

American Planning
Association
Guiding Principle:

Responsible Regionalism

Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

Regional planning agencies do not have regulatory power, but they provide important perspectives into regional systems like transportation and water supply. Transportation planning is primarily the responsibility of designated metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) as required by federal transportation laws. Many MPOs and other regional planning agencies are now also addressing related issues, such as open space, environmental protection, housing, economic development, utility infrastructure, and disaster preparedness. These regional agencies help different local governments work together, allowing for joint decisions that go beyond local politics. Local governments' plans and policies affect each other, influencing new development locations, commuting patterns, and stormwater management. Thus, connecting these plans through a comprehensive plan can help understand and manage overlapping functions.