

Section 1 - Introduction

2009-2035 Ashland Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The Ashland Area 2009-2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) addresses potential transportation improvements to the year 2035 for the Metropolitan Planning areas of Boyd and Greenup Counties, Kentucky. The main focus of this plan is to identify and guide future year transportation decisions and improvements within the Ashland Area MPO on a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing planning process. The MTP views transportation in terms of the movement of people and goods, not just vehicles. While the plan analyzes individual transportation modes, it stresses the interrelationships between modes and encourages the integration of the various transportation components into a system that efficiently and cost-effectively meets the mobility needs of the area's citizens, business, and the traveling public.

The MTP is designed to be financially constrained. The recommendations are based on projections of available federal, state and local revenue. Furthermore, the plan is intended to be flexible; therefore, responding to new or changing project plans and studies. The MTP must be updated at a minimum every four years, and amendments and administrative modifications may occur more frequently in response to the changes/updates of Ashland Area MPO transportation system. The updates afford the Policy Committee the opportunity to review, redefine, or reaffirm the plan's projects, programs, goals, and policies and follow references 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(4) and 23 U.S.C. 135(f)(2)(D) "*the transportation plan shall be reviewed and updated....in nonattainment....areas to conform its validity and its consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends to extend the forecast period.*"

The MTP also reflects the vision and direction of local officials, relevant agencies, stakeholders, and the general public. From the beginning of the plan development, a proactive public involvement process was undertaken to provide opportunities for the public to be involved in the planning process. The public involvement process allows area citizens and businesses to take an active role in the plan development and provides an opportunity to educate the public about transportation planning activities.

A. Long-Range Transportation Planning

Transportation planning is a process for accommodating the linkages between land use, economic development, mobility, and environmental conditions to improve the quality of life for area citizens. The "3-C" planning process is comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing process.

Comprehensive: The process evaluates all transportation modes including: roadway, transit, bicycles, pedestrians, rail, and aviation.

Cooperative: The process involves a number of agencies/individuals including: Federal, State, Local, Private, and Public Participation.

Continuing: The process is on-going. The LRTP anticipates and responds to future year needs, identifies short-term and long-term improvements, and address transportation needs over a 20-year planning horizon.

The transportation planning process also recognizes that a relationship exists between land-use and transportation decisions.

B. Governing Legislation

Four major pieces of federal legislation define the MTP planning process. The intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA) of 1991 recognized the economic and cultural diversity of metropolitan areas, and the need to provide metropolitan areas with more control over transportation decisions. Superseding ISTEA, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was enacted on June 9, 1998 as Public Law 105-17B. TEA-21 authorized the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 6-year period 1998-2003. Since 2003, Congress has extended TEA-21 on six occasions. The latest federal legislation is the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted August 10, 2005 as Public Law 109-59 and authorized federal surface transportation programs for a 5-year period.

TEA-21 reaffirmed elements established in ISTEA. This included public involvement, linking land-use to transportation planning, a multi-modal approach in developing transportation solutions, the need for increased mobility and transportation's key role in economic growth. TEA-21 required the MTP to be financially constrained, meaning each transportation project and strategy identified in the plan be backed by specified federal, state, local and/or private funding. It also shifted the evaluation of transportation systems from how well the system is physically operating to how well the system is meeting the needs of its users. It placed the user at the center of the decision-making process, and viewed transportation in terms of the movement of people and goods, not just vehicles. SAFETEA-LU extends elements of TEA-21 while emphasizing consultation and planning with interested parties such as environmental advocacy groups, bicycle and pedestrian and safety and security of the transportation system. The Act also stresses development of operations and maintenance programs.

Finally, ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU are linked to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA). The CAAA encourages reduced auto emissions, and fewer trips by single-occupant vehicles and it promotes the use of alternative transportation (transit and bicycles) as a more viable part of the transportation system. The Ashland Area MPO currently is considered a maintenance area for the 8-hour ozone and is possibly to be considered in non-attainment for PM_{2.5}.

C. The Metropolitan Planning Area

The requirements of the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) state that the Ashland Area 2009-2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan cover an area that includes the urbanized area and any areas likely to be urbanized for the next twenty years. With this in mind; the study area for the Ashland Area 2009-2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan encompasses the Kentucky counties of Boyd and Greenup.

