

Discussion Draft

Advisory Committee Operating Policies

Introduction

The Capital Region Transportation Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a four-county planning area that includes Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Saratoga (except the Town of Moreau and Village of South Glens Falls). Advisory Committees have been established by the Transportation Council's Policy Board to allow for public input into the region's transportation planning process. They are ongoing forums led by Transportation Council staff open to anyone interested in participating. The following outlines how Advisory Committees will operate as approved by the Transportation Council's Policy Board.

Current Advisory Committees

The following Advisory Committees have been established. Note that the Equity Advisory Committee is currently not meeting but is expected to be re-established in 2024. Additional Advisory Committees may be created or ended at the discretion of the Transportation Council's Policy Board.

- Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) – Discusses topics related to bicycling, walking, micromobility (i.e. e-scooters, bike share, etc.), and other forms of active transportation.
- Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) – Discusses topics related to truck and rail freight.
- Regional Operations and Safety Advisory Committee (ROSAC) – Discusses topics related to congestion management, transportation system operations, security, and safety.
- Human Services Transportation Advisory Committee (HSTAC) – Discusses topics related to the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.
- Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) – Discusses topics related to Environmental Justice and Title VI.

Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Advisory Committees provide a forum for participants to discuss topics of mutual interest and advise the Transportation Council staff. Meetings serve as networking opportunities, allowing participants to coordinate and collaborate, share local planning practices, and share updates on Capital Region initiatives.

During meetings, Advisory Committee participants are asked to limit their input to topics on the meeting agenda which may include opportunities to review, identify issues, or provide feedback on the following:

- Federally required Transportation Council products such as:
 - Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
 - Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
 - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
 - Congestion Management Process (CMP)
 - Public Participation Plan (PPP)
 - Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
 - Air Quality Conformity Documentation
 - Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan
- Transportation Council related regional and community planning studies such as:
 - Regional planning studies (i.e. Vision Zero Safety Action Plan, Truck Parking Study, Regional Trails Plan, etc.)
 - Community Planning/Linkage Program studies
- The consistency of capital projects proposed for Transportation Improvement Program funds with Transportation Council regional planning studies and federally required products.
- Transportation plans and programs in development by member agencies, at their request. Examples may include:
 - Planning and Environmental Linkages studies (i.e., I-787, NY 378, etc.)
 - State transportation plans (i.e. Freight Master Plan, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, New York State Transportation Master Plan, etc.)
 - Regional and local community planning studies (i.e. municipal comprehensive plans, CDTA Transit Development Plan, etc.)
- Other planning studies or transportation planning topics as determined by Transportation Council staff. These may include initiatives led by non-profit groups, academic institutions, consultants (i.e. tools in development), peer MPOs, and other government agencies.

Feedback on the above should consider the adequacy of the technical data and analysis presented, the reasonableness of the concepts being developed, the extent of the public participation process, and the accuracy and completeness of the product.

In addition, Advisory Committee participants may:

- Identify plan or project proposals to Transportation Council staff that may be harmful to a community or may not consider the transportation needs of specific segments of the population.
- Assist the Transportation Council staff with public outreach on required MPO products, draft MPO regional plans, and Community Planning/Linkage Program studies. This may include sharing official posts via social media, newsletters, email or through other means available to Advisory Committee participants.
- Suggest technical resources, practices, and innovative initiatives in progress outside of the region for consideration by Transportation Council staff.

Advisory Committee participants shall not:

- Make decisions on behalf of the Transportation Council.
- Speak to the media representing themselves as a member of a Transportation Council Advisory Committee.
- Use Transportation Council logos, letterhead, or other media for any reason without the expressed written consent of the Transportation Council's Executive Director.
- Comment on transportation plans or the design details of capital projects representing themselves as a member of a Transportation Council Advisory Committee. Participants are welcome to comment on capital projects through the sponsoring organization's public participation process.
- Contact Advisory Committee participants through mass email for purposes other than Transportation Council related business. Advisory Committee participant contact information is proprietary and shall not be used for purposes of lobbying, including sharing petitions.

Meetings

Advisory Committee meetings are held quarterly, at minimum, and are open to anyone interested in participating. Specifics can be found on our [calendar of events](#). Participants should be aware of the following:

- Meeting agendas and related materials will be posted on the Transportation Council website and emailed to the participant list one week prior to the meeting.
- Meetings may be viewed through a live broadcast. Meetings are also recorded and made available on our [YouTube Channel](#).
- Written comments may be submitted by calling (518) 458-2161 or emailing info@capitalmpo.org.
- Anyone may register to speak during the public comment agenda item (limited to 3 minutes per speaker) at the beginning of the meeting by calling (518) 458-2161 or emailing info@capitalmpo.org.

- For requests for aids, services, or reasonable accommodation to attend the meeting in person, call (518) 458-2161 or email info@capitalmpo.org at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- Meeting dates will be published on the Transportation Council website, newsletter, social media outlets, etc.

Transportation Council staff are responsible for the following:

- Serving as liaison between the Advisory Committee and the MPO Planning Committee and Policy Board.
- Setting meeting schedules at the beginning of each calendar year.
- Maintaining participant contact lists.
- Preparing meeting agendas with input from Advisory Committee participants, as needed. The agenda shall include a section allowing for public comment with pre-registration, limited to 3 minutes per speaker. Transportation Council staff reserve the right to adjust meeting agendas and schedules at any time.
- Preparing meeting summaries.
- Posting recent meeting summaries and links to video recordings (both up to two years) on the Transportation Council website.
- Documenting Advisory Committee feedback. Advisory Committee feedback will be shared with the Executive Director. At the discretion of the Executive Director, Advisory Committee feedback will be provided to the Planning Committee and/or Policy Board.
- Organizing additional meetings at the request of Transportation Council member agencies, municipalities, or other entities.

All meetings are held with regard to the Transportation Councils' Public Participation Plan, Title VI, ADA, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan requirements.

It should be noted that the New York State Committee on Open Government has issued an opinion that Metropolitan Planning Organizations are established pursuant to federal requirements and, therefore, are not subject to the New York State Open Meetings Law.

Participants

Transportation Council staff will maintain a participant list for each Advisory Committee. Anyone that lives, works, or does business within the Capital Region is welcome to participate. There are no membership requirements, term limits, and no appointments. At least one Planning Committee member shall be included on each Advisory Committee participant list.

Participants are expected to be fair, respectful of Transportation Council staff and others, and participate in committee discussions but not dominate them.