CHAPTER 1

Introduction

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1 PURPOSE **2**

1.2 WHAT IS AN MPO? **2**

1.3 WHAT DOES THE MPO DO? **4**

1.4 WHAT THE MPO DOES NOT DO **7**

1.5 FLORIDA'S MPOS **7**

1.5.1 MPO Organizational Structure 9

1.5.2 MPO Board Composition 10

1.5.3 MPO Committees 11

1.5.4 MPO Advisory Council 12

1.6 MPO CONTACT INFORMATION **12**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1A – Overview of Federal Planning Factors 3

Figure 1B – MPO Planning Process 4

Figure 1C – Statewide Planning Process 5

Figure 1D – Planning Products 6

Figure 1E – Florida MPO/TMA Areas 8

Figure 1F – MPO Organizational Structures 9

Figure 1G – Average Board Size By Population Group 10

Figure 1H – FDOT Districts 13

1.1 PURPOSE

This handbook is intended for Department and staff of Florida's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning offices and the public. Its purpose is to answer questions about what an MPO is, what an MPO does, what authority it has, the responsibilities of its committee members and what kinds of decisions it makes.

It is also intended to provide a brief introduction to the process of planning and funding transportation projects and the role of the MPO in that process.

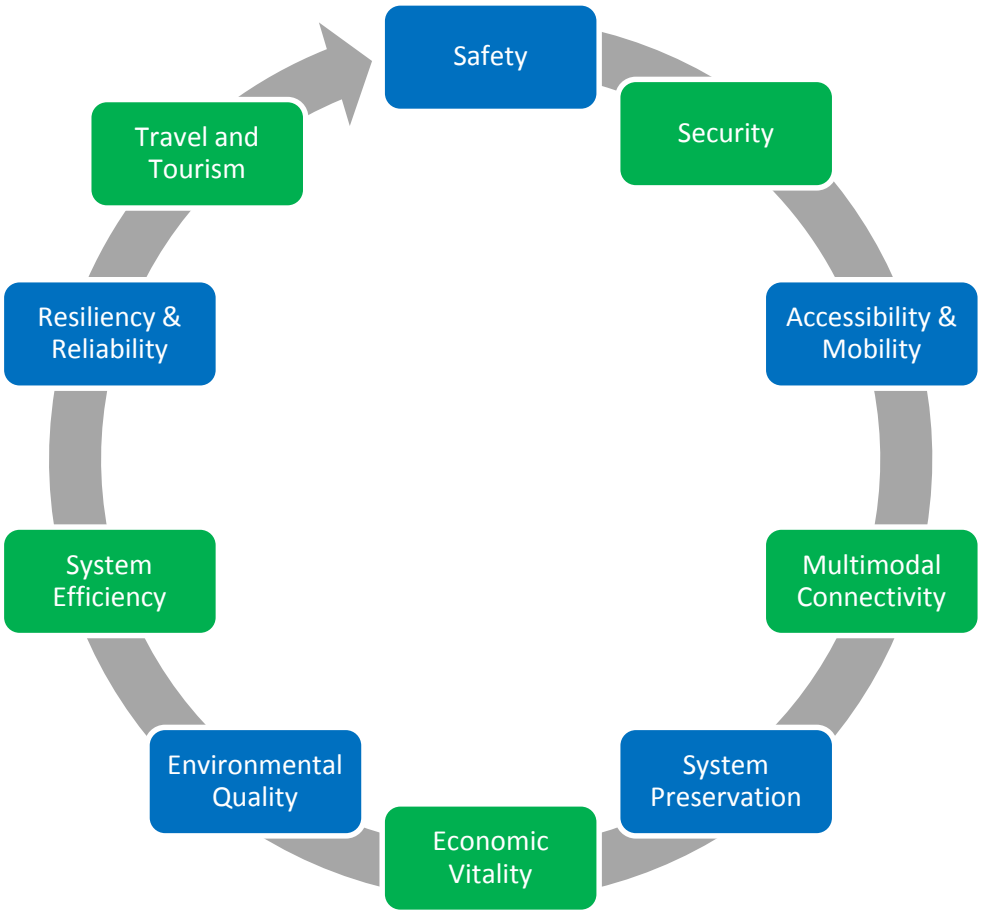
1.2 WHAT IS AN MPO?

