

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.

Among other ongoing work, the MPO is focusing efforts on the development of the Governor’s 2018 Recommended Highway Plan. Available transportation funds are scarce, however the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has created a new approach to set priorities – SHIFT (Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow), a data-driven prioritization process developed to objectively and collaboratively determine Kentucky’s transportation funding priorities. The current highway plan assures more than \$6 billion in unfunded transportation projects, with the project “wish list” estimated at ten-times greater than

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the available state funds. SHIFT enables Highway District Offices, Area Development Districts and MPOs to select a set number of transportation projects to sponsor based on quantitative data measured by KYTC. These sponsored projects may be in the existing Highway Plan or may be selected from a project “wish list” developed by the various agencies, to later be ranked through collaboration with local transportation agencies and local leaders. Once developed, the Governor’s Recommended Highway Plan will be presented to the 2018 General Assembly.



Travelers on Scottsville Road, looking north near the intersection with Woodhurst Street.

# Transit Collaboration Opportunities for Work Access Pass Program

Over the past few years, many medical and civic services have relocated to various locations throughout Bowling Green. In light of this, GO bg Transit has been forced to analyze their route system to identify gaps, ridership counts and ways to accommodate to the needs of the community dependent on public transportation. GO bg recently added Route #6 (Pink Line) to the transit network in response to many of these needs, which has proved to be successful thus far. The agency is also working in close coordination with Western Kentucky University's Topper Transit to maximize efficiency between routes provided by both agencies, in order to adequately serve the needs of the WKU and Bowling Green community. While Topper Transit primarily serves WKU's Main and South campuses, GO bg is able to reach medical, civic, community and retail services. The respective transit providers have been working over the last few months to develop a more cohesive system, with streamlined routes and easier transfer locations. Topper Transit seeks to continually encourage WKU students, faculty and staff to not only utilize their park and ride services, but also to use GO bg for additional connections and travel. Route maps displaying the new route realignments will be published this spring and will represent both transit providers and transfer locations.



One of the route connection locations on State Street at 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

GO bg Transit additionally supports a **Work Access Pass Program (WAPP)**. This is a new program offered by GO bg to provide up to six months of FREE unlimited GO bg transit rides for approved participants. The program is open to anyone living and working in the city of Bowling Green who meets the program requirements. WAPP essentially provides free transportation for working people who do not have access to their jobs, and encourages residents to work a minimum of 22 hours per week, as explained through the program requirements.

There are currently opportunities for additional riders to participate. To apply, individuals should meet the requirements and bring proof of employment and a photo ID to the Transit Center located at 304 East 11th Avenue.



Topper Transit serves students during the first week of the Spring 2017 semester.

## Moving Forward

President Donald Trump's infrastructure plan, released in October 2016, budgets \$1 trillion for highway and bridge projects, and emphasizes tax cuts to private-sector investors.

Before leaving his position, the previous Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Foxx, proposed several recommendations for where our nation's transportation leaders should focus their efforts. They all addressed the issue of a **growing America**, which in turn means more congested roadways in and around urban areas, and beyond. The **US Census Bureau** projects that by 2045, America's population will grow by more than 70 million, creating a population of nearly 395 million Americans in the next 28 years. In case you're wondering, that's roughly 2.5 million people settling on American soil every year (be it immigration or birth).

Just like many of the urban areas across the nation, Bowling Green and Warren County continue to experience this growth trend. According to **2015 estimates**, Warren County held a population of 122,851 - that's a 33% growth rate from the 2000 Census. And by the year 2050, the County is expected to surpass a population of 200,000. To further support these numbers, the City-County Planning Commission (CCPC) has seen a substantial increase of development, primarily in apartment and mixed-use complexes. In fact, in the last five years, the CCPC has approved plans for 5,629 new apartment units, with 2016 making up 35% of the total. Additionally, 1,015 single family lots were also authorized by the CCPC from 2012 to 2016, with 2016 making up 42% of all approvals.

