
**REVIEW OF MPO
LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANS
AND REGIONAL MPO PLANNING
ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS**

Research Support for the Florida
Transportation Plan Update

Final Technical Memorandum

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Prepared by:
The Center for Urban Transportation Research
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16. Abstract To assist FDOT with updating the Florida Transportation Plan in coordination with metropolitan planning organization (MPO) planning activities and plans, CUTR was asked to: 1) review and summarize Florida MPO long range transportation plan (LRTP) goals, objectives and planning priorities; 2) assess the status of regional transportation planning products; and 3) document the research method used in 2002 to prepare a 20-year statewide transportation shortfall and discuss the practicality and validity of extrapolating that financial shortfall estimate using data from a small sample of MPOs. CUTR reviewed MPO long-range transportation plans to identify their key transportation planning priorities. The various policy statements (goals, objectives and other policy statements) from individual MPO LRTPs were synthesized into generalized goal statements representing the most frequently stated priorities of individual MPOs. In all, 20 generalized goal statements were developed. An assessment of the status of regional transportation products was conducted and an inventory of both completed and planned regional transportation planning products was created. In all, 21 of Florida's 26 MPOs have entered into formal arrangements to form seven (7) regional associations of MPOs. A wide variety of transportation planning products have been produced by the regional associations of MPOs, including regional long range transportation plans, project priority lists, transportation models, public involvement programs and websites, and transportation studies (transit, economic impact, land use vision, etc.). Developing a revised estimate of the 20-year statewide financial shortfall, based on an extrapolation of the 2002 shortfall estimate using sample financial data, would be impractical and difficult to defend. Instead, a new statewide shortfall estimate should be calculated in 2006, at which time all 26 individual MPO long range transportation plans would have been updated.			
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Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is currently updating the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP). Federal planning codes and regulations (23 USC 135(b) and 35 CFR 450.214(b)(4)) require that statewide planning be coordinated with metropolitan planning organization (MPO) planning activities and plans.

Toward that end, the FDOT requested research assistance from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida (USF) to:

- Review and summarize Florida MPO long range transportation plan (LRTP) goals, objectives and planning priorities
- Assess the status of regional transportation planning products
- Document the research method used in 2002 to prepare a 20-year statewide transportation shortfall and discuss the practicality and validity of extrapolating that financial shortfall estimate using data from a small sample of MPOs

MPO Planning Priorities

CUTR reviewed MPO long-range transportation plans produced by 20 of Florida's 26 MPOs (those that had recently updated information) to identify the key transportation planning priorities of Florida's MPOs. The various policy statements (goals, objectives and other policy statements) from individual MPO LRTPs were synthesized into generalized goal statements describing key transportation planning priorities representing the most frequently stated priorities of individual MPOs. In all, 20 generalized goal statements were developed.

The 20 generalized goal statements include (percentage of MPO LRTPs that have goals, objectives and/or policy statements reflected by the generalized goal statement):

- Enhance transportation system safety (100%)
- Make modal alternatives more viable through increased availability, improved service and additional funding (100%)
- Promote economic vitality by focusing on mobility to, between, and within major economic activity centers and major transportation facilities (100%)
- Focus on operational improvements, management systems, maintenance and technologies to relieve system congestion and to capitalize on available system capacity (100%)
- Coordinate programs, plans and investments with and between public and private partners (100%)
- Identify and meet mobility needs of various populations during the transportation decision-making process while minimizing/mitigating the negative impacts of those transportation decisions (100%)
- Promote livable communities through the design of a transportation system that is both sustainable and sensitive to community visions and values (100%)
- Minimize and/or mitigate the impacts of the transportation system to preserve environmental resources (100%)

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- Encourage local governments to adopt urban design strategies and corresponding land development regulations that support the integration of land use and transportation (95%)
 - Enhance intermodal connections to improve the ability to get from one place to another on multiple modes seamlessly and efficiently (90%)
 - Improve designated evacuation and emergency vehicle routes to minimize emergency evacuation and response times (85%)
 - Consider the life cycle costs of transportation projects and make the most effective use of available traditional funds to meet those costs (85%)
 - Facilitate the regional movement of goods and people (75%)
 - Plan for and develop mechanisms to preserve future transportation rights-of-way (75%)
 - Preserve the character and aesthetic quality of transportation corridors and the surrounding area (70%)
 - Improve the connectivity of the transportation network through the provision of alternate routes (70%)
 - Identify and implement new local government funding sources and innovative funding mechanisms (70%)
 - Protect transportation system users from security threats (65%)
 - Implement public involvement and education activities that promote broad participation in and understanding of the transportation planning process (65%)
 - Change user behavior (60%)

Regional Transportation Products

An assessment of the status of regional transportation products was conducted and an inventory of both completed and planned regional transportation planning products was created. In all, 21 of Florida's 26 MPOs have entered into formal arrangements to form seven (7) regional associations of MPOs. A wide variety of transportation planning products have been produced by one or more of the regional associations of MPOs, including:

- Regional long range transportation plans
- Regional project priority lists
- Regional transportation models
- Regional public involvement programs and websites
- Regional transportation studies (transit, economic impact, land use vision, etc.)

A few planned regional transportation planning products include:

- Performance measures to assess the effectiveness of regional coordination activities
- A regional transit action plan
- A regional transit economic impact study

Of the seven (7) regional transportation planning efforts around the state, three (3) have regional transportation goals and objectives (the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee, the Central Florida MPO Alliance and the Southeast Florida

Transportation Council). In general, the regional goals and objectives developed around the state mirror those found at the metropolitan level.

20-Year Transportation Financial Shortfall

Developing a revised estimate of the 20-year statewide financial shortfall, based on an extrapolation of the 2002 shortfall estimate using sample financial data, would be impractical and difficult to defend for the following reasons:

- The eight (8) MPOs for which sample financial data is available (those with recently completed and approved LRTPs) do not constitute a representative sample of Florida's MPOs as they are primarily from large urban areas
- A shortfall estimate would have to be based on individual MPO average annual shortfall estimates (as was the case in 2002) as available completed MPO LRTPs have different horizon years and cover different time periods
- The reporting of financial data varies significantly across the state
- The definition of transportation "need" varies significantly across the state
- All available financial data would need to be inflated or deflated so as to be in a common year

Instead, a new statewide shortfall estimate should be calculated in 2006, at which time all 26 individual MPO long range transportation plans would have been updated. Further, MPOs across the state should cooperatively develop guidelines for determining "needed" projects and for reporting financial data. Developing guidelines would facilitate future 20-year financial shortfall estimates with more accuracy and confidence.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	iv
Introduction.....	1
MPO Planning Priorities.....	1
Regional Transportation Products.....	23
20-Year Transportation Financial Shortfall.....	36

Introduction

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is currently updating the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP). Federal planning codes and regulations (23 USC 135(b) and 35 CFR 450.214(b)(4)) require that statewide planning be coordinated with metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning activities and plans.

Toward that end, the FDOT requested research assistance from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida (USF) to identify transportation issues and concerns raised by Florida's MPOs individually in their long range transportation plans and collectively through the products of regional associations of MPOs. The FDOT was also interested in gaining a better understanding of the feasibility of estimating a 20-year statewide shortfall between estimated transportation needs and reasonably available revenues by using data collected from a small sample of MPOs to extrapolate a similar estimate made in 2002.

CUTR completed three distinct research tasks to provide the information requested by the FDOT. Those tasks included:

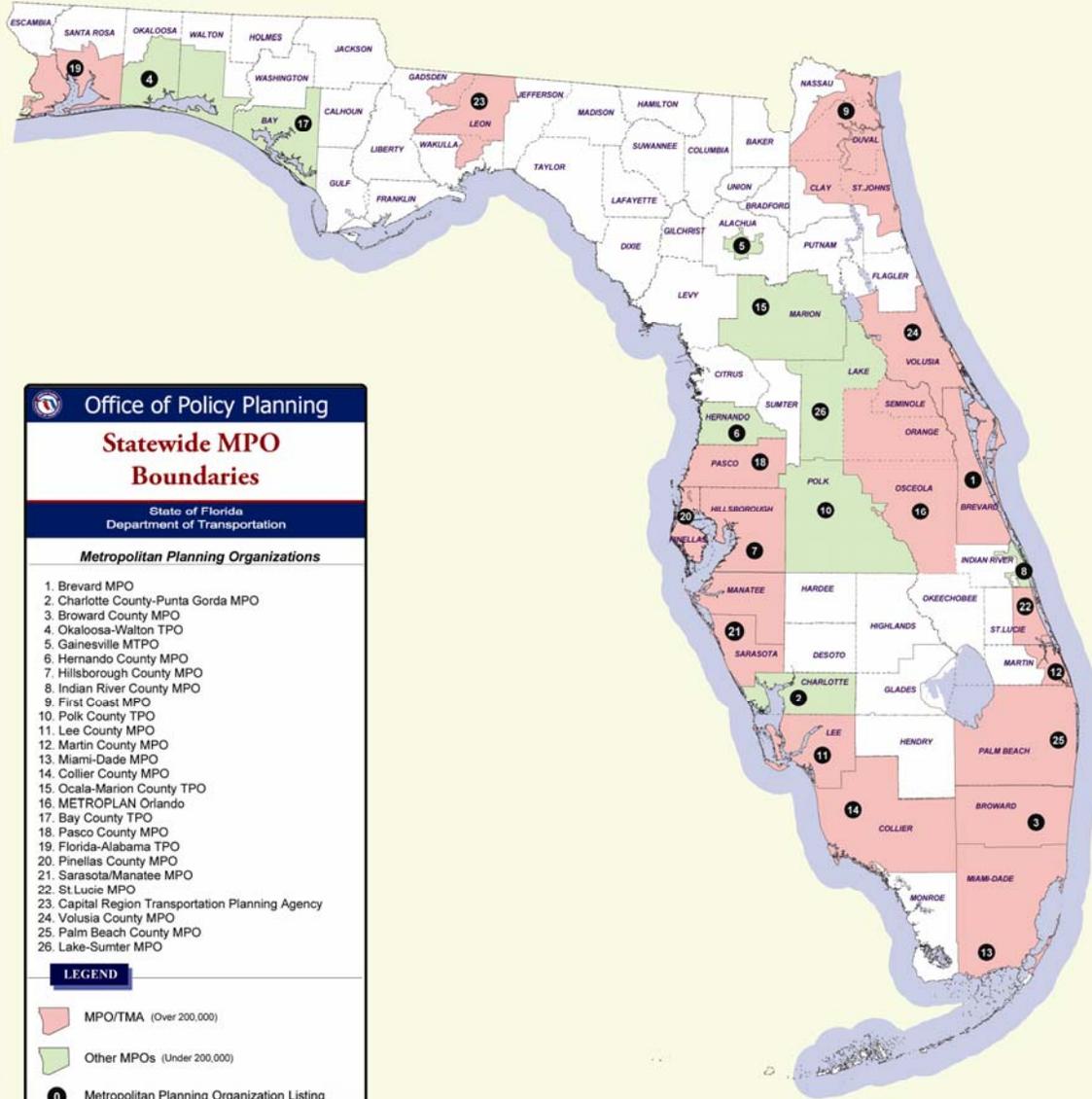
1. Reviewing and summarizing Florida MPO long range transportation plan goals, objectives and planning priorities from a statewide and regional (i.e. by district or economic region) perspective
2. Assessing the status of regional transportation planning products and creating an inventory of both completed and planned regional transportation planning products
3. Documenting the research methodology used in 2002 to prepare a 20-year statewide shortfall between estimated transportation needs and reasonably available revenues and discussing the practicality and validity of extrapolating that financial shortfalls estimate using updated financial data from a small sample of MPOs around the state

