

Bowling Green-Warren County

MPO

Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Newsletter

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Looking south on US 31W Bypass, near the intersection with Broadway Avenue.

Get to Know the MPO

On June 3, 2003, the Governor of Kentucky designated the Bowling Green-Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Its boundary includes the Bowling Green urbanized area, as well as the balance of Warren County. The MPO implements transportation policy for Bowling Green and Warren County. The MPO reviews short- and long-range transportation plans and programs and annually endorses a course of action to make those plans a reality.

The local MPO is less than 15 years old, but MPOs began dotting the nation's landscape in the 1960s. The Federal-



GObg Transit operates five routes across the Bowling Green-Warren County community. They offer shuttle services throughout the day to medical facilities, shopping centers, residential areas and much more.

Aid Highway Act of 1973 required an MPO for all urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 to develop transportation plans in order to receive federal funds for road projects. Since then, the responsibilities of an MPO in transportation planning have expanded, and the importance of public participation has grown.

A critical component of the MPO is citizen participation and involvement in all elements of the transportation planning process to create an inclusive vision for the region. We seek out and consider the needs of people traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system, such as those who face challenges getting to work or medical appointments. The MPO staff consults with local, state, and federal agencies responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation decisions to help gauge the needs of the community.

Long-Term Transportation Bill Passed

On Dec. 3, Congress passed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act," and on Dec. 4, President Obama signed it into law. This is the first long-term surface transportation bill that has been enacted in over 10 years. The five-year, \$305 billion, bill is a glimpse of hope for state transportation departments and transit agencies nationwide, as it ensures transportation funding through fiscal year 2020 through the Highway Trust Fund – the transportation fund supported by a gas tax revenue. After 36 short term extensions and a great deal of uncertainty for transportation officials, the bill means that States and local governments can now move forward with certainty on critical transportation projects to enhance the needs of the American people.

How will it affect Kentucky and individual states? According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, "the law also makes changes and reforms to many Federal transportation programs, including streamlining the approval processes for new transportation projects, providing new safety tools, and establishing new programs to advance critical freight projects."¹ There is emphasis on raising the importance of freight (trucks, trains, ships, and aircraft) and the positive economic impacts a coordinated freight system could have on a community. President Dennis Slater of the Association of Equipment Manufacturers stated that with five years of surface transportation stability, infrastructure investments are likely to increase. He continued, "This certainty extends to both the equipment manufacturing industry and the entire economy. The FAST Act means faster and safer infrastructure, economic growth and more prosperity."²



CSX Railroad Crossing on Dillard Road in Warren County. The new transportation bill seeks to establish streamlined programs to promote the importance and safety of freight use.

¹ <https://www.transportation.gov/fastact>

² <http://thehill.com/policy/transportation/262101-advocates-exhale-after-passage-of-305b-highway-bill>

Current Happenings

The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO works with local transportation officials to ensure the transportation needs of our community are addressed. This coordinated effort means working together to provide those traveling in, around, and through Warren County a safe and efficient transportation network - in good and bad weather.

The Bowling Green Public Works Department has recently completed the design work for the Smallhouse Road widening project from Campbell Lane through the intersection with Highland Way. The City is currently meeting with property owners impacted by the project and anticipates bidding the construction project in Spring 2016, depending on the status of property acquisition at that time. In addition to road construction projects, the City Public Works is currently managing construction of approximately 9,500 linear feet of sidewalks at various locations. Sidewalk construction was recently completed along Covington Street and is ongoing at Meredith Drive and Emmett Avenue. Construction along Lehman Avenue and Cherry Drive will also be completed with the current sidewalk contract.

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) District 3 opened the second phase of the KY 884 (Three Springs Road) widening project to traffic on Dec. 3. The project turned a two-lane section of roadway into a five-lane section with curb and gutter from Flea Land connecting to the previously widened section toward Scottsville Road. The construction began in late March 2015 and was awarded to Scotty's Contracting and Stone LLC in the amount of \$5,693,412. Currently underway is the Interstate 65 to US 31-W connector project being built in the northern part of Warren County under provision of KYTC. This project has over a year estimated before completion, with current work consisting of grade building and earthwork operations.

Winter Weather Prep

With winter quickly approaching, the City, County, and State road departments are working hard to prepare Warren



Recently constructed sidewalk near Covington Woods Park on Covington Street in Bowling Green. The newly constructed sidewalk runs along Covington Street from Lehman Avenue to Broadway Avenue.



