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Background on Why This Plan was Developed

Federal statutes require urbanized areas to include bicycling and walking components in their long-range transportation plans. In addition to transportation benefits, the WAMPO region recognizes the economic and quality of life benefits that pathways bring to communities and their residents.

SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period from 2005-2009. It has been extended into 2012 when a new transportation bill is authorized.

In accordance with SAFETEA-LU requirements, states are required to designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to develop transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas with more than 50,000 individuals. The planning process shall provide for all modes of transportation and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate based on the complexity of transportation problems.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

For this task we collected all available planning work to date on greenways, trails, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks from the 21 cities and three counties within the MPO planning area. This includes existing, planned, and soon to be completed facilities.

Public Participation and Community Outreach

We view development of any local bicycle/pedestrian/trail plan as a joint venture with the local jurisdiction(s) and its citizens. For this reason, we carefully structured early and interactive public involvement as a key component of our planning process.

Implementation Plan

Three basic categories of regional needs were identified during the development of the WAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035:

- 1) Filling in gaps between existing pathway segments;
- 2) Making land use connections; and
- 3) Targeting opportunities.

To reach these goals, the implementation plan includes the following sub-categories:

Bicycle System Planning

A planning approach to create bicycling corridors at least 5 miles in length that link destinations and serve population centers.

Implementation Strategies

Includes big ideas to carry out the long-term vision and small, first steps to realize its implementation.

Pedestrian Guidelines

Supplemental guidance that moves beyond pathway corridors and addresses the pedestrian-friendliness of street rights-of-way and adjacent land uses.

The Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The growing Wichita area economy combined with prolonged periods of growth has resulted in extraordinary demands on the region's surface transportation system. Reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and finding ways to fund and implement alternative modes of travel are issues that extend well beyond traditional local government boundaries.

Multimodal transportation planning facilitated through a single policy direction for all modes of travel ensures that plans, programs, and policies are coordinated across various city, county, and agency service areas as well as jurisdictional boundaries, and that coordination is occurring among implementing agencies.

In the Wichita area, this direction is provided through a collaborative structure of committees and organizations creating partnerships in regional transportation planning and implementation. Our region's MPO was established in 1974, and reorganized and renamed as the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) in 2007. WAMPO serves the region by developing transportation plans and programs that address the complex transportation needs of our rapidly growing metropolitan area.

The WAMPO MPO serves the region consisting of 21 cities and three counties in south central Kansas. The WAMPO Transportation Planning Boundary identified on the following page consists of all of Sedgwick County, and the cities and towns within; portions of Butler County around and including the city of Andover; and a portion of Sumner County around and including the City of Mulvane.

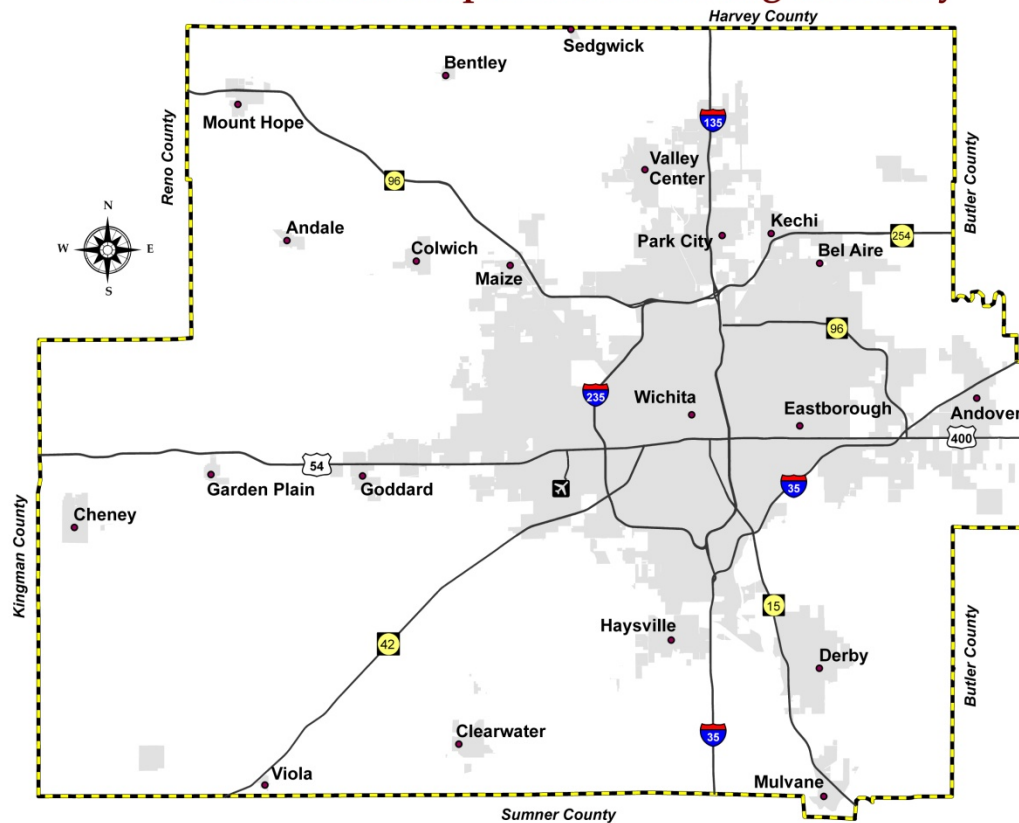
What is an MPO?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an organization of local governments in areas with a collective population of 50,000 or more, called an Urbanized Area. As a condition for receiving federal transportation dollars, MPOs shall cooperate with the state, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas. This transportation planning process results in plans and programs consistent with the area's locally adopted comprehensive plans.

