

# Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Policy Board Orientation Booklet



January 2015



## Table of Contents

Background .....	1
Metro COG Mission.....	1
What is a Council of Governments?.....	1
What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization?.....	1
MPO Certification Process .....	2
MPO Core Functions .....	2
Performance- Based Planning.....	3
Pro-Active Public Participation .....	3
Planning Boundaries .....	3
Federal Legislation .....	4
Administrative Organization .....	4
Articles of Association.....	4
3C Agreement .....	5
Policy Board Bylaws .....	5
Administrative Procedures.....	5
Personnel Policies .....	5
Organizational Structure.....	6
FUNDING .....	6
Consolidated Planning Grant .....	6
Local Match.....	6
Local Dues .....	7
Other Revenue .....	7
Policy Board Purpose, Membership and Role.....	8
Membership.....	8
Alternates.....	8
Officers.....	8
Meeting/Quorum Requirements .....	9
Policy Board Role .....	9
Metro COG Executive Committee.....	9
Other Committees and Boards .....	9

Transportation Technical Committee .....	9
Membership.....	9
Officers.....	10
Meetings/Quorum .....	10
Other Committees and Subcommittees .....	10
Metro Area Transit (MATBUS) Coordinating Board.....	10
Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee .....	10
Traffic Operations Working Group & ITS Deployment .....	11
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Committee.....	11
POLICY BOARD PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	11
Board Principles .....	11
Major Responsibilities of the Policy Board .....	12
2015 BUDGET .....	14
2015 Unified Planning Work Program .....	14
ORIENTATION.....	15
BREIFINGS .....	15
STAFF.....	15
TRANSPORTATION ACRONYMS .....	16
Transportation and Related Acronyms.....	17
<i>METRO COG POLICY BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION</i> .....	20
METRO COG PRINCIPLES.....	21

## Background

### Metro COG Mission

*Provide quality, proactive regional planning services for a changing society.*

Metro COG functions as both the Council of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization for the greater Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. Both have different, but similar missions but both look at planning at a regional level.

### What is a Council of Governments?

A council of governments (COG) is a multi-service entity with state- and locally-defined boundaries that delivers a variety of federal, state, and local programs while carrying out its function as a planning organization, technical assistance provider, and “visionary” to its member local governments. As such, COGs are accountable to local units of government and effective partners for state and federal governments.

Conceived in the 1960s, COGs are stable, broad-based organizations adept at consensus-building, creating partnerships, providing services, problem solving and fiscal management. Comprehensive and transportation planning, economic development, workforce development, the environment, services for the elderly and clearinghouse functions are all among the types of programs that may be managed by COGs. Of the 39,000 local, general purpose governments in the United States (counties, cities, townships, towns, villages, boroughs) a total of more than 35,000 are served by COGs.

There are many differences between a COG and local governments. In a COG, Policy Board officials are appointed or designated to serve, rather than elected directly by the people. They are intended to provide a forum for dealing with regional issues that need regional solutions. COGs are voluntary planning bodies formed by local governments; organizational structure is typically as a sub-state unit of government, nonprofit or quasi-governmental form. Their responsibilities are primarily assigned by local government policy leaders, in addition to federal, state and local legislation, regulations or program funding requirements.

COGs traditionally do not have local government authority such as taxation, zoning and ordinance controls, or eminent domain powers. They must raise program and operations funding through federal and state grants and aid, local government dues support, fee-for-service initiatives, business and community lending loan funds and other means.

COGs often serve as advocates and intermediaries for local governments with federal and state policy and program officials.

As the designated COG, Metro COG is also the designated Metropolitan Planning Agency for the greater F-M metropolitan area.

### What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an agency created by federal law to provide local elected officials input into the planning and implementation of federal transportation funds to metropolitan

areas with populations of greater than 50,000. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, which mandated the formation of MPOs, has implemented that MPOs must plan for regional transportation planning expenditures and is responsible for the Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive (3C) transportation planning process for their urbanized area. Under federal law established in the 1973 Highway Act and the Urban Mass Transit Act, organizations in urbanized areas are designated by their governors to perform significant planning and programming of federally funded highways and transit projects. The policy leadership, committees, professional staff, and consultants, combined with the administrative capability to support MPO planning processes, constitute the core elements of MPOs activities. Metro COG was jointly designated by the governors of Minnesota and North Dakota in 1973.

MPOs have become a more significant actor in regional transportation planning since they received additional resources and powers from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the ensuing federal legislation, currently MAP-21. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has identified 420 MPOs as of the most recent census. Nearly half of MPOs operate as part of a Council of Governments serving the same general geography.

Similar to COGs, MPOs do not have authority to raise revenues such as levy taxes on their own; rather, they are designated to allow local officials to decide collaboratively how to spend available federal and other governmental transportation funds in the region. The funding for the operations of the MPO comes from a combination of federal transportation funds and required matching funds from state and local governments.

### **MPO Certification Process**

Federal law requires that the Federal government certify the MPO planning process every four years. In general, this process is a review of the various work products, policies and procedures. In addition, each year the NDDOT and the MPO must jointly certify the metropolitan planning process. Annual self-certification is included in the approval of the annual Transportation Improvement Program.

### **MPO Core Functions**

MPOs were created by Congress to allocate scarce federal and other transportation funds appropriately and the planning efforts reflect the region's shared vision for its future. They provide a comprehensive examination of the region's future investments alternatives and they facilitate a collaborative planning process between state DOT's, interested parties and residents in the planning process.

There are six (6) core functions of an MPO:

1. **Establish a Setting:** establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.
2. **Evaluate Alternatives:** evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region, to the nature of its transportation issues, and to the realistically available options.
3. **Maintain a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):** develop and update a fiscally-constrained long-range transportation plan for the region covering a planning horizon of at least twenty years that fosters:
  - mobility and access for people and goods;
  - efficient system performance and preservation; and
  - quality of life for residents.

4. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): develop a fiscally-constrained program based on the long-range transportation plan and designed to serve the region’s goals while using spending, regulating, operating, management and financial tools.
5. Involve the Public: involve the general public and all the significantly affected sub-groups in the four essential functions listed above.
6. Protect Air Quality: transportation plans, programs, and projects must conform with the air quality plan, known as the “state implementation plan” (SIP), for the state within which the region lies.

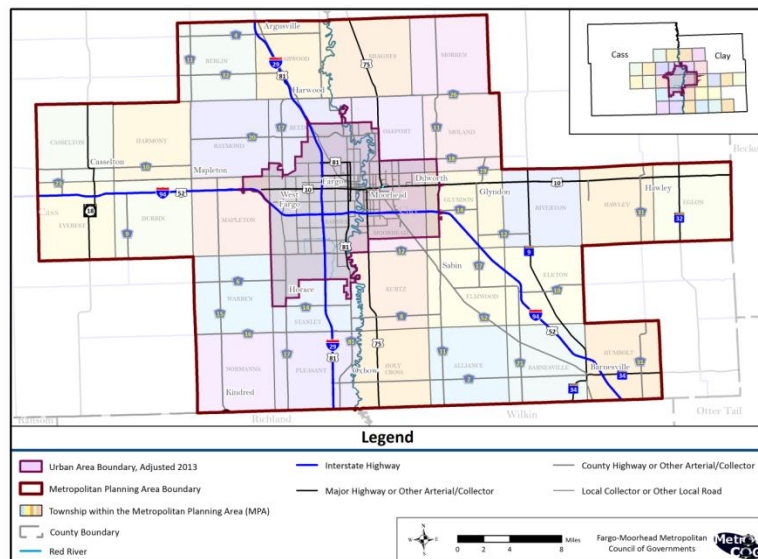
### Performance- Based Planning

Metro COG, as the designated MPO, is responsible for the establishment, use, and tracking of performance-based approach to transportation decision-making to support the national goals described in federal legislation. The state DOTs, Metro COG and local transit agencies will develop performance measures to track the progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the MPO region.

### Pro-Active Public Participation

Since 1991, federal transportation legislation has included requirements for a pro-active effort by the MPO to involve the public in the transportation planning process. Metro COG staff follows direction identified in the Metro COG Public Participation Plan when developing plans, reports and efforts. Public meetings are scheduled to allow public input on documents, planning studies and other planning functions done at Metro COG. Additionally, all Policy Board meetings are open to the public. Provisions for public comment are established in the Policy Board Bylaws and Public Participation Plan.

**Figure 1: Metro COG Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary**



Source: Metro COG 2014

### Planning Boundaries

There are basically three (3) boundaries that are important to Metro COG; the Urban Area Boundary (UZA), the revised urban area boundary and the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPAB) (Figure 1.).

- **Urban Area Boundary (UZA):** A Census-designated urban area with 50,000 residents or more. Every UZA must be represented by an MPO.
- **Adjusted UZA:** A Census-defines UZA boundary that has been adjusted by the MPO to include additional territory. Typically created to smooth irregular UZA boundaries, the adjusted UZA must be submitted to NDDOT and MnDOT for review and submitted by the DOTs to FHWA for approval.

- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPAB): Defines the area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process must be carried out. The MPAB must encompass the UZA and the contiguous geographic area likely to become urbanized within the next 20 years. Must be approved by the State DOTs.

The Metro COG planning area consists of 14 townships in North Dakota and 16 in Minnesota. It is a subset of the Cass-Clay Metropolitan Statistical Area.

## Federal Legislation

An MPO is a creature of federal legislation. Five terms you will hear frequently are USC, CFR, PL, MAP-21 and Executive Order. All play a part in the operations and requirements of an MPO. Figure 2 provides a brief explanation of each term.

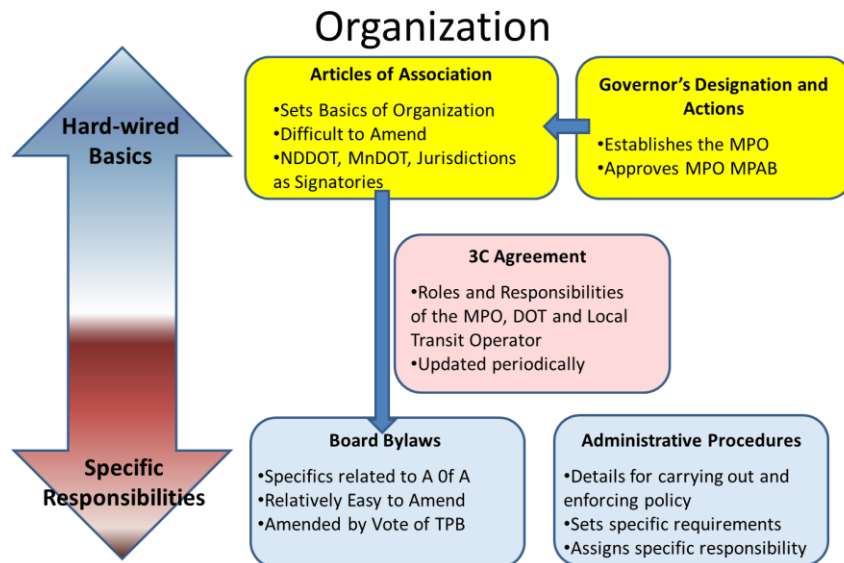
**Figure 2: Governmental Terms Related to an MPO**

USC	United States Code	It's the law. Specifically 23 USC: Highways and 49 USC: Transportation.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	It's the regulations. Law through rulemaking. Specifically 23CFR: Highways and 49 CFR: Transportation.
PL	Public Law	Non-codified law. (e.g. P.L. 112-141)
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Current Transportation Bill.
EO	Executive Orders	Presidential orders (e.g. EO 12898 – Environmental Justice)

Source: FHWA 2014

## Administrative Organization

**Figure 3: Administrative Organization**



Metro COG has its legal foundation in the Articles of Association which allows for the creation of the COG, identifies Metro COG as the designated MPO, and provides for the development and maintenance of Policy Board Bylaws, Administrative Procedures and Personnel Procedures (figure 3).

