

## What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization?

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are transportation policy –making organizations typically comprised of local government and transportation agencies. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is the designated MPO for the 13 communities of the Nashua region.

## How did MPOs begin?

In 1962, the Federal-Aid Highway Act required that federally funded projects in urbanized areas with a population of at least 50,000 people must employ a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative “3-C”, planning process with both state and local input. Soon after this, the birth of MPOs occurred throughout the country to ensure that the “3-C” planning process was being utilized in local and state planning efforts. By 2005, the United States was home to 385 MPOs.

## What services does the MPO provide to local communities?

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region, NRPC is responsible for developing and maintaining the region’s transportation planning program. This includes soliciting, prioritizing, and making recommendations on regional and local transportation projects that are funded through Federal or State sources. NRPC works with its member communities to obtain input and develop recommendations for transportation improvements into the State’s planning process. NRPC produces a Long Range Transportation Plan for the region, which includes a prioritized list of many projects that are then entered into the State’s plan. Recommendations for projects can also come out of more specific studies, such as a corridor study or town-wide traffic study, as well as from an alternative mode study, such as the Regional Transit Plan. NRPC is also responsible for maintaining the regional traffic model, and performing required air quality conformity analyses.

In addition, NRPC’s MPO funds are used to provide municipal technical assistance on transportation issues. NRPC helps communities to apply for funding under State-run programs, such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Transportation Enhancement (TE), and Safe Routes to School. All transportation planning activities at NRPC are governed by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC). Members of the Committee are responsible for representing their community and its transportation needs, as well as recommending plans and projects for approval by the full Commission.

## How can I learn more?

For more information on NRPC’s role as the region’s MPO, please contact Tim Roache at [tim@nashuarpc.org](mailto:tim@nashuarpc.org) or 603-424-2240 x28.

Additional resources on MPOs can be found at the following websites:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan\\_planning\\_organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_planning_organization)

<http://www.ampo.org/what/index.php>

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/23/134.html>

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