

APPENDIX 2: Planning History and Approach

Dating back more than 40 years, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 was the beginning of metropolitan transportation planning as it is practiced today. The Act mandated that all urbanized areas (with a population greater than 50,000) establish a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process in order to be eligible to receive U. S. Department of Transportation funding.

Later, the 1974 Federal-Aid Highway Act refined the process by requiring the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), wherein governors of each state are to formally designate the local government entities that make up an MPO in each qualifying urbanized area. The 1974 Act further reinforced the process by providing grants to the MPOs for transportation planning.

Signed into law in December 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) is landmark legislation that introduced a comprehensive approach to transportation problems by emphasizing innovation, multi-modalism, and flexibility. It also forwarded to local governments more responsibilities, giving these entities a greater role in planning. The approach begun under ISTEA was continued in 1998 with the adoption of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

The concept of multi-modalism means that long-range transportation plans must address all available modes of transportation, including public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation modes in addition to automobile travel. Projects developed through the long-range transportation plan process should provide for an integrated mix of transportation modes, including those that would benefit the traditionally underserved.

Limited funding at the federal, state and local levels necessitates that transportation improvements be prioritized so that the costs of planned improvements are balanced with anticipated revenues, and so that the most needed transportation improvements are implemented in an orderly and timely manner. Long range transportation plans are required to have a planning horizon of 20 or more years, which provides a basic structure and overall goal for meeting the long-term transportation needs for the community. Since many factors influencing the development of the long range plan (such as demographics, forecast revenue, and project costs) change over time, long-range transportation plans are updated at least every five years (for non-attainment areas) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) every four years (SAFETEA-LU). These regular updates of the LRTP ensure that federal, state, and local dollars continue to flow to the community's most needed projects, while allowing flexibility to adjust to changing conditions and needs of the area.

This LRTP has been developed in accordance with the guidelines and objectives as outlined in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The LRTP has been developed through a close working relationship with the MPO technical staff, the LCVMPPO Policy Board, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Other area stakeholders and the general public were involved at specific points in the LRTP update development process.

On August 10, 2005, the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law, marking the largest surface transportation investment in U.S. history (over \$244 billion). SAFETEA-LU supplies funds to improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, improve efficiency in freight movement, increase intermodal connectivity, and protect the environment. Perhaps most important, an emphasis

remains in place concerning the programmatic structure for investing the dollars; requiring strategic project planning while allowing decision makers more flexibility for solving community-level transportation issues. Although SAFETEA-LU became law prior to the adoption of the LCVMPPO LRTP, the Plan was begun under the purview of TEA-21. As described in a September 2nd, 2005, FHWA document titled *Interim Guidance For Implementing Key SAFETEA-LU Provisions On Planning, Environment And Air Quality For Joint FHWA/FHT Authorities*, the LRTP for each MPO must be in full compliance with SAFETEA-LU by July 1, 2007. Accordingly, this LRTP needs only to be in compliance with TEA-21(until the next update).

However, it is worth noting that the LCVMPPO is already planning for and incorporating several of the new SAFETEA-LU activities and requirements. For example, the 2030 LRTP addresses, at least in part, the changes made to the transportation planning factors. Additionally, the LRTP already promotes coordination among agencies involved in other types of planning and promotes consistency with local land use and growth objectives. Finally, the MPO will continue the public involvement process that has been established, particularly with the use of visual displays at public meetings (as well as in the LRTP), and an informational web site that is updated regularly.

In summary, the Lewis Clark Valley MPO is responsible for identifying transportation improvement needs over the next 25 years through the Long Range Transportation Plan (2030 LRTP) and is responsible for updating the LRTP every five years to reflect changes in growth patterns and updates to revenue and traffic forecasts.

As has been experienced with other MPOs in the nation, the 2030 LRTP lists substantially more needed projects than available revenues to pay for them. It is important to recognize that through the work of the public involvement process, the MPO has prioritized critical transportation needs for funding and will continue to seek out policy changes and other strategies to address congestion and expand mobility throughout the planning area over the next 25 years.