The research results are documented below.

MPO Planning Priorities

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an areawide, multi-jurisdictional agency mandated by federal and state law for urbanized areas of more than 50,000 people to provide a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive regional transportation planning process. An MPO is responsible for planning and programming, in cooperation with local transportation agencies and the FDOT, for the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds in an effort to enhance the statewide and regional multimodal transportation system. There are 26 MPOs in Florida (see map) covering all or part of 36 of Florida's 67 counties and approximately 14.9 million people (approximately 93% of the 15.9 people living in Florida).

Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Designated Transportation Management Areas



To achieve their planning and programming objectives, MPOs develop and regularly update a 20-year long range transportation plan (LRTP). In their LRTPs, MPOs:

1. Document the key transportation issues being faced in their metropolitan areas
2. Establish planning goals, objectives and policies to guide future transportation decision making
3. Outline a course of action for addressing those issues

CUTR reviewed MPO long-range transportation plans to identify the key transportation planning priorities of Florida's MPOs. While several MPOs completed updates of their long-range transportation plans last year (2004), the majority of MPOs are still in the updating process. It was determined that the existing LRTPs for those MPOs still in the updating process were too old to reflect current MPO priorities and, as such, would not be relevant for the purposes of this research. Instead, those MPOs still in the LRTP updating process were asked to provide completed relevant sections of their long-range transportation plan updates including goals, objectives, vision statements, mission statements, transportation policy statements or any other text that would reveal the MPOs transportation planning priorities. While most were able to provide sufficient materials to reflect their transportation planning priorities, a few were not. Of the 26 MPOs in Florida, relevant information was collected from 20 (77 percent). The sample included MPOs from all areas of the state and MPOs that range in size from the smallest to the largest – a sample sufficient to develop a meaningful statewide summary of MPO priorities in transportation planning.

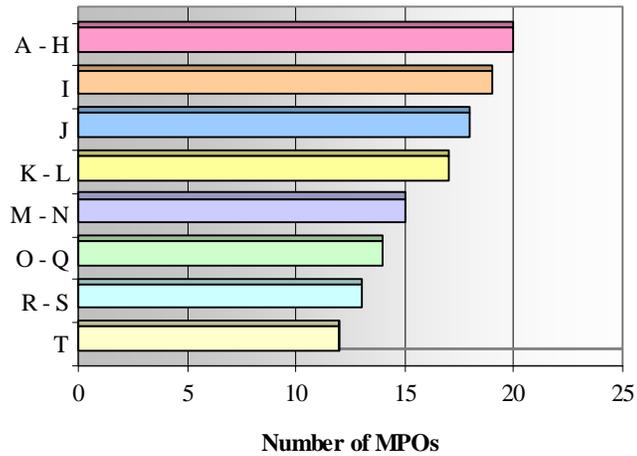
For those familiar with MPO products, it comes as no surprise that no two MPO LRTPs were the same both in terms of content and format. In order to provide useful input to the FDOT, the various policy statements from individual MPO LRTPs were synthesized into generalized goal statements describing key transportation planning priorities representing the most frequently stated priorities of individual MPOs. In all, 20 generalized goal statements (summarized in Table 1) were developed to describe the key transportation planning priorities of Florida's MPOs. CUTR researchers attempted to draw distinctions between the various inputs to craft unique statements, but in a few cases there is some overlap.

As can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1, eight (8) of the 20 generalized goal statements developed for this report reflected the policy intent of each of the 20 individual MPOs reviewed, as signified by the goals, objectives and/or policy statements contained in their individual MPO LRTPs. The remaining twelve (12) generalized goal statements reflected the policy intent of between 12 and 19 of Florida's MPOs, again as indicated by the goals, objectives and/or policy statements contained in their individual MPO LRTPs.

Table 1. Generalized Goal Statements Reflecting Policy Intent of Individual MPOs

Statement Identifier	Generalized Goal Statements	Reflects Policy Intent of MPOs (# of MPOs)	Reflects Policy Intent of MPOs (% of MPOs)
A	Enhance transportation system safety	20	100%
B	More viable modal alternatives	20	100%
C	Promote economic vitality	20	100%
D	Relieve system congestion and capitalize on available system capacity	20	100%
E	Coordinate programs, plans and investments	20	100%
F	Identify and meet mobility needs of various populations while minimizing/mitigating the negative impacts	20	100%
G	Promote livable communities	20	100%
H	Minimize and/or mitigate the impacts of the transportation system to preserve environmental resources	20	100%
I	Urban design strategies and land development regulations that support the integration of land use and transportation	19	95%
J	Enhance intermodal connections	18	90%
K	Improve designated evacuation and emergency routes	17	85%
L	Effective use of available traditional funds to meet costs	17	85%
M	Facilitate the regional movement of goods and people	15	75%
N	Preserve future transportation rights-of-way	15	75%
O	Preserve the character and aesthetic quality of transportation corridors	14	70%
P	Improve the connectivity of the transportation network	14	70%
Q	Identify and implement new local government funding sources and innovative funding mechanisms	14	70%
R	Protect transportation system users from security threats	13	65%
S	Public involvement and education activities	13	65%
T	Change user behavior	12	60%

**Figure 1:
MPO Policy Intentions Reflected
by Generalized Goal Statements**



Legend

- A Enhance transportation system safety
- B More viable modal alternatives
- C Promote economic vitality
- D Relieve system congestion and capitalize on available system capacity
- E Coordinate programs, plans and investments
- F Identify and meet mobility needs of various populations while minimizing/mitigating the negative impacts
- G Promote livable communities
- H Minimize and/or mitigate the impacts of the transportation system to preserve environmental resources
- I Urban design strategies and land development regulations that support the integration of land use and transportation
- J Enhance intermodal connections
- K Improve designated evacuation and emergency routes
- L Effective use of available traditional funds to meet costs
- M Facilitate the regional movement of goods and people
- N Preserve future transportation rights-of-way
- O Preserve the character and aesthetic quality of transportation corridors
- P Improve the connectivity of the transportation network
- Q Identify and implement new local government funding sources and innovative funding mechanisms
- R Protect transportation system users from security threats
- S Public involvement and education activities
- T Change user behavior

Based on the review of MPO long-range transportation planning materials, the following generalized goal statements describe key Florida MPO transportation planning priorities.

Enhance transportation system safety

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed. It relates directly to one of the federal transportation planning emphasis areas and a goal of the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan. The primary objective for most of the MPOs is to reduce the rates of crashes, particularly fatal crashes, and to reduce the number of conflicts between public transit, pedestrians and automobile traffic. Also, many of the MPOs wanted to focus their attention on making specific components of the transportation system that have a higher incidence of crashes and conflicts safer. These transportation system components include bicycle and pedestrian ways, transit systems (including the walk to and from stops), intersections, bridges/causeways and railroad crossings.

Most of the MPOs hope to achieve a safer transportation system through improved technological and operational strategies that include deploying Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), applying corridor access management standards and guidelines, installing of appropriate street lighting and signage and calming neighborhood traffic through a variety of street design techniques. Many of the MPOs also indicated that increased emphasis should be placed on regular maintenance activities as a means to making transportation systems safer (resurfacing, pavement marking and pothole repair programs, for example).

Some MPOs also indicated that education and outreach programs, particularly those that target special populations such as the young and the elderly, would improve safety conditions. Finally, some MPOs indicated that improved coordination with other agencies (law enforcement, for example) would enhance transportation system safety.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Identify and implement safety enhancements to improve security and reduce the rates of crashes, injuries, and fatalities
- Okaloosa-Walton TPO: Minimize automobile/pedestrian/bicycle conflicts by developing a multi-modal and intermodal transportation system
- Palm Beach MPO: The Plan will consider, improve, and increase the transit safety to and from stops
- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Annually identify high hazard intersections
- Brevard MPO: Identify and improve causeways and bridges that are or may be potential physical problems
- Lee County MPO: Reduce crash rates at RR crossings
- Pinellas County MPO: The MPO shall work with the local governments, FDOT, and law enforcement agencies to identify high crash locations in order to initiate the necessary improvements on the affected roadways and/or intersection

Make modal alternatives more viable through increased availability, improved service and additional funding

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed. Increased multi-modalism was one of the key priorities of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and remains a cornerstone of transportation policy at both the federal and state level. Individual MPO priority statements touched on a variety of issues and subjects, each of which can be categorized generally under a desire by MPOs to create a multi-modal transportation system. Many MPOs simply stated this desire to have a balance between modes in very general terms. Most MPOs want to increase fixed route bus transit service, as well as, to enhance, protect existing, and provide more sidewalks and bicycle facilities. Two MPOs even want to accommodate water-based transportation alternatives through their transportation planning activities. It was common for MPOs to want to support an increase in funding both from existing and new funding sources for alternative modes of transportation or operations and management systems. These proposals sometimes included setting aside funds to create a dedicated funding source for a specific mode.

