

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Planning for Housing in a Regional Context

Results from a Survey of Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations

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RESEARCH REPORT

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Executive Summary

Transportation and housing policy are closely linked. Homes in areas without easy access to employment and services can be unaffordable for their residents, who are forced to spend money on gas and time on the road. Meanwhile, transit systems designed without considering how to effectively serve neighborhoods may be inefficient and underused. These two systems are interdependent, yet they are often independently determined. In the United States, transportation planning is largely organized at the regional level, while localities make most of the decisions related to housing and land use policy, which is key to determining housing supply and affordability. This policy separation produces metropolitan areas with inefficient distribution of homes and jobs, long commute times, and environmentally unsustainable land use patterns. Can metropolitan governance and planning organizations help bridge the gap?

Making the connection between these two policy areas is essential to help improve quality of life and reduce the cost of living for people throughout the nation. Even so, there are no federal requirements for regional housing or land use planning, and federal efforts to coordinate these policy areas with transportation, such as through a new program created as part of the 2021 infrastructure law, so far remain unfunded.

We conducted the first national survey on the links between housing and transportation planning among metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), councils of governments (COGs), and other organizations with regional purview. We collectively refer to these organizations as metropolitan governance and planning organizations (MGPOs). Using responses from 143 MGPOs, we evaluated the degree to which these organizations influence local housing planning and integrate housing into regional transportation plans.

We find, first, that regional coordination of transportation and housing policy is quite rare. Only 19 percent of responding organizations agreed that their planning approaches integrated these two policy areas in their day-to-day activities. Less than half of MPOs—which are responsible for developing regional transportation plans—have integrated local land use laws into their short- and long-range transportation plans, despite the fact that effective transportation investments depend on connections to housing. Among those MGPOs that develop regional plans, only a minority have integrated issues related to affordable housing. These outcomes indicate a lack of federal requirements and funding

support for integrated planning. They also reflect a belief expressed by some transportation planners we surveyed that their role was to be reactive to housing plans—rather than to proactively influence these plans through coordinated planning.

Roughly two-thirds of MGPOs reported addressing or investing in housing and community development issues as part of their function. This work, however, is primarily related to data generation and analysis. Only one-third of MGPOs reported doing any kind of housing technical assistance or facilitating the creation of regional plans affecting housing. When we examined the efficacy of their different housing activities, absent state-vested authority over local jurisdiction housing policies (e.g., through fair share requirements, growth management, and/or comprehensive plan oversight), the largest share of MGPOs reported managing housing-related subsidy or grant programs as their most effective activity. Yet, respondents reported that the median organization dedicates just 5 percent of their total funding toward housing activities or subsidies.

Despite the limited effort thus far by MGPOs to integrate housing and transportation planning, respondents expressed interest in and support for broadening their work in this area, though most preferred to have more incentives for regional coordination and fewer wanted or used mandates or penalties. Many agreed that their boards would support regional housing planning and direct investment in affordable housing subsidies. Though they expressed caution about the potential for MGPOs to override local land use and housing authority, many survey respondents emphasized that influencing or helping coordinate local policies could help improve regional planning outcomes.

To do so, however, MGPOs will need additional support. Among respondents, 70 percent said they needed funding for planning and affordable housing production from government and developers. Federal rules related to coordinating housing and transportation within either the US Department of Housing and Urban Development or the US Department of Transportation remain weak and unfunded, leaving much to be desired (including creating a joint initiative between the two departments). Additional research is needed on what form and activities MGPOs could use to effectively achieve the goal of integrated housing and transportation systems.

Planning for Housing in a Regional Context

Many Americans face a tradeoff when choosing where to live: Should they pay higher housing costs or commute a longer distance? These two elements—housing and transportation—represent the largest and second largest portions of most households’ budgets, respectively (Haas et al. 2013). Both are affected just as much by regional as by local market and political dynamics, which have major impacts in metropolitan areas that are divided into dozens—sometimes hundreds—of localities, each with control over land use and housing policies (Savitch and Adhikari 2017). Jurisdictions in regional labor economies want to create communities that enable residents to live and work with a high quality of life, but competition among jurisdictions to attract the highest-income residents while assuming low costs for public services—such as those that address homelessness, congestion, crime, and vacancy (Peterson 1981)—leads to often inequitable and inefficient arrangements of transportation services and housing (Freemark, Steil, and Thelen 2020). The result is that, in many places, people with the highest needs for job access and mobility live farthest from their places of work (Stacy et al. 2020), and the development of affordable housing is undertaken without considering access to effective transportation or concentrations of people in poverty (Freemark 2023).

In theory, regional planning can mitigate some of these harms by requiring or encouraging a more efficient and equitable distribution of residents and services across localities. This could ensure adequate access to opportunity for all and maximize the benefits of metropolitan infrastructure, such as in the form of public transportation lines (Goetz, Chapple, and Lukermann 2003). And yet, regional planning exists in a gray zone within American governance structures. Since the 1960s, federal law has required states to create metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) that coordinate local and federal funding to build and maintain regional transportation infrastructure and services (Sciara 2017). Since the early 1990s, federal law has expanded the role of MPOs, including by giving them direct control over some transportation program funding. But these organizations typically decide what to do with their transportation funds without the political leverage to resolve inefficient gamesmanship between jurisdictions (e.g., free riding), typically relying instead on voluntary coordination to achieve outcomes without enforcement (Wolf and Farquhar 2005). Other regional organizations, such as associations of governments, are often even more powerless when it comes to achieving effective regional planning outcomes.

