**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# Understanding Regionalism: What are COGs and MPOs?

**Thursday, December 6, 2012**

**Erika Young, Transportation Director**
**erika@narc.org**

# NARC's Mission

- National non-profit organization
- Represents multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations – large and small, urban and rural
- Formed by NACo and NLC; governed by local elected officials
- President Hon. David Shafer, Clerk-Treasurer, Town of Munster, IN
- Concentrate on four core areas: Transportation; Economic & Community Development; Homeland Security/Public Safety; Environment
- Provides advocacy, training and technical assistance
- Strongly supports building livable, sustainable communities through multi-jurisdictional, regional cooperation in urban, suburban and rural areas that are reflective of local elected decision-making and community choice.

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# About NARC

**Erika Young, Transportation Director, National Association of Regional Councils**

- Develop NARC's Transportation Program and Policy

- Staff contact for NARC's Transportation Committee & Subcommittees

- Liaise with external transportation stakeholders, US DOT, Congress, etc.

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*
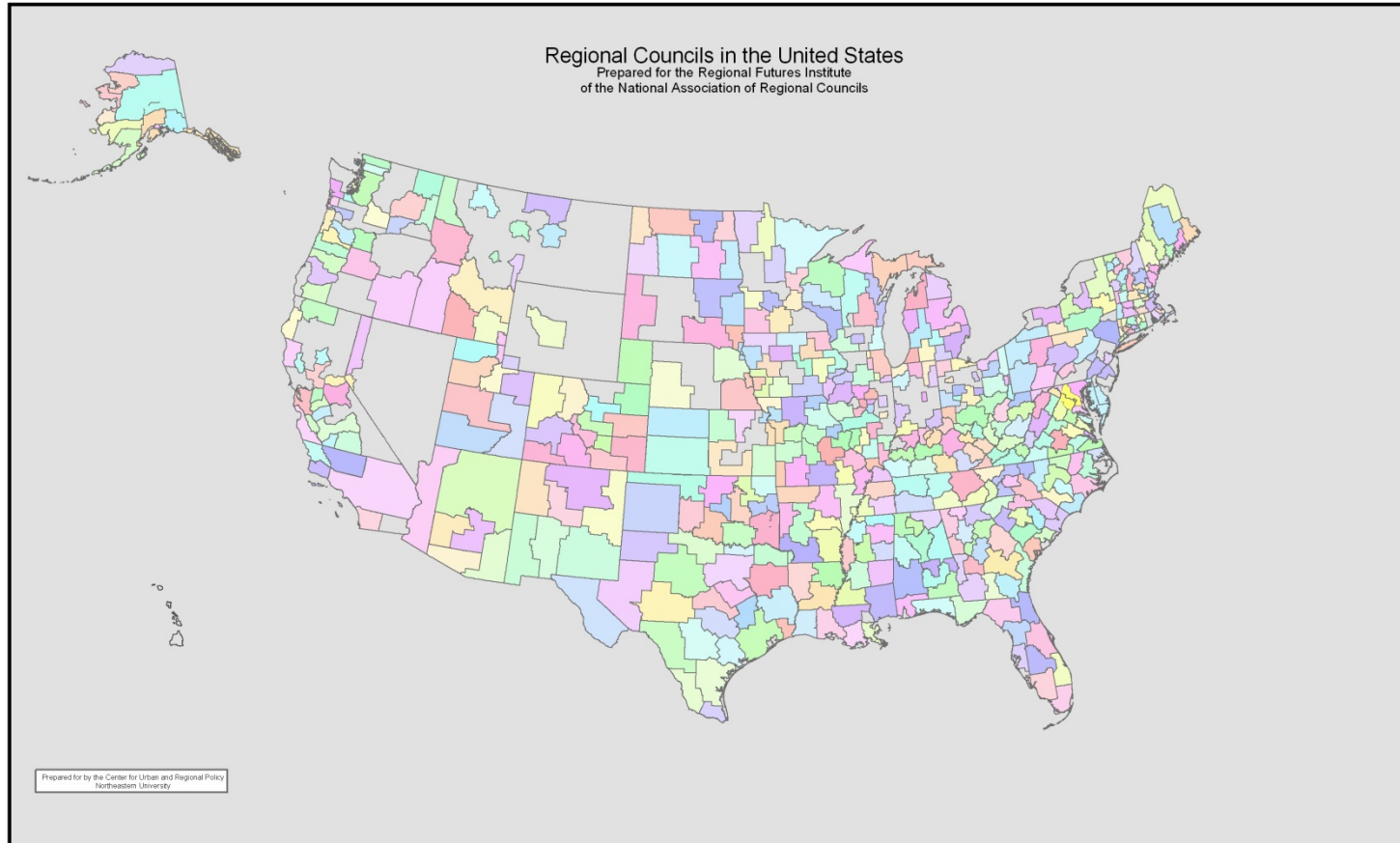
# What are COGs?

