



North Carolina Research Triangle Area Cooperative Long-Range Planning

Quick Information

Organization(s): North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO)

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Website: <http://www.campo-nc.us/adopted-2040-mtp>

Cooperation Topic(s): Air Quality and Environmental Planning; Regional Planning

Cooperation Practice(s): Joint Planning Products

Cost Information: CAMPO and DCHC MPO jointly fund the MTP initiative. Data collection efforts are proportionally split; one MPO will independently buy an urgently-needed dataset, and this is eventually offset by the other MPO.

Air quality and congestion issues are concerns for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) across the country, and they do not fit neatly within jurisdictional boundaries. With guidance from previous collaborations between [North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization \(CAMPO\)](#) and the [Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization \(DCHC MPO\)](#), these agencies agreed that working together to solve these issues would be better than working separately. After years of staff level coordination on various processes and projects, the idea to develop a plan together was approved and the [2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and Air Quality Analysis and Conformity Determination Report](#) (2035 LRTP) and [2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan](#) (2040 MTP) were adopted in 2009 and 2013, respectively. These plans have provided the region with a cohesive framework for the future of transportation in the Raleigh-Durham region of North Carolina.

Motivation for Establishing the Collaboration

The busiest freeway link in the Raleigh-Durham region lies along the boundary that separates CAMPO's jurisdiction from DCHC MPO's jurisdiction, essentially connecting the two MPOs and the areas that they serve. The freeway is one example of how the two jurisdictions unite in planning processes. Coordination between the MPOs also extends to travel demand modeling and air quality management. As the staff at each MPO began working together on various projects and programs that spanned the combined areas of the MPOs, they realized that planning together could also be beneficial for the region.

CAMPO and DCHC MPO presented the idea to develop a joint metropolitan transportation plan to their local policy boards. Upon receiving approval, they kicked off an extensive, coordinated effort to produce the 2035 LRTP in 2009. Collaboration on the 2035 LRTP was considered to be a success, which led to the development of the 2040 MTP, which was adopted in April of 2013.

Collaboration Structure

Collaboration at all levels was essential to the success of both the 2035 LRTP and the 2040 MTP—the MPOs' leadership and staff consistently worked together through both formalized agreements and informal communications where information, processes, and data were shared.

Before this particular effort began, the MPOs signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) that defined which MPO was responsible for jurisdictions that crossed over MPO boundaries. This included an advisory committee, called the Triangle Metropolitan Planning Organizations Coordinating Council (TMPOCC), with representatives from each MPO's Transportation Advisory Committee. Other MOAs and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) have been established to clarify planning responsibilities, but the efforts related to the joint plan do not have an MOA or MOU since the agencies have grown habituated to working together informally. With the collaborative framework established by the previous MOAs and MOUs, these agencies now do not need such formal processes of collaboration. MPOs work together on regional transportation planning, which have included the 2040 MTP in addition to other transportation planning activities for the region. As the workload increases for the development of MTP, meeting frequency increases as needed.

Different aspects of the plan lent themselves to various types of coordination. At the staff level, many informal discussions took place throughout the process in order to advance the technical portions of various modeling, GIS, and planning projects. During an MTP year, staff from each MPO meet regularly (sometimes multiple times per week and sometimes biweekly) at [Triangle J](#), the region's COG, to discuss mutual interests and issues. During non-MTP years, the technical staff continue collaborative efforts. Fortunately, Triangle J initiated interagency coordination for air quality conformity in the region years ago, so CAMPO and DCHC MPO trusted the COG to facilitate discussions for the 2035 LRTP and 2040 MTP as well.

