

# Rural Planning Organization Workshop

## Rural Planning Organizations: Their Role in Transportation Planning and Project Development in Texas

Product 5-6483-01-P1 h "U "

...





# RPO Workshop Agenda

- Introductions
- Session 1 - Overview & Context
- Session 2 - RPO Key Issues
- Session 3 - Planning Rules



# Workshop

- Format
  - Discussion and Review of RPOs
  - RPO Guidebook
- Materials
  - Workshop Slides – Participant Guide
  - Evaluations
- Participation Encouraged
  - You are important
- Breaks and logistics



# Introductions

- Project Team
  - TxDOT
  - TTI
- Participants
  - RPOs
  - MPOs
  - FHWA / FTA
  - COGs + Lead Agencies
  - Local officials
  - Elected Officials
  - Agencies, Associations, Organizations



# Self Introductions

- What is your name?
- What is your position / role in RPOs?
- What are your primary responsibilities?
- What do you expect from this workshop?



# Workshop Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop, you should be able to:

- Identify the key transportation planning organizations in Texas
- Describe:
  - the current status of RPOs
  - key issues affecting RPOs
  - TxDOT Transportation Planning rules
  - How RPOs “fit” into the Transportation Planning Process





# Session 1

## RPO Overview & Context



## Workshop Session I

- Describe Key Findings about RPOs
- Describe changes in Texas demographics
- Identify metropolitan and rural boundaries
- Define non-metropolitan
- Identify the key transportation planning organizations in Texas



## Key Findings National RPO Scan / Review

- Rural transportation planning is linked to economic development
- RPOs are frequently “housed” in COGs / RDOs
- Planning practitioners (staff) and stakeholders share interest in both economic development and transportation



## RPO Scan / Review (cont'd)

- RPOs face similar challenges
  - There is no established funding sources or allocation to support RPOs.
  - State DOTs generally use State Planning and Research (SPR) funds and most require some form of local match. Funding for RPO varies among the states.





## RPO Scan / Review (cont'd)

- Most RPOs have policy and technical committees similar to MPOs.
- Interagency coordination and multiple funding programs is a common challenge.
- Most RPO boundaries align with COG/RPC/RDO/EDO but exclude areas inside MPO boundaries.



## Review (cont'd)

- NADO (2009):
  - In 1998, 17 state DOTs have agreements with RPO-like organizations
  - In 2005, 25 (or more) states with RPOs
  - In 2010, 30+ (?) States with RPOs



## Summary

- Most RPOs are organized and operate similar to MPOs.
- States commonly use RPOs to “consult” with rural and local officials.



## Texas RPO Summary

- No current legislation enabling RPOs in Texas from 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislatures
- TxDOT Rules define role of RPO
  - 43 TAC Chapter 16  
Planning and Development of Transportation Projects
  - More on rules later



## Federal Summary

- Proposed federal legislation 2009
  - by Oberstar, (defeated in 2010)
  - recognize RPO's existence
  - directs states to coordinate with RPOs in statewide transportation planning
  - State DOTs fund RPOs to conduct rural transportation planning.
- No signs federal legislation is moving



## *Texas Census Preview*

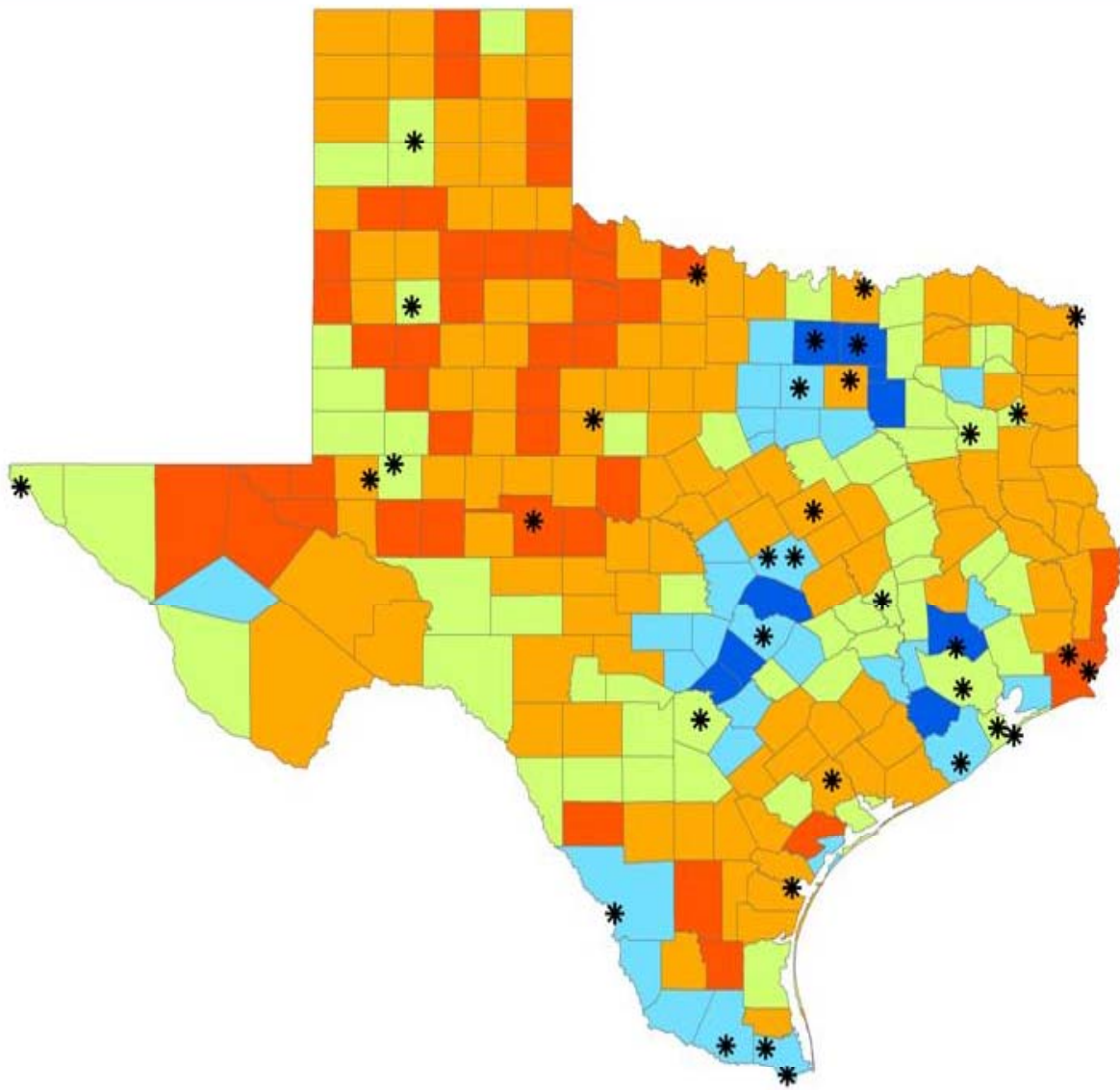
- Selected Findings from...
  - TxDOT Research Project No. 0-6199
  - Estimates for 2010 Census and impact on Texas Transit Funding Formula
  - The University of Texas at San Antonio Institute for Demographic & Socioeconomic Research (IDSER)
  - Texas Transportation Institute (TTI)



## Census Estimated Population Growth for Texas

	2000	2010	Growth
<u>Texas Population</u>	20,900,000	25,400,000	21.7%
% of US Population	7.3%	8%	
<u>Urbanized</u>	14,800,000	18,600,000	25.7%
% of US Population	7.5%	8.3%	
<u>Non-Urbanized</u>	6,100,000	6,800,000	11.5%
% of US Population	6.8%	7.2%	