- Known by Many Different Names
  - Regional Councils of Government (COGs)
  - Planning and Development Commissions
  - Regional Planning Organizations
  - Regional Planning Commissions

- There are over 500 COGs in the country

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# Where are COGs?



Regional Councils in the United States
Prepared for the Regional Futures Institute
of the National Association of Regional Councils

Prepared for by the Center for Urban and Regional Policy
Northeastern University

# What do COGs do?

*COG responsibilities are wide-ranging, but in all cases are determined by its member jurisdictions and agencies.*

Traditional activities can include:

- regional review of environmentally significant projects per CEQA or NEPA;

- air quality planning;

- Homeland security planning;

- Serve as an area wide clearinghouse for review of Federal financial assistance;

- regional housing needs assessment;

- hazardous and solid waste management;

- demographic projections and growth management analysis;

- review of local general plan amendments;

- area wide water quality planning;

- transportation planning, modeling and programming; and

- general planning support and technical assistance.

# What do COGs do?

*COG responsibilities are wide-ranging, but in all cases are determined by its member jurisdictions and agencies.*

Emerging activities can include:

- Regional energy planning;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation planning;
- Cooperative purchasing agents;
- Serve as a local government pension fund; and,
- Whatever else their voluntary local governments feel is appropriately handled on a regional level.

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# What do COGs do?

*COG responsibilities are wide-ranging, but in all cases are determined by its member jurisdictions and agencies.*

Ground-up, grassroots expressions of local government desires

States may also add responsibilities

- Texas/Florida law mandates that COGs address evacuation planning

- California mandates housing planning and assessment

- WA mandates growth management

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# What are MPOs?

*Unlike a COG, an MPO is federally mandated when a region reaches 50,000 population in its metro area.*

- Created in 1962: Federal law required the formation of MPOs and they were given greater authority under ISTEA
    - Adjusted/Determined by the Census Bureau every 10 years
    - Created by U.S. DOT
- Must plan and program certain federal funds within their MPO defined region
- States may add authorities through legislation
    - CA mandates climate change planning
    - VA mandates land use and transportation planning

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# What are MPOs?

*Unlike a COG, an MPO is federally mandated when a region reaches 50,000 population in its metro area.*

- MPOs are governed by local elected officials, appropriate state officials *and now* transit officials
- Plan for the "continuing, comprehensive and coordinated" transportation in a metropolitan region
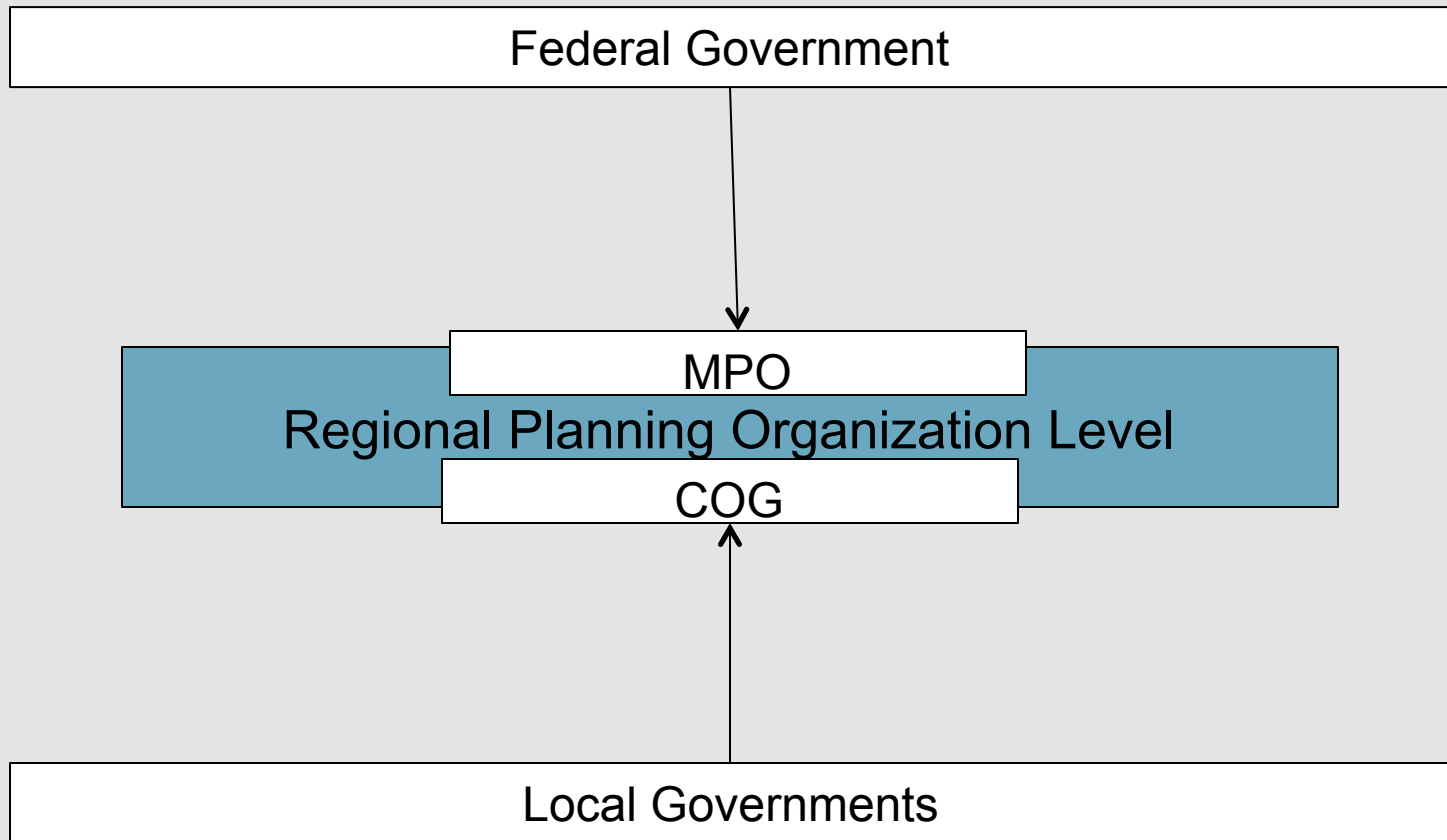- Serve as a forum for regional decision-making and technical resources