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are federally mandated transportation policy-making organizations that are comprised of representatives from local governments and transportation authorities. In Florida, MPOs are also referred to as Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs) and Transportation Planning Agencies (TPAs). They are all metropolitan planning organizations that meet the federal requirements. In 1962 the United States Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which required metropolitan areas with populations greater than 50,000 to have a transportation planning process that was ''continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative" (i.e., 3-C planning process). To more effectively address the need for regional coordination of transportation planning across jurisdictional boundaries, the 1973 Federal-Aid Highway Act mandated the creation or designation of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) for urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000 people. While every urbanized area greater than 50,000 people must be represented by an MPO, there can be multiple urbanized areas within a single MPO and an urbanized area can be included in the boundary of more than one MPO [23 C.F.R. 450.310(a)]. MPOs are required to implement the 3-C planning process and comply with federal and state transportation planning requirements as a condition of the receipt of federal transportation funds. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) relies on MPOs to ensure highway and transit projects that use federal funds are products of a credible planning process while addressing local priorities. Within an MPO area, USDOT (through FHWA and FTA) will not approve federal funding for urban highway and transit projects unless they are consistent with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

The MPO's role is to develop and maintain the necessary transportation plans for the area to assure that federal funds support these locally developed plans. The development of these plans requires the MPO to consider the Federal Planning Factors, as indicated in **Figure 1A**. The

results of transportation studies or planning results should be based on these transportation planning factors established by federal law.

Figure 1A – Federal Planning Factors



The MPO was given the responsibility to involve the public in this process through expanded citizen participation efforts with the passage of the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), signed in 2005, and reiterated in the 2012 federal transportation legislation entitled *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century* (MAP-21), increased those responsibilities with new Participation Plan requirements. Since the MPO is made up of those agencies responsible for carrying out transportation programs in the MPO area, the process allows for input from all agencies within the MPO area to be engaged in the process.

In Florida, MPOs are governed both by the federal laws and regulations, as well as Chapter 339.175, Florida Statutes (F.S.). Currently, there are 27 MPOs in the State of Florida (see Section 1.5).

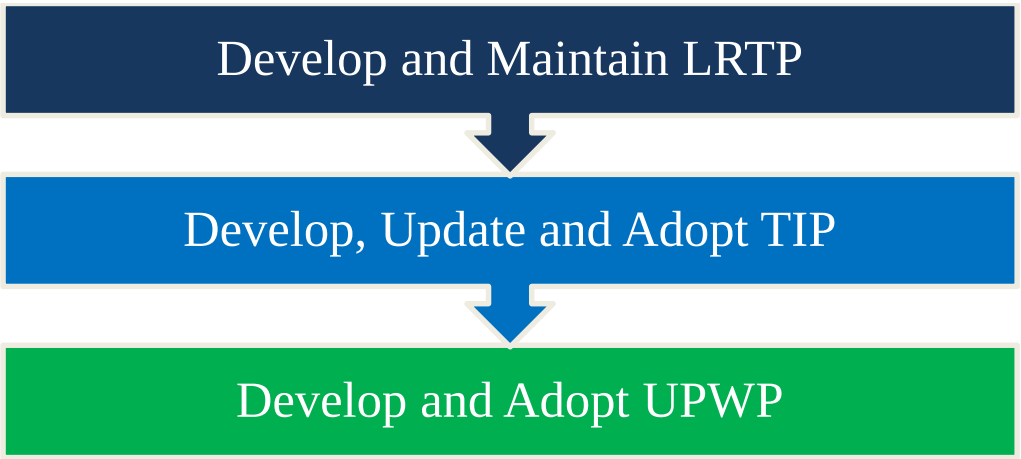
1.3 What Does The MPO Do?

The MPO carries out three major work activities:

1. The development and maintenance of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) which addresses no less than a 20-year planning horizon.
2. The update and approval of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a four-year program for highway and transit improvements. In Florida, MPOs are required to develop and adopt a TIP annually and includes a five year program of projects. The fifth year is included for illustrative purposes.
3. The development and adoption of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that identifies activities to be undertaken in the metropolitan planning area by the MPO.

