



Peer Exchanges

Planning for a Better Tomorrow

FHWA/FTA
Transportation Planning Capacity Building

Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program

– Peer Exchange Report –

“Effective Practices in Planning for Livable Communities at Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)”

Location: Atlanta, GA

Date: August 30-31, 2010

Host Agency: Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

Peer Agencies: Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Delaware Valley Regional Transportation Commission (DVRPC)
Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
Portland Metro (Metro)
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)

Federal Agencies: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center)

I. Introduction

This report documents the presentations and discussions from a one-and-a-half day peer exchange on “Effective Practices in Planning for Livable Communities at Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs),” hosted by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) on August 30-31, 2010, in Atlanta, GA.

The event was sponsored by the [Transportation Planning Capacity Building \(TPCB\) Program](#), which aims to advance the state of the practice in multimodal transportation planning nationwide. The TPCB Program is jointly funded by the [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA) and the [Federal Transit Administration](#) (FTA).

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II. Key Findings

The peer exchange gathered seven leading MPOs in the emerging field of livability planning to discuss their 8 to 10 years of experience testing new methods, approaches, and strategies to integrate transportation and land use. Most of these efforts have been accomplished through the creation of a livability program within the MPO. The section below summarizes key findings that emerged from the peer event discussions. For more detailed information, see the *Summary of Discussions* below.

Key findings about MPO livability planning are:

- **Creating a livability program can be a unique and effective opportunity for MPOs to build relationships with local officials, staff, and the public to support greater transportation and land use integration.** MPOs can provide technical assistance to local governments to support innovative planning and design, while learning in greater detail the kinds of transportation and development needs and challenges that local jurisdictions face.
- **There is no “one size fits all” approach to creating a livability program.** Each MPO should work with regional stakeholders to develop a program that addresses the region’s specific financial, political, and development context and needs.
 - Livability programs fund a range of project types (e.g., planning grants, construction projects, technical assistance to local governments, land acquisition). Some of the participating MPO livability programs fund only one project type (e.g., plans), while others fund multiple types of projects (e.g., plans, infrastructure, and technical assistance). Typically when livability programs support multiple project types, the completion of a livability plan is a pre-requisite for communities to receive funds for capital projects that advance livability principles.
 - Participating MPOs use different approaches and criteria to evaluate, prioritize and select planning efforts and capital projects to receive funding from their livability programs. Some project selection processes are highly detailed and technical, while others reflect broader policy priorities. Others have no formally adopted or standardized criteria.
 - Participating agencies draw on a variety of funding sources to finance their livability programs, depending upon whether their efforts involve planning, project implementation, or both. The most common sources of Federal funds used are the [Surface Transportation Program](#) (STP) and [Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality](#) (CMAQ). In Dallas-Fort Worth, Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) is also an important source of funds for their livability program. Several of the participating peer organizations also conduct local funding swaps – where the MPO exchanges Federal funds with a local funding source that allows greater flexibility on what the funds can be spent on – to support some of their livability program activities.
- **Communication and careful language choice are critical to gain buy-in from elected officials, developers, and the public.** Words like “livability,” “smart growth,” “density,” and “planning” mean different things to different people. In order to get local buy-in on livability planning, it is important to learn to talk with people in different communities and frame issues in a way that meaningful for them.
- **Current Federal transportation planning guidance and funding sources provide a good foundation for experimenting with multimodal transportation planning.** However, the “next level” of MPO livability planning may require greater funding flexibility in terms of how funds may be used, the need to streamline administrative requirements for relatively small projects, and the need to develop more consistent and supportive eligibility interpretations by agencies who oversee Federal funds, such as FHWA Divisions, FTA Regions, and state DOTs.
- **Reaching out and building effective inter-agency partnerships is critical to developing a meaningful livability program.** In order for livability planning to be successful, MPOs need to develop effective working relationships with both local

municipalities, who often sponsor projects and make land use decisions, and the state DOT, who often oversees the Federal funding programs that MPOs use to support their livability programs.

- **Partnerships with non-transportation agencies and organizations can help MPOs bring new stakeholders to the table.** Participating MPOs noted that livability planning helps them reach populations and audiences that are affected by their work but who may never have been involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process before, such as public health agencies, school districts, or environmental organizations. As such, these collaborations provide a valuable opportunity to build supportive coalitions and find new ways of communicating the value of transportation planning and finding new language to talk about what “livability” means to people living in different communities or with different interests.
- **Implementing livability projects can be a challenge** for MPOs. Livability projects can require a higher degree of inter-agency coordination and often utilize non-traditional funding. A few of the implementation challenges noted by participating MPOs were:
 - The lack of MPO authority to adopt supportive local land use policies or approve transit supportive development projects.
 - The lack of MPO ability to influence how and where developers choose to invest.
 - The obstacles in developing effective strategies to ensure that housing – particularly affordable units – are incorporated into projects along transit corridors.
 - The inconsistent interpretation by various oversight agencies on which types of non-traditional capital project uses are eligible for Federal transportation funds.
 - The lack of organizational capacity local jurisdictions may have in administering Federal transportation funds and dealing with Federal requirements.
- **Creative financing is typically needed to fund non-traditional livability activities.** Limitations on how Federal transportation funds may be used can preclude some activities that may have a positive long-term impact on transportation and land use integration, such as land banking to spur development close to transit.
- **Performance management and program evaluation are areas of increasing interest,** as many agencies want to better communicate with the public and elected officials about the value of their livability programs and other transportation investments.
 - Most participating MPOs have begun to use performance measures in their region’s long-range transportation plan. Three participating MPOs (ARC, MTC, DVRPC) have also conducted in-depth evaluations of the specific achievements of their livability programs.
 - Participating MPOs noted an interest in developing new, non-traditional indicators to better reflect the benefits of livability projects. New measures include those for energy and greenhouse gas reduction, multimodal level of service, affordable housing impacts, and health impacts.
- **A livability program is not the only way for MPOs to better integrate transportation and land use in their work.** All of the participating MPOs noted other livability-supportive activities that they do to better integrate land use in their work. This includes scenario planning, updating the regional travel demand model to better address land use issues,

adopting complete streets policies, integrating land use criteria into transportation project selection criteria, etc. Participating MPOs also reported that livability planning means doing good transportation planning at all levels - local, MPO and state – with coordination among them.

III. Background

Multimodal transportation planning requires close coordination between land use and transportation, so that the places people need to go (i.e., between home, work, shopping, other services, and play) are closer together and better connected by alternatives to the automobile such as transit, walking or biking. Yet this is no easy task since the agencies responsible for transportation planning are separate from the agencies responsible for local land use planning. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are charged with regional transportation planning while local municipalities make land use decisions, such as where housing, schools, shopping, and employment centers are located, what density development may occur at, and whether or where transit shelters, sidewalks and bicycle facilities are built and maintained.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a handful of MPOs around the country pioneered new thinking about how to work with local jurisdictions to better coordinate land use decisionmaking with transportation planning and project development cycles in their areas. These MPOs wanted to find a way to better link transportation and land use investments in order to provide more transportation choices and improve the community benefits of transportation projects. This included encouraging housing, jobs, and services to locate closer to transit corridors and improving multimodal station connections and networks to make communities more walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly.

To test their new ideas and approaches to transportation and land use coordination, these MPOs created pilot “livability programs” that reserved a small portion of their total MPO capital and planning funds to support non-traditional, multimodal transportation projects and plans, such as bike and pedestrian improvements, station area planning, transit-oriented development (TOD), and complete streets. Two examples of these early livability programs are the Atlanta Regional Commission’s (ARC) [Livable Centers Initiative \(LCI\)](#), created in 1999 and the [Transportation for Livable Communities \(TLC\) Program](#), created by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in Oakland, CA in 1998.

In June 2009, “livability planning” became a topic of national interest when the [Department of Transportation \(DOT\)](#), [Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#), and [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) formed a high-level inter-agency *Partnership for Sustainable Communities* to better coordinate Federal transportation, housing, and environmental planning and investment in order to make American communities into more “livable” and “sustainable” places.

In light of the new Federal interest in “livability” as a goal for transportation decision-making, ARC requested a peer exchange to convene leading MPOs in the emerging field of “livability planning.” The peer exchange would serve as a forum for these MPOs to share information about their livability programs and multimodal transportation and land use coordination strategies, and identify opportunities for how to strengthen the state of the practice moving forward.

IV. Goals and Peer Selection

The goal of the peer exchange was to share information about how innovative MPOs in the field of “livability planning” are working to improve transit, walking, and biking as viable transportation options through regionally coordinated multimodal transportation and land use planning.

