



ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING  
ORGANIZATIONS

## MPOs and Transit Agencies— Sitting Together at the Table?

Rich Denbow, Denbow Consulting

**H**ow well do MPOs and transit agencies work together? Are transportation plans and programs adequately multimodal? Are transit agencies participants at the MPO table, and vice versa? AMPO is working in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration to shed some light on these questions. This partnership resulted in formation of the AMPO Transit Development Task Force.

AMPO's research shows that the range of experience among transit agencies and MPOs in the post-ISTEA era indicates that transit operators are involved in the MPO process for many key decisions. Working relationships between MPOs and transit agencies are typically quite cooperative, leading to multimodal funding and project decisions that would not have happened before ISTEA.

Upon further examination, it is clear that transit agencies may not always have a seat at the table alongside elected officials on MPO boards where critical transportation policy and funding allocation decisions are made. In some instances, transit agencies do not have parity with their counterpart highway agencies in their access to decision makers and to the planning process.

But many good models exist for a productive relationship between MPOs and transit operators on both the working and policy level, and transit operators are generally experiencing better outcomes from the MPO process as measured by funding allocation and project selection.

The AMPO Transit Development Task Force was formed to bring together staff from several MPOs and transit agencies across the country to promote understanding regarding transit planning being conducted by MPOs. AMPO members believe that increased knowledge among the MPO community of models of good working relationships with transit agencies will greatly assist technical and policy decision-making, leading to improved multimodal transportation plans and programs.

The first meeting of the AMPO Transit Development Task Force took place on March 29-30, 2004 in Washington, DC. Representatives from MPOs and transit agencies in seven metropolitan areas were present: Dallas, Orlando, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Washington, DC, and Wilmington, DE. AMPO staff and representatives of the American Public Transportation Association, the American Planning Association, FTA, and FHWA joined them.

### Key Characteristics of Effective MPO-Transit Partnerships

The participants believe that the MPO-transit agency working relationships among those present are generally positive. Throughout the meeting, the participants often returned to three key characteristics that are present when transit agencies and MPO work together effectively. They are:

#### Technical Credibility

A successful transit system is self-perpetuating. Although the fight may initially be difficult, the system gains credibility and support if results meet the expectations and forecasts developed by the sponsoring agencies.

Good technical studies depend on models that take into account transit as well as highway modes. MPOs and transit agencies that work together on models can produce credible forecasts that garner support from other stakeholders.

#### Established Forums for Having Transit at the Table

Institutional framework is important; MPO board structure and transit board structure may influence how MPOs consider transit in the planning process. The manner in which the agencies are able to institutionalize these forums also makes a difference. Examples include a project selection process that addresses transit, transit representation on the MPO board or technical committees, joint participation in environmental studies, and MOUs. Some participants emphasized that the buy-in is most helpful when it happens at the staff level.

#### The Intangibles of Personal Relationships

The existence and extent of lines of communication between the boards of an MPO and a transit agency are important for effective multimodal planning to take place. Existence of personal relationships between members of the two boards is also important and enhances these lines of communication.

Individual personalities of key board members can make a significant difference in the relationship between transit agencies and MPOs and in the development of a multimodal plan. This aspect cannot transfer from one metro area to another easily. However, this can be cultivated through means such as board training and facilitation. Public outreach and education is important too, and can enhance situations where the citizens lead the leaders on important transportation issues.

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### Outcomes

The MPOs and transit agencies report improved outcomes in metro areas where these characteristics are present:

- Better public understanding of agency roles and acceptance of outcomes
- Transportation agencies speak with one voice and messages are consistent
- Citizens are engaged in the process
- Redundancy and resource use is minimized
- Local government buy-in is improved
- Regional prioritization of projects

### Transit at the Table

FTA was present to discuss a recent report titled "Transit at the Table: A Guide to Participation in Metropolitan Decisionmaking." The report presents results of interviews with transit agencies and recommendations on how to secure strategic positions in the metropolitan planning process. The report includes a self-assessment checklist to help transit agencies assess the level and quality of their involvement in the metropolitan planning process.

