

2014

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council
of Governments Focus Group
Findings

On the Move
2015-2045 Transportation Plan



Introduction

The Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) partnered with students in the Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Master of Public Administration Program to collect data on the transportation needs of the Toledo region to be integrated into the On the Move 2015-2045 Transportation Plan. In order to gather this information, students were tasked with different aspects of data collection such as conducting a public forum, administering focus groups, and distributing and analyzing surveys. This group was tasked with facilitating focus groups composed of key consumers of transportation in Bowling Green, Ohio.

The target geographic area for information gathering was Bowling Green, Ohio. To prepare for this undertaking, research was conducted on how to facilitate focus groups as well as on transportation focus groups specifically. A discussion format with eight to ten participants was chosen to help facilitate open discussion among participants. While the whole group developed the interview protocols for the focus groups, there was a student facilitator for each of the sessions conducted by the group. The questions were developed based on the TMACOG goals for the transportation plan (safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement, environmental sustainability, project delivery, and personal mobility) as well as on the research conducted as a group.

Focus Group Methodology

To prepare for the focus groups, participants had to be recruited and venues had to be chosen. In addition to that, open-ended discussion oriented questions had to be developed. Those questions were compiled after conducting research on transportation focus groups and were modeled after TMACOG's eight goals for the 2015-2045 Transportation Plan. In addition, some general questions focused on the transportation needs and concerns of each particular focus group demographic. Each focus group began with introductions of all participants and attendees, followed by the facilitator beginning with questions. The focus groups four target demographics were: senior citizens, Bowling

Green State University students, Bowling Green area cyclists, and Bowling Green area freight and industry representatives.

Senior Center Focus Group

The first focus group conducted looked at the needs of the Bowling Green community from the perspective of senior citizens from the Wood County area. One aspect of gaining knowledge on transportation concerns is to include groups that can be viewed as underrepresented or marginalized. To try and gather information from as many sources as possible, the group decided to include participants who received services from the Wood County Senior Center. The group decided to hold the focus group at the Senior Center due to concerns around accessibility of other candidate locations. In addition to the location, the time of the focus group was also taken into consideration. The focus group was held during the morning at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2014. This time was agreed upon based in part on availability of focus group facilitators, availability of the Senior Center, and the seniors themselves. There were seven participants in attendance.

Student Focus Group

The next focus group was February 27, 2014 at 7 p.m. for students at Bowling Green State University. Students were identified as another key demographic that would have different needs and concerns than the general population. Students were also selected because they make up a large proportion of Bowling Green residents for 9 months a year. In order to recruit a diverse collection of students to ensure many perspectives were heard, it was decided to include undergraduate and graduate students who live on and off campus. The participants were recruited through various on campus student meetings. The participants were contacted and invited personally. This was deemed to be the most effective way to contact and target students for the focus group. The venue for the focus group needed to be convenient for students so the Bowen-Thompson Student Union was chosen. The

time of 7:00 p.m. on February 27 was chosen for the focus group since the schedules of many students did not allow for a meeting during typical business hours. There were four participants in attendance.

Cyclist Focus Group

Another important aspect of the Bowling Green community is the support for sustainability and environmentalism as well as an interest in bicycling. To tap into those interests and concerns, it was decided to contact people interested in cycling in Bowling Green and Wood County. Contacting this group of people would allow TMACOG to hear more about other goals such as sustainability, environmental protection, and safety that might not be discussed in other focus groups. It was also decided that the focus group should be held at a convenient hour for those who work, so 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5 was chosen. Also, it was determined that having this focus group at a venue that would be accessible for those who wished to bike to the meeting was important. The Wood County Regional Airport at 1261 E. Poe Rd, Bowling Green, Ohio was chosen. The next task was identifying potential focus group participants.

To obtain contact information for potential participants, Cycle Werks, a bicycle shop in Bowling Green, was contacted. Cycle Werks was able to provide information for various community members who are involved in cycling, including members of the Black Swamp Bicycling Society. The City of Bowling Green was then contacted to obtain contact information for Bowling Green Bicycle Safety Commission members. The potential participants were invited via email. After a low initial response rate, the focus group was also announced at the Wood County Public Forum to attract more participants. The confirmed participants were then sent a reminder about the event slated for Monday, March 3rd. There were seven participants in attendance.

