

Florida's Rural Transportation Planning Process
Phase 1, Discovery

Final Report



Florida Department of Transportation

Office of Policy Planning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Office of Policy Planning is examining its transportation planning program to ensure a commitment to effective rural and local government engagement and collaboration. Understanding how FDOT currently engages with rural local governments is critical to the Department’s vision of providing a transportation network that is well planned, supports economic growth, and has the goal of being congestion and fatality free.

This undertaking supports the seven goals in FDOT’s long-range plan, the [Florida Transportation Plan](#) (FTP), as well as multiple strategies. For instance, the FTP calls for a stronger link between transportation and land use decisions, which is critical to supporting quality places. It recognizes the need to strengthen state funded local programs that address regional and local mobility needs, as well as the need to provide technical assistance to local governments. Among other strategies, it also recognizes the need to improve public transportation services within rural areas and between rural and urban areas to connect people to jobs, education, and training. FDOT and its Office of Policy Planning play a lead role in implementing the FTP and, in partnership with its regional and local partners, envision an enhanced rural transportation planning process as progress towards that effort.

Therefore, in addition to supporting the FTP, the goal of this two-year study is to develop recommendations for enhancing Florida’s rural transportation planning process as well as comply with the requirements of federal law. Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations § 450 requires every state to document its process for cooperating with non-metropolitan local officials during development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In addition, this process must be separate and discrete from the public involvement process and, at least once every five years, states must review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties regarding the effectiveness of this process and document any proposed changes.

FDOT Districts are responsible for carrying out this federally prescribed rural transportation planning process for the 21 counties that are not within the boundaries of an MPO as well as portions of seven counties that are partially outside of an MPO boundary. This primarily involves Districts 2 and 3 and to a lesser extent, District 6 (Monroe County), District 4 (a portion of Indian River County), and District 5 (a portion of Flagler County). The remaining portion of the seven partial counties and the urbanized and rural areas of the remaining 39 counties are subject to the metropolitan planning process.

The first year of this study (Phase I) focused on discovery. This included outreach to FDOT’s partners in transportation planning, FDOT Districts, and Florida’s rural local governments, to determine how technical assistance and compliance with federal and state transportation processes are facilitated throughout the state, as well as to identify challenges, opportunities, and notable practices. Outreach methods included conversations with each of the FDOT Districts by phone or in person, interviews with FDOT’s rural transportation planning partners, and a survey of Florida’s rural local governments.

Upon conclusion of the discovery process, one of the more significant commonalities found among all of the Districts was their use of workshops and annual meetings to provide technical assistance to their local governments on the various transportation grant programs managed by FDOT, including the federal Local Agency Programs and state grant programs such as the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP), Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). In some instances, these workshops also addressed other FDOT programs including Complete Streets Implementation, Safe Routes to Schools, and the Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail (SUN Trail) Program.

The Districts with MPOs in their boundaries noted MPOs with strong public involvement plans encourage the participation of rural local governments in MPO planning activities and development of MPO long range transportation plans. This was also facilitated by rural local governments that served on MPO Boards and MPO technical advisory committees. The Districts also noted planning outreach and coordination with rural local governments typically increased during the work program cycle and they also engaged with rural local governments on issues that may arise through the day-to-day business of the MPOs.

In addition to workshops and annual meetings, several notable practices were identified among the Districts., including the following:

- Outreach to rural local governments by District Secretaries and managers;
- Identification of one or two key staff for rural local government technical assistance who are known to the local governments and serve as their primary point of contact on planning issues;
- Efforts to streamline the application process for locally administered state funded grant programs; and
- Participation in MPO regional coordination initiatives in which rural local governments are actively involved.

A survey of Florida’s rural local governments gathered input from rural local elected officials to determine levels of satisfaction with the existing rural transportation planning process. Of the 618 surveys circulated, 68 (11%) were completed. Results revealed overall, 50 percent of respondents were satisfied with Florida’s rural transportation planning process; 16 percent were not, and 34 percent offered no opinion. Among those who coordinated directly with their FDOT District, responses to specific questions regarding positive levels of satisfaction ranged from 43 percent to 55 percent, while those who were subject to the MPO process had positive levels of satisfaction ranging from 57 percent to 69 percent.

Gaps and challenges were also identified throughout this discovery effort, including those listed below:

- Varying federal and state definitions of “rural” make it challenging to apply a statewide approach to rural transportation planning that meets the needs of Florida’s rural local governments and ensures state cooperation with elected and appointed officials in the rural transportation planning process;
- Local officials who are unaware of whom to contact at their FDOT District for technical assistance and may not understand the transportation planning process;
- Lack of consistency in the role, responsibilities, and funding availability for FDOT’s MPO liaisons;
- Lack of adequate District staff to serve rural local governments;
- Lack of District-to-District coordination and sharing of best practices;
- Lack of adequate program funding for projects on non-Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) roads, rural transit, and transportation disadvantaged services, as perceived by local governments.

With completion of the discovery phase and the findings noted in this report, the Office of Policy Planning will begin Phase II of the study, which includes working with FHWA to conduct a peer exchange with states that take a variety of approaches to enhancing their rural transportation planning processes. The purpose of the peer exchange will be to understand why these states chose their respective approaches and what challenges and solutions they discovered along the way. Phase II will also include compliance with the FAST Act and 23 CFR 450.210(b), as described above. It is anticipated this two-year study of Florida’s rural transportation planning process will largely inform that federally required report, which is due in the spring of 2019.

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT’s) Office of Policy Planning seeks to discover the role that the FDOT Districts, local governments, and key partners play in Florida’s rural transportation planning process. FDOT recognizes the unique set of circumstances and challenges that are faced by Florida’s rural areas in addressing their transportation needs. These include having access to jobs, schools, and healthcare; balancing transportation and environmental considerations; preserving rural character while promoting economic growth; prioritizing transportation needs in the face of limited resources; and ensuring the movement of agricultural and other goods, to name a few.

This project also supports the seven goals in FDOT’s long-range plan, the [Florida Transportation Plan](#) (FTP), as well as multiple strategies. For instance, the FTP calls for a stronger link between transportation and land use decisions, which is critical to supporting quality places. It recognizes the need to strengthen state funded local programs that address regional and local mobility needs, as well as the need to provide technical assistance to local governments. Among other strategies, it also recognizes the need to improve public transportation services within rural areas and between rural and urban areas to connect people to jobs, education, and training. FDOT and its Office of Policy Planning play a lead role in implementing the FTP and, in partnership with its regional and local partners, envision an enhanced rural transportation planning process as progress towards that goal.

Project Purpose

This project discovered and documented Florida’s existing rural transportation planning process. This was accomplished through the following three primary activities:

- Researching the extent to which FDOT Districts engage with their rural local governments;
- Exploring the level of satisfaction that rural local governments have with their access and ability to participate in transportation planning activities, including the establishment of local project priorities; and
- Reaching out to other key transportation planning partners, such as metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and regional planning councils (RPCs), regarding their engagement with rural local governments and their FDOT Districts.

This was the first phase of a two-year study that will lead to recommendations for enhancing rural transportation planning in the state of Florida.

History of Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations

Federal regulations require all states to consult with and consider the concerns of non-metropolitan local elected officials when making transportation decisions in their statewide transportation planning and programming processes, as well as to review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local elected officials regarding the consultation process to ensure it is continually effective. For the purposes of this report, non-metropolitan and rural are synonymous. Below is a brief history of how these regulations evolved:

Table 1. History of Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations

Law	Effective Date	Summary
Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)	1991	Placed significant emphasis on broadening participation in planning to include key stakeholders who had not traditionally been involved, including the business community, members of the public, community groups, and other governmental agencies, to promote a more integrated planning process and be more responsive to local needs.
Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century (TEA-21)	1998	Required the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct a study on the effectiveness of the participation of local elected officials in transportation planning and programming and to especially consider the degree of cooperation between each state, its local officials in rural areas, and its regional planning and development organizations; and required the delivery of a report within two years containing the results of the study and any recommendations.
Rule on Statewide Metropolitan and Transportation Planning (23 CFR 450.210(b))	2003	<p>Implemented the congressional intent of TEA-21 to enhance the participation of rural local elected and appointed officials in the statewide planning and decision-making process, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a documented process for rural local official input into statewide transportation plans and investment programs, and at least once every five years, states must review and solicit comments (for a minimum of 60 days) from the non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties on the effectiveness of the existing consultation process(es) and propose modifications; • Keeping the consultation process separate and discrete from state processes to obtain input from the general public; • Modifying the definition of “consultation” to require states to confer with local elected and appointed officials before taking certain actions; and • Requiring states to make public their reasons for not choosing to follow the recommendations provided by local officials during the comment period.

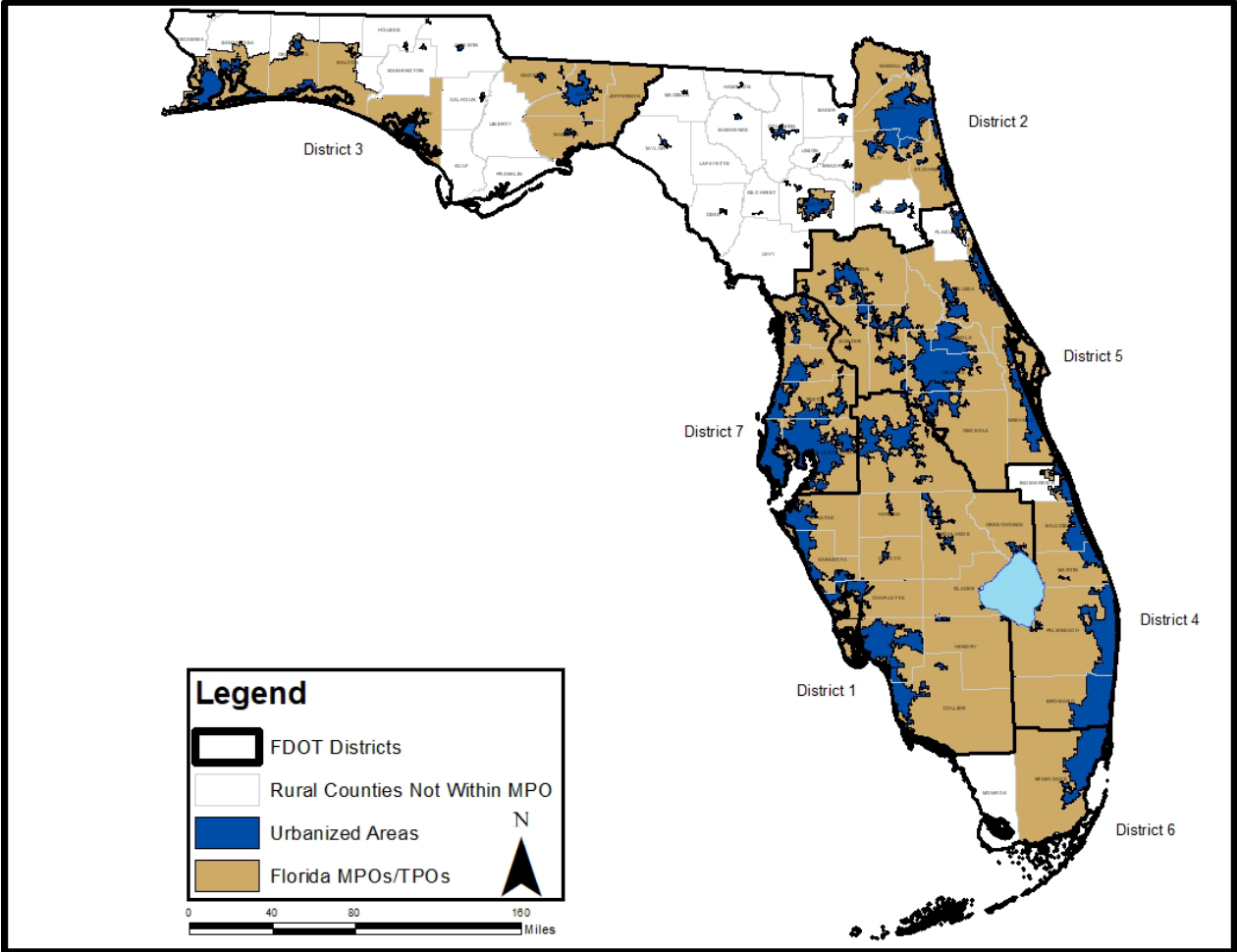
Law	Effective Date	Summary
Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)	2005	Continued the provisions of TEA-21 as noted above and added a provision requiring statewide planning to be coordinated with metropolitan planning and statewide trade and economic development planning activities and related multi-state planning activities. It also required statewide planning efforts to consider and implement projects, strategies, and services that promote the economic vitality of non-metropolitan areas.
Rule on Statewide Metropolitan and Transportation Planning (23 CFR 450.210(b))	2007	Modified to ensure consistency with SAFETEA-LU.
Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century (MAP-21)	2012	<p>Carried forward the previous provisions related to the role of non-metropolitan local governments in the transportation planning process as well as the requirement for documenting consultation with non-metropolitan local officials. It also added a new provision allowing states to designate regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of long-range plans and the STIP, as well as defined RTPOs’ structure and responsibilities, which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing regional long-range multimodal transportation plans; • Developing a Regional Transportation Improvement Program for consideration by the state; • Fostering the coordination of local planning, land use, and economic development plans with state, regional, and local transportation plans and programs; • Providing technical assistance to local officials; • Participating in national, multistate, and state policy and planning development processes; • Providing a forum for public participation in the statewide and regional transportation planning processes; and • Considering and share plans and programs with neighboring RTPOs, MPOs, and, where appropriate, Indian Tribal governments.

Law	Effective Date	Summary
		In addition, states that do not establish or designate regional transportation organizations must consult with affected non-metropolitan officials to identify projects that may be of regional significance.
Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act	2015	Continues the statewide and non-metropolitan planning requirements that were in effect under MAP-21.
Rule on Statewide Metropolitan and Transportation Planning (23 CFR 450.210(b))	2016	Includes previous provisions noted above and also calls for a higher level of involvement with non-metropolitan local officials by changing “consultation” with local officials to “cooperation” with local officials and by providing a process for the optional creation of regional transportation planning organizations.

Florida’s Urbanized and Rural Areas

For the purposes of this project, the terms *non-metropolitan* and *rural* are synonymous. Figure 1 below depicts the difference between Florida’s urbanized areas (shown in dark blue), remaining non-metropolitan areas that are within an MPO boundary (shown in tan), and rural counties that are not within an MPO boundary (shown in white). Thirty-nine of Florida’s 67 counties are wholly within the boundaries of an MPO, through which all local transportation planning functions flow. Of the remaining 28 counties, seven are partially within the boundaries of an MPO and 21 are not governed by the metropolitan planning process.

Figure 1. Florida’s MPOs and Urbanized Areas



To better comprehend the findings of this project, it is important to understand that FDOT Districts are responsible for carrying out the regulations noted above for only the 21 counties that are not within the boundaries of an MPO as well as those portions of the seven counties noted above that are partially outside of an MPO boundary. This primarily involves Districts 2 and 3 and to a lesser extent, District 6 (Monroe County), District 4 (a portion of Indian River County), and District 5 (a portion of Flagler County). Both the urbanized and rural areas of the remaining 39 counties are subject to the metropolitan planning process.

METHODOLOGY

Florida’s rural local governments have a unique history, people, and economy. For those familiar with rural communities in the state of Florida, most would agree that one size does not fit all. Rural communities could be characterized by a variety of factors, including the following:

- Small enclaves and settlements within urban counties;
- Fast-growing/transitioning communities, some of which may be at the edge of metropolitan areas;
- Inland regions encompassing small towns, agricultural lands, conservation and recreation lands, and open space; and
- Areas characterized by long term unemployment, poverty, and economic challenges.

This study began with a literature review and review of federal and state definitions of “rural,” to better understand how rural areas are defined, assess previous research related to rural transportation planning, and learn how other states address rural transportation planning challenges. This included a high-level data snapshot of Florida’s rural areas; an extensive outreach initiative, including interviews with key District staff; targeted partner meetings; and a survey of local governments. Each of these activities is described in the sections that follow.

Literature Review

FDOT commissioned a literature review of the current national practice in transportation planning to identify effective current practices. This began with reviewing a literature search that was conducted for the FHWA Office of Planning’s 2014 initiative, *RTPOs State of the Practice*,¹ for any sources that were relevant to this rural transportation planning study. In addition, a literature search from 2014 to the present time identified additional case studies and related materials. Finally, four states (North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington) were identified as having noteworthy practices in rural transportation planning with similarities to Florida’s MPO/non-metropolitan composition. A commonality among these four states was the designation of regional or rural transportation planning organizations, although their structure and authority varied. Telephone interviews were conducted with these four states to collect additional data on their robust rural transportation planning partnership programs. The results of the literature review and peer state interviews are available in Appendix A.

Rural Definitions and Data Snapshot

This project also sought to define what it means to be rural in the context of transportation planning and to identify the rural local governments that should be included in this study. The U.S. Census Bureau and FHWA each have a set of definitions, as does the state of Florida in Section 288.0656(1)(e), F.S. For the purpose of this study, all counties and their municipalities that met the state definition of rural were included, which are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

¹ This literature review was funded by the FHWA Office of Policy and Government Affairs/Office of Transportation Policy Studies (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/>) to document the state of the practice in RTPOs, but was never published.

Table 2. Rural Counties in Florida

Baker	Gadsden ⁱ	Holmes	Okeechobee ⁱ
Bradford	Gilchrist	Jackson	Putnam
Calhoun	Glades ⁱ	Jefferson ⁱ	Suwannee
Columbia	Gulf	Lafayette	Taylor
DeSoto ⁱ	Hamilton	Levy	Union
Dixie	Hardee ⁱ	Liberty	Wakulla ⁱ
Flagler ⁱ	Hendry ⁱ	Madison	Washington
Franklin	Highlands ⁱ	Nassau ⁱ	Walton ⁱ

ⁱ Entirely within an MPO, with the exception of Flagler County, which is partially within an MPO

Table 3. Incorporated Municipalities within Rural Counties

Baker County	City of Quincy	Jackson County	Putnam County
City of Macclenny	Town of Greensboro	City of Graceville	City of Crescent City
Town of Glen St. Mary	Town of Havana	City of Jacob City	City of Palatka
Bradford County	Gilchrist County	City of Marianna	Town of Interlachen
City of Hampton	City of Fanning Springs	Town of Alford	Town of Pomona Park
City of Lawtey	City of Trenton	Town of Bascom	Town of Welaka
City of Starke	Town of Bell	Town of Cambellton	Suwannee County
Town of Brooker	Glades Countyⁱⁱ	Town of Cottondale	City of Live Oak
Calhoun County	City of Moore Haven	Jefferson Countyⁱⁱ	Town of Branford
City of Blountstown	Gulf County	City of Monticello	Taylor County
Town of Altha	City of Port St. Joe	Lafayette County	City of Perry
Columbia County	City of Wewahitchka	Town of Mayo	Union County
City of Lake City	Hamilton County	Levy County	City of Lake Butler
Town of Fort White	City of Jasper	City of Cedar Key	Town of Raiford
DeSoto Countyⁱⁱ	Town of White Springs	City of Chiefland	Town of Worthington
City of Arcadia	Town of Jennings	City of Fanning Springs	Springs
Dixie County	Hardee Countyⁱⁱ	City of Otter Creek	Wakulla Countyⁱⁱ
City of Cross City	City of Bowling Green	City of Williston	City of Sopchoppy
City of Horseshoe Beach	City of Wauchula	City of Yankeetown	City of St. Marks
City of Old Town	Town of Zolfo Springs	Town of Bronson	Washington County
Flagler Countyⁱⁱ	Hendry Countyⁱⁱ	Town of Inglis	City of Chipley
City of Bunnell	City of Clewiston	Liberty County	City of Vernon
City of Flagler Beach	City of LaBelle	City of Bristol	Town of Caryville
City of Palm Coast	Highlands Countyⁱⁱ	Madison County	Town of Ebro
Town of Marineland	City of Avon Park	City of Madison	Town of Wausau
Town of Beverly Beach	City of Sebring	Town of Greenville	Walton Countyⁱⁱ
Franklin County	Town of Lake Placid	Town of Lee	City of DeFuniak Springs
City of Apalachicola	Holmes County	Nassau Countyⁱⁱ	City of Freeport
City of Carrabelle	City of Bonifay	City of Fernandina Beach	Town of Paxton
Gadsden Countyⁱⁱ	City of Ponce De Leon	Town of Callahan	
City of Chattahoochee	City of Westville	Town of Hilliard	
City of Gretna	Town of Esto	Okeechobee Countyⁱⁱ	
City of Midway	Town of Noma	City of Okeechobee	

ⁱⁱ Part of an MPO

In addition, the outreach process also included municipalities that are within non-rural counties and outside of MPO boundaries or designated as part of an Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO)² but located within an urban county as they have similar transportation planning issues as rural municipalities. The following municipalities were included:

- Municipalities within Alachua County outside of the Gainesville MTPO (metropolitan transportation planning organization).
 - City of Alachua
 - City of Archer
 - City of Hawthorne
 - City of High Springs
 - Town of La Crosse
 - Town of Micanopy
 - City of Newberry
 - City of Waldo
- Municipalities within Escambia County outside of the Florida-Alabama TPO (Transportation Planning Organization).
 - Town of Century
- Municipalities within Santa Rosa County outside of Florida-Alabama TPO.
 - Town of Jay
- Municipalities within Okaloosa County outside of Okaloosa-Walton TPO.
 - City of Laurel Hill
- Municipalities within Walton County outside of Okaloosa-Walton TPO.
 - Town of Paxton
- Municipalities within the South Central Florida RAO included in an urban county.
 - City of Belle Glade (Palm Beach County)
 - City of Pahokee (Palm Beach County)
 - City of South Bay (Palm Beach County)
 - City of Immokalee (Collier County)

The project team also included some municipalities with rural characteristics in its outreach process that were within non-rural counties or an MPO, due to their unique transportation planning issues and rural

² Section 288.0656(7)(a), F.S.

components. For instance, Monroe County does not meet either the definition of a rural county or an urban county. Therefore, it was important to determine how transportation needs were being met by FDOT in these areas as well. These municipalities include:

- City of Fellestere in Indian River County
- City of Key West in Monroe County
- City of Marathon in Monroe County
- City of Key Colony Beach in Monroe County
- City of Layton in Monroe County
- Village of Islamorada in Monroe County

A more robust explanation of these varying definitions of “rural” and how they are applied is provided in the Gaps and Challenges Section and the complete *Florida’s Rural Areas Report* is available in Appendix B.

District Outreach

FDOT’s discovery efforts included outreach to the FDOT Districts to identify how they engaged with their rural local governments in carrying out transportation planning mandates and activities. Between October 2017 and December 2017, interviews were conducted with staff from each of FDOT’s seven Districts. For Districts 2 and 3, the interviews were conducted in person, due to their proximity to Tallahassee. The remaining interviews were conducted by phone. Questions focused on local government outreach, planning consultation, identification of key players in each of the Districts, technical assistance support, identification of gaps in the needs of rural local governments, vision implementation, and adequacy of resources.

In addition, the feedback from the Districts was summarized and presented to the Intermodal Systems Development (ISD) Managers at their meeting on January 24, 2018. At that meeting, the ISD Managers were asked whether the information gathered to date rang true to them. They were also asked what they thought should be the top priorities in rural transportation planning and what FDOT should be doing to support rural local governments. Finally, they were asked for any other suggestions they might have for strengthening and enhancing rural transportation planning in the state of Florida. The results of these interviews and conversations are incorporated into the chapters that follow.

Targeted Partner Outreach

FDOT also engaged in outreach with its key partners in rural transportation planning. From November 2017 through March 2018, FDOT met with the following organizations to brief them on this project and gather their ideas for better engaging rural local governments in the transportation planning process:

- FTP/SIS Implementation Committee, which guides the FTP and SIS Policy Plan implementation process;
- Florida Regional Councils Association’s Staff Directors’ Advisory Committee, representing the 10 RPCs in Florida;

- Attendees of the 2017 Florida Rural Economic Development Summit, hosted by Florida’s Rural Areas of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, F.S.);
- Staff of six MPOs: the Heartland TPO, Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (TPA), Gainesville MTPO, Florida Alabama TPO, Okaloosa-Walton TPO, and Bay County TPO;
- Florida’s Rural Economic Development Initiative, which provides a focused and coordinated effort among state and regional agencies that administer programs and deliver services for rural areas of the state; and
- Staff of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, who administer Florida’s Transportation Disadvantaged Program and oversee its funding.

Their feedback and suggestions are also incorporated into the chapters that follow.

