

**FY 2031 and Beyond
Notice of Funding Availability for Indiana LPAs**

Evansville MPO CY 2024 Call for Projects Reference Guide

Project Prioritization Process and Instructions for Applicants

Evansville MPO



Henderson • Vanderburgh • Warrick

Applications are due: July 26, 2024

This guide provides information and guidance for the process used by the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization (EMPO) to prioritize and distribute EMPO-allocated federal funds to local programs and projects.

Background

In 2012, the EMPO adopted a Complete Streets Policy requiring that all local projects receiving EMPO-allocated federal funding adhere to the Policy by providing Complete Street accommodations. This Policy began the shift in transportation planning in our region – moving from predominately auto-focused roadway designs to creating a multimodal transportation system that includes pedestrian, bicycle, and transit amenities when possible.

A complete street is defined in the EMPO Policy as:

“roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, including but not limited to motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. ‘All users’ includes people of all ages and abilities.”

The transportation planning process is ever changing. With input from the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Local Public Agencies (LPAs), the Goals and Objectives that guide the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) have shifted to a more inclusive approach to transportation. The most recent MTP, the MTP 2050 adopted in 2023, has a new set of Goals and Objectives for the regional transportation network to ensure it will accommodate all users when possible.

The Call for Projects presents an opportunity for the EMPO to coordinate with LPAs to increase mobility options in the planning area. Project selection and prioritization will be guided by the Goals and Objectives set forth in the MTP 2050.

MTP 2050 Goals and Objectives

Quality of Life & Health
<p>Goal: Provide a variety of transportation options for all residents to improve connectivity and enhance quality of life, community health and transportation equity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obj 1: Increase the availability of bicycle and ADA-accessible pedestrian facilities to provide better connections between residential areas, workplaces, health care, schools, shopping, parks/recreational facilities, services and other transportation networks. • Obj 2: Increase the viability of transit by providing more options and connections between residential areas, workplaces, health care, schools, shopping, parks/recreational facilities, services and other transportation networks. • Obj 3: Create a dependable transportation network to minimize impacts of unexpected delays and provide consistent travel times for all modes.
Economic Vitality
<p>Goal: Increase the economic vitality of the region to support mobility options, employment access and freight movement efficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obj 1: Increase the availability of bicycle and ADA-accessible pedestrian facilities to improve job access for residents and serve as an economic catalyst to promote redevelopment. • Obj 2: Expand transit options and increase efficiencies to improve access to jobs and places of business in and between all three counties. • Obj 3: Create a consistent and dependable transportation network to ensure the on-time delivery of goods and services. • Obj 4: Prioritize transportation projects that support redevelopment and compact growth to reduce the cost of providing transportation options and utilizing the transportation network.
Environment
<p>Goal: Develop a transportation system that minimizes environmental impacts and preserves or enhances natural resources, air quality and water quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obj 1: Incorporate sustainability and resiliency into the planning process by prioritizing projects that reduce emissions. • Obj 2: Prioritize projects that incorporate design elements to reduce and mitigate environmental impacts on the transportation network.
Safety & Security
<p>Goal: Improve the safety and security of the transportation system for all users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obj 1: Prioritize projects that reduce serious injuries and fatalities to ensure safe and secure transportation networks for all users. • Obj 2: Maintain and monitor transportation infrastructure conditions to preserve regional transportation networks. • Obj 3: Maintain a state of good repair for transit and paratransit vehicles and facilities to ensure a safe and secure transit system.

