



Metropolitan Planning Organizations in North Carolina

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Items to Discuss

- What is an MPO/RPO?
- Why were they established?
- How are they structured?
- What areas do they cover?
- What are their duties and responsibilities?



Definition of MPO

- Federal Law (23 U.S.C. § 134 & 49 USC § 1604) - Established Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), for all urbanized areas with populations in excess of 50,000, as a requirement for receiving federal funding.
- An MPO, as defined in NC General Statute 136-200, is:
“An agency that is designated or redesignated by a memorandum of understanding as a Metropolitan Planning Organization in accordance with 23 U.S.C. § 134.”



Laws Establishing MPOs

- 1962 – Federal Law - Section 134(a) of Title 23 United States Code (3-C Process)
- 1991 - ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act)
- 1998 - TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act – 21 Century)
- 2000 – NCGS 136-200.1 MPOs recognized in State Law
- 2001 – NCGS 136-66.2(a) recognizes MPOs as regional planning entity for MPO area
- 2005 - SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – Legacy for Users)
- 2012 – MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century)
- 2015 – FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation)



MAP-21 & FAST Act

- End of the “TEA” era
- Does not change MPO designation or structure
- Consolidates capital programs in both FHWA and FTA
- **New focus on performance-based planning**
 - MPOs need to be cognizant of the outcomes of their investments in terms of actual impact on transportation operations and community goals
 - The old model **Forecast-Plan-Program-Build [and don't look back]** is no longer appropriate
 - Development & monitoring of performance measures



What is an MPO?