The regional planning process includes making informed predictions about future transportation needs, investigating and assessing alternative actions for meeting those needs, and making recommendations about which course of action to pursue. The information generated by this process is used by decision-makers to select transportation policies and programs from the choice of alternatives.

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WAMPO Transportation Planning Boundary



Map Depicting the WAMPO Planning Area and Member Communities

Regional Pathway System Plan

The following summarizes the key aspects of this project:

- ▶ The geographic area of WAMPO encompasses 1,050 square miles and 24 local jurisdictions, including 21 cities and portions of three counties. This planning process was designed to further the collection and assimilation of data into a single source for future development of local plans and policies by the affected jurisdictions.
- ▶ Previous non-motorized efforts in the region have focused on recreational trail development. This project continued this work and expanded upon it to include bicycling and walking to work, commercial centers, and activity centers.
- ▶ The 2030 WAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) established a sound planning foundation based on the region’s economic, social, land use and transportation conditions, and received extensive citizen input into goals and desired improvements. This project built on that foundation. This same effort is reflected in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035, the current update to the 2030 LRTP. Tenets of the MTP 2035 have been incorporated into Chapter 3 of this document.

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- ▶ Based upon previous park planning efforts, recreational facilities are desired to be provided at a minimum rate of 1 trail mile per 5,000 populations. It is estimated to take 85 years to complete building approximately 400 miles of proposed trails at current funding levels of 4.1 miles per year.
- ▶ Additional funding mechanisms are desired to supplement Transportation Enhancement Funds to help meet identified needs, and a prioritization method is needed to determine where expenditures should be strategically spent on future projects.
- ▶ In addition to recreational trails, several other facilities have been included in this Regional Pathway System Plan, including off-road multi-use paths, signed bicycle routes, bike lanes, paved roadway shoulders, and sidewalks.
- ▶ The end mapping and database product was intended to be used as a planning tool at both the local and regional levels. The plan maps therefore include all existing and planned facilities in the region, overlaid with a regional priority network.
- ▶ Guidelines were desired to be developed by the MPO, working in conjunction with the local communities, which can be used to guide local development processes, prioritize enhancement project applications, and connect the gaps in the existing system. Providing a mechanism for regional coordination was the overall project goal.

Regional Goal

“To create a strategic plan that ensures a quality of life and encourages our young people to live, learn, work, and play in our regional community.”
 --Visioneering Wichita,
 December 2004

The Benefits of Pathways

Visioneering Wichita was a major study examining issues and trends affecting the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that includes Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, and Sumner Counties, as well as their communities. This regional vision incorporates the ideas of more than 8,650 residents representing all of the communities and counties in the MSA region.

The Visioneering Wichita planning effort focused on understanding and addressing the following issues:

1. Regional Growth and Development;
2. Retaining Young People;
3. Job Growth;
4. Income Growth;
5. Education;

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6. Family Stability;
7. Downtown Development;
8. Arts/Recreation ;
9. Racial Diversity, Opportunity, and Harmony; and
10. Leadership

Development of a Regional Pathway System can be a major step in realizing many of these goals, particularly as related to job retention in a society that values and responds to “The New Economy” and a “Creative Class” of workers. Today’s companies and individuals are free to locate to regions where quality of life, recreational amenities, personal mobility, and sense of place become key location factors, as described following.