### Next Steps for the Task Force

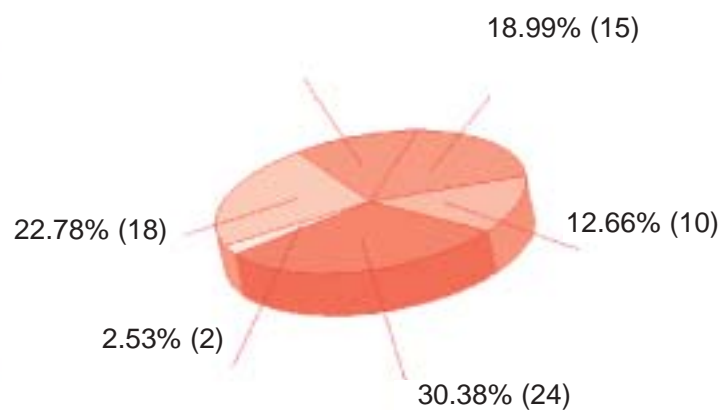
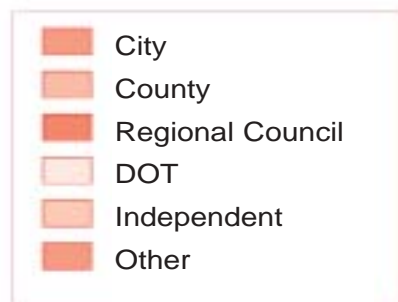
The group discussed products that would assist MPOs and transit agencies as they strive to enhance multimodal planning. Sharing examples of well-written, tight scopes contained in request for proposals and scopes for rail studies would enhance study outcomes. A group member suggested AMPO begin development of a profile of MPO and transit agency affiliation arrangements that would include information on voting arrangements, board structure and representation, committee membership, and funding sources. The Task Force also discussed development of a "Self-Assessment Guide for MPO Officials" that would pose questions to provide an indication of the extent of multimodalism in the planning process.

The group will convene again to decide when and where to next meet, and how to best convey this useful information to the wider MPO community. Look for further updates in future editions of *Metros*.

# AMPO Survey Results: Institutional Survey

Michael Montag, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

## Where is your MPO housed?



In response to an increasing number of questions from new MPOs, this spring AMPO conducted a survey to gather information that will help our new colleagues get on their feet. The survey, which was distributed to all MPOs and received 80 responses, asked MPOs about various aspects of their regular operations – from how many people they employ to what non-required activities they undertake. The results illustrate the diversity among the MPO community, and will hopefully provide new, and even existing, MPOs with a solid informational base on which to build their organizations.

The variance among MPOs becomes clear when you compare the mean and median staff sizes, urbanized area populations, and federal funding levels of MPOs who responded to this survey. While they represent a mean UZA of nearly 1 million people, the median is only 208,000. MPOs also have widely variant staff sizes – ranging from 1 to 129, with a mean of 12.6 and median of 5.5. MPOs receive vastly different sums of PL funding, ranging from \$56 thousand to \$15 million, with a mean of nearly

\$1 million and a median of just \$300,000. More than 60 percent have a source of funding other than PL and 5303 money. With such a diverse group of needs and resources, it stands to reason that MPOs across the country are constructed differently, operate differently, and plan differently than one another.

The most basic element of an MPO's organizational structure is the entity that employs its staff. Of the responding MPOs, 28 percent are staffed independently, while 30 percent are staffed by a regional council. Greater proportions of large (representing populations over 1 million) and medium (populations between 200 thousand and 1 million) MPOs are employed by regional councils. By contrast a larger share of MPOs under 200 thousand are staffed by cities, counties, or other arrangements. In general, the entity that staffs an MPO also houses it and provides its business insurance.

Not all respondents were sure of their MPO's tax status, but most (81 percent) described their status as "exempt." Half of that 81 percent are considered

governmental organizations, and the other half did not specify. The remaining 19 percent of MPOs are classified as non-profits – half did not specify what sort, half are a type of 501c.

Slightly more than 50 percent of survey respondents report that their MPO performs some function beyond those required for MPOs by federal law. 21 percent serve as a land use agency, 14 percent are a transit operator/authority, and 12.5 percent also perform rural planning duties. Several MPOs are also their region's Area Agency on Aging, economic development commission, or air quality monitoring agency. Responding MPOs have taken on many other responsibilities, including GIS and safety/homeland security planning.

Survey results show that 29 states have a statewide/regional MPO association and/or a statewide/regional MPO meeting. Some of these take the form of statewide MPO associations, while others are more informal. Such groups are extremely valuable not only for information sharing and coordination among MPOs, but are also an effective means of providing a unified voice for the MPO community.

This AMPO survey gathered a great deal more information than can be presented here – the full results (which can be viewed at [http://www.ampo.org/survey\\_results.html](http://www.ampo.org/survey_results.html)) present descriptions of intra-state funding distribution, methods of deriving local match, summaries of where MPOs get basic office services, and much more. AMPO hopes this will be a valuable resource for new MPOs as well as those who are more established but looking for new perspectives. If you have any questions or are interested in more specific analysis of the results than provided on the website, please contact Michael Montag ([mmontag@ampo.org](mailto:mmontag@ampo.org)).

