



PLAN NEWS

Volume 16 Issue 3

December 2011

FEDERAL PLANNING CERTIFICATION

The DMMPC hosted their federal planning certification review on October 18-19, 2011 with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) participating. Our planning practices were reviewed and suggestions were made on how we could improve them. A formal report will be provided by the end of 2011.

With the help of MITS, we took the group on a tour of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) sites, discussing completed, current and future planned improvements on the second day.

We finished the review at the October Administrative Committee (policy) meeting with Technical Advisory Committee members in attendance. FHWA asked that the local Administrative Committee be renamed the Policy Committee and be updated to have a majority of voting members be elected officials. Currently, the only elected representatives on the committee are a County Commissioner and the Mayor. It is likely that most of the committee positions will remain the same, but new voting slots could be created to represent County Council, City Council, and certain town boards. Ms. Moody said she would craft a committee restructuring that might be ready by the start of 2012.

URBAN AREA CHANGES COMING

Sometime in 2012, the Bureau of the Census will release their urban areas maps resulting from the 2010 Census. Those areas usually have a checker-board pattern including some diagonal connections. We have accepted those mapped areas in the past and expanded our adjusted Muncie Urbanized Area to show a smoother boundary and to include expected growth areas. Our contacts in INDOT have indicated that they think The Bureau of the Census will probably use population densities to a greater extent than corporate limits to determine what is "urban". If that is what happens, we might not have to expand or change the urbanized area to cover the updated "urban" area. The Town of Eaton expanded their boundary several years ago by annexing to one mile from the urbanized area. If the Bureau of the Census treats that annexed area as "urban", then Eaton would be added to the Muncie Urbanized Area.

MITS

The ridership for the Muncie Indiana Transit System (MITS) is on pace to exceed 1.9 million for 2011, which is close to its average for the past decade. MITS annual ridership exceeded two million a few years ago, dropped a little over time, and has been increasing slightly back toward its peak.

MITS has a long-range strategy to gradually add hybrid diesel-electric buses when replacing their older conventional diesel buses. The hybrid buses have been getting greater miles per gallon than expected and are helping MITS reduce their operational costs per mile.



DMMPC STAFF ATTENDS MPO CONFERENCE IN INDIANAPOLIS



2011 Indiana MPO Conference CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Marta Moody and her planning staff attended the Annual Metropolitan Planning Organization Conference which was held in Indianapolis this year on October 12 -14, 2011. The conference is attended by 14 MPO's from Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. The conference was also attended by individuals from the Federal Highway and the Federal Transit authorities, the Indiana Department of Transportation and various regional planning agencies.

Brian Payne, from the Central Indiana Community Foundation, discussed how successful public/private partnerships helped to create the Indy Cultural Trail which is an urban bike and pedestrian path connecting neighborhoods, cultural districts and entertainment amenities. The public/private partnership concept was also emphasized by other presentations, particularly those dealing with future funding.

Commissioner Michael Cline addressed conference attendees by discussing the revenue trends which have been slowly declining since 2005 and the fluctuating budgets. He discussed the Major Moves projects which included US 24 Fort to Port, I-80/94 Interchange, Accelerate 465, the Milton-Madison Bridge, I-69, US 31, and SR 25 Hoosier Heartland, noting that 75% of the projects are completed or under construction now. There was a presentation for Traffic Incident Management (TIM) with the key elements of the plan focusing on how to reduce injuries and fatalities, reduce congestion, improve TIM responses and programs, and emphasize TIM as a core mission for all responders. Other sessions dealt with asset management, data collection, air quality modeling, livability/sustainability, environmental issues, ADA transition plans, and freight planning.

Conference attendees were able to participate in three different mobile workshops that included a bicycling or walking tour of the Cultural Trail, the Georgia Street pedestrian corridor and the Indy bike hub at the YMCA at the downtown city market, a tour of the City of Carmel which highlighted the Keystone Parkway Corridor, roundabout facilities, bike lanes/paths, and other transportation enhancements, and an Airport Vicinity/Logistics Tour which featured transportation connectivity and land use. The next MPO Conference will be held in Bloomington in 2012.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

On November 15th the INDOT notified the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission that the proposal they submitted for a comprehensive safe routes plan for 11 of the Muncie Community Schools had been approved. Funding for this project will come from the 2011 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. The DMMPC proposal was one of 13 non-infrastructure and 18 infrastructure projects selected.



The DMMPC staff will begin working with INDOT and the Muncie Schools to start the process of implementing a SRTS plan that will make walking and bicycling to school safe and routine.

TRANSITIONING FROM MOBILE6 TO MOVES

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Indiana Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have been working toward a federally-mandated transition from using Mobile6 to using MOVES software for Air Quality emissions calculations of various counties' transportation networks based on improvements planned over the next 25 years. The early 2012 results of that effort will include an updated State Implementation Plan (SIP), new emissions budgets for Maintenance and Non-attainment counties, and a standard working process for using MOVES. Cambridge Systematics, Bernardin Lochmueller & Associates and Wilbur Smith Associates have been the consultants guiding the effort. Part of the process will include standardized data for: vehicle registrations by age and vehicle type, vehicle mix by road type, default worst day temperatures by hour and relative humidity. The result of all this is that the Muncie MPO will have a new air quality analysis for its Transportation Plan, along with a new emissions budget for the transportation network and a new process for calculating those emissions using MOVES.

2011 TRAFFIC COUNTS COMPLETED

The 2011 traffic count season has been completed. Planners MaryAnn Gervolino & Cheryl McGairk completed over 125 traffic counts this year. The data collected during the fall is being processed and should be reflected on the DMMPC website (www.dmmpc.org) by the end of January. Data that was collected in the spring is already on the website in both a tabular format as well as within our interactive traffic count map. The interactive map shows the most current data available as well as metadata for past traffic counts.



In addition to traffic counting, the Indiana Department of Transportation is asking all MPO's to provide roadway inventory data including lane miles, jurisdictional boundaries and median locations.