MPOAC

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS PLAN 2024

Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)

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Introduction

The Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) is committed to advancing transportation planning across Florida by serving as a unifying voice for the state's metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The 2024 Strategic Directions Plan represents our roadmap for the future, guiding our efforts to enhance transportation policies, planning practices, and educational initiatives.

This plan is a **living document** designed to adapt to the ever-changing transportation needs and challenges. It is built upon the collective insights and experiences of our members, stakeholders, and partners. The Strategic Directions Plan reflects our mission to improve transportation planning and education and serves as **a call to action**, urging collaboration and innovation across the state.

As we move forward, this plan will focus on key goals and strategies for fostering an environment that prioritizes the needs and perspectives of our members, enhancing knowledge and capacity, and encouraging collaboration.

We invite our members to contribute to its implementation and join us in our mission to improve transportation planning and deliver results throughout our state.

MPOAC Mission

The MPOAC improves transportation planning and education by engaging and equipping its members to deliver results through shared innovations, best practices, enhanced coordination, communication, and advocacy.

Strategic Plan Framework and Implementation

The Strategic Directions Plan is crafted to lead the MPOAC in fulfilling its mission of advancing transportation planning across Florida. This plan provides clarity and focus, aligning with the MPOAC's current needs and long-term vision. The structure of this plan is organized around guiding principles, overarching goals, strategies, and actionable steps, all of which are supported by an Annual Work Plan to ensure implementation.

Guiding Principles: At the core of this plan are the guiding principles that steer the overall direction of the MPOAC. These principles serve as the enduring values and standards by which all activities and decisions are measured. Despite the evolving landscape of transportation planning, the MPOAC membership has determined that these principles, initially established in the 2016 Strategic Plan, remain relevant. They reflect the organization's commitment to maximizing its role in transportation policy, serving as a state leader and agent of positive change, and empowering individual MPOs to perform effectively.

Goals: Building upon the guiding principles, the Strategic Directions Plan articulates high-level goals that represent the key objectives the MPOAC seeks to achieve. These goals are broad in scope, providing a vision of what the organization aims to accomplish over the plan's duration.

Strategies: Each goal is supported by specific strategies that define the approach the MPOAC will take to achieve the desired outcomes. These strategies act as a bridge between the broad goals and the practical steps required for implementation. They are carefully crafted to align with the guiding principles, ensuring that all actions align with the organization's core values.

Actions: The strategies are further broken down into detailed implementation actions. These actions outline the specific, time-bound steps that need to be taken to execute the strategies successfully. Each action is assigned to responsible parties, with clear measures of success established to monitor progress and ensure accountability.

Annual Work Plan: To ensure the effective implementation of the Strategic Directions Plan, the MPOAC Executive Director will develop and maintain an Annual Work Plan. This plan will outline the specific initiatives and timelines required to carry out the strategies and actions identified in the Strategic Directions Plan. The Annual Work Plan will serve as a living document, reviewed and updated regularly to reflect progress, changes in priorities, and new legislative developments. It will be a key tool in translating the strategic goals into tangible outcomes, ensuring that the MPOAC's efforts are focused and adaptable.

This structured approach ensures that the MPOAC's goals are not only aspirational but also achievable. By clearly defining strategies and actions under each goal, supported by an Annual Work

Plan, the plan provides a practical guide for implementation, helping to focus efforts on the most critical areas and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Integration of Strategic Direction and Legislative Framework

The MPOAC was created by the 1984 Florida Legislature pursuant to Section 339.175(11), Florida Statutes. This legislation establishes and shapes the responsibilities and activities of the MPOAC. As a statutory organization, the MPOAC must adapt to legislative changes that redefine its duties, areas of focus, and operational scope. Any adjustments to 339.175 directly influence the MPOAC's strategic priorities and, consequently, its approach to implementing its Strategic Directions Plan. Therefore, while the Strategic Directions Plan sets the direction, it does so in alignment with the current legislative framework and with the flexibility to ensure that the MPOAC's efforts remain responsive to statutory mandates and policy developments from the Florida Legislature.

Administrative Responsibilities

In addition to the strategic initiatives outlined in this plan, the MPOAC carries out a range of essential administrative responsibilities that support its core operations and ensure smooth organizational functioning. These duties include, but are not limited to, preparing the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), organizing quarterly meetings, preparing and tracking budgets, and managing other day-to-day tasks.