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs Well-Represented in Reauthorization Bill

Jonathan Staley, America Bikes

Federal programs that have funded over 8,000 bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects since 1991 look relatively safe and strong in the pending transportation reauthorization. Congress is currently in conference trying to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The biggest pot of money, the popular Transportation Enhancements, continues in both versions, and the possible addition of two new programs should further increase available funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Both the House and Senate bills also continue the flexibility that has allowed bicycle and pedestrian projects to be built with several other programs in the legislation, including regular STP funds, Congestion Mitigation and National Highway System funds. The Recreational Trails program should also continue.

Two notable new programs are also on the horizon. The final legislation will likely create a national Safe Routes to School program. Funded at \$420 million in the Senate bill and \$1 billion in the House, the program will channel money through State DOTs to build infrastructure improvements and provide educa-

tional programs to improve the safety of kids biking and walking to school.

Another exciting new provision is called Fair Share for Safety. Currently present only in the Senate bill, this program would require that state DOTs spend their Federal safety infrastructure money (currently called Hazard Elimination) on bicycle and pedestrian improvements at a level at least proportional to the percentage of traffic fatalities that are bicyclists and pedestrians. Fair Share for Safety would redress a longstanding oversight in safety funding, as bicycles and pedestrians account for 13.2% of traffic fatalities nationwide, but receive only 1.9% of safety funding. The provision would likely drive more safety dollars to metropolitan areas, as an analysis by America Bikes has shown that the bulk of these traffic safety dollars are currently spent in rural areas, although the vast majority of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities occur in urban areas.



Despite Congress' move to conference, an overall funding level for the transportation bill has still not been established, and the deadlock may stall the legislation until next year. But bicycle advocates are optimistic that nation's new transportation bill will improve bicycling and walking across America. For more information, please visit [www.americabikes.org](http://www.americabikes.org) or e-mail: [info@americabikes.org](mailto:info@americabikes.org).



# Freight Professional Development (FPD) Program: Enhancing Freight Knowledge and Skills

Scott Johnson, Federal Highway Administration Office of Freight Management and Operations

The efficient and reliable movement of goods is dependent, in large part, on the people who build, maintain, and operate the transportation system. Educating and training a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is crucial to improving freight transportation productivity and institutionalizing a freight “voice” in the transportation planning and development processes. This is now more important than ever, as domestic and international freight volumes are projected to increase by 67 percent and 85 percent, respectively, between 1998 and 2020.

From 2001 to 2002, FHWA held several stakeholder outreach sessions to identify the major problems and/or strategic gaps that were adversely affecting freight productivity, and devise a strategy to begin addressing those challenges. Throughout these sessions, stakeholders, namely States and MPOs, expressed a strong need for improved skills in addressing freight transportation issues. In addition, several key factors have heightened the need for freight professional development at State and local levels:

- Increased desire and need by State and local transportation agencies to develop freight programs within their agencies
- Inadequate supply of publicly available courses and tools focusing on freight planning and operations for the public sector
- Significant turnover in planning jobs combined with small staff devoted to freight resulting in little or no mentoring
- Limited public-private sector engagement leading to lack of understanding of private business practices by public sector officials and vice versa

mobility, economic growth, and global connectivity. In alignment with the elements found in other FHWA-sponsored professional development programs, the FPD Program consists of four key elements: training, education, technical assistance, and a resource library.

**Training:** The purpose of the training element is to develop and deliver targeted training to build the knowledge and skill base for agency staff involved in freight transportation and planning. Training is provided on a broad range of topics through short courses, workshops, conferences and seminars. Two FPD courses are being offered through the National Highway Institute, namely “Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process” and “Multi-modal Freight Forecasting”. In addition, workshops on “Engaging the Private Sector on Freight Planning” and “Freight Data Made Simple” will be offered in September 2004.



**TRAINING**



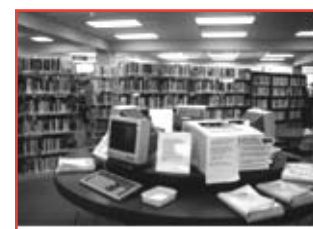
**EDUCATION**

**Education:** The FPD Program is concerned with future public professionals who will be responsible for freight transportation and planning. The FPD Program works with the academic community to promote needed changes in transportation planning and logistics degree programs critical to ensuring the future availability of appropriately trained public sector freight professionals.