Six peer agencies were identified to participate in the peer exchange with ARC, based on the following criteria:

- Articulation of a vision or goal/s to better integrate transportation and land use in support of transit, walking, and biking in the long-range regional transportation plan (RTP).
- Demonstrated actions to better integrate transportation and land use to improve transit, walking, and biking in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) or other agency policies/plans.
- Eight to ten years of experience developing, managing, and modifying vision, goals, and actions in the RTP, TIP, and UPWP that support improved transportation and land use integration to enhance transit, walking, and biking options.
- Presence of a formally adopted livability program that provides funding for community plans and capital projects that promote transportation-land use integration to improve transit, walking, and biking options.

The six selected peer agencies were:

- Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) – Albany, NY
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Philadelphia, PA
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) – Denver, CO
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) – Oakland, CA
- North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) – Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
- Portland Metro (Metro) – Portland, OR

IV. Summary of Discussions

Each participating MPO provided a high level summary of its livability program goals and activities in an opening presentation (*see Appendix A. for a summary of each participant agency's livability program*).

Discussion topics were then used to delve into greater detail about how livability planning is integrated across the multiple phases of each MPO's transportation planning and programming cycle.

Core discussion topics on the peer exchange agenda were:

- Transportation and Land Use Integration
- Transportation Planning Process
- Programming and Project Prioritization
- Funding
- Project Implementation
- Program Evaluation and Performance Measures
- Partnerships and Outreach

The last section of the peer exchange was reserved for a *Federal Listening Session*, which gave participating MPOs an opportunity to share their ideas for how Federal partner agencies could support the next level of MPO livability planning through technical tools/assistance, research, capacity building, planning guidance, etc.

Highlights from each discussion area are summarized in the sections below.

A. Transportation and Land Use Integration

This peer discussion explored the ways in which participating agencies are integrating transportation and land use in their work. Key questions for the discussion included:

- **What specific actions is your agency taking to coordinate transportation and land use** (e.g., policies, programs, forecasting/project prioritization methods, studies)?
- **What are the major obstacles to integrating transportation and land use** in your region, and how is your agency overcoming them?

Discussion Highlights

For six of the seven participating agencies, a livability program is used as the key strategy for integrating transportation and land use in their work. There is no “one size fits all” approach to creating a livability program, however. Participating MPO livability programs vary in the types of projects they fund, who may apply, and how long they have been in place (see *Table 1, below*).

Participating MPO livability programs fund a range of project types, including planning grants, construction projects, technical assistance to local governments, and land acquisition. Some of the participating MPO livability programs fund only one project type (e.g., plans), while others fund multiple types of projects (e.g., plans, infrastructure, and technical assistance). Typically when livability programs support multiple project types, the completion of a livability plan is a pre-requisite for communities to receive funds for capital projects that advance livability principles.

Participating MPO livability programs differ in who is eligible to apply for funds. Most participating MPO livability programs allow local municipalities to compete for funds, but some also allow non-profit organizations to apply (e.g., ARC, CDTC). NCTCOG allows special districts (e.g. school districts) to apply for funding from its Sustainable Development Funding Program and Portland Metro allows private developers to apply for funding from its TOD Program.

Participating MPOs also have a range of experience with administering livability programs. The oldest participating livability programs were MTC, ARC, and CDTC, each of which has been in existence for more than a decade.

Table 1: Summary of Participating Agency Livability Programs

Agency	Livability Program	Types of Projects Funded	Who can apply?	Year Begun
ARC	Livable Centers Initiative	-Planning Studies -Transportation Construction Projects	Government agencies (city, county, state), non-profits	1999
MTC	Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC)	-Capital projects -Station area planning grants -Technical assistance grants	Public agencies	1998
Portland Metro	Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Program	- Mixed-use TOD projects (funds easements, land acquisition, operations including planning and feasibility studies)	Developers (private, non-profit, institutional)	1998
CDTC	Community and Transportation Linkage Program	-Planning Studies -TIP projects	Units of local governments (cities, towns, villages), counties, non-profits and public authorities also eligible with letter of support from a local government	2000
NCTCOG	Sustainable Development Funding Program	-Planning studies -Sustainable Infrastructure Projects -Land-banking	-Planning: cities, counties, special districts, transit agencies -Infrastructure: cities, transit agencies, counties with a private developer sponsor	2001
DVRPC	Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TDCI)	Planning studies in three areas: -Planning and Land Use -Reuse and Revitalization -Transportation and Transit	Municipalities and counties identified as environmental justice (EJ) areas in DVRPC's regional EJ analysis, community development corporations (CDCs) within the City of Philadelphia	2002
DRCOG*	Station Area Master Plans and Urban Centers (STAMP)	-Station area master plans -Urban Center plans	Any municipality with a FasTracks Station or DRCOG designated "urban center."	2006

**DRCOG does not have a formal livability program, but supports a variety of livability planning activities such as the Station Area Master Plans (STAMP) and Urban Center Planning. See Appendix A for summary of DRCOG's broader livability related activities.*

Participating agencies also highlighted actions that their agencies have taken beyond the scope of a formally adopted livability program to better align transportation and land use and create more transportation choices. Some of these actions were taken by multiple agencies, and others were unique to individual participants.

Actions that multiple participating MPOs took to integrate transportation and land use outside a formal livability program are:

- **Use scenario planning** to engage the public in conversations about transportation and land use and inform updates to the long-range transportation plan – ARC, CDTC, DRCOG, MTC, NCTCOG

- **Prepare a regional comprehensive plan** in conjunction with a long-range transportation plan – *ARC, DRCOG, DVRPC, Metro*
- **Integrate land use criteria into the TIP Process**, such as considering minimum zoning requirements in the project evaluation and selection criteria for TIP programming – *CDTC, DRCOG, MTC, NCTCOG*
- **Update the regional transportation demand model** to better address land use development and associated travel behavior – *ARC, DRCOG, MTC, NCTCOG*
- **Pay staff or consultants to track and monitor development or land values** in the region to identify opportunities for strategic transportation investments – *Metro, NCTCOG*
- **Provide design guidelines** and information, training or technical assistance on complete streets – *ARC, DVRPC, DRCOG, MTC, NCTCOG*

Actions beyond the scope of a livability program that were unique to individual participating MPOs and that serve to better integrate transportation and land use are:

- **ARC** – Created a [Lifelong Communities Program](#) with grant funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to promote housing and transportation choices for senior citizens, in order to help them more easily “age in place.” (ARC serves as the region’s Area Agency on Aging, as well as the MPO.)
- **CDTC** – Participated in the development of a [Transit Propensity Index](#) (TPI) in collaboration with the regional transit agency, the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTCA), and the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) to forecast the potential for transit ridership and service productivity along different corridors given local conditions (*see page 65 of CDTA’s Strategic Plan for an explanation of the TPI*).
- **DRCOG** – Metro Vision, the Denver region’s long-range plan, established an urban growth boundary/area (UGB/A) to help stage growth and promote an increase in overall regional density. Although the UGB/A is voluntary, most of DRCOG member governments have signed the [Mile High Compact](#), an intergovernmental agreement to manage growth by adhering to the ideals in Metro Vision.
- **MTC** – Adopted a TOD Policy in 2005 for its transit expansion program called [Resolution 3434](#), the first of its kind passed by any MPO nationwide. The policy requires that new transit investments meet minimum housing and development thresholds, encourage TOD-supportive station area planning, and create corridor working groups to convene agency partners and key stakeholders to provide input for station area plans. MTC conducted an [evaluation](#) of the policy in 2006. An updated evaluation is due summer 2011.
- **NCTCOG** – Formed a working group and held a [workshop](#) to better understand school siting issues in the Dallas-Fort Worth region and better integrate transportation and land use decision-making to encourage school siting in areas where supportive infrastructure already exists, instead on the urban fringe.

B. Transportation Planning Process

This peer discussion explored some of the ways in which a livability program and related activities are being integrated into the Federally required transportation planning process (e.g., RTP, TIP, UPWP). Key questions for the discussion included:

- **How is your livability program integrated into the overall transportation planning process (RTP, TIP, UPWP)?**
- **Have your livability program and related activities impacted your agency's approach** to transportation planning and programming?
- **How do you collaborate with local planning agencies** and integrate your livability program/initiatives into local planning processes?

Discussion Highlights

Most participating agencies allocate funding for their livability programs (or individual projects funded by them) in the TIP (STP and CMAQ) and use the UPWP (PL and Section 5305 program funds) to support their staff to oversee them. Only two of the participating agencies list their livability programs and allocate funding to them in the RTP. Table 2 below displays what is funded by participating MPO livability programs and where the funding is allocated across different components of the transportation planning process.

Table 2. Where Livability Programs Allocate Funds in the RTP, TIP, UPWP

Agency	RTP	TIP	UPWP
ARC	LCI Program	LCI projects (plans, construction)	LCI Program staff/administration
CDTC	-	Linkage Program study related capital/construction projects	-Linkage Program studies -Linkage Program staff/admin
DRCOG*	-	STAMP program and individual station area plans.	-STAMP program staff/administration.
DVRPC	-	TCDI Program and planning studies	TCDI program staff/administration
MTC	TLC Program	TLC projects (plans, tech assistance, capital)	TLC program staff/administration
NCTCOG	SDF Program and individual projects	SDF individual projects	SDF individual projects
Portland Metro	-	TOD Program and projects	TOD program staff/administration

DRCOG does not have a formal livability program, but supports a variety of livability planning activities such as the Station Area Master Plans (STAMP) and Urban Center Planning. See Appendix A for summary of DRCOG's broader livability related activities.