## Percent Change in Population by County 2000- 2010

### Legend

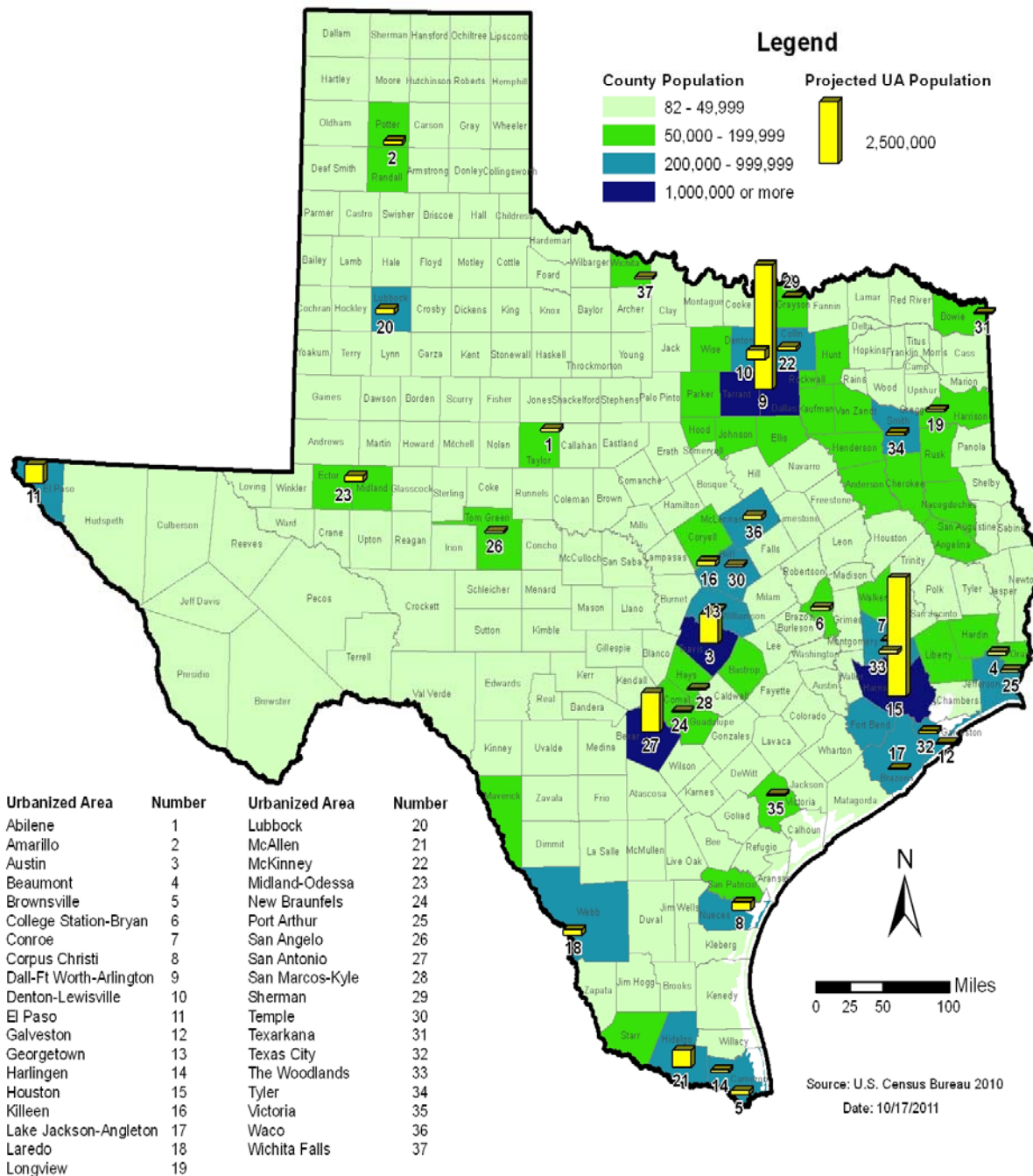
#### Percent Population Change

- 50% or more
- 21.7% to 50%
- 10% to 21.7%
- 0% to 10%
- less than 0%

\* Urbanized Areas

# Population Distribution in Texas

## 2010 County Populations and Projected Urbanized Area Populations



## 2010 Census Key Points

- Population growth is faster than national averages for urban and rural
- Fastest growth in counties around largest metropolitan areas and border communities
- 4 urbanized areas will top 200,000
- 5 new urbanized areas over 50,000
- Rapidly urbanizing rural areas could merge into larger urban areas

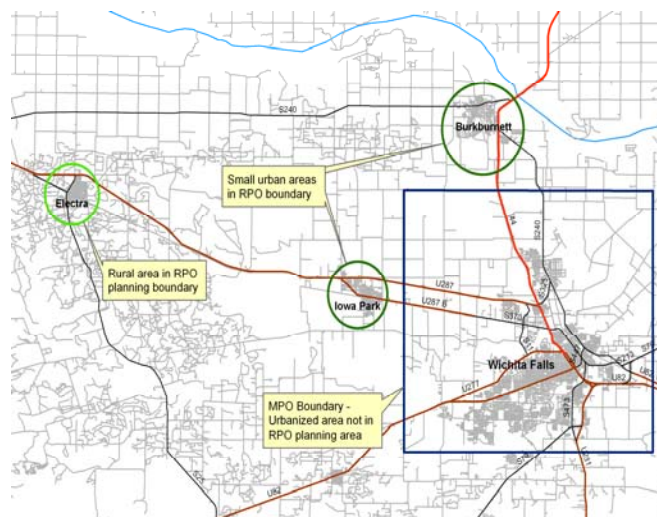
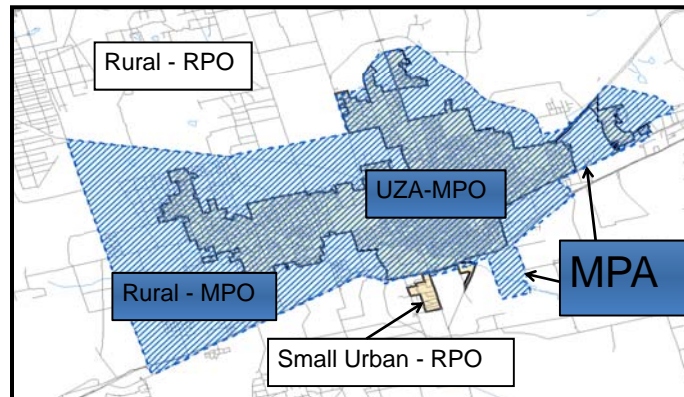


## Key Points to Remember

- RPOs represent rural and small urban areas outside metropolitan planning area (MPA)
- Census Rural Definition < 2,500
- USDOT Definitions
  - Rural < 5,000
  - Small Urban = 5,000 to 49,999
  - Urbanized = 50,000+
- Non-Metropolitan area--An area of the state not included within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning organization

