

HAMILTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ON JANUARY 27, 2010

INTRODUCTION

In January 2009, the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution directing the Regional Planning Commission staff to convene an ad-hoc Transportation Policy Plan Committee. The purpose of the Committee was to identify key transportation issues, opportunities and risks, and to make recommendations as to how such issues could be addressed by Hamilton County in such a fashion as to advance the transportation interests of the County.

With this direction, a committee representing a broad array of transportation interests was appointed and met a number of times over the course of the year. The work of this committee resulted in the "Transportation Policy Plan." The Draft will be submitted to the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners in early 2010 for consideration and approval. The Committee agreed on several principles, which became the overarching themes or foundations of the proposed policy. Those principles were taken into context and reinforced each other as they were weaved into the Goals of the Policy Plan:

- Promote economic development and prosperity
- Unify our voice In legislation and lobbying efforts
- Promote cooperation, coordination and communication of organizations Involved in allocation and distribution of funding
- Coordinate regulations in Hamilton County and its jurisdictions
- Promote rehabilitation of existing infrastructure first
- Facilitate connectivity and mobility of people and goods and data/communication (within the County, with adjacent counties, to the nation, and to the world)
- Promote energy conservation in all transportation projects and programs, especially by capitalizing existing transportation and other infrastructure assets
- Promote the evaluation and use/deployment of new technologies that will improve our region's transportation system
- Utilize collaborative decision-making that seeks collaborative funding participation from private, public, and civic sector sources

The Hamilton County Transportation Policy Plan is intended to apply to all transportation and related infrastructure in Hamilton County that is supported or endorsed by the Board of Commissioners. Therefore, the intended users of this document include the Board of Commissioners, County Departments reporting to the Board of Commissioners as well as those Hamilton County jurisdiction's that choose to follow the Vision and Goals of the Plan.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Andy Dobson	Bicycle Community
Tom Eamoe	The Arc of Hamilton County
Andy Fluegemann	ODOT - District 8
Adam Goetzman	Green Township / Township Association
Gerri Harbison	City of Montgomery / First Suburbs Consortium / Municipal League
Ted Hubbard	Hamilton Co. Engineer's Office
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Andy Reser	OKI Regional Council of Governments
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Kim Satzger	Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority
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Stiney Vonderhaar	Village of Evendale / Municipal League

VISION

Hamilton County is the core of the Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area. Development of a healthy and efficient transportation and transit system is essential to promote economic prosperity for the County and the region. Positioning the County to succeed in a global economy demands attention and intention to create and maintain a transportation system that moves people, products and data/communication.

Hamilton County and its political subdivisions need to make significant investment in the design, engineering, and construction of public infrastructure. Policies and principles that unify such an investment through planning and collaboration for the efficient delivery of transportation infrastructure will position the County and its residents on the path to prosperity. Effective communication and collaboration are necessary to allow the County to speak with one voice to outside funding entities.

Hamilton County aspires to implement an efficient and seamless multi-modal transportation network that connects residents, visitors, and workers to businesses, neighborhoods, and regional amenities, and must support the efficient movement of goods. Well thought-out transportation and infrastructure investment decisions create dynamic cities and neighborhoods that are a catalyst for regional success. Energy conservation, mixed uses, higher densities, walkable communities, and reducing the impact of transportation on climate change create livable environments that attract residents of all ages while promoting economic growth and the creation of good jobs for the citizens of Hamilton County.

Hamilton County is part of a regional transportation system that stretches from Northern Kentucky to Dayton Ohio. Transportation decisions affecting the movement of goods, people, and data/communication in Hamilton County are based on collaborative approaches to decision-making and funding, and guided by the following principles:

- Promote economic development and prosperity
- Unify our voice In legislation and lobbying efforts
- Promote cooperation, coordination and communication of organizations Involved in allocation and distribution of funding
- Coordinate regulations in Hamilton County and its jurisdictions
- Promote rehabilitation of existing infrastructure first
- Facilitate connectivity and mobility of people and goods and data/communication (within the County, with adjacent counties, to the nation, and to the world)
- Promote energy conservation in all transportation projects and programs, especially by capitalizing existing transportation and other infrastructure assets
- Promote the evaluation and use/deployment of new technologies that will improve our region's transportation system
- Utilize collaborative decision-making that seeks collaborative funding participation from private, public , and civic sector sources

GOALS

- ❖ **Promote a multi-modal transportation system to be operated and maintained as one integrated network for the movement of and connection with people, jobs, goods and services.**

Transportation construction and enhancement can no longer focus solely on capacity building for automobiles. Since a large percentage of the County transportation network relies on road infrastructure, any additional transportation improvement should build on and maintain existing infrastructure first.