These activities are necessary for the eligibility of the Metropolitan Planning Organization to qualify for and receive federal transportation funds.

Figure 1B – MPO Primary Activities

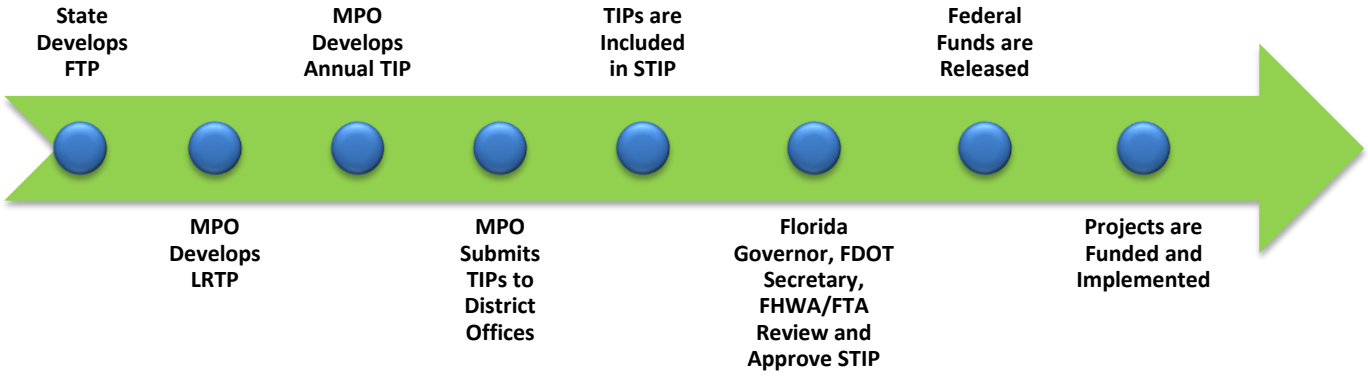


The LRTP includes both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods [23 C.F.R. 450.322(a)(b)]. The LRTP is reviewed and updated every five years in attainment areas to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use trends and conditions and to extend the

20 year planning horizon [23 C.F.R. 450.322(c)]. The LRTP process is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this handbook.

Each MPO's LRTP must be consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), which is the long-range plan for the state of Florida [339.175(7)(a), F.S.]. Florida's current FTP has a horizon year of 2060 that outlines the transportation policies for the state of Florida over the next forty plus years. The FTP contains goals and objective designed to anticipate future conditions to meet the State's transportation needs. Within each metropolitan area, the statewide long-range transportation plan is developed in cooperation with the MPOs [23 C.F.R. 450.214(f)]. The FTP can be accessed at: http://www.floridatransportationplan.com.

Figure 1C – Statewide Planning Process



While the LRTP looks some twenty years into the future, the MPO also develops an annual TIP as required by Florida Statute [339.175(8)(a), F.S.], which identifies projects to be carried out in the next five years. Although federal statute [23 C.F.R. 450.324(a)] only requires the TIP to cover a period of four years, state law [339.175(8)(c)(1), F.S.] requires the schedule for the development of the TIP be compatible with the schedule of the development of the Department's Work Program. Since the five year work program is adopted annually, the TIP covers five (5) years instead of four. This fifth year is considered "illustrative" for planning purposes. This process involves solicitation of projects' requests from those agencies responsible for providing transportation services and facilities, cooperatively ranking them, and selecting those highest priority projects that will fit into the estimated available funding. The TIP process is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this handbook.

Each MPO, in cooperation with the State(s) and public transportation operator(s), shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) [23 C.F.R. 450.308(c)]. For the development of the UPWP, the Districts are

provided Federal and State Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) that are to be considered when developing tasks. The UPWP identifies work proposed for the next one or two year period. In Florida, the MPOs are currently on a two year UPWP schedule. The UPWP balance sheet includes Year 1 allocation and for illustrative purposes, the anticipated Year 2 allocation. The UPWP process is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this handbook.

Figure 1D is a matrix of FDOT and MPO planning products and their .review and update requirements.

