

WARREN COUNTY MUNICIPAL CENTER



LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Telephone: (518) 761-6410

**Planning and Community Development Committee
Meeting Agenda
27 June, 2011**

Pending Items:(Referral from the Clerk of the Board)

- 1) Three vacancies on the Warren County Planning Board: two from the northern part of the County and one from the Town of Queensbury; Committee to discuss the possibility of reducing the number of members on the Planning Board. (05.26.11)
- 2) Ms. Tatich to continue to research properties in Warren County to determine if there is a possibility of qualifying for grant funding. (05.26.11)

Committee Actions:

- 1.) Discussion and potential action to amend Resolution No. 376 of 2011 concerning a contract with EnvisionGEO for the development of a brochure for the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor. Contract value is \$1,200 per year.
- 2.) Discussion regarding the status of AGFTC and potential action to support their continued funding as a small MPO under the new Federal Transportation Bill. (Suggested support letters to be provided at the meeting.)

Discussion Items:

- 1.) Impact of the Governors' newly established Economic Development Councils as it pertains to existing funding requests to the Housing Trust Fund Corp. Discussion on the preliminary application submitted on behalf of Hudson Headwaters Health Center for the project in the Town of Queensbury.
- 2.) Mapping projects in the Towns impacted by the recent damaging rain storms. Brief discussion on Town documentation activities.
- 3.) Discussion on staff involvement in Fire Inspection Services undertaken by the Department of Building and Fire Codes.
- 4.) Other items as identified by Committee members.



June 10, 2011

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Mica,

The transportation authorization bill is a top priority for the United States. We are struggling to balance pressing infrastructure needs while strengthening our nation's economy. These two critical issues overlap in many ways.

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations ("AMPO") writes regarding our serious concerns about the future of smaller metropolitan planning organizations ("MPO"). AMPO represents MPOs across the United States, of which there are 385 ranging in designated population size of 50,000 to several million.

As Congress debates the reauthorization of surface transportation legislation, we would like to remind you that it has been AMPO's policy recommendation to **retain all existing MPOs under 200,000 in population** regardless of any new MPO threshold designation changes that may be included in legislation. While we agree that certain changes in law may be needed to improve the planning process, all existing small MPOs must remain in operation to continue their critical roles in decision-making.

- **Local elected officials are the MPO.** Removing the decision-making authorities from the local level will take away the voice of the local government, its citizens, and people in the regions. Citizens elect their local public officials to reflect the unique nature of their region.
- **Citizens and voters need to be heard and participate in transportation decisions that impact their daily lives.** Removing the MPOs' connection to public participation will lead to decisions made without actual citizen involvement. It will only increase the distance between the average citizen and the policy-maker.
- **Should Congress elect to change the population threshold without including grandfather provisions, States will lose MPOs.** In fact, with the possible elimination of MPOs in areas with populations lower than 200,000, 8 states potentially will not have a MPO. In all, the 200,000 threshold would eliminate approximately 220 of the 385 MPOs. Some current MPOs have existed since 1962; Decades of an open table for the operators, public agencies, state officials, local electeds and citizens will disappear.

*...the transportation advocate for metropolitan regions...
committed to enhancing MPOs' abilities to improve metropolitan transportation systems...*

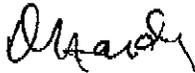
As required under U.S. Code Title 23, Chapter 1, Section 134, MPOs are policy boards comprised of local elected officials, representatives of public agencies that administer or operate transportation modes and state officials. The boards are responsible for carrying out federally required transportation planning activities that include, but are not limited to, development of long-term multimodal transportation plans, coordinated selection of transportation improvements in a fiscally constrained manner, public outreach, and coordination with states and numerous public and citizen interests.

With current economic realities, these transportation decisions and investments are critical to economic growth, our citizens, and the nation's financial engines, which are tied to metropolitan regions of all sizes. Given the importance of transportation infrastructure to economic growth, security, and sustainability, MPOs are an inextricable part of the U.S. economy.

AMPO has provided Congress with legislative language that would grandfather existing MPOs from designation changes. If you would like to receive a copy of this draft legislative provision please feel free to contact DeLania Hardy, Executive Director, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations at 202-296-7051, or dhardy@ampo.org. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

The following signatories support AMPO's position on grandfathering existing MPOs:

Sincerely,



DeLania Hardy
Executive Director, AMPO

Enclosures
6/9/11

**Adirondack / Glens Falls Transportation Council**

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June 20, 2011

Re: Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Population Requirement

Dear ,

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were created in Federal transportation law in 1973 as a means of implementing a requirement (established in 1962) for a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning process in urban areas with more than 50,000 people. This requirement has remained in place through subsequent reauthorizations of the Federal transportation program, as Congress has seen the value that MPOs add to the proper allocation of funds from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. MPOs develop twenty year long range transportation plans and four programs of federally funded projects with a decision-making structure that involves substantial input from the public, local elected officials, transit operators, and state transportation agencies. The results have proven the test of time: the development of metropolitan transportation systems that support the movement of people and freight within the more than 380 urbanized areas throughout the United States. Each of the thirteen MPOs in New York have become regional forums where stakeholders continually explore the positive relationship between transportation investment and creating a strong healthy region.

It has come to our attention that the future of MPOs in metropolitan areas of fewer than 200,000 people, including our regional MPO, the Adirondack / Glens Falls Transportation Council, may be in jeopardy as reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU is being considered. While we understand that there are some small metropolitan regions that may not make full utilization of a coordinated transportation planning process, this is not universally the case. Many smaller regions have significant transportation issues to address, ranging from air quality to seasonal congestion to freight movement.

In New York State, the MPOs in our smaller metropolitan regions have proven their value not only to their constituents, but also as part of a statewide transportation network. As examples, the Adirondack / Glens Falls Transportation Council has been successful in:

- Providing a 'seat at the table' for local municipalities to advance significant transportation infrastructure needs
- Providing technical justifications and abundant opportunities for public input for major transportation system investments
- Prioritizing mobility issues of regional and national significance
- Promoting, supporting and improving public transportation
- Preserving options for rural mobility, including administration of a regional carpooling match service

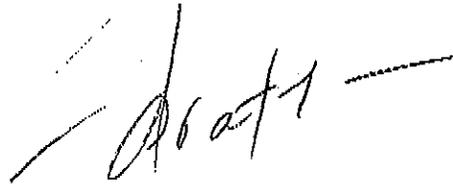
- Advancing bicyclist and pedestrian issues

The A/GFTC Policy Committee strongly supports the direction offered in earlier legislative initiatives as articulated by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. This would set a higher population floor for designating new MPOs, but offer the opportunity for existing MPOs in regions under 200,000 population to continue to serve their communities. This could require both an affirmative act by the MPO Policy Committee and a demonstration of technical capability to conduct the required planning process. A/GFTC staff is ready and able to adapt to changes as necessary to continue to demonstrate the value of continued investments in transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. MPOs will continue to be the mechanisms that ensure that Federal transportation dollars are distributed wisely in order to provide safe and efficient transportation for New York State in support of our economy.

Sincerely,

Daniel G. Stec
Chairman, A/GFTC Policy Committee



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