About the Call

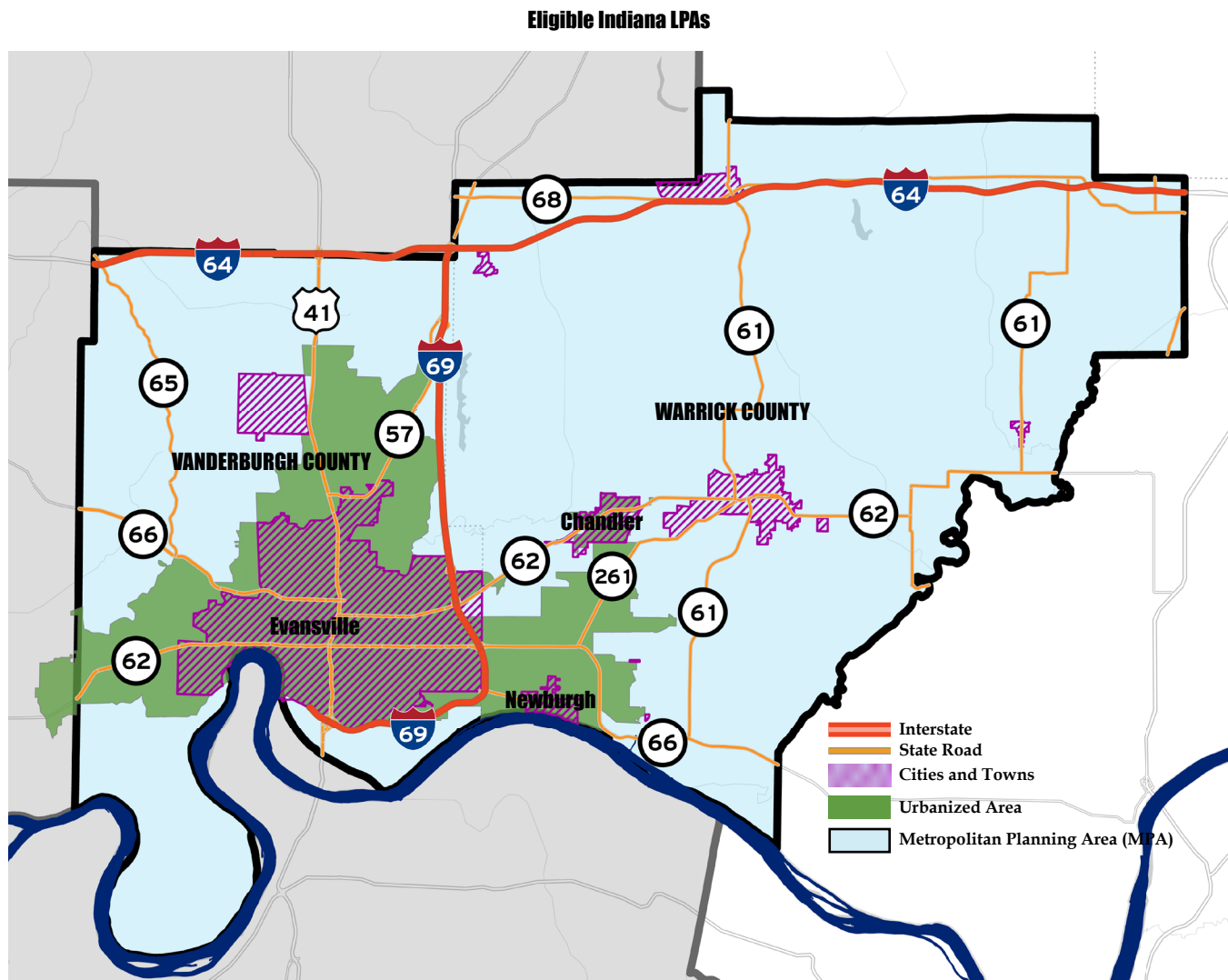
The Call for Projects is a competitive process that, if awarded, will fund the federal portion of local transportation projects. The EMPO is responsible for reviewing and prioritizing eligible applications that fall within the EMPO urbanized area.

The EMPO, in coordination with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will ensure that any submitted application meets federal eligibility requirements. Once the EMPO has confirmed eligibility and awarded funds to LPAs, INDOT will administer funds and all subsequent project management aspects (e.g. engineering design reviews, contract bids, contract awards, etc.). LPAs will be required to participate in quarterly project update meetings with INDOT, EMPO and project consultants.

All project applications must be submitted through the online portal no later than **July 26, 2024**.

Who Can Apply?

Eligible applicants include local jurisdictions within the urbanized area in Vanderburgh and Warrick counties in Indiana.



Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include transportation projects within the urbanized area that will be constructed/implemented in FY 2031 and beyond in Indiana by an eligible applicant. The EMPO seeks to award funding from the following federal programs:

- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives
- Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)
- Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program (PROTECT)

Project applications may include bridges; bicycle and pedestrian projects; public transportation; roadway capacity, operations, management, preservation and safety; and projects that may reduce greenhouse gases from transportation. Please contact the EMPO if there are questions about specific project eligibility.

Limitations

The following funding limitations will be applied to each call for projects application requesting EMPO allocated funding:

- No more than 80% of a project's eligible costs will be covered, which in turn requires a minimum of a 20% local match to be paid by the applicant.
- Funding will be provided at the amount shown on each application. Applicants should make sure their cost estimates are sufficient to cover the cost of the activities shown in their application.
- Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Right-of-Way (ROW) phases are typically not funded with EMPO-allocated funds. Availability of funds for these phases may be evaluated after an eligibility determination has been made and the project application has been approved for construction funding.
- The EMPO will be a participant in the RFP, consultant selection, and contract negotiation process for all projects that are approved for Preliminary Engineering and/or Construction Engineering/Inspection funding through EMPO-allocated funds.
- If federal funds are to be used for Construction Inspection activities, it is advised that the selected Construction Engineering/Inspection consultant shall not be associated with the preparation of the project construction plans or construction contract bid documents.

Application Process

The EMPO has adopted the following process for soliciting, reviewing, and prioritizing projects funded with EMPO-allocated funds. The EMPO staff reviews and revises the prioritization process for these funds as necessary in order to effectively implement the program goals and comply with INDOT and FHWA program requirements.

