



# Appendix B

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## Regional Transportation Planning Coordination

A primer for Capital – Alamo Connections Study



# MEMO

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**Subject:** Regional Transportation Planning Coordination: A primer for the Capital-Alamo Coordination Study

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Coordination across jurisdictional boundaries is an ongoing concern in growing regions. While MPOs were established to coordinate transportation planning and programming at a regional level, the initial designation of MPOs in the 1970s have remained relatively fixed nationwide despite changes in regional growth and development. As once-separate regions begin to grow together, transportation organizations have taken several approaches to address areas of overlapping concern.

This white paper is an input to the ongoing work of the Capital-Alamo Connections Study. This study is TxDOT's effort to foster a collaborative transportation planning process for Austin, San Antonio, and the communities in between. Though these two metropolitan areas are still distinct today, their boundaries are frequently crossed by travelers. The urgency to work together on issues of shared concern is expected to increase as growth and traffic congestion increase. This paper summarizes some of the most commonly-used coordination strategies and provides examples of the use of these strategies between different regions and MPOs throughout the U.S.

## **Regional Coordination Framework**

Agencies use a range of alternatives to improve coordination while retaining jurisdictional control. Some of the benefits of regional coordination between transportation agencies include the following:

- Promote the efficient use of local resources and align decisions with regional goals
- Create consistent transportation solutions for a region's travelers, including passengers and freight carriers
- Acknowledge that transportation issues are not limited by jurisdictional boundaries
- Maximize the strengths of existing agencies, their goals, and their organizational structures

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OUR MISSION: *Through collaboration and leadership, we deliver a safe, reliable, and integrated transportation system that enables the movement of people and goods.*

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Figure 1 illustrates the range of coordination approaches currently used by transportation agencies that do not require a modification of their internal governance structures.

**Figure 1: Transportation Agency Coordination Approaches**

Ad hoc (single project)	Forums for ongoing dialog	Joint planning tasks	Combined planning documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on a single project that overlaps area</li> <li>• Does not require continuous coordination</li> <li>• Can involve State mediation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish meetings at regular intervals</li> <li>• Share current goals, activities</li> <li>• Identify areas of shared concern</li> <li>• Generate ideas for future coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOs collaborate on a specific part of the planning process</li> <li>• Data sharing agreements</li> <li>• Coordinating growth and travel demand assumptions</li> <li>• Co-producing planning products on areas of shared concern (freight, corridors, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOs collaborate on one long-range plan</li> <li>• Focus on a program of projects of shared regional interest</li> </ul>

The following sections will describe each approach to coordination and provide illustrative examples.

### **Ad Hoc**

In many cases, regional coordination is initiated by a single issue that brings agencies together in an ad hoc manner. In this form of coordination, transportation agencies work together on a single project with limited or no formal agreement. This approach to coordination is flexible, highly focused, and is not expected to continue beyond the limits of the single project. Many of the successful examples of regional coordination outlined in the *Selected National Examples* section began as ad hoc efforts.

The I-25 Denver-Colorado Springs Connection PEL, an ongoing study, is an example of a single project that crosses MPO boundaries. This effort is being led by the State but requires MPO engagement.

### **Forums for Ongoing Dialog**

Continuous regional coordination is often the result of long-term dialog between regional transportation agencies in order to define areas of shared concern. Forums for ongoing dialog involve periodic meetings of regional transportation agencies wherein each shares information on its current projects; discusses topics of regional interest, such as economic development; and works to identify opportunities to collaborate in the future. This type of coordination is continuous, occurring at fixed intervals, and formalized, often through a joint resolution signed by each member agency. It often results in the creation of task forces or working groups to further develop ideas.

One example of this type of coordination is the Central Jersey Transportation Forum, a meeting of decision makers who discuss cross-jurisdictional transportation issues. Over the years, several task

forces have formed to develop ideas introduced at the Forum, such as smart growth and bus rapid transit.