Though they worked together to develop the joint 2040 MTP, each MPO retained a measure of flexibility with regard to developing certain performance measures. This flexibility includes different target goals for each MPO. For instance, DCHC MPO had aspirational performance measure targets established, while CAMPO simply had a goal to monitor and record performance measures, such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT). As of now, both MPOs have the same general goals and the same measures, but this may change in the future. The MPOs aim to use the same measures as much as

Takeaways

- As the staff at CAMPO and DCHC MPO began working together on various projects and programs that spanned the combined areas of the MPOs, they realized that planning together could also be beneficial for the region and developed the intention for a joint metropolitan transportation plan.
- Through a general MOA, the MPOs established an advisory committee called the Triangle Metropolitan Planning Organizations Coordinating Council that included representatives from each MPO's Transportation Advisory Committee.
- The agencies saved resources by sharing staff and funding to achieve their goals – between the two MPOs, there are around four staff members working on the 2040 MTP initiatives, which was funded 25 percent by the State, 25 percent by the regional transit authority, and 50 percent was proportionally split between the MPOs based on population.
- The MPOs worked together to develop the joint 2040 MTP, and retained a measure of flexibility with regard to developing certain performance measures, including target goals and metrics.

possible, but if they decide to measure goals and targets differently, they aim to make the measures compatible. Furthermore each MPO preserves its individuality and autonomy by having the authority to propose amendments to the 2040 MTP.

Joint planning between these MPOs includes regular coordination meetings, a shared regional model, a cosponsored regional travel demand modeling and forecasting center at North Carolina State University with a contract to the University, and MPO modeling staff at the model team offices. Often, one planner may be staffed to different tasks across MPOs, including population forecasting or updating Environmental Justice and Title VI for the counties. Outside of the MTP, there are special joint planning studies, including one joint study this year and three next year. For these studies, a scope will be jointly developed to determine which MPO staff is a better position to administer that study and processes are developed to ensure cooperation.

Collaboration Accomplishments

The agencies saved resources by sharing staff and funding to achieve their goals. Between the two organizations, there are about four staff members working on the 2040 MTP initiatives. CAMPO and DCHC MPO estimate that if each MPO were to work separately, each agency would require three to five staff members to complete the work. The agencies jointly fund the MTP initiative. Often, data collection efforts are proportionally split, but if one MPO wants a dataset urgently, that MPO will buy the entire dataset; the other MPO often buys the next shared dataset to offset these costs.

The 2040 MTP planning process also introduced the MPOs to innovative technology that supports collaboration. For instance, a new project required the collaboration of CAMPO and DCHC MPO through the tool, CommunityViz, a GIS-based scenario development and analysis software that was first used in the 2040 MTP. Learning the capabilities of CommunityViz during the 2040 MTP process enabled the MPOs to begin analyzing future growth scenarios and helping their over 30 cities and towns with local land use control to develop consistent and transparent forecasts, which improves the region's transportation modelling and planning.

Most importantly, the region's residents experience the greatest benefits from cooperation between CAMPO and DCHC MPO. Many residents travel from their homes in one jurisdiction to work in the other, so they rely on coordinated services to improve their commutes and overall quality of life. Improved demographic and socioeconomic forecasts, as well as travel behavior models, help the MPOs to plan and coordinate better services for residents. Furthermore, the chambers of commerce created a business coalition, called [Regional Transportation Alliance \(RTA\)](#), which provides a unified voice from the business community for transportation efforts. The RTA contributes to the efforts of Raleigh and Durham to attract mutual investments in economic development, rather than competing for projects that could go to other cities instead of one of them.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Staff and leadership from CAMPO and DCHC MPO have long recognized the importance of working together when they can, but as separate entities, they also have competing interests. To address this issue, the MPOs work with Triangle J to facilitate discussions between them. Triangle J acts as a neutral party that has no vested interest in the conclusions that the MPOs reach. This provides CAMPO and DCHC MPO with a forum that is not biased towards one MPO or the other, improving cooperation between them.

While Raleigh and Durham have a number of common transportation goals, the cities and their corresponding MPOs have different cultures, political leanings, and demographics. In spite of that, they have realized over time that cooperating on planning efforts saves time and money, and improves the quality of life in both their jurisdictions. As a result of their expanding portfolio of collaborative work over the past few years, CAMPO and DCHC MPO anticipate that they will continue to develop joint transportation planning products for years to come.

Additional Resources

- Memorandum of Agreement (see RMOG Handbook Appendix p. 32)
- [2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and Air Quality Analysis and Conformity Determination Report](#)
- [2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan](#)
- [Triangle J](#)
- [Regional Transportation Alliance \(RTA\)](#)