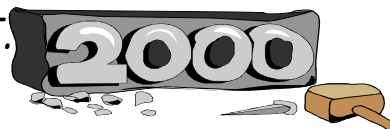


TRANSPORTATION PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. EUTS Y2K PROGRESS REPORT



Although the new millennium doesn't technically arrive until January 2001, the approach of the year 2000 is still significant for many reasons. One of those reasons is that 20 years ago—in November 1979—the EUTS Policy Committee adopted the *Year 2000 Transportation Plan*, which recommended numerous roadway projects for construction in Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties by the year 2000. While the *2000 Plan* has since been superceded by an updated long-range transportation plan (the *2020 Transportation Plan*), it does provide valuable documentation of past planning recommendations. And because it's not often that we have the opportunity to review past plans to see which projects have come to fruition, we at EUTS thought it would be interesting to revisit the *2000 Plan* and review what progress has been made on the transportation system over the past 20 years.

The public's perception is often that there is little movement being made on roadway improvements. However, a follow-up on the *2000 Plan's* recommendations reveals a different picture. A total of 26 recommendations were carried forward from the *Plan*. 19 of the 26 projects have been completed, 3 are either under construction or will be completed within the next 2-3 years, and 4 are currently in the design and/or right of way acquisition phase, with construction to follow. Following is a list of some of the more significant projects that were completed, along with a status report on the remaining projects:

2000 Plan recommendations **COMPLETED**:

- I-164 – new interstate from I-64 to US 41
- Division Street (Lloyd Expwy) - upgrade and widen from Second Ave. to Fielding Ct.
- SR 66 – upgrade and widen from Fielding Ct. to I-164
- SR 62 – upgrade and widen from Green River Rd. east to new I-164
- Covert Ave. – widen/extend from Vann Ave. to Newburgh Rd.
- Burkhardt Rd. – upgrade between Lincoln Ave. and SR 62 (Morgan Ave.)
- Lynch Rd. – widen to 4 lanes from US 41 to Oak Hill Rd.
- Lynch Rd. – construct new 4-lane roadway from Oak Hill Rd. to Burkhardt Rd.
- Ohio St. – realign and upgrade, construct new bridge over Pigeon Creek
- First Ave. – widen to 4 lanes from Division St. to Diamond Ave.
- Fulton Ave. – widen to 4 lanes from CSX railroad crossing north to Fulton/5th Ave. bridge
- KY 425 – new bypass between Pennyrile Parkway and US 60 W



2000 Plan recommendations **CURRENTLY UNDER / SCHEDULED FOR CONSTRUCTION**:

- Lynch Rd. – extend from Burkhardt Rd. to SR 62 in Warrick Co.
 - Burkhardt Rd. to I-164 (with interchange at I-164) – construction in 2000
 - I-164 to Old Boonville Hwy – construction in 2002
 - Old Boonville Hwy to SR 62 in Warrick Co. – construction in 2003
- SR 66 – upgrade and widen from I-164 to eastern edge of the study area – construction in 2000-02
- SR 662 – upgrade and widen to 4 lanes from Covert Ave. to Newburgh - construction in 2000
- Fulton Ave. – widen to 4 lanes from SR 62 to CSX railroad crossing – construction in 2000
- Fulton/5th Ave. bridge replacement - under construction

2000 Plan recommendations in **DESIGN or RIGHT-OF-WAY PHASE**:

- SR 261 Relocation (Newburgh Truck By-Pass) – to be constructed by 2010

- St. Joseph Ave. – widen to 4 lanes from SR 62 (Lloyd Expwy) to Diamond Ave. – Design plans and environmental work being developed - to be constructed by 2010
- Eickhoff-Koressel Rd. – new connector between I-64 and SR 62 on Evansville’s west side
 - Phase I (SR 62 to SR 66) is in right of way acquisition - to be constructed by 2010
 - Phase II (SR 66 to I-64) is being designed – to be constructed by 2020

While it is rewarding to look back in time and see the progress made on the transportation network, the need for sound long-range transportation planning remains. There are several major planning issues facing the region over the next year or two. First, EUTS, Vanderburgh County Commissioners, and area officials, in concert with the Indiana Dept. of Transportation and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, are about to embark on a \$1.8 million 2-year study to determine the best location for I-69 through the EUTS study area. In addition, two major data collection efforts which will greatly affect transportation planning will occur next year—the federal government’s decennial census count in the Spring, and EUTS’ region-wide household travel survey of residents and their travel habits in the Fall of 2000. Complete and accurate data from both of these surveys will be critical for good future planning. Lastly, EUTS will continue to promote the development of a balanced transportation system, working to finalize a comprehensive Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, as well as develop a Park & Ride feasibility study.

EUTS is committed to continuing its role in working with the community to define the area’s transportation goals, and develop information and recommendations to help guide local officials in making wise transportation choices for future generations.

