

WINSTON-SALEM URBAN AREA MPO EXPLAINED

INTRODUCTION

The Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for developing and directing a continuous, comprehensive transportation planning process carried out cooperatively by the local, State and federal governments in conformance with federal laws and guidelines. Broad responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To advise the policy boards within the MPO planning area on the status and needs identified through the continuing transportation planning process.
- To assist the general public in understanding decisions and policies related to the transportation planning and decision-making process.
- Identifying existing and future transportation needs by analyzing existing conditions, data, and trends and making projections of future changes.
- Increasing the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increasing the accessibility and mobility options available for people and freight.
- Protecting and enhancing the environment and improving the quality of life.
- Enhancing the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, both across and between nodes.

In addition to the broad responsibilities outlined above, the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO is also responsible for the following specific major tasks and/or products:

- Reviewing and approving the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Reviewing and approving the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) for multimodal capital and operating expenditures, ensuring coordination between local and State capital improvement and operating programs.
- Reviewing and approving the multi-modal Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and making changes as needed.
- Reviewing and approving changes to maps and documents for the National Highway System (NHS), the Federal functional street classification, the Urbanized Area Boundary (UAB), and the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB).
- Reviewing and approving a Prospectus for transportation planning which defines the work tasks and responsibilities for the various agencies participating in the cooperative transportation planning process.
- Establishing goals and objectives for the transportation planning process, including the assumptions and conditions upon which the projections and conclusions are based.

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO is the agency responsible for coordinating all of the transportation planning functions outlined above, and others, for the designated area. This coordinated transportation planning effort serves as the basis for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the project list submitted for the SPOT Prioritization Process, and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). Additionally, transportation planning is a key component to improving and expanding transit services.

One of the key considerations for advanced transportation planning is how well it integrates into the overall land use plan. By knowing the existing transportation needs of an area and having a plan to address such existing and future needs, elected officials are better able to make informed decisions regarding the potential impacts of development proposals upon the network. Additionally, such advanced knowledge makes it possible for the dedication of future right-of-way and/or necessary on-site improvements.

Given the highly specialized and technical nature of the transportation planning process, there is a tendency to use a lot of technical terms and acronyms. To assist you in navigating the world of “transportation speak”, we have included a list of commonly used transportation acronyms, as well as a transportation glossary in the Appendix.

MPO HISTORY

The 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act was the first legislation to call for a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) urban transportation planning process carried on in coordination by the states and local governments. The 1962 Act required roads in urban areas to be based on a regional transportation plan prepared according to the 3C process. A Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) of professional planners and engineers to do transportation planning in the Winston-Salem Urban Area was established by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 1965.

On August 13, 1973, President Richard Nixon signed into law the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973. The Act required the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in all major metropolitan areas with an urbanized population of 50,000 or greater. One of the most significant features of the Act was that it provided greater emphasis on and increased flexibility for transportation decision-making in urban areas. Part of this flexibility resulted in an allocation, for the first time, of planning funds to MPOs to support the urban transportation planning process.

In December 1973, Governor James E. Holhouser, sent a letter to the FHWA that designated an agency from each MPO to serve as the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) and would be directly responsible for transportation planning. In his letter, Governor Holhouser said “we feel that local planning agencies represent the most legitimate leader in this area.” In Winston-Salem, the City-County Planning Board (CCPB) was designated as the LPA to carry out the transportation planning process for the MPO. On February 20, 1974, the North

Carolina Department of Transportation sent a letter to the CCPB confirming this designation by the Governor, and thus the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO was born.

By July, 1974, the Winston-Salem Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed, and Floyd S. Burge, Jr., became the TAC's first Chairman. The planning area for the MPO at that time only consisted of the city of Winston-Salem and the urbanized areas surrounding the city.

By the early 1980's the Winston-Salem MPO was expanded to include all of Forsyth County including the Towns of Rural Hall and Kernersville. Throughout the remainder of the 1980's and 1990's, five (5) suburban communities in Forsyth County became incorporated and were later added to the MPO. These municipalities included the Village of Clemmons, the Town of Lewisville, the Village of Tobaccoville, the Town of Walkertown, and the Town of Bethania. In 1991, the City of Winston-Salem formed a Department of Transportation (WSDOT) that brought together staff from the City's Traffic Engineering Department, the Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA), and CCPB. As a result of this consolidation, WSDOT was re-designated as the MPO's LPA and has continued to serve in this function. The CCPB staff continues to play an important role in the transportation planning process by handling the administration of the TCC and TAC, completing major portions of the annual work program, and providing coordination with other local agencies.

