

8. Establishment of Select Committee on Planning Area and Composition

BACKGROUND

A core element of a successful cooperative planning process for a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is effective representation from the entire metropolitan region. MPOs are required to regularly evaluate their Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) and consider changes that ensure the MPA includes the contiguous urbanized area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year period. This process occurs in conjunction with the Decennial Census, when the MPO also reviews and potentially adjusts the Urbanized Area.

Our region's Metropolitan Planning Area has not changed since the MPO was established in 1974; during that time, the region's population has grown from 2.5 million to 7.2 million and the Census-defined urbanized area has grown by more than 250 percent. Any expansion of the Metropolitan Planning Area would also necessitate a change in the MPO's composition.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Transportation Policy Council's Bylaws allow for the establishment of ad hoc committees, as needed. Multiple issues relating to the MPO's planning area boundary, membership, and composition have recently arisen:

- Staff is recommending an Adjusted Urbanized Area that would extend beyond the current MPA and would therefore require adjusting the MPA and membership. Projections under development of future urban growth may also extend beyond the current MPA.
- The Woodlands Township recently requested to be added to the TPC's membership. This type of request is not addressed in the TPC's Bylaws and has previously been considered by an ad hoc TPC committee.
- The outcome of the City of Houston's Proposition B ballot measure may lead to review of the TPC's voting structure, representation, and membership.
- Any changes to the planning area, membership, or representation would require amendments to the TPC Bylaws and potential redesignation of the MPO.

After discussions with the TPC Chair, staff recommends establishment of a Special Committee on Planning Area and Composition to examine and make recommendations to the TPC on the issues identified above. The Committee Chair and the MPO Director may identify specific or additional topics for the Special Committee to examine.

A proposed membership roster will be provided.

As the Committee Chair deems appropriate, additional stakeholders potentially impacted by issues or recommendations under consideration by the Committee will be invited to participate with non-voting roles.

ACTION REQUESTED

Establish and appoint a Select Committee on Planning Area and Composition.