Ame lan

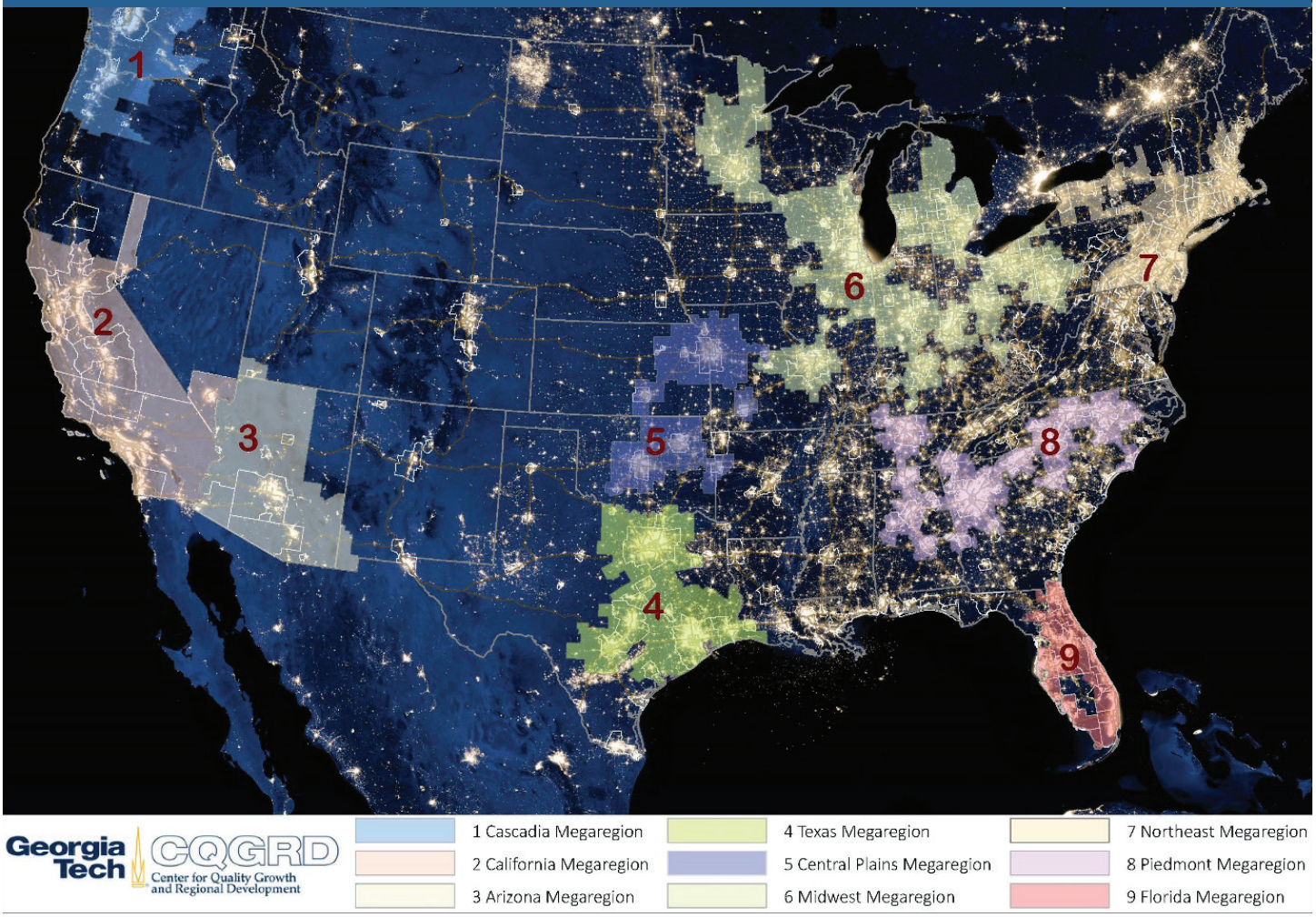
Making Great Communities Happen

REGIONAL LONG-RANGE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Defining Megaregions

Megaregions are networks of metropolitan areas that share economic, environmental, and cultural features, as well as infrastructure and geographic connections. While megaregions have no legal status or official governance mechanisms in the United States, the concept of megaregions gives researchers and policy experts a framework for analyzing and discussing the increasing interconnectedness and interdependencies among metropolitan areas and regions (Ross 2009).

