

MPO COORDINATION AND PLANNING AREA REFORM

Update on Final Federal Rulemaking

Eric Randall
TPB Transportation Engineer

TPB Technical Committee
January 6, 2017

What's Happened

- **FHWA and FTA jointly issued revisions to the metropolitan planning rules that affect the planning areas and the coordination activities of MPOs**
- **Final rulemaking published December 20, 2016**
 - The proposed rulemaking was issued in June 27. TPB submitted comments in August.
 - A request for additional information was published on September 23 and TPB again submitted comments.
- **Stated intent of the rulemaking:**
 - Strengthen coordination between MPOs and States
 - Promote regional approaches to transportation planning and decision making
 - Emphasize importance of regional perspective
 - Ensure transportation investments reflect regional needs and priorities
 - Strengthen voice of MPOs in the transportation planning process

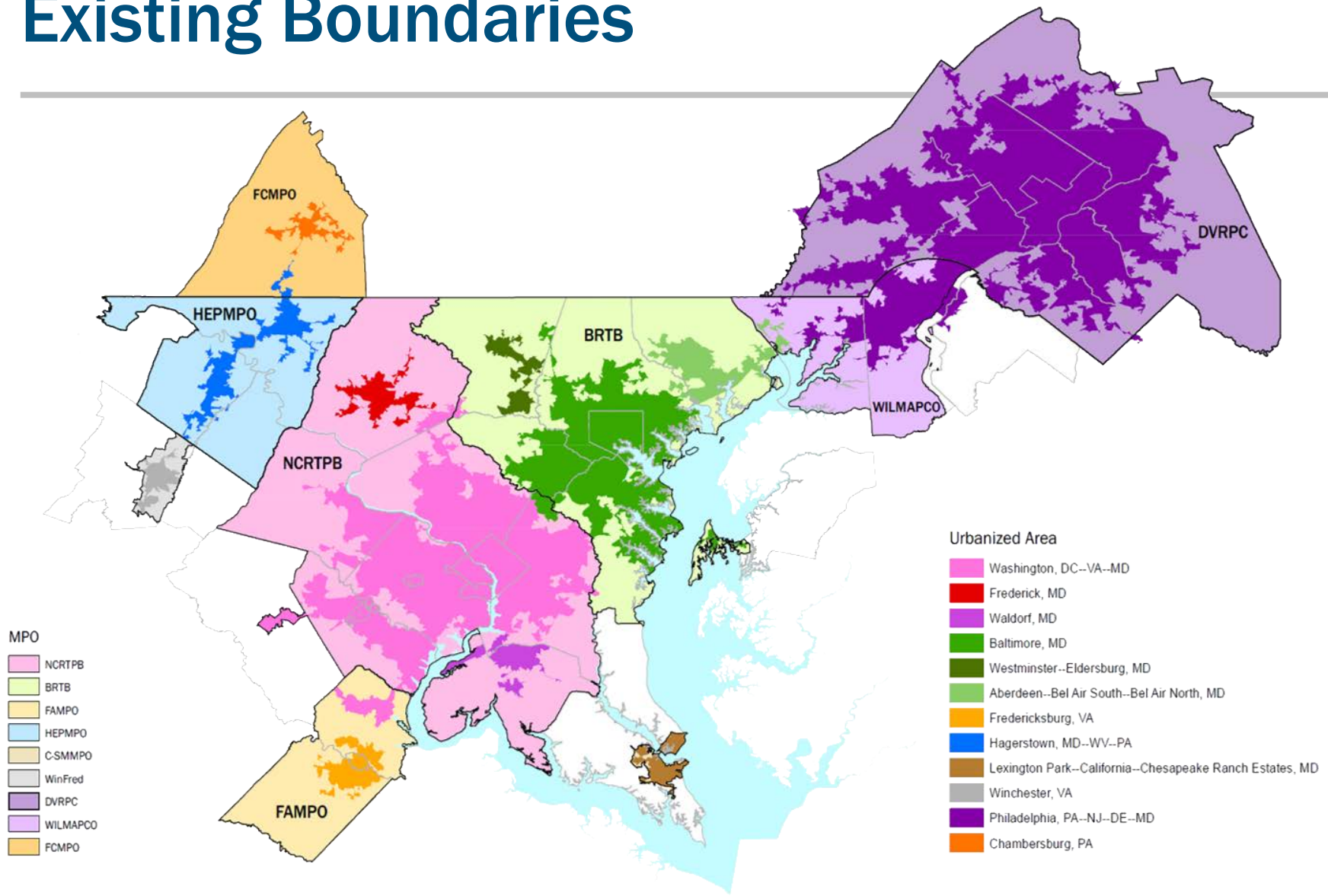


How It Affects Planning Areas

- **Revises the definition of Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPA)**
- Requires the MPA, at a minimum, to include the entire Urbanized Area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period
- A single MPO will conduct the metropolitan planning activities for an MPA (as defined above) UNLESS
- The Governor(s) (and Mayor) and the affected MPOs make an exception and establish multiple MPOs for the MPA
 - Basis for exception: Determination that the size and complexity of the MPA merits multiple MPOs



Existing Boundaries



How It Affects Planning Products

Even if an exception for multiple MPOs in the MPA is granted:

- **All MPOs in a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) would be required to jointly prepare, for the entire MPA:**
 - A single metropolitan transportation plan (i.e., CLRP)
 - A single transportation improvement program (TIP)
 - A single set of performance targets (PBPP topic areas)
- The final rule does not include the proposed requirement for MPOs sharing an MPA to agree on a process for a single conformity determination for the metropolitan transportation range plan and TIP.



Unified Planning Products Exception

The final rule offers an exception to the unified planning products requirement for MPOs sharing an MPA

- US DOT Secretary may approve exception to unified planning products requirement
- An exception may be granted if:
 - Compliance is not feasible due to the extraordinary size of the MPA
 - The large number of MPOs or State/local jurisdictions required to participate
 - Clean Air planning requirements, or
 - Adverse results of the regional planning process.
- MPOs must document and demonstrate: coordinating planning procedures, jointly adopted formal written coordination agreement, and show productive joint decisionmaking over two most recent STIP update cycles.



How It Affects Planning Processes

- **All MPOs are required to establish planning agreements that:**
 - Cooperatively determine mutual responsibilities among MPOs, States, and providers of public transportation for the metropolitan planning process
 - Identify areas of coordination and division of planning responsibilities for the MPA
 - Include a process for joint decision making
 - Include procedures for resolution of any disagreements
 - Coordinate data collection, analysis, and planning assumptions
 - Document coordination efforts and outcomes in the UPWP and other planning produces, including the long range plan and TIP



What Happens Next

- **Final rule is effective January 19, 2017.**
 - Compliance date is set at 2 years after the US Census Bureau releases its notice of Qualifying Urban Areas following the 2020 census.
- **TPB will begin work on compliance**
 - Coordination Agreement with adjacent MPOs
 - Documentation of planning responsibilities with States and providers of public transportation
- **FHWA and FTA will provide guidance and support, including**
 - Identify appropriate situations for the exception to unified planning products
 - How to accomplish MPA boundary adjustments.
 - Responsibilities and methodology for determining 20-year growth projections
 - Work with the Census Bureau on how the 2020 UZAs should be delineated



Eric Randall

TPB Transportation Engineer

(202) 962-3254

erandall@mwkog.org

mwkog.org/tpb

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20002



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board