Local Government Survey

Finally, a local government survey was conducted to gauge how officials from rural cities and counties felt their transportation needs were being met. The line of questioning in the survey distinguished between rural local governments that were within the boundaries of an MPO and those that were not. For those within the boundaries of an MPO, questions focused on their level of satisfaction with the long-range transportation planning and project selection and prioritization processes. For those that were not within the boundaries of an MPO, questions addressed their level of satisfaction with their FDOT District’s transportation planning and work program project prioritization processes. In addition, all who took the survey were asked questions regarding their resource and technical assistance needs. Copies of the survey and survey results are located in Appendix C and are also discussed in the chapters that follow.

PROJECT FINDINGS

Through the discovery process described above, FDOT’s goal was to gather input from key staff and partners regarding their involvement and experiences in Florida’s rural transportation planning process. It is generally accepted that all local governments in Florida have the opportunity to request technical assistance, participate in FDOT workshops, and provide input into the project planning process, but how that is facilitated District by District needed to be better understood. This qualitative data gathering exercise resulted in the documentation of commonalities and notable practices, which were then augmented by the results of a survey to the rural local governments identified in the previous chapter.

Commonalities

All FDOT Districts engage with their rural local governments, often in the form of workshops, as described in the examples below:

- District 3 holds a Local Agency Transportation Symposium for its local governments, which addresses not only the various locally administered state funded grant programs, including the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), County Road Incentive Grant Program (CIGP), and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) but also other timely topics such as Safe Routes to School, Transportation Alternatives Program, and Complete Streets Implementation.
- District 5 holds partner meetings twice a year focused on locally administered state funded grant programs as well as Local Agency Program certification and the use of joint planning agreements and intergovernmental agreements.
- Each spring, District 6 holds two day-long annual listening sessions, one in Miami-Dade County and the other in Monroe County, which focus on roads and transit and often lead to new programs or studies.

Due to the number of rural counties in Districts 2 and 3 that are not in an MPO, direct interaction between these Districts and their rural local governments appeared to be more prevalent as compared to other Districts, where the interaction is largely driven by MPO functions and activities.

In conversations with the Districts and MPOs with rural local governments within their boundaries, most noted that rural local governments were concerned more about safety issues than roadway capacity. Bridge maintenance and road resurfacing were also commonly identified needs.

The Districts also said they closely coordinate with their MPOs and, as a result, engage with rural local governments through MPO activities and transportation projects. For example, District 7 holds monthly conference calls with the MPOs in its District; conducts bi-annual workshops for the MPOs; conducts agency to agency training, and participates with the MPOs in programmatic initiatives, including an annual Safety Summit. The Districts also noted planning outreach and coordination in concert with the MPO typically increases during the work program cycle, and strong MPO public involvement plans help elevate and bring forward the needs of rural local governments.

Most of the FDOT Districts stated that outreach to local governments occurs on a daily basis through District programs other than planning, including multimodal programs such as aviation, freight, rail, seaports, and transit, as well as between state and local offices such as public works, project development and environment, site development, and traffic operations.

Another commonality was the formation of regional partnerships. The Regional Transportation Partnership (Bay, Gulf, Holmes and Washington counties) and a coalition including the Ocala/Marion County TPO and Gainesville MTPO were formed to secure TRIP funding. The Northwest Florida Regional TPO (Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties) formed to collaboratively plan for future regional transportation. It also hosts an annual Emerald Coast Transportation Symposium.

There are also several MPOs with rural local government members, including the Heartland Regional TPO and Capital Region TPA. The Heartland Regional TPO includes DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Okeechobee, and Highlands counties and the Capital Region TPA includes Gadsden, Jefferson, and Wakulla counties. In addition, the Heartland TPO includes two elected officials from the City of Avon Park (Highlands County) on its board, and the Capital Region TPA includes a municipal elected official from Gadsden County to represent all of Gadsden County's municipalities. The North Florida TPO invites representatives from three rural counties that are not within its boundaries, Baker, Putnam and Flagler counties, to serve as ex-officio board members. Finally, the City of Fernandina Beach, Town of Hilliard, and Town of Callahan, within Nassau County, serve on the TPO's Technical Coordinating Committee.

Other examples include the following:

- The Indian River County MPO includes the Town of Orchid as an ex-officio member of the board and member of its Technical Advisory Committee;
- The Miami-Dade TPO includes a non-elected official residing in unincorporated Miami-Dade County as a voting member of its board;
- The Okaloosa-Walton TPO include officials from the City of DeFuniak Springs and City of Freeport in Walton County as voting members of its board; and
- The Palm Beach TPA includes the City of Belle Glade as a voting member of its board.

RPCs also serve as a link between Florida's rural local governments and the transportation planning process. Eight of Florida's 10 RPCs serve on MPO technical advisory committees. In addition, the North Central Florida RPC, Central Florida RPC, and West Florida RPC, provide administrative and financial staff services to MPOs in their regions.

Finally, as part of the discovery process, FDOT's Office of Policy Planning staff sought to determine whether the Districts were receiving the necessary support from Central Office to carry out their duties as it related to transportation planning. All Districts responded affirmatively and provided examples of staff outreach and communication between the Districts and the Office of Policy Planning, as well as with other units within Central Office.

Notable Practices

Numerous notable practices were identified through the discovery process, beginning with District 7's strong culture of education, collaboration, and relationship building. This culture starts with the

District Secretary and managers permeates through all levels of the District. The District Secretary makes an effort to meet with local elected officials and communities, especially some of the smaller ones, on a regular basis. District 7 works collaboratively with its MPOs and also supports MPO regional coordination, which includes the rural areas within the Hernando Citrus MPO. Recently, the Hernando Citrus MPO advised the District that Hernando County was experiencing high staff turnover and was struggling to administer six LAP projects in the work program. The Department stepped in and worked directly with the county to keep those projects moving through the process.

In District 3, staff ensure its rural local governments are given the same opportunities as urban local governments. There is a single point of contact within the District who the local governments know and call for information or requests for technical assistance. This person routinely interacts with other offices within the District and routes technical assistance requests to the appropriate person as needed. If staff is unable to address an issue by phone, they personally visit the local government if deemed necessary. During the work program cycle, District staff visit every local government in the District, first meeting with staff and then again meeting with elected officials. As mentioned earlier, the District also holds an annual Local Agency Transportation Symposium for its local governments.

Several Districts are streamlining internal processes. District 2 is consolidating application forms for its locally administered state funded grant programs into a single application that will eventually be available online. In addition, Districts 1 and 5 adopted a “4P” (Priority Project Programming Process) approach to fully scoping and estimating funding for projects requested through the MPO process. This process ensures projects are submitted with a well thought out scope, schedule, and cost estimate.

A few other notable practices are District 4’s efforts to include the MPO Liaisons in the Office of Multimodal Development’s activities to make them more aware of transportation planning issues throughout the District. In addition, District 6 provides funding to Monroe County to support two planning staff positions.

Survey Results

A Rural Transportation survey was created to poll decision-makers within rural local governments throughout the state of Florida to determine the levels of satisfaction with the existing rural transportation planning process. For rural local government officials who were not within the boundaries of an MPO, the survey asked if they felt their transportation planning needs were being met through coordination with FDOT’s planning processes. For rural local government officials within the boundaries of an MPO, the survey asked if they felt their transportation planning needs were being met through the metropolitan planning process.

A total of 618 surveys were circulated to local government elected and administrative officials of the identified rural areas throughout the state of Florida, and 68 completed surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 11 percent. Of these 68 respondents, 35 were elected officials, 20 were city/county administrators, and another 13 were other local government employees. In response to a general question regarding levels of satisfaction with the rural transportation planning process that was asked of all respondents, 50 percent were satisfied with Florida’s rural transportation planning process; 16 percent were not, and 34 percent offered no opinion. The survey also provided an option for respondents to request a reply from FDOT and 14 of them opted to do so. Of these 14 respondents, 11 coordinated directly with FDOT for their rural transportation planning needs and six of these 11 were among those who were dissatisfied with the rural transportation planning process. If a reply from FDOT was requested,

the complete survey response was forwarded to the Director of the Office of Policy Planning, who handled each request accordingly.

The survey questions were separated into two groups, rural local governments coordinating with FDOT on rural transportation planning issues, and rural local governments subject to the metropolitan planning process. Questions were asked to determine level(s) of respective transportation agency support, access to financial resources, and overall satisfaction. The results of this analysis as well as the percentage of respondents answering Positive (agreed or strongly agreed), Neutral (no opinion), or Negative (disagreed or strongly disagreed) are provided in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4. Rural Transportation Survey Respondents Subject to FDOT Coordination

Question	Satisfaction Metrics
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: My FDOT District’s transportation planning process allows an opportunity for me to provide input in determining the future of transportation plans in my jurisdiction.	Positive 45%
	Neutral 33%
	Negative 22%
My FDOT District’s work program project prioritization process fully considers and evaluates project priorities.	Positive 42%
	Neutral 44%
	Negative 14%

Table 5. Rural Transportation Survey Respondents Subject to MPO Planning Process

Question	Satisfaction Metrics
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: The MPO’s (or TPO’s/TPA’s) long range transportation planning process allows an opportunity for me to provide input in determining the future of transportation planning in my jurisdiction.	Positive 71%
	Neutral 12%
	Negative 14%
The MPO’s (TPO’s/TPA’s) project selection and prioritization process allows for a comprehensive evaluation of project priorities.	Positive 60%
	Neutral 28%
	Negative 12%
The MPO’s (TPO’s/TPA’s) project selection and prioritization process (board representation, voting structure, public meetings, etc.) adequately addresses the transportation needs of my jurisdiction.	Positive 54%
	Neutral 23%
	Negative 23%

Finally, all survey participants were asked a series of questions regarding their engagement with FDOT and knowledge of available resources. Their responses are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. All Rural Transportation Survey Respondents

Question	Satisfaction Metrics
I know who my FDOT District contact is for transportation planning technical assistance	Positive 66% Neutral 10% Negative 24%
When transportation planning technical assistance is needed, my FDOT District is quick to respond.	Positive 43% Neutral 47% Negative 10%
Resources available through local program grants (i.e., SCRAP, SCOP, TRIP, and CIGP) are available, easy to access, and help support my jurisdiction’s transportation related needs.	Positive 60% Neutral 36% Negative 12%
If needed, technical assistance with the local program grant application process is available from my FDOT District.	Positive 60% Neutral 35% Negative 5%

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

The process of discovery also identified numerous gaps and challenges that may impact or are within Florida’s rural transportation planning process. They can generally be categorized into two groups: application of rural definitions and resource and information needs.

Application of Rural Definitions

The U.S. Census defines “rural” as what is not urban, meaning after defining individual urban areas, rural is what is left. The Census Bureau uses a definition based on population and other measures of dense development when identifying urban areas. These other measures include density, land use, and distance. Urban areas are classified into two types: urbanized areas and urban clusters. Urbanized areas are areas with 50,000 or more people. Urban clusters are areas with at least 2,500 but fewer than 50,000 people. Rural encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. With this method of delineation, rural areas across the state of Florida look vastly different—ranging from densely settled small towns and subdivisions on the fringe of urban areas to lightly populated and remote areas.

FHWA’s definition differs slightly from the Census Bureau’s. For planning purposes, rural is considered to be any area outside of a metropolitan area having 50,000 or greater in population. This definition for rural transportation planning is further described in three forms as shown below.³ These ‘areas’ are a generalization of non-metropolitan areas outside the limits of an incorporated or unincorporated city, town, or village.

- *Basic Rural Area:* Dispersed counties or regions with few or no major population centers of 5,000 or more. These are mainly characterized by agricultural- and natural resource-based economies, stable or declining populations, and “farm-to-market” localized transportation patterns.
- *Developed Rural Area:* Fundamentally dispersed counties or regions with one or more population center(s) of 5,000 or more. Economies in these areas tend to be mixed industrial and service based in the cities, and agricultural and natural resource based in the rural areas. Populations tend to be stable or growing, and transportation choice more diverse.
- *Urban Boundary Rural Area:* Counties or regions that border metropolitan areas and are highly developed. Economic growth, population growth, and transportation are tied to the urban center. Many of these areas experienced high levels of growth in recent years.

To specifically recognize the needs of rural communities, the state of Florida established its own statutory definitions. These areas are identified by population and may or may not be part of an MPO. Florida Statutes defines a rural community as:⁴

- A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.

³ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/page03.cfm

⁴ Section 288.0656(1)(e), F.S.

- A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
- Any municipality within a county as described above.
- An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in Section 288.0656(2)(c), Florida Statutes and verified by the Department of Economic Opportunity.⁵

In its simplest form, MPOs take the lead in the transportation planning process for urban areas and FDOT takes the lead in rural areas. However, ten of Florida’s rural counties, as defined by state law, are within the boundaries of an MPO. They are:

- Desoto County
- Flagler County (partial designation)
- Gadsden County
- Glades County
- Hardee County
- Hendry County
- Jefferson County
- Okeechobee County
- Wakulla County
- Walton County (partial designation)

These varying state and federal definitions and their application in accordance with federal regulations result in a varied approach to rural transportation planning throughout the state and also result in a few anomalies. Flagler County, with a population of 105,157⁶ is considered a rural county by state definition because it has a population of 125,000 or fewer and is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer (Putnam County). Whereas Monroe County, with a population of 76,889, is adjacent to Miami-Dade County and might otherwise be deemed rural if it were adjacent to a rural county instead. In addition, Monroe County does not qualify as an urbanized area according to the U.S. Census Bureau definition. Monroe County does not receive the financial benefits of being within an MPO and neither does it receive the benefits that come from being a rural county or a Rural Economic Development

⁵ According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity there are no rural communities that qualify for this definition.

⁶ University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research (www.bebr.ufl.edu), 2017 Estimates.

Initiative⁷ designated RAO⁸, which include waivers of financial match and program criteria for any economic development incentive.

These varying definitions and classifications of what is or is not rural presents challenges that are further impacted by the diversity among rural communities across Florida. The transportation planning needs of Levy County (a coastal rural county with a population of 41,015) and the City of Cedar Key (a historic fishing village and tourist destination with a population of 713) may vary greatly from the needs of Highlands County (a non-coastal urbanizing county with a population of 102,138) and the Town of Lake Placid (a small town that identifies itself as the Caladium Capital of the World, with a population of 2,579).⁹ These differences in rural definitions and rural character make it challenging to apply a statewide approach to rural transportation planning that meets the needs of Florida’s rural local governments and ensures state cooperation with elected and appointed officials in the rural transportation planning process as required by federal law, particularly for those rural local governments within the boundaries of an MPO.

Resource and Informational Needs

During the discovery process, several challenges impacting the Districts’ roles and responsibilities in rural transportation planning were identified. These include the following:

- Lack of adequate staff to meet all of the technical assistance and transportation planning needs of rural local governments, including helping them to implement new policies such as Complete Streets or access data resources;
- Few opportunities or resources that encourage District-to-District coordination on rural issues or the sharing of best practices;
- Inconsistency among Districts in the administration and timing of locally administered state funded grant programs; and
- Immediate needs of rural local governments (e.g., safety, road resurfacing, bridge maintenance, etc.) take precedence over efforts to provide long-term visioning or planning exercises.

Several Districts also mentioned the lack of consistency in roles, titles, and funding of MPO Liaisons among the Districts proved challenging. They pointed out that MPO Liaisons handle a significant workload and must be multi-talented, from dealing with the public and elected officials to handling contract management and invoicing. They added it was difficult to retain staff. They also noted that with additional resources, MPO Liaisons could provide more support to rural local governments within an MPO.

Another consistent topic of discussion was the need for additional funding for projects on non-SIS roads, rural transit, and locally administered state funded grant programs (e.g., CIGP, SCOP, SCRAP, and TRIP). For instance, while at the 2017 Florida Rural Economic Development Summit, some attendees submitted written comments to FDOT expressing their frustration with the lack of funding to repair paved county roads and pave rural dirt roads, which can be funded by SCOP and SCRAP. The Summit and the local

⁷ Section 288.0656, F.S.

⁸ Section 288.0656(7)(a), F.S.

⁹ University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research (www.bebr.ufl.edu), 2017 Estimates.

government survey also revealed some local government elected officials did not know who their FDOT District contact was for rural or other transportation needs and some may not fully understand the transportation planning process. Additionally, some rural local governments are not fully staffed and are often unable to pursue grant funding or participate in District workshops. Some Districts noted the ability to conduct visioning or planning exercises with long-term horizons was a challenge, since the needs of rural local governments are typically immediate and take precedence given limited time and resources.

Among the identified rural transit needs was a rural community transit circulator to connect lower income residents around Lake Okeechobee in Districts 1 and 4 with regional employment centers and medical services. In District 2, there is a need for rural transit service to bring prospective students from rural areas, such as the City of Williston, to the College of Central Florida’s Levy (County) Campus, which offers an adult vocational program in welding technology. While transportation disadvantaged funding can be used to provide transportation to and from places of employment, most trips are medically-related. In 2017, 61 percent of transportation disadvantaged trips were for medical purposes, while only 16 percent were for employment purposes and 23 percent were for educational purposes.¹⁰ Lack of operating funds for rural transit was also a topic of discussion at the January 2018 Intermodal Systems Development Managers’ meeting.

¹⁰ Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged 2017 Annual Performance Report, January 1, 2018.

NEXT STEPS

Phase I of this rural transportation planning initiative documented FDOT’s rural transportation planning practices and identified the gaps and challenges that exist from the perspective of FDOT, its partners, and Florida’s rural local governments. Phase II will focus on identifying potential solutions to those gaps and challenges and making recommendations to enhance Florida’s rural transportation planning process.

One of the many commonalities among the Districts was the observation that outreach to rural local governments regularly flows through their multimodal programs (i.e., seaports, aviation, freight, rail, and transit). Whether it is manufacturing or farming, freight and logistics have an impact on, and are impacted by, Florida’s rural communities. Rural Florida is a critical link in the state’s transportation network. Outreach to District modal staff as well as FDOT’s freight coordinators and key freight partners would help inform this study and is expected to be included in Phase II.

In addition, the FDOT Office of Policy Planning received funding from FHWA to support a peer exchange with states that take a variety of approaches to enhancing their rural transportation planning processes. The purpose of the peer exchange will be to understand why certain states chose their respective approaches and what benefits and pitfalls they discovered along the way. Examples of states that strengthened their rural transportation planning process are:

- **Ohio:** The Governor of Ohio formally designated five multi-county regional development organizations as Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) in accordance with the process established in 23 CFR 450.210(b). Although they do not cover the entire non-urbanized area of the state, they delivered regional transportation planning services to previously underserved areas. Given the diversity of the state, the RTPOs’ priorities, roles and responsibilities vary, but they all provide technical assistance to local governments, identify local needs, and assist in project delivery.
- **North Carolina:** North Carolina established Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) as a requirement of state law¹¹ to serve all areas outside of the existing 17 MPO boundaries. There are currently 18 RPOs that are required to serve contiguous areas of at least three counties and must have a combined minimum population of 50,000. They are involved in plan development, serve as a forum for public participation, and develop and prioritize projects for recommended inclusion in the STIP.
- **Michigan:** Michigan’s regional planning agencies (RPAs) assist the Michigan DOT with statewide planning activities since 1975. Michigan DOT contracts with the state’s RPAs to conduct tasks related to the participation of local officials and the general public in statewide planning in nonmetropolitan areas, including through legislatively created Rural Task Forces (RTFs). With assistance from the RPAs, counties conduct local project selection meetings to reach consensus on what projects will be submitted to their RTF, which then identifies and submits projects to the Michigan DOT for inclusion in the STIP.

Based on the findings of the Phase I discovery as noted in this report and the findings of the peer exchange, a menu of potential solutions to identified challenges and recommendations for enhancing

¹¹ Chapter 136, Article 17

(https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/ByArticle/Chapter_136/Article_17.pdf).

Florida’s rural transportation planning process will be developed. As they are developed, outreach to the Districts and key transportation planning partners will continue.

Finally, Phase II will also include compliance with the FAST Act and 23 CFR 450.210(b), which requires every state DOT to document its process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials during the development of the long range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. In addition, at least once every five years, states must review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process, including any recommended changes. It is anticipated this two-year study of Florida’s rural transportation planning process will largely inform that report, which is due in the spring of 2019.

APPENDIX A

Rural Transportation Planning
Current National Practice: Literature Review and Agency Interviews

RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

CURRENT NATIONAL PRACTICE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND AGENCY INTERVIEWS

2.14.2018



PREPARED FOR:
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NADO	National Association of Development Organizations
RPA	Regional Planning Association
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
RPO	Regional Planning Organization, Rural Planning Organization
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Federal law prescribes much of the transportation planning process for which States are responsible. States develop a Long Range State Transportation Plan to guide their decision making over a twenty year or greater period. They are also required to adopt a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that acts as a four-year capital program, enumerating project-level investments of funds from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

In accomplishing these tasks, the State DOT must work with specified partners: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for the urbanized portions of the state; and local officials representing nonmetropolitan regions. When Congress passed Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) in 2012, they created a new option for rural consultation, the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). States could choose to designate rural planning agencies as RTPOs if they met standards specified in the law (see box below). Agencies that met these standards would act much like MPOs.

RTPO Requirements

“(d) To carry out the transportation planning process required by this section, a Governor may establish and designate RTPOs to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of nonmetropolitan areas of the State. In order to be treated as an RTPO for purposes of this Part, any existing regional planning organization must be established and designated as an RTPO under this section.

(1) Where established, an RTPO shall be a multijurisdictional organization of nonmetropolitan local officials or their designees who volunteer for such organization and representatives of local transportation systems who volunteer for such organization.

(2) An RTPO shall establish, at a minimum:

(i) A policy committee, the majority of which shall consist of nonmetropolitan local officials, or their designees, and, as appropriate, additional representatives from the State, private business, transportation service providers, economic development practitioners, and the public in the region; and

(ii) A fiscal and administrative agent, such as an existing regional planning and development organization, to provide professional planning, management, and administrative support.

(3) The duties of an RTPO shall include:

(i) Developing and maintaining, in cooperation with the State, regional long-range multimodal transportation plans;

(ii) Developing a regional TIP for consideration by the State;

(iii) Fostering the coordination of local planning, land use, and economic development plans with State, regional, and local transportation plans and programs;

(iv) Providing technical assistance to local officials;

(v) Participating in national, multistate, and State policy and planning development processes to ensure the regional and local input of nonmetropolitan areas;

(vi) Providing a forum for public participation in the statewide and regional transportation planning processes;

(vii) Considering and sharing plans and programs with neighboring RTPOs, MPOs, and, where appropriate, Indian Tribal Governments; and

(viii) Conducting other duties, as necessary, to support and enhance the statewide planning process under § 450.206.”

23 CFR 450.210(d)

This report will document the current state of practice for rural transportation planning across the country. It includes a thorough literature review and information gathered from interviews with four State DOTs and regional planning agencies in each of those states.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This activity is the first task in a larger project intended to assist the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Office of Policy Planning in evaluating its process for conducting transportation planning in rural regions of the state. The literature review and identification of noteworthy practices provides the foundation for further research.

For additional information about this project, contact

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RSG was engaged by the FHWA Office of Policy and Government Affairs/Transportation Policy Studies to document “RTPO State of the Practice.” The project was initiated in 2013 and completed in 2014. FHWA was interested in how transportation planning was being done in rural regions of the country after the passage of MAP-21, in documenting noteworthy practices, and in preparing materials to encourage states to consider designating RTPOs. Deliverables from that work included two series of Fact Sheets: “RTPO 101”, and “RTPO Noteworthy Practices”¹.

This literature review begins with the findings of the FHWA project through 2013. Additional research work was done to add documents that have been published since that time.

2.1 | LITERATURE REVIEW PREPARED FOR FHWA: “RTPO STATE OF THE PRACTICE” (2013)²

GUIDANCE

1. Federal Highway Administration (2001). Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas. 99p.,

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/ruralguide.pdf

This document was developed as a resource rather than a guidebook. It includes a discussion of how “rural” is defined, the characteristics of the rural system, issues and trends impacting the rural system, how various jurisdictional levels address rural transportation planning, major rural transportation planning challenges, and some lessons from states addressing these challenges. The document also includes questions to be answered before getting started on a rural plan, approaches for public consultation and environmental review, the basic components for rural transportation planning, and how to develop the plans. As special planning topics, transit system planning concepts, rural intelligent transportation systems, and access management are addressed, along with case studies of successful rural transportation planning efforts from several states.

¹ https://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/RTPO_factsheet_master.pdf

² The project is described in the above paragraph. The literature review was provided to FHWA but not published.

2. Goodwin, Ronald, et al. Rural Transportation Guidebook, Report 0-4230-P1, Center for Transportation Training and Research, Texas Southern University, March 2004.

This guidebook presents the tools and strategies for developing and implementing successful rural transportation projects using both bottom-up (transportation plans based on the identification of needs from the community perspective) and top-down (strategy using regional and state perspectives) approaches. It defines rural regions and how they are distinct from urban transportation designs and needs. The authors explain the process for developing a potential rural transportation plan as well as considerations that must be incorporated in order to properly meet area needs.