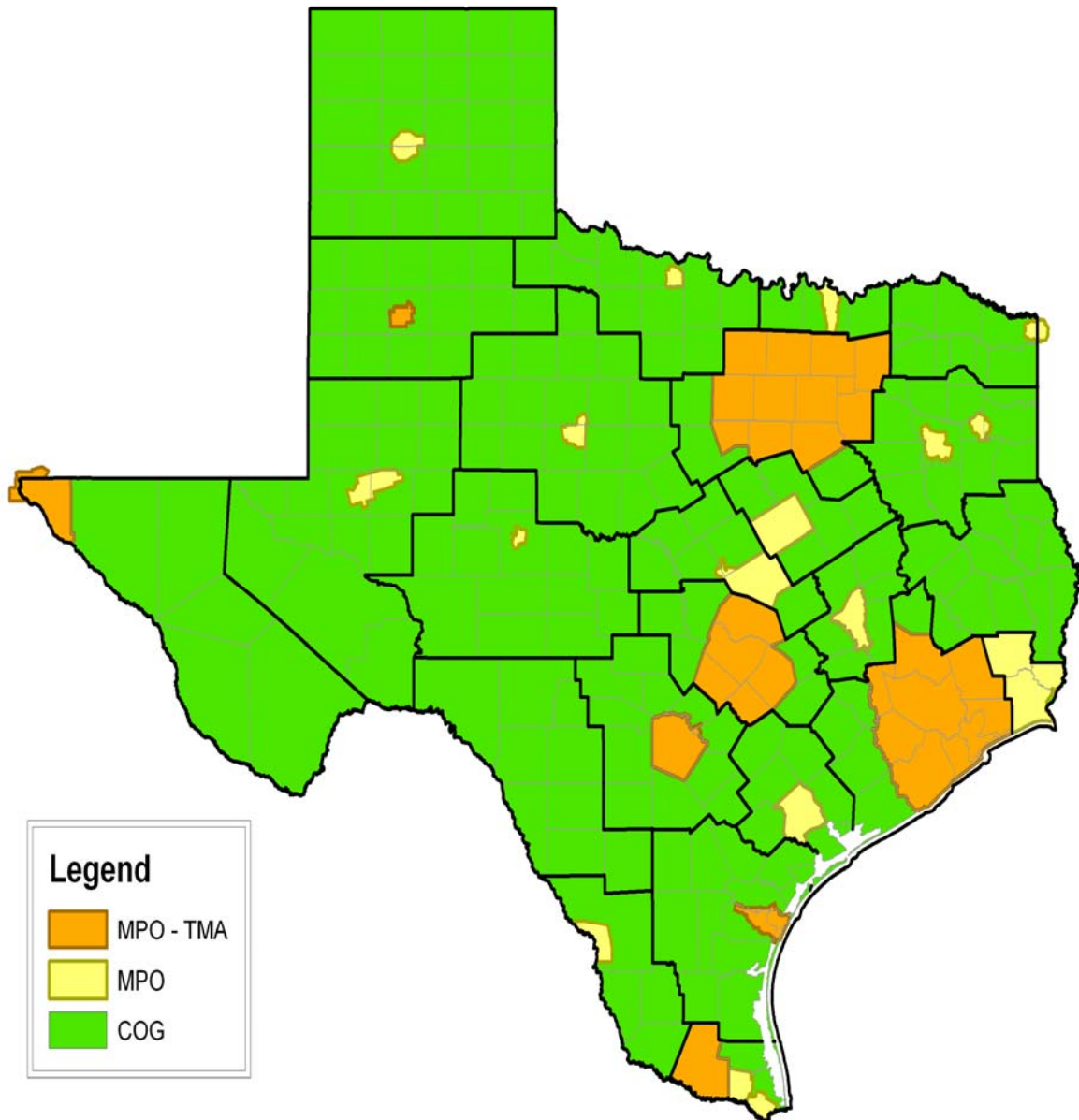


## Areas Covered by RPO & MPO





# COGs and MPOs

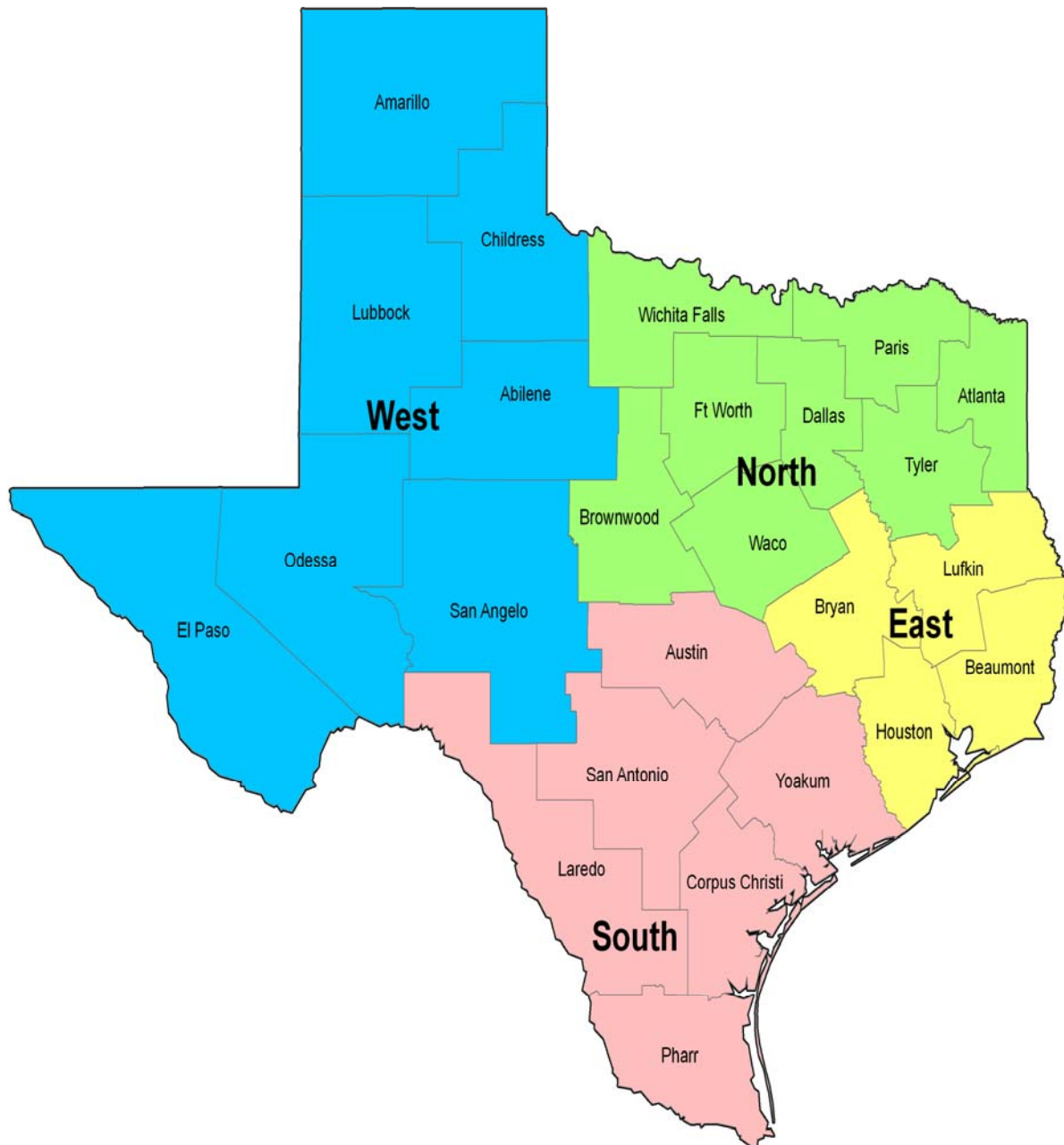


## Transportation Planning in Texas

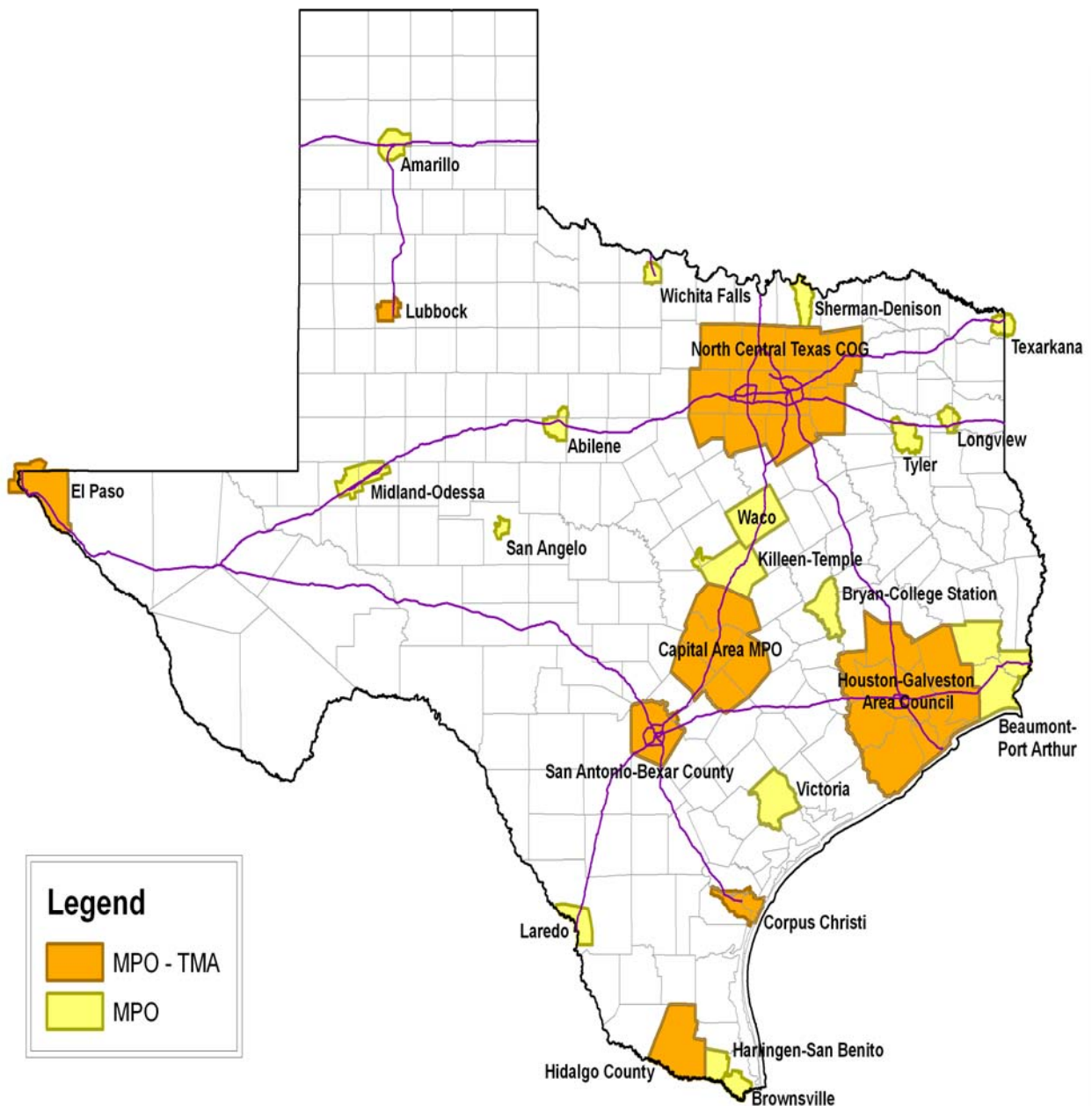
- TxDOT
  - 25 Districts / 4 Regions
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
  - 25 MPOs
- Councils of Government (24)
- Lead Agencies (24)
- RPO (at least 12 established / 21 with resolutions)
- Regional Mobility Authorities (8)
- Others (e.g. 391's)



