

JACTS

Introduction

Background

In July 2012, President Obama signed into law transportation funding legislation entitled “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” (MAP-21). This is the fourth in a series of bills, dating from 1991, that brought surface transportation planning into the 21st century. These four laws have shaped the highway program to meet the Nation’s changing transportation needs. Current legislation continues to build on this firm foundation, supplying the funds and refining the programmatic framework for investments needed to maintain and grow our vital transportation infrastructure. In addition, to assure the program’s success, performance measures are now an integral piece of the planning process.

As the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Jackson urbanized area, the Region 2 Planning Commission through the Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (JACTS) is responsible for the development of a multi-modal, long range transportation plan (LRTP). The plan identifies the Jackson area's transportation needs through the year 2040, including the projects and policies to meet those needs. MAP-21 legislation continues to require the plan to be updated on a five-year cycle and cover at least a 20-year planning horizon

The development of the JACTS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan was a cooperative effort undertaken by the Region 2 Planning Commission, Jackson County Road Commission, Jackson Transportation Authority, City of Jackson, Michigan Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, other local units of government and concerned residents representing several interest groups throughout Jackson County. Development of the JACTS 2040 LRTP was initiated in August 2012 with approval of goals and objectives by the JACTS Technical Advisory and Policy Committees. The goals and objectives have been updated to reflect the requirements of MAP-21, the emphasis on preservation of the existing transportation system, and the addition of performance measures.

The Jackson area transportation planning process examined and evaluated the existing transportation facilities and travel characteristics to measure its present operating efficiency. An understanding of the relationships between land use, population and trip making characteristics is essential for anticipating future needs. The primary concern in the long range planning process is to develop a system that will meet the transportation demands of the Jackson area. In addition to safety and time considerations, more emphasis is to be placed on preserving existing facilities and supporting economic growth. Emphasis placed on the construction of new facilities is decreasing as a result of limited financial resources for major projects.

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Furthermore, the plan attempts to ensure that the proposed improvements to the area's transportation system enhance the movement of goods and people in a safe, efficient and economic manner. The projects are then included in the 4-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which is a process for scheduling the implementation of projects selected through the long range transportation planning process in order to receive federal transportation funding for a particular year.

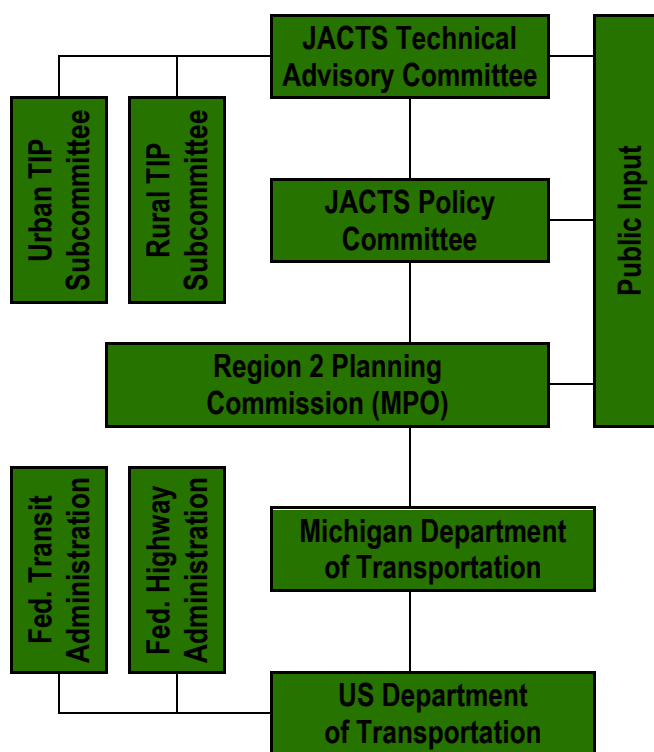
Figure 1-1
JACTS Organizational Structure

Federal law requires that each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 persons establish a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to ensure that it has a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process.

The Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (JACTS) is responsible for the transportation planning activities in Jackson County. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Region 2 Planning Commission provides the necessary staffing for the JACTS program. Two committees, the Technical Advisory and Policy Committees, provide the required direction, advice, and coordination for all phases of transportation planning (Figure 1-1).

The JACTS Technical Advisory Committee is comprised of appropriate staff (i.e. planners, engineers, managers) from units of government and modal agencies (i.e. transit and airport) within the metropolitan area boundary; representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation; and, an ex-officio member representing the Federal Highway Administration. The Technical Advisory Committee reviews all plans and programs and makes technical recommendations to the JACTS Policy Committee.

The JACTS Policy Committee, which includes elected and appointed officials from units of government within the metropolitan area boundary and the Michigan Department of Transportation, is involved in formulating and implementing policies pertaining to trans-



portation matters. The Policy Committee serves as a forum for discussion and analysis of development and improvement issues.

The primary tool for addressing these issues is through the JACTS planning work program activities, the recommendations passed onto the Policy Committee from the Technical Advisory Committee, and through public comment. Finally, the Region 2 Planning, as the designated MPO, reviews and affirms the recommendations and decisions put forth by the Policy Committee. Together, these MPO committees direct the work of the JACTS staff in completing the annual *Unified Work Program* that describes the work to be completed during the fiscal year; the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* that includes a list of the transportation and transit projects to be funded with federal funds within the subsequent 4-year time period; and, the *Long Range Transportation Plan*.

Study Area

The Plan study area encompasses the Jackson metropolitan area boundary (MAB), which covers the entirety of Jackson County (Figure 1-2). The U.S. Census-designated urbanized area boundary (UAB) for Jackson includes the City of Jackson and all or parts of Blackman, Leoni, Napoleon, Sandstone, Spring Arbor, and Summit Townships. All Census block areas within this core which have a population density of 1,000 or more persons per square mile are automatically included in the urbanized area, as well as adjacent areas that have developing “urban characteristics.”

The City of Jackson's existing roadway network includes 9.2 miles of state trunkline (e.g. highways), 54 miles of paved major streets and 101 miles of local streets. Jackson County has a total road mileage of 1,934 miles of which 240 miles are paved state trunklines, 786 miles are paved local roads, 544 miles are paved county roads, and 253 miles are gravel roads.

Jackson County has a total land area of 720 square miles and includes nineteen townships and the City of Jackson. Six incorporated villages lie within the Jackson County boundaries - Brooklyn, Concord, Grass Lake, Hanover, Parma and Springport.

Future Plan Development

It is anticipated that this Plan will be updated again in the 2018 to 2019 time period, based on current requirements. However, this may change when new federal legislation is enacted to replace MAP-21, which expires in July 2014.

