

Bowling Green-Warren County

M P O

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) exist in urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. MPOs hold the responsibility of implementing transportation planning, programming and coordinating federal highway and transit investments. With the input of community stakeholders, MPOs gain knowledge on issues influencing the efficiency and effectiveness of the area's roadways, sidewalks and transit systems, which allow the organization to implement transportation policies for Bowling Green and Warren County.

The MPO's short-range, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and long-range, 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) explore the short- and long-term transportation goals for the MPO area. These plans outline funding expectations for Bowling Green-Warren County over the associated forecast years. Locally, the MPO works with the City, County, GO bg Transit and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) to effectively plan for the future of our transportation system. The MPO also coordinates with area agencies to learn more about the community, issues we're facing and ways to adapt to growth and change.



In this issue:

- Changes for GObg Transit
- WKU's Topper Transit Sees Growth
- Driverless Cars?
- Projects in Warren County
- Bike/Ped Safety in Focus



Photo at top of page: Natcher Parkway - US 231 (Morgantown Rd) interchange, to be reconstructed for the I-65 Spur corridor to Owensboro. Photo directly above: The recent "Road Diet" on Gordon Avenue and traffic signal installation at the intersection with Scott Way, as shown.

Changes in Store for GO bg WKU Transit Sees Growth

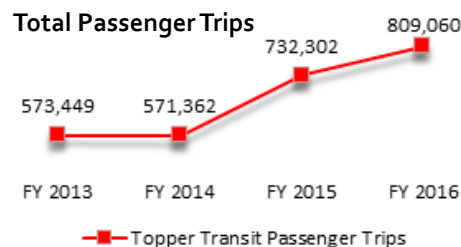


A woman boards the WKU Red Line Bus at the Center Street/East 11th Avenue stop, bound for WKU's Main Campus.

GO bg Transit will soon face minor changes to their route system in order to accommodate the recent move of key facilities along the Lovers Lane corridor, such as Life Skills, Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), Western Kentucky Orthopedic and Neurological Associates, Vision Source, Davita and Fresenius Dialysis Centers and other area businesses. As many riders utilizing GO bg's transit services are patients or recipients of such facilities, the transit agency has proposed a trial route, Route #6 (Pink Line), to serve the needs of its riders. Upon approval by the City, the new route is proposed to operate 9 hours daily, Monday - Friday. It will operate from Greenwood Mall, K-mart, Kroger, Bryant Way area to Lovers Lane and back to Greenwood Mall on one hour headway. Additionally, route #6 (Pink Line) will serve the Bryant Way area, giving Route #3 time en route to serve the Social Security office on Chandler Avenue.

With growing needs, aging buses and technological transit advances, GO bg Transit has recently applied for numerous grants to assist funding maintenance, operations and capital costs to maintain an effective transit system that strives to expand and enhance services to all users. If received, such funds would help support repaving of the parking lot, security lighting and fencing at the Downtown Transit Center; improvements on the ADA Complementary Paratransit service; and general maintenance, operations and capital expenses of the transit system.

As GO bg is hard at work providing for the community at large, WKU's Topper Transit, inaugurated in 2006, focuses on providing connections for students on campus, and off. Topper Transit and GO bg work together to streamline routes, providing shared services and greater connections. The Topper Transit Shuttle service provides public transportation between WKU's Main and South Campuses. This service operates two daytime routes (Red and White Lines) and one evening route (Green Line), known as the Shopping Shuttle, during the fall and spring semesters, with reduced transit service during summer and winter terms, Monday through Friday. This gives students the opportunity to travel to necessary destinations without using a car.



In recent years, student enrollment has held steady near 20,000 total, but Topper Transit has experienced tremendous growth in ridership. The graph above depicts this change. Additionally, for the first months of the WKU 2016 Fall semester, Topper Transit is showing even more growth, with numbers in August reaching 51,637 passengers and in September 123,103 passengers. This is 13,880 more passengers the same time in FY 2016. Overall, since its inception in 2006, WKU's Topper Transit has carried nearly 5.5 million passengers.

The Not-So-Distant Future

In response to the public's desire to ensure the technology behind self-driving cars promotes safety for everyday driving, the federal government is working to establish guidelines for automakers, suppliers and tech firms. The guidelines will help those in the automotive industries better understand what's expected when it comes to creating and deploying automated vehicle technologies. In the recently released *Policy* by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the guidelines for the development of automated vehicles are divided into four sections, including: Vehicle Performance Guidance for Automated Vehicles, Model for State Policy, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Current Regulatory Tools, and New Tools and Authorities for NHTSA.

