

# MPO COORDINATION AND PLANNING AREA REFORM

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## Update on Recent Proposed Federal Rulemaking and TPB Comments

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# What's Happening

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- **FHWA and FTA jointly proposing revisions to the metropolitan planning rules that affect the planning areas and the coordination activities of MPOs**
- Proposed rulemaking published June 27, 2016
  - Comments were due August 26 and submitted by TPB
- Stated intent of the proposed rules:
  - Strengthen coordination between MPOs and States
  - Promote regional approaches to transportation planning and decision making
  - Emphasize importance of regional perspective
  - Ensure transportation investments reflect regional needs and priorities
  - Strengthen voice of MPOs in the transportation planning process



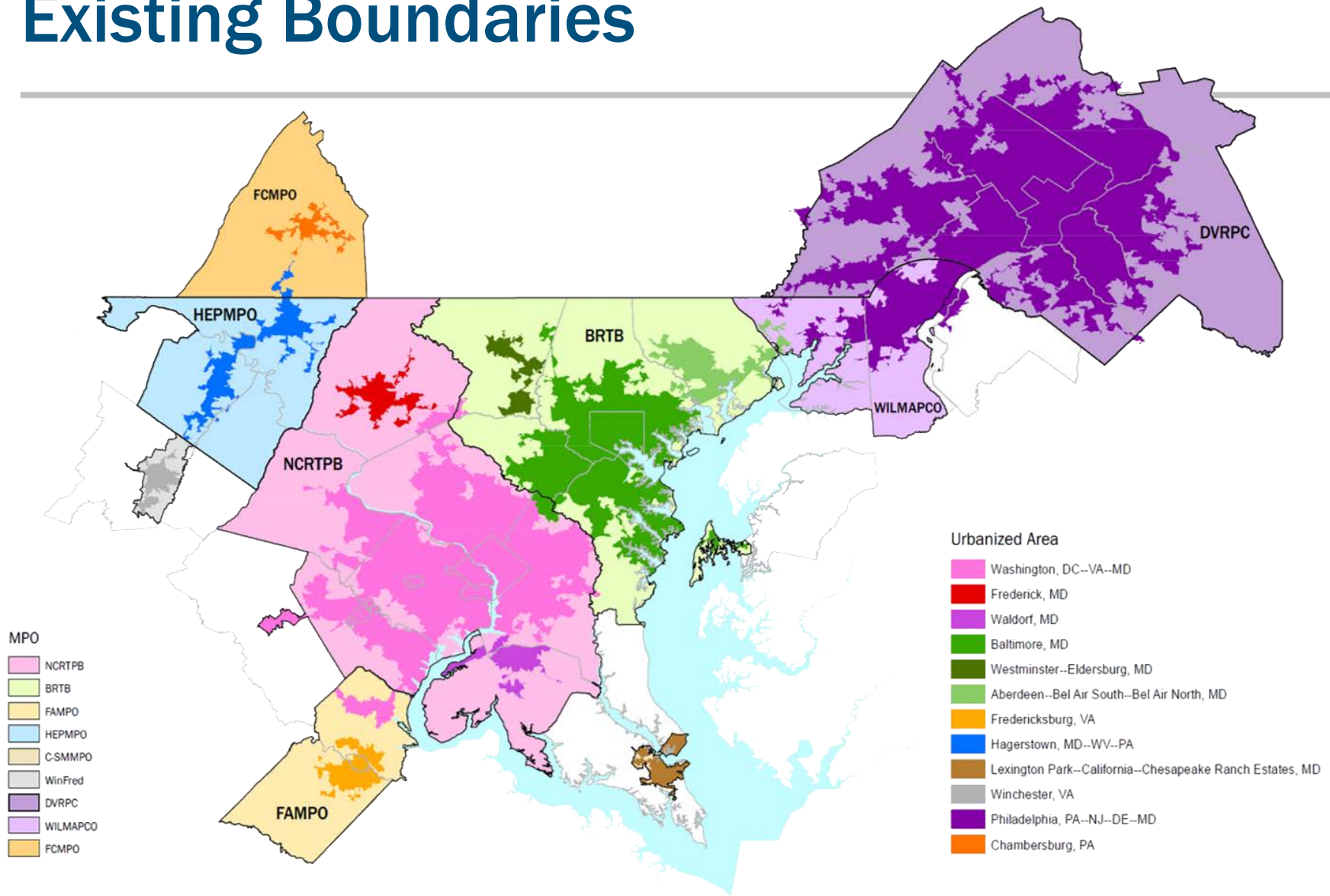
# How It Would Affect Planning Areas

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- **Would revise the definition of Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPA)**
- Would require the MPA, at a minimum, to include the entire Urbanized Area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period
- A single MPO would conduct the metropolitan planning activities for an MPA (as defined above) UNLESS
- The Governor(s) (and Mayor) and the affected MPOs make an exception and establish multiple MPOs
  - Basis for exception: Determination that the size and complexity of the MPA merits multiple MPOs



# Existing Boundaries



# How It Would Affect Planning Products

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## Even if an exception is granted:

- All MPOs in a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) would be required to jointly prepare, for the entire MPA:
  - A single metropolitan transportation plan (i.e., CLRP)
  - A single transportation improvement program (TIP)
  - A single air quality conformity analysis on the joint plan (CLRP)
  - A single set of performance targets (6 topic areas)



# How It Would Affect Planning Processes

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## Even if an exception is granted:

- **AND, all MPOs would be required to establish agreements to:**
  - Identify areas of coordination and division of planning responsibilities for the MPA
  - A process for joint decision making
  - Procedures for resolution of any disagreements
  - Coordinate data collection, analysis, and planning assumptions



# TPB Comments

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- We support the stated intent of the proposed rule
- But we respectfully urge USDOT to withdraw the proposed changes
  - Extremely challenging if not impracticable to implement
  - Will hinder not advance regional approaches and perspectives into regional planning
  - Disrupts long standing existing “3C” process (Continuing, Comprehensive, Cooperative)
  - Existing rule does not preclude actions to advance the stated intent

***Key Recommendation:*** USDOT should work with individual MPOs and States to remedy specific instances in which a lack of coordination might be hindering the transportation planning process.



# What Happens Next

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- **USDOT reviews comments**
- **USDOT takes one of the following actions:**
  - Withdraws proposed rulemaking
  - Takes time to collaborate and make changes before issuing a final, revised rule
  - Makes changes and issues a final, revised rule
  - Issues final rule without changes from proposed rule
- **Rule becomes effective 30 days after finalization**
- **All requirements to be complied with within 2 years of effective date**





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