

MPO 101

Presented to:
BACTS Municipal Partners Transit Committee

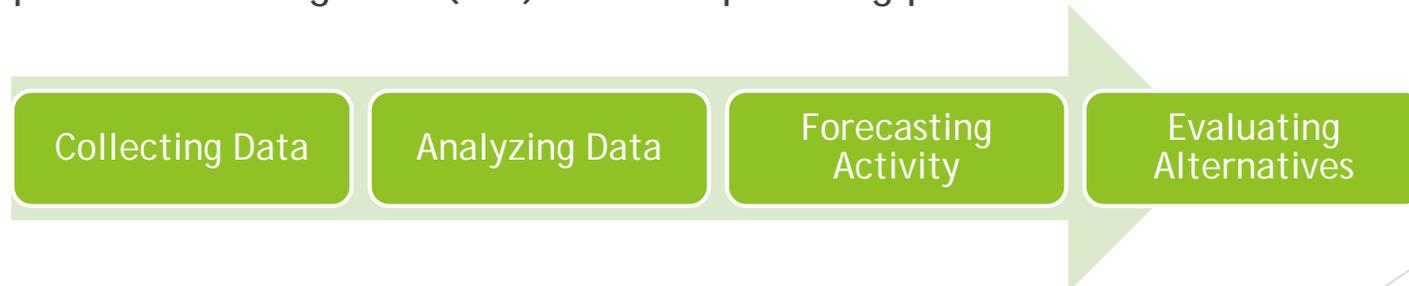
September 6, 2017

What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

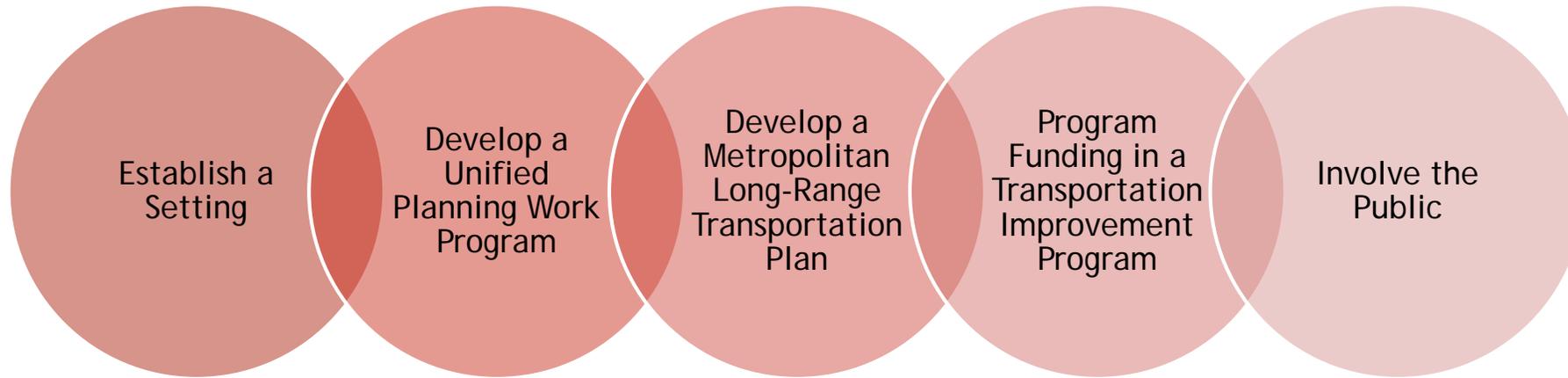
- ▶ Under federal law, any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000 must have an MPO.
- ▶ An MPO is an organization that makes **regional** level transportation plans and policies and has responsibility for determining how to distribute federal transportation funds within the region.
- ▶ Regional level transportation plans and policies provide the framework for:
 - ▶ Allocating scarce transportation funding resources appropriately within the region
 - ▶ Reflecting the region's shared vision for its future
 - ▶ Examining the region's resources and potential future and investment alternatives
 - ▶ Facilitating collaboration of governments, interested parties and residents.

What do MPOs do?