### Articles of Association

Metro COG is a stand-alone, quasigovernmental organization whose existence and organizational structure

is enabled by the Articles of Association (Articles). The Articles were approved in 1968 when Metro COG was formed. The need for Metro COG's existence grew out of several years of "intergovernmental coordination" among local cities and counties.



The Articles also identify Metro COG as the designated MPO for the region. The designation is made by agreement of the governors of Minnesota and North Dakota and units of general purpose local government that together represent at least 75% of the affected population, including the largest incorporated city.

The Articles of Association will be updated this year (2015) to provide additional information and direction of Metro COG.

### **3C Agreement**

The MPO's mission is to provide a **C**omprehensive, **C**oordinated and **C**ontinuous ("3C") transportation planning process for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, consistent with the region's overall economic, social and environmental goals. The MPO places special emphasis on providing equal access to a variety of transportation choices and effective public involvement in the transportation planning process.

The MPO, state(s) and the providers of public transportation are to cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation process. As such, Metro COG, along with the Minnesota and North Dakota DOTs and MATBUS, cooperatively develop an agreement that defines the roles and responsibilities of each in the 3C planning process.

Federal legislation states that the MPO, state(s) and the providers of public transportation should periodically review and update the agreement, as appropriate, to reflect effective changes. Metro COG will be updating the 3C agreement in 2015, with the cooperation and approval of the state DOT's and MATBUS.

### **Policy Board Bylaws**

The Articles provide for the development and implementation of a set of Policy Board Bylaws intended identify procedures and responsibilities which will serve to organize and guide the proper function of the Metro COG Policy Board.

### **Administrative Procedures**

Administration regulations are detailed directions developed by the Policy Board to put policies into practice. They tell how, by whom and where and when things are to be done. They assign detail needed to implement policy to staff, allowing the Board to focus on broad issues.

They provide detailed requirements, procedures and prohibitions under which Metro COG and its employees will be operated. Many satisfy a state for federal requirement or serve as a compliance indicator. All regulations inform staff.

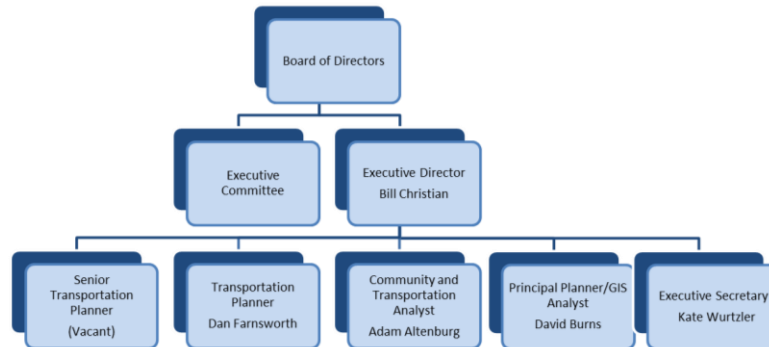
### **Personnel Policies**

The Policy Board is also responsible for developing and amending the Metro COG Personnel Policies. These policies identify the benefits and restrictions related to employment at Metro COG.

## Organizational Structure

The Policy Board is the COG and MPO. The Policy Board hires an Executive Director and professional staff to carry out the day-to-day activities of the COG and MPO (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Metro COG Organizational Structure**



## FUNDING

Funding for the operations of Metro COG come from Federal, state and local sources. As an MPO, Metro COG receives funding identified in 23 USC and 49 USC.

### Consolidated Planning Grant

Metro COG receives federal transportation funds administered through the North Dakota and Minnesota Departments of Transportation through a Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG). The CPG consists of money from the Federal Highway Administration grant funds, referred to as “PL” or public law funds. These funds are distributed annually based on an allocation formula. Additional funds contributing to the CPG are Federal Transit Administration Grant Funds (section 5309). These funds require a local match of funds to be accessed. Unspent CPG funds roll forward to the following fiscal year. They are not a cash reserve. Unobligated CPG funds may be rescinded by the NDDOT if balances become too large.

By agreement the NDDOT is the lead agency in the distribution of CPG funds. CPG funds originating in Minnesota are administered by the NDDOT. These funds are reimbursable; Metro COG must provide a request each month to NDDOT to receive the eligible portion of costs related to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

### Local Match

For every \$0.80 of CPG funds, Metro COG, through its jurisdictions and planning partners contribute \$0.20. Together, these funds provide the total capital required to operate the MPO. Un-spent local funds are held by Metro COG to account for those times when more local funding is needed, which lessens the need to adjust the local dues structure (Figure 5). They also remain available as local match for local transportation contracted planning services. Metro COG also maintains Certificates of Deposit and a Money Market comprised of unspent local match funds to be used to cover emergency situations, (e.g. a freeze on federal transportation funds or other such instances). We are still under funded in this area. Funding should be adequate to fund Metro COG operations for a sustained amount of time.

## Local Dues

Each voting member jurisdiction is assessed annual dues based on a structure that is approved annually by the Policy Board. The structure consists of a set percentage for which each jurisdiction is responsible. The formula for these assessments is updated every 10 years in conjunction with the decennial census. No one member jurisdiction shall pay more than 50% of the total dues. Dues are paid annually in January of each calendar year.

