

AMPO

MPO Engagement Toolkit

Empowering MPOs with Resources
for Effective Education and Outreach

Brief Overview of the Toolkit for the LAPC Policy Board

May 21, 2025

Link: [MPO Engagement Toolkit](#)

What's inside?

All-in-one resource for educating decision-makers and boosting outreach efforts.



- **Policy Education & Briefs**

- Legislative priorities
- MPO 101 Brief
- Issue Papers & Survey Reports
- Reauthorization 101
- One-pagers
- Presentations
- Data
- Podcasts

- **Engagement Tools**

- 119th Congressional Compass
- Key Messaging Framework
- Congressional Outreach Templates
- Meeting Request Templates
- Customizable MPO Briefs
- Tips for Engaging Congressional Staff

How to use the toolkit

- ✓ Explore the Resources
 - Get familiar with the tools available to strengthen your engagement.
- ✓ Find Your Representative
 - Use the [119th Congressional Compass Map](#) to locate your members of Congress
- ✓ Develop Key Messages
 - Engagement is most effective when your message is clear and targeted. Make every conversation count by using AMPO's [Key Messaging Starters and Framework](#)
- ✓ Pick Your Tools
 - Choose [resources](#) based on your engagement goals. Introductory meeting? Policy discussion? Ongoing engagement?
- ✓ Reach Out to AMPO and Stay Engaged

MPO 101

Importance of MPOs

- Ensures transportation investment and planning is efficient, data-driven, reflective of local needs and national priorities, while addressing broader regional challenges.
- Based on a **C**ontinuing, **C**ooperative, and **C**omprehensive (3 Cs) framework
 - Local control with regional reach
 - Solving regional problems through collaboration
 - Responsible use of federal funds
 - Economic development
 - Safety and resiliency
 - Transparency and public input
 - Adapting to the future

Anatomy of an MPO

- Develop core documents that shape regional transportation planning (MTP, UPWP, TIP, etc.)
- Typically include:
 - Elected Board
 - MPO Staff
 - Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - Subcommittee/Working Groups (i.e., CTAT)
 - Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC)

TMA vs. Non-TMA MPO

- MPOs are designated for urbanized areas with a population above 50,000
- TMAs (Transportation Management Areas) are specifically designated for populations 200,000 or more
 - Additional requirements includes Congestion Management, portion of STBG funds suballocated based on pop., and federal certification every 5 years

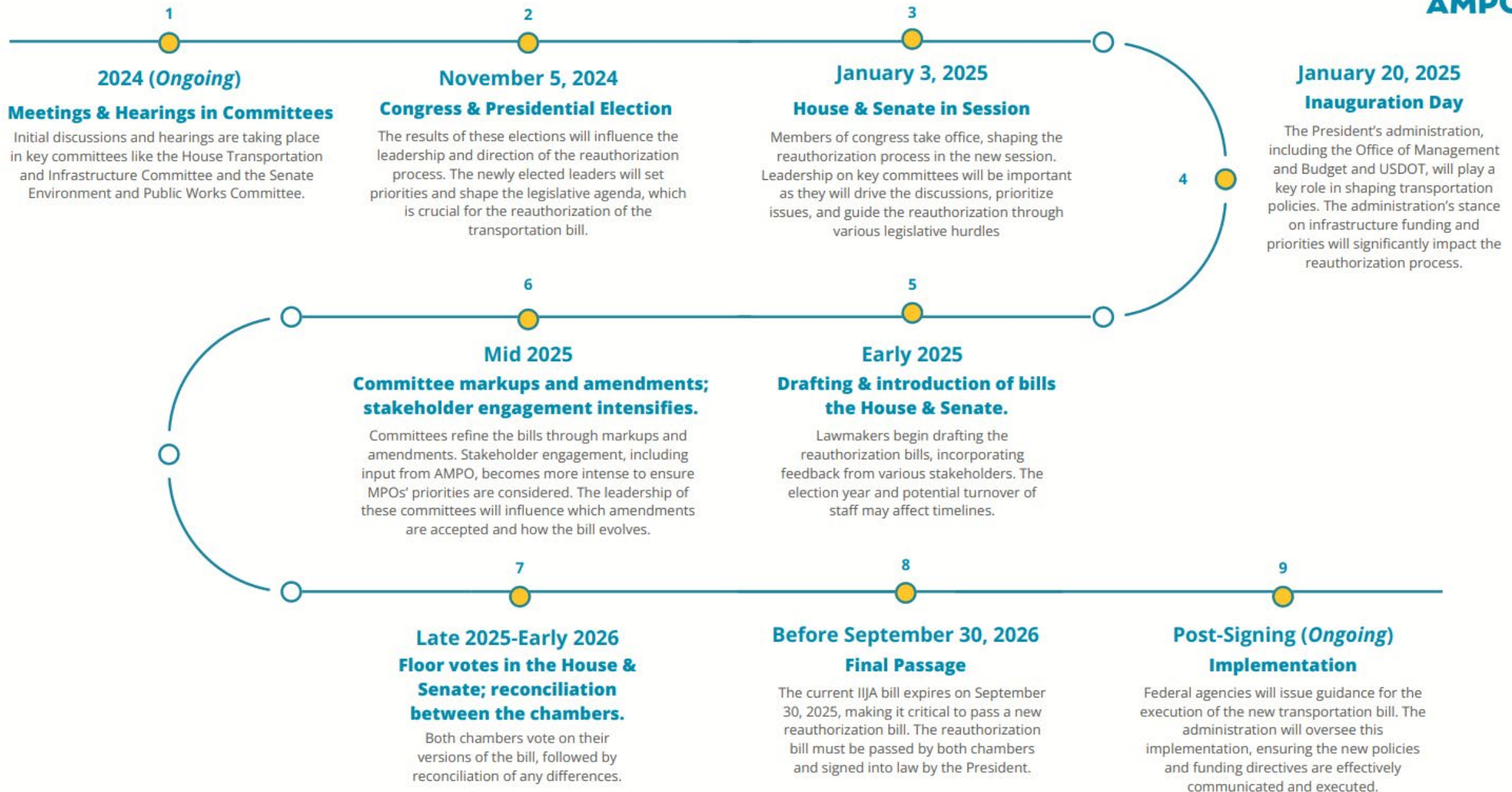


Download: [MPO 101 Brief](#)

Reauthorization 101

- The **Surface Transportation Reauthorization** (e.g. MAP-21, FAST, and IIJA) sets the **funding and policy framework** for surface transportations programs over a multi-year period.
 - These larger surface transportation funding reauthorizations shape how funding is directed through streams like our PL, STBG, CRP, and TA programs.
- Reauthorization is a key opportunity to shape the policies and funding frameworks that directly impact our communities.
 - For example, MPOs can build relationships with congressional offices to demonstrate how federal transportation policies have impacted our region's projects and communities.

 Download: [Reauthorization 101 Brief](#)



Note: Although the reauthorization process varies, it typically follows a multi-year cycle. Historically, reauthorization bills face delays, requiring short-term extensions to maintain funding.

Recent Reauthorization History	Legislation	Fiscal Years & Surface Transportation Funding	Key Impacts & Themes	Select Notable Programs
	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)	1992-1997 <i>\$155 billion</i>	First major shift to empower MPOs; emphasized multimodal and regional planning More funding flexibility Learn more	National Highway System (NHS) established Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program
	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)	1998-2003 <i>\$218 billion</i>	Expanded MPO authority and planning factors Strengthened environmental considerations and innovative financing tools Learn more	Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Expanded Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)	2005-2009 <i>\$244.1 billion</i>	Formalized public participation plans Increased Planning Funds Encouraged public-private partnerships Learn more	Safe Routes to School program Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)	2012-2014 <i>\$105 billion</i>	Introduced performance-based planning requirements Strengthened MPO accountability Learn more	National Performance Management Goals Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
	Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act	2016-2020 <i>\$305 billion</i>	Expanded transit funding and resiliency programs Increased focus on freight and safety Learn more	National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) Grants for freight Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Build America Bureau
	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)	2021-2026 <i>\$567 billion</i>	Historic funding increase Expanded MPO eligibility in competitive programs Focus on equity and resilience goals Learn more	Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program (PROTECT) National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program New discretionary grants (ex: Safe Streets & Roads for All)

The Role of MPOs in the Reauthorization Process

MPOs play a vital role in translating federal policies into regional plans and projects. MPOs ensure that local governments and communities have a say in how those funds are spent.

During reauthorization, MPOs can:

- **Build relationships with Congressional offices**
 - Demonstrate how federal transportation policies directly impact your region's projects and communities.
- **Participate in national coalitions**
 - Work with organizations like AMPO to strengthen advocacy efforts.
- **Share data-driven stories**
 - Highlight successful projects funded by federal programs like STBG to show the real-world impact of federal investments.
- **Develop policy priorities**
 - Identify and communicate both regional needs and broader MPO priorities, such as increased planning funds, reduced local match, and more direct access to federal dollars.



Download: [Reauthorization 101 Brief](#)

Federal Funding 101

Planning Formula Funds

Planning Funds
(PL/5303):

- These formula funds support MPO planning activities and are allocated to all MPOs based on population and other factors. They fund transportation studies, staff, and long-range planning efforts.

Capital Formula Funds

Surface Transportation
Block Grant (STBG):

- Funds support road, bridge, and multimodal projects. In areas with populations over 200,000 (i.e., Transportation Management Areas or TMAs), a portion is directly suballocated to MPOs. For smaller MPOs, the state determines the funding allocation.