Big ‘Creative Class’ Helps a City Thrive

“Because companies go where they can tap such workers, the people charged with revitalizing cities need to focus less on chasing big companies and more on growing communities where creative types prosper, the theory goes. Think bike trails, parks, good architecture, and a lively arts scene. Companies and jobs will follow pools of highly skilled workers. It’s about clustering people, Florida preaches, not companies.”
 -- Pioneer Press, St. Paul, MN

The New Economy

In the mass-production economy, people had to go to a work site to work because they had to access equipment kept in a central place. In the New Economy, the means of production is the personal computer which has begun to make the need for distinct and separate workplaces obsolete. With the increasing numbers of home-based businesses and telecommuters we are able to shape work to suit the way we live rather than shaping our lives to fit our work.

Successful “economic communities” are places with strong, responsive relationships between the economy and the community that provide companies and communities with sustained advantage and resilience.

The New Economy & Creative Workers

“Companies that can locate anywhere will go where they can attract good people in a good place.”
 --Intel spokesperson

“Keep your tax incentives and highway interchanges; we will go where the highly skilled people are.”
 --Former CEO of Hewlett Packard

Companies increasingly move to, start up, and grow where the talent for the New Economy wants to live. Research shows that quality of life is an especially important screening factor for firms in technology businesses or that employ highly skilled workers in knowledge-based service and production.

The Creative Class

Today, a significant demographic realignment is under way: the mass relocation of highly skilled, highly educated, and highly paid Americans to a relatively small number of

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metropolitan regions, and a corresponding exodus of the traditional lower and middle classes from these same places.

It used to be thought that for regions and nations to grow all that was required was to influence business location decisions. Those days are over. Today we know that in order to grow and prosper, communities and regions need to do much more. Communities with natural amenities and a high quality of life draw a higher percentage of creative workers, according to major research work by Richard Florida.

Economic Development

As a part of the public outreach and education for the WAMPO Pathways Plan, we held a special meeting with representatives of Visioneering Wichita and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss creating opportunities for bicycling and walking for transportation and recreation.

Why? Communities that provide multi-modal transportation systems and a variety of close-to-home recreation opportunities offer residents and employees a higher quality of life. Places ranking among the top tier of innovative regions are concerned about the sustainability of their success and are realizing the importance of quality of life as an asset.

Skilled workers and entrepreneurs choose to live in places that offer attractive career opportunities, an attractive lifestyle, and high overall community quality of life.

Developing a sense of place within a community, creating places for active living, and enhancing property values through natural and built environments contribute to the economic vitality of a healthy community.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

This task involved collecting all available planning work to date on greenways, trails, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks from the 24 jurisdictions within the MPO planning area. This included existing, planned, and soon to be completed facilities.

The following plans were reviewed for incorporation into this project:

Old Bikeway Maps (1970s)

These maps identified meandering Bike Routes along low-volume local streets. We referenced these routes when looking at necessary connections between facilities, but this planning effort focused on improving direct routes that serve regional destinations.

Wichita Metropolitan Area Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (1989)

This plan took a “4-E” approach to making recommendations for enforcement, education, encouragement, and engineering. Most of the physical engineering recommendations of this plan have been implemented, with five missing pathway segments yet to be constructed.

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Parks and Pathways: Park and Open Space Master Plan, Wichita-Sedgwick County (1996)

Primarily recreational in nature, this plan focused on off-road trail opportunities to connect a variety of public and private open spaces. The goal was for 99% of the City of Wichita's population to reside within one mile of a trail or pathway. The plan included proposed trails along of a number of waterways both within the City of Wichita and continuing on into Sedgwick County.

WAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035 (2010)

The MTP 2035 sets the goals and objectives for the regional transportation system in 2035, and it also includes recommendations, strategies, and projects to help the region achieve the overall MTP 2035 vision of a safe, affordable, accessible, and efficient transportation system. MTP 2035 recommendations on how to improve the regional pathways system include filling physical gaps in the system, increasing connections, improving safety, making land use connections, and targeting opportunities. Our approach is the same, filling in the details for how to make the broad MTP 2035 vision happen.

