

**Mecklenburg-Union  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**



# **Delegate Handbook**

**Charlotte  
Cornelius  
Davidson  
Huntersville  
Indian Trail  
Matthews  
Mecklenburg  
County  
Mint Hill  
Monroe  
NCDOT  
Pineville  
Stallings  
Union County  
Waxhaw  
Weddington  
Wesley Chapel  
Wingate**



M E C K L E N B U R G - U N I O N  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

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Charlotte, North Carolina 28202-2853  
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[www.mumpo.org](http://www.mumpo.org)

CHARLOTTE

CORNELIUS

DAVIDSON

HUNTERSVILLE

INDIAN TRAIL

MATTHEWS

MECKLENBURG  
COUNTY

MINT HILL

MONROE

NCDOT

PINEVILLE

STALLINGS

UNION  
COUNTY

UNIONVILLE

WAXHAW

WEDDINGTON

WESLEY CHAPEL

WINGATE

January 13, 2010

**2010 MPO Delegates & Alternates:**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization's orientation session. I hope the information contained in this handbook, combined with tonight's presentations, will be helpful as you deliberate the important issues MUMPO will face during the year.

Although the orientation will be able to cover just the basics, there are other resources available to obtain more information. This handbook contains a great deal of helpful material, and more important, links to websites where even more detailed information can be obtained. In addition, staff is always available to answer questions, and your agency's Technical Coordinating Committee member can provide you with valuable assistance and insight. Moreover, we hope to continue our education efforts with pre-MPO meeting presentations devoted to key topics such as funding and air quality conformity.

On behalf of Vice-Chairman Bill Coxe and all members of the TCC, I look forward to working with you throughout the year to ensure that the decisions we make are in the best interests of the people we serve.

Sincerely:



Wayne Herron, AICP  
Chairman, Technical Coordinating Committee  
Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization

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## **Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization Overview**

### **Historical Context**

In 1962, Congress enacted the Federal-Aid Highway Act and required that an urbanized area (as defined by the Census Bureau) that exceeded a population of 50,000 must establish a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” (3-C) transportation planning process in order to qualify for federal transportation funds. Later, the Bureau of Public Roads (predecessor to the Federal Highway Administration) required the creation of planning agencies or organizational arrangements capable of carrying out the required planning process, thus Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) came into being.

### **Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization**

In the Charlotte Urbanized Area, the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) is charged with implementing the federally-mandated 3-C transportation planning process. In carrying out that process, some of MUMPO’s specific responsibilities are to:

- develop and adopt a long-range transportation plan
- develop and adopt the Transportation Improvement Program
- make air quality conformity determinations on the long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program
- annually adopt a Unified Planning Work Program
- prepare, update and maintain the Thoroughfare Plan/Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- provide for adequate public involvement in the decision-making process

MUMPO’s planning area includes all of Mecklenburg County and most of Union County. See Section 3 of this handbook for a planning area map.

### **The MPO**

The other sixteen North Carolina Metropolitan Planning Organizations refer to their governing bodies as a “Transportation Advisory Committee,” or TAC; however, MUMPO refers to its governing body as the “MPO.” Representatives on the MPO include members of the governing boards of:

- Charlotte
- Cornelius
- Davidson
- Huntersville
- Indian Trail
- Matthews
- Mecklenburg County
- Mint Hill
- Monroe
- Pineville
- Stallings
- Union County
- Waxhaw
- Weddington
- Wesley Chapel
- Wingate

The local representative to the NC Board of Transportation is also a voting member.

Non-voting representatives from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Union County Planning Board, US Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Turnpike Authority participate in MUMPO deliberations.

The voting structure is based on population: Charlotte has 16 votes; Huntersville, Matthews, Mecklenburg, Mint Hill, Monroe, and Union have two votes each; each of the other voting members has one vote.

### **Technical Coordinating Committee**

The TCC is the staff arm of MUMPO. It is composed of representatives of various departments and communities involved in the transportation planning process. Other relevant local, state and federal departments are also members. The TCC's primary responsibility is to carry out the various planning tasks described in the Unified Planning Work Program. These include updates to the long-range transportation plan, analyses of operational issues in the thoroughfare system, recommendations for various transportation investment programs, and the public involvement process for the MPO. Virtually all technical recommendations to the MPO originate at the TCC level.

### **Lead Planning Agency**

MUMPO's lead planning agency (LPA) is the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department.

## **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING HISTORY**

### **1950s**

The Charlotte region has a long history in urban transportation planning. Charlotte was one of the first cities in the country to develop a comprehensive transportation plan, doing so in cooperation with what was then known as the State Highway Commission. The study was started in 1957 and preceded the state legislative mandate for thoroughfare planning by two years and the federal mandate for urban transportation planning by six years. In 1959, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted General Statute 136-66 which called for the development and mutual adoption of Thoroughfare Plans by the State Highway Commission and local governments. One year later, the City of Charlotte and the State Highway Commission adopted the first official Thoroughfare Plan for the Charlotte area.

### **1960s & 1970s<sup>1</sup>**

In 1962 the Federal-Aid Highway Act was enacted by Congress, requiring the establishment of a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” (3-C) transportation planning process in urban areas with populations exceeding 50,000 as a prerequisite for continued federal funding of highway projects. Regulations promulgated by the then Bureau of Public Roads (now the Federal Highway Administration) required State Highway Departments to develop formal working relationships with local jurisdictions to carry out the transportation planning requirements of the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act. Thus, the first formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defining a transportation planning process for Charlotte-Mecklenburg was adopted by the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the State of Highway Commission in June 1965. The 1965 MOU delineated responsibilities for maintaining a continuing planning process and established a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and charged it with the responsibility for general review, guidance, and coordination of the process.

The TCC, at their first meeting, recognized the need to update the 1957-1960 Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The TCC was involved in defining the methodology and evaluating results at various stages of the process, but the State provided overall technical direction and most of the staff support. (A parallel study effort was prepared by a consultant to develop a transit plan for the region.) The late 1960's and early 1970's were spent in a continuing series of data collection efforts, travel demand model development, travel forecasting and testing of alternative plans. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (CMPC) prepared the socio-economic forecasts while the State Highway Commission developed mathematical models to convert the forecasts prepared by CMPC into estimates of future travel for the region. A series of technical reports followed, resulting in a 1977 Thoroughfare Plan (see below for more information).

Concurrent with the above activities, the 1970 Census resulted in the expansion of the transportation planning area to include all Mecklenburg County municipalities.<sup>1</sup> The MOU was revised (1975) and established a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) of elected representatives from the governing boards. The TAC was given the

responsibility for assisting in the development of a coordinated, multi-modal transportation capital program for the planning area. In addition, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 was passed, placing an emphasis on planning at the local level.

In 1976, the Charlotte City Council and the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners adopted the 1995 Comprehensive Plan prepared by the CMPC. The Plan included land use and transportation components that provided a framework for the 1977 Thoroughfare Plan. The 1995 plan called for the development of metro service centers served by an expanded roadway system and a series of busways.

In 1977, the TAC approved the updated Thoroughfare Plan, but it was not presented to the North Carolina Board of Transportation (BOT) because it had approved an alignment of the Southern Outer Belt (I-485) which was contrary to the Thoroughfare Plan. This highly controversial project revealed the fragility of the transportation planning process and, in particular, the transportation decision-making structure in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Moreover, it brought to the surface the ambiguities that had crept into the process over the previous 20 years.