Figure 1D – Planning Products

	Who Develops	Who Approves	Time Horizon	Content	Update Requirements
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	MPO	MPO/Governor	4 Years FL: Illustrative 5th Year	Transportation Improvements	Every 4 Years FL: Annual
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	State DOT	FHWA and FTA	4 Years FL: Illustrative 5th Year	Transportation Improvements	Every 4 Years FL: Annual
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	MPO	MPO	20 Years FL: 20+ Years	Future Goals, Strategies and Projects	Every 5 Years (4 Years for non-attainment and maintenance areas) FL: 5 Years
Florida Transportation Plan (FTP)	State DOT	State DOT	20 Years FL: At least 30 Year Horizon	Future Goals and Strategies	Not Specified FL: At Least Every 5 Years
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	MPO	MPO	As Needed	Procedures, and Strategies for Engaging the Public	45 Day Review and Public Comment Period

1.4 What The MPO Does Not Do

MPOs are charged with long-range transportation planning and prioritization. Conversely, MPOs are not generally involved in day-to-day operations of the transportation system. Below is a list of what the MPO does not do:

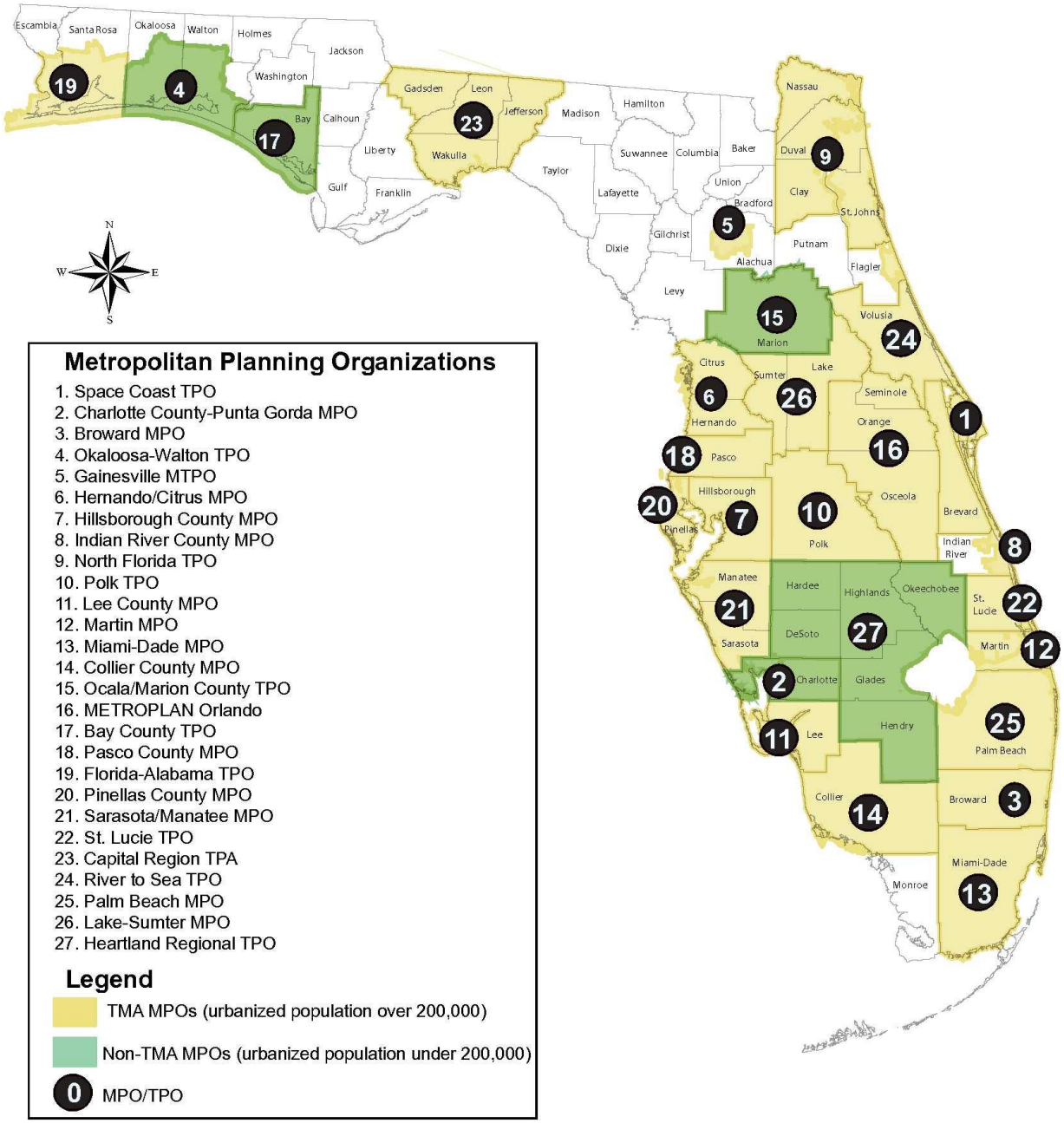
- The MPO does not repair potholes in roads.
- The MPO does not adjust traffic signal timing.
- The MPO does not enforce traffic laws.
- The MPO does not determine zoning issues.