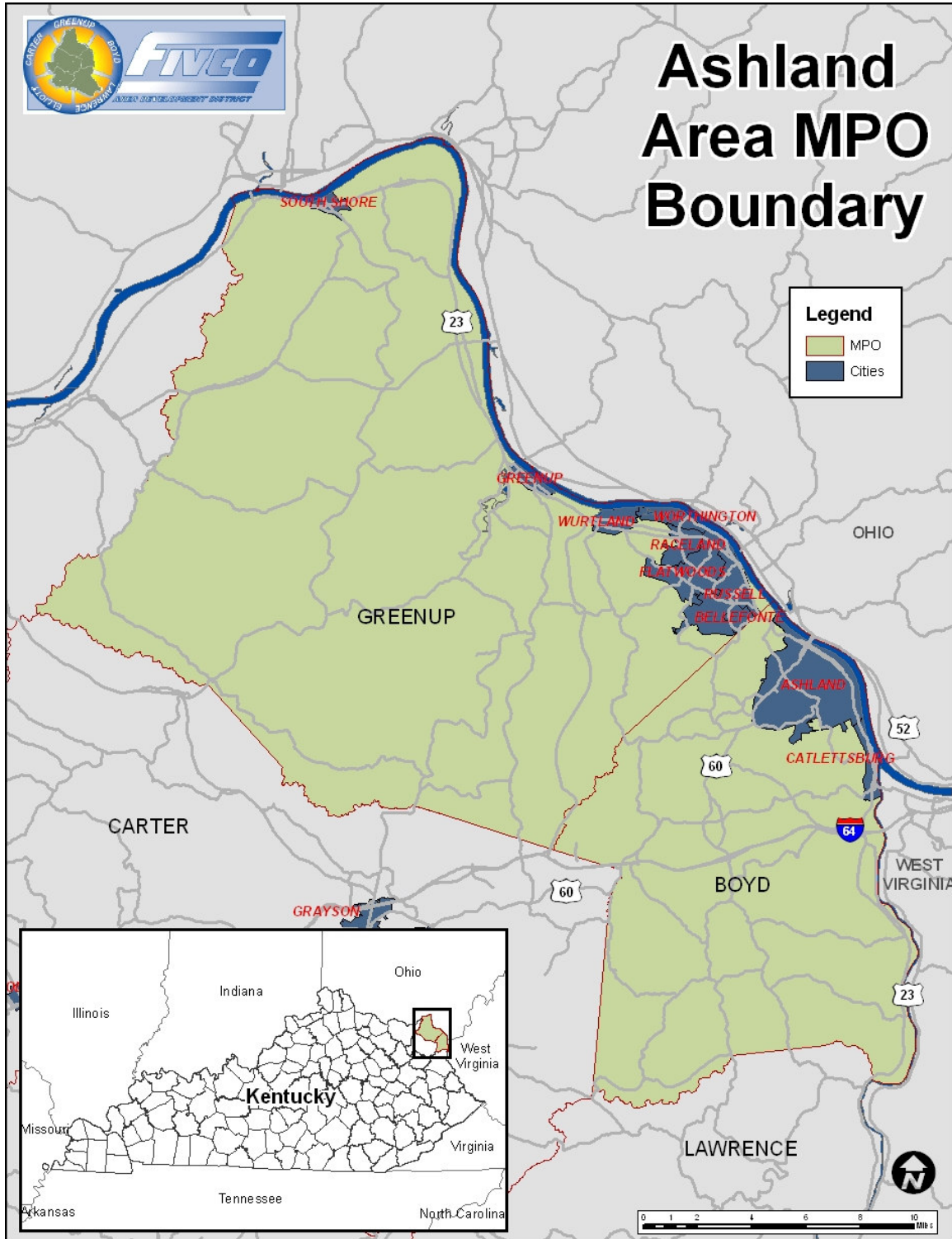
D. The Metropolitan Planning Organization

In May of 1988, the Governor of Kentucky designated FIVCO Area Development District (FIVCO ADD) as the staff agency for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kentucky portion of the Huntington, West Virginia, Kentucky-Ironton, Ohio Urbanized Area. At that time, FIVCO established a Transportation Policy Committee to serve as the decision-making entity for the MPO. KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission previously served as the MPO for this entire area and remains as such for the urbanized portion of southeastern Ohio and western West Virginia. The Ashland Area MPO planning area consists of Boyd County and Greenup County, Kentucky (**Figure 1**).

MPOs are the designated entities which coordinate and direct transportation planning efforts in the nation's urbanized areas. An urbanized area is defined as an area with the total population greater than 50,000. The federal government requires MPOs to develop transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (with annual elements), and unified planning work programs, and to base such products on the "3-C" (comprehensive, continuing, cooperative) planning process. The basic mission for the local MPO is to meet the federal requirements for both product and procedure, while focusing its efforts on the attainment/conformity of area highway and transit system needs.