A result of the controversy was the hiring of a consultant to define an urban-based transportation planning process that would be tied to a comprehensive land planning process that could respond effectively to emerging opportunities and the needs of difficult, technical and community based decision-making situations. The recommendations that came forth focused primarily upon transportation decision-making and the structuring of staff support for carrying out the transportation planning process. The consultant recommended that a new MOU be prepared for Charlotte-Mecklenburg to redefine and update the participation of all local governments and the State in the transportation planning process and to re-establish the former TAC as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region. It was also recommended that the restructured MPO give increased voting strength to the City of Charlotte and to the County. In addition it was recommended that voting rights be limited to elected officials representing local governments, but that the CMPC and the BOT have non-voting representation on the MPO.

## **1980s<sup>2</sup>**

A new MOU was adopted in November 1981 and agreed upon by the City of Charlotte, the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Pineville, Mathews, Mint Hill, Mecklenburg County, NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. It included a weighted voting structure that gave the City of Charlotte six votes, Mecklenburg County two votes, and the six Towns and NCDOT one vote each. The revised MOU also reorganized the TCC and set the responsibility for overall coordination of the transportation planning process within the staff of the CMPC, specifically through the creation of the position of Transportation Coordinator.

As the decade progressed, Federal funding levels, citizen lifestyles, government decisions on land use, and other factors limited the range of transportation choices for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. In response, a Transportation Action Plan (TAP) was developed to

provide officials with the information necessary to make sound transportation decisions for the 1980s. The TAP took into consideration both land use and the transportation system because of their many interrelationships and interdependencies.

Future planning efforts identified by the TAP for completion in the early 1980s included an update of the 1977 Thoroughfare Plan and a generalized land use plan update. This was coupled with a citizen involvement program that provided for review and comment on future transportation planning efforts.

### **1990s**

The 1990 Census brought about an expansion of the Charlotte urbanized area to include parts of Union County. The result was a newly defined metropolitan planning area boundary, along with Stallings, Indian Trail, Weddington and Union County being added as voting members of the MPO. The weighted vote structure was revised to reflect these additions and adopted in a new MOU. The new voting structure gave Charlotte nine votes, Mecklenburg County three votes and the remaining towns and NCDOT one vote each for a total of 23 votes.

Air quality became a more significant regional concern during the 1990s. Prior to 1997, only Mecklenburg and Gaston counties were found not to meet air quality standards for ozone as established by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); however, new standards were issued in 1997 that resulted in Union, Cabarrus, Lincoln, Rowan, eastern York and southern Iredell counties being classified as non-attainment of the ozone standard.<sup>3</sup>

### **2000s**

A further expansion of the urbanized area boundary occurred after the 2000 Census and the City of Monroe, the towns of Waxhaw and Wingate, and the Village of Wesley Chapel were added as MPO voting members. The MOU was revised and the weighted voting structure was modified, giving Charlotte 16 votes, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, Monroe and Mecklenburg and Union counties two votes each, with all remaining municipalities and NCDOT assigned one vote each.

The urbanized area boundaries established by the Census Bureau resulted in MUMPO's boundary spreading into Cabarrus and York counties, and the Gaston MPO's boundary spreading into Mecklenburg County. In all three cases the spillover was minimal. Agreements were reached by the MPOs that permitted the MPO already having jurisdiction to continue its transportation planning activities in the affected area.

1. The Rock Hill MPO was established after the 1960 Census, and 1970 Census resulted in the creation of the Gaston Urban Area MPO.
2. The Cabarrus-Rowan MPO (then known as Cabarrus-South Rowan) was established following the 1980 Census.
3. The EPA did not complete its non-attainment declaration for the region until 2004.

## 2011 MEETING SCHEDULE

### **Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The MPO meets at 7:00 PM on the third Wednesday of every other month (beginning in January). The meeting location is Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center.

Special meetings are held when necessary. Approval of the transportation improvement program (TIP) and the required air quality conformity determination that must be made may require additional meetings this year.

Listed below is the MPO meeting schedule for 2011:

**January 19**

**March 16**

**May 18**

**July 20**

**September 21**

**November 16**

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### **Technical Coordinating Committee**

The TCC meets at 10:00 AM on the first Thursday of every month. The meeting location is Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center.

Listed below is the TCC meeting schedule for 2011:

**January 6**

**February 3**

**March 3**

**April 7**

**May 5**

**June 2**

**July 7**

**August 4**

**September 1**

**October 6**

**November 3**

**December 1**



## GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

The MOU outlines the policies, structure, membership, and the roles and responsibilities of MUMPO. It is the governing document of the MPO, which guides the cooperative, comprehensive and continuing transportation planning process among the parties therein. MUMPO's MOU was adopted in September 2003.

[MUMPO Memorandum of Understanding](#)

### **MPO and TCC Bylaws**

The Bylaws describe the purpose and operational procedures of the MPO and TCC, including the terms and duties of officers, meeting procedures, voting procedures and attendance. MUMPO's Bylaws were adopted in September 2003.

[MUMPO MPO Bylaws](#)

[MUMPO TCC Bylaws](#)



## MAPS

### **MUMPO Area Boundary**

The MUMPO Boundary map shows all the jurisdictions within the MPO boundary of Mecklenburg and Union counties, as well as a small portion of Iredell county. All of the jurisdictions shown are not necessarily voting members of the MPO; however, the 2010 census could change the boundary and result in modifications to MUMPO's voting structure.

[MUMPO Area Boundary](#)

### **Urbanized Area**

An Urbanized Area (UZA) is a densely populated area that contains a minimum of 50,000 people. The MPO process is required in UZAs and in adjacent areas reasonably expected to be urban in 20 years, in order to receive federal funding for transportation. The UZA map shows the urbanized area within MUMPO's boundary.

[MUMPO Urbanized Area](#)

### **Thoroughfare Plan**

A Thoroughfare Plan provides a functional hierarchy of major streets that permits travel between origins and destinations with directness, ease and safety. The Thoroughfare Plan is a planning tool designed to provide for the orderly development of an adequate major street system as land development occurs or traffic increases. It helps reduce travel and transportation costs. The Thoroughfare Plan map shows the existing and proposed thoroughfare road network within the MUMPO boundary.

A subcommittee led by the NCDOT urban area coordinator is being formed to begin work on the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP will ultimately take the place of MUMPO's Thoroughfare Plan.

[MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan](#)



**2011 Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
Members List

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PINEVILLE	Jim Eschert <a href="mailto:jeschert@aol.com">jeschert@aol.com</a>	Mayor George Fowler <a href="mailto:gowler@pinevilledsl.net">gowler@pinevilledsl.net</a>
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**MECKLENBURG-UNION  
TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**2011 Voting Members**

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## KEY ISSUES

### ***The Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues***

A publication of the Federal Highway Administration, this document provides an overview and framework of the transportation planning process for decision makers, officials and staff. It briefly covers a variety of topics to provide a concise, yet comprehensive understanding of the many elements of transportation planning.

[The Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book](#)



## KEY ISSUES

### **Long-Range Transportation Plan**

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) defines the policies, programs and improvements to be implemented during the next twenty years in order to provide an integrated multi-modal transportation system that offers choices to residents and visitors, as well as facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods in the MPO's planning area. MUMPO's LRTP is updated every four years, and must be fiscally constrained.

[MUMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan](#)

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies the transportation projects and strategies from the LRTP to be funded in the next seven years. It must include all projects receiving federal funds. The TIP is fiscally constrained and is incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). MUMPO's TIP is updated at least every two years.

[MUMPO Transportation Improvement Program](#)

### **Air Quality Conformity**

Air Quality Conformity is the process by which the MPO ensures that its plans and programs conform to the purpose of the State Implementation Plan (SIP), the document which sets forth the means by which meeting clean air standards will be achieved. Conformity is important to MUMPO because the Metrolina region is an ozone non-attainment area, meaning it must pass a conformity test for air quality in order to receive federal funding for transportation projects.

