the north side of the roadway and sidewalks and curb ramps will be updated to meet ADA requirements on the south side. The improvements on this section will tie into the previously completed Walnut Street Phase 1 (US 41 to

Weinbach Avenue), and ultimately Walnut Street Phase 3 (Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to US 41). In addition to the upgrades on Walnut Street, Vann Avenue will see the addition of a multi-use path (along the east side of the roadway), connecting the Walnut Street corridor to the multi-use path and pedestrian bridge near the intersection of the Lloyd Expressway and Vann Avenue.

The Walnut Street Phase 2 road diet project is being constructed using STBG and CMAQ funding with a local match.



# StreetLight Data in Travel Demand Modeling and Planning

Big data has improved the way the Evansville MPO analyzes travel patterns for transportation planning and modeling by incorporating StreetLight Data into the decision-making process. StreetLight Data has become an integral tool in travel demand modeling and planning procedures, providing valuable insights that inform transportation strategies for the future.

StreetLight Data is a comprehensive platform that harnesses big data from various sources, such as mobile devices and navigation systems. By aggregating this data, the MPO gained a comprehensive view of travel patterns, including trip origins, destinations, routes, and traveler demographics. This allows the MPO to identify

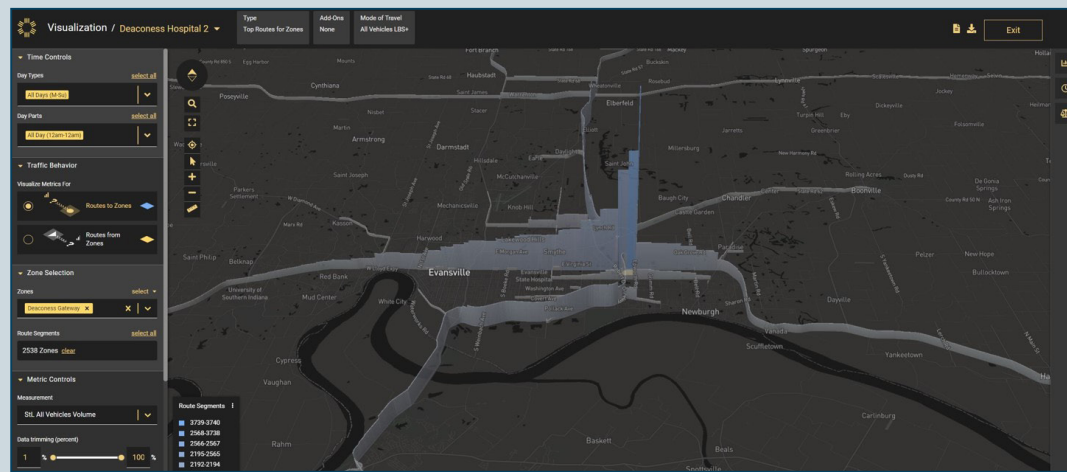
transportation needs, plan infrastructure improvements, and optimize existing systems more effectively.

In the travel demand model update, the MPO utilized StreetLight Data to provide origin-destination matrices for external trips and truck trips. Model parameters were designed that can calibrate the individual pairs or group pairs of the matrices manually, bringing an extra level of accuracy and confidence to the travel demand model.

If you are interested in knowing more about big data or have questions, please contact Xinbo Mi at [xmi@evansvillempo.com](mailto:xmi@evansvillempo.com).

## BIG DATA:

enormously large amount of datasets extracted from traveler's mobile devices (Location-Based Service data) or connected vehicles (GPS data)



## SWIRCA Helping Provide Free METS Rides

Funding from SWIRCA has made free rides available for seniors and individuals with a disability on METS' fixed route system. SWIRCA has been able to provide discounted rates for bus rides for their clients in the past, but this new funding has allowed SWIRCA to provide free rides to anyone over 65 who showed their photo ID and anyone with a disability that provided proof of their disability. The program started early in January 2023 and the goal was to provide the free rides through June 30, 2023. However, the popularity of the free trips will likely deplete the funding before then. SWIRCA is hoping to find more funding and partnerships to continue these free rides into the future.

METS has seen a substantial uptick in ridership since these free rides were offered. The pandemic dropped ridership to less than 50% compared to ridership in 2019. Ridership numbers had climbed to nearly 60% in 2022. These new riders have helped METS increase their ridership, which is now at just over 80% when compared to 2019. Some of these riders had utilized METS in the past, but many of them are new riders who tried METS because of the free rides. These new riders are realizing how convenient it is to ride METS' fixed route system and realizing that seniors can ride for just 35 cents once these free rides expire. METS is looking forward to continuing to serve these new riders moving forward and thankful to SWIRCA for helping these riders be introduced to the fixed route system.