### **Joint Planning Tasks**

Once agencies build trust and identify areas of collaboration, there is the opportunity to begin working together on specific transportation planning tasks. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has identified the following transportation topics that are often coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries:

- Air Quality and Environmental Planning
- Asset Management
- Congestion Management
- Economic Development
- Environmental Justice Analysis
- Freight Planning
- Safety Planning
- Transit Planning
- Regional Planning

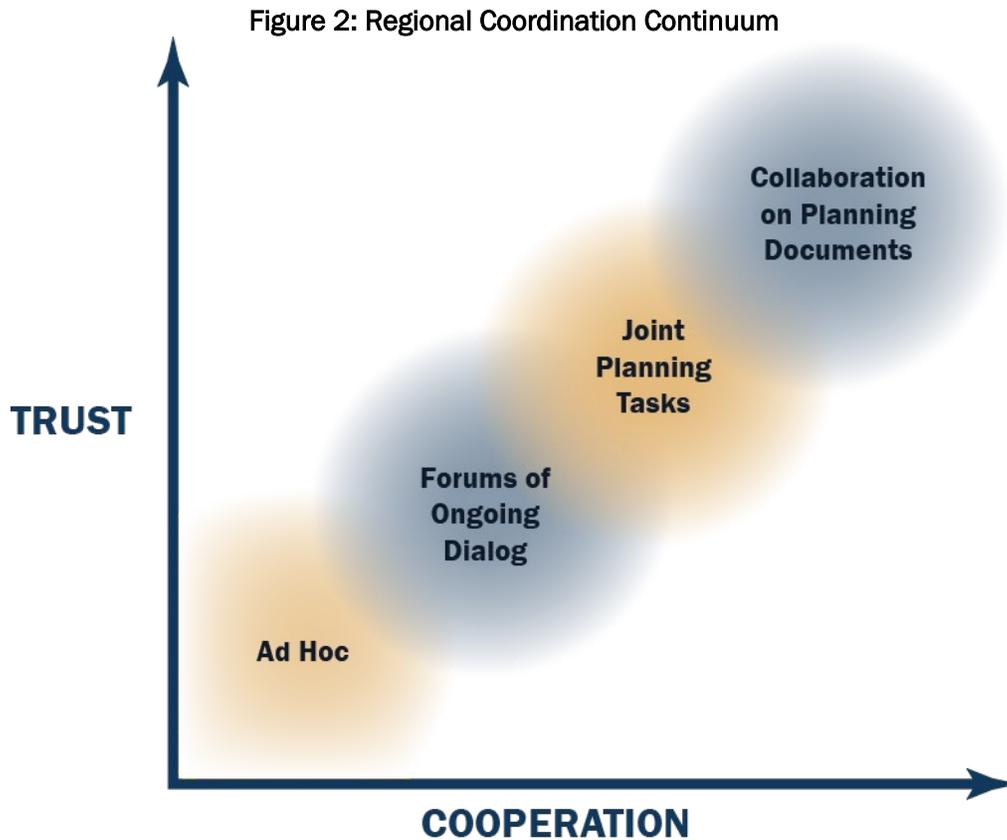
The specific form of coordination will depend on the overlapping concerns identified by the agencies. In some cases, the joint planning tasks are highly technical. The two MPOs in Raleigh-Durham, NC have collaborated on a land use scenario planning exercise and a travel demand model. Other regions coordinate on studies for specific planning areas identified through formalized coordination efforts, such as the *I-75 Regional Corridor Transportation Use Evaluation* by the West Central Florida MPOs Chairs Coordinating Committee. In the examples listed in the *Selected National Examples* section, coordinated joint planning tasks are based on detailed memorandums of understanding that provide detail on the agencies involved and their roles as co-producers of a document or technical product.

