



AMPO

Association of  
Metropolitan  
Planning  
Organizations

# What the Heck IS an MPO?

## **An Introduction to the Purpose and Function of a Metropolitan Planning Organization**

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The Association of MPOs

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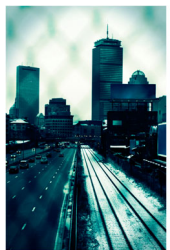
RSG, Inc, and New York State AMPO



## Purpose

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





## What is an MPO?

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- A transportation **policy-making and planning body** with representatives of local, state & federal government and transportation authorities
  - A forum for cooperative decision making involving key stakeholders
  - Federal requirement in Census urbanized areas of 50,000 or more
  - At >200,000, designated a Transportation Management Area (TMA)
  - After the 2010 Census, as many as 420 MPOs
  - The Policy Committee or Board is the designated MPO, not the staff
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## What is an MPO?

- Back when Congress was smart...
  - In 1964, they said metropolitan areas had to have a transportation planning process that was comprehensive, cooperative, continuing (3C)
  - In 1973, they created a home for the 3C process, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, which was required to bring local officials into decision making
  - In 1991, ISTEA gave MPOs more authority and changed the way we do planning





## What About MPO staff?

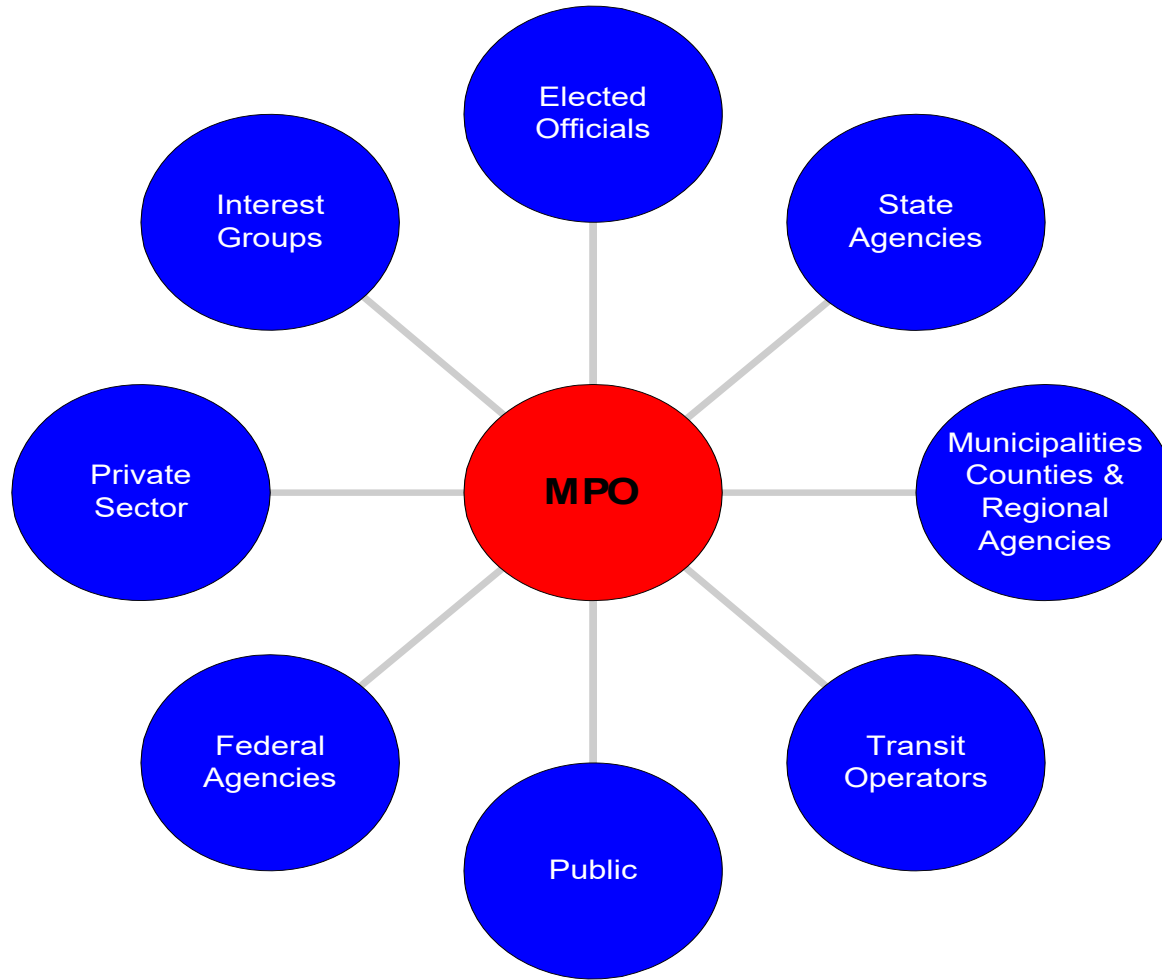
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- Federal law is silent on staffing the MPO
- Great flexibility in staff arrangements, often depends on state law
- Typically have a “host agency” as fiscal/ administrative agent
- FHWA and FTA have funding programs to support MPO work; provide a maximum 80% Federal share
- Required work may be performed by staff, member agencies, consultants