Most agencies noted that livability programs have had spillover effects on their transportation planning processes over time. Some participants noted that goals to better integrate transportation and land use were isolated in their livability programs when the programs were first created, but have subsequently been incorporated into other aspects of the MPO's planning work. For example:

- **CDTC noted that its Linkage Program has shifted the agency's overall approach to transportation decision-making in the last 10 years** to the point where land use considerations are now taken into account in all aspects of the agency's work. All projects are required to be consistent with community desires as documented in local land use plans including CDTC Linkage Studies or other policy documents that have been vetted through public workshops or other means. Infrastructure projects that include multimodal

features such as sidewalks and bike lanes are given more competitive consideration in the project selection process than projects without such elements.

Yet several participants noted that livability programs are still the main place where issues of transportation and land use integration are addressed within their agency's transportation planning process. In these cases, special livability program funding is reserved and used to fund projects that meet specially designed livability criteria, but the work that takes place inside the livability program does not influence how transportation planning and programming decisions are made in other aspects of the MPO's work (e.g., evaluating roadway, maintenance, or other non livability-specific projects).

All participating agency representatives reported that the creation of the Federal *Partnership for Sustainable Communities* to foster multi-jurisdictional, multi-sectoral planning partnerships among transportation, housing, and environmental agencies, and the creation of new funding opportunities such as the [Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants](#) will support further integration of livability goals throughout the transportation planning process. Some participants noted that their leadership embraces the new "sustainable communities" paradigm, which sees housing and land use as integral components for the long-term success of transportation decision-making. Others noted some hesitation from their leadership about these new directions, and worry that scope creep might dilute their ability to deliver a successful transportation network.

One of the key benefits of creating an MPO Livability Program is that it creates a forum for establishing closer working relationships with local planning board officials and planning agency staff.

Participants also discussed the critical importance of partnering and collaborating with local planning agencies, who usually retain the power to implement land use policies. One of the key benefits cited about creating a livability program was that it creates a forum for establishing closer working relationships with local planning board officials and local planning agency staff.

Another issue noted by most participants was the question of how to address livability-type projects within the regional travel demand modeling process. Many MPOs only model large-scale projects, and most livability-type projects are too small to be included in the model. In addition, travel

demand models currently used by many MPOs are not able to accurately model the types of projects that livability programs are intended to fund, such as bicycle and pedestrian projects or road diets. Better modeling capabilities for livability-type projects could help to more accurately assess costs and benefits in terms of regional mobility, accessibility, equity, air quality emissions and in meeting air quality conformity requirements.

C. Project Prioritization and Selection

This peer discussion explored how different livability programs approach their project programming, prioritization, and selection processes. Key questions for discussion were:

- **How are your projects selected?** What eligibility criteria, evaluation methods, and prioritization criteria are used? Do they differ by mode, project type, or any other category?
- **What types of projects are funded,** just transportation-specific projects or are funds available for development, land acquisition, etc.?

Discussion Highlights

Participating MPOs fund different types of projects with their livability programs. The main types of projects they fund are summarized in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Types of Livability Program Projects Funded by Participating MPOs

Livability Program Project Types	Participating Agencies that Fund this Project Type
Planning Studies	ARC, CDTC, DRCOG ¹ , DVRPC, MTC, NCTCOG
Transportation Construction Projects	ARC, MTC, NCTCOG (<i>CDTC and DRCOG indirectly</i>)
Technical Assistance to Local Governments	ARC ² , CDTC, DRCOG, MTC, NCTCOG
Supportive Infrastructure for Mixed-Use/Residential/Commercial Development Projects	Metro, MTC, NCTCOG
Land Acquisition/Banking	MTC, Metro (<i>NCTCOG funded land banking in the past, but does not currently</i>)

Some of the participating agency livability programs fund only one of the project types above (e.g., plans), while others fund multiple types of projects (e.g., plans, infrastructure, and technical assistance)

Participating MPOs use different approaches and criteria to evaluate, prioritize and select projects for their livability programs as well. Some project selection processes are highly detailed and technical, while others reflect broader policy priorities; others have no formally adopted or standardized criteria at all (*see examples of different processes in the boxes below*).

NCTCOG's [Sustainable Development Funding \(SDF\) Program](#) funds both planning studies and transportation construction/infrastructure projects. The Program has issued three calls for projects since it was first created in 2001, but does not have a standardized project solicitation timeframe.

The SDF Program used a very detailed online application during its latest 2009-2010 call for projects, with 61 questions addressing the project's Basic Information, Site Description, Project Budget, Project Purpose, and Community Profile. Applicants received additional points when they met certain criteria. For example, 5 extra points were given to projects that:

- Included a pedestrian friendly block structure (by 2013)
- Made a pedestrian, bicycle, or transit connection (*by comparison, making an automobile connection received 0 points*).
- Included resource protection and enhancement activities.
- Were located within a ¼ mile of a park, school library, or police station.
- Included 100 units of workforce housing.
- Furthered community or comprehensive plan directives that preserved historic, cultural, or archaeological features.
- Redeveloped a Brownfield site.

NCTCOG's MPO Policy Board makes final decisions about which projects are selected, based on staff recommendations.

¹ DRCOG funds station area plans through its Urban Center Planning and Station Area Master Plans (STAPs) activities, but does not have a formal Livability Program.

² Technical assistance provided through the [Community Choices Program](#), which is open to all local governments; many communities with LCI studies have received technical assistance to implement their LCI plan.

DVRPC's [TCDI Program](#) provides funding for planning studies only, on a formal evaluation cycle every two years. In order to apply for a study, applicants must be a local jurisdiction that meets the following eligibility criteria:

- Identified as an environmental justice (EJ) area in DVRPC's regional EJ analysis.
- Identified as a "center" in DVRPC's long-range transportation plan.
- Identified by being transit accessible by DVRPC.

Applications are then evaluated and prioritized by DVRPC committees based on the following four broad, evaluation criteria:

- Does the project relate to and serve to enhance the transportation network? (30%)
- Will the project generate an increased demand in development and density to support transit as well as enhance the quality of life? (30%)
- Does the project provide a clear implementation strategy that includes community involvement, particularly underserved populations? (20%)
- Is the applicant ready to proceed and complete the project in 3 years if awarded the funds? (20%)

Final decision-making authority over which projects are selected for funding rests with the DVRPC Board.

Metro's [TOD Program](#) accepts project proposals on a rolling basis, so projects are not prioritized among competing applications. Instead, a TOD Program steering committee evaluates applications on a case-by-case basis with respect to how well they meet the following four objectives:

- Causing construction of higher density housing, mixed-use projects (e.g. apartments over retail, office over retail), and destination uses that have a physical and functional connection to transit, through partnerships with the private sector.
- Developing urban building types with the lowest reasonable parking ratio and highest reasonable floor area ratio (FAR).
- Increasing the modal share of transit and pedestrian trips within station areas while decreasing reliance on personal automobiles.
- Leveraging and focusing public expenditures within station areas to support Metro's 2040 Growth Concept.

If the steering committee determines that the project meets TOD Program objectives, it makes a recommendation to fund the project and the project moves forward unless there is an objection from the Metro Council.

D. Funding

This peer discussion explored how participating MPO livability programs and related activities are funded. The key questions for discussion were:

- **How is your livability program funded?** What are the funding sources and amounts, mix of funds, etc.?
- **Does your MPO employ innovative approaches to expedite projects** (e.g., funding swaps, bundling similar projects together in a single project/letting)?

Discussion Highlights

Participating agencies draw on a variety of funding sources to finance their livability programs and related activities. The most common sources of Federal funds used to support livability program activities are the [Surface Transportation Program](#) (STP), [Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality](#) (CMAQ) funds. In Dallas-Fort Worth, Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) is also an important source of funds to support livability program efforts. Several of the participating peer organizations also conduct local funding swaps – where the MPO exchanges Federal funds with a local funding source that allows greater flexibility on what the funds can be spent on – to support some of their livability program activities.

Table 4, below, provides information on the types of funding used by participating MPO livability programs, as well as the current levels of funding they have allocated to their programs in the RTP, TIP and UPWP.

