Introduction

As a central component of daily life and something that affects everyone, transportation represents a critical component of an area’s social and man-made infrastructure. The *Kanawha-Putnam 2045 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) defines the community’s strategy for creating a regional transportation system that accommodates the existing mobility needs of residents and looks to the future to anticipate where new needs may arise. In response to federal mandates and the desires of residents, the RTP addresses all modes of transport including automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and freight movements.

The *Kanawha-Putnam 2045 Regional Transportation Plan* is shaped by several elements, including federal legislation and the direction of state and local agencies. The RTP is governed by the *Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act* (FAST Act), which was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The goals of the FAST Act include strengthening America’s highways, establishing a performance-based program, creating jobs and supporting economic growth, supporting the United States Department of Transportation’s aggressive safety agenda, streamlining Federal Highway Administration transportation programs, accelerating project delivery, and promoting innovation. Additionally, the FAST Act is the first federal legislation that provides a dedicated source of federal funding for freight projects. This legislation extends through fiscal year 2020.

The Planning Process

The *Kanawha-Putnam 2045 Regional Transportation Plan* is the result of an ongoing partnership between local, state, and federal representatives, as well as a dedicated Steering Committee, the public, and key stakeholders. The planning process was designed to foster an open dialogue about existing and anticipated concerns for congestion, safety, access, and
connectivity for all modes of transportation. The planning process flow chart on the previous page outlines the RTP approach.

Public Outreach

Steering Committee

The RTP Steering Committee was formed as a group of staff members, local officials, and citizen advocates with a well-developed understanding of the needs and opportunities of the two-county region. Beginning with a kick-off meeting on April 27, 2016, the Steering Committee met throughout the planning process to fulfill its mission of examining existing deficiencies and potential solutions for all modes of transportation. The Committee also assisted the project team in developing the plan’s guiding statements, which are used throughout the plan from visioning to prioritization. The Committee’s duties included acting as a sounding board for project team ideas, participating in visioning and mapping exercises, assisting with the identification of existing conditions, aiding in the development and vetting of recommendations, and establishing the prioritization criteria. In total, the Steering Committee met six times throughout the planning process, as shown in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: RTP Steering Committee Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING</th>
<th>TOPIC(S) COVERED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting #1</td>
<td>Goals &amp; Visioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27, 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting #2</td>
<td>Existing Conditions &amp; MetroQuest Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9, 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting #3</td>
<td>Outreach Recap, CMP Kick-off, Recommendations Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6, 2016</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting #4</td>
<td>Prioritization Methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 31, 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting #5</td>
<td>Prioritized Project Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting #6</td>
<td>Financially Constrained Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24, 2017</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Stakeholder Interviews

Early in the public outreach process, the project team identified several stakeholders, including staff from municipal and county planning departments, representatives from the freight community and transit system, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, and local government representatives. Interviews with these stakeholders were used to gain insight regarding the social, political, economic, and transportation issues facing the Kanawha Valley. Responses received during stakeholder interviews were used to review progress since the 2010 plan, validate background information, and formulate preliminary recommendations. Information gathered through stakeholder interviews supplemented the information provided by the Steering Committee and the results of other public outreach events. Full stakeholder interviews can be found in the appendix.

Public Workshops

Gathering input from the public throughout the planning process is critical to understanding local needs, identifying projects of importance, and gaining buy-in to see projects progress from planning to implementation. Citizens recognize the strengths and shortcomings of their transportation system, and transportation decisions affect them daily. To fully utilize the knowledge of Kanawha-Putnam residents, the project team—assisted by the Steering Committee—conducted two public workshop series. In addition to the traditional public workshops, RIC staff travelled to three neighborhood and community meetings. Meeting attendees were updated about the plan and encouraged to participate in the same activities that were offered at the public workshops.

Public Workshop Series #1

The first public workshop series occurred June 9, 2016, with concurrent workshops held in Kanawha County and Putnam County. The evening was set up as a drop-in session, with six interactive activity stations. The activities helped generate information that aided in the initial phase of the planning process, including the creation of goals and objectives and the understanding of existing conditions.

Public Workshop Series #2

A second drop-in style public workshop series was held March 16, 2017 in both Kanawha and Putnam counties. The workshop allowed attendees to
review multimodal recommendations and weigh in by prioritizing their top five roadway and top five active transportation recommendations.

**Online Survey**

To broaden the range of public participants, an interactive web-based questionnaire was launched. Over 350 members of the public participated between June 9, 2016 and October 2, 2016. The online survey was advertised using handouts, email blasts, media attention, word of mouth, and the RIC website. This advertisement process yielded a robust survey response and a valuable dataset of community preferences, opinions, and issues that ultimately contributed to the development of transportation recommendations and project prioritization.