- ▶ MPOs create a collaborative process to address issues that no single jurisdiction can tackle alone.
- ▶ The most critical of MPO responsibilities is the regional plans which dictate how transportation funds are spent in the region.
- ▶ MPOs coordinate the various elements of transportation networks into one cohesive regional transportation system. Doing this requires coordination and partnership across jurisdictions and agencies, starting with a comprehensive planning process that looks at current and future needs and then prioritizes available resources to achieve these goals.
- ▶ MPOs are required to undertake a **continuing**, **cooperative**, and **comprehensive** transportation planning process (known as “3C”) to produce the region’s Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP) and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). The 3C planning process involves four technical phases:



Five Core Functions of an MPO



1. Establish a Setting

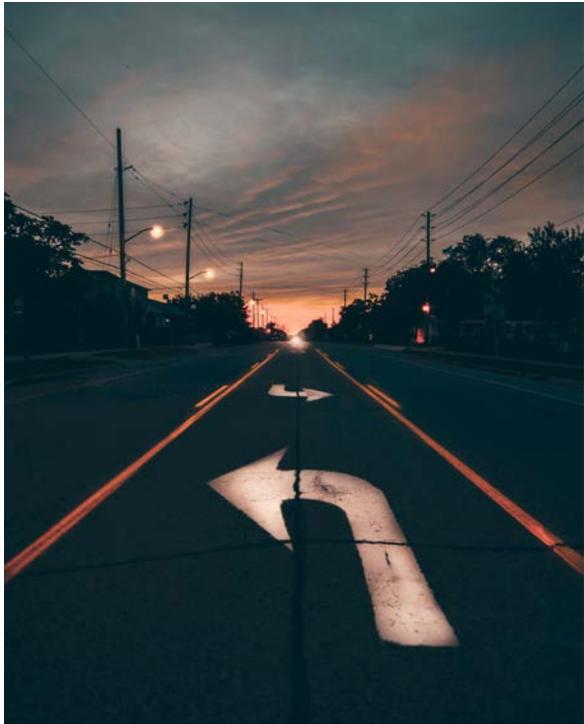
MPOs establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.

- ▶ This is a critical role because MPOs often represent the only regional assembly for elected officials, stakeholders and professional experts to discuss issues of metropolitan-wide importance.
- ▶ BACTS Policy Committee meets the third Tuesday of each month.
- ▶ BACTS Municipal Partners Transit Committee meets the first Wednesday of every other month.



2. *Develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)*

MPOs use data and planning techniques to generate and evaluate realistically available options. This may require special studies and/or research projects to be performed.



- ▶ Outlines planning studies, research and tasks to be performed.
- ▶ Identifies responsible agency for each study and/or task.
- ▶ Identifies anticipated funding sources for each task.
- ▶ Covers a two calendar year period.
- ▶ Basis for contract with MaineDOT.

3. *Maintain a Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*

MPOs develop a MTP that fosters mobility and access for people and goods; efficient system performance and preservation; good quality of life; and sets goals and targets.

- ▶ Twenty-year horizon, updated every five years.
- ▶ Lists the region's transportation system investment priorities and anticipated available funding.
- ▶ Details regional goals and policies, consistent with the Statewide Transportation Plan, for investments in each transportation mode, including connecting modes.
- ▶ Reports on meeting regional performance goals and targets.
- ▶ Links land use and economic goals with transportation.
- ▶ Documents fiscal constraint.



4. *Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*

MPOs develop fiscally constrained prioritized transportation improvement programs, consistent with the MTP.



- ▶ Four-year program covering most immediate projects (new investments, maintenance and system operations).
- ▶ Updated each year.
- ▶ Allocates limited transportation resources among the region's priorities.
- ▶ Projects must be included in TIP to receive federal funding.
- ▶ Must be fiscally constrained to ensure proposed projects can be reasonably completed with available funding.
- ▶ Incorporated into Statewide TIP once approved.

5. Involve the Public

Community engagement is a central part of transportation planning.

- ▶ Requirements for public notice and involvement are stipulated in related federal laws that govern the use of federal funds.
- ▶ Public Participation Plan
 - ▶ Notice of activities
 - ▶ Public review and comment period
 - ▶ Public forums/workshops



Performance-Based Planning Emphasis

With the renewed focus on transportation planning in Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), the FTA and FHWA have identified an overall performance management approach which invests resources in projects that collectively will make progress toward National goals.



- Transition to performance-based planning and programming;
- Identify gaps in the transportation services that preclude the public, including traditionally underserved populations, having access to essential services, such as housing, employment, health care, schools/education, recreation, etc.
- Expand the scope of consideration of the metropolitan planning process to include—
 - improving transportation system resiliency and reliability;
 - reducing (or mitigating) the storm water impacts of surface transportation; and
 - enhancing travel and tourism.

Planning/Advisory Committees

MPOs use advisory committees and subcommittees to provide technical analysis, recommendations and specialized knowledge to the board on specific planning strategies, projects or issues. These committees are generally made up of local government technical staff with expertise in specific planning or engineering areas.

- Other specialized standing committees may be used to address emerging and priority planning issues. These types of committees are typically responsible for reviewing and evaluating transportation-related plans and programs before items are presented to the MPO board.