**Technical assistance:** The FPD Program provides assistance to States and MPOs engaged in transportation and freight planning. The ongoing “Talking Freight” Seminar Series, offered through web conference technology, provides a no-cost way for freight transportation professionals to broaden their knowledge and develop new skills. Seminars are held monthly and are open to all interested parties through <http://talkingfreight.webex.com>. The Freight Planning Peer Exchange LISTSERV, located at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning), provides a forum to share information on freight with over 500 public and private sector subscribers. In addition, the new Freight Peer-to-Peer Program helps put freight experts in touch with freight practitioners who may be “just getting started” or require assistance in other specific functional areas. This program includes a database of freight experts in different discipline areas and offers travel assistance to support the peer exchange.



**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**



**RESOURCE LIBRARY**

**Resource Library:** The resource library is a web based database designed to provide easy access to freight-related information, to include state-of-the-art practices, from a variety of sources including USDOT, state DOTs, MPOs, regional councils, professional associations, the academic community and others. Users can search for resources by a number of categories and within each category, can find the resources listed by location.

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## FPD Program Objectives

- Enhance the freight-related skills and knowledge of transportation planners and other professionals
- Foster intermodal approaches to advancing freight productivity and security
- Engage private sector stakeholders in the project development process
- Improve freight planning and decision-making at State and MPO levels

In 2003, responding to these needs, FHWA launched the Freight Professional Development (FPD) Program. This initiative assists State DOTs and MPOs in developing the skills and knowledge needed to address the challenges associated with growing freight flows on the nation’s transportation system. The goal of the FPD Program is to integrate freight infrastructure and operational improvements in the transportation development process to improve

## Quick Snapshot of Some Freight Planning Resources

(For more information on all resources listed below, please visit <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/FPD>)

- Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process Course (2-Day)
- Multi-modal Freight Forecasting in Transportation Planning Course (3-day; Available Aug. '04)
- Talking Freight Seminar Series
- Engaging the Private Sector in Freight Planning Workshop (Available: Sept. 04)
- Freight Data Made Simple Workshop (Available: Sept. '04)
- Freight Planning Web Site

# AMPO's Travel Modeling Action Group Talks Modeling

Rich Denbow, Denbow Consulting

“How does your model work?” That was the theme of AMPO's most recent Travel Modeling Action Group meeting in Las Vegas. Over 45 modeling experts from MPOs, consulting firms, academia, and US DOT were at the March 2004 meeting to learn from their peers about modeling practices and challenges.

AMPO established the Travel Modeling Subcommittee to bring together MPO technical staff and our federal partners in a forum where MPOs can share practices and identify solutions to the transportation planning challenges they face.

The meeting agenda was created to reflected the range of modeling challenges MPOs face. Donald Hubbard from Fehr & Peers Associates spoke about a “4D” tool developed under contract to the Environmental Protection Agency. The tool, an add-on to a typical 4-step travel model, incorporates neighborhood Design, Density, Diversity of land uses, and proximity to Destinations. It allows modelers to more fully examine the effect of land use changes on vehicle trips and vehicle miles of travel and provides policy makers with more reliable forecasts of the likely effects of smart growth policies than those provided by conventional travel models. Mr. Hubbard discussed application of the model at the Sacramento MPO and in Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Fresno.

The group heard a presentation on the Best Practice Model (BPM) used in the New York City metro area from Kuo-Ann Cho of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC). The BPM Model covers 28 counties in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and comprises 3,500 transportation analysis zones! The highway network used by the model includes all types of road facilities from minor arterials and above, and all forms of public transportation, which are represented at the individual route level. This is truly a complex model. The BPM uses a micro-simulation method to simulate the travel of each person in the region.

Dennis Hooker of the MPO for Orlando, Florida, spoke about a Florida Standard Model used for all urban areas in the state. The standard model provides flexibility so that each MPO can customize it for their area and application. A statewide task force that is comprised of MPOs, Florida DOT, state transit agencies, FHWA, and other state agencies supports this model. Components include an urban freight and a statewide intermodal highway freight model, a life-style trip generation model, and a generalized nested logit model. It incorporates time-of-day modeling and alternative trip distribution methodology.

The topic turned to High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, as Firouzeh Nourzad of Urban Analytics reported her research on methods for estimating travel demand for value pricing projects. Ms. Nourzad summarized and compared existing modeling procedures addressing highway value pricing strategies. HOT lane modeling practices in eight metro areas were surveyed: Atlanta, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, Sacramento, San Diego, and Washington, DC. She categorized the practices into five types of techniques. It's clear that value pricing strategies can be modeled in several ways.