1. The EMPO staff will distribute a "Call for Projects" notification to area LPAs and the EMPO Technical and Policy Committees. Additionally, the application and procedures will be available on the EMPO's website (www.evansvillempo.com) with a submission deadline and a directive to contact the EMPO for any questions regarding the application process.
2. Eligible LPAs are required to submit completed project applications to the EMPO by the deadline specified in the Call for Projects.
3. The EMPO staff reviews applications submitted by the deadline for completeness and consults with project applicants to clarify any outstanding issues or omitted data. This initial consultation and review screens projects that are anticipated as eligible for funding from those that do not meet eligibility.
4. Projects that meet eligibility requirements are analyzed by EMPO staff to determine the expected benefits and impact to the existing transportation network.
5. Upon eligibility confirmation from EMPO, projects are prioritized by staff according to the adopted EMPO project prioritization process. The project list with prioritization results are then presented to the EMPO Technical and Policy Committees for project selection.
6. Once projects have been selected, EMPO staff advises the LPA to continue the project development process and request TIP/STIP inclusion.

Application Details

The EMPO project application is now available online. It contains eight sections that are to be completed by all applicants. Please note that Section 7: Project Budget is a standalone Excel file that will need to be filled out separately and uploaded to the online application.

Section 1: Local Public Agency Information

This section contains basic questions about LPA contact and Employee in Responsible Charge (ERC)¹ certification information. An ERC is a designated employee who is responsible for ensuring the compliance of all state and federal-aid regulations related to the project development and construction of locally administered projects.

An LPA must be Title VI and ADA compliant to be eligible to receive federal funds. INDOT² is responsible for monitoring subrecipients to ensure compliance and must ensure communities are actively addressing deficiencies and demonstrating good faith efforts in their compliance with Title VI. Information regarding the LPA's Title VI Plan and ADA Transition Plans, or Compliance Letters showing that the LPA is in compliance are required with this application. These documents can be uploaded in the online application by selecting the appropriate box and attaching the file, or by dragging the file into the box.

The last question of this section is project type. Applicants must select one of the three project type options: Roadway/Complete Street Projects, Standalone Bicycle/Pedestrian/Greenway Projects, or Transit Projects. The application will continue to the appropriate Section 2 based on the project type selected.

Section 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3: Project Information

Based on the project type selected in Section 1, the applicant will complete either Section 2.1 for Roadway/Complete Street projects, Section 2.2 for Standalone Bicycle/Pedestrian/Greenway projects, or Section 2.3 for Transit projects. A project map is required to be submitted, showing project limits and any other information relevant to the project. The map can be uploaded to the online application by attaching the file, or by dragging the file into the box.

Section 2.1: Roadway/ Complete Streets Projects	This section is for any project that will be completed on a roadway affecting motor vehicle travel. There is no need to fill out Section 2.2 separately for any bicycle or pedestrian amenities that are included with roadway projects.	Example Projects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any roadway projectAny roadway project incorporating complete streets elements, such as on-street bicycle lanes, ADA curb ramp and sidewalk improvements, or sidewalk/sidepath inclusion.Non-roadway infrastructure improvements, such as signal timing projects or equipment upgrades
Section 2.2: Standalone Bicycle/ Pedestrian Greenway Projects	This section is for any bicycle or pedestrian project that is being completed without any changes or enhancements to a roadway affecting motor vehicle travel.	Example Projects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">New greenway segmentsSeparated trail/path or sidewalk/sidepath developmentSafe Route to School (SRTS) projects
Section 2.3: Transit Projects	This section is for transit providers only. If applying for a new vehicle purchase, additional information is required in the "Bus Purchase Only" section, under the Vehicle Being Replaced and Vehicle Being Purchased dropdown menus.	Example Projects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">New transit serviceSystem or service expansionFare subsidiesNew vehicles

1 [INDOT ERC Program](#)

2 [INDOT LPA Guidance Manual](#)

Section 3: Local Support

Projects that are consistent with local, regional or state planning documents will receive additional points. The EMPO follows the 3C planning process derived from the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 to ensure a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative planning process. This helps the EMPO and its state and local planning partners achieve shared goals for the transportation system. Therefore, projects will receive additional points if they are included in any of the following planning documents:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050 (MTP 2050)
- METS Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)
- Bicycle and pedestrian plans
- Regional Pavement Management Systems plans
- Bridge Management System Plan
- Local comprehensive plans
- ADA Transition Plans
- Safe Routes to School plans
- Green infrastructure plans
- Climate Action Plans
- Safety Action Plans
- Other local planning documents that demonstrate a sound planning process

Section 4: Project Readiness/Phases Complete

The EMPO will look at project readiness as a way to award points to a project. All professional services leading to federally funded construction must be performed by INDOT prequalified consultants. The Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Acquisition Policies Act applies to any right-of-way acquisition or relocation activities that are undertaken after there is any anticipation or intent to use federal funds on any phase of a project.