Figure 1: Megaregions across the United States



The Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at Georgia Tech identifies nine megaregions across the country (Ross et al. 2009).

Most researchers trace the origin of the concept of megaregions to French geographer Jean Gottman's 1961 study *Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States*. Gottman used the term *megalopolis* to describe a continuous string of economically linked metropolitan areas spanning from the northern suburbs of Boston to the southern suburbs of Washington, D.C.

Since the identification of the Northeast Megalopolis in 1961, the concept of megaregions has been slowly moving from planning theory into planning practice. The megaregion provides an empirically grounded concept for addressing both challenges and opportunities related to the systems that directly impact both regions and local communities, but which span across larger geographic scales. The Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD) at the Georgia Institute of Technology now identifies nine megaregions across the United States (Image 1) (Ross et al. 2009).

In addition to providing a construct for discussions about metropolitan interdependencies, megaregions also represent areas of population growth. As the U.S. population continues to grow, the majority of that growth, and the related economic activity, are expected to be concentrated within these nine megaregions.

Addressing Megaregions

Just as many localities are situated within metropolitan areas, many metropolitan areas exist within megaregions. They are influenced by the economic, environmental, demographic trends, and transportation systems that exist and operate at this broader scale.

Regional and local planning agencies are beginning to acknowledge their locations within megaregions as opportunities for collaboration at the megaregional scale in long-range planning. As regional-scale activities are impacted by trends and activities in neighboring areas, it is important to be aware of and proactively address these interregional and megaregional considerations.

There are four primary reasons to address megaregions in the long-range planning process:

- **Megaregional/interregional systems**: Transportation, economic, and environmental systems often transcend local and regional political boundaries. Addressing these systems, including high-speed rail, freight and supply chain management, and food systems at the interregional or megaregional scale, may also provide opportunities for coordination and cooperation, which can maximize efficient use or conservation of limited resources.
- **Competitive advantages**: Being aware of megaregional trends and actively addressing and planning for them can create competitive economic advantages for a region, allowing it to position itself advantageously within the megaregion. Additionally, interregional collaboration to address issues including connections between job and activity centers, the jobs-housing balance, and areas of growth and decline across the megaregion can help build competitive advantages over other megaregions.
- **Environmental stewardship**: Issues of environmental stewardship lend themselves to consideration at the megaregional scale. Environmental systems extend across local and regional boundaries and actions taken in one region have impacts on neighboring regions. As a result, collaborative efforts at the interregional scale on green infrastructure, water resources, air quality, and other environmental issues can have broad benefits.
- **Equity considerations**: Inefficiencies in systems, such as spatial mismatch between affordable housing and jobs centers, often have a greater impact on underserved populations. Megaregions offer a scale at which to holistically examine and address the connections between access to affordable housing and transportation, and where public services and employment centers are located. It can also offer opportunities to examine and address environmental justice issues and challenges.

Areas Where Regional Planning Agencies Can Engage

Regional planning agencies, including regional councils and councils of government, as well as metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), are well positioned to both address megaregional scale issues and to take the lead on coordinating efforts that address megaregional and interregional issues through their regular activities.

Regional councils/councils of government are voluntary regional coordinating bodies comprised of member local governments. They engage in a range of activities, including long-range and functional planning, convening regional stakeholders, providing technical assistance, and administering state and federal programs.

The federal Highway Act of 1973 required all state governors to designate an MPO for each urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000. These MPOs have responsibility for transportation planning and policy making in their respective urbanized areas. The functions of MPOs include preparing the long-range transportation plan, developing the transportation improvement program (TIP), and establishing and monitoring performance targets. Many MPOs operate as part of a regional council/council of government.

Many, if not most, regional planning agencies have at least four basic roles: (1) preparing long-range transportation plans; (2) convening local jurisdictions to discuss issues of regional importance; (3) collecting and analyzing data; and (4) providing technical assistance to localities.