KYTC crews cleared Interstate-65 South after a snow-storm covered much of South Central Kentucky in early March, 2015. Photo taken from the Bristow Road bridge by KYTC staff, March 5, 2015.

County roads to keep both travellers and residents safe and moving. The City, County and the KYTC District 3 road crews have been busy preparing for any upcoming winter weather that may come our way. Bowling Green's snow removal equipment is ready and equipped for inclement weather, with all repairs completed on plows and salters. The City has increased its snow removal equipment by four trucks, all of which have been outfitted with plows and salters. Public Works is currently at full capacity with 2,000 tons of de-icer. City staff anticipates the addition of equipment will allow them to address hazardous roadways faster than years prior.

Additionally, Warren County road crews have concentrated on trimming trees that overhang roadways and clearing fence rows in an effort to reduce the potential for icing and fallen limbs. The County's dump trucks have been outfitted with snow plows and tire chains, and the beds are ready for spreading salt. Warren County currently has 500 tons of salt on hand, with an additional 500 tons on reserve. The KYTC crews have also prepped their equipment for inclement weather and are ready to do battle again, should they be called to do so. Last year, crews battled challenging winter storms, working around the clock to keep the roadways as safe as possible. The KYTC encourages folks to follow the District 3 twitter account, @KYTCDISTRICT3, and the District 3 Facebook Page, KYTC District 3, for up-to-date information about roadway conditions.

In an effort to increase safety and prevent accidents during winter storms, motorists should avoid travel unless absolutely necessary. Should motorists venture out, the following tips can reduce the chances of accidents:

- *Reduce speed*
- *Use caution on bridges, overpasses, and low lying areas where ice may be present*
- *Increase the distance between vehicles, as it takes longer to stop in slick conditions*
- *Turn on your vehicle's headlamps*



BG in Motion On Stride to Build a Healthy Community

The Greenways Commission is excited to announce that all three grant applications that were submitted this fall have been selected for funding. The grant projects seek to meet the goals outlined in the recently adopted Greenways Master Plan. The mission of the Greenways Commission is to develop a network of walking and biking pathways that bring the community and nature together. There are many benefits of Greenways to the community, including health, recreation, economic development, alternative transportation, heritage preservation and environmental protection. Through successful collaboration amongst community partners, connectivity between existing trails and destinations will be expanded through these projects.

A \$177,474 federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant, matched by a \$44,000 contribution by the City of Bowling Green, will pay for a new greenway path that will connect Moss Middle School to an existing greenway on Creekwood Drive. The project will include a bridge over Jennings Creek, lighting, benches and a trailhead marker. The trail will allow children to walk or ride a bike safely to school while providing a place for outdoor recreation for the community.

The Greenways Commission was also awarded an \$8,900 Paula Nye Memorial Educational grant through the



The recently awarded TAP grant will fund construction of a new greenway path connecting Moss Middle School to this portion of the Creekwood Greenway.

Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission for a bicycle/pedestrian safety program with the goal of educating the public about bicycle safety laws and skills.

The third grant awarded is, a \$3,000 mini grant from the Kentucky Department for Public Health for a Bicycle/Pedestrian plan for the West End area of Bowling Green. A local match was provided by the Barren River Area Public Health Department (BRDHD) and WellCare Health Plans. The project is a partnership between the BRIGHT Coalition (Barren River Initiative to Get Healthy Together), the BRDHD, the Greenways Commission, City of Bowling Green Public Works and Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) departments, the MPO, GO BG Transit, and WellCare Health Plans. The goal of the project is to involve the community in identifying gaps in the bicycle/pedestrian system to enhance connectivity and safety as well as aid in prioritizing future transportation projects.

Upcoming Meetings

- Greenways Commission - January 4 @ 4pm*
- Policy Committee - January 11 @ 9am**
- Technical Advisory Committee - January 25 @ 1pm*
- Greenways Commission - February 1 @ 4pm
- Technical Advisory Committee - February 22 @ 1pm
- Greenways Commission - March 7 @ 4pm
- Technical Advisory Committee - March 28 @ 1pm

*All MPO TAC and Greenways Commission meetings are held at the City-County Planning Commission, 1141 State Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room

**All MPO PC meetings are held at BG City Commission Chambers, 1001 College Street, at 9 a.m.

Tell us what you think!

Do you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding our transportation system? Send us your input to help us plan for the future of our community.

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