Concerns about these issues should be directed to local city or county offices.

1.5 Florida's MPOs

There are 27 MPOs in Florida serving a wide range of population sizes. There are 15 Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) in the state. TMAs are urbanized areas that have a population greater than 200,000 people. The planning requirements for TMA MPOs and non-TMA MPOs are slightly different. MPOs serving a TMA are required to undergo a Federal certification review of their organization's planning process every four years (conducted by FHWA and FTA). However, all MPOs, regardless of size, are required to engage in an annual joint state-MPO certification review process with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The map below shows all of the MPO and TMA areas throughout Florida. For a listing of all Florida MPOs and their contact information, please see **Section 1.6**.

Figure 1E – Florida MPO/TMA Areas



1.5.1 MPO Organizational Structure

Conventionally, MPOs have either been considered independent or hosted entities for operational and administrative purposes. Typically, hosted entities are affiliated with another governmental agency, such as a county or regional planning council. Research now shows that MPO organizational structures span a continuum ranging from fully independent freestanding MPOs to MPOs that are an all-in-one agency. The following are descriptions of the various types of MPO organizational structures.

Figure 1F – MPO Organizational Structures

Independent MPOs

- Freestanding Independent MPO - The MPO must meet all of its own operating needs.
- Learning Independent - The MPO receives some services from one of its member agencies under a severable contract.

Hosted MPOs

- Dual Purpose MPO - The host leverages MPO planning funds to maintain transportation planning staff that perform both MPO planning and host agency transportation planning functions.
- Component MPO - MPO functions are separated from most functions of the host, but remains a division of the umbrella agency.
- All-in-One Agency - The agency does not differentiate between MPO functions, non-MPO transportation functions, and all of the other functions of the broader agency.

