

Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization

What is an MPO?

An MPO, or Metropolitan Planning Organization, is an organization comprised of representatives and policymakers from a region's local governments dedicated to creating, evaluating, and implementing transportation policy in a region.

What is its purpose?

MPO's are required by federal law to be created for any urbanized area with a population of over 50,000 in order to qualify for federal transportation funding. MPO's ensure that the region is compliant with federal transportation and planning statutes, as well as facilitating a coordinated and collaborative process for decision-making concerning the present and future transportation goals of a region.

The core functions of an MPO are to:

- Create, evaluate, and implement transportation solutions across a region considering financial, political, and environmental constraints.
- Create and maintain a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which is a federally-mandated plan that outlines a region's transportation goals over the next 25 years.
- Create and maintain a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which outlines a region's scheduled spending of transportation funds over a period of 4 years.

How is it staffed?

Most MPO's consist of permanent staff from the local planning commission, or members of local governments or transportation authorities. The Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO is staffed by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission. Appointed members of the committees within the MPO are often elected or appointed officials from the localities within the MPO boundary, federal and state agency representatives, and other transportation stakeholders.

How is it funded?

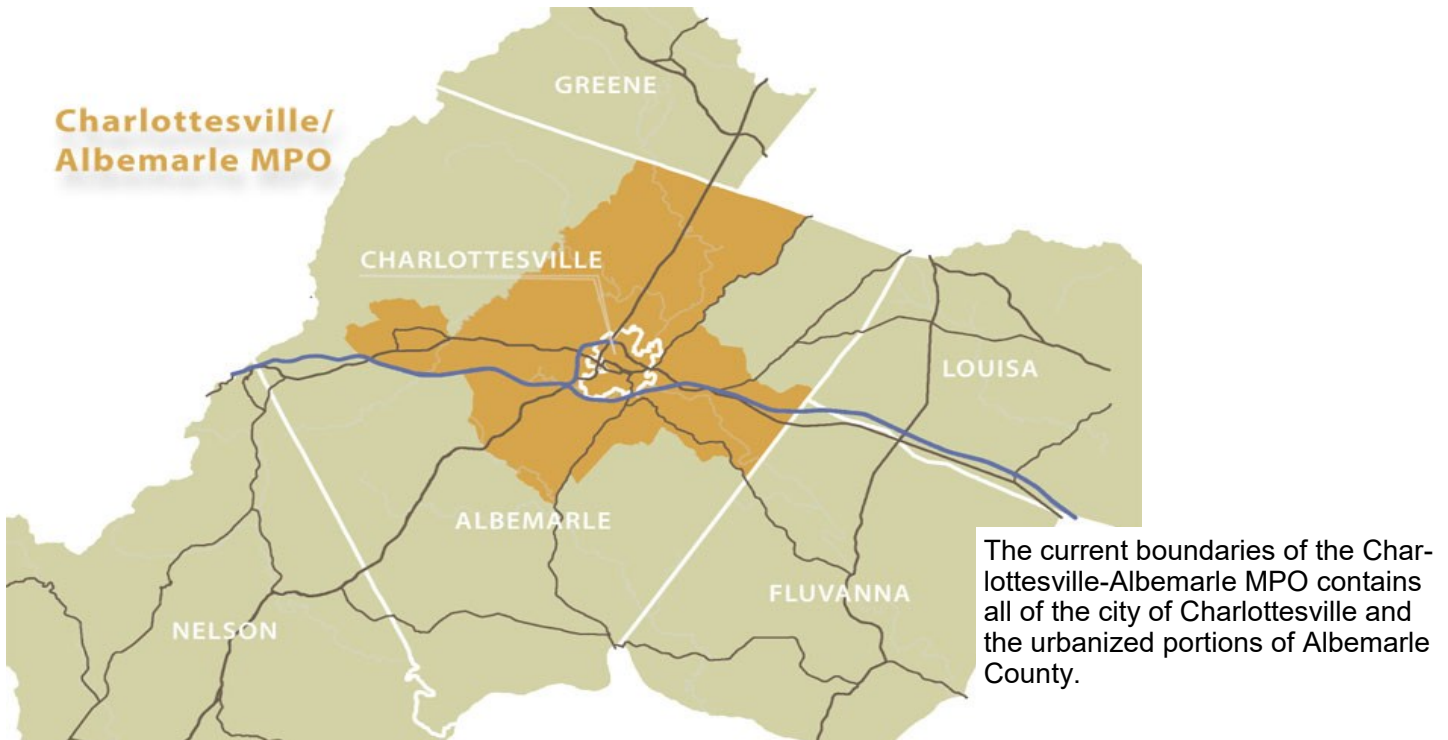
The organization manages and directs federal funds, with the possibility of additional added funds provided by state, local, or private entities. The organization's internal budget is often provided by the local planning commission, which provides permanent full-time staff.

How are an MPO's boundaries determined?