The MPOAC Governing Board and Staff Directors' Advisory Committee may also issue motions or directives that result in additional administrative assignments and duties for MPOAC staff. These directives reflect the organization's responsiveness to evolving needs and priorities that this plan may not explicitly cover. For example, at the direction of the Governing Board, the MPOAC may periodically evaluate the organization's operations and structure. Any directives will be integrated into the MPOAC's annual work plan to ensure they are systematically managed and aligned with ongoing priorities.

These administrative activities are essential to operating the MPOAC and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, but they function as routine operations rather than strategic initiatives. The Strategic Directions Plan guides the MPOAC's long-term efforts, while these tasks provide the foundation that supports the organization's mission and goals.

Process for Developing the Strategic Directions Plan

Developing the MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan was a collaborative and iterative process that engaged MPOAC members, committees, and partners. The goal was to ensure that the plan reflects the collective insights, priorities, and experiences of those involved in metropolitan transportation planning across Florida. The following key meetings and workshops served a critical role in shaping the Strategic Directions Plan:

1. **In-Person Workshop (October 26, 2023)**

- This workshop was the initial step in gathering input from MPOAC members. Participants shared their insights on the MPOAC's priorities and strategies that set the foundation for the Strategic Directions Plan.

2. **Executive Committee Meetings & Workshops (January through April 2024)**
    - Over a series of meetings and workshops, the Executive Committee engaged in in-depth discussions to refine the plan's framework, strategies, and implementation actions. This process allowed for a thorough review of key concepts and ensured alignment with the MPOAC's mission and guiding principles.
3. **Governing Board Meeting (January 25, 2024)**
    - The first Governing Board meeting focused on presenting the initial draft of the Strategic Directions Plan, gathering feedback from board members, and identifying areas for further development.
4. **Governing Board Meeting (April 25, 2024)**
    - The April Governing Board meeting provided an opportunity to present a revised version of the plan, incorporating feedback from previous sessions. Members reviewed the updated goals, strategies, and actions, leading to additional refinements to enhance the plan's clarity and focus.
5. **Policy and Technical Committee Meeting (June 12, 2024)**
    - During this meeting, the Policy and Technical Committee evaluated the strategic initiatives outlined in the plan and provided technical insights to ensure that the proposed actions were practical and achievable.
6. **Virtual Workshop (July 16, 2024)**
    - The virtual workshop brought together a broader group of members and partners to review the near-final draft of the Strategic Directions Plan. Participants offered valuable feedback on the proposed strategies, implementation actions, and measures of success, ensuring that the plan was comprehensive and responsive to the needs of MPOs.

This process of collaboration and engagement ensured that the MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan is a well-rounded and dynamic document built upon the collective expertise and input of its members and partners.

Guiding Principles

The MPOAC is guided by a set of enduring principles that form the cornerstone of its strategic direction. These principles were originally established in the 2016 Strategic Plan and have been reaffirmed by the MPOAC membership as being relevant and crucial to the organization's mission. As the transportation landscape evolves, these guiding principles remain the touchstone for all MPOAC activities, ensuring that the organization remains focused on its mission while adapting to new challenges and opportunities.

1. **Maximize the role of the MPOAC in transportation policy, planning, and education.**
2. **Serve as a state transportation leader and agent of positive change.**
3. **Empower and enable individual M/TPOs to do their jobs better.**
4. **Provide opportunities for MPOAC members to participate in committee and workgroup efforts to enhance the organization's mission and impact.**

Goals

As the MPOAC continues to lead and support Florida's MPOs, it is essential to establish clear and actionable goals that guide our collective efforts. This Strategic Directions Plan sets forth three goals designed to enhance the effectiveness of the MPOAC and the collaboration efforts among MPOS and its partners.

The following states the three primary goals of the Strategic Directions Plan. These goals serve as the foundation for our initiatives and activities:

Goal 1: Represent the interests and priorities of MPOs with FDOT, federal partners, and other organizations to ensure policies and programs encompass MPOs' needs and perspectives.

Goal 2: Enhance knowledge and capacity to aid decision-making and strengthen the understanding of metropolitan planning practices.

Goal 3: Lead and support collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing among MPOs for continuous improvement of transportation planning products.

Implementation Actions

The success of the Strategic Directions Plan hinges on translating high-level goals into concrete, actionable steps. To achieve this, each goal outlined in the plan is supported by targeted strategies, which are broken down into specific implementation actions. These actions provide a clear roadmap for how the MPOAC will execute its strategic objectives, ensuring its efforts are focused, measurable, and aligned with its guiding principles.