**Figure 5: 2015 Metro COG Dues and Expenses**

2015 Jurisdiction Dues and Expenses	Total	Cass County	Clay County	City of Dilworth	City of Fargo	City of Moorhead	City of West Fargo
Local Member Dues Assessment	\$114,394	\$10,195	\$9,370	\$2,230	\$57,197	\$21,091	\$14,312
Miscellaneous Expenses Split by Member Units of Government	\$4,326	\$386	\$354	\$84	\$2,163	\$798	\$541
Local Match on Contracted Planning Activities/Projects	\$68,000	\$3,387	\$3,112	\$741	\$39,100	\$16,906	\$4,754
<b>Total 2015 Dues and Assessments</b>	<b>\$186,720</b>	<b>\$13,967</b>	<b>\$12,836</b>	<b>\$3,055</b>	<b>\$98,460</b>	<b>\$38,795</b>	<b>\$19,608</b>

2015 Jurisdiction Dues and Expenses	Total	Cass County	Clay County	City of Dilworth	City of Fargo	City of Moorhead	City of West Fargo
Local Member Dues Assessment	100%	8.9%	8.2%	1.9%	50.0%	18.4%	12.5%
Miscellaneous Expenses Split by Member Units of Government	100%	8.9%	8.2%	1.9%	50.0%	18.4%	12.5%
Local Match on Contracted Planning Activities/Projects	100%	5.0%	4.6%	1.1%	57.5%	24.9%	7.0%
<b>Total 2015 Dues and Assessments</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>

Source: Metro COG 2014

Metro COG also collects annually from member jurisdictions additional funds for items that are universal in nature and are divided among the jurisdictions (Figure 5). Examples of this currently included in the 2015 UPWP are:

- AMPO dues (Dilworth, Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo)
- Metro COG Traffic Count Equipment Pool (Dilworth, Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo)
- Metro COG GIS Software Update (Dilworth, Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo)

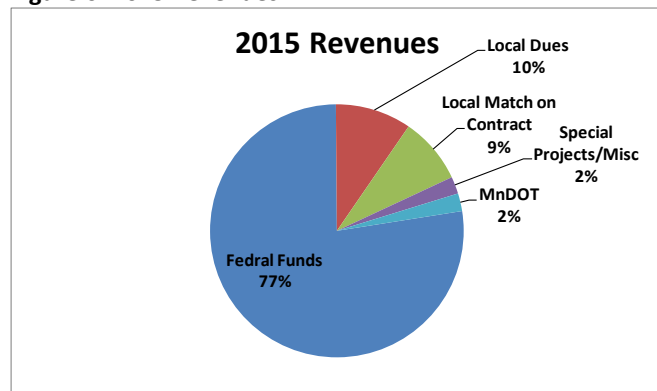
Metro COG also collects additional funding from jurisdictions for their participation in contracted planning activities. These funds are collected from individual jurisdictions (or collection of jurisdictions) for project specific to that jurisdiction.

- Metropolitan Travel Demand Model (Dilworth, Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo)
- Metropolitan Traffic Count (Dilworth, Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo)
- Transit Development Plan (Fargo, Moorhead)

## Other Revenue

The MnDOT annual provides Metro COG funding from the state general Fund. Metro COG also receives minimal income from the sale of maps, reproduction costs and administering grants or programs for member jurisdictions. These funds, along with CPG and related local match, provide the operating capital for Metro COG. A breakout of revenue percentages is identified in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: 2015 Revenues**



Source: Metro COG 2014

## Policy Board Purpose, Membership and Role

The purpose of the Policy Board is to provide an ongoing cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process that meets Federal and State guidelines for the expenditure of Federal Transportation funds in the Metro COG region, as well as providing for local and regional non-transportation planning studies and efforts.

### Membership

The Policy Board consists of fourteen (14) elected and appointed officials. The Articles of Association state that no one jurisdiction shall have more than 50% of the votes on the Policy Board. The composition and status of each jurisdiction is as follows:

- Cass County (1 voting member)
- Clay County (1 voting member)
- City of Dilworth (1 voting member)
- City of Fargo (7 voting members)
- City of Moorhead (3 voting members)
- City of West Fargo (1 voting member)

Additionally, Metro COG offers seven (7) Associate Memberships to the Policy Board. The Associate Members do not have voting privileges, but may participate in the Policy Board discussions. Associate Members to the Policy Board include:

- City of Barnesville (1 non-voting associate member)
- City of Casselton (1 non-voting associate member)
- City of Glyndon (1 non-voting associate member)
- City of Harwood (1 non-voting associate member)
- City of Hawley (1 non-voting associate member)
- City of Horace (1 non-voting associate member)
- City of Mapleton (1 non-voting associate member)

### Alternates

Every appointed entity may also designate an alternate delegate to serve when its regular voting member is absent. The appointed alternate must be an elected official if her or she is representing an elected official, and must serve the jurisdiction within all or part of the area that the regular member serves.

### Officers

The Chair and Vice Chair rotate on an annual basis based on a preapproved schedule. The schedule may be revised at the pleasure of a majority of the voting members of the Policy Board. The current rotation schedule is identified in Figure 7. The incoming Chair and Vice Chair take office at the January meeting, or first Policy Board meeting of the new year, whichever comes first.

**Figure 7: Rotation Schedule for Chair and Vice Chair**

Year(s)	Chair Representative from:	Vice Chair Representative from:
2015, 2020, 2025, 2030	City of Dilworth	City of Fargo
2016, 2021, 2026, 2031	City of Fargo	City of Moorhead
2017, 2022, 2027, 2032	City of Moorhead	Cass County
2018, 2023, 2028, 2033	Cass County	Clay County
2019, 2024, 2029, 2034	Clay County	City of West Fargo

*Source: Metro COG 2014*

## Meeting/Quorum Requirements

The Policy Board conducts their meetings on the third Thursday of each month at 4:00pm at the Metro COG offices, One 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North, Suite 232, Fargo, North Dakota. Meetings are open to the public. A quorum is eight (8) voting members.

## Policy Board Role

As previously stated, the Policy Board **IS** the Council of Governments and **IS** the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Policy Board approves all activities of Metro COG. It hires an Executive Director to oversee a professional staff engaged in meeting the federal, state, and local responsibilities of a COG and MPO, as well as any and all requested activities as directed by the Board.