The federal government is largely in favor of self-driving cars as this monumental shift in transportation could be a means of saving thousands of lives on our roadways every year. USDOT reported in its *Policy* that more than 35,000 died on U.S. roadways in 2015 alone, with nearly 94 percent of the nation's crashes being linked to human error. Another factor in the federal government's preemptive guidelines is the fact that urban populations are sky rocketing. People are flocking to cities across the globe, and it's estimated that by 2050, cities will house 70 percent of the global population. Increased urban populations bring many challenges, with the biggest potentially being transportation: does the infrastructure support the growth, what form of transportation will people use and is it safe and reliable? The director of Google's self-driving car program, Chris Urmson, stated that "Google's primary motivation for creating driverless cars is to improve safety, mobility and reliability by reducing traffic crashes and the amount of time people waste sitting in traffic." This could change the way we build roads, design cities and will certainly influence how we plan for the future.

Locally, it is difficult to discern how and when our community will be affected, but as technology for self-driving cars continues to be refined, our means of travel, living, spending and socializing will likely be refined as well. The extent of change is yet to be determined, but it's certain that our society is on the cusp of a monumental shift in urban transportation. Connected and automated vehicle technology will likely "improve pedestrian and driver safety, decrease congestion and improve freight and shipping technology,"¹ yet there are still many questions, doubts, fears and consequences that arise with such advanced, utopia-sounding technology. Regardless of the timeline of events, it is important for our community to consider planning for not only the good of the people, but for these robots traveling our streets.



What's Happening in Warren County?

The MPO's 2016-2020 TIP was approved for an Amendment October 10 by the Policy Committee to reflect the I-65 Spur corridor, connecting Bowling Green and Owensboro. In addition to modifying the existing Natcher Parkway – US 231 interchange project, a new highway project to modernize the Natcher Parkway has been added to the TIP. Both parts of the Spur project are funded through federal dollars (National Highway), with design, right-of-way and utility phases beginning in 2017. The full Amendment can be viewed on the [MPO website](#).

KYTC:

Although summer has come to a close, fall has commenced with KYTC District 3 projects in full swing. Work is continuing on the Interstate 65 to U.S. 31-W connector project just north of exit 28. Progress has been made on the five new bridges located along the project, with most being near completion. The project portion from I-65 to U.S. 68 is still on schedule to open in July of 2017 with the entire project slated to be finished by the end of 2017.

Recently, crews completed major roadway modifications on KY 185 (Gordon Avenue) between U.S. 68 (Veterans Memorial Lane) and Double Springs Road. The roadway was reconfigured from four lanes of travel down to three lanes in this section, and was resurfaced and restriped. The new striping change will help improve safety in the area by eliminating blind spots and lowering speeds. KYTC has already seen a difference in speed reduction with many motorists traveling through this section of roadway. A new traffic signal was also installed on this corridor at the intersection of KY 185 (Gordon Avenue) and Scott Way.

Though fall has barely arrived, the KYTC has already been planning for the upcoming winter weather. The District is in fact in the final stages of winter preparation, with crews getting the latest trainings and up-to-date information for the upcoming winter season. The KYTC District 3 [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts are a great source of real-time information, including road conditions and photos during the winter season. The accounts can be found at [KYTCDISTRICT3](#) on Facebook and Twitter.

Bowling Green Public Works:

When it comes to road construction, the City of Bowling Green allocates funds annually for street paving, construction and maintenance. In FY17, with \$2 million approved for repaving – the largest ever budgeted for city street paving, over 15 miles of streets will be repaved and over 60 handicap ramps along these streets will be upgraded to ADA compliancy. This project should near



Curb ramp repairs to meet ADA compliancy on Cabell Drive, at the intersection with Ogden Avenue/High Street.



I-65 to U.S. 31W connector project, traveling north on I-65 near exit 28.

completion by the end of 2016. Work continues with the Smallhouse Road Corridor Improvements as well. The Phase I construction, from Campbell Lane to Highland Way, will begin this fall, along with ongoing utility relocation along the corridor to prepare for the roadway widening from 2-lanes to 3-lanes. The Phase II (Highland Way through Ridgcrest Way) design work will also begin this fall. Additionally, to alleviate congestion and promote safety, the City has secured funding and will be constructing a new traffic signal on Cave Mill Road at Crossings Boulevard. This signal will likely be operational by the end of 2016.

The City's Public Works Department remains busy with their annual sidewalk initiative. The City's Sidewalk Construction Program, enacted in 2008 to help make Bowling Green a more pedestrian friendly city by funding new construction of sidewalks in areas where none existed, is currently able to construct approximately 1.5 miles of new sidewalk each fiscal year. In addition to this, the City budgets \$100,000 per fiscal year for sidewalk repair and replacement. In FY16, more than 7,800 linear feet of new sidewalk was constructed. The City was able to secure additional funds through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the federal government for construction of new sidewalk along sections of Collett Ave., Lain Ave. and Josephine St., with construction being completed by the end of October. Survey and design work are ongoing for the FY 2017 sidewalk program, with construction scheduled to begin in early 2017. To view the status of the City's current and upcoming projects, as well as rankings of identified sidewalk projects, please [click here](#).

