



RURAL LOCAL OFFICIAL ROLES STRENGTHENED IN STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING PROCESSES UNDER MAP-21

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) supports the statewide transportation planning guidelines for state DOT consultation requirements with non-metropolitan local elected officials under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) transportation law.

BACKGROUND:

On July 6, 2012, MAP-21 (P.L.112-141) was signed into law, the legislation establishes and gives federal recognition to Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) for areas outside the boundaries of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Additionally, MAP-21 improves the participation of rural local officials in the statewide transportation planning process, making it more formal and enhanced. States may establish and designate regional transportation planning organizations to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of statewide strategic long-range transportation plans and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The long-range transportation plans and the STIP shall be developed in "cooperation" with non-metropolitan local officials or, if applicable, through regional transportation planning organizations. States are also required to "cooperate" with non-metropolitan local officials or, if applicable through regional transportation planning organizations on project selection. If a State chooses not to establish or designate a regional transportation planning organizations, the state shall consult with affected nonmetropolitan local officials to determine projects that may be of regional significance.

Overall, MAP-21 reauthorizes surface transportation programs through fiscal 2014, mostly at current levels, with some programs receiving increases for inflation. It also consolidates highway programs and includes provisions to accelerate federal environmental review of construction projects.

Specifically, MAP-21:

- Elevates the participation of rural local officials from "consultation" to "cooperation" in the statewide transportation planning process
- Establishes a federal definition and basic work program for RTPOs
- Allowed U.S. DOT to review and comment on state DOT processes for consultation with rural local officials.
- Retains the current population threshold for all MPOs (existing and new) for urbanized areas of 50,000 or greater
- Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) would also remain at 200,000 or greater
- Requires states to coordinate with MPOs on performance measures for performance-based plans
- Allocates a portion of modified Transportation Enhancement program resources to TMAs in areas above 200,000

ISSUE:

MAP-21 authorization will expire in 2014. Both the House and the Senate leaders are committed to moving forward with MAP-21 reauthorization legislation despite vast policy differences on how to fix the long-term financing and solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

In a reauthorization bill, NADO supports maintaining the federal definition of RTPOs, charged with a regional focus in the statewide transportation planning and project selection process. NADO also supports enhanced provisions requiring state DOTs to designate and fund RTPOs to help address the transportation needs of non-metropolitan areas outside the boundaries of MPOs.

For more information, contact NADO Legislative Associate, Ted Stiger at 202.624.8467 or tstiger@nado.org.

Level of Participation for Rural Local Official/ Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs)		
	SAFETEA-LU (P.L.111-68)	MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141)
Scope of Planning Process	Consult	Cooperate
Long-Range Plan	Consult	Cooperate
STIP Development	Consult	Cooperate
Project Selection	Consult - on projects from the National Highway System, Bridge Program, or the Interstate Maintenance Program	Consult - on projects from the National Highway System, Bridge Program, or the Interstate Maintenance Program
	Cooperate - on projects selected from the Transportation Improvement Program	Cooperate - on projects selected from the Transportation Improvement Program
RTPO Designation	None - Rural Planning Organization means voluntary organization of local elected officials and representatives of local transportation systems	Yes - States may establish and designate regional transportation planning organizations to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of statewide strategic long-range transportation plans and STIP

Four Cs of Federal Transportation Planning Participation

Under federal transportation planning rules, the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes are guided by four levels of intergovernmental collaboration and outreach. Each of the following definitions holds a specific meaning established in regulation that state DOTs must follow with their local government partners.

- **Consideration** means that one or more parties takes into account the opinions, actions, and relevant information from other parties in making decisions or determining a course of action.
- **Consultation** means that one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), consider the views of the other parties and periodically inform them about action(s) taken.
- **Cooperation** means that the parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning and programming processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.
- **Coordination** means the cooperative development of plans, programs, and schedules among agencies and entities with legal standing and adjustment of such plans, programs, and schedules to achieve general consistency, as appropriate.

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