

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

On August 10, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU authorized the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the five-year period 2005-09.

SAFETEA-LU requires the development and update of a long-range transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon. The transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an

integrated multi-modal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The purpose of the long-range transportation plan is to describe the transportation improvements envisioned for the next twenty years. It serves as a guide for the LCATS Policy Committee in making decisions regarding transportation improvements within the LCATS Service area. Federal Transportation Legislation requires an approved Long-Range Transportation Plan in order to receive federal transportation funding.

ROLE OF THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

History MPOs

In the early 1970s, the United States Congress passed legislation that required the formation of an MPO for any Urbanized Area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000. Congress created MPOs in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive ("3-C") planning process.

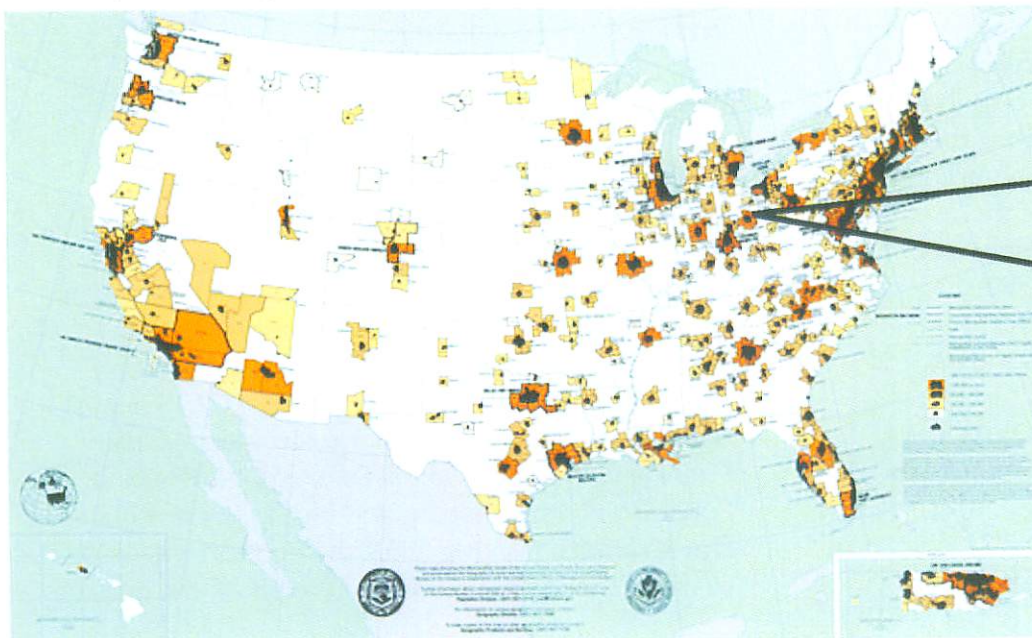
- The term continuing reflects the ongoing nature of the planning process. MPO planning programs are routinely updated to address current and future socio-economic and environmental conditions impacting regional transportation conditions.
- Cooperative references the effort to include all regional transportation stakeholders (public, private, and governmental) in the MPO

transportation decision-making process.

- Comprehensive means the MPO planning programs address persons and goods movement for all transportation modes.

The premise behind the federal planning regulations is that the complexity of transportation problems, the range of potential solutions, and the number of agencies involved in operating and maintaining transportation systems in urbanized areas requires an enhanced level of coordination and cooperation among the area's transportation stakeholders. MPOs provide a forum where regional transportation stakeholders collaboratively assess regional transportation issues and identify optimal solutions meeting the area's travel needs.

Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process. In 2005, there were 385 MPOs in the U.S.



Primary MPO Planning Documents

Transportation Plan - The formal MPO planning document describing the transportation policies, programs and projects needed to facilitate the efficient movement of persons and goods within and through the region for 20 years into the future. Plan development includes consideration of the interrelationships among transportation systems, *land use*, and the social, economic, and natural environments. The plan must address all transportation modes and be fiscally constrained. Transportation Plans in poor air quality areas must also demonstrate transportation conformity with the official State plan for meeting and maintaining national air quality standards.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - A listing of the specific transportation system improvement projects scheduled for implementation within the MPO boundary over the next four years. All projects financed with US DOT surface transportation funding, regardless of project sponsor, must be listed in the MPO TIP. Projects must be consistent with the MPO's Transportation Plan. Project information includes project phase, federal funds type, and costs by Federal, State, and local participation rates. ODOT practice is to also include 100% State funded projects into TIPs. MPO TIPs are directly incorporated into the State TIP (STIP). See <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/planning/STIP/Stip.htm> for additional Ohio STIP/TIP information.

ORGANIZATION OF LCATS

LCATS, an MPO

LCATS, the Licking County Area Transportation Study, is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Newark Ohio Urbanized Area. LCATS is one of seventeen (17) MPOs in Ohio.

A metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making committee that State Governors formally designate as the body responsible for conducting an urbanized area's transportation planning process. In Ohio, this committee is typically referred to as a Policy Committee. At a minimum, the Policy Committee is comprised of:

- Local elected officials
- Operators of major modes of transportation, and
- State transportation officials

History of LCATS

The Newark Ohio urbanized area, originally called the Newark-Heath Urbanized Area, was organized in response to the 1980 U.S. Census identifying the urban area as having reached the 50,000-population threshold. Following the requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and the Clean Air Act of 1990, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) requested the officials of the City of Newark, the City of Heath and Licking County form a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). As a result, the Licking County Area Transportation Study (LCATS) was formed.