In addition to hearing fellow modelers talk about application issues, the Group heard from FHWA



and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) about new initiatives. Bruce Spear from FHWA distributed a draft MPO Certification Checklist developed by USDOT for FHWA field reviewers and MPOs to examine how well the travel forecasting process is conducted. The checklist would alert MPOs and field staff to issues that merit attention and may need correction. Mr. Spear said he received mixed feedback from stakeholders on the concept, with AMPO being the most favorable towards supporting the checklist idea.

The Group continued discussion from a previous meeting of a state of the practice report for travel modeling. FHWA tasked the TRB with developing a synthesis of practice for travel modeling by MPOs and state DOTs and with recommending steps that might be taken to improve technical processes. Jon Williams from TRB provided an overview of the proposed study scope and composition of the oversight committee by area of expertise and organization. The Group provided feedback on the scope and information collection methods and expressed

some concerns. Mr. Williams will incorporate the comments as TRB moves forward with this important work.

The group shared information at the two-day meeting. It was clear that many MPOs are facing similar challenges in modeling travel demand in both the short and long term, and that they are rising to the occasion by developing and tweaking the tools they have at hand. It is said that travel modeling is more art than science. Like artists, each modeler takes a unique approach to their work. But unlike art, modeling outcomes must be accepted by the wider community and meet rigorous requirements. This meeting helped the MPO modelers understand the different approaches available to do so.

AMPO would like to thank our hosts at the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada for providing meeting support and opening their Board Room to the Group. The Group will meet next in Kansas City in the early fall.

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## Future Directions

Since education and training are the responsibilities of both the public and private sectors, partnerships between government and business will be key to building freight professional capacity now and in the future.

The FHWA's FPD Program will continue to develop and deliver professional development resources in 2005 and beyond. Specifically, initiatives planned for 2005 include:

- Congestion Mitigation Strategies for Urban Goods Movement Workshop
- Supply Chain Logistics Course
- Freight Planning: "How to..."
- Advanced Multi-modal Freight Forecasting in Transportation Planning Workshop
- Freight Finance Seminar
- Freight and the Environment Seminar
- Size and Weight Introductory Course
- Size and Weight Peer to Peer Program

In addition, FHWA will lead coordination efforts across the Department to develop an Intermodal Freight Professional Development Program that includes freight-related training and technical assistance initiatives stemming from all applicable DOT agencies.

## For More Information

A comprehensive web site has been developed to serve as a one-stop source of FPD information. This site contains current information on freight training opportunities, university-based freight and related degree programs, state-of-the-art practices, technical assistance, publications, and more, as well as links to related web sites. The homepage of the site provides frequently updated news items, in addition to links to noteworthy practices from across the nation. Many components of the site are easily searchable, to include allowing users to search for education opportunities in each state and resources by subject area.

To access the FPD web site, please visit <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/FPD>

For additional information, please contact Scott Johnson, 202-366-9498 or Eloise Freeman-Powell, 202-366-2068

# Global Perspectives: Transport for London

Michael Montag, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

It should come as no surprise that transportation problems aren't an exclusively American phenomenon. As populations rise, metropolitan areas around the globe are facing crippling congestion, worsening environmental conditions, and aging highway and transit infrastructure. It would therefore be sensible for us to investigate foreign approaches to combating these common problems, and consider their domestic applicability.

As anyone who has traveled to, and especially around, London knows, the city is wrought with obstacles to creating an effective transportation system. London is an old city with narrow streets not designed with automobiles in mind, and since 1989 has been the fastest growing major city in Europe. The city's population has increased by 500,000 people in the last fifteen years, and is anticipated to balloon by another 800,000 over the next ten. In addition, the next decade is expected to bring to London 636,000 new jobs. Add to that the crushing wave of tourists that descends upon London each year and you've got an enormous mass of humanity, not to mention goods and services, to move around the crowded city.

Tasked with creating and managing a transportation system with the capacity to withstand the daily onslaught are the poor souls at Transport for London (TfL). TfL is in charge of planning for and delivery of transportation facilities, and manages the city's buses, the Underground (London's subway system), the Docklands Light Railway, London Trams, Victoria Coach Station, a 360 mile network of main roads, all of London's traffic lights, taxis and the private hire trade, and to top it off the London Transport Museum. The list might seem overwhelming, but the consolidation of these responsibilities into one organization allows TfL to develop a fully integrated and truly multimodal transportation system.