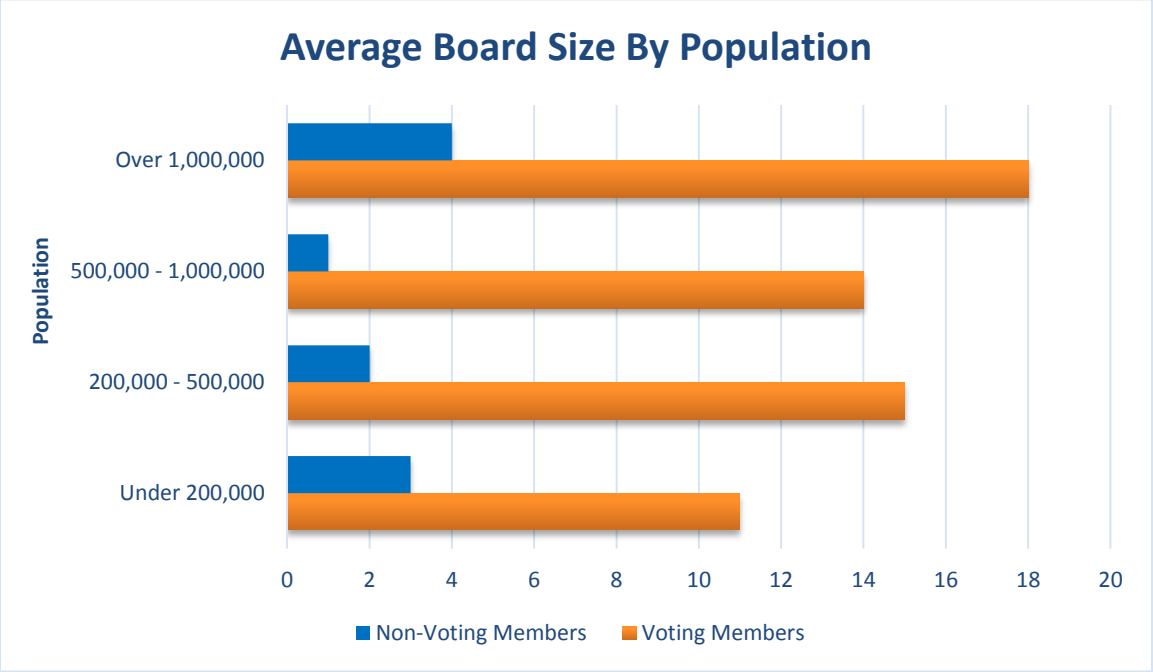
Of the 27 MPOs in Florida, a majority (16) are hosted MPOs while the remaining (11) MPOs are independent of a hosting agency. Currently, Florida has no all-in-one agency MPOs. The most common organizational structure in the state is the Dual Purpose MPO. For more information, see A Snapshot of Florida MPOs that outlines MPO structures across the state.

1.5.2 MPO Board Composition

Statewide, there are over 438 Governing Board members, 386 of whom are voting members. Memberships range between 6 and 29 members per MPO including both voting and non-voting members. Florida Statute 339.175(3), F.S. establishes a 25 member cap for each MPO Governing Board; however, the Miami-Dade Urbanized Area MPO is permitted to exceed this cap [339.176, F.S.]. Section 339.175(3)(a), F.S. states that, "Voting members shall be elected officials of general-purpose local governments, one of whom may represent a group of general-purpose local governments through an entity created by an MPO for that purpose. An MPO may include, as part of its apportioned voting members, a member of a statutorily authorized planning board, an official of an agency that operates or administers a major mode of transportation, or an official of Space Florida."

The average size of an MPO Governing Board in Florida is approximately 16 members – 14 voting members and 2 non-voting advisors. MPOs serving areas over 1 million persons tend to have the largest boards – an average of 18 voting members and 4 non-voting advisors. MPOs serving populations below 200,000 people tend to have the smallest Governing Boards – an average of 11 voting members and 2 non-voting advisors.

Figure 1G – Average MPO Board Size By Population



Section 339.175(3)(a), F.S. states that, "In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134, the Governor may also allow MPO members who represent municipalities to alternate with representatives from other municipalities within the metropolitan planning area which do not have members on the MPO." These rotating MPO Governing Board seats allow groups of municipalities (typically smaller population municipalities – often grouped by geographic proximity) to more fully engage in the MPO process by allowing them to rotate on and off the MPO Governing Board as a full voting member – taking turns representing the interests of the group they represent.

1.5.3 MPO COMMITTEES

By Florida Statute each MPO is required to have a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). These committees meet prior to board meetings to develop recommendations for presentation to the board.

Pursuant to 339.175(6)(d), F.S., each MPO appoints a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) whose members serve at the pleasure of the MPO. The TAC consists of transportation professionals working for governments and government agencies who review plans, projects and programs from a technical perspective. The members of the TAC "must include, whenever possible, planners, engineers, representatives of local aviation authorities, port authorities, and public transit authorities or representatives of aviation departments, seaport departments, and public transit departments of municipal or county governments; as applicable, the school superintendent of each county within the jurisdiction of the MPO or the superintendent's designee; and other appropriate representatives of affected local governments." State and federal agency representatives whose actions are transportation related should also serve on the committee.