Policy Board responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Approving a Budget and Unified Planning Work Program
- Approving Area Wide Plans and Studies
- Hiring and reviewing an Executive Director
- Rendering personnel decisions on staff and the Executive Director
- Reviewing, amending and approving the Articles of Association, Administrative and Personnel documents, Policy Board and Transportation Technical Committee Bylaws
- Approving all Contracts between and among Metro COG and its oversight agencies, contracted service providers, and local jurisdictions.

## Metro COG Executive Committee

The purpose of the Executive Committee is to advise the Policy Board on matters of Personnel and Finance, as well as activities delegated to it by the Policy Body. Membership on the Executive Committee is one (1) member each from Policy Board members representing Cass and Clay counties and the cities of Dilworth Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo. The current Policy Board Chair oversees the Executive Committee. Voting on recommendations or actions is by consensus, unless one or more members desire a vote. Four (4) members constitute a quorum. Meetings are scheduled on as-needed basis.

## Other Committees and Boards

### Transportation Technical Committee

The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) is an advisory body to the Policy Board. It evaluates the technical, operational and implementation aspects of studies, grant proposals and certain construction projects and offers recommendations to the Policy Board. The TTC is composed of professional transportation planning and engineering staff from local governments and the Minnesota and North Dakota DOTs.

### Membership

Membership on the TTC is open to all member jurisdictions. Voting members consist of representatives for all six local units of government, public transit and state DOTs:

- Cass County
- Clay County
- City of Fargo
- City of Moorhead

- City of Dilworth
- Fargo-Moorhead MATBUS
- NDDOT (Fargo District)
- City of West Fargo
- MnDOT (District 4)

### Non-voting Members

Non-voting members include NDDOT (Local Government Division), Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation and representatives from associate member jurisdictions.

### Alternates

Each appointing authority may also designate one (1) alternate for each member serving on the TTC.

### Officers

The Metro COG Executive Director is designated as the TTC Chair. The Senior Transportation Planner or designated staff will serve as Chair in the absence of the Executive Director.

### Meetings/Quorum

Meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each month at 10:00 at the Metro COG offices, One 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North, Suite 232, Fargo, North Dakota. Meetings are open to the public. At least 9 members must be present to have a quorum and conduct business.

## Other Committees and Subcommittees

### Metro Area Transit (MATBUS) Coordinating Board

**Purpose/Responsibilities:** Formed under a Joint Powers Agreement in 2004, the MAT Coordinating Board is tasked with making recommendations to the City of Fargo, the City of Moorhead, and other cities/entities related to capital purchases, service areas, transit routes, transit rates/fares, budgets, marketing, long-term planning needs, and other applicable matters.

**Membership:** Elected and appointed members from the community. Chair appointed by the Coordinating Board.

**Meeting frequency:** Meets approximately every other month.

**Number of member seats:** Board comprised of 12 voting members (7 for a quorum).

**Typical meeting location:** Varies.

### Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee

**Purpose/Responsibilities:** Discuss, coordinate and recommend to Policy Board bicycle and pedestrian matters around the FM metro area.

**Membership:** Technical staff from local units of government & DOTs, health and social service agencies, citizens.

**Meeting frequency:** Quarterly.

**Number of member seats:** 17 (9 for quorum).

**Typical meeting location:** Metro COG Conference Room.

### **Traffic Operations Working Group & ITS Deployment**

**Purpose/Responsibilities:** Discuss, review and oversee any matters relating to Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), traffic operations, or incident management in the FM metro area.

**Membership:** Technical staff from local units of government & DOTs.

**Meeting frequency:** Quarterly or as-needed.

**Number of member seats:** There is no defined number of seats or a defined quorum.

**Typical meeting location:** Metro COG Conference Room.

### **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Committee**

**Purpose/Responsibilities:** To provide an outlet for GIS users and managers in the F-M community to discuss GIS initiatives, coordinate and share planning-related data among agencies in the metropolitan area.

**Membership:** Technical and GIS management staff from the cities and counties in the Metro COG region.

**Meeting frequency:** Quarterly or as-needed.

**Number of member seats:** There is not a defined number of seats or a defined quorum.

**Typical meeting location:** Metro COG Conference Room.

## **POLICY BOARD PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Board Principles**

Metro COG is, by definition and mission, a regional planning organization. The whole of the region is more than just the sum of its individual jurisdictions. The principles on which the Policy Board is based are designed to be regional in nature and to put the needs of the region first. Metro COG is also a service agency and an avenue for the public and other concerned stakeholders to actively participate in the regional planning process. It is expected that:

- On all matters, Metro COG shall endeavor to first consider what is good and right for the region as a whole, when evaluating requests from specific groups or local governments. The visions of the member governments should be incorporated into a cohesive area wide approach.
- The Policy Board should always strive to be courteous to our citizens and allow each person ample opportunity to express his or her concerns in the public forum. This courtesy should also be extended to other members of the Policy Board and Metro COG staff.
- Policy Board members, staff and others attending the meeting are encouraged to maintain an appropriate meeting decorum.

It is assumed that each Policy Board member has agreed to represent his or her respective jurisdiction and has been appointed to the position to represent the interests of the region and not just on matters related to their respective organizations. Metro COG does not impose any responsibilities on the Policy Board members, but asks only for a commitment to participate on Board activities and to prepare accordingly to be informed and able to intelligently vote on matters before the Board. It is recommended that Policy Board members:

- Study the agenda package and contact the Executive Director or Executive Secretary, as needed, to be familiar with each item.
- Be prepared with the necessary facts and background to intelligently discuss and decide each issue.
- To ask questions and express concerns on matters before the Board.
- To use Policy Board meetings to update all members on information relative to any outside committees or boards that pertain to Metro COG.
- To bring back to the Policy Board information about local board activities
- To arrange their schedules to keep the third Thursday afternoon of each month open for Policy Board meetings.
- To keep discussion limited to issue before the Policy Board. Meetings will be in duration as long as is needed to conduct the business before the board. The Chair will strive to adjourn the meetings within one hour.
- To schedule their time so that each meeting may start on time. A Board member who is unable to attend a scheduled meeting is asked to advise the Executive Director or Executive Secretary 24 hours prior to the meeting to assure that a quorum will be present. Absent Board members are responsible for contacting their alternate member representative and advising them that they need to attend in their stead.