MPO's are required to encompass an urban area with a population of over 50,000, as well as the surrounding urban areas in other jurisdictions. MPO's often include areas that are anticipated to become urban over the next 20-year period. MPO's across the country feature varied combinations of small cities and larger counties that comprise urban centers.

The boundary of an MPO are updated and expanded after each census, in order to have a more accurate picture of where increased population requires new transportation and infrastructure planning.

Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CA-MPO)



What Committees Comprise the CA-MPO?

The CA-MPO contains three standing committees, as well as one advisory board.

- **Policy Board:** decision-making authority rests with the Policy Board, whose voting membership is made up of two members each from the Albemarle Board of Supervisors, the Charlottesville City Council, and the district engineer for the VDOT Culpeper District.
- **Technical Committee:** Consists of transportation planning personnel from Charlottesville Area Transit, Charlottesville, Albemarle, and other regional actors. Both Charlottesville and Albemarle having a Planning Commissioner on the technical committee. This committee provides technical expertise for proposals from the Policy Board.
- **Citizens Transportation Advisory Board:** Comprised of members of the Charlottesville-Albemarle community and provides feedback, recommendations, and community input on transportation proposals from the Policy Board. The members of the this board are recruited and appointed by the Policy Board.
- **Regional Transit Partnership:** Serves as an official advisory board to localities and stakeholders, and whose membership consists of members of Charlottesville and Albemarle local governments, members of the state's Department of Rail and Public Transportation, as well as key figures from transportation providers like Charlottesville Area Transit, JAUNT, and UVA.



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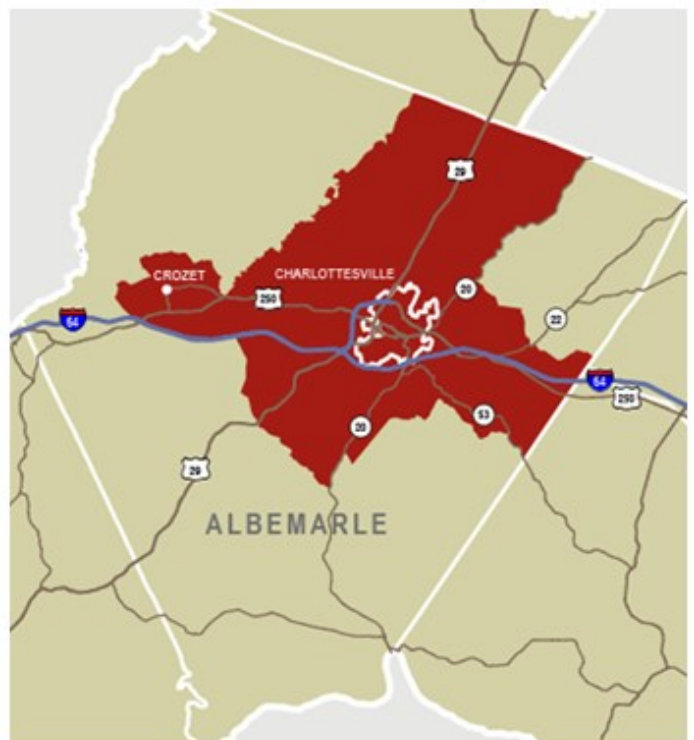


Long Range Transportation Plan

What is a Long Range Transportation Plan?: A Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a federally-mandated plan that outlines the region's priority transportation improvements over the next 20 years at a minimum. The Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO's current Long Range Transportation Plans covers the time period through 2045. Regional transportation projects must be included in a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)'s LRTP in order for it to qualify for federal funding. It exists to provide guidance on current transportation conditions and attempts to project what projects and monies will be needed in the future.

The LRTP covers all modes of transportation (private vehicles, public transit, bicycles, pedestrians, air) and transportation issues such as bridge maintenance and safety improvements. The plan incorporates a performance-based approach, considering many factors like safety, congestion, freight, access, state of good repair, and transit, as well as a robust public input process specifically to identify transportation deficiencies and potential projects. Performance measures are then used to determine the degree to which various improvements would accomplish the region's vision, goals, and objectives. A set of performance measures, created using federal resources, public comment, and committee input, was used to produce quantitative values for project scenarios. With these tools, the MPO was able to determine the degree to which various transportation improvements accomplished the region's vision, goals, and objectives, and select the most optimal project combination for achieving them.

What are does it cover? The LRTP covers the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO's boundaries, which include all of the City of Charlottesville and parts of Albemarle County.



What is the LRTP's role in policymaking?

In order for transportation projects to be eligible for federal funding, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) require that they be listed in a long-range transportation plan. For this reason, any project that requires extensive funding needs to be included in the LRTP. Project proposals are submitted to the MPO and judged upon the criteria previously created for the LRTP that highlight's the MPO's priorities for the future. These are derived, generally, from federal guidelines, but are finalized in Virginia by the Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Rail and Public Transit. The MPO's decide which projects to submit as applications for funding.



What are requirements for a project's inclusion in the LRTP?