[***METS Extended Service Takes Off***]

In the Summer 1999 issue of the *Metropolitan*, we told you of the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System’s (METS) plans to modify local bus service, and begin offering evening service. It’s been about 5 months since those changes were made, and EUTS is happy to report on news of their success. According to METS, ridership has increased 23% since extended service began, and trolley service has benefited as well with a surprising 67% increase. All of this comes at a time when bus fares were raised, which is typically marked by a decrease in ridership, says John Connell, METS Director. The fare increase is helping to pay for new night service to popular shopping areas and extended service in general. We’ll keep you posted on any new plans for METS.

DRAFT *BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN* UP FOR REVIEW



EUTS staff and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee have been hard at work developing a draft *Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*—the first for the entire EUTS study area—which will be released for a 30-day public comment period in mid-December. The *Plan* should be of interest not only to bicycle and pedestrian advocates, but also to parents of school-age children, those involved in improving public health, citizens concerned about the local air quality problem, residents interested in enhancing the area’s quality of life, or anyone who would just like to be able to bicycle or walk occasionally instead of having to drive.

The draft *Plan* takes a comprehensive approach to addressing bicycle and pedestrian issues, putting forward a range of recommendations including:

- ◆ sidewalk and bikeway improvements
- ◆ changes in local land use policies to require greater consideration of bicyclists and pedestrians in new commercial and residential developments
- ◆ better education of motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians on rules of the road, which will improve the safety of all modes of travel
- ◆ strategies for promoting bicycling and walking

The greatest challenge in developing the *Plan* was coming up with a proposed network of on-street bikeways—one that works with the planned Pigeon Creek Greenway to form a system that will serve cyclists of all skill levels, for both travel use and recreation. The recommended bikeways would be implemented either by reallocating space on existing streets, or by incorporating bikeways and sidewalks into new roadway construction or reconstruction projects.

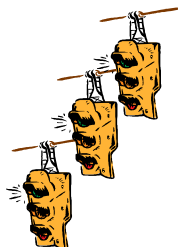
While many of the *Plan's* recommendations involve relatively low or no costs, having an approved *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* in place will improve the region's chances of securing federal funds to help construct bikeway facilities, improve local safety education programs, and create pedestrian-friendly areas. EUTS hopes to implement selected high-priority recommendations within the next year, including a few on-street bikeway "demonstration" projects.

Copies of the draft *Plan* will be available in mid-December at the EUTS office and selected public libraries for review. EUTS staff will be available for presentations to civic organizations, neighborhood groups, and other interested parties upon request, and will also conduct a public hearing on the draft *Plan* in mid-January. EUTS will then develop a final document for presentation to its Technical and Policy Committees, and local and county governing bodies for approval. Visit the EUTS webpage at www.evansville.net/~euts, or call us at (812) 436-7833 for more information.

Staff News

EUTS would like to welcome Doug Lane, who recently joined the staff as a transportation planner. Doug received a B.S. in Geography from Western Kentucky University, and most recently worked for Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency. Doug will be involved in rural transportation planning for Posey and Gibson County, as well as other projects.

Also, EUTS would like to congratulate staff member Seyed Shokouhzadeh and his wife Debbie on the birth of their son Reza! Congratulations Seyed, Debbie and big sister Beenah!



Traffic Signals 101

Ask any citizen in the area for their biggest complaint about transportation in the Evansville area, and they'll likely tell you it's the number of stoplights on the roads, and the difficulty in driving anywhere without getting stopped by red light after red light after red light. . . . Early this year, when the *Evansville Courier & Press* asked readers for their opinions on traffic signal synchronization, respondents were clear about their frustration.

While local engineers and planners are the first to acknowledge that there are some obvious problems with traffic flow in the region, there also appears to be some public misunderstanding about what traffic signal coordination is all about, and the limits to what it can achieve. As such, we've decided to do a two-part series, called "Traffic Signals 101". In this issue of the *Metropolitan*, we'll discuss the basics of traffic signal coordination: what it is, what it's supposed to do, and when it does and doesn't "work". The series will continue in the Spring 2000 newsletter, when we take a hard look at the number of traffic signals in the region, compare that to the number of signals in other urban areas, and discuss how to resolve some of the local problems with traffic signals. While we can't guarantee agreement from everyone on the traffic signal issue, we can promise an interesting discussion!

What is traffic signal coordination? Are signals in Evansville and Vanderburgh County REALLY coordinated?

Signal coordination (also called synchronization) simply means that intersections are programmed to "relate" to one another. It's important to keep in mind that it's not possible to have a system in which no one ever gets stopped by a red light; rather, the idea is to minimize the number of stops and delays that motorists have to face. Most traffic signals in the City and County are coordinated. However, coordinating signals is just one part of the equation for smooth, relatively uninterrupted traffic flow —there are many other factors involved, as well.

If most traffic signals are already coordinated, why does traffic still get caught by red lights?

