
Chapter 1:

Introduction

The Fayette/Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization (FRMPO) was organized in 2012, pursuant to federal requirements, upon the release of 2010 U.S. Census data designating parts of Fayette and Raleigh counties combined as an urbanized area. Its responsibility is to provide a coordinated, cooperative, and comprehensive approach to transportation planning for an area that encompasses all of Fayette and Raleigh counties.

This document is an update of the Fayette/Raleigh MPO's first regional transportation plan. It provides a 25-year blueprint for transportation investments in the region to the year 2045. This plan is multimodal, meaning it addresses travel by all modes on the transportation system including streets and highways, bikeways and walkways, public transportation, rail and aviation.

Consideration is given to population and employment trends, land development patterns, travel characteristics, current and future transportation system performance, and other planning factors. The Plan has been developed in consultation with the federal, state and local agencies responsible for environmental protection, land use management, natural resources, and historic preservation. The recommended Plan is also based on a series of stated community goals, financial capability, environmental considerations, and public guidance.

The Plan is organized into seven sections:

1 Introduction	Legal basis of the plan and planning requirements
2 Development Trends	Current and future demographic and development conditions
3 Goals, Objectives, and Performance	Guiding goals and objectives of the 2045 Plan, and Performance Based Planning Process
4 Analysis of the Transportation System	Current conditions and future needs of the transportation system
5 Recommended Plan and Funding	Proposed transportation investments for the 25-year period, and projected funding for their implementation
6 Potential Impacts	Assessment of the planned improvements on the physical and social environment
7 Public and Stakeholder Participation	Outreach, involvement and consultation during the planning effort

METROPOLITAN PLANNING

Federal law requires metropolitan areas (defined as urbanized areas with a population of greater than 50,000 people, based on the latest U.S. Census) undertake a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process. The Fayette/Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization is the governing entity that is charged with carrying out this process for a planning area that covers all of Fayette and Raleigh counties.

The planning area of the FRMPO, shown in **Figure 1-1**, extends to the county boundaries of both Fayette and Raleigh counties. The 2010 U.S. Census designated urbanized area is comprised of the Cities of Oak Hill and Mt. Hope and the Town of Fayetteville in Fayette County, and the City of Beckley and the Towns of Mabscott and Sophia in Raleigh County. Along with representatives from the two respective County Commissions, representatives of the municipalities in the designated urbanized area comprise the voting members of the FRMPO. Municipalities that are within the county boundaries, but outside of the urbanized area, are also within the planning area of the FRMPO and participate as non-voting members.

Organizational Structure

The MPO is led by a Policy Board that adopts formal plans, programs and budgets for the organization; a Technical Advisory Committee that provides recommendations to the Policy Board; and a professional staff drawn from the Region 1 and Region 4 Planning and Development Councils.

- **Policy Board**

The Policy Board of the MPO consists of representatives from each of the municipalities located within the planning area, representatives from each county commission, the Executive Directors of the Regional Planning and Development Councils for Regions 1 and 4, and the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