This all-in-one approach to transportation has shown considerable success. Each day 27.3 million journeys are made in Greater London, of which 31

percent are on public transportation, 27 percent on foot or bicycle, and only 40 percent by car or motorcycle. The city recently experienced a modal shift from private car to public transportation, remarkable as globally transportation habits are trending in the opposite direction. Much of this success is attributable to TfL's focus on improving bus service – 90 percent of Greater London households are within 400 meters of a bus stop, and bus usage has become the preferred mode of public transportation for Londoners, accounting for 20 percent of trips of all modes. Safety on London's roads is also improved: TfL's 2001 Road Safety Plan has so far led to a 25% reduction in death and fatalities from levels in the late nineties.

London also benefits from TfL's consolidation of responsibilities because it enables large scale development and implementation of innovative strategies for soothing the city's transportation woes. A prime example is their year-old congestion-charging scheme for the central city, which instituted a substantial toll on all who wish to drive into central London. Traffic delays in the charging zone are down 30%, and toll revenue has totaled approximately \$125 million in the last year. To address the omnipresent issue of system reliability, TfL instituted a program called Quality Incentive Contracts, which is a system in place on over 60% of bus routes, whereby bus drivers are paid according to the quality of service they deliver. TfL also uses broad approaches to ensuring an accessible system – older citizens and those with disabilities are eligible for free passes that allow travel on most public transportation in greater London, and the city boasts a bus fleet of which 89 percent are low-floor and wheelchair accessible, the largest such fleet in the world.

Though it may seem supernaturally powerful, Transport for London didn't materialize from some sort of divine intervention - the demand for a world class transportation system is deeply rooted in the ethos of the city and its inhabitants. Terrible congestion and gas prices more reflective of actual costs

than those in the U.S. make public transportation a logical choice for Londoners, and the central city is remarkably walkable. In addition, Western European attitudes in general tend toward social inclusion and public investment in means to support that idea. London's efforts to create an accessible transportation system that effectively serves even the most socio-economically disadvantaged is merely a manifestation of that sentiment. It thus stands to reason that London would create an entity with the capacity to address all of the city's transportation wants and needs.

Londoners are unequivocal in their demand for quality transportation. According to TfL's stakeholder research, 39 percent of individuals in London and over half of businesses consider transportation one of the top three issues facing their nation. More than 90 percent of both individuals and businesses feel that improving transportation in London should be a priority. Additionally, the majority of each group (71 percent of individuals and 53 percent of businesses) prefers investment in public transportation rather than roads or National Rail.

In response to the obvious demand for transportation services, Transport for London has developed into an extraordinarily customer oriented organization. Its branding efforts have led to near global recognition of its logo, which has become iconic of London itself. TfL's centralized nature allows for a website that is a one-stop resource for all transportation related information in London, for locals and tourists alike, and plans to have all of its services available online by 2005. The organization produces countless outreach publications, including concise summaries of its accomplishments and goals, all of which are available online, including borough-by-borough assessments of transportation needs, costs, and benefits. Many of these are part of its Transport for a Growing City campaign, which highlights the need to plan and implement a transportation system

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## Smart Growth Network

Dan Emerine, Smart Growth Network



In 1996, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency joined with several non-profit and government organizations to form the Smart Growth Network (SGN). The Network was formed in response to increasing community concerns about the need for new ways to grow, that boost the economy, while at the same time protecting the environment, and enhancing community vitality. The Network's partners include environmental groups, historic preservation organizations, professional associations, developers, and local and state government entities.

### Mission

The SGN works to encourage development that serves the economy, community, and the environment. The Network provides a forum for:

- Raising public awareness of smart growth and the implications of development decisions for the economy, community, and the environment
- Promoting smart growth best practices through educational publications and other venues
- Developing and sharing information, innovative policies, tools, and ideas

- Fostering collaboration among Network partners and members to apply smart growth approaches to resolve problems of the built environment
- Cultivating strategies to address barriers to, and to advance opportunities for, smart growth

### Major Initiatives

Last year, SGN published the second volume of *Getting to Smart Growth*, a primer for implementing smart growth policies. Each volume of *Getting to Smart Growth* lists 100 policies for implementation of each of the ten smart growth principles. State and local government leaders across the U.S. have used these two primers have been used by to gain a deeper understanding of the nuts and bolts of smart growth, and explain the policy options to stakeholders. Both volumes are available for free from [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org).