Projects are measured by various criteria including environmental impact and design, impact on regional transit, and expected operations and maintenance costs. Deficiencies within the transportation area studied are identified, and a list is developed using projects that were carried over from the previous long range plan, other plans produced by the MPO and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District, and the CAT and Jaunt Transit Development Plans. Modeling is used to determine the extent of the deficiency throughout the timeframe of the LRTP. Projects are chosen based on how well they address a current deficiency in the area's transportation infrastructure, satisfy the MPO's criteria, and how much they cost. Public comment is also solicited, as well as recommendations from the MPO's standing committees.

How is the Long Range Transportation Plan Adopted?

The LRTP is adopted by the Policy Board of the MPO after public hearings and presentation of the final plan.



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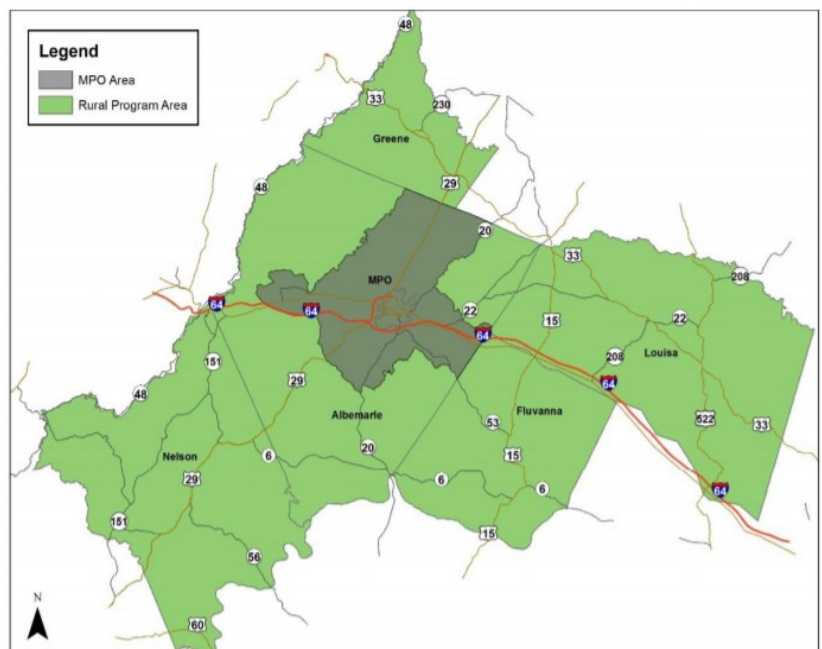


Unified Planning Work Program

What is the UPWP? - The Unified Planning Work Program is a formal presentation of the transportation planning projects that will be undertaken by an MPO for a designated fiscal year. The UPWP serves as a mechanism for the MPO to plan the money that it receives from federal and state sources - it can go towards project research, committee management, or other responsibilities of the MPO.

Why is it important? - The UPWP reflects the planning priorities of an MPO in terms of its desired transportation planning, but also provides a detailed list of projects, their associated costs and timelines for completion, as well as end products and deliverables. In addition to its critical function, ensuring federal funds which make up the majority of the MPO's budget, it serves as a way for associated localities and residents can understand what improvements are being prioritized, how they are occurring, and what will look different when they have been completed.

Who prepares the UPWP? The UPWP is prepared by the MPO of an area in line with transportation and planning priorities that have been determined by partner organizations and the public, and are reflected in the MPO's long range transportation process and broader transportation goals and vision.



How is work identified? Federal law dictates that work programs identified in the UPWP must incorporate one or more of eight basic planning factors in order to be included. These factors include safety, security, and connectivity, and generally represent most or all of an MPO's own planning goals. The MPO, after considering these factors, will then formulate its own set of planning priorities after input from staff, transportation stakeholders, local governments, and the general public, and use these priorities to guide and formulate projects. Long term transportation planning efforts, like the Long Range Transportation Plan developed by an MPO, will also guide and prioritize projects.

B) Short Range Project Planning

PL Funding: \$25,000

FTA Funding: \$7,500

MPO staff will continue to work with VDOT, DRPT, City and County staff to identify appropriate funding sources for regional priority projects. SMART SCALE pre-applications were submitted in April of 2020, with final applications due in August of 2020. MPO staff will continue to strengthen and prepare SMART SCALE applications for submission on behalf of the MPO, as well as provide support for projects submitted by the City of Charlottesville and urbanized portions of Albemarle County where needed.

End Products:

- Facilitate outreach efforts in the pursuit of funding sources for high priority projects within the MPO;
- Hold a regional meeting to coordinate SMART SCALE project submittals from the member localities and MPO;
- Coordinate sharing of economic development, and other relevant information, between the localities in support of SMART SCALE applications; and
- Attend the Quarterly Transportation Meetings hosted by OIPI to ensure that MPO and locality staff have appropriate information about all funding programs.

An example entry in the 2021 Fiscal Year UPWP from the CA-MPO.

How is it monitored? The UPWP's progress is monitored by the staff of the MPO. The Virginia Department of Transportation is currently developing a mechanism to ensure MPO's across the state are complying with their UPWP's.



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