

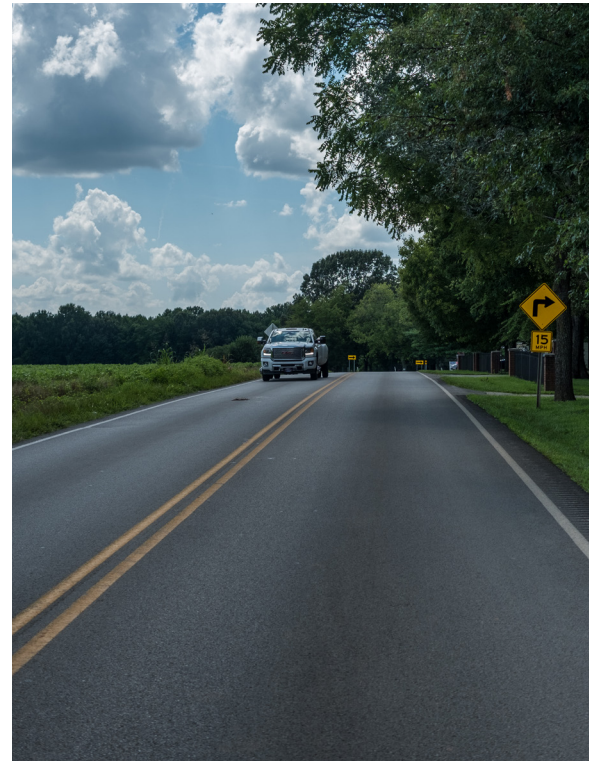
Bowling Green-Warren County

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. Additionally, a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies work, plans and studies to be undertaken throughout the fiscal year.



The infamous "S-curve," located on Plano Road, just south of the William H. Natcher Parkway interchange. The MPO’s FY17 UPWP identifies the execution of a Comprehensive Traffic Study along this corridor from Scottsville Road (US 231) to Richpond Road (KY 242). As growth continues in this part of Warren County, land use and transportation planners in our area are seeking to accommodate this growth and provide a framework for the work and development that lies ahead.

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Oslo, Norway seeks to ban private cars from the city center by 2019, as an initiative to slash greenhouse gas emissions. This street in Oslo supports travel for trams, cars, bicycles and pedestrians.

A Look at Transit

GO bg & WKU Transit reflect on recent study

Earlier this summer, on behalf of the MPO, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff completed a [Transit Needs Assessment and Route Realignment Study](#) analyzing the current transit routes and the areas served by GO bg Transit and WKU's Topper Transit. The overarching focus of the study looked at improving access to jobs and job training resources, providing service to medical and social services sites, as well as streamlining routes between GO bg and Topper Transit for more direct and efficient services. The consultants evaluated demographic characteristics of Warren County, including population and employment densities; poverty; car ownership; minority, foreign born and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations; and then conducted a transit propensity analysis. Pairing the demographic data with a propensity analysis allowed the firm to analyze travel patterns, identify trips most likely to be made by transit and identify gaps in the current transit system. The complete analysis resulted in recommended realignment scenarios to improve the service and efficiency of the route systems.



Topper Transit and GO bg Transit utilize a ride-sharing program to offer students a more cohesive service between Main Campus, South Campus and services throughout the Bowling Green community.

Though GO bg and Topper Transit already coordinate services, the study proposed additional ways to fully capitalize on the connections of the two existing transit systems. Dr. Jennifer Tougas of WKU Parking and Transportation stated that "Both systems have limited resources and have core missions to serve the WKU students, in the case of Topper Transit, and the Bowling Green Community, in the case of GO bg. Topper Transit concentrates service between South Campus and Main Campus. By tying into these existing routes, GO bg is able to design their routes to extend further into the surrounding community rather than duplicating service WKU is already providing. Topper Transit takes care of the transportation piece between South Campus and Main Campus; GO bg takes care of the Campbell Lane residential and commercial corridor. It works great for WKU students, too, because students can have better access to both campus and community facilities." GO bg and Topper Transit plan to use the results of this study to help plan for the future of the public transportation system and to serve the needs of WKU and the Bowling Green community as a whole.

In response to the study, Ken Merideth of GO bg added, "The proposed route changes [from the study] look great on paper, but with all changes to service we need to be sure we are not removing existing service from community partners, employment locations and other presently served locations. The more linear route designs should provide reduced ride time. Services between WKU and SKYCTC will be improved, as well as extended services to Lovers Lane, due to the relocation of many medical and essential services in that area."