With the changing housing trends and urbanized growth both locally and nationally, our roadways will continue to face considerable amounts of congestion and failed mobility. As more and more people begin to migrate to our nation's urban areas, how will our infrastructure hold up? Where will traffic worsen and how will we combat safety concerns? Will the ways we travel change? Locally, the MPO is seeking to address these concerns by encouraging mixed-use developments – looking for ways to increase pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, supporting increased transit ridership, and finding ways to make logical connections to and from places to live, work, and play.

Foxx has been and continues to push for greater use of public transit. Having a secure transit system also means providing safe "first mile and last mile" accessibility to transit stops. Supporting a healthy transit system often means supporting safe(r) bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It's not solely about providing alternative transportation for people who cannot drive or do not own a vehicle, but as Foxx emphasizes, it's about providing alternative means of travel for people who need and want to travel by bicycle, walking, or public transit. America is growing and in some places developing faster than the infrastructure can provide, causing countless issues. Many wonder and fear what **President Trump's** "transforming America's crumbling infrastructure into a golden opportunity for accelerated economic growth and more rapid productivity gains" might mean for our nation's infrastructure. With a much larger, and greatly needed proposed infrastructure budget, we can cross our fingers and be hopeful that it means innovatively moving forward with our transportation system, and not simply providing short-term fixes for long-term growth.

# What's Happening in Warren County?

## Bowling Green Public Works

The [City of Bowling Green](#) Public Works Department has several projects currently underway. Though many construction projects slow down or even come to a halt in the winter months, Phase I construction on the Smallhouse Road widening project commenced in December 2016. This section of roadway, from Campbell Lane through the intersection of Highland Way, will be reconstructed to a 3-lane roadway with an 8-foot multi-use path on one side. Currently, utility relocation is underway and construction crews have begun work on retention basins necessary for the stormwater retention on the project. It is expected that construction on Phase I of this project will continue throughout late summer 2017. Meanwhile, the Smallhouse Road Phase II design, from Highland Way through Ridgecrest Way, began in December 2016. With preliminary designs being complete in the next few months, the City will hold a public meeting in February to share the plans for necessary improvements along this portion of roadway.

Additionally, the City will be installing a new traffic signal on Cave Mill Road at Crossings Boulevard to address traffic congestion and access management issues at this location. Construction to accommodate the new signal will begin in February, with the signal under operation by later this spring.

Each fiscal year, the City enacts a roadway Overlay Program dedicated to repaving city streets in need of repair; the current fiscal year's work is approximately 50% complete. Roadway paving to complete the FY17 program's budget will resume in early spring to complete nearly fifteen miles of pavement rehabilitation. As part of this contract, the City replaced 57 handicap ramps along the proposed paved routes to bring them into ADA compliancy. With the recent completion of the City's ADA Transition Plan inventorying locations and conditions of sidewalks and ramps, Public Works will continue working to bring additional handicap ramps into compliancy.

With this, the City's annual Sidewalk Construction Program will resume construction in February to build approximately 2,200 linear feet of sidewalk along Gordon Avenue and Morgantown Road. More sidewalk projects funded through the City's sidewalk funds are slated for construction later this spring along Warren Way, South Sunrise Drive, Hogle Drive and Logan Way.



Construction gets underway on the Smallhouse Road widening project, Phase I, from Campbell Lane through the Highland Way intersection.

## Warren County Public Works

As with the other transportation agencies working throughout the county, the [Warren County](#) Road Department is anxiously anticipating the onset of winter weather and in preparation, has equipped all dump trucks with snow plows and salt spreaders. The Road Department works diligently upon the forecast of inclement weather to pretreat historically problematic areas such as steep hills and hidden intersections with calcium chloride to aid in safer roadways for motorists. New this season to the Warren County fleet is the addition of  $\frac{3}{4}$ - and 1-ton trucks equipped with smaller plows and salt spreaders. The Parks and Recreation Department operates the new fleet, however, will seek to provide shared services with the Road Department to clear snow in residential subdivisions, as needed. Primarily, the new fleet of trucks will be utilized to clear entrances and parking lots for county fire stations, and other county-owned buildings. The goal for this addition is to maintain normal governmental functions regardless of weather, by having the ability to clear parking lots and providing safer accessibility for employees and patrons.