## Major Responsibilities of the Policy Board

As the COG and MPO for the greater Fargo-Moorhead, we are required to develop and maintain various plans and programs that are required by federal legislation. Failure to do so would mean the loss CPG funding. This is a short list of major requirements, but is not an inclusive list:

### Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Long Range Transportation Plan is updated every 4 years to cover a planning horizon of at least 20 years. It must be financially constrained and identify the goals and objects of the metropolitan area as well as transportation projects to be accomplished over the planning horizon to meet those goals and objectives.

Metro COG completed the year 2040 update in 2014 and progress toward the 2045 plan will begin in 2016 with the collection of socioeconomic data and development of the Travel Demand Model. The 2045 update will be due for Policy Board approval in 2018.

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program is a staged, capital improvement plan that is used to program transportation projects in a four-year time frame. All projects contained in the TIP must come from the LRTP. Federal funds attributable to the region, as administered through the MnDOT and NDDOT, are assigned and prioritized to projects in the TIP.



### Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) contains information about planning studies, technical support projects, and ongoing planning activities that are being conducted on behalf of the Metro COG transportation agencies, and the municipalities that are in the MPO region. The UPWP also lists the federal, state, and/or local funding sources for each planning project and provides detailed budget information for each project.

Metro COG uses a two-year UPWP and amends it as needed. The current UPWP is for 2015-2016.

### Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Public Participation Plan identifies all the policies and procedures that we employ in our public outreach efforts. The LRTP, TIP, UPWP and other documents and studies require proactive public input. The current PPP was approved in 2013.

### Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)

As a recipient of federal funds Metro COG is required to conform to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and all related statutes, regulations, and directives, which provide that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on the grounds of race, color or national origin.

The purpose of Title VI is to eliminate discrimination in federally funded programs and activities and to ensure the equitable distribution of public funds for public benefit. Metro COG incorporates into its planning process various elements of Title VI requirements, Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and report annually to the NDDOT on Title VI issues in the region. Metro COG includes in all contracts Title VI requirements for all contractors, subcontracts and sub-recipients. All public participation efforts are designed to be nondiscriminatory and to reach out to all members of the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area.

### Transit Development Plan (TDP)

The Transit Development Plan is a five year planning document that identifies needs, strategies and opportunities for public and private transit in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. Metro COG works with MATBUS in the development of the TDP, usually through a consultant hired to produce the document. It documents the existing conditions, identifies system performance issues, underserved areas and establishes preferred alternatives to implement future transit needs.

### Other Major Activities

*Intelligent Transportation Systems Regional Architecture* – Identifies the physical and logical connections and data flows of information between and among ITS field elements and control centers.

*Traffic Counts* – Metro COG collects and processes traffic count data for both vehicular and bicycle/pedestrian traffic. The results of these counts are provided to local jurisdictions, state DOTs and the general public.

*Planning Studies and other Contracts* – The Policy Board approves all Requests for Proposals and contracts for all planning studies and contracted services funded by Metro COG.

## 2015 BUDGET

Metro COG in 2015 will operate from a \$1.8M budget approved in May of 2014. Two-thirds of the budget will be used for contracted planning services. The remaining third of the budget will be applied for internal operating costs (Figure 8).

The Policy Board approves the budget and all budget amendments.

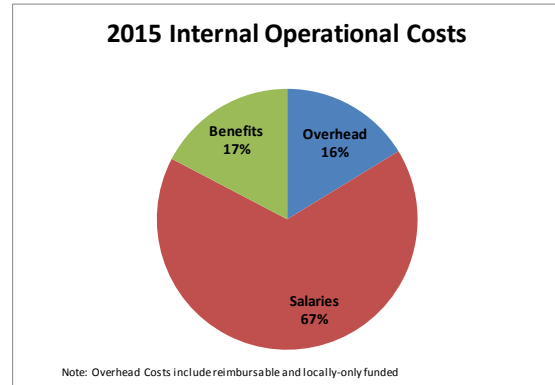
Salaries make up 67% of the Metro COG internal operating costs. Benefits and Overhead expenses will account for 17% and 16%, respectively, of the internal operational budget (Figure 8).

## 2015 Unified Planning Work Program

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG) 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was approved in August 2014. It satisfies the requirements of 23 CFR 450.308, and thereby formally identifies the planning priorities for the FM Metropolitan area for the years 2015-2016.

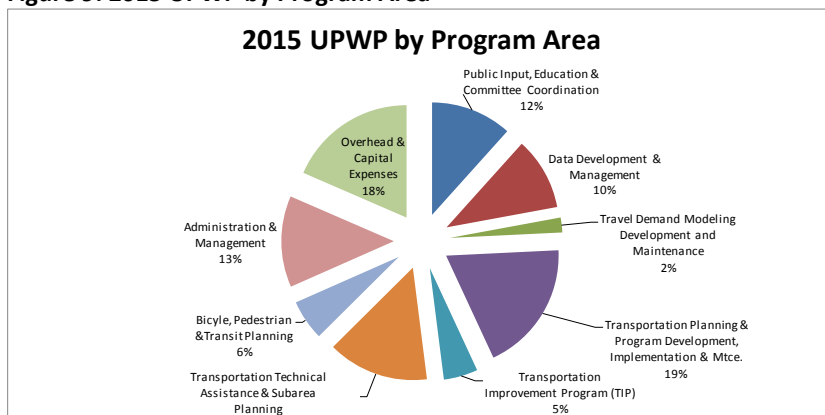
Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.314, the development of the 2015-2016 UPWP is done in cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Metro Area Transit (MATBUS) of Fargo-Moorhead and member units of government.

