

MPO Primer for the LCOG Executive Committee February 2007

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are established in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134, to provide a “Continuous, Cooperative, and Comprehensive” transportation planning process on a regional level in urbanized areas with a population exceeding 50,000. A special type of MPO, a Transportation Management Area (TMA) is created when the population exceeds 200,000. Our MPO is a TMA. Members include the City of Eugene, City of Springfield, City of Coburg, Lane County, Lane Transit District and ODOT. Federal regulations require representation by each of these parties.

MPOs are required to coordinate with State and local transportation planning processes, and their plans must be consistent with State and local plans.

MPOs are not responsible for meeting the State planning goals (primarily Goal 12.) This responsibility rests with general purpose governments and the State.

Key Products:

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The RTP is the guiding document of the MPO. It provides a minimum 24 year look at “regionally significant” projects in the MPO’s planning area and certifies that these projects will meet environmental requirements (primarily Air Quality.) Projects are divided into two categories “fiscally constrained” and “illustrative.” The key group is the fiscally constrained list, as we must demonstrate we know how those projects will be funded, and only this group can be used to meet our necessary environmental, congestion, etc. goals.

The RTP must be consistent with the local Transportation System Plans (TSPs), the State required local plan. In an ideal world, the RTP is really a compilation of the content of the TSPs and ODOT’s Statewide plan, with additional work done to satisfy federal requirements.

Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

The RTP is the MPO’s long-range plan, with the MTIP serving as the short-range plan or project list. Projects from the MPO agencies’ Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) and ODOT’s project list are combined to create the MTIP. Projects in the MTIP must be listed in the RTP or be consistent with the RTP’s goals.

Each MTIP is developed for a specific time-span (typically 3-5 years), programming the federal, state and local project funds authorized under the then-prevailing budget authorizations. Our current MTIP covers federal fiscal years 2006-2009, and we are currently working to develop the '07-'11 MTIP.

Like the RTP, the MTIP grows from the local (State) project development processes. MTIP projects are not developed at the MPO level, they are created by the local and state agencies which make up the MPO.

For federal money to be spent on any transportation project within the MPO's boundary, the project must be approved through both the local and MPO processes.

Air Quality Conformity Determination (ACQD)

Both the RTP and MTIP must be shown to result in maintenance of acceptable air quality standards for several pollutants, or improvement of air quality if an area is currently out of attainment. Major projects added to or subtracted from the RTP or MTIP trigger an ACQD.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

A new requirement within the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation, the PPP describes how we involve the public in each aspect of the MPO's operations.

Annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

An annual list of work-plan tasks for the MPO. It includes activities by participating MPO agencies.