The Smart Growth Network is also a major sponsor of the annual New Partners for Smart Growth conference. This national, multidisciplinary event features cutting-edge smart-growth issues, the latest research, implementation tools and strategies, successful case studies, new partners, new projects, and

new policies. The next conference will be held January 27-29, 2005, in Miami Beach, Florida. See <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/SmartGrowth/> for more information.

### Join the Smart Growth Network!

While AMPO is an organizational partner in the Network, membership is also open to individual MPO staff, elected officials, and others who are interested in learning about smart growth and getting tools to improve quality of life, encourage better development patterns, and link land use and transportation planning. As a member, you will receive helpful primers, timely policy information, a highly regarded bimonthly newsletter, and a library of cutting-edge reports and fact sheets from leaders in the field. Members also have the opportunity to sign up for a Smart Growth Network listserv, which allows members to connect with each other, share information, and get advice from experts and fellow members.

To sign up, go to [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org) and click on the "Become a Member" link.

# Achieving Smart Growth

Christopher Forinash, U.S. EPA: Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation



The many communities seeking better ways to grow have found common approaches that help them attract and graciously accommodate new investment and residents, while keeping what they love and repairing gaps in their hometowns. The principles describing this successful development - what many including AMPO call Smart Growth - offer proven lessons in how and where development should occur to provide more choices and improve quality of life for all. (<http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/>) Key among the principles are those relating to transportation, the most crucial set of decisions affecting growth that any community makes. For example, two principles call for building walkable communities and providing transportation choices. Beyond that, however, lie many significant and unresolved (or at least incompletely answered) questions. What is a smart growth transportation system? How is the street network arranged? How are individual streets and sidewalks built to safely serve all users? How does transit service fit in? How do people behave who have access to smart growth transportation choices? How does such a smart growth transportation system perform, by conventional and wider measures? How does that performance compare to the operations of alternative transportation systems? How do we get there from here?

The Development, Community and Environment Division of the U.S. EPA works with the Smart Growth Network (SGN) partners, including AMPO and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), to help communities achieve smart growth. The diverse SGN partners began by identifying the smart growth principles described above, subsequently conducting research and adopting policies to allow and encourage smart growth. Early work focused on improving land development, but the key role of transportation soon gained significant attention. EPA-led research in the late 1990s modeled the trip-reduction possibility of infill

development relative to greenfield development. (See [http://epa.gov/smartgrowth/topics/atlantic\\_steel.htm](http://epa.gov/smartgrowth/topics/atlantic_steel.htm) and related work.) This research also showed additional trip reductions from site design characteristics, as has more recent research supported by EPA (see [http://www.nrdc.org/cities/smart Growth/char/charinx.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/cities/smart%20Growth/char/charinx.asp)) and many others. At the neighborhood scale such reductions are now clearly documented, as are the traffic-moderating benefits of connected neighborhood street networks. Work at the regional scale shows significant savings in vehicle trip-making from smart growth development alternatives - Chicago's Metropolis 2020 offers a well-documented case (see <http://www.metropolisplan.org/>) and FHWA and EPA are working to document others.

Similarly, at the neighborhood scale, street network and design practices now offer proven alternatives to conventional disconnected street systems, and many states and regions have adopted traditional neighborhood or new urbanist street codes. Beyond the neighborhood level however, we have much to understand about the transportation network and facility design. States and metropolitan areas have led the way, with much of the work has focused on the "context-sensitive design" of highway facilities. Building on and extending this work, ITE and the Congress for the New Urbanism, with funding from FHWA and EPA, are working to develop national guidelines for context-sensitive design for urban networks and major streets.

From this work and the many efforts by communities to examine their transportation investments and operations, a description of a smart growth transportation system has begun to emerge. Most essentially, it is one that supports a smart growth development pattern. It is safe and accessible for all users. It is multimodal and multiuse - providing mobility and access for personal, commercial and freight

users. It must be walkable. The street system includes frequent connections, a richer variety of street types and less complicated intersections. Individual streets typically have narrower cross-sections, made possible because of the multiple routes available to users. These streets take more advantage of on-street parking and the benefits it provides. Beyond the curb, planting strips separate generous sidewalks from vehicles, and provide space for commercial activities and transit access. In sum, the transportation network better serves the community, for movement and as the backbone of public space.