Freight and Industry Focus Group

Another important demographic to capture concerning transportation was freight transportation and industry. These two types of businesses utilize a variety of transportation means

such as rail, road, air, and water. The group decided that freight and industry representatives traveling through Bowling Green from the Wood and Lucas County area would be the target participants. These businesses would be most likely to travel through the Bowling Green area and be able to attend the focus group without a large time commitment.

The next aspect of planning the focus group was locating participants. The Bowling Green Economic Development Office was contacted to gain information about potential participants. To gain more diversity within participants, Data.com was used to learn of more freight and industry contacts in the Bowling Green community. To accommodate participants who keep typical work hours, the focus group was held at 10:00 a.m. The focus group was held at the

"If you live outside of the city, you can't get anywhere".

-Judy

Weston, Ohio

Wood County Regional Airport as a neutral, convenient location on March 19, 2014. To contact potential participants, an email was drafted that contained pertinent information about the focus group. This information was delivered through phone contact and email when available. The week of the focus group, an email reminder was sent out and there were four participants in attendance.

Focus Group Discussion Topics

Senior Center Focus Group

This focus group had seven attendees from Wood County including Bowling Green, Weston, and Portage, Ohio. The participants included Donna Moto, Shirley Jenkins, Judi Errett, Larry Powell, Danilda Lee, and Ray Hillard. TMACOG also had a representative present, Janet Arcuicci. This focus group provided a wealth of information and insight into Bowling Green and the surrounding area.

Two themes that emerged from the discussion were safety and accessibility. The participants were concerned with needing more sidewalks in Bowling Green, Weston, and Portage as well as safer ways to get across town on foot. One particular safety concern was raised by Mr. Hillard when he spoke

about the lack of a traffic light in Portage. There is a crosswalk and flashing lights at that intersection, but not adequate signage. People do not feel safe crossing the road because cars do not stop or slow down. Ray surmised that was due to drivers not knowing what to do at the crosswalks with flashing lights and a lack of signage for the crosswalks.

The other main topic discussed was accessibility. The group members were concerned with connectivity between the towns within the region. Some participants lived in surrounding towns and at times were unable to get to Bowling Green or even return home due to a lack of transportation options. Ms Errett from Weston, Ohio stated, "If you live outside of the city, you can't get anywhere." In addition to being unable to get to Bowling Green, participants had problems getting to areas such as Toledo for doctor appointments or even to the grocery store reliably when they did not have access to an automobile or shared ride. Many participants spoke of a desire for more public transportation that could transport them on group trips to areas such as Perrysburg or the Toledo Express and Detroit airports. Focus group facilitators were informed that the Senior Center does have a bus that can take seniors to designated locations but the bus seats only eleven people, making availability an issue. The Senior Center also has a service that can take them to doctor's appointments but they have to be given a month's notice, which is not always possible. The participants voiced that even being able to utilize the bus system that runs for BGSU's campus would be nice and helpful, especially when trying to get groceries. Overall, the participants were happy with the transportation options available in Bowling Green. Mr. Hillard stated, "Getting around town is actually pretty good" when comparing Bowling Green to other small rural towns. The main concerns voiced had to do with safety and accessibility, and if those were addressed participants would be much happier with transportation in Bowling Green, OH.

Student Focus Group

The next focus group scheduled was the student focus group held in the BGSU Student Union.

"Drivers just don't pay attention".

-Eric Juzkin, Undergraduate Student at BGSU

Participants included Erin Bortel, a graduate student at BGSU; Michael Stafford, an undergraduate student; Eric Juzkin, an undergraduate student; and Mike Smith a graduate student. The students were a mix of those who lived on campus as well as those who resided off campus.

Most students identified driving as their main form of transportation around Bowling Green and the surrounding areas. The main themes

that emerged from the discussion were the need for increased safety across all modes of transportation, increased access to public transit and multi-modal connections, and greater focus on the sustainability of our transportation system.