Section 5: Purpose and Need

Purpose and need statements are required by INDOT as part of the NEPA process, and the EMPO is now asking for this during the Call for Projects. The purpose and need statement explains why a project is being developed and outlines the problem(s) and goal(s) of a transportation facility. It does not address the recommended alternative. Purpose and need can be summarized as:

Purpose:	<p>The purpose statement defines the goals and objectives that should be included as part of a successful solution to the problem. It is a broad statement of the primary intended transportation result and other related objectives supported by the identified needs. It is not the scope of work, but the goals of the project.</p> <p><i>Appropriate, consistent purpose example:</i> The purpose of the project is to reduce congestion and improve mobility on Road A between the intersections of Street Y and Street Z. (This is a good example as the statement is consistent with the need statement, focusing on the same transportation-related problems or deficiencies.)</p> <p><i>Not a purpose statement:</i> The purpose of the project is to widen the two-lane road to four lanes to relieve congestion. (In this example, widening the two-lane road to four lanes is not the purpose, but rather one alternative for accomplishing the true purpose of relieving congestion.)</p> <p><i>Not a purpose statement:</i> The purpose of the project is to improve traffic mobility in Evansville. (This example is overly broad because there could be an infinite number of alternatives.)</p>
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Need:	<p>The need statement is a detailed explanation of the specific or multiple transportation problems or deficiencies that exist, or that are expected to exist in the future. It should provide measurable objectives or specifications for evaluating alternatives.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> The project is needed because the capacity of Road A, between the intersections of Street Y and Street Z, is (a) inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, resulting in congestion, reduced mobility, and a Level of Service 'F', and (b) does not meet current design standards as the travel lanes are too narrow and there are no shoulders.</p>
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The following list is not intended to be all-inclusive, but demonstrates common types of problems or deficiencies and includes a general description of the types of supporting facts and data appropriate for those problems and deficiencies.

- **Safety:** Describe the crash history, relating the history to similar roadways, as appropriate. Identify any design or operational issues leading to safety problems, such as vehicles having to make unprotected left turns.
- **Congestion and/or mobility:** Discuss the capacity of the existing facility and its ability to meet current and future traffic volumes. Provide historical, present and projected traffic volumes and levels of service. Describe any trends in land use and population leading to congestion.
- **Failure to meet current design standards:** Explain the existing roadway and the ways it does not meet current design standards, such as load limit, geometrics, lack of turning lanes, etc.
- **System connectivity:** Explain how the existing transportation system within the project area connects with other facilities. Identify any connectivity problems.
- **Law/policy:** Identify any federal, state or local governmental mandate or policy requiring the project, if applicable.

Section 6: Project Details

This section consists of five questions that will demonstrate more project-specific details. These questions will help EMPO staff determine awardable points to projects and demonstrate to LPAs examples of project types and amenities that can be eligible for federal funding. There is an “other” option that can be used to provide additional information or to explain project elements that may not be listed as a checkbox option. Two questions have been added to the CY 2024 application: Green Infrastructure details and FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures³.

Section 7: Project Budget

The project budget table is intended to give a realistic cost estimate for the project. This table is provided as a separate Excel file. There are two tabs in this file – one tab for all projects not related to transit, and one tab for transit bus purchases. Once the total estimated cost for each phase is entered and the percentage of local match is selected, the amount of local funding match and federal funding needed will be automatically calculated. Cost estimates may be provided for Preliminary Engineering, Right of Way, Utilities, Construction, Contingency, and Construction Engineering/Inspection. Once the Project Budget table is complete, it can be uploaded to the online application by attaching the file, or by dragging the file into the box.

Keep in mind:

- Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way phases are typically not funded with EMPO allocated funds. Availability of funds for these phases may be evaluated after an eligibility determination has been made and the project application has been approved for construction funding. If Preliminary Engineering and/or Right of Way funding is programed, the jurisdiction must bear the initial expenditures of the project, and receive reimbursement for eligible expenditures.
- The EMPO will be a participant in the RFP, consultant selection, and contract negotiation process for all projects that are approved for Preliminary Engineering and/or Construction Engineering/Inspection funding through EMPO allocated funds.

³ <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

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- It is advised that neither consultants nor subconsultants who prepare engineering construction plans or construction contract bid documents for a project programmed for EMPO Construction Engineering/ Inspection funding shall be associated with construction inspection activities for plans or bid documents they prepared.

The EMPO is also requesting that a source for the cost estimates be provided.

Section 8: Certification and Letter of Financial Commitment

This section includes statements that must be signed off on by the applying ERC in order to be eligible for funding.