Achieving smooth traffic flow is not as easy as just coordinating signals. There's a laundry list of other factors—poor signal spacing, overcapacity roadways and intersections, seasonal traffic overloads, complex traffic patterns, and roadway construction projects--which interfere with traffic flow, and which can't be fixed simply by coordinating traffic signals. A quick description of each follows:

- Poor signal spacing (signals closer than one quarter of a mile apart) is one of the greatest problems in the Evansville area. Traffic signal coordination cannot compensate for traffic signals that are too close together. The solution? Remove unnecessary traffic signals. (Easier said than done—but more on that later.)
- Intersections that are forced to handle more traffic than they are designed to carry are also a problem (think Green River Rd. during the holiday shopping season, or the Lloyd Expwy/Fulton Ave. intersection at rush hour), and one that can't be fixed simply by coordinating signals. Signals can't compensate for a roadway or intersection that simply has too few lanes.
- Complex traffic patterns and road construction also impact traffic flow and signal timing. It's much easier to control traffic if traffic patterns are predictable, and there's no roadway construction to interfere with traffic flow. Walnut St. and Bellemeade Ave. are good examples—drive at the speed limit during rush hour and

odds are you'll hit every green light. Conversely, engineers are now working on a signal timing plan for the Lloyd Expwy from US 41 to Crosspointe Blvd., but drivers won't be able to see it working until all the roadway construction along that stretch is completed.

Driver behavior can also contribute to a breakdown in smooth traffic flow. Make sure *you're* not part of the problem:

Watch your speed! Coordination is usually set based on the posted speed limit. Drivers who speed between signals will simply get caught by red lights at each successive signal, then preventing all the traffic following behind from being able to cruise through the signal when it does change to green.

Don't run red lights! In addition to being a safety hazard, red light runners also impact signal timing. Timing at high-accident intersections must sometimes be modified to provide more "all red" time--when all directions have a red light and no one moves--to account for red-light runners. More "all red" time means shorter green lights.

So what can be done to improve the flow of traffic along signalized corridors?

Some improvements will be realized when the City of Evansville purchases new hardware and traffic signal software next year, which will aid engineers in refining signal timing plans. In addition, continued planning and construction of various roadway and intersection projects will help by providing more lanes to move traffic. Replacing all at-grade intersections with interchanges would certainly improve the traffic flow situation, but the magnitude of the costs makes it unrealistic. At \$15-20 million to design and construct a single interchange, many other needed road projects would be forced to go by the wayside.

Beyond those gains, significant improvements in traffic flow along many roadway corridors will only be achieved by removing *unwarranted* or *poorly spaced* traffic signals. Despite residents' distaste for traffic signals, however, getting public support to remove a signal is an uphill battle. EUTS has conducted two studies that looked at traffic volumes and accident rates at all signals in Vanderburgh County, in order to determine candidates for removal. The studies recommended the removal of 11 traffic signals. 7 of the recommended signals were subsequently removed, while public opposition to the removal of the remaining 4 signals resulted in those recommendations being declined. EUTS still receives requests from residents to re-install 3 of the 7 signals that were removed.

Is there a recurring problem at a particular intersection that's giving you a headache?

Citizens often help identify areas that can be improved. If there is a particular intersection that gives you trouble, contact David or Jason at 436-4987 to report the problem. Be prepared to provide the intersection, direction of travel, time of day and the problem. If the situation can't be improved, you will at least have an understanding as to why it can't.

Stay tuned for part two of "Traffic Signal 101" in the Spring 2000 issue of the Metropolitan, when we look at the number of traffic signals in Vanderburgh County and compare it to other urban areas, discuss why new signals continue to be installed, and talk about the difficulty of removing existing traffic signals.

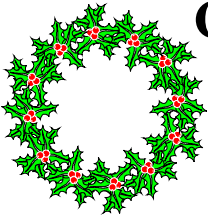


Funding Available For Recreational Trails

Is your community interested in developing a recreational trail for hikers, mountain bikers or off-road vehicles, but short on funding? If so, you'll want to check with the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resource (DNR) for details on the Recreational Trails Program. This federal program, made possible with funds from TEA-21 (the same bill which authorizes federal transportation dollars), was created to support the development of multi-use recreational projects. The City of Henderson was recently awarded \$14,100 under the Kentucky program to develop 2 trails (one paved to allow wheelchair access, one woodchip) in the wooded nature area at the Newman Park Recreational Complex.

Applications for Indiana's next funding round will be available on February 1, 2000, with a total of \$850,000 up for grabs statewide. Funding requests must be between \$10,000 and \$100,000, and the applicant must be able to put up a 20% match. For more information about the Indiana Recreational Trail Program, call DNR at (317) 232-4070, or visit their website at www.state.in.us/dnr/outdoor/grants/national.htm

**Thank you to the EUTS Policy and Technical
Committees for their dedication and support in
1999.**



**EUTS would like to wish everyone a happy
and safe holiday season. See you in 2000!**