



READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

c/o Berks County Planning Commission
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To: Reading Area Transportation Study Coordinating Committee
From: Alan D. Piper, Secretary
Re: PA House Bill 532 - MPO & RPO Board Representation
Date: July 10, 2026

This is an informational / discussion item at this time.

Within the past week, we were informed of proposed legislation in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives (HB 532 - MPO & RPO Board Representation - Attached) that is under consideration by the House Transportation Committee. While originally introduced in February, 2025, we had no prior knowledge of this proposal.

This legislation would create a statewide majority requirement for municipal elected officials for MPO and RPO membership and extend that requirement to both policy and technical board structures. In our case, that would be both the Coordinating and Technical Committees. This legislation has been locally co-sponsored by Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz (PA129).

I am also attaching a summary of this proposed legislation that has been prepared by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) as well as our current Bylaws that detail Coordinating and Technical Committee composition.

Attachments

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 532 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY PROBST, HILL-EVANS, PIELLI, SANCHEZ, GIRAL, KUZMA,
DALEY, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, OTTEN AND GREEN, FEBRUARY 10, 2025

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, FEBRUARY 10, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 74 (Transportation) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, providing for metropolitan and rural
3 planning organizations.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Title 74 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
7 Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

8 CHAPTER 4

9 METROPOLITAN AND RURAL

10 PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

11 Sec.

12 401. Definitions.

13 402. Membership requirements.

14 § 401. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter
16 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
17 context clearly indicates otherwise:

18 "Elected official." A mayor or a member of the governing

1 body of a city, borough, incorporated town or township.

2 "Metropolitan planning organization." As defined in 49
3 U.S.C. § 5303(b)(2) (relating to metropolitan transportation
4 planning).

5 "Rural planning organization." The term shall have the same
6 meaning as the term "regional transportation planning
7 organization" as defined in 49 U.S.C. § 5303(b)(5).
8 § 402. Membership requirements.

9 (a) Composition.--Elected officials or individuals appointed
10 by elected officials shall constitute the majority of the
11 membership of a metropolitan planning organization and a rural
12 planning organization. Elected officials or designees shall
13 comprise a majority of the membership of a committee that serves
14 as the policy board and technical board within a metropolitan
15 planning organization and rural planning organization.

16 (b) Bylaws.--Within one year of the effective date of this
17 subsection, metropolitan planning organizations and rural
18 planning organizations within this Commonwealth shall update
19 bylaws to comply with the requirements of this section.

20 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.



Pennsylvania HB 532: MPO & RPO Board Representation

HB 532 is short, but its effects could be significant. It would create a statewide majority requirement for MPO and RPO membership and extend that requirement to policy and technical board structures, potentially disrupting locally negotiated governance models, county participation, and technical review capacity.

What HB 532 Would Require

- **Add a new Title 74 chapter** for metropolitan and rural planning organizations.
- **Define MPOs and RPOs by federal law** using the MPO definition and the federal “regional transportation planning organization” concept.
- **Require elected officials or individuals appointed by elected officials** to constitute a majority of MPO and RPO membership.
- **Extend the majority requirement to committees** that serve as the policy board and technical board.
- **Require bylaw updates within one year** after the law takes effect.

Why This Raises Concerns

- **Elected officials already have a central role** in MPO decision-making under federal planning law and existing local/state agreements.
- **The bill may create a one-size-fits-all mandate** that conflicts with long-standing regional governance structures.
- **The municipal definition of “elected official” may exclude counties**, even though counties are central to many Pennsylvania MPO boards.
- **Technical committees are not policy boards.** They are designed for planners, engineers, transit operators, PennDOT district staff, county planning staff, freight partners, safety professionals, and other subject-matter experts.

Potential Practical Impacts

- **Governance disruption:** MPOs/RPOs may need to reopen bylaws, voting structures, MOUs, intergovernmental agreements, or long-standing representation models.
- **County role uncertainty:** County commissioners and county-appointed representatives may face ambiguity because the bill’s definition focuses on cities, boroughs, incorporated towns, and townships.
- **Technical capacity concerns:** Replacing technical experts with elected-official-majority structures could weaken technical review rather than improve accountability.
- **Federal process exposure:** Significant voting-member or decision-making changes may need to be assessed for redesignation or federal review implications.
- **Special structure uncertainty:** Bi-state, compact-based, grandfathered, or otherwise unique MPO/RPO structures may require separate analysis.

Questions for MPOs: Which members currently count under the bill’s definition? Would county roles change? Would the TAC/technical board need to be restructured? Would bylaws, MOUs, or intergovernmental agreements need to be reopened? Could any change trigger federal review or redesignation questions?

