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Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Transit Agency Planning Coordination in Florida

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Metric Conversion Table

SYMBOL	WHEN YOU KNOW	MULTIPLY BY	TO FIND	SYMBOL
LENGTH				
in	inches	25.4	millimeters	mm
ft	feet	0.305	meters	m
yd	yards	0.914	meters	m
mi	miles	1.61	kilometers	km
VOLUME				
fl oz	fluid ounces	29.57	milliliters	mL
gal	gallons	3.785	liters	L
ft^3	cubic feet	0.028	cubic meters	m^3
yd^3	cubic yards	0.765	cubic meters	m^3
NOTE: Volumes greater than 1,000 L shall be shown in m^3				
MASS				
oz	ounces	28.35	grams	g
lb	pounds	0.454	kilograms	kg
T	short tons (2000 lb)	0.907	megagrams (or "metric ton")	Mg (or "t")
TEMPERATURE (exact degrees)				
°F	Fahrenheit	5 (F-32)/9 or (F-32)/1.8	Celsius	°C

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The purpose of this study was to benchmark the current level of coordination and cooperation between Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and transit agencies vis a vis the long range transportation plan (LRTP) and transit development plan (TDP). The impetus for the study was historical, albeit anecdotal, reports of inconsistency between LRTPs and TDPs in some metropolitan areas of Florida. An online survey was conducted of all 27 Florida MPOs and 25 of the 31 fixed route transit operators. In the survey, both MPOs and transit agencies expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the process of coordination of the LRTP. However, MPOs were less satisfied than transit agencies with the process of coordination of the TDP. The online survey was followed up with case study interviews of MPO and transit agency staff in six Florida counties: Duval, Pinellas, Lee, Palm Beach, Indian River, and Bay. Several key observations were made from the interviews. One of them was the importance of regularly scheduled coordination meetings between MPO and transit agency staff. The report recommends that Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) 14-73.001 be modified to require the LRTP and TDP to be updated the same year and that language be added saying that the vision, mission, goals, and objectives in the TDP shall to the maximum extent feasible be consistent with the vision, mission, goals, and objectives in the LRTP.</td></tr>
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Executive Summary

Transportation planning is a complex process involving multiple agencies and various levels of government. Adding to the complexity of transportation planning is the need to coordinate efforts between these various agencies and levels of government. In Florida, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required by both federal code 23 CFR Parts 450 and 771 and State Statute 339.175 f.s. to prepare a long-range transportation plan (LRTP) that has at least a 20-year planning horizon. Transit agencies in Florida are required under the Florida Administrative Code 14-73.001 to prepare a Transit Development Plan (TDP) with a 10-year planning horizon. Furthermore, TDPs are required under the State's administrative code to be consistent with the LRTP.

The purpose of this study was to benchmark the current level of coordination and cooperation between Florida MPOs and transit agencies vis a vis the LRTP and TDP. The impetus for the study was historical, albeit anecdotal, reports of inconsistency between LRTPs and TDPs in some metropolitan areas of Florida. The work performed in this study comprised of three main tasks:

- Document current federal and state requirements for planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies.
- Conduct an online survey of all MPOs and fixed route transit operators in Florida.
- Conduct case study interviews of MPO and transit agency staff in six selected Florida metropolitan areas.

Literature reviewed for this study included federal law and regulations, state statues, and academic reports. Key themes found in the literature review include the following:

- MPOs and transit agencies of various sizes and in various regions of the U.S. face challenges and obstacles to better coordination.
- MPOs are required to conduct long range multimodal transportation planning.
- Transit agency involvement in the MPO planning process is beneficial to the transit agency.
- Transportation planning coordination can be improved by building rapport and enhancing the working relationships between MPOs and transit agencies.
- Pertaining to Florida, there are instances of MPOs and transit agencies working collaboratively on various occasions, such as evaluating transit quality of service.

An online survey and case study interviews provide perspectives from MPOs and transit agencies on the current state of practice, and give additional insights on the of key components of and barriers to successful coordination between MPOs and transit agencies.

Online Survey Results

Some highlights from the survey include:

- Both MPOs and transit agencies expressed a high degree of satisfaction when it came to the process of coordination of the LRTP. Sixty-seven percent of the MPOs and 72 percent of the transit agencies said they were extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied.
- MPOs were less satisfied than transit agencies with the process of coordination of the TDP. While 61 percent of the transit agencies said they were extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied, among MPOs, it was only 46 percent. While only 6 percent of transit agencies were dissatisfied with the process of TDP coordination, among MPOs, it was 15 percent. Three MPOs that were dissatisfied made statements to the effect that their transit agency did not welcome their involvement in the development of the TDP because the transit agency viewed it as their internal document.
- MPOs were also less satisfied than transit agencies with the level of consistency between the vision, goals, and strategies of the LRTP and TDP. Whereas 56 percent of the transit agencies said they were either extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied, among the MPOs it was only 34 percent. The majority of MPOs (57%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- The majority of MPOs and transit agencies (75% or more) said they do not coordinate the timing of their LRTP and TDP updates. Furthermore, the majority of MPOs and transit agencies said they do not plan to coordinate the timing of their next LRTP and TDP updates (65% and 55%, respectively).
- Thirty-two percent of the MPOs and 40 percent of the transit agencies said that the biggest challenge for improved integration of the LRTP and TDP is the difference in horizon years and update frequencies. However, it should also be mentioned that 32 percent of the MPOs said that integration of the LRTP and TDP was not a challenge.

The MPOs and transit agencies were given a chance at the end of the survey to provide additional comments. One recommendation was to remove the requirement for separate planning documents. Another was for the State to clarify the mission, roles and responsibilities of MPOs and transit agencies. Another agency highly recommended regular monthly meetings between MPO, transit agency, and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) staff to coordinate priorities, funding, and projects.

Case Study Interview Results

The six metropolitan areas that were selected for case study interviews included the following counties: Indian River, Bay, Pinellas, Lee, Palm Beach, and Duval. Five key observations were made from the interviews.

Observation No. 1 – Personality

The one common feature that was shared by all six metropolitan areas was that the planning staff from the MPO and the transit agency got along well and shared a common vision for transit. Personality is key, and it can be a blessing or a curse. In some of the metropolitan areas, it took a change of leadership at one or both of the agencies in order to bring about a positive change in the working relationship. For example, Observation 2 below mentions regularly scheduled coordination meetings between MPO and transit agency staff. In two of the counties where these meetings occur (Pinellas and Palm Beach), these meetings are a direct result of a new director coming in and saying that coordination was going to be a priority.

Observation No. 2 – Regularly scheduled meetings between MPO and transit agency planning staff

In Pinellas County, Indian River County, and Palm Beach County, planning staff from the MPO and transit agency meet on a regular basis. The formality and content of the meetings can vary. For example, the staff meetings in Indian River County and Palm Beach County include a prepared agenda. In Indian River County, the meeting is essentially a quarterly performance review of the transit system because the MPO operates the transit system. In Palm Beach County, the main purpose of the meeting is to review the status of transit projects that are funded by the MPO's Local Initiatives Program. The meetings in Pinellas County are more informal. There is no prepared agenda. The meetings are held over lunch and are meant as an opportunity for staff to speak frankly with one another. What the meetings in all three counties have in common is that they are held on a regularly scheduled basis, and they are attended by staff members who have decision-making authority (e.g., executive director or deputy director).

Observation No. 3 – Collaborating on projects besides the LRTP and TDP

Collaborating on other projects besides the LRTP and TDP helps build trust between the MPO and transit agency, which leads in turn to better coordination on the LRTP and TDP. What they collaborate on can vary. It can be on something large. In Pinellas County and Lee County, the MPO and transit agencies collaborated on a sales tax initiative for better transit service. Although both initiatives failed, the collaboration nevertheless forged a positive relationship between staff. The collaboration could be on something smaller like adopting common software. In Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach TPA and Palm Tran collaborated on adopting Remix transportation software. In Duval County, the North Florida TPO and JTA will be using the

same traffic forecast model for the first time. JTA is taking the lead on updating the transit network in the model, and the TPO is updating the highway component to the model. The lesson here is that the more the MPO and transit agency collaborate, the more likely it is that the LRTP and the TDP will be consistent.

Observation No. 4 – Interlocal agreement between the MPO and transit agency

The Lee County MPO and Lee Tran have collaborated extensively on a number of transit studies, including one that involved collaboration with a neighboring MPO and transit agency. They have actually formalized their collaborative relationship via an interlocal agreement in which they pledge to "actively engage" each other not just in the development of the LRTP and TDP, but also on other transportation studies. In the agreement, the Lee County MPO agrees to give LeeTran up to 80 percent of its FTA Section 5305 funds for planning. Also in the agreement, it states that "[t]he Transit Element of the MPO's LRTP is the accepted twenty-year planning document and vision for transit needs in Lee County."

Observation No. 5 – Smaller MPOs as the transit operator

In Indian River County and Bay County, the MPO is the transit operator, and the MPO Board adopts the TDP. If consistency between the LRTP and the TDP is the goal, this is certainly one way to do it. While this study does not recommend implementing this organizational structure statewide, it could be worth consideration for small metropolitan areas (e.g., 550,000 population or less).

Suggestions to Improve MPO and transit agency Coordination

Based on research findings from the literature review, surveys, and case studies, the following suggestions are provided for improved planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies:

- **Implement regular meetings between decision-making staff from MPOs, transit agencies, and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).**
- **Implement mechanisms to make both MPO and transit agency governing boards aware of the issues and activities of the other agency.**
- **Ensure that staff is active in the committee structure of the other agency (both standing committees and project-specific committees), perhaps even using the committees of one agency to benefit and inform the planning decisions of the other agency.**
- **Share staff between both agencies to conduct, in part or in full, the transit planning activities of the other agency.**

- **Enter into a formal agreement, such as an interlocal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to define each agency's role in planning for transit in the region.**
- **Adjust the update cycle of the transit development plan (TDP) and the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) to be aligned, to the extent practical.**
- **Align the vision statements of the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and the transit development plan (TDP).**
- **Conduct, when feasible, joint public engagement activities.**
- **Jointly fund and conduct planning studies, data collection exercises, and software development activities.**
- **Provide joint training for MPO and transit agency staff.**

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Transportation planning is a complex process involving multiple agencies and various levels of government. Adding to the complexity of transportation planning is the need to coordinate efforts between these various agencies and levels of government. In Florida, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required by both federal code 23 CFR Parts 450 and 771 and State Statute 339.175 F.S. to prepare a long-range transportation plan (LRTP) that has at least a 20-year planning horizon. Transit agencies in Florida are required under the Florida Administrative Code 14-73.001 to prepare a Transit Development Plan (TDP) with a 10-year planning horizon. Furthermore, TDPs are required under the State's administrative code to be consistent with the LRTP.

MPOs are responsible for transportation planning and policy-making in urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. As part of their transportation planning responsibilities, MPOs are required by federal law to prepare three different planning documents: a long-range transportation plan, a transportation improvement program (TIP), and a unified planning work program (UPWP). All three of these planning documents are required to be fiscally constrained, meaning there must be a reasonable expectation of funding for the projects contained within them. Furthermore, these documents must be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for comment/approval. There is no corresponding federal requirement for transit agencies to produce similar planning documents. However, Florida law does require transit agencies to annually prepare and update a transit development plan. Coordination between MPOs and transit agencies is the focus of this research project. As the literature review will show, there are numerous citations in federal and state law and regulation where coordination is emphasized.

The purpose of this study was to benchmark the current level of coordination and cooperation between Florida MPOs and transit agencies vis-a-vis the LRTP and TDP. The work performed in this study comprised of three main tasks:

- Document current federal and state requirements for planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies.
- Conduct an online survey of all MPOs and fixed route transit operators in Florida.
- Conduct case study interviews of MPO and transit agency staff in six selected Florida metropolitan areas.

This report summarizes findings from the research tasks and provides a set of suggestions to improve MPO and transit agency coordination. The documentation of current federal and state requirements for planning coordination and literature on current practice can be found in Chapter 2. The methodology used to collect data from MPOs and transit agencies is detailed in Chapter 3. Results of the online survey are documented in Chapter 4. The case study interviews are summarized in Chapter 5. Elements for successful coordination between MPOs and transit agencies and suggestions to improve MPO and transit agency coordination are provided in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Limited research has been done on the topic of MPO and transit agency coordination in regard to long range transportation planning. The existing literature identifies what federal and state laws say about MPO and transit agency coordination, and what academic research has been done on this topic. Research findings conclude that levels of participation by transit agencies in the MPO planning process have been inconsistent (Rivasplata & Smith, 2012; FTA, 2004). The literature offers some historical and contextual insight into the origins of the lack of coordination.

Federal and state law are clear on the requirements for coordination. MPOs are required to have a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive" (3C) planning process (23 CFR 450.300). The establishment of the 3C vision in the 1960s laid the groundwork for transportation planning, but offered no details as to who was to be involved in transportation planning, what role participating parties should play, and what cooperation among parties meant or required. With the adoption of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, the TIP became an influential tool for MPOs to guide metropolitan transportation planning. Despite this, many MPOs simply formed TIPs around the projects that local governments and transportation agencies wanted rather than leveraging the TIP as a means to accomplish regional planning goals (Sciara, 2017).

MPOs are required to include officials from transit agencies as voting members of their board (23 CFR 450.310). Under ISTEA and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), MPOs must consist of representatives of local governments, appropriate State officials, and agencies that operate major modes of transportation (e.g. transit systems, ports, airports). Goldman and Deakin (2000) found that partnerships had been established, but they were mostly limited partnerships, emphasizing consultation and coordination. These limited partnerships are characterized by minimal opportunities for transit agency participation and varying levels of effort by MPOs to include transit agencies in the planning process (Sciara, 2017; FTA, 2004). Some MPOs follow the minimum federal requirements for coordination while others go above and beyond what is required as part of the planning process (FTA, 2004).

Historically, most transit agencies have not held an MPO board seat; in cases where transit was granted seats on MPO boards, they were often non-voting members (Goldman & Deakin, 2000; Sciara, 2017). Transit agencies that do participate in MPO decisions report that such participation benefits them as it enhances awareness of transit needs and accelerates transit project implementation (Sciara, 2017). For example, within Hillsborough County the transit

agency holds a voting seat on the MPO policy board and has been able to utilize this position to receive federal funding (FTA, 2004).

MPOs are required by federal law to develop the long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program "in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators" (23 CFR 450.306). The LRTP must include existing and proposed public transportation projects, and the MPO and transit agencies must cooperatively develop the estimate of funds that will be available to support these projects. The benefits of coordinating during the development of the LRTP were identified by Deyel and Widenman (2014):

- Members involved in the LRTP creation process are more likely to reach consensus when the member organizations are interdependent.
- The development of LRTPs fits well with the collaborative model and exemplifies conditions that allow for successful consensus-based collaborative planning.
- The process of creating a draft LRTP is where the most meaningful collaboration between stakeholders in the transportation planning process occurs.
- The satisfaction of organizations participating in the drafting of an LRTP is derived from their organizational impact on the content of the plan, the achievement of their goals for the plan, and their overall satisfaction with the draft plan itself.

State law in Florida supports what is written in federal law and often borrows the same language. When it comes to the TDP, the Florida Administrative Code requires consistency with the LRTP (14-73.001 – Florida Administrative Code). FDOT District 4 (2015) noted that the variation in the planning horizons and update frequency of these two documents can lead to inconsistencies between them. Also, because the LRTP is focused on capital investments and the TDP is more focused on operations, the short-term operational decisions called for in the TDP may be inconsistent with the long-term investment decisions in the LRTP. When developing the TDP, transit agencies must use either a TDP public involvement plan or the public participation plan of the MPO. The transit agency must notify the MPO of all public meetings where the TDP is presented or discussed, and the MPO must be given an opportunity to comment on the TDP.

The adoption of ISTEA in 1991 established stricter regulations for coordinated planning between MPOs and transit agencies. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that coordination has only minimally improved since then. Barriers to regional coordination are often political, institutional, or financial in nature (Rivasplata & Smith, 2012). Some specific challenges and barriers to coordination between MPOs and transit agencies identified in the literature include:

- MPOs have historically focused on highway planning rather than transit and multimodal planning (Bay, 2009).
- MPOs and transit agencies have had separate federal funding sources. These separate funding sources have allowed transit agencies to directly apply for FTA funding without first coordinating with MPOs. Transit agencies are concerned that funding all regional transportation projects through the MPO will reduce their ability to receive funding for transit projects given the historic highway orientation of most MPOs (Bay, 2009).
- Most MPOs lack legal authority to override decisions made by transit agencies, including investment decisions (Bay, 2009).
- The large number of agencies involved in transit planning can lead to inconsistencies caused by the different priorities and technical capacity of their boards and staffs (FDOT District 4, 2015).
- MPOs control project selection in a lesser capacity than the 3C procedures suggest. Local jurisdictions, state DOTs, and local transportation agencies largely control federal, state, and local funds for regional projects; shaping the scope, locations, and implementation of such regional projects (Sciara, 2017).
- The inability of the MPO to impose and collect fees to fund transportation, thus hampering their ability to form collaborative relationships with other parties involves in regional transportation planning for the purpose of delivering region-serving investments (Sciara, 2017).
- Regional entities lack the ability to integrate transit services due to political and administrative difficulties (e.g., no authoritative control over transit agencies within their region) (Rivasplata & Smith, 2012).
- The regional transportation planning organization plays only a limited role in the ongoing planning of transit services in a metropolitan region. Many times this is because of outstanding political factors. In other cases, the regional agency may have limited resources that can be used to promote coordination (Rivasplata & Smith, 2012).
- Inherent conflicts between the benefits of regional coordination and the costs to individual transit agencies.

The literature review highlighted some of the obstacles that still impede MPO-transit agency coordination as well as some of the recommendations that have been made for improvements. Key themes found in the literature review include the following:

- MPOs and transit agencies of various sizes and in various regions of the U.S. face challenges and obstacles to better coordination. These obstacles emerge from having different priorities, different planning horizons, different update frequencies for their required planning documents, and different funding sources.