3. Rural Local Officials Consultation Assessment Guide, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2008, www.nado.org/rural-local-officials-consultation-assessment-guide.

This guide is intended to provide rural local elected and appointed officials, along with their regional planning organizations, with a framework for appraising the effectiveness, timeliness and results of their involvement and input into the statewide transportation planning and decision-making processes within their respective states. The document explains federal statute regarding transportation planning and decisionmaking, including the role for local officials, and provides a series of questions for nonmetropolitan areas to gauge their level of participation in statewide planning and to determine steps to increase their value as a planning partner.

4. Rural Transportation Consultation Processes, National Academy of Public Administration, Washington DC, 2000.

This report examines the effectiveness of required consultation with non-metropolitan local officials in state transportation planning and programming processes. Changes to the federal government's surface transportation programs in the 1990s established new requirements for involving local rural officials in planning, programming, decision-making and spending of certain federal-aid funds. In spite of these new rules, local officials voice dissatisfaction with their access to DOT planning and question their level of inclusion into the process. This study examines the degree of cooperation between each state, local rural officials, and RPOs.

Researchers were able to derive some major findings based on the research. Consultation with local officials is crucial to making transportation delivery systems work well in the states. The usefulness of consultation is maximized when conducted using a framework of dialogue about planning, programming, and results. State demographics vary considerably, resulting in unique practices and processes. Transportation officials at all levels need to work towards institutionalizing and improving the process for effective consultation.

5. Statewide Transportation Planning: Opportunities Exist to Transition to Performance-Based Planning and Federal Oversight, Government Accountability Office, 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1177.pdf>.

States conduct a variety of long- and short-range planning activities, and the majority of RPOs surveyed reported being generally satisfied that rural needs are considered. To develop required long-range statewide transportation plans (long-range plans), states conduct research activities, such as inventorying assets and modeling traffic. While the resulting plans generally include some performance elements, such as goals, many plans do not include performance targets. Such targets are not required, but prior GAO work shows that targets are useful tools to indicate progress toward achieving goals. To develop required short-range plans—state transportation improvement programs (STIP)—states assess needs and determine funding allocations. However, in selecting projects, states assigned greater importance to factors such as political and public support than to economic analysis of project benefits and costs. While the majority of surveyed RPOs reported being satisfied that their rural needs were considered, some RPOs reported less satisfaction with their role in allocating funds for rural areas.

6. Wilbur Smith Associates, Non-Metropolitan Local Consultation Process: A Self-Assessment Tool for States, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington, DC, August 2006.

This self-assessment guide assists state transportation agencies with evaluating their performance in carrying out the non-metropolitan local consultation process required by Federal law for statewide transportation planning and other state actions. Well-established consultation processes have existed for decades for metropolitan areas, but equivalent rural processes are far less established. The involvement of local officials should be one of the major elements when state transportation agencies develop their plans and programs. Their participation provides local knowledge and necessary perspective on the needs, priorities, evaluation criteria and potential impacts of decisions on their regions. The tool provides suggestions for questionnaires, rating systems, and performance evaluations to conduct these assessments.

RPO INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE

7. Bradshaw, Scott, Kwabena Boansi, Jacqueline Huff, Michael Worthington, Development of Performance Measures for the Assessment of Rural Planning Organizations, Center for Research and Evaluation, Elizabeth City State University, 2011, www.ncdot.gov/doh/preconstruct/tpb/research/download/2008-12FinalReport.pdf

Following extensive review of published research and a search of RPO-related documents in each state in order to identify evaluation and performance 'best practices' in each state, the authors met with the Transportation Planning Board, North Carolina Association of RPOs, and representatives of RPO constituents to determine concerns with existing measures and their needs and suggestions for the new performance measures. After developing the evaluation criteria and performance measures, the project team presented the plans to the various groups, and gathered feedback. The feedback was used to clarify any issues within the new performance measures. The development of the performance measures was driven by several principles: (1) The assessments developed, where possible, should be objective and quantifiable, (2) The evaluation criteria and performance measures should be developed

with input from all of the parties involved, (3) The evaluation criteria and performance measures should facilitate the assessment of both short-term and long-term goals, and (4) measures should be practical and cost-efficient to implement.

8. Chase, M. et al. (2005). Transportation Planning in Rural America: Emerging Models for Local Consultation, Regional Coordination and Rural Planning Organizations. National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation: 36p., <http://www.ruraltransportation.org/uploads/scan2005.pdf>

Following the passage of ISTEA and TEA-21, many states adopted regional-level transportation planning models in non-metropolitan areas. This report provides summaries of the practices of 28 states where the state department of transportation has contracted with local or regional entities to conduct planning activities, gather local official and public input, and/or collect relevant data to support statewide planning. In some cases, the regional rural transportation planning organizations are county planning offices or state DOT district offices, but more often, it is a council of governments, regional planning commission, or regional economic development district that receives the state DOT contract. As of 2005, California, Colorado, North Carolina, and Washington had adopted state statutes requiring regional transportation planning in nonmetropolitan areas of those states.

9. Integrating Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development in Pennsylvania, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2010, www.nado.org/integrating-land-use-transportation-and-economic-development-in-pennsylvania

Pennsylvania initiated a statewide effort to integrate land use, transportation and economic development at the regional level through a process known as LUTED, under which the state's regional planning and development organizations developed regional visions and strategies to identify projects related to multiple issue areas.

In April 2010, the NADO Research Foundation held a Peer Exchange event in Pennsylvania to learn more about this effort. At this event, a group of transportation planning practitioners from rural and small metropolitan regions across the nation visited three regional planning and economic development organizations based in Pennsylvania: the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission, SEDA-Council of Governments and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. This proceedings report describes the background of regional planning and the LUTED process in Pennsylvania, and provides case studies of how the three organizations observed on the Peer Exchange approached the integration of land use, transportation and economic development planning in their regions.

10. Kissel, C. and C. Gron (2011). Transportation Project Prioritization and Performance-based Planning Efforts in Rural and Small Metropolitan Regions. National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation: 24p., <http://www.nado.org/transportation-project-prioritization-and-performance-based-planning-efforts-in-rural-and-small-metropolitan-regions>

This report provides an overview of the state-of-the practice in regional-level rural transportation planning, including structure, staff capacity, major transportation responsibilities, and inclusion of performance-based elements in transportation planning documents. According to the research, regional rural transportation planning organizations receive from under \$25,000 to over \$125,000 per year from their state DOT to conduct non-metropolitan transportation planning-related tasks, with the most contract amount being between \$50,000 – 75,000. Nearly two-thirds of the responding organizations are staffed at 2 or fewer individuals who work on transportation planning. Most of those staff members also have responsibilities outside transportation planning. Over half of respondents have a policy committee and technical committee in place. Other significant findings include that regional transportation planning organizations' responsibilities nearly always include public involvement and technical assistance to local governments. Most also facilitate local official participation in statewide planning and develop a regional transportation improvement program, while 57% develop a rural long-range plan.

11. Local Government Officials: Key Stakeholders in Rural Transportation Planning, National Association of Development Organizations and National Association of Counties, December 2004, www.nado.org/pubs/primer.pdf

This primer provides a summary to help local officials better understand the new rural transportation planning requirements established by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). By February 2004, each state was required to have a documented planning process in which local non-metropolitan government officials have provided considerable input. The primer provides an overview of the federal statewide consultation requirements, examples of local official involvement in the transportation decision-making process, and a resource list and glossary of common transportation planning terms.

12. Martin, J., C. Giusti, E. Dumbaugh and L. Cherrington, Examining Challenges, Opportunities and Best Practices for Addressing Rural Mobility and Economic Development under SAFETEA-LU's Coordinated Planning and Human Services Framework: 76p., http://utcm.tamu.edu/publications/final_reports/Martin_08-17-09.pdf

In response to changes in federal requirements for rural transit planning, the Texas State Legislature and the Texas Department of Transportation have recently developed coordinated transit and human services plans for the 24 planning regions in the state of Texas. This study evaluates both the processes that have been adopted throughout the state as well as the types of outcomes that have emerged. Having engaged in perhaps the most comprehensive approach to meeting the revised federal requirements in the United States, the Texas experience in developing coordinated transit and human service plans is particularly useful for identifying opportunities, barriers, and best practices for coordinated rural transit planning, and thus for filling a major gap in the available professional guidance.

13. Natural Gas Drilling in the Marcellus Shale: Economic Opportunities and Infrastructure Challenges, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2010, www.nado.org/natural-gas

This issue brief examines the natural gas drilling boom in the U.S. and associated economic opportunities and infrastructure challenges, including strains on local transportation networks and other types of infrastructure as well as environmental impact concerns. The publication explores how regional development organizations in Pennsylvania and New York are addressing these challenges, and what sort of measures can be taken to ensure that natural gas extraction brings the best possible benefits to regions and communities, while minimizing potential negative effects.

14. North Carolina’s Rural Consultation Process, North Carolina Department of Transportation, Transportation Planning Branch, January 2004.

The North Carolina DOT developed this report to document the development of a new rural consultation process following the creation of RPOs statewide in accordance with law passed by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2000. The report provides an overview of steps taken in the consultation processes for statewide planning, non-metropolitan planning, metropolitan planning, and transportation conformity.

15. Overman, John, Patricia Ellis, William Frawley, Ryan Taylor, Tina Geiselbrecht, and Ginger Goodin, Rural Planning Organizations – Their Role in Transportation Planning and Project Development in Texas: Technical Report, Texas Transportation Institute, 2011.

While a formal planning and programming process is established for urbanized areas through Metropolitan Planning Organizations, no similar requirement has been established for rural areas. Currently, under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, states are required to consult with non-metropolitan local officials in transportation planning and programming. The consultation process between state Departments of Transportation (DOT) and non-metropolitan local officials is not prescribed in the planning rules, and consultation practices vary widely among each state’s DOT.

Historically, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has worked in cooperation with each individual rural county to plan and program projects. This has often resulted in a county-by-county project list that the TxDOT districts must try to fashion into a regional strategy or plan. A need exists to examine the concept of rural planning organizations and research their use in Texas to determine if a formal rural planning organization may offer a means to improve transportation planning and programming. The objective of this research is to identify and examine rural planning organizations, their structure and operation, and their role in transportation planning and programming. The project will include a review of current processes used by TxDOT and other agencies to plan and program transportation projects in rural areas.

16. Ransome, K. and K. Quinn. (2009). Coordinating Transportation and Land Use in Rural Jurisdictions.

Like many jurisdictions throughout the United States, rural counties in Maryland are growing at an alarming rate. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of rural counties has increased

by nearly 20 percent. In addition, Maryland is annually converting 25,000 acres of agricultural and forest lands for development. While development in rural jurisdictions continues to grow, many of these areas remain isolated from transportation services. According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), two-thirds of rural Americans - about 60 million people - are unserved by public transportation and live in remote counties that have either little or no service. Given the current pace of development and the seclusion faced by residents of rural areas, it is vital that land use decisions incorporate transit opportunities. This paper includes an examination of comprehensive master plans and development review processes in rural counties in Maryland, both of which can be used to coordinate transit and land use. The integration of transit in these areas is critical in preparing rural jurisdictions for future population growth while ensuring more balanced communities.

17. Regional Approaches to Sustainable Development: Linking Economic, Transportation, and Environmental Infrastructure in Rural and Small Metropolitan America, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2011, www.nado.org/regional-approaches-to-sustainable-development

Regional development organizations (RDOs) working in all types of communities across the country are designing and implementing strategies to create stronger, more dynamic, more resilient regional economies that are based on quality of place. Featuring case studies from California, Michigan, North Carolina, and Utah, this report highlights the opportunities available to RDOs to undertake sustainable development initiatives using a systems-based approach.

18. Statewide Transportation Planning Process and Transportation Planning Regions. Code of Colorado Regulations. 2 CCR 601-22., <http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/statewide-planning/planning-process.html>

The regulation names the 15 Transportation Planning Regions and their boundaries, and defines the TPRs' and Colorado DOT's (CDOT) responsibilities in transportation planning. Of the 15 regions, five are urban and served by metropolitan planning organizations. The remaining ten regions are rural and are typically assisted by a regional planning commission. For the rural areas, CDOT and the non-metropolitan TPRs "shall work together" to develop Regional Transportation Plans, and CDOT shall consult with the rural TPRs on development of the Statewide Transportation Plan; incorporation of RTPs into the Statewide Transportation Plan; and the inclusion of projects into the STIP that are consistent with the RTPs. A Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee comprises a representative from each metro and non-metro TPR in the state, as well as non-voting members from two Tribal governments within Colorado. The role of the STAC is to review and comment on regional plans, integration of regional plans into the statewide plan, and issues and problems related to the state's transportation system. The regulations outline a process for public involvement, content of the regional and statewide long-range plans, and development of statewide and regional transportation improvement programs in accordance with federal regulations. A Transportation Commission, whose members are appointed by

the governor and serve a four-year term, directs the work of CDOT and its partners, approves the statewide plan and STIP, and develops guidance for the state's planning process and other policy.

19. Statewide Transportation Planning Program Rural Consultation Report, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Division of Planning, 2006.

In response to the TEA-21 requirements, Kentucky established a formal Regional Transportation Planning Program with the state's 15 area development districts (ADDs). To analyze the current state of this partnership, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) solicited comments and suggestions from 142 local officials in non-metropolitan counties and urban areas on the effectiveness of the program. Results showed that continuing efforts to build and strengthen relationships between ADDs and KYTC have yielded enhancements to the planning program. The planning program serves as an effective consultation process with local officials through the setting of regional project priorities.

20. Turnbull, Katherine F., Consultation between State Departments of Transportation and Local Elected Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas, Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University System, 2002.

The study examines traditional and innovative methods used by state DOTs when consulting with rural area officials and inter-jurisdictional partnerships involving state transportation agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders. The consultation methods and techniques specifically examined are those used to maintain ongoing communication with local officials and to obtain input during the development of statewide plans and State Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs), the project development and selection process and transportation planning activities. The report examines consultation and communication techniques, but does not examine the level of funding provided to urban or rural areas. The examples are based on reviews of the FHWA reports, state submitted documentation of consultation methods, Internet sites, reports and documents from state transportation agencies, and telephone interviews with 38 individuals from 27 states.

The study recognized certain themes pulled from the examples: there is no one best approach, the need for use of multiple methods, the need for matching approaches to the unique features of individual states, the importance of building on existing institutional arrangements and organizational structures, the need for making the investment to develop strong working relationships over time, and the benefits of being creative and using innovative approaches.

21. Twaddell, H. and D. Emerine (2007). Best Practices to Enhance the Transportation - Land Use Connection in the Rural United States, Transportation Research Board: 103p., http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_582.pdf

This report presents guidance on how best to integrate land use and transportation in rural communities. The study highlights programs and investment strategies that support community development and livability while providing adequate transportation capacity. The

research consisted of an extensive review of current literature; a series of focus group discussions with community, tribal, and transportation agency staff and officials; and a survey aimed at a cross section of rural transportation planners. The research identified key principles for successful land use and transportation integration and outlines specific approaches suitable to a range of rural community types. This report will be useful to transportation planners and decision-makers who deal with land use and transportation issues in rural communities.

22. Widoe, Jr., Robert O., RPO Process Review Survey Final Report, New Mexico Department of Transportation, May 2007.

The New Mexico DOT, in cooperation with FHWA, conducted a survey to assess the effectiveness of the RPO process in New Mexico and the level of support provided by the NMDOT in the transportation planning process. Results from the survey showed that the RPO process is working well at a generally high level. Most of the negative feedback received from local officials related to specific isolated issues. The strength and effectiveness of the RPO process depends on the level of collaboration and communication between communities, governments, and the state. These connections, particularly in the rural regions, must be based on inclusion.

CASE STUDY MATERIALS

23. Aligning Strategies to Maximize Impact: Case Studies on Transportation and Economic Development, National Association of Development Organizations, 2012, www.nado.org/category/resources/transportation-publications

This report features 10 case studies from 11 states, where regional planning and economic development organizations are taking steps to coordinate planning processes and investment strategies, partner with new entities to improve outreach and implementation, document progress through metrics, and communicate results in an engaging way.

Projects from regional organizations across the United States demonstrate how the fields of transportation and economic development can complement each other and create an environment for increased collaboration and aligning of resources. Achieving multiple goals with a single project offers significant benefits as budget concerns continue to impact regional planning.

In particular, this report examines transportation planning through the lens of economic development and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a regional economic development plan. In 2011, the NADO Board of Directors adopted Peer Standards of Excellence for Economic Development Administration (EDA)-designated Economic Development Districts (EDDs). These principles, developed by NADO members, are intended to make the CEDS a more effective tool, beyond a compliance plan needed to access EDA funds. The Standards of Excellence promote a strategic planning and implementation framework that is results-oriented; focused on aligning and leveraging

resources; inclusive of public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders; and emphasizes the importance of asset-based regional economic development.

24. Cole, David, CONNECTING THE D•O•T•S, A Guide for Connecting with Your Department of Transportation, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2011, <http://www.nado.org/connecting-the-dots>

This report describes evolutions in Maine’s regional transportation planning partnerships and processes as a model case for other states seeking to improve relationships among state, regional, and local practitioners and stakeholders. Using examples from specific projects and initiatives, the report demonstrates ways that regional partners can add value to statewide planning and project delivery processes.

25. Exploring the Role of Regional Transportation Projects as Rural Economy Drivers, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2011, www.nado.org/exploring-the-role-of-regional-transportation-projects-as-rural-economy-drivers

With case studies in Alabama, Oregon, and Vermont, this report explores regions where public transit is playing a role in connecting employees to work, getting people to services, and revitalizing downtown areas. Through partnerships at the local and regional level, regional planning and development organizations are facilitating improved mobility, which in turn supports the regional economy.

26. Four Corners Rural Transportation Forum: Summary of a Conference, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2010, www.nado.org/four-corners-rural-transportation-forum-summary-of-a-conference

In August 2009 and May 2010, a small group of regional transportation planning practitioners convened in Sedona, Arizona (2009) and Park City, Utah (2010) for two days of facilitated discussion and presentations. Participants shared information about best practices and emerging issues in their regions on a variety of rural transportation planning and economic development issues, including rural transportation safety, livability in rural areas and relationship-building with Tribal nations. Read the event summaries to learn about issues, collaborative models, and practices in rural transportation planning in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah. Two proceedings reports were produced through the NADO Research Foundation’s Center for Transportation Advancement and Regional Development under a cooperative agreement with the Federal Highway Administration.

27. Evaluating State DOT Rural Planning Practices, prepared as part of NCHRP Project 08-36, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transportation Research Board, ICF Consulting, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington, DC, December 2003, www.transportation.org/sites/planning/docs/nchrp35.doc

This report highlights the role of state DOTs and RPOs regarding planning practices for rural areas and identifies best practices and areas for improvement. Eight U.S. states are sampled to provide diversity regarding the type of rural areas discussed: Colorado, **Florida**,

Maine, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon. The discussion is organized around five topic areas: state and RPO roles in rural transportation planning, public participation in rural areas, serving the transit-dependent in rural areas, linking transportation and land use in rural areas, and linking transportation and economic development in rural areas. The report provides some general conclusions. Based on interviews, state DOTs receive high marks from local and regional officials in rural areas because they listen and address their concerns and needs. States with empowered RPOs show success in their rural transportation planning process. The use of RPOs can create new institutional challenges. State DOTs need to encourage more public participation. Most state DOTs need to improve linkages between transportation planning and land use in rural areas. Finally, there is considerable variability among the states regarding techniques in promoting rural economic development through transportation investments.

28. Lessons Learned from Irene: Vermont RPCs Address Transportation System Recovery, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2012, www.nado.org/lessons-learned-from-irene-vermont-rpcs-address-transportation-system-recovery

One week after moving into the Caribbean and then striking the U.S. east coast as a category 1 hurricane, Irene arrived in Vermont on August 27, 2011. The storm caused widespread damage in 223 of the state's 251 towns and villages. Severe flooding was particularly devastating for transportation infrastructure, requiring the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) to take a leading role in the recovery. The extent of the damage, however, proved too much for a single agency to manage alone. VTTrans' leadership sought help from the state's 11 regional planning commissions (RPCs) to assume responsibility for assessing needed local road repairs.

While the RPCs were well positioned to assist because of their established relationships and networks within the towns, their recovery activities often went beyond their typical scope of work. The collaboration between VTTrans and the RPCs offers lessons for disaster preparedness and recovery, both crucial elements for building more resilient communities.

29. Metropolitan and Rural Transportation Planning: Case Studies and Checklists for Regional Collaboration, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2009, www.nado.org/metropolitan-and-rural-transportation-planning-case-studies-and-checklists-for-regional-collaboration

This report provides checklists of possible actions that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), rural transportation planning organizations (RPOs), state departments of transportation (DOTs), local government entities, and other planning partners may take to enhance their partnership efforts. In addition, case studies from several states describe the institutional arrangements and practice areas that lend themselves to partnerships across planning agency boundaries.

30. Midwest Local Consultation Workshop, May 18 – 19, 2006, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, National Association of Counties, National Association of Development Organizations, 2007.

This report presents the results of a workshop hosted in St. Louis, Missouri. Participants included representatives of state DOTs, local representatives from counties and staff from RDOs in nine states in the Midwestern United States. The purpose was to identify successes, challenges and best practices in each state's current local consultation process, identify the major criteria and performance measures for evaluating the local consultation process, develop self-assessment tools for each state, and determine ways of institutionalizing these processes. The states of Missouri, Minnesota, and Iowa involve RPOs as the first line of input to link local needs with the state transportation planning process. All of the states who participated demonstrate a willingness to communicate and improve relationships between the DOTs and rural local officials.

Certain themes were heard throughout the workshop: DOT officials should consult with local officials in a manner that they would want to be consulted; regional areas need adequate resources for the local consultation process, a process that should be flexible, dependable, and inclusive; training should be provided to local officials by state DOTs regarding the state transportation planning and programming process; self-assessment guides provide a useful and flexible tool that can be applied to each state DOT and participant in the process.

31. Overman, John, Texas RPO Workshop Implementation Project Summary, Texas Transportation Institute, 2012, <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/5-6483-01-1.pdf>

This report documents rural planning organization (RPO) workshops conducted throughout Texas. An RPO is a voluntary organization created and governed by locally elected officials responsible for transportation decisions at the local level. RPOs address rural transportation planning priorities and provide recommendations to TxDOT for areas outside the boundaries of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO). More than 145 community leaders participated in the workshops, including county judges, county commissioners, and mayors and representatives from TxDOT Districts, cities, MPOs, and councils of governments.

Since the RPO project was initiated, the number of RPOs in Texas has grown from four to 14. Additional RPOs are expected to organize and form in the next few years. The RPO workshops involved both new and existing RPOs throughout Texas.

32. RPO America Peer Symposium Proceedings, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2013, www.nado.org/2010-2013-rpo-america-peer-symposium-proceedings

With support from the Federal Highway Administration, the NADO Research Foundation held a special symposium session during the 2010 – 2013 National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conferences. Each year, the symposium was designed to showcase the efforts of rural and small metropolitan regional transportation planning organizations and their partners, such as state departments of transportation, that are leveraging partnerships to create innovative programs that have beneficial impacts on the communities, regions, and states that they serve. Attendees had opportunities to ask questions of presenters and to share information with their peers about their own programs and issues. The symposia

proceedings include information on planning processes, partnerships, and initiatives from states with diverse institutional arrangements and road ownership structures, including Alabama, Connecticut, **Florida**, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and Virginia.

33. Rural Planning Peer Exchange in Iowa: The Role of Regional Planning Agencies in Iowa's Rural Planning Process, Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, FHWA/FTA, August 2006, www.planning.dot.gov/Peer/iowa/iowa_2006.htm

This report summarizes the results of a Peer Exchange in which state and regional transportation organizations from Indiana and New Hampshire traveled to Iowa. Metropolitan and rural planning agencies were given the opportunity to examine the rural/regional transportation planning process in Iowa, specifically focusing on the role of Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) in the planning process. The objectives were to learn about the RPA planning process, Iowa DOT funding for RPAs, the RPA transportation improvement program and its relationship with the statewide transportation improvement program, local official membership and participation in RPAs, and the state long-range transportation plan.

Participants recognized lessons learned from the exchange that may be applied to improve the equivalent RPO processes in their regions. RPAs are project-driven, establish regional transportation priorities with local officials, and channel programming funds to implement those priorities. Participants believe that the key to making the RPA system work is to think and act regionally. This requires governmental involvement at every level and the encouragement of citizen participation. When developing transportation plans, local needs and processes of the community must be considered.

34. Southeast Local Consultation Workshop, June 16 and 17, 2005, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, National Association of Counties, National Association of Development Organizations, 2006.

