# Tampa Bay Regional MPO – Progress and Next Steps

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January 17, 2025



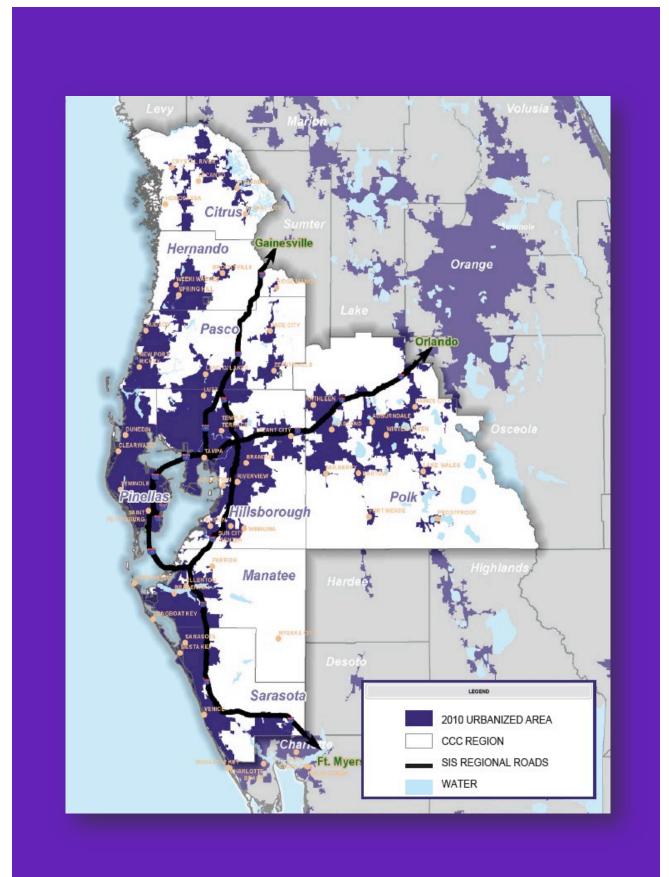
## What is a MPO or TPO?

- Metropolitan Planning Organizations created by Congress to fulfill transportation planning responsibilities and receive funds to address transportation needs in urban areas over 50,000 people
- Continuing, comprehensive & cooperative planning process
  - Establish priorities for state and federal funding
  - Engage the public in decision-making
  - Additional responsibilities and authority for MPOs in Transportation Management Areas
- Tampa Bay's county-based MPOs created in the 1970s
- Federal requirements and state statutes govern MPOs in Florida



## Some Context

- Most federal transportation funding allocated to the urban area; FDOT then distributes funds based on county population
- Major sources of transportation funding are competitive
- After the 1990 Census, the Florida Governor formally requested the Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas MPOs merge as a single MPO serving the Tampa-St. Petersburg Urban Area
- SCTPA (and TMA Leadership Group) created to guide regional planning and collaboration among the MPOs



# Why Merge the MPOs?



Potential to significantly improve the region's transportation network



Strengthen relationships among elected officials, staff, and partners across the region



Tackle regional issues more effectively



Impetus from the Florida Legislature (HB 425 in 2023)

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# Important Considerations

- Concerns over structural deficiencies and communities losing influence
- No guarantee of more funding or resolving needs for transportation operations and maintenance
- Potential to shift emphasis to regional projects instead of community safety, access and mobility needs
- Could weaken countywide planning and linkage with land use
- How would a regional agency conduct public participation and engagement?

# What Have We Accomplished?

- Adopted MOU to explore a potential merger
- Submitted a Feasibility Report in December 2023 to the governor and legislature
- Reached consensus on a regional governing board consisting of 25 governing board members
  - -23 seats to be apportioned by population
  - Hillsborough County Aviation Authority
    (TPA) and Tampa Port Authority have voting representation by executive staff
  - Transportation operators serve as nonvoting advisors
  - Small city representation to be determined by each county
- Approved scope of services for management and legal consultation

## **MOU Principles**

- Build collaboration and create a forum for leveraging the strength of the region to achieve better regional outcomes
- Respect the differences in characteristics, conditions and needs among the three counties and urban centers
- Determine a process that enables local voices to shape decision-making
- Establish a stable funding mechanism to support planning activities that leverage state and federal funding



# Management and Legal Scope of Services

- Affirm the apportionment plan
- Evaluate the organizational structures in place
- Identify options and build consensus on a preferred agency structure
- Develop policies and procedures
- Obtain consensus among the general-purpose local governments representing at least 75% of the population of the urbanized area, and the central city(ies)

### Regional MPO Procurement

#### TMA Approves Scope

Hillsborough TPO finalizes procurement package, including the draft contract, and goes through internal review process for quality control. This may take 1-2 months.