The LPA must submit a Financial Commitment Letter on the LPA's letterhead, signed by the fiduciary body of the LPA, containing the amount and year of expenditure of the LPA project match. The Letter of Financial Commitment can be uploaded to the online application by attaching the file, or by dragging the file into the box.

The following are examples of Financial Commitment Letters. Information in **[brackets]** should be provided by the LPA, along with any supporting information as necessary.

Sample financial commitment wording for a project in Indiana:

The purpose of this letter is to commit **[LPA]** to fund the **[project name]** project. If selected for funding through the EMPO call for projects process, and in order to secure the eligible federal funds, the **[LPA]** commits (budgetary) to fund 100% of the development costs and a non-federal funding 20% match of construction costs consistent with the project funding sheet in the EMPO Call for Projects application. The **[LPA]** commits to provide all other financial resources necessary to complete the project including costs that overrun those presented in the project funding sheet in the application. Additional eligible federal funding may be obligated if, through the Quarterly Project Update Process, an eligible need is identified and the funds are available.

The local contribution/match will be available concurrent with the project authorization and in accordance with the FHWA and INDOT requirements. The **[LPA]** is aware that all federally-funded projects shall comply to requirements included in the INDOT LPA Guidance Document and LPA Invoice Voucher process.

Sample financial commitment wording for a Transit project:

The purpose of this letter is to commit **[Transit Agency]** to fund the **[project name]** project. If selected for funding through the EMPO call for projects process, and in order to secure the eligible federal funds, the **[Transit Agency]** commits (budgetary) to a non-federal funding 20% match of project costs consistent with the project funding sheet in the EMPO Call for Projects application. The **[Transit Agency]** commits to provide all other financial resources necessary to complete the project including costs that overrun those presented in the project funding sheet in the application. Additional eligible federal funding may be obligated if, through the project coordination team meeting process, an eligible need is identified and the funds are available.

The local contribution/match will be available concurrent with the project authorization and in accordance with the FTA requirements.

Prioritization Process

The prioritization process used for evaluating received applications is based on the goals and objectives from the MTP 2050. The MTP 2050 goals are listed on the right side of the Prioritization Measures and Metrics table, with the connection between each scoring element and the goals being represented with a dot. The EMPO will review and analyze all projects based on the following three sections: Project Elements, Project Location, and Project Readiness.