The original designation of LCATS was made per
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Section 450.306
Metropolitan
Planning
Organization:
Designation and
Re-designation,
from the Federal
Register dated Oct.
28, 1993, 23 CFR
Part 450 and 49
CFR Part 613. The
section stated that
"Designations of
MPO's made after
Dec. 18, 1991, shall
be made by agreement among the governor(s) and units
of general purpose local governments representing 75% of
the affected metropolitan population including the central
cities as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, or in
accordance with the procedures established by state or
local law."



Prior to ISTEA the MPO existed, but did not employ staff. Decision-making was governed by the Mayor of Newark, the Mayor of Heath, the Licking County Engineer, and a representative of ODOT District 5. For the most part, the MPO's effort at that time consisted of producing a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on an annual basis. Federal Transportation dollars were given to the MPO only on an as-needed basis. On July 1, 1993, LCATS began operation as the newest and smallest Metropolitan Planning Organization in the State of Ohio. The first Policy Committee meeting was held in July of 1993. Due to limited planning funds, the decision was made to hire a Transportation Study Director as the only

full-time staff member. LCATS remaining three part-time staff members were full-time members of the Licking County Planning Commission (LCPC). Shortly thereafter, and continuing today, LCATS staff includes three full-time employees. LCATS also continues to share the services of an administrative assistant.

LCATS Urbanized Area

Since 1980, the urbanized area has grown and, as of the 2000 U.S. Census, now includes the Cities of Newark and Heath, the Villages of Granville, Hanover, Hebron, Buckeye Lake, and Millersport, located in Fairfield County, along with portions of the unincorporated areas of Licking County connecting the municipal areas.

LCATS Study Area

The study area now encompasses Licking County, excluding Etna Township, the cities of Pataskala and Reynoldsburg, and including the Village of Millersport in Fairfield County as shown in the map below. Etna Township and the cities of Pataskala and Reynoldsburg are included in the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Columbus Ohio Urbanized Area.

LCATS, the Organization

The Policy Committee of LCATS, as the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making, is comprised of at least 51% locally-elected officials. LCATS eligible members include:

- Mayor of Newark
- Mayor of Heath
- A Licking County Commissioner

- Licking County Engineer
- City of Newark Transit Operations
- Representative from the Ohio Department of Transportation
- Mayor of Granville
- Mayor of Hebron
- Mayor of Buckeye Lake
- Mayor of Hanover
- Mayor of Millersport
- Representative from the Licking County Transit Board

The Policy Committee is assisted by a Technical Advisory Committee. LCATS eligible representatives include:

- Newark City Engineer
- Heath City Zoning Inspector
- Licking County Engineer
- City of Newark Transit Operation
- ODOT District 5
- Village of Granville Planner
- Village of Hebron Administrator
- Village of Buckeye Lake representative
- Village of Millersport representative
- Licking County Transit Board Manager
- Licking County Planning Commission Director
- Newark Area Chamber of Commerce
- Transportation Sub-Committee

A Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Committee also assists with multi-modal transportation decisions. A GIS Committee was formed in August 2007 to provide specific guidance to the Policy Committee on GIS issues and to create a forum for sharing GIS data, resources and successes.

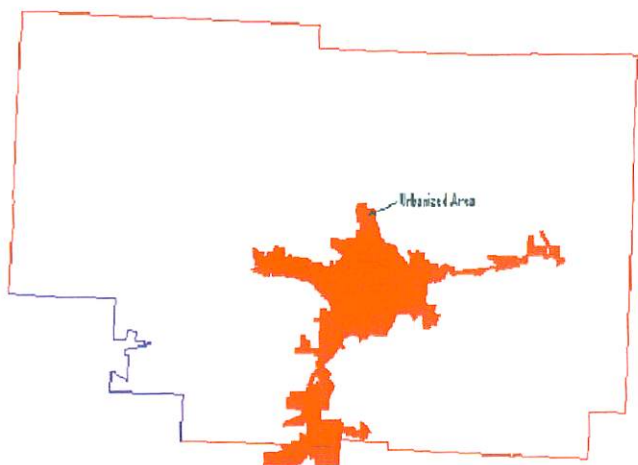


FIGURE I: LCATS Urbanized Area

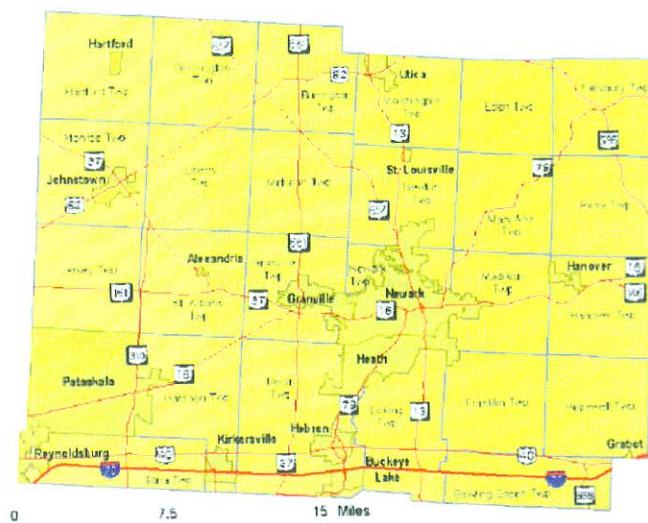


FIGURE II: LCATS Study Area