

Tampa Bay Regional MPO – Progress and Next Steps

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Forward Pinellas

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SCTPA
Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance

ONE REGION, ONE VOICE

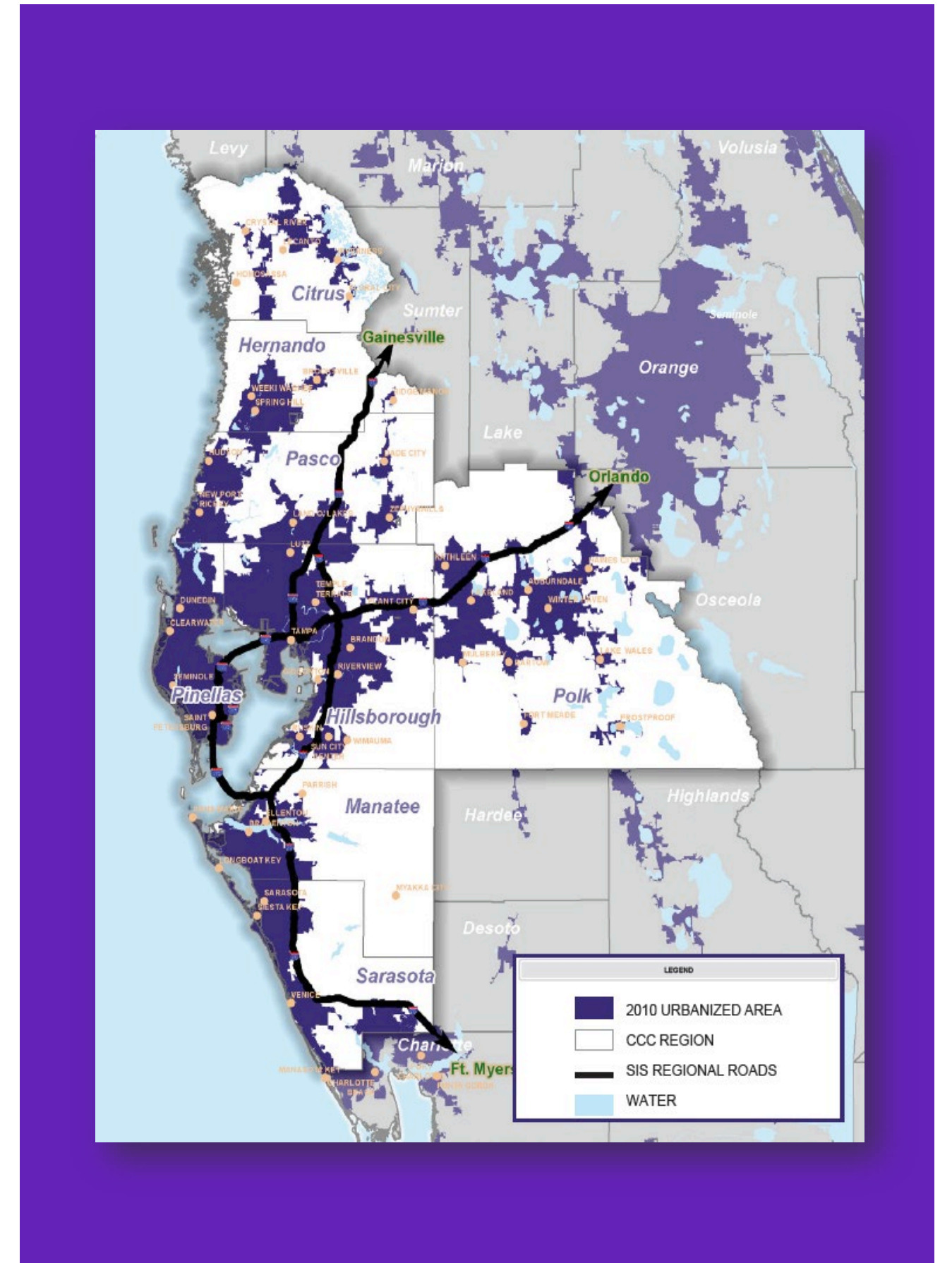
What is a MPO or TPO?