Table 4: Current Livability Program Funding Levels and Funding Sources

Agency	Funding Source	Total Funding and Time Period	Local match Requirement	Average Funding (per project)
ARC	STP	<p>RTP \$500 million for LCI construction projects & \$13 million for LCI planning studies over 25 years</p> <p>TIP \$120 million for LCI construction projects over 5 years & \$1 million per year for LCI planning studies</p>	20% cash match	<p><u>LCI Construction:</u> Pedestrian: \$1.3 M Bike/Ped: \$2.2 M Transit: \$1.8 M Multi-Use: \$1.5 M Road Ops: \$1 M</p> <p><u>LCI Planning Study:</u> \$99,000</p>
MTC	<p>STP for planning grants</p> <p>CMAQ for capital projects</p> <p>Local parking revenues (exchanged with Federal funds)</p>	<p>RTP \$2.2. billion for total TLC program over 25 years</p> <p>TIP \$39.95 million annually for total TLC Program over 4 years</p>	20% cash match	<p><u>Station Area Plans:</u> \$375,000</p> <p><u>Technical Assistance:</u> \$38,000</p> <p><u>Capital Projects:</u> \$2 M</p>
Portland Metro	<p>STP and CMAQ</p> <p>Local transit agency funds (exchanged with Federal funds)</p>	<p>TIP \$5 million biannually for total TOD Program over 4 years</p>	None currently required.	<p><u>Mixed-Use TOD Projects</u> \$100,000-\$500,000</p>
NCTCOG	<p>Regional Toll Revenue (RTR)</p> <p>CMAQ/STP</p> <p>Regional Transportation Council (RTC) local funds (exchanged with Federal funds)</p>	<p>TIP \$161 million for total SDF Program over 4 years</p>	20% cash or in-kind match	<p><u>Infrastructure Projects:</u> \$2.5 mil</p> <p><u>Plans:</u> \$150,000</p> <p><u>Land Banking:</u> \$1.1 mil</p>
CDTC	<p>PL for program administration and linkage planning studies</p> <p>STP and other Federal funds for capital projects, depending on project type</p>	<p>TIP \$35 million for Linkage studies and related construction projects over 5 years</p> <p>UPWP \$562,000 for total Linkage Program</p>	25% cash match	<p><u>Linkage Studies:</u> \$60,000</p>
DVRPC	STP	<p>TIP \$2 million for TDCI studies over 3 years</p>	20% cash or in-kind match.	<p><u>TDCI Plans:</u> \$58,000</p>
DRCOG*	CMAQ	<p>TIP \$3.5 million for urban center and station area plans over 5 years</p>	20% cash match	<p><u>Station Area Plans:</u> \$150,000</p>

DRCOG does not have a formal livability program, but supports a variety of livability planning activities such as the Station Area Master Plans (STAMP) and Urban Center Planning. See Appendix A for summary of DRCOG's livability activities.

The total number of dollars committed to livability program activities varies widely across the participating MPOs, but the percent of funds committed to livability activities is small for each in relation to the size of its long-range plan and TIP. For some participating MPOs, however, the livability program still accounts for a significant portion of the Federal transportation dollars over which they have decision-making authority. For example:

- **The TLC Program is MTC's third largest use of STP/CMAQ dollars**, after local road rehabilitation and transit capital replacement.
- **Albany's CDTC uses more than one-third of its total allocation of Federal Planning (PL) dollars to fund its Linkage Program.** CDTC also estimates that 50 percent of its staff hours are devoted to supporting the Linkage Program and local projects resulting from Linkage Program Studies.

Participating agencies created livability programs to fund non-traditional activities that have positive long-term impacts on transportation and land use integration, such as land banking to help spur development close to transit, building supportive infrastructure for mixed-use TOD (including sewer replacements), and providing incentives to private and non-profit developers to build TOD. Limitations on Federal funds often preclude activities such as making sewer replacements and offering incentives to private and non-profit developers, however. Several participating agencies (e.g., MTC, Portland Metro, NCTCOG) are overcoming these limitations by swapping Federal flexible funds with their regions' transit agencies or other local authorities, whose funds may have fewer rules or limitations. This gives them greater flexibility in how funds may be used. For example:

- **MTC exchanges Federal funds with a local jurisdiction's parking revenue to fund land banking for affordable housing development along transit corridors** and make necessary sewer replacements/upgrades for TOD. These activities clearly support the goals of the TLC program and MTC's long-range plan but are not allowable expenses with Federal transportation funds. Federal funds typically are exchanged in an earlier year for an agreed upon repayment schedule. These local exchange funds can then be awarded as grants or be used to seed the affordable TOD land fund.
- **Portland Metro localizes its Federal funds by exchanging them with TriMet, the regional transit agency.** This provides the flexibility required to offer financial incentives directly to private and non-profit developers to build more intensive mixed-use developments along transit corridors than the market would dictate on its own. These financial incentives are typically a small portion of overall cost of the development project (1-2 percent), but provide the necessary support to cover cost premiums of higher density development (e.g., structured parking, firewall separations, elevators) and ensure that TOD projects are built.
- **NCTCOG has swapped Federal funds with regional transit agencies to provide additional funds for pedestrian amenities and bicycle trail construction** around TOD projects. STP metro and/or CMAQ funds are used for station construction and FTA funds are used to support amenities surrounding the station that strengthen its walking and biking connections.

Participating agencies who exclusively used Federal funds for their livability programs have not engaged in land acquisition and development work because Federal funds are not allowable for these kinds of activities.

E. Project Development and Implementation

This peer discussion explored the degree to which, and how, participating MPOs are involved in the development and implementation of livability projects. Key questions for the discussion were:

- **What role does your agency play in livability program implementation and project development** (e.g., managing construction projects, assisting with zoning codes or design regulations, project development oversight, local planning and programming)?
- **What challenges does your region face in implementing livability-type projects** and how is your agency trying to overcome these challenges?

Discussion Highlights

All participating agencies noted that implementing non-traditional projects that expand transportation choices and promote greater transportation and land use integration is a big challenge. The challenge may be compounded by the fact that few MPOs have direct experience implementing any type of transportation project (this is typically done by state DOTs or transit agencies), much less non-traditional ones. Challenges and some of the solutions participating MPOs have developed to overcome them are noted in the bullets below.

Some of the implementation challenges cited by participating MPOs are:

- **Lack of MPO authority to adopt supportive local land use policies** or approve transit supportive development projects. Ultimately, decisions about where to locate development and what kind of development to approve are at the discretion of local jurisdictions, not MPOs.
- **Lack of MPO ability to control when and where developers want to invest**, what kinds of developments they want to build, and how developments are financed. Developers are highly responsive to market conditions, so spurring TOD during an economic downturn can be difficult.
- **Developing effective strategies to ensure that housing**, particularly affordable units, are incorporated into development projects along transit corridors.
- **Hesitancy by some state DOTs to approve road diet projects** because they do not conform with adopted state design guidelines/manuals or traditional level of service (LOS) standards.
- **Inconsistent interpretation by various oversight agencies** (e.g., FHWA, FTA, state DOTs) on what Federal funding sources may and may not be used for livability-type projects. These projects may not fit well within the traditional uses of Federal transportation funds, because they require funding for non-transportation activities like sewer replacement and land acquisition. Not all oversight agencies agree on which types of non-traditional uses are eligible for Federal funds.
- **Small average size of livability program grants relative to administrative requirements** to oversee them can be cumbersome for local jurisdictions and project sponsors, who often have limited staff capacity and experience administering Federal funds. This may slow down the timeframe for completing projects and require MPOs to provide additional resources in technical assistance and oversight.
- **Greater demand for livability program funds than available supply** creates a backlog of projects and long timeframe for implementation. Most participating agencies reported that their livability programs are oversubscribed by two or three to one, some even more.

Several participants noted that the planning studies funded by their livability programs have created many more projects that communities would like to build than the MPO currently has funding available to invest.

- **Length of time to implement projects** (5 – 10 years, in some cases) and multiple approval processes (e.g., environmental, right-of-way), given the relatively small size of most Livability program projects (\$60,000-\$2,000,000).

MPOs have varying degrees of power to influence and address these challenges. Some of the creative solutions noted by participating agencies to address these challenges are:

- **ARC developed a [manual with guidelines for LCI project sponsors](#) and holds [workshops](#)** to provide project sponsors with information on implementation procedures and requirements, as well as to review new LCI planning requirements (*see bottom of hyperlink page for links to workshop presentations and materials*).
- **ARC hired a law firm to conduct a [legal review](#)³ of regional land use and transportation** for its current long-range plan, to establish where legal authority in Georgia lies with ARC and where it lies with local jurisdictions. The review also included a peer review of implementation by peer agencies and made recommendations on project implementation strategies that are both legal and effective, which helps to ensure that ARC is able to use its authority to maximum impact and effectiveness where it exists, but does not overstep its bounds.
- **ARC hired a former Georgia DOT project engineer to conduct design review** on concept reports and construction plans, and has a full-time LCI Project Manager who tracks all the projects through the Plan Development Process (PDP), provides technical assistance and acts as a liaison between local government sponsors and the Georgia Department of Transportation.
- **MTC works closely with local TLC project sponsors to provide technical assistance** and guidance to help project sponsors administer Federal funds. MTC conducts regular project check-ins with local sponsors at 30, 60, and 90 percent completion and instituted an agency wide policy ([Resolution 3606](#)) on the timely use of STP/CMAQ funds to help ensure that projects continue to move forward once they are granted funding.
- **DRCOG adopted a “3 Strikes” policy** where the third time a local project sponsor lapses on obligating its funds in the required timeframe, it has to appear before the DRCOG board to make a case for keeping its project funds.
- **NCTCOG and MTC both give project applicants additional points for including affordable units** in their project applications.
- **CDTC extended application eligibility to non-profits and public authorities** and has worked closely with the [Albany Housing Authority](#) to have it incorporate transit, bike and pedestrian accessibility into its housing projects through Linkage Program studies.
- **CDTC works closely with local cities and towns who request help with re-zoning** to ensure that updated zoning codes include transit, bike and pedestrian supportive elements.