Each of these roles and how they position regional planning agencies to engage around megaregions is further addressed below:

- **Long-range transportation planning**—MPOs prepare long-range transportation plans, and may prepare other long-range plans. The long-range transportation plan (LRTP) addresses transportation goals for the region and includes both short-term and long-term strategies that consider how intermodal transportation system components interact to efficiently move both goods and people. The LRTP has a time frame of at least 20 years and is updated on a four-year schedule for air quality nonattainment areas and a five-year schedule for all other planning areas. The federally defined scope of the long-range transportation planning process offers numerous opportunities to address and define specific goals and policy recommendations related to megaregional and interregional considerations.
- **Convening**—Regional planning agencies play an important role as conveners for their regions. Through long-range planning processes, they bring together stakeholders and the public. Through technical and advisory committees, they bring local jurisdictions, transportation agencies, and other regional stakeholders together around issues facing the region. As a convener, regional planning agencies can play a central role in addressing megaregional issues, bringing together local jurisdictions, transportation agencies, and neighboring regions to look at issues at a megaregional or interregional scale.
- **Data**—Regional planning agencies often serve as data warehouses for their regions, collecting and analyzing data and preparing local and regional forecasts related to transportation, land use, demographic and economic trends, and environmental indicators. Through their work collecting data, analyzing current conditions, and forecasting future conditions, regional planning agencies are well positioned to assemble and synthesize data related to megaregional issues and trends and to incorporate this data and analysis into long-range plans and regional planning scenarios.
- **Technical Assistance**—Regional planning agencies often provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions within their regions. Through their role as a technical assistance provider to local planning agencies, regional agencies can provide guidance on why the megaregional concept should be addressed and how megaregional and interregional considerations can be addressed in local plans.

Specific considerations related to each of these roles is provided in the following sections.

Long-Range Planning Framework

Federal law requires each MPO to prepare or update a LRTP at least once every five years under 23 CFR 450.324(a). The LRTP establishes goals, policy recommendations, and both short- and long-term strategies for investment over at least a 20-year planning horizon. These plans must be performance-driven and outcome-based, and include performance measures and targets. They coordinate vertically with state-level transportation plans and programs, though often not horizontally with transportation plans and programs of neighboring regions.

Many of the interregional and megaregional planning practices relate to multiple planning factors. This table shows the other relevant factors for each practice.

Table 1: Planning Factors

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
1.1.	**Address the concept of megaregions in the plan's fact base.** This includes acknowledging the region's location within a megaregion and discussing interregional connections (e.g., economic, transportation, environmental). This should also involve analysis of current conditions and future trends, including demographics, economic and environmental indicators, and land-use and transportation patterns. Addressing megaregions in the plan's fact base will lend support for policies and investments that relate or respond to megaregional systems, issues, or trends.	**2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**
1.2.	**Coordinate regional proposals within the region and interregionally.** This involves accounting for, connecting with, and supporting the plans of localities within the MPO's jurisdiction as well as those of neighboring MPOs and localities. Coordinating proposals within the region and interregionally ensures that local and regional plans, programs, and polices are not at cross-purposes, and that plans of neighboring regions are complementary.	**2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**
1.3.	**Plan for an interregional jobs-housing balance with equitable transportation connections.** A jobs-housing balance is defined by the ratio of jobs to housing within a commuter shed. As interregional commuting increases, commuter sheds transcend metropolitan area boundaries. One of the forces behind expanding commuter sheds is a lack of affordable housing options located in close proximity to employment centers or connected by safe and convenient transportation options. Planning for a jobs-housing balance with equitable transportation options that connect the areas where people live and work can support economic vitality and productivity by increasing access to employment opportunities, while reducing the transportation cost burden and the need for long-distance commuting.	**5**

2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
2.1.	**Plan for safe bike and pedestrian connections to interregional transportation systems.** Interregional commuters and other travelers may rely on bike or pedestrian connections to complete the first and last mile of their trips. The location and design of these connections affects the safety of these first- and last-mile solutions. Planning for safe bike and pedestrian connections to interregional transportation systems can ensure that conflicts are minimized at transfer points between local networks of sidewalks and bike routes, lanes, and trails and interregional transit facilities.	**1, 4, 9, 10, 11**
2.2.	**Coordinate interregionally on unified or interoperable emergency communications systems.** Emergency notification systems provide messages to systems users about emergency situations. Emergency communications systems allow for two-way communication, including emergency notification and communications between first responders, emergency communications staff, and the public. Unified or interoperable systems can communicate with related systems. Coordinating interregionally on unified emergency communications and interoperability can maximize the efficiency of communications in emergency situations, increasing system safety for all users.	**3, 7**
2.3.	**Coordinate interregionally on safety communications and messaging.** Transportation agencies use a variety of means, including static and dynamic signs, text message alerts, and public service announcements, to communicate about transportation system conditions and suggest actions system users can take to improve their safety and that of other system users. Coordinating and standardizing messaging across agencies can ensure that system users are receiving a consistent message about transportation safety.	**3, 4, 7**
2.4.	**Plan at the interregional or megaregional scale for emergency evacuation.** Emergency evacuations for natural hazards or other disasters often force people to move between regions within a megaregion. Multiple regions may be affected by the same event, such as a hurricane or wildfire, which can force large-scale evacuations from multiple localities or regions. Planning for evacuation routes should address emergency evacuation routes, as well as multimodal evacuation options for nonmotorized system users. Planning for emergency evacuations at the interregional or megaregional scale creates opportunities to identify potential conflicts or efficiencies and allows for effective communication of routes and evacuation options.	**4**

