

# KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission:

## A Case Study for Transit Security

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The **KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission** (KYOVA) is a non-profit association of local governments in southwestern West Virginia and southeastern Ohio that serves as a forum for assessing and acting upon regional transportation problems. The Commission's goal is to promote cooperation among its member organizations and to maximize their ability to solve problems that cannot be solved by any jurisdiction individually. KYOVA serves a population of slightly over 200,000, and under federal law, KYOVA is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for ensuring the coordinated use of federal transportation funds for the bi-state region, which benefits from a multi-modal transportation system linking the two states. One particular area where KYOVA is focusing is integrating transit security into overall transportation planning per the requirements of the current five-year law - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

In 2005, SAFETEA-LU created a separate and distinct "security" planning factor, however, little is known about small and mid-sized MPOs successes and challenges in integrating this planning factor into their transportation plans. KYOVA recognizes that the terrorist attacks on America have mandated that future transportation planning incorporate public and private interests to achieve a higher level of security across all modes. As such, KYOVA plans to incorporate its planning activities with other federal, state and local agencies involving future transportation objectives in order to obtain a broad scope of management activities concerning the safeguarding of its citizens. The region seeks to address hazards presented by both flooding due to the topography of the region (two rivers converge five miles west of downtown), but also from commerce-related hazards occurring along the Ohio River.



KYOVA works closely with the regional transit authority, The Transit Authority (TTA). TTA provides bus service on 17 routes Monday through Saturday, and Dial-A-Ride para-transit service in both West Virginia and Ohio. TTA's service reaches and connects all major low income and elderly housing facilities in the region, medical, governmental and shipping establishments in the urbanized area of Wayne and Cabell counties in West Virginia. While KYOVA and TTA are not co-located, the two organizations partner on transit-related projects and studies and often utilize independent consultants for these joint projects. As

KYOVA conducts all of the transportation planning for the region, TTA will contract with KYOVA to conduct studies and design-work on behalf of TTA. Any transit-related capital expenditure in the Huntington region

must be approved by KYOVA's Board of Directors. For example, KYOVA, TTA and the Kanawha Regional Transit Authority in Charleston, West Virginia, are working together to initiate a low-cost bus service between Charleston and Huntington, West Virginia, beginning in January, 2009. KYOVA and TTA have worked closely on studying and implementing projects beyond those listed in the past and will continue to do so when new opportunities arise in the future.

KYOVA has been active and continues to look for new ways to integrate security concerns into their transportation processes. KYOVA staff attends regular meetings of the Regional Homeland Security committee comprised of representatives of local law enforcement, fire protection, the state and federal military, transit and others. Initially, in its 2005 Transportation Improvement Program, KYOVA incorporated funding for the replacement of security fencing around the TTA facilities, and for upgrading the surveillance system on the transit authority's buses and

around its maintenance facility. Additionally, KYOVA commissioned a study, which began in November, 2008, that addresses disaster response and recovery in the KYOVA metropolitan area. This study is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2009. Through this study, KYOVA and TTA are exploring ways in which the transit function can act as the mechanism by which the region can be quickly and efficiently evacuated in the event of a man-made or natural disaster. KYOVA is both funding the study and coordinating the various state agencies, which have jurisdictional responsibility over disaster management. The results of this study will aid in developing an emergency preparedness plan for KYOVA and TTA for the Huntington region.

“When emergencies occur, TTA’s role is to support the efforts of fire, police and emergency medical services and rescue workers.” TTA’s important role in providing response and recovery services also includes TTA’s equipment and personnel, as TTA is required to offer services for evacuations, transporting emergency workers and warming or cooling areas at the scene of an incident, as well as to assist in the area’s recovery immediately after an incident. At times when public transit may be many residents’ only transportation option, TTA serves as a lifeline to the community. The need to be better prepared for an emergency has led to KYOVA and TTA’s work in developing a planned, documented and organized response to potential events, in an effort to minimize the negative impacts of a disaster on TTA, its employees, customers, operations and property.



The KYOVA and TTA 2007 Transit Authority Strategic Plan notes,

**About SAFETEA-LU Regulations**

The passage of the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) increased the number of federally required planning factors that Metropolitan Planning Organizations must include in their Transportation Improvement Programs. Whereas under the previous authorization of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century, MPOs were required to account for a “safety and security” planning factor, SAFETEA-LU broke apart this singular factor into “safety” and “security.” The separation of this singular planning factor into two separate and distinct factors was an attempt to address concerns as to the lack of preparedness of localities to the attacks of September 11, 2001. One lesson learned from September 11th is that effective coordination and communication among the different operating agencies in a region is paramount. This type of coordination is needed to allow enforcement, security and safety responses to occur expeditiously, while concurrently permitting the transportation system to handle a potentially overwhelming public response to the incident, and providing the public with clear and concise information about the situation and any actions that should be taken.

**About MPO Responsibilities**

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are responsible for administering federal funds, though the duties performed vary by state law and other mandates as directed by their MPO board. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan or Long-Range Transportation Plan, which visualizes the MPO’s region 20 years into the future, forms the basis of all activities. From this 20-year plan, a shorter term priority list of projects is maintained in the TIP, identifying projects of the greatest importance for construction, upgrade or maintenance. MPOs may also be required, depending on their region, to prepare plans for non-motorized transportation, public transit or air quality.

**About the National Association of Regional Councils**

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) serves as the national voice for regionalism by advocating for regional cooperation as the most effective way to address a variety of community planning and development opportunities and issues. NARC’s member organizations are composed of multiple local governments that work together to serve American communities – large and small, urban and rural. In 2008, NARC launched the first of four public awareness campaigns – Green Regions, Mobile Regions, Build Regions and Secure Regions. For additional information, please visit [www.NARC.org](http://www.NARC.org).



**About the Kyova Interstate Planning Commission**

KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission (KYOVA) is a transportation planning agency established by federal law. Its mission is to plan for an orderly, cost-effective, multi-modal transportation system for all citizens of the service area. With the support of your local officials, KYOVA plans for sound transportation improvements, which will facilitate the movement of goods and people in a safe and efficient manner. For additional information, please visit <http://www.wvs.state.wv.us/kyova/>.



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