

# Regional Models of Cooperation



**This EDC-3 effort provides a framework and process for state departments of transportation (DOTs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to develop multi-jurisdictional transportation plans and agreements to improve communication, collaboration, policy implementation, technology use and performance management across agency boundaries.**

Issues like air pollution and traffic congestion do not stop at state DOT or MPO boundaries, but planning often does. Planning in jurisdictional silos can interfere with essential coordination of regional transportation planning solutions, which can lead to project delays, process inconsistencies and reduced freight reliability.

An enhanced process for effective communication used by state DOTs, MPOs and transit authorities can result in improved collaboration, policy implementation, technology use and performance management. Using these Regional Models of Cooperation requires thinking beyond traditional borders and brings together many entities to support common goals on transportation planning topics such as congestion management, safety, freight, livability and commerce.

Multi-jurisdictional planning combines many perspectives to improve coordination and implement effective planning across wide geographic areas. This helps state DOTs, MPOs and transit authorities work together to reduce project delivery times and enhance efficiency. The public benefits through improved infrastructure, system operations, safety and economic performance, as well as reduced traffic congestion and more livable communities.

The competitive advantage of Regional Models of Cooperation for transportation planning is that they can improve decision-making, save time and money through shared resources, and help agencies achieve more by working together. They can improve freight and congestion management coordination across jurisdictional boundaries, support ways to address issues facing the region, and enhance trust.

## BENEFITS

- ▶ **Effective Decision-Making.** Regional Models of Cooperation provide a framework and processes for state DOTs and MPOs to develop agreements across agency boundaries that produce effective communication and result in mutual benefits. They allow agencies to achieve more by working together.
- ▶ **Improved Communities.** Exploiting the competitive advantage of regional planning can spur economic development through faster construction, improved freight movement, and reduced traffic congestion, improving communities' quality of life.



## CURRENT STATE OF THE PRACTICE

Arizona's Sun Corridor is one of several nationally defined "mega regions" that has recognized the value of coordinating regional planning decisions. Other established multi-jurisdictional efforts include Atlanta's pooled resources transit data sharing; the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) public private partnership to improve rail efficiency; and the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Council, which includes eight MPOs working together to address valley-wide urban and rural issues.

Another example is the Southeast Florida Transportation Council, which was created to serve as a forum for policy coordination and communication and carry out regional initiatives agreed on by MPOs in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. An inter-local agreement among the three parties was completed in 2005. Several other Florida MPOs coordinate transportation demand modeling and long-range transportation planning through formal agreements.

The North Carolina Capital Area and Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPOs began a coordinated effort to produce a 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan in 2009. Successful collaboration on the 2035 plan led

to development of a 2040 plan, which was adopted in 2013. Recognizing that a joint travel demand modeling process and air quality management planning could benefit the region, the MPOs worked together through formalized agreements and informal sharing of information, processes and data.

## SUPPORT AND AVAILABLE TOOLS

- ▶ Additional information is available from the Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) website at <http://planning.dot.gov/>. Administered by FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration, the TPCB Program offers training, technical assistance and support to State, local, regional and Tribal governments; transit operators; and community leaders.
- ▶ The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) report on "Multi-State Metropolitan Planning Organizations: Approaches, Cases, and Institutional Arrangements," documents the enabling authority for 40 multistate MPOs, along with institutional arrangements, organizational structures, board composition and voting requirements: [http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/archive/NotesDocs/NCHRP08-36%2844%29\\_FR.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/archive/NotesDocs/NCHRP08-36%2844%29_FR.pdf)

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