



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



# MPO PROCESS REVIEW OVERVIEW

Waco MPO Policy Committee - February 20, 2020



## **Review Methodology**

- Sponsored through an interagency contract between TTI and TxDOT (Transportation Planning & Programming Division)
- Work group developed
  - Members of MPO agencies
  - All recommendations come through/developed with them
- Voluntary effort
  - Not due to any real or perceived problems
  - We have performed this type of review all over the state
- Work sessions with appropriate staff

## Review Purpose

- Prepare MPO for TMA status
  - New TMA Designations approximately 1 year from today
  - Compliance with new requirements 1 year afterwards (March / April, 2022)
- Identify required and desired MPO activities and work tasks
- Identify necessary staffing level
  - Current
  - Future
- Analyze all MPO aspects
- Ensure an efficient process that is in compliance with federal and state requirements, resulting in success

# Review Purpose

- Provide objective observations
  - Consider peer MPO practices
    - Best practices
    - Lessons learned
  - TTI leads this effort through a contract with TxDOT, but is accountable to all member entities
- Equip the MPO to provide effective transportation planning and programming for the entire metropolitan area
  - Provide services to all member entities
  - Follow all codes and regulations
- Recognize the unique characteristics of the Waco metropolitan area

## Sample Steps

- Complete Staff-Task Matrix
- Bylaws analysis
- Policy Board and TAC composition
- Identify additional TMA requirements
- Public Participation Process
- Project Selection Process

## Staff-Task Matrix

- Detailed inventory of tasks, staff positions/skillsets, and hours required
- Iterative process
- Analyze tasks on multiple frequency cycles (10-year, 5-year, annual, etc)
- Provides a suggested staffing level in FTEs
- Feeds into a 5-year work plan and timeline

# Staff-Task Matrix

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	In UPWP?	UPWP Task		MPO Director	Sr. Planner	Transit	Model	GIS	Student help	Adm Assistant	Total Hours
2											
3			<b>Tasks on a 10-year Cycle</b>								
4			UAB review and smoothing	8	20	0	0	12	0	4	44
5			MAB review & coordination w/outside agencies	32	32	20	20	20	0	24	148
6			Functional Classification review	16	40	0	0	8	0	12	76
7			Census Review	20	40	0	0	20	0	12	268
8				76	132	20	20	60	0	52	536
9				0.63	1.10	0.17	0.17	0.50	0.00	0.43	1028
10			<b>Annual Total</b>	7.6	13.2	2	2	6	0	5.2	1908
11			<b>Tasks on a 5-year Cycle</b>								
12			<u>TDM Update</u>								
13			Saturation Count Map Mtg	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	16
14			Saturation Count Map Review	16	24	0	0	28	0	0	68
15			Model Kick-Off Meeting	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	16
16			Coordination & Meetings	16	16	0	0	0	0	0	32
17			TAZ Review and Update	16	24	0	0	32	0	0	72
18			TDM Demographic Development Base	80	80	0	0	32	40	0	332

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## Staffing Level

- Current staffing level is 3.5 FTEs
- Indicated need for up to 5.5 FTEs
- Identified gap of 2 FTEs
- Staff currently works an average of 45 hours per week
- Current funding could support 1 additional FTE
- Staff needs to be able to stay focused on MPO work
  - Human resource usage
  - Quality and effectiveness of work
- Typical situation among small and medium sized MPOs

# Staff-Fiscal Agent Relationship

- MPO is federally funded
  - 80% federal cash
  - 20% match from TxDOT (transportation development credits)
  - Reimbursement process
- MPO serves and performs transportation planning and programming for all member entities
  - All incorporated cities
  - McLennan County
  - TxDOT
  - As indicated by representation on Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee

# Staff-Fiscal Agent Relationship

- MPOs were often originally housed in city planning departments
  - Cities frequently became fiscal agents
  - Councils of governments also housed some and were fiscal agents
- As metropolitan areas have grown, so have federal planning and programming requirements
  - Increases in numbers of member entities
  - Waco is an extreme example for its metropolitan population
- Increased federal and state level scrutiny on processes and adherence to legislation and regulations

# Staff-Fiscal Agent Relationship

- Typical fiscal agent situations throughout Texas
  - Cities
  - Councils of governments
  - Counties
- Fiscal agents must be able to front the cash necessary to operate the MPO
  - Typically at least 3 months worth

## Staff-Fiscal Agent Relationship

- The MPO pays the fiscal agent, through indirect costs, for its support services
  - Payroll
  - Legal
  - Office space
  - Human Resources
  - Other
- MPO employees are technically “fiscal agent” employees because of who issues the paychecks
  - Paychecks are federally funded – no local funds used
  - If federal planning funds were not available, there would not be an MPO
  - Important to remember that they are in reality MPO employees, serving all member entities (23 CFR 450.300)

# Tying Staffing and Relationship to Fiscal Agent Together

- Identified need for up to 5.5 FTEs to perform MPO work
- Realistic potential for up to 4.5 FTEs
  - Given current financial resources
  - Potential additional financial resources in the future
- Even if MPO staff focuses solely on MPO work, some work either goes undone or gets accomplished “after hours”
  - Staff is a resource
  - Has to be maintained to continually be effective

# Tying Staffing and Relationship to Fiscal Agent Together

- Best practices
  - MPO has a financially healthy fiscal agent
  - Fiscal agent and member entities recognize that MPO is a federally funded process
  - MPO Director reports to the MPO Policy Board
  - MPO Director has direct control of MPO staff
  - All member entities are served equitably by the MPO
  - MPO follows the “3-C Process”
    - Continuing
    - Comprehensive
    - Cooperative

# Tying Staffing and Relationship to Fiscal Agent Together

- What are these “best practices”?
  - Adhering to codes and regulations
    - Periodic federal reviews
  - Functionality
    - Ability to perform quality and timely work
  - Appropriate autonomy
    - Stay focused on metropolitan area needs
  - Transparency and accountability to all member entities
    - Accountability and appropriate support to all entities

## Next Steps

- MPO Designation?
- Review Policy Board and Tech Committee Structure
  - TMAs have specific additional requirements
- Review of Bylaws
- Fiscal Analysis
  - Future funding availability
  - Potential other sources
- MPO Offices & Facilities
  - Staff Offices
  - Meeting locations and accessibility requirements
    - Live Streaming of Meetings

## Contact Information

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