Figure 8: 2015 Internal Operational Costs



Source: Metro COG 2014

Figure 9: 2015 UPWP by Program Area



Source: Metro COG 2014

implement certain activities as set forth within previously adopted plans, programs and policies. These approved plans, programs and policies are relative to the overarching Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP) as approved by the Metro COG Policy Board. To that

The 2015-2016 UPWP establishes work activities that ensure the maintenance and implementation of the 2014 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the FM Metropolitan area (Figure 9).

The 2015-2016 UPWP is constructed to specifically

end the 2015-2016 UPWP proposes work activities that address needs identified through previously adopted plans and programs.

The 2015-2016 UPWP includes several work activities to further recommendations outlined within the 2014 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Metro 2040. Most significantly the 2015-2016 UPWP includes the development of a more detailed performance based approach to transportation planning as required by Moving Ahead for Program in the 21st Century (MAP-21).

## **ORIENTATION**

Early each calendar year the Executive Director is available to hold an orientation to familiarize new and existing members with current projects and give them a general overview of how the organization works and a review of the contents of this document.

## **BREIFINGS**

The Executive Director is also available to provide individual briefings prior to scheduled Policy Board meetings or to answer questions related to specific projects or concerns you may have. You may contact the Executive Director, William A. Christian, at 701.232.3242 x32 to schedule an appointment or contact him at any time on his cell phone at 316.670.9567.

## **STAFF**

Metro COG is staffed with 6.0 Full Time Employees (FTE).

### William A. Christian, Executive Director

General questions concerning Metro COG meetings, events and programs. All questions concerning agenda items, administrative issues and questions concerning the operation of Metro COG and related committees. TIP, LRTP, UPWP and budget, technical assistance.

[Christian@fmmetrocog.org](mailto:Christian@fmmetrocog.org) 701.232.3242 x 32

Senior Transportation Planner – Position is currently

### David Burns, Principal Planner/GIS

Website update, GIS systems mapping and graphics, surveillance and monitoring report, data development, IT and technical assistance.

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### Daniel Farnsworth, Transportation Planner

Traffic counts, bicycle and pedestrian activities, TAP applications, planning studies and technical assistance.

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Adam Altenburg, Community and Transportation Analyst

Comprehensive and local plans, planning studies, Food System Advisory Commission, transit planning and technical assistance.

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Kate Wurtzler, Executive Secretary

General questions concerning Metro COG meetings, newsletter, committee coordination, general administration.

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## **TRANSPORTATION ACRONYMS**

Sometimes it is impossible to know what staff or other speakers are talking about without knowing what acronyms we use. Is “STP” something we use for engine performance or does it have a relevant use at Metro COG? Surface Transportation Program, or STP, is the principle federal funding source for transportation improvements and planning. The list of acronyms on the following pages is included for your convenience. As always, if you do not understand the context of what is being said or presented, please ask for clarification.

## Transportation and Related Acronyms

**"3C" Process** - Continuing, Comprehensive and Cooperative Planning Process  
**AASHTO** - American Association of State Highway and transportation Officials  
**ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act  
**AMPO** - Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations  
**APA** - American Planning Association  
**AQ** - Air Quality  
**ATAC** - Advanced Traffic Analysis Center  
**ATR(s)** - Automatic Traffic Recorders  
**AVL** - Automatic Vehicle Location  
**BNSF** - Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad  
**BRT** - Bus Rapid Transit  
**CAA** - Clean Air Act of 1970, as amended  
**CE(s)** - Categorical Exclusions  
**CEQ** - Council on Environmental Quality  
**CFR** - Code of Federal Regulations  
**CMAQ** - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality  
**CMP** - Congestion Management Process  
**COG** - Council of Governments  
**CPG** - Consolidated Planning Grant  
**CPR** - Canadian Pacific Railroad  
**CTAA** - Community Transit Association of America  
**CTD** - Coordinated Transit District  
**CTP-HSP** - Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan  
**CY** - Calendar Year  
**DMS** - Dynamic Message Signs  
**E+C** - Existing plus Committed Network  
**EA** - Environmental Assessment  
**ECHO** - Electronic Clearing House Operation  
**EIS** - Environmental Impact Study  
**EJ** - Environmental Justice  
**EPA** - Environmental Protection Agency  
**FAA** - Federal Aviation Administration  
**FAF** - Freight Analysis Framework  
**FEMA** - Federal Emergency Management Agency  
**FFC** - Federal Functional Classification  
**FFY** - Federal Fiscal Year  
**FHWA** - Federal Highway Administration  
**FONSI** - Finding of No Significant Impact  
**FRA** - Federal Railroad Administration  
**FTA** - Federal transit Administration  
**FY** - Fiscal Year  
**GIS** - Geographic Information Systems  
**GPS** - Global Positioning System  
**GTC** - Ground transportation Center  
**HSIP** - Highway Safety Improvement Program