#### **RFP Package Released**

Procurement information will be publicly noticed and shared with potential firms. There will be a noticed question & answer period.



#### **Proposals Due**

Approximately 5-6 weeks following the release, proposals are due per the public noticed information which will contain the exact date. TPO staff will review for completion and share with reviewers.

#### Staff Review & Selection

A team of MPO staff will review the proposals, conduct interviews and make a selection recommendation. This process takes about 4 weeks.



#### **TMA Update**

MPO staff will update the TMA Leadership Group on the recommendation and next steps. This is anticipated to be at the May TMA meeting or a special meeting held in June or July.

#### **Confirmation of Selection**

The Hillsborough TPO approves the selection, initiating negotiations, and will ensure all documentation is in order to receive the funds. This is likely to be in Summer 2025.



#### **Negotiations & Execution**

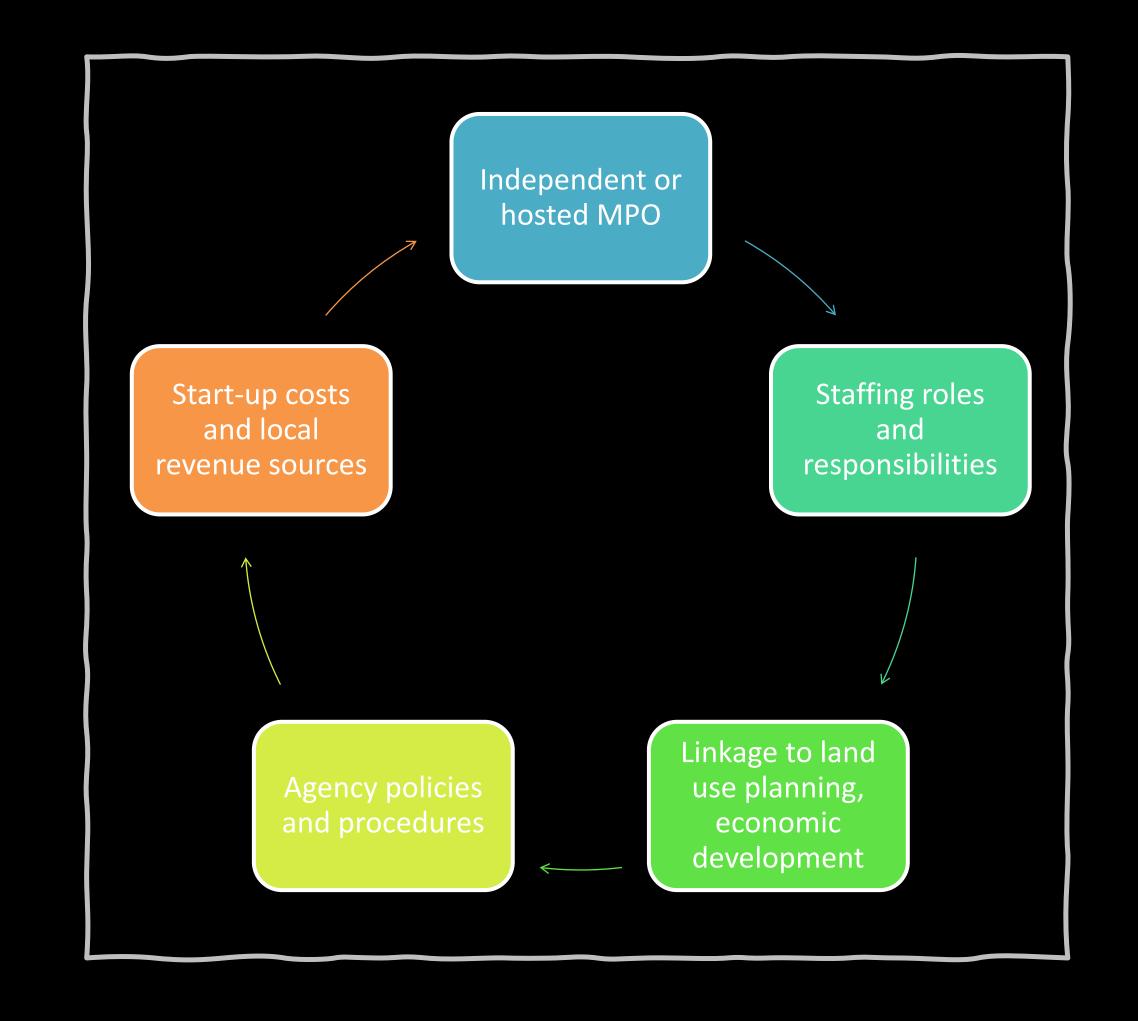
The Hillsborough TPO will negotiate following TPO Board action and work to execute an agreement. This would begin immediately following the selection and last approximately 1-2 months.

