

What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

In every urbanized area in the United States, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is designated to conduct regional transportation planning and to select federally funded projects. This MPO system was established by the federal government to give people who are affected by transportation decisions a say in how those decisions are made.

Although the State Department of Transportation has the primary role of administering the expenditure of these funds, all federally funded transportation projects in the Region must be approved by the MPO.

The **Capitol Region Council of Governments** (CRCOG) is the designated MPO for the Capitol Region. Every year, CRCOG makes decisions that influence the improvement of the Region's transportation system. As members of the **CRCOG Policy Board**, chief elected officials from each community vote on transportation decisions.

The general public has significant opportunity to comment on these decisions before a vote is taken, and CRCOG undertakes special public outreach efforts for major projects and planning studies. We also conduct special outreach efforts to include people who are traditionally not involved in the decision-making process: minorities, low-income and persons who do not speak English well.

Types of Projects the MPO Approves

Federal transportation funds can be used for many different types of transportation projects. Examples include:

- ◆ Bus purchases
- ◆ Bike and pedestrian improvements
- ◆ Road construction projects
- ◆ Intersection improvements
- ◆ Bridge repairs and replacements
- ◆ Railroad crossing safety projects

How the MPO Plans for the Capitol Region – and How You Can Become Involved

CRCOG conducts many planning studies and approves the expenditure of millions of transportation dollars. Some of the key planning and funding activities CRCOG conducts include:

◆ **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

The Capitol Region RTP provides a twenty-five year overview of the major transportation investments in the Region and addresses long-range solutions to meet the Region's greatest transportation needs. This plan must be updated every 4 years.

◆ **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The TIP is a list of all federally funded projects that will be undertaken in the Capitol Region over a 4-year period. This list can be amended at any time, but a full update must be undertaken at least every 4 years.

Amendments to the TIP are considered at the Transportation Committee and Policy Board meetings each month. A copy of amendments to be considered are available with the agenda for those meetings.

◆ **Corridor Planning**

CRCOG occasionally conducts specialized studies for transportation corridors and other subregions. Traffic conditions and land use are analyzed, and a strategic plan is developed to address any problems identified. Such studies have been conducted for the Bradley Airport Area, and Routes 4, 10, 44, 190, 175 and 5/15.

Corridor studies are conducted with the input of town-appointed Local Advisory Groups (LACs) and the general public.

◆ **Transit Planning**

In 2001, CRCOG adopted the Regional Transit Strategy, a plan to make public transportation more accessible, attractive, user-friendly, and a true alternative to the automobile. The Strategy calls for several Bus Rapid Transit (BRTs) corridors connecting nearby communities to Hartford, a circulator system in downtown Hartford, a new commuter rail service with access to Bradley Airport, and improvements to the local bus system.

CRCOG has also been instrumental in planning for transit-oriented development near the stations of the proposed New Britain-Hartford BRT, and has conducted a traffic and circulation study for the area near a proposed BRT station in Newington.

◆ **Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning**

CRCOG is responsible for both bicycle and pedestrian planning in the Region. A comprehensive bicycle plan was adopted in April 2000 and a pedestrian plan was adopted more recently, in May 2005.

CRCOG staff have helped move the recommendations in the both plans forward to implementation and continue to work with the towns to make the Region more bike and pedestrian friendly. Information about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Subcommittee activities is available on the Bicycle & Pedestrian page of the CRCOG website. A bicycle advocacy group has also been formed to promote bicycling in the Region. Information about that group can be found on their website at www.wecyclect.org.

◆ **Current Projects**

If you would like to receive notification about meetings associated with these special projects currently underway, or about to get underway, please contact CRCOG and we will add your name to the appropriate mailing list. Ways to contact CRCOG are described on the back panel.

- ◆ Update of the Regional Transportation Plan
- ◆ Corridor Studies for Route 305 in Bloomfield and Windsor and for Route 195 in Tolland
- ◆ New Britain/Hartford Busway Transit Oriented Development Implementation Project: will provide technical resources for advancing previously completed Station Area Plans
- ◆ Northwest Corridor Study: development of a bus service plan for the Day Hill Road area in Windsor and an improvement plan for downtown Hartford bus circulation

What is CRCOG?

The Capitol Region Council of Governments is an association of 29 municipalities in the Hartford area. As a council of governments, CRCOG is guided by the mayors, first selectmen, and town council chairs of its 29 member municipalities. They make up the governing **Policy Board** that establishes policy, and sets the CRCOG work agenda.

The Policy Board functions as the **MPO** on transportation issues, but they also address a much broader range of issues than just transportation.

CRCOG works to enable the implementation of regional solutions to regional challenges on a range of issues. Most of this work is carried out through CRCOG's standing committees:

- ◆ **Community Development Committee** — responsible for providing policy guidance and oversight on issues, projects and programs affecting the development of communities.
- ◆ **Regional Planning Commission** — prepares the Regional Plan of Development and reviews municipal projects that affect regional land use.
- ◆ **Municipal Services Committee** — carries out projects to improve town governmental efficiency through cooperative purchasing, shared services, and related initiatives.
- ◆ **Public Safety Committee** — promotes regional public safety programs.
- ◆ **Transportation Committee** — prepares transportation plans and selects federally funded transportation projects in the Region.

Become Involved

CRCOG's Policy Board and Transportation Committee meetings are held monthly. Agendas are available through the local town clerk's offices and posted on our website at www.crcog.org. By contacting CRCOG, you can be added to our MPO mailing list and be kept informed of our meeting activities, as well as the implementation of our transportation programs.

There are other ways to get involved in CRCOG's planning activities. Contact us if you would like to be added to special study mailing lists. Visit our website often to learn about new and on-going projects. If you have a special interest, such as the involvement of under-represented groups like minorities or the disabled, let us know and we may be able to provide you with information about advocacy groups. **Get involved, stay involved!**

Contact us:

CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Fax: 860-724-1274

Email: info@crcog.org

Telephone: 860-522-2217

Website: www.crcog.org

CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Metropolitan Planning Organization

FOR THE CONNECTICUT CAPITOL REGION