In this section, we present each of the Strategic Directions Plan's goals, followed by the strategies that will guide the MPOAC in achieving these goals. For each strategy, detailed implementation actions are outlined, specifying the steps that need to be taken, the parties responsible, timelines for completion, and the measures of success. This structured approach ensures that every aspect of the plan is actionable, and that progress can be tracked and evaluated over time.

By breaking down the goals into strategies and actionable steps, the MPOAC clarifies its path forward and fosters accountability and continuous improvement. These implementation actions are designed to be dynamic, allowing adjustments to respond to changing circumstances while keeping the organization on course to achieve its mission.

Goal 1: Represent the interests and priorities of MPOs with FDOT, federal and state partners, and other organizations to ensure policies and programs encompass MPOs' needs and perspectives.

Strategy 1.1: Confirm the needs of MPOs.

To effectively represent the interests of the MPOs and ensure that their priorities are reflected in state and federal policies, it is essential first to understand MPOs' specific needs and concerns. Strategy 1.1 aims to create a structured approach to consistently gather and prioritize these needs through direct communication and engagement with MPOs. By regularly polling the MPOs and organizing their inputs, the MPOAC can strategically align its efforts to advocate for these priorities during engagements with key partners, such as FDOT and federal agencies. This strategy ensures that the collective voice of the MPOs remains central to policy discussions and program development.

Actions:

1. Poll the MPOs on their current and upcoming interests, ideas, concerns, and/or initiatives.
2. Organize and prioritize the MPO interests and needs.
3. Integrate priorities into engagement efforts with FDOT and federal partners, like the FMPP meetings.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Staff
- MPOAC Governing Board
- MPOAC Executive Committee
- MPO Staff Directors

Timeline:
Annually: Polling; Ongoing: Engagement

Measures:

- Percentage of actions implemented to respond to MPO needs and be reported on at the respective quarterly meeting

- Goal 1: Represent the interests and priorities of MPOs with FDOT, federal partners, and other organizations to ensure policies and programs encompass MPOs' needs and perspectives.

Strategy 1.2: Continue to engage state and federal partners.

Maintaining strong, consistent relationships with state and federal partners is crucial for ensuring that the perspectives and priorities of MPOs are effectively represented in transportation policies and programs. Strategy 1.2 focuses on maintaining and enhancing these relationships by engaging in regular dialogue, inviting partners to participate in MPOAC Quarterly Meetings, and exploring new opportunities for collaboration. By sharing MPO insights and identifying funding opportunities, this strategy aims to strengthen partnerships supporting MPO goals and driving progress on shared transportation initiatives.

Actions:

1. Schedule periodic updates or briefings to share MPO perspectives and interests with partner agencies.

2. Continue to include state and federal partners in MPOAC Quarterly Meetings.

3. Identify other opportunities, as needed, for engaging state and federal partners with MPOs.

4. Identify transportation funding opportunities for MPOs.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Governing Board and Staff
- MPO representatives
- State and federal agencies

Timeline:
Quarterly

Measures:

- Effectiveness of collaborative initiatives of MPOAC and state and federal agencies that support and advance MPO interests through a post-meeting evaluation. The post-meeting evaluation to be reported on at the respective quarterly meeting.

Strategy 1.3: Engage national and statewide organizations and associations.

Building connections with national and statewide organizations and associations is vital for enhancing the influence of MPOs and advancing transportation policy and planning efforts. Strategy 1.3 focuses on identifying key entities that align with MPO interests and goals, facilitating

collaboration and information exchange opportunities. Through participation in events, sharing best practices, and exchanging resources, this strategy seeks to create partnerships that strengthen the MPOAC's role in driving meaningful progress for MPOs and the broader transportation community.

Actions:

1. Identify key organizations and associations that align with the interests and goals of MPOs.
2. Explore opportunities for collaboration, partnership, information exchange, and to inform on MPOs and the MPOAC.
3. Identify ways the MPOAC and the organizations can participate in each other's events, conferences, and forums. In addition to sharing best practices, resources, and relevant updates.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Governing Board and Staff
- MPO representatives
- Identified organizations and associations

Timeline:
Quarter 1: identify organizations and explore opportunities; Ongoing: Collaboration

Measures:

- Effectiveness and satisfaction of collaborative initiatives that support and advance MPO interests through a post-engagement evaluation.

Goal 2: Enhance knowledge and capacity to aid decision-making and strengthen the understanding of metropolitan planning practices.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to offer the MPOAC Weekend Institute to elected officials.