[Metrolina Non-Attainment Area Map](#)

[Air Quality Overview](#)

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes the planning activities that are anticipated for the coming fiscal year, and documents the allocation of state and federal funds associated with each planning activity. It is adopted annually in accordance with federal transportation planning guidelines.

[MUMPO Unified Planning Work Program](#)

### **Public Involvement Plan**

Public involvement is an integral part of good transportation planning. The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the variety of ways in which MUMPO strives to provide information to, and create an open dialogue with, the public regarding transportation planning issues.

[MUMPO Public Involvement Plan](#)



## **Local Transportation Planning Coordination**

The Mecklenburg-Union MPO is one of six transportation planning agencies in the greater Charlotte region. The five other agencies are:

- Gaston Urban Area MPO
- Cabarrus-Rowan MPO
- Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study\*
- Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
- Rocky River Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

A map on the following page shows the jurisdiction of the six agencies.

## **Regional Cooperation**

The large number of agencies in the region would appear to present a challenge to effective regional transportation planning; however, there are several on-going activities that permit the region to overcome any obstacles presented by multiple MPOs and RPOs.

### **1. Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation (CRAFT)**

CRAFT is made up of the four MPOs and two RPOs in the region and was created in 1999 to facilitate regional transportation planning in the greater Charlotte area. Originally consisting of the region's MPOs, CRAFT expanded in 2002 when the Lake Norman and Rocky River RPOs were established in 2002.

CRAFT's role is to enhance communication among jurisdictions, promote awareness of regional concerns, and to provide an educational forum in the Charlotte region that addresses significant common issues.

The organizational model is that of an MPO: an Executive Committee consisting of the MPO and RPO chairs, as well as representatives from the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC), the NC Board of Transportation and the SC Transportation Commission, and a Technical Committee consisting of staff and TCC members. The Executive Committee meets on average once per year, whereas the Technical Committee, made up of staff and TCC members, meets three to four times a year. It is at the Technical Committee level that most of the crucial information exchanges take place, ensuring that what is planned in one agency's jurisdiction is not in conflict with what is planned in another.

### **2. Interagency Consultation**

Interagency Consultation is designed to facilitate the air quality conformity process and is required by transportation conformity rules. It serves as the underpinning for conformity determinations and as the primary mechanism

for ensuring early coordination and negotiation between all affected parties. The process is particularly helpful in the Metrolina region because all six transportation planning agencies are at least in part located in the ozone non-attainment area. Partners in the process include:

- MPOs
- RPOs
- Mecklenburg County Air Quality
- NC & SC Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- NC Division of Air Quality
- SC Department of Health & Environmental Control
- US Environmental Protection Agency

### **3. Project Level**

Project-level activities are another venue where cross-boundary cooperation takes place. Some of the most significant transportation improvement projects are located in, or affect, more than one transportation planning agency. Interaction and cooperation between MPOs and/or RPOs takes place on steering committees or in activities associated with the preparation of environmental impact statements (EIS). Some examples include:

- Garden Parkway (with the Gaston MPO)
- Monroe Parkway (with the Rocky River RPO)
- I-85 widening (with the Cabarrus-Rowan MPO)
- Lake Norman Bike Route (with the Lake Norman RPO)
- Carolina Thread Trail (with the Gaston MPO)

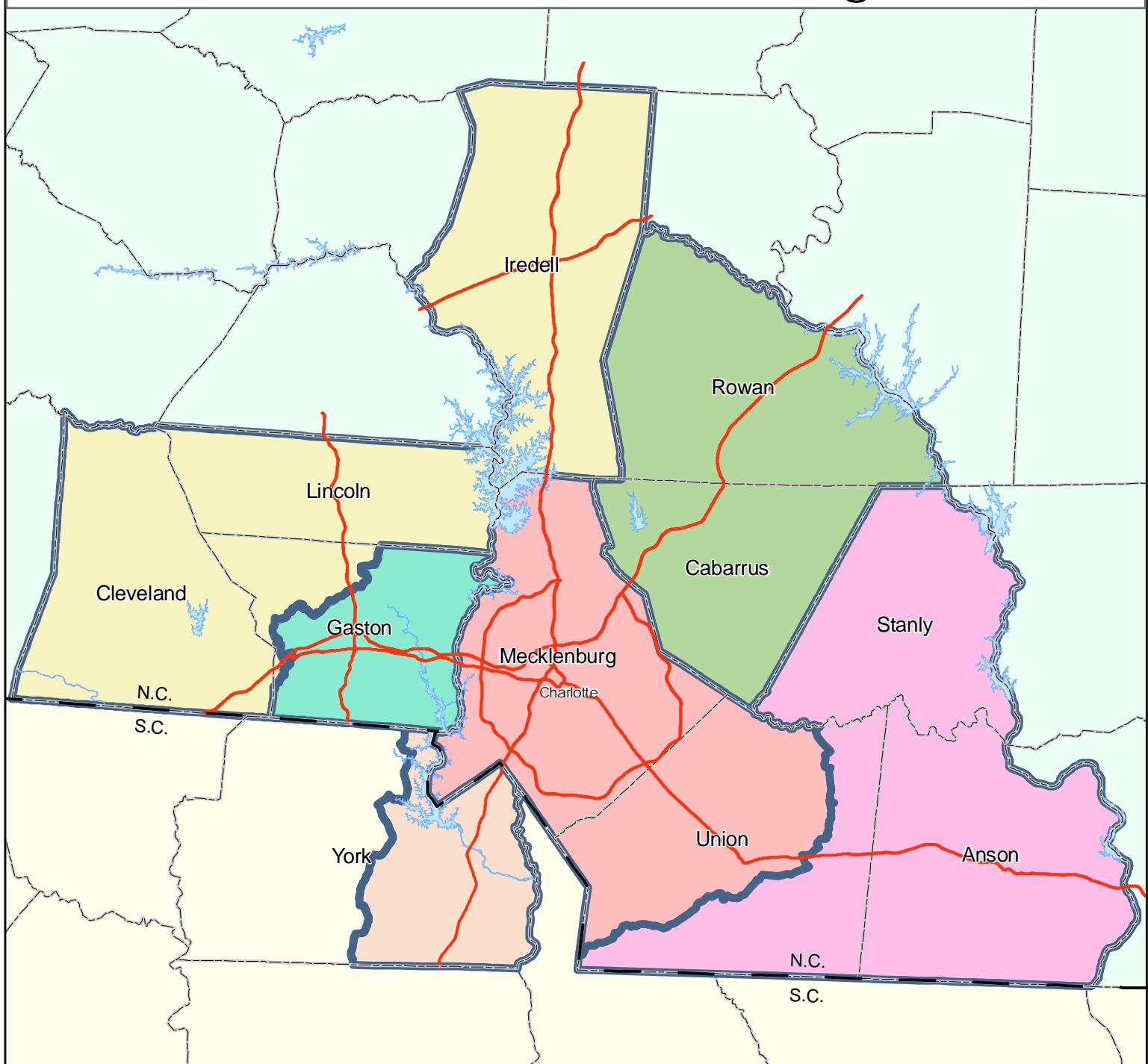
## **Statewide Cooperation**

The large number of transportation planning agencies in the Charlotte region is reflected in an unusually large number of MPOs throughout the state. There are 17 MPOs in North Carolina (compared with 18 in California). Cooperation among the MPOs is facilitated by the NC Association of MPOs. The following lists the state's MPOs.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French Broad River (Asheville)</li><li>• Burlington-Graham</li><li>• Cabarrus-Rowan</li><li>• Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro</li><li>• Fayetteville</li><li>• Gaston Urban Area</li><li>• Goldsboro</li><li>• Greensboro</li><li>• Greenville</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater Hickory</li><li>• High Point</li><li>• Jacksonville</li><li>• Mecklenburg-Union</li><li>• Capital Area (Raleigh)</li><li>• Rocky Mount</li><li>• Wilmington</li><li>• Winston-Salem</li></ul> |
|--|---|

\*South Carolina uses the term "area transportation study" rather than metropolitan planning organization.

