

**VOLUME II, SECTION VI. A.  
IDENTIFICATION OF COMPARABLE AND MULTIPLE MPOs**

**INTRODUCTION**

In order to conduct a fair and objective examination of the operation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the Denver Transportation Management Region, the Research Team set out to identify several other MPOs in metropolitan areas comparable to Denver that would be analyzed as a part of this study. Additionally, several metropolitan regions with multiple MPOs would also be examined. An analysis of comparable and multiple MPOs would contribute to the national significance of this study, particularly in identifying issues of common concern to larger MPOs and to help in identifying best practices.

**COMPARABLE MPOS**

The first task was to compile a list of criteria for MPOs and metropolitan areas on which comparability could be judged. The Research Team, in consultation with the Project Steering Committee, developed the following criteria:

Table VI. 1

List of Criteria for Comparable MPO Identification

Population Size (MPO region, derived from 1999 *Profiles of MPOs*)

Geographic Area (MPO region, derived from 1999 *Profiles of MPOs*)

Ethnic Distribution (Metropolitan Area)

Per Capita Income (Metropolitan Area)

Number of Jurisdictions (MPO region)

Number of Fast-Growing (> 40% from 1990-97) Suburban Counties (MPO region)

Sunbelt

Economic Orientation (% Manufacturing, % Services, etc)

Air Quality Status (MPO region, 1999 *Profiles of MPOs*)

Based on these criteria, the Research Team began to identify a list of potential comparable MPOs, in consultation with the Steering Committee and other sources, such as the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO). The following MPOs were selected for possible inclusion in the study:

Table VI. 2

List of Suggested Comparable MPOs

Atlanta (Atlanta Regional Commission)

Baltimore (Baltimore Metropolitan Council)

Dallas (North Central Texas COG)

Kansas City (Mid-America Regional Council)

Minneapolis (Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area)

New Orleans (Regional Planning Commission)  
 Phoenix (Maricopa Association of Governments)  
 Salt Lake City (Wasatch Front Regional Council)  
 San Diego (San Diego Association of Governments)  
 Seattle (Puget Sound Regional Council)  
 Tucson (Pima Association of Governments)  
 Washington, DC (Metropolitan Washington COG)

The following tables display data on each criterion for each MPO, including Denver:

Tables VI. 3: Relevant Data for Comparable MPO Analysis

MPO Population, Geographic Area, and Number of Jurisdictions

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area (sq. mi.)</u>	<u># Jurisdictions</u>
<b>Denver</b>	<b>2,233,300</b>	<b>5,075</b>	<b>8 counties; 40 cities and towns</b>
Atlanta	3,110,600	3,023	10 counties; 64 municipalities
Baltimore	2,400,000	2,500	Baltimore City; 5 counties
Dallas	4,300,000	5,000	16 counties; 231 member govts
Kansas City	1,599,338	3,800	8 counties; 114 cities and villages
Minneapolis	2,300,000	3,000	7 counties; 189 cities and townships
New Orleans	1,100,000	223	5 parishes
Phoenix	116,036*	191*	1 county; 24 cities and towns
Salt Lake City	1,250,000	**	5 counties; 53 municipalities
San Diego	2,700,000	4,200	1 county; 18 cities
Seattle	3,100,000	6,290	4 counties; 70 cities
Tucson	800,000	9,240	1 county
Washington, DC	3,900,000	2,600	DC, 7 counties, 9 cities

\*MPO Profiles reported 1990 Urbanized Area population and geographic area for Phoenix. More accurately, the metropolitan Phoenix (Maricopa County) 1997 population was 2,696,198, covering a geographic area of 9,204 sq. mi.

\*\*MPO Profiles listed just the county names of Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, Morgan, and Tooele counties. The Salt Lake City MA includes Davis, Salt Lake, and Weber counties, encompassing 1,617 sq. mi.