### **Combined Planning Documents**

Regional transportation coordination becomes urgent as urbanized areas begin to grow together. In several cases nationwide, MPOs that hold jurisdiction over a single Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) work to produce shared planning documents. CMSAs are geographical areas that include multiple core cities and their surrounding areas with strong economic and transportation linkages. Where multiple MPOs exist in a single CMSA, coordination is required across transportation planning activities to effectively address regional needs. In some cases, multiple MPOs co-produce regional core planning documents. In other cases, regions focus on long-range planning efforts, with MPOs retaining their own short-range plans (TIPs). In the Raleigh-Durham Triangle Region, for example, two MPOs have collaborated on Metropolitan Transportation Plans since 2007 while continuing to author individual TIPs. In other cases, regions create shared planning documents that supplement plans for each MPO area. While MPOs in Southeast Florida still produce their own long-range planning documents, they also collaborate on a consolidated long-range plan to identify projects of regional significance.

## Continuous Coordination

Regional coordination involves improving transportation outcomes through partnerships across existing jurisdictional boundaries. Each of the alternative approaches presented exists on a continuum of trust and cooperation. Each step builds trust and mutual understanding that form the basis for further partnership between agencies. Figure 2 illustrates this process.



The next section provides selected examples of ongoing or recent regional coordination efforts across the nation. As mentioned previously, many of these strategies began as Ad Hoc efforts and evolved into other types of coordination frameworks with earned trust and cooperation. Regions with no currently-set framework for coordination can begin using an Ad Hoc approach through coordination on a single project that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. With improved trust, cooperation, and proper funding, the coordination between the agencies can be transformed into a more formally-structured framework over time. Enhancing coordination between agencies can be supported by adopting practices of previous successful efforts, outlined in the FHWA's "Regional Models of Cooperation Handbook" (pp. 11-12):

- Fostering relationships between agencies at all levels, from technical staff to decision makers, that builds trust and understanding
- Working to define mutual benefits and overlapping areas of interest
- Allowing both formal and informal coordination
- Building a culture of coordination that encourages working across jurisdictional boundaries
- Making room for differences of opinion
- Ensuring that all members have opportunities to participate

## Regional Transportation Coordination – Selected National Examples

### *I-25 PEL - Denver – Colorado Springs*

<https://www.codot.gov/projects/I25COSDEN>

#### WHO IS INVOLVED:

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Denver MPO and Colorado Springs MPO.

#### TYPE OF COORDINATION:

Ad-Hoc

#### TOPICS DISCUSSED:

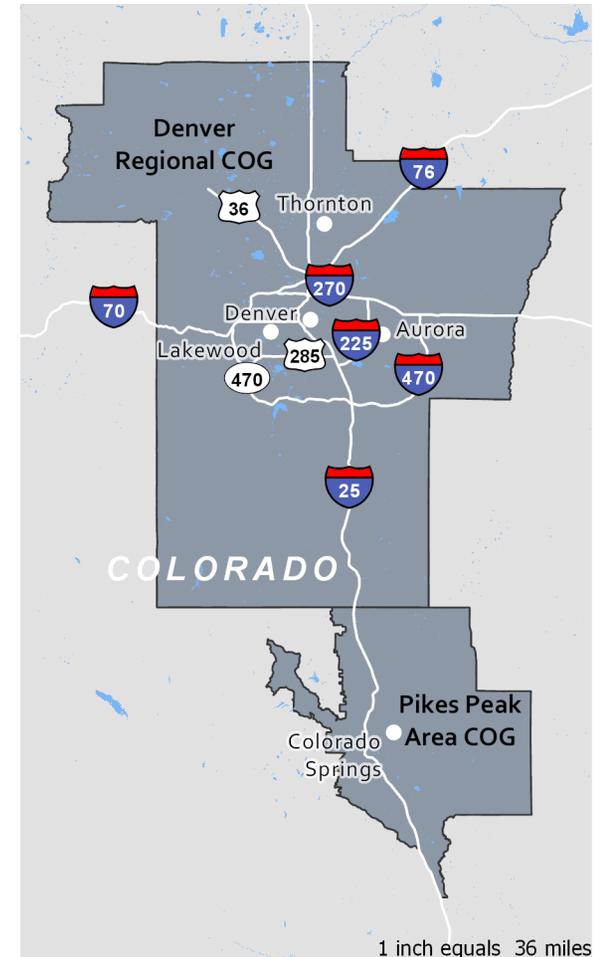
Identify, define and prioritize projects based on the corridor's greatest needs. Identify significant environmental constraints. Clarify project costs and identify necessary financing and funding options to implement improvements.