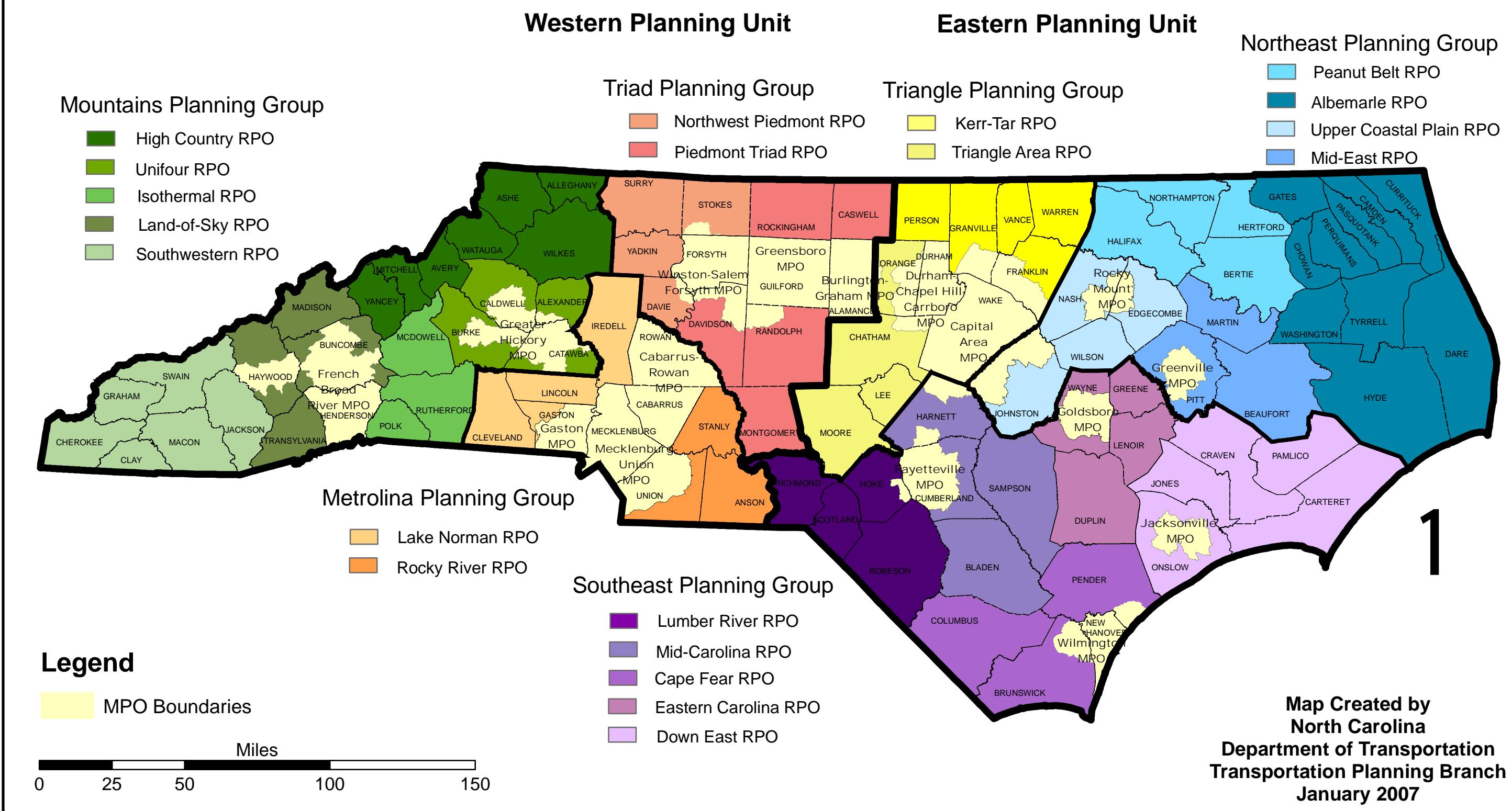
# Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations in the Greater Charlotte Region



- Cabarrus-Rowan MPO
- Gaston Urban Area MPO
- Lake Norman RPO
- Mecklenburg-Union MPO
- Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study
- Rocky River RPO

0 5 10 15 20 Miles

# North Carolina Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Rural Planning Organizations



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

**AASHTO** - American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

**ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: Regulations implementing the ADA require transportation agencies to make certain improvements to the infrastructure and some of these improvements have to be specifically identified in the Transportation Improvement Program.

**Allocation** - An administrative distribution of funds among the States, or among subunits in a metropolitan area, done for funds that do not have statutory distribution of funds.

**AMPO** - Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (NCAMPO for North Carolina)

**Annual Element** - A list of those transportation improvement projects contained in a Transportation Improvement Program that are proposed for implementation in the first year of the TIP

**Apportionment** - A term that refers to a statutorily prescribed division or assignment of funds. An apportionment is based on prescribed formulas in the law and consists of dividing authorized obligation authority for a specific program among the States.

**Appropriations** - Action of a legislative body that makes funds available for expenditure with specific limitations as to amount, purpose, and duration. The amount of funding appropriated may be less than what was authorized. In most cases, it permits money previously authorized to be obligated and payments made, but for the highway program operating under contract authority, appropriations specify amounts of funds that Congress will make available to liquidate prior obligations.

**Authorization** - Basic substantive legislation or that which empowers an agency to implement a particular program; also establishes an upper limit on the amount of funds that can be appropriated for that program and creates the policy and structure of a program, including formulas and guidelines, for awarding funds. Revenues to be spent under an authorization must be appropriated by separate legislation.

**Average Daily Traffic (ADT)** - The average number of vehicles passing a specific point in a 24-hour period, often measured throughout a year, it is a standard measurement for vehicle traffic-load on a section of road and is used when making transportation planning decisions.

**BOT** - Board of Transportation (NCBOT for North Carolina)

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - An exclusive right of way separated from other traffic for bus vehicles.

**Budget Authority** - Empowerment by the Congress that allows Federal agencies to incur obligations to spend or lend money. This empowerment is generally in the form of appropriations. However, for the major highway program categories, it is in the form of “contract authority”. Budget authority permits agencies to obligate all or part of the funds that were previously

“authorized”. Without budget authority, Federal agencies cannot commit the Government to make expenditures or loans.

**Capital Budget** - A plan of proposed capital outlays and means of financing them.

**Capital Cost** - Costs associated with improvements to or expansions of the physical capacity of the transportation system, including both facilities and vehicles.

**Capital Program** - A plan for capital expenditures to be incurred each year over a fixed period of years to meet capital needs.

**Carbon Monoxide (CO)** - A colorless, odorless, tasteless gas formed in large part by incomplete combustion of fuel. Human activities such as transportation or industrial processes are largely the source for CO emissions.

**Categorical Exclusion (CE)** - One of three types of environmental documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

**Charlotte Railroad Improvement and Safety Program (CRISP)** – Formed in order to modernize existing track infrastructure in and around Charlotte with a planning/design window of 50 years, CRISP hopes to improve speed and capacity of rail infrastructure, safety and efficiency of freight commerce and transit, and safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

**Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation (CRAFT)** - An alliance of the four MPOs and two RPOs in the greater Charlotte region created to enhance communication among jurisdictions, promote awareness of regional concerns and provide an educational forum to address significant common issues. Members include: MUMPO, Cabarrus Rowan MPO, Gaston Urban Area MPO Rock Hill - Fort Mill MPO, Lake Norman RPO and Rocky River RPO.