- 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 non-voting advisors
 - Small city representation to be determined by each county
- Approved scope of services for management and legal consultation

MOU Principles

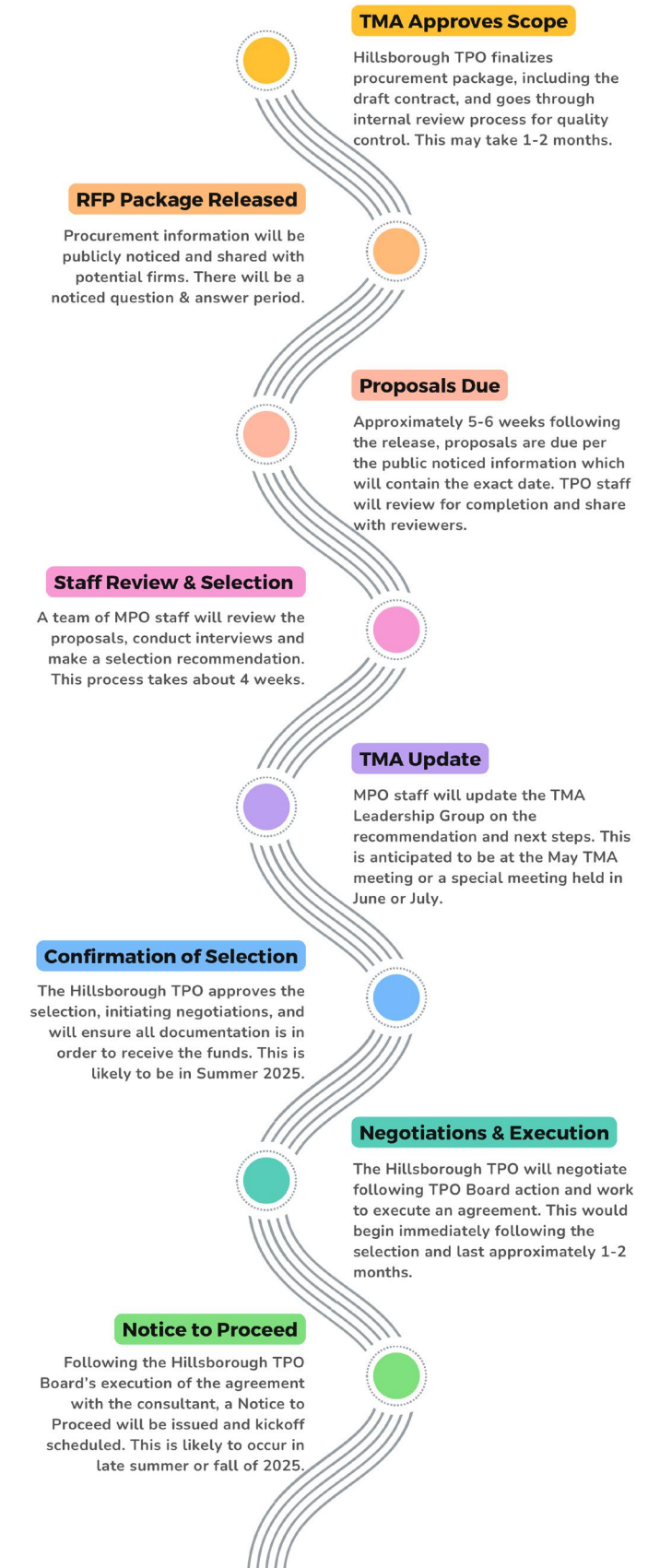
- Build collaboration and create a forum for leveraging the strength of the region to achieve better regional outcomes
- Respect the differences in characteristics, conditions and needs among the three counties and urban centers
- Determine a process that enables local voices to shape decision-making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