- Federally mandated and funded*
 - Responsible for regional transportation planning/coordination and policy-making
 - Made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authorities
 - Tasked with carrying out the 3-C planning process* in cooperation with State DOT and transit operators
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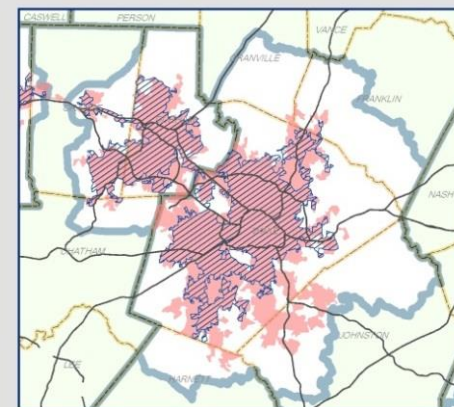
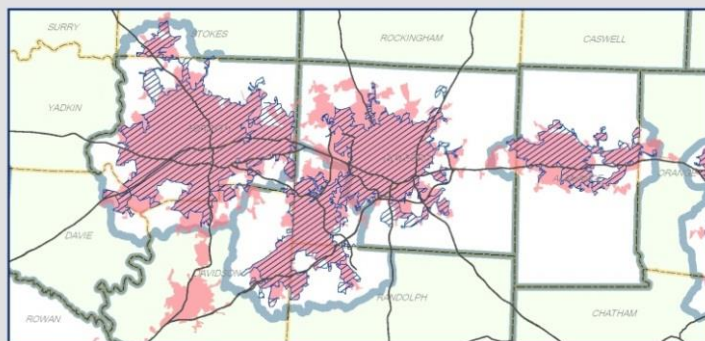
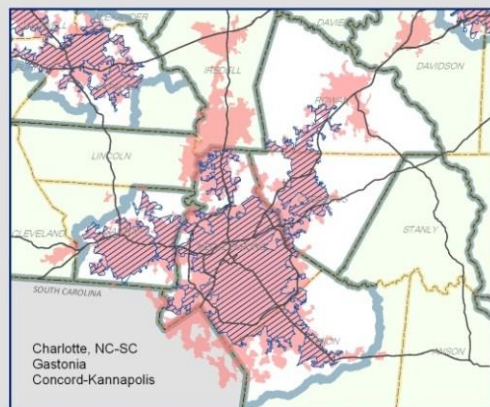
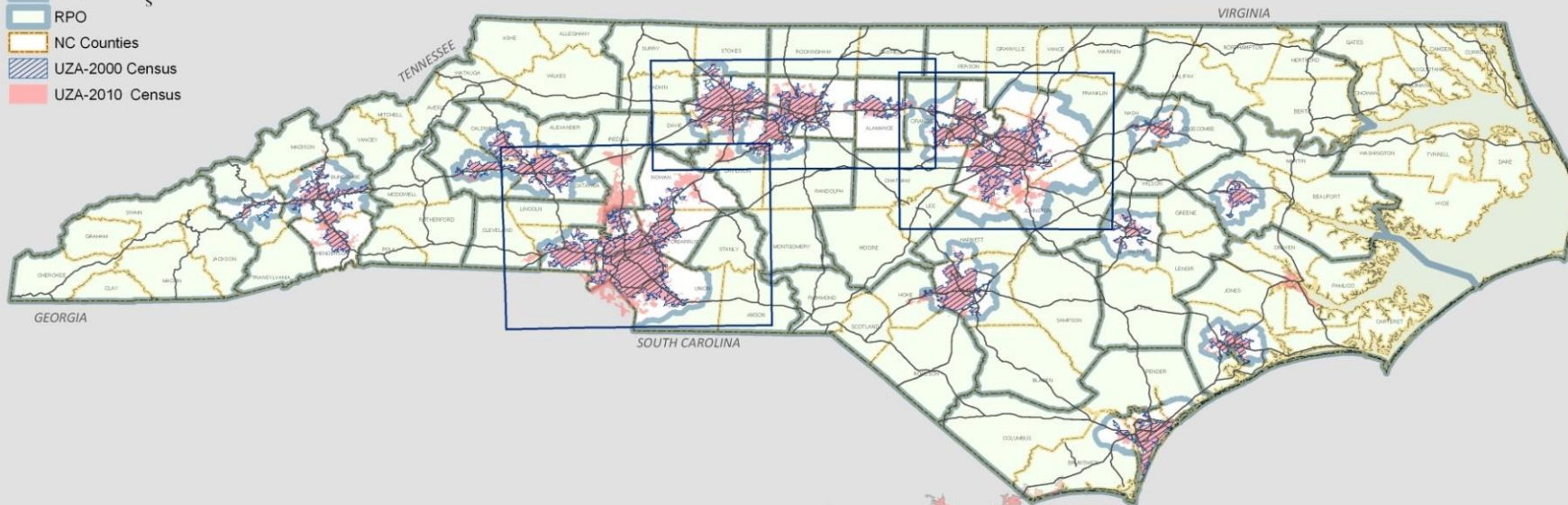
The Continuing, Cooperative and Comprehensive (3-C) process is carried out by the MPO through the collaborative efforts of its elected officials, other professional staff, and interested stakeholders on transportation issues of a regional nature.