Safety was a main concern for students in many different capacities. In terms of safety concerns related to driving, the students had concerns about dangerous intersections in Bowling Green, which included Main Street and Wooster, Sandridge and Gypsy Lane Roads, the interchange of State Route 6 and Main Street, and Napoleon and College Roads. Students felt that these were dangerous intersections due to a lack of visibility, traffic lights, and lighting in general. Another safety concern was when students were either walking or riding a bike in town and on campus. The main concerns for pedestrian safety related to surrounding area crosswalks. There are four crosswalks at the intersection of Ridge Street and Thurston Avenue on campus, which causes confusion for pedestrians as well as for drivers. In addition, there is a need for more crosswalks near the library and recreation center in the middle of campus. It appears that students cross where it is convenient rather than at the designated crosswalks. Lastly, it appears that there is a lack of driver attention to the crosswalks with the blinking lights near the recreation center. Eric Juzkin, an undergraduate student, stated, "Drivers just don't pay attention." The last safety concern raised by students was for cyclists. The main safety concerns voiced

pertained to bicycles utilizing sidewalks because they didn't feel safe cycling on roads due to the lack of space on existing roadways. In addition, participants mentioned a need for warning lights where the bike path is located near Wal-Mart on Gypsy Lane Road because it does not appear drivers are aware of this bicycle crossing.

In addition to safety concerns, students raised concerns regarding accessibility, particularly for students who do not have a car. They reported concerns for students being able to get to grocery stores, to airports over breaks, and the limited bus schedule. The students said it was inconvenient for people to use the bus to go grocery shopping. Additionally, students had difficulties locating the schedule and stops for the buses. Another concern was for students not having transportation to get to airports to go home or even having a bus station close by.

The participants further expressed their concerns by speaking to the issue of the environment and sustainability. The students spoke of needing bike lanes and more bike paths. The students were also concerned about single drivers driving to campus rather than carpooling to help with sustainability and the environment. Mike Smith, a graduate student, voiced a concern that "the bike program needs to be expanded on campus (to include off campus travel)". This is needed because of the environmental and sustainability component as well as for accessibility. In particular, students from other countries would like a way to get around town and prefer to utilize bikes as that is how they are accustomed to traveling. Currently, the Orange Bike program is only available to be used by students on the BGSU campus.

"Paint isn't going to protect cyclists but it will make drivers more aware".

*-Eileen Baker Bowling Green
Bicycle Safety Commission and the
Black Swamp Bicycling Society*

Cyclist Focus Group

The cyclist focus group had seven attendees including Russ Frye from the Black Swamp Bicycling Society, Jennifer Karches, a Bowling Green resident; Tom Vanden Eynden from the Black Swamp Bicycling Society and the Bowling Green Bike Safety Commission; Steve Langendorfer from the Bowling Green Safety Commission and the Black Swamp Bicycling Society; Ted Hagarman from the Bowling Green Orange Bike Program; Eileen Baker from the Bowling Green Bicycle Safety Commission and the Black Swamp Bicycling Society; and Neil Munger from the Wood County Park District. Janet Arcuicci was in attendance as a TMACOG representative.

The main themes that emerged from the discussion included increased personal mobility, increased safety for cyclists, and improved infrastructure to support bicycles. Three of the participants, Tom Hagarman, Steve Langendorfer, and Eileen Baker, all use cycling as their main forms of transportation and recreational activity. They felt there was a real need for bike lanes and bike paths for personal mobility. They also felt the current knowledge of existing bicycle paths was lacking for both people who may want to utilize them as well as for drivers so they are aware to watch for bicyclists entering and exiting the paths.

The need for increased safety for cyclists was another key topic discussed by many participants. Eileen Baker mentioned that more people would bike around town if they felt safer. She advocated for more awareness and signage for both cyclists and drivers. Ms. Baker stated, "Paint isn't going to protect cyclists but it will make drivers more aware" in reference to needing better signage and awareness. There are specific roads that cyclists will not utilize because of car-bicycle accidents, traffic, and not feeling safe. These roads include Wooster Street, Main Street, South College Street, River Road, and State Route 6.

The last main topic discussed by the participants was the infrastructure condition of both the roads and sidewalks in the Bowling Green area. Jennifer Karches stated that she only bikes on sidewalks because she does not feel safe sharing the road with cars but the sidewalks are not in good condition. Many are cracked or have roots coming through. It appears that these sidewalks have been marked with paint for improvement but they have not been addressed in several years. For others who do utilize roads to cycle, Poe Road was mentioned as being in poor condition due to bumps.