## Transportation and Related Acronyms (cont.)

**IM** - *Interstate Maintenance*  
**ISTEA** - *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991*  
**ITS** - *Intelligent Transportation Systems*  
**JARC** - *Job Access reverse Commute program*  
**LEP** - *Limited English Proficiency*  
**LOS** - *Level of Service*  
**MAP-21** - *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century*  
**MATBUS** - *Metro Area transit of Fargo-Moorhead*  
**Metro COG** - *Metropolitan Council of Governments*  
**MnDOT** - *Minnesota Department of Transportation*  
**MOA** - *Memorandum of Agreement*  
**MOU** - *Memorandum of Understanding*  
**MPA** - *Metropolitan Planning Area*  
**MPAB** - *Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary*  
**MPO** - *Metropolitan Planning Organization*  
**MSA** - *Metropolitan Statistical Area*  
**MTI** - *Metropolitan Transportation Initiative*  
**MTP** - *Metropolitan Transportation Plan*  
**NAAQS** - *National Ambient Air Quality Standards*  
**NDDOT** - *North Dakota Department of Transportation*  
**NDSU** - *North Dakota State University*  
**NEPA** - *National Environmental Protection Act*  
**NF** - *New Freedom program*  
**NHI** - *National Highway Institute*  
**NHPP** - *National Highway Performance Program*  
**NHS** - *National Highway System*  
**NIMS** - *National Incident Management System*  
**NIPP** - *National Infrastructure Protection Program*  
**NPIAS** - *National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems*  
**NRF** - *National Response Framework*  
**NTI** - *National Transit Institute*  
**O&M** - *Operations and Maintenance*  
**OCI** - *Operational Condition Index*  
**ONEDOT** - *FHWA and FTA together*  
**OTVR** - *Otter Valley Railroad*  
**PCI** - *Pavement Condition Index*  
**PE** - *Preliminary Engineering*  
**PL** - *Public Legislation (Metropolitan Planning Funds)*  
**PPP** - *Public Participation Plan*  
**PQI** - *Pavement Quality Index*  
**PSC** - *Project Selection Criteria*  
**PTZ** - *Pan-Tilt-Zoom*  
**R&P** - *Rehabilitation and Preservation*  
**RCIP** - *Regional & Community Improvement Priority*  
**RCTO** - *Regional Concept of Operations*

## Transportation and Related Acronyms (cont.)

**RFP** - *Request for Proposals*  
**RFQ** - *Request for Qualifications*  
**ROW** – *Right of Way*  
**RQI** - *Roadway Quality Index*  
**RRVW** - *Red River Valley & Western Railroad*  
**RSTI** - *Regionally Significant Transportation Infrastructure*  
**RWIS** - *Road Weather Information System*  
**SAFETEA-LU** - *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*  
**SHSP** - *Strategic Highway Safety Plan*  
**SIB** - *State Infrastructure Banks*  
**SIP** - *State Implementation Plan*  
**SOV** - *Single Occupancy Vehicle*  
**SPR** - *State Planning and Research funds*  
**SRTS** - *Safe Routes to School Program*  
**STIP** - *State Transportation Improvement Program*  
**STP** - *Surface Transportation Program*  
**STP/R** - *Surface Transportation Program Regional Funds*  
**STP/U** - *Surface Transportation Funds Attributable to the Urban Area*  
**STRACNET** - *Strategic Rail Corridor Network*  
**STRAHNET** - *Strategic Highway Network*  
**TAB** - *Transit Advisory Board*  
**TAP** - *Transportation Alternatives Program*  
**TAZ** - *Traffic Analysis Zones*  
**TCC** - *Transportation Technical Committee*  
**TCMs** - *Transportation Control Measures*  
**TDM** - *Travel Demand Model*  
**TDP** - *Transit Development Plan*  
**TEA-21** - *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century*  
**TEAM** - *Transportation Electronic Award and management*  
**TIF** - *Tax Increment Financing*  
**TIFIA** - *Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act*  
**TIP** - *Transportation Improvement Program*  
**Title VI** - *Title VI of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended*  
**TMA** - *Transportation Management Area*  
**TTC** - *Transportation Technical Committee*  
**UGPTI** - *Upper Great Plain Transportation Institute*  
**UPRR** - *Union Pacific Railroad*  
**UPWP** - *Unified Planning Work Program*  
**USDOT** - *United States Department of Transportation*  
**USFWS** - *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*  
**USC** – *United States Code*  
**UZA** - *Urbanized Area*  
**VMT** - *Vehicle Miles Traveled*  
**VSS** - *Valley Senior Services*  
**YOE** - *Year of Expenditure*

## **METRO COG POLICY BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Jurisdiction/Membership</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Email</b>
Roger Buscher	Moorhead Planning Commission	(218) 236-9685	N/A
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Karen Lauer	Barnesville Econ. Devel. Dir., Associate Member, Alternate	(218) 354-2145	klauer@bvillemn.net
Tim Mahoney	Fargo City Commission	(701) 541-5628	tmahoney@cityoffargo.com
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Jeffrey Morrau	Fargo Planning Commission, Alternate	(701) 526-3693	jm@artekta.com
Sherry Morris	Harwood Auditor, Associate Member, Alternate	(701) 281-0314	cityauditor@cityofharwood.com
Julie Nash (C), (EC)	Dilworth City Council	(701) 231-6653	julie.nash@nds.u.edu
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Mike Williams	Fargo City Commission	(701) 793-3771	gofargo@msn.com
John Young, Jr.	Hawley, Alternate	(218) 849-8369	cschenck@arvig.net
C = Chair, VC = Vice Chair, EC = Executive Committee			



## **METRO COG PRINCIPLES**

### Principle 1: Develop Exceptional Staff

- Hire the best people
- Challenge staff to continuously improve
- Grow effective leaders who live the COG philosophy
- Encourage creativity; think outside the box

### Principle 2: Share the Burden

- Level the workload through cross-training and a team approach

### Principle 3: Prevent Inefficiencies

- Use all resources (time, labor, and capital) efficiently

### Principle 4: Maintain Credibility

- Resolve issues proactively, before they become problems
- Make objective planning recommendations
- Use the best available information
- Use proven analytical tools
- Choose long-term benefits over short-term considerations

### Principle 5: Build Consensus

- Listen
- Take the time to plan carefully
- Serve as an honest broker to resolve conflicts
- Educate and achieve consensus
- Keep the public involved and informed
- Implement quickly

### Principle 6: Remain Flexible

- Be responsive to your customers changing needs

### Principle 7: Help Partners

- Maintain effective working relationships with public and private partners
- Encourage them to improve

### Principle 8: Be the Best

- Be the standard by which other MPOs are judged
- Do it right the first time
- Don't cut corners
- Be action oriented