The 2000 United States Census confirmed that the Winston-Salem urban area had grown considerably during the past decade. The designated urbanized area expanded beyond Forsyth County for the first time. The new urbanized area boundary extended into a portion of southern Stokes County and included the City of King, into a portion northern Davidson County and into the northeastern portion of Davie County and included the Town of Bermuda Run. The Winston-Salem Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) map was revised to include these new areas and was approved by the TAC on November 21, 2002. Also, as a result of the 2000 Census, the High Point urbanized area expanded into the southeastern corner of Forsyth County, which has become a part of the High Point MPO. After extending offers to each of the units of local government within the expanded MAB to join the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO, and amending the MOU and By-Laws, the expanded TAC met for the first time on November 19, 2003.

In November 2005, the TAC extended an invitation to the newly incorporated Town of Wallburg to join the MPO. The MOU and By-laws were amended and the Town of Wallburg joined the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO in 2006.

In 2007, the TAC voted to extend an invitation to join the TAC to the newly incorporated Town of Midway; to revise the voting structure of the TAC to establish a weighted voting system based on population; and to apportion required local match for federal transportation planning grant funds to member jurisdictions based on TAC adopted policies. The Town of Midway accepted the TAC's invitation. After negotiation with the State about other changes to the MOU, a revised MOU and By-laws were adopted by the TAC. In 2008, all member governments, except Davidson County, voted to execute the revised MOU. The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO still retains responsibility for transportation planning for that portion

of Davidson County in the defined Winston-Salem Urban Area. Davidson County may choose to rejoin the TAC at any time by voting to execute the revised MOU. Davidson County staff continues to participate on the Technical Coordinating Committee.

MPO AREA AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Transportation planning should be viewed as a regional undertaking. Transportation systems do not simply stop at a jurisdictional boundary; rather, transportation systems are interconnected and require the cooperation and participation of local, State and federal agencies.

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO has a defined planning area, the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB), which is shown on page 3. The area is based on the Winston-Salem Urbanized Area from the 2000 Census, as well as those areas anticipated to be urbanized by the year 2035. The area includes the following units of local government:

- Davidson County
- Davie County
- Forsyth County
- Stokes County
- Town of Bermuda Run
- Town of Bethania
- Village of Clemmons
- Town of Kernersville
- City of King
- Town of Lewisville
- Town of Midway
- Town of Rural Hall
- Village of Tobaccoville
- Town of Walkertown
- Town of Wallburg
- City of Winston-Salem

Participation in the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO by member units of government is handled through two (2) different groups: the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC).

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is responsible for approving the transportation planning documents and reports prepared by the MPO staff and developing policies on various transportation conditions and issues. Once approved, staff can begin plan implementation. The TAC is comprised of at least one (1) elected official from each of the member units of government, as well as the NCDOT Board Member for the area. Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, the largest and most populous jurisdictions, have multiple members. The TAC has a weighted voting system with 100 total votes apportioned based on the population of the jurisdiction (as of the 2000 Census) with each member having at least one (1) vote. The apportioned votes are listed in the MOU and the TAC By-laws. Non-voting, ex-officio members include representatives from the City-County Planning Board (CCPB), the Forsyth County Airport Commission (FCAC), the Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) reviews the agenda and makes recommendations to the decision making body, the TAC. Each member unit of government has at least one (1) staff member (typically the manager or other technical expert) that serves on the TCC. There are also technical experts from other agencies of the local, State and

federal governments, as well as from surrounding MPO's and other regional organizations. Representatives from major modes of transportation such as transit and freight can also be asked to serve on the TCC.

A list of members of the TAC and TCC can be found in the Appendix. Additional information about the make-up, voting structure, etc. can be found in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and By-Laws also located in the Appendix.

WINSTON-SALEM URBAN AREA MPO

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