Strategy 2.1 focuses on maintaining the MPOAC Weekend Institute as a cornerstone educational initiative to enhance the knowledge and capacity of elected officials and other MPO governing board members involved in metropolitan planning. This program offers in-person training sessions designed to deepen officials' understanding of transportation planning and equip them with the tools needed for informed decision-making. By providing these learning opportunities up to two times per year, the MPOAC aims to strengthen the skills and knowledge base of those guiding the future of metropolitan transportation planning.

Actions:

1. Continue to offer in-person Weekend Institute sessions for elected officials.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Governing Board and Staff

Timeline:

Sessions are provided up to two times per year.

Measures:

- Number of participants
- Post-training participant evaluation score to be shared at the respective quarterly meeting

Strategy 2.2: Offer training on advanced or specialized topics.

To further develop the skills and expertise of individuals involved in metropolitan planning, Strategy 2.2 focuses on providing training on advanced or specialized topics. This approach involves identifying relevant subjects that address emerging trends and complex aspects of transportation planning. By offering these training opportunities virtually and on-demand, the MPOAC aims to make learning accessible year-round, allowing participants to expand their knowledge and stay current with best practices in the field.

Actions:

1. Identify other training topics that offer advanced topics or specialized topics.
2. Provide virtual training opportunities for identified topics.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Executive Director
- MPOAC Governing Board Members

Timeline:

Training will be available on-demand year-round, as needed.

Measures:

- Number of virtual participants that complete the online training.
- Post-training participant evaluation score to be shared at the respective quarterly meeting

Strategy 2.3: Offer training opportunities to MPO staff.

Strengthening the capabilities of MPO staff is essential for advancing metropolitan planning practices and achieving organizational goals. Strategy 2.3 focuses on assessing the specific training needs of MPO staff and developing tailored programs that address their technical and professional development. By offering these training opportunities in various formats—such as workshops, webinars, and on-demand modules—the MPOAC aims to provide flexible learning options that enhance the knowledge and skills of MPO staff, fostering a more effective and well-equipped workforce.

Actions:

1. Conduct a thorough assessment of the training needs and skill gaps among MPO staff through surveys and consultations.
2. Develop specialized training programs and courses that address MPO staff's technical and professional development needs.

3. Deliver training sessions through various formats, including in-person workshops, webinars, and on-demand modules.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Governing Board and Staff
- MPO representatives

Timeline:

Annually, or as needed.

Measures:

- Number of training opportunities offered
- MPO participation rates and attendance in training sessions.
- Post-training participant evaluation score to be shared at the respective quarterly meeting.

Strategy 2.4: Collaborate with other partners, agencies, and educational institutions to expand training resources and opportunities.

Strategy 2.4 emphasizes the importance of collaboration with external partners, agencies, and educational institutions to maximize training resources and enhance learning opportunities. By establishing strategic partnerships and sharing training materials, courses, and expertise, the MPOAC aims to broaden the scope of available training for MPO staff and stakeholders. This strategy promotes cross-training, knowledge exchange, and hosting joint training events to create a richer learning environment that supports the continuous professional growth of those involved in metropolitan planning.

Actions:

1. Establish partnerships with organizations and associations to access additional training resources.
2. Share training materials, courses, and expertise to broaden the range of available training.
3. Promote cross-training and knowledge exchange.
4. Host joint training events and workshops.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Executive Director, Executive Committee, Governing Board, and Staff Directors
- Partners, agencies, educational institutions

Timeline:

Ongoing

Measures:

- Number of partnerships established with organizations
- MPO participation in joint training initiatives
- Post-training participant evaluation score

Goal 3: Lead and support collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing among MPOs for continuous improvement of transportation planning products.

Strategy 3.1: Maintain a webpage to share best practices and resources.

Strategy 3.1 focuses on creating and maintaining a dedicated online resource for MPOs to promote continuous improvement and innovation in metropolitan transportation planning. This webpage will serve as a centralized hub where MPOs can access best practices, templates, guides, and case studies from both local and national sources. By making these resources easily accessible, the MPOAC aims to facilitate knowledge sharing and provide MPOs with the tools they need to develop effective planning products.

Actions:

1. Maintain a dedicated webpage for MPOs to access best practices, resources, templates, and guides by topic area.
2. Populate the webpage with relevant content, including best practice guides and case studies. Content could include local and national best practices.
3. Provide training and support to MPOs for using the webpage effectively.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Governing Board and Staff
- MPO representatives

Timeline:

Ongoing

Measures:

- Number of downloaded resources from webpage
- Number of visits to the webpage

Strategy 3.2: Host knowledge-sharing webinars and workshops.