#### TYPE OF AGREEMENT:

CDOT initiated a planning and environmental linkages (PEL) study to identify immediate and longer-term solutions to this vital stretch of highway, which connects Colorado Springs and the Denver South area.

#### MAJOR SUCCESSES:

None to date. Ongoing I-25 PEL: Colorado Springs Denver South Connection.



**Joint Policy Advisory Council (JPAC) in Arizona**

<http://www.jpacaz.org>

**WHO IS INVOLVED:**

Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the Pima Association of Governments (PAG), the Central Arizona Governments (CAG) and the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (SCMPO).

**TYPE OF COORDINATION:**

Forum for Ongoing Dialog

**TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

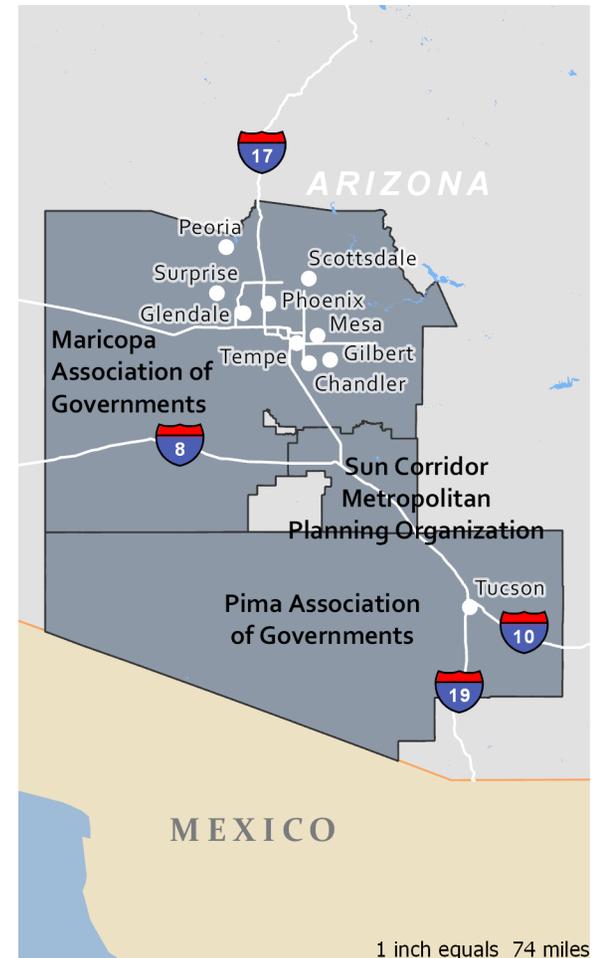
Was established to identify mutually agreed upon goals and interests, provide guidance on possible technical assistance and joint planning activities, and enhance the communication and cooperation among the policymakers in these regions.