Source: AMPO, *1999 MPO Profiles*

Air Quality Status

	<u>CO</u>	<u>PM-10</u>	<u>Ozone</u>
<b>Denver</b>	<b>Nonattainment: Serious</b>	<b>Nonattainment</b>	<b>Not Classified</b>
Atlanta	Attainment	Attainment	Nonattainment: Serious
Baltimore	Attainment	Attainment	Nonattainment: Severe
Dallas	Attainment	Attainment	Nonattainment: Serious
Kansas City	Attainment	Attainment	Attainment
Minneapolis	Nonattainment: Moderate 1	Attainment	Attainment
New Orleans	Attainment	Attainment	Attainment
Phoenix	Attainment	Attainment	Attainment
Salt Lake City	Att Redesignation Submitted	Nonattainment	Att Redesign Submit
San Diego	Attainment	Attainment	Nonattainment: Serious
Seattle	Maintenance	Maintenance	Maintenance
Tucson	Nonattainment: No class	Attainment	Attainment
Washington	Attainment	Attainment	Nonattainment: Serious

Source: AMPO, 1999 MPO Profiles

Ethnic Distribution (by Metropolitan Area, 1996 data)

	<u>% White</u>	<u>% Black</u>	<u>% Asian/PI</u>	<u>% Hispanic Origin*</u>
<b>Denver PMSA</b>	90.1	6.2	2.9	14.2
Atlanta	71.4	25.8	2.6	3.0
Baltimore PMSA	69.2	25.7	4.8	4.9
Dallas PMSA	80.1	15.8	3.5	16.0
Kansas City	84.8	13.3	1.4	3.5
Minneapolis	91.2	4.4	3.4	2.0
New Orleans	62.6	35.0	2.1	4.8
Phoenix	91.4	4.0	2.2	19.5
Salt Lake City	95.0	1.2	3.0	7.3
San Diego	82.5	6.4	10.2	25.1
Seattle PMSA	85.7	4.6	8.5	3.7
Tucson	90.5	3.7	2.3	27.9
Washington, DC P	68.1	25.4	6.2	6.8

\*Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: *State and Metropolitan Area Databook*, 1997-98, Table B-2, pp. 66-71.

Economic Profile, Earnings (by Metropolitan Area, 1994 data)

	<u>Income/Cap</u>	<u>%Man</u>	<u>%Retail</u>	<u>%FIRE</u>	<u>%Serv</u>	<u>%Gov</u>
<b>Denver PMSA</b>	<b>24,731</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>14.4</b>
Atlanta	23,633	12.7	9.4	8.5	28.3	12.1
Baltimore PMSA	24,045	12.2	9.2	8.6	30.5	20.5
Dallas PMSA	24,479	15.9	9.0	9.2	29.7	9.6

Kansas City	22,642	15.3	9.3	8.6	26.9	14.9
Minneapolis	25,231	22.5	9.1	9.3	25.6	12.4
New Orleans	19,835	11.2	9.9	6.1	30.9	16.1
Phoenix	20,000	16.1	11.1	8.7	28.4	13.7
Salt Lake City	18,625	14.0	10.5	7.3	25.7	18.5
San Diego	21,626	12.6	10.2	6.0	31.1	23.7
Seattle PMSA	27,098	20.0	9.3	6.9	29.3	12.6
Tucson	18,575	12.7	12.0	5.0	30.2	21.6
Washington, DC P	28,762	4.2	7.4	6.1	D	30.0

Source: *State and Metropolitan Area Databook, 1997-98.*

Sunbelt (South or West Census Regions) and Number of States in MPO

	<u>Sunbelt</u>	<u># of States</u>		<u>Sunbelt</u>	<u># of States</u>
<b>Denver</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>	New Orleans	Yes	1
Atlanta	Yes	1	Phoenix	Yes	1
Baltimore	No	1	Salt Lake City	Yes	1
Dallas	Yes	1	San Diego	Yes	1
Kansas City	No	2	Seattle	Yes	1
Minneapolis	No	1	Tucson	Yes	1
			Washington	No	2 + DC

Sources: U.S. Census and AMPO, *1999 MPO Profiles.*

Population Growth (1990-97)

	<u>MA Growth %</u>	<u>Fast-Growing (&gt;40%) Counties</u>
<b>Denver</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>Douglas (109.1)</b>
Atlanta	22.6	Henry (67.0), Gwinnett (41.9), Cherokee (40.6)
Baltimore	3.9	--
Dallas	16.8	Collin (52.0), Rockwall (40.3)
Kansas City	8.0	--
Minneapolis	10.0	--
New Orleans	1.8	--
Phoenix	26.9	--
Salt Lake City	16.4	--
San Diego (Co)	9.0	--
Seattle PMSA	11.6	--
Tucson (Pima)	17.0	--
Washington, DC	9.0	Loudoun, VA (55.0), Stafford, VA (43.5), Spottsylvania, VA (41.2)