This report presents the results of a workshop held in Nashville, Tennessee where various state transportation agencies from 12 states in Southeastern United States, county officials, and regional development organization representatives participated. The purpose of the workshop was to identify successes, challenges and best practices in each state's current local consultation process, identify the major criteria and performance measures for evaluating the local consultation process, develop self-assessment tools for each state and determine ways of institutionalizing these processes. Themes emerged in the participants' input on challenges to local official consultation: attention needed to be spent on governance, education, understanding, and feedback to improve the process.

35. Transportation Planning in Rural America: Emerging Models for Local Consultation, Regional Coordination and Rural Planning Organizations, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2005.

This report consists of findings from a nationwide scan of 320 RDOs that primarily serve small metropolitan and rural regions. The report offers insights into the impact, trends and

partnerships being forged in response to new rural planning and consultation rules. The important partnership developing between RDOs and state transportation officials is also examined. This report highlights the growing network of RPOs and presents case studies that showcase the activities and results of these regional planning entities. The report provides brief summaries of organizational structures of regional transportation planning agencies from 29 states.

36. Transportation Project Prioritization and Performance-based Planning Efforts in Rural and Small Metropolitan Regions, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2011, <http://www.nado.org/transportation-project-prioritization-and-performance-based-planning-efforts-in-rural-and-small-metropolitan-regions>

This report provides an overview of the state of the practice in non-metro regional transportation planning, including the contract amounts, RPO tasks, and committee structures. The research also examines rural long-range planning efforts and criteria used to rank regional priority projects. With case studies on the statewide and regional planning processes in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington, the document provides examples for rural and small metro regions looking to formalize their planning process.

37. Watts, Richard, Evaluation and Review: Citizen Participation and Local Official Consultation in the Transportation Planning Initiative, Vermont Agency of Transportation, October 2003.

This report reviews the factors that led to the creation of the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, analyzes its current practice and execution, and provides recommendations for continuing to meet the goals of citizen participation and local official consultation, particularly with transportation advisory committees (TACs). The report attempts to identify the merits of consultative planning and how Vermont's approach to consultative planning has been productive and meaningful. The results of the survey generated some key findings. Participation depends largely on the amount of influence individual TAC members believe they have in the decision-making process. State agency staffs view the TPI positively and believe it enhances collaborative relationships in the community. The TPI has been successful at expanding participation in transportation decision-making. Public involvement has greatly increased. The TPI met its initial objectives, but several towns still do not participate.

2.2 | RECENT PUBLICATIONS (2014-2017)

RPO INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE

1. Advancing Collaborative Planning: Summary of a Focus Group on Transportation and Economic Development, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2016, https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Advancing_FocusGpReport.pdf

In March 2016, the NADO Research Foundation held a focus group on the link between transportation and economic development, and how state departments of transportation and regional planning and development organizations can work together to better plan for those issues in an integrated way. The focus group participants included regional, state, and federal agency staff and others with experience in both transportation and economic development programs. During the conversation, the focus group participants developed a definition of economic development that emphasizes doing economic development and transportation planning differently, and can be used to help frame related planning efforts: Economic development in transportation involves deliberate interventions to produce tangible benefits that are specific to the context, are sustained over time, and make a place more resilient.

2. Akoto, Eunice, Transit Operational Performance--Exploring Non-traditional Performance Indicators and Methods for Analyzing Policy Impact on Non-urbanized/Rural Transit Operations, Transportation Research Board, TRB 93rd Annual Meeting Compendium of Papers, 2014.

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on improving rural transit operational performance. However, the indicators and methodologies employed in analyzing transit performance outcomes do not always favor the rural transit systems due to the unique characteristics of rural transit operations such as the long mileage and service hours involved. Consequently, the utilization of traditional performance measurement constructs that mostly analyze transit operational efficiency may present skewed outcomes compared to the urban transit systems. This study explores the use of both traditional and non-traditional performance indicators and methodologies to assess level of improvement in rural transit operational performance during the implementation of “Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) policy. Traditional indicators include effectiveness and efficiency constructs while non-traditional constructs were mobility/impact constructs. Combinations of these variables are used to capture the unique attributes of rural transit operational performance and reveal the socioeconomic impact on transit operational performance during the period of policy implementation. This paper is a part of a broader study, which analyzes the impact of the SAFETEA-LU policy provisions and strategies. This extract from the study focuses on the performance indicators; it offers useful implications for policy and practice and should assist in motivating continuous investment in transit programs. It also has the potential to be used in analyzing the operational performance of other FTA formula programs.

3. Aultman-Hall, Lisa, Jonathan Dowds, The Role and Position of Local Agencies in Climate Adaptation Planning, University of Vermont Transportation Research Center, 2015, <http://docs.trb.org/prp/16-3846.pdf>

Climate adaptation is a growing priority for transportation agencies but is inhibited by variability and uncertainty about climate threats, tool development, limited human and financial resources and the interdependent nature of the transportation system which consists of infrastructure owned and managed by a host of different state and local agencies. The adaptation process can be described in 5 steps: 1) inventorying assets, 2) assessing climate threats, 3) evaluating asset vulnerability, 4) rating asset criticality, and 5) identifying and implementing adaptation actions. State and local agencies need to collaborate in order to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of this process but appropriate roles for different agencies are not clearly delineated. The rating of criticality may be the weakest link in the framework and the one for which local and state cooperation is most essential. This paper

proposes a potential delineation that considers ownership and responsibilities by agency type. Analysis of survey data from 149 transportation professionals finds that agencies at both the state and local levels have identified climate threats that pose a risk to their region that agencies are not currently preparing for. Overall, state agencies are more active than locals in preparing for climate threats and a higher percentage have undertaken many adaptation actions (this gap is not statistically significant for all threats and actions surveyed). On average tools and resources for climate adaptation are relatively poorly rated.

4. Beiler, Michelle, “Organizational sustainability in transportation planning: Evaluation of multi-jurisdictional agency collaboration,” *Journal of Transport Geography*, Vol. 52, 2016.

Although significant effort is being made in addressing infrastructure design, construction, operations, and maintenance, there is the need for assessing organizational sustainability within transportation planning. Transportation planners have identified coordination and collaboration as fundamental steps in addressing issues related to transportation network planning and sustainability initiatives. This research explores multi-jurisdictional collaboration between agencies using a case study on Pennsylvania Metropolitan/Rural Planning Organizations (MPOs/RPOs) and non-designated areas. The agencies are surveyed and the results are analyzed using a network analysis software (Gephi). In order to compare the collaboration network analysis (survey results) to influential factors, such as geographic adjacency and geographic proximity (reflective of transportation networks), GIS is used in combination with Gephi to complete geographical network analyses. The three analyses are compared using average degree, density, and average path length. The results indicate that the MPOs, RPOs, and non-designated areas within the state of Pennsylvania are collaborating, on average, beyond the geographical adjacency but below the level of geographical proximity network. In addition, email and phone communication forms are the most widely used for high frequency connection while face-to-face meetings are more likely for biannual and annual collaboration. The results of this study serve as a foundation for measuring and monitoring multi-jurisdictional collaboration to promote sustainable organizational planning in transportation.

5. Edrington, Suzie, Jonathan Brooks, Linda Cherrington, Todd Hansen, Paul Hamilton, Chris Pourteau, Identifying Best Practices for Managing Operating Costs for Rural and Small Urban Transportation Systems: Technical Report, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Texas Department of Transportation, 2016,

<https://ntl.bts.gov/lib/60000/60000/60011/0-6694-1.pdf>

Rural and small urban transit providers across the United States face fiscal challenges caused by the growing gap between the cost of providing transit service and available federal, state, and local funding. In Texas, the fiscal challenges facing rural and small urban transit providers are compounded by an increasing population and growth in urbanization in some counties and declining population with increasing demand for transit service for an aging population in other counties. The research report examines the drivers of operating costs, approaches to containing costs, transit agency priorities for tools needed to better contain costs, and methodology used to develop the guidebook and workshop.

There are five primary documents produced in this research project: research report, guidebook entitled *Managing Operating Costs for Rural and Small Urban Transportation Systems*, workshop participant workbook, workshop instructor’s guide, and a presentation to

support the workshop. Researchers found that transit agency staff indicated a priority need for guidance and training in the following topics: managing staff, maintenance and state of good repair, buying and managing fuel, contracting for service, minimizing no-shows, and innovations in technology and service design. Also, researchers found a need to provide information on fundamentals of reporting, allocating, and tracking costs. The resulting guidebook and corresponding workshop incorporates the findings of the research.

6. Griffin, Greg, Put It There: Geographic Specificity of Public Engagement Methods in Transportation Planning, Transportation Research Board, TRB 93rd Annual Meeting Compendium of Papers, 2014.

Public involvement methods are often chosen for transportation planning without a framework for determining how relevant the comments received are to the specific plan. A key issue in the design of participation methods is whether and how the location of public comments are included. This study critically assesses existing literature, including the foundations of public involvement and the latest requirements. A rural transportation planning process is evaluated in terms of the geographic specificity of comments received from open-ended responses on a questionnaire and a facilitated mapping session, and reviews them for relevance to developing a rural transportation plan. Although all input received from the public can be valuable in the process, location-based comments may be more actionable by transportation planners. Qualitative methods are employed to evaluate spatial aspects of public input from a transportation plan in Central Texas, and relative benefits reviewed. This study demonstrates geographic specificity is a valuable concern in the design of public involvement for transportation planning, and offers several techniques for consideration.

7. Karner, Alex, "Planning for transportation equity in small regions: Towards meaningful performance assessment," Transport Policy, Vol. 52, 2016.

Regional transportation planning agencies seek to achieve multiple objectives simultaneously including consensus on key issues, compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and improvements in the congestion, air quality, and safety performance of the transportation system. Some performance areas lend themselves well to operationalization while others do not. One area that has received comparatively little study is the assessment of a plan's impacts on environmental justice and social equity. Although research on regional planning usually emphasizes larger metropolitan areas and agencies, these issues are especially relevant in smaller regions where planners lack the capacity for innovation and careful analysis. Further, the transit services on which disadvantaged populations depend are often lacking or non-existent in less-populated regions. Understanding how planners in these locations undertake social equity-related analyses and providing suggestions for improvement is thus an important endeavor. While prior work has assessed whether, and to what extent, equity objectives are included in plans, there are few detailed investigations of the key analytical choices that shape equity outcomes. This paper fills this important research gap, providing such an analysis of existing practice in a largely rural region in California, the San Joaquin Valley, as well as recommendations for future analyses aimed at improving the consistency between equity analyses and the real-world impacts of transportation plans.

8. Matsuo, Miwa, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Management Characteristics of Rural Local Bus Services in the US, 2015,

https://waseda.repo.nii.ac.jp/?action=repository_action_common_download&item_id=27281&item_no=1&attribute_id=77&file_no=1

This paper conducts semiparametric analysis of service production efficiency and service effectiveness of U.S. rural bus services, using network data envelopment analysis (NDEA) and censored regression. Production efficiency is measured by the ratio of the service provided to the resource inputs, and service effectiveness is measured by the ratio of the service consumed to the service provided. The analysis finds strong scale economies in production efficiency, while service effectiveness peaks at annual vehicle revenue hours of approximately 10,000. Operators with smaller service areas have lower production efficiency because of lack of capacity, while their service effectiveness is higher due to their compact network and local knowledge. Moreover, operators in states with regional transportation planning organizations perform better than operators in states without such organizations, particularly in effectiveness of service. Private operators are not performing well compared to public operators, even in production efficiency. The assessment indicates regional coordination ensures services are scaled to achieve both high production efficiency and high service effectiveness. The analysis also demands revisiting contracting schemes with private operators to improve their performance.

9. Miller, Kristi, John Overman, Performance Planning for Rural Planning Organizations, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Texas Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2017.

Recent federal rules place increased emphasis on performance-based management of the multimodal transportation system and require the use of performance based methods in state, metropolitan, and non-metropolitan transportation planning and programming. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act emphasizes seven areas including: safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery. Establishing a common set of performance measures allows for the evaluation and comparison of different projects and transportation corridors for both current and future conditions, and translates data and statistics into a form that the public and decision makers can easily understand. This research developed a framework, performance measures, tools, and guidance to conduct performance-based transportation planning and programming in non-metropolitan areas of the state and support Rural Transportation Planning Organizations.

10. Monast, Kai, Matthew Palmer, Exploring the Relationship Between Performance Measures and Trip Type for Transit Systems Serving Rural Communities in the United States, TRB 96th Annual Meeting Compendium of Papers, 2017.

This research considers how using the rural element of the National Transit Database (NTD) to determine performance-based allocations may influence rural transit system service delivery. Rural public transportation providers receive subsidies that support both consolidated human service trips and general public transportation. Due to budget constraints and the public expectation of providing greater production and cost-efficiency with the same or decreasing resources, the use of performance measures in rural public transportation subsidy allocation formula is gaining traction in policy circles. This research examines rural National Transit Database statistics to determine whether there is a relationship between standard transit system performance measures (productivity and cost-

efficiency) and the percentage of trips that service the general public in rural areas. The analysis shows that higher percentages of general public trips are associated with higher system productivity and cost-efficiency. This research supports larger policy concerns as to whether public policies incentivizing higher levels of system performance may have the unintended consequence of encouraging rural transit systems to reduce human service trips; in so doing, costing more to the public than through sponsored NTD trips for human service agencies. The research does not claim that transit systems currently make these sacrifices, rather that funding tied to performance measures using rural National Transit Database statistics introduces an incentive to do so and ultimately costs the public more when considering the full social costs and benefits of rural public transportation.

11. Morton, Brian, Joseph Huegy, John Poros, Close to Home: A Handbook for Transportation-Efficient Growth in Small Communities and Rural Areas, Transportation Research Board, 2014.

Many people in small communities and rural areas in the United States spend a considerable amount of time in their cars. New growth in such areas can add to an already high load of daily driving if land use decisions are not made with careful consideration and a regional perspective. This handbook provides insights into the relationship between a small/rural area's existing development patterns and changes in daily driving after hypothetical new growth. The handbook offers a vocabulary of land use characteristics that are significant in small communities and rural areas. It also estimates the change in daily driving per person after hypothetical growth occurs according to different development visions or scenarios. Although the report does not advocate any particular type of development pattern, it suggests the land-use-related conditions that are most important to consider when one of the goals of planning is minimizing the increase in vehicle-miles traveled and the consequent consumption of fossil fuels and vehicular emissions of air pollutants, including greenhouse gases. In addition, the handbook includes dozens of streetscape visualizations of real towns in small communities and rural areas, showing ways in which noticeable levels of growth can be accommodated without losing the character and feel of the towns. The project's results are applicable to many small communities and rural areas in the United States.

12. Moving Toward Performance-Based Transportation Planning in Rural and Small Metropolitan Regions, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2014,

http://ruraltransportation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MovingTowardPerformance_NADORF.pdf

The NADO Research Foundation report Moving toward Performance-based Transportation Planning in Rural and Small Metropolitan Regions (PDF), published in December 2014, draws on research and training efforts conducted by the NADO Research Foundation from 2010 – 2014 and with support and guidance from the Federal Highway Administration. Throughout this period, the NADO Research Foundation collected planning documents from rural, regional transportation planning organizations, held interviews and conversations about planning and performance measurement with regional planning professionals and their state partners, and conducted training and outreach on performance measurement where discussion in the sessions also informed the research effort.

The research found that many organizations are adopting measures and considering performance measurement carefully. The efforts of state DOTs and state legislatures to

increase performance culture play a significant role in determining the extent to which regional agencies are moving toward performance measurement. In many cases, a strategic planning framework is already well entrenched in RTPOs' planning processes and could be adapted to include systematic performance measurement.

Some of the strategies to move toward performance-based planning used by RTPOs, MPOs, and state DOTs that participated in the research include working with partners on data, analysis, selecting measures, and creating measurement frameworks; communicating the information that resonates with the audience; using data to drive decisionmaking; making use of funding scenarios and plan alternatives to understand the performance implications of potential future investment decisions; and more.

13. Overman, John, Rural Performance Based Planning Guidebook, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Texas Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2017.

Performance-based transportation planning has existed for many years. Recently, it is becoming more accepted and practiced as a result of federal rules. It is fast becoming the cornerstone for transportation decision making throughout the country in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan (rural) areas. Establishing a common set of performance measures allows for the evaluation and comparison of different projects and transportation corridors for both current and future conditions, and translates data and statistics into a form that the public and decision makers can easily understand. This guidebook directs the reader through the framework for conducting a rural transportation system assessment based on individual goals and objectives and selected performance measures and weights. The planning tool developed as part of this project is intended for use with the guidebook for establishing and using rural performance-based transportation system assessment, monitoring, planning, and programming consistent with statewide plans and programs.

14. Planning for Transportation Together: Collaborating to Address Transportation and Economic Resilience, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2016, [https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Planning Transportation Together Final.pdf](https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Planning_Transportation_Together_Final.pdf)

Across the nation, state agencies and regional planning and development organizations are working together and with other partners to create jobs, improve access to employment, education, and essential services, and to advance quality of life in communities and regions. Transportation facilities, infrastructure, and services are critical components to support these economic and quality of life outcomes, along with other policies and investments. Transportation can be an economic asset where the system allows for access to the workforce, resources, and markets. As a feature of the landscape, a region's roads, paths, and services also support community vitality.

Transportation and economic development efforts occur through both a mix of state-led policies and programs that include local and regional input and participation, as well as more locally developed priorities that benefit from state funding and technical assistance. Top-down and bottom-up efforts often work together, as policies and plans adopted at the state level have provided a useful framework for regions to complete their own transportation and economic development planning and project development.

This report presents case studies that demonstrate how state agencies and regional planning and development organizations are working together on deliberate interventions to produce tangible benefits that are specific to the context, are sustained over time, and make a place more resilient.

15. Regional Rural Transportation Planning: State Models for Local Consultation, Regional Coordination, and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2016, https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Reg_transportation_planning_report_FINAL2.pdf

This new report presents information on the structures, membership, tasks, and funding for regional organizations conducting rural transportation planning work in about 30 states.

16. Regional Transportation Planning Organization Peer Exchange Summary: Held in Conjunction with Moving Rural America: National Working Summit on Transportation in Rural America, National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, 2017, <https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/RTPOPeerExchange2016.pdf>

The Regional Transportation Planning Organization Peer Exchange Summary (PDF) covers discussion of a small group of regional transportation planners and state Department of Transportation planning staff, as well as engagement with a larger and diverse group of professionals attending the summit *Moving Rural America: National Working Summit on Transportation in Rural America*.

The peer exchange summary includes discussion and short descriptions of practice on several topics, including: addressing rural mobility challenges, aligning transportation with economic development, rural public involvement, opportunities to increase economic development by having a safe transportation system, and connecting to transportation safety.

17. Reinke, David, Jim Damkovich, Daniel Landon, Development of performance measures for rural counties in California, 2016, <http://docs.trb.org/prp/17-06203.pdf>

Transportation agencies at all levels are increasingly relying on performance measures to inform decisions on investment and transportation system management. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently adopted a set of performance measures that were based mainly on the needs of urban areas in the state. The California Rural Counties Task Force were concerned that these performance measures did not meet their specific needs. The Task Force therefore commissioned a study to develop performance measures applicable specifically to rural areas in the state. This paper describes the development of these performance measures, which were subsequently adopted by the CTC. The study consisted of reviewing existing performance measurement practices in rural counties, assessing available planning resources for data collection and analysis to produce performance measures, establishing criteria for assessing potential performance measures, recommending performance measures, and examining potential future performance measures. The recommended performance measures were adopted in toto by the CTC.

What distinguishes this study from most previous efforts in this area is the development of a systematic framework for the selection of performance measures.

18. Waldheim, Nicole, Susan Herbel, Carrie Kissel, Integrating Safety in the Rural Transportation Planning Process, Cambridge Systematics, Inc., National Association of Development Organizations, Federal Highway Administration, 2014, https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/training/fhwasa14102/isrtpp.pdf

Rural areas consistently experience higher numbers of crash-related fatalities and serious injuries than urban areas. Regional planning organizations (RPO) are poised to assist state departments of transportation (DOT) and local officials in addressing the safety needs in nonmetropolitan areas in accordance with statewide safety goals. RPOs in general engage in a planning process to understand the regional issues and needs, and identify strategies to address them through coordination with regional stakeholders. The opportunity exists to incorporate safety into this existing process.

This Technical Report provides methods for integrating safety into each step of the RPO planning and programming process, to assist in addressing rural roads multimodal safety needs.

CASE STUDY MATERIALS

19. Anderson, Michael, Tahmina Khan, “Performance Measures for the Analysis of Rural Public Transit in Alabama,” Journal of Public Transportation, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2014, <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=jpt>

As rural public transit systems are vital to the livelihood of rural Americans, improving the operations of these systems is the focus of this work. The use of performance measures to evaluate operation is essential to maintain growth and avoid becoming stagnant. The main goal of this study was to examine existing performance measures (PM) and modify them to allow for comparison of performance among rural transit agencies in Alabama. The tasks presented in this paper are a review of performance measures, data collection, and data analysis for agencies in Alabama. The report concludes that performance measures can be developed that balance external factors in the analysis and allow for a fair comparison of agencies.

20. Astroza, Sebastian, Priyadarshan Patil, Katherine Smith, Vivek Kumar, Chandra Bhat, Zhanmin Zhang, Texas Transportation Planning for Future Renewable Energy Projects: Final Report, The University of Texas at Austin Center for Transportation Research, 2017, <https://ntl.bts.gov/lib/61000/61200/61299/0-6850-1.pdf>

There will be a significant increase in the number of renewable energy production facilities in Texas. The construction of wind farms requires the transport of wind turbine components that create increased loads on rural roads and bridges. These rural roads and bridges are typically not designed for such loads. This will result in a greater burden on the transportation infrastructure in Texas.

Given the upward trend in wind energy production, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is looking to plan for the impacts of future renewable energy projects on roads while facilitating the development of new renewable projects in and around Texas. CTR created an operational planning tool that TxDOT can use to propose route plans for wind turbine components passing along Texas routes and develop recommendations for planning construction of new wind farms as well as maintenance strategies for the roads.

21. Battista, Geoffrey, Brian Lee, Jane Kolodinsky, Sarah Heiss, “Exploring Transportation Accessibility to Health Care Among Vermont’s Rural Seniors,” Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, Vol. 2531, 2015.

The aging baby boomer generation will have a profound impact on the demand for health care services in the United States. This impact will be felt strongly in rural areas, where the population in general is older and the supplies of health care services and alternative transportation are limited. This study employed a mixed-method approach to assess health care accessibility among seniors in the state of Vermont. A geographic information system was used to project health care accessibility according to the spatial characteristics of the health care and transportation systems. Subsequently, the mechanisms that shaped accessibility were assessed through semi-structured interviews with 20 seniors and caregivers. The study found that health care accessibility varied among seniors, given the local health care supply, transportation, and individual resources at their disposal. Health care accessibility also was shaped by less tangible factors, which included social connectedness and personal preferences for care and transportation. The results suggested that mixed methods provided a more nuanced and valid perspective on health care accessibility. This perspective can better inform policy makers as they strive to accommodate rural senior preferences to age in place in a healthy manner.

22. Beiler, Michelle, Leylin Marroquin, Sue McNeil, “State-of-the-practice assessment of climate change adaptation practices across metropolitan planning organizations pre- and post-Hurricane Sandy,” Transportation Research Part A: Policy Practice, Vol. 88, 2016.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) throughout the United States are identifying goals and implementation strategies to reduce the impacts of climate change through transportation adaptation initiatives. Using vulnerability assessments as well as adaptation practices that support mitigation, MPOs are beginning to integrate climate change planning into the long-range planning process. Evaluating the state-of-the-practice of adaptation planning and adaptation in support of mitigation is useful in that it helps identify gaps and areas of improvement. Therefore, this research investigates the state-of-the-practice of MPO adaptation planning using the Mid-Atlantic region as a case study. Surveys, administered in 2012 and 2014, are used to identify the level of progress of MPOs with regard to climate change adaptation practices as well as barriers before and after Hurricane Sandy. A cross-sectional analysis using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) maps the results of the surveys and spatially compares regional trends. The results of the case study suggest growing interest in adaptation efforts such as floodplain area designations and efforts to enhance coordination and collaboration as transportation jurisdictions respond to the potential climate change impacts. In addition, MPOs with dense, smaller geographic areas prioritize inter-jurisdictional collaboration as high, suggesting that they are more reliant on other

agencies to maintain inter-connectivity of transportation networks and further implement adaptation planning practices.

23. Bond, Megan, Jeffrey Brown, James Wood, “Adapting to challenge: Examining older adult transportation in rural communities,” Case Studies on Transport Policy, 2017.