Table 1: Planning Factors

3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
3.1.	**Coordinate interregionally on transportation infrastructure security.** Multiple transportation and public safety agencies are charged with protecting transportation infrastructure from man-made threats. These agencies include local and state transportation departments; public and private transit providers; railroad companies; and local, state, and federal law enforcement. Coordinating interregionally on transportation infrastructure security creates opportunities to address security gaps and maximize the efficient deployment of security measures and provision of security services.	**2, 7**
3.2.	**Coordinate interregionally on transportation system threat assessment.** Transportation system threat assessment is a process that involves identifying, evaluating, and managing potential threats to system components or users. Multiple transportation and public safety agencies are charged with assessing transportation system threats. These agencies include local and state transportation departments; public and private transit providers; railroad companies; and local, state, and federal law enforcement. Coordinating interregionally on transportation system threat assessment increases the likelihood of preventing attacks on transportation system components or users.	**2, 7**

4. Increase accessibility and mobility for people and freight.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
4.1.	**Facilitate interregional coordination between transit providers.** Within a region, public and private transit may be provided by a number of local and regional service providers. The same is true for transit connecting multiple metropolitan areas. Facilitating coordination between transit providers in adjoining regions may help promote schedule optimization to reduce travel time for commuters connecting between multiple providers.	**1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10**
4.2.	**Plan for high-speed passenger rail.** High-speed rail provides a convenient, and potentially more environmentally friendly, alternative to air travel for trips of 600 miles or less. High-speed rail proposals are generally megaregional in scale, connecting multiple metropolitan areas along a single corridor or through a hub-and-spoke system. Regional transportation networks that facilitate intermodal connections and mitigate potential traffic conflicts can help improve high-speed rail system performance and maximize benefits. As a result, planning for high-speed rail can make metropolitan areas more accessible by increasing transportation choices for long-distance commuters and other travelers.	**1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10**
4.3.	**Coordinate on interregional trail-oriented development.** Interregional trails are dedicated pedestrian and bicycle systems that connect multiple metropolitan areas. Trail-oriented development is characterized by mixed use development around trail access points and along trails, such that the location and design of the development encourage trail use and the patronage of local businesses. Long-distance trails bring visitors to host communities and provide recreational opportunities for residents. Many interregional trails use decommissioned rail corridors, and parcels adjacent to these corridors may require new land-use designations or public investments to spur redevelopment. Coordinating on interregional trail-oriented development will facilitate recreational travel between regions and provide users with access to a wider range of goods, services, and amenities.	**1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10**
4.4.	**Plan for interregional freight transportation and supply chain management.** Freight rail and highway infrastructure often connects multiple metropolitan areas, and freight traffic often originates in a different metropolitan area than its final destination. Supply chain management addresses the movement of goods through this network, from their point of origin to the final consumer. Planning for interregional freight transportation and looking at supply chains at the interregional scale can increase efficiencies across the freight network and create competitive economic advantages.	**1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7**

5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
5.1.	**Protect interregional water resources.** Interregional water resources are water bodies, watersheds, floodplains, and aquifers that cross metropolitan area boundaries or provide source water from one metropolitan area to another. Policies and actions within one region can have negative effects on the water quality and supply of communities in a neighboring region. Taking an interregional approach to the protection of water resources allows for a holistic look at the water resource and how actions in one region may impact neighboring regions.	**1, 9, 10**