Creating opportunities for MPOs to learn from each other and share innovative ideas is essential for advancing the field of metropolitan transportation planning. Strategy 3.2 aims to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing by organizing regular webinars and workshops focused on topics of interest to MPOs. These events will provide a platform for exchanging insights, discussing best practices, and distributing relevant materials, helping MPOs stay informed and continuously improving their planning efforts.

Actions:

1. Plan and organize regular webinars or workshops that address a topic of interest.
2. Distribute relevant presentations, guides, and any other information post-meeting.
3. Poll participants about the effectiveness of webinars and workshops after each event.

Responsibility:

- MPOAC Governing Board and Staff
- MPO representatives

Timeline:

Semiannual

Measures:

- Number of hosted webinars or workshops.
- MPO participation in webinars or workshops.
- Effectiveness of webinars and workshops based on participant evaluation.

Annual Work Plan

The successful execution of the Strategic Directions Plan requires a detailed and actionable work plan that translates the overarching goals and strategies into specific tasks, timelines, and responsibilities. This work plan will serve as a roadmap for implementing the strategies outlined in the Strategic Directions Plan, ensuring that the MPOAC remains focused, accountable, and aligned with its guiding principles. The MPOAC Executive Director will create a quarterly-based annual work plan, detailing specific actions for each calendar year to guide the implementation of the Strategic Directions Plan.

The work plan intends to provide a structured approach to achieving the MPOAC's goals. It will detail the specific actions required to advance each strategy, along with the timelines, responsible parties, and measures of success. This plan also incorporates feedback from MPOAC membership to enhance its effectiveness. The work plan is designed to be dynamic, allowing for adjustments as necessary to respond to evolving conditions and opportunities. By setting clear expectations and regularly measuring progress, the MPOAC can ensure that it is continuously moving toward its strategic objectives. The work plan will also support transparency and communication within the organization, with regular updates provided at quarterly meetings to keep all members informed of progress.

Below is a demonstration/draft of an annual work plan detailing specific actions by quarter:

Q1: January - March 2025

- **Strategy 1.1: Confirm the Needs of MPOs**
    - Conduct an annual survey to gather input on MPO interests.
    - Organize and prioritize survey results by the end of Q1.
- **Strategy 1.2: Continue to Engage State and Federal Partners**
    - Begin scheduling regular briefings and include partners in quarterly meetings.
- **Strategy 1.3: Engage National and Statewide Organizations and Associations**
    - Identify key organizations for collaboration.
- **Strategy 2.3: Offer Training Opportunities to MPO Staff**
    - Assess training needs and skill gaps.
- **Strategy 2.4: Collaborate with Other Partners to Expand Training Resources**
    - Continuation and expansion of partnerships with organizations and educational institutions.

- **Strategy 3.1: Maintain a Webpage to Share Best Practices and Resources**
    - Launch the dedicated webpage by the end of Q1.

Q2: April - June 2025

- **Strategy 1.3: Engage National and Statewide Organizations and Associations**
    - Establish partnerships with identified organizations.
- **Strategy 2.3: Offer Training Opportunities to MPO Staff**
    - Develop specialized training programs based on the needs assessment.
- **Strategy 3.1: Maintain a Webpage to Share Best Practices and Resources**
    - Start updating and maintaining the webpage content.

Q3: July - September 2025

- **Strategy 2.3: Offer Training Opportunities to MPO Staff**
    - Begin delivering the developed training programs.
- **Strategy 3.2: Host Knowledge-Sharing Webinars and Workshops**
    - Continue hosting regular webinars and workshops.

Q4: October - December 2025

- **Strategy 1.2: Continue to Engage State and Federal Partners**
    - Continue engaging partners and reporting on the effectiveness of collaborations.
- **Strategy 2.1: Continue to Offer the MPOAC Weekend Institute**
    - Host any remaining Weekend Institute sessions and report on evaluation scores.
- **Strategy 3.2: Host Knowledge-Sharing Webinars and Workshops**
    - Plan and execute final webinars and workshops for the year.

Continuous Monitoring and Reporting

Effective implementation of the MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan requires ongoing monitoring and regular reporting to ensure that all strategic initiatives are progressing.

- **Regular Updates:** The MPOAC Executive Director will provide regular updates on progress at each quarterly meeting, highlighting successes, areas for improvement, and any adjustments to the work plan based on emerging needs or legislative changes.

- **Adaptability:** The work plan is designed to be flexible, allowing for revisions to address evolving conditions, feedback from MPOAC membership, and new opportunities that arise throughout the year.
- **Transparency:** All progress reports, including measures of success and feedback from training evaluations, will be shared with MPOAC members to ensure transparency and collective input in decision-making.