Legend

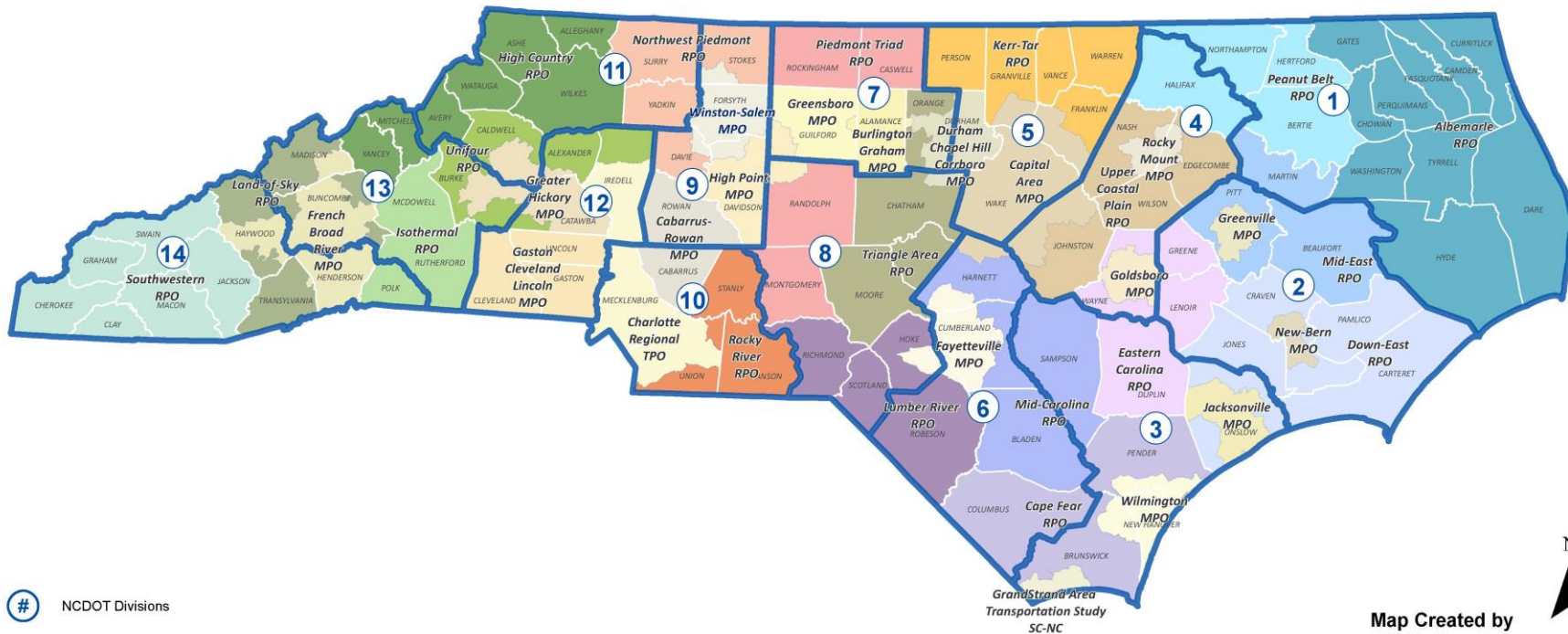
- NHS
- MPO
- RPO
- NC Counties
- UZA-2000 Census
- UZA-2010 Census



North Carolina Urbanized Area (UZA) Boundaries 2000 Census - 2010 Census



North Carolina Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations with NCDOT Division Boundaries



Map Created by
North Carolina
Department of Transportation
Transportation Planning Branch
January 2014



Why an MPO?

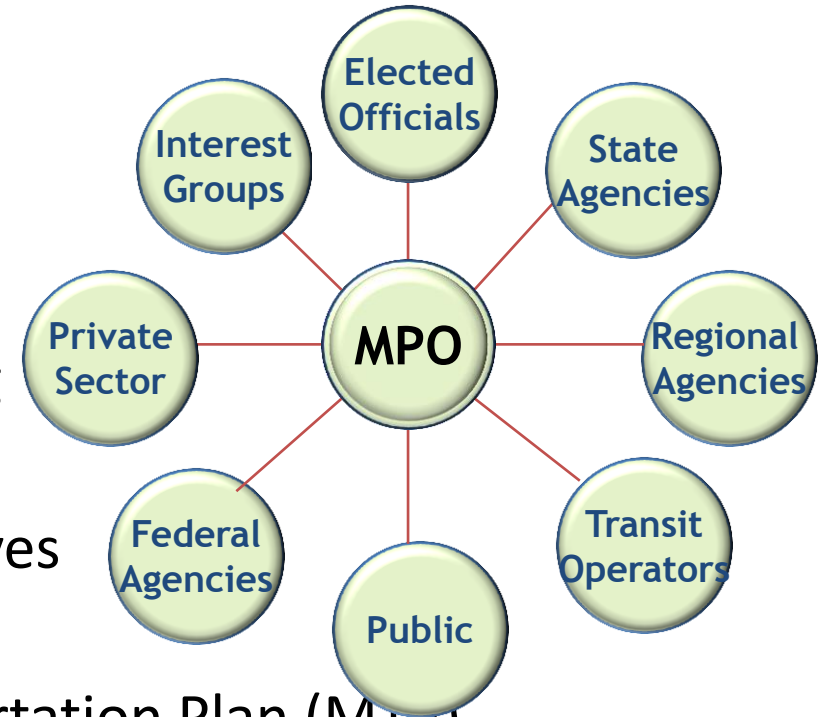
- Planning's job is to elicit the region's shared vision for the future
- Requires a comprehensive examination of future growth and investment alternatives
 - Technical and qualitative forecasts
- Transportation investment means allocating scarce transportation funding resources that achieve outcomes that move toward the vision
- MPO facilitates collaboration of governments, interested parties, and proactively involving the public