There appears to be a consensus that new and reconstructed roadways should include multi-modal facilities within or adjacent to the roadway corridor. Several MPOs also encourage local governments to require/encourage developers to make provisions for modal alternatives through the land development process. Developer improvements mentioned in individual MPO LRTPs included the provision of bicycle, pedestrian and transit facility connections to adjacent properties and the inclusion of physical accommodations for alternate forms of transportation.

Many MPOs expressed a clear and specific desire to make alternative modes of transportation competitive with the single occupant vehicle through improved travel time, accessibility, and aesthetics. Mechanisms described in MPO LRTPs included:

- Making bus transit more physically attractive, comfortable and comparable to automobile travel time
- Making premium transit services available between activity centers
- Increasing the accessibility, convenience and comfort of modal alternatives
- Providing a pedestrian and bicycle system focused on access to schools, work places, shopping, recreation, tourist areas and residential areas

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Sarasota/Manatee MPO: Promote a balanced transportation system through investment in improvements across modes
- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Provide increased fixed route transit services by expansion of the existing transportation system into areas of high population, employment, or services and/or by decreasing existing bus route times providing more frequent service
- Lee County MPO: Evaluate the feasibility of water based transportation

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- Florida-Alabama TPO: Encourage developers in the local government site plan review process to include provisions for alternate forms of transportation such as compact car, motorcycle, golf cart, bicycle racks, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), designated park and ride lots, designated car pool, and bus
 - Gainesville MTPO: Improve the viability of alternatives to the single-occupant automobile (bicycle, walking, public transit, carpooling, and telecommuting) as options for all users of the transportation system through accessibility, convenience, and comfort
 - Pinellas County MPO: Mass transit use shall be encouraged and promoted in order to increase ridership while reducing the number of single-occupant vehicles on the county's roadways and as a primary means of travel for the transportation disadvantaged population
 - Hernando County MPO: Identify bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link schools, recreational area and commercial centers with residential areas

Promote economic vitality by focusing on mobility to, between, and within major economic activity centers and major transportation facilities

A federal transportation planning factor as well as a goal of the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan, this generalized goal statement dealing with economic vitality reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed. Many MPOs focused on the need to improve multimodal connections and access to, between and within international airports, seaports and major economic centers to enhance their metropolitan areas and the states national and international economic competitiveness. A few MPOs made more specific statements calling for improved connectivity of the local and regional transportation network to the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) given the prominence of the SIS in statewide transportation policy over the past few years.

Several MPOs highlighted the need to focus on freight and goods movement to support the local and state economy, including the provision of more efficient truck routes and access to airports and seaports. A minority of MPOs also focused on the need to enhance tourist travel within metropolitan areas and to provide improved access to tourist destinations.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Hernando County MPO: Support economic development through consideration of improved access and connections to port, rail, and airport facilities
- Bay County TPO: Ensure that intermodal facilities which are important to the regional economy, such as those identified in Florida's Strategic Intermodal System and emerging facilities, are fully integrated into the region's transportation system resulting in a seamless, efficient network
- Capital Region TPA: Give priority to transportation projects that are consistent with economic development priorities established in the comprehensive plan and enhance economic development and redevelopment in targeted areas of the Capital Region
- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Identify and promote transportation projects that expand and enhance economic vitality

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- Bay County TPO: Support economic vitality of the area by providing a transportation system that enables global transportation, competitiveness, productivity and efficiency
 - Broward County MPO: Provide efficient truck routes

Focus on operational improvements, management systems, maintenance and technologies to relieve system congestion and to capitalize on available system capacity

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed, as well as, globally reflecting two of the federal planning factors and one of the goals of the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan. In general, MPOs indicate that they want system congestion reduced primarily through maintenance and enhancement of the existing transportation system ahead of roadway expansion. Broad categories of mechanisms widely supported by MPOs to improve the existing transportation system without adding roadway mileage include implementing intelligent transportation systems (ITS), transportation systems management (TSM), access/corridor management, and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies. Additionally, MPOs suggested that alternatives for intersections be considered (i.e. roundabouts, flyovers, etc.) be considered to relieve problem intersections that act as bottlenecks.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Brevard MPO: Optimize efficiency through improved operations of current roadways, prior to the addition of capacity
- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Expansion of existing roadways to accommodate travel demand shall be given preference over establishment of new roadways
- Bay County TPO: Broaden alternatives for intersections and roads (e.g. roundabouts, flyovers, reversible lanes)
- Sarasota/Manatee MPO: Protect roadway capacity, optimize operating efficiency, enhance safety of transportation facilities and reduce delays through the application of ITS system management and demand management strategies
- First Coast MPO: Give priority to improvements that do not require additional travel lanes (i.e., changes to signal timing, addition of turn lanes, transportation systems management, and intelligent transportation systems)
- Volusia County MPO: Congestion management strategies such as Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques will be encouraged

Coordinate programs, plans and investments with and between public and private partners

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed. Primarily, the MPOs believe that transportation plans and programs (their own and those of other transportation agencies) should be coordinated with a variety of public and private stakeholder groups, including transit agencies, emergency management agencies, police and fire departments, school boards, local governments (particularly with regard to comprehensive plans and concurrency management ordinances), the FDOT,

Regional Planning Councils, utility companies, environmental regulatory agencies and other public interest groups. Several MPOs saw the need to coordinate land use, transportation and system investments both within individual local governments and with adjacent local governments. A few MPOs also indicated that transportation investments needed to be coordinated at the state, regional and local level to maximize the efficiency of the entire transportation system.

The MPOs indicated that improved coordination between various agencies would result in more efficient strategies for addressing complex problems, with reduced negative impact to the public and, perhaps, at a lower cost to individual agencies. One example might be if the state and local utility companies (electric, water, etc.) coordinated plans to simultaneously widen a roadway and extend service using shared rights-of-way and construction timelines, thereby improving the infrastructure in a particular area while limiting the right-of-way need and reducing the length of time needed for construction.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Gainesville MTPO: Coordinate transportation plans and programs with all stakeholders in the transportation system, including the public, public agencies, transit, emergency management, police and fire, etc.
- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Coordinate local, regional, and state transportation investments to maximize opportunities and benefits of joint study, design, and/or construction of projects planned or programmed in the region's Cost Feasible Plan
- Pinellas County MPO: The MPO shall continue to work with the Pinellas County School Board, private schools and Bay Area Commuter Services to expand the school based carpool program and to encourage the use of non-motorized modes to reduce traffic congestion in and around schools and improve safety of our children
- Florida-Alabama TPO: Coordinate with and review utility companies' long range plans so that public utilities and transportation projects are implemented in the most cost effective manner
- Bay County TPO: Involve environmental regulatory agencies and interested public groups in environmental issues early in the planning process

Identify and meet mobility needs of various populations during the transportation decision-making process while minimizing/mitigating the negative impacts of those transportation decisions

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed. MPOs were unanimous in their belief that transportation benefits and burdens should be distributed fairly across populations in metropolitan areas. Specifically, MPOs thought that transportation system decisions should strive to meet the mobility needs of the young, the elderly, the transportation disadvantaged, low-income populations, minority populations and other populations that have traditionally been underserved by transportation services in any given metropolitan area.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Florida-Alabama TPO: Ensure no one segment of the population bears a disproportionate share of adverse impacts
- Lee County MPO: Minimize adverse impacts on low-income and minority populations
- Gainesville MTPO: Improve access to transportation facilities and services for elderly, children, disabled and economically disadvantaged individuals
- Pasco County MPO: The plan will provide for the needs of the transportation disadvantaged (TD) population and improve the coordination of TD services with other modes
- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Reconstruction or resurfacing of roadways shall include provisions for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and provisions for Americans with Disabilities consistent with the TPO bicycle/pedestrian master plan and the Americans with Disabilities Act

Promote livable communities through the design of a transportation system that is both sustainable and sensitive to community visions and values.

This generalized goal statement, directly related to a federal planning factor and a goal of the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan, reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPO LRTPs reviewed. The MPOs indicated a strong desire to support community livability through the transportation planning process. Many MPOs stressed the need to provide a transportation system that enhanced multi-modal access to key community facilities such as schools, work places, shopping districts, recreational venues, cultural facilities and medical services. A majority placed emphasis on the promotion of non-motorized travel and transit use by incorporating livable street design, community enhancing design features (pedestrian scale), and context sensitive design into the development of transportation facilities and corridors.

Another key element of promoting livable communities was the use of appropriate planning and design criteria to avoid or minimize negative impacts on residential neighborhoods or business districts. At a systems level, developing a roadway network that provides appropriate facilities for a variety of trip purposes (functional classification) would minimize non-local traffic cutting through neighborhoods. At a more local level, MPOs advocated traffic calming techniques, landscaping, noise buffering and signage as mechanisms for making a transportation improvement fit into the local context. Additionally, the MPOs placed emphasis on the need to avoid impacts, while maintaining access, to scenic, historical, archaeological, and cultural community resources.

