

Request for Research Funding for FY 2021-2022

Requesting Office: Florida MPO Advisory Council	MPOAC (Administratively supported by FDOT Central Office)	Priority: 1	1 of 1
Proposed Title	Elements of Effective 3-C Planning Partner Relationships		
Justification	<p>Research Question: Is the manner in which the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) agencies (the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration or (FHWA/FTA), the State of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Florida metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) interact, communicate and oversee each other the most beneficial and efficient form of working relationship? Are there more effective relationship characteristics elsewhere that can be emulated in Florida to improve transportation and mobility outcomes?</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggests there is significant variation across the state and country in how planning partnership relationships function (including practices, procedures, and policies intended to improve the working relationships between planning partners) and how those relationships impact the ability of the partners to effectively implement the respective 3-C planning processes. This study would identify ways to improve the interactions of the main players in the 3-C process so that planning products and approvals are streamlined, project delays are avoided and limited resources such as staff time are used in the most efficient manner possible.</p> <p>Background: Federal laws and regulations (23 CFR Parts 450 and 771 & 49 CFR Part 613) require each state DOT and MPO to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) performance-based multimodal transportation planning process. The FHWA/FTA are required to oversee these 3-C planning processes through a variety of mechanisms, including providing guidance and training, reviewing planning documents, and conducting statewide and metropolitan level certification reviews. Together, the planning partners (FHWA/FTA, State DOT, and MPOs) are expected to collectively ensure that all the elements of the 3-C process are being conducted in compliance with all applicable requirements.</p> <p>Questions arise as to what constitutes an effective 3-C process and, more specifically, what role does the relationship between the planning partners play in ensuring that 3-C processes across the state are being implemented in the most effective manner possible? Are there practices, procedures, and policies in place to enhance and facilitate these relationships such that each planning partner understands their own role and respects the roles of their partners such that they each feel respect for those roles and are confident that the process is being carried out in the most resourceful and outcome-effective manner possible?</p> <p>Methodology/Purpose: Beginning with a literature review and through surveys, follow-up interviews, relevant document reviews, and analyses of the resulting data, this project proposal seeks to understand the nature of State DOT, MPO and FHWA Division Office practices and relationships as they relate to the oversight and implementation of the federally required statewide and metropolitan planning processes in a representative sample of states across the country to inform and improve those same practices and relationships in Florida. Practices to be observed will include, but not be limited to, the level and nature of coordination/cooperation between States, MPOs and FHWA Division Offices, how this coordination is documented, consistency of practices across the country, and unique and effective practices for achieving a high level of cooperation and coordination. The results from this analysis will be used to develop a set of suggestions to improve 3-C planning partnership relationships in Florida.</p> <p>The proposed deliverables will include a review of existing literature and legal requirements, a technical memorandum providing a synthesis of practices and relationships from a select number of states across the country (including a characterization of comparable practices and relationships in Florida), and a final report compiling the research findings and making suggestions for improvements in Florida.</p>		
Impact	This research will assist the Department, the State’s 27 MPOs and USDOT (both the FHWA Florida Division Office and the FTA Regional Office) to better understand and improve their working relationships in overseeing and implementing the federally required statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes. Using observations of national and state practices, Florida’s 3-C planning partners can reconsider their own working relationships to achieve common objectives in planning and programming which would result in streamlined decision-making and project delivery, improved process documentation, a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities, and reduced staff work effort. Additionally, the overall impact of improved transportation planning processes at the statewide and metropolitan level will result in enhanced access and mobility (for people and goods) throughout the state which in turn will provide significant economic benefits for Florida’s citizens, businesses and visitors.		

Affected Offices	Office of Policy Planning; Office of Work Program and Budget, MPO Advisory Council		
Existing Work	<p>To be determined through Literature Review, but to include:</p> <p>USDOT (May 2016); Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rule (Federal Highway Administration 23 CFR Parts 450 and 771 & Federal Transit Administration 49 CFR Part 613); Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-05-27/pdf/2016-11964.pdf</p> <p>USDOT John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (January 2018); Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review Primer; Retrieved from https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/34964</p> <p>USDOT John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (February 2017); TMA Certification Review State-of-the-Practice Review Report: 2016; Retrieved from https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/12436</p> <p>Regional Models of Cooperation Handbook; FHWA (December 2016); https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/regional_models/rmoc_handbook/</p>		
Keywords Used In Existing Work Search (Cannot leave blank)	<p>Florida MPO Advisory Council and Florida's 27 MPOs</p> <p>FDOT Office of Policy Planning</p> <p>FHWA FL Division</p> <p>FDOT District Planning Offices</p>		
Related Contracts (Give contract numbers)			
Funding Request	\$150,000	Anticipated Duration	24 months
Project Manager	Carl Mikyska	Contracting Method	Direct contract with university
Urgency	1	<p>While Federal laws and regulations define the minimum requirements for cooperation and coordination between state DOTs, MPOs and the FHWA in the implementation of the federally required statewide and metropolitan planning processes, anecdotal evidence suggests significant variations related to the communications and relationships between these agencies exist across the state and country. Findings and suggestions from this research are intended to be applied immediately upon the conclusion of the research and would result in streamlined 3-C processes, speedier project delivery, improved planning outcomes, and reduced work effort for 3-C planning partner agency staff. The overall economic impact of improved processes and planning outcomes would also dramatically benefit Florida's citizens, businesses, and visitors through quicker and more targeted project planning and programming.</p>	
Implementability	1	<p>Resulting information and suggestions for improved practice, once published, will be immediately useful to the Department, MPOs, the FHWA Florida Division, and the FTA Regional Office (particularly during TMA certification reviews and the statewide annual assessment).</p>	
Project Benefits (Succinct, complete explanation)			

Project Benefits (Select all that apply and explain)	Quantifiable Benefits (units, dollars, etc...if applicable)	Methodology or Data Sources Used to Determine Quantifiable Benefits. If not applicable, please give justification of project benefits
○ Materials Enhancement		
○ Materials Savings		
○ Time Savings	Planning Partner Staff Time (FDOT, MPO, and FHWA)	Improved practices with more open communication and expectations will save staff time during the implementation and oversight of statewide and metropolitan planning processes. Additionally, improved coordination and planning outcomes would result in fewer delays in project delivery that often result from poor coordination and communication.
○ Lives Saved/Injuries Prevented		
○ Other (Explain)		This research will assess the current working relationship between the FHWA/FTA, Florida's 27 MPOs, and FDOT and provide a basis for developing a more effective and efficient approach to coordination and communication that result in streamlined transportation system improvements. The final research report will document training needs, define effective practices, and develop suggestions for improved planning practices.

*Comments should explain and support urgency, financial benefit, and implementability scores