In addition to the TAC, each MPO is required to appoint a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) whose members also serve at the pleasure of the MPO [339.175(6)(e), F.S.]. This committee provides a mechanism for input to the transportation planning process that reflects the citizen's views and interests. It also assists in disseminating relevant information to the public. Membership on the CAC "must reflect a broad cross-section of local residents with an interest in the development of an efficient, safe, and cost-effective transportation system. Minorities, the elderly, and the handicapped must be adequately represented."

Although not mandated by statute, most MPOs have a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to provide input to the MPO Board and staff on bicycling and pedestrian-related issues, especially important in Florida due to the climate. Also, depending on the situation, MPOs may have other active committees to advise the MPO Board on current or local issues in their area.

1.5.4 MPO Advisory Council

The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) assists MPOs in carrying out the urbanized area transportation planning process by serving as the principal forum for collective policy discussion. It was created by the Florida Legislature as a statewide transportation planning and policy organization to augment the role of individual MPOs in the cooperative transportation planning process [339.175(11) F.S.].

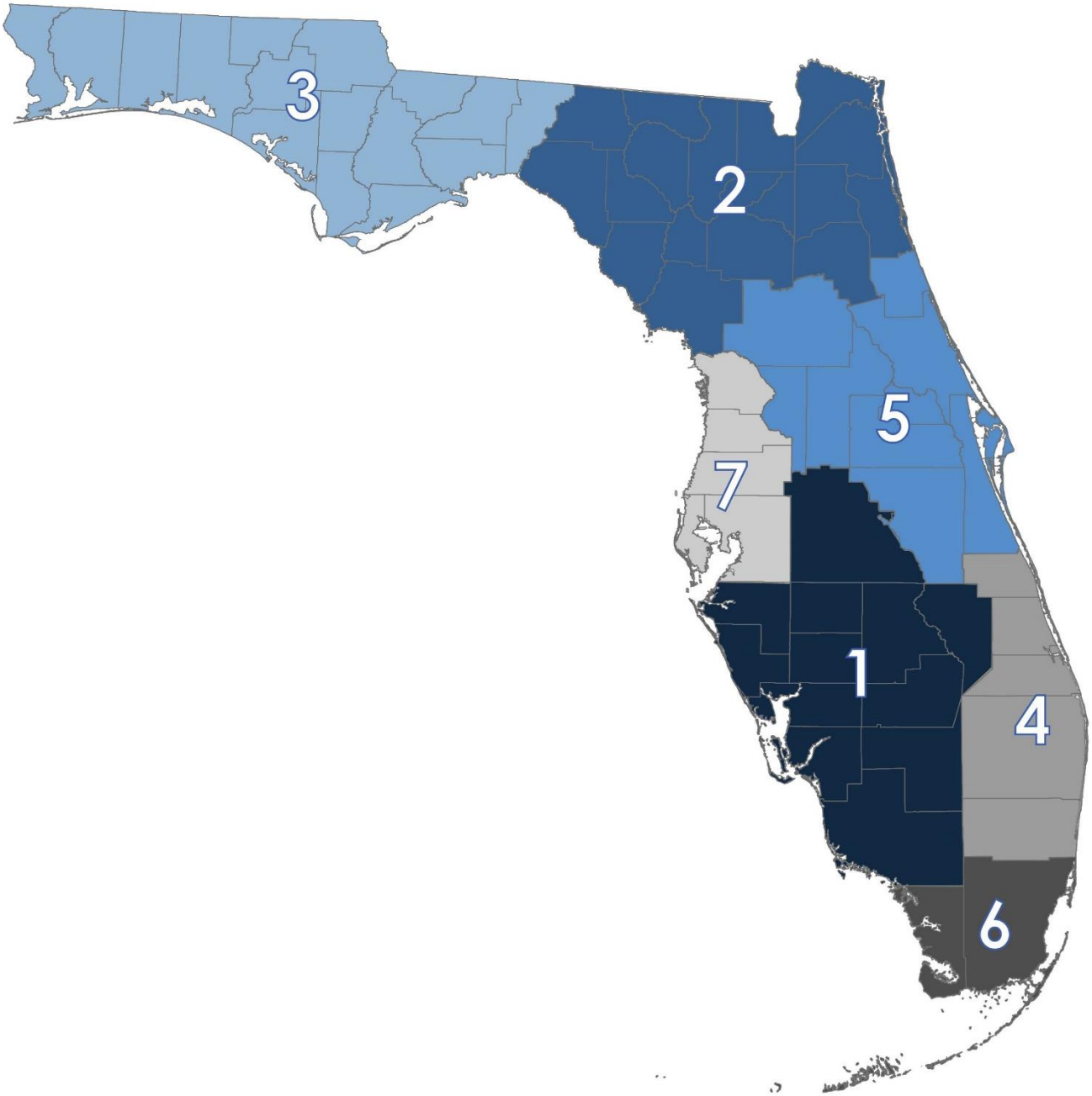
The organization is made up of a 27-member Governing Board consisting of local elected officials from each of the MPOs, as well as a 27-member Staff Directors Advisory Committee consisting of the staff directors from each of the MPOs. The MPOAC also includes a Policy and Technical Subcommittee and other committees as assigned by the Governing Board. The Policy and Technical Subcommittee annually prepares legislative policy positions and develops initiatives to be advanced during Florida's legislative session. The MPOAC actively participates in the activities of the national Association of MPOs (AMPO) and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and works with other stakeholder groups to help shape state and national policy regarding metropolitan transportation issues. The MPOAC offers training to new board members and also performs some research projects.