Table 1: Planning Factors

5.2.	**Coordinate interregionally to improve air quality.** Air pollution produced in one region may have negative effects in neighboring regions. Similarly, efforts to exceed federal and state air quality standards can help reduce incidences of nonattainment in neighboring regions. Coordinating interregionally on air quality improvement initiatives can help maximize the efficiency and efficacy of local and regional policies and investments aimed at improving air quality.	**1, 10**
5.3.	**Plan for an interregional electric vehicle network.** This network will support use of electric vehicles and promote energy conservation. Electric vehicles rely on a connected network of publicly accessible charging stations where vehicles can recharge. An interregional electric vehicle network is a network of charging stations spaced at intervals to facilitate travel between metropolitan areas. Because electric vehicles can be powered by any energy source, clean energy investments in electrical grids can lead to reduced fossil fuel consumption associated with transportation. Planning for an interregional electric vehicle network extends the range of electric vehicles to longer trips and makes them an option for interregional commuters, thereby helping maximize the energy conservation benefits of clean energy investments.	**1, 4, 6, 7**
5.4.	**Promote interregional environmental justice.** Interregional environmental justice is characterized by land-use decision making processes for facilities intended to serve multiple metropolitan areas that afford the same level of protection from environmental and health hazards to all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income. Some facilities—such as landfills, incinerators, waste-transfer stations, coal-fired power plants, and intermodal freight hubs—serve customers in multiple metropolitan areas but have negative environmental effects that are often borne disproportionately by lower-income communities of color. Working at the interregional scale to address the land-use policies that increase exposure to environmental risk can improve quality of life for all community members.	**1**
5.5.	**Promote interregional access to public services, facilities, and health care.** Lower-income communities of color often lack access to high-quality public services, facilities (including recreation facilities), and health care, which are often inequitably distributed within and between neighboring regions. Working at the interregional scale to address the land-use, housing, and transportation conditions that often make it difficult for low-income households to access public services, facilities, and health care can improve quality of life for all community members.	**1, 4, 6, 7**
5.6.	**Plan for interregional food systems.** Interregional food systems are represented by connected clusters of agricultural producers, processors, distributors, marketers, and consumers. Agricultural lands often produce food processed, sold, and consumed in multiple regions. Direct-to-consumer (e.g., farmers markets, community supported agriculture) and intermediated consumption channels (e.g., institutional sales, regional distributors) represent growing areas of food sales. Taking an interregional approach to food systems planning can grow interregional economies and increase access to fresh, healthy food for all community members. 1, 4	**1, 4**
5.7.	**Coordinate interregional transportation investments with job clusters.** The jobs-housing balance is defined by the ratio of jobs to housing within a commute shed. As interregional commuting increases, commute sheds expand and affordable housing options may not be located in close proximity to employment centers. Coordinating at the interregional scale on transportation investment priorities provides an opportunity to address the inequitable distribution within and between neighboring regions of affordable, convenient, and safe transportation options that connect where people live and where they work. It creates opportunities to build connections between areas of residential and economic growth, improve access to employment, and reduce the overall need for long-distance commuting. 1, 4, 6	**1, 4, 6**
5.8.	**Align transportation infrastructure investments and capacity with interregional growth or decline projections.** Interregional growth or decline projections consider the interrelationships among metropolitan areas to produce estimates of job or population change across multiple regions. Looking at interregional growth and decline projections can highlight opportunities for alignment between transportation infrastructure investments, job clusters, and areas of population growth. Aligning transportation infrastructure investments with growth and decline is important to balancing quality of service provision with costs to service providers. 1, 4, 6	**1, 4, 6**

Table 1: Planning Factors

6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
6.1.	**Plan for interregional bike and pedestrian systems.** Interregional bike and pedestrian systems include dedicated pedestrian and bicycle trails that connect multiple metropolitan areas as well as connections among those trails, local pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and transit facilities. Interregional commuters may rely on bike and pedestrian connections to complete the first and last mile of their commutes. Similarly, interregional trail users may rely on local bike and pedestrian infrastructure or transit for trail access. Planning for interregional bike and pedestrian systems can increase mobility and accessibility for nonmotorized users and have benefits for long-distance commuters, providing additional options for first- and last-mile connections.	**1, 2, 4, 5**
6.2.	**Plan for interregional transportation access for long-distance commuters.** Interregional commuters, most of who travel by car, represent a growing segment of the workforce that commutes from one region to another at least one day a week for work. Interregional transportation access for long-distance commuters involves first- and last-mile solutions that provide convenient access to limited-access roadways and bus and train services that connect multiple metropolitan areas. Planning for interregional transportation access for long-distance commuters can help expand transportation choices for these commuters and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, as well as increase the economic competitiveness and attractiveness of a region for both employers and employees.	**1, 4, 5, 6, 7**