- MPOs are required to conduct long range multimodal transportation planning. They can create a regional transit vision, but they have no legal authority to enforce it. Cities and counties generally control the local purse strings.
- Transit agency involvement in the MPO planning process is beneficial to the transit agency. It helps the transit agency to influence transportation policy decisions for the metropolitan area. In some cases, it even helps them to secure additional funds to meet their needs that they may not have otherwise received (e.g. STP flex funds).
- Transportation planning coordination can be improved by building rapport and enhancing the working relationships between MPOs and transit agencies. At a minimum, the establishment of a regional vision, clear communication, and individual planning responsibilities can improve coordination. Further coordination may be accomplished by assigning transportation planning coordination responsibility to a single entity or individual, who would work to improve relationships between MPOs and transit agencies. In order to make planning coordination easier to accomplish, the timeframe and development process of TDPs can be enhanced to better coincide with the LRTP timeframe, in an effort to ensure greater consistency and alignment between the two plans.
- Pertaining to Florida, there are instances of MPOs and transit agencies working collaboratively on various occasions, such as evaluating transit quality of service. Although not specifically related to the transportation planning process, such cases exemplify the ability of these entities to work together. Such past experiences, whether positive or negative, can be evaluated in order to enhance the relationship between MPOs and transit agencies for the purpose of transportation planning in the state.

Chapter 3
Methodology

In September and October of 2018, the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) conducted an online survey of the twenty-seven metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and thirty-one fixed route transit operators in the state of Florida. All twenty-seven MPOs responded to the survey. However, only twenty-five of the thirty-one fixed route transit operators responded. There were two survey questionnaires: one for the MPOs and one for the transit agencies. Both questionnaires can be found in Appendix A.

The purpose of the survey was to assess opinions about the current state of planning coordination between these agencies in regards to LRTPs and TDPs as well as to ask some questions about how they coordinate with one another. The scope of work for the research study also called for conducting a more detailed examination (i.e., interviews) of the planning coordination practices of MPOs and transit agencies in six metropolitan areas (two small, two medium, and two large). In order to identify these six MPO-transit agency pairs, the research team created a rubric for evaluating and scoring the survey results. The following eight topic areas from the survey were used.

1. Satisfaction with the process of coordination as it relates to the LRTP
2. Satisfaction with the process of coordination as it relates to the TDP
3. Satisfaction with the mutual consistency of the LRTP and TDP
4. Integration of other agency's plan into own plan
5. Coordinate timing of most recent LRTP and TDP updates
6. Transit priority corridors reflected in each other's plans
7. Coordinate on other planning documents
8. Pool funds, either for the LRTP and TDP or some other planning document

Each question was assigned a scale to use in evaluating the survey responses. It is important to note that the scales were designed to be out of a total possible score of four points. This was decided in order to weigh each question or topic evenly throughout the evaluation. Because the purpose of the interviews was to identify best practices, only positive responses from the survey were scored. The scales for each question are as follows:

Satisfaction with the process of coordination as it relates to the LRTP

- Extremely Satisfied = 2
- Somewhat Satisfied = 1
- Neither Satisfied = 0

- Somewhat Dissatisfied = 0
- Extremely Dissatisfied = 0

Satisfaction with the process of coordination as it relates to the TDP.

- Extremely Satisfied = 2
- Somewhat Satisfied = 1
- Neither Satisfied = 0
- Somewhat Dissatisfied = 0
- Extremely Dissatisfied = 0

Satisfaction with the actual consistency of the LRTP and TDP

- Extremely Satisfied = 2
- Somewhat Satisfied = 1
- Neither Satisfied = 0
- Somewhat Dissatisfied = 0
- Extremely Dissatisfied = 0

Integration of the other agency's plan into their own plan

- Yes = 2
- No = 0

Coordinate timing of most recent LRTP and TDP updates.

- Yes = 2
- No = 0

Transit priority corridors are reflected in each other's plans.

- Yes = 2
- No = 0

Coordinate when it comes to other planning documents.

- Yes, always = 2
- Yes, sometimes = 1
- No, never = 0

Pool funds, either for the LRTP and TDP or some other planning document

- Yes = 2
- No = 0

A sample score card for one of the MPOs is shown in Figure 1.

MPO: Bay County TPO
Transit Agency: Bay Town Trolley

Question	MPO Score (out of 2)	Transit Score (out of 2)	Question Total (Out of 4)
Satisfaction with coordination as it relates to the LRTP	2	1	3
Satisfaction as it relates to the TDP	2	1	3
Satisfaction as it relates to consistency of LRTP and TDP	2	0	2
Integration of the other's plan (LRTP/TDP) into own plan	2	2	4
Both coordinate the timing of the most recent LRTP and TDP updates?	0	0	0
Transit priority corridors reflected in each other's plans?	2	0	2
Coordinate when it comes to other planning documents?	2	1	3
Pooled funding either for the development of the LRTP, TDP, or any other planning document?	2	2	4
		Total Score:	**21**

Figure 1 Sample Score Card

Table 1 on the following page shows the total scores for each MPO-transit agency pair. The pairs were grouped into three categories (large, medium, small) according to the 2017 estimated population size of the MPO area. The population ranges that were used in the classification size were as follows: Large MPO area (1,000,000+); Medium MPO area (551,000 to 1,000,000); and Small MPO area (0 to 550,000)

The pairs highlighted in green were the ones selected for the case study interviews. Miami-Dade Transit and the Miami-Dade TPO do not appear in the table. Multiple attempts were made to get Miami-Dade Transit to complete the survey, but these efforts were unsuccessful. It will be noted also that in the Large category, the Palm Beach TPA and Palm Tran were selected instead of MetroPlan Orlando and LYNX and the Hillsborough MPO and HART. MetroPlan Orlando and LYNX were not selected for interviews because of a large amount of staff turnover that occurred at LYNX shortly after the online survey, including the resignation of the LYNX executive director in February 2019. The Hillsborough MPO and HART were not selected for interviews because Forward Pinellas and PSTA had been selected for interviews. While Hillsborough and Pinellas are in two different size categories, there was a desire for geographic distribution of the MPO/transit Agency pairs.

Table 1 Composite Scores of MPO-Transit Agency Pairs

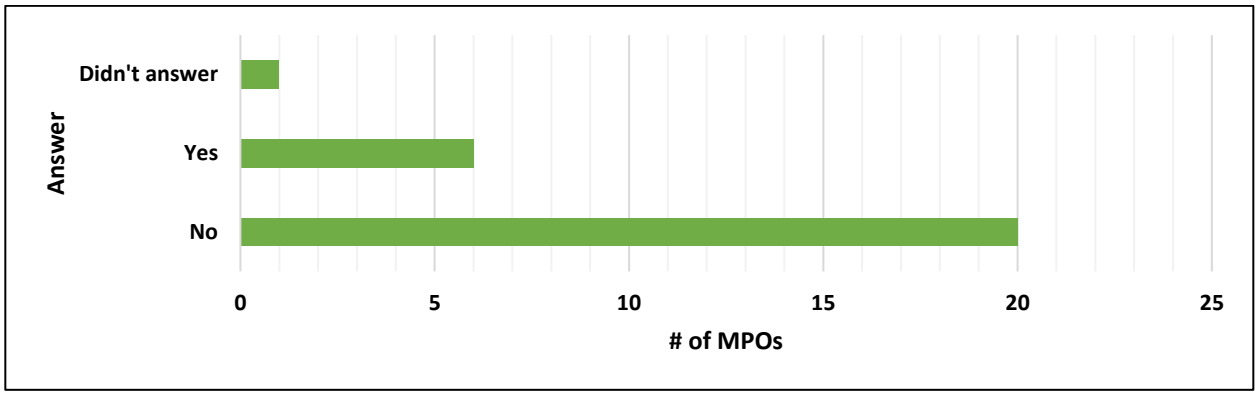
MPO	Transit Agency	Score (Out of 32)	2017 Population	MPO Size
North Florida TPO	Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)	23	1,455,500	Large
North Florida TPO	Sunshine Bus Company (St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.)	23	1,455,500	Large
MetroPlan Orlando	LYNX	23	2,106,300	Large
Hillsborough MPO	Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART)	18	1,379,300	Large
Palm Beach TPA	Palm Tran	17	1,414,100	Large
Miami Dade TPO	Tri-Rail (South Florida RTA)	17	2,743,100	Large
Broward MPO	Tri-Rail (South Florida RTA)	15	1,874,000	Large
Broward MPO	Broward County Transit (BCT)	14	1,874,000	Large
Palm Beach TPA	Tri-Rail (South Florida RTA)	12	1,414,100	Large
MetroPlan Orlando	SunRail (FDOT)	11	2,106,300	Large
Broward MPO	Palm Tran	5	1,874,000	Large
Forward Pinellas	Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)	25	962,000	Medium
Lee County MPO	Lee County Transit (LeeTran)	24	698,500	Medium
Sarasota/Manatee MPO	Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)	21	776,000	Medium
River to Sea TPO	Votran (Volusia County)	19	619,700	Medium
Polk TPO	Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (Citrus Connection)	18	661,600	Medium
Sarasota/Manatee MPO	Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)	17	776,000	Medium
Space Coast TPO	Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT)	14	575,200	Medium
River to Sea TPO	SunRail (FDOT)	12	619,700	Medium
Indian River County MPO	GoLine (Indian River)	26	149,000	Small
Bay County TPO	Bay Town Trolley	21	178,800	Small
Pasco County MPO	Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT)	21	505,700	Small
Collier MPO	Collier Area Transit (CAT)	20	357,500	Small
Lake-Sumter MPO	Lake County Public Transportation (Lake Xpress)	20	452,400	Small
Hernando/Citrus MPO	Citrus County Transit	19	325,700	Small
Florida-Alabama TPO	Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT)	19	469,300	Small
Gainesville MTPO	Gainesville Regional Transit System	12	209,700	Small
Martin County MPO	Martin County Public Transit	9	153,000	Small
Capital Region TPA	StarMetro (Tallahassee)	9	368,100	Small
Pasco County MPO	Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART)	7	505,700	Small

Chapter 4
Survey Results

Are you members of the same parent agency?

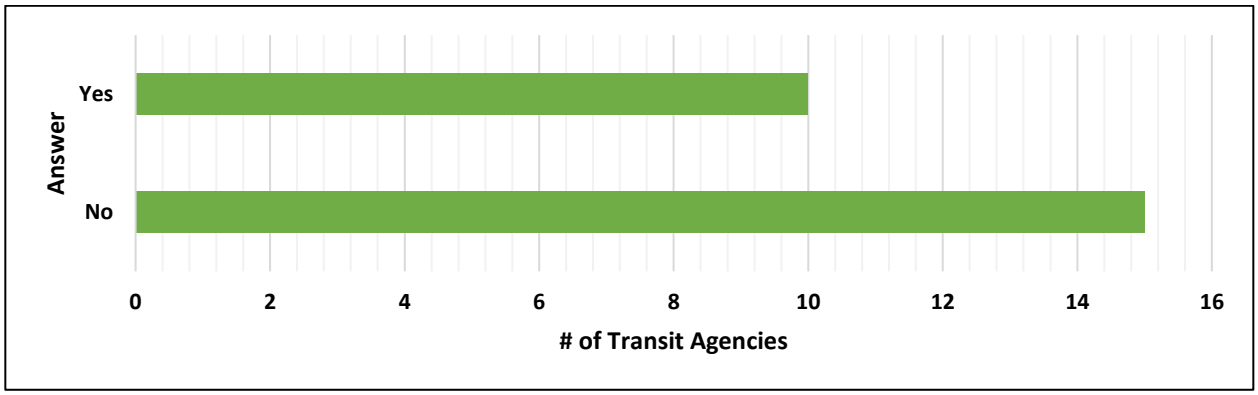
In the survey, MPOs and transit agencies were asked whether they are members of the same parent agency (e.g. city government, county government, regional planning council). On the one hand, the majority of the MPOs and transit agencies are not members of the same parent agency. On the other hand, there was a discrepancy in the survey results. Specifically, ten of the transit agencies said they were members of the same parent agency as their MPO, but only six of the MPOs said they were members of the same parent agency. Some of the MPO-Transit agency pairs answered this question differently. For example, Bay Town Trolley responded yes to this question while the Bay County MPO/TPO responded no. Bay Town Trolley staff are officially County employees. However, they report to, and act as staff to, the Bay County MPO/TPO, which is staffed by the Emerald Coast Regional Council. So even a question as seemingly simple as this one can be difficult to answer accurately. The six MPOs that said they were members of the same parent agency as the transit agency were Collier, Hernando/Citrus, Indian River, Martin, and Ocala/Marion, and Pasco.

MPO Response



Answer	Percent	Count
Yes	22%	6
No	74%	20
Didn't answer	4%	1
Total	100%	27

Transit Agency Response



Answer	Percent	Count
Yes	40%	10
No	60%	15
Total	100%	25

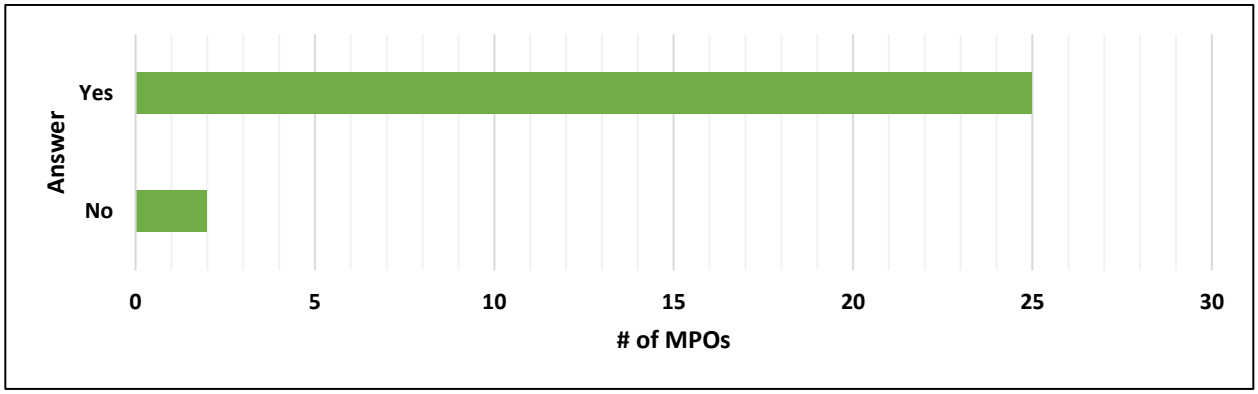
Note: All 27 MPOs in the State completed the survey. However, only 25 of the 31 fixed route transit operators responded.

Do you share any common board members?

Having common Board members can help contribute to better planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies. The majority of MPOs and transit agencies in Florida do share at least one common Board member. In fact, the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO and the Heartland Regional TPO were the only two MPOs that reported not having any common Board members with their transit agency, and that is because there is not a fixed route transit system in their county. According to the MPO survey results, the average number of shared Board members was 3.5. According to the results of the Transit agency survey results, it was 3.8.

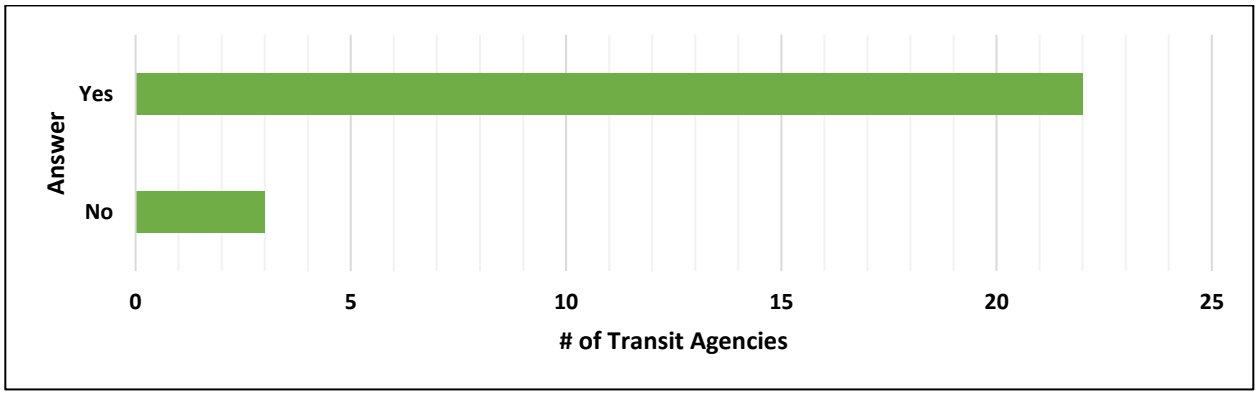
Once again, there are some discrepancies in the responses received for this question. Three of the transit agencies said they do not share any common Board members with their MPO. These were GoLine Transit, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, and the Sunshine Bus Company/St. Johns County Council on Aging. However, GoLine Transit, which is operated by the Senior Resource Association, is a service of the Indian River MPO, and the MPO Board acts as GoLine's Board. According to the North Florida TPO, they do share one common Board member with JTA and the Sunshine Bus Company.

