



City of Helena City of East Helena Lewis & Clark County MPO Update



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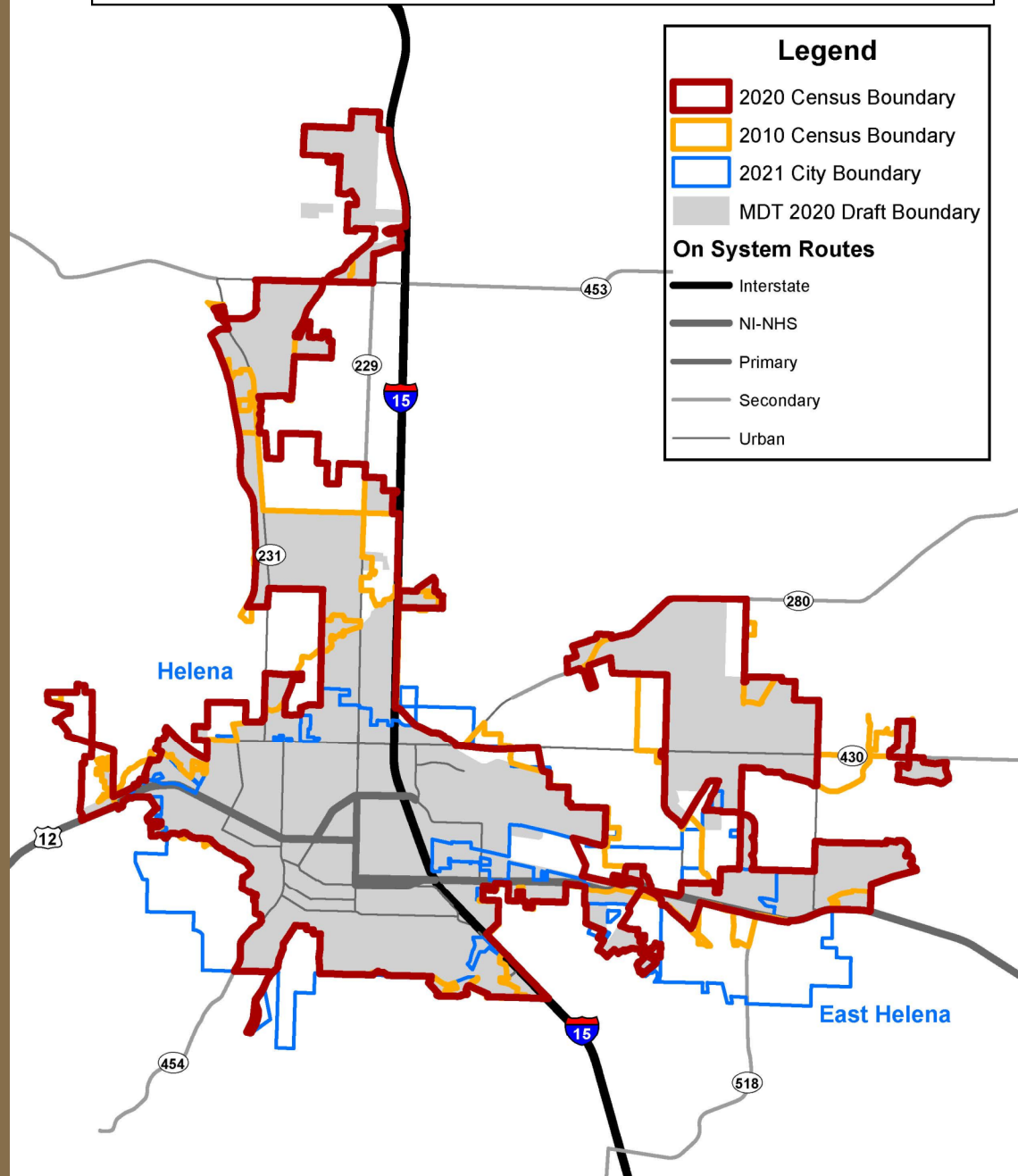
May 30, 2023