MPO Functions

Five Core Characteristics:

1. Establish a fair & impartial setting
2. Evaluate transportation alternatives
3. Maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
4. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
5. Involve the public – Proactive Public Participation Process





MPO Organizational Structure

- Policy/Executive Board (TAC) –
 - Policy/Executive board
 - Comprised mostly of member governments' elected officials, NCDOT board member(s), and other agency representatives
 - ***Makes the MPO's Decisions***
- Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) –
 - Comprised of government and agency staff members including NCDOT Division Engineers, transit providers, FHWA staff
 - ***Advises the TAC***
- MPO Staff –
 - Professional, interdisciplinary staff to support the TAC and TCC and carry out planning processes (Planners, Engineers, Technicians)
 - ***Advises the TCC and TAC***



MPO Federally Required Products

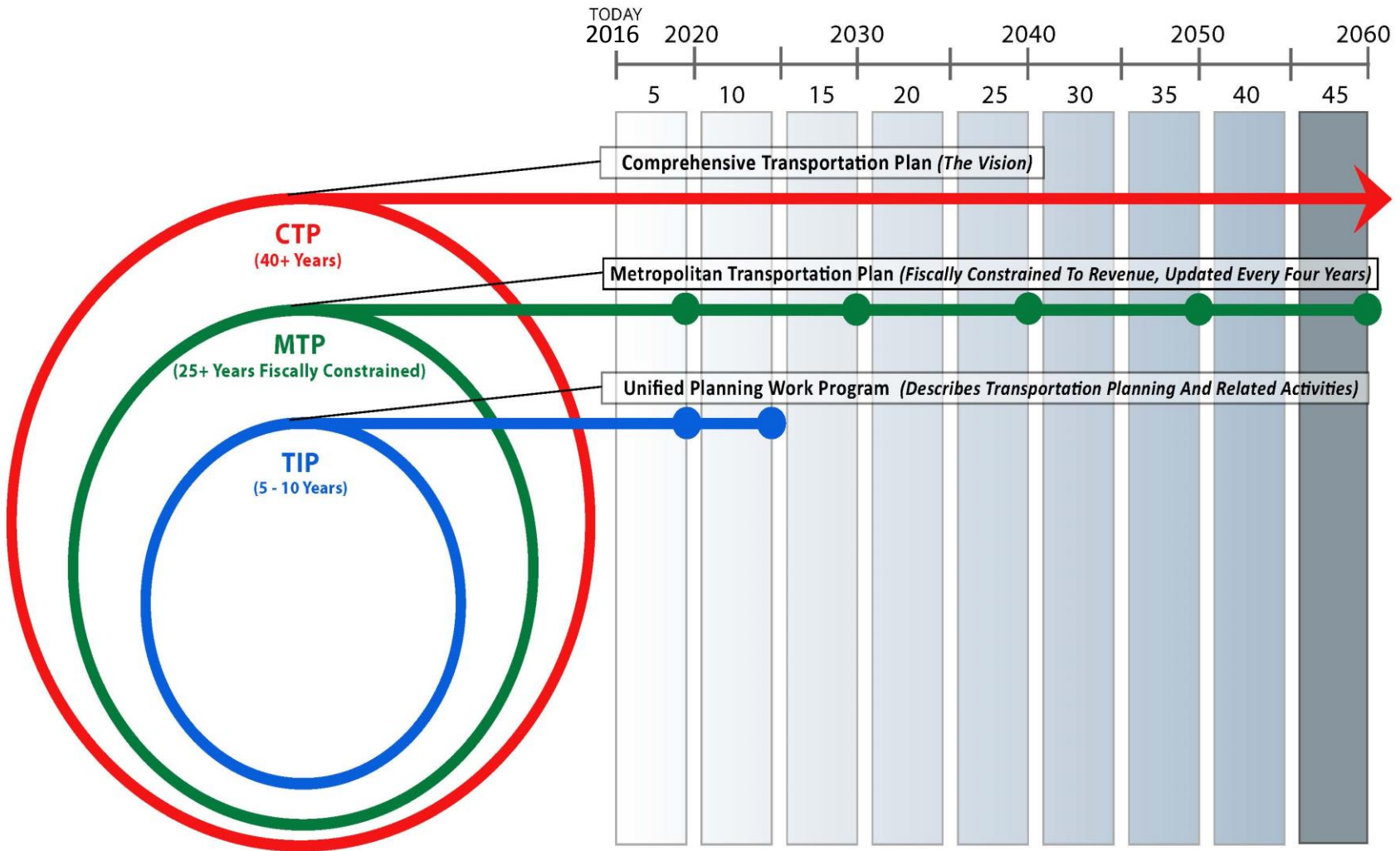
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
 - Primary document for long range planning
 - Goals, objectives, performance measures
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
 - Activities and tasks to accomplish planning activities for the upcoming year
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
 - Projects to implement the MTP
- Public Participation Plan
 - Proactive and ongoing involvement and communication with the public(s) and key affected groups
 - Environmental Justice