The Cycling City

Earlier this summer, I spent some time traveling around Scandinavia. With a profession in transportation planning and a passion to learn how a people and place function cohesively, I couldn't help but analyze the way one Swedish city relished in their history, yet embraced a transportation system of modernity.

In Lund, Sweden – a small university town about 40 miles from Copenhagen, Denmark – students, seniors, visitors and citizens flock to the city's cycling paths, and not for exercise. Lund – a city thick with history, founded sometime around 990 by the Danes – hasn't always been a city of cycling, but has always seemed to be a city of innovation and leadership. From being home to a Swedish king in 1716 to being elevated as the archbishopric of the Nordic countries in 1103/1104, it seems Lund has experienced everything from power, to war, fire, plague, academic acclaim and now growth.

In 1971, the "Municipality of Lund" was adopted, and in the same year, city officials closed the city center to traffic. However, bicycles were still allowed. For nearly 45 years, Lund has been actively working toward sustainable transport. Somewhere in the midst, city planners got serious about implementing these efforts and thus developed a series of cycling paths, essentially bike highways. As nearly half the population of Lund commutes by bicycle, bike highways are being developed across the region to not only protect riders, but to provide and encourage a safe travelway to those choosing two wheels over four. Additionally, thousands of bike parking spaces sprawl across the community and a comprehensive public transportation system further connects destinations in and out of the municipality.

With an ambitious endeavor for cycling to dominate transportation infrastructure, planners have been challenged to provide safe and reliable transportation for all users. One article stated that despite the spike in bike commuters, cycling accidents have actually declined. This has been attributed to the vast construction of cycling paths, revised signal systems and overall awareness of motorists to share the road with their two-wheeled friends. It's inevitable to ask the question, what's going on and what makes my community so different? Besides the obviousness of the cobblestoned streets, foreign language and geographic location, one researcher from Lancaster University concluded that "While Americans still view bicycling as a form of exercise or recreation, a tectonic shift in attitudes has taken place in many parts of Europe, where people now regard bicycling [and walking] as a serious form of urban mass transportation...Many people barely recognize the bicycle as a legitimate mode of transport; it is either a toy for children or a vehicle fit only for the poor and/or strange." Though there are many reasons, observations, assumptions and/or conclusions that can be made regarding the bicycling phenomenon, this is just one. There are countless studies, articles, statistics and even regulations that are pushing communities across the United States to incorporate more alternative modes of transportation. It was both refreshing and hopeful to experience firsthand how Lund has evolved their transportation infrastructure, and therefore endured a social change and cultural dependence on multimodal transportation.



One of the many cycling paths traveling outside the urban core of Lund, through agricultural fields and windmill farms, commencing several miles later along the coast of Sweden.

Current Happenings

KYTC: Summer is a busy time for road crews across Warren County, as it (typically) accounts for warm and dry weather. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is in full swing with its biggest project in Warren County being the continued construction of the I-65 to US 31-W connector road, in the northern part of the county. Progression is being made by Scotty's Contracting & Stone as dirt moving operations continue, road grade building moves forward and bridge construction is underway. The project is expected to be completed in November of 2017.

Several resurfacing projects are in the works as well. Glen Lily Road resurfacing will be wrapping up soon, with resurfacing on University Drive, near Western Kentucky University, to begin thereafter. A micro resurfacing project for US 231 (Scottsville Rd) from Alvaton into Allen County is expected to start in late July. However, resurfacing and road construction are only among a few of the items KYTC is working on this summer. A new traffic signal was recently installed on US 68/KY 80 (Russellville Road) at the intersection with Woodmont Avenue to improve safety for those turning into and out of the large residential area.

Additionally, a public meeting concerning a widening project on US 31-W from the Warren/Simpson County line to Buchanan Park is scheduled for **Thursday, July 28** from **4 PM to 6 PM at Woodburn Baptist Church**. If you have any comments or concerns related to this project, you are invited and encouraged to attend the meeting!

Bowling Green Public Works: The City of Bowling Green Public Works Department is finalizing the property acquisition for the Smallhouse Road Widening Phase I Project (Campbell Lane to Highland Way). Gas line relocation for this project began in early spring of 2016 and will wrap up by the end of the summer. Following this, crews are hopeful to begin construction on the widening and associated storm sewer and waterline relocation in late summer, contingent upon property acquisition completion. Additionally in the works for late summer, the City will proceed with survey and design on the second phase of the Smallhouse Road Widening Project.



This section of Gordon Avenue, from Double Springs Road to Dollar General, will be repaved in FY17, as part of the City's approved budget for road repavement.