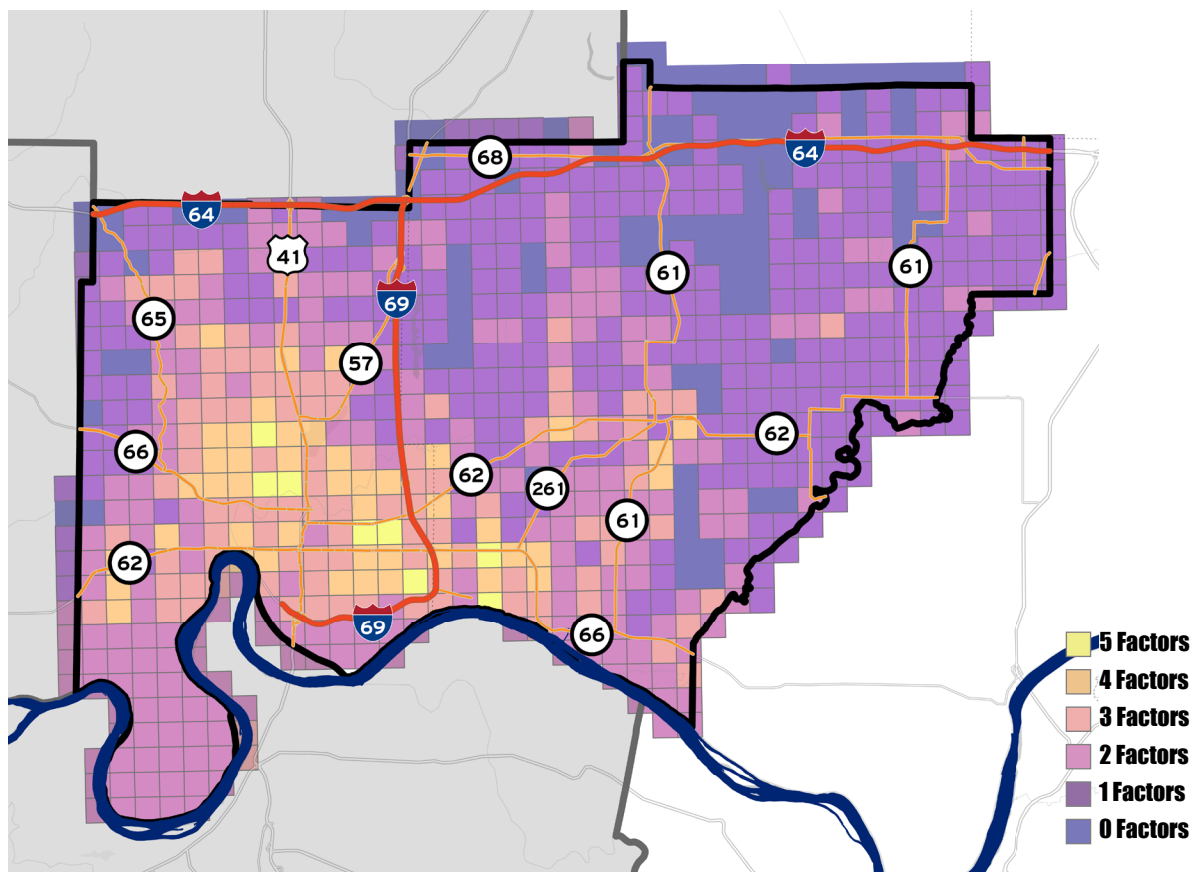
Project Elements

This section scores projects based on measures and metrics related to project elements, such as infrastructure upgrades and types, improved access, and equipment replacement.

Project Location

This section scores projects based on their location in relation to nearby suitability and demographics. The Suitability Zone factors 100-Year Floodplain data, crash intersections and segments (both include locations with fatalities or incapacitating injuries), pavement conditions (Pavement Condition Index of 55 or less), and Environmental Justice information (Tiers 1, 2 and 3). These datasets were aggregated and overlaid with a 1-mile square grid. A zone was determined based on the number of these factors present within that mile grid. Zone 5 has all five factors present, Zone 4 has four factors, and so on until Zone 0 has no factors present. More information about this process can be found in the MTP 2050: Chapter 2.

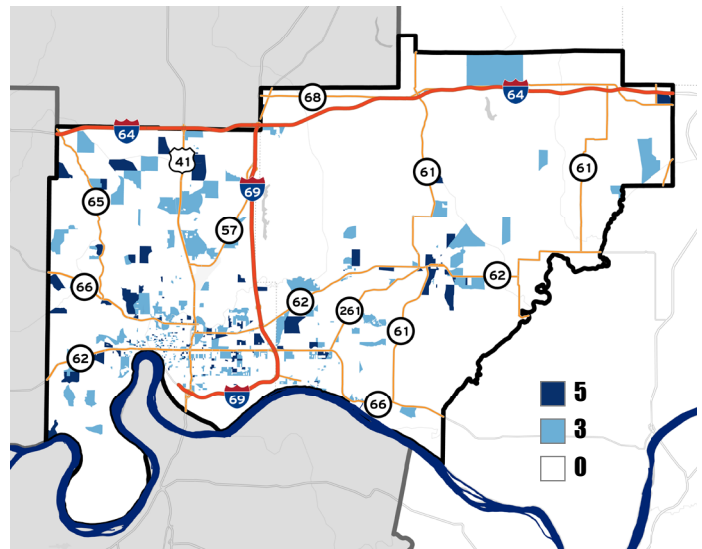
Suitability Zones



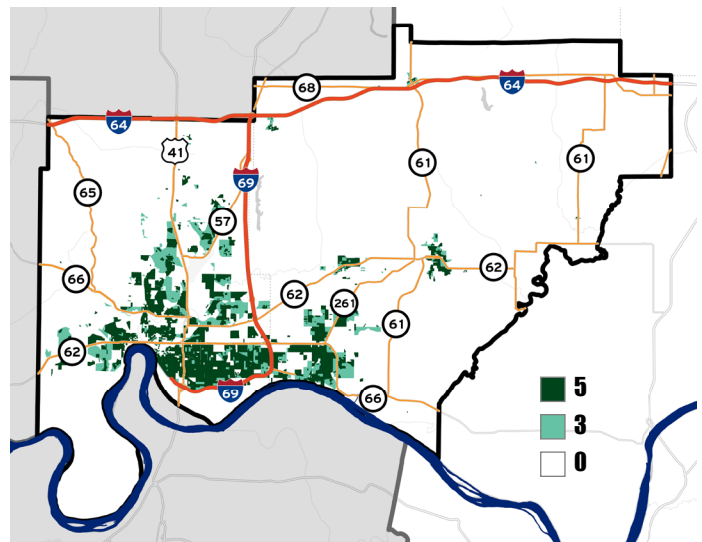
Similarly, a land use location map was developed using population and employment data from the US Census Bureau. The 2020 Decennial Census was used to find population by Census Block and the 2021 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data was used to find the total number of retail and service jobs by Census Block. If a Census Block has a mix of population and retail/service jobs between 40% and 60%, it is considered to be a high mixed-use zone and provide easy access to work for residents. Census Blocks with a mix of population and retail/service jobs between 20% and 40% or 60% and 80% are considered a medium mixed-use zone. All other Census Blocks are considered low mixed use. Population and employment density also improve the accessibility of an area. Therefore, areas with a high population density or employment density also receive more points.