# TxDOT Districts & Regions



# MPOs (25)



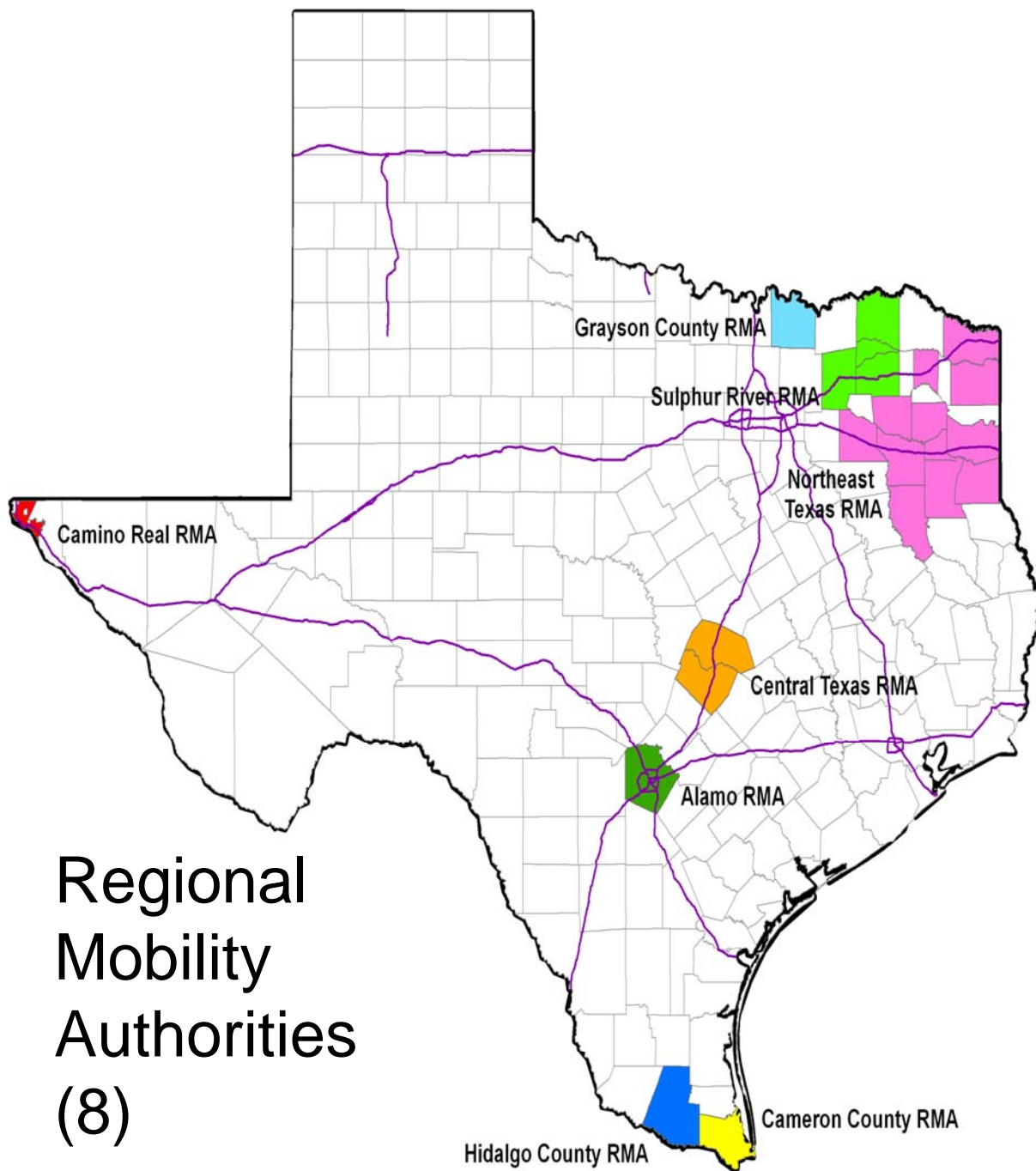
# COGs



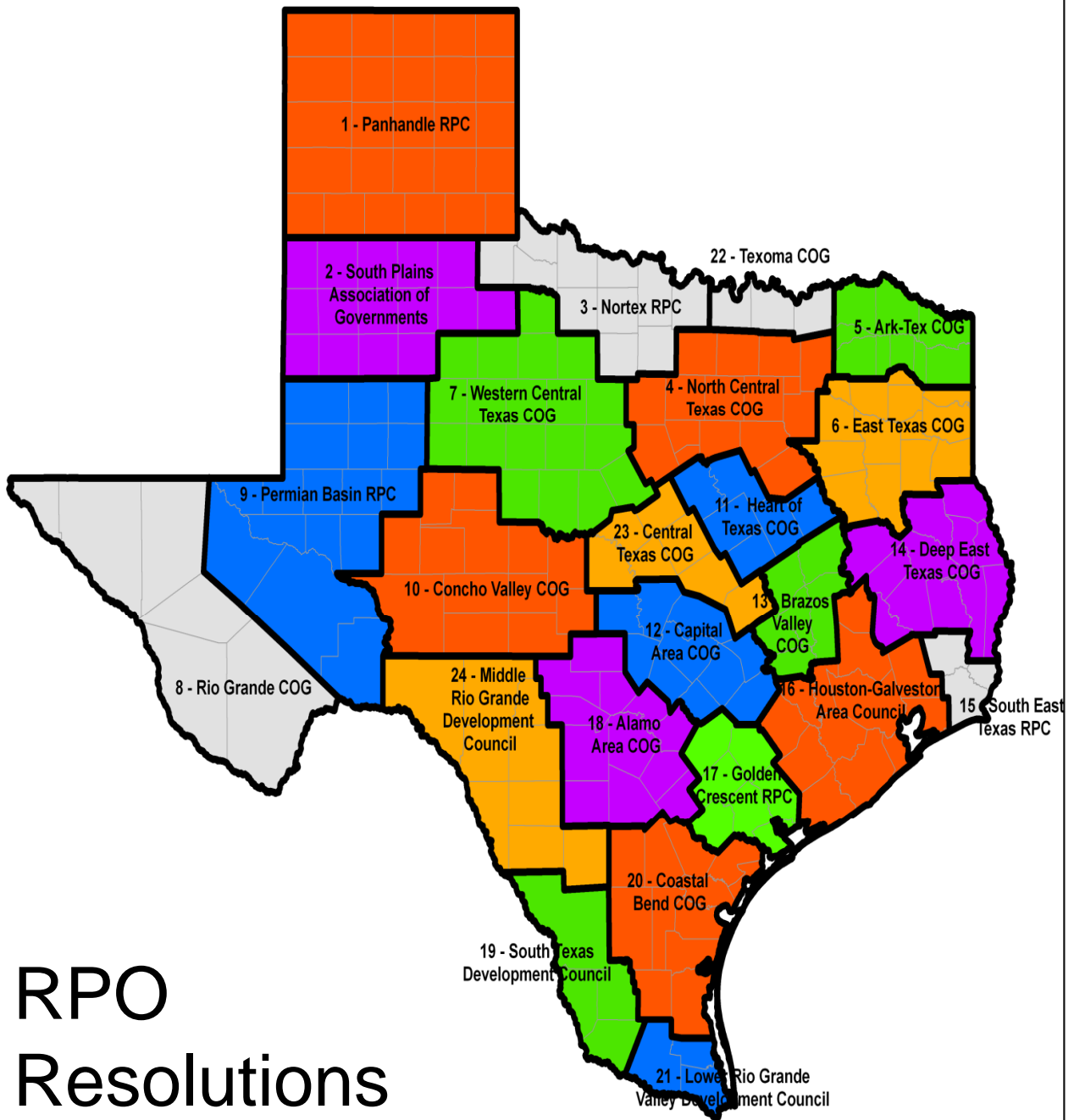
# Regional Public Transportation Coordination Lead Agencies (24)