BYLAWS OF THE READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ARTICLES

ARTICLE I – Name

The Metropolitan Planning Organization, known as the Reading Area Transportation Study, hereinafter referred to as “the MPO”, originally established by PennDOT Agreement No. 31761, dated April 9, 1964, shall carry out a transportation planning process, in accordance with current Federal Metropolitan Planning Regulations, for Berks County of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE II – Object

The MPO is the official transportation planning organization for Berks County, designated by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under current and applicable federal laws.

ARTICLE III – Membership

Section 1. The parties hereby establish the governing body of the MPO, hereinafter referred to as the Coordinating Committee, which shall consist of ten (10) voting members. Appointments of the voting members are as follows:

- 1 member representing the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority – appointed by the Authority’s Board of Directors
- 1 member representing the Reading Regional Airport Authority - appointed by the Authority’s Board of Directors
- 2 members representing the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation - appointed by the Secretary of Transportation
- 1 member representing the Board of County Commissioners - appointed by the County Commissioners
- 1 member representing the Berks County Planning Commission - appointed by the Berks County Planning Commission
- 1 member representing the City of Reading - appointed by the City of Reading
- 1 member representing the Boroughs - appointed by the Board of County Commissioners
- 1 member representing 1st Class Townships - appointed by the Board of County Commissioners
- 1 member representing 2nd Class Townships - appointed by the Board of County Commissioners

Section 2. In addition to the ten (10) voting members, the MPO shall include ex officio members. Such ex officio members shall receive all MPO reports and agendas, shall be entitled to participate in MPO discussions, but shall serve without vote. Ex officio members shall include, among others:

- Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

ARTICLE IV – Officers

Section 1. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the MPO shall be elected annually by and among the voting members of the MPO. The Chairperson shall be responsible for conducting the committee meetings, shall be responsible for signing official documents of the MPO, and shall only vote on an issue in the event of a tie. The Vice-Chairperson shall have the right to vote on all issues.

Subsection A. In the event of the absence of the Chairperson, or at the Chairperson's direction, the Vice-Chairperson shall temporarily assume the powers and fulfill all of the duties of the Chairperson.

Section 2. The staff of the Berks County Planning Commission shall serve as the staff and Secretary to the MPO and perform transportation planning activities as defined through the annual work program developed in cooperation with federal, state, and local priorities.

ARTICLE V – Meetings

All meetings of the MPO shall be open to the public and copies of any materials considered by the committee shall be made available to the public at the time of the meeting or subsequent to a committee meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be maintained and shall be made available for review in the offices of the Berks County Planning Commission. The responsibility for the development of the minutes shall rest with the Secretary.

ARTICLE VI – Authority

Section 1. It shall be the duty and the responsibility of the MPO to direct and control the policies and objectives of the transportation planning and programming process, with due regard to the requirements and recommendations of its several represented agencies of government, in order to accomplish and maintain the County's eligibility for federal transportation funds, and help implement the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. Actions of the MPO shall be by a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote, provided that a quorum is present at the beginning of the meeting. Six (6) voting members, or their alternates, shall constitute a quorum for the MPO.

Section 3. On occasions when actions may be sought without convening a meeting, a telephone ballot may be conducted. The Chairperson will review the issue at hand and determine the appropriateness of a mail, fax, or electronic mailing, to poll MPO voting members. Briefing material relevant to the issue at hand, along with a date and time the telephone poll will be conducted, will be sent to all voting members of the MPO at least one week prior to the poll. The Secretary of the MPO will be responsible for disseminating the briefing material and polling all voting members. The result of the poll will not be considered valid unless a majority vote has been obtained. Upon completion of the poll, the Secretary will notify the MPO voting members of the result. The action will be confirmed at the next meeting of the MPO.

ARTICLE VII – Technical Committee

Section 1. The MPO shall be assisted in its activities by the Reading Area Transportation Study Technical Committee, hereinafter referred to as “the Technical Committee”, which shall consist of eight (8) voting members. Appointments of the voting members are as follows:

- 2 members representing the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation - appointed by the Secretary of Transportation
- 2 members representing the Berks County Planning Commission – appointed by the Berks County Planning Commission
- 2 members representing the City of Reading – appointed by the City of Reading
- 1 member representing the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority – appointed by the Authority’s Board of Directors
- 1 member representing the Reading Regional Airport Authority – appointed by the Authority’s Board of Directors

Section 2. In addition to the eight (8) voting members, the Technical Committee shall include ex officio members. Such ex officio members shall receive all Technical Committee reports and agendas, shall be entitled to participate in Technical Committee discussions, but shall serve without vote. Ex officio members shall include, among others:

- Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

Section 3. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Technical Committee shall be elected annually by and among the voting members of the Technical Committee. The Chairperson shall be responsible for conducting the committee meetings and shall only vote on an issue in the event of a tie. The Vice-Chairperson shall have the right to vote on all issues.

