

Perspective

An outline on the governance of metropolitan planning organization

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ABOUT THE STUDY

A Metropolitan Planning Organisation (MPO), made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authority, is a federally mandated and federally sponsored transportation policy-making institution in the United States. They were established to guarantee a regional approach to planning transportation. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 established MPOs by mandating the creation of an MPO for any Urbanised Area (UZA) with a population of more than 50,000 people. Through this planning process, federal financing for transportation projects and programmes is routed. In order to guarantee that present and future government funding expenditures for transportation projects and programmes are based on an on-going, cooperative planning process, Congress established MPOs. Federal legislation regulates regional, state-level, and metropolitan transportation planning procedures.

Governance

An MPO governance structure typically consists of a professional staff and a number of committees. The planning organization's senior decision-making body is known as the "policy committee." The majority of MPOs' policy committees are made up of;

- Elected or appointed representatives of local governments, such as counties or municipalities
- Representatives of various kinds of transportation, including freight, public transportation, and bicycles and pedestrians.
- Officials from state agencies such as the environmental agency and the state department of transportation.
- FHWA, FTA, FAA, FRA, staff advisors from state departments of transportation, and chambers of commerce are non-voting members.

Members of the MPO policy committee are not directly chosen by the general public, with just a few notable exceptions around the country (like the MPO in Portland, Oregon). A member of the policy committee is often an elected or appointed representative from one of the local governments that make up the MPO. Thus, the policy committee member is able to speak and act in the MPO

context on behalf of that jurisdiction. However, members of an MPO policy committee are not required by federal law to be citizens of the metropolitan areas. Systematic research has shown that MPO policy committees underrepresent metropolitan municipalities and underrepresented minority communities in their jurisdictions. Adoption of the metropolitan long-range transportation plans, transportation enhancement programmes, yearly planning work programmes, budgets, and other policy papers are just a few of the important MPO activities and problems that the policy committee is responsible for debating and deciding. In addition to holding public meetings and hearings, the policy committee may actively participate in major decisions or milestones related to MPO plans and research. The suggestions for the policy committee's consideration are created by an Appointed Advisory Committee (CAC), which also creates a ranking proposal for work plans.

For transportation concerns that are essentially technical in nature, the majority of MPOs additionally create a technical committee that serves as an advisory body to the policy committee. On technical issues pertaining to planning, analysis tasks, and projects, the technical committee communicates with the professional staff of the MPO. The technical committee creates suggestions on projects and programmes through this work for the policy committee to examine. One of the primary responsibilities that the technical committee supports is metropolitan travel forecasts. Officials from municipal, state, and federal agencies at the staff level often make up the technical committee. A technical committee may also include members from interest groups, different forms of transportation, and local residents.

MPOs often keep a core group of professionals on staff to guarantee that the necessary metropolitan planning process can be completed quickly and effectively. Each MPO may have a different size and set of qualifications for these personnel because no two metropolitan areas have the same planning requirements. However, because to the complexity of the process and the necessity to make sure that requirement are adequately met, the majority of MPOs require at least some employees that are entirely responsible for overseeing and managing the MPO process.

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