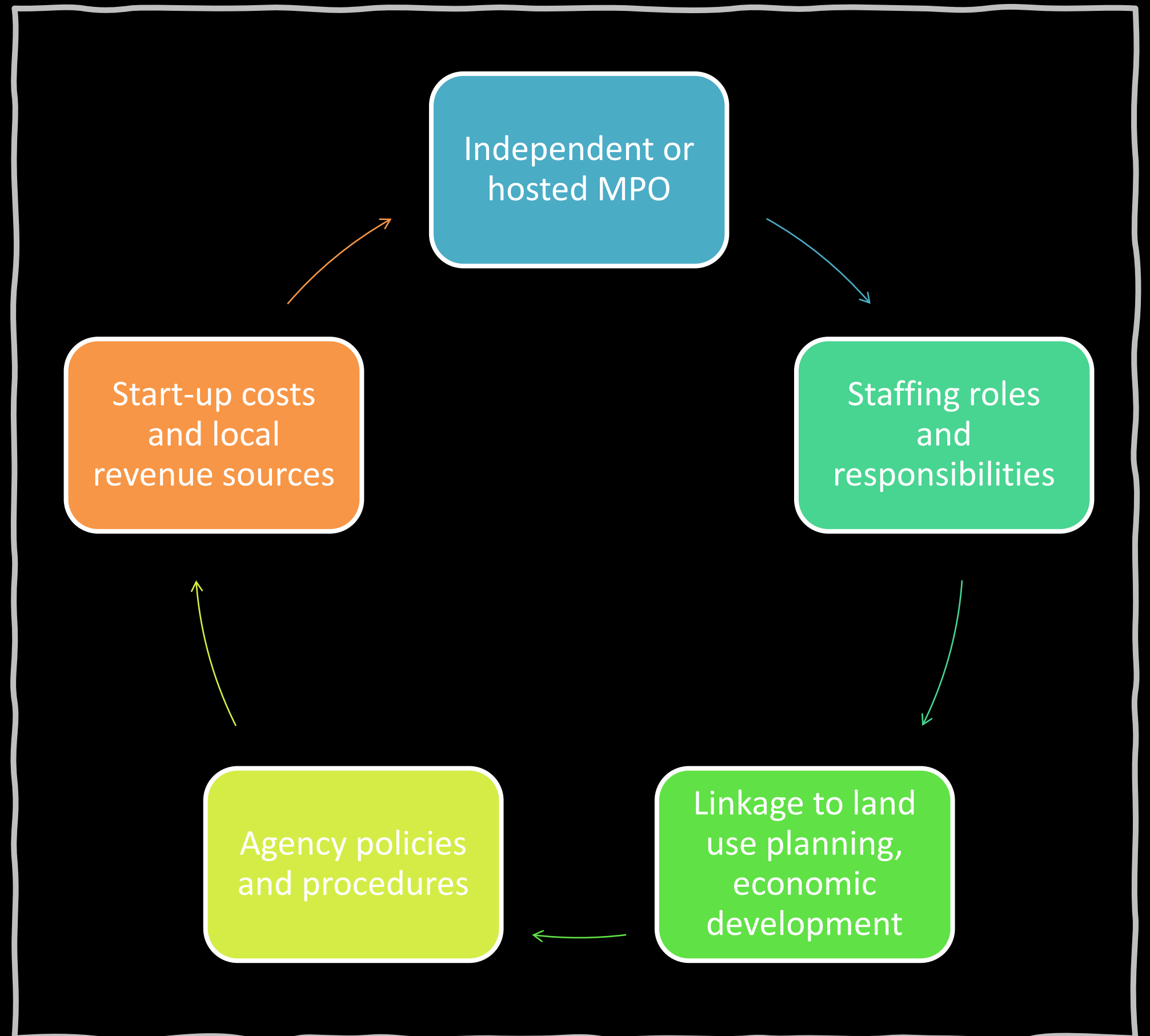
Management and Legal Scope of Services

- 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



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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