The Role of MPOs in Megaregion Planning: the Texas Triangle

A presentation to the CM2 Brownbag

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Research Framework

• The goal of this collaborative team project is to create a framework for megaregional planning at the MPO level within the Texas Triangle:
  - develop recommendations for the roles, requirements, and responsibilities for MPOs
  - develop recommendations for how MPOs or other transportation planning agencies could be “scaled up” to form partnership align planning goals across the megaregions
Existing Recommendations

“As metropolitan-level organizations, the interactions between multiple MPOs will...be crucial to the success of megaregion transportation planning initiatives.”
– Catherine Ross, Megaregion expert

“The metropolitan transportation planning process, which is used to update the metropolitan transportation plan every 3 to 5 years, should examine the role of metropolitan areas in a megaregion economy.” - Ankner and Myer Investigating in Megaregion Transportation Systems: Institutional Challenges and Opportunities
Research Questions

• Questions asked
  • Does the legal framework for transportation planning prohibit megaregional planning at the MPO level?
  • What current planning processes are used at Texas Triangle MPOs? Do state requirements further limit opportunities for 3C planning?
  • How do organizational structures differ across Texas Triangle anchor city MPOs? Do any better lend themselves to a megaregional planning model?
  • How can MPOs proactively conduct megaregional planning within existing legal frameworks?
MPO History

- Federal Highway Act 1956
- Highway Act 1962
- Highway Act 1973
- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act 1991
- Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century 1998
- Moving Ahead for Progress 2012
- Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act 2015
MPO Boundaries
Nonattainment Areas

STATUS
- Early Action Compact Area
- Near Nonattainment
- Nonattain Ozone 8 Hour
- Nonattainment For CO
- MPO Boundary

Areas marked in different colors indicate various status levels of nonattainment.
Planning Agreements

Article 1. Agreement Period

Article 2. Responsibilities of the Department

Article 3. Responsibilities of the MPO

Article 4. Responsibilities of the MPO Policy Committee

Article 5. Responsibilities of the Fiscal Agent

Article 6. Responsibilities of the MPO Transportation Planning Director

Articles 7-17: Other sections include: 1) components of the UTWP, 2) authorized compensated activities, 3) required reporting, 4) document retention, 5) work performance and conduct standards, 6) resolution of disputes, 7) non-collusion, subcontracting, termination, force majeure, and other legal requirements.
Transportation Planning Life Cycle at the MPO

- **Identify Needs**
  - Needs identified by local agencies and submitted to MPO for scoring and consideration.

- **UTWP: Plan & Budget**
  - Annual Work plan
  - Production Cycle: Annual
  - Financially constrained

- **MTP: Long-Range Plan**
  - 25 year outlook
  - Production Cycle: 4-5 years
  - Financially constrained

- **TIP: Short-Term Plan**
  - 4 year outlook
  - Production cycle: 4 years (minimum)
  - Financially constrained
Case Study: Regional Planning in the US

1) Mandate of plans and planning processes for efficient coordination and resource allocation.

2) The rise of a specific need or problem that requires interjurisdictional solutions.

3) It may be the only or best strategy for seeking commonly held goals.

- Ethan Seltzer and Armando Carbonell, *Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect*. 
**Case Study: Transportation Policy Board Composition and Representation**

Anchor City Representation by Board Member

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H-GAC</th>
<th>AAMPO</th>
<th>NCTCOG</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total MPO Population Estimate, 2010</td>
<td>5,891,999</td>
<td>1,988,188</td>
<td>6,371,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Transportation Policy Board Members</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Citizens per Board Member</td>
<td>210,429</td>
<td>110,455</td>
<td>144,813</td>
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Conclusions & Recommendations

• Formalize a megaregional planning focus between the MPOs and TxDOT

• Expand non-voting memberships on TPBs

• Incorporate megaregionalism into TPB structural and strategic planning

• Prioritize megaregional scope in long-range planning
  • Performance Measurement
Questions?