

The following is a summary of the first Transportation and Transit Working Group meeting. The group discussed issues of economic development, environmental impact, as well as infrastructure improvements. These are the three themes that emerged from the discussion. The discussion also included requests for more information and best practices.

The Working Group discussed transportation as an important aspect within economic development. Both transportation and economic development groups would benefit from a cross-element meeting to discuss transit as a catalyst for development and freight movement. Transportation is essential to economic development by making goods and services more accessible. Public transportation systems in particular have spurred economic growth in other cities cited by the Working Group as best practices. An interesting omission from the economic conversation is the importance of the Ohio River in freight movement. It may be useful for the group to hear from a member of the River Advisory Commission on the topic of riverfront transportation.

The environmental impact theme is about the implications of transportation methods on the environment as well as the consideration of environmental limitations on transportation. Non-motorized travel, public transportation, and shortening commutes are strategies to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions generated by automobile travel. The Health, Environment, and Open Space Working Group may present some interesting information to this group on the subject of emissions. The Working Group made several comments about incorporating bicycle traffic into the existing road network, improving pedestrian paths, and even improving neighborhoods so that Cincinnatians can live near their workplace. This issue presents a possible meeting with the Housing and Neighborhood Development Working Group.

The topography of Cincinnati presents some challenges in terms of connecting areas that are in close proximity but do not relate because of foreboding hillsides (i.e., Central Business District and surrounding hillsides). This issue is especially pertinent to non-motorized travel, such as pedestrian and bicycle paths. The opportunity exists here to generate some creative ideas to take advantage of the challenging topography and make it an asset rather than a hindrance.

The final theme generated in the first Working Group meeting is about the infrastructure needs for Cincinnati's transportation network. Some comments mentioned intermodal, or multimodal, transportation, high-speed rail, and a new location for the Greyhound station. All of these are considerations for the transportation Working Group that will require infrastructure improvements. City Council has had discussions about a port facility on the riverfront to accommodate intermodal freight movement through the city. The infrastructure theme also includes rail improvements and the construction of passenger rail through the city and to connect Cincinnati neighborhoods and destinations with the region.