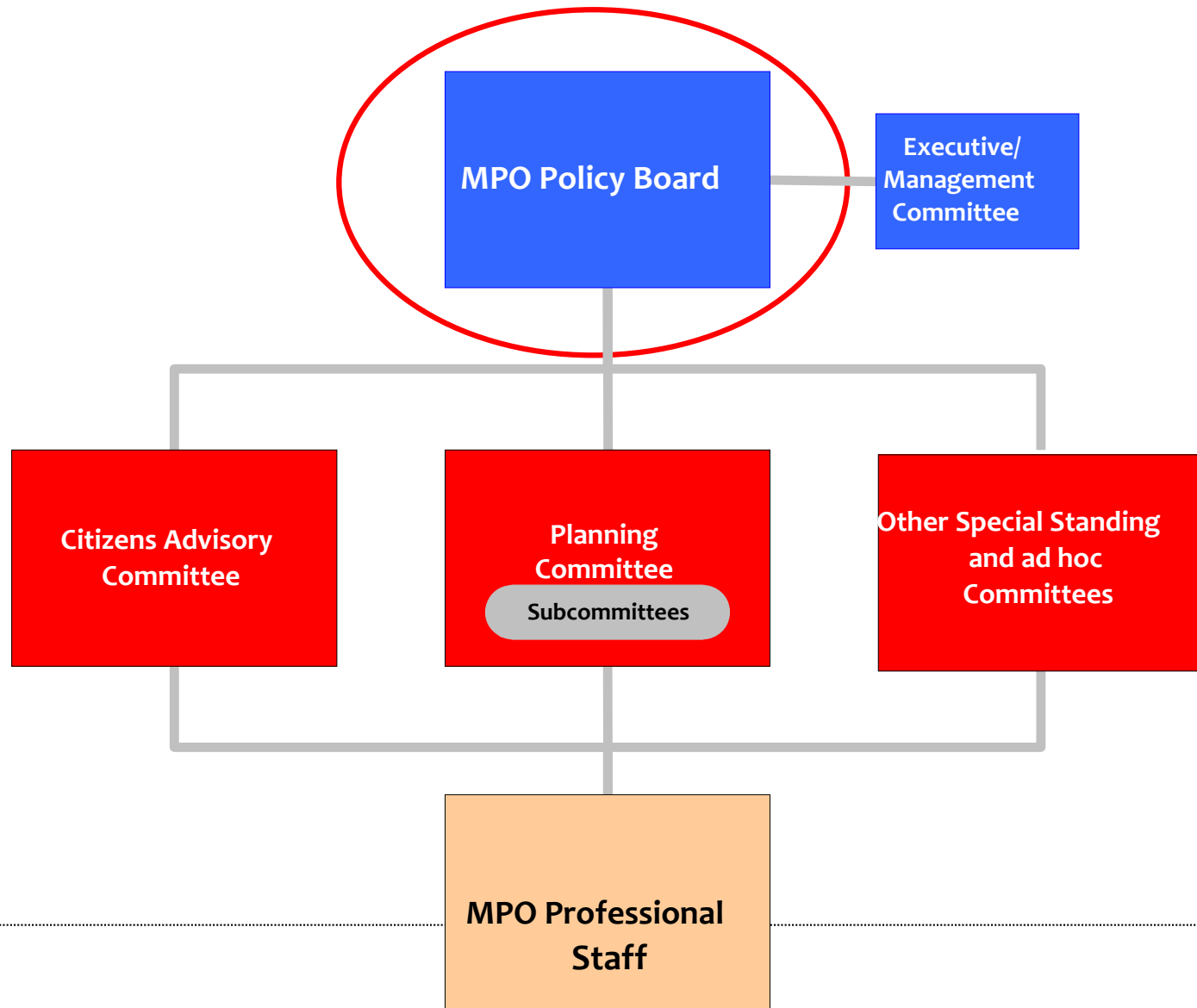


# Who is the MPO?

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# “Typical” MPO Structure



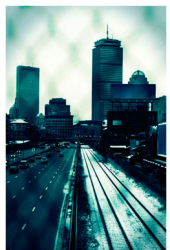


## Typical MPO Structure

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### Policy Committee or Board