MPO Response



Answer	Percent	Count
Yes	93%	25
No	7%	2
Total	100%	27

Transit Agency Response



Answer	Percent	Count
Yes	88%	22
No	12%	3
Total	100%	25

Level of satisfaction with the process of coordination on the LRTP

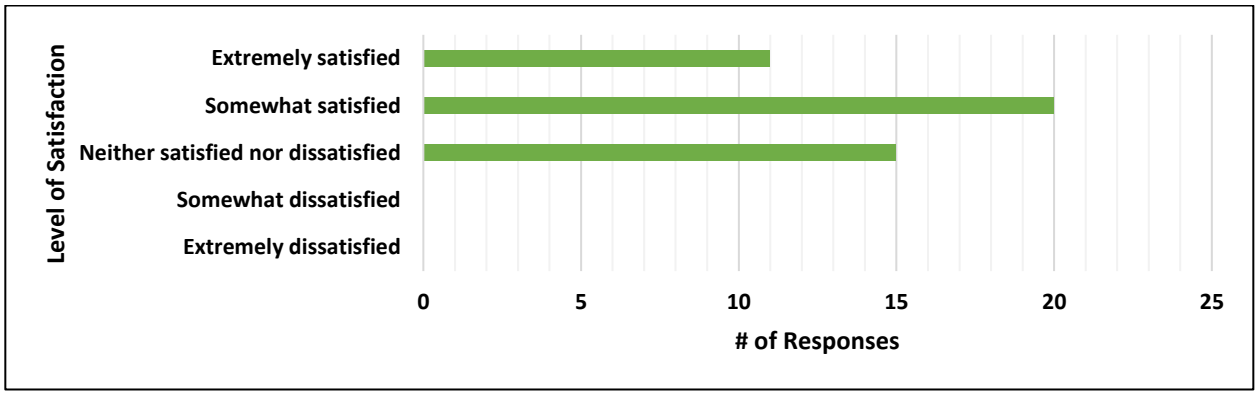
Both MPOs and transit agencies expressed a high degree of satisfaction when it came to the process of coordination of the LRTP. Among the MPOs, 67 percent were extremely satisfied or satisfied. For transit agencies, it was 72 percent. No MPOs said they were dissatisfied. Only one transit agency said it was dissatisfied.

MPOs and transit agencies that responded as being either extremely satisfied or satisfied were asked in a follow-up question what contributed to their level of satisfaction. The most recurring comment was

having a close working relationship and good communication with staff from the other agency. The answers varied as to how this was achieved. For example, while all MPOs are required by state law to have transit agency representation on their technical advisory committee, some MPOs go further by having transit agency representation on their LRTP steering committee. Forward Pinellas, the MPO for Pinellas County, reported that they and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) actually co-branded and aligned the LRTP and Community Bus Plan. The latter was a study commissioned by PSTA in 2012 to evaluate the existing bus system and come up with three viable future scenarios of the bus system. In the survey, Forward Pinellas also reported that they have conducted joint board meetings with PSTA. Some MPOs reported having regular meetings with transit agency staff. In the Tampa Bay area for example, FDOT District 7 hosts monthly coordination meetings between FDOT, the MPOs, and the transit agencies. In Palm Beach County, planning staff from the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA) and Palm Tran meet monthly. Several other MPOs reported that they are the ones that they coordinate the planning for the transit agency. For example, the Marion County TPO and the Indian River TPO both administer fixed route transit operations in their counties via a third-party contractor.

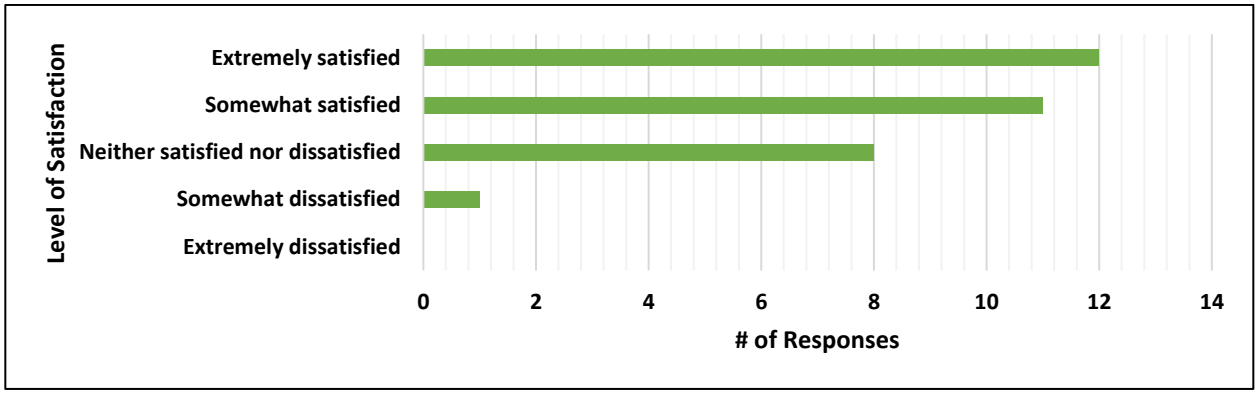
The one transit agency that expressed dissatisfaction with the process of coordination of the LRTP was asked what would improve things. This transit agency responded that there needs to be reduced emphasis on model-driven highway priorities and that the traditional travel demand model needs to be overhauled entirely.

MPO Response



Answer	Percent	Count
Extremely satisfied	24%	11
Somewhat satisfied	43%	20
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	33%	15
Somewhat dissatisfied	0%	0
Extremely dissatisfied	0%	0
Total	100%	46

Transit Agency Response



Answer	%	Count
Extremely satisfied	38%	12
Somewhat satisfied	34%	11
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25%	8
Somewhat dissatisfied	3%	1
Extremely dissatisfied	0%	0
Total	100%	32

Note: Some MPOs have planning relationships with more than one transit agency and vice versa. The 46 responses from the MPO survey, and the 32 responses from the transit survey reflect this.

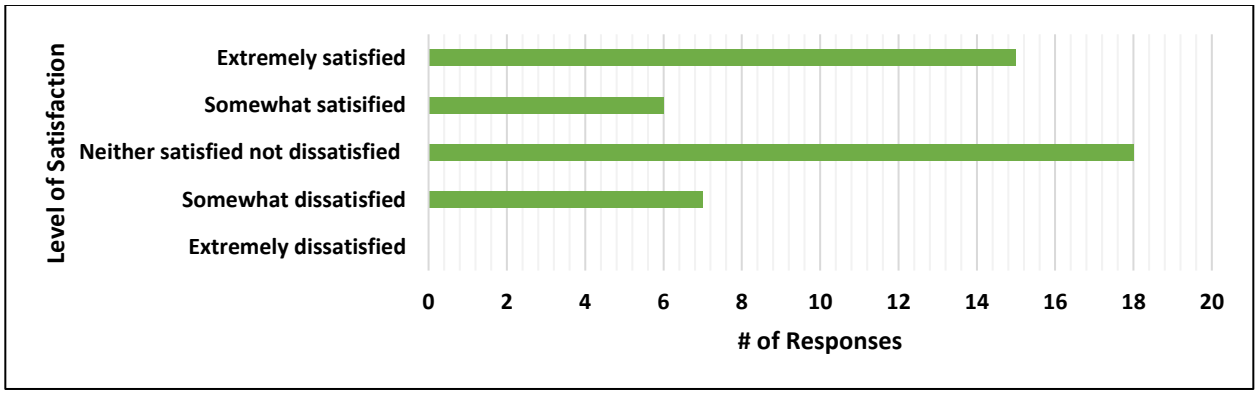
Level of satisfaction with the process of coordination on the TDP

Transit agencies were more satisfied than MPOs with the process of coordination of the TDP. Among transit agencies, 61 percent said they were either extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied while among MPOs, it was only 46 percent. Conversely, a larger percentage of MPOs than transit agencies said they were dissatisfied with the process of coordination on the TDP. Among MPOs, 15 percent said they were somewhat dissatisfied compared to just 6 percent of transit agencies. No MPOs or transit agencies said they were extremely dissatisfied.

Three of the MPOs that were dissatisfied made statements to the effect that their transit agency did not welcome their involvement in the development of the TDP because the transit agency viewed it as their internal document. One of those three MPOs stated that it was their perception that the transit agency's TDP consultant saw more value in involving the MPO than the transit agency did. One MPO described doing transit planning with their transit agency as challenging. There were two transit agencies that expressed dissatisfaction, and both made comments related to funding. One transit agency said that the MPO should contribute more money to the TDP because the TDP is part of the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and because TDP-derived projects impact MPO planning documents. This same transit agency wished that their MPO helped more with the public involvement component of the TDP. The other transit agency wrote that they should be able to use some of their MPO's planning funds to hire a consultant for major TDP updates.

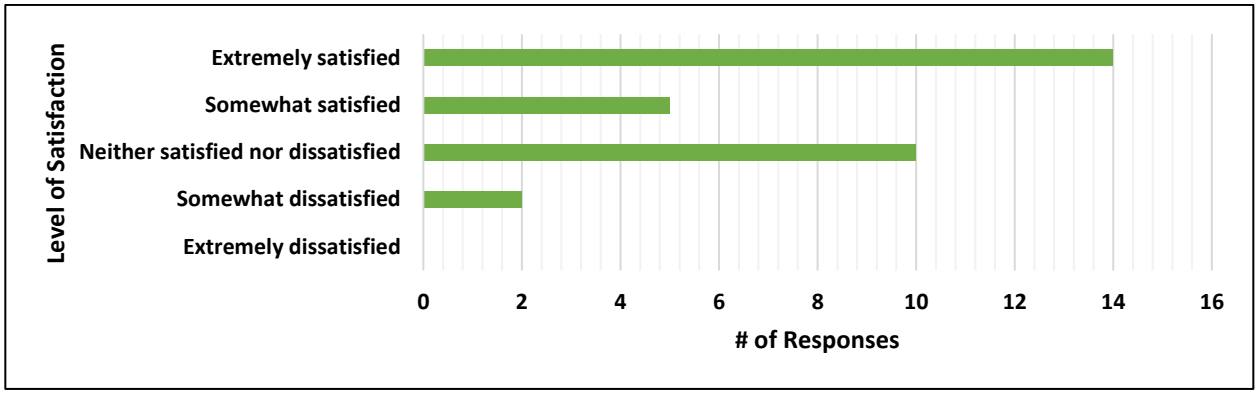
Several of the MPOs that were either extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the process of TDP coordination commented on what contributed to their level of satisfaction. The Polk TPO and the Ocala-Marion TPO both stated that they prepare the TDP for their respective transit agencies. The Ocala-Marion TPO added that they also administer the transit service through a third-party contractor. The Lee County MPO stated that their transit service provider, LeeTran, invites MPO staff to serve on the project review team for the TDP. The St. Lucie TPO stated that they have quarterly meetings with all of the transit operators in their area. At these meetings, they discuss the respective TDPs. Among the transit agencies that expressed being either extremely or somewhat satisfied, the main reasons cited were good communication and having a good relationship with MPO staff. Furthermore, two of the transit agencies (PSTA and Space Coast Area Transit) mentioned having regular coordination meetings with MPO staff.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Extremely satisfied	33%	15
Somewhat satisfied	13%	6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	39%	18
Somewhat dissatisfied	15%	7
Extremely dissatisfied	0%	0
Total	100%	46

Transit Agency Response



Answer	%	Count
Extremely satisfied	45%	14
Somewhat satisfied	16%	5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	32%	10
Somewhat dissatisfied	6%	2
Extremely dissatisfied	0%	0
Total	100%	31

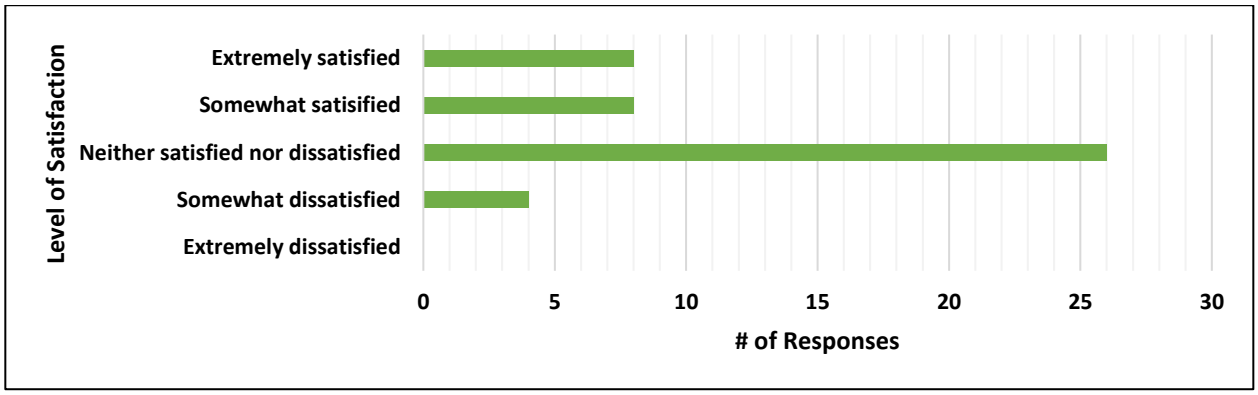
Level of satisfaction with the level of consistency between the visions, goals, and strategies, and projects of the LRTP and TDP.

The process of coordination between the MPO and the transit agency should ultimately lead to the adoption of an LRTP and TDP that are consistent with one another. Therefore, the survey also asked MPOs and transit agencies about their level of satisfaction with the level of consistency between the visions, goals, and strategies/projects of the LRTP and TDP. Overall, the transit agencies are more satisfied than the MPOs. Whereas, 56 percent of the transit agencies said they were either somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied, among the MPOs it was only 34 percent. The majority of MPOs (57%) were neutral (i.e. they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

In reading the comments from the transit agencies that expressed satisfaction, a common theme that emerges is that the MPO played an important role. For example, GoLine in Indian River County wrote, "The MPO has a lot to do with it. They keep it consistent." In Pinellas County, PSTA stated that, "The TDP is incorporated in the LRTP. We have the same transit plan. This wasn't always the case but was for the last LRTP and will be for the upcoming LRTP. [It] [t]ook a lot of ongoing coordination and relationship building and support from both CEO/EDs." Pinellas County was one of the areas selected for a case study. During the interviews, it was learned that the current Pinellas MPO director played an important role in building up the relationship with PSTA. In Orange County, LYNX wrote, "We appreciate the way in which the staff and leadership of MetroPlan ask questions and identify opportunities for LYNX staff to engage and collaborate on local and regional priorities for both agencies." In South Florida, Tri Rail wrote, "Miami-Dade TPO goes the extra mile to include all agency input."

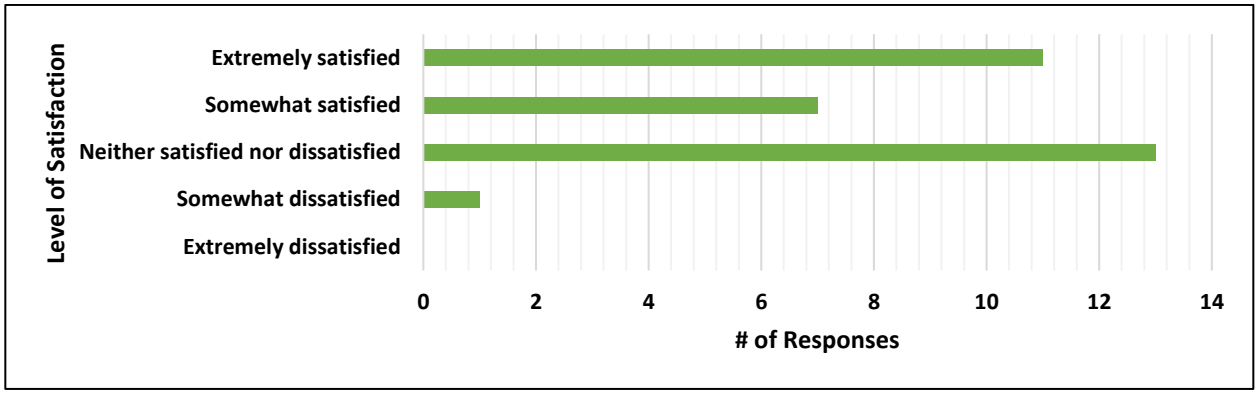
Two MPOs that expressed being somewhat dissatisfied gave some input as to what would improve the consistency of the two documents. One MPO wrote that the transit agency does not focus on the long-term vision of the bus transit network. In their opinion, it would be better if the transit agency relinquished some control of the long-range transit planning to the MPO. Another MPO wrote that there is a need for clarification of the roles and responsibilities of MPOs and transit agencies. This same MPO recommended removing the 10-year vision component of the TDP in order to avoid confusion between the TDP vision and the LRTP vision, requiring common goals, objectives and strategies in the two documents, and establishing joint performance measures and targets.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Extremely satisfied	17%	8
Somewhat satisfied	17%	8
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	57%	26
Somewhat dissatisfied	9%	4
Extremely dissatisfied	0%	0
Total	100%	46

Transit Agency Response

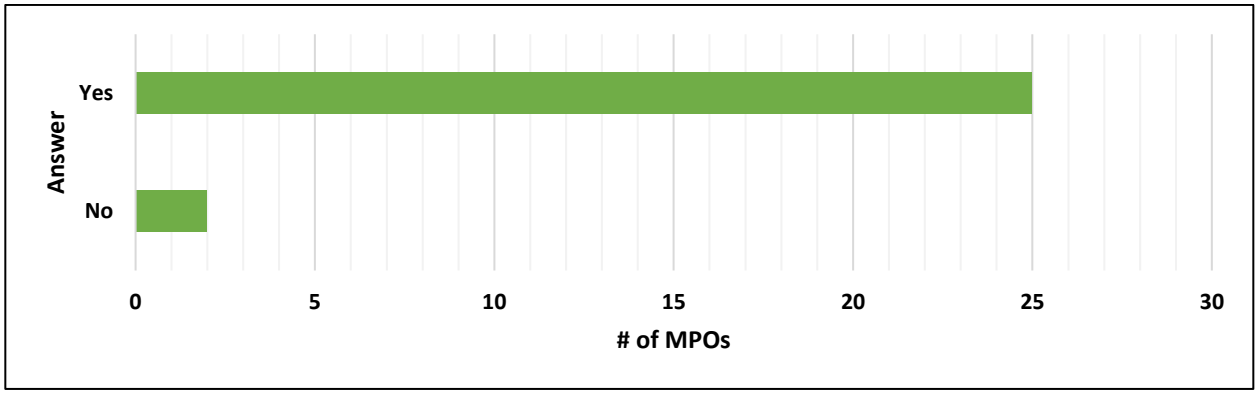


Answer	%	Count
Extremely satisfied	34%	11
Somewhat satisfied	22%	7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	41%	13
Somewhat dissatisfied	3%	1
Extremely dissatisfied	0%	0
Total	100%	32

Do you integrate elements of the LRTP into the TDP and vice versa?