Freight and Industry Focus Group

The Freight and Industry focus group had four industry participants including William Hirzel from Hirzel Canning, Dave Saneholtz from Poggemeyer Design Group, Kevin Doering from the Bowling Green Flight Center, and Vic Kidden from Berner Trucking. Christine Drennen and Janet Arcuicci represented TMACOG at the meeting. Overall, the participants were satisfied with the available transportation options in the Toledo region, but felt it could be marketed better. The participants were happy with the multiple hubs to move shipments, whether it's by road, rail, air, or water. Dave Saneholtz from Poggemeyer Design stated, "We are blessed with a lot of good primary routes in the area and the region." William Hirzel supported that sentiment and stated, "We have one of the best (transportation systems) in the world." Mr. Hirzel also felt that Toledo's transportation system needed to be marketed

more to attract more businesses.

We have one of the best (transportation systems) in the world".

-William Hirzel, Hirzel Canning

The main issue of concern was the lack of heavy haul routes between Lucas and Wood Counties. A problem is the lack of heavy haul roads that connect processing facilities to industries that need the raw materials. It was stated that there are no heavy haul routes from Toledo to Woodville, or Toledo to Bowling Green. It was stated

that companies will use existing heavy haul routes where available and then will have to split the trucks when the routes end. It was suggested that more heavy haul routes could save industry and freight

companies money, that it would require fewer trucks on the road and fewer drivers needed by companies.

Central Themes

Through the synthesis of the focus group comments, several common themes emerged that provide insight into the transportation needs in Bowling Green. These themes include: the need for increased safety across all modes of transportation, a greater focus on the sustainability of our transportation system, the need for improved infrastructure, the need for increased personal mobility, particularly for seniors, and the need for greater infrastructure for cyclists. Those are also four of the eight goals that TMACOG will be pursuing in their transportation plan for 2015-2045.

Need for Increased Safety Across All Modes of Transportation

Regarding safety, many different aspects were discussed in each particular focus group. The topics pertaining to safety ranged from roads not being clearly lit to pedestrians needing more crosswalks for safe road crossing. Other specific safety topics included bicycle safety with the need for education of cyclists and drivers as well as more clearly marked bike passages to protect cyclists.

Crosswalks

One main area of concern for many of the focus groups was condition and placement of crosswalks. First, discussed by seniors in the senior center focus group, in Portage there is an issue with not having a traffic light downtown. Without this traffic light, it creates an issue for pedestrians attempting to cross the street. Currently, there is a system in place where pedestrians can push a button that activates flashing lights to alert drivers that pedestrians will be utilizing the crosswalk. However, drivers are not stopping or yielding for the flashing lights, which makes pedestrians concerned for their safety.

In addition to Portage, there are crosswalk safety concerns near BGSU's campus. This was expressed by students as well as cyclists in each respective focus group. Specifically, students who park between Court Street and Pike Street have no clear path to cross the street and end up crossing the street where there are no crosswalks. This creates a safety concern for those pedestrians as well as for drivers. Currently, there are crosswalks only at Court Street and Thurston Avenue and Ridge Street and Thurston Avenue. Additionally, there are not enough crosswalks on Main Street. Specific examples include Ordway Street to Napoleon Road, which has no marked crosswalks, as well as from Court Street to Clay Street and from Clay Street to Poe Road. This resulted in pedestrians having to cross the street wherever it is most convenient, which is not always the safest place.

Dangerous Intersections and Mergers

In addition to safety concerns surrounding crosswalks, there are also concerns surrounding intersections and mergers. Some intersections are a concern due to poor visibility for drivers, a lack of traffic lights, and a lack of lighting. Some specific intersections of concern include: Main Street and Wooster, Sandridge and Gypsy Lane Roads, interchange of State Route 6 and Main Street, and Napoleon Road and College Road. Students in particular felt these intersections were especially dangerous.

The cyclist group mentioned the intersections of Wooster and South College to be a concern due to a lack of having a protected left turn. This is a safety concern due to the amount of traffic at this intersection including pedestrian, vehicle, and cycling. Also, the intersection of Wooster and Haskins was a concern due to the amount of curves, splits, traffic, and the difficulty with visibility. One last intersection that was mentioned was Main and Wooster Streets. At this intersection, cyclists are not allowed on sidewalks and are forced to be in the traffic lanes with cars in that intersection, which has a lot of traffic, sharp turning lanes, and an abundance of freight movement as well.