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## Kentucky Transportation Cabinet - District 3

Though winter has yet to settle in, the KYTC District 3 is in full winter mode. Thus far, our area has experienced two minor winter events, in which District 3 crews were out treating the roadways to prevent treacherous conditions. With the last few winters bringing heavy snowfall and ice throughout February and March, and uncertain of what the coming months will bring, crews stand ready to work to keep the roads safe regardless of the conditions. District 3 encourages the public to follow District 3 social media accounts on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) at KYTCDISTRICT3 for real-time information during winter storm events.

Additionally, the KYTC announced the adoption of the new GoKY travel system several months ago. This new system replaces the outdated KY511. Motorists can now go to [GoKY.ky.gov](#) to get real-time travel information such as road construction or crashes resulting in travel delays, helping motorists avoid these situations. With the convenience of the mobile-friendly website, there is no longer a need to dial a number or download an app to obtain these services. Particularly during inclement weather, the map is continually updated with current county treatment statuses and road conditions. The website enables users to view travel information from counties across the state of Kentucky.



# BG in Motion

Preparing projects, planning for the future & encouraging more activity

Just as the MPO has begun work on prioritizing highway projects, the Greenways Commission Working Committee is well underway to ranking their top ten bicycle/pedestrian projects for the community. Committee members worked diligently to establish a formula based on various attributes from accessibility to parks and schools to population density and closing gaps between existing greenway trails. After many modifications of the formula, the project that has received the highest rank thus far is to build a greenway along Industrial Drive. The conceptual project would connect the greenway at WKU's South Campus from Campbell Lane to Dishman Lane, then continue onto connect to the existing trail at Lost River Cave. Though a ranked project does not ensure funding for the construction of a project, the ranking procedure does provide the Greenways Commission with a data-driven process which helps create a strong grant application when opportunities for funding arise.



Patrons walk on the greenway located along Cemetery Road. This trail provides a connection between other greenways trails at Kereiakes Park and along Lovers Lane.

As mentioned in previous newsletter issues, the MPO is in the midst of working with consultants to create a Multimodal Implementation Plan that considers bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users alike. The study will be completed by June 2017, with an opportunity for you to provide input on your multimodal-related desires for our community in the coming months. Stay tuned and visit [bggreenways.com](http://bggreenways.com) for updated information on how to get involved and to view safe routes for biking and walking in Bowling Green!

Additionally, the Greenways Commission has partnered with the City of Bowling Green, who was funded a \$177,474 Transportation Alternatives Program grant from the KYTC, to construct a new greenway path at the rear of Moss Middle School on Russellville Road. The approximately ¼ mile greenway will provide a connection to the existing greenway on Creekwood Drive, linking the nearby subdivision, and will provide a safe route for students to walk or bike to school. Construction of this trail will add to the existing 20 miles of greenways trails within Bowling Green. The project is currently in the engineering design phase. Plans to provide an additional connection to the new elementary school, to be built next to Moss Middle School, are being reviewed by KYTC.

## Cave Country Trails

Are you a fan of Mammoth Cave National Park? Or interested in regional multimodal connections? Cave Country Trails is hosting a Strategic Planning Meeting on February 9th from 4:00 – 6:00 PM at the Cave City Convention Center. Cave Country Trails is a nonprofit organization whose vision is to create a larger network of trails connecting communities in the Mammoth Cave area with hiking, biking, walking, and equestrian and water trails. They have been working to create regional maps and connections within the Park area, with the upcoming meeting reviewing and getting input on trails in and around Warren County. To learn more, visit their [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) page.

## Upcoming Meetings

	FEB.	MAR.	APR.
<b>MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b> <i>Meets 4th Mon. at 1:00 P.M.*</i>	27th	27th	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>	10th
<b>GREENWAYS COMMISSION</b> <i>Meets 1st Mon. at 4:00 P.M.</i>	6th	6th	3rd

\*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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