The majority of MPOs and transit agencies integrate elements of their respective documents. However, the percentage was higher among the MPOs than it was for the transit agencies (93% of the MPOs versus 84% of the transit agencies). The most frequently integrated element of the TDP incorporated into the LRTP is the transit agency's capital plan. It is harder to pinpoint the most frequently integrated element of LRTP into a TDP. Three transit agencies mentioned bus rapid transit (BRT). Presumably, they mean their MPO's discussion of BRT as part of the long-term vision for the metropolitan area.

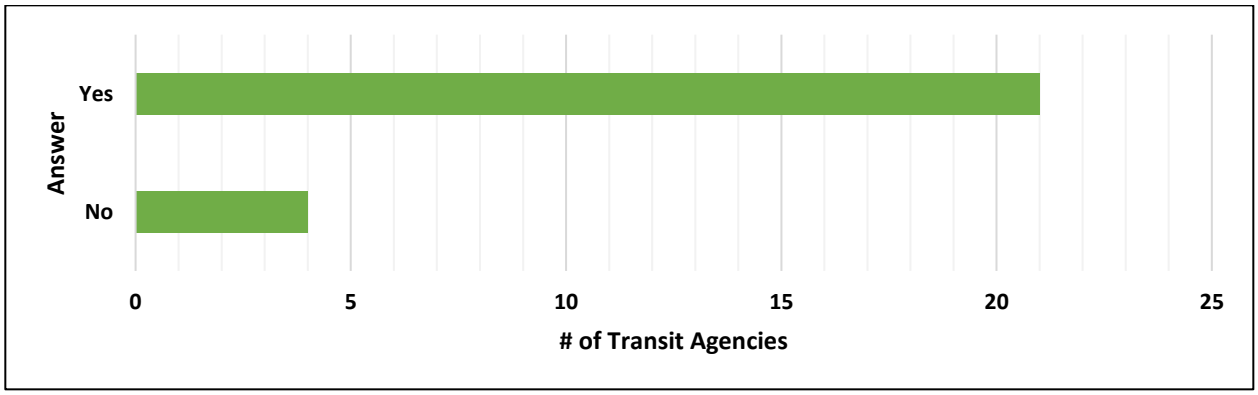
MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	93%	25
No	7%	2
Total	100%	27

Note: Counts represent MPOs that integrate TDP elements from at least one transit agency with whom they coordinate.

Transit Agency Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	84%	21
No	16%	4
Total	100%	25

Note: Counts represent transit agencies that integrate LRTP elements from at least one MPO with whom they coordinate.

Biggest challenge to better integration of the TDP and LRTP.

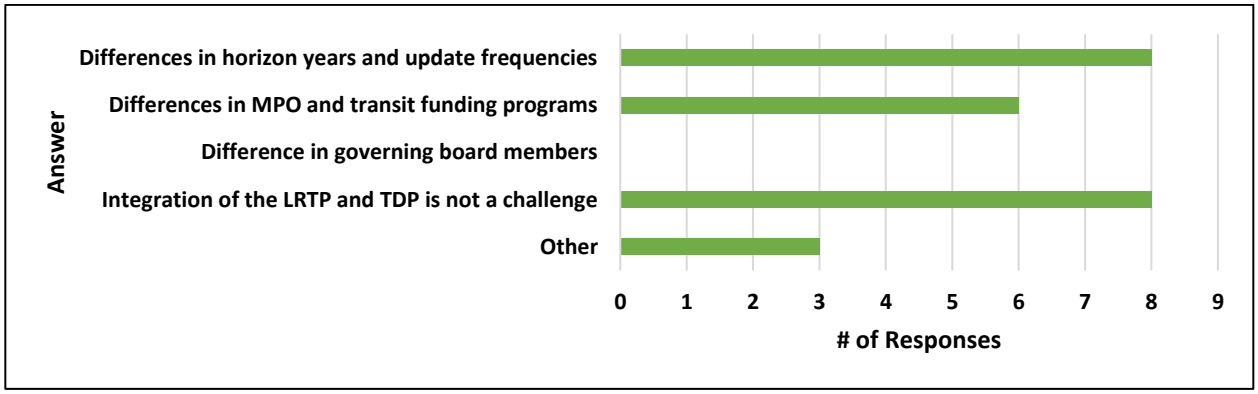
Eight MPOs said the biggest challenge of better integration of the TDP and LRTP was the difference in horizon years and update frequencies. However, just as many MPOs said integration of the LRTP and TDP was not a challenge. Six MPOs said the biggest challenge was that MPOs and transit agencies have different funding programs. On the transit side, ten of the transit agencies said it was the difference in

horizon years and update frequencies. None of the MPOs and only one transit agency cited having different board members as a challenge to TDP and LRTP integration.

Three MPOs and six transit agencies selected "Other" as the biggest challenge. One of the three MPOs stated that the lack of transit funding was the biggest challenge. More transit projects would be incorporated into the LRTP if there was more transit revenue. Another MPO stated that integration of the TDP into the LRTP is dependent upon the maturity of operations and the clarity of vision for the transit provider.

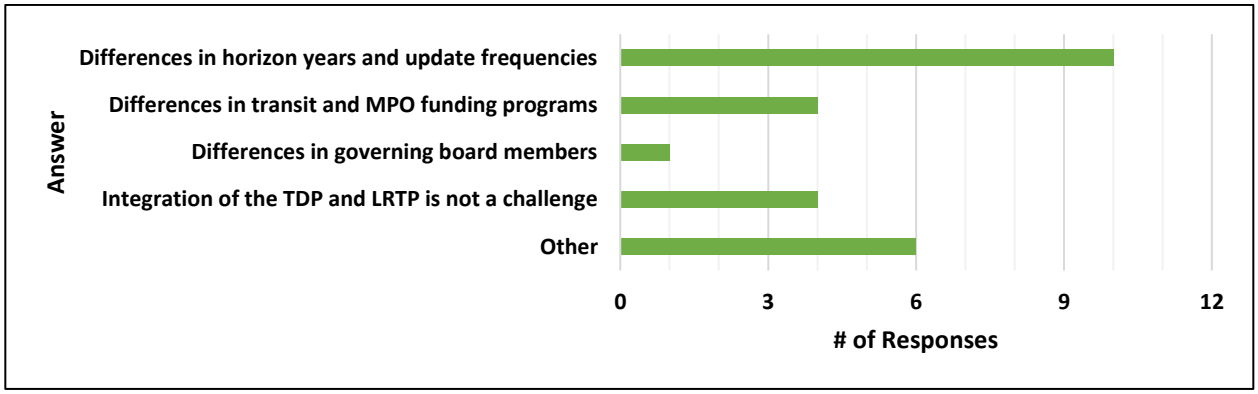
On the transit side, one transit agency said that the biggest challenge to improved integration in their area is caused by the focus on cars in the LRTP, which contrasts with the focus on shared-ride public transportation in the TDP. Another transit agency said that the biggest challenge is that the TDP is due before the LRTP. Presumably, what is meant is that the shorter-range TDP is being adopted before the transit vision in the longer-range LRTP can be developed.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Differences in horizon years and update frequencies	32%	8
Differences in MPO and transit funding programs	24%	6
Difference in governing board members	0%	0
Integration of the LRTP and TDP is not a challenge	32%	8
Other	12%	3
Total	100%	25

Transit Agency Response

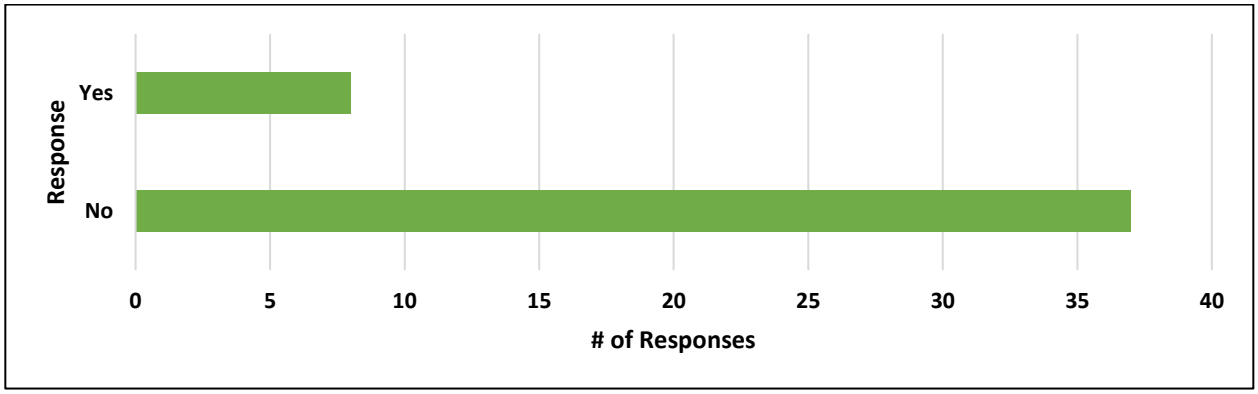


Answer	%	Count
Differences in horizon years and update frequencies	40%	10
Differences in MPO and transit funding programs	16%	4
Difference in governing board members	4%	1
Integration of the LRTP and TDP is not a challenge	16%	4
Other	24%	6
Total	100%	25

Do you use the same consultant to help develop the LRTP or TDP?

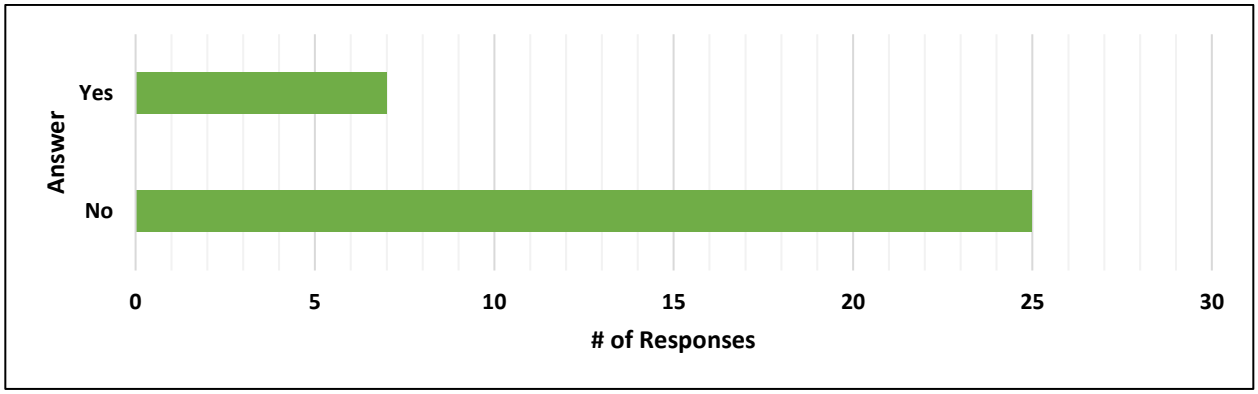
Having the same consultant work on the LRTP and TDP could potentially help ensure that data is shared between the two plans. As shown in the charts below, the majority of MPOs and transit agencies do not employ the same consultant for the two plans.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	18%	8
No	82%	37
Total	100%	45

Transit Agency Response

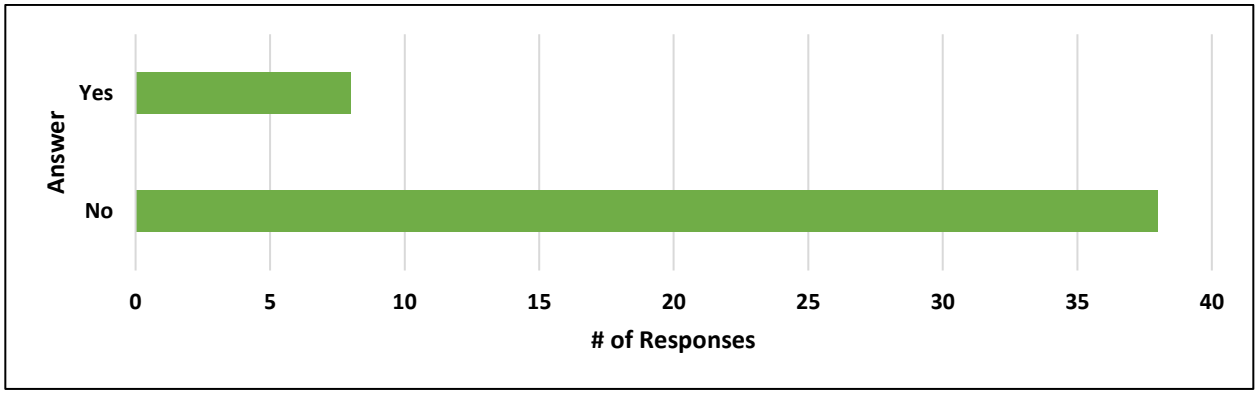


Answer	%	Count
Yes	22%	7
No	78%	25
Total	100%	32

Did you coordinate the timing of your most recent LRTP or TDP update?

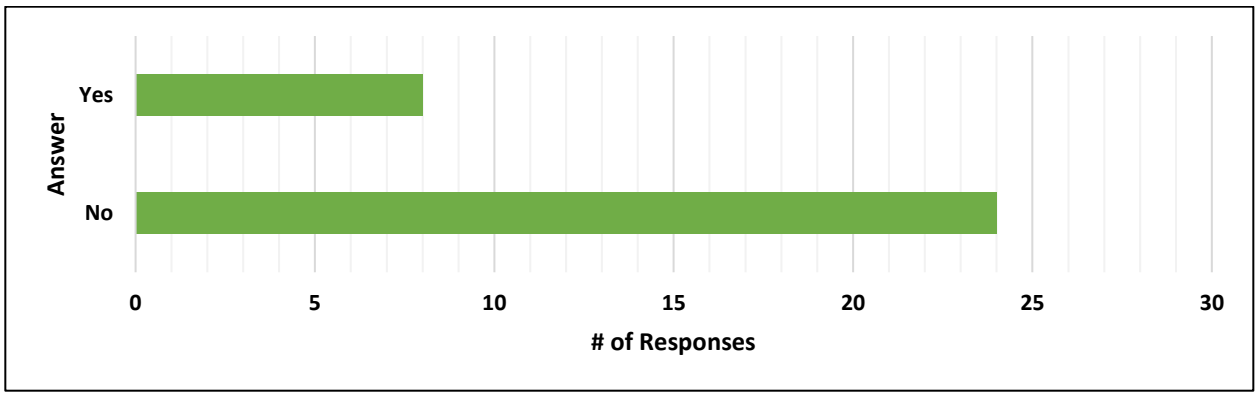
The majority of MPOs and transit agencies (75% or more) said they do not coordinate the timing of their LRTP and TDP updates. This is likely due to the absence of legal requirements for coordinated timing and the difference in update cycles, which makes it hard to coordinate the timing. However, it should be noted that there were major discrepancies in the responses. For example, eight MPOs responded that they coordinated the update of their most recent LTRP with the most recent update of their partner transit agency's TDP. However, five of those partner transit agencies said they had not coordinated the timing. The same discrepancy appeared in the opposite direction. For example, eight transit agencies said they had coordinated the update of their most recent TDP with the most recent update of their partner MPO's LRTP. However, only one MPO gave the same answer. The other seven MPOs said they had not coordinated. Either there was confusion about the question, or the person completing the survey was simply incorrect.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	17%	8
No	83%	38
Total	100%	46

Transit Agency Response

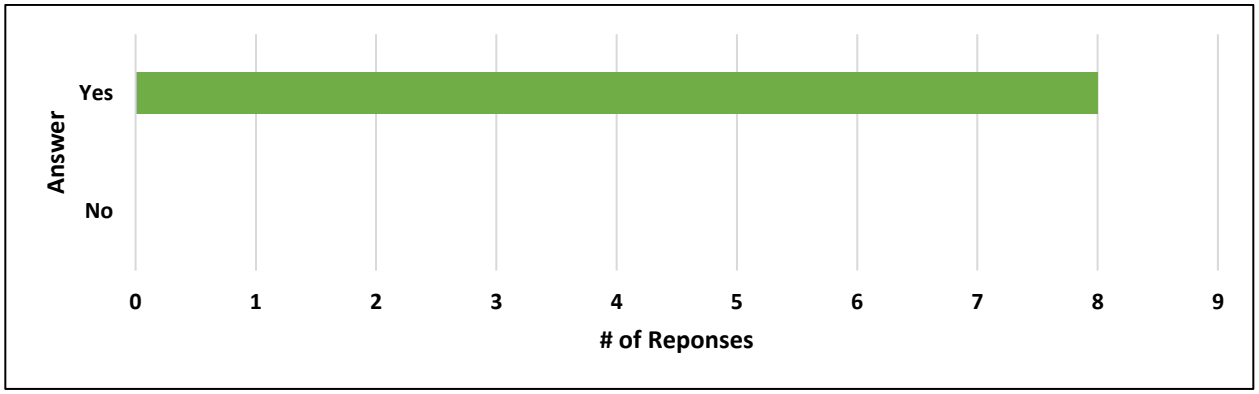


Answer	%	Count
Yes	25%	8
No	75%	24
Total	100%	32

Did you coordinate public involvement activities related to the most recent update of the TDP and LRTP?