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT:**

Resolution of Planning Coordination

**MAJOR SUCCESSES:**

The Sun Corridor Economic Development for the Global Economy (EDGE) Program and Annual Leadership Meeting



***Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC)***

<http://seftc.org/>

**WHO IS INVOLVED:**

MPOs from the Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties

**TYPE OF COORDINATION:**

Ah-Hoc, Forum for Ongoing Dialog, Joint Planning Tasks, Combined Planning Documents

**TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

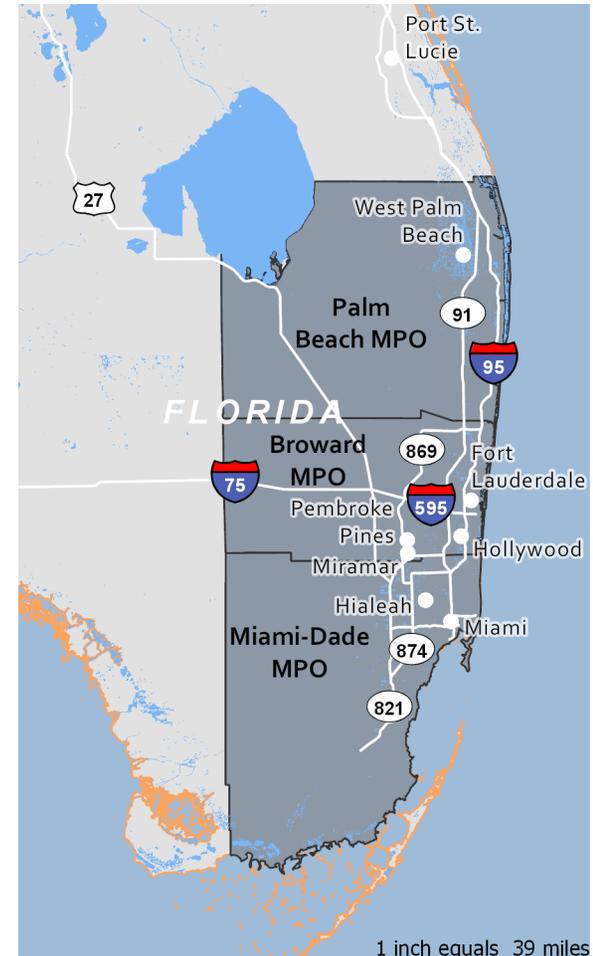
Regional long range transportation plans, regional project prioritization and selection process, regional public involvement process, performance measures to assess the effectiveness of regional coordination.

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT:**

An interlocal agreement between the three parties was completed in 2005 paving the way for the first SEFTC meeting in January 2006.

**MAJOR SUCCESSES:**

SMART Plan, Public Participation Subcommittee, Freight Participation Subcommittee, Tri-Rail Coastal Link Partnership MOU, Universal Fare Card Resolution, I-95 Express Bus



### *West Central Florida MPOs Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC)*

<http://tbarta.com/en/chairs-coordinating-committee/about/chairs-coordinating-committee>

#### **WHO IS INVOLVED:**

Hernando/Citrus MPO, Hillsborough MPO, Pasco MPO, Pinellas MPO, Polk TPO, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, FDOT District One and Eleven, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and Council Board-Council Member, Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority

