



MPOs MEGAREGIONAL PLANNING IN THE TEXAS TRIANGLE & BEYOND

MPOs were first mandated for urbanized areas with 50,000 or more people in the Highway Act of 1973 and have increasingly become more central in the regional transportation planning process. Our research evaluates the evolving role of MPOs in megaregional planning within existing legal frameworks and the related policy and planning implications for smart growth in the Texas Triangle.

How aligned are MPO planning and operational procedures within the Texas Triangle? Do current legal and MPO operating structures allow for megaregion planning at the MPO level? This research maps out MPO planning processes and operating procedures to see where discrepancies may lie within the Texas Triangle megaregion. Given any discrepancies, the research will assess what, if any, measures need to be taken to move forward to allow MPOs to plan on a megaregion scale. Analysis includes evaluating success in other MPO-driven approaches to megaregional planning in order to calibrate practical recommendations for implementation.

This project will involve a review of the requirements of the three main planning documents produced by MPOs: the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Plan, and the Unified Transportation Work Program. Following this, researchers will provide a delineation of federal, state and local funding streams that support the operating budgets of MPOs. After a case study of the bylaws of Texas Triangle anchor city MPOs, researchers anticipate the draft of an MOU that could be used between MPOs to encourage megaregion planning. The work will also integrate findings from a companion piece "Creating a framework to determine purpose and need for increased travel options in the megaregion for vulnerable (environmental justice) communities."

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Issues in Setting a MPO Process for Megaregion and Inter-regional Planning in the Texas Triangle (#CM2-14, 28)

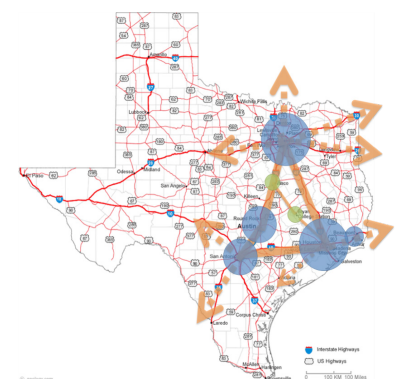
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The scale of planning in the Texas Triangle is very different from other areas. For example, the population living within NCTCOG boundaries exceeds that of 38 states.