7. Promote efficient system management and operation.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
7.1.	**Coordinate interregionally on transportation systems management and operations.** MPOs may complete transportation systems management and operations (TSM&O) plans in conjunction with the LRTP. These plans include visions for systems operations; operations objectives; proposed strategies, projects, and programs; and performance measures. Interregional coordination on TSM&O plans can help maximize the efficiency and efficacy of projects and strategies across regions.	**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8**

8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
8.1.	**Coordinate interregionally on transportation asset management planning.** Transportation asset management refers to resource allocation and programming decision-making processes that are rooted in policy goals and measurable performance objectives, based on the best available data and analysis, and monitored to provide accountability and feedback. Two of the primary goals of transportation asset management are maintaining or improving the conditions of existing infrastructure and cost containment. Coordinating interregionally on transportation asset management planning can help extend the functional life of existing infrastructure by ensuring that the various agencies responsible for managing transportation assets across regions develop synergistic management strategies.	**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10**
8.2.	**Coordinate interregionally on intelligent transportation systems and automation.** ITS includes interoperability, which enables connectivity between different parts of the transportation system, including vehicles and infrastructure. It also includes automation technologies and connected vehicles. These systems supply transit providers with real time information on system conditions, including issues affecting neighboring service providers that may have impacts on passenger or freight movement. In combination, these strategies can move higher volumes of traffic using existing infrastructure, eliminating or delaying the need for systems expansions. Consequently, coordinating interregionally on ITS and vehicle automation can increase the efficiency and efficacy of the existing transportation system.	**1, 4, 6, 7, 10**

9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.

PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
9.1.	**Plan for interregional green infrastructure networks.** Interregional green infrastructure features are open spaces, greenways, and protected lands that cross metropolitan area boundaries. These features may be linked to create an interregional green infrastructure network that can serve to mitigate stormwater impacts, in addition to providing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Planning for an interregional green infrastructure network can increase the stormwater mitigation provided by linked green infrastructure features.	**1, 5**

Table 1: Planning Factors

10. Enhance travel and tourism.		
PRACTICES		OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
10.1.	**Coordinate interregionally on travel demand management (TDM).** Interregional TDM strategies are those that reduce or redistribute demand for single-occupant vehicle trips between metropolitan areas to increase the efficiency of the overall transportation network, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and improve air quality. As more people commute between regions for work, primarily by car, TDM strategies become important to addressing overall network efficiency and environmental considerations. Coordinating interregionally on TDM can help maximize the efficiency and efficacy of local and regional policies and investments aimed at reducing vehicle miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution.	**1, 4, 5, 6, 7**
10.2.	**Coordinate interregionally on intelligent transportation systems (ITS).** The use of ITS can reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated GHG emissions. ITS incorporate information and communications technologies into transportation infrastructure, including vehicles. These systems can help network users make real-time decisions about transportation mode choice, and can help increase overall systems performance, resulting in fewer VMT. Additionally, the use of ITS can improve the performance of commercial vehicles and freight networks. Coordinating interregionally on ITS may help make user experiences more consistent and predictable over large geographic areas, while also maximizing efficient deployment. ITS can also help maximize the efficiency and efficacy of local and regional policies and investments aimed at reducing vehicle miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution.	**1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8**

Convening Framework

Regional planning agencies serve an important function, convening local jurisdictions and other stakeholders within the region through long-range planning processes and technical and advisory committees. This section provides a framework for how regional planning agencies, through this role as a convener, can facilitate megaregional collaboration and planning efforts.

- **Provide a forum to discuss megaregional issues.** An important first step to addressing interregional and megaregional issues is defining those issues and how they may affect the local and regional entities within the megaregion.
- **Facilitate interregional planning efforts.** A barrier to addressing interregional and megaregional issues and challenges is the lack of a formal governance structure or clear authority for any one entity to take the lead in addressing these issues. Because regional planning agencies already bring together a range of stakeholders within the region to address issues that extend beyond the jurisdictions of individual agencies and connections and interdependencies that exist within the region, they are well positioned to take on the authority of facilitating or leading interregional planning efforts.
- **Promote interregional cooperation and sharing of resources.** Interregional cooperation can create efficiencies and opportunities for resource sharing. By prioritizing cooperation around specific interregional issues that are addressed in the planning framework, regional planning agencies can promote cooperation at the interregional scale. Examining these issues across this broader scale will provide opportunities to identify where resources are being duplicated and where resources can be efficiently shared across jurisdictional and regional boundaries.