Not only are intersections a concern, but lane mergers are as well. The student focus group mentioned the merger at Wooster and Mercer Street where there is little warning that the right lane ends and traffic must merge into one lane. Also, at Wooster and Thurston Avenue near the railroad tracks, the right lane ends again and must merge into a single lane. There appears to be more room to merge than is actually there which can be partially attributed to the short notice and the location of the merge, which is very close to the railroad tracks. The students felt these mergers were dangerous due to not being marked soon enough.

Bike Path Concerns

Lastly, there were specific concerns raised by the cyclists group as well as the student focus groups pertaining to bike path safety. Specifically, participants noted that the entrance to the bike trail on Gypsy Lane Road is not well marked. This entrance also has a lot of vehicle traffic due to Wal-Mart also being near that intersection. The concern was due to increased traffic and not enough signage to warn drivers of the increased cyclists. Another bike trail of concern is located near River Road and Anthony Wayne Trail. This road in particular is very scenic for cyclists, but is not safe for biking due to the low visibility of drivers and the increased vehicle traffic.

A Greater Focus on the Sustainability of our Transportation System

In addition to safety, sustainability and the environment were also a concern that was discussed. Within many of the groups, it was mentioned that there needs to be safer bike lanes to encourage more bicyclists and fewer cars on the road. Specifically, participants in the cyclists group noted that if there were more bike lanes, paths, or other ways to make cycling safer then more people would be interested in cycling as opposed to driving. The cyclist group discussed how since they were very experienced with cycling they felt safe cycling in most areas, but the average person does not feel safe. By increasing

the number of people cycling, the number of people driving could decrease, increasing the sustainability of roads and the environment.

Another aspect of sustainability that was discussed by groups such as the senior center, student, and cyclists groups was the need for a more inclusive public transportation system. The student, senior center, and cyclist groups felt that the BGSU transportation system could be expanded to include all citizens to encourage fewer people to drive, which would increase the sustainability of roads as well as the environment. Lastly, the freight and industry focus group suggested that by improving the heavy haul options for truck drivers, there would be a decreased demand for trucks resulting in less traffic. With less truck traffic, the sustainability of the roads and environment would also be increased.

The Need for Improved Infrastructure

Different aspects of infrastructure were also a topic that was discussed and emerged as a central theme. Some groups such as the senior group were happy with Bowling Green's infrastructure, but other groups such as the cyclists and the freight and industry group felt there were some issues with roads and sidewalks in town. Within the freight and industry group, it was discussed that there were many potholes after the cold winter. The cyclists were concerned with some of the more heavily truck trafficked roads such as Poe Road, where the road is wash boarded and bumpy making it more difficult to cycle utilizing this road.

In addition to road infrastructure conditions, sidewalk conditions were also discussed. The cyclist group stated that there was a lack of consistency among sidewalks in Bowling Green. Some sidewalks are crumbling or have roots growing through them, which makes it difficult to ride bikes as well as walk on them. There was also mention of several sidewalks being marked for improvements, but nothing has been done to improve them or address the areas of concern.

The Need for Increased Personal Mobility, Particularly for Seniors

Lastly, personal mobility and accessibility were mentioned frequently within each of the focus groups. These two topics can be viewed as complementary as both have to do with citizens having the resources to become mobile. Some accessibility concerns brought up included not being able to get to other towns in Wood County and the need for the region to be linked to other areas such as Toledo. There was an expressed need for public transportation that could fulfill those needs as well as for more bike paths and for bike paths to be connected for more regional travel.

Public Transportation

Within the senior center, cyclists, and student focus groups, there was an expressed need for a comprehensive public transportation system. The senior center focus group focused on the need for a public transportation system that could take them to other towns such as Toledo for doctor appointments, grocery shopping within the community, as well as shopping excursions to areas such as Perrysburg. In addition to the senior center focus group, the student focus group brought up the need for a public transportation system to take students to stores for shopping as well as to airports to be able to return home over breaks.

Lastly, the cyclist group was interested in a public transportation system that would allow for fewer people driving and for connectivity within the region. The senior center group also expressed a need for public transportation that would be affordable. Senior citizens were concerned with the prices of taxis and shuttles to take them places within Bowling Green as well as to areas such as Toledo. It was expressed by many participants that living on fixed incomes does not allow for \$50 taxi fares to go to doctor's appointments or to the airport.