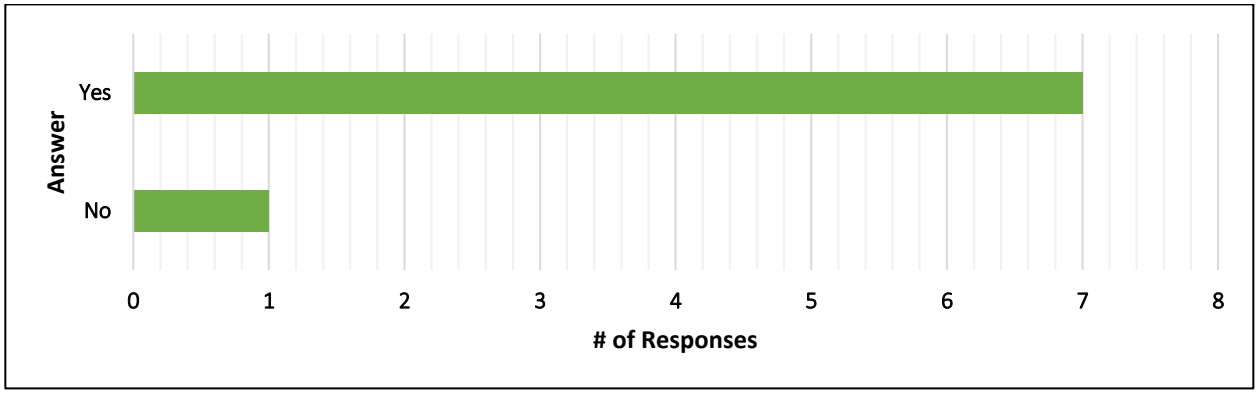
The eight MPOs and the eight transit agencies that answered yes to the question about coordinating the timing of their most recent LRTP and TDP updates were also asked whether they coordinated the public involvement related to the update of these two documents. All eight MPOs and seven of the eight transit agencies said they coordinated.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	100%	8
No	0%	0
Total	100%	8

Transit Agency Response



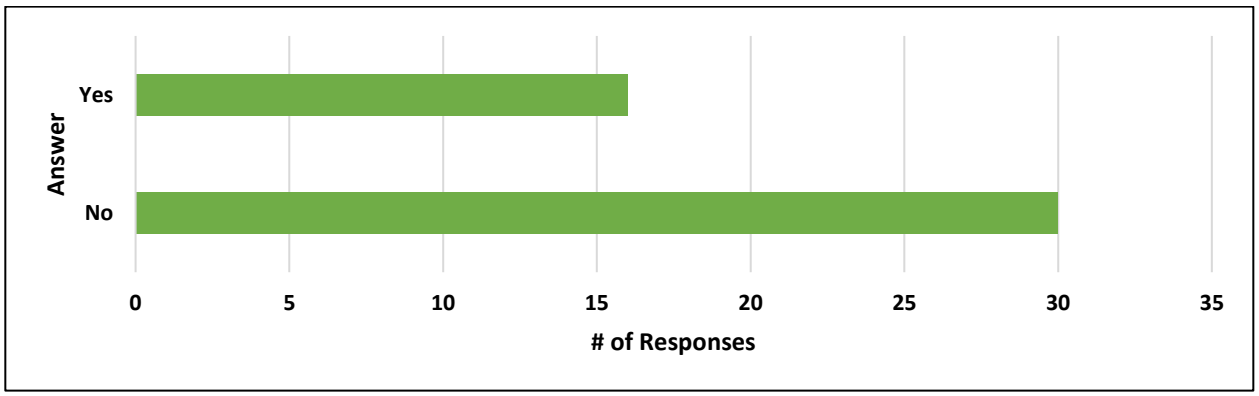
Answer	%	Count
Yes	88%	7
No	13%	1
Total	100%	8

Do you plan to coordinate the timing of the next LRTP and TDP update?

The majority of MPOs and transit agencies said they do not plan to coordinate the timing of their next LRTP and TDP updates (65% and 55%, respectively). However, here again, there were inconsistencies in the responses of the MPOs and transit agencies. For example, 14 transit agencies said yes, they plan to coordinate their next TDP update with the MPO's LRTP update. Ideally, the response from the MPO should match the response of the transit agency. However, that was not the case. Eight of the 14 MPOs said they were not coordinating the next update. Similarly, 16 MPOs said yes, they were planning to coordinate their next LRTP update with the partner transit agency's TDP update. However, seven of

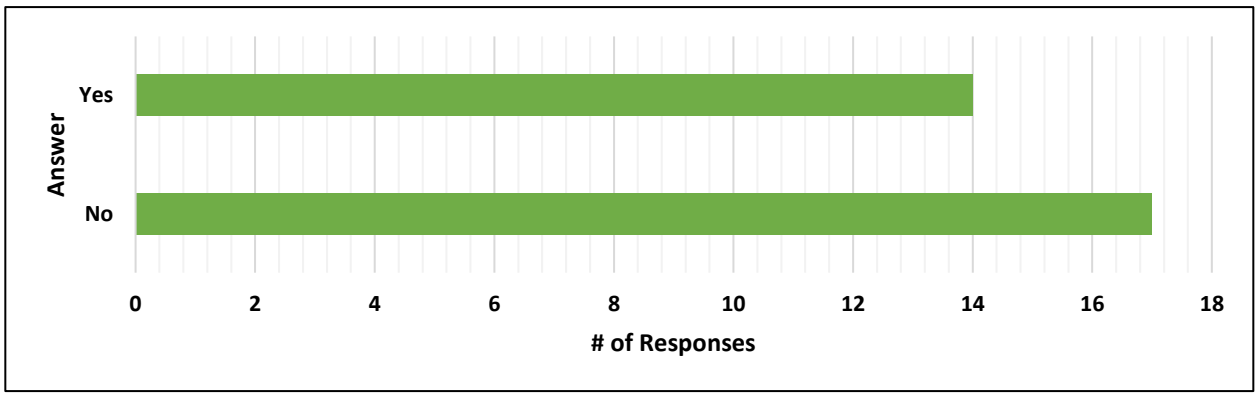
those 16 transit agencies said they were not coordinating. Something is amiss. Either the respondent(s) did not understand the question, or there is a lack of communication between some MPOs and some transit agencies.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	35%	16
No	65%	30
Total	100%	46

Transit Agency Response

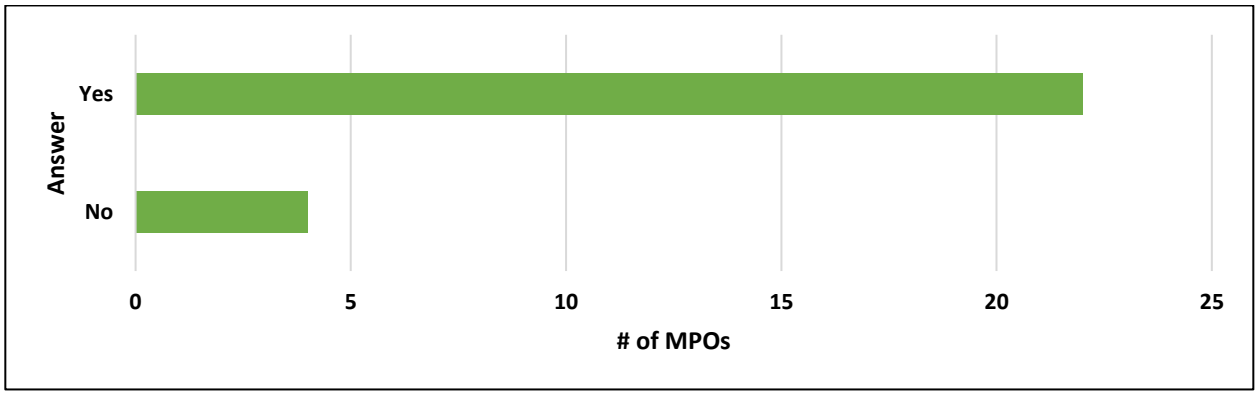


Answer	%	Count
Yes	45%	14
No	55%	17
Total	100%	31

Has your MPO or transit agency identified transit priority corridors in the LRTP or TDP?

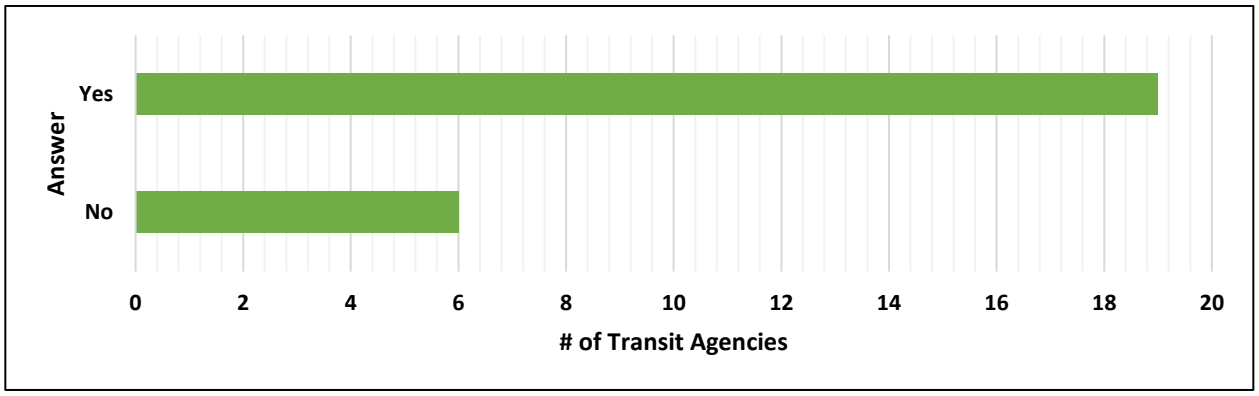
Here the question is referring to whether the agency has identified transit priority corridors in its own planning document. The majority of MPOs and transit agencies said that they have done so (85% and 76%, respectively).

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	85%	22
No	15%	4
Total	100%	26

Transit Agency Response

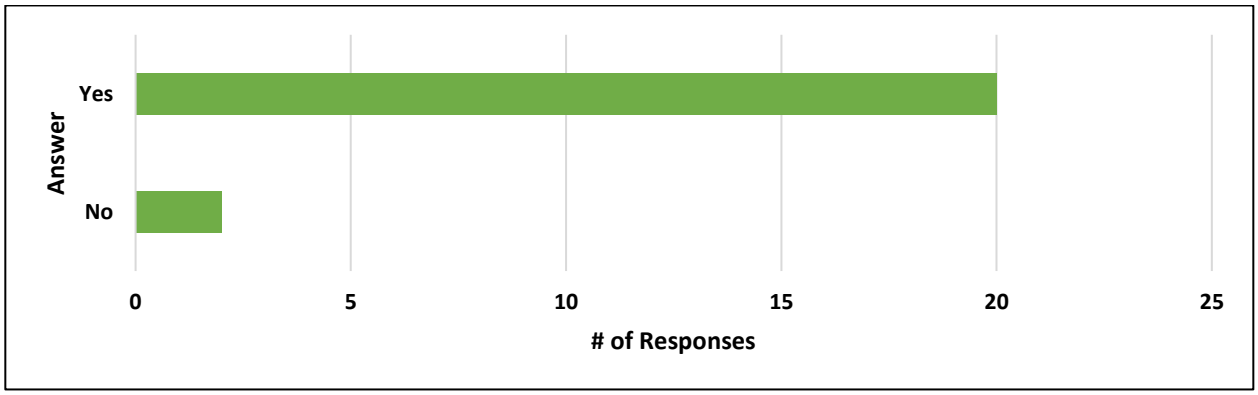


Answer	%	Count
Yes	76%	19
No	24%	6
Total	100%	25

Are the transit priority corridors in the LRTP reflected in the TDP and vice versa?

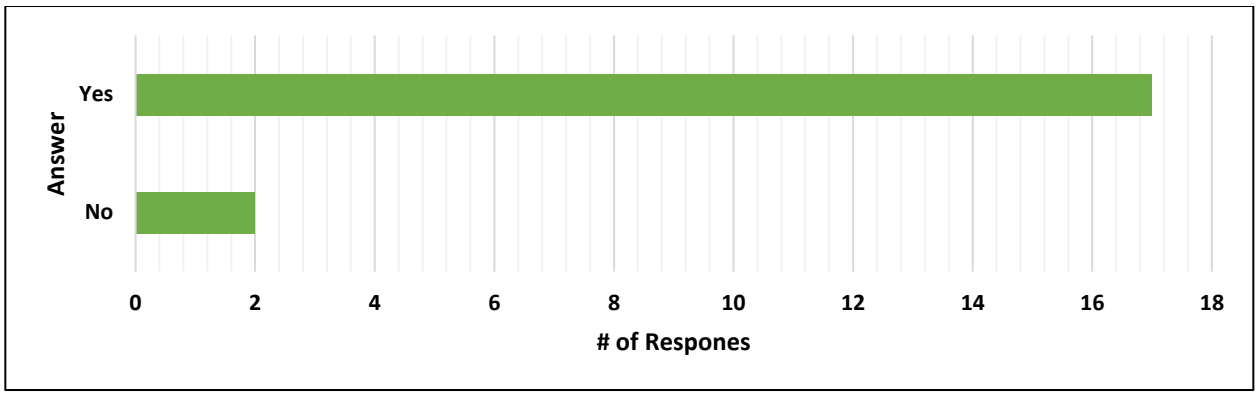
This question asked whether the transit priority corridors identified in one planning document (e.g. the LRTP) were identified in the planning document of the other agency (e.g. the TDP). Of the 22 MPOs that had this question, 20 said yes (91%). Of the 19 transit agencies that had this question, 17 said yes (89%).

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	91%	20
No	9%	2
Total	100%	22

Transit Agency Response



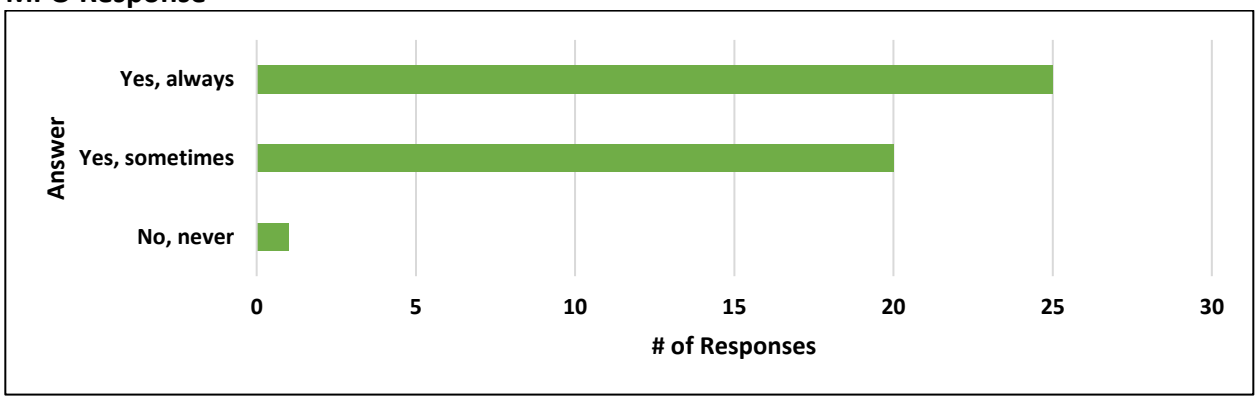
Answer	%	Count
Yes	89%	17
No	11%	2
Total	100%	19

Do you coordinate on other planning documents besides the LRTP and TDP?

The MPOs and transit agencies were asked whether they coordinated together on other planning documents besides the LRTP and TDP, and if so, how often. Examples of other types of planning

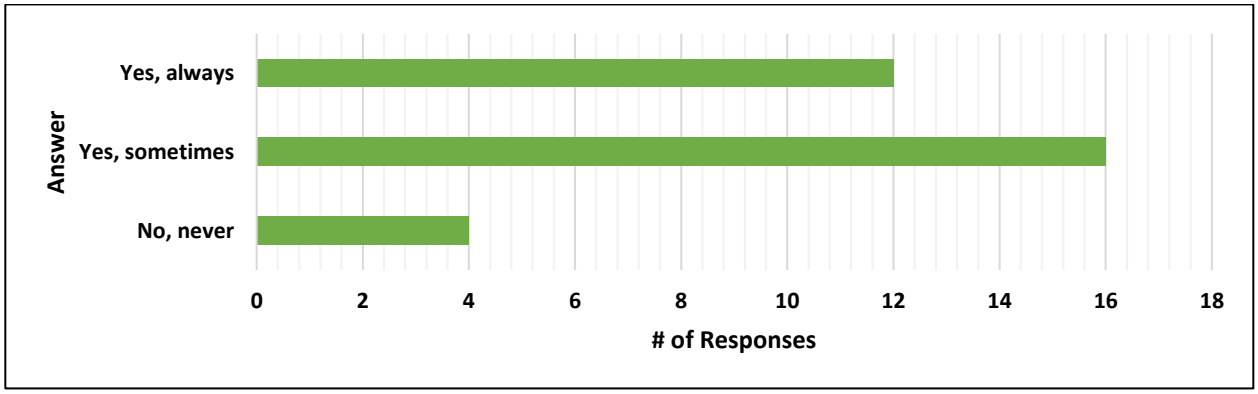
documents include, but are not limited to, corridor studies, bicycle/pedestrian plans, and sub-area plans. Ninety-seven percent of MPOs and eighty-eight percent of transit agencies said that they coordinate on other planning documents either always or sometimes. MPOs are "planning" agencies by nature. Therefore, it is likely that MPOs simply have opportunities for "planning" collaboration than transit agencies, which are operational by nature.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes, always	54%	25
Yes, sometimes	43%	20
No, never	2%	1
Total	100%	46

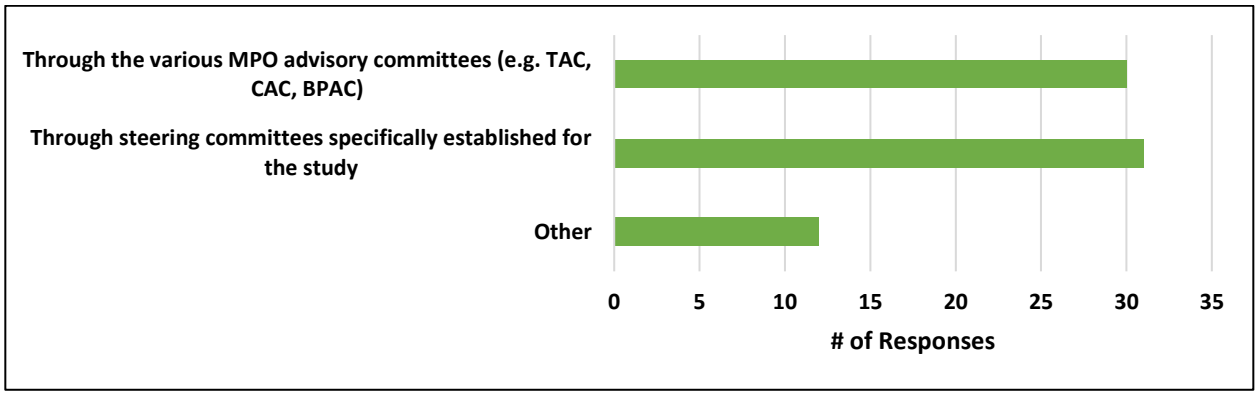
Transit Agency Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes, always	38%	12
Yes, sometimes	50%	16
No, never	13%	4
Total	100%	32

How do you involve the other agency in coordinating the other planning documents?