#### **TYPE OF COORDINATION:**

Join Planning Tasks, Combined Planning Documents

#### **TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

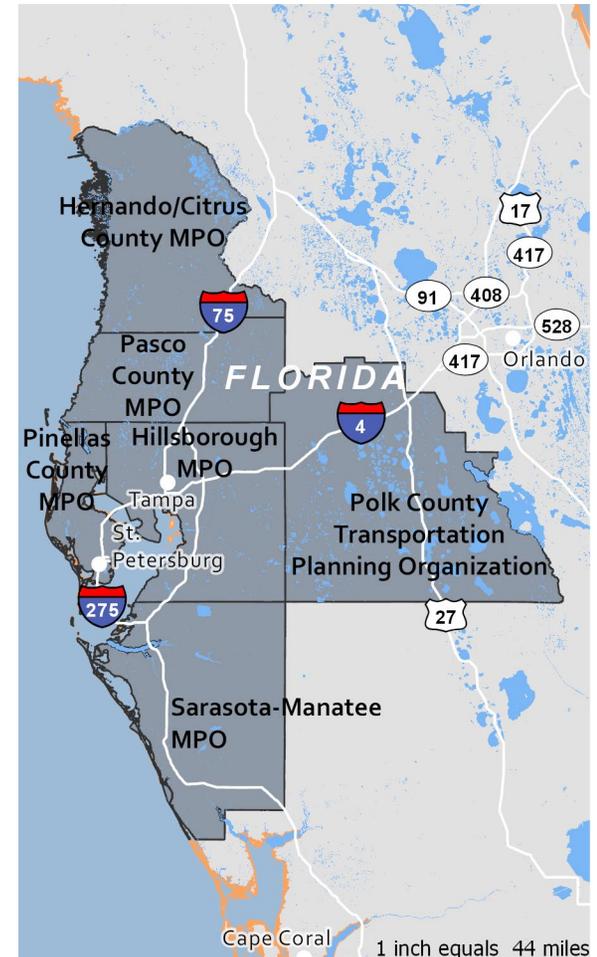
Was established to coordinate projects deemed regionally significant, review regionally significant land use decisions, review all proposed regionally significant projects affecting more than one MPO, and institute a conflict resolution process throughout the West Central Florida region.

#### **TYPE OF AGREEMENT:**

Established in 1993 by State statute

#### **MAJOR SUCCESSES:**

The Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) and West Central Florida Regional Roadway Network. Since 2010, the CCC has contracted TBARTA to provide organization and administrative services for the functions of the TBARTA MPOs CCC.



*Joint Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC) in Utah*

<http://wfrc.org/committees/joint-policy-advisory-committee/>

**WHO IS INVOLVED:**

Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO) in Cache County, Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMPO) in Washington County, Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) in Utah County, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and Utah Transit Authority (UTA).

**TYPE OF COORDINATION:**

Forum for ongoing Dialog

**TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

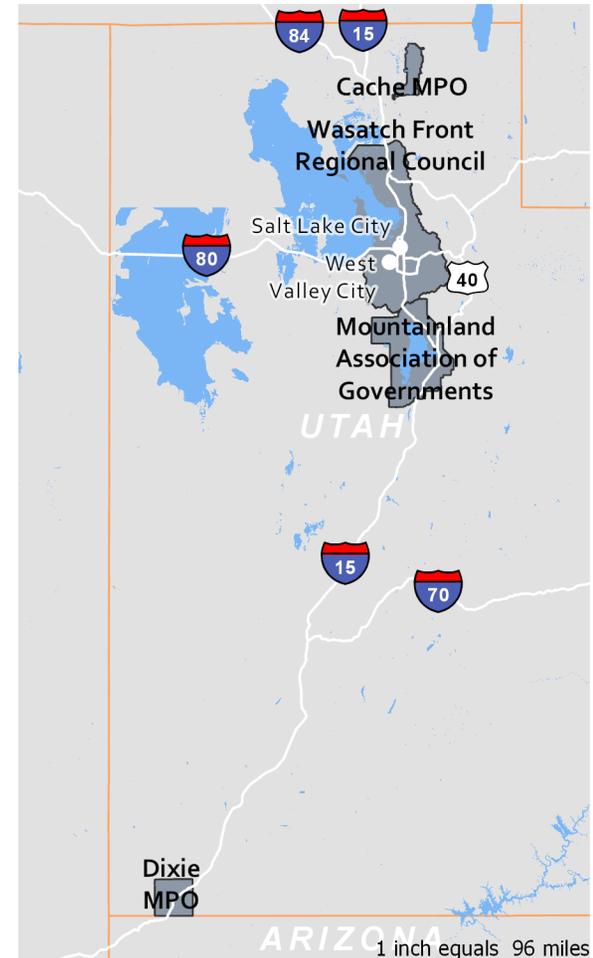
State and federal transportation legislation, roadway and transit safety, traffic management, and active transportation.