FIVCO Area Development District has two staff members assigned to carry out the Ashland Area MPO responsibilities under the direction of the FIVCO ADD Director of Transportation. Additionally, an experienced administrative staff is available to assist the planners. Together, the MPO staff and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) works under the direction of the MPO Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), the decision-making group comprised of four local elected officials and a representative of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) as voting members. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) serve as ex-officio members. The staff and TCC are responsible for providing technical advice and assistance to the TPC, which in turn provides final authority and approval for the work program and plans. Another link in the MPO organizational chain is the community-at-large. The community provides the MPO staff with a better understanding of local transportation values, goals, and objectives. The MPO responds by offering technical information and explanation of programs to individuals and groups throughout the Ashland MPO Area. (**Refer to Appendix A for detailed committee lists**).

Figure 1: Ashland Area Planning Boundary



E. Transportation Work Products

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) require the Ashland Area MPO to have a “3-C” planning process that results in an MTP consistent with the needs of the area. The three primary products of this process are the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – The UPWP lists tasks to be performed by the MPO. The UPWP contains several elements including planning tasks and studies to be conducted during the work program contract.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – The TIP is a financially constrained four-year program covering the most immediate projects from the transportation plan. Under federal law, the TIP covers a minimum four year period of investment, is updated at least every four years, is realistic in terms of available funding (fiscally constrained), is approved by the MPO and the governor, and is incorporated into the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP).
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – The MTP identifies short-and long-term strategies to invest in the MPOs transportation system. The plan is updated at a minimum of every four years in areas designated as in maintenance and/or nonattainment, as defined in section 107(d) of the Clean Air Act. Additionally the MTP:
 - Identifies policies, strategies, and projects for the future;
 - Determines projected demand for transportation services over 20 years;
 - Focuses at the systems level, including roadways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and intermodal connections;
 - Coordinates with regional land-use, development, housing, and employment goals and plans;
 - Estimates cost and identifies reasonably available financial sources for operation, maintenance, and capital investments;
 - Determines ways to preserve existing roadways and facilities and make efficient use of the existing system;
 - Is consistent with the statewide transportation plan; and
 - Consults with Federal and State wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies.

F. Public Participation

In compliance with federal regulations, and to gain support for the implementation of the MTP recommendations, a Participation Plan was developed to proactively provide every opportunity for and encourage the involvement of citizens in the transportation planning process. Participation means the public within the Ashland Area MPO, planning and engineering professionals, and those who are not professional planners or government officials taking part in the transportation planning and decision-making that affects the community. The MTP development follows those guidelines set forth in the Participation Plan.

Public participation is crucial for successful planning. The MPO staff and local officials need input from those who know the community best – the people who live and work there. Public participation informs and educates individuals about the transportation planning process, creates an informed community that leads to better planning, and creates a sense of ownership. A number of activities were used to inform and gather support/comments throughout the MTP process. The public participation activities included:

- Public Open House – A public open house was held March 12, 2009 to inform the public regarding the findings of existing transportation system conditions and initial findings of the year 2035 conditions. The public was encouraged to comment on the findings and provide additional feedback concerning the Ashland Area MPO transportation system.
- Website – The draft MTP was made available at the FIVCO ADD website (fivco.org). –Area citizens and businesses were encouraged to review the Plan and contact the MPO staff with questions and comments.
- 30-day Public Review Period – The final draft MTP was available at the local public libraries in Boyd and Greenup counties, Boyd and Greenup County Fiscal Court Offices, the City of Ashland Public Works Department, and the FIVCO ADD Office from February 25, 2009 to March 26, 2009. It was also made available on the FIVCO ADD website (www.fivco.org).

G. Environmental Justice

The principals of environmental justice include program, policies and activities impacting minority and low-income populations. The need to consider Environmental Justice is embodied in many laws, regulations, and policies, including:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- President's Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (EO12898);
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA);
- Section 109(h) of Title 23;
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URAO, as amended);
- The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21);
- The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); and,
- Other US Department of Transportation (DOT) statutes and regulations.

It is the goal of the Ashland Area MPO to ensure inclusion of all persons in the transportation planning process.

H. MTP Organization

Section 1

Provides background on the MTP development process and information on the Ashland Area MPO

Section 2

Outlines the vision statement, goals, and objectives for the Ashland Area MPO

Section 3

Summarizes the existing transportation conditions and identifies transportation deficiencies, sets project selection criteria and reviews the role of the MPO in security with in the Ashland Area MPO

Section 4

Identifies year 2035 conditions including population and employment projections

Section 5

Analyzes year 2035 conditions for the respective transportation modes and including a discussion of potential impacts due to future land development

Section 6

Contains the financial capacity analysis that documents the Ashland Area's ability to operate and maintain the current transportation network and to implement potential transportation improvements

Section 7

Summarizes the public participation process and activities

Section 8

Summarizes the air quality conformity data

Section 9

Provides the conclusion and amendment policy of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan