Introduction to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process

COG 101

Adapted by
Kern Council of Governments
(Kern COG)

January 2019

Better Planning – Better Transportation
The Kern COG Board:

11 Elected City Council Member from the 11 Kern County cities
2 Members of the Board of Supervisors

Ex-Officio Members from:
Military Joint Planning Policy Board District
Golden Empire Transit
Caltrans District 6
Voting Structure of the Board

- All Board members with voting privileges can vote
- 2-Hats: 1) Transportation Planning Policy Committee (TPPC) and 2) the Board
- Board can contain “ex-officio” members that participate but don’t vote
Kern COG Committee Structure

All 11 Cities & 2 County Supervisors
Kern Council of Governments Board of Directors
Ex-Officio: GET, Caltrans (2 dist.), Military JPPB

Transportation Planning Policy Committee (TPPC)
same players, everyone votes

Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC)
Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) & Congestion Management TAC
Social Service Technical Advisory Committee (SSTAC)
Public Transit Operators Committee (PTOC)

Kern COG Board Executive Committee

Two most active committees

Geographic Information Advisory Committee (GIAC)
Council of Governments (COG) Basics

DESIGNATED RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Federally designated **MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization**
- State designated **RTPA = Regional Transportation Planning Agency**
- Locally established **KMAA = Kern Motorist Aid Authority - 511 program**
- State/Federal designated **CMA = Congestion Management Agency**
- State designated Affiliate Data Center - U.S. Census coordination/training
- State/Federal designated Local Clearinghouse for grant applications
- Federally designated Home Mortgage Disclosure Depository
The MPO as the Forum
Working Beyond Jurisdictions

- MPO is the forum for discussion
  - Place to air issues
  - Find solutions that benefit all jurisdictions/regions
- MPOs work with adjoining regions
  - Consistency of projects
  - Multi-regional projects
The People in the Process

The Public

- States
- Regional Agencies
- Local Government
- User/Special Interest Groups
- Private Sector
- Legal System
- Tribal Governments
- Federal Government
Key Decisions and Products

- Long-Term Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Short-Term Transportation Improvement Program/Plan (TIP)
- Public Participation Plan
- Overall Work Program (OWP)
Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

To be Eligible for Federal Funds:

- a project must be consistent with the approved transportation plan
The Long-Term RTP...

- Documents conclusions and decisions
- Includes long term and short term policies, strategies, and actions
- Covers capital improvements and operations
- Addresses federal requirements including:
  - Movement of People and Goods
  - Environmental Mitigation
  - Environmental Justice
- Is financially constrained by reasonably available resources
Short-Term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Allocates limited transportation funds to projects and programs
- List of transportation projects to be implemented in the short-term (no less than 4 years)
- Includes nearly all federally funded surface transportation projects
- Includes all regionally significant projects – regardless of funding source in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas
- Identifies funding source for each project
TIP adoption requires identifying top priority projects for funding.

The total cost of worthy projects always exceeds available funding – must set priorities.

The TIP and STIP are products of the programming process.
Characteristics of a Successful Programming Process – Collaborative, Comprehensive, Continuous

- Early consensus on planning goals
- Effective communication among technical and policy leaders
- Continuous public involvement
- Qualitative as well as quantitative criteria
Federal Requirements for Public Involvement

- MPOs must prepare a public involvement plan
- Plan must be proactive and provide for:
  - Complete information and timely public notice
  - Early and continuing involvement
  - Full public access to key decisions
  - Explicit consideration and response to input
Overall Work Program (OWP)

- Lists the metropolitan area’s program of planning studies
- Identifies sources of funding, schedules and responsible agencies
- Coordinates the planning by all regional participants
- Describes all Federally-funded studies
- Lays out MPOs Strategic Plan
Major Policy and Planning Issues
Federal Transportation Funding

- Each state is different (in California there is a 60/40 split between Southern and Northern California, Kern is in the South)

- “Earmarked funding” such as High Priority Projects, i.e. Thomas Roads Improvement Program (TRIP)
Future Funding is Subject to Change

- Federal FAST Act expires in 9/30/2020
- Administration & Congressional priorities may change
- Future motor fuel revenues may vary
- The Highway Trust Fund has been saved from insolvency by Congress multiple times
Good freight movement is vital to a region’s economy.

MPO should examine how freight moves in and out of its region.

Engage the freight community to find “win-win” solutions to problems.
2010 saw a reduction in fatality levels not seen since the 1950s.

MPO can examine system for trends and allocate resources to address safety related issues.

MPOs can serve as a forum for safety related discussion with applicable agencies.
What is Conformity?

- Established by the Federal Clean Air Act
- Requires evaluation of emissions from transportation plans, programs, and projects BEFORE any element may be implemented;
- Applies in geographic areas where transportation-related pollutants violate national air quality standards; or
- Have violated national air quality standards in the past.
- Connects Air Quality and Transportation Planning
Questions?

Additional Transportation Planning Background Info –
https://www.kerncog.org/transportation-planning-background-information/

- A Guide to Transportation Decision Making 2015, FHWA (24 pages)
- Transportation Funding in California 2018, Caltrans (40 pages)
- California Mobility Investment Opportunities 2017, CTC (82 pages)
- Transportation/Air Quality Conformity—A Basic Guide for State and Local Officials 2017, FHWA (24 pages)
- Regional Planning/Climate Change – Understanding SB 375 (8 pages)
- A Guide to Performance Based Planning, 2014 (188 pages)
Consider Kern COG an Extension to Your Local Government Staff.

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