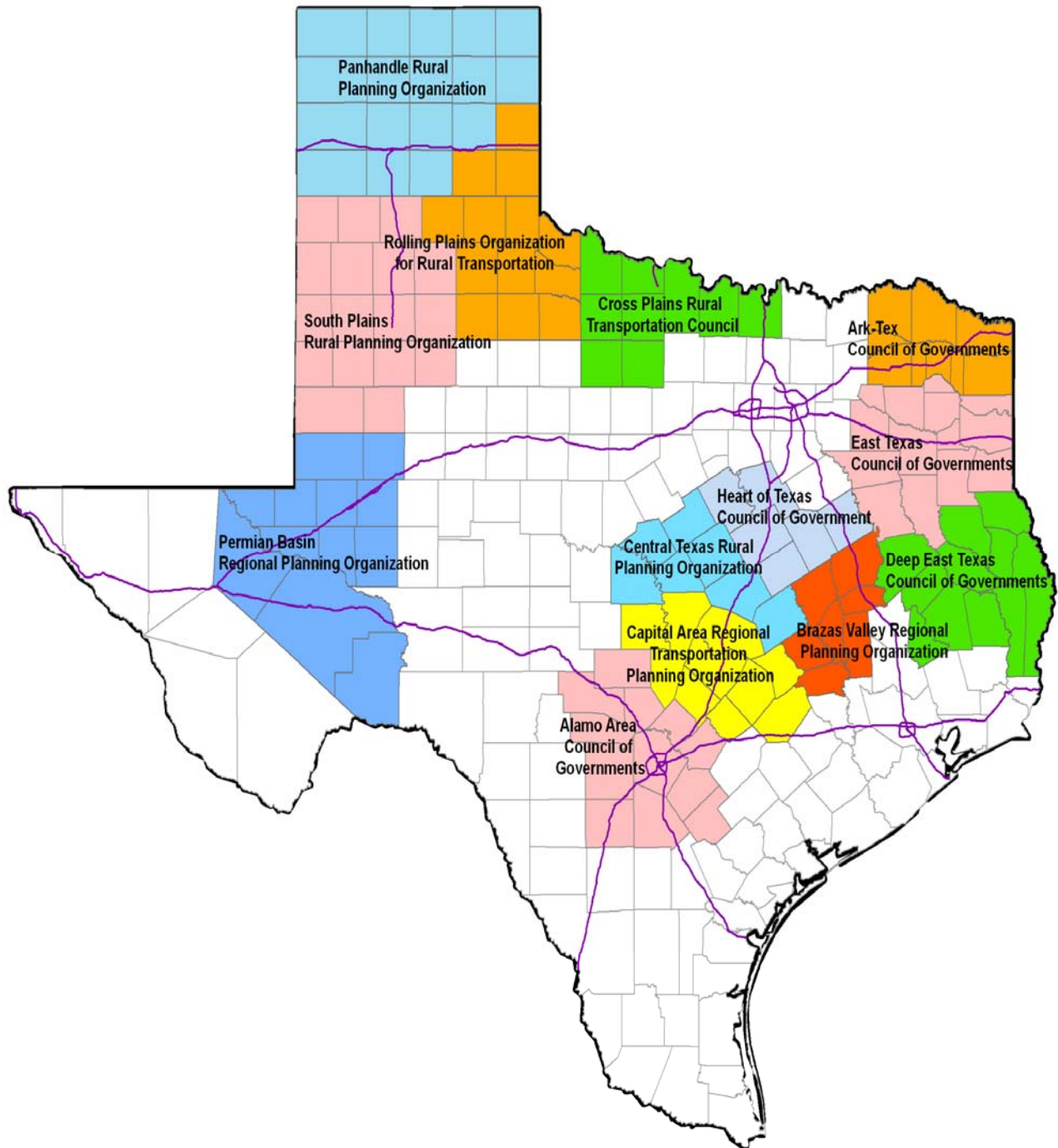


## Regional Mobility Authorities (8)

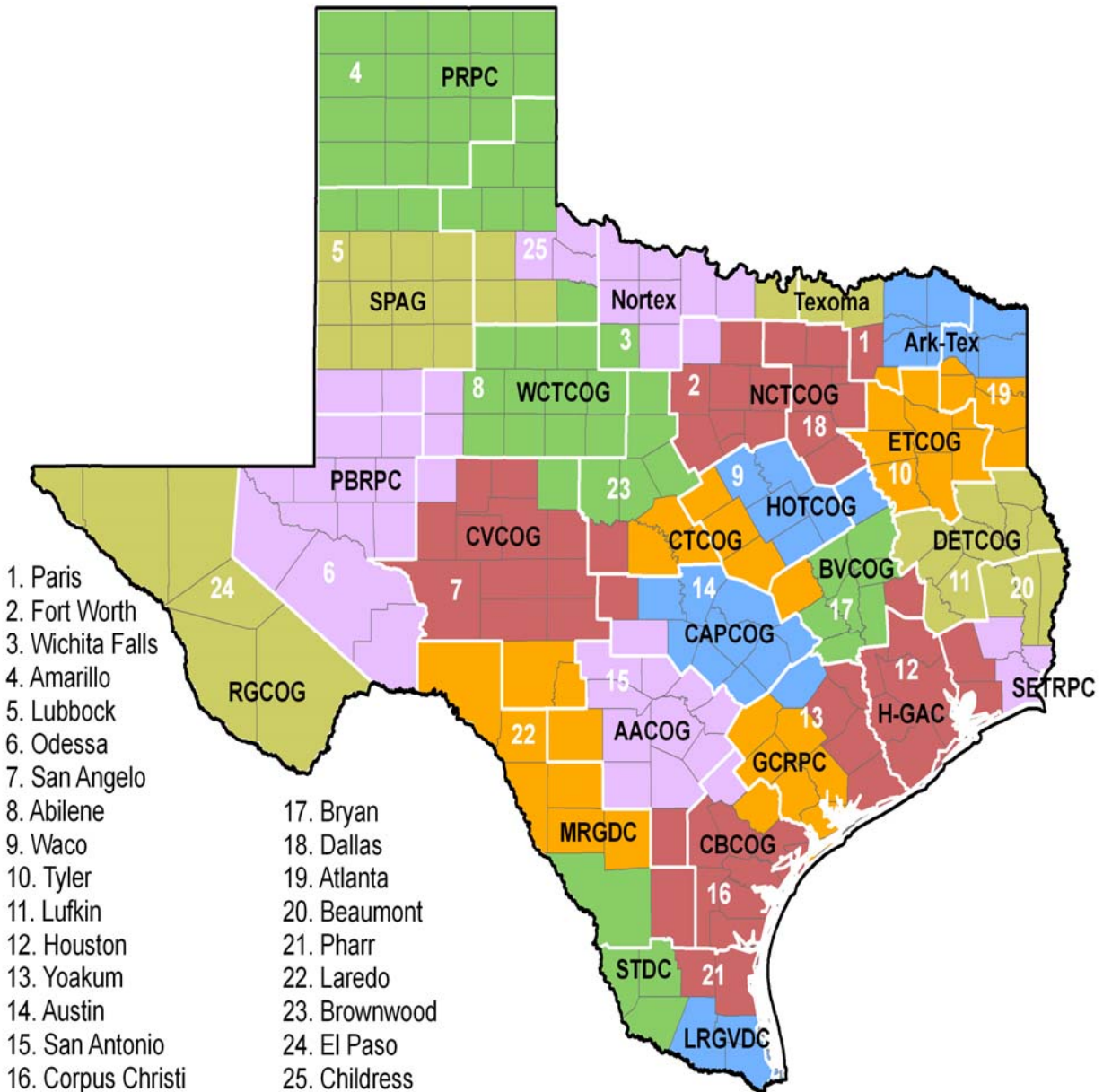




# RPOs



# Districts and COGs



## Texas RPO Summary

- RPOs in Texas are voluntary organizations and use both TxDOT district and COG boundaries
- Most (21) COGs with resolutions supporting / enabling RPOs for their region
- Activities at RPOs in Texas vary



## Session I Workshop Activity

- What should be the role and purpose of RPOs in transportation planning in Texas?
- Describe the most important issue for RPOs and transportation planning in your region?
- Are there any issues or reasons to NOT have an RPO?
- Use flip charts to record your answers



## Session 1 Review

- How are most RPOs organized?
- Describe changes in Texas demographics
- Name the key transportation organizations in Texas?
- What is the MAB?
- How do you describe the RPO planning area?
- What is “rural” when defining an RPO?



## Key RPO Issues (to be reviewed in Session II)

- RPO purpose:
  - Forum for informed decision making
- Outreach Summary
- Funding
- RPO Organization
- Interagency Coordination
- Geographic Boundaries
- Project Prioritization / Selection



# Session 2

RPO Key Issues



## Session 2 Topics

- Outreach Summary
- Funding
- Organization
- Interagency Coordination
- Geographic Boundaries
- Programming
- Project Prioritization / Selection
- Public Involvement



## Session 2 Objectives

- Describe RPO Key Issues
- Describe Programming and Project Prioritization
- Define Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures
- Describe how RPOs “fit” into the Transportation Planning Process
- Describe Successful Public Involvement



## Key Findings

- Majority of Districts and COGs support establishing an RPO in their region
- RPO Membership should be similar to MPO Policy Boards
- Most agree COGs are the logical agency to house the RPO



## Key Findings

- Need to remain flexible regarding RPO geographic boundaries
- District boundaries do not mirror COG boundaries
- Large area of some COGs may hinder participation



## Key Findings

- Agreed that permanent funding source is needed
- Development of rural long-range transportation plan would be beneficial
- There is no “one size fits all”
  - Need to maintain flexibility when developing legislation / regulations for RPOs.



# RPO Funding & Project Programming

Transportation Funding 101



## What Matters to RPOs?

- RPOs members want to know...
  - What is available?
  - How much?
  - When?
  - Who decides?
  - Where does it come from?





## RPO Funding Needs

- Meeting Cost
  - Piggyback other meetings
  - Meeting venue is a sunk cost
- Administrative cost (low)
  - District provides information and materials



## RPO Funding Needs

- Staff cost
  - Technical support in District, COG, RPO staff sharing,
  - Plan & Program preparation
- Public Involvement
  - Constituent and community outreach
  - Assist TxDOT with outreach



## Potential RPO Funding

- State , Federal, Local
- Member dues
  - County, city
- Member fee schedule
  - Scaled to population
- In-kind support
  - IRS volunteer rate as local match
  - Technical staff time



## RPO Project Involvement Review

- RPO members ...
  - Rely on District guidance and direction
    - Project information
    - Funding available
  - Need education on:
    - Funding and programming process
    - Planning and project development process



## The UTP is ...

- (G) ...a ten-year financially constrained program developed by the department that represents an intermediate timeframe in the statewide project development process. It includes all of the projects, or phases of projects, covered in the four-year statewide transportation improvement program (STIP) plus those projects, or phases of projects, within the state that it anticipates can proceed to letting within the next six years. A project's inclusion in the UTP also represents a commitment to its continued development.