The MPOAC Governing Board and Staff Directors Advisory Committee typically meet at a central location on the fourth Thursday during the months of January, April, July and October. The Policy and Technical Subcommittee meets between the quarterly MPOAC meetings at a central location. More information on the MPOAC can be found at www.mpoac.org.

1.6 MPO Contact Information

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is a decentralized state agency in accordance with legislative mandates. There are seven FDOT Districts throughout Florida, and each is managed by a District Secretary. Coordination between FDOT and the MPOs occurs mainly through the cooperative planning efforts of the MPOs and the FDOT District offices. **Figure 1H** highlights the geographical area for each FDOT District. The following page includes contact information for each of the 27 MPOs.

Figure 1H – FDOT Districts



MPO Contact Information By FDOT District

District 1

Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
(941) 883-3535
ccmpo.com

Collier County MPO
(239) 252-5850
colliermpo.com

Heartland Regional TPO
(869) 534-7130
heartlandregionaltpo.org/

Lee County MPO
(239) 244-2220
leempo.com/

Polk TPO
(863) 534-6486
polktpo.com

Sarasota/Manatee MPO
(941) 359-5772
mympo.org

District 2

Gainesville MTPO
(352) 955-2200 x.103
ncfrpc.org/mtpo/index.html

North Florida TPO
(904) 306-7500
northfloridatpo.com

District 3

Bay County TPO
(850) 332-7976
wfrpc.org/programs/b-tpo

Capital Region TPA
(850) 891-6800
crtpa.org

Florida-Alabama TPO
(850) 332-7976
wfrpc.org/programs/fl-al-tpo

Okaloosa-Walton TPO
(850) 332-7976
wfrpc.org/programs/o-w-tpo

District 4

Broward MPO
(954) 876-0033
browardmpo.org

Indian River County MPO
(772) 226-1672
irmpo.com

Martin MPO
(772) 221-1498
martinmpo.com

Palm Beach MPO
(561) 684-4170
palmbeachmpo.org

St. Lucie TPO
(772) 462-1593
stlucietpo.org

District 5

Lake-Sumter MPO
(352) 315-0170
LakeSumterMPO.com

MetroPlan Orlando
(407) 481-5672
metroplanorlando.com

Ocala/Marion County TPO
(352) 629-8297
ocalamariontpo.org

River to Sea TPO
(386) 226-0422
r2ctpo.org

Space Coast TPO
(321) 690-6890
spacecoasttpo.com

District 6

Miami-Dade MPO
(305) 375-4507
miamidadempo.org/

District 7

Hernando/Citrus MPO
(352) 754-4057
www.hernandocitrusmpo.us/

Hillsborough County MPO
(813) 272-5940
hillsboroughmpo.org

Pasco County MPO
(727) 847-8140
pascocountyfl.net

Pinellas County MPO
(727) 464-8200
pinellascounty.org/mpo