Finally, several of the MPOs indicated that identifying environmental and socio-cultural impacts using the Efficient Transportation Decision Making and the Socio-Cultural Effects processes would enhance the ability of transportation providers to make their plans and programs more compatible with community desires and goals.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Provide a pedestrian system that connects to an inter-modal transportation system in order to support neighborhood and community livability and vitality
- Miami-Dade MPO: Utilize sound community-compatible values in systems development and aesthetic principles in systems design
- Pasco County MPO: Support community social values by developing facilities that are user friendly and multi-modal
- Palm Beach MPO: Disruption to established communities, activity centers, redevelopment areas, and infill areas will be minimized
- Gainesville MTPO: Implement techniques to traffic calm in residential, educational, and commercial areas where walking and bicycling are common
- Sarasota/Manatee County MPO: Minimize adverse impacts of transportation on existing neighborhoods caused by cut-through traffic, noise or right-of-way needs
- Volusia County MPO: Use the EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION DECISION MAKING process to minimize the negative impacts, to the maximum extent feasible, to the natural environment and the cultural resources of the community

Minimize and/or mitigate the impacts of the transportation system to preserve environmental resources

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of the 20 MPOs LRTPs reviewed and directly relates to a federal planning factor and a goal of the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan. Most MPOs emphasized the need to minimize impacts to air quality, water resources, natural habitats, sensitive habitats and endangered species and other environmentally sensitive areas. Additionally, MPOs supported measures to reduce energy consumption and fossil fuel use and promote the use of alternative fuels. Several MPOs advocated the Efficient Transportation Decision Making process as a way to identify potential environmental impacts early in the planning process so that mechanisms for avoiding, minimizing or mitigating those impacts could be developed well ahead of project implementation.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Hernando County MPO: The Plan will be sensitive to preserving the quality of the environment, and in responding to air quality and energy conservation, and will ensure that air quality degradation will not occur by addressing the requirements of EPA conformity regulations
- Miami-Dade MPO: Minimize water quality impacts of transportation facilities, services, and operations
- Bay County TPO: New transportation facilities will be designed to protect the environment (e.g., sensitive habits, air quality, water quality, water quantity, recharge areas, trees)

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- Gainesville MTPO: Reduce the adverse impacts of transportation on the environment, fragmentation of natural areas and wildlife
 - Okaloosa-Walton TPO: Reduce energy consumption by recommending transportation system improvements which reduce vehicle idling, a major contributor to air pollution and wasted fuel
 - First Coast MPO: Identify environmental and socio-cultural impacts using processes such as Efficient Transportation Decision Making and Socio-Cultural Effects

Encourage local governments to adopt urban design strategies and corresponding land development regulations that support the integration of land use and transportation

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 19 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. While local governments are directly in control of the land development process, MPOs are clearly interested in this subject and, through policy statements made in their LRTPs, encouraged local governments to develop and implement urban design strategies that integrate transportation and land use. Most MPOs used a variety of popular terms to generally describe this desire (smart growth, community-oriented design, transit oriented design, etc.). A few MPOs suggested more specific design concepts including support for designs that would encourage internal trip capture, control of access along major facilities, mixed use development, transit-oriented development, walkable communities and more intense non-residential development in transit corridors while discouraging the development of strip commercial land use and improvements that support peripheral growth and urban area sprawl.

Additionally, MPOs encouraged local governments to include requirements in their land development regulations to ensure that new development is integrated into the multimodal transportation system. Suggestions included regulations that would require developers to integrate design elements in their site plans that would facilitate transit use (transit stops and connections, etc.), encourage walking, biking and other modal transportation modes (bicycle racks, lighted sidewalks, benches, van pool parking spaces, etc.) and provide for multi-modal connections to adjacent land uses.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Ocala/Marion County TPO: New subdivisions and developments shall be required to provide multi-modal interconnections to adjacent properties to permit travel to neighboring land uses without having to use the public roadway system
- Collier County MPO: The MPO will work with local governments to develop ordinances that require all new and redevelopment projects consider alternative modes and “smart growth” design techniques
- Volusia County MPO: Support in-fill development, redevelopment and the concentration of new commercial and office space in activity centers that can be inter-connected by transit, bikeways, and sidewalks

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- Sarasota/Manatee MPO: Encourage redevelopment of established corridors and centers to reduce sprawl, expand job-housing choices, support transit service and improve pedestrian safety and accessibility
 - Capital Region TPA: Coordinate with local governments and other agencies, to discourage development of strip commercial land use, encourage the control of access along major facilities, encourage mixed-use development, and encourage transit-oriented development and more intense non-residential development in existing and planned transit corridors
 - Miami-Dade MPO: Discourage improvements that support peripheral growth and urban area sprawl

Enhance intermodal connections to improve the ability to get from one place to another on multiple modes seamlessly and efficiently

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 18 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Most of the MPOs generally indicated the need to provide facilities that made possible the smooth connection between various modes of transportation to create a more efficient and integrated transportation network. Several specifically indicated the need to develop multi-modal terminals in major activity centers, including college campuses, shopping centers, medical centers, or large places of employment.

Some MPOs discussed the need for integrated bicycle, pedestrian and trail systems that would promote intermodal travel and that connect to the broader transportation system. A few even identified the need to locate transit stops/stations within convenient walking distance of major concentrations of employment to provide park and ride lots, both as mechanisms to encourage and facilitate modal transfers.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Provide an integrated bicycle system that connects major generators and attractors and promotes intermodal travel opportunities
- Pinellas County MPO: Develop a long range inter-county and regionally accessible transit system in Pinellas County that features advanced technology express service to intermodal transportation facilities, major employment centers, recreational points of interest, tourist destinations and significant commercial activity
- Volusia County MPO: Priority shall be given to intermodal facilities, including Strategic Intermodal System connectors, that serve more than one mode of transportation
- Broward County MPO: Improve connectivity to SIS and intermodal facilities
- Florida-Alabama TPO: Provide Park and Ride lots to facilitate passenger transfer for all modes of travel
- Sarasota/Manatee MPO: Maintain and improve efficient access to regional passenger and freight intermodal hubs
- First Coast MPO: To improve access to port, airport and other intermodal facilities via designated connectors and linkages

Improve designated evacuation and emergency vehicle routes to minimize emergency evacuation and response times

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 17 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. There were two primary focuses under this planning priority statement. The first deals with emergency evacuation needs. While most made general comments on this subject relating to the provision of improved emergency evacuation routes, a few made specific statements including improved access to emergency evacuation shelters and avoiding transportation improvements that encourage growth in high hazard coastal areas.

The second focus area was on emergency vehicle response. The prevailing general sentiment was to ensure that transportation planning and implementation decisions are made with the needs of emergency vehicle routing in mind, particularly the reduction of emergency response times. Specific statements related to the provision of alternate or parallel routes and signal preemption for emergency vehicles. Additionally, four (4) MPOs wanted all future transportation planning to incorporate appropriate measures for the safe transportation of hazardous materials.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Pinellas County MPO: Needed improvements to hurricane evacuation routes and to facilities providing access to these routes shall be appropriately prioritized in the development and scheduling of projects included in the TIP
- First Coast MPO: Consider clearance times on those roads that function as evacuation routes when establishing roadway improvement priorities
- Hillsborough County MPO: Minimize incident response time and rectify conditions that impede emergency response
- Collier County MPO: Work with local agencies to determine the viability and feasibility of signal preemption to improve emergency responsiveness
- Miami-Dade MPO: Avoid improvements encouraging growth and development in high hazard coastal areas
- Bay County TPO: All future planning will incorporate appropriate measures for the safe transportation of hazardous materials

Consider the life cycle costs of transportation projects and make the most effective use of available traditional funds to meet those costs

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 17 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. In an environment of increasing transportation needs and limited new sources of transportation funding, many MPOs stressed the need maximize the effective use of existing transportation resources and the accurate assessment of true transportation costs. Among the various strategies supported by MPOs were prioritizing funding for projects that have already been funded for preliminary project phases (environmental study,

final design or right-of-way acquisition), optimizing maintenance outlays, and accounting for operating and maintenance costs of transportation facilities (life cycle costs).

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Miami-Dade MPO: Maximize use of external funding sources
- Okaloosa-Walton TPO: Priority should be given to transportation projects that have already received funding commitments for any of the following project phases: project development and environment (PD&E), final design, or right-of-way purchase
- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Coordinate local, regional, and state transportation investments to maximize opportunities and benefits of joint study, design, and/or construction of projects planned or programmed in the region's Cost Feasible Plan
- Pasco County MPO: The Plan will consider the protection and enhancement of existing highway facilities by considering not only the initial capital investment, but also operating and maintenance costs throughout the service life of the facility.
- Capital Region TPA: Consider the life cycle costs in the evaluation of transportation alternatives
- Hillsborough County MPO: Assess true transportation investment costs by taking into account not only initial capital costs, but also operating and maintenance costs

Facilitate the regional movement of goods and people

This generalized goal statement (an issue receiving significant attention in recent years in Florida) reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 15 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. MPOs addressing this subject focused on one of two emphasis areas: coordination and integration. Several MPOs supported improved regional coordination with adjacent MPOs, local governments and transit providers in the planning and prioritization of regionally significant transportation projects. Additionally, these MPOs stressed the need to make their own plan and priorities consistent with those of other agencies.