The Desire for Greater Infrastructure to Support Cyclists

Within the student and cyclists groups, the need for bike lanes, bike paths, as well as increased safety were all expressed as concerns. Currently, within Bowling Green there are no bike lanes. Given this lack of bike lanes as well as the inability of cyclists to ride on sidewalks through downtown, there does not appear to be any safe place for cyclists to be when traveling. One participant from the cyclists' focus group, Jennifer, expressed that she felt it was too dangerous to ride on the roads and often rode on sidewalks even though it is not allowed due to some city restrictions.

Some cyclists, such as Jennifer, have attempted to find alternative routes for cyclists to utilize when traveling. However, Jennifer mentioned that riding on sidewalks can be challenging due to not being able to utilize them everywhere and because not all people know that cycling is allowed on sidewalks in some locations. This leads to pedestrian confusion and makes utilizing sidewalks as a safety precaution confusing as well as challenging. As to actually utilizing sidewalks, there is a lack of consistency due to there not being sidewalks everywhere in town as well as the infrastructure itself being in need of repair in some locations. There is also a need for more signage to alert drivers to cyclist traffic. That may not protect cyclists as bike focus group participant, Eileen, stated but it will assist drivers in becoming more aware of cyclists.

The last concern related to cycling was the need surrounding bike paths. Currently, there are some bike paths located in Wood County and Bowling Green; however, these paths are not widely advertised or marked. Students within the student focus expressed that they were not sure where bike paths were located. In the cyclists' focus group, it was expressed that there needed to be more connectivity between the different bike paths within the region. Eileen even suggested having a rails-to-trails system put into place to improve the connectivity between these paths.

Recommendations

The concerns voiced by the focus group participants should be able to be addressed in the context of the regional transportation plan, especially if funding were not a constraint. The three main recommendations that would address main concerns brought up by the focus group participants would include public transportation, safety in Wood County, especially Bowling Green, and the addition of heavy haul trucking routes.

Address Public Transportation Concerns

In regards to public transportation, there could be several options such as completing a more in depth study of the public transportation needs of Wood County, working with the university to expand its services to all members of the community, or by adding a new system or supplementing an existing system that would link Perrysburg, Bowling Green, other towns in Wood County as well as Toledo.

The first step for TMACOG regarding public transportation concerns in the Bowling Green area could be to complete a more in depth and pointed study of what is actually needed in Bowling Green in regards to public transportation as well as what may have been implemented in other rural areas similar to Wood County. This would provide decision-makers with a more nuanced understanding of the transportation needs in Bowling Green and the County as well as possible options to address those needs.

Another option would be to begin talks with BGSU's transportation department on the feasibility of allowing all citizens to utilize the BGSU bus system. This bus system does go to places such as grocery stores so it would address some of the concerns and needs of the participants. Also, depending on the bus schedule over the weekend, it may be possible to utilize it occasionally for transporting people to airports, shopping trips or other group outings. If it was found to be feasible, other aspects of

implementing that system would need explored, such as advertising the routes and the bus system in general.

Focus on Addressing Safety Concerns

The most pronounced needs and concerns of all focus group participants were related to safety. Therefore, TMACOG should work and allocate funds to address those safety needs expressed by focus group participants. This can be done in a variety of ways. First, to address some concerns the sidewalks could be repaired where it is necessary. Then, there could be a joint venture between TMACOG and the Bowling Green Bicycle Safety Commission to offer bicycle and vehicle safety classes. This would address some of the safety concerns expressed by participants as well as increase awareness among potential cyclists and vehicle operators.

Lastly, it would be important to address the safety concerns surrounding crosswalks and dangerous intersections and mergers. TMACOG could allocate funding to increase signage for these areas, such as for crosswalks, or even add additional crosswalks with lights to increase awareness of drivers. This would assist in addressing safety needs, which is a priority for TMACOG, while making citizens feel safer.

Work with Communities on Increasing Connectivity Between Areas for Freight and Industry

One concern expressed during the freight and industry focus group was the need for more heavy haul lanes that would allow for freight and industry trucks to make more efficient and practical routes between locations. TMACOG could work with the different towns and regions to assist freight and industry businesses in having more heavy haul routes between the necessary manufacturing locations. This would potentially not involve large amounts of funding allocated by TMACOG, but could address many concerns. If the heavy haul problem were addressed, there would be less truck traffic resulting in

increased sustainability of roads and an improved relationship between TMACOG and freight and industry businesses.