³ Scroll down to the bottom of the page and see “Report 1: Legal Review” under the heading “Plan 2040 Implementation Strategy Reports.”

Several agencies noted that they are reducing their focus on new planning studies and trying to focus instead on implementing projects from completed plans. As the total funding available for transportation has tightened, participating MPOs worry about creating longer and longer lists of new projects when there isn't sufficient funding to build them.

In some cases, however, **peer agencies found that they did not need to take a direct implementation role in order for action to result from their Livability Program activities. For example, DVRPC's TCDI program only funds planning studies; it does not provide construction dollars to implement plans. Yet communities have been able to successfully leverage nearly \$2.5 billion in investment** from private, local, regional, county and state partners as a result of their TCDI planning studies (an investment of approximately \$10 million from DVRPC over the lifetime of the program).

F. Program Evaluation and Performance Measures

This peer discussion explored how participating agencies are tracking performance and measuring the success of their livability work. Key questions for the discussion were:

- **How are you tracking progress and measuring the success** of your transportation planning process generally, and your livability program specifically? What performance measures, data, reporting, etc. do you use?
- **How would you like to incorporate performance measures and program evaluation** in your agency's livability work moving forward?

Discussion Highlights

Performance management and program evaluation are areas of increasing interest, as many agencies want to better communicate with the public and elected officials about the value of their long-term investments. This is still an emerging field for transportation, however, especially with regard to non-traditional projects like those funded by MPO livability programs.

Most participants reported that their agencies have begun to use performance measures in their transportation planning and project development. This typically takes place at a high level, with respect to the region's long-range transportation plan rather than individual livability program efforts. For example:

- **DRCOG prepares a [Measuring Progress](#) report every two years**, which tracks progress towards regional goals established in the Metro Vision Plan. Metro Vision is currently being updated and the Board is considering six new measurable goals focused on sustainability, including reducing VMT per capita, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and capturing 75% of new employment and 50% of new residential development in "centers."
- **DVRPC prepares a [Tracking Progress](#) report after each update to the region's long-range transportation plan.** The reports analyze how well the region is implementing its long-range plan by tracking indicators for each goal in the plan. The current plan, *Connections 35*, has a goal of "creating livable communities" so DVRPC's next *Tracking Progress* report will identify a series of livable communities indicators that assess how well the region is doing with respect to that goal.
- **MTC incorporated 11 performance outcome targets into its current long-range plan, [Transportation 2035: Change in Motion](#)** These targets are linked to the "Three Es of Sustainability — Environment, Economy, and Equity" and include reducing: Bike and pedestrian injuries and fatalities 25% below 2000 levels; Carbon dioxide (CO²) emissions to 40% below 1990 levels; VMT to 10% below current levels; and the share of earnings

spent on housing and transportation costs by low and moderately-low income households to 10% below current levels by 2035. MTC also conducted an in-depth [Performance Assessment Report](#) that analyzed the performance of various investment packages and individual projects for inclusion in Transportation 2035.

Three participating MPOs have also conducted in-depth evaluations of the specific achievements of their livability programs:

- **ARC has an ongoing evaluation and monitoring initiative for its LCI program that is divided into two parts** – the *Breaking Ground Report* and the *LCI Implementation Report*.
 - The [Breaking Ground Report](#) is compiled every six months. ARC staff contact grantees who have received LCI implementation funds to gather information on project status and track the degree to which projects are moving forward.
 - Every two years, ARC staff prepare a more detailed [LCI Implementation Report](#) to better understand the accomplishments, strengths, and challenges of the LCI Program. An in-depth survey is distributed to local staff of all communities who have received LCI funding. The survey tracks results in three areas:
 - Development tracking – creates a spreadsheet of all developments that are complete, planned, or currently under construction in LCI communities.
 - Code changes – summarizes how LCI communities are changing their land use policies and regulations to allow new development as a result of LCI plans.
 - Community attitudes towards livability – summarizes if and how local staff see community attitudes changing on 14 livability-related questions about quality of life, housing choices, transit service, pedestrian-friendliness, community events, etc.
- **In 2007, MTC conducted a 10-year review and evaluation of its TLC Program accomplishments.** The report, [Ten Years of TLC: An Evaluation of MTC's Transportation for Livable Communities](#), evaluated all of its completed projects and includes information gathered from surveys, focus groups, and interviews with project sponsors, community groups, and end users. Recommendations were made to improve the effectiveness of the program, re-prioritize funding awards, and broaden project eligibility moving forward. Staff also developed five in-depth [case studies](#) to examine the before and after results of a TLC investment.
- **DVRPC has completed two evaluation reports that examine its TCDI Program.** These reports provide an overview of the TCDI program and evaluate the administration, project selection, and funding investments that have been leveraged by TCDI studies throughout the DVRPC planning region. The most [recent evaluation report was completed in 2008](#).

None of the participating agencies conduct regular post-implementation evaluations for individual projects funded through their livability programs. Agency representatives expressed interest in being able to do more evaluation of their livability programs and projects, but noted that it would likely require significant additional resources, in terms of funding and staff time to oversee such endeavors.

Participating agencies also noted an interest in developing new, non-traditional indicators to better reflect the benefits of livability projects. In particular, agencies noted an interest in developing performance measures and evaluation metrics that quantify:

- Health benefits / Health Impact Assessments
- Greenhouse gas reduction benefits
- Energy reduction benefits
- Long-term economic development benefits
- Affordable housing benefits
- Bike and pedestrian level of service benefits

Participating agencies also noted some cautions about performance measures and evaluation:

- **Some agencies are hesitant to establish long-term performance outcome targets.** Without the authority to implement plans and affect local land use decision-making, there is no guarantee that outcome targets may be met. Therefore, agencies worry about being branded as having “poor performance.”
- **It is difficult to establish clear, measurable short-term criteria** by which to evaluate how well individual projects contribute towards achieving a long-term regional performance goal.
- **It is important not to frame some communities as having “successful” projects while others have “unsuccessful” projects** when conducting evaluations of a livability program and individual projects within it, as this may create a sense of favoritism or lead to conflict among local jurisdictions.
- **Good data are a prerequisite for meaningful performance measurement** and program evaluation, but some participating agencies struggle with obtaining and maintaining high quality data.

G. Partnerships and Outreach

This peer discussion explored participating MPOs’ public involvement efforts related to their livability programs, as well as inter-agency collaborations they are developing to better integrate transportation and land use planning. Key discussion questions were:

- **How do you engage the public in your livability program efforts?**
- **What kinds of partnerships have you formed with other agencies** (e.g., local, state, Federal, non-transportation) in order to develop a successful Livability Program? What kinds of partnerships would you like to explore?

Discussion Highlights

All participants noted that reaching out and building effective inter-agency partnerships is a critical success factor to developing a meaningful livability program. At a bare minimum, MPOs must develop effective working relationships with local municipalities, who sponsor projects and make land use decisions that directly impact the successful Livability-type projects, and their state DOTs, who often oversee the Federal funding programs MPOs use to fund their Livability Programs.

Most participating MPOs also noted that they have used their livability programs as a way to better involve the public in transportation planning.

- **For example, CDTC, noted that enhanced public involvement has been a valuable result of its Linkage Program.** Because the Albany region has suffered economic divestment in recent decades, environmental justice (EJ) has also become an important aspect of the Linkage Program’s public outreach. CDTC staff have worked with community-based organizations serving EJ communities, such as [ARISE](#) (A Regional Initiative Supporting Empowerment) to reach out to people who have not traditionally participated in the metropolitan transportation planning process. CDTC staff found that the most effective way to reach out to people in these communities is to go directly to them, by meeting in churches or walking door to door in the neighborhoods where they live to do “stoop surveys.”
- **Environmental justice is an important aspect of DVRPC’s TCDI Program.** The primary goal of the TCDI Program is to create community plans where transportation investments are a catalyst for redevelopment and revitalization, so local jurisdictions are only eligible to apply for a grant if they include an area identified as an environmental justice (EJ) community in DVRPC’s regional EJ analysis. All final TCDI plans are also required to include an EJ element.