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# How do they Relate?

Authority Stems From Different Levels of Government

Federal Government

MPO

Regional Planning Organization Level

COG
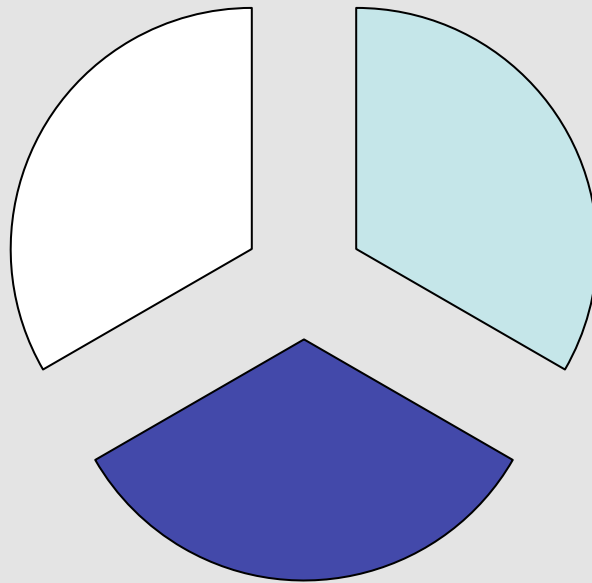
Local Governments

NARC
*Building Regional Communities*

# How do they Relate?

## Professional Relationship b/t MPOs and COGs

The number of MPOs and COGs are almost evenly split as to whether or not they occupy the same location, board structures, staff, resources



- ☐ MPO & COG together
- ■ MPO w/ COG
- ☐ MPO & COG separate

*http://www.cutr.usf.edu/programs/pcm/files/2010-05-Staffing_and_Administrative_Capacity_of_MPOs.pdf*

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# How do they Relate?

- ~ 69% of MPOs are "hosted" by another agency.
- The remaining 31 percent exist as "independent" agencies.
- Local governments hosting MPOs are the most common.
  - 20% of all MPOs are hosted at a county government.
  - 20% are hosted by a municipal government.

*http://www.cutr.usf.edu/programs/pcm/files/2010-05-Staffing_and_Administrative_Capacity_of_MPOs.pdf*

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# How do they Relate?

- MPO & COG Joined
  - Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City)
  - Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (Columbus)
- MPO Housed with COG
  - Metropolitan Washington COG (Washington, DC)
- MPO & COG Separate
  - Centralina COG & Charlotte MPOs
  - Metropolitan Area Planning Council & Boston MPO

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

# How do Regions Value SRTS?

- Letters of Endorsement from Localities
  - Beloit MPO (Beloit, WI)
  - Blacksburg, VA
  - Chittenden County, VT, MPO
- Referencing SRTS as a positive solution to challenging problems
  - St. Joseph Area Transportation Study Area (St. Joseph, MO)
  - Sacramento COG (also MPO)
  - Among others

**NARC**
*Building Regional Communities*

"The Safety Ambassador program was developed in 2007 by the Mid-America Regional Council and partner organizations to provide consistency in youth pedestrian and bicycling safety education across the region. … This initiative draws upon the knowledge of these individuals and other partners to create a forum for promoting safety issues in our communities." www.marc.org/bikeped/

Safety Ambassador is a program of the Mid-America Regional Council.

The MARC region crosses 2 states, including 9 Counties, 120+ cities with a combined population of over 1.9 million covering over 4,400 square miles.

# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

**For more information, please contact NARC staff:**

**Erika Young**
Transportation Director
erika@narc.org
202.986.1032, x 212