

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

OVERVIEW

Purpose

Federal surface transportation legislation mandates that urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 or more must develop and maintain long range transportation plans. As a prerequisite for federally funded transportation improvements, long range plans must be based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing planning process. As part of this planning process, federal legislation provided for the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs). Cambria County is represented by a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) known as the Johnstown Area Transportation Study (JATS). This MPO is comprised of two (2) committees - the Coordinating Committee and the Technical Committee. The members of the Coordinating Committee conduct the official business of the MPO while the Technical Committee provides information and recommendations to the Coordinating Committee members. The members of these committees are selected from local public offices, transportation authorities, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

SAFETEA-LU

The 2012-2040 update of the Cambria County Long Range Transportation Plan is in response to the latest federal legislation on transportation funding entitled the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU was enacted on August 10, 2005 to provide funding for the nation's surface transportation program through 2009, and has been continued by Congress through 2012.

This federal legislation provides over \$244 billion, the largest transportation investment in the nation's history, to address such challenges as: safety; traffic congestion; freight movement; intermodal connectivity; and the protection of the environment. In addition to these new programs, SAFETEA-LU also reauthorized many of the programs created under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) of 1998.

Some of the major changes and additions that must be included in all long range plans (to be in compliance with SAFETEA-LU) include the following:

- Long range plans must be SAFETEA-LU compliant by July 1, 2007 to insure the Federal approval of future amendments to transportation plans and programs;
- The long range plan and air quality conformity update cycle will be every 4 years instead of every 3 years;
- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will need updating every 4 years instead of every 2 years; or as required by Act 120 of Pennsylvania State Law and amendments;
- An additional planning factor has been added - Increase Transportation Security;
- Environmental mitigation must be addressed for major projects;
- A procedure for consulting with state agencies must be addressed;
- Address the performance of existing transportation facilities; and
- Include a Public Participation Plan.

As part of the SAFETEA-LU legislation, several changes were made to the transportation planning factors. These transportation planning factors are an integral part of every long range transportation plan and are summarized below.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase security for transportation system users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize preservation of the existing transportation system.