Participating MPOs noted that their livability work has helped to develop relationships with non-transportation agencies, such as regional housing organizations, public health organizations, and special purpose districts (e.g., water, sewer, school districts). All of the participating MPOs had recently completed applications to HUD’s [Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants](#) (also known as “Partnership Grants”) at the time of the peer exchange. Many of them noted that it was easier to develop a Partnership Grant than it might have been without their livability programs, because they had nearly a decade’s worth of experience partnering with non-transportation agencies. Participating MPOs also noted that the Partnership Grants were an opportunity to reach out to new sectors and agencies they hadn’t worked with before.

For example, ARC partnered with:

- Affordable housing developers
- Regional green building alliance
- Statewide advocacy group focused on fresh food access
- Regional livable communities coalition
- Local non-profit/university partnership that focuses on data analysis/tracking for regional indicators

Other peer representatives noted new partnerships they created in order to develop HUD partnership grant applications:

- Public health agencies/non-profit organizations
- County mental health agencies
- School districts
- Veterans services organizations
- Homelessness HIV/AIDS organizations
- Local universities
- Local environmental groups
- Transit riders advocacy organizations
- State Department of Local Affairs
- Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

It is important to “de-buzz” the language of transportation and livability planning so that people in different fields can understand it more easily.

New partnerships and collaborations help MPOs reach populations and audiences that are impacted by their work but who may never have been involved in the metropolitan planning process before. As such, these **collaborations provide a valuable opportunity to find new ways of communicating the value of transportation planning and new language to talk**

about what “livability” means to different communities or people with different interests.

All participating MPOs noted that it is critical to “de-buzz” the language and jargon surrounding transportation planning and “smart growth” so that it can be more easily understood by people who have not been involved in transportation decisionmaking before.

Participants also acknowledged that there are mixed benefits and challenges of forging so many new partnerships. On one hand, bringing so many organizations and perspectives together can generate lots of creative new ideas and has the potential to greatly expand the number of people who are well-served by resulting projects and plans. On the other hand, each new organization added to a coalition partnership brings new, and potentially conflicting interests, and may create increased transaction costs for communication and final decision-making.

H. Federal Listening Session: How to Support the “Next Level” of MPO Livability Planning

The last section of the peer exchange was a discussion of the “next level” of MPO livability planning. This was an opportunity for the participating MPOs to share their thoughts and reflections with Federal staff on what they would like to do to take their livability programs and related activities to the “next level” and how they think Federal partners could support those efforts through technical assistance/tools, research, capacity building, etc.

Ideas shared by peers on how Federal partners can help to promote the “next level” of MPO livability planning included:

- **Relaxed process requirements for smaller/livability projects** to make design review and conformity review more efficient and appropriate relative to the scale of the project. For example, treat bicycle/pedestrian projects like Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects, which have a streamlined environmental review and approval process. Or develop measures that could decrease ROW plan approval and acquisition time (such as relaxed requirements for projects that only require easements or temporary easements vs. condemnation or purchase).
- **Additional guidance on financing/funding for livability projects and planning** – how to apply flexible funds to non-traditional use (i.e., sewer and other critical infrastructure replacement, land acquisition), swapping funds with locals, etc.
- **Increased funding, with greater flexibility and more control by MPOs**, to specifically support livability planning.
- **Training for area engineers and state DOT engineers on good transit/bike/pedestrian design**, such as context sensitive solutions and complete streets.
- **Guidance and best practices from current and emerging leaders in modeling and forecasting for transportation and land use integration** – from developing consistent approaches for basic assumptions like future gas prices to more complex issues such as how to model for greenhouse gases, or examine regional benefits from single projects.
- **Peer exchanges to convene TIP and programming staff** from leading MPOs to discuss strategies on how to integrate livability principles into the TIP programming process.
- **Clearer guidance on roles and responsibilities for different agencies** (e.g., MPO, local jurisdictions, transit agencies) in building and maintaining infrastructure to improve bike and pedestrian access to transit stations/stops.

- **Additional /clearer guidance on joint development requirements** – particularly clarifying the role of parking near transit stations and TOD, and tradeoffs between levels and locations of parking vs. development.

V. Conclusion

This TPCB peer exchange convened seven leading MPOs to discuss their experiences, challenges, and creative approaches to successful transportation and land use integration in the emerging field of MPO livability planning.

Participating MPOs have nearly a decade's worth of experience administering livability programs and developing innovative approaches to livability planning. They demonstrated that current Federal transportation planning guidance and funding structures do provide a foundation for testing more effective approaches to transportation and land use integration, and expressed the belief that livability planning would be a good model for future transportation decisionmaking.

In order to take livability planning to the next level, however, participating MPO representatives noted that they would benefit from additional support, technical assistance, and resources.

VI. Next Steps

ARC requested a peer exchange in order to inform future program development for ARC's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), based on best practices and lessons learned by other MPOs engaged in livability planning to promote smart growth and TOD. ARC plans to use the information shared during the peer exchange as it moves forward with its next long-range regional plan – [PLAN 2040](#) – which is scheduled to be adopted in mid-2011. The LCI program will be included in *PLAN 2040* as a key regional plan implementation tool.

A few of the main takeaways from the peer exchange that ARC staff noted will be influential as it considers future LCI program development are:

- The peer exchange affirmed that the LCI program is a significant Livability Program in the league with other cutting-edge programs around the country and should be continued to support regional plan implementation.
- To assist with LCI plan implementation, ARC should consider a fund swap to access more flexible funds, which could be used for efforts such as:
 - Land banking for TOD implementation, especially related to affordable housing;
 - Non-transportation projects to assist development projects;
 - Small transportation project lump-sum funding to build small transportation projects outside of state/Federal agency review process.
- In future years as funding becomes more difficult, ARC and regional partners should consider the use of CMAQ and other possible sources to fund elements of the LCI program.
- It is important to focus on implementing existing LCI studies and prioritizing funding/assistance to areas with the most significant regional impact.
- Moving forward, ARC should establish more direct ties for future funding/assistance to those communities that show clear implementation results and support of regional goals

in areas such as the number of housing units provided, a project's impact on increased transit ridership, inclusion in an environmental justice area, etc.

- ARC would like to explore more public-private partnership opportunities; consider working more directly with the development community to implement LCI studies.

VII. About the Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) Program

The [Transportation Planning Capacity Building \(TPCB\) Program](#) is a joint venture of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that delivers products and services to provide information, training, and technical assistance to the transportation professionals responsible for planning for the capital, operating, and maintenance needs of our nation's surface transportation system. The TPCB Program website (www.planning.dot.gov) serves as a one-stop clearinghouse for state-of-the-practice transportation planning information and resources. This includes over 70 peer exchange reports covering a wide range of transportation planning topics.

The [TPCB Peer Program](#) advances the state of the practice in multimodal transportation planning nationwide by organizing, facilitating, and documenting peer events to share noteworthy practices among state departments of transportation (DOTs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), transit agencies, and local and Tribal transportation planning agencies. During peer events, transportation planning staff interact with one another to share information, accomplishments, and lessons learned from the field and help one another overcome shared transportation planning challenges.

VIII. Appendix

A. Summary of Livability Programs

ARC's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)

Agency Name: Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

Location: Atlanta, GA

Livability Program Name: [Livable Centers Initiative](#)

Year Created: 1999

Why Created: Created by the ARC Board, in concert with staff leadership, to address the need to better coordinate land use and transportation decisions and to develop strategies to create sustainable, livable communities. LCI serves as an implementation tool for the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Land Use Plan. Initially adopted as part of the 2025 RTP as a strategy to address conformity issues.

Program Goals:

- Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the center/corridor level;
- Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking;
- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders.

Program Funding (inception to date):

- \$13 Million for studies in 2030 RTP (*\$1 Million per year 2000 – 2012*)
- \$500 Million for transportation projects in 2030 RTP (*approximately \$120 million in projects committed in FY08-FY13 TIP*)

Types of Projects Funded:

- LCI Planning Studies
- Supplemental Studies
- Transportation Construction Projects

Results/Impacts:

- 107 LCI Planning Studies and 57 Supplemental Studies
- 79 Transportation Construction Projects (*approximately 64 percent pedestrian, 14 percent bike/ped, 6 percent transit-supportive facility, 6 percent multi-use path, 8 percent roadway operations, 1 percent roadway capacity*) – 31 completed, 18 under construction, 30 in preliminary engineering (PE) or right-of-way (ROW)
- From 2000-2007, 8 percent of housing, 21 percent of commercial, and 67 percent of office built in the region was located in an LCI study area (which constitute 3.4 percent of the region's total land area).
- 2008 survey of 90 communities that completed LCI studies identified 1,148 new development projects in existing LCI town centers, activity centers and corridors.
 - These projects are expected to add more than: 84,500 new residential units, 12,000 new hotel units, 9 million square feet of commercial space, 38 million square feet of office space
- 2008 survey showed that communities that have completed LCI studies made the following policy changes:
 - 92% have adopted their LCI study into their comprehensive plan
 - 66% have special LCI mixed use zoning districts
 - 56% have affordable or senior housing policies
 - 83% have design guidelines in place

Portland Metro's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Implementation Program

Agency Name: Metro

Location: Portland, OR

Program Name: [Transit Oriented Development \(TOD\) Implementation Program](#)

Year Created: 1998

Why Created: Internal leadership decision

Program Goals:

- Causing construction of higher density housing, mixed-use projects (i.e. apartments over retail, office over retail), and destination uses that have a physical and functional connection to transit, through partnerships with the private sector;
- Developing urban building types with the lowest reasonable parking ratios and highest reasonable floor area ratios (FAR's);
- Increasing the modal share of transit and pedestrian trips within station areas while decreasing reliance on personal automobiles;
- Leveraging and focusing public expenditures within station areas to support Metro's 2040 Growth Concept.