Congestion Mitigation
and Air Quality
Improvement (CMAQ):

- This program funds projects aimed at reducing transportation-related emissions. CMAQ funds are suballocated to TMAs, while in smaller regions they are often administered by the state. Not all MPOs receive; based on Air Quality and/or agreement with State DOT.

Transportation
Alternatives (TA) Set-
Aside:

- Funds projects focused on improving non-motorized transportation options, such as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. TA funds are suballocated in TMAs, with administration varying in smaller regions.

Carbon Reduction
Program (CRP):

- Funds projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Like other programs, CRP is suballocated to TMAs, and is often state-administered in smaller areas.

1. US Congress authorizes & appropriates funds



2. Highway Trust Fund (HTF) as a funding source - primarily fed. gas tax & transportation fees



3. Funds flow to State DOTs based on federal apportionments



4. MPOs receive suballocated funds



5. MPOs program funds into UPWP, TIP, and MTP



6. Project implementation



Download: [Federal Funding 101 Brief](#)

Federal Funding 101

- Most federal funds require a local match, typically 20% for PL funds and **80% federal / 20% local split** for most programs
- **Importance of Participation:**
 - MPOs offer a powerful platform for decision making
 - MPO board members translate community priorities into regional action and investments
 - Federal reauthorization and transportation funding decisions are heavily influenced by local elected officials – **advocacy is key!**
- More information link: [Highway Trust Fund Primer](#)

 Download: [Federal Funding 101 Brief](#)

Legislative Priorities for MPOs

1. Increase Federal Planning (PL) Funds

- Increased PL funds = smarter investments
- Planning is the foundation of successful projects
- Current planning funds are insufficient, representing less than 1% of total formula funding

2. Reduce Local Match Requirements

- Ensuring access to federal funds
- Lowering barriers to local participation
- Balancing critical local priorities

3. Shift Certain Discretionary Funds to Formula-Based Programs

- Reliable and predictable funding is key
- More efficient project delivery

4. Direct Recipient Status for Certain Federal Funds

- Strengthening local control
- Faster, more responsible planning and project delivery

5. Allow the Carryover of Federal Funds

- Maximizes the use of federal dollars
- Flexibility for smarter investments

These priorities empower MPOs to deliver **better, more impactful transportation solutions.**



Download: [Legislative Priorities One-Pager](#)

Key Messages

- **Strengthening the MPO process**
 - **MPOs and decision-making authority over federal funds:** Congress designed federal transportation funding to be allocated in part through MPOs (PL, STBG, CMAQ, CRP), ensuring local and regional priorities guide investment decisions. However, administrative barriers often limit or delay MPO control over project selection and funding obligations
 - **Stable, dedicated funding is essential for MPO success:** Predictable, long-term, direct funding is the foundation of successful MPO-led planning and implementation. Without stable formula funding, regional governments are left in a cycle of inconsistent and unreliable financing.
 - **Locally driven investments:** MPOs are designed to have authority of project selection, ensuring investments reflect local and regional needs. But too often, that authority is sidestepped. Strengthening MPO decision-making leads to greater transparency, accountability, and effectiveness.

Importance of MPOs:

- ✓ MPOs are the first step in project execution
- ✓ MPOs ensure strategic, regional coordination
- ✓ MPOs break down silos
- ✓ MPOs are best positioned for regional solutions
- ✓ MPOs align transportation investments with local and national priorities
- ✓ MPOs convene key stakeholders
- ✓ MPOs conduct data-driven, long-term planning



Download: [Key Messaging Framework Guide](#)

Key Messages

First impressions matter: introducing MPOs

- What are MPOs?

As **required by Federal law**, MPOs are **regional policy-making bodies** charged with developing and coordinating multimodal transportation plans based on Congressionally created performance measures.

- Why are MPOs important?

You wouldn't build a house without a blueprint – so why build a regional transportation network, critical to economic success, without a plan? MPOs develop these blueprints using **data-driven processes** and **extensive stakeholder engagement** to ensure investments are targeted, responsive to local needs, aligned with national priorities, and future-proofing.

- MPO Elevator Pitch Guide:

- ✓ **Who We Are:**

Your MPO's name and its role in regional transportation planning.

- ✓ **Our Region:**

Population and the number of counties, cities, and areas you serve.

- ✓ **Who We Represent:**

Share board composition and engagement with key stakeholders.

- ✓ **Federal Funding:**

Highlight the amount of federal funding your MPO oversees.

- ✓ **Our Impact:**

Showcase successful projects.






Download: [Key Messaging Framework Guide](#)

Get Involved with AMPO

AMPO

Join the engagement effort! Stay engaged by:

-  Signing up for updates
-  Joining AMPO Groups and Committees
-  Participating in upcoming events

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