US 31W (Nashville Road), near Buchanan Park, traveling south toward Simpson County. KYTC is preparing for a widening project along this portion of roadway.

The FY16 Annual Paving contract, which began in April, will wrap up in late summer as well, with a new contract anticipated to start shortly thereafter. The City has selected a number of streets to be paved in FY17 based on a \$2M budget approved by the City Commission. This is the largest budget dedicated to paving city streets, to date, and City officials anticipate completing more than 15 miles of paving with these funds.

One major focus of the City Public Works Department is the continual improvement of the sidewalk network throughout Bowling Green. The City has started survey and design of approximately 9,500 linear feet of new sidewalk as part of the fiscal year 2017 sidewalk construction program. This year, several locations that will see new sidewalks are: Morgantown Road (Old Morgantown Rd to Festival Dr), Logan Way (Chestnut St to Cabell Dr), Gordon Avenue (Double Springs Rd to Pearl St) and South Sunrise Drive (Old Morgantown Rd to Morgantown Rd). The FY16 sidewalk construction will near completion later this summer and into early fall, boasting an additional 8,000 feet of new sidewalk along city streets.

Warren County Public Works:

A typical July work schedule at the Warren County Road Department would consist of right-of-way mowing, ditch and shoulder work, and preparation for road re-surfacing. However, July 2016 has been anything but typical. According to KY Mesonet, over 8 inches of rain has fallen across the county and brought severe thunderstorms and straight line winds with it. Road crews have been focused on cleaning up over fifty downed trees, many of which had roads completely blocked. In addition, road culverts and ditch lines have become blocked by debris and leaves, and are currently being removed. Due to the increased rainfall, right-of-way mowing was put on hold for close to a week, but crews are back at it and working diligently to keep the fast growing grass at bay.

In addition to regular maintenance and duties of the County, prioritization of road re-surfacing for County roads is near complete, pending Flex Fund appropriation. Citizens should anticipate work to begin in all six magisterial districts by October.



BG in Motion

Greenways Commission working toward safety and support

The Greenways Commission works throughout Warren County to develop walking and biking pathways that provide safe connections to desired destinations across the community. The Greenways staff and board collaborate with members of our community to build awareness and support, as well as to identify areas in need of connections and/or multimodal improvements. Recent work on behalf of the Greenways has been active participation in the development of the **Cave Country Trails** – a long-term master plan aimed to link trails in the four counties surrounding Mammoth Cave. The National Park Service has spearheaded this endeavor, which has helped identify and map potential trails, trail towns and community assets in Warren County and beyond.

Through a grant funded by the Kentucky Department for Public Health along with a local match, the Commission successfully wrapped up the **West End Walk & Ride** study in June, 2016. The project committee worked with stakeholders in the West End neighborhood to identify four independent projects that would improve pedestrian/cyclist safety and accessibility. The committee interacted with numerous residents in the area that expressed their safety concerns for pedestrians, as many of these residents walk to and from their daily destinations.

The Greenways Commission is encouraging all schools to participate in the national Walk/Bike to School Day, scheduled for October 5, 2016, or any day throughout October. If you would like your school to be added to the national map, organize a **Walk/Bike to School** event at your school – give us a call if you need help getting started!



Parker Bennett Community Center partnered with the Bowling Green Police Department in July to hold a Bike Safety Day. The Bike Rodeo Kit was used to teach children safe bicycle skills.

Additionally, as part of a Bicycle Pedestrian Public Safety Program, funded by the Paula Nye Memorial Grant program, the Greenways Commission is taking measures to educate residents of all ages about bicycle and pedestrian safety. Just a few of these efforts include the development of a bicyclist comfort level map, a public service announcement to be aired across several mediums, a pedestrian safety brochure and a bike rodeo kit, which provides equipment for a bicycle skills clinic. The bike rodeo kit is available to use throughout the community. If you're interested in hosting an event, please **contact us!**

Work will commence on a multimodal plan for the Bowling Green area, as identified in the FY2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The plan will consider existing studies (such as the Greenways Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Downtown Circulation Study and GO by Transit Studies) and will offer implementation strategies to make walking and cycling safer in our community. Stay tuned for more information as work progresses.

Upcoming Meetings

	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.
MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE <i>Meets 4th Mon. at 1:00 P.M.</i>	25th	22nd	26th
MPO POLICY COMMITTEE <i>Meets 2nd Mon. of new quarter at 9:00 A.M.</i>	11th	No Mtg.	No Mtg.
GREENWAYS COMMISSION <i>Meets 1st Mon. at 4:00 P.M.</i>	11th	1st	TBD

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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