Conclusion

Bowling Green and the region in general has a great transportation network. There are many positives that can be said for this region in regards to transportation such as the infrastructure, number of freight and industry hubs, and sidewalk conditions. With all of the positives, there are some areas for improvement. If things such as the connection of heavy haul routes, better sidewalks, and more regional connectivity were addressed, the Toledo metropolitan area would grow and be more efficient.

Appendices

Focus Group Questions

General Questions:

- How do you use transportation in Bowling Green?
 - What types of transportation do you use?
- How good do you feel the transportation system is in Bowling Green?
 - What is working?
 - What is not working?
 - Think multimodal, roads, train tracks, bike paths, sidewalk conditions, walking, safety, etc.
- What do you see as the main need in Bowling Green in regards to transportation?
- The 2045 Plan Goals include:
 - Safety
 - Infrastructure condition
 - Congestion reduction
 - System reliability
 - Freight movement
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Project delivery
 - Personal mobility
 - How well do you think Bowling Green is accomplishing these goals?
 - Do you feel anything is missing from their goals specific to the Bowling Green community?
 - Why?
 - How can it be improved?

- What do you think is most important goal?
 - Why?
- In the last ten years has anything changed in the BG community?
 - Development, etc?
 - Has the transportation and infrastructure system also changed to address the dynamic nature of the community?
 - What other transportation changes could be made?
- What changes would you like to see in the next 5, 10, and 25 years regarding transportation in Bowling Green?
- Are there specific places/points of concern regarding transportation in Bowling Green?
 - What could improve those concerns?

Questions related to TMACOG Goals

Safety- Reduce fatalities and serious injuries

- Do you have concerns about safety in Bowling Green?
- In regards to safety, what do you feel some of the needs in the Bowling Green community are?
- While traveling in BG (walking, driving, biking, etc.), have you even felt unsafe?
- Tell us about a time you felt unsafe traveling the in the BG community.
 - What could be done to fix this?

Infrastructure Condition- Improve system to a state of good repair

- In regards to infrastructure conditions, how do you feel Bowling Green ranks?
- How would you rank pavement conditions? Lane markings? Signs?
- Do you see needs in regards to the infrastructure?
- Has the infrastructure in BG been a problem for you?

Congestion Reduction- Reduce congestion on the National Highway System

- Do you feel Bowling Green or Wood County has a problem with congestion?
- Where do you think there is congestion in BG/Wood County?
- Have you ever run late, been stuck in traffic, or had any other negative experiences due to congestion in BG?

System Reliability-Improve Efficiency

- In terms of system reliability, being able to get where you need to go, how does BG rank to you?
- Have you had any bad experiences pertaining to the reliability of transportation in BG?

Freight Movement- Access to trade markets to support economic development

- Have you noticed any issues with freight movement in Wood County?
- Can you anticipate any needs pertaining to freight movement in BG?

Environmental Sustainability- Protect community and natural environments

- How important is the environment to you when you think about the transportation needs of the BG community?
- Do you foresee any environmental needs for the BG community in regards to transportation?

Project Delivery- expedite it

- Do you see any needs or concerns pertaining to road construction in BG?
- Has there been a time where road construction has been an issue for you or someone you know and why?
- Are there areas would you would like to see a construction project/infrastructure change?

Personal Mobility- Improve multimodal personal transportation, Public transit & passenger rail

- Living in the BG area, how do you feel about personal mobility?
- Are there any challenges?
- Are there places where bicycle lanes should be added?
- Are there sufficient sidewalks and crosswalks in the community?

Invitation Email

Dear

Hi, my name is _____, and I am a graduate student in the Master's of Public Administration Program at Bowling Green State University. I am currently working with my fellow students as well as TMACOG, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, to complete several focus groups in Bowling Green. These focus groups are targeted at assessing the transportation need of various community groups in the Bowling Green Area.

The information that will be gathered from these focus groups will be used to target funding to specific transportation needs throughout the community. Without your input, the real community concerns may not be heard. This is your opportunity, as a Bowling Green community member, to be heard and recognized. Your knowledge and experiences combined with TMACOG's technical expertise can lead to a better functioning Bowling Green community.

