

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) End of Year Report 2018

MPO – Transportation Planning

The Casper Area MPO provides cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous transportation planning to the Casper urbanized area. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration provide grants that cover over 90% of costs related to transportation planning projects in Casper. These funds require a local match and are administered by the MPO Policy Committee, a board of elected and senior administrative officials from each local government in the Casper Area. Regular projects include a 5-year Long Range Transportation Plan, subarea traffic studies, trails plans, and transit development plans. The MPO's overall purpose includes:

- Allocating transportation investments of scarce federal and other transportation funding resources; and,
- Reflecting the Casper area's vision for its future; and,
- Providing comprehensive examination of the Casper area's future and investment alternatives; and,
- Acting as a Council of Governments, to facilitate collaboration of governments, agencies, interested parties, and residents in the planning process.

Achievements in 2018

Long Range Transportation Plan – began in September 2018 and to be completed December 2019

The MPO, in cooperation with the State, is responsible for developing and updating an MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Updates are required every five years. The LRTP will include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demands. This plan serves as the foundation for State and local funding and budgeting of transportation related projects in the Casper metropolitan area, which includes Mills, Evanville, Bar Nunn, and the County.



Control Point Network Modernization – Completed December 2018

The project included:

- Placement and construction of fourteen (14) new regional control monuments;
- Observation and data collection of a total of the thirty-seven (37) new and existing control monuments within the Casper area;
- Post processing of the collected Global Positioning System (GPS) data on the thirty-seven (37) individual monuments. The completion of this project will lead to more accuracy for local surveyors and a more accurate aerial imagery for the Casper area's geographic information system (GIS).

Adopt Federally Required Transportation Performance Measures

Performance measures were finalized and adopted in 2018 to further ensure a link between transportation projects with investments, goals, and metrics. Transit related performance measures were adopted on April 24, 2018. Pavement, Bridge, and Travel Time Reliability (LOTTR) measures were finalized and adopted by the Policy Committee on October 4, 2018. Performance measures will continue to play a large part in transportation planning and identifying the implementation strategies of these plans.

Hiring of MPO GIS Technician

One of the key expectations of any MPO is to maintain and update travel demand models in order to better facilitate transportation planning, engineering, design, oversight, and investments. This component has not been consistently maintained within the Casper Area MPO in recent memory. A new MPO GIS Technician began on October 1, 2018. She attended a week long training to begin managing the Casper Area Travel Demand Model. The Demand Model is currently in the process of being updated as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan process. Furthermore, she is expected help reduce costs in planning projects by giving our office the ability to create maps, manage data, manage performance measures, and be present for all other aspects of the planning process.

Downtown Casper Parking Study

This Downtown Casper Parking Study focused on parking assets and identifying innovative parking management solutions. Components of the parking study included stakeholder and community engagement, data collection such as an inventory of existing assets and land and analysis of current and future demand, identification of high-priority issues, and identification of short-term and long-term management and financing strategies and solutions. This project was completed in the summer of 2018. It is anticipated that in 2019, Casper City Council will address the recommendations of this plan.

Traffic Counts

Since 1996, the MPO has been involved in the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) program mandated by Congress through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. Each year the MPO obtains traffic counts on arterials and collectors specified by WYDOT, City of Casper staff, Natrona County staff, Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills staff, and requests from the public. These counts are then used to build the Casper Area travel demand model, to determine future transportation needs, used by WYDOT, and used by local businesses, engineers, and developers to perform market and traffic studies.

The counts are performed on one-third of the system each year in the Casper urbanized area. The urbanized area includes Casper, Bar Nunn, Evansville, Mills, and Natrona County. Traffic Counts are performed on one third of the system in the Casper Metropolitan Boundary Area each year. In May of 2018, 322 mid-block traffic counts were collected across the Casper Metropolitan area.

Key Budget Drivers of Non-Personnel Areas

Long Range Transportation Plan:	\$300,000
Control Point:	\$71,000
Parking Study:	\$80,000
GIS ESRI Licensing:	\$52,500
GIS Support:	\$83,000
Total:	\$586,500

The key drivers behind annual, non-personnel related activities predominately include transportation related planning, engineering, and design projects and support of the Natrona Regional Geospatial Cooperative.

Other Activities

- MPO and Community Development staff met with FTA and FHWA representatives for a day long collaborative meeting to address challenges and opportunities within the Casper Area MPO – August 29, 2018
- WYDOT Local Public Agency (LPA) Training – April 12, 2018
- WYDOT East Belt Loop Study Participation
- Coordinated review of Casper Area MPO Title VI requirements with FHWA - 2018



MPO - Transit

The City of Casper, along with surrounding towns, contracts with the Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC), a non-profit group, for transit service. The present contractor, CATC, is a private, non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors that also oversees CATC's operations. CATC oversees two services:

1. The eponymously named CATC, which is a door-to-door paratransit service, providing transportation for the Casper area's handicapped and elderly populations;
2. The Bus, which is a fixed-route bus transit system.



