
CHAPTER EIGHT - TRANSPORTATION

This chapter references the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as the Transportation Chapter of Horizon 2020, reflects the goals of the MTP as adopted, and presents a brief explanation of the regional transportation planning process conducted in Douglas County by the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO) and how that regional transportation planning program relates to the land use planning activities conducted by the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Commission. This chapter also explains how both transportation planning and land use planning for the area are documented in the regional comprehensive plan.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The MTP, currently titled Transportation 2030 Lawrence Douglas County Long-Range Transportation Plan (T2030), is a document produced and approved by the L-DC MPO. The MTP sets regional transportation policies and it articulates goals and objectives for the creation of a multi-modal transportation system that complements land use plans, economic development plans, environmental plans, parks and open space plans, and other comprehensive plan elements for the region. The MTP assists state and local government agencies in improving the quality of life for area residents by developing a safe and efficient transportation system. The library of L-DC MPO documents, including the MTP, along with a description of the MPO process can be found on the web at <http://www.lawrencecks.org/pds/MPO>.

In addition to the regional scale planning policies found in the MTP which show major transportation corridors and services in a systematic way, there are smaller scale planning and design issues that are also important to the safe and efficient development of a multi-modal transportation system. Although many of these detailed items are more traffic engineering concerns than planning level issues, it is important to note that some items that need to be included in the transportation element of a comprehensive plan are not included in the MTP. However, the MTP does reference the need for corridor and access management and other traffic engineering items designed to protect the operational integrity of the major roads in the region. This is important to support system planning for the regional multi-modal transportation system that is described in the MTP. For this reason, the state and local policies that address traffic engineering and transportation planning need to be used along with this chapter and the MTP in the review of proposed developments and infrastructure improvements. Local development codes should be supportive of the transportation planning policies set forth in this chapter and in the MTP.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Transportation Goals and detailed Objectives are provided in T2030, Chapter 4. A summary of the Goal Statements are included in this chapter:

GOAL 1: — Support the Economic Vitality of the Region

Approve guidelines that enhance economic activity and foster the principles of accessibility, convenience, cooperation, and aesthetic character.

~~GOAL 2: Maintain, Expand and Enhance the Existing Transportation Network~~

~~Advance policies that promote roadway connectivity and expand multimodal services.~~

~~GOAL 3: Promote Efficient System Management and Operation~~

~~— Create policies that promote transportation system management, efficient operation, multimodal transportation, and access management standards.~~

~~GOAL 4: Protect the Environment and Promote Energy Conservation~~

~~— Preserve the environment by adopting criteria that promote smart growth patterns to help sustain healthy air quality levels and minimize land use conflicts.~~

~~GOAL 5: Emphasize Transportation System Safety~~

~~— Develop criteria that focus on the safety aspect of projects and require that the safety element of projects be addressed properly before approval is considered.~~

~~GOAL 6: Increase Transportation System Security~~

~~— Increase the ability of the transportation system to support homeland security and to safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized system users.~~

~~GOAL 7: Coordinate Land Use and Transportation~~

~~— Ensure that land use planning and transportation planning is coordinated.~~

~~GOAL 8: Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation System~~

~~— Establish an integrated system of bicycle and pedestrian improvements that provides for safe and efficient connections throughout the community, and offers viable choices of travel.~~

~~GOAL 9: Public Transportation System~~

~~— Implement a coordinated public transportation system that offers a viable choice of travel that addresses the needs of individuals and the community as a whole.~~

Detailed Action Steps are provided in the subsequent chapters of the MTP and a summary of actions and policies is provided in Chapter 16: Implementation of the Transportation Plan.

MPO PLANNING PROCESS

The MPO transportation planning process is designed to provide a regional forum for decision-making for the development and operation of a multi-modal transportation system designed to provide safe and efficient mobility for all of the region's residents and businesses. Coordination and information sharing among jurisdictions are important elements of MPO activities. The L-DC MPO covers the entirety of Douglas County including the three smaller cities (Baldwin City, Eudora, and Lecompton) which are not included in or approving bodies for this comprehensive land use plan and may produce their own land use plans.

The MPO planning process is called the 3-C (Continuing, Comprehensive, Cooperative) process. It is a continuing process that does not end when a new transportation plan document is approved. The MPO produces a new transportation plan at least once every five years (may change to every four years in the foreseeable future due to air quality issues), but as soon as a new plan is approved the MPO begins to work on related documents and improvements to put in the next edition of the transportation plan. The MPO process is comprehensive in that it views transportation system planning as one part of a larger planning process where various types of planning (transportation, land use, environmental, economic, etc.) work together to improve the quality of life for all people in the region. Transportation planning is intricately tied together with land use planning since much of the planning for mobility corridors is predicated on the types and intensities of land uses planned along those routes. Likewise, the land uses planned for an area depend on the access afforded by the transportation network. Transportation and land use planning have a symbiotic relationship. MPO activities are also part of a cooperative process involving several different government agencies and an ample amount of public review. Two federal agencies (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Agency), the Kansas Department of Transportation, Douglas County, and the four city governments in Douglas County all participate in the MPO process and its committee meetings. This regional transportation planning process is open to the public which is welcome to attend meetings and encouraged to send comments about transportation planning issues to the MPO staff.

SUMMARY

This chapter of the Lawrence-Douglas County Comprehensive Plan establishes the current version of the MTP as the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. The MTP is the transportation policy guide for comprehensive planning activities to be used in the local and regional policy decision-making process.