Various local bikeway and pathway project proposals (2006, Updated in 2011)

Collected from all of the jurisdictions within the WAMPO boundaries, these have been added to the pathways mapping database and will become part of the Primary and Secondary corridors analysis. Individual plans include:

- ▶ City of Wichita, Transportation Enhancement Bike Path Proposals (2004-2007)
- ▶ City of Wichita, Proposed Transportation Enhancement Projects for FY 2008
- ▶ City of Wichita Public Works Department – Traffic Engineering Department, Traffic Flow Map (2006)
- ▶ Wichita Pathways and Plats Report (November 2005)
- ▶ City of Wichita, 21st Street North Corridor Revitalization Plan (December 2004)
- ▶ City of Wichita, Park Recreation Open Space Plan (August 2008)
- ▶ City of Wichita 2030 Wichita Functional Land Use Guide
- ▶ WAMPO Transportation Improvement Program (2006)
- ▶ Wichita Metropolitan Area Bike Path Map
- ▶ Wichita-Valley Center Floodway (Big Ditch) Access Analysis (June 1993)
- ▶ City of Andover Resolution of Street Policy (2004)
- ▶ City of Valley Center Linear Trail System Map and Bike Plan (2004)
- ▶ City of Derby Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Map (1999)
- ▶ City of Derby Pedestrian and Bike Path Map (2006)
- ▶ City of Andover Park System and Open Space Master Plan Map 2003-2013 (2004)
- ▶ City of Mulvane Rock Road Path Plan
- ▶ City of Cheney Sidewalk and Path Map (2006)
- ▶ City of Haysville Hike & Bike Trail Map

Recommended bicycling routes (2006, Updated in 2011)

Referenced a variety of recommended bike routes as found in the Kansas DOT Bicycle Guide, mapped by the Oz Bicycle Club, and identified by the Regional Pathways System Plan Project Advisory Group. Changes, additions, and deletions to bicycle routes originally

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identified in 2006 will be considered as emerging issues and deliberated during the full update to the plan in 2013.

All of these resources were overlaid to examine similarities in route preferences and combined with field work to determine needs and opportunities for targeted infrastructure improvements.

Public Participation and Community Outreach

Task 1 through Task 5 were developed during public participation and community outreach efforts in 2007. Task 6 was added during the 2011 update.

Task 1 included on-site meetings and ongoing coordination with WAMPO staff and a core group of State and Federal agency representatives.

A project website (www.wampopathways.org) was created and is an available resource to inform and educate the public on topics and events related to or involving the Regional Pathway System Plan. By providing project updates, minutes of previous meetings and presentations, and notifying the public of upcoming events we have been able to inform the community of the project status and direction. Links to related organizations and project resources have helped educate the public as well as staff, committees, and groups throughout the planning process.



Task 2 was an ongoing work phase comprised of several events including Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, public workshops, and special topic stakeholder work sessions which focused on local-level implementation strategies and regional economic development. Key topics included discussion of local capital improvement programs, developer requirements, transportation/land use connections, and the Enhancements program application process.

Two Pathway Users workshops held early in the planning process allowed people representing area bicycle clubs, running groups, commuter cyclists, and neighborhood pathway users to interact with staff by sharing their knowledge of the region and ideas for transportation improvements.

Since the presence of a university in a community is often a major factor contributing to high levels of bicycling and walking, we contacted Wichita State University, Friends

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University, and Newman College early in the process for collaboration. However, due to the trip distances of most students attending these schools, there was no interest in working with WAMPO to plan for promoting bicycling and walking to campus.



Task 3 included charette-style work sessions with individual communities to collect data and to learn about their unique pedestrian and bicycle needs. The consultants held meetings to discuss local community projects and plans relating to trails and greenways, Safe Routes to School, bicycle transportation, sidewalks, and street crossings, and supplemented this data collection with field work observations of area trails and streets.

Task 4 input focused on ongoing coordination with the Project Advisory Committee and WAMPO staff to write and revise components of the draft plan. Throughout the course of this planning effort, the consultants and WAMPO staff have also been having one-on-one meetings with citizens and elected officials, as well as staff from the various agencies and departments who will ultimately be responsible for implementing various recommendations of the pathways plan.



Task 5 involved presentations of the draft plan to the Project Advisory Committee, the WAMPO Policy Body, the WAMPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the general public.

A summary of main comments received on the draft plan and how they have been incorporated into the Final Plan include the following:

- ▶ Included mention of consultation with local colleges and universities.
- ▶ Added an expanded explanation of the types of bicycle facilities and safety considerations for each. Pros and cons of various facility types are given to assist local communities in making informed decisions for implementation of projects within their jurisdiction.
- ▶ Clarified that WAMPO does not have the intent to mandate plan specifics to jurisdictions.
- ▶ Clarified that share-the-road signs will be installed in conjunction with future paved shoulder improvements.