To complement the work toward pedestrian (and cyclist) safety, the City is coordinating with KYTC to build a potential pedestrian crossing, linking Weldon Pete Park and the walking trail at Mitch McConnell/Riverwalk Park. Many community members, local planners and engineers see Old Louisville Road as a barrier and safety hazard to users wanting to cross the street; the crossing is not stop controlled nor at a desirable location. Additionally, KYTC is planning to undertake a significant construction project beneath the Old Louisville Road bridge to mitigate scour concerns. As part of this mitigation design, the City hopes to incorporate a path beneath the bridge to provide a better connection between the two recreational areas. Public Works will also construct multi-use trails at the Lovers Lane Soccer Complex. A six-foot wide sidewalk with lighting will be constructed around the soccer fields, while an eight-foot wide gravel trail, similar to what is at Kereiakes Park, will be constructed around the perimeter of the complex. Construction of these trails is scheduled to begin this fall.



BG in Motion

Plans, Grants and Safety

Recognizing the many benefits that daily walking and bicycling bring to individuals and communities, the MPO is kicking off an exciting project this fall to develop a strategic Multimodal Implementation Plan. The selected firm, RPM Transportation

Consultants, will use previous plans and studies, such as the [Greenways Master Plan](#), the [2040 MTP](#) and the [TIP](#) to prioritize and develop cost estimates for non-motorized facilities that are connected to transit. To ensure the plan reflects the desires and needs of the local community, the firm will work with a Project Steering Committee this winter to engage the public through online surveys and community focus group meetings. Dates and locations of meetings will be announced on the Greenways website, through local media outlets and social media. The final plan will be completed by June 30, 2017, and will include specific project cost estimates, funding information, prioritization and implementation strategies, as well as design standards and guidelines for proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

In response to the [West End Walk & Ride](#) study, along with other safety concerns, the Greenways Commission, on behalf of the City of Bowling Green, submitted a grant application requesting nearly \$1.1 million (including the City's local match) for a 2.38 mile



Greenway trail at Riverwalk/Mitch McConnell Park, just off of Old Louisville Road.

shared-use path to close gaps between the greenway system in the downtown-riverfront area and existing greenways at Hobson Grove Park and Boatlanding Park. The project also includes pedestrian improvements at key intersections in the West End, such as shorter crosswalks and pedestrian scaled street lighting. The Greenways Commission, City and KYTC staff are excited for this potential and the improvements it would bring to our community as a whole, but also to people traveling on foot, bike or transit in the West End.

One of the critical elements of a healthy multimodal transportation system is a high level of public awareness and understanding about bicycle and pedestrian safety. The Greenways Commission is in the final stages of completing three public service announcements (PSA), being produced by Harris Visual Production Company to highlight bicycle and pedestrian laws from the viewpoint of a pedestrian and a driver. The PSAs will be aired through local media outlets, social media and on our website.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY:

- Cross at crosswalks. Don't jaywalk!
- ALWAYS look both ways before crossing. Don't assume green lights or walk signals mean it is safe to cross.
- When there is no sidewalk, walk facing oncoming traffic as far off the road as possible.
- Remember that it takes longer for cars to stop when visibility is limited or weather is bad.
- Have small children hold your hand when crossing the street or walking in a parking lot.

Another component of the public education safety program is the update of a Bicycle Comfort Rating map. If you are looking for a safe route to ride your bicycle, download the map [here](#). If you are an experienced cyclist, choose an "advanced" route, or if you are interested in riding but have little experience or want a safe route for you or your children, locate a Greenways path or select a "beginners" route. The map will be continuously updated as we develop and build more shared-use paths and bike routes.

Additionally, the Greenways Commission has available a Bicycle Rodeo Kit, for groups interested in organizing a bicycle skills training event for elementary-aged children. If your school or group is interested in organizing an event, please [contact us](#), we'd love to help out! The Greenways staff is also available to conduct bicycle and pedestrian safety training sessions for children kindergarten to 5th grade.

Upcoming Meetings

	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE <i>Meets 4th Mon. at 1:00 P.M.*</i>	24th	-	12th
MPO POLICY COMMITTEE <i>Meets 2nd Mon. of new quarter at 9:00 A.M.</i>	10th	-	-
GREENWAYS COMMISSION <i>Meets 1st Mon. at 4:00 P.M.</i>	3rd	7th	5th

*Due to holidays, the TAC meetings for Nov. and Dec. have been adjusted. 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. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status.

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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