Hamilton County should aim to develop a transportation infrastructure system that responds to and promotes Countywide mobility goals. A comprehensive vision of connectivity, focused upon the mobility of people, goods and information not only within Hamilton County, should be carried out in consideration and cooperation with adjacent counties, to promote the region to the nation and world.

- Minimize congestion on roadways and at intersections
- Maximize the continuity of transportation facilities and services across all modes
- Provide efficient, frequent, reliable and convenient transit service that is easy to use and understand
- Provide a balance of transportation facilities, including construction of more sidewalks and bicycle facilities
- Provide infrastructure to support transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- Improve intermodal connectivity and access to intermodal facilities and activity centers
- Provide multi-modal options consistent with local government comprehensive plans
- Provide more opportunities for water-based transportation
- Maintain existing transportation infrastructure that is consistent with County and municipal comprehensive plans and provide safe, reliable, effective and sustainable mobility for all users
- Examine more equitable sources of funding for County-wide transit
- Accommodate and encourage walking and bicycling for daily transportation needs by including facilities for these uses in all transportation projects as standard operating procedure.

- ❖ **Promote a transportation system that is sensitive to community character, socio-cultural effects and environmental resources.**

Hamilton County should promote a transportation system that reinforces and strengthens the unique urban development patterns in the County by emphasizing connectivity, quality of design, and scale. The transportation system should provide a framework for economic development by physically linking centers of the communities with their surrounding

neighborhoods through streets that are safe and shared by individuals using multiple modes of transportation. The transportation system should promote environmental justice and equitable access to transportation for all.

- Enhance aesthetics and the character of neighborhoods, communities, and commercial districts
- Minimize adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations
- Minimize the disruption of neighborhoods, communities, and commercial districts
- Enhance the mobility and accessibility of elderly populations
- Enhance the mobility and accessibility of persons with disabilities
- Enhance the mobility and accessibility of the economically disadvantaged
- Minimize adverse environmental impacts
- Increase landscaping along transportation corridors
- Coordinate infrastructure improvements with adjacent communities

❖ **Promote a transportation system that sustains economic growth and development.**

Hamilton County and its jurisdictions should maximize use and investment of available transportation dollars by jointly supporting (a) the enhancement of existing infrastructure, (b) strengthening of existing infrastructure by creating new linkages, and (c) speaking with a unified voice at the MPO, State and Federal levels. Such an approach will help make Hamilton County more competitive in the region, nationally and internationally. Every decision should be linked to a larger transportation vision/strategy aimed at promoting economic development and improving the quality of life of Hamilton County's residents and businesses.

Hamilton County should support a multi-modal transportation system that provides affordable choices for its residents and businesses. This system will provide seamless integration between transportation modes and be designed with the users' needs in mind.

Transportation investments should consider land use implications and be prioritized based on positive, inclusive economic development outcomes. The cost-benefit analysis should include investments linked to capacity building for multi-modal transportation projects. Investments in transportation should support an efficient, frequent, reliable, and convenient transit service that is easy to use and understand and is accessible to all.

Economic development does not rely solely on the physical transportation of goods and people. Information and data that supports development of important industry sectors depends on speedy and reliable communication networks. Hamilton County should support and invest in a data/communication infrastructure that will facilitate economic growth and development.

- Improve intermodal connectivity and access to intermodal facilities and activity centers
- Coordinate transportation initiatives at the MPO, State, and Federal levels
- Consider limitations of local road expansion and promote alternative modes of transportation, mass transit, and telecommuting whenever possible
- Promote efficient, reliable and convenient data/communication transit service that is accessible to all

❖ **Promote a transportation system that is maintained, optimized, and expanded using the best available technologies and innovations.**

As a member of the National Cool Counties Initiative, Hamilton County is committed to work with local communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below current levels by 2050. Therefore, energy conservation should be a hallmark of all future County planning efforts. Since a substantial source of greenhouse gases is produced by automobiles and other forms of transportation that utilize combustion engines, high-performance transportation options must be integrated into transportation planning policies to promote and incentivize the use of alternative transportation modes. To this end, the County and its jurisdictions should strive to incorporate multiple transportation modes into future planning and investment to flatten the hierarchy of transportation modes and reduce reliance on automobile use, thereby reducing related emissions.

- Construct and maintain transportation infrastructure (roads, buses, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, truck routes, intermodal facilities, etc.) to standards that minimize their life-cycle cost, including costs to users
- Identify and implement the best available technologies and innovations to improve the reliability and efficiency of the transportation system
- Identify and reserve corridors and rights-of-way for future transportation facilities and services
- Reduce congestion on roadways and at intersections
- Provide a variety of transportation modes within existing transportation corridors

❖ **Promote a financially sustainable transportation system.**

It is essential that Hamilton County jurisdictions collaborate at the local, state and national level to clearly communicate their transportation priorities.

