

The Springfield Area Transportation Study: **SATS**

Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Transportation Planning and the “MPO”

Transportation is one of the most important items on the planning agenda. The provision of roads, highways, transit systems, rail, air services, pedestrian ways and bicycle routes can affect how and where we live, work, recreate, and even learn. Because of its importance to long-term economic and community success, attention is given to transportation planning at the Federal, state and local levels.

The **Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC)** is one of 16 agencies designated as **Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPOs**, in Illinois. Federal law requires that an MPO be established whenever an urban area reaches a population of

50,000 or more, and once established the MPO is responsible for transportation planning in the urban area.



The MPO serves as the forum where regional transportation investment decision making takes place, helping to coordinate transportation planning for all of the transportation providers in the planning area. The intention is for the MPO to work to develop, as called for in Federal law, a co-

operative, comprehensive and continuing planned response to the area’s transportation needs.

Transportation planning and decision making is a collaborative process. Working with the other key actors in the regional transportation system, the MPO works to encourage the involvement of all interested parties, including business, community and environmental groups, as well as the public at-large.

This document is intended to give those interested in transportation in the SSCRPC region an overview of what the MPO is and does through the **Springfield Area Transportation Study, or SATS**.

The Springfield Area Transportation Study — SATS

The work of the MPO for the Springfield-Sangamon County urbanized area goes under the name **Springfield Area Transportation Study**; better known as **SATS**.

Along with Springfield, Chatham and parts of Sangamon County, the planning area includes such communities as Clear Lake, Curran, Grandview, Jerome, Leland Grove, Riverton, Rochester, Sherman, Southern View, Spaulding, and a small section of Williams-ville.

SATS works through a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee. Six jurisdictions are directly involved as voting members of both; the SSCRPC, Sangamon County, City of Springfield, Village of Chatham, Springfield Mass Transit District, and the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Region 4, District 6. Springfield and Chatham are both represented on the Policy Committee by virtue of their population.

The non-voting membership of the SATS Policy Committee includes

representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and IDOT’s Office of Planning and Programming.

Additional non-voting state and federal agencies, such as the Federal Highways Administration, IDOT and the Illinois Commerce Commission, are also represented on the Technical Committee, along with the Springfield Airport Authority.



The Springfield Area Transportation Study's Work

SATS Responsibilities



As noted previously, effective transportation planning involves more than roadways and is intended to provide the information, tools and public involvement necessary for sound judgments that improve the entire transportation system. It is also intended to be a continuous process that requires the monitoring of the system's performance and condition.

SATS is required to provide a forum for cooperative transportation decision making in its metropolitan area, be the engine driving regional collaboration and coordination, and meet regional transportation needs while being responsive to community interests and local laws and policies. SATS has the authority to do this by Federal law and, to ensure the involvement of the various jurisdictions involved, includes a representative group of local transportation stakeholders so that local needs are considered.

As noted previously, within SATS these activities are carried out

through the work of two bodies: the **Policy Committee** and the **Technical Committee**.

As provided in the SATS Bylaws, the SATS Policy Committee, which is made up of senior local officials, is responsible for the direction, oversight and coordination of the transportation planning process for the region, and is to do so in a manner that will ensure that transportation planning and programming decisions are reflective of the needs and desires of its members and the general public. The Policy Committee must approve policies, plans and actions, and prioritize and program specific transportation initiatives for funding.

The Technical Committee, which is made up of transportation specialists, is responsible for providing technical advice and recommendations to the Policy Committee and MPO staff on all matters pertaining to transportation planning as well as any other matters referred to them by the Policy Committee.

The specific responsibilities of these groups include reviewing and providing advice for the development of the annual **Unified Planning Work Program**, the **Long Range Transportation Plan**, and the prioritization of transportation projects and the assignment of funding for the annual **Transportation Improvement Program** (the "TIP"). See page 3 for additional information on these three planning activities.

In developing transportation plans both SATS committees must be mindful that their efforts take into account more than transportation. They must consider land use and local laws pertaining to land use, environmental laws and policies (such as the National Environmental Policy Act), the needs of special populations (such as those covered by the Americans With Disabilities Act), and other Federal regulations (such as those related to environmental justice).



MPO Staff Responsibilities

The SATS Policy and Technical committees cannot do their work without staff support, and this is provided through the SSCRPC in its role as MPO staff.

The MPO staff must carry out a number of responsibilities. These include providing information and technical support to Policy and Technical committee members, preparing the documents and

plans produced as part of the planning process, facilitating public outreach activities to gain input and feedback, and managing the planning process.

These activities often include a number of special data collection, research and analysis projects. These projects have included such wide-ranging activities as collecting data on vehicle crashes in the

planning area, reviewing parking needs, developing bike and pedestrian plans, assessing transportation barriers to economic growth, reviewing the implications of rail corridor plans, developing transportation performance measures, and developing computer models that can be used to forecast the effects of road and rail changes on the entire transportation system.