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT:**

Memorandum of Agreement

**MAJOR SUCCESSES:**

JPAC coordinates the development of the four MPO's long-range transportation plans, as well as UDOT's plans for the rural areas. This coordination leads to the development of Utah's Unified Transportation Plan.



## Central Jersey Transportation Forum (CJTF)

<https://www.dvrpc.org/Committees/CJTF/>

### WHO IS INVOLVED:

Three NJ counties: Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset. This partnership is facilitated by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Council (DVRPC) and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and coordinated with New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).

### TYPE OF COORDINATION:

Forum for Ongoing Dialog

### TOPICS DISCUSSED:

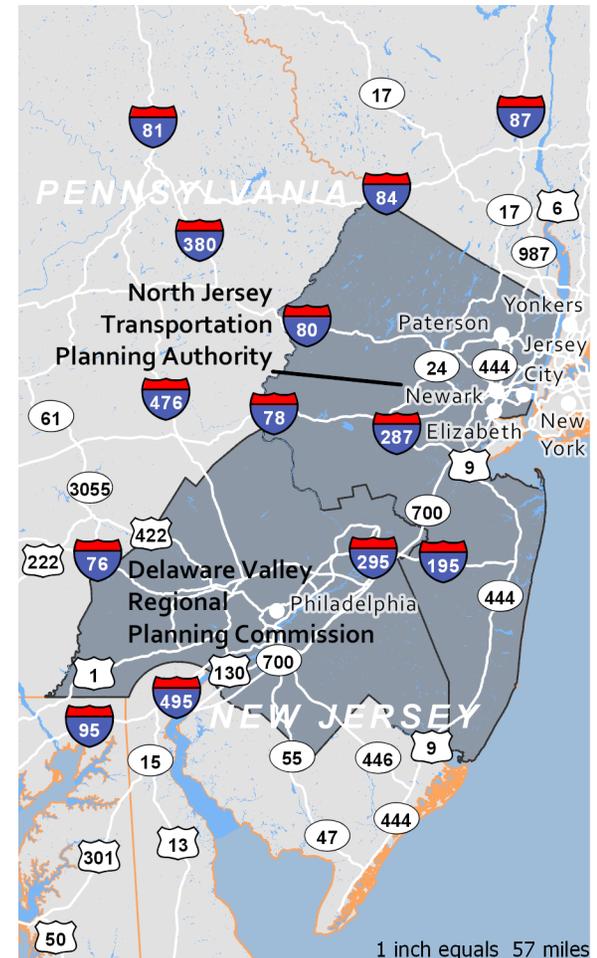
Several organizations meet to coordinate, discuss transportation and land use issues, and implement solutions. The key issues it addresses are east-west access; improving coordination of transportation and land use in this high growth, congested area; and developing a bus rapid transit project.

### TYPE OF AGREEMENT:

A long-standing voluntary gathering of mayors and their representatives, county and state leaders, and representatives from major employers and non-profit organizations.

### MAJOR SUCCESSES:

Smart Growth Best Practices Brochure, Advance the Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit, Annual CJTF Planned Projects Status Reports.



## *North Carolina Research Triangle Cooperative Long-Range Planning*

<http://www.campo-nc.us/transportation-plan/2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan>

### **WHO IS INVOLVED:**

NC Department of Transportation, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Triangle J Council of Governments, and GoTriangle

### **TYPE OF COORDINATION:**

Joint Planning Tasks, Combined Planning Documents

### **TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

MPOs and transit providers in the Raleigh-Durham region in North Carolina have been collaborating on a series of regional planning efforts that have culminated in a 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan and 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Other joint efforts include air quality analysis, a regional travel demand model, a freight plan, and a scenario planning exercise.

### **TYPE OF AGREEMENT:**

Memorandum of Agreement

### **MAJOR SUCCESSES:**

Triangle Region Freight Plan, Triangle Transportation Demand Management Program, Land Use Scenario Planning Tool (CommunityViz), Triangle Regional Model, Joint MTP