Rural and small communities in the United States are home to a higher proportion of older adults (those aged 65 and older) than urban or suburban areas. This proportion is expected to grow over the next decade. Public transportation can play an important role in meeting the mobility needs of older adults, but transportation providers face significant challenges serving older adults in these settings. Using a set of case studies, the authors explore strategies that providers use to try to address these challenges and increase older adult transit use. These strategies include the use of flexible services, partnerships, and individualized outreach. Local context is important to service provision in small communities. Providers report generally positive results, yet most assessment rests on anecdotal evidence. There is a need for better data to determine whether older adult mobility needs are being effectively served.

24. Dierwechter, Yonn, Brittany Hale, Robert Woodmark, Cody Wyatt, Wendy Moss, Matthew Hall, Whitney Hays, Shanna Schubert, Cheng Wang, Seth Lundgaard, and Caleb Rawson, "Enhancing Big Ideas Through Regional Planning: Cross-Jurisdictional 'Value Added' in Washington State," Conflux, 2014,
<http://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=conflux>

This paper argues that enhancing multi-jurisdictional planning - i.e. regionalism in various forms -- should be at the center of how we ameliorate most of our major developmental challenges. Put another way, efforts to improve the planning profession's contribution to concerns like “climate action,” “economic development,” “social equity,” “local government capacity,” and so on, all require more attention to stronger regional planning processes. The paper is divided into three sections. In the first section, the authors develop the over-arching theme that experiments in regionalism no longer refer to significant institutional-structural reforms - in particular, to consolidation or centralization of planning authority -- but instead to far less threatening, more politically viable, and also less ambitious efforts to build incremental, horizontal collaborations that frequently lack much formal authority because they rely heavily on voluntary reciprocity. They then turn to a lengthy discussion of five different regional planning experiences in Washington State. The final section of the paper recapitulates the main ideas and offers preliminary suggestions as we move forward.

25. Freund, Katherine, “Getting From Here to There: Maine's Elder Transportation Challenge,” Maine Policy Review, Vol. 24, Issue 2, 2015,
<http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1707&context=mpr>

Surveys and studies have repeatedly pointed out the problem of transportation for elders in Maine. Katherine Freund reviews Maine transportation studies and policy and suggests that the solution lies in developing private transportation alternatives that are supported by technology and by appropriate public policies.

26. Mathison, Arlene, Gina Baas, Janene Cowan, Frank Douma, Guillermo Narvaez, Thomas Garry, Dakota County Human Services Research and Transportation Planning: Strategic Action Plan, Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota, 2014,

<https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/176397/CTS14-14.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Transportation is essential to a full life: providing access to jobs, school, medical care, recreation, and other basic needs. Those who can afford and are able to use personal vehicles do not experience significant barriers to getting where they need to go. For those who cannot drive a personal vehicle, the story is very different. Dakota County engaged a team from the University of Minnesota, led by the Center for Transportation Studies, to conduct collaborative stakeholder engagement, data collection and analysis, emerging practices research, and strategic planning in order to assist County government with identifying strategic opportunities to facilitate improved transit and client transportation services in Dakota County. The work was conducted from October 2013 through February 2014. This report summarizes the results of the research and engagement activities, and outlines seven recommendations for the County to improve the coordination, availability, accessibility, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and safety of human service transportation.

27. Mjelde, J.W., R. Dudensing, J. Brooks, G. Battista, M. Carrillo, B. Council, A. Giri, M.K. Kim, V.D. Pyrialakou, and S. Ullerich, Economics of Transportation Research Needs for Rural Elderly and Transportation Disadvantaged Populations, Texas A&M University, United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2017, <https://static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.edu/documents/TTI-2017-1.pdf>

Economic research focused on enhancing the mobility of the elderly and disadvantaged individuals is insufficient. To address this insufficiency, a multidisciplinary team of researchers convened as part of the 2016 National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation (RIBTC) in Asheville, North Carolina. The team's objective is to provide research recommendations that may be used to enhance, if appropriate or applicable, the provision of rural transportation options that improve quality of life for the rural elderly and other socially and transportation disadvantaged populations. Research recommendations focus on five general areas: theoretical issues, innovative solutions, rural socioeconomic considerations, economic assessment and evaluation of rural transit, and information technology solutions.

28. Novak, David, Chris Koliba, Asim Zia, Matt Tucker, "Evaluating the outcomes associated with an innovative change in a state-level transportation project prioritization process: A case study of Vermont," Transport Policy, Vol. 42, 2015.

This paper examines the outcomes associated with an innovative change in a state-level transportation project prioritization process within the United States (U.S.). A foundational component of the innovation is the development and implementation of a novel multi-criteria analysis (MCA) tool to aid decision-makers. The pre and post-MCA project prioritization processes are described in detail for the state of Vermont, and the authors use a mixed methodological approach to empirically evaluate the outcomes associated with the innovative change with respect to three objectives: (1) to make the project prioritization

process more transparent, (2) to improve the project prioritization process by incorporating well-defined, objective evaluation criteria into the decision-making process, and (3) to reduce inequality in the allocation of transportation project funds between the local jurisdictions. They demonstrate that the innovative change in the project prioritization process was clearly successful in accomplishing objectives 1 and 2, but does not appear to be successful with respect to accomplishing objective 3. The findings are discussed in the context of the state of Vermont, and the authors offer suggestions for how funding inequality might be addressed in the future.

29. Reinke, David, Jim Damkovich, Daniel Landon, Development of performance measures for rural counties in California, 2016, <http://docs.trb.org/prp/17-06203.pdf>

Transportation agencies at all levels are increasingly relying on performance measures to inform decisions on investment and transportation system management. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently adopted a set of performance measures that were based mainly on the needs of urban areas in the state. The California Rural Counties Task Force were concerned that these performance measures did not meet their specific needs. The Task Force therefore commissioned a study to develop performance measures applicable specifically to rural areas in the state. This paper describes the development of these performance measures, which were subsequently adopted by the CTC. The study consisted of reviewing existing performance measurement practices in rural counties, assessing available planning resources for data collection and analysis to produce performance measures, establishing criteria for assessing potential performance measures, recommending performance measures, and examining potential future performance measures. The recommended performance measures were adopted in toto by the CTC. What distinguishes this study from most previous efforts in this area is the development of a systematic framework for the selection of performance measures.

3.0 PEER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The second step in documenting current practices in rural transportation planning was the conduct of interviews with peer states and their constituent rural planning organizations. Many states have regional transportation planning agencies in rural areas. NADO recommended states that have longstanding or exemplary practices associated with rural transportation planning. A determination was made that peer states should be similar to Florida in having a significant number of metropolitan areas with MPOs that are adjacent to rural regions. Each of these states has robust rural transportation planning partnership programs that are anchored in State law. This allowed an examination of how some states, like Ohio, are using the Federal definition of RTPO designation, while others rely on state statute to define the context and content of rural planning. The selected states that were interviewed as peers included:

- North Carolina
 - NCDOT
 - NCARPO (State Association Chair)
 - Rocky River RPO
- Ohio
 - Ohio DOT
 - Buckeye Hills Regional Council - RTPO
 - Maumee Valley Planning Organization – RTPO
 - Ohio Valley Regional Planning Commission – RTPO
- Pennsylvania
 - PennDOT
 - North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning Development Commission - RPO
- Washington
 - Washington DOT

3.1 | NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina established rural regional transportation planning organizations, referred to as RPOs, as a requirement of a State law passed in 2000. State officials worked with local officials and the existing network of Councils of Governments to create 20 RPOs that served all counties outside of the existing 17 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The 2010 Census urbanized area boundary changes resulted in some counties becoming part of MPOs, so there are now 18 RPOs. Under the law, RPOs are required to serve contiguous areas of at least three counties and must have a combined minimum population of 50,000. The largest is the Albemarle RPO, which includes ten counties. Not all the municipalities in an RPO region are required to join, but each county must be a member. The RPOs are structured with a Transportation Policy Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee, and a staff/administrative agent. They are established by MOU with NCDOT and member counties, accompanied by an Agreement for Disbursement and Accounting of Rural

Transportation Planning Funds. Currently, the RPOs serve nearly four million North Carolinians, or almost half the population of the state.

North Carolina DOT (NCDOT) provides funding for the RPOs from the FHWA State Planning & Research (SPR) program. The annual budget is between \$1.5 and \$1.7 million, with each organization receiving between \$80,000 and \$150,000 on a population-based formula. The required 20% match is provided by the constituent counties.

The RPOs are involved in plan development, and to a lesser extent in project programming. In North Carolina, each county is responsible for a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). These are coordinated through the RPOs with assistance from NCDOT, including modeling assistance. There is no requirement that the CTP be updated on a regular basis, nor that it be fiscally constrained. RPOs are working on the plan development process so the projects can be more competitive for funding. There is consideration of moving these plans from the county to the RPO level.

While they do not prepare a regional TIP, RPOs are involved in the project selection and prioritization process. NCDOT states that project criteria make it difficult for rural projects to score well, and there remains an urban-rural divide, both perceived and real.

RPOs play an important role in public outreach. They acknowledge this can be particularly difficult in rural areas, but many of the COGs/RPOs have established themselves with their constituencies. The COGs also provide technical services like GIS mapping to their member governments.

The North Carolina Association of RPOs (NCARPO) provides a means, through quarterly meetings, for the RPOs to share planning practice, and to meet as a group with NCDOT. They sometimes meet jointly with the North Carolina Association of MPOs.

3.2 | OHIO

Ohio is the only state in the country that has taken advantage of the provision in MAP-21 to formally designate Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO). This began with a two-year pilot program in July 2013, initiated by Ohio DOT (ODOT). ODOT stated that prior to this, transportation planning was done by 17 MPOs covering 33 of their 88 counties. The state was responsible for planning in the rural areas and felt that the process could be improved. Their reasoning was that RTPOs would:

- Provide local elected officials and stakeholders a forum to participate in the statewide transportation planning process
- Result in better transportation decision making in rural areas
- Over time, cover the entire state with regional transportation planning

Rather than create a process in state law, they found that the Federal planning rule describing the institutional and planning requirements of RTPOs met their needs.

Five existing regional planning agencies were selected for the pilot initiative, covering 34 rural counties:

- Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District (8 counties)
- Logan Union Champaign Regional Planning Commission (2 counties)
- Maumee Valley Planning Organization (5 counties)
- Ohio Mid-East Government Association (8 counties)
- Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (11 counties)

In 2016, ODOT initiated the process of designating a sixth RTPO:

- Central Ohio Regional Planning Organization (7 counties)

The rural regions of Ohio are diverse. Those in the southeastern part of the state are part of the Federally designated Appalachian Region, addressing issues of poverty and isolation. Others can be characterized by Rust Belt issues of loss of manufacturing economy and aging population. Some of the counties have demand-response public transit, but others have few transportation options. The Ohio Rural Intercity Bus Program uses Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds to support a program called GoBus. This service supplements commercial bus operations, which have experienced cut backs over recent years, by providing rural-urban intercity bus service throughout the state.

Each of the RTPOs established a Policy Committee that is distinct from the Board of the parent organization. In each case, local elected officials fill the majority of seats. Transportation Technical Committees at the RTPOs include engineers and planners from the member counties and some cities; ODOT; and others. ODOT funds the RTPOs with FHWA SPR program funds and covers half of the 20% match. This is sufficient to support a staff of 1.5 to 2 FTEs.

Because the Federal requirements for RTPOs mirror those for MPOs, ODOT assigned an MPO mentor to each of the new RTPOs. The RTPOs found these relationships valuable and have generally continued them after the pilot period. Each RTPO was charged with developing a Transportation Plan and a Public Participation Plan.

The regional planning organizations that host the RTPOs are multi-functional, typically with a history of administering programs of the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the Ohio Public Works Commission. They assist their member counties with comprehensive plan development, GIS mapping, and other technical services. Some had been involved in project scoring for ARC and EDA transportation projects. One of the RTPOs noted that projects identified as ARC local access roads would be ideal for RTPO funding.

The most significant drawback cited by the RTPOs is that they are not provided an allocation of FHWA capital funds by ODOT. The RTPOs will be developing their first Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) in 2017 for SFY 2018-2021. This will provide for direct input from local governments in the program development process. The projects in the RTIPs will be consistent with the RTPO LRTP. The RTIPs are included in the ODOT Statewide TIP (STIP). While the lack of a direct allocation has presented a challenge to keeping the interest of local officials, the RTIP process is a significant step.

The RTPOs and ODOT cited the value of the organizations in providing the rural perspective and advocating for local needs that might otherwise be missed.

3.3 | PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania has a long history of having the entire state being covered by either MPOs or RPOs. PennDOT's recognition of rural planning agencies as RPOs occurred after the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991. There are now five RPOs in the state, as some met the population threshold to be designated as MPOs after the 2010 Census. The RPOs meet all the Federal requirements for RTPO designation, but neither they nor PennDOT sees any benefit from officially designating them. PennDOT funds the RPOs with SPR funds and provides half of the non-Federal match.

As in other states, these agencies have always performed a variety of planning tasks. Many began as EDA Economic Development Districts. They work in community development, workforce development, and environmental resource planning. There is broad agreement that transportation planning benefits from the interaction with these other planning functions.

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning Development Commission is recognized as a national leader in rural transportation planning. They are involved in a wide range of transportation planning work, including the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, greenway planning, a safety corridor analysis, an economic corridor analysis, and an inland port feasibility study.

The RPOs have adopted Public Participation Plans that include a Limited English Proficiency element like the MPO plans. PennDOT sees them as a valuable link to local rural communities, helping them focus on needs-based planning.

3.4 | WASHINGTON

Washington's 1990 Growth Management Act created the legislative basis for creation of its Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). While they use the RTPO name, they are not designated under Federal law. An RTPO in Washington covers both urban and rural areas and receives state funding in support of its planning efforts. Because an MPO covers an urbanized area, there are planning agencies that are designated as MPOs under Federal law and RTPOs under State law. RTPO members include cities, counties, Washington State DOT (WSDOT), tribal governments, ports, transportation service providers, private employers and others. Four of the RTPOs are entirely rural. WSDOT funds RTPOs within the State budget at a level of \$4.4 million/biennium. This has not been increased since 2003. Constituent counties provide in-kind services to support the RTPO organizations.

Each RTPO prepares a Regional Transportation Plan. They also work with their constituent counties to certify that the county comprehensive plans are consistent with the RTP. This ensures that planning goals, objectives, and performance measures are consistent across levels of government. The RTP update cycle is as follows: every two years there is a review

for currency of data and assumptions, every six years there is a full update. The update may be done sooner if needed. Content is similar to an MPO LRTP. Fiscal constraint is required, but not applied rigidly. WSDOT is in the process of updating its Washington Transportation Plan. The WTP does not include a project list, but seeks to align policies with the RTPO plans.

RTPOs develop a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). These are not directly incorporated into the STIP, as there is a separate Capital Program Development process. RTPOs do not receive capital allocations; counties and cities must work with the RTPO to get projects on the RTIP.

WSDOT sees the benefits of RTPOs as:

- Allowing multiple counties that are resource poor to pool resources for things like GIS purchase and licensing;
- Model development for the entire region;
- Meeting state policy goals;
- Consistency of planning with available data, projects

The primary challenge is that available funding often does not provide for enough staff. While MPOs have other revenue sources like FHWA-PL, they often lose focus on their rural component. The fully rural RTPOs struggle to meet all of their planning responsibilities.

4.0 NOTEWORTHY PLANNING PRACTICES

Review of relevant literature and interviews of peer states has brought forth noteworthy practices in rural transportation planning, and institutional relationships between State DOTs and rural planning agencies.

4.1 | INSTITUTIONAL AND PLANNING PROCESS

States choose to meet the Federal planning requirement for consultation with nonmetropolitan local officials in a variety of ways. In some cases, there are simply periodic informal meetings between DOT field personnel and local government engineering and planning staff. Other states have chosen to develop a more formal process of collaborating with local officials. Finally, there are those, including the states interviewed for this project, that use either existing or newly created rural regional planning organizations in a fully institutionalized cooperative process.

As noted above, Ohio is the only state in which the Governor has designated RTPOs under Federal law. The action is the same as MPO designation, and the organizations act very similarly.

States including Washington and North Carolina have passed state laws regarding regional planning organizations to facilitate effective statewide transportation planning. In many cases, the requirements and practice are similar to that of Federal law.

Finally, there are states like Pennsylvania that cover the full geography of nonmetropolitan regions with RPOs, which are governed by neither state nor Federal law.

Thus, the effectiveness of rural regional planning and collaboration is not necessarily determined by the legal framework, but rather by the commitment of all parties to the accepted practice.

States that represent best practice in institutionalizing a collaborative process to facilitate effective transportation planning in rural counties recognize these benefits:

- The State DOT gains a single channel to communicate about rural transportation policy and program issues.
 - PennDOT involves all of the RPOs and MPOs in working groups to develop financial forecasts for LRTPs, performance management, UPWP development, and other topics. These forums facilitate striking a balance between urban and rural areas, large and small metros, and across modes.
 - North Carolina DOT participates in the quarterly meetings of the North Carolina Association of RPOs.
- The State DOT gains greater insight into the transportation needs of rural counties and communities. DOT Districts/Regions typically do not have enough staff to fully engage rural stakeholders, and therefore rely on RTPO/RPO as an intermediary.

- The development of LRTPs in rural regions provides the State DOT with input to its State Transportation Plan that is robust and publicly vetted, on par with MPO LRTPs.
- The development of Regional TIPs can result in greater consistency in project identification, selection, and programming for the STIP.
- The engagement of local elected officials from rural counties and cities through RTPO/RPO Boards creates a formal opportunity for two-way communication. Not only do the local officials have a forum for making the case for transportation improvements in their counties or cities, but the DOT also has a forum for explaining State policies, funding constraints and opportunities, and methods for project selection and management.

4.2 | SUBJECT-SPECIFIC BENEFITS

The exploration of the transportation planning and related work of RTPO/RPOs can be distilled into areas that create benefit for both rural counties and cities, and for the State DOT. [Note that the numeric citations refer to the Recent Literature Review, Section 2.2]

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A core value of planning is engaging the public and stakeholders in meaningful communication throughout the process of developing plans and programs. Outreach helps planners understand community needs, and also helps the public understand what the agency hopes to accomplish, and what constraints it is operating under. The new paradigm of performance-based planning makes it particularly important for the planning agency to look at the transportation system from the user perspective, recognizing that the measure of success is not programming and constructing transportation projects, but documenting the impact of the projects on safety, mobility, access, or system preservation.

State DOTs face challenges in achieving effective public outreach in rural areas. First, the DOT is often seen as a distant organization by rural people, when the District/Region office may be in a different county. Second, the DOT's investment priorities are often seen as heavily weighted to urban needs. Finally, it can be difficult to generate interest in planning topics that the public does not see as having a direct or immediate impact on their lives.

Using RTPO/RPO staff to lead public outreach has proved beneficial. Citizens often feel closer to the regional planning agency. These agencies may have engaged them on other topics ranging from Area Agency on Aging, to workforce development, to stormwater planning. The following approaches have proven useful in engaging the rural community through public outreach:

- Communicate the information that resonates with the audience, bringing them together by offering incentives, food, time for socializing/community connection, and an accessible location for public engagement events. [12, 16]
- Reach out specifically to the young, disabled, elderly, and other potentially transportation-disadvantaged communities. [16]

- Employ a variety of media and other approaches to maximize community engagement with different types of citizens. This may include using surveys, and attending events in rural areas like fairs and farmers' markets [16, Twin Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Council VT]
- Using online platforms for communication is an important way to overcome rural travel distances, but must be balanced in regions where there is limited broadband coverage. North Central Pennsylvania RPDC created an online portal branded *Engage North Central PA* that they tested for two years. Enhancements to the agency website ended the use of the portal. [16, 25, 27]
- Using partner agencies to expand outreach efforts. The NCPRPDC Participation Plan³ states the value in reaching the underserved rural population from working with housing authorities, the Workforce Development Board, and community groups. Similarly, North Carolina's Triangle Area RPO's Public Involvement Plan⁴ includes a list of stakeholders that include organizations like Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Corporations that not only participate directly but can act as communications conduits to their members and others.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rural counties vary from high levels of economic activity to those that are depressed and have a large percentage of low-income households. In either case, there is a role for transportation planning that RTPO/RPOs can facilitate. As noted above, many of these agencies started as EDA Economic Development Districts before they assumed a transportation planning function. Having an in-house linkage between these planning functions is particularly beneficial. The State DOT may be called on to provide improved access for both workforce and freight to a proposed development site. In many parts of the country, rural counties are home to recreational and tourism venues that generate significant economic activity and create traffic congestion. Some of these locations are seasonal, others are year-round. The RTPO/RPO may be in the best position to do the required analysis, often with technical assistance from the DOT. They may also influence the project prioritization process to recognize rural needs.

- Economic development: Even small transportation projects in rural areas can significantly impact economic development, tourism, and local business. The regional agency can communicate local needs and impacts to the DOT that may influence project prioritization or project scope/design. [16]
- Regionalism: Individual counties, cities, or government sub-units may compete for new development to enhance their tax base, even when the transportation and other impacts will be regional. RTPOs can facilitate a regional approach to major development challenges, especially with a focus on acknowledgement of shared benefits and costs among the agencies involved. [24]

³ <http://199.115.61.236/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/FINAL-2016-NCPPP-Update-12JULY2016.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.tarpo.org/docs/pubinvplan.pdf>

- **Growth:** Planning is critical in rural areas because unplanned growth can bring more VMT than the roadways can support. RTPOs can assist in making the land use – transportation linkage understandable to local officials. This can result in planning for growth that can be best accommodated by existing public facilities, or prioritizing transportation investments to either encourage or respond to planned growth locations. [11]
- **Energy Development:** Rural counties are the site of both traditional energy extraction (coal, oil and gas drilling and fracking) and new alternative energy infrastructure (i.e., wind turbines, large scale solar arrays). This industry can create a high volume of truck trips, including oversize and overweight loads. The RTPO can work with the State DOT to analyze the impact of these loads on local roads and bridges in the region. [20]

RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND ALTERNATIVE MODES

It is a challenge to provide public transportation in rural settings because of low density of population and long trip distance. Transit can fill a critical transportation gap for elderly, low-income, and other underserved rural citizens. RTPO/RPOs can bring planning expertise to help decision makers understand what is feasible, the costs of different service models, and the benefits to area residents. Some RTPO/RPOs do a Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, which is required for MPOs. These plans not only identify service gaps but can also find available transportation resources that were not otherwise apparent.

- A study in Dakota County, Minnesota recommended forming a “county coordinating collaborative” to organize regional human service transportation. Coordinating transit by region helps to appropriately scale services for different types of places, maximize both the effectiveness of the service and the efficiency of operating it, and balance resources and capacities as needed. [8, 26]
- **Rural elder transportation:** “Individualized outreach” is an important technique in addressing the transportation needs of the rural elderly, a group that often tends to be isolated. This requires paying attention not only to the resources they need to access, including healthcare, shopping, and financial services, but also to factors like personal preference and social/community connection when determining how best to provide transportation. The Boonslick (Missouri) RPC created a Mobility Manager position to perform this service, devising plans to meet individual needs. [21, 23]
- Most rural transit services have long mileage and less frequent service. They may benefit from a more compact structure and local knowledge compared with bigger systems, but they are relatively lacking in capacity and resources. RTPOs may be able to supply the analysis. [2, 8]
- Rural demand-response transit service is most often oriented toward meeting human service needs. This may be critical for seniors and others, but typically does not accommodate workforce needs for unemployed rural residents who do not drive. [2, 8, 26]

- Alternative Transportation Modes: Interest in ridesharing, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and other alternative modes is on the rise even in rural areas. With proper planning and community involvement, making these modes available can improve transportation safety by offering an alternative to those who should not be driving but have no other transportation option (i.e. driving under the influence, elderly drivers). [16]
- Alternative Transportation Modes: RTPOs may be able to identify locations where a multiuse path can serve both commuting and recreational needs, benefitting the regional economy and community quality of life. They have also been effective in finding grant funding for these facilities. For example, NCPRPDC works with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to obtain greenway grants for its members.

PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING

MAP-21 created a requirement, since defined through a series of rulemakings from FHWA and FTA, that States and MPOs conducted a performance-based planning and programming process. This is done to support seven National Goals, through identified performance measures and a requirement that States set performance targets for each.

There is no requirement for rural planning organizations to do performance-based planning and programming, but they can assist the State DOT by taking that approach. As discussed by NADO [12], this activity is occurring in a number of states.

California provides a useful perspective. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted a set of performance measures that were based primarily on the needs of urban areas. The California Rural Counties Task Force were concerned that these performance measures did not meet their specific needs, and commissioned a study to develop performance measures applicable specifically to rural areas in the state. The study consisted of reviewing existing performance measurement practices in rural counties, assessing available planning resources for data collection and analysis to produce performance measures, establishing criteria for assessing potential performance measures, recommending performance measures, and examining potential future performance measures. The recommended performance measures were adopted in total by the CTC.