Subsection A. In the event of the absence of the Chairperson, or at the Chairperson's direction, the Vice-Chairperson shall temporarily assume the powers and fulfill all of the duties of the Chairperson.

Section 4. The staff of the Berks County Planning Commission shall serve as the staff and Secretary to the Technical Committee and perform transportation planning activities as defined through the annual work program developed in cooperation with federal, state, and local priorities.

Section 5. All meetings of the Technical Committee shall be open to the public and copies of any materials considered by the committee shall be made available to the public at the time of the meeting or subsequent to a committee meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be maintained and shall be made available for review in the offices of the Berks County Planning Commission. The responsibility for the development of the minutes shall rest with the Secretary.

Section 6. The Technical Committee is responsible for providing a technical review of data, plans, and programs at the direction of the MPO, and for forwarding recommendations for actions to the MPO.

Section 7. It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Technical Committee to study and report on technical aspects as directed by the MPO. The Technical Committee may establish and abolish subcommittees and/or advisory groups as needed. Subcommittees and/or advisory groups shall report to the Technical Committee.

Section 8. Actions of the Technical Committee shall be by a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote, provided that a quorum is present at the beginning of the meeting. Five (5) voting members, or their alternates, shall constitute a quorum for the Technical Committee.

ARTICLE VIII – Provisions

Section 1. Vacancies on the MPO or the Technical Committee shall be filled by an appointment by the responsible organization as shown in Article III, Section 1 or Article VII, Section 1.

Section 2. Removal of any member, or their representative, of the MPO or the Technical Committee, due to failure to attend meetings, or for other reasons, shall be at the discretion of the appointing authority. Absence from three (3) consecutive meetings or less than 60% attendance over a twelve (12) month period will result in a letter being sent from the MPO to the appointing authority apprising them of the situation.

Section 3. Any voting member who is absent from a meeting of the MPO or the Technical Committee may be represented by an alternate who will participate and vote in his/her behalf. Each voting member of the MPO or the Technical Committee shall notify the Secretary of the MPO or the Technical Committee of his/her alternate, who shall be empowered to vote in the absence of the voting member, and shall be counted towards establishing a meeting quorum. This notification shall be done annually, or when the designated alternate changes. In the event that time would not permit a voting member to notify the Secretary of the MPO or the Technical Committee in advance of his/her absence and his/her alternate, a one time written proxy will be considered acceptable.

ARTICLE IX - Procedures

Section 1. The MPO and the Technical Committee shall establish regular meetings, and, in addition, shall meet upon the call of the Chairperson.

Section 2. If a voting member is appointed by an office, board, authority, commission, etc., his/her voting membership in the MPO or the Technical Committee shall automatically expire upon that member leaving the appointed office.

Section 3. No business shall be conducted by either the MPO or the Technical Committee unless a quorum is present.

Section 4. In accordance with current federal regulations for metropolitan transportation planning, the MPO, with the advice of the Technical Committee, shall periodically update and adopt, or amend, the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program for Berks County. Actions taken with respect to these two documents shall be consistent with policies and procedures developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in a coordinated and cooperative manner with its planning partners throughout the Commonwealth.

Section 5. No party will incur any costs under the terms of this agreement. Costs incurred for work done pursuant to the planning and programming process will be allocated in separate, individual agreements. Contributions of the various parties will be determined by the percentages set forth in the federal transportation funding programs currently governing work done under the Unified Planning Work Program.

Section 6. The members agree that all voting and non-voting members of the MPO and the Technical Committee will fully participate in the ongoing transportation planning and programming process developed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in a manner to be recommended by the MPO and approved by all of the parties to this agreement. The MPO shall determine when, and in what respects, the approved plans and programs shall be reevaluated and updated, and the necessary participation therein consistent with current federal regulations.

Section 7. The Berks County Planning Commission agrees that it will make available, to the MPO and the Technical Committee, conference space at the Berks County Planning Commission, in the City of Reading, at convenient times, as requested by the MPO or the Technical Committee, for purposes of conducting the transportation planning and programming process. Each member agrees that it will, without expense to the other parties, keep, or cause to be kept, such files, data, and reports pertinent to the planning and programming process as the MPO shall, from time to time, request, properly storing the same, and holding the same available for further purpose of the continuing planning process.

Section 8. The members agree that all planning and programming reports shall be printed or otherwise put in form for publication, and shall be distributed without charge, in adequate numbers, to the parties hereto, to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the members of the MPO and the Technical Committee, and to such others as the MPO shall determine advisable, subject to approvals for such publications and distributions.

On this date, the Reading Area Transportation Study adopted the foregoing Bylaws.

ATTEST:

Walter E. Brown 7/26/01
Chairperson Date

Alan D. P. 7/26/01
Secretary Date