MPO 101

An Introduction to the Purpose and Function of an MPO

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The Association of MPOs
Purpose

• What is an MPO?
• MPO requirements
• Relationship of MPOs to the larger picture of transportation planning
• Federal law
What is an MPO?

- A transportation **policy-making and planning body** with representatives from local, state & federal government and transportation authorities
- Federal law **requires** in **urbanized areas** of 50,000 + -384 MPOs in the US
- Ensures federal spending on transportation occurs through a **comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) process**
- Variety of **organizational arrangements** – “hosted” by another agency; stand-alone; existing agency designated as MPO
 Federal Finances for an MPO

• MPOs receive Federal funds
  – Highway
  – Transit
• 20% match requirement to the Federal funds
Who is the MPO?
Why an MPO?

• Transportation investment means allocating scarce transportation funding resources appropriately.

• Planning needs to reflect the region’s shared vision for the future.
  – Requires a comprehensive examination of the region’s future and investment alternatives.

• MPO facilitates collaboration of governments, interested parties, and residents.
Federally Required Functions for All MPOs

• Establish a setting – fair & impartial
• Evaluate transportation alternatives
• Maintain a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
• Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
• Involve the public – residents and key affected subgroups
## MPO Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time Horizon</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Update Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unified Planning Work Program</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>Planning Studies Tasks Budget</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Range Transportation Plan</td>
<td>20 years (minimum)</td>
<td>Future Goals Strategies and Products</td>
<td>4 years for air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas; 5 years for air quality attainment areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Improvement Program</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Transportation Investment Projects</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subjects for MPO Long Range Plans

SAFETEA-LU required planning factors:

• Economic vitality
• Safety
• Security
• Accessibility and mobility
• Environmental areas, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life
• Integration and connectivity
• Management and operations
• Preservation
“Typical” MPO Structure

- MPO Policy Board
  - Executive/Management Committee
  - Planning Committee
    - Subcommittees
  - Citizens Advisory Committee
  - Other Special Standing and ad hoc Committees
- MPO Professional Staff
Planning Committee:

- An advisory body to the MPO Board for transportation issues, primarily technical in nature
- Oversees MPO technical work and develops recommendations on projects and programs for Board consideration
- Meets on regular schedule
- Usually comprised of staff-level officials of local, state & federal agencies
“Typical” MPO Structure

Citizen Advisory Committee:

- Acts in an advisory capacity to MPO on public involvement strategies
- Meets regularly to review and develop plans and also assists in organizing and managing public meetings and comments
- Comprised of members of the public
  - Often appointed by localities and MPO policy board
  - May include representatives of community, environmental & other interested parties
Resources

• Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program – www.planning.dot.gov/metro.asp
  – The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues – A Briefing Notebook for MPO Board Members

• Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) www.ampo.org
Resources

• Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov)

• FHWA Resource Centers (www.fhwa.dot.gov/resoucecenter)

• Federal Transit Administration (www.fta.dot.gov)
Want More Information?

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