**CIP** - Capital Improvements Program

**Clean Air Act (CAA)** - The Clean Air Act is the law that defines EPA's responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality and the stratospheric ozone layer. The last major change in the law, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, was enacted by Congress in 1990. Legislation passed since then has made several minor changes.

**CMAQ** - The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program provides funds for projects and activities which reduce congestion and improve air quality. To be eligible for CMAQ, projects and activities must contribute to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and must be included in a Transportation Improvement Program.

**Congestion Management Process (CMP)** - A systematic approach required in TMAs that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities. Provides information on transportation system performance and finds alternative ways to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of people and goods, to levels that meet state and local needs. MUMPO is classified as a TMA.

**Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)** - NC General Statute 136-66.2 requires each municipality or MPO, with the cooperation of the NCDOT, to develop a CTP serving present and anticipated travel demand in and around the municipality or MPO.

**Consultation** - Occurs when one party confers with another identified party and, prior to taking actions(s) considers that party's views.

**Contract Authority** - A form of budget authority that permits obligations to be made in advance of appropriations; The Federal-Aid Highway Program operates mostly under contract authority rules.

**Cooperation** - The parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning, programming, and management systems processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.

**Coordination** - The comparison of the transportation plans, program, and schedules of one agency with related plans, program and schedules of other agencies or entities with legal standing and adjustment of plans, program, and schedules, to achieve general consistency.

**Council of Governments (COG)** – Multipurpose, multijurisdictional public organizations created by local governments to respond to federal and state programs.

**DAQ** - Division of Air Quality

**DEIS** - Draft Environmental Impact Statement

**DENR** - Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR for North Carolina)

**Dedicated Funding Source** - A funding source that, by law, is available for use only to support a specific purpose and cannot be diverted to other uses. Examples range from the Highway Trust Fund to local sales taxes.

**Discretionary Funds** - Any funds whose distribution is not automatic. Decision on the distribution of discretionary funds are usually made by an agency or person on the basis of that agency's or person's choice or judgment and in accordance with criteria set out in law or regulations.

**DOT** - Department of Transportation (NCDOT for North Carolina)

**Emissions Budget** - The part of the SIP that identifies the allowable emissions levels, mandated by the NAAQS, for certain pollutants emitted from mobile, stationary and area sources. The emissions levels are used for meeting emission reduction milestones, attainment or maintenance demonstrations.

**EPA** - Environmental Protection Agency

**Environmental Assessment (EA)** - One of three types of environmental documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** - One of three types of environmental documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An environmental document that serves as a decision making tool. It provides a full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and informs decision makers and the public of the reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the environment.

**Environmental Justice (EJ)** – Assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination. A 1994 Presidential Executive Order directed every Federal agency to make EJ part of its mission. (See Title VI)

**Evaluation Criteria** - A process developed as part of the programming process for evaluating the relative merits of projects.

**Expenditure** - Any allowable expense actually incurred in implementing a particular capital or operating or capital program.

**FAA** - Federal Aviation Administration

**Federal-aid Highways** - Those highways eligible for assistance under Title 12, U.S.C., except those functionally classified as local or rural minor collector.

**Federal Implementation Plan (FIP)** - A FIP is implemented to achieve attainment of air quality standards when a state does not or is unable to develop an adequate plan.

**FEIS** – Final Environmental Impact Statement

**FHWA** - Federal Highway Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation with jurisdiction over highways.

**Financial Planning** - The development of financial information for decision-making including: information describing cost and revenue cash flow streams; knowledge and risks and uncertainties associated with financing proposed transportation projects and programs; information to determine the best way to raise capital for projects.

**Fiscally Constrained** - Both the long range transportation plan and the TIP/STIP are required to be based on financial plans that are fiscally constrained, which means that these documents can only contain projects for which it is determined that funding sources are reasonably available over the life of the plan/program to pay for both the capital and operating cost of the proposed improvements.

**Flexible Funds** - Money that can be invested in a range of transportation projects and that is not limited to one mode or another. Examples include Surface Transportation Program and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program.

**FONSI** - Finding of No Significant Impact, issued by the responsible federal agency at the close of an Environmental Assessment (EA) indicating that a proposed project will not have a significant environmental impact.

**Formula Funds** - Funds distributed or apportioned to qualifying recipients on the basis of formulas described in law or regulations.

**FRA** - Federal Railroad Administration

**FTA** - Federal Transit Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation with jurisdiction over transit.

**Geographic Information System (GIS)** - A computer-based data management tool used for mapping, storing, retrieving, analyzing and displaying geographic data

**HOT** - High Occupancy Toll lane

**HOV** - High Occupancy Vehicle, or relates to a High Occupancy Vehicle lane

**HPMS** - Highway Performance Monitoring System

**Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)** - Examples of ITS include signal timing, electronic message boards, real-time travel information and automated vehicle locators (used by transit systems).

**Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)** - Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires a permit for the discharge of “dredged or fill materials” into “waters of the United States.” To construct any project involving the discharge of dredged or fill material into U.S. waters, one must obtain a 404 permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

**Level of Service (LOS)** - A qualitative assessment of a road’s operating condition, generally described using a scale of A (little congestion) to F (severe congestion).

**Limitation on Obligations** - Any action or inaction by an officer or employee of the United States that limits the amount of Federal assistance that may be obligated during a specific time period. A limitation on obligations does not affect the scheduled apportionment or allocation of funds; it just controls the rate at which these funds may be used.

**Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** - A 20 year forecast plan now required at both the metropolitan and state level, which must consider a wide range of social, environment, energy and economic factors in determining overall regional goals and how transportation can best meet these goals.

**LPA** - Lead Planning Agency. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department is MUMPO’s Lead Planning Agency.

**Maintenance Area (MA)** - Any geographic region of the United States designated non-attainment pursuant to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, and subsequently redesignated to attainment subject to the requirement to develop a maintenance plan under section 175A of the Clean Air Act as amended.

**Major Metropolitan Transportation Investment (MIS)** - A high-type highway or transit improvement of substantial cost that is expected to have a significant effect on capacity, traffic flow, level of service, or mode share at the transportation corridor or subarea scale. Details on what is/is not considered a MIS are included in the definition section of 23 CFR 450.104.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA & CMSA)** - The Census classification for areas having a population over 50,000; The MSA may contain several urbanized areas, but contains one or more central city or cities. When commuting patterns of two MSAs have caused them to merge, the result is a Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA).

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** - The forum for cooperative transportation decision making for the metropolitan planning area; The MPO is designated by agreement among the Governor and the units of general purpose local governments representing 75 percent of the affected metropolitan population.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)** - The official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area.

**Metropolitan Planning Area** - The geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process as required by 23 USC 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act must be carried out.

**MOBILE** - EPA's Emission Factor Model

**MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding

**MPO** - Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Multi-modal** - Refers to the availability of multiple transportation options, especially within a system. A multi-modal approach to transportation planning focuses on the most efficient way of getting people or goods from place to place by truck, train, bicycle, automobile, airplane, bus, boat, foot or even a computer modem.

**National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)** - The standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency, which a metropolitan area must meet for various pollutants in order to be considered an attainment area.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** - This act was signed into Law and established a national environmental policy intentionally focused on Federal activities and the desire for a sustainable environment balanced with other essential needs of present and future generations of Americans.

**National Highway System (NHS)** - This approximately 160,000 mile network consists of the 42,500 miles of the Interstate system, plus other key roads and arterials through the United States. Designated by Congress in 1995 pursuant to a requirement of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act., the NHS is designed to provide an interconnected system of principal routes to serve major travel destinations and population centers.

