

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
between the
NASHVILLE AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
and the
GREATER NASHVILLE REGIONAL COUNCIL
to
DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE REGIONAL COORDINATION IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to establish a formal understanding between the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) as to the need for enhanced coordination among local communities and between regional organizations in Middle Tennessee, and to set forth terms for the two agencies to collaborate on the development of strategies and recommendations to achieve the goals presented in Part A of this Agreement.

Part A. Shared Goals

The parties to this MOA hereby share the following objectives associated with enhanced regional coordination:

1. Simplify and streamline the current process of collaboration among area jurisdictions in order to use the time and resources of local leaders more constructively.
2. Provide a clear and easy point of access to data, research, and planning activities for private sector organizations interested in regional economic development or quality growth initiatives.
3. Better align existing regional plans and programs with state and local community concerns related to growth and development, workforce and jobs, aging and congested infrastructure, and changing demographics.
4. Bridge the growing divide between rural and urban communities by responding to the unique nature of their respective challenges, and expanding opportunities for communities of all sizes to benefit from regional plans and investments.
5. Strengthen the regional planning portfolio to better link transportation planning with activities related to economic development, land use and design, solid waste management, open space preservation, workforce housing, environmental quality, public health, and other key issues.
6. Grow the menu of services available to local government members to enhance the value of participation in regional organizations.
7. Better position regional priorities to the state legislature, state agencies, and the federal government to affect policy and funding decisions.
8. Optimize the use of local funds collected through membership dues and encourage increased funding from the state and federal partners to sustain the required programs.
9. Ensure equity in the governance structure of regional agencies so that citizens and stakeholders are appropriately represented in the decision-making process.
10. Better promote the advantages, opportunities, and successes associated with regional cooperation through strengthened brand identity and unified messaging.

Part B. The Nashville Area MPO

1. The Nashville Area MPO was established in 1970 by the Tennessee Highway Department and the Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County as the *Nashville Urban Area Transportation Study* in response to requirements initially set forth by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 mandating that the nation's urban areas carry-out a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning process as a condition of federal transportation funding.
2. The MPO planning area has grown from an original footprint, located wholly within Davidson County, to its current seven-county form as population and development patterns have expanded over the decades. Today it is comprised of urban, suburban, and rural communities across Davidson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson counties.
3. The MPO serves as the forum for negotiating the use of federal transportation funds to improve area roadways and transit systems. It is responsible for the development of a 20+ year regional transportation plan, a short-range transportation improvement program, and an annual unified planning work program.
4. The use of federal transportation funds by TDOT or local governments must be 1) consistent with the regional transportation plan and 2) included in the approved transportation improvement program.
5. The unified planning work program describes staff-led research and planning activities and the consultant studies that support the transportation decision-making process.
6. The MPO engages in planning efforts that span a variety of issues including economic development, land use and urban design, environmental quality, public health, social equity, among other community concerns in support of sound transportation planning.
7. The MPO is governed by an executive board comprised of mayors and county executives, the Governor of Tennessee, and representatives of the Greater Nashville Regional Council, county highway officials, public transit operators, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.
8. The executive board is staffed by an executive director and up to 14 full-time professionals, and advised by a technical advisory committee comprised of staff-level experts from local planning and public works departments, transit agencies, health departments, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, and the Federal Highway Administration.
9. The MPO is not a legally-recognized entity in the state of Tennessee, and as such, relies on a fiscal agent to act on its behalf when executing contractual agreements and accepting state and federal planning grant funds to carry-out its responsibilities.
10. The Metropolitan Planning Commission of Nashville-Davidson County has served as the fiscal agent and contracting authority for the MPO since it was created.
11. In 2008, the MPO adopted a sponsorship policy which formalizes the roles and responsibilities of the MPO Executive Board, the fiscal agent, and the MPO Executive Director.

Part C. The Greater Nashville Regional Council

1. The GNRC was established as the Mid Cumberland Development District in 1965 by the Tennessee General Assembly as one of nine such districts statewide created to provide

an effective and efficient means for cities and counties to organize to carry out general planning and economic development activities.

