

## 2 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

### WHAT IS AN MPO

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally mandated single local agency created by the Federal Highway Aid Act of 1962 to administer federal transportation funds and set transportation project priorities to spend those funds within designated MPO urbanized boundaries. An urbanized area over 50,000 people as defined by the Census must have an MPO. The High Point MPO is the designated MPO for the High Point urbanized area which includes the municipalities of High Point, Archdale, Denton, Jamestown, Lexington, Thomasville, Trinity, and Wallburg, as well as portions of Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford and Randolph Counties. The High Point MPO Board is referred to as the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and receives recommendations from the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) prior to making planning decisions. The MPO Board is composed of elected officials from each member jurisdiction, as well as NCDOT Board members representing NCDOT Divisions 7, 8, and 9. In addition, a transit representative from the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) is a member. A representative from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is an ex-officio member.

### FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

For urbanized areas to be eligible for federal and state funds, the MPO must adopt and maintain a transportation plan covering at least 20 years, and a five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both these are required by federal and state laws and mandates. In addition, the MPO often reviews and comments on local, regional, and state plans and projects that affect areas within or near the MPO's boundary. Many of these plans are incorporated into the MTP and/or TIP, and to be eligible for federal and state funds, projects generally must be included in the MTP and TIP. MPOs are governed by federal law (23 USC 134), with regulations included in 23 CFR 450. When MPOs were mandated in 1962, federal laws required metropolitan transportation plans and programs be developed through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. The thrust of these laws is for the MPO to serve as a forum for collaborative decision-making, with planning to be conducted through a cooperative process with state and local officials as well as all public transportation agencies operating within the MPO's boundaries. The MTP integrates long-term and short-term concerns across modes, including air, bicycle, freight, highways, pedestrian, and transit. It tries to balance operations and maintenance with construction, management and environmental issues. It supports the efficient movement of people and goods, while considering economic, social, and environmental goals and constraints. The plan emphasized links between modes and continuity to transportation systems outside the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB). The MTP is consistent with local land use plans and conforms to the North Carolina State Implementation Plan (SIP). The MTP is the long range planning document that covers a 20 year time frame and must be updated at least every four years. The MTP must include existing transportation facilities, operational and management activities, a financial plan to ensure that reliable and reasonable funding sources are identified for implementation of the plan. The cost of projects listed in the MTP must balance financially with the revenues from funding sources forecast to be reasonably available over the duration of the plan. One of the requirements of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP 21), the funding and authorization legislation to govern federal surface transportation spending is the integration of performance measures and targets into the MTP. The performance measures are to be established by the MPO to evaluate the existing conditions of the area's transportation system. Currently FHWA is in the process of developing guidance for the inclusion of performance measures in the MTP.

### HISTORY

The first thoroughfare plan for the High Point area was adopted in 1962. It was based on a 1960 origin and destination study and included High Point, Jamestown, Archdale, and part of Guilford County. In 1965, comprehensive planning was formalized by a Memorandum of Understanding between High Point, Jamestown, Guilford County, and the North Carolina State Highway Commission, in cooperation with the United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Public Roads, which established a Technical Coordinating Committee. The High Point Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan was updated in 1968 and revised in 1977, based on a 1973 origin and destination study. A Thomasville Thoroughfare Plan was developed in 1969. In the 1970's, Archdale, Thomasville, Davidson County and Randolph County were formally added to the High Point Urban Area MPO, the City of High Point was designated as the lead planning agency, and a Transportation Advisory Committee was established. In 1999 the City of Trinity was added to the High Point Urban Area MPO. In 2013 the City of Lexington, the Town of Denton, and the remaining portion of Davidson County not in the Winston-Salem MPO was added. The High Point Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan was updated in 1980, revised in 1982 and updated again in 1989, 2001, 2005, and 2007. In 2007 NCDOT began the process of replacing the Thoroughfare Plan with the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP consisted of an adoption sheet, a highway map, a transit map, a bicycle map, and a pedestrian map. The High Point MPO TAC adopted the new Highway map of the CTP in January of 2008 with the adoption of the full CTP in 2010.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The HPMPO is responsible for the completion of several documents. These documents guide the transportation planning process and prioritize the implementation of transportation projects. This section provides descriptions of these documents and how they are used by the MPO.

### COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)

A CTP is a mutually adopted legal document between the state and the local area partner(s). When a CTP is adopted by NCDOT, it represents the state's concurrence with the identified transportation needs and proposed recommendations. However, it does not commit the Department to funding or constructing those project proposals, or to a particular cross-section. CTPs replace the thoroughfare plans that have been developed since the 1950's.

### METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

The primary purpose of the MTP is to prioritize the projects listed in the CTP. Whereas the CTP has no specific timeframe attached to it, the MTP is looking only at the next twenty-five years. With the MTP, projects are separated into horizon years in which projects can be reasonably expected to be completed, and future funding must be estimated and specifically identified for each project in the MTP. This usually means that not all of the projects in the CTP are included in the MTP.

Because of air quality requirements, the projects in the MTP must undergo an air quality analysis to determine whether their construction will have an adverse impact on the air quality in the MPO area. The MTP must undergo revision every four years.

### METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (MTIP)

The MTIP is a ten-year program adopted every other year that schedules federal funding for transportation projects in the High Point urban area. The funds are used for roadways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other projects.

The MTIP details the Project ID Number, Location and Description, Length, Total Estimated Cost, Funding Source, and Schedule. A project's inclusion in the MTIP is a prerequisite for eligibility for certain federal transportation funding sources.

### PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (PWP)

The PWP is developed every year by staff and approved by the TAC. The PWP highlights the operating budget and work schedule for the fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th). The funds are allocated to different work tasks as detailed in the MPO Prospects.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

The PIP is prepared to provide for complete information, timely public notice, full access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public.

The obligation to provide information and consider public input in decision-making is explicit under MAP 21. The true test of a successful public participation plan is the level of public awareness and feedback. Too often, public participation does not occur until after the community-at-large becomes aware of an unpopular decision, at which point large citizen efforts become necessary to change decisions after the fact. A planning process that involves the average citizen early makes the public a participant in any decision that is ultimately made.