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- ▶ Removed consultant’s recommendations for specific types of facility improvements from corridor.
- ▶ Clarified that future improvements on 53rd Street North, particularly around the new Wal-Mart site located at Meridian, need to include bicycle accommodation appropriate to the type of growth and development patterns.
- ▶ Eliminated portion of Corridor C that suggested on-street bike lanes on 13th N.
- ▶ Added request to call the former BNSF line along Corridor D the “Redbud Trail.” Received many comments specifically about this rail-banked BNSF corridor as it falls within the City of Wichita jurisdiction. Many were from trail advocates who fully support this project being developed; others were from concerned land owners who do not want to see a trail adjacent to their properties.
- ▶ Clarified the history of the Wichita-Valley Center BNSF line.
- ▶ Rerouted the central portion of Corridor N off of Oliver onto Edgemoor and Woodlawn Streets.
- ▶ Included a section of Corridor D as a priority missing link to connect the Canal Hike and Bike Trail to Oliver through the Ken-Mar Neighborhood, which desires construction of a public-use trail on the former BNSF line as an amenity to improve their neighborhood.
- ▶ Received general comments that the implementation recommendations should be stronger. Many people would like to see more definitive action items, but these will need to happen within the individual jurisdictions rather than at the regional level.
- ▶ Received questions on the availability of supplemental funding sources, which led to shortening this section.
- ▶ Addressed questions on road diets and clarified that pedestrians use sidewalks while cyclists use bicycle lanes. Also moved summary information on research that addresses safety and capacity concerns associated with the road diet treatment to the appendices.
- ▶ Clarification of recommended pathway crossing treatments of roadways, and a desire to include orientation signs naming intersecting streets.
- ▶ Added new section on bicycle parking.
- ▶ Created appendices.

Task 6 incorporates recommendations to include in the 2011 update. These include:

- ▶ Connecting the WAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035.
- ▶ Add performance measures to gauge the progress of the plan.
- ▶ Add a section identifying emerging issues suggested through public input and PAC recommendations.

Implementation Plan

In summary, this plan is intended to understand the role of the MPO in providing direction for individual communities and agencies to use in implementing projects within their jurisdiction, while valuing the input of the member jurisdictions and agencies in helping to develop MPO policy.

Of the bicycle/pedestrian facility recommendations contained within the MTP 2035, connecting gaps in the system should be the region's top priority. Too often, bicycle/pedestrian/trail plans are completed that depict a number of facilities, but the reality is a disconnected collection of individual projects that does little to serve the travel needs of users.

Bicycle System Planning

For bicycle travel, the region should strive to identify, fund and implement a system of primary bicycling corridors that allow cyclists safe and convenient travel to and from major destinations for distances greater than 2.5 miles (the national average bicycle trip length). Due to land development patterns throughout the WAMPO region, initial primary corridors will be at least 5 miles in length.

Accommodation within the primary corridors may vary from off-road trails to also include segments of on-road bicycle facilities, with seamless transitions provided between facility types. Multi-modal accommodation that includes transit route service and pedestrian supportive land use will also be critical to the goal of increasing bicycling for practical purposes. Completion of a primary system is critical if people are expected to bicycle beyond a recreational ride within or between area parks.

This core bicycle/trail system may be supplemented with a network of secondary corridors that feed into the primary system. Local community plans and the MTP 2035 goal for equitable distribution of trail facilities throughout the region can add to the system. However, it is our experience that the MTP 2035 proposed methodology used alone will not result in an effective regional bicycling system.

Pedestrian Guidelines

For pedestrian facility planning, the WAMPO plan includes guidelines for the location and design of sidewalk facilities and safe roadway crossings in addition to expansion of a pathway system.

The consultants provided guidance for varying levels of pedestrian accommodation based upon context, meaning that recommended facility standards vary between rural, suburban, and urban environments within the region and the desired levels of pedestrian-friendliness.

Implementation Strategies

Finally, for all bicycle and pedestrian facilities to be successful at both the local and the regional level there needs to be a strong grass roots advocacy effort to help support the

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funding and implementation. Designating achievable priorities is important to keeping both the advocacy base and local communities engaged over the length of the project. For this reason, the overall goal for this task was to gain consensus on a list of priority projects, with associated cost estimates, that may be realistically funded and implemented by multiple jurisdictions.