MPOs also focused on the need to create an integrated regional transportation network to facilitate the regional movement of freight and goods. Most supported this concept in general terms, but a few focused on specific aspects including making efficient connections between modes and ensuring that the system enhances access to and between major regional economic activity centers.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Pasco County MPO: The transportation planning process will ensure coordination among all governmental agencies, including the Florida Department of Transportation, municipal governments, county agencies, the Regional Planning Council, port and airport agencies, rail providers, and freight providers
- Sarasota/Manatee MPO: Create an interconnected regional network of on-road bicycle facilities and/or trails that link existing and emerging community focal points

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- Hernando County MPO: Ensure that regional as well as local markets are adequately served by the transportation system
 - METROPLAN ORLANDO: Plan a network of integrated transportation systems to safely and efficiently move people and goods by auto, truck, aviation, rail, bus, bicycle, and pedestrian modes
 - Brevard MPO: Support statewide passenger rail initiatives
 - Hillsborough County MPO: Provide appropriate highway, public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian links to airports, seaports, rail facilities, major transit terminals/stops, theme parks, and other major tourist destinations

Plan for and develop mechanisms to preserve future transportation rights-of-way

This generalized goal statement (consistent with the sentiments expressed in newly enacted elements of Florida's growth management laws) reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 15 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Specifically, MPOs supported local government efforts to preserve transportation rights-of-way through both the development of land use regulations/ordinances (implemented through the land development process) and advanced ROW acquisition programs. Additionally, many MPOs supported efforts to designate future corridor rights-of-way needs that would accommodate anticipated roadway, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian uses.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Hillsborough County MPO: Establish additional right-of-way requirements along designated corridors for public transit, high-occupancy vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians
- Hernando County MPO: Identify rights-of-way for preservation that will include not only sufficient space for roadway improvements, but also improvements for mass transit and the bicycle and pedestrian modes, and will supports an advanced right-of-way acquisition program for future planned improvements
- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Coordinate with FDOT and local governments to develop an advanced right-of-way acquisition program
- Volusia County MPO: Encourage local governments to protect future rights-of-way and corridors from development that would conflict with the future needs of the transportation community
- Palm Beach MPO: Support an advanced right-of-way acquisition program for future planned improvements where economically advantageous

Preserve the character and aesthetic quality of transportation corridors and the surrounding area

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 14 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Many of the MPOs supported the protection of the character and scenic qualities both from transportation corridors (looking onto the surrounding area) and of transportation corridors (looking onto the transportation facility). MPOs expressed some

interest in preserving and enhancing scenic views, encouraging green spaces and minimizing the loss of open space through scenic byways planning and programs.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Hernando County MPO: Constrain the development of highway facilities within corridors which are scenic in nature, and when appropriate, apply “parkway” treatments that enhance the overall social and aesthetic values of the community
- Pasco County MPO: Consider the designation of scenic corridors and parkways that enhance the overall social and aesthetic values of the community
- Okaloosa-Walton TPO: Preserve and protect natural scenic beauty, and historic buildings and sites, while providing a necessary level of transportation service to such facilities
- Broward County MPO: Develop facilities that meet aesthetic standards and minimize impact of facilities and services on the environment
- Collier County MPO: Establish priorities for enhancement activities that enhance the aesthetics, including landscaping and signage, of existing and proposed transportation corridors if private funding, assessment or other non-traditional funding sources are used for maintenance activities

Improve the connectivity of the transportation network through the provision of alternate routes

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 14 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Most MPOs that addressed this issue focused on the need to improve connections between roadways of various functional classes (arterials, collectors, local roads, etc.) to encourage an appropriate distribution of vehicle traffic across the entire roadway system and relieve congestion on the higher order roadways. A few MPOs expanded upon that concept to include improved connectivity between all components of the transportation system including sidewalks, bikeways and transit ways.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Capital Region TPA: Improve connectivity of the collector roadway network to relieve congestion on arterial and freeway facilities
- Gainesville MTPO: Develop a balanced transportation system that include a dispersion of traffic across multiple smaller roads rather than concentrating traffic on a few major roadways
- Broward County MPO: Enhance accessibility to the FIHS
- Florida-Alabama TPO: Provide design guidelines for developers to ensure multimodal connectivity and in or between new developments
- Volusia County MPO: Support in-fill development and the concentration of new commercial and office space in activity centers that can be interconnected by transit, bikeways and sidewalks

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- Palm Beach MPO: Consider traffic improvements throughout the network which provide east-west arterials connecting the major highways running north-south for the purpose of increasing the flow of traffic around major activity centers

Identify and implement new local government funding sources and innovative funding mechanisms

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 14 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Recognizing that new transportation facilities will be required to meet future transportation needs despite efforts to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system and that traditional funding sources cannot be depended upon to fully fund those needs, some MPOs have increased their emphasis on identifying and implementing new and innovative funding mechanisms, particularly at the local level. Suggestions included considering legislative changes to permit new local funding sources such as taxes, toll revenues and user fees. Additional funding sources recommended by MPOs included variable pricing strategies, indexing existing funding sources and creative public/private partnerships.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Support local government in establishing or expanding local tax programs with a portion of the revenue dedicated to funding transportation capital improvements
- Lee County MPO: Maximize transportation funding from all sources, including toll revenues and other user fees
- Ocala/Marion County TPO: Support public/private partnerships to provide funding and/or services to meet existing and future transportation needs
- Brevard MPO: Provide an affordable transportation system that is funded by both tax dollars and private investments
- METROPLAN ORLANDO: Transportation funding sources, such as the local option gas tax, should be indexed to offset the effect of inflation
- Broward County MPO: Incorporate innovative, cost-effective technologies

Protect transportation system users from security threats

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 13 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. The need for improved security related to domestic and international threats and the vulnerability of this countries infrastructure has received a great deal of attention in the media, particularly since 9/11/01, and has been the subject of numerous pieces of national legislative and regulatory initiatives. Additionally, the potential of violent crime remains a key concern of the American public.

Most MPOs that addressed this issue in their LRTP did so in a very general way, making statements that broadly indicated their desire for improved security for both transportation system users and transportation facilities. A few MPOs made somewhat more specific

statements related to the use of appropriate design concepts to increase security for transit passengers including at bus stops and intermodal stations. Only two MPOs mentioned security threats to the transportation system in the context of homeland security and even those statements were general in nature.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Palm Beach MPO: Security of public transit services will be monitored and, if necessary, improved through appropriate design concepts and programs
- Lee County MPO: Increase safety and security at bus stops and intermodal stations and connections
- First Coast MPO: Identify the implications of homeland security on the region's transportation system
- Gainesville MTPO: Address existing and potential safety and security problems on or adjacent to transportation corridors through an interagency planning and prioritization process
- Miami-Dade MPO: Improve transportation security for facilities and in operations

Implement public involvement and education activities that promote broad participation in and understanding of the transportation planning process

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 13 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Several MPOs identified the importance of involving the public in the transportation planning process early, often, and at key milestones so that the transportation system reflects the needs of all citizens. MPOs recognized the need to inform the public on transportation planning and funding issues in a clear, concise and timely manner through a proactive public involvement process that reaches as many interested people as possible, including populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in the transportation planning processes.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Capital Region TPA: Provide for early, continuing and timely opportunities in the transportation planning process for the public to express their views and become educated to technical terms, limitations and constraints, and funding opportunities and requirements
- First Coast MPO: To provide time for public review and comment at key milestones in the transportation planning process
- Pasco County MPO: The MPO will document public input and involvement in the transportation planning activities and the impact that public involvement has on transportation planning decisions
- Pinellas County MPO: The MPO shall utilize public venues such as shopping malls, government buildings, libraries and schools to provide information and to seek input on the Long Range Transportation Plan

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- Collier County MPO: Work with CAT to establish a public participation process that would include the review of and make recommendations regarding transit service changes
 - Volusia County MPO: Those traditionally underserved and underrepresented in the transportation planning process will be actively sought out and encouraged to express their views and concerns
 - METROPLAN ORLANDO: Involve the “silent majority” through survey methods, limiting influence of the “vocal few”

Change user behavior

This generalized goal statement reflects the goals, objectives and policy statements of 12 of the MPO LRTPs reviewed. Unlike other management and technology strategies that place an emphasis on changes to the existing transportation system to maximizing capacity and efficiency, this statement places emphasis on users of the transportation system changing their behavior to achieve those same ends. Most of the policy statements found in MPO LRTPs supported this concept in general ways through expressed desires to reduce vehicle miles traveled, reduce single occupant vehicle dependency and increase vehicle occupancy rates. A handful of policy statements attempted to make more specific recommendations including reducing peak period travel using TDM strategies and providing a telecommunication network that would enhance people’s ability to avoid trips entirely.

Examples of goals, objectives and other policy statements related to this generalized goal statement include:

- Okaloosa-Walton TPO: Reduce energy consumption by promoting actions to increase the occupancy of vehicles (e.g. ridesharing, mass transit, High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) lanes)
- Collier County MPO: Encourage employers to use incentives for transit use, such as bus passes, van pooling, and coordination of ridesharing activities
- Lee County MPO: Reduce peak period travel through the use of Transportation Demand Management measures (e.g. carpooling vanpooling, telecommuting, flexible work hours)
- Sarasota/Manatee MPO: Improve public health and air quality by encouraging increased walking and bicycling activity for all trip purposes
- Pinellas County MPO: The MPO shall encourage the development of a telecommunication infrastructure to provide universal service access to all citizens for expanding educational opportunities via distance learning, obtaining medical information via telemedicine, increasing commerce via the purchase of goods by online shopping, and creating job opportunities via telework. These elements will foster economic development by helping citizens and businesses move intellectual property, data and information electronically. This policy is intended to reduce or even eliminate the need to travel for these purposes

CUTR was also asked to identify differences in policy between individual MPOs based on their geographic perspective (i.e. do MPOs from different parts of the state place varying emphasis on transportation planning issues). The research indicates that there is no

discernable difference between the planning priorities of individual MPOs based on their respective location in the state. For example, MPOs from Central Florida were just as likely to have indicated that emergency evacuation (including hurricane evacuation) was a planning priority as were MPOs from coastal parts of the state. Additionally, CUTR looked for indications of policy differences between MPOs based on the size of the metropolitan area they are from. Again, there was no discernable difference between the planning priorities of individual MPOs based on the size of their respective metropolitan areas. For example, MPOs from small urban areas were just as likely as MPOs from large urban areas to have indicated that the development of a multi-modal transportation system was a planning priority.

Regional Transportation Products

In 2003, CUTR conducted a review of regional transportation planning activities for the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC). At that time, CUTR found that several MPOs were formally coordinating regional transportation planning activities with one or more neighboring MPOs, often through a regional association of MPOs. Also in 2003, the Florida Legislature authorized MPOs to enter into interlocal agreements for the purpose of coordination.

