

## Bowling Green-Warren County

## MPO

## 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.

Among other ongoing work, the MPO is working with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) as they guide efforts in the development of the next highway plan (2018). The new transportation project prioritization process, SHIFT (Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow), allows the Cabinet to calculate data-driven scores for sponsored (high priority) transportation projects. The MPO and KYTC Highway District 3 worked together to sponsor a total of 25 projects for Warren County, which will then be assigned statewide scores by the Cabinet. Currently, the MPO is working to develop a methodology for ranking the sponsored projects. This new prioritization process will continue throughout the summer, with the Governor's

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Recommended Highway Plan being complete by the end of this calendar year.

In addition, the MPO is underway with a corridor study for Plano Road, being conducted by Neel-Schaffer, Inc. The purpose of this study is to determine a coordinated plan of transportation improvements and land use policies that will address the impacts of residential and commercial growth along the Plano Road corridor and surrounding area. It will also address the safety and mobility concerns incurred by future growth, with recommendations and policies amongst planning agencies resulting from the findings of this study. There will be a public meeting to gather community input on **May 9th from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM** at Plano Elementary School located at 2650 Plano Road. Please visit the [MPO website](#) for more information.

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A study is being conducted on Plano Road (KY 622) from Scottsville Road to KY 242 to recommend future transportation and land use improvements and policies. The Plano Road corridor and surrounding area has experienced numerous development changes, and is expected to incur substantially more. This study will provide a framework for moving forward with planning and development endeavors for the Plano community.

# Transit Opportunities

GObg enacts expansion of services and new stops



GObg Transit center located at 304 E 11th Avenue. All bus passes, work access passes, and other inquiries can be made here.

Earlier this year, [GO bg transit](#) realigned all six routes to better serve its users and the community at large. GO bg transit staff utilized the results of the Transit Needs Assessment & Route Realignment Study conducted for the MPO by WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, completed in May of 2016, along with other studies such as the West End Walk and Ride Study. The new routes have been planned with sidewalks in mind, building off the City of Bowling Green's efforts to improve existing sidewalks and construct new ones in areas of need. In addition to sidewalk accommodations, the new routes better reflect traffic patterns and serve several relocated businesses and newly developed businesses suited for transit users. Lost River Cave, the Lovers Lane corridor, and ADA accessible services across Interstate-65 are some of the new areas served by the route realignment. One new transit route (Pink Line, Route 6) has been added to the system, along with an upgrade from 181 stops to 242 stops served by transit providers. Currently, GO bg transit is working to acquire new buses and automatic annunciator systems for all buses. Despite the uncertainty with the future of transit funding, GO bg transit will continue to seek all applicable opportunities to serve the needs of the Bowling Green community.

## The Demands of a City

Many of us may not realize how important infrastructure is to our daily lives, or even how often we utilize our nation's transportation system. Think about all the things you buy—from groceries to clothes, to medications and cars—we buy everything big and small and it all comes from somewhere. Goods and people traverse from place to place via many forms of transportation—walking, biking, public transportation, trains, vehicles, airplanes, and ships. However, across the country, states are struggling to make necessary improvements to infrastructure due to limited funding, making transportation for goods and people a challenge in overall accessibility and mobility, and in safety.

Statistics show that globally, more people are flocking to urban areas than ever before, which puts an unprecedented amount of pressure on urban infrastructure to meet the demands of these new city dwellers. By the year 2050, it is expected that nearly 70% of the world population will be urban. To put those numbers into perspective, in 1950 only about 30% of the population lived in urban areas. These growth trends are no exception at the regional and local level. Not only are the southern United States as a whole experiencing rapid growth—in 2016 the South saw an annual growth rate of 37.9% (from 2000); but according to the [Kentucky State Data Center's](#) population projections, Warren County itself is projected to grow by 49.5% (2015-2040). Furthermore, the [Urban Institute](#) maps population projections by commuting zones, where the Bowling Green area, consisting of the counties of Warren, Allen, Edmonson, Logan, and Simpson, will grow 26.07% by the year 2030 (from 2010). The implications of this growth on the Bowling Green community will undoubtedly have positive effects on the local economy, but it will also present a major challenge for transportation infrastructure across the region.