Land Uses	40% - 60% population to jobs ratio	5
	20% - 40% or 60% - 80% population to jobs ratio	3
	<20% or >80% population to jobs ratio	0
Population Density within 1/2 mile	>2,000 people per sq mi	5
	1,000 - 2,000 people per sq mi	3
	<1,000 people per sq mi	0
Employment Density within 1/2 mile	>1,000 jobs per sq mi	5
	500 - 1,000 jobs per sq mi	3
	<500 jobs per sq mi	0

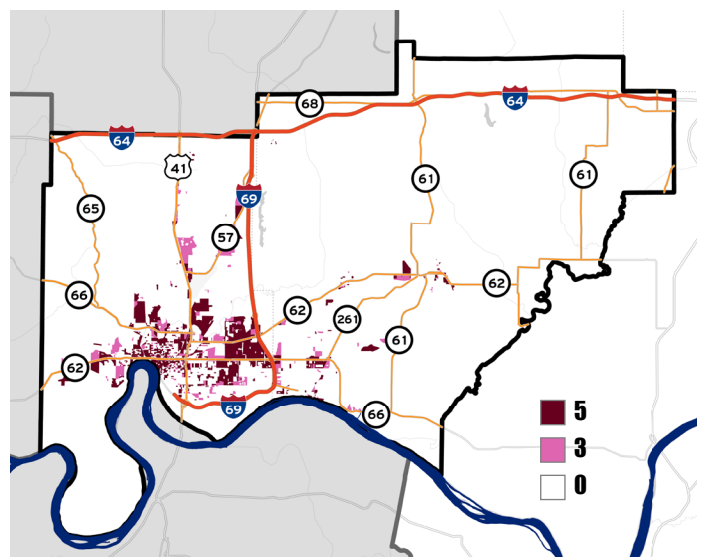
Land Uses



Population Densities

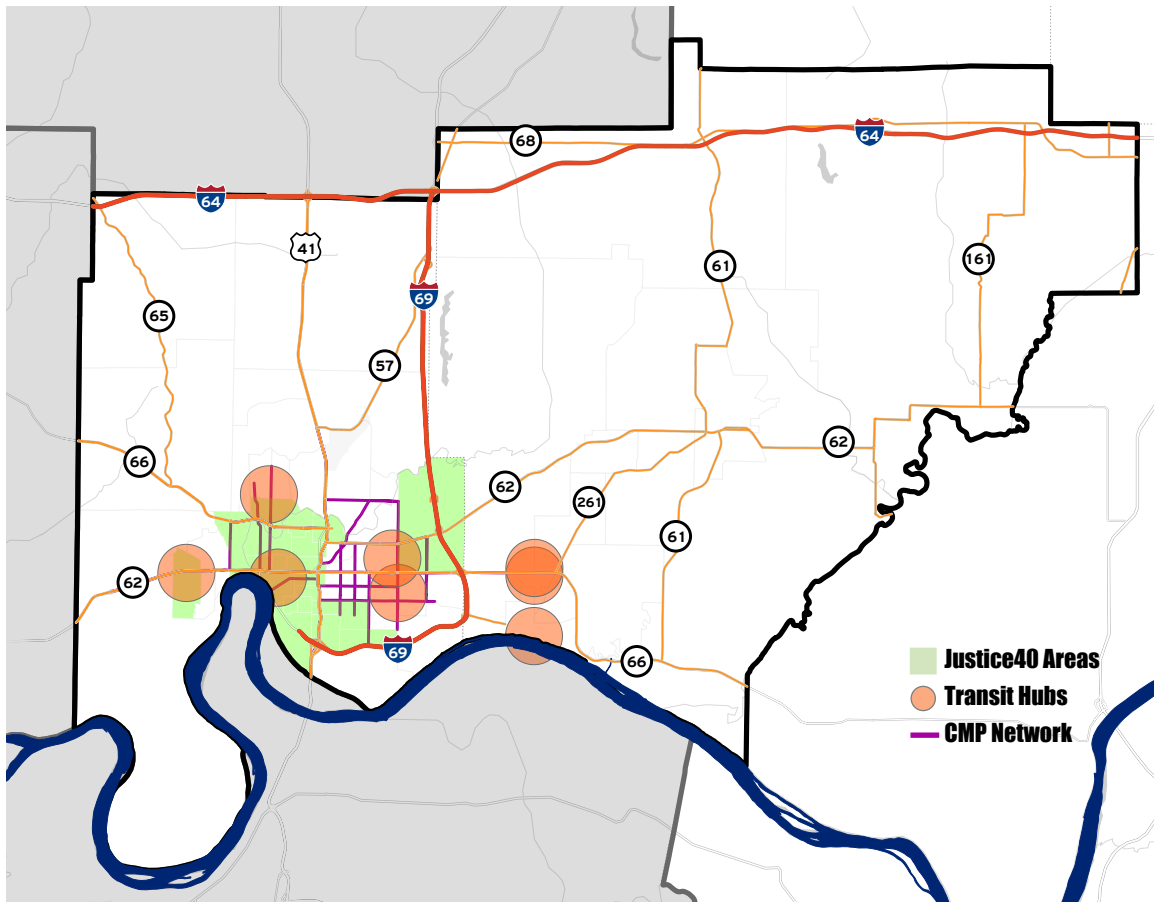


Employment Densities



The USDOT has recently placed a greater emphasis on disadvantaged populations and Transit Oriented Developments. Projects may receive points for being located within the defined Justice40 area and/or within 1 mile of a METS or WATS transfer point. The MTP 2050 identifies the Congestion Management Process (CMP) corridors for the MPO area, with 22 of the 25 identified corridors being in Vanderburgh and Warrick counties. More information about CMP can be found in Appendix C of the MTP 2050.

Justice40 Zones, Transit Hubs and CMP Network



Project Readiness Scores:

Projects may receive points if any phase(s) of the planning process have started, or if any phase(s) are complete.

Prioritization Measures and Metrics

Project Elements Score									
Measure	Metric	Possible Points	Awarded Points		Quality of Life & Health	Economic Vitality	Environment	Safety & Security	Equity
Local Support/Consistency with Plans: <i>Is the project consistent with or included in local, state, or other regional plans?</i>	Yes	5							
	No	-5							
Added bicycle/pedestrian facilities	Bicycle AND Pedestrian	5							
	Bicycle OR Pedestrian	3							
	No Bicycle or Pedestrian	0							
Separated bicycle/pedestrian facility	Yes	5							
	No	0							
Connects to existing bicycle or pedestrian facility	Yes	5							
	No	0							
Access Improvements	New sidewalks or bus shelters	5							
	Existing sidewalk improvements with ADA ramps or bus with ramp/lift	3							
	ADA ramps only	1							
Transit improvement	New or improved bus route	5							
	Bus purchase, new shelter, bus stop improvements	3							
	No transit improvement	0							
Transit equipment and facility replacement or rehabilitation	ULB exceeded 5+ years or TERM 3 or less	5							
	ULB exceeded 3-5 years or TERM 4	3							
	ULB exceeded or TERM 5	1							
Green Infrastructure Components	Yes	5							