**NOx** - Nitrogen Oxide(s)

**Nonattainment Area (NAA)** - Any geographic region of the United States that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated as a nonattainment area for a transportation-related pollutant for which a National Ambient Air Quality Standard exists.

**Obligation Authority (OA)** - Another term for limitation on obligations (See that definition)

**Obligations** - Commitment made by Federal agencies to pay out money as distinct from the actual payments, which are “outlays”. Generally, obligations are incurred after the enactment of budget authority. However, since budget authority in many highway programs is in the form of contract authority, obligations in these cases are permitted to be incurred immediately after apportionment or allocation. The obligations are for the Federal share of the estimated full cost of each project at the time it is approved regardless of when the actual payments are made or the expected time of project completion. Often funding programs come with restrictions that require a project sponsor to obligate funds in a timely manner or lose the funds.

**Operating Costs** - Expenses associated with the general, day to day costs of running transportation systems. For transit, costs include fuel, salaries, and replacement parts. For roads, operating costs involve maintaining pavement, filling potholes, and paying workers salaries.

**Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)** – A colorless gas with a sweet odor, it is a secondary pollutant formed when VOCs and NOx combine in the presence of sunlight. It is associated with smog or haze conditions.

**PIP** - Public Involvement Plan

**Planning Funds (PL)** - The principal source of funding for carrying out the MPO process.

**PM** - Particulate Matter (2.5 = 2.5 microns / 10 = 10 microns)

**Project Costs** - All eligible expenditures expected to be associated with the funding of a project. These costs are legally able to be included in the principal amount of any bond issue used to finance the project. These outlays may include the costs of acquisition, construction costs, equipment use and acquisition costs, capitalized interest expenses, reserve funding requirement, printing cost, legal fees and the like.

**Programming** - A process required under Federal statute and regulations (23 CFR Part 450) for developing a staged, prioritized, fiscally constrained, multi-year, intermodal program of projects for funding, consistent with the long range transportation plan. States and local laws may also impose programming requirements that have to be coordinated with the federal effort.

**Reasonably Available** - Those funds which are not yet currently available or committed but for which there is an identified strategy for ensuring that they will be available within the timeframe of the financial plan for the transportation plan/program. The strategy should include a plan of action that will be taken to obtain the new funding and past experiences with obtaining this type of funding.

**Regionally Significant** - A project that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside of the region, major activity centers in the region, major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, etc, or transportation terminals as well as most terminals themselves) and would normally be included in the modeling of a metropolitan area's transportation network, including, as a minimum, all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer a significant alternative to regional highway travel.

**Revenue Aligned Budget Authority** - Highway program funding levels are tied to estimates of Highway Trust Fund (HTF) receipts made at the time of enactment of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) and the levels are adjusted each year to reflect the latest information of Highway Trust Fund receipts. The annual calculation of this adjustment, known as revenue aligned budget authority, or RABA, is intended to ensure that highway program funding tracks closely with actual and anticipated revenue to the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund.

**Record of Decision (ROD)** - The final step in the EIS process; identifies the selected alternative, presents the basis for the decision, identifies all the alternatives considered, specifies the "environmentally preferred alternative" and provides information on the adopted means to avoid, minimize and compensate for environmental impacts.

**RPO** - Rural Planning Organization

**SAFETEA-LU** – Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

**SOV** - Single Occupancy Vehicle

**SOx** - Sulfur Oxide(s)

**Special Assessment** - A compulsory levy made against certain property to defray part or all of the cost of a specific improvement or service deemed to primarily benefit those properties.

**Special District** - An independent unit of local government organized to perform a restricted number of related governmental functions. Special Districts usually have the power to incur debt and levy taxes; however, certain types of special districts are entirely dependent on enterprise earnings and cannot levy taxes.

**Stakeholders** - Any group of individuals or organizations who are involved in the programming process whether that involvement is required by statute or regulation or simply because that individual has an interest in the outcome of the process.

**State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)** - The North Carolina Environmental Policy Act of 1971 sets the State's environmental policies. The Act encourages the wise, productive, and beneficial use of the natural resources of the State without damage to the environment, and requires that State agencies consider and report upon environmental aspects and consequences of their actions involving the expenditure of public moneys or use of public land.

**State Implementation Plan (SIP)** - The portion (or portions) of an applicable implementation plan approved or promulgated, or the most recent revision thereof, under section 110, 301(d) and 175A of the Clean Air Act. The SIP is a plan for how the state will achieve the National Ambient Air Quality Standard.

**Statewide Transportation Plan** - The official statewide, intermodal transportation plan that is developed through the statewide transportation planning process

**Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)** - A staged, multiyear, statewide intermodal program of transportation projects which is consistent with the statewide transportation plan and planning processes and metropolitan plans, TIPS and processes.

**Surface Transportation Program (STP)** - A funding program which provides flexibility of funds for highway and transit modes and for a category of funding known as transportation enhancements.

**Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)** - A committee of government personnel within the local MPO which supports the TAC/MPO and is responsible for the general review, guidance, and coordination of the transportation planning process

**TDM** - Travel Demand Management

**TIFIA** – The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998: A program established which authorizes the U.S. DOT to provide secured (direct) loans, lines of credit and loan guarantees to public and private sponsors of eligible surface transportation projects.

**Title VI** - Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance. (See Environmental Justice)

**Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** - A committee of elected officials within the local MPO responsible for communication and coordination between various policy boards and that takes action on issues in the transportation planning process. MUMPO does not use this term.

**Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA)** - A funding category which requires 10 percent of Surface Transportation Program monies to be set aside for projects that enhance the compatibility of transportation facilities with their surroundings. Examples of TEA projects include bicycle and pedestrian paths, restoration of rail depots or other historic transportation

facilities, acquisition of scenic or open space lands next to travel corridors, and mural or other public art projects.

**Transit Enhancements** - A requirement designed to enhance the travel experience for public transit riders in Transportation Management Areas by requiring at least one percent of the area's annual Section 5307 funds be spent on transit enhancements. Eligible projects include bus shelters, increased access by persons with disabilities, public art, rehabilitation, and renovation of historic transit facilities and vehicles, landscaping, and bicycle and pedestrian access.

**Transit Feasibility Study** - A study undertaken to assess whether local transit services are needed for an area.

**Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP)** - A discretionary program which provides grants and research to investigate and address the relationship between transportation and community and system preservation.

**Transportation Control Measures (TCM)** - Actions that may be taken by state or local units of government related to the transportation systems' contribution to the achievements of National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** - A staged, prioritized, multi-year intermodal program of transportation projects, prepared in each metropolitan area, which is consistent with that area's metropolitan transportation plan. Each metropolitan TIP is incorporated in its entirety into the STIP.

**Transportation Management Area (TMA)** - An urbanized area with a population over 200,000 (as determined by the latest decennial census) or other area when TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO (or affected local officials), and officially designated by the Administrators of the FHWA and FTA. The TMA designation applies to the entire metropolitan planning area(s). MUMPO is classified as a TMA.

**TSM** - Transportation System Management

**Trust Funds** - Accounts established by law to hold receipts that are collected by the Federal Government and earmarked for specific purposes and programs. These receipts are not available for the general purposes of the Federal Government. The Highway Trust Fund is comprised of receipts from certain highway taxes (e.g., excise taxes on motor fuel, rubber, and heavy vehicles) and reserved for use for highway construction, mass transportation, and related purposes.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** - A document produced every year by the MPO to describe all transportation related planning activities that will be carried out during the next year.

**United States Code (USC)** - 23 USC 134 is the part of the USC that governs the metropolitan transportation planning process.

**Urbanized Area (UZA)** - A census classification for areas having a population of 50,000 or more which meets certain population density requirements.

**Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)** - The total number of miles driven by all vehicles within a given time period and geographic area, it is used by regional transportation and environmental agencies for planning purposes. Since 1970, vehicle emissions have decreased even as vehicle miles traveled have increased.