Transportation Plans & Planning

The plans developed through SATS are intended to reflect what are termed the “Three C’s” of transportation planning: a **Comprehensive, Cooperative and Continuing** planning process. A

number of plans must be produced and maintained by SATS. These include such specialized plans as the **Public Participation Plan (PPP)** and the **Human Services Transportation Plan**

(HSTP), but the three planning activities briefly described below are particularly important to understanding what the MPO is and does.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Long-Range Transportation Plan describes the vision, policies and operational strategies for the region, as well as the projects contemplated to achieve this vision. The LRTP is updated by the MPO every 5 years and covers a 25-year time frame. In developing the LRTP, SATS must consider the transportation system as a multimodal one that includes all modes of transportation, not just auto and truck traffic, and how the system can be enhanced. It is intended to reflect and document public involvement, so its development must include opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process. Most often these activities are described in the Public Participation Plan mentioned above.

One important aspect of the LRTP is that it contains a financial plan for the projects envisioned that is “fiscally constrained”. This means that the financial plan must demonstrate that it can be accomplished with available and projected revenues, and if new revenue sources are identified, it must provide strategies to ensure their availability.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

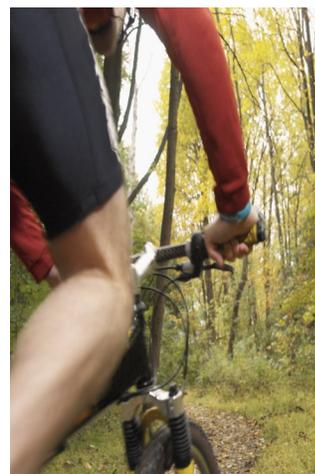
The Transportation Improvement Program is a staged, multi-year, intermodal program of *prioritized* transportation initiatives consistent with the LRTP. It shows annual activity for a 4-year period, and like the LRTP must contain a financial plan that is fiscally constrained by year. The TIP reflects public involvement and is updated annually.

The TIP is an extremely important planning and prioritization tool since any transportation initiative not listed in the TIP cannot receive Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. The TIP process helps to ensure that all funded projects are part of a multimodal planning process, represent sound financial planning, are consistent with the LRTP, and are technically sound and have the support of key policy makers.

The TIP may be amended by action of the SATS Policy Committee, but this requires: public review and comment; re-demonstration of fiscal constraint; and approval action by the Federal Highway or Federal Transit administrations.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

SATS must prepare and submit to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) an annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP lists the transportation studies and tasks to be performed by the MPO staff or member agencies over a one- to two-year period. Along with the tasks SATS staff must accomplish to support and administer the work of the MPO, the UPWP includes all Federally funded studies as well as all relevant state and local planning activities conducted without Federal funds. The UPWP provides the work agenda for SATS, outlining its planning activities, their priorities and the budget for them, all in support of the LRTP. Because the UPWP reflects local priorities, the content differs from one MPO to another and may change from year-to-year.



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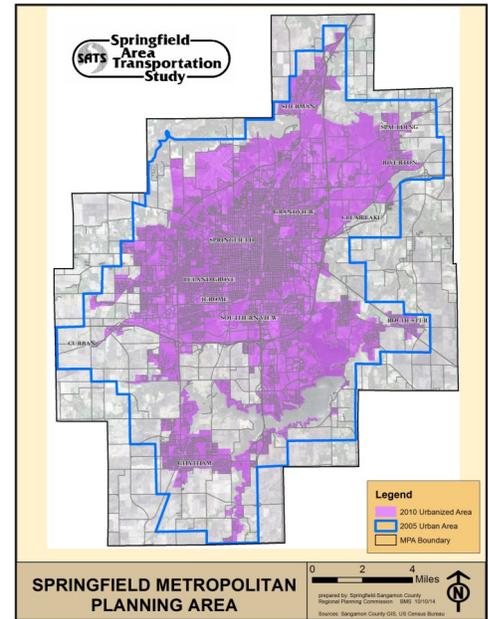
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SATS METRO PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY



About the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

As well as serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the area, the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. Along with this ongoing responsibility, the Planning Commission's staff works with many other public and semi-public agencies to promote orderly growth and redevelopment in individual communities as well as throughout the region at-large.

The Commission that oversees this work is made up of 17 members who include representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and 6 appointed citizens from the city and county.

Through the efforts of its professional staff, the Planning Commission provides overall

planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economic development, hazard mitigation, and environmental matters, conducting many special projects and programs each year.

The SSCRPC prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the county, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with their planning activities. For Springfield and Sangamon County, the planning staff reviews all proposed subdivisions and makes recommendations on all City and County zoning and variance requests. The Commission also acts as the designated local A-95 review clearinghouse, processing and reviewing all Federally funded applications to ensure consistency with local plans.

In addition to this work, the SSCRPC is called upon to provide staff assistance to the Citizens' Efficiency Commis-

sion for Sangamon County as it works to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local government services in the region, as well as assisting the Regional Leadership Council, made up of mayors, village board presidents and the Chairman of the County Board, which serves as a forum for local government communication and joint problem solving.

The SSCRPC's Executive Director also oversees Sangamon County's Department of Zoning, serves as the Plats Officer for Sangamon County, Springfield and some other municipalities, and also serves as floodplain administrator for the unincorporated portions of the county.

