



Regional Rural Transportation Planning

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National Association of Development Organizations

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About NADO

- National association for 540 regional development organizations, including emerging network of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs or RPOs)
- Promote public policies that strengthen local governments, communities and economies through the regional strategies, coordination efforts and program expertise of the nation's regional development organizations

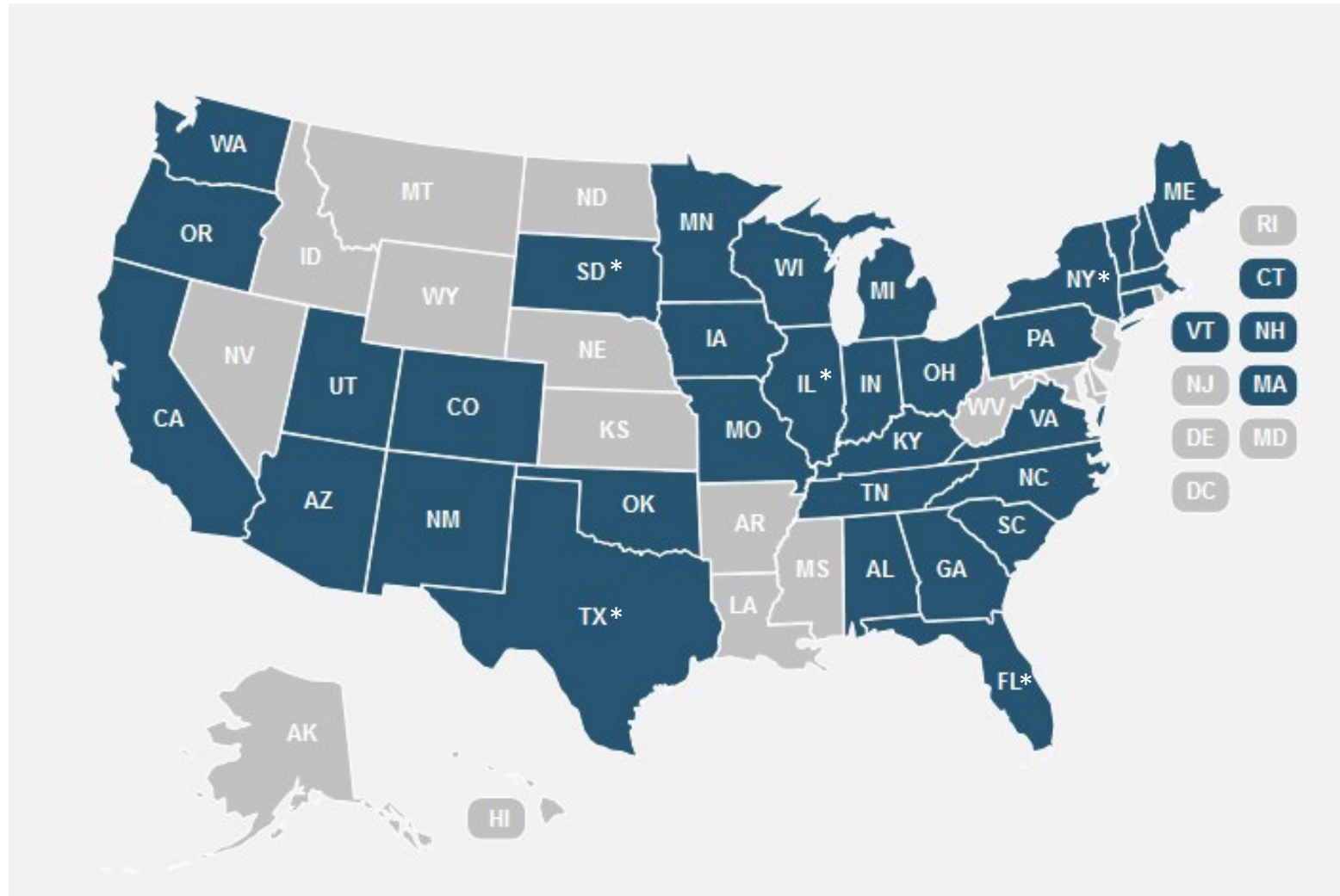
About NADO

- Through the NADO Research Foundation, develop training and resources related to:
 - Rural/small metro transportation planning, RPO America
 - Small business finance
 - Economic development planning
 - Regional resiliency
 - Developing quality of place

Today's Agenda

- Background on RTPOs
- Considerations for forming RTPOs
- Resources related to local project administration

Regional Transportation Planning Models



How Did We Get Here?