MPO Federally Required Products

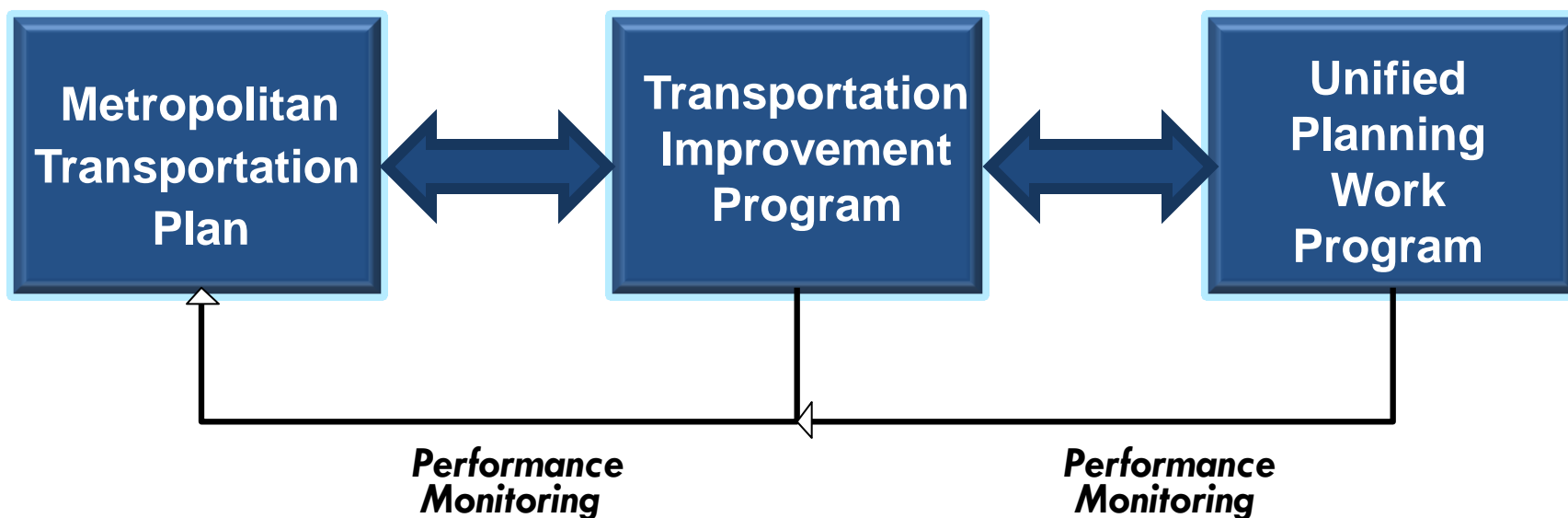
- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
 - How to make best use of transit operations
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
 - Required only in TMAs
 - Identifies congestion in all modes, and mitigation strategies
- Air Quality planning in non-attainment areas
 - The MTP and TIP are subject to conformity analysis

...TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PRODUCTS...