## 2011 UTP Categories

<b>Category 1 – Preventive Maintenance and Rehabilitation</b>	<b>\$10.96</b>
Category 2 – Metropolitan and Urban Area Corridor Projects	\$1.99
Category 3 – Non-Traditionally Funded Transportation Projects	\$3.68
<b>Category 4 – Statewide Connectivity Corridor Projects</b>	<b>\$0.02</b>
Category 5 – Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement	\$1.12
Category 6 – Structures Replacement and Rehabilitation	\$2.50
Category 7 – Metropolitan Mobility and Rehabilitation	\$2.03
<b>Category 8 – Safety</b>	<b>\$1.24</b>
Category 9 – Transportation Enhancements	\$0.65
<b>Category 10 – Supplemental Transportation Projects</b>	<b>\$0.63</b>
<b>Category 11 – District Discretionary</b>	<b>\$0.64</b>
<b>Category 12 – Strategic Priority</b>	<b>\$2.47</b>
<b>Total = \$27.9</b>	



## RPO Organization Model

- Reviewed by-laws / practices
- Basic organization is “MPO-like”
  - Policy Committee
  - Decision making forum
  - Public Involvement / Participation vehicle
  - Elevates consultation to cooperation



## RPO Org. Model (cont'd.)

- Policy Committee = Decision Makers
  - County Judges, Mayors, etc.
  - City Mgrs, City Directors
  - Size and composition stays flexible
  - Geography matters (e.g. distance in West Texas)
- Technical committee is optional
  - Use existing technical resources
  - Stay flexible, use TxDOT, COG / RPC, cities and counties



## Interagency Coordination

- Regional Transit Coordination
  - Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Planning 2007-present
  - 24 lead agencies (many are COGs)
  - Established steering committees and coordination plans
- TxDOT Districts
- COGs
- MPOs



## Geographic Boundaries

- Boundaries are not prescribed
  - Use existing relationships and boundaries
  - COG, District, or other
  - Focus is rural and small urban (aka non-metro)
- Anticipate change
  - The nature of “rural” is changing
  - The size of urbanized areas is changing
- One size does not fit all



## RPO Goals & Objectives

- Establish a purpose for the RPO
- Prepare RPO Goals & Objectives



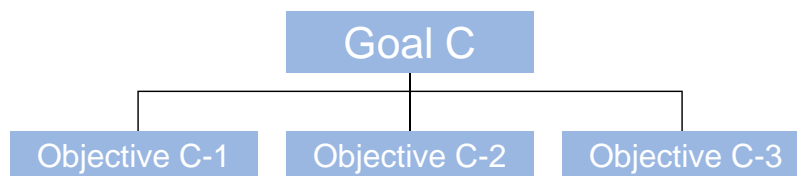
## Definitions

- Goals: Generalized statements which broadly relate the physical environment to values
- Visioning: Various techniques for developing goals
- Objectives: Specific measurable statements related to the attainment of goals
- Performance Measures: Indicators of the extent to which objectives are met



## Definitions

- Goals: Generalized statements which broadly relate the physical environment to values
- Objectives: Specific, measurable statements related to the attainment of goals



## “SMART” Objectives

**S**pecific: Sufficiently descriptive but not dictating approach

**M**easurable: Quantitative (number, degree)

**A**greed: Consensus on meaning and value

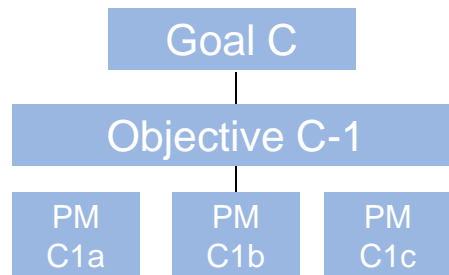
**R**ealistic: Can be accomplished with expected resources

**T**ime – bound: Identifies timeframe



## Performance Measures Provide a Means to Evaluate...

- How well current system meets objectives today
- Extent to which alternative plans or strategies will help region meet objectives in future



## Performance Measures Should

- Be measurable
- Have a clear meaning to all
- Be acceptable and useful
- Be cost effective to use
- Be based on statistically sound techniques
- Measure outcomes rather than output
- Do not predetermine the solution





## Workshop Activity

### 1. Is it a goal, objective or performance measure?

- Protect the environment
- Tons of NOx
- Reduce emissions by 10%
- Traffic fatalities



## Workshop Activity

1. Prepare a sentence describing the purpose of your RPO
2. Prepare 3 goals, objectives and performance measures for your RPO.



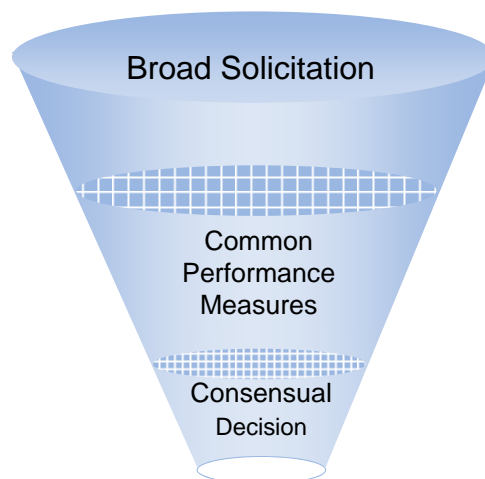
# Project Prioritization

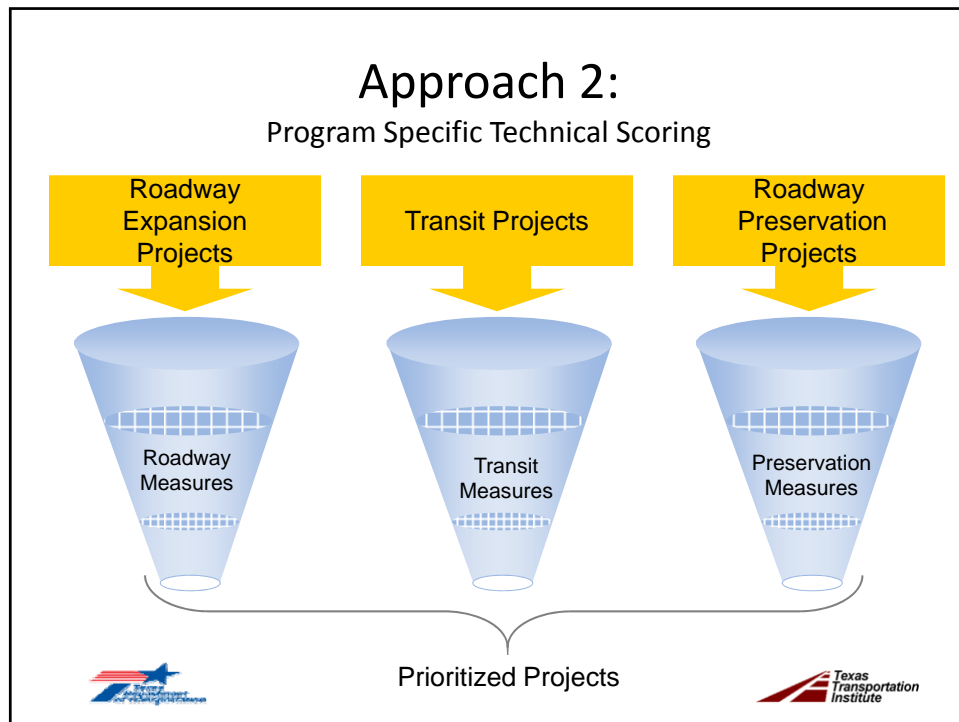
- What do you think?
  - With fewer resources, decisions on allocation are even more important.
  - Or
  - With so few resources, decisions on allocation are less important.
- Learn to walk before you run.
  - Establish purpose, goals, objectives before prioritizing



## Prioritization Approach 1: Technical Scoring

All projects are  
examined with the  
same performance  
measures





## Transportation Plan Adoption Is a Process – Not a Single Event

- Review of analysis and evaluation results
- Technical and other committee involvement
- Stakeholder involvement
- Clean air conformity and financial constraints
- Board briefings
- Board action

## Challenges to Be Overcome

- Multiple objectives may be in conflict
- Competition for scarce resources
- Institutional and political fragmentation
- Attaining and keeping public interest
- Trade-offs over modes and programs



## Programming

- Programming is identifying top priority projects, and matching projects with funding
- Cost of worthy projects always exceeds funding – need to set priorities
- Programming decisions are documented in the:
  - MPO's TIP, Transportation Improvement Program
  - RPO's Rural TIP (RTIP)
  - State's TIP (STIP)



## Characteristics of a Successful Programming Process

- Early consensus on goals
- Effective communication among technical and policy leaders
- Effective public involvement
- Qualitative as well as quantitative criteria