The FDOT is interested in considering as input to the FTP update the material contained in the regional transportation products produced by these regional associations of MPOs and any new associations formed since 2003. Additionally, the FDOT is interested in knowing what regional transportation planning products are planned for the future and the quality of the products that have been produced thus far.

CUTR researchers conducted an assessment of the status of regional transportation products and created an inventory of both completed and planned regional transportation planning products. Completed regional long range transportation plans were then reviewed and assessed for quality, relevance, and their relationship to individual MPO planning products as well as statewide planning issues and goals.

In all, a total of 21 of Florida's 26 MPOs have entered into formal arrangements to coordinate regional transportation planning activities. Three of those efforts involve three or more MPOs working through a regional association of MPOs, while the rest include two contiguous MPOs. The regional groupings of MPOs are as follows:

- West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC)
- Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA)
- Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC)
- Northwest Florida Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWFL RTPO)
- Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
- Collier County MPO and Lee County MPO
- Martin County MPO and St. Lucie County MPO

While a couple of the groups (the CCC and the CFMPOA) have been formally in existence for several years, others are relatively new. Even so, quite a few regional transportation products have been produced around the state. These include long range transportation plans, regional goals and objectives, regional project priority lists, regional multi-modal transportation network maps, regional congestion management systems, regional public involvement programs and more. Additionally, several new products are planned.

In terms of regional transportation planning products that would provide useful policy guidance for the Florida Transportation Plan update, only regional goals and objective statements serve that purpose. Of the seven (7) regional transportation planning efforts around the state, three (3) have regional transportation goals and objectives (the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee, the Central Florida MPO Alliance and the

Southeast Florida Transportation Council). In general, the regional goals and objectives developed around the state mirror those found at the metropolitan level. The goals and objectives of these three (3) regional associations of MPOs are described in detail later in this section.

The following summarizes the research results for each regional coordination effort.

West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee

The West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) was formed in 1992 and has been operating continuously for the past 13 years. The voting membership of the CCC is comprised of representatives from six (6) individual MPOs including the Hillsborough County MPO, the Pinellas County MPO, the Pasco County MPO, the Hernando County MPO, the Polk County TPO, and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. Additionally, there are eight (8) non-voting partner entities of the CCC including representatives from FDOT Districts 1 and 7, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, Citrus County, the Central Florida RPC, the Southwest Florida RPC, the Withlacoochee RPC and the Tampa Bay RPC. Major Modal providers participate on an *ad hoc* basis. Originally formed by a mandate of the Governor and organized by the Florida Legislature, the CCC is now established and governed by an interlocal agreement.

CCC products to date:

- Interlocal agreement (forming the CCC)
- Operating procedures (outlining member responsibilities under the interlocal agreement)
- Memorandum of understanding for a conflict resolution process
- Cost affordable regional long range transportation plan (LRTP)
 - A detailed regional LRTP document addressing highways, public transit and multi-use trails
 - A summary brochure summarizing the regional LRTP
- Annual regional roadway project priority list
- Annual regional multi-use trails project priority list
- Coordinated regional tasks in individual MPO unified planning work programs (UPWPs)
- Regional congestion management system (CMS)
- Regional data sharing and mapping
- Regional geographic information system (GIS)
- Coordination with the West Central Florida Air Quality Coordinating Committee
- Regional highway, public transit and multi-use trails elements
- Major investment studies coordination
- Regional public involvement program
 - A website (<http://www.ccctransportation.org/>)
 - A joint citizens advisory committee (currently made up of members from only the Hillsborough and Pinellas MPOs)
 - A regional public involvement program (PIP)
- Coordination with FDOT's Tampa Bay Regional Goods Movement Study

Planned CCC Products:

- Regional transit action plan (expected to be completed Summer 2005)
- Regional transit economic impact study (expected to be completed Summer 2005)
- Annual regional roadway project priority list
- Annual regional multi-use trails project priority list
- Updated regional congestion management system
- Updated regional long range transportation plan (based on federal reauthorization policies, revised revenue projections and the soon to be completed LRTPs for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Polk County MPO)

The regional LRTP was developed using a top down approach in which member MPOs agreed upon a regional multi-modal transportation network, identified needs on the regional transportation network, identified viable regional transportation improvement strategies, developed regional goals, objectives and measures of effectiveness, identified available revenue sources that could be applied to the regional transportation network and developed a 20-year fiscally constrained list of regional transportation projects. In essence, this LRTP was developed using a long range transportation planning process that would be used by any individual MPO, including public involvement activities and an advisory committee process.

The decisions made in the regional LRTP process have been integrated into the development of the LRTPs recently completed or currently being developed by the individual CCC member MPOs. The summary document is prepared in an easy to read format (a glossy, fold-out brochure) and is an effective tool for conveying a regional transportation roadmap as agreed by the member MPOs to elected officials (at the federal, state and local levels), the state and the general public. The full LRTP document is clearly written and contains sufficient detail to document the various data reviewed and decisions made as part of the regional long range transportation planning process. It provides a basis upon which member MPOs can make regional decisions, including the selection of regional project priorities. The top-down-up approach also provides a strong policy mechanism for establishing a regional transportation vision that has been or is being well integrated into each of the individual member MPO LRTPs. It does not appear to have interfered with the ongoing metropolitan policy setting process being carried out by each individual member MPO, but does appear to have had an influence on those processes. In all, the CCC regional LRTP is a very useful tool for coordinating regional transportation decision making and the implementation of an integrated regional transportation network.

The goals and objectives in the regional LRTP include:

1. Provide a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system that serves the mobility needs of West Central Florida
 - a. Maintain and improve the regionally significant highway system
 - b. Maintain and improve an integrated public transportation system that addresses regional mobility, and promotes regional connectivity and customer convenience

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- c. Develop a coordinated common fare instrument to allow seamless transfers across transit systems in the region
 - d. Maintain and improve an integrated system of regionally significant non-motorized facilities, including bicycle, pedestrian and shared-use paths
 - e. Reduce transportation congestion by promoting regional transportation system management, transportation demand management and intelligent system strategies
 - f. Support an integrated regional transportation system with efficient connections between transportation modes
 - g. Support improvements to regional emergency evacuation routes and to related infrastructure
 - h. Support improvements to regional roadways with a high incidence of crashes
2. Provide a transportation system that contributes to the economic vitality of West Central Florida
 - a. Improve access to regional activity centers
 - b. Improve access to regional intermodal facilities on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) to enhance the movement of people, goods and freight
 - c. Develop the regional transportation system to support adopted land use plans, and encourage land use and planning decisions that promote an efficient and regional transportation planning system
 - d. Pursue opportunities to obtain maximum federal and state funding for regional transportation needs
 - e. Support appropriate institutional mechanisms that implement and operate regional transportation facilities and services
 - f. Coordinate improvements to the regional transportation system with plans of adjacent regions and with statewide plans
3. Provide a regional transportation system that protects the environment and preserves quality of life
 - a. Maintain air quality levels in accordance with the Clean Air Act Amendments
 - b. Minimize disruption to established communities and environmental justice areas
 - c. Minimize the adverse affects that regional transportation improvements may have on environmentally sensitive resources and foster their enhancements to such resources
 - d. Promote and protect the designation of scenic regional corridors and parkways
 - e. Provide opportunities for the public to express regional concerns, needs and priorities, and respond to them in the regional transportation planning process

Central Florida MPO Alliance

The Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) was formed in 1997 by METROPLAN ORLANDO and the Volusia County MPO as a regional collaborative to focus on regional transportation planning issues, including improvements to the I-4 bridge across the St. John's River. The CFMPOA has grown over the past eight (8) years to now include a voting

membership of six (6) MPOs including the Brevard MPO, the Lake-Sumter MPO, METROPLAN ORLANDO, the Ocala/Marion TPO, the Polk County TPO and the Volusia County MPO. Additionally, FDOT Districts 1 and 5 are both non-voting members of the CFMPOA. The CFMPOA is established and governed by a joint resolution of the participating member MPOs and the FDOT. The members of the CFMPOA are currently discussing the need to develop and enter into an interlocal agreement as the basis for the organization.

CFMPOA products to date:

- Joint resolution
- Central Florida Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Annual Central Florida regional project priority list
- FDOT District 5 transportation model covering the majority of CFMPOA member MPOs (excludes Polk County which resides in FDOT District 1)
- Annual Central Florida legislative program
- Central Florida MPO Alliance web site (<http://www.metroplanorlando.com/site/partnerships/cfmpoa.asp>)
- “Summary of Transportation Topics of Regional Significance”
- Products to support the *myregion.org* initiative
- Central Florida Smart Growth Alliance (as an outgrowth of the CFMPOA process)
- PennDesign Study of Alternative Futures

Planned CFMPOA Products:

- Interlocal agreement
- Update to the Central Florida Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Annual Central Florida regional project priority list
- Annual legislative priorities

The CFMPOA used a bottom-up approach to develop the Central Florida LRTP. It is a composite of the individual CFMPOA member MPO LRTPs and reflects a synthesis of those elements of each LRTP that were determined to be regional in nature. The Central Florida LRTP includes a description of the need for regional transportation planning, provides a summary of each member MPO LRTP, broad regional goals, a list of regionally significant priority projects and the cost to implement those projects.

Because it is a composite plan, the Central Florida LRTP is well integrated with the individual MPO LRTPs as it is merely a reflection of common themes. It is easy to read and an effective tool for conveying regional themes embraced by each of the individual member MPOs to elected officials (at the federal, state and local levels), the state and the general public. It also provides a basis upon which member MPOs can make regional decisions, including the selection of regional project priorities. However, the bottom-up approach does not provide a strong policy mechanism for establishing a regional transportation vision as it is limited by the individual constraints established by the individual MPO LRTPs. In a sense it is the “tail wagging the dog” in that metropolitan policy is established first and regional

policy follows. The value of such an approach depends entirely on the priority placed on those two levels of policy establishment. That issue notwithstanding, the Central Florida LRTP is a very useful tool for coordinating regional transportation decision making and the implementation of an integrated regional transportation network.