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Through the various MPO advisory committees (e.g. TAC, CAC, BPAC)	41%	30
Through steering committees specifically established for the study	42%	31
Other	17%	12
Total	100%	73

Note: MPOs were asked to select all that applied.

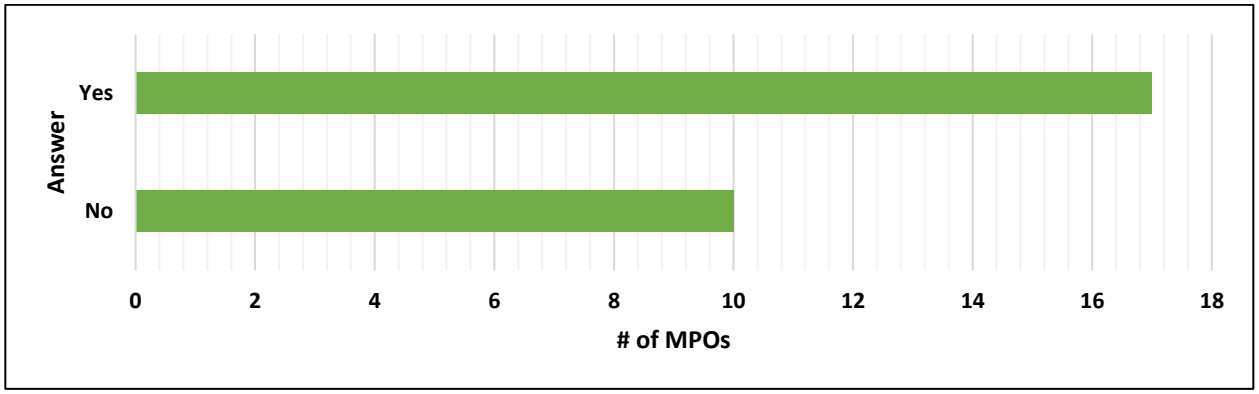
Transit Agency Response

Since transit agencies do not generally have the same type of standing committees that MPOs do, this question was left open-ended in the transit agency survey. The way transit agencies involve MPOs in coordinating planning studies other than the TDP varied. The methods of involvement include project steering committee meetings, regular meetings between staff, and presentations to the MPO's standing committees (e.g. technical advisory committee, citizens advisory committee) and Board of Directors.

Have you ever pooled funds for the development of the LRTP, TDP, or other planning document?

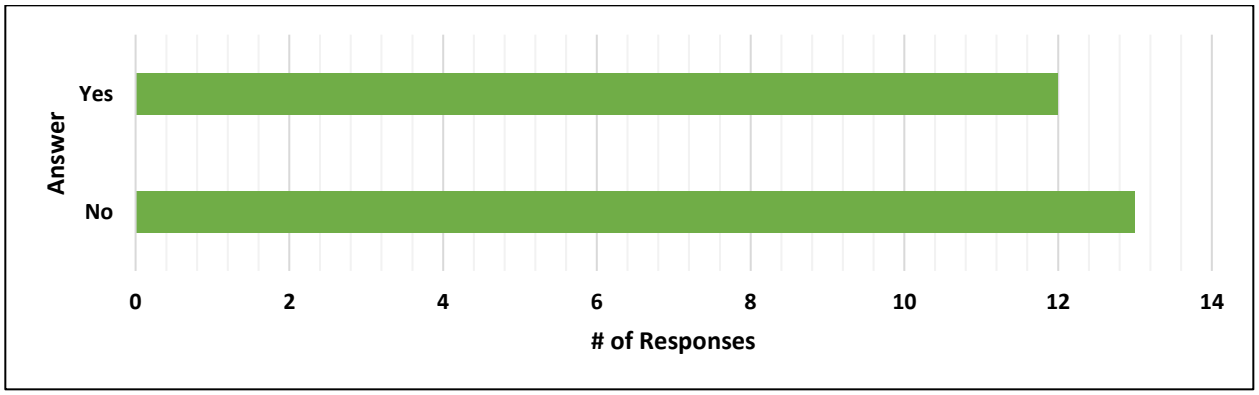
Pooling funds can help foster collaboration between the agencies and lead to better consistency between the LRTP and TDP. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the MPOs said they had pulled funds with their transit agency, but only forty-eight percent of transit agencies said they had pulled funds with their MPO. Upon closer examination of the data, there were four instances where the MPO's response did not match the response of the transit agency. Once again, something is amiss. Either the respondent(s) did not understand the question, or there is a lack of communication between some MPOs and some transit agencies.

MPO Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	63%	17
No	37%	10
Total	100%	27

Transit Agency Response



Answer	%	Count
Yes	48%	12
No	52%	13
Total	100%	25

On what types of projects did your agencies pull funding?

This was an open-ended question. TDP updates were the most common project on which the MPOs and transit agencies pooled funding. Other examples included a latent demand study, a concept of operations plan for automated transit, a model calibration, a waterborne transit study, and several circulator studies.

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding MPO and transit agency coordination?

The last question of the survey was also an open-ended question. Several of the responses are provided below.

- Timing and planning horizons greatly impact the coordination efforts between an MPO's LRTP development and a transit agency's TDP development. Also, the focus of an MPO and transit agency are different when it comes to their planning documents. A TDP is much more about the here and now with a 10-year planning horizon while the LRTP is 25 years or more. The idea of an illustrative plan seems to be more relevant in an LRTP than a TDP.
- To the extent practical, we need to remove requirements for separate planning documents for the MPO and transit agency, especially those with different horizon years (20-25 years vs 10 years). We should work to clarify agency mission, roles and responsibilities and how partners can influence those plans and achieve successful outcomes by working together.
- The MPO invites the transit agency to participate in its planning activities. However, normally the transit agency does not care to receive any input from the MPO.
- There needs to be more transit agency and MPO coordination. Typically, the MPO/TPO focuses on road projects, which are a significant portion of their funding but typically forget or do not place enough value in transit and other modes of transportation. This diminished priority is reflected in staff's planning, involvement, and promotion of the transit to the TPO members, other staff, and the public.
- Would highly encourage regular monthly meetings with the MPO, transit agency, and FDOT to coordinate priorities, funding, and project (including LRTP and TDP). Starting this has helped immensely on many fronts.

Chapter 5
Case Study Interviews

Forward Pinellas and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)

A key component to the strong planning coordination between the MPO (Forward Pinellas) and the transit operator (Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority: PSTA) appears to be monthly meetings of key staff from these two agencies as well as from FDOT District 7. Figure 2 shows a picture taken during one of the monthly coordination meetings. These meetings are informal with no written agenda and are held during lunch. The attendees typically include the Forward Pinellas executive director, the Forward Pinellas Principal Planner for transit planning, the PSTA Chief Development Officer, the PSTA Director of Planning, the FDOT District 7 Intermodal Systems Development Manager, the FDOT District 7 Transit Programs Administrator, and several other FDOT staff involved with MPO and transit projects/planning. The meetings provide an opportunity for staff to meet face-to-face and speak candidly about transit related issues. At the meeting that CUTR was able to attend, staff discussed PSTA's planned bus rapid transit (BRT) route from downtown St. Petersburg to St. Pete Beach, a busway being designed to cross the Clearwater Memorial Causeway, and funding options for a new intermodal center.

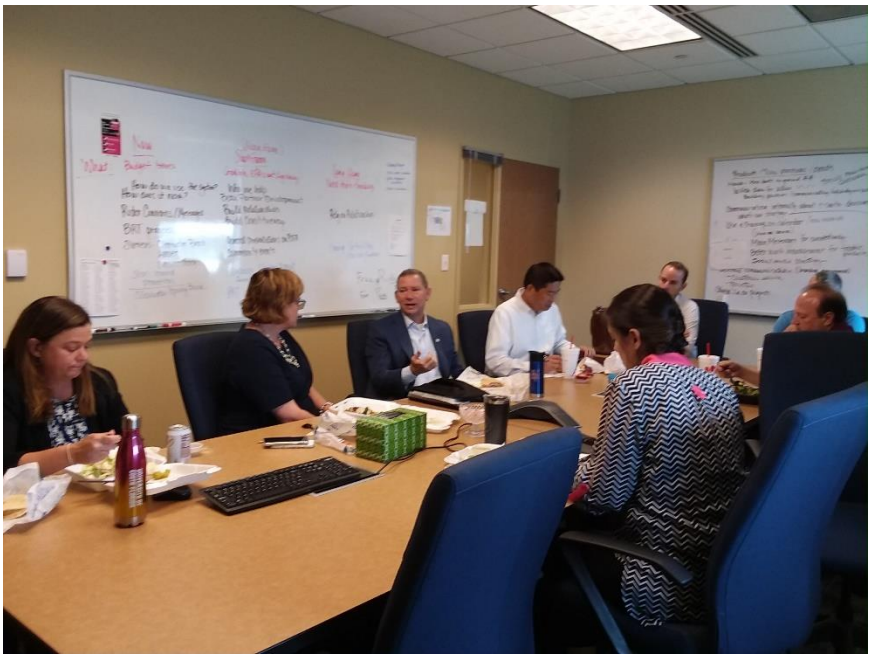


Figure 2 Pinellas Transit Coordination Meeting

CUTR interviewed Whit Blanton, the executive director of Forward Pinellas, and Heather Sobush, the Director of Planning for PSTA. Both gave some historical background to the monthly meetings as well as to the relationship between the MPO and PSTA. Both stated that in decades past the relationship between the MPO and PSTA was a bit adversarial and marked by a lack of trust. Some of this was due to personality and professional differences between staff. They often had conflicting opinions about the roles and

responsibilities of their respective agencies. This sometimes led to a disconnection between the MPO and PSTA when it came to reviewing the draft TDP.

Another source of the tension may have been institutional. PSTA is an independent authority with taxing authority and receives funding from ad valorem property taxes. It receives minimal funding from the county or cities. This may have contributed to the development of a "bunker mentality" at PSTA such that the agency felt it had to protect its own interests. Whatever the source of tension was, PSTA's mode of operation for a long time was maintaining the status quo while the Pinellas MPO tended to pursue more ambitious projects.

A change in leadership at both agencies seems to have ushered in a new era of cooperation. In 2007, Tim Garling became the new executive director of PSTA, replacing the previous long-time director, Roger Sweeney. According to Ms. Sobush, it was around that time that several elected officials on PSTA's Board noticed that the LRTP and TDP were not aligned. That was when discussions first began between the two agencies on how to better coordinate the two documents. In 2010, Mr. Garling left PSTA to take over as director of Broward County Transit, and he was replaced in 2011 by the current CEO of PSTA, Brad Miller. That same year, the long-time director of the Pinellas MPO, Brian Smith, retired.

Improved planning coordination between the MPO and PSTA continued and in fact intensified in 2014 during the Greenlight Pinellas initiative. This was a ballot initiative that would have added an extra penny to the sales tax to expand bus service by sixty-five percent and build a light rail system. Although the initiative failed, the momentum of improved collaboration between the MPO and PSTA continued. In 2015, Mr. Blanton became the new executive director of the Pinellas MPO, which was soon thereafter rebranded as Forward Pinellas. It was Mr. Blanton's suggestion to have regular meetings between Forward Pinellas, PSTA, and FDOT. He had heard of it being done in Orlando when he was a private consultant and wanted to bring the concept to Pinellas. Initially, the meetings were bi-weekly. Then they went to monthly.

At the coordination meeting that was attended by CUTR, all of the attendees attested to the value of the meetings. Ming Gao, the FDOT District 7 Intermodal Systems Development Manager, stated that of all the meetings he attends, the monthly coordination meetings with PSTA and Forward Pinellas are one of his favorites because they are so productive. In the interview that CUTR conducted with Ms. Sobush, she stated that she thinks the improved planning coordination between the two agencies has contributed to FDOT being more open to funding transit projects in Pinellas County because now PSTA and Forward Pinellas now appear to be in sync.

The monthly coordination meetings have helped staff from PSTA and Forward Pinellas to become more comfortable working together on other projects besides the LRTP and TDP. For example, PSTA is an active participant in Forward Pinellas' Complete Streets Program. This is a competitive funding program that assists local governments in planning, designing and constructing Complete Streets projects. PSTA helps Forward Pinellas to review the applications, and they also assist by providing ridership data, helping them look at bus stop locations, and consolidating or moving bus stops if that complements the Complete

Streets projects. On larger Complete Streets projects, PSTA might sit on a steering committee or attend stakeholder workshops.

Mr. Blanton stated that once a year PSTA and Forward Pinellas hold a Joint Board Meeting. Like the monthly coordination meetings, this too was a new initiative that he began after becoming director. It had not been done under the previous leadership. The Joint Board Meetings help the leadership at the two agencies to discuss issues of common concern and to become more familiar with each other's activities and projects, and to define shared priorities. The MPO is now putting transit capital projects, including new service and vehicle replacements, on its priority list and into its annual Transportation Improvement Program.

Staff Suggestions

Both Mr. Blanton and Ms. Sobush had several recommendations that they thought could contribute to better planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies.

- FDOT should consider modifying its TDP training to be TDP/LRTP training, or to at least dedicate some time to addressing the topic of MPO coordination.
- The roles of the MPO and transit agency needs to be better defined in state statute and/or in the administrative code.
- FDOT should consider removing the requirement that the TDP include a vision statement and simply treat the TDP as a 5-year capital improvements program (CIP) that helps to implement longer-range goals and strategies defined in the LRTP.
- Along the same lines, FDOT should consider changing the language in the administrative code to make adopting the LRTP vision in the TDP a requirement for receiving state block grants.

Indian River County MPO and GoLine Transit

A key component to the successful planning coordination between the Indian River County MPO and GoLine Transit is that the MPO operates the transit system. More specifically, the Indian River County Community Development Department, under which the Indian River County MPO falls, has contracted with Senior Resource Association (SRA) to operate GoLine Transit. SRA also operates Community Coach, the door-to-door paratransit service in Indian River County. CUTR interviewed Phil Matson, the Indian River MPO Staff Director, Brian Freeman, the MPO Senior Planner responsible for transit planning, and Karen Deigl, the President and CEO of Senior Resource Association.

Like Forward Pinellas, the Indian River County MPO hosts regularly scheduled coordination meetings with the transit operator. Figure 3 shows a picture taken during one of the coordination meetings. The meetings are attended for the most part by staff with decision making authority. This includes the Indian River County MPO Staff Director, the MPO Senior Planner responsible for transit planning, the Indian River County Budget Director, the CEO of SRA/GoLine Transit, and the CFO for SRA/GoLine Transit. FDOT District 4 usually participates by phone. However, unlike the meetings in Pinellas, which have FDOT representation from both the District Intermodal Systems Development Manager and the District Transit Programs Administrator, FDOT District 4 representation is handled by a lower level multimodal/transit coordinator.

Figure 3 Indian River Transit Coordination Meeting

Unlike the coordination meetings that occur monthly in Pinellas, the meetings in Indian River are done quarterly. Another difference is that the meetings include a prepared agenda. The agenda is actually quite extensive. The first half of the meeting covers GoLine operations, and the second half covers finances. In effect, these meetings are a quarterly performance review of the GoLine system. All of the

information that is reviewed and discussed at these coordination meetings is also shared with the various MPO advisory committees and with the MPO Board.

CUTR asked Mr. Matson about the genesis of the coordination meetings. He stated that they were born from a recommendation made by FTA during one of its triennial reviews of the GoLine system (the triennial review is a management tool used by FTA to examine a recipient's performance and adherence to FTA requirements and policies. The review examines up to 21 areas, one of which is Section 7, Satisfactory Continuing Control. Section 7 examines how the recipient is ensuring that FTA-funded property remains available to be used for its authorized purpose). Mr. Matson stated that this recommendation pre-dated his arrival 17 years ago as the MPO Staff Director. He said that initially, the meetings did not have a prepared agenda, and consequently they were not very productive. He collaborated with his MPO staff and staff from SRA to develop a template meeting agenda that would be used each meeting.

Another ingredient to the successful planning coordination between the MPO and GoLine Transit has been the long-standing working relationship between Mr. Matson and Ms. Deigl. Ms. Deigl has been the CEO of SRA for 13 years, and as already stated, Mr. Matson has been the MPO Staff Director for 17 years. Long-standing relationships are a double-edged sword. They can be a blessing or a curse to planning coordination depending on whether the relationship is positive or negative. In the case of Indian River, it has been the former. Although the successful planning coordination between the Indian River MPO and GoLine Transit was initially personality driven, the quarterly meetings have helped to institutionalize it. Both Mr. Matson and Ms. Deigl are nearing retirement. However, the structure is in place for the coordination to continue.

Staff Suggestions

Mr. Matson and Ms. Deigl provided feedback to CUTR's potential study recommendation that language be added to the state statutes and/or administrative code requiring that the LRTP and TDP be updated at the same time. In general, they supported the recommendation, but they did offer two points of caution. First, a requirement to update both documents at once could place a heavy burden on their small staff. Second, combining the public outreach for both documents could dilute some of the focus on transit. When public outreach is done for the major TDP update, the focus is on trying to find out what changes residents would like to see made in the transit system. Some of that transit focus could be lost if the public outreach for the TDP was folded into the LRTP public outreach where the focus is on getting residents opinions about all modes. That being said, Mr. Matson admitted that much of the transit data analysis that the MPO does for the LRTP is taken from the TDP.