	No	0							
FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures	Yes	5							
	No	0							
Project Elements Score Total				0					

Project Location Score									
Measure	Metric	Possible Points	Awarded Points		Quality of Life & Health	Economic Vitality	Environment	Safety & Security	Equity
Suitability Zone: <i>100-Year Floodplain Data</i> <i>Crash intersections (locations with fatalities or incapacitating injuries)</i> <i>Crash segments (locations with fatalities or incapacitating injuries)</i> <i>Pavement conditions (Pavement Condition Index of 55 or less)</i> <i>Environmental Justice (Tiers 1, 2 and 3)</i>	If 5 factors are present within zone	15							
	If 4 factors are present within zone	12							
	If 3 factors are present within zone	9							
	If 2 factors are present within zone	6							
	If 1 factors are present within zone	3							
	If 0 factors are present within zone	0							
Connectivity: <i>Project through or adjacent to mixed land uses</i>	40%-60% population to jobs ratio	5							
	20%-40% or 60%-80% population to jobs ratio	3							
	< 20% or > 80% population to jobs ratio	0							
	>2,000 people per sq mi	5							
	1,000-2,000 people per sq mi	3							
	< 1,000 people per sq mi	1							
	> 1,000 jobs per sq mi	5							
<i>Population density within 1/2 mile</i>	500-1,000 jobs per sq mi	3							
	< 500 jobs per sq mi	1							
Located within USDOT-designated Justice40 areas	Yes	5							
	No	0							
Located within 1 mile of Transit Hub: <i>METS: Downtown Evansville terminal</i> <i>METS: Westside Schnuck's transfer point</i> <i>METS: Lawndale transfer point</i> <i>METS: Eastland Mall transfer point</i> <i>METS: Northside Target transfer point</i> <i>WATS: Downtown Newburgh transfer point</i> <i>WATS: Schnuck's Newburgh transfer point</i> <i>WATS: Walmart Newburgh transfer point</i>	Yes	5							
	No	0							
On CMP Network	Yes	5							
	No	0							
Project Location Score Total				0					

Project Readiness Scores									
Measure	Metric	Possible Points	Awarded Points		Quality of Life & Health	Economic Vitality	Environment	Safety & Security	Equity
Project Readiness/Phases Complete	Portion of construction complete	5							
	All ROW Acquired	5							
	Partial ROW acquired	3							
	Design	5							
	NEPA documents submitted/approved	5							
Awarded Points Total				0					
Awarded Points Total				0					