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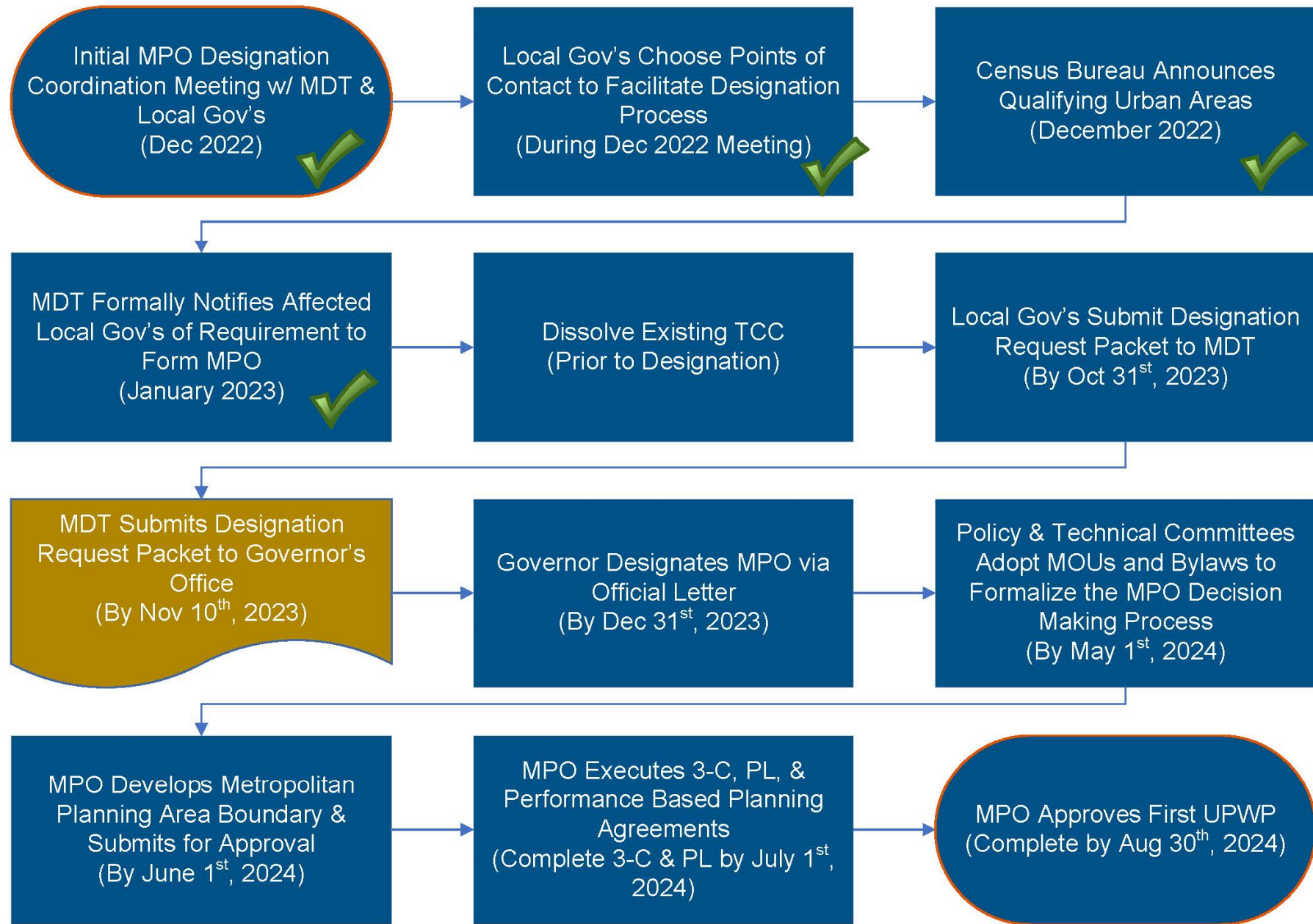
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Helena 2020 Census Boundary



PROCESSES



The dates presented on this timeline were developed by MDT to align with FHWA guidelines to designate MPO within 12 months of Census Bureau release.

Required Documents of an MPO

- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
 - Planning tasks, MPO staff hours, and cost estimates
 - Update Cycle – Annual
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
 - Future goals, strategies, & projects
 - Update Cycle – Every 5 years
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
 - Transportation investments to be implemented (project description, cost, funding source)
 - Update Cycle – Every 4 years (but typically done more frequently, 1-2 years)
- Public Participation Plan (PPP)
 - Plan outlining how the public will be involved in the MPO planning process
 - Update Cycle – Periodically
- Annual Obligated Projects List
 - List of projects obligated in the previous fiscal year
 - Update Cycle – Annually



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Required Documents

Funding

- Metropolitan Planning (PL) Funding
 - Provided for carrying out the required planning process and documents
- Transit Planning Funding (5303 Transit Planning)
 - Provided for the purposes of transit planning, not operation
- Transit Planning Operations (5307 Transit Capital and Operating)
- No additional direct allocation of federal transportation funding



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Funding

Next Steps...