5.0 SUMMARY

This report summarizes a literature review that begins with work done for the FHWA Office of Planning “RTPO State of the Practice” project in 2013-2014. It then adds new sources from subsequent years through 2017. The review spans rural transportation planning practice, institutional arrangements, and content.

The project team also conducted interviews with peer states and regional planning agencies across the country. These are combined with interviews completed for the FHWA project.

The result is the identification of noteworthy practices in rural transportation planning that highlight the benefits to both the State DOT, the RTPO/RPO, and rural citizens.

Fact Sheets produced for the FHWA RTPO State of the Practice can be found at https://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/RTPO_factsheet_Master.pdf

6.0 INTERVIEW CONTACTS

North Carolina

- North Carolina DOT: Jamal Alavi, Director, Transportation Planning Division
- North Carolina Association of RPOs: Dana Stoogenke, Chair
- Rocky River RP: Dana Stoogenke, Transportation Planning Director

Ohio

- Ohio DOT: David Moore, Statewide Planner
- Buckeye Hills RTPO: Karen Pawloski, Transportation Planning Coordinator
- Maumee Valley Planning Organization: Ellen Smith, Deputy Director
- Ohio Valley Regional Planning Commission: Malcolm Meyer, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania DOT: Jim Ritzman, Deputy Secretary for Planning
- North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning Development Commission: Amy Kessler, Director of Regional Development and Community Planning

Washington

- Washington State DOT: Matt Kunic, Director, Tribal and Regional Coordination Office

APPENDIX B

Florida’s Rural Areas Report

Florida's Rural Areas

Office of Policy Planning

Florida Department of Transportation

May 2018



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INTRODUCTION

Transportation planning is a process to consider all aspects of the transportation system through plans and programs and understand how they impact the people served by these plans and programs. While, in general, this planning considers both urban and rural (or metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas), often the focus and priority is on the urban areas, which are those with the greatest population. The term “rural” has many unique definitions at both the federal and state level that rely on a variety of data and geographic variables. These unique definitions can be influenced by the mission or purpose of the agency defining the term “rural.” Many of Florida’s residents, like those in other states, live in areas that have both rural and urban characteristics making accommodating the needs of these communities challenging.

This document will review definitions of rural areas at the federal and state levels and consider various data points for counties in Florida considered rural. General characteristics of rural areas will be summarized to serve as a preliminary effort to identify commonalities between Florida’s rural communities. This document will become a part of a larger study focused on determining how to define, characterize, and plan for Florida’s rural areas.

DEFINING RURAL

Federal Rural Definitions

This section will review three definitions of ‘rural’ at the federal level as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These entities were reviewed because their definitions are applicable to Florida Department of Transportation planning processes.

U.S. Census Bureau Rural Definition

The U.S. Census defines rural as what is not urban, meaning after defining individual urban areas, rural is what is left. The Census Bureau uses a definition based on population and other measures of development patterns when identifying urban areas. These other measures include density, land use, and distance. Urban areas are classified into two types: urbanized areas and urban clusters. Urbanized areas are areas with 50,000 or more people. Urban clusters are areas with at least 2,500 but fewer than 50,000 people. Rural encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. With this method of delineation, rural areas across the country look vastly different—ranging from densely settled small towns and subdivisions on the fringe of urban areas to lightly populated and remote areas.

U.S. Department of Transportation’s (U.S. DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Rural Definition

The FHWA’s definition differs slightly from the Census Bureau’s. In practice, FHWA has two separate definitions for identifying rural areas: one for highway classification and outdoor advertising and one for planning purposes. The rural definition for highway classification and outdoor advertising is anything outside of an area with a population of 5,000. For planning purposes, rural is considered to be any area outside of a metropolitan area with a population of 50,000 or more. This definition for rural transportation planning is further described in three forms as shown below.¹ These ‘areas’ are a generalization of non-metropolitan areas outside the limits of an incorporated or unincorporated city, town, or village.

- *Basic Rural Area:* Dispersed counties or regions with few or no major population centers of 5,000 or more. These are mainly characterized by agricultural- and natural resource-based economies, stable or declining populations, and “farm-to-market” localized transportation patterns.
- *Developed Rural Area:* Fundamentally dispersed counties or regions with one or more population center(s) of 5,000 or more. Economies in these areas tend to be mixed industrial and service based in the cities, and agricultural and natural resource based in the rural areas. Populations tend to be stable or growing, and transportation choice more diverse.
- *Urban Boundary Rural Area:* Counties or regions that border metropolitan areas and are highly developed. Economic growth, population growth, and transportation are tied to the urban center. Many of these areas have experienced high levels of growth in recent years.

¹ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/page03.cfm.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) Non-metropolitan Rural Definition

The USDA's ERS focuses on a variety of trends and emerging issues in agriculture, food, the environment, and rural areas across the country. While not specific to transportation planning, their approach to understanding rural communities and the capacity of rural economies is related to understanding and planning for the transportation system in these areas. The USDA ERS uses the term 'non-metropolitan (non-metro)' to describe rural areas. They analyze and study conditions in these areas to determine the condition of 'rural' in the United States and track and explain regional population and economic trends that impact transportation planning.

For the purposes of ERS' research, non-metropolitan areas are defined on the basis of counties, the standard building block for disseminating population and economic trends. They define non-metropolitan counties as a combination of 1) open countryside; 2) rural towns (places with fewer than 2,500 people); and 3) urban areas with populations ranging from 2,500 to 49,999 that are not part of larger labor market areas. In addition to the basic metro/non-metro delineation, they developed multilevel county classifications, such as the rural-urban continuum codes, to measure rural areas in more detail and to assess the economic and social diversity of non-metropolitan areas.² However, sometimes counties are too large to accurately distinguish rural and urban settlement patterns so the USDA ERS also developed subcounty classifications that better explain the different levels of rurality, including rural-urban commuting areas.³

State Rural Definitions

This section will review commonly used definitions to distinguish between urban and rural at the state level, including the metropolitan planning organization definition and the rural community definition.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Definition

This designation is for metropolitan areas identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as an urbanized area, meaning they have a population of more than 50,000 individuals. While federally mandated, a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is managed regionally within each state.⁴ MPOs are organizations of elected officials in recognized urban areas that provide a forum for local decision-making on transportation issues of a regional nature. MPOs promote consistency between the local and state processes for transportation, growth management, and economic development.

There are 27 MPOs in the state of Florida that serve metropolitan areas ranging from around 135,000 people to over 2 million people, with some encompassing only part of a county to some encompassing multiple counties. In most cases, the county that the metropolitan area is in is designated as a whole, which includes a significant geographic area outside of the actual urbanized area. The geographic portion of the state that is not within an MPO is often considered non-metropolitan, although this is not an official designation. Another example of MPO boundaries include predominantly rural counties with small pockets of urban clusters (e.g., they don't have urbanized areas of 50K+) and in Florida, an example would be the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), which includes the Sebring urbanized area in Highlands County, plus the rural portion of Highlands and the predominantly rural surrounding counties. Table 1 and Map 1 below identifies Florida counties that are part of a MPO.

² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/>.

³ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes/>.

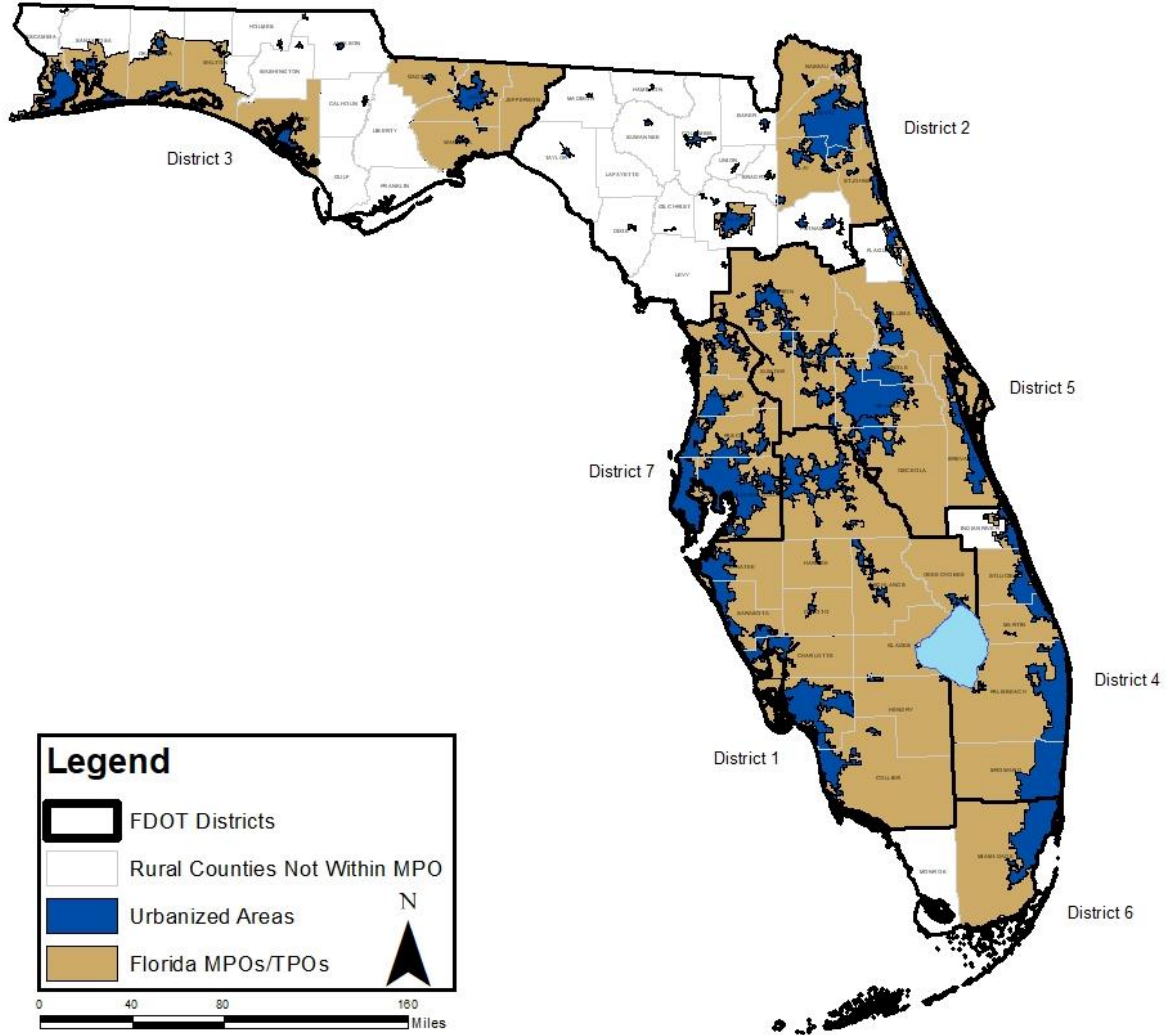
⁴ Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) can also be referred to as a Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) or Transportation Planning Agency (TPA), or Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO).

Table 1. Florida's Counties Arranged by MPO Planning Area

Entire County In An MPO		Partial County In An MPO	Counties Not In An MPO
Bay	Marion	Alachua	Baker
Brevard	Martin	Escambia	Bradford
Broward	Miami-Dade	Flagler	Calhoun
Charlotte	Nassau	Indian River	Columbia
Citrus	Okeechobee	Okaloosa	Dixie
Clay	Orange	Santa Rosa	Franklin
Collier	Osceola	Walton	Gilchrist
Desoto	Palm Beach		Gulf
Duval	Pasco		Hamilton
Gadsden	Pinellas		Holmes
Glades	Polk		Jackson
Hardee	Sarasota		Lafayette
Hendry	Seminole		Levy
Hernando	St. Johns		Liberty
Highlands	St. Lucie		Madison
Hillsborough	Sumter		Monroe
Jefferson	Volusia		Putnam
Lake	Wakulla		Suwannee
Lee			Taylor
Leon			Union
Manatee			Washington

Source: Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council.

Figure 1. Florida's Counties Arranged by MPO Designation



Rural Community Definition

To specifically recognize the needs of rural communities, the state of Florida established its own statutory definitions. These areas are identified by population and may or may not be part of an MPO. According to Florida Statute, a rural community is defined as:⁵

- A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
- A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
- Any municipality within a county as described above.
- An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in Section 288.0656 Paragraph (c), Florida Statutes and verified by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).⁶

Tables 2–4 below show which counties and municipalities/communities meet the state definition.

Table 2. Counties with a Population of 75,000 or Fewer

Baker	Gilchrist	Jefferson ¹	Taylor
Bradford	Glades ¹	Lafayette	Union
Calhoun	Gulf	Levy	Wakulla ¹
Columbia	Hamilton	Liberty	Washington
DeSoto ¹	Hardee ¹	Madison	Walton ¹
Dixie	Hendry ¹	Okeechobee ¹	
Franklin	Holmes	Putnam	
Gadsden ¹	Jackson	Suwannee	

¹ Part of an MPO.

Table 3. Counties with a Population of 125,000 or Fewer Which is Contiguous to a County with a Population of 75,000 or fewer

Flagler ¹	Highlands ¹	Nassau ¹
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¹ Part of an MPO.

⁵ Section 288.0656(1)(e), F.S.

⁶ According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity there are no rural communities that qualify for this definition.

Table 4. Incorporated Municipalities within Rural Counties

<p>Baker County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Macclenny • Town of Glen St. Mary 	<p>Gadsden County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Chattahoochee • City of Gretna • City of Midway • City of Quincy • Town of Greensboro • Town of Havana 	<p>Holmes County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bonifay • City of Ponce De Leon • City of Westville • Town of Esto • Town of Noma 	<p>Nassau County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fernandina Beach • Town of Callahan • Town of Hilliard
<p>Bradford County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Hampton • City of Lawtey • City of Starke • Town of Brooker 	<p>Gilchrist County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fanning Springs • City of Trenton • Town of Bell 	<p>Jackson County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graceville • City of Jacob City • City of Marianna • Town of Alford • Town of Bascom • Town of Cambellton • Town of Cottondale 	<p>Okeechobee County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Okeechobee
<p>Calhoun County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Blountstown • Town of Altha 	<p>Glades County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Moore Haven 	<p>Jefferson County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Monticello 	<p>Putnam County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Crescent City • City of Palatka • Town of Interlachen • Town of Pomona Park • Town of Welaka
<p>Columbia County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Lake City • Town of Fort White 	<p>Gulf County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Port St. Joe • City of Wewahitchka 	<p>Lafayette County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Mayo 	<p>Suwannee County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Live Oak • Town of Branford
<p>DeSoto County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Arcadia 	<p>Hamilton County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Jasper • Town of White Springs • Town of Jennings 	<p>Levy County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Key • City of Chiefland • City of Fanning Springs • City of Otter Creek • City of Williston • City of Yankeetown • Town of Bronson • Town of Inglis 	<p>Taylor County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Perry
<p>Dixie County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cross City • City of Horseshoe Beach • City of Old Town 	<p>Hardee County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bowling Green • City of Wauchula • Town of Zolfo Springs 	<p>Liberty County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bristol 	<p>Union County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Lake Butler • Town of Raiford • Town of Worthington Springs
<p>Flagler County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bunnell • City of Flagler Beach • City of Palm Coast • Town of Marineland • Town of Beverly Beach 	<p>Hendry County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Clewiston • City of LaBelle 	<p>Madison County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Madison • Town of Greenville • Town of Lee 	<p>Wakulla County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Sopchoppy • City of St. Marks
<p>Franklin County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Apalachicola • City of Carrabelle 	<p>Highlands County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Avon Park • City of Sebring • Town of Lake Placid 	<p>Washington County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Chipley • City of Vernon • Town of Caryville • Town of Ebro • Town of Wausau 	<p>Walton County¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of DeFuniak Springs • City of Freeport • Town of Paxton

¹ Part of an MPO.

Additional Rural Communities Not Defined as Rural

For the purpose of this study, the Project Team included in the outreach process municipalities that are within non-rural counties and outside of MPO boundaries as they have similar transportation planning issues as rural municipalities. The following municipalities were included:

- Municipalities within Alachua County outside of the Gainesville MTPO.
 - City of Alachua
 - City of Archer
 - City of Hawthorne
 - City of High Springs
 - Town of La Crosse
 - Town of Micanopy
 - City of Newberry
 - City of Waldo
- Municipalities within Escambia County outside of the Florida-Alabama TPO.
 - Town of Century
- Municipalities within Santa Rosa County outside of Florida-Alabama TPO.
 - Town of Jay
- Municipalities within Okaloosa County outside of Okaloosa-Walton TPO.
 - City of Laurel Hill
- Municipalities within Walton County outside of Okaloosa-Walton TPO.
 - Town of Paxton
- Municipalities within Indian River County outside of Indian River County MPO.
 - Town of Indian River Shores
 - Town of Orchid
 - City of Sebastian
 - City of Vero Beach
- Municipalities within the South Central RAO included in an urban county.
 - City of Belle Glade (Palm Beach County)
 - City of Pahokee (Palm Beach County)
 - City of South Bay (Palm Beach County)
 - City of Immokalee (Collier County)

The project team also included some municipalities with rural characteristics in their outreach process that were within non-rural counties and within MPOs due to their unique transportation planning issues and rural components. For instance, Monroe County does not meet the definition of a rural county or an urban county,

and it was important to determine how transportation needs were being met by FDOT. These municipalities include:

- City of Fellemsmere in Indian River County
- City of Key West in Monroe County
- City of Marathon in Monroe County
- City of Key Colony Beach in Monroe County
- City of Layton in Monroe County
- Village of Islamorada in Monroe County

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

To better serve Florida's rural communities, the Florida Legislature created the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) (Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes), which provides a focused and coordinated effort among state and regional agencies that provide programs and services for rural areas. FDOT plays a vital role in this initiative as a member agency of REDI. REDI responds to specific community needs and requests by working with rural communities to improve their rural economies, access to housing, access to healthcare, and access to education. REDI also reviews and evaluates the impact of statutes and rules on rural communities to help minimize any adverse impacts. In addition, REDI has the authority to recommend waivers of match provisions for certain economic development programs on a project-by-project basis.

Under Florida Statute, REDI is:

“Responsible for coordinating and focusing the efforts and resources of State and regional agencies on the problems which affect the fiscal, economic, and community viability of Florida's economically distressed rural communities, working with local governments, community-based organizations, and private organizations that have an interest in the growth and development of these communities to find ways to balance environmental and growth management issues with local needs.

REDI shall review and evaluate the impact of statutes and rules on rural communities and shall work to minimize any adverse impact and undertake outreach and capacity-building efforts.

REDI shall facilitate better access to State resources by promoting direct access and referrals to appropriate State and regional agencies and statewide organizations. REDI may undertake outreach, capacity-building, and other advocacy efforts to improve conditions in rural communities. These activities may include sponsorship of conferences and achievement awards.”

Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAO)

An additional designation included in Section 288.0656 are the Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAOs). These areas are defined as rural communities, or a region composed of rural communities, designated by the Governor, that have been adversely affected by extraordinary economic events, severe or chronic distress, or natural disasters that present a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact. REDI may recommend up to three RAOs to the Governor who may designate them by Executive Order. Counties and communities within a RAO are established as a priority assignment for REDI agencies, which allows the Governor to waive criteria of certain economic development incentives. Florida's three designated RAOs include the Northwest RAO, with support from Opportunity Florida; the South Central RAO, with aid from

Florida’s Heartland Region of Opportunity (FHRO); and the North Central RAO with assistance from North Florida Economic Development Partnership.

Catalyst Site Designation

Through REDI’s RAO designation, there is a third tier of designation that exists called catalyst sites. Catalyst sites are parcels of land within a RAO that have been prioritized as a geographic site for economic development through partnerships with state, regional, and local organizations. The site must be reviewed by REDI and approved by DEO for the purposes of locating a catalyst project. Catalyst projects include businesses locating or expanding in a RAO to serve as economic generators of regional significance for the growth of a regional target industry cluster. The project must provide capital investment on a scale significant enough to affect the entire region and result in the development of high-wage and high-skill jobs. Section 288.0656, F.S. states that:

“Each rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically recommended by REDI, identified as a catalyst project by Enterprise Florida, Inc., and confirmed as a catalyst project by the department (DEO). All state agencies and departments shall use all available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law to promote the creation and development of each catalyst project and the development of catalyst sites.”

Table 5 and Figure 2 identify Florida counties arranged by RAO designation.

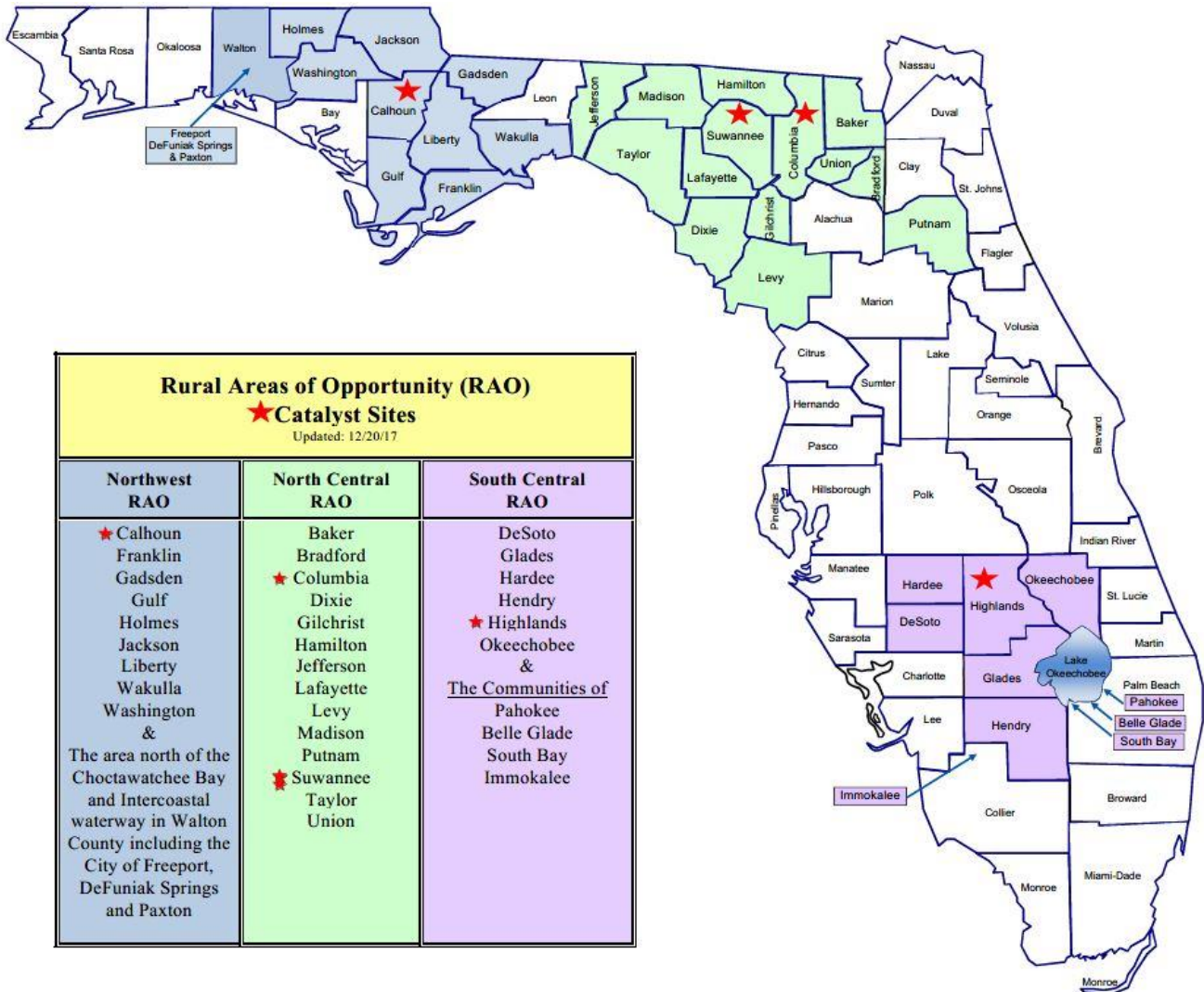
Table 5. Florida Counties Arranged by RAO Designation

Counties Part of a Rural Area of Opportunity			Cities Designated as RAOs (not in an RAO County)		
Northwest	South Central	North Central	Northwest	South Central	North Central
Calhoun	DeSoto	Baker	Freeport (Walton)	Immokalee (Collier)	
Franklin	Glades	Bradford		Pahokee (Palm Beach)	
Gadsden	Hardee	Columbia ¹		Belle Glade (Palm Beach)	
Gulf	Hendry	Dixie		South Bay (Palm Beach)	
Holmes	Highlands ¹	Gilchrist			
Jackson	Okeechobee	Hamilton			
Liberty		Jefferson			
Wakulla		Lafayette			
Washington		Levy			
		Madison			
		Putnam			
		Suwannee ¹			
		Taylor			
		Union			

¹ Indicates County hosts a catalyst site.