## NHI Planning Courses Scheduled July - December 2004

<b><u>NHI Planning Courses</u></b>	<b><u>Date of Course</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
<i>Estimating Regional Mobile Source Emissions</i>	7/13-16/2004	Knoxville, TN
<i>Introduction to Urban Travel Demand Forecasting</i>	7/19-23/2004 8/9-13/2004	Atlanta, GA Memphis, TN
<i>Fundamentals of Title VI/Environmental Justice</i>	7/21-22/2004	Topeka, KS
<i>Metropolitan Transportation Planning</i>	7/27-29/2004	Emerville, CA
<i>Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning</i>	8/3-4/2004	Arden Hills, MN
	8/10-11/2004	Denver, CO
	8/17-18/2004	Kansas City, MO
	8/24-25/2004	Indianapolis, IN
	8/30-31/2004	Boston, MA
	09/8-9/2004	Concord, NH
	9/14-15/2004	Columbia, SC
	9/20-21/2004	Phoenix, AZ
	9/29-30/2004	Glendale, CA
	10/6-7/2004	Montpelier, VT
<i>NEPA &amp; Transportation Decision Making</i>	10/14-15/2004	Houston, TX
	8/31-9/2/2004	Baton Rouge, LA
	8/31-9/2/2004	Anchorage, AK
	10/12-14/2004	Olympia, WA
<i>Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking</i>	10/27-29/2004	Montpelier, VT
	10/20-22/2004	Sacramento, CA

### **NTI Planning Courses**

NTI has not currently planned the date and locations of their courses for July 2004 - June 2005. Primarily, deliveries will start in September to avoid summer vacation schedules. Courses will be added to the NTI website: [www.ntionline.com](http://www.ntionline.com) as they are confirmed.



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Compiled by Michael Montag, AMPO

**T**he Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) in Seattle, WA was awarded the Diamond Ring Award for its long term leadership and voluntary commute options program. This is the fourth time the agency has been honored. Although the PSRC is not required to participate in the Commute Trip Reduction Law because it has fewer than 100 employees, it offers a \$65 transportation incentive to employees who walk, bike, bus, or carpool to work. Over 98% of employees regularly use alternative modes to get to work.

**Metro, the Portland, OR MPO**, funded a half-hour television program through a FHWA grant called, "ZigZag: Real Stories, New Angles" which focuses on how transportation affects the daily lives of urban, suburban, and rural families in Oregon. The show is part of a larger project that includes transportation-themed short films created by local filmmakers and an interactive web site, <http://www.zigzagshow.org/home/>, which allows viewers to post their transportation stories and share their thoughts on a community Weblog.

**The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council** in Grand Rapids Michigan is partnering with West Michigan schools to promote a Local Government Curriculum and "This Land is Your Land" land use curriculum. Both programs will educate children in local government, land use and regional issues. GVMC will connect educators with local officials and experts on regional issues who are willing to come to schools and speak.

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that can accommodate London's projected growth. A great number of TfL's publications are self-assessing in nature, including a section of its website dedicated to "performance indicators," which provides information on all aspects of system performance and usage (for more information on the indicators see <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/performance-indicators/pi-index.shtml>).

London's transportation problems are not, however, a thing of the past. Despite significant improvements, traffic still meanders through the city at a snail's pace. The system's infrastructure is aging and falling into disrepair, and TfL is calling for substantial resources to be funneled into the system. London's business community has joined en masse to echo the need for new money to provide the capacity Londoners demand. In July the Treasury will announce the results of its annual spending review; currently TfL is optimistic it will conclude that transportation in London is worthy of increased investment.

It would of course be difficult to transplant London's approach to transportation into an American city. The United States is a vastly different environment, both politically and culturally. However, many elements of Transport for London's work are practically transferable, such as their strategy of using a beefed-up bus system to fill gaps in the system over the short and medium terms, or their user friendly, consolidated approach to customer service. Transport for London is but one example of how, with the confines of American realities in mind, we can benefit from looking abroad for inspiration in our transportation planning work.

For more information on Transport for London, visit <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>.



ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING  
ORGANIZATIONS

1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 608  
Washington, DC 20036

Email: [staff@ampo.org](mailto:staff@ampo.org) Website: [www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org) Phone: 202-296-7051

DeLania Hardy, Executive Director  
[dhardy@ampo.org](mailto:dhardy@ampo.org)

Bridget Hennessey, Legislative Affairs Coordinator  
[bhennesey@ampo.org](mailto:bhennesey@ampo.org)

Michael Montag, Research Analyst  
[mmontag@ampo.org](mailto:mmontag@ampo.org)

Nicole Waldheim, Membership Services Coordinator  
[nwaldheim@ampo.org](mailto:nwaldheim@ampo.org)

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ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING  
ORGANIZATIONS

1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 608  
Washington, DC 20036

Email: [staff@ampo.org](mailto:staff@ampo.org) Website: [www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org)