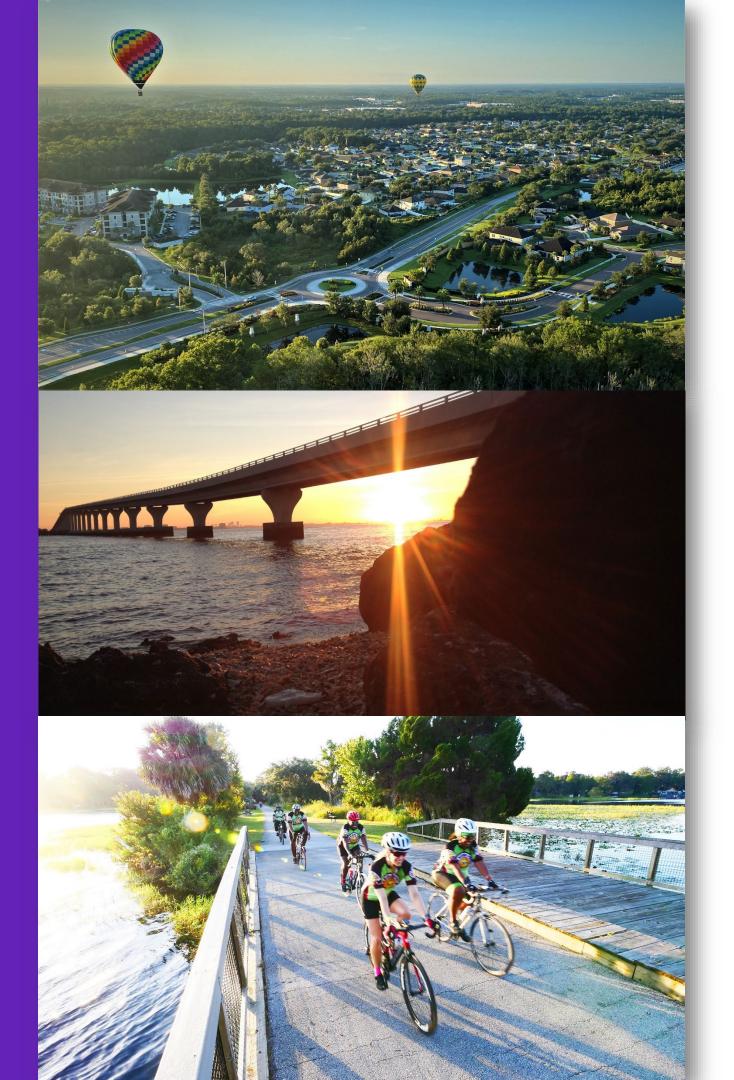
#### Notice to Proceed

Following the Hillsborough TPO Board's execution of the agreement with the consultant, a Notice to Proceed will be issued and kickoff scheduled. This is likely to occur in late summer or fall of 2025.



# Questions to Address





## Next Steps

- Develop FAQ on the merger
- Procure management & legal support
- Use federal Prioritization Process Pilot Program Grant award to explore ways to align each MPO's methods of setting transportation priorities
- Engage with the City of Tampa and Tampa Bay Partnership on the Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) project
- Keep the Legislative Delegation apprised
- Continue meeting with local governments and other partners to address questions

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