- ISTEA (1991)
 - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
- TEA-21 (1998)
 - Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
- SAFETEA-LU (2005)
 - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
- 2003 FHWA/FTA planning regulations were adopted implementing language on rural planning and state-local consultation. (4-year process)
- Same language used in 2007 regulations
- In essence requires meaningful input by local officials in the transportation planning process/decision making—separate from public outreach efforts

MAP-21 & FAST Act RTPOs

- Structure: policy committee, fiscal agent
- Basic regional planning, TA duties outlined
- State outreach to local officials separate from public outreach
- State roles:
 - “Cooperate” with RTPOs on LRTP
 - “Consult” with RTPOs on Interstate, Bridge, NHS, 5310, 5311 projects in STIP
 - “Cooperate” with RTPOs on other projects in STIP for areas with a population under 50,000
 - “Consult” with RTPOs on Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Forming an RTPO

- Usually found within an existing organization
 - Fiscal agent, administrative support
 - Professional planning support
 - Lower 48: An organization *like* an ARDOR, a borough, a multi-jurisdictional human services agency, sometimes a metropolitan planning organization (AMATS, FMATS) that could also serve neighboring rural areas, or a standalone agency

Forming an RTPO

- Determine policy board makeup
 - Existing regional organization's board?
 - Majority local governments
 - Transportation mode operators, owners, or key stakeholders
 - Major stakeholder reps: health, business, other
 - State DOT (voting or non-voting)

Forming an RTPO

- Can set up technical committee to advise board
 - Local government professional staff
 - Transportation mode representatives
 - State agencies
 - Transportation user representatives

Forming an RTPO

- Establish bylaws
 - Membership
 - Leadership
 - Roles & responsibilities
 - Policies, processes, procedures

Forming an RTPO

- Who is typically NOT at the decision-making table?
- Who is assumed to be a *beneficiary* but doesn't have a role?
- What roles could they play on boards and/or advisory committees to *contribute* new perspectives or identify different challenges and opportunities? What would make them feel included?
 - Youth?
 - Residents with limited income?
 - Limited English speakers?
 - Individuals with disabilities or chronic illnesses? Neurodiverse individuals?
 - Who else?

What makes a region?

- Multiple jurisdictions
- Political agreement
 - Locals want to work together
 - State agrees; governor may designate as RTPO

What *e/else* makes a region?

- Multiple jurisdictions that have some shared goals and concerns
- Political agreement
 - Locals want to work together toward overlapping interests
 - State agrees to institutionalize a process to work with those regions; governor may designate as RTPO so that specific roles and responsibilities are outlined
- Tips:
 - Consider adding transportation as a program area to existing organizations that serve multiple jurisdictions
 - Or select regions where residents and leaders are accustomed to working together or could envision working together
 - Don't be afraid to try a pilot effort to see what works

Why work together in an RTPO?

- **Self interest:** What's in it for my community? What will we get out of it? Less interested in other communities' concerns, but not necessarily selfish.
- **Shared interest:** Is there something in it for both/all of us that gives us a shared interest in a successful outcome? Symbiotic, although the benefits may differ for each partner.
- **Common interest:** Altruism, public good.

Common interest alone isn't enough to change how we operate.

Value Proposition: State DOT

- Efficient consultation and cooperation
 - Enhanced participation of local governments required
 - *One* meeting for DOT staff to attend
- RTPo assistance with reviewing projects in the pipeline:
 - What's changed at local level? What's still a priority?
- Public outreach
 - Help DOT host regional local official forum, public forum
 - RTPOs often attend local government meetings
 - Can conduct general public + targeted stakeholder outreach

Value Proposition: Regional organizations

- Efficient planning
 - Bring a clearer transportation lens to other work
 - Align plans and programs to minimize planning fatigue of officials, committee members, public
 - ID potential projects that support multiple regional goals
 - Connect programmatic dots in-house
 - What are the transportation needs of revolving loan fund clients?
 - Human services + transportation planning = greater understanding of mobility
 - What are we asking transportation to do to support community economic development strategies?

Value Proposition: Local Governments

- Clear sense of planning/programming process and roles
- Regional cooperation = larger voice
 - Don't be afraid of identifying an RTPO region in multiple DOT regions or multiple legislative districts
- Access to a general resource on transportation
- Awareness of big picture trends in demographics, economy

Value Proposition: Local Governments

- Technical assistance to rural places (dependent on needs, RTPO staff time, and funding)
 - Traffic counts, parking counts, safety studies, ADA audits, local roads issues
 - Convene local transit providers or road managers
 - Learn major state/fed program categories: answer questions about what projects are eligible or assist with grant writing
 - Joint purchasing opportunities

Value Proposition: Businesses

- Identify pain points that can realistically be addressed
- Transportation + economic development opportunities
- Avoid surprises—opportunities for outreach

Value Proposition: Residents

- Benefit from regional perspective, aligned planning efforts
- Participate through citizen's advisory committee or providing input through engagement opportunities
- Local technical assistance benefits people, not just governments, when there are improvements to mobility, safety, accessibility, efficiency

Equity?