Mr. Matson also provided feedback on CUTR's potential study recommendation that language be added to the state statutes and/or administrative code requiring that the vision, mission, and goals of the TDP support to the maximum extent feasible the vision, mission, and goals of the LRTP. His opinion is that bus transit will become the first casualty of the rapid technological changes that are occurring in transportation (e.g. vehicle automation, TND services). This will make it harder to develop a 20-year

vision for transit because no one can predict how quickly these technological changes are going to penetrate the market and society.

Palm Beach TPA and Palm Tran

CUTR interviewed Ms. Valerie Neilson, the Deputy Director of Multimodal Development at the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA), and Mr. Steve Anderson, the Manager of Transit Planning at Palm Tran. Similar to what was heard in the interviews from Pinellas County and Indian River County, the secret to success in Palm Beach County appears to be a combination of personalities and regularly scheduled meetings between MPO and transit agency staff.

Every other month, the TPA and Palm Tran have a joint leadership meeting. The leadership staff from both agencies attend, including the executive directors along with Ms. Neilson and Mr. Anderson. FDOT District 4 does not attend. Both agencies prepare and modify the agenda prior to the meeting. The main purpose of the meeting is for the TPA and Palm Tran to review the status of transit projects that are funded through the TPA's Local Initiatives (LI) Program. The LI Program was started by the current TPA executive director, Nick Uhren, who came on board in 2013. Its annual budget is around $20 million and is supported by the MPO through the use of FHWA SU funds. These funds are flexed (transferred) to FTA for transit capital projects. Eligible projects include Complete Streets projects, bike/pedestrian projects, and transit capital projects. In addition to discussing the LI-funded transit projects, the TPA and Palm Tran use the joint leadership meeting as a chance to discuss relevant transit planning studies and initiatives.

Change in staff at the executive level at both agencies appears to have played a positive role as well. Similar to what was occurring in Pinellas County, there used to be not much leadership coordination between the TPA and Palm Tran. As stated already, Mr. Uhren took over leadership of the TPA in 2013. At Palm Tran, Clinton Forbes took over as executive director in 2015. Both Ms. Neilson and Mr. Anderson stated that the current relationship between the TPA and Palm Tran is very positive.

Although the relationship is much stronger now, there still remain challenges. For instance, Palm Tran is a part of the County government. The Palm Tran executive director reports to the county administrator. That can put the transit agency in a delicate position where it has to do a balancing act when it comes to planning for agency, County, and TPA objectives. The TPA is in a similar predicament because the county is the host agency for the TPA, and TPA staff are officially County employees. Ms. Neilson stated that the TPA is currently seeking to become a fully independent agency. She described the TPA as being the "quarterback" when it comes to championing premium transit service in Palm Beach County. Mr. Anderson stated that the TPA has done a great job promoting multimodal planning. Palm Tran, after many years of no major service changes, successfully redesigned its route network with the Route Performance Maximization (RPM) project in 2018, which increased service reliability and efficiency.

Both acknowledged that there are times when TPA-Palm Tran joint initiatives get delayed due to lack of staff, lack of funding, and/or political reasons. Ms. Neilson gave a specific example of this. She stated that last year the TPA completed a 42-mile corridor study of U.S. 1, which has the highest transit ridership in the county. The study includes a vision for BRT-lite in the corridor. The TPA has offered the possibility of applying the entire LI Program funding pot for one year, about $20 million, to

implementing all of the transit capital for this BRT project. The Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC), which has representatives from the three South Florida MPOs (Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade) has agreed to make this BRT project a priority in its application to FDOT for Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funds. Palm Tran participated in the study and was supportive of the BRT concept. However, Palm Tran needs to officially commit to run the service once funded and would need approval from the County. Delays have occurred because Palm Tran has not had enough staff to evaluate the proposal thoroughly. They are currently in the process of hiring a general planning consultant to help with this project.

Another challenge has been staff turnover at Palm Tran. However, here is an example of where a challenge was changed into an opportunity. The 2017 TDP Palm Tran Major Update happened when Palm Tran was experiencing this turnover. The TPA jumped in and helped Palm Tran by paying for the first phase of the TDP update. Mr. Anderson stated that both agencies have adopted using Remix transportation software, and in his words, this experience has joined the two agencies "at the hip". Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement when it comes to LRTP and TDP coordination. For example, Ms. Neilson stated that the TPA wants to discuss with Palm Tran being more involved with the minor TDP updates not just the major 5-year updates. She cited as an example the LRTP includes a goal to convert 75% of the entire Palm Tran fleet to electric by 2030 and 100% by 2045. However, the current TDP does not say much about electric buses. So, there is still some disconnection between the two documents that needs to be addressed.

Staff Suggestions

In regard to CUTR's suggestion that the TDP and LRTP be updated the same year, Ms. Neilson stated that it might be better to require that the TDP be adopted the year after the LRTP update so that the LRTP vision informs the TDP. She also stated that the TPA would like to do an internal peer exchange through the MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) that showcases how different areas in Florida have been able to get premium transit or transportation taxes passed. She asked if CUTR and/or FDOT could put together a report that summarized the state of transit in Florida with a focus on who is doing BRT in Florida, who has gotten transportation taxes passed, and what has been the MPO's role.

Lee County MPO and LeeTran

CUTR interviewed Don Scott, the Lee County MPO executive director and Levi McCollum, Principal Planner at LeeTran. Much of the successful planning coordination between the Lee County MPO and LeeTran appears to be due to the fact that they collaborate extensively on other projects and studies besides the TDP and LRTP. Furthermore, they have signed an interlocal agreement in which the MPO agrees to allocate up to eighty percent of its FTA Section 5305 planning funds to LeeTran.

LeeTran is an independent division of Lee County Government. The five-member Lee County Board of County Commissioners governs LeeTran. Mr. Scott said that when he began as the Lee County MPO executive director in 2007, LeeTran was looking at becoming an independent transit authority with a separate board and a one percent sales tax to support it. The Lee County MPO conducted studies in support of that effort. Although the effort eventually failed, Mr. Scott stated that the experience built a positive relationship between the two agencies that continues to this day.

The MPO and LeeTran have collaborated on a number of studies and projects not just the TDP and LRTP. One of the more important projects that they collaborated on was a project that also involved collaboration with the Collier County MPO and Collier Area Transit. This was a project that resulted in an FDOT Service Development Grant to connect transit service between the two counties. Other collaborative studies mentioned by Mr. Scott included a bus pullout study, a bus queue jump study, a Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom study, a Fort Myers Beach Trolley Study, and a Cape Coral Transit Study.

As stated above, the Lee County MPO has signed an interlocal agreement with LeeTran in which the MPO allocates up to 80 percent of its FTA Section 5305 funds to LeeTran. The two agencies have had this agreement since 2013. Some of the text from the agreement is worth noting.

Section 3.2 states:
The Lee MPO will work with LeeTran to mutually develop the transit tasks in the Unified Planning Work Program which will be reviewed and approved by the MPO Committees and the MPO Board.

Section 4.1 states:
LeeTran shall participate in the transportation planning process by appointing a member to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinating Committee (BPCC), and the Traffic Management and Operations Committee (TMOC), and the Local Coordinating Board (LCB). In addition, LeeTran staff should also attend the Citizens' Advisory Committee, and the MPO Board meetings to help address transit related items. LeeTran shall also attend and participate in the MPO's annual state certifications with FDOT and the MPO's quadrennial certifications with FHWA and FTA. The Lee MPO staff shall participate and coordinate with LeeTran's Transit Authority.

Sections 4.2 to 4.4 specifically address the LRTP and the TDP. Section 4.4 is probably the most important paragraph in the agreement in regard to TDP and LRTP coordination.

Section 4.2 states:
The Lee MPO and LeeTran shall actively engage each other during the development of the Transit Development Plan, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and other transportation related studies. Final documents resulting from these studies including but not limited to the Major and Minor Updates of the Transit Development Plan, Comprehensive Operations Analysis, Park and Ride Studies, Bus Rapid Transit Studies, Transit Demand Studies, Bus Pullout Study, Bus Queue Study, Land Use Scenario Project, and Bus Fare Studies that affect transit service shall be presented to the MPO committees and the MPO Board.

Section 4.3 states:
LeeTran should make all efforts to help the MPO meet its Public Involvement Plan requirements when it comes to developing the Transit Development Plan, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and other coordinated studies.

Section 4.4 states:
The Transit Element of the MPO's LRTP is the accepted twenty-year planning document and vision for transit needs in Lee County. The Cost Feasible Transit Plan for the first two five-year blocks shall be developed consistent with the 10-year Transit Development Plan. MPO shall actively engage LeeTran staff in the development of the Needs Plan, Cost Feasible Plan, and the development of the cost estimates for the Transit Element.

Bay County TPO and Bay Town Trolley

CUTR interviewed Rob Mahan from the Emerald Coast Regional Planning Council and Angela Bradley from Bay Town Trolley. Similar to Indian River County, the Bay County TPO is the operator of the fixed route transit service. This along with the positive working relationship between TPO and transit staff appears to have played a positive role in the planning coordination.

The Bay County TPO is administered by staff from the Emerald Coast Regional Planning Council (RPC), and the TPO is the operator of Bay Town Trolley. According to Mr. Mahan, it was the Council on Aging that created Bay Town Trolley and worked with FDOT to receive FTA 5307 funds and state block grants. Because none of the local jurisdictions within Bay County wanted to oversee public transportation, the TPO agreed to step in and administer it. Originally, the TPO provided the administration from their headquarters office in Pensacola (Escambia County). About ten years ago, they opened a local office in Panama City and hired Mr. Mahan to be the grant administrator for Bay Town Trolley. In 2013, Bay County decided that they wanted to take over administration of the transit service. The County signed an agreement with the TPO saying that the County would hire a Transit Grant Administrator, and the TPO would pay them. That has led to the current situation today. The Bay County TPO remains the transit operator, and the TPO continues to provide transit planning support. However, the Transit Grant Administrator is now an employee of Bay County. In fact, Mr. Mahan stated in the interview that he trained the county staff, and that has led to the positive working relationship that continues to this day.

The Bay County TPO acts as the Board of Directors for Bay Town Trolley, and it is the Bay County TPO that adopts the TDP. Both Mr. Mahan and Ms. Bradley stated that the TPO and Bay Town Trolley co-manage the development of the TDP. The TPO sits on Bay Town Trolley's subcommittee for picking the TDP consultant. Even when the TDP is not being updated, Ms. Bradley stated that she gives an update each month to the various TPO advisory committees and to the TPO Board on Bay Town Trolley activities. There is always a transit update even if there is nothing that needs to be voted on by the Board.

Mr. Mahan gave an example of how the TPO and Bay Town Trolley worked together and used the TDP to secure additional service. Every year, staff from Bay Town Trolley and the TPO have to go around to the various municipalities in Bay County that they serve in order to ask for operating funds. In the TDP, the two top desires expressed by the riders were for evening service and Saturday service. When they went to the various municipalities, they pointed to that information from the TDP, and they were able to secure the funds for the evening service and Saturday service. When the Great Recession hit around 2007, all the municipalities reduced the amount of funding that they gave to Bay Town Trolley. Even though that meant they couldn't start any new transit service, they were able to keep operating the evening and Saturday service because it was so successful.

Hurricane Michael (2018), which devastated the Florida Panhandle in general and Bay County in particular, has in a strange way helped to strengthen the relationship between the Bay County TPO and Bay Town Trolley. During the hurricane, TPO staff helped man the Emergency Operations Center and

took some of the shifts so that Bay Town Trolley staff could focus on emergency transportation services. Since then, the two agencies have been working together on a mini Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) to try and recover some of their ridership losses. Transit ridership has been down significantly since the storm because most of the residential housing was flattened and much of the population has not returned.

North Florida TPO and Jacksonville Transportation Authority

CUTR interviewed Ms. Denise Bunnewith, Planning Director of the North Florida TPO, and Ms. Suraya Teeple, Director of Planning and System Development at JTA. Of the six metropolitan areas that were selected for the case study interviews, the successful planning coordination in the Jacksonville area seems to be the least replicative. This is because it seems due more than anything else to a positive working relationship between Ms. Bunnewith and Ms. Teeple.

Both Ms. Bunnewith and Ms. Teeple are approaching retirement, which could potentially lead to a void in coordination. During the interview, both made a recommendation that the MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) consider providing training for new MPO staff members similar to what it currently offers to new MPO Board members via the MPOAC Institute. This recommendation echoes a similar recommendation that was made by Ms. Sobush from PSTA in Pinellas County, that CUTR/FDOT should modify its existing TDP training to be TDP/LRTP training.

During the interview, they did state that the TPO and JTA are updating the LRTP and TDP concurrently for the first time. A further improvement is that they will both be using the same traffic forecast model for the first time. Previously, JTA used their own model. JTA is taking the lead on updating the transit network in the model, and the TPO is updating the highway component to the model.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

The impetus of this research was historical, albeit anecdotal, reports of inconsistency between MPO LRTPs and transit agency TDPs in some metropolitan areas of Florida. The survey findings showed that a high percentage of both MPOs and transit agencies are satisfied with the process of LRTP coordination. However, the MPOs were not as satisfied as the transit agencies with the process of TDP coordination. While sixty-seven percent of the MPOs and seventy-two percent of the transit agencies were extremely satisfied with coordination of the LRTP, only forty-two percent of the MPOs were satisfied with the TDP coordination compared to sixty-one percent of transit agencies. Furthermore, a larger percentage of MPOs were dissatisfied with the process of TDP coordination than transit agencies (15% of MPOs versus 6% of transit agencies). Three MPOs made statements to the effect that their transit agency did not welcome their involvement in the development of the TDP because the transit agency viewed it as their internal document. MPOs were also less satisfied than the transit agencies with the level of consistency between the vision, goals, and strategies of the LRTP and TDP (34% of MPOs versus 56% of transit agencies). The largest perceived challenge to better coordination of the LRTP and TDP is the difference in horizon years and update frequency. All of the survey findings point to room for improvement when it comes to MPO and transit agency planning coordination.

The case study interviews shed light on some of the ingredients to success when it comes to MPO and transit agency planning coordination. There were five key findings:

1. Personality is key (i.e., getting along contributes to better coordination).
2. In three of the metropolitan areas, there were regularly scheduled coordination meetings between MPO and transit agency staff.
3. The more the MPO and transit agency collaborate on planning studies or transportation projects, the better coordination they have on the LRTP and TDP.
4. In one metropolitan area, the MPO and transit agency have signed an interlocal agreement in which the MPO allocates a portion of their FTA 5305 funds to the transit agency.
5. The two MPOs that were interviewed from the small metropolitan areas are also the operators of the transit system.

Suggestions to Improve MPO and Transit Agency Coordination

Based on research findings from the literature review, surveys, and case studies, the following suggestions are provided for improved planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies:

- **Implement regular meetings between decision-making staff from MPOs, transit agencies, and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).**
  Regular meetings between agency staff, whether formal or informal, help to build bridges, foster trust, and improve understanding between staff. These meetings can be formalized through

agendas and standing topics of conversation, as is the case in Indian River and Palm Beach Counties, or more informal, focused primarily on current issues, as is the case in Pinellas County. It is important that staff with the ability to act on discussion items regularly attend the standing meetings so that they can act on decisions made. Joint regular meetings also provide opportunities to heighten management level sensitivity to the issues and concerns of the other agencies. Additionally, holding regularly scheduled meetings between staff helps to overcome obstacles resulting from staff turnover.

- **Implement mechanisms to make both MPO and transit agency governing boards aware of the issues and activities of the other agency.**
  Holding occasional joint meetings of agency boards to discuss issues of common concern, which happens in Pinellas County, would provide a regular forum for coordinated and informed planning decision-making. Encouraging members who sit on both the MPO and transit agency governing boards to carry the concerns and decisions made by one agency to the other would also help coordinate and inform planning decisions. An additional mechanism to improve planning coordination at the governing board level is to have a standing agenda item for both agencies to provide status reports on activities of the other agency (presented by either agency staff or a member of the agency governing board).

- **Ensure that staff is active in the committee structure of the other agency (both standing committees and project-specific committees), perhaps even using the committees of one agency to benefit and inform the planning decisions of the other agency.**
  Staff who actively participate in the committees of the other agency will become more familiar with the issues and concerns of that agency. They can then bring those issues and concerns back to their own agency to inform planning decisions. For example, LeeTran appoints members to several of the Lee County MPO advisory committees including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinating Committee (BPCC), and the Traffic Management and Operations Committee (TMOC), and the Local Coordinating Board (LCB). Additionally, agencies can use the committees of the other agency (with permission) to advance the planning activities of their own agency. LeeTran has successfully used the various committees of the MPO to workshop planning concepts on a variety of transit planning studies and for the previous update of the TDP.

- **Share staff between both agencies to conduct, in part or in full, the transit planning activities of the other agency.**

  As is the case in Indian River and Bay Counties, MPO staff can take on partial or full responsibility for conducting transit planning activities for the local transit agency, including developing the Transit Development Plan. Alternatively, as is the case in Lee County, transit agency staff could conduct planning work for the MPO. In both cases (often achieved through a formal transfer of agency planning funds), this results in improved planning coordination as the staff conducting planning work are deeply familiar with the needs and expectations of both agencies. In a few select cases, the MPO has become the hosting agency for the transit agency, resulting in a full integration of transit planning activities at the staff level.

- **Enter into a formal agreement, such as an interlocal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to define each agency's role in planning for transit in the region.** The agreement should detail responsibilities, activities, and mechanisms for transit planning activities in the region, including the responsibilities of each agency in the development of the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and the transit development plan (TDP). The agreement could be in connection to a transfer of funds or the pooling of funds for a specific purpose, part of the regions agreements establishing either or both agencies, or be a separate agreement unto itself. An example can be seen in Lee County where the Lee County MPO and LeeTran have executed an agreement stipulating agency responsibilities as part of a transfer of up to eighty percent of FTA 5305(d) transit planning funds to Lee Tran from the MPO for transit planning activities. A statewide approach would be to modify existing state statute and administrative code to define the roles each agency should play as it relates to regional transit planning in general and to the development of the LRTP and TDP specifically.