MPO Products





Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

- Federally Mandated
- Planning horizon of at least 20 years (25+ preferred)
- Plans for all modes of transportation
- Projects must be consistent with MTP if
 - Funded with federal funds
 - Regionally Significant
- Extensive and ongoing public involvement
- Prioritized listing of projects “Fiscally Constrained”
 - Not a wish list



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Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

What is a Comprehensive Transportation Plan?

A Multi-modal long-range vision plan that defines an organization's philosophy towards decisions related to the integration of transportation and land use

- Includes a Highway Plan, Public Transit and Rail Plan, Bicycle Plan and a Pedestrian Plan
- Depicts transportation infrastructure needed to handle the area's projected traffic for a minimum 30-40 year planning horizon
- Financially Unconstrained



Legal Basis for a CTP

N.C.G.S. § 136-66.2.

Development of a coordinated transportation system and provisions for streets and highways in and around municipalities.

Each MPO, with cooperation of the NCDOT, shall develop a comprehensive transportation plan in accordance with 23 USC § 134.

- In addition, an MPO may include projects in its transportation plan that are not included in a financially constrained plan or are anticipated to be needed beyond the horizon year as required by 23 USC § 134

For municipalities located within an MPO, the development of a comprehensive transportation plan will take place through the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

- For purposes of transportation planning and programming, the MPO shall represent the municipality's interests to the Department of Transportation.



Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Allocates limited resources to region's priorities
 - Similar to a Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Financially-constrained
 - Includes most immediate MTP-based projects & strategies for implementation
- Minimum 4 year document (many are 10 yrs. in NC)
 - First 4 years considered “funded” years
 - Updated every 2 years
- Year-by-year “line-item” list of projects approved for federal funding by the MPO's Executive Board
 - Includes all major funding categories and programs
 - All Projects prioritized and funded through State Prioritization or directly by MPOs
- TIP and Statewide TIP (STIP) must match



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Ideas to Reality – SPOT Process

Statewide Strategic Prioritization (SPOT Process)

Quantitative, needs based approach to identifying statewide transportation needs.

First step towards developing a fiscally constrained State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and NCDOT's 5/10 year Work Programs.

Each MPO submits candidate projects for consideration in the Statewide Prioritization process.

- Extensive public involvement/participation

Projects are scored by NCDOT and each MPO is asked to assign priority points to projects in the region.

- Extensive public involvement/participation



Funding & the Future

- STI & HB 97 state budget changes
 - Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!
 - Transparent, needs based, data driven approach designed to identify the most cost-effective transportation investments in the state.
 - Continue to identify projects and programs where the needs are the greatest
- Currently anticipated resources may not be enough to meet future needs
 - Population and congestion growth are far outpacing currently available resources
- All revenue options should be looked at to meet our needs
 - Secure new dependable transportation funding that can be used flexibly by NCDOT and MPOs to support transportation needs throughout the state at all levels in the most cost-effective manner



How to Get Involved

- MPOs are an important partner in the decision making process
 - Provide an open forum for cooperative process
 - Contact and visit your local MPO
- MPOs can be a resource for you
 - Participate in MPO processes
 - Use MPO experience and resources



Resources

- Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program –
https://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_metropolitan.asp
- Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) www.ampo.org
- National Highway Institute www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov
– *Metropolitan Transportation Planning, Course #152069*



Resources

- Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov)
- FHWA Resource Centers (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter>)
- Federal Transit Administration (www.fta.dot.gov)



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