- For TMAs, the MPO shall consist of local elected officials; officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, including representation by providers of public transportation; and appropriate State officials.
- For all MPOs, designation occurs by agreement between the Governor and local governments representing at least 75% of the population including the largest incorporated city
- Policy Committees determine their own representation and decision making procedures; some require consensus, others majority or super-majority
- Some MPOs have an Executive or Management Committee to handle agendas and routine matters







## Typical MPO Structure

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### Planning (or Technical) 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
- Usually composed of staff-level officials of local, state & federal agencies
- May have standing sub-committees, for example TIP, Transit, Program Administration
- May create ad hoc sub-committees





## Typical MPO Structure

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### Citizen Advisory Committee

- Acts in an advisory capacity to MPO Board as liaison to the public
- Advises on public involvement strategies
- May assist in organizing and managing public meetings and comments
- Composed of members of the public
  - Often appointed by localities and MPO policy board
  - Sometimes elected
  - May include representatives of stakeholder and advocacy groups like neighborhood, environmental, bicycle and pedestrian, or transit users



## Why an MPO?

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*If you don't know where you're going, any plan will do.*





## Why an MPO?

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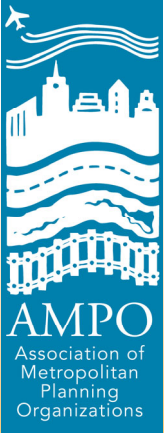
- Planning's job is to elicit the region's shared vision for the future
- Requires a comprehensive examination of the region's future and investment alternatives
  - Technical and qualitative forecasts
- Transportation investment means allocating scarce transportation funding resources that achieve outcomes that move toward the vision
- MPO facilitates collaboration of governments, interested parties, and residents



## MPO Federally Required Products

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- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
  - Goals, objectives, actions
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
  - Tasks to accomplish planning activities
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
  - Projects to implement the LRTP
- Participation Plan
  - Communication with the public(s) and key affected groups
  - Environmental Justice
  - Limited English Proficiency Plan



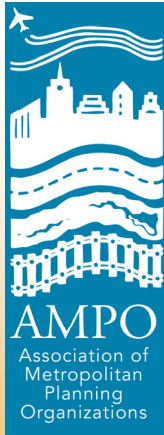


## MPO Federally Required Products

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- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
  - How to make best use of transit operations
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
  - Required only in TMAs
  - Identifies congestion in all modes, and mitigation strategies
- Air Quality planning in non-attainment areas
  - The LRTP and TIP are subject to conformity analysis





# MPO Products

	Time Horizon	Contents	Update Requirements
Unified Planning Work Program	1-2 years	Planning Studies Grant Budgets	Annual
Long Range Transportation Plan	20 years (minimum)	Future Goals Strategies and Products	4 years for air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas; 5 years for air quality attainment areas
Transportation Improvement Program	4 years (minimum)	FHWA and FTA Projects and Strategies	4 years (or less)





## Subjects for MPO Long Range Plans

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### MAP-21 required planning factors

- **Economic vitality**
- **Safety**
- **Security**
- **Accessibility and mobility**
- **Environmental areas, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life**
- **Integration and connectivity**
- **Management & operations**
- **Preservation**







## MAP-21: What's New for MPOs?

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### Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- End of the “TEA” era
- Does not change MPO designation or structure
- Consolidates capital programs in both FHWA and FTA
- **New focus on performance-based planning**
  - MPOs need to be cognizant of the outcomes of their investments in terms of actual impact on transportation operations and community goals
  - The old model **Forecast-Plan-Program-Build [and don't look back]** is no longer appropriate





## MAP-21 Performance Measures

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- Infrastructure condition: state of good repair
  - Congestion reduction: reduce congestion on NHS
  - Safety: reduce fatalities and serious injuries on public roads
  - System Reliability: improve efficiency of travel
  - Freight Movement and Economic Vitality: improve freight networks, rural access, and regional economic development
  - Environmental Sustainability: protect and enhance the environment
  - Project Delivery: reduce delays in project development and delivery
  - **TARGETS** to be determined by MPOs and states
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## Resources

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- Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program – [www.planning.dot.gov/metro.asp](http://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](http://www.ampo.org)
- National Highway Institute [www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov)
  - *Metropolitan Transportation Planning, Course #152069*





## Resources

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- Federal Highway Administration  
([www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov))
- FHWA Resource Centers  
([www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter))
- Federal Transit Administration  
([www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov))





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## Want More Information?

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