

Bill Austin to Receive 2026 Ronald F. Kirby Lifetime Achievement Award

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — September 17, 2026 — The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) will honor former Morgantown/Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Director **Bill Austin** with the **2026 Ronald F. Kirby Lifetime Achievement Award** during AMPO's 2026 Annual Conference in Sacramento, California, on Thursday, September 17.

The Ronald F. Kirby Lifetime Achievement Award honors the legacy of Ronald F. Kirby, a leading expert in transportation planning and a key figure in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) community. The award recognizes outstanding efforts in planning and leadership by an individual who has advanced or promoted the cause of planning in the public arena.

For more than three decades, Austin has been a cornerstone of regional transportation planning, bringing a steadfast commitment to the mission of MPOs and a career-long focus on strengthening the communities they serve. His professional experience spans Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, and West Virginia, where he has played a significant role in advancing regional transportation planning.

Austin was instrumental in establishing both the **North Carolina MPO Association** and the **West Virginia MPO Association (WVAMPO)** and served multiple terms as chair of each organization. During WVAMPO's early years, he helped secure resources for visioning sessions that established the organization's goals, objectives, and bylaws. He went on to serve a record six terms as West Virginia's MPO Association Chair.

Throughout his career, Austin has also championed innovative and collaborative approaches to transportation planning. As Executive Director of the Morgantown/Monongalia MPO, he worked with partners across disciplines—including public health agencies—to incorporate broader community needs into long-range transportation planning. His work included helping advance West Virginia's first Complete Streets legislation, leading the state's first micromobility study, and contributing to efforts that secured major federal discretionary grants, including West Virginia's first MEGA grant and several RAISE grants.

“Bill’s impact stretches far beyond the borders of West Virginia and North Carolina, where he helped establish and lead both states’ MPO associations,” said AMPO Executive Director Bill Keyrouze. “It has been an honor for AMPO staff to work alongside Bill during his time on the AMPO Board of Directors. His collaborative spirit and steady leadership have left an indelible mark on our national network. Bill has always understood that regional planning is about connecting people and improving lives, and he has mentored countless peers along the way.”

Austin’s influence on the MPO community extends beyond his professional accomplishments. Colleagues have consistently turned to him for guidance, institutional knowledge, and mentorship throughout their careers. His willingness to share his experience and encourage emerging leaders has helped strengthen the profession and the national MPO network.

“Bill leads by example,” said Keyrouze. “His combination of deep policy knowledge, practical experience, and genuine commitment to his colleagues makes him an invaluable resource and advocate for MPOs nationwide.”

Austin’s career-long contributions to transportation planning, leadership within the MPO community, and dedication to mentoring the next generation of transportation professionals embody the spirit of the Ronald F. Kirby Lifetime Achievement Award.

About AMPO

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) is a national nonprofit organization representing the interests and needs of Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the United States. AMPO provides advocacy, training, technical assistance, and opportunities for collaboration to support MPOs in carrying out their critical role in regional transportation planning.