**Planning Themes Priority Ranking**

Survey respondents were presented with six planning themes and asked to select the three that were most important to them. The planning themes in order of priority and the top theme associated with each are summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety &amp; Security</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economic Vitality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mobility &amp; Accessibility</strong></td>
<td><strong>Land Use &amp; Transportation Integration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Culture &amp; Environment</strong></td>
<td><strong>System Preservation &amp; Efficiency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the travel safety and security in the Greater Kanawha Valley</td>
<td>Promote economic development through targeted transportation investments</td>
<td>Promote an efficient, interconnected, and accessible transportation network</td>
<td>Improve the integration of land use and transportation</td>
<td>Preserve and sustain the natural and built environments</td>
<td>Support and strengthen the current transportation network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL DATA POINTS**

855
WEBSITE VISITS

351
SURVEY RESPONSES

897
MAPPED IMPROVEMENTS

650
WRITTEN COMMENTS

1,898
TOTAL DATA POINTS
Previous Planning Efforts

The Kanawha-Putnam 2045 Regional Transportation Plan is coordinated closely with other state, regional, county, and local plans that impact planning efforts within the area. Primarily, the RTP should acknowledge the planning process and outcomes of the prior plans. Table 1-2 summarizes the transportation plans prepared within the region that were reviewed and used in data collection.

Table 1-2: Previous Plan Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT TITLE</th>
<th>ISSUING AGENCY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KRT System Analysis Plan</td>
<td>KVRTA</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goff Mountain Road &amp; Big Tyler Road (WV 622) Corridor Study</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Street Corridor Study</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike &amp; Trail Master Plan</td>
<td>City of Charleston</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Development Plan Region III</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Hill Corridor Study</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine Charleston</td>
<td>City of Charleston</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Mobility 2040</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of West Virginia Rail Plan</td>
<td>WVDOT</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Bicycle Route Connectivity Plan</td>
<td>WVDOT</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Albans Railroad Crossing Study</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teays Valley Subarea Transportation Study</td>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Road Design Study</td>
<td>WVDOT</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guiding Statements

The first step in creating a long range transportation plan is to establish guiding statements that will provide direction for the entirety of the planning process and will serve as a tool for prioritizing recommendations—an important step as the Kanawha-Putnam area faces a shortage of transportation dollars to fund identified needs. Guiding statements for the Kanawha-Putnam 2045 Regional Transportation Plan were developed through collaboration with the Steering Committee and reflect the community’s vision for the future of the transportation system. The statements combine guidance given through FAST Act federal legislation with localized objectives to provide the framework for a regional growth strategy. Table 1-3 on the following pages outlines the goals and guiding statements for the RTP.

Table 1-3: RTP Goals and Guiding Statements
CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Preserve and sustain the natural and built environments

- encourage use of alternative transportation modes and energy sources that reduce air pollution, fuel consumption, and other environmental impacts
- minimize development impacts in areas of cultural and historical significance
- reduce development impacts on environmentally sensitive areas
- develop strategies to decrease single-occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled
- improve access to areas of historical, cultural, and recreational significance

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Promote economic development through targeted transportation investments

- improve access to key economic nodes and areas of planned development
- support transportation investments and policies that work to create jobs and improve access to people, places, and goods
- encourage the concentration of employment and activity sites within established transit corridors to maximize transportation efficiency
- focus transportation system improvements to support and promote tourism
- promote multimodal access to encourage economic growth in distressed areas

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION INTEGRATION

Improve the integration of land use and transportation
• enhance communication and coordination between various transportation planning and land use planning agencies

• increase coordination between roadway design and land use development to improve transportation system performance

• encourage efficient infill and redevelopment to maximize use of the existing transportation system

• maximize effectiveness of parking infrastructure and regulations

**MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Promote an efficient, interconnected, and accessible transportation network

• identify and recommend alternative traffic control and system optimization measures

• provide efficient regional routes and internal connectivity for freight goods movement

• develop strategies to manage travel demand

• reduce peak-period congestion by promoting flexible working hours and innovative workforce policies for regional employers

• increase transit accessibility and availability to transit-dependent users and persons with special needs

• utilize Complete Streets initiatives to improve pedestrian mobility and expand a safe bicycle lane network

• increase intermodal connectivity to allow system users greater mode and route choices
Chapter 1: Plan Development

SAFETY AND SECURITY

*Improve the travel safety and security in the Greater Kanawha Valley*

- reduce the number of injuries, fatalities, and hazardous spills
- mitigate potential conflicts and delays at rail crossing sites
- reduce the number of high incident-accident locations
- facilitate coordination for emergency preparedness
- promote long-term resiliency of the transportation network to prevent interruptions, endure damages, and quickly recover from the disturbances
- implement incident management strategies to quickly reestablish traffic flow and increase the safety of motorists and emergency personnel
- minimize intersection conflicts, increase pedestrian safety, and enhance safety by refining access management policies

SYSTEM PRESERVATION AND EFFICIENCY

*Support and strengthen the current transportation network*

- reduce the number of potential conflicts between various transportation modes
- develop strategies and implement measures to extend the functional life of transportation facilities
- increase the use of innovative transportation technology to enhance the efficiency of the existing transportation system and to be better prepared for emerging vehicle technologies