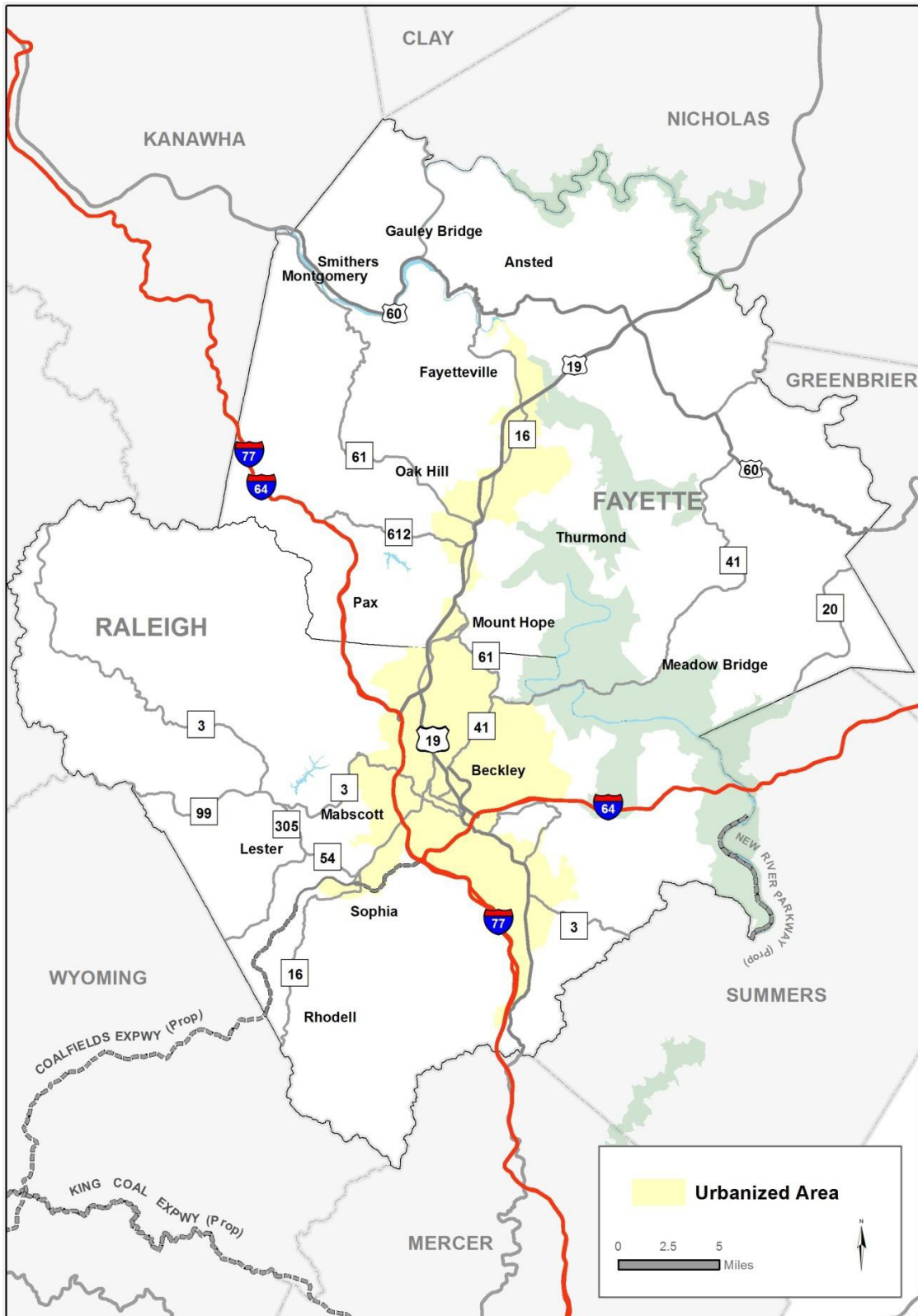
- **Technical Advisory Committee**

The MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is comprised of technical representatives (such as county engineers, city engineers/planners, etc.) from each of the counties, municipalities and transit organizations within the MPO region.

- **MPO Staff**

The MPO is staffed by several professionals at the Regional Planning and Development Councils who provide planning, GIS mapping and analysis, and administrative services for the agency. The MPO staff also functions as a liaison between the Policy Board, TAC, the West Virginia Department of Transportation, New River Transit Authority, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Authority, local governments, and other groups and individuals interested in transportation issues within the MPO planning region.

Figure 1-1: Fayette / Raleigh MPO Planning Area



LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLAN

Federal legislation provides the guiding framework that governs the transportation planning process for all MPOs. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the federal transportation legislation passed in 2016, requires that each MPO develop a transportation plan with at least a 20-year horizon that leads to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. The plan must be updated every four years to keep consistent with existing conditions and re-evaluate proposed plans, programs and projects. The full set of metropolitan planning requirements are codified in U.S. law (23 U.S. Code § 134).

Other requirements of the MPO planning process include compliance with a number of existing laws and regulations which are described below.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which mandates equal opportunity for, and prohibits discrimination against, individuals with disabilities. In particular, Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires State, local and regional agencies to provide transportation programs, services and activities that are accessible to all individuals;
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, and Section 324 of the Federal Aid Highway Act, the enabling legislation of the Federal Highway Administration, which prohibits discrimination based on sex;
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, which prohibits unfair and inequitable treatment of persons as a result of projects that are undertaken with federal financial assistance;
- The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, which clarified the intent of Title VI to include all programs and activities of federal aid recipients and contractors whether or not those programs and activities are federally-funded;
- Executive Order 12898, which reaffirms that each federal agency must make Environmental Justice part of its mission. Environmental Justice is a concept founded in the intent of the non-discrimination prohibitions of the federal legislation referenced above. Each agency (including the MPO, as a recipient of federal funds) must identify and address disproportionately high and/or adverse environmental or human health effects that any of its programs, policies and activities may have on minority and low-income populations. Further, each agency must work to prevent the denial, reduction or delay of benefits received by minority and low-income populations. Most importantly, each agency must develop policies and strategies to ensure full and fair participation by affected populations in transportation decisions.

The 2045 Plan reflects consideration of, and compliance with, the federal requirements of the FAST Act and all of the provisions described above.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of recommendations from the 2045 Plan occurs through the MPO Policy Board's action to program funds for regional transportation projects and services. The MPO, in consultation with the appropriate city, county, and state transportation agencies, determines which projects are to be advanced from the regional transportation plan into the MPO's short-term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The TIP is a planning/programming document developed and adopted by the MPO in response to area transportation needs. The TIP updates and advances a minimum four-year implementation program for all modes of transportation. This document includes not only major transportation projects such as construction of a new bridge or road, but also smaller-scale transportation improvements such as intersection improvements and sidewalks. All projects that are included in the TIP for funding and implementation must be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.

Amendments to the Regional Transportation Plan can and do occur once a plan has been adopted. These amendments can occur for various reasons, including a change in project schedule, unknown development changes, or changes in priorities. While the intent is to avoid such mid-cycle changes, amendments do occur. Any such amendment to the Plan must follow the same public review process and procedures that were used to adopt the Plan, as outlined in the MPO's Public Participation Plan.