**Volatile Organic Compound (VOC)** - Emitted as gasses from certain solids or liquids, VOCs include a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects. Concentrations of VOCs are consistently higher indoors than outdoors.

**Volume/Capacity (V/C)** - A ratio of volume to capacity: A ratio >1 indicates the facility is carrying more traffic than it can handle and improvements may be needed.

**ZEV** - Zero Emissions Vehicle

## FAQs

### **What is an MPO?**

Metropolitan Planning Organizations are part of a federal process to conduct local transportation planning in urbanized areas. The federal government requires urbanized areas to establish a planning process that is comprehensive, continuing and cooperative (the three C's of transportation planning). The MPO process is required in urbanized areas over 50,000 in population in order to receive federal funding for transportation. The MPO process is a partnership between the local, state and federal governments to make decisions about transportation planning in urbanized areas and to meet planning requirements established by federal authorizing legislation for transportation funding.

### **What is the Mecklenburg-Union MPO?**

The Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) is a multi-jurisdictional of local governments, NCDOT, USDOT and other providers of transportation services. MUMPO is currently comprised of the following member governments: Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Indian Trail, Matthews, Mecklenburg County, Mint Hill, Monroe, Pineville, Stallings, Union County, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wesley Chapel and Wingate.

### **What are the major functions of MUMPO?**

It is MUMPO's responsibility to coordinate transportation policy for local governmental jurisdictions within the Charlotte Urbanized Area, as well as develop transportation plans and programs for the urbanized area in cooperation with the State. Cooperatively, MUMPO works with the North Carolina DOT to develop transportation plans, travel models, thoroughfare plans, transit plans and bicycle and pedestrian plans. MUMPO also works with the state on issues such as funding for transportation improvements, project planning, environmental impacts and air quality. Additionally, MUMPO works with local governments to coordinate land use and transportation planning.

### **How are MPOs established?**

MPOs are established in every urbanized area in the country with a population over 50,000. Urbanized areas are defined every ten years by the U.S. Census. In North Carolina, MPOs are determined by agreement between the Governor and the MPO. MPOs are established by a Memorandum of Understanding which is signed by all participating local governments and by the State of North Carolina.

### **How many MPOs are there in North Carolina?**

MUMPO is one of 17 urban areas in North Carolina, which participate in the 3-C transportation planning process. Others include Asheville, Burlington, Cabarrus-Rowan, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Fayetteville, Gaston, Goldsboro, Greensboro, Greenville, Hickory-Newton-Conover, High Point, Jacksonville, Raleigh, Rocky Mount, Wilmington, and Winston-Salem.

**Who makes decisions for the MPO?**

All decisions are made by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), with recommendations from the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The membership and voting structures of these committees are established through a Memorandum of Understanding between all of the participating governments.

MPO – The policy-making body made up of elected officials from each of the member governments, and the Board of Transportation.

TCC – Staff level committee that provides recommendations to the MPO regarding transportation decisions.

**What is the Lead Planning Agency?**

The City of Charlotte is the Lead Planning Agency for MUMPO. The MPO staff is made up of members of the City of Charlotte Planning Department and the Charlotte Department of Transportation. Responsibilities of the staff include conducting planning studies, forecasting travel demand and patterns, and preparing meeting materials for and implementing directives of the MPO and TCC. In addition, Staff provides technical expertise to all of the member MPO jurisdictions.

**How can I participate and/or provide feedback to the MPO?**

All MPO meetings are open to the public and there is an item on each MPO agenda that allows for public comment. Anyone may sign up to speak about relevant issues during this comment period and will be given an allotted time to do so. In addition, MUMPO has various opportunities for public involvement throughout the year, usually regarding specific projects, programs or plans. You may check the MUMPO website at [www.mumpo.org](http://www.mumpo.org) by clicking the "Upcoming Public Meetings" link to find out if any public meetings are scheduled. The MUMPO website also has a "Contact Us" link which can be utilized for any questions or comments regarding MUMPO related issues.

## **Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Management Areas Roles and Responsibilities**

### **What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization?**

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making body made up of representatives from local government and transportation agencies with authority and responsibility in metropolitan planning areas. Federal legislation passed in the early 1970s required the formation of an MPO for any urbanized area (UA) with a population greater than 50,000. Areas with a population greater than 200,000 are designated as Transportation Management Areas (TMA).

### **What is responsibility of the MPO?**

MPOs were created in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs were based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. [23 U.S.C. 134](#)

### **What is the transportation planning process?**

Transportation planning is a cooperative process designed to foster involvement by all users of the system, such as the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, the traveling public, freight operators, and the general public, through a proactive public participation process conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), state Department of Transportation (state DOT), and transit operators.

### **What are the typical functions of the MPO?**

**Establish a setting:** Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision making in the metropolitan area.

**Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options:** Use data and planning methods to generate and evaluate alternatives.

**Prepare and maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)/(LRTP):** Develop and update a Metropolitan for the metropolitan area covering a planning horizon of at least twenty-years (20) that fosters (1) mobility and access for people and goods, (2) efficient system performance and preservation, and (3) good quality of life.

**Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** Develop a short-range (four-year) program of transportation improvements based on the metropolitan transportation plan; the TIP should be designed to achieve the area's goals, using spending, regulating, operating, management, and financial tools.

**Involve the public:** Involve the general public and other affected constituencies in the four essential functions listed above.

## **What are key documents produced by the metropolitan and statewide planning processes?**

**The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** The UPWP lists the transportation studies and tasks to be performed by the MPO staff or a member agency. The UPWP covers a one- to two-year period. It typically contains several elements:

- The planning tasks (e.g., data collection and analysis, public outreach, and preparation of the plan and TIP), the supporting studies, and the products that will result from these activities;
- All federally funded studies as well as all relevant state and local planning activities conducted without federal funds;
- Funding sources identified for each project;
- A schedule of activities; and
- The agency responsible for each task or study.

**The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) / (LRTP):** In metropolitan areas, the transportation plan is the statement of the ways the region plans to invest in the transportation system. Per the federal regulations, the plan shall "include both long-range and short-range program strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods."

The plan addresses, for example:

- Policies, strategies, and projects for the future;
- A systems level approach by considering roadways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and intermodal connections;
- Projected demand for transportation services over 20 years;
- Regional land use, development, housing, and employment goals and plans;
- Cost estimates and reasonably available financial sources for operation, maintenance, and capital investments (see Part II section on Financial Planning and Programming); and
- Ways to preserve existing roads and facilities and make efficient use of the existing system.

The Transportation Plan and the long-range statewide transportation plan must be consistent with each other. The MTP must be updated every four years in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas and 5 years in attainment areas.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** In the TIP, the MPO identifies the transportation projects and strategies from the MTP that it plans to undertake over the next four years. All projects receiving federal funding must be in the TIP. The TIP is the region's way of allocating its limited transportation resources among the various capital and operating needs of the area.

Under federal law, the TIP:

- Covers a minimum four-year period of investment;
- Is updated at least every four years;
- Fiscally constrained, i.e. Is realistic in terms of available funding and is not just a "wish list" of projects.
- Conforms with the SIP for air quality in nonattainment and maintenance areas;
- Is approved by the MPO and the governor; and
- Is incorporated directly, without change, into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

In accordance with federal regulations, the MPO is required to carry out metropolitan transportation planning in cooperation with the state and with operators of publicly owned transit services. The MPO approves the transportation plan. Both the governor and the MPO approve the TIP.