- Designation letter signatures
- Designation from the Governor
- Establish make-up of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): The TAC Provides the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) with the technical expertise to carry out the 3C's (continuing, cooperative and comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning).
- Establish make-up of PCC: The PCC ensures transportation planning is an integral part of the comprehensive regional planning for each urban area and ensures that the transportation planning remains current.
- Post Designation
 - Policy and Technical Committees each need to develop and adopt bi-laws
 - Establish voting and non-voting members, determine meeting frequency and length
 - Execute federally required agreements: 3 C's, PL funding and Performance based Planning Agreement
 - Develop first UPWP: Decisions need to be made about how to spend 1st year of PL allocation.
 - Completed and approved UPWP is required for reimbursement of PL and 5303 funds; activities that occur prior to UPWP approval are NOT reimbursable.
- MDT's Proposed Timeline
 - MPO approval of UPWP by August 2024
 - MDT to submit to FHWA for approval September 2024
 - Eligibility to expend PL funds beginning October 2024



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Next Steps

Questions?



What is an MPO and what is its purpose?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process in accordance with federal statute. The purpose of an MPO is to provide a forum for continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning in the MPO planning area between all agencies responsible for transportation.

Must an MPO be developed?

Title 23 USC 134 requires urban areas with populations of 50,000 or more determined by the decennial census to form an MPO, in order to continue receiving federal transportation funding directly, or indirectly through project development and delivery by MDT.

What are the benefits of an MPO?

The creation of an MPO provides a forum for increased cooperation and coordination and enhances relationships between MDT and local governments responsible for transportation planning. MPOs receive financial assistance, Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds, to carry out the required planning activities, and Transit funds (5303) to provide funding for transit planning.



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the challenges to being an MPO?

MPOs have specific federal requirements for transportation planning that non-MPOs are not subject to. The limited federal financial assistance provided to the MPOs may not be sufficient to cover costs to address the requirements.

What funding does an MPO receive?

MPOs receive an annual allocation of federal metropolitan planning dollars called PL funds and transit planning dollars called 5303 funds to carry out the federally required transportation planning process.

What are PL Funds? How is the PL funding amount determined for an MPO?

PL stands for Metropolitan Planning Funds, which are reimbursable federal transportation planning funding allocated to the MPO. The funding is used to pay for MPO staff and transportation planning activities. The eligible activities for PL funds include carrying out the MPO planning requirements, developing management systems including asset management, and performance-based planning and programming (PBPP).

MDT receives a set amount of PL funding for Metropolitan Planning. These funds are distributed among the MPOs in the state by a proportionate share of the population of all state MPOs. Population numbers are determined by the decennial census population within the census urban area boundary.

Is there funding available to an MPO for capital construction projects?

There are no direct allocations of federal transportation formula funding available to MPOs for capital construction projects.



Frequently Asked Questions cont.

Can an MPO and its member agencies secure federal funding for projects that they didn't qualify for previously?

Yes, there are federal discretionary grant opportunities that an MPO is an eligible applicant. Additionally, MPO member agencies could pool resources to be able to secure the required non-federal match for awarded discretionary grants.

Does the State receive additional PL funding or do the current funding levels get split between the existing and new MPOs?

The state does not receive additional PL Funding when new MPOs are brought on, the current funding levels will now be distributed among five MPOs as a result of the 2020 decennial census.

Are there funds available for local government expenses incurred through the MPO designation and formation process?

There is no federal funding available to local governments through the designation and formation process. Once the MPO has been established and has an approved Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), PL funding will be available to the MPO for expenses on a reimbursement basis. Note that much of the designation process responsibilities will fall to MDT. The state is responsible for the administration of the federal program; therefore, MDT is tasked with leading this designation process.

How will we know how much our PL allocation is for the MPO? What are the match requirements for PL funds? When will PL funds be available for reimbursement?

In June of every year, MDT will provide the MPO with their PL allocation for the federal fiscal year. PL funding has an 86.58%/13.42% non-federal match ratio. Currently, MDT is providing the non-federal match for this funding. PL funds will be available to reimburse MPO costs incurred after approval of the MPO's first UPWP.



Frequently Asked Questions cont.

Why is it recommended to dissolve the TCC prior to MPO designation? Can we sequence to dissolve the existing TCC at the time of the formation of new MPO committees?

It is recommended to dissolve the existing TCC prior to MPO designation to allow the designation process to become streamlined by leaving the technical and administrative work required, at the staff level, and having one point of contact between local governments and MDT. It is important to note, that the MPO designation process is an administrative process that does not require planning or decision-making. MPO planning and decision-making will not occur until after designation once the new policy and technical committees are formed. Not dissolving the existing TCC until after designation is possible, however doing so may result in increased complexities and potential challenges that may impact the designation timeline.

What does it mean for current TCC priorities if the TCC is dissolved and replaced by the PCC?

Any priorities at the time of dissolution of the current TCC remain. In the interim, if there is business that needs to be addressed, the decision-making authority reverts to all Government entities that make up the current urban area.

How is the membership of the Policy Board of the MPOs determined? Federal statute only specifies who must be part of the MPO, beyond that, the local officials determine the makeup of the Policy Board.



Frequently Asked Questions cont.