As state-funded transportation projects are halted, and the availability and extent of federal transportation dollars are yet to be determined, progress on existing highway plan projects is abnormally slow and the feasibility of new projects remains nearly unrealistic. Despite lack of funding, the number of vehicles traveling the nation's roadways are at record high; gas prices continue to remain relatively low; vehicles continue to become more fuel efficient; and the shift toward alternative fuel vehicles is on the rise. These contrasting factors leave the revenue from the gas tax a dwindling and outdated funding source for transportation projects, forcing Kentucky legislators, elected officials, and local governments to look beyond the current sources of revenue. Jim DeCesare, member of the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee and State Representative for the 17th District, added that "As we move forward with tax reform in Kentucky, we'll also need to explore new alternatives to our antiquated and regressive system of funding our roads."

Not only are urban areas growing, roadway travel increasing, gas prices dropping, and transportation dollars diminishing, but the means in which Americans travel are beginning to shift. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) developed a few outlooks into the changes of fuel efficiency and growth of alternative fuel vehicles: by the year 2040, the average light vehicle mileage (including pickups and SUVs) will reach nearly 35 mpg, an increase of about 70 percent from 20 mpg in 2015. And as far as electric vehicles go, they project that about 35 percent of all new car sales in 2040 will be gasless electric vehicles—estimating that sales for electric vehicles will grow by more than 90 times the number sold annually today. Given the variety of statistics, our community will grow even more so in the next twenty years than it has in the last few; the extent and implications of our growth and development reach beyond just what the numbers estimate and delve into our ability to be a strategic city geared toward the welfare of its people. And that may very well begin with the ways we seek to fund our infrastructure.



Construction of mixed-use development in Downtown Bowling Green, one of the many changes reflecting growth in the MPO area.

# What's Happening in Warren County?

## Kentucky Transportation Cabinet - District 3

The commencement of spring initiates the busiest time of year for the [Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's](#) construction projects. Several projects are currently underway with several more starting soon. Construction crews continue work with paving operations on the Interstate-65 to US 31W connector road in the northern part of Warren County. The KYTC expects the new interchange and connector road to US 68 to open this July, with phase two from US 68 to US 31W opening sometime in 2018.

Also under construction is the bridge project on Cemetery Road (KY 234) over Drakes Creek. Currently, the rock roadbed has been laid and crews are continuing work on the bridge portion of the project. The speed limit in that area has been lowered to 35 mph in an effort to encourage motorists to exercise caution when traveling along the corridor.

The Natcher Parkway is also under construction with reduced speed limits. Work is being done from the Three Springs Road (KY 884) bridge, to exit 9 at Morgantown Road (US 231). Construction crews have recently been working off the roadway on some drainage issues, but will soon begin the larger portion of the project to resurface this section of the Natcher Parkway.

Additionally, improvements will be made to the Natcher Parkway exit 9, Morgantown Road (US 231) interchange. On April 11, the KYTC hosted a public meeting at the National Guard Armory, where the community was presented three different options for the interchange improvements project. District Three staff hopes to have a preferred alternative selected within a few months.

## Bowling Green Public Works

In December 2016, construction began on the Phase I widening of Smallhouse Road from Campbell Lane through the intersection of Highland Way. Upon completion, the corridor will be a three-lane roadway with an eight-foot multi-use path on one side. Construction along the east side of the roadway, between Campbell Lane and Highland Way, is nearly complete with all necessary paving finished to allow for the change in traffic flow. Within the Phase I boundary, crews have constructed the majority of the multi-use path and are beginning to work on the west side of the roadway to accommodate waterline relocation, as well as installation of storm sewer and curb and gutter. Construction on this phase of the project is expected to be near completion later this summer.



Construction crews work on the bridge over Drakes Creek on Cemetery Road (KY 234).

With construction of Phase I heavily underway, the [City of Bowling Green Public Works](#) department began design of the Phase II Smallhouse Road widening earlier this year, and expects design work to be complete by the end of May. This portion picks up from the end of Phase I, near Highland Way, and continues just past Ridgecrest Way. Once design is complete, property acquisition necessary for the project will proceed.

The City recently installed a new traffic signal on Cave Mill Road at Crossings Boulevard in an effort to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety. Additionally, the City will soon begin another project to address traffic and safety concerns at the intersection of Emmett Avenue and Creason Street. A contract will be awarded to construction crews this spring to add turns lanes on both approaches, giving motorists alternative travel routes should there be a train blocking Emmett Avenue at the CSX crossing.

Earlier this spring, the City completed and opened the "Loops at Lovers Lane" which is comprised of two walking paths around the Lovers Lane Soccer Complex. The inner loop provides a lit concrete path and is approximately 0.7 miles long. The outer loop is gravel and approximately 1.6 miles in length, and connects to the existing greenways trail along Lovers Lane.