We would like your input on the transportation situation, and would like to invite you to attend one of our focus groups. The focus group will be on THIS DATE at THIS TIME at THIS LOCATION. As we are tracking the attendance, please respond to this email advising whether or not you are able to attend.

Thank you and we are looking forward to hearing from you,

Senior Center Flyer Announcement

Hello! The Master of Public Administration students at Bowling Green State University are currently working with TMACOG to develop a long-term transportation plan for Northwest Ohio. In order to determine the transportation needs of Bowling Green, we will be hosting a series of focus groups targeting different segments of the community. These focus groups are targeted at assessing the transportation need of various community groups in the Bowling Green Area.

The information that will be gathered from these focus groups will be used to target funding to specific transportation needs throughout the community. Without your input, the real community concerns may not be heard. This is your opportunity, as a Bowling Green community member, to be heard and recognized. Your knowledge and experiences combined with TMACOG's technical expertise can lead to a better functioning Bowling Green community.

Please join us for the focus group listed below and let your voice be heard!

Focus Group Sign In Sheet

Name	Affiliation	Address	E-Mail



**Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments
2015-2045 Transportation Plan:**

In Coordination with the BGSU Master of Public Administration Program

Student Focus Group

February 27, 2014

Thank you for participating in the 2015-2045 Transportation Planning process for TMACOG (Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments)! The purpose of this focus group is to gain insight from community members regarding transportation in Bowling Green and Wood County. Your input is vital to the transportation planning process. Throughout today's discussion, please keep in mind the 2045 Plan Goals and how they may impact your personal and professional lives:

- Safety
- Infrastructure condition
- Congestion reduction
- System reliability
- Freight movement
- Environmental sustainability
- Project delivery
- Personal mobility

Discussions are not limited to these subject matters, but instead may provide a framework for dialogue. Examples of local topics that may impact your day-to-day include:

- Bicycle lanes
- Sidewalks
- Public Transportation
- Highways and railways
- Regional airport

Input gathered from today's focus group will be used to inform TMACOG's Planning Committee of the concerns and needs of the Bowling Green community. For more information regarding the 2015-2045 Transportation Plan, please feel free to contact TMACOG:

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments
300 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., Suite 300
Toledo, Ohio 43604
(419) 241-9155

Focus Group Participants

Senior Focus Group

Wood County Senior Center
 305 N. Main Street
 Bowling Green, OH 43402
 February 25, 2014

Participant	Affiliation
Donna Moto	Bowling Green, Ohio Resident
Shirley Jenkins	Bowling Green, Ohio Resident
Judi Errett	Weston, Ohio Resident
Larry Powell	Bowling Green, Ohio Resident
Danilda Lee	Bowling Green, Ohio Resident
Ray Hillard	Portage, Ohio Resident
Janet Arcuicci	TMACOG Representative

Student Focus Group

Bowen-Thompson Student Union
 Bowling Green, OH
 February 27, 2014

Participant	Affiliation
Erin Bortel	Bowling Green State University Graduate Student
Michael Stafford	Bowling Green State University Undergraduate Student
Eric Juzkin	Bowling Green State University Undergraduate Student
Mike Smith	Bowling Green State University Graduate Student
Janet Arcuicci	TMACOG Representative

Cyclist Focus Group

Wood County Airport
 1261 E. Poe Rd.
 Bowling Green, OH 43402
 March 5, 2014

Participant	Affiliation
Russ Frye	Black Swamp Bicycling Society
Jennifer Karches	Bowling Green, Ohio Representative
Tom Vanden Eynden	Black Swamp Bicycling Society and Bowling Green Bike Safety Commission
Steve Langendorfer	Bowling Green Bike Safety Commission and Black Swamp Bicycling Society
Ted Hagarman	Bowling Green Orange Bike Program
Eileen Baker	Bowling Green Bicycle Safety Commission and Black Swamp Bicycling Society
Neil Munger	Wood County Park District
Janet Arcuicci	TMACOG Representative

Freight and Industry Focus Group

Wood County Airport
1261 E. Poe Rd.
Bowling Green, OH 43402
March 19, 2014

Participant

Affiliation

Vic Kidden	Berner Trucking
William Hirzel	Hirzel Canning
Dave Saneholtz	Poggemeyer Design Group
Kevin Doering	Bowling Green Flight Center
Christine Drennen	TMACOG Representative
Janet Arcuicci	TMACOG Representative