## STIP / RTIP Adoption Is a Process

- RPO / TxDOT sets criteria and solicits project recommendations from a plan
- TxDOT, local governments and others submit projects
- RPO / TxDOT evaluate and coordinate on priorities and funding
- Stakeholder involvement
- Clean air conformity and financial constraints
- Board briefings and approval
- Governor ( or TxDOT ) approval



## Public Involvement

- Why Public Involvement?
- What are the Benefits of Effective Public Involvement?
- What are the Requirements



## Public Involvement Steps

- Set goals and objectives for the program
- Identify people or “publics” to be reached
- Develop strategies for each target audience
- Match strategies with specific techniques
- Include methods for evaluating effectiveness and refining approach



## Workshop Activity

### Organize an RPO

#### RPO checklist:

- Boundaries and Organization
- Board Composition and By-laws / MOU
- Purpose, goals, objectives
- Work plan
- Public involvement plan
- RTIP Priority list
  - Project prioritization concept
- Annual Report



## Session 2 Review

- Who are typical members of an RPO policy committee?
- What is Programming?
- Describe Project Prioritization?
- What is the UTP?
- Define Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures
- Describe Successful Public Involvement







# Session 3

Planning Rules  
RPO Moderated Discussion  
Workshop Summary



## Session 3 Objectives

- Explain Transportation Planning Rules
- Describe Who does What in Transportation Planning



## 43 TAC Chapter 16

### Planning and Development of Transportation Projects

- Subchapter A, General Provisions, §§16.1-16.4;
- Subchapter B, Transportation Planning, §§16.51-16.56;
- Subchapter C, Transportation Programs, §§16.101-16.105;
- Subchapter D, Transportation Funding, §§16.151-16.160; and
- Subchapter E, Project and Performance Reporting, §§16.201 - 16.205



## These New Rules...

- Apply to MPOs, federally funded transit agencies, and RPOs.
- Provide minimum standards for metropolitan and rural transportation planning and programming.
- Do not prescribe conditions for the boundaries or organization of an RPO.



## Transportation Planning Rules

- Recognize RPOs
- Recognize Rural TIP (RTIP)
  - Rolls-up into STIP and UTP
  - Projects approved by TxDOT
- Do not set RPO boundaries
- Provide for public involvement



## Transportation Planning Rules

- RPO is a voluntary organization
  - Created & governed by elected officials
  - Responsible for decision at local level
  - Provide recommendations and priorities to TxDOT in areas NOT included in MPO (outside MAB)



## Chapter 16, Section 16.2(a) (23) defines RPO as:

- “A voluntary organization created and governed by local elected officials with responsibility for transportation decisions at the local level, including an organization established by a council of governments or regional planning commission designated by the governor pursuant to Local Government Code, Chapter 391, to address rural transportation priorities and planning and provide recommendations to the department for areas of the state not included in the boundaries of a metropolitan planning organization.”



## RPO Rules

- RPO makes “recommendations to the department” concerning projects within its boundaries on..
  - SLRTP / SWTP
  - RTIP
  - UTP



## An RPO Makes Recommendations...

- An RPO may make recommendations to the department regarding projects and priorities for areas within its boundaries to accommodate preparation of the statewide long-range transportation plan (SLRTP), STIP, and Unified Transportation Program (UTP)



## TxDOT and RPO Develop RTIP Cooperatively...

- TxDOT will develop TIPs for all areas of the state outside of metropolitan planning areas, containing a prioritized list of projects which have been approved for development in the near term. These RTIPs will be developed in cooperation with RPOs and projects will be selected in accordance with federal regulations and the requirements of this subchapter.



## RTIPs are “like” TIPs

- RTIP projects are rolled into the STIP and UTP.
- All projects are approved by the department and projects in the TIP and RTIP must be consistent with the state LRTP.



## Programming Rules

- TxDOT develops Rural TIP (referred to as RTIP)
  - RTIP included in STIP
- TxDOT provides Rural Public Involvement Process
  - District Coordinates, publish notices, etc.



## Chapter 16, Section 16.2(a) (24) defines a RTIP as:

- “A staged, multiyear, intermodal program of transportation projects which is developed by the department, in consultation with local officials, for areas of the state outside of the metropolitan planning area boundaries. The rural TIP includes a financially constrained plan that demonstrates how the program can be implemented.”



## RPO Public Involvement

- Each district will coordinate with the applicable RPO,
- Develop and implement a public involvement process covering the development of a rural TIP that,
- Minimum = publication in a newspaper



## RPO Public Involvement

- A rural public involvement process provides that each district will coordinate with the applicable RPO, if any, to develop and implement a public involvement process covering the development of a rural TIP that, at a minimum, consists of the following: publication, in a newspaper with general TxDOT circulation in each county within the district, of a notice informing the public of the availability of the proposed rural TIP and of a 10-day public comment period.



## Continued...

- (ii) a request, in the published notice, for public comments concerning the proposed rural TIP, to be submitted in writing to the district.
- (iii) notification, in the published notice, that a public hearing will be held in order to receive comments on the initial adoption, along with a public comment period of at least 10 days subsequent to the hearing. The notice of public hearing will be published a minimum of 10 days prior to the hearing.





## Workshop Activity

### Who does what

- Take a few minutes, work together and...
- Fill-in the table on the following page
- We will review the results



## Plans & Programs

(See page 8 in Briefing Book)

<i>Planning Product</i>	<i>Who Develops</i>	<i>Who Approves</i>
SWTP/ SLRTP		
MTP		
SIP		
A/Q Conformity		
STIP		
TIP		
RTIP		
UTP		



## RPO Review

- Funding
  - Don't expect much...
  - With fewer resources, decision making is more important
- Organization & representation
  - Be MPO-like,
  - Be a forum for informed decision-making
- Planning capacity
  - Use existing staff and expertise
  - COGs, Districts



## RPO Review

- Institutional relationships
  - Be cooperative, build trust,
  - Establish goals, objectives,
  - Leadership is needed
- Boundaries and jurisdiction
  - Use existing relationships and boundaries
  - COGs, Districts, or other
  - Focus is rural and small urban (non-metro / outside MAB)



## Transportation Planning Success Factors

- Performance based planning
  - Establish goals and objectives
  - Use performance measures
  - Accountability
- Leadership
- Sustainability
- Three C's
  - Continuing, cooperative, comprehensive



## Moderated Discussion

- Introduction of panelists
- Key Issues
  - RPO purpose:
    - Forum for informed decision making
  - Funding
  - Interagency Coordination
  - Geographic Boundaries
  - RPO Organization
  - Project Prioritization / Selection



## Best RPO Website

- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
- Ruraltransportation.org



## ruraltransportation.org



# Contact Information

John H. Overman, AICP  
Texas Transportation Institute  
110 North Davis, Suite 101  
Arlington, TX 76013

817-462-0516

[joverman@tamu.edu](mailto:joverman@tamu.edu)



<b><i>RPO Scenario I</i></b> <b>Potential Work Products for RPO in Texas</b> <b>(not Federal or State requirements)</b>					
<b>Planning Product</b>	<b>Who Develops</b>	<b>Who Approves</b>	<b>Time Horizon</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Updates Required</b>
Rural Work Program	Optional	TxDOT	Optional	Planning Studies	Annually
Rural LRP	Optional TXDOT w/ RPO Coordination	TxDOT	20 years	Future Goals and Strategies	Optional
Rural TIP	TxDOT w/RPO Coordination	TxDOT	4 years	Transportation investments	Every 2 Years
Public Involvement Plan	TxDOT with RPO coordination	RPO/TxDOT	1 year (continuous)	Stakeholders Goals and Objective	Annually
Project Selection	TxDOT with RPO	TxDOT	Annually	Prioritized and constrained list	Annually (minimum)