2. The agency received its current name and additional powers and duties in 1988 through a subsequent act of the legislature (TCA Title 64, Chapter 7) that combined the Mid-Cumberland Council of Governments with the Mid-Cumberland Development District to form the Greater Nashville Regional Council.
3. GNRC serves the 13 Middle Tennessee counties of Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, and Wilson.
4. GNRC is designated by the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) as the region's Area Agency on Aging and Disability which administers federal and state programs aimed at improving the lives of elderly or disabled citizens.
5. GNRC is designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the region's economic development district and is responsible for adopting a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which establishes shared goals and objectives and qualifies local projects for grant funding through EDA.
6. GNRC serves as the designated regional solid waste planning agency and carries out requirements of the federal and state solid waste reduction acts.
7. GNRC staffs the Middle Tennessee Tourism Council which provides tourism marketing and other promotional activities to its membership comprised of chambers of commerce, area attractions, local governments, and convention and visitor bureaus.
8. GNRC staffs the Mid Cumberland Area Development Corporation which administers a variety of lending programs available to small businesses, including the 504 program through the U.S. Small Business Administration.
9. GNRC administers grants on behalf of local governments from various state and federal agencies including the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA), the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD), and the U.S. EDA.
10. The GNRC provides local planning and historic preservation services to member cities and counties, supports the Nashville Area MPO and the Clarksville Urbanized Area MPO in carrying out the federally-required regional transportation planning process, and provides project management services to the Tennessee River Trails Association.
11. GNRC is governed by a regional council comprised of mayors and county executives, state legislators, minority representatives, and industrial board representatives; and acts through a 24-member executive committee.
12. GNRC is a legal entity with contracting authority, created by the state, and owned by its member jurisdictions. It is staffed by an executive director and up to 70 full-time professionals.

Part D. Work Tasks

The parties to this MOA hereby agree to carry-out the following tasks:

1. Assess the current state of the MPO, GNRC, and other relevant organizations in Middle Tennessee, including the Clarksville Urbanized Area MPO and the Middle Tennessee Rural Planning Organization, in order to document existing programs and services, sources of revenue, professional talent and staffing resources, capital assets, duties and responsibilities, and governance structures.

2. Review the state of the practice for regional cooperation and governance among peer regions in Tennessee and the Southeastern U.S., and to document best practices of high-performing areas across the nation.
3. Consult with agency members and regional partners to identify a list of shared goals and objectives to guide the subsequent development of recommendations.
4. Work with the leadership of the respective agencies to develop and evaluate alternative models of coordination and governance that might be suitable for Middle Tennessee.
5. Seek input from member governments, regional partners, and state and federal officials in order to finalize recommendations.
6. Bring recommendations to the respective governing boards of the MPO and GNRC for endorsement.
7. Develop and adopt a strategic plan of action for the implementation of recommendations, to include a timeline and budget for each recommendation.

Part E. Terms of the Agreement

The parties to this MOA hereby agree to be bound by the following terms:

1. The MPO Chair and GNRC President shall appoint no less than three members each to a joint committee to oversee the implementation of the work tasks and to present final recommendations to the respective governing bodies. The joint committee shall include at least one officer from each board, and representation from the each of the largest incorporated cities within the Census-defined urbanized areas of the region.
2. Work shall commence no later than 30-days of the effective start date of this Agreement with draft recommendations due within six months.
3. The executive directors of each agency shall cooperatively present progress reports as part of regularly-scheduled meetings of the MPO Executive Board and the GNRC Executive Committee.
4. The MPO shall defer any external job posting for the executive director position until work tasks have been completed, so long as those tasks are completed within six months of the effective start date, or until the Agreement is terminated by either party, whichever is sooner.
5. The agencies will commit available staff and resources to support the implementation of the work tasks and the increased collaboration among agencies. Any sharing of resources between agencies shall comply with applicable statutes, regulations, and contractual terms of state or federal planning grants.

Part F. Effective Period

This Agreement shall remain in effect until either party notifies the other in writing that the Agreement is no longer suitable, or has become inconsistent with the policies of the respective governing bodies. If or when this occurs, the parties agree to meet as soon as practicable to discuss possible modifications to this cooperative working Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Memorandum of Agreement, effective as of the ____ day of _____, 2016.