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, 2017.

Figure 2. Florida Rural Areas of Opportunity and Catalyst Sites



DATA SNAPSHOT OF FLORIDA'S RURAL COUNTIES

This section provides various data points for Florida's rural counties referencing demographics, local economies, and transportation. Rural demographic trends have the potential to affect rural economies significantly, which in turn can impact transportation demand. Therefore, several data points were identified to better understand Florida's rural communities. Improved understanding of commonalities between Florida's rural areas can help identify planning solutions that apply to multiple rural communities in the State of Florida. The rural counties identified for this assessment are those designated as 'rural' by Florida Statute and include 32 of Florida's 67 counties.

Demographics

Table 6 provides population demographic data for Florida's rural counties, including total population, population density, and age cohorts. The data indicate the following:

- **Total population:** The total population of Florida's 32 rural counties is 1,124,190, which is only 5.7 percent of Florida's total population. The largest rural county by population is Flagler County with 100,783 and the smallest rural county by population is Liberty County with 8,295.
- **Density:** Florida's rural counties have a lower average persons per acre than the rest of the state. On average, rural counties average 0.081 persons per acre while the rest of the state averages 0.568 persons per acre.
- **Age cohorts:** Florida's rural counties are generally in sync with the age distribution of the state as a whole. The average population of rural counties in Florida have almost the same proportion of people younger than 18 (20.4 percent) when compared to the statewide average (20.5 percent). They have a slightly larger proportion of people age 18 to 65 (61.6 percent) when compared to the statewide average (60.6 percent), and a slightly smaller proportion of people 65 and older (17.9 percent) compared to the statewide average (18.8 percent).

Table 6. Population Demographics for Florida's Rural Counties

County	2015 Population	Average Persons Per Acre	Age (percent of population)		
			Under 18	18-64	65 and Over
Florida Total/ Average	19,815,183	0.568	20.5%	60.6%	18.8%
Rural County Average	35,131	0.081	20.4%	61.6%	17.9%
Baker	27,135	0.072	24.9%	62.5%	12.5%
Bradford	27,223	0.142	19.8%	63.2%	17.0%
Calhoun	14,615	0.04	21.2%	61.6%	17.2%

County	2015 Population	Average Persons Per Acre	Age (percent of population)		
			Under 18	18-64	65 and Over
Columbia	67,806	0.132	21.9%	61.3%	16.8%
Desoto	34,957	0.085	21.2%	60.0%	18.8%
Dixie	16,091	0.035	18.4%	60.2%	21.4%
Flagler	100,783	0.310	18.6%	53.9%	27.5%
Franklin	11,628	0.033	16.6%	64.3%	19.1%
Gadsden	46,424	0.137	22.4%	62.9%	14.7%
Gilchrist	16,992	0.075	20.7%	60.1%	19.2%
Glades	13,272	0.021	16.9%	58.1%	25.0%
Gulf	15,785	0.043	15.7%	66.6%	17.7%
Hamilton	14,395	0.043	19.0%	66.0%	14.9%
Hardee	27,468	0.067	26.6%	59.4%	14.1%
Hendry	38,363	0.05	27.9%	59.9%	12.3%
Highlands	98,328	0.139	17.9%	48.8%	33.4%
Holmes	19,635	0.063	20.3%	61.2%	18.6%
Jackson	48,900	0.08	18.8%	63.9%	17.3%
Jefferson	14,198	0.036	17.1%	63.6%	19.3%
Lafayette	8,801	0.025	21.5%	65.3%	13.2%
Levy	39,821	0.055	20.2%	27.9%	22.0%
Liberty	8,295	0.015	18.7%	69.5%	11.9%
Madison	18,729	0.041	20.3%	62.4%	17.4%
Nassau	85,880	0.178	20.7%	60.3%	19.0%
Okeechobee	39,255	0.069	23.0%	59.6%	17.4%
Putnam	72,696	0.137	22.0%	57.4%	20.6%

County	2015 Population	Average Persons Per Acre	Age (percent of population)		
			Under 18	18-64	65 and Over
Suwannee	43,595	0.098	21.5%	58.9%	19.6%
Taylor	22,685	0.034	19.1%	53.5%	17.4%
Union	15,191	0.095	19.2%	69.0%	11.8%
Wakulla	31,128	0.079	21.1%	66.5%	12.5%
Walton	59,487	0.087	20.4%	61.2%	18.4%
Washington	24,629	0.062	20.4%	62.8%	16.8%

Source: Florida Department of Transportation Environmental Screening Tool, 2017.

Table 7 provides educational attainment and income demographics for Florida's rural counties. The data indicate the following.

- **Educational attainment:** Florida's rural counties have lower educational attainment than the rest of the state. On average, 55.5 percent of the population in rural counties have attained a high school diploma and 9.3 percent have attained a four-year college degree, compared to the statewide average of 88.9 percent and 28.3 percent, respectively.
- **Household income:** Florida's rural counties have a median household income that is \$10,000 less than the statewide median household income. Only two of Florida's rural counties have a median household income greater than the statewide median household income: Nassau County and Wakulla County. Rural counties have a greater share of their population living in poverty with an average of 19.9 percent of their households living below the poverty line compared to a statewide average of 11.7 percent.

Table 7. Education and Income Demographics for Florida's Rural Counties

County	Educational Attainment		Median Household Income	Percentage of Households Below Poverty Line
	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
Florida Average	88.9%	28.3%	\$48,900	11.70%
Rural County Average	55.5%	9.3%	\$38,806	19.85%

Educational Attainment				
County	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Median Household Income	Percentage of Households Below Poverty Line
Baker	53.5%	7.5%	\$44,966	15.92%
Bradford	54.8%	7.8%	\$41,606	22.55%
Calhoun	53.2%	7.4%	\$34,510	19.69%
Columbia	58.9%	10.4%	\$41,926	17.06%
Desoto	48.5%	6.7%	\$35,165	22.13%
Dixie	58.7%	5.9%	\$36,292	21.20%
Flagler	67.8%	17.1%	\$47,866	11.20%
Franklin	60.0%	11.8%	\$40,401	18.60%
Gadsden	53.6%	11.7%	\$35,567	24.06%
Gilchrist	55.1%	7.6%	\$40,623	19.10%
Glades	57.5%	6.3%	\$34,877	20.03%
Gulf	61.8%	12.0%	\$41,788	15.29%
Hamilton	49.2%	6.6%	\$35,048	26.28%
Hardee	44.2%	6.8%	\$35,457	22.75%
Hendry	39.3%	6.1%	\$36,771	22.77%
Highlands	62.5%	12.6%	\$35,093	17.26%
Holmes	53.6%	8.0%	\$35,020	26.10%
Jackson	57.2%	9.9%	\$35,098	21.26%
Jefferson	61.0%	14.1%	\$43,355	15.78%
Lafayette	51.0%	7.9%	\$35,864	23.06%
Levy	59.1%	7.9%	\$35,782	20.04%
Liberty	53.2%	7.7%	\$39,406	19.28%

Educational Attainment				
County	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Median Household Income	Percentage of Households Below Poverty Line
Madison	57.4%	7.9%	\$32,164	25.14%
Nassau	56.6%	14.6%	\$54,116	11.73%
Okeechobee	47.8%	7.2%	\$35,405	22.98%
Putnam	55.2%	8.3%	\$31,715	25.55%
Suwannee	54.8%	8.1%	\$36,289	22.03%
Taylor	55.3%	6.6%	\$36,181	16.61%
Union	53.7%	5.7%	\$39,163	19.06%
Wakulla	63.2%	11.4%	\$50,340	14.23%
Walton	62.0%	18.8%	\$44,966	14.56%
Washington	57.1%	7.9%	\$38,970	21.93%

Source: Florida Department of Transportation Environmental Screening Tool, 2017.

Economy

While some traditional agricultural industries remain, rural economies are diversifying. Proximity to metropolitan areas can influence growth and economies through access to labor market, services, and amenities.

The local economies of Florida's rural communities are varied but most are anchored by either government employment or employment in the trade, transportation, and utilities industry. Table 8 shows the percent of the population in each county that works for one of Florida's major industries as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The green highlight indicates the top three industries that employ the workforce of that rural county. The data indicates the following:

- **Top three employed industries:** On average, 29.0 percent of the employed workers in Florida's rural counties are government employees compared to only 12.6 percent statewide. The next largest industry is the trade, transportation, and utilities industry at 18.8 percent, only a few points lower than the state average of 20.6 percent. The third largest industry among rural counties is the education and health services industry, with an average of 12.0 percent of the rural employees in this industry.
- **Least employed industry:** The industry with the lowest percent of employment in rural counties is the information industry. This industry accounts for 0.7 percent of rural jobs, which is less than half the

statewide average of 1.6 percent. Only four rural counties have more than one percent of their population employed in this industry (Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, and Jackson).

Table 8. Employment by Industry¹ for Florida's Rural Counties

County	Construction	Education and Health Services	Financial Activities	Government	Information	Leisure and Hospitality	Manufacturing	Natural Resource Mining	Professional and Business Services	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Other Services
Florida Total	5.7%	14.8%	6.5%	12.6%	1.6%	14.1%	4.3%	0.9%	15.5%	20.6%	3.3%
Rural County Average	5.3%	12.0%	2.7%	29.0%	0.7%	9.8%	6.6%	7.7%	5.7%	18.8%	2.0%
Baker	4.7%	11.2%	1.7%	35.5%	0.7%	7.1%	1.2%	0.3%	3.3%	32.8%	1.5%
Bradford	3.4%	14.4%	2.8%	30.9%	0.5%	12.4%	3.2%	3.7%	3.8%	23.4%	1.5%
Calhoun	6.0%	20.7%	2.3%	32.7%	–	7.3%	–	5.8%	1.9%	20.0%	1.2%
Columbia	3.7%	14.5%	2.5%	21.9%	0.4%	11.5%	8.3%	0.9%	14.5%	20.0%	1.8%
Desoto	6.1%	9.2%	2.3%	23.8%	–	8.1%	2.6%	12.7%	5.3%	28.3%	1.4%
Dixie	2.5%	5.9%	1.2%	39.0%	–	6.6%	15.0%	5.5%	4.1%	18.2%	2.0%
Flagler	7.3%	12.1%	3.5%	42.5%	0.0%	9.1%	2.6%	1.6%	3.1%	14.6%	3.1%
Franklin	5.7%	9.8%	6.6%	28.1%	1.2%	21.1%	3.6%	–	3.7%	17.8%	2.0%
Gadsden	7.3%	5.6%	1.3%	34.4%	0.8%	5.5%	6.8%	11.1%	8.5%	17.0%	1.7%
Gilchrist	5.5%	18.5%	1.6%	32.3%	0.4%	6.0%	4.6%	13.6%	4.2%	11.5%	1.7%
Glades	7.2%	5.7%	1.7%	31.4%	–	4.0%	5.6%	22.0%	1.5%	18.9%	1.9%
Gulf	7.2%	14.0%	5.9%	31.0%	1.4%	12.0%	1.0%	1.9%	6.6%	17.6%	1.4%
Hamilton	3.3%	6.9%	0.8%	33.8%	–	4.4%	–	15.4%	3.2%	14.7%	1.6%
Hardee	3.8%	12.5%	3.6%	22.6%	–	7.9%	4.7%	24.4%	4.4%	14.7%	1.0%
Hendry	5.0%	6.7%	2.4%	17.8%	0.6%	8.2%	3.6%	33.2%	6.4%	14.4%	1.6%
Highlands	4.5%	21.8%	3.0%	15.3%	0.6%	11.2%	2.6%	8.7%	10.0%	20.1%	2.2%
Holmes	6.2%	12.7%	3.8%	15.9%	2.9%	17.7%	4.8%	0.7%	12.9%	18.8%	3.5%
Jackson	6.2%	10.7%	2.9%	35.7%	1.1%	8.8%	4.2%	1.7%	5.5%	21.5%	1.8%
Jefferson	5.6%	12.1%	4.2%	27.7%	–	7.1%	0.4%	11.1%	5.6%	21.0%	5.4%

County	Construction	Education and Health Services	Financial Activities	Government	Information	Leisure and Hospitality	Manufacturing	Natural Resource Mining	Professional and Business Services	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Other Services
Lafayette	2.7%	9.2%	2.5%	44.0%	–	3.8%	4.9%	13.7%	2.8%	15.6%	0.4%
Levy	11.8%	8.6%	3.4%	21.6%	0.3%	10.0%	7.7%	7.9%	4.3%	22.3%	1.9%
Liberty	2.1%	18.5%	–	41.6%	–	3.3%	16.0%	6.2%	0.7%	9.9%	0.6%
Madison	2.1%	16.2%	3.1%	32.6%	0.5%	7.6%	10.0%	5.0%	2.7%	18.5%	1.7%
Nassau	4.7%	11.0%	3.1%	15.5%	0.9%	23.6%	5.7%	2.0%	11.1%	18.5%	3.9%
Okeechobee	5.4%	15.5%	2.4%	18.0%	0.7%	12.3%	4.8%	10.1%	8.9%	19.1%	3.1%
Putnam	4.6%	15.9%	2.8%	22.7%	0.5%	10.0%	9.6%	3.9%	5.3%	22.0%	2.5%
Suwannee	4.3%	12.4%	1.8%	21.6%	0.4%	7.7%	17.4%	6.6%	4.6%	21.3%	1.8%
Taylor	4.1%	10.8%	1.5%	22.7%	0.5%	8.1%	25.0%	3.7%	3.6%	18.3%	1.8%
Union	5.4%	7.1%	0.7%	56.6%	–	1.8%	–	1.6%	–	15.5%	0.7%
Wakulla	6.4%	6.8%	1.8%	32.6%	–	13.0%	–	0.5%	9.3%	17.0%	2.4%
Walton	9.0%	10.1%	5.0%	12.8%	0.5%	26.1%	1.6%	0.1%	8.9%	21.9%	4.0%
Washington	5.5%	16.2%	2.2%	33.3%	–	10.9%	–	2.2%	7.0%	16.2%	1.4%

¹ Cells highlighted in green indicate the top three industries based on employment in that county. In addition, industries may not add to 100% due to confidentiality and unclassified information.

Transportation

Transportation is a key component to the success of the economy. A lack of transportation options could significantly impact access to employment, goods and services, health care, government services, and social services. Transportation choices available to rural communities are linked to mobility and accessibility. Some transportation related trends that could be considered include travel time to work, access to public transportation, and condition of the local road system.

- **Travel time to work:** As shown in Table 9, when averaged together, the mean travel time to work for the Florida's rural counties is similar to the statewide average. However, depending on the county, there is a variance of 12.7 minutes between the rural county with the highest average (Wakulla, 33.0 minutes) and the county with the lowest average (Franklin, 20.3 minutes).

Table 9. Travel Time to Work for Florida's Rural Counties

County	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Travel Time ¹	County	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Travel Time ¹
Florida Average	26.4		Highlands	20.9	↓
Baker	29.6	↑	Holmes	28.9	↑
Bradford	31.4	↑	Jackson	22.5	↓
Calhoun	28.2	↓	Jefferson	28.8	↑
Columbia	24.2	↓	Lafayette	22.8	↓
Desoto	25.0	↓	Levy	30.1	↑
Dixie	25.9	↓	Liberty	30.8	↑
Flagler	26.2	↓	Madison	27.7	↑
Franklin	20.3	↓	Nassau	29.0	↑
Gadsden	28.5	↑	Okeechobee	24.3	↓
Gilchrist	29.5	↑	Putnam	27.3	↑
Glades	27.5	↑	Suwannee	26.0	↓
Gulf	23.0	↓	Taylor	20.5	↓
Hamilton	22.4	↓	Union	23.0	↓
Hardee	24.4	↓	Wakulla	33.0	↑
Hendry	28.7	↑	Walton	27.2	↑
			Washington	29.3	↑

¹ Counties with a green down arrow indicate a shorter travel time to work than the statewide average and counties with a red up arrow indicate a longer travel time to work than the statewide average.

Source: Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

- Public transportation.** Rural public transportation systems can include traditional fixed-route services, deviated fixed-route services, demand-response services, vanpools, and reimbursement programs. The 31 fixed-route transit systems in Florida are generally located in urban counties. However, some systems located in urban areas extend services to rural areas such as the Palm Beach County's Palm Tran which serves Pahokee and Belle Glade. In addition, demand response options are available through contracted services and generally serve rural areas. Many of Florida's rural residents are considered transportation disadvantaged, meaning they are those persons, including children as defined in s. 411.202 F.S., who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or inability to drive due to age or disability are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and have no other form of transportation available. These persons are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, or medically necessary or life-sustaining activities. Florida's Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged coordinates with transportation service providers to ensure cost-effective provision of transportation by qualified community transportation coordinators or transportation operators for the transportation disadvantaged.

- **Condition of the local road system.** FDOT collects data on the condition of State-owned and maintained roadways in Florida's rural areas for strategic decision-making and statistical uses, but the data does not provide a complete picture of Florida's roadway system. There are gaps in roadway information for local roads especially in rural areas where they are owned and maintained by local or county governments. Evaluating and reporting on the condition of local roads can be an expensive and time consuming task, especially in rural counties where funding is limited. More information on the condition of locally owned and maintained roads in Florida's rural areas could help FDOT make strategic decisions on how to allocate funding for roadway improvements in rural areas.

To help address the condition of the local road system in Florida's rural counties, FDOT provides multiple funding assistance programs shown and described below:

- **Small County Outreach Program (SCOP):** The purpose of this program is to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads. FDOT funds 75 percent of the cost of projects on county roads funded under the program. More information on SCOP can be found at:
 - <http://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LP/SCOP/Default.shtm>.
- **Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP):** The purpose of the SCRAP program is to assist small county governments in resurfacing and reconstructing county roads. Up to \$25 million annually is available to be allocated for the purposes of funding this program. More information on SCRAP can be found at:
 - <http://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LP/SCRAP/Default.shtm>.
- **County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP):** The purpose of CIGP is to provide grants to counties to improve a transportation facility, including transit, which is located on the State Highway System (SHS) or which relieves traffic congestion on the SHS. The FDOT provides 50 percent of project costs for eligible projects. More information on CIGP can be found at:
 - <http://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LP/CIGP/Default.shtm>
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP):** The purpose of TAP is to fund a variety of small-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, Safe Routes to School projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. More information on TAP can be found at:
 - <http://www.fdot.gov/planning/Policy/TransportationAlternatives/default.shtm>
- **Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP):** The purpose of TRIP is to provide support to improve regionally significant transportation facilities. State funds are available throughout Florida to provide incentives for local governments and the private sector to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce. FDOT will pay up to 50 percent of the non-federal share of project costs for public transportation facility projects. More information about TRIP can be found at:
 - <http://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LP/TRIP/Default.shtm>

Without the funding assistance of these programs, Florida's rural counties would have a more difficult time making critical infrastructure improvements to their roadways.

Conclusions

Due to the variety of economic and community characteristics in Florida, it is difficult to identify which federal and/or state definitions most accurately capture the nature of Florida's rural areas. Florida has critical mechanisms in place for supporting rural areas, such as REDI, the RAO designation, and catalyst sites within RAOs. A review of demographic data specific to Florida's rural counties shows that the population density of Florida's rural areas is dramatically lower than in Florida's urban areas but age cohorts remain similar in both rural and urban areas. It also indicates that residents of Florida's rural areas have a lower educational attainment than the statewide average, and the median household income is on average \$10,000 less than the average statewide median household income. Florida's rural population is primarily employed in either the government sector; trade, transportation, and utilities; or education and health services. Access to public transit is lacking in Florida's rural counties but there are several funding programs such as SCOP, SCRAP, CIGP, TAP, and TRIP that provide a dedicated funding source to support rural transportation improvements. This document is part of the first phase of a larger study that will identify commonalities, notable practices, and challenges associated with rural transportation planning in the State of Florida, and will lead to recommendations for enhancing FDOT's rural transportation planning process.

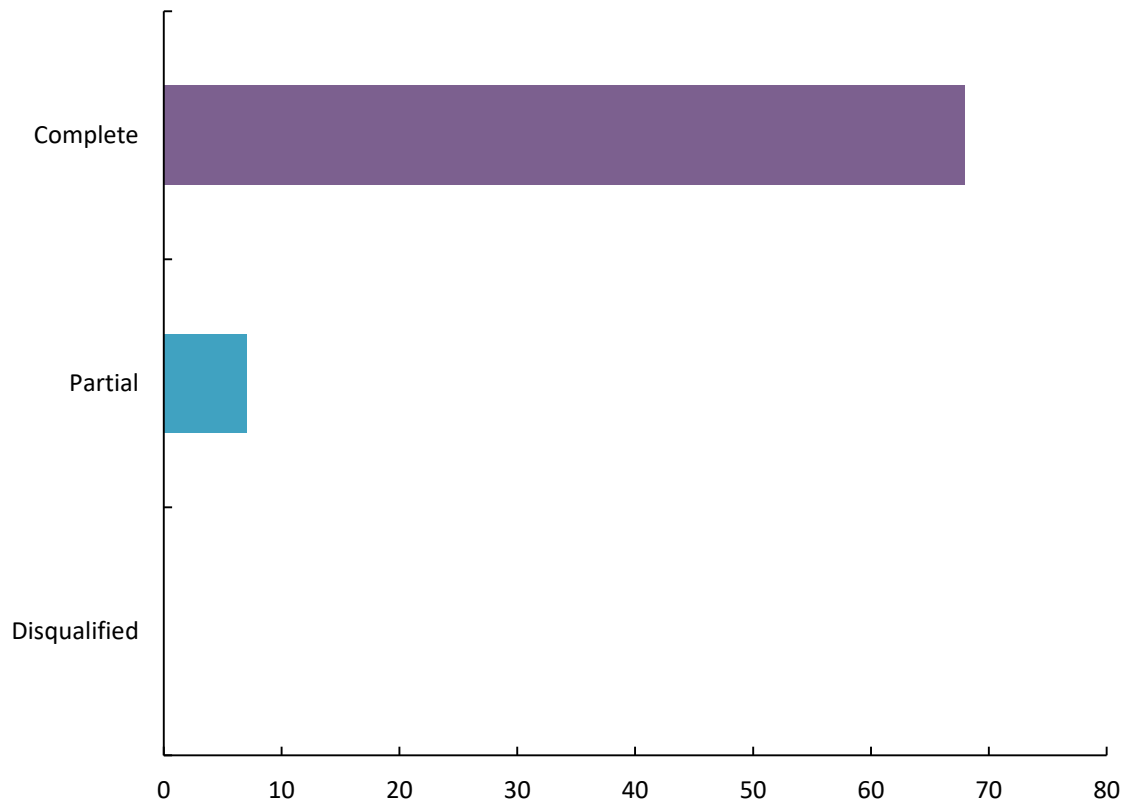
APPENDIX C

FDOT Rural Survey Response Report

Report for FDOT Rural and Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Survey

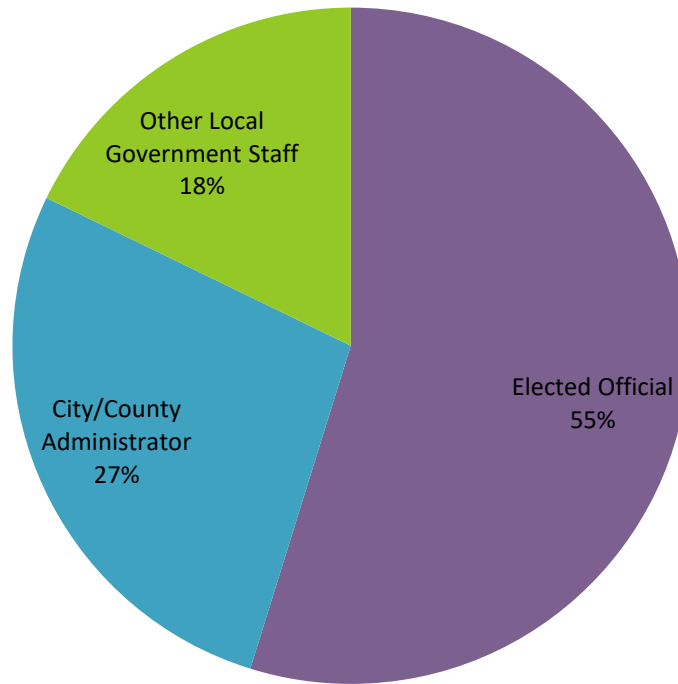
FDOT Rural and Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Survey