The goals of the Central Florida LRTP are as follows:

1. Highways: A safe, reliable, attractive regional highway system that provides connectivity and capacity for residents, businesses, and visitors
2. Non-Highway Modes: A balanced regional transportation system that accommodates the present and future needs of users on all modes (transit, rail, airports, seaports, spaceport, bicycle, pedestrian)
3. Planning & Policy: A transportation planning and policy development process that cooperatively addresses priority regional transportation needs while remaining sensitive to local concerns
4. Funding: Funding levels that are adequate to address the region's short and long range transportation needs

Southeast Florida Transportation Council

The three MPOs in Southeast Florida (the Miami-Dade MPO, the Broward County MPO and the Palm Beach MPO) have been informally coordinating transportation planning at the regional level for many years. Most of the coordination activities focused on air quality coordination, the implementation of coordinated Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in Southeast Florida and the establishment of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The three MPOs also collaborated on joint studies and projects such as the Transit Bridge and Tri-Rail services.

Given increased state and federal emphasis and incentives to formally coordinate transportation planning on the regional level, the three MPOs are currently in the process of approving an interlocal agreement to form the Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC). The voting members of the council will be comprised of the three Southeast Florida MPOs. Other participants will include the FDOT Districts 4 and 6, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, the South Florida Regional Transit Authority, the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, Monroe County, and the Martin County and St. Lucie County MPOs. The draft interlocal agreement states that the SEFTC will be responsible for producing a regional long range transportation plan, a process for prioritizing regional projects, a regional public involvement process, and performance measures to assess the effectiveness of regional coordination activities.

SEFTC Products to date:

- Regional long range transportation plan goals and objectives (developed collaboratively by the three Southeast Florida MPOs, but adopted individually)
- A regionally significant roadway network

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- A regionally significant transit network (this is currently in draft form and being considered for approval by each MPO individually)

Planned SEFTC Products:

- Remaining components of a regional long range transportation plan
- Annual prioritized list of regional roadway and transit projects
- A regional public involvement process
- Performance measures to assess the effectiveness of regional coordination activities

The goals of the South East Florida LRTP are as follows:

1. Improve Regional Transportation Systems and Travel
 - a. Provide adequate capacity for regional travel demands
 - b. Improve transportation facilities' and services' regional connectivity
2. Support Regional Economic Vitality
 - a. Increase access to regionally significant employment areas and sites
 - b. Enhance access to intermodal facilities for tourists, passengers and goods
3. Enhance Regional Social Benefits
 - a. Provide equitable and environmentally-just travel facilities and services
 - b. Increase accessibility to major health care, recreation, education, and cultural facilities
 - c. Improve techniques for the management of auto/truck conflicts
4. Mitigate Regional Environmental Impacts
 - a. Minimize environmental impacts of transportation facilities, services, and operations
5. Integrate Regional Transportation with Land Use and Development Considerations
 - a. Provide for linkage of urban centers and intermodal facilities in the region
 - b. Endorse transportation improvement projects that improve sustainability
 - c. Promote transit-oriented development
 - d. Promote the efficient transportation access to key regional industrial and commercial areas
6. Optimize Sound Regional Investment Strategies
 - a. Optimize use of existing funding sources
 - b. Identify new funding sources
7. Provide for a safer and more secure transportation system for residents, businesses and visitors
 - a. Ensure that evacuation plans for disasters are in place and up-to-date
 - b. Consider and improve the safety and security of seaports, transit, and airport facilities

Northwest Florida Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Prior to the 2000 Census, the metropolitan planning boundary of the Pensacola MPO (renamed the Florida-Alabama TPO in 2004) included the urbanized portions of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. The metropolitan planning boundary of the Fort Walton Beach MPO (renamed the Okaloosa-Walton TPO in 2002) included the urbanized portions of Okaloosa and Walton Counties and extended only very slightly into Santa Rosa County. The 2000 Census redefined the urbanized areas of the two TPOs as growing toward each other with the Fort Walton Beach urbanized area extending further into the metropolitan planning area of the Florida – Alabama TPO. The result was that the urbanized area covered by the Okaloosa-Walton TPO expanded into the metropolitan planning area of the Florida-Alabama TPO. Increasingly, residents of this four county area make inter-county trips to work, shop and play - without regard to political boundaries.

Recognizing the increasingly close relationship among the four counties, the FDOT wrote a letter in 2003 requesting that the two MPOs either consolidate or develop a consultative process to incorporate institutional and process improvements to address regional transportation issues at the MPO level. As a result, the two MPOs entered into an interlocal agreement in 2004 to form the Northwest Florida Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWFL RTPO). The stated purpose of the NWFL RTPO is:

- To establish a forum for a coordinated and cooperative regional transportation planning process for Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties through coordination of long range transportation plans, project priorities, and planning policies and to begin developing alternatives for a solution to congestion and safety problems on US 98, a regionally-significant arterial roadway
- To identify regional transportation projects which improve mobility across county and metropolitan planning area boundaries and, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, to seek funding for those projects
- In cooperation with the individual, local metropolitan planning organizations, to develop and adopt regional transportation priorities for regional transportation projects

Among the responsibilities outlined in the interlocal agreement are the development of a regional transportation plan, regional transportation policies and priorities, and an operating budget (to be included in the individual Unified Planning Work Programs of the member MPOs) sufficient to meet the requirements of the interlocal agreement.

NWFL RTPO Products to Date:

- Intergovernmental agreement

Planned NWFL RTPO Products:

- Regional project priorities (to be submitted annually)

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- Regional transportation network
 - Regional long range transportation plan (LRTP)
 - Regional public involvement plan

Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO

The boundaries of the Sarasota-Bradenton Urbanized Area and the North Port-Punta Gorda Urbanized Area have been growing together steadily over the past several years. The three counties have become increasingly linked through a variety of factors including increased multi-directional travel. It is no longer uncommon for a resident of one of these three counties and to work or shop in another. In fact, the two urbanized areas have grown close enough geographically that they have grown into the metropolitan study areas of the respective contiguous Sarasota/Manatee and Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPOs.

In 2003, recognizing the increasingly close relationship among the three counties, the FDOT requested that the Sarasota/Manatee County MPO and the Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO consider consolidating the two separate MPOs into a single MPO covering the three-county area. Both MPOs decided not to pursue consolidation, but did agree that it would be beneficial to formalize and solidify joint regional cooperation between the MPOs. As a result, the two MPOs entered into an interlocal agreement overseeing a formalized process for joint regional transportation planning and coordination in 2004.

Among the responsibilities outlined in the interlocal agreement are the development of five (5) specific regional planning products and a timeline for their development. They include:

1. Joint Regional Transportation Model:

The parties have developed a tri-county model validation using the same consultant to assist in this critical planning product which will form the basis of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Update by the two MPOs for December, 2005. This effort consisted of regular model validation committee meetings by representatives of the member jurisdictions of the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda and Sarasota/Manatee MPOs. The validated model was completed in 2004.

2. Joint Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Component:

This involved the identification and designation by the two MPOs of the Joint Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System as a component of each MPO's LRTP. Specifically, this exercise identified regionally significant corridors and facilities. The Joint Regional Multi-Modal System will be completed and approved by the respective MPO Boards in December 2005. This identified system will be studied and refined as necessary as part of each MPO's LRTP update and considered throughout the LRTP process and analysis and each MPOs Long Range Plan will be consistent with this regional plan.

3. Joint Regional Project Priorities:

Based on the Joint Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System, the MPOs annually will identify those priorities on the identified Joint Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System and include said projects in the respective MPO's Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) in 2004. In addition, the parties will collaborate and prioritize projects on the Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System for inclusion in the adopted Project Priorities of each MPO in 2004. Each MPO's TIP and Project Priorities will be consistent with the identified Regional Priorities. This collaboration and the products developed will reoccur each subsequent year during the duration of this agreement and will be a continuing obligation and commitment.

4. Joint Regional Public Involvement Process Component:

The parties developed and adopted a Joint Regional Public Involvement Component for inclusion in each MPO's existing Public Involvement Plan. This Joint Regional Component will prescribe public notice and outreach actions and measures to assure public access and involvement for all Joint Regional activities including development of the Regional Long Range Plan component and annual Regional Priority list within the tri-county area. Both MPOs adopted the Joint Regional Public Involvement Components in 2004.

5. Regional Conflict Resolution Process:

The parties agreed to develop a Regional Conflict Resolution Process to resolve any conflicts related to issues covered by the interlocal agreement. Both MPOs adopted the Regional Conflict Resolution Process in 2004.

Joint Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Products to Date:

- Intergovernmental agreement
- Joint regional transportation model
- Joint regional long range transportation plan (LRTP) component
- Joint annual regional project priorities
- Joint regional public involvement process component
- Regional conflict resolution process

Planned Joint Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Products:

- Joint annual regional project priorities

Collier County MPO and Lee County MPO

Based on the 2000 Census, the former Naples Urbanized Area grew to include the Bonita Springs area of Lee County and is now designated as the Naples-Bonita Springs Urbanized Area. The result was that the urbanized area covered by the Collier County MPO (including

Naples) expanded into the metropolitan planning area of the Lee County MPO (including Bonita Springs). Like their neighbors to the north, the residents of these two counties increasingly live, shop and work without regard to the geographic boundary. There has been an increase in inter-county trips over the past several years and that trend is expected to continue.

In 2002, at a joint meeting, members of the two MPOs, directed staff to coordinate transportation planning and policy activities in the bi-county region to promote regional transportation solutions and enhance overall regional transportation system efficiency. In February 2003, the FDOT wrote a letter requesting that the Collier County MPO and the Lee County MPO asking the two counties to enter into an interlocal agreement to formalize the joint regional transportation planning and coordination process. In 2004, the two MPOs entered into an interlocal agreement for joint regional transportation planning and coordination.