Most MPOs will not take the lead in implementing transportation projects, but will provide an overall coordination role in planning and programming

**Congestion Management Process (CMP):** The congestion management process (CMP) is a way of systematically considering congestion-related issues using a set of technical tools, and basing evaluations on a discrete set of locally determined performance measures. A CMP provides for the systematic review of performance of multimodal transportation systems in larger metropolitan areas and identification of strategies to address congestion through the use of "management" strategies focused on both the use and operation of facilities and services.

A CMP should help the MPO to:

- Develop alternative strategies to mitigate congestion;
- Determine the cause of congestion;
- Identify congested locations;
- Evaluate the potential of different strategies;
- Evaluate the impacts of previously implemented strategies; and
- Propose alternative strategies that best address the causes and impacts of congestion.

### **What are the relationships among the MPO, the state DOT, and other agencies involved in transportation planning and project implementation?**

Transportation planning must be cooperative because no single agency has responsibility for the entire transportation system. For example, some roads that are part of the Interstate Highway System (IHS) are subject to certain standards and are usually maintained by a state DOT. Others are county arterials or city streets which are designed, operated, and maintained by counties or local municipalities. Transit systems are often built, operated, and maintained by a separate entity.

In metropolitan areas, the MPO is responsible for actively seeking the participation of all relevant agencies and stakeholders in the planning process; similarly, the state DOT is responsible for activities outside metropolitan areas. The MPO and state DOT also work together. For example, a state DOT staff person may sit on the MPO board.

### **What is the relationship between transportation and air quality?**

Usage of the transportation system is an influential factor in a region's air quality. Therefore, the estimated emission of pollutants from motor vehicles is a key consideration in transportation planning. Regions that have nonattainment or maintenance air quality status are required to ensure that emissions from transportation investments are consistent, or in conformity with, levels set forth in state air quality plans. Therefore, state DOTs and MPOs need to have a clear understanding of the air quality-related transportation planning requirements.

### **What is the role of the MPO in air quality planning?**

The MPO must ensure that transportation investments in the region do not contribute to the degradation of air. The MPO must analyze the emission from the MTP and the TIP to demonstrate that motor vehicle emissions do not exceed the emissions levels in the State Implementation Plan. This is a conformity determination.

### **What is financial planning?**

Financial planning takes a long-range look at how transportation investments are funded, and at the possible sources of funds. State DOTs, MPOs, and public transportation operators must consider funding needs over both the 20-year period of the metropolitan transportation plan and the 4-year period of TIPs and STIPs. In the MTP MPOs must develop a financial plan that identifies funding sources for needed investments, and demonstrates the reasonably reliable means to maintain and operate the existing federally funded transportation system.

### **What is financial programming?**

Financial programming is different from financial planning because programming involves identifying funding sources and implementation timing for specific projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which must cover a period of at least four years and be updated at least every four years. Programming also includes notifying FHWA and FTA of the sources of funds that will likely be used to support each individual transportation project.

### **What is fiscal Constraint?**

Fiscal constraint is a demonstration of sufficient funds (federal, state, local and private) to implement proposed transportation system improvements, as well as to operate and maintain the entire system, through the comparison of revenues and costs.

### **How is the public involved?**

Throughout the entire transportation planning process the MPO must provide the public with reasonable opportunity to participate, comment and be heard. The MPO must develop a public involvement plan that outlines for the public their opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process.

- MPOs must prepare a public participation plan
- Plan must be proactive and provide for:
  - Complete information and timely public notice
  - Early and continuous involvement
  - Full public access to key decisions
  - Explicit consideration and response to input
  - Consider the needs of all populations

## TRANSPORTATION-RELATED WEBSITES

**MUMPO** [www.mumpo.org](http://www.mumpo.org)

### Local Sites

City of Charlotte	<a href="http://www.charmeck.org">www.charmeck.org</a>
Town of Cornelius	<a href="http://www.cornelius.org">www.cornelius.org</a>
Town of Davidson	<a href="http://www.ci.davidson.nc.us">www.ci.davidson.nc.us</a>
Town of Huntersville	<a href="http://www.huntersville.org">www.huntersville.org</a>
Town of Indian Trail	<a href="http://www.indiantrail.org">www.indiantrail.org</a>
Village of Marvin	<a href="http://www.marvinncc.org">www.marvinncc.org</a>
Town of Matthews	<a href="http://www.matthewsnc.com">www.matthewsnc.com</a>
Mecklenburg County	<a href="http://www.charmeck.org">www.charmeck.org</a>
Town of Mint Hill	<a href="http://www.minthill.com">www.minthill.com</a>
City of Monroe	<a href="http://www.monroenc.org">www.monroenc.org</a>
Town of Pineville	<a href="http://www.pinevillenc.net">www.pinevillenc.net</a>
Town of Stallings	<a href="http://www.stallingsnc.org">www.stallingsnc.org</a>
Union County	<a href="http://www.co.union.nc.us">www.co.union.nc.us</a>
Town of Unionville	<a href="http://www.unionvillenc.org">www.unionvillenc.org</a>
Town of Waxhaw	<a href="http://www.waxhaw.com">www.waxhaw.com</a>
Town of Weddington	<a href="http://www.townofweddington.com">www.townofweddington.com</a>
Village of Wesley Chapel	<a href="http://www.ci.wesley-chapel.nc.us">www.ci.wesley-chapel.nc.us</a>
Town of Wingate	<a href="http://www.wingate.govoffice.com">www.wingate.govoffice.com</a>

## **State Sites**

NC Department of Transportation	<a href="http://www.ncdot.org">www.ncdot.org</a>
NC Division of Highways	<a href="http://www.ncdot.org/doh/">www.ncdot.org/doh/</a>
NC District 10	<a href="http://www.ncdot.org/doh/operations/division10/">www.ncdot.org/doh/operations/division10/</a>
Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE)	<a href="http://itre.ncsu.edu">itre.ncsu.edu</a>
State of North Carolina	<a href="http://www.ncgov.com">www.ncgov.com</a>
NC Division of FHWA	<a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ncdiv/about.htm">www.fhwa.dot.gov/ncdiv/about.htm</a>
NC Turnpike Authority	<a href="http://www.nctrunkpike.org">www.nctrunkpike.org</a>
Travel Information Management System	<a href="http://www.ncdot.org/traffictravel/">www.ncdot.org/traffictravel/</a>

## **Federal Sites**

Federal Highway Administration	<a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov">www.fhwa.dot.gov</a>
Federal Transit Administration	<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov">www.fta.dot.gov</a>
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	<a href="http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov">www.nhtsa.dot.gov</a>
US Department of Transportation	<a href="http://www.dot.gov">www.dot.gov</a>

## **Miscellaneous Sites**

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)	<a href="http://www.ridetransit.org">www.ridetransit.org</a>
Charlotte Department of Transportation	<a href="http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/transportation">www.charmeck.org/Departments/transportation</a>
Charlotte Planning Department	<a href="http://www.charlotteplanning.org">www.charlotteplanning.org</a>
Centralina Council of Governments	<a href="http://www.centralina.org">www.centralina.org</a>

Carolina Thread Trail	<a href="http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org">www.carolinathreadtrail.org</a>
NC 73 Council of Planning	<a href="http://www.nc73.net">www.nc73.net</a>
Cabarrus-Rowan MPO	<a href="http://www.crmopo.org">www.crmopo.org</a>
Gaston Urban Area MPO	<a href="http://www.gastonmpo.org">www.gastonmpo.org</a>
Lake Norman RPO	<a href="http://www.lakenormanrpo.org">www.lakenormanrpo.org</a>
Rocky River RPO	<a href="http://www.rockyriverrpo.org">www.rockyriverrpo.org</a>
American Association State Highway Transportation Officials	<a href="http://www.transportation.org">www.transportation.org</a>
American Public Transportation Association	<a href="http://www.apta.com">www.apta.com</a>