

# What Everyone Should Know About the MPO





## What is the Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO)?

**An MPO is a transportation-planning body composed of locally elected officials and representatives from state and local transportation agencies for urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000.**

The governor of Arkansas and locally elected officials designated the **Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation Planning Commission Policy Committee (N.A.R.T.P.C.)** as the official Metropolitan Planning Organization, with a Technical Advisory Committee to assist with the planning process. The area served by the MPO includes the cities of Bay, Bono, Brookland, Jonesboro, and some unincorporated portions of Craighead County.

## What does the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) do?



The Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for planning and developing a safe, efficient, and affordable multimodal transportation system for the designated region. Major plans developed by the N.A.R.T.P.C. are as follows:

- **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)** – the long-term regional transportation plan for the MPO area. The Plan identifies transportation needs and outlines financial resources available to meet those needs over a twenty-five year period. This document is developed every 5 years.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – a program that includes all transportation improvements planned or programmed in the MPO region that will be funded (either fully or partially) with federal dollars.

- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** – describes the proposed planning activities of the MPO throughout the fiscal year (July-June).
- **Public Participation Plan (PPP)** – a plan developed to ensure that the transportation planning process complies with federal requirements to incorporate public participation. This document outlines the MPO processes concerning public engagement.



## How does the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Develop Transportation Plans?

Transportation planning is the process of identifying regional, statewide, and national transportation problems and looking for solutions to those problems. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was created to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a **comprehensive, cooperative and continuing (3-C)** planning process with an emphasis on performance and outcome-based planning. The MPO performs its planning responsibilities at three levels: the Metropolitan Planning Organization Staff, the Technical Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Committee.

The **Metropolitan Planning Organization staff** carries out the day-to-day activities of the MPO, as set forth in the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO staff is responsible for involving the public in the transportation planning process using the techniques described in the Public Participation Plan (PPP). Through a collaborative effort between officials, from local governments and transportation agencies, the community's vision for the future of the regional transportation system is incorporated into the fiscally constrained, multimodal **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**.

The **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** implements the short-range elements of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan by allocating the region's limited transportation resources among the various capital and operating needs of the area. Like the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program is realistic with respect to available funding, and is not simply a wish-list of projects.

The governing body of the MPO, the **Transportation Policy Committee**, is responsible for making policy decisions and approving each MPO plan and project presented by MPO staff.

The **Technical Advisory Committee** is appointed by the Transportation Policy Committee to assist with the decision-making process. The Technical Advisory Committee is responsible for providing technical support in the preparation of plans and the development of projects. They are also responsible for making recommendations to the Transportation Policy Committee as to whether or not a plan should be adopted, or if a project should be pursued.



## How is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Funded?

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), through the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), provides 80% of the funding for administrative tasks included in the Unified Planning Work Program as well as 80% of the capital improvement projects outlined in the Transportation Improvement Program. The USDOT also provides 50% of the costs of local transit operations. The remaining 20% of the MPO is locally funded, with contributions submitted by each jurisdiction according to individual population (per capita).



## Where and When does the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meet?

The **Transportation Policy Committee** meets approximately **four times per year**, typically on the third Tuesday of the month. The meetings are held at various locations within the MPO jurisdiction.

The **Technical Advisory Committee** meets approximately **four times per year**, typically on the first Tuesday of the month. The meetings are held at the Jonesboro Municipal Center (unless otherwise posted).

On occasion both the **Transportation Policy Committee & Technical Advisory Committee** will meet for a joint committee meeting. These meetings occur **two to three times per year**, and are held at the Jonesboro Municipal Center (unless otherwise posted).

The **Citizen Advisory Committee** meets approximately **six times per year**, typically on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The meetings are held in the third-floor conference room of the Jonesboro Municipal Center.

Both the Transportation Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee can create ad hoc or other subcommittees.

*Citizens are welcome, and encouraged, to attend all meetings of the MPO committees. The date, time, and location for upcoming meetings are available on the MPO website.*



## How do I contact the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

If you have any questions or comments, you may visit with, write, e-mail, or call the MPO staff:

### **MPO Staff**

Cecelie Cochran, MPO Director  
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<https://www.jonesboro.org/191/Metropolitan-Planning-Organization>

### **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/TransportationForLife/>

### **Twitter:**

<https://twitter.com/NARTPC>