Data Management Framework

Most regional planning agencies collect and analyze data to monitor current conditions and forecast future conditions for the region. This section provides a general framework for how regional planning agencies can collect, aggregate, and analyze data for the region (and beyond) to support interregional/megaregional planning.

- **Conduct interregional data analysis.** Regional planning agencies routinely collect and analyze demographic, economic, environmental, land-use, and transportation data for their regions. Looking at demographic, economic, environmental, land-use, and transportation trends both within the region and in conjunction with those of neighboring regions can provide important context on current conditions and help improve local and regional decision making. Regional planning agencies may also have opportunities to aggregate and disseminate interregional or megaregional data when that data is otherwise unavailable. This data should be included, along with regional analysis, in the plan's fact base.

- **Include interregional data projections in regional planning scenarios.** IIncluding interregional data projections in regional planning scenarios provides additional context about trends affecting and surrounding the region and may facilitate identification of opportunities for interregional collaboration and resource sharing.

Technical Assistance Framework

This section provides a framework for how MPOs can provide information to local planning agencies on how to address interregional/megaregional considerations in local comprehensive plans.

- **Address the importance of interregional/megaregional considerations at the local level.** Municipal and county planning agencies work on a range of issues of local importance. These local issues often have greater resonance with community members and stakeholders engaging in the planning process than do broader-scale interregional and megaregional themes and considerations. This, combined with constrained resources, can make it difficult for local planning agencies to prioritize participation in interregional and megaregional planning efforts. Through their work with local planning agencies, regional planning agencies can address why localities should be considering the interregional/megaregional scale and related issues in their local comprehensive plans. This may involve:
  - o Engaging local planning agencies in megaregional forums
  - o Providing data on megaregional trends and how they affect the region
  - o Providing planning scenarios that include interregional/megaregional data

- **Provide local planning guidance.** Through their work with localities, MPOs can provide guidance related to incorporating interregional and megaregional considerations into local comprehensive plans. As a parallel to the guidance provided for MPOs, the American Planning Association and CQGRD have developed "Guidance for Integrating Interregional and Megaregional Issues, Systems, and Resources into Local Comprehensive Planning Practice." Providing interregional/megaregional guidance to local planning agencies also offers opportunities to align local and regional goals and policy recommendations related to interregional/megaregional issues.

Table 2: Framework for Integrating Interregional and Megaregional Issues, Systems, and Resources into Local Comprehensive Planning Practice

Comprehensive Plan Standards	Interregional/Megaregional Practices
Livable Built Environment	Plan for high-speed passenger rail
	Plan for interregional transportation access for long-distance commuters
	Plan for interregional trail-oriented development
	Plan for the mitigation of interregional natural hazards
Harmony with Nature	Protect and manage interregional water resources
	Plan for the provision or protection of interregional green infrastructure
	Participate in interregional transportation demand management programs to reduce GHG emissions
	Prepare for the interregional effects of climate change
Resilient Economy	Support interregional economies
	Plan for interregional freight transportation and supply chain management
	Plan for interregional utility systems
Interwoven Equity	Promote interregional environmental justice
	Provide affordable housing
	Promote interregional jobs-housing balance with equitable transportation connections between jobs centers and housing to reduce the need for long-distance commuting
	Address interregional access to public services, facilities, and health care

Table 2: Framework for Integrating Interregional and Megaregional Issues, Systems, and Resources into Local Comprehensive Planning Practice

Healthy Community	Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to meet or exceed federal and state air quality standards
	Promote interregional food security and access
	Address interregional access to parks and recreation facilities
Responsible Interregionalism/Megaregionalism	Include interregional data projections in local planning scenarios
	Promote interregional cooperation and sharing of resources
Authentic Participation	Participate in interregional planning efforts
Accountable Implementation	Establish cooperation with interregional planning efforts and initiatives
	Include reports on interregional efforts and initiatives in progress report
Consistent Content	Incorporate interregional considerations into assessments of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
	Include interregional data and information in the plan's fact base
Coordinated Characteristics	Coordinate with interregional planning efforts

Local Comprehensive Planning Framework: Integrating Interregional and Megaregional Issues, Systems, and Resources into Practice

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