Source: *State and Metropolitan Area Databook, 1997-98.*

The Research Team was most interested in those metropolitan areas possessing characteristics similar to Denver, particularly the following: population size, overall population growth, the presence of rapidly-growing jurisdictions, the number and type of jurisdictions in the MPO, sunbelt region, and air quality status. The task was to select four comparable MPOs: three to be analyzed together with Denver, and one to serve as a pilot case to test the questionnaire and interview structure.

On the basis of analysis of the preceding tables of data and discussions with members of the steering committee and AMPO, several metropolitan areas were dismissed from further consideration. Baltimore and Washington, DC were removed from further consideration because of multi-state jurisdictions, lack of sunbelt status, and different economic profile. Kansas City also had multi-state jurisdictions, lack of sunbelt status, lack of air quality problems, and slower overall growth. New Orleans was not considered because of its smaller population size, slower overall growth rate, and lack of rapidly-growing jurisdictions. Tucson was considered too small and lacked a comparable jurisdictional structure.

Of the remaining metropolitan areas, several stood out as reasonable comparables. Atlanta was selected initially on the basis of its similar population size, overall growth, the presence of several rapidly-growing counties, similar jurisdictional structure, sunbelt orientation, similar economic profile, and nonattainment status for at least one air quality category. Seattle was selected on the basis of similar size, similar jurisdictional structure, sunbelt orientation, somewhat higher overall growth, and lack of attainment status across air quality categories. Dallas was also selected even though its population size and jurisdictional structure was much larger than Denver. Factors in favor of Dallas include high overall population growth, several rapidly-growing jurisdictions, sunbelt orientation, similar economic profile, and nonattainment status for at least one air quality category.

Salt Lake City was initially considered to be a plausible pilot MPO case on the basis of similar jurisdictional structure, similar population growth, sunbelt orientation, similar economic profile, and nonattainment air quality status. It was decided, however, not to include Salt Lake City because of the possibility of skewed results due to the increased transportation funding in anticipation of the 2002 Winter Olympics.

The Research Team then identified Phoenix as a good comparable due to its similar population size, its strong overall population growth, its sunbelt orientation, and its similar economic profile. The main drawback to including the Phoenix MPO was its jurisdictional structure, i.e. being composed of only one county. This issue was discussed thoroughly among the research team and the steering committee; it was argued that municipalities in the Phoenix area are as large as counties and in fact behave like counties to some extent, and exhibit very high growth rates. It was felt that Phoenix was very comparable to Denver, and it should be included as one of the three comparable MPOs to be analyzed in the actual study despite its jurisdictional structure.

The next decision was to identify which MPO would serve as the pilot case. It was decided that Dallas would be a good pilot because its much larger size and large jurisdictional structure would serve well as a pilot. Using a larger MPO in the pilot study may result in more useful feedback with which to alter the questionnaire and interview questions.

Prior to final selection of comparable MPOs, the Research Team was made aware of extraordinary events occurring in Atlanta concerning the process of metropolitan transportation planning. Representatives from AMPO and the Steering Committee strongly advised not to include Atlanta as one of the comparable MPOs; the research team agreed. After reconsidering additional possible MPOs, the Research Team decided not to add any other MPOs, but instead to use Dallas as both pilot and comparable MPO. Thus, Dallas, Seattle, and Phoenix were selected as the three comparable MPOs to be analyzed together with Denver.

### **MULTIPLE MPOS**

The Research Team also decided to select three metropolitan regions that had multiple MPOs operating within the region. The Team relied upon recommendations from the Steering Committee and AMPO, and began to focus on metropolitan areas in Florida and North Carolina. Consideration of comparability criteria such as size, sunbelt orientation, and single state status eliminated multiple MPO metropolitan regions such as New York or Chicago. In the end, the research team selected the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Palm Beach and the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metropolitan regions in Florida, and the Charlotte-Gastonia metropolitan region in North Carolina to assist with the multiple MPO analysis.