Among the responsibilities outlined in the interlocal agreement are the development of five (5) specific regional planning products and a timeline for their development. They include:

1. Joint Regional Transportation Model:

The parties have developed a bi-county model, using the same consultant, to assist in the development and validation of this critical planning tool, which will first be used in the development of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Update that will be adopted by December, 2005. The validated model was completed in 2004.

2. Joint Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Component:

This involved the identification and designation by the two MPOs of the Joint Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System as a component of each MPO's LRTP. Specifically, this exercise identified regionally significant corridors and facilities. The Joint Regional Multi-Modal System was endorsed by the respective MPO Boards in 2004. This initial system may subsequently be reconsidered and refined as necessary, at the request of either MPO.

3. Joint Regional Project Priorities:

Following the Joint Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System, the MPOs annually adopt priorities for funding unprogrammed improvements on the identified Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System that will be competing for funding within the next six (6) fiscal years. Each MPOs Project Priorities will be consistent with the identified Regional Priorities. This collaboration and the products developed will reoccur each subsequent year during the duration of this agreement and will be a continuing obligation and commitment.

4. Joint Regional Public Involvement Process Component:

The parties developed and adopted a Joint Regional Public Involvement Component for inclusion in each MPO's existing Public Involvement Plan. This Joint Regional Component prescribes public notice and outreach actions and measures to assure public access and involvement for all Joint Regional activities including development of the Regional Long Range Plan component and annual Regional Priority list within the bi-county area. Both MPOs adopted the Joint Regional Public Involvement Components in 2004.

5. Regional Conflict Resolution Process:

The parties agreed that if an issue is otherwise irresolvable, the MPO staffs will organize a joint meeting of the MPO governing boards to resolve said matter. If the parties are unable to resolve the issue at the joint meeting, they agreed to submit the issue to the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council for non-binding arbitration.

Joint Collier County MPO and Lee County MPO Products to Date:

- Intergovernmental agreement
- Joint regional transportation model (the two MPOs also now jointly utilize the services of the same transportation modeler, employed by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council)
- Joint regional multi-modal system and other regionally significant transportation facilities
- Joint annual regional project priorities
- Joint regional public involvement process component
- Regional conflict resolution process

Planned Joint Collier County MPO and Lee County MPO Products:

- Joint annual regional project priorities, including priorities for the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP)
- Joint regional multi-modal transportation plan component

Martin County MPO and St. Lucie County MPO

The 2000 US Census resulted in the merger of several urbanized areas in Florida. In Martin and St. Lucie counties, the two urbanized areas of Fort Pierce and Stuart were merged into the Port St. Lucie urbanized area. Despite the merger of the urbanized areas and the encouragement of the FDOT to do so, the Martin and St. Lucie County MPOs opted not to consolidate. However, the two MPOs did acknowledge the need for improved regional coordination.

One of the initial steps towards regional coordination included the formation of a joint-planning program to develop a transportation vision for the Treasure Coast region. Several

reasons prompted the MPOs to work collectively to create a transportation vision for the region, including the following:

- amount of multidirectional travel patterns between the counties
- the benefit of producing one regional voice to articulate transportation priorities and funding needs
- the need to enhance data and increase information between the MPOs and partners

Toward that end, Martin MPO and St. Lucie MPO are jointly developing a regional long-range transportation plan (RLRTP) for the Treasure Coast area to address the demands on their shared transportation network. The RLRTP will define the regional multimodal transportation network (including facilities, corridors, and centers) and address regional LRTP system plan elements, such as transit, bicycle/pedestrian ways and greenways, movement of freight and goods, and a congestion management system. In addition, the RLRTP will contain provisions for a joint decision-making process related to developing regional transportation priorities.

Although the plan will not be approved until later in 2005, the two MPOs have jointly retained a consultant to assist in the development of the regional LRTP. The consultant will review the individual MPO's interests and those of the region as a whole and formulate the plan accordingly. Through the development of the regional LRTP, the two MPOs are conducting joint MPO meetings and joint public outreach efforts. The plan is currently scheduled for final adoption in December 2005. The two MPOs are also in the process of developing an intergovernmental agreement to further clarify their intent, roles, and responsibilities in the joint planning effort.

Joint St. Lucie and Martin County MPO Products to Date:

- Treasure Coast Region Transportation Vision

Planned Joint St. Lucie and Martin County MPO Products:

- Regional long range transportation plan (under development and to be completed by December 2005)
- Intergovernmental agreement
- Regional transportation project priorities list (to be submitted annually)

20-Year Transportation Financial Shortfall

In 2002, as part of a full review of MPO long range transportation plans in Florida, CUTR researchers estimated that the 20-year statewide shortfall between estimated transportation needs and reasonably available revenues amounted to \$37.7 billion in Year 2000 dollars.

CUTR has been asked to document the research method used to prepare the financial shortfall estimate along with the challenges and barriers in developing such an estimate. Additionally, CUTR has been asked to include a discussion focusing on the practicality and validity of extrapolating the financial shortfalls estimate conducted in 2002 using updated financial data from a small sample of MPOs around the state (data available from MPO that have updated long range transportation plans since 2002).

Research Method for Calculating the 2002 Estimate of Statewide Financial Shortfall

The methodology used to calculate the shortfall was relatively straightforward, but the accuracy of the result was naturally limited by problems with the available data. The two primary data problems were inconsistencies in the definition of a transportation “need” from MPO to MPO and the varying ways that MPOs reported their financial data in their individual LRTPs. A more detailed explanation of both of these issues with the available data follows.

- The definition of transportation need varied across the state

Some MPOs defined a set of needed transportation projects strictly on projected highway level of service deficiencies and projected transit ridership demands. Other MPOs refined their definition of needed transportation projects by considering policy, physical and environmental constraints, effectively reducing the number of needed projects. Other MPOs, specifically excluded projects considered to be unrealistic, too controversial or overkill. For example, one MPO excluded what they referred to as “gold plated” transportation options where cheaper alternatives could be identified that still met the projected demand. Another MPO specifically stated that unrealistic projects were excluded from inclusion in the needs plan.

Another factor directly impacting the determination of transportation needs was the population projections made in the metropolitan area. Higher population growth rates tend to lead to an increase in the projected travel demand, often resulting in more needed projects. Therefore, MPOs that anticipated significantly larger population growth than other similarly sized MPOs tended to identify more transportation needs. As a result of these policy decisions and factors, MPOs of comparable size reported dramatically different shortfalls between their needs plan costs and reasonably available revenue, with some shortfalls being very large and others being relatively modest in size.

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- The reporting of financial data varied between MPOs across the state

MPOs across the state reported financial data in disparate ways. MPO financial data was expressed in a variety of base years, were projected to a variety of forecast years and covered a variety of timeframes. Additionally, MPOs across the state reported financial data in a number of different ways. For example, some MPOs calculated a needs plan cost and a cost feasible plan cost for each mode (highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc.) at each level (state and local) considered in the plan. Other MPOs only calculated needs plan costs for some modes while calculating cost feasible plan costs for all modes and then presented both as a total cost. A few MPOs did not distinguish between operating costs and capital costs, particularly as they related to transit, in deriving a total plan cost. Still other MPOs simply reported the expected revenue for a given mode as the expected cost. A few MPOs used unit costs to estimate project costs, but the unit costs used by individual MPOs were not always the same as those used by other MPOs. While these variations may have made sense in the local metropolitan planning context and made the planning exercise more realistic within that local context, this lack of standardization made statewide comparisons of financial data problematic.

The statewide shortfall estimate was calculated using information from each individual MPO plan, supplemented by information provided by MPO staff, with a full understanding of the above described data limitations. Two adjustments were necessary to methodically arrive at a statewide financial shortfall estimate, including:

- Inflating or deflating all the available financial data so as to be in a common year (Year 2000 dollars)
- Calculating an average annual shortfall estimate for each MPO by dividing the total financial shortfall for that MPO by the number of years covered by the individual MPO LRTP in order to account for differing plan horizon years (2020 and 2025) and different time periods covered (ranging from 15 to 25 years)

Once calculated, the individual MPO average annual plan shortfall estimates were then added together and multiplied by 20 to arrive at a statewide 20-year shortfall estimate, expressed in year 2000 dollars. It should be understood that the 20-year timeframe does not reflect a specific timeframe (2005 through 2025, for example) since the individual MPO LRTPs covered a variety of time frames and time periods. Instead, the 20-year shortfall reflects an average annualized shortfall projected across a common 20-year period, expressed in Year 2000 dollars.

Practicality and Validity of Extrapolating the 2002 Estimate of Statewide Financial Shortfall Using a Sample of Updated LRTPs

CUTR was asked to consider and discuss the practicality and validity of extrapolating the current financial shortfalls estimate using financial data from a sample of recently updated MPO long range transportation plans from around the state. A brief review of the financial data contained in those plans indicates that the same data limitations and adjustment issues experienced in 2002 still exist (varying financial data, inconsistencies in the definition of a

transportation need, different base years, time horizon years and time periods covered). Further, there are inherent limitations in the validity of extrapolating an estimate based on a relatively small data sample (8 of 26 MPOs). An additional concern, in this case, would be that the eight sample MPOs would not be representative of MPOs from across the state as they are primarily from relatively large urban areas in Southeast Florida and the Tampa Bay area.

Considering the relative value of such an estimate and given the high likelihood of significant inaccuracy of the result, any revised estimate based on an extrapolation of the 2002 shortfall estimate would likely be impractical and difficult to defend.

Instead, a new statewide shortfall estimate should be calculated in 2006, at which time all 26 individual MPO long range transportation plans would have been updated. Further, MPOs across the state should cooperatively develop guidelines for determining “needed” projects and for reporting financial data. Developing guidelines would facilitate future 20-year financial shortfall estimates with more accuracy and confidence.