

**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 a 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 federal legislation in the early 1970's to increase local governments' input regarding where and how federal and state transportation dollars would be spent. The federal legislation is reinforced by Oregon statutes that delineate how MPOs may be formed and what representation is required on the MPO Board.*

### 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 a 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 a 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.

MPO's provide the forum though 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 the METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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 project 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 20 years. In addition, the MPO annually develops a listing of projects that will be considered for the next TIP. 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.

#### 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 ODOT*

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

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

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

- a. I don't know of any.
- b. The creation of your 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. These funds break down in three categories:

1. **Planning Funds (PL)** – 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 LRTP. In addition to these mandated activities, planning funds may be used for special projects and activities that promote a coordinated, multi-modal transportation system. The MPO receives roughly \$750,000 Planning Funds annually.
2. **Transit Planning Funds (Section 5303)** – these funds are to be used for transit planning activities – those plans and studies that promote an efficient public transit system for the area serviced by each MPO. The MPO receives roughly \$150,000 in Section 5303 Planning Funds annually.
3. **Extra Urban Funds (XU)** – these can be considered construction funds and are provided only to those areas that meet two criteria: the area has a population greater than 200,000 and the area has MPO representing it. The region service by the MPO receives roughly \$5.2 million dollars annually in XU funds.