Response Statistics



	Count	Percent
Complete	68	90.7
Partial	7	9.3
Disqualified	0	0
Totals	75	

1. Please identify how you are involved in transportation planning decision making.



Value	Percent	Count
Elected Official	54.8%	40
City/County Administrator	27.4%	20
Other Local Government Staff	17.8%	13
	Totals	73

2. Please provide the name of your city or county.

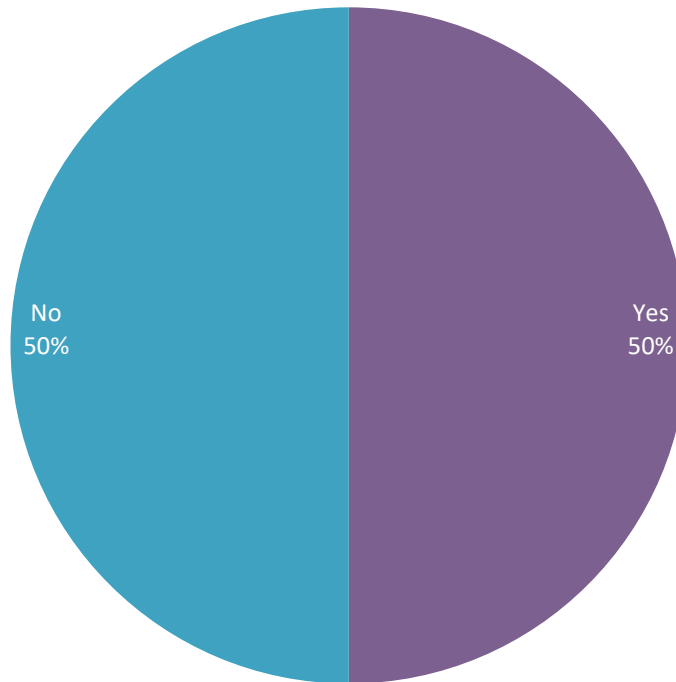
Count	Response
2	Campbellton
2	Inglis
2	Okeechobee
2	Putnam
2	Walton
1	Altha
1	Baker
1	Bonifay, FL
1	Branford
1	Bronson
1	Bunnell
1	Calhoun County
1	Campbellton, FL
1	Century
1	Chattahoochee
1	Chipley
1	City of Blountstown
1	City of Freeport
1	City of LaBelle
1	City of Quincy

1	City of St Marks
1	City of Williston
1	DeSoto
1	Esto
1	Flagler County
1	Franklin County
1	Glades
1	Glen St. Mary
1	Greenville
1	Greenville/Madison Co.
1	Hampton
1	Hardee
1	Hawthorne
1	High Springs
1	Highlands County
1	Highlands county
1	Indian River
1	Indian River County MPO
1	Jefferson
1	Lake Butler
1	Madison
1	Madison County

1	Marianna
1	Monticello
1	Nassau
1	Newberry FL
1	Palm Coast
1	Quincy
1	South Bay
1	Santa Rosa County
1	Starke
1	Suwannee
1	The Town of Ponce de Leon
1	Town of Beverly Beach
1	Town of Caryville
1	Town of Indian River Shores
1	Town of Lacrosse
1	Town of Lee
1	Town of Orchid
1	Town of Pomona Park
1	Wakulla County
1	Wauchula
1	Wausau
1	Yankeetown FL

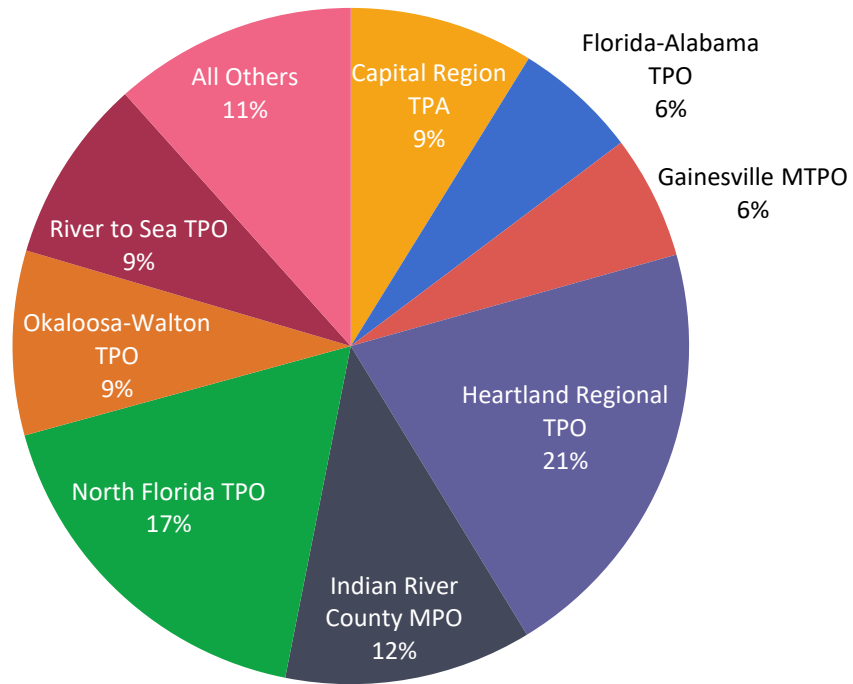
1	Zolfo Springs
1	Dixie
1	Islamorada
1	Jacob

3. Is your city/county within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), which may also be known as a Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) or Transportation Planning Agency (TPA)?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	50.0%	36
No	50.0%	36
	Totals	72

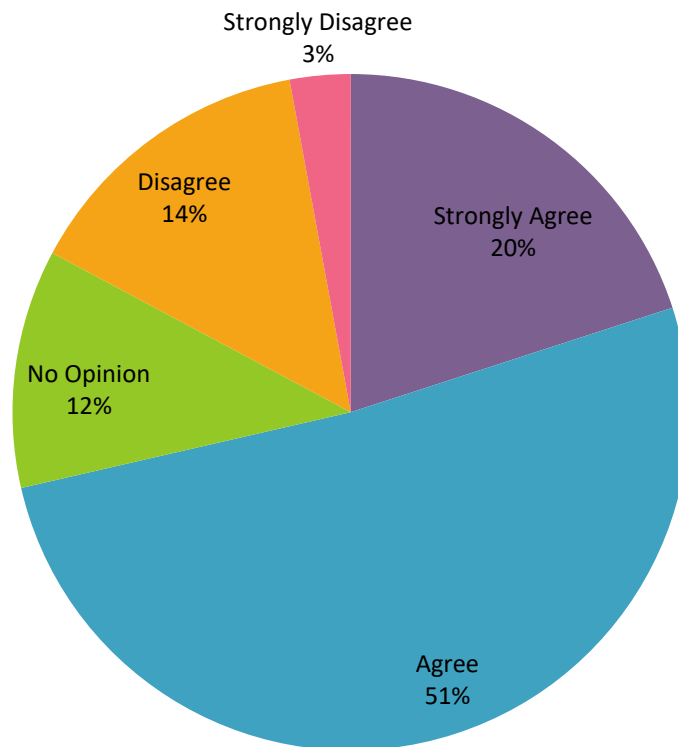
4. Which one?



Value	Percent	Count
Bay County TPO	2.9%	1
Capital Region TPA	8.8%	3
Florida-Alabama TPO	5.9%	2
Gainesville MTPO	5.9%	2
Heartland Regional TPO	20.6%	7
Hernando/Citrus MPO	2.9%	1
Indian River County MPO	11.8%	4
North Florida TPO	17.6%	6
Ocala/Marion County TPO	2.9%	1
Okaloosa-Walton TPO	8.8%	3

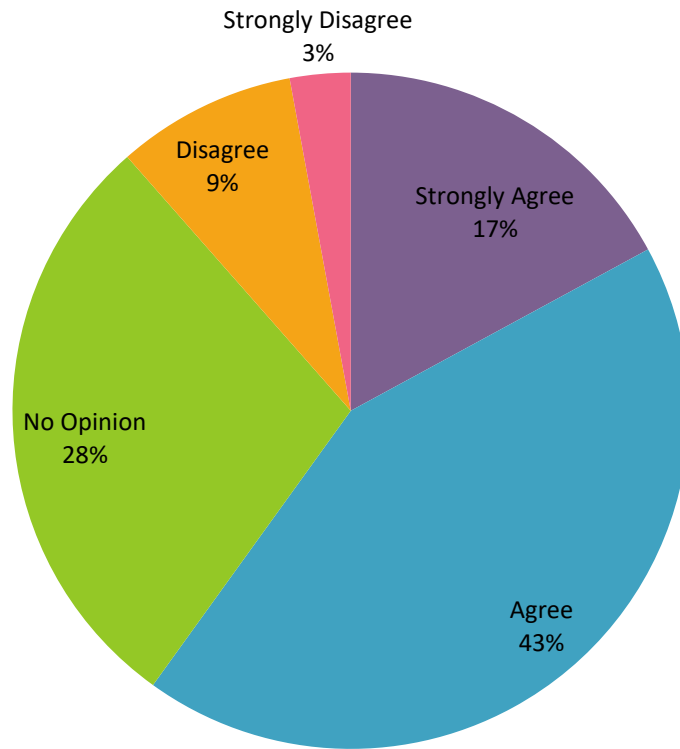
Palm Beach TPA	2.9%	1
River to Sea TPO	8.8%	3
	Totals	34

5. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: The MPO's (or TPO's/TPA's) long range transportation planning process allows an opportunity for me to provide input in determining the future of transportation planning in my jurisdiction.



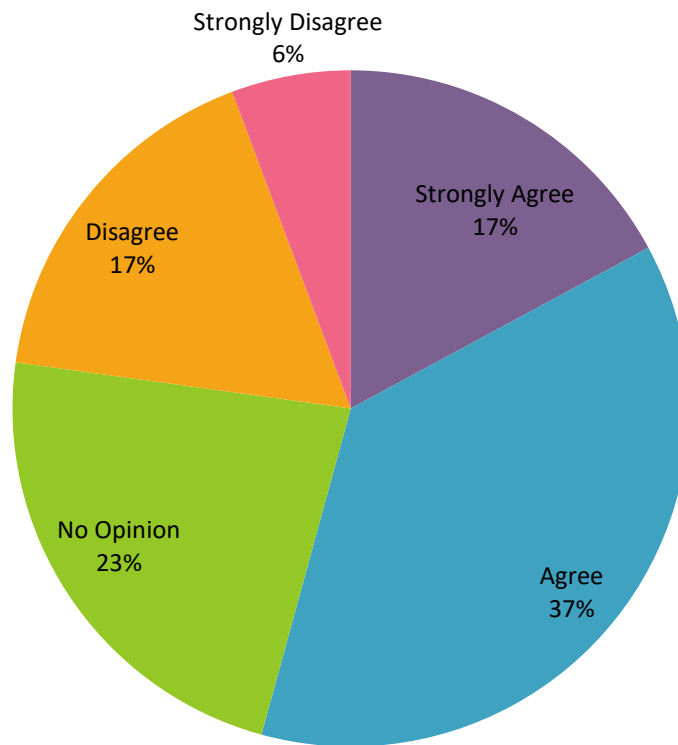
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	20.0%	7
Agree	51.4%	18
No Opinion	11.4%	4
Disagree	14.3%	5
Strongly Disagree	2.9%	1
	Totals	35

6.The MPO's (TPO's/TPA's) project selection and prioritization process allows for a comprehensive evaluation of project priorities.



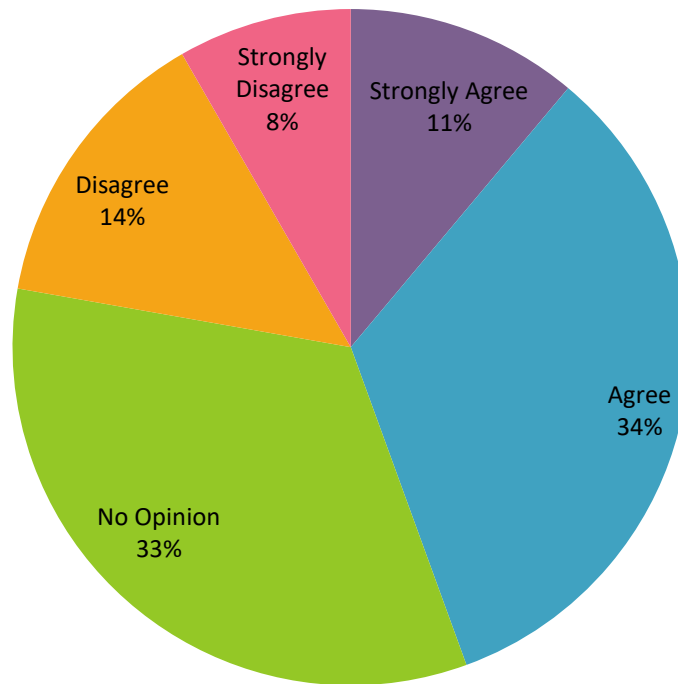
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	17.1%	6
Agree	42.9%	15
No Opinion	28.6%	10
Disagree	8.6%	3
Strongly Disagree	2.9%	1
	Totals	35

7.The MPO's (TPO's/TPA's) project selection and prioritization process (board representation, voting structure, public meetings, etc.) adequately addresses the transportation needs of my jurisdiction.



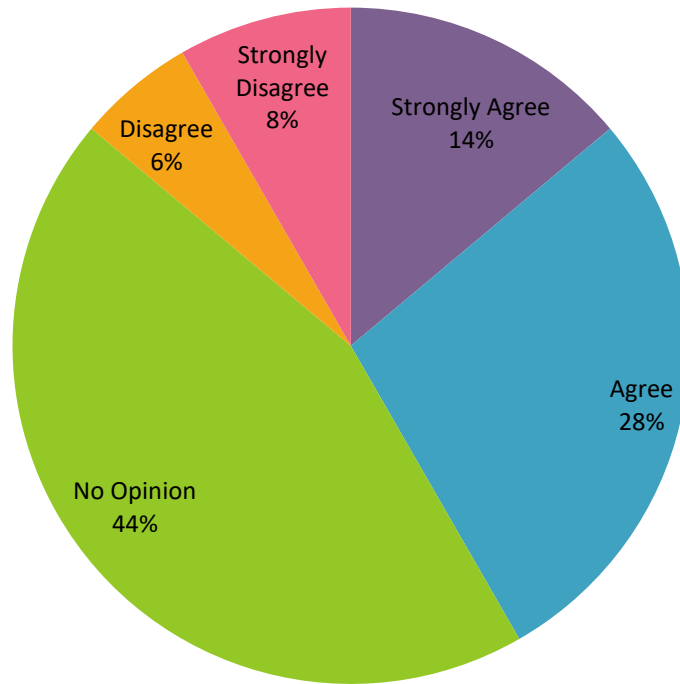
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	17.1%	6
Agree	37.1%	13
No Opinion	22.9%	8
Disagree	17.1%	6
Strongly Disagree	5.7%	2
	Totals	35

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: My FDOT District's transportation planning process allows an opportunity for me to provide input in determining the future of transportation plans in my jurisdiction.



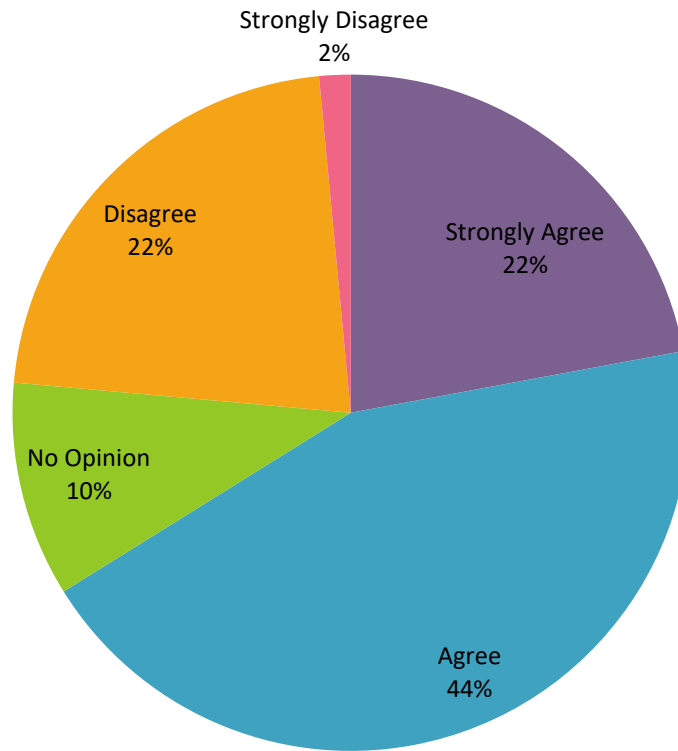
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	11.1%	4
Agree	33.3%	12
No Opinion	33.3%	12
Disagree	13.9%	5
Strongly Disagree	8.3%	3
	Totals	36

9. My FDOT District's work program project prioritization process fully considers and evaluates project priorities.



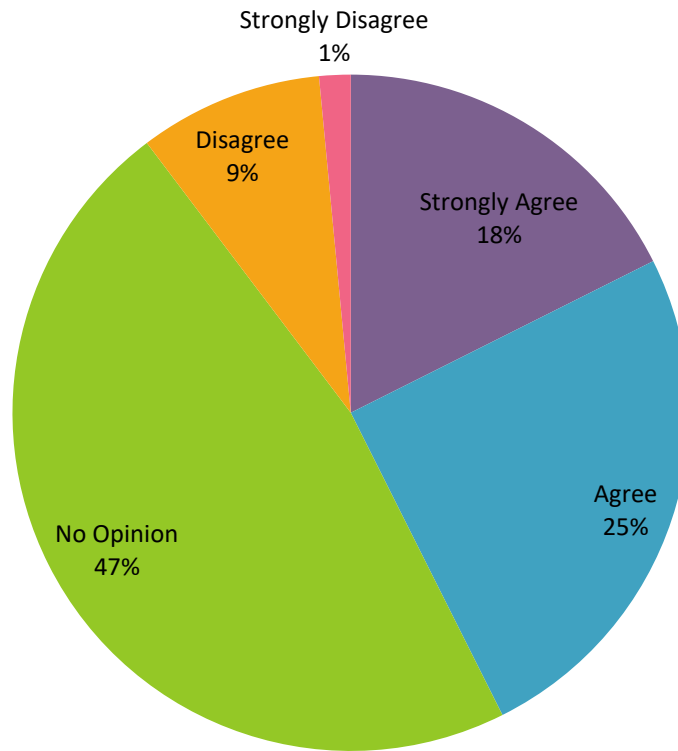
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	13.9%	5
Agree	27.8%	10
No Opinion	44.4%	16
Disagree	5.6%	2
Strongly Disagree	8.3%	3
	Totals	36

10.I know who my FDOT District contact is for transportation planning technical assistance.



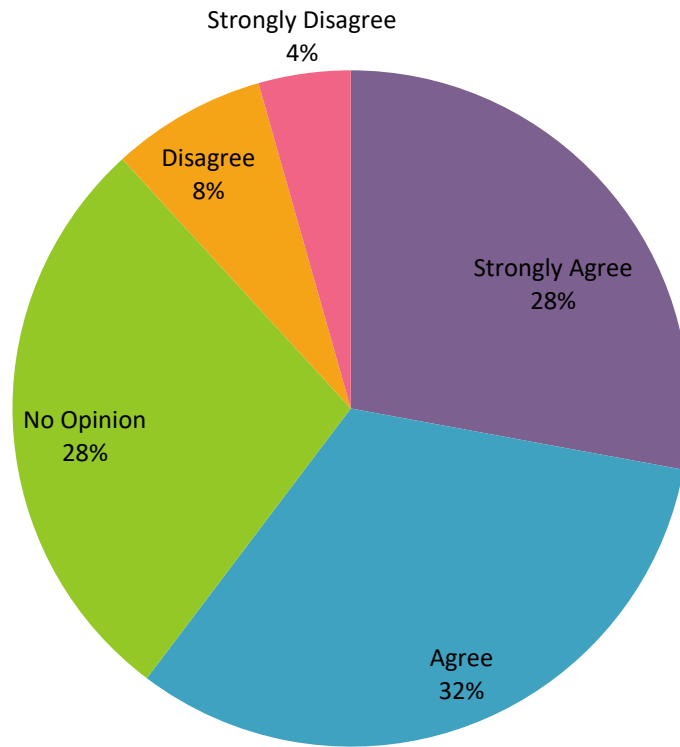
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	22.1%	15
Agree	44.1%	30
No Opinion	10.3%	7
Disagree	22.1%	15
Strongly Disagree	1.5%	1
	Totals	68

11. When transportation planning technical assistance is needed, my FDOT District is quick to respond.



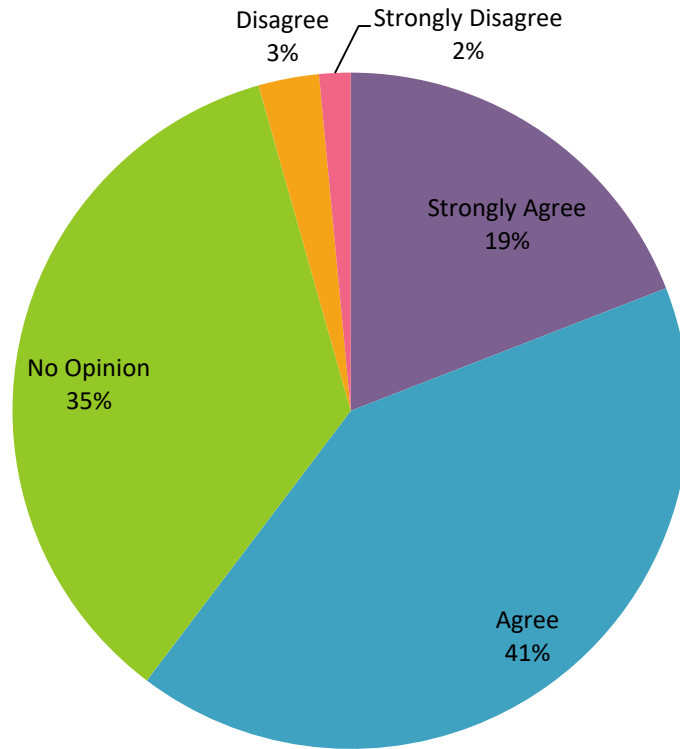
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	17.6%	12
Agree	25.0%	17
No Opinion	47.1%	32
Disagree	8.8%	6
Strongly Disagree	1.5%	1
	Totals	68

12.Resources available through local program grants (i.e., SCRAP, SCOP, TRIP and CIGP) are available, easy to access, and help support my jurisdiction’s transportation related needs.



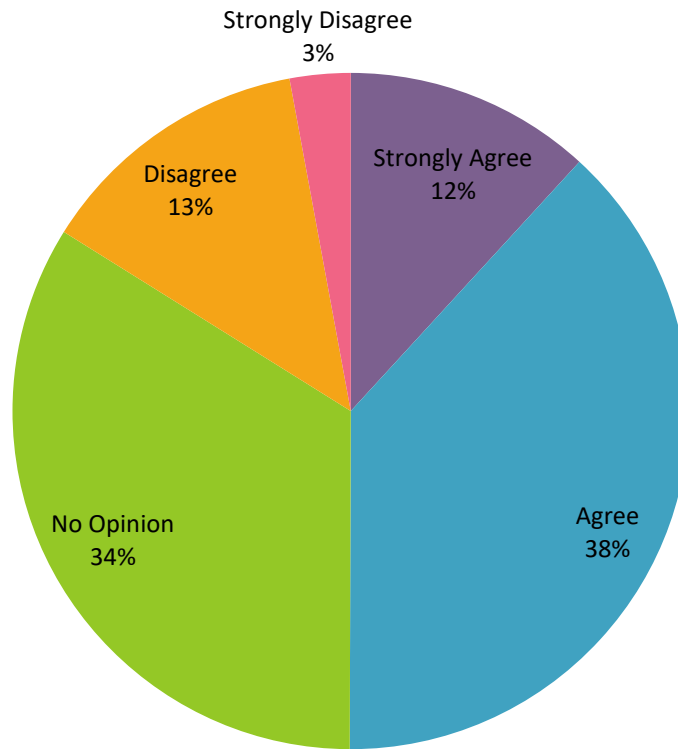
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	27.9%	19
Agree	32.4%	22
No Opinion	27.9%	19
Disagree	7.4%	5
Strongly Disagree	4.4%	3
	Totals	68

13.If needed, technical assistance with the local program grant application process is available from my FDOT District.



Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	19.1%	13
Agree	41.2%	28
No Opinion	35.3%	24
Disagree	2.9%	2
Strongly Disagree	1.5%	1
	Totals	68

14. Overall, I am satisfied with Florida's rural transportation planning process.



Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	11.8%	8
Agree	38.2%	26
No Opinion	33.8%	23
Disagree	13.2%	9
Strongly Disagree	2.9%	2
	Totals	68