

**INTRODUCTION:** Consider how familiar you are with the traffic issues that affect Josephine County. You can have a voice on what projects are being considered to improve current conditions.

**1. What is an MPO?**

- a. A secret organization designed to misdirect federal, state, and local tax dollars.
- b. Just another layer of bureaucracy.
- c. A local organization created to provide local and county governments a great voice making transportation decisions.

*Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are local organizations created by the federal government to increase your local governments' input regarding where and how federal and state transportation dollars would be spent.*

**2. Who makes these decisions if there is no MPO?**

- a. The State Department of Transportation.
- b. My cousin Vinny.
- c. No one, the decisions are made at random.

For those areas that are not represented by an MPO (areas with populations less than 50,000) the State Dept. of Transportation (DOT), in coordination with the county government, is responsible for programming state and federally funded projects for that area/county.

**3. Why is there an MPO?**

- a. Just because.
- b. To provide for the conscientious application of sound planning principles in order to promote a more livable, environmentally sound, and economically viable community that is accessible through an efficient and effective multi-modal transportation.
- c. To create a layer of bureaucratic confusion in order to obfuscate the process.

In areas with urban area populations of greater than 50,000 MPO's provide the forum through which all levels of government work together to identify and address local, county, and regional transportation needs. The MPO maintains a staff of dedicated professionals who work with the local governments, the county and the state to identify, prioritize, and plan of the transportation needs of the region.

Company Name  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP Code

Recipient Name  
Address  
City, ST ZIP Code

# A Guide to understanding your METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

A brief guide to help you learn a little bit about Transportation Planning in your community.



#### 4. What does an MPO do?

- a. Assists local and state government in developing a five-year work program and 20-year long range plan.
- b. As little as possible.
- c. Misdirect federal, state, and local tax dollars to pay for covert operations.

#### *There are three tasks that MPO's must perform in order to maintain their certification:*

1. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) outlines those planning tasks and projects that MPO staff will undertake in the upcoming two years.
2. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a listing of projects to be undertaken over the next five years.
3. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the guiding document for transportation improvements over the next 25 years. In addition, the MPO develops a listing of projects that will be considered for the TIP every three years. This listing is called the Prioritized List of Projects. It is through the development of this list that the local governments have the greatest impact on the improvements to the transportation system in their region.

The MPO serving the Grants Pass Area is called the Middle Rogue MPO. Its members consist of representatives from Grants Pass, Josephine County, Jackson County, Rogue River and Gold Hill the combined population of which exceeds the 50,000 population threshold.

#### 5. How does a local government become involved or participate?

- a. Pretend the MPO doesn't exist and hope that it will all work out for the best.
- b. Wait until your city is threatened by a massive highway project and then complain.
- c. Provide representatives to participate on the MPO Board and the primary committees.

The business of the MPO is conducted through 3 primary committees:

##### 1. **Technical Advisory Committee**

*Planning and engineering professionals*

##### 2. **Policy Committee**

*Elected officials from municipalities, the county, and a representative of the Oregon DOT*

##### 3. **Public / Citizen Advisory Committee**

*Comprised of citizen participants who are appointed as representatives by their respective members of the MPO Board.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** The MRMPO Policy Committee is actively seeking interested parties to participate on the Citizen Advisory Committee.

#### 6. What are the benefits derived by creating and maintaining an MPO?

- a. I don't know of any.
- b. The creation of an MPO allows for additional funding for the planning and construction of transportation projects.
- c. You have someone else to blame if things go wrong.

When a MPO is created, the region it serves becomes eligible for additional federal funds. For the Grants Pass area these funds break down in four categories:

1. Planning Funds (PL) – these funds are provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to be utilized by the MPO's, and by the governments they serve, to plan for and develop transportation projects in the region served by the MPO. These projects include the UPWP, the TIP, and the RTP. In addition to these mandated activities, planning funds may be used for special projects and activities that promote a coordinated, multi-modal transportation system.
2. Section 5303 Funds – these funds are similar to PL funds and are provided by the Federal Transit Administration.
3. Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – these can be considered construction funds and are provided to MPOs by the Oregon DOT.
4. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Funds – these funds are to assist the area in meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The use of these funds is restricted geographically to the 2016 Urban Growth Boundary of Grants Pass.