Program Funding (inception-to-date):

- \$22 million (*\$5.7 million in 2010-2013 TIP*)
 - \$9 million in project easements
 - \$8 million in land acquisition
 - \$5 million in operating costs (including planning and feasibility studies)

Types of Projects Funded: Higher density mixed use, residential, and commercial development projects using project grants/easements, land acquisition, and, to a lesser extent, planning & feasibility studies.

Results/Impacts:

- 20 built TOD projects
- \$300 million in development activity
- 543,000 annual transit trips
- 2,100 residential units
- 240,000 sq ft of retail and office
- Resident survey from a completed TOD project found that only 53% of the travel trips generated were by auto, compared to 87% for the balance of the region; 60% of the residents stated they drive "a little to a lot less" and 70% use transit "a little to a lot more". On commute to work or school, only 44% of the residents regularly use a private vehicle.

NCTCOG's Sustainable Development Funding Program

Agency Name: North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)

Location: Dallas-Fort Worth, TX

Program Name: [Sustainable Development Funding Program](#)

Year created: 2001

Why Created: The Sustainable Development Funding Program was created by NCTCOG's policy body, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), to encourage public/private partnerships that positively address existing transportation system capacity, rail access, air quality concerns, and/or mixed and integrated land uses. By allocating transportation funds to land use projects promoting alternative transportation modes or reduced automobile use, NCTCOG and its regional partners are working to address mounting air quality, congestion and quality of life issues.

Program Goals: The program is designed to foster growth and development in and around historic downtowns and Main Streets, infill areas, and passenger rail lines and stations. The goals are to:

- Respond to local initiatives for Town Centers, Mixed-Use Growth Centers, Transit Oriented Developments, Infill/Brownfield Developments, and Pedestrian Oriented Projects.
- Complement rail investments with coordinated investments in park-and-ride, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- Reduce the growth in vehicle miles traveled per person.
- Promote economic development throughout the region through public/private partnerships.

Program Funding (inception to date):

- Approximately \$161 million (*approximately \$54.7 million for construction and \$1.3 million for planning in current TIP*)

Types of Projects Funded:

- Since 2001, a total of 84 projects have been granted funding:
 - Infrastructure: 60 (\$151.5 million)
 - Planning: 20 (\$5.4 million)
 - Land banking: 4 (\$4.3 million)
- The majority of the infrastructure projects are part of larger initiatives that fund commercial, retail, residential mixed-use developments and TODs. Eligible activities for infrastructure projects include: street construction, landscaping, bike trails, bus stations, rail stations, intersections improvements, traffic signals, pedestrian amenities (sidewalks, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, signing, etc.), PS&E, and ROW acquisition.

Results/impacts: 14 infrastructure projects will be completed by the end of 2010. The impact to the surrounding properties or to the community, the reduction of VMT and improvement to air quality is something that NCTCOG is looking to quantify through performance measures or program success evaluation.

DVRPC's Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TDCI)

Agency Name: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Program Name: [Transportation and Community Development Initiative \(TDCI\)](#)

Year Created: 2002

Why Created: The TDCI Program is an opportunity for the DVRPC to support local development and redevelopment efforts in the individual municipalities of the Delaware Valley that implement municipal, county, state, and regional planning objectives. Despite regional growth in population, employment, and income, a number of older townships, boroughs, and cities have seen a loss of population or jobs, and need directed investments to seed and support their redevelopment efforts. The DVRPC Board made an executive decision to set aside TIP dollars for specific planning activities in these communities of the region.

Program Goals: The TDCI Program is intended to implement the goals of DVRPC's long-range transportation plan. The goals of the TDCI program and individual projects are to:

- Support local planning projects that will lead to more residential, employment, or retail opportunities;
- Improve the overall character and quality of life within these communities to retain and attract business and residents, which will help to reduce the pressure for further sprawl and expansion into the growing suburbs;
- Enhance and utilize the existing transportation infrastructure capacity in these areas to reduce the demands on the region's transportation network; and
- Reduce congestion and improve the transportation system's efficiency.

Program Funding (inception to date): \$10.62 million (*\$1.62 million on FY 2010-2012 TIP*)

Types of Projects: TDCI funds three types of planning studies (*but not project construction*):

- Planning and Land Use
- Reuse and Revitalization
- Transportation and Transit

Results/impacts:

- To date the TDCI Program has funded 171 planning studies:
 - Planning and Land Use: 50 projects (29%)
 - Reuse and Revitalization: 41 projects (24%)
 - Transportation and Transit: 80 projects (47%)
- DVRPC's \$10.62 dollar investment in TDCI planning studies has leveraged over \$2.5 billion dollars in these communities from private, local, regional, county, and state partners.

CDTC's Linkage Program

Agency Name: Capital District Transportation Committee

Location: Albany, NY

Program Name: [Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program \(Linkage Program\)](#)

Year Created: 2000

Why Created: The Linkage Program was created to provide assistance with local community/transportation planning initiatives. It is the key implementation program of the CDTC's long-range transportation plan, *New Visions 2030*.

Program Goals: The Linkage Program emphasizes seven broad planning strategies that are consistent with the adopted *New Visions 2030* principles as well as other initiatives such as sustainable development, complete streets and the national Smart Growth movement. Submissions are screened as part of the evaluation process as to how well they incorporate the program strategies. The more program strategies incorporated, the higher the priority. The seven strategies are to:

- Support urban revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial/residential areas;
- Improve street connectivity and reduce driveway conflicts through access management;
- Enhance and develop activity centers and town centers;
- Enhance and develop transit corridors and transit supportive built environments;
- Encourage a greater mix and intensity of land uses;
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian-friendly design standards;
- Create an integrated multi-modal transportation network.

Program Funding:

- Approximately \$4.2 million in federal, state and local funds have been committed to the Linkage Program since its inception in 2000.
- Approximately \$100 million in Linkage Program-related projects have been funded through the TIP since the year 2000.

Types of Projects:

- The Linkage Program directly funds land use and transportation planning studies.
- Capital projects developed by Linkage Studies are funded in the TIP.

Results/Impacts:

- CDTC has funded a total of 66 collaborative, jointly-funded planning studies over the past ten years. Study sponsors have included 39 separate urban, suburban and rural municipalities and counties as well as not-for-profits and other public entities.
- CDTC reports that Impacts of Linkage Planning Studies include:
 - Local Planning Boards use study recommendations as a guide when reviewing proposals with the developers which has led to some projects being incorporated in development proposals (sidewalks, limiting curb cuts, road connections/easements, etc.)
 - Local Planning Boards have become more aware of issues such as sidewalks and are asking more of developers as a result
 - Studies have encouraged developers to be more creative with some of their projects.
 - Studies have led to adaptive reuse of buildings in the studied corridors.
 - Studies have helped communities receive TIP funds for projects (nearly \$100 million in TIP projects leveraged from Linkage Studies ins 2000)
 - Changes have been made to zoning codes and led to adopted design standards.
 - The New York DOT has been helpful in working with developers in the review process to implement recommendations

- Studies have helped communities implement small scale, short term improvements such as signage

MTC's Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Program

Agency Name: Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

Location: Oakland, CA

Program Name: [Transportation for Livable Communities \(TLC\)](#)

Year created: 1998 (TOD Policy adopted in 2005)

Why created: Advocacy and internal leadership decision.

Program Goals:

- Support a community's infill or transit-oriented development and neighborhood revitalization activities.
- Support well-designed, high-density housing and mixed use developments that are well served by transit, or will help build the capacity for future transit investment and use and reduces displacement of local residents and businesses.
- Support projects developed through a collaborative and inclusive planning process that includes broad partnerships among a variety of stakeholders such as public agencies, community- based organizations and community stakeholders, and outreach to a diversity of participants.
- Improve a range of transportation choices by adding or improving pedestrian, transit, and/or bicycle facilities, and by improving the links between these facilities and activity nodes.
- Enhance a community's sense of place and quality of life.
- Invest in projects that are ready to begin construction in the near term.