While the current Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) decision-making model is based on the spirit of collaboration and coordination, often Hamilton County jurisdictions' divergent priorities compete not only against each other's interests but also against the interests of all the other counties within the OKI region. Recognizing that there are a number of committed projects identified on the current STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program), an approach that emphasizes these unified, Countywide transportation goals should be utilized in the future. Such an approach will

assure that decision-makers at all levels of government are aware of Hamilton County's agreed upon transportation priorities, which will lead to better County and regional outcomes.

- Seek to leverage transportation funding from all authorized sources
- Ensure that the County seeks and receives its fair share of state and federal transportation funding
- Support development of a Strategic Transportation Plan that is comprehensive in nature and seeks collaborative funding participation for transportation projects from public, private and civic sector sources

❖ Promote a transportation system that is locally and regionally coordinated and based on effective transportation, land use, and smart growth planning.

Recognizing that the existing road infrastructure was built over time and supports the built environment, Hamilton County's communities should work together to develop a coordinated Countywide multi-modal transportation plan that addresses road design, access management, pedestrian circulation systems, bicycle inclusion standards, as well as standards for accommodation of bus and rail infrastructure. The plan must be clear, concise and easy to understand. Further, the plan should establish standards to promote the use of green infrastructure technologies in new projects as well as infrastructure retrofits. Rising energy costs combined with finite public resources will require communities to choose energy efficient solutions that limit impact on budgets while furthering environmental solutions that are self-sustaining rather than requiring expensive, on-going maintenance. To this end, Hamilton County should create a Strategic Transportation Plan that is comprehensive in nature and is developed through a transparent process inclusive of all stakeholders.

- Coordinate transportation and land use planning and development
- Coordinate transportation planning at both the local and regional scales
- Maximize connections between and accessibility to established activity centers, before establishing new centers
- Apply transportation and land use planning techniques that support intermodal connections and coordination
- Encourage mixed-use development and increased densities along major transit corridors to decrease vehicle trips
- Develop a coordinated Countywide multi-modal Strategic Transportation Plan

❖ **Promote the efficient and effective use of Hamilton County freight transportation assets – including roadway, railroad, river, and air – to build a more productive and sustainable freight network.**

The Hamilton County area transportation systems are links in the global logistics chain. It is imperative that the Hamilton County community recognize and understand critical international economic and transportation trends and issues. By understanding its role in the local, regional, and global transportation systems network, Hamilton County will be better positioned to maintain pace with global competition and, perhaps more importantly, to capitalize on unique transportation advantages that give the area a competitive edge in attracting business development and entrepreneurship.

Shifting trade patterns could have a profound effect on Hamilton County's economy, if regional leadership is prepared to focus its attention and investment dollars on the necessary transportation infrastructure to capitalize on the opportunity. The Ohio Department of Transportation estimates that a total of 950 million tons of freight travels to, from, or through Ohio annually; one-third of this volume runs through Ohio; the balance is distributed among inbound, outbound, and internal movements. Of this volume, the majority of freight is carried by trucks, which carry 60% (567 million tons); followed by rail, which carries 28% (263 million tons); and water, which carries 12% (118 million tons). It is of vital importance to have not only global and statewide views of the supply chain, but also a micro view of Hamilton County's role in it.

In order to increase productivity, reduce the cost of goods and services delivered to customers, and remain competitive in a global marketplace, business and industry have adopted just-in-time logistics strategies for both manufacturing and product delivery. This approach relies heavily on cost-effective and reliable freight transportation systems. To maintain and grow Hamilton County's, the Region's, and Ohio's economic vitality, it is important that freight transportation systems keep pace with the requirements of business and industry.

Making sustainable improvements to the flow, efficiency, reliability, and safety of freight transportation systems will improve the economic competitiveness of Hamilton County. Traditionally, in the United States, freight improvements have been neglected, and investments made only in an ad hoc fashion, with marginal benefits. The Hamilton County area should break from this traditional practice and make catalytic investments in nearly all modes of transportation; thus, making strategic investments linking global supply management with the local transportation systems. Therefore, when reviewing freight transportation system improvements, Hamilton County should:

- Evaluate and choose the right mix of freight transportation system components that will yield the best result for Hamilton County's limited transportation dollars

- Undertake a targeted approach toward intermodal investments in order to expand and improve the movement of freight through truck, rail, and barge transportation into and through the region
- Consider limitations of highway expansion and divert highway truck traffic to rail and/or river whenever possible
- Implement projects through an expansive and aggressive program to fund freight improvements, including public-private partnership arrangements and innovative finance mechanisms
- Facilitate and foster economic development through the maintenance of prior investments in existing freight transportation (truck, rail, river, and air) infrastructure
- Invest public funds in additional physical capacity only where it makes strategic and economic sense to do so