- Easy to lose focus on equity when implementing new processes and trends
- Not just rural vs. urban, but also *within* rural
- Tips: Broad engagement, link planning processes and programs, and connect to implementation
- Make economic resilience meaningful to all residents

Lessons Learned

- Be clear about how RTPOs fit into state's consultation & cooperation processes
- Be consistent about roles
- Develop regional priority list:
 - What can we agree on?
 - What issues/projects are most important?
- Be realistic and strategic—may need to focus on specific or issues rather than needs of region's entire network

Lessons Learned

- Build buy-in strategically
 - Quick wins
 - Champions
 - Consistent participation
 - Quality meeting agendas

Lessons Learned

- Level of state investment & match: you get what you pay for
 - Meet federal requirements for consultation/cooperation
 - Pain points for state
 - Regional capabilities
 - Local government needs
 - Baseline tasks for all RTPOs
 - Flexibility: Rural planning work programs, pilots, special studies
- Invest in new RTPOs: training, mentoring, regular statewide meetings

RTPO Funding

- Most common source is FHWA Statewide Planning and Research
 - 80:20, with match combo of state/local funds
- FTA Planning, state funds, other
- Range from \$5,000 – \$300,000+ annual funding including match
 - \$80,000 – \$100,000+ common

Local Project Administration

- Locals may be administering Community Development Block Grants, USDA Rural Development Grants and Loans; transportation projects would be similar
 - Prevailing wages (Davis-Bacon Act)
 - Buy American
 - Environmental review (NEPA)
 - Title VI and Environmental Justice
 - Americans with Disabilities Act

Local Project Administration

Pre-award:



Post-award:



Local Project Administration

Key resources from the Federal Highway Administration

- Federal-aid Essentials for Local Public Agencies:
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federal-aidessentials/index.cfm>
Extensive how-to video library
- Federal-aid Program Administration:
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federalaid/lpa/>
Statutory and Regulatory Requirements
- A Guide to Federal-aid Programs and Projects
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federalaid/projects.pdf>

Local Project Administration

Key resources from the Federal Highway Administration

- Realty Toolkit

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/local_public_agencies/lpa_tool

Right of Way training and resources

- Environmental Review Toolkit

<https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/default.aspx>

Statutes and regulations, resources

Resources for Regional Planning

The screenshot shows the homepage of Rural Transportation.org. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the logo and navigation links: Home, About Us, RTPO Models, Resources, NADO Reports, Excellence Awards, and Events. Below the header is a large featured article titled "NADO Holds Downtown Redevelopment Webinar" with a photo of a large outdoor gathering. To the right of the photo is a short text snippet and a "read more" button. Below the featured article is a "LATEST NEWS" section with three items, each with a date (FEB 05) and a brief description. To the right of the news section is a "NEWSLETTER" sign-up box and an "UPCOMING EVENTS" section with two items: "New Partners for Smart Growth Conference" and "Webinar: Measuring the Pedestrian Streetscape".

The screenshot shows the NADO RPOAMERICA website. At the top, there is a logo for NADO (National Association of Development Organizations) and RPOAMERICA (A Program Affiliate of NADO). Below the logo is the text "SERVING AMERICA'S RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROFESSIONALS". The main heading is "Rural Transportation News". Below this is a paragraph of text: "Learn about new resources on RTPO planning, NADO awards, safety, health, connected and autonomous vehicles, and more!". To the right of the text is a "Visit our website" button. Below this is a section titled "NADO Research Foundation Releases 2017 Regional Transportation Planning Organizations Peer Exchange Summary". To the right of this section is a photo of a group of people walking and cycling on a path, with the caption "Regional Transportation Planning Organizations Peer Exchange Summary" and "Courtesy Coastal Regional Commission". Below the photo is a paragraph of text: "The NADO Research Foundation has released a summary of the [Regional Transportation Planning Organizations Peer Exchange](#) (PDF) that occurred on June 30, 2017 in conjunction with the National Regional Transportation Conference. The document synthesizes discussions that occurred in four smaller groups, which were organized by multi-state region. The summary documents discussion themes around evolving RTPO planning with new practices and recent successful developments; connecting transportation planning and economic resilience; funding and partnerships; opportunities and concerns from transformative innovation; and participants' hopes

Connect with NADO

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Visit us online: www.NADO.org

www.RuralTransportation.org | www.CEDScentral.com

Upcoming events:

- NADO Annual Training Conference, October 16 – 18, Portland, OR
- National Regional Transportation Conference, July 2022, Kansas City, MO
- Check our websites for other upcoming webinars/events