Program Funding:

- \$210 million from 1998-2010
- Currently \$2.2 billion committed in the 2035 RTP and \$79 million in the FY9/10-FY11/12 TIP.

Types of Projects:

- Planning program – Funds Planning Studies, Station Area Planning Grants, and Technical Assistance Grants to revitalize existing neighborhoods, downtowns, corridors, commercial cores, and transit stops to create more pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly environments.
- Capital Program – Funds transportation infrastructure improvements that encourage pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips and support high-density, mixed-use development.

Results/Impacts:

- 162 capital projects
- 33 planning grants
- A 10-Year Evaluation of the TLC Program can be found at:
http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/tlc_eval/10_Years_of_TLC_Eval_Summary_2008.pdf

DRCOG's "Livability Planning" (No Formal Livability Program)

Agency Name: Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)

Location: Denver, CO

Program Name: DRCOG does not have a defined "Livability Program," per se. Activities that support "livability" include the [Metro Vision planning process](#), the [TOD Program](#), the [commitment of TIP funds to the FasTracks program \(120 miles of new rapid transit\)](#), [Urban Center Planning, and Station Area Master Plans \(STAMPs\)](#), and the [inclusion of Metro Vision criteria in the scoring of all TIP projects](#).

Timeframe: DRCOG first adopted the Metro Vision plan in 1997. Voters approved the FasTracks program in 2004, which DRCOG incorporated into the RTP in 2005. DRCOG established the TOD Program and STAMPs funding program in 2006. DRCOG further expanded the STAMPs program to include Urban Center Planning in 2010.

Impetus: The first Metro Vision plan resulted from a multi-year discussion led by a variety of local champions. The DRCOG Board directed staff to establish the TOD program and provide TIP funding for STAMPs after the voters approved FasTracks.

Goals:

1. TOD Program Goals – Provide relevant & timely information to help policy makers, business leaders, and the public make informed decisions regarding transit-oriented development
2. Metro Vision Draft Sustainability Goals (*anticipated for adoption in January, 2011*)
 - o Locate 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new employment between 2005 and 2035.
 - o Increase the rate of construction of alternative transportation facilities
 - o Reduce the percent of trips to work by single-occupant vehicle to 65% by 2035
 - o Reduce regional per capita municipal and industrial water use
 - o Reduce regional per capita VMT 10 percent by 2035
 - o Reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector 60% by 2035 - consistent with Colorado Climate Action Plan goal of reducing total emissions 20% below 2005 levels by 2020

Funding:

- \$3 million committed in the TIP since 2007 for STAMPs, and an additional \$3.5 million set aside in the 2012-2017 TIP.
- 45% of the funding in the 2008-2013 TIP went to projects located within Urban Centers, and an additional 21% to projects located near and supporting Urban Centers.
- Current Metro Vision long-range plan includes \$6.75 billion for FasTracks construction.

Types of Projects:

- Station Area Plans and Urban Center Plans
- FasTracks program

Results/Impacts:

- Since 2007, DRCOG has funded STAMPs for 28 stations, 19 of which are located in or are within a quarter mile of an Urban Center. DRCOG has not specifically evaluated the outcomes of STAMPs funding, other than collecting the final planning products.
- In the 2008-2013 TIP, DRCOG allocated funding for 14 transportation infrastructure projects located within an Urban Center, and seven transportation infrastructure projects located near and supporting an Urban Center.
- DRCOG periodically publishes a [Measuring Progress](#) report that evaluates progress towards Metro Vision goals on a range of indicators.

B. Event Agenda

Day 1: Monday, August 30, 2010

Time	Agenda Item
1:00 pm	<p>ARC Welcome ARC welcomes participants and opens the exchange. Provides context on what motivated the peer exchange request and how ARC plans to use information gathered during the exchange.</p>
1:05 pm	<p>TPCB Overview, Goals and Deliverables TPCB staff review the program mission and overarching goals, describe products and plans for documentation, and establish ground rules for the day's discussions.</p>
1:15 pm	<p>Participant Goals Peer and other participating staff share their goals for the day, including any specific information they hope to gather during the exchange.</p>
1:30 – 2:45 pm	<p>Opening Comments from ARC and Peers Each agency provides <i>brief</i> introductory comments (<i>7-10 minutes each</i>) addressing 3 key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did your livability program start and why? • What aspect of your program is particularly interesting, unique, successful – what distinguishes it from others around the country and how did that become part of your program? • What are your future plans for the program? What do you want to change, update, expand, revise? What advice do you seek from peers to help get there?
2:45 pm	<i>Break</i>
3:00 –4:00 pm	<p>Discussion Topic: Land Use and Transportation Integration Facilitated roundtable to discuss how agencies are integrating transportation and land use.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific actions is your agency taking to coordinate transportation and land use (e.g., policies, programs, forecasting/project prioritization methods, studies)? • What are the major obstacles to integrating transportation and land use in your region, and how is your agency overcoming them?
4:00 –5:00 pm	<p>Discussion Topic: Planning Process Facilitated roundtable to discuss how the livability program and related activities are being integrated into the overall transportation planning process (MTP, TIP, UPWP).</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is your livability program integrated into the overall transportation planning process (MTP, TIP, UPWP)? • How are you addressing livability/smart growth principals in your overall transportation planning process (MTP, TIP, UPWP) outside of the livability program? • How do you collaborate with local planning agencies and integrate your livability program/initiatives into local planning processes?
4:45 pm	<i>Break</i>
6:00-9:30 pm	<p>Dinner in an Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Community ARC staff lead a trip to an LCI community and provide a brief tour/explanation before dinner at a near-by restaurant.</p>

Day 2: Tuesday, August 31, 2010

Time	Agenda Item
8:30 – 9:30 am	<p>Discussion Topic: Funding / Programming Facilitated roundtable to discuss livability program funding and programming processes.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is your livability program funded – what are the funding sources and amounts, mix of funds, etc.? • How are projects selected – what eligibility criteria, evaluation methods and prioritization criteria are used? Do they differ by mode, project type, or any other category? • What types of projects are funded – just transportation-specific projects, or are funds available for development, land acquisition, etc?
9:30 –10:30 am	<p>Discussion Topic: Implementation / Project Development Facilitated roundtable to discuss livability program implementation and project development.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does your agency play in livability program implementation and project development (e.g. managing construction projects, assisting with zoning codes or design regulations, project development oversight, local planning and programming)? • Does your MPO employ innovative approaches to expedite projects (e.g., funding swaps, bundling similar projects together in a single project/letting)? How long does it take your region to implement a new pedestrian scale transportation project from concept to breaking ground? • What are some effective implementation strategies to encourage more housing/residential development in activity centers and future transit corridors (especially given the decline in the housing market)?
10:30 am	<i>Break</i>
10:45 – 11:45 am	<p>Discussion Topic: Program Evaluation Performance Monitoring Facilitated roundtable to discuss how agencies are tracking performance and measuring the success of their livability program and related activities.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you tracking progress and measuring the accomplishments of your livability program and smart growth/livability initiatives – what performance measures, data, reporting (internal or public) do you use? • What are your performance findings? What activities have been most and least successful – what are you doing to build on your findings?
11:45 – 12:30 pm	<p>Discussion Topic: Outreach and Partnerships Facilitated roundtable to discuss public involvement, outreach and board engagement related to the livability program and related activities.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you engage the public in livability program efforts? How is information about your program and projects distributed? • How do you solicit projects? • How do you engage/educate your Board on livability program efforts? • What partnerships have you formed with local, state, Federal, non-transportation agencies in order to develop a successful livability program? How/why? What partnerships would you like to explore?
12:30 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
1:00 –2:00 pm	<p>Overcoming Challenges and Looking Forward: Next Steps for MPO Livability Planning Facilitated roundtable to discuss plans for how to expand/improve MPO livability programs and related activities moving forward.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key ingredients to administer a successful livability program? • What are the key challenges your livability program faces and how is your agency overcoming them? • What are your plans for the “next level” of livability planning in your region?
2:00 –	Federal Listening Session: What can FTA/FHWA do to facilitate effective MPO Livability Planning?

Time	Agenda Item
3:00 pm	Facilitated discussion for participants to share feedback on how Federal partners can support the “next level” of livability planning. <u>Discussion Question:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How could Federal partners promote/support the “next level” of MPO livability planning through technical tools/assistance, research, capacity building, planning requirements, etc.?
3:00 pm	<i>Break</i>
3:15 – 4:15 pm	Wrap-Up: Best Practices and Take-Aways Facilitated discussion to get input from participants on best practices heard throughout the day and reflect on what people learned and are taking home from the exchange.
4:15 – 4:30 pm	TPCB Peer Program Evaluations Participants fill out TPCB peer program evaluation forms.

C. Participant List

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