More work continues with the City's FY17 Paving Contract and Sidewalk Program, including nearly 15 miles of city streets in need of repaving and nearly 60 handicap ramps in need of ADA compliancy upgrades. Another 8 miles of streets and associated handicap ramps will be awarded a paving contract later this spring. Construction of approximately 2,200 linear feet of sidewalk along Gordon Ave. and Morgantown Rd. has recently been completed with projects along Warren Way, South Sunrise Dr., Hogle Dr., and Logan Way currently in design with construction scheduled to begin this spring. And for FY 2018, the City has already begun to identify areas of need with sections of Kenton St., Park St., and Magnolia St. selected as candidate sidewalk projects. Upon approval by the Bowling Green City Commission, these projects will move forward with survey and design work, with construction for these three locations scheduled for Winter, 2017.

In an effort to improve accessibility in the West End, the City's Neighborhood and Community Services will be investing approximately \$1 million in pedestrian facilities in Census Tract 112 on the West End of Bowling Green. This area is roughly bounded by Old Morgantown Road, Old Barren River Road and Normalview Drive, to the west edge of the city limits. Recommendations from existing studies, such as the West End Walk & Ride Study and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, are being used to determine possible locations for facility improvements. Final project proposals will be presented to City officials and approved in the coming months.



## BG in Motion Multimodal Plan near completion, Bike Rodeo teaches kids basic skills

Last month, a cross section of stakeholders including police officers, public school officials, bike shop owners, transportation professionals, and other community leaders, gathered together with RPM Transportation Consultants and MPO staff to provide input on key issues related to the multimodal transportation system in our community. The discussion of opportunities and challenges for pedestrians and cyclists provided the consultants with necessary feedback to incorporate into the MPO's Multimodal Implementation Plan. Several items of concern involved the danger of mid-block crossings, maintenance of existing greenways and sidewalks, and accommodating pedestrians and cyclists in a car-oriented community. Many stakeholders noted the importance of a walkable and bike-able community to the overall economic success of local businesses, as well as the need to improve the multimodal connections between Western Kentucky University and Downtown – highlighting safety for students walking and biking, and encouraging a safe place for families and individuals to live, work, and play.

RPM will continue to utilize the input provided by these stakeholders to curate recommendations specific for our community, particularly seeking ways to build on Bowling Green's success stories and



Stakeholders fill out a survey addressing their concerns and desires for multimodal transportation for the Multimodal Implementation Plan on March 22, 2017.



Volunteers teach children bicycle safety and skills at the Arbor Day Celebration Bike Rodeo on April 15, 2017.

encouraging connections between existing trails. Liesel Goethert of the RPM Project Team added that “the Multimodal Implementation Plan builds upon the [previous] analyses completed, input gathered, and recommendations proposed by developing a blueprint for where and how the community should move forward on improving multimodal connectivity within Bowling Green.” Want to voice your opinion regarding bike/ped infrastructure? [Take this survey](#) and stay tuned for a public meeting in May, when the draft plan and recommendations will be presented.

The Greenways Commission conducted a successful “Bike Rodeo” – a bicycle skills course for children - at the City of Bowling Green's Arbor Day Festival on Saturday, April 15. More than 25 children learned safe bicycle riding techniques including: proper helmet and bicycle fitting; correct hand signals when turning and stopping; skills for hills, slopes, braking, and changing gears; and the importance of paying attention and making eye contact with motorists. WKU Big Red Bikes provided the Greenways Commission with bicycles and helmets, while the Bowling Green Police Department demonstrated safe bicycling techniques for the children. Nat's Outdoor Sports also donated a helmet for one lucky participant. The Greenways Commission will organize another Bike Rodeo on Saturday, April 22 at the Warren County Services Fair at Warren Central High School from 9:00 AM until NOON and on Tuesday, April 25 at Cumberland Trace Elementary School from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. If you are interested in hosting a Bike Rodeo, the kit is available for community groups to use. Please contact us [here!](#)

### Upcoming Meetings

	MAY	JUNE	JULY
<b>MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b> <i>Meets 4th Mon. at 1:00 P.M.*</i>	22nd	26th	24th
<b>MPO POLICY COMMITTEE</b> <i>Meets 2nd Mon. of new quarter at 9:00 A.M.</i>	SC <sup>†</sup>	SC <sup>†</sup>	5th
<b>GREENWAYS COMMISSION</b> <i>Meets 2nd Mon. at 4:00 P.M.</i>	15th	12th	10th

\*Special-Called Policy Committee meetings will likely be held and are under the discretion of the MPO and participating parties.  
<sup>†</sup>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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