- **Adjust the update cycle of the transit development plan (TDP) and the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) to be aligned, to the extent practical.** Synchronizing the update cycle will allow each agency to account for the newest planning considerations of the other agency and help coordinate the decisions made by each. Examples of coordinated updates can be found in several counties in the state including the Jacksonville area where the North Florida TPO and the Jacksonville Transit Authority have adjusted their update cycles to match. In Lee County, LeeTran advanced the update of the TDP by a year in order to match the update cycle of the LRTP by the Lee County MPO.

  One way to facilitate the synchronization of the LRTP and the TDP is to use common data sources and to coordinate technical and public engagement activities. This will save costs and ensure that both documents are being developed using common data inputs. To facilitate the synchronized update process in the Jacksonville area, the North Florida TPO and the Jacksonville Transit Authority (JTA) will be using the same traffic forecast model for the first time. JTA will take the lead on updating the transit component of the model and the TPO will take the lead on updating the highway component. In Indian River County, the MPO uses data developed for the TDP to conduct transit data analysis for the LRPT update.

  One obstacle to synchronizing TDP and LRTP update cycles is the regulatory requirements for both documents in federal and state law. It could be costly for either agency to advance their current update cycle to match the other and the law, as currently written, provides no flexibility for delaying an update of either document. To facilitate update synchronization, a change in state statute governing the TDP could be made to allow a one-time delay in the update cycle for the expressed purpose of aligning the TDP update with the LRTP update (an easier approach than attempting to modify the LRTP update requirements which are in both state and federal statute).

- **Align the vision statements of the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and the transit development plan (TDP).**

Aligning LRTP and TDP visions would help ensure that both documents, and therefore both agencies, are striving to achieve a common outcome when conducting planning activities. A higher level of coordination would be achieved if the TDP vision, as the shorter-range document with a more operational focus, were developed to specifically support the LRTP vision, even potentially going so far as to adopt the LRTP vision as the TDP vision. This level of coordination can be facilitated through an interlocal agreement between the MPO and transit agency. For example, in Lee County, Section 4.4 of an interlocal agreement transferring FTA Section 5305(d) transit planning funds to LeeTran states that the "Transit Element of the MPO's LRTP is the accepted twenty-year planning document and vision for transit needs in Lee County."

If this level of coordination were desired statewide, the section of state administrative code governing the development of the TDP and receipt of state transit block grants could be modified to require, or at least strongly encourage, that the TDP specifically support the LRTP vision.

It should be noted that aligning the LRTP and TDP visions could be complicated in cases where the transit agency is part of a local general-purpose government (County or City) where the TDP vision may be expected to align with the local comprehensive plan vision for transportation.

- **Conduct, when feasible, joint public engagement activities.**
  MPOs and transit agencies could better coordinate their message to and their input from community stakeholders if they conducted joint public engagement activities, particularly during activities related to the updates of the TDP and the LRTP. An example activity could include a speaker's bureau where representatives of both agencies educate community groups, organizations, stakeholders on the transit planning activities of both agencies.

- **Jointly fund and conduct planning studies, data collection exercises, and software development activities.**
  Joint funded planning activities would provide yet another mechanism for coordinating transportation planning activities in the region. Joint funded projects would compel the agencies to work together toward a common goal and provide information that could be used in both agencies' decision-making processes. It would also serve to build trust and joint knowledge between the staff of the two agencies. It could also have the additional benefit of saving costs for both agencies through a shared procurement process and joint oversight of contractors. Such an approach could even include the joint update of the TDP and LRTP by a common consulting team.

  Examples of joint activities can be found in Jacksonville where the North Florida TPO and JTA are jointly updating the transportation demand model, and in Lee and Palm Beach Counties where the MPOs and transit agencies have successfully conducted a wide range of joint funded studies, including a bus pullout study, a bus queue jump study, a beach trolley study, a corridor study, and a bus rapid transit (BRT) study.

- **Provide joint training for MPO and transit agency staff.**

Training for both transit agency and MPO staff would, like joint meetings and jointly funded projects, bring the staff of both agencies together to both meet each other and to familiarize themselves with the needs, issues and concerns of the other agency type. Training could focus on the general planning activities and processes of both agencies and on the specific elements of the TDP and the LRTP. Training could take a variety of forms including a statewide summit, workshop, webinar series, or peer exchange and be jointly developed by FDOT, the Florida MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC), and the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA).

Alternatively, the existing FDOT TDP training could be modified to include a discussion of MPO responsibilities in planning (including the role of LRTP) as it relates to transit and MPO coordination and MPO staff could be encouraged to attend. Of course, local agencies could also provide joint training activities focused on TDP and LRTP development, the core mission of the local transit agency and MPO, and a discussion of the local context for transportation planning activities.

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Appendix A – Survey Questionnaires

Planning Coordination - MPO Survey

The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida is conducting a study on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and transit agency planning coordination. This survey attempts to determine the current level of planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies, as well as to identify challenges to coordination.

Results from this survey will be used to document current levels of planning coordination between Florida MPOs and transit agencies, specifically related to LRTP and TDP planning. The results will also be used to identify notable practices of planning coordination between MPOs and transits agencies within the state.

This survey should take no more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete. That being said, feel free to take as much time as needed to accurately respond to each question. The survey does not need to be completed in a single session, and all answers can be edited up until the survey has been submitted.

Start of Block 1

Q1) Which MPO do you represent?

▼ Bay County TPO ... St. Lucie TPO [Drop-down Menu]

Q2) Please select all of the fixed route transit operators with whom you coordinate the development of the LRTP and TDP. (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Bay Town Trolley
- ☐ Broward County Transit (BCT)
- ☐ Citrus County Transit
- ☐ Clay Transit
- ☐ Collier Area Transit (CAT)
- ☐ Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT)
- ☐ Gainesville Regional Transit System
- ☐ GoLine (Indian River)
- ☐ Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART)
- ☐ Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)
- ☐ Lake County Public Transportation (Lake Xpress)
- ☐ Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (Citrus
- ☐ Connection) Lee County Transit (LeeTran)
- ☐ LYNX Transit
- ☐ Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)
- ☐ Martin County
- ☐ Miami-Dade Transit (MDT)
- ☐ Okaloosa County (Emerald Coast Rider)
- ☐ Palm Tran
- ☐ Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT)
- ☐ Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
- ☐ Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)
- ☐ Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT)
- ☐ St. Lucie Council on Aging, Inc.

☐ StarMetro (Tallahassee)

☐ SunRail (FDOT)

☐ Sunshine Bus Company (St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.)

☐ SunTran (Ocala/Marion)

☐ TBARTA

☐ The Bus (Hernando)

☐ Tri-Rail (South Florida RTA)

☐ Votran (Volusia County)

Q3) Are there any other transit operators with whom you coordinate the development of the LRTP and TDP that were not listed?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Q4 displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q3.

Q4) Please identify the additional transit operator.

_____

Start of Block 2 *(This block is repeated for each transit agency selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q5) Is your MPO and **[Transit Agency]** members of the same parent agency (e.g. city government, county government, regional planning council, etc.)?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 3 *(This block is repeated for each transit agency selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q6) Does your MPO share any common Board members with **[Transit Agency]**?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q7 displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q6.

Q7) How many Board members do your MPO and **[Transit Agency]** currently share?

_____

Start of Block 4 *(This block is repeated for each transit agency selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q8) How satisfied are you with the process of coordination between your MPO staff and the staff from **[Transit Agency]** as it relates to LRTP development?

- ◯ Extremely satisfied
- ◯ Somewhat satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ◯ Extremely dissatisfied

Q9 displayed if "Somewhat dissatisfied" or "Extremely dissatisfied" is selected in Q8.

Q9) In your opinion, what would improve the process of coordination with the staff from **[Transit Agency]** as it relates to LRTP development?

_____

_____

_____

Q10 is displayed if "Somewhat satisfied" or "Extremely satisfied" is selected in Q8.

Q10) What contributes to your satisfaction with the process of coordination with the staff from **[Transit Agency]** as it relates to LRTP development?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 5 *(This block is repeated for each transit agency selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q11) How satisfied are you with the process of coordination between your MPO staff and the staff of **[Transit Agency]** as it relates to TDP development?

- ◯ Extremely satisfied
- ◯ Somewhat satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ◯ Extremely dissatisfied

Q12 is displayed if "Somewhat dissatisfied" or "Extremely dissatisfied" is selected in Q11.

Q12) In your opinion, what would improve the process of coordination with the staff of **[Transit Agency]** as it relates to TDP development?

_____

_____

_____

Q13 is displayed if "Somewhat satisfied" or "Extremely satisfied" is selected in Q11.

Q13) What contributes to your satisfaction with the process of coordination with the staff of **[Transit Agency]** as it relates to TDP development?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 6 *(This block is repeated for each transit agency selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q14) How satisfied are you with the level of consistency between the vision, goals, and strategies/projects identified in the LRTP and the vision, goals, and strategies/projects identified in **[Transit Agency]'s** TDP?

- ◯ Extremely satisfied
- ◯ Somewhat satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ◯ Extremely dissatisfied

Q15 is displayed if "Somewhat dissatisfied" or "Extremely dissatisfied" is selected in Q14.

Q15) In your opinion, what would improve the consistency between the LRTP and **[Transit Agency]'s** TDP?

_____

_____

_____

Q16 is displayed if "Extremely satisfied" or "Somewhat satisfied" is selected in Q14.

Q16) What contributes to your satisfaction with the consistency between the LRTP and **[Transit Agency]'s** TDP?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 7 *(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q17) Do you integrate elements of **[Transit Agency]'s** TDP into your LRTP?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Q18 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q17.

Q18) What elements from **[Transit Agency]'s** TDP are integrated into your LRTP?

_____

_____

Start of Block 8

Q19) In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge to better integration of the LRTP and TDP? (Select one)

- ◯ Differences in horizon years and update frequencies
- ◯ Differences in MPO and transit funding programs
- ◯ Differences in governing board members
- ◯ Integration of the LRTP and TDP is not a challenge
- ◯ Other _____

Start of Block: 9 *(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q20) Does your MPO and **[Transit Agency]** use the same consultant to help develop the LRTP and the TDP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 10 *(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q21) Did your MPO and **[Transit Agency]** coordinate the timing of your most recent LRTP and TDP updates?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q22 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q21.

Q22) Did your MPO and **[Transit Agency]** coordinate public involvement activities related to the most recent update of the LRTP and TDP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 11 *(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q23) Do you plan on coordinating the timing of the next LRTP and TDP update with **[Transit Agency]**?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 12

Q24) Has your MPO identified transit priority corridors in the LRTP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 13 ***(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)***

Q25 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q24.

Q25) Are these transit priority corridors reflected in **[Transit Agency]'s** TDP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 14 *(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q26) Does your MPO coordinate with **[Transit Agency]** when it comes to other MPO planning documents (e.g. corridor studies, bike/ped plans, sub-area plans, etc.)?

- ◯ Yes, always
- ◯ Yes, sometimes
- ◯ No, never

Q27 is displayed if "Yes, always" or "Yes, sometimes" is selected in Q26.

Q27) How do you involve **[Transit Agency]** in coordinating other planning documents? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Through the various MPO advisory committees (e.g. TAC, CAC, BPAC)
- ☐ Through steering committees specifically established for the study
- ☐ Other _____

Start of Block 15 *(This block is repeated per number of transit agencies selected in Q2 and for any additional transit agencies identified in Q4.)*

Q28) Has your MPO and **[Transit Agency]** ever pooled funding, either for the development of the LRTP, TDP, or any other planning document?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q29 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q28.

Q29) Please specify for which project funding was pooled and how much funding was pooled with **[Transit Agency]**.

Start of Block 16

Q30) Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding the topic of MPO and transit agency coordination?

End of Survey

Planning Coordination – Transit Agency Survey

The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida is conducting a Florida Department of Transportation funded study on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and transit agency planning coordination. This survey attempts to determine the current level of planning coordination between MPOs and transit agencies, as well as to identify challenges to coordination.

Results from this survey will be used to document current levels of planning coordination between Florida transit agencies and MPOs, specifically related to TDP and LRTP planning. The results will also be used to identify notable practices of planning coordination between MPOs and transits agencies within the state.

This survey should take no more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete. That being said, feel free to take as much time as needed to accurately respond to each question. The survey does not need to be completed in a single session, and all answers can be edited up until the survey has been submitted.

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1) Which transit agency do you represent?

▼ Bay Town Trolley ... Votran (Volusia County) [Drop-down Menu]

Q2) Please select all MPOs with whom you coordinate the development of the TDP and LRTP. (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Bay County TPO
- ☐ Broward MPO Capital Region TPA
- ☐ Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
- ☐ Collier MPO
- ☐ Florida-Alabama TPO
- ☐ Forward Pinellas
- ☐ Gainesville MTPO
- ☐ Heartland Regional TPO
- ☐ Hernando/Citrus MPO
- ☐ Hillsborough MPO
- ☐ Indian River County
- ☐ MPO Lake-Sumter MPO
- ☐ Lee County MPO
- ☐ Martin MPO
- ☐ MetroPlan Orlando
- ☐ Miami-Dade TPO
- ☐ North Florida TPO
- ☐ Ocala/Marion County TPO

☐ Okaloosa-Walton TPO

☐ Palm Beach TPA

☐ Pasco County MPO

☐ Polk TPO

☐ River to Sea TPO

☐ Sarasota/Manatee MPO

☐ Space Coast TPO

☐ St. Lucie TPO

Start of Block 2 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q3) Is your transit agency and the **[MPO]** members of the same parent agency (city government, county government, regional planning council, etc.)?

◯ Yes
◯ No

Start of Block 3 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q4) Does your transit agency share any common Board members with the **[MPO]**?

◯ Yes
◯ No

Q5 displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q4.
Q5) How many Board members do you and the **[MPO]** currently share?

_____

Start of Block 4 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q6) How satisfied are you with the process of coordination between your transit agency staff and the staff of the **[MPO]** as it relates to TDP development?

- ◯ Extremely satisfied
- ◯ Somewhat satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ◯ Extremely dissatisfied

Q7 is displayed if "Extremely dissatisfied" or "Somewhat dissatisfied" is selected in Q6.

Q7) In your opinion, what would improve the process of coordination with the staff of the **[MPO]** as it relates to the TDP development?

_____

_____

_____

Q8 is displayed if "Extremely satisfied" or "Somewhat satisfied" is selected in Q6.

Q8) What contributes to your satisfaction with the process of coordination with the staff of the **[MPO]** as it relates to TDP development?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 5 (*This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q9) How satisfied are you with the process of coordination between your transit agency staff and the staff of the **[MPO]** as it relates to LRTP development?

- ◯ Extremely satisfied
- ◯ Somewhat satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ◯ Extremely dissatisfied

Q10 is displayed if "Somewhat dissatisfied" or "Extremely satisfied" is selected in Q9.

Q10) In your opinion, what would improve the process of coordination with the staff of the **[MPO]** as it relates to LRTP development?

_____

_____

_____

Q11 is displayed if "Somewhat satisfied" or "Extremely satisfied" is selected in Q9.

Q11) What contributes to your satisfaction with the process of coordination with the staff of the **[MPO]** as it relates to LRTP development?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 6 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q12) How satisfied are you with the level of consistency between the vision, goals, and strategies/projects identified in the TDP and the vision, goals, and strategies/projects identified in the **[MPO]** LRTP?

- ◯ Extremely satisfied
- ◯ Somewhat satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ◯ Extremely dissatisfied

Q13 is displayed if "Somewhat dissatisfied" or "Extremely dissatisfied" is selected in Q12.

Q13) In your opinion, what would improve the consistency between the TDP and **[MPO]** LRTP?

_____

_____

_____

Q14 is displayed if "Somewhat satisfied" or "Extremely satisfied" is selected in Q12.

Q14) What contributes to your satisfaction with the consistency between the TDP and the **[MPO]** LRTP?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 7 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q15) Do you integrate elements of the **[MPO]'s** LRTP into your TDP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q16 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q15.

Q16) What elements of the **[MPO]'s** LRTP are integrated into your TDP?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 8

Q17) In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge to better integration of the TDP and LRTP? (Select one)

- ◯ Differences in horizon years and update frequencies
- ◯ Differences in transit and MPO funding programs
- ◯ Differences in governing board members
- ◯ Integration is not a challenge
- ◯ Other _____

Start of Block 9 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q18) Does your transit agency use the **[MPO]'s** list of priority projects as a basis for funding requests for service development and/or urban corridor grants?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 9 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q19) Does your transit agency and the **[MPO]** use the same consultant to help develop both the TDP and LRTP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 10 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q20) Did your transit agency and the **[MPO]** coordinate the timing of your most recent TDP and LRTP updates?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q21 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q20.

Q21) Did your transit agency and the **[MPO]** coordinate public involvement activities related to the most recent update of the TDP and LRTP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 11 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q22) Do you plan to coordinate the timing of the next TDP and LRTP updates with the **[MPO]**?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 11

Q23) Has your transit agency identified transit priority corridors in the TDP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 12 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q24 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q23.

Q24) Are these transit priority corridors reflected in the **[MPO]** LRTP?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Start of Block 13 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q25) Does your transit agency coordinate with the **[MPO]** when it comes to other transit agency planning documents (e.g. corridor studies, bike/ped plans, sub-area studies, etc.)?

- ◯ Yes, always
- ◯ Yes, sometimes
- ◯ No, never

Q26 is displayed if "Yes, always" or "Yes, sometimes" is selected in Q25.

Q26) How do you involve the **[MPO]** in coordinating these documents?

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 14 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q27) Has your transit agency and the **[MPO]** ever pooled funding, either for the development of the TDP, LRTP, or any other planning document?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q28 is displayed if "Yes" is selected in Q27.

Q28) Please specify for which project funding was pooled and how much funding was pooled with **[MPO]**.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Start of Block 15 *(This block is repeated for each MPO selected in Q2.)*

Q29) Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding the topic of transit agency and MPO coordination?

_____

_____

_____

End of Survey