Casper Area Transit (CAT) is financed through a combination of sources including the City of Casper, fare revenues, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307, Section 5316 funds, funding from Bar Nunn, Evansville, Mills, the State of Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), the Casper area portions of Natrona County, and from contracts with local agencies. The City of Casper is the grantee and the Municipal Councils are the policy making body for transit in the Casper area metropolitan area.

Achievements in 2018

Route Modifications Exploration

In January of 2018, Casper City Council expressed a need to reduce general fund obligations. In turn, it requested staff to explore possibilities and the projected results of a decreased transit budget. MPO and CATC staff worked together to apprise Casper City Council and work with local riders to explore the impacts of a decreased transit budget and identify any potential efficiencies that could be made. The Casper City Council ultimately declined to reduce the City's transit budget and local match for federal funding, but requested staff continue to explore efficiencies that can be made without reducing service.

Public Engagement

2018 resulted in an elevated level of communication and engagement with the riders of CATC the The Bus. A collective of CATC riders organized the Friends of CATC, a group of riders that serve as a voice for riders. CATC and MPO Staff have used this group as a sounding board for transit policies and modifications to bus routes. The peak moment of communication with riders occurred from November 27, 2018 to the

end of the year, with a 45-day Public Comment Period in which proposed bus route changes sparked discussion about potential efficiencies to the existing bus routes.

Adopt Federally Required Transportation Performance Measures

Federal divisions have directed the Casper Area MPO, as a transit provider, to develop a transit asset management plan to inventory capital assets and track the conditions and maintenance of these capital assets to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of these assets. The MPO adopted WYDOT’s transit asset management plan on April 24, 2018.

Transit services will continue to be tested as Casper’s senior citizens age and the general population increases. Without additional funding or significant shifts in resource allocations, transit services on both fixed route and demand response systems may be significantly strained.

Performance Metrics

Measure	2017	2018
The Bus Total Ridership	154,862	163,306
The Bus Passenger per Service Hour	7.4	7.8
The Bus Cost per Mile	\$3.48	\$3.30
The Bus Cost per Passenger	\$5.53	\$4.85

CATC Total Ridership	46,430	46,045
CATC Passenger per Service Hour	2.3	2.3
CATC Cost Per Mile	\$4.60	\$5.34
CATC Cost Per Passenger	\$23.70	\$26.12

In 2018, The Bus served more riders than 2016 and 2017, with a 5.5% increase in 2018 over 2017. Coupled with a decrease in total service hours and miles, we see a Bus system that is serving more riders per hour and decreasing costs per hour and per mile. **Overall, this is the most efficient we have seen the Bus system in four years, as far back as this data goes.**

CATC tells a different story. Ridership has only slightly decreased in 2018, but costs, miles, and hours have risen steadily. **These increased burdens may be due to an aging fleet, a growing and sprawling service area, and growing demand by wheel chairs users.** Wheel chair users have remained steady from 2015 - 2017, but saw a dramatic increase of 13% in 2018.

Key Budget Drivers of Non-Personnel Areas

The key drivers behind annual, non-personnel related transit activities is made up of capital costs such as new vehicles and the maintenance of these vehicles. In 2018, we purchased 2 new CATC paratransit buses and 2 new fixed-route buses. As of December 2018, CATC fixed route maintains ten (10) vehicles with seating capacity ranging from a 9-person van to 26-passenger cutaways. The CATC paratransit fleet consists of twelve (12) vehicles with wheelchair lift service, ranging from a six (6) passenger van to eighteen (18) passenger cutaways. We look forward to seeing how new rolling stock affects our long term costs.

Other Activities

- South West Transit Association (SWTA) Transit Conference – March 5-7, 2018

MPO – Summary of 2019 Goals

- Complete the Casper Area Long Range Transportation Plan
- Maintain an updated and robust MPO travel demand model
- Complete an update of the Casper Area MPO Public Participation Plan and fulfill Title VI enhancements as requested by FHWA
- Work with Casper City Council to implement Downtown Parking Study Recommendations
- Begin and complete a Mills Main Street Corridor Study to prepare for improvements along SW Wyoming Boulevard
- Coordinate with Platte River Trails Trust on bicycle, pedestrian, trail safety and education
- Coordinate and begin a Casper Area Wayfinding Plan
- Implement Casper bus route changes
- Continue fostering a strong working relationship with CATC under a new Executive Director
- Perform MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (MTIP 18-21) Update
- Further engage with WYDOT and the Casper Area's District 2

Respectfully Submitted,

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