



# Introduction to Metropolitan Planning Organizations

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# What Is a Metropolitan Planning Organization?

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- MPOs are regional planning agencies for metropolitan areas & surrounding parts
- Mandated by federal law, established by the states, & operated by local decision makers
- Required for any urbanized area with a population of over 50,000 people
- Over 400 across the United States
- Act as gatekeepers for federal & state transportation funding





# How Do MPOs Work?

- Each MPO is governed by a policy board
- The policy board is generally composed of elected & appointed officials from the cities, towns, counties, & public transportation providers in the region
- Goal is to coordinate planning among all these actors across the region
- Larger MPOs have a range of staff people with many areas of expertise
- MPOs almost always have technical advisory committees & may have many other advisory committees

# Why Do MPOs Matter?



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### U.S. Total Population



**71%** of population lives within MPO boundaries

### U.S. Total Land Area



less than **5%** of land area lies within MPO boundaries

 not within MPO boundaries  within MPO boundaries

# MPOs, Transportation & Health



- Physical activity
- Traffic injuries & fatalities
- Air quality
- Climate change
- Environmental justice
- Emergency safety
- Health equity
- Access to economic opportunity
- Healthy aging
- Access to healthy destinations

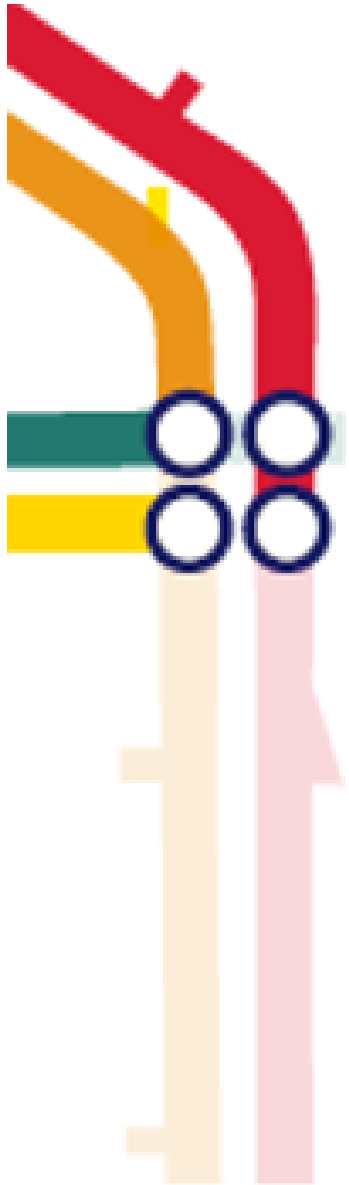




# What Do MPOs Do?



# Short & Long Term Transportation Planning



- **Long Range Transportation Plans:** Engage in continuous long-term regional planning; every 3-5 years develop new regional transportation plan that projects at least 20 years into the future.
- **Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs):** Develop short-term transportation improvement programs (TIPs) that select projects & strategies to fund & implement in next four years. Projects must be consistent with the long range plan.



## Much More!

- **Funding awards** (e.g. MPOs serving more than 200,000 people award a share of federal Transportation Alternatives Program funds, key funding for active transportation)
- **Congestion management**
- **Public engagement**
- **Plans, policies & resolutions**
- **Programs & activities**
- **Technical assistance & model policies to support action by local jurisdictions**
- **Coordinating stakeholders**
- **Resources & tools**

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