More importantly, anecdotal evidence suggests that MPOs often operate with limited to no connections to the housing and land use policy decisionmakers who determine a large part of the need for transportation—the people who make choices about where new homes should be built, for example. Although housing and transportation systems are interdependent, they are usually independently determined. Ideally, there would be coordination from the start, such as a city laying down sewer lines for expanded residential neighborhoods before or while transportation departments—with the funding support of MPOs—invest in plans for new rapid bus or rail transit access. But, for the most part, project-by-project evidence suggests that either local planning offices set housing and zoning policies that MPOs must adapt short- and long-range transportation plans to serve, or MPOs make choices about investing in new transportation projects that local planners must respond to with plans for surrounding development.

This report explores the nature and extent of regional organizations' efforts to integrate housing into their transportation planning and vice versa, and the extent to which they have begun to coordinate regional housing policy. We detail the results of the first comprehensive survey of the housing-transportation coordination approaches of what we call metropolitan governance and planning organizations (MGPOs), a broad term that encompasses both MPOs and associations or councils of governments (COGs). This survey captures 143 responses from the national population of 473 total MPOs and their associated COGs or host entities (a 30 percent response rate). Their answers illustrate gaps in current approaches and provide reasons to be optimistic about how MGPOs can coordinate regional housing in association with transportation investments.

Our nationwide survey shows that the vast majority of MGPOs thus far have been unable to coordinate their transportation planning with housing issues. Most consider growth forecasts but rarely consider land use laws, which are key determinants of housing production, distribution, affordability, and even demand (Freemark et al. 2022). Only a few MGPOs have conducted housing-related technical assistance, facilitated housing-related regional plans, or managed housing-related grant or subsidy programs. Organizations that incorporate COGs and those with larger service areas are more likely than standalone MPOs and organizations with smaller service areas to have activities related to housing planning, indicating that additional funding capacity and staff outside of MPOs are necessary for MGPOs to help resolve regional housing development and distribution challenges.

In open-ended responses, multiple transportation planners described themselves as reactive rather than proactive about housing plans and realities. One fundamental problem they reported is that they do not have the funding to commit to housing planning—and sometimes state policy or state and federal statute prevent them entirely from using funds for any housing-related planning. The bulk of funding for

MPOs comes from the Highway Trust Fund, through the Federal Aid Highway Program, though funding may come from many other sources, including block grants, transit fares, toll payments, local or state general funds, and special federal appropriations. These funds have limitations on eligible activities, depending on the source, and almost all eligible activities are exclusively transportation-related, such as complete streets, congestion management, or transit network improvements. As a result, MPOs must find alternative revenue to support housing and land use planning that is unsupported by current funding criteria. Overall, MGPO funding and authority over transportation is rarely applied to address regional housing problems.

Even so, staff from two-thirds of MGPOs reported addressing, investing in, or coordinating housing and community development issues, with most work involving data generation and analysis. Most respondents said they desired greater local government participation in regional coordination related to housing, and wanted to see funding assistance to achieve effective, coordinated outcomes. The 2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) allows the creation of “housing coordination plans” that could be associated with required short- and long-term transportation plans. However, this is only an eligible activity for MPOs representing Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), which are those with populations over 200,000. For reference, roughly half of all MPOs represent areas that fall below this population threshold, and therefore cannot be expected to participate in this new activity.

Aside from producing a capacity-building website offering examples of housing and transportation integrations (e.g., smart growth, transit-oriented development, and transportation demand management activities),¹ the federal government has provided no clear guidance to TMAs on how best to develop housing coordination plans or the topics they might cover and problems they may resolve. Nevertheless, MGPO staff we surveyed are ready to take the next step in solving the inefficiencies created by this lack of coordination between local housing and regional transportation planning. To do so, they need funding and examples of approved and/or proven models to bring housing and transportation planners together to create plans, ordinances, and investments that foster economic growth, access, and equity in a regional context.

Background: Regional Planning Coordination for Transportation and Housing

Metropolitan governance and planning organizations can take many forms, such as COGs; regional planning associations or agencies; free-standing MPOs; or “embedded” MPOs housed as departments

within COGs, cities, or county governments (US Department of Transportation 2017). State governments (with input from municipalities) generally create rules that designate what powers regional coordination organizations may have and dictate what form MPOs must take. Federal statute provides flexibility for MPO administration, which allows each region to create a structure that works best for them. This poses challenges in comparing MPOs nationwide, as each is unique. But MGPOs largely share a rationale: their purpose is to help coordinate decisionmaking between many local jurisdictions. This section outlines the justification for implementing regional governance and planning bodies, then introduces the extent to which housing and transportation planning occur in conjunction with each other.

Why Plan for Transportation and Housing at a Regional Level?

Because it enables workers to move across jurisdictions within metropolitan areas to find and fill the best jobs they can, regional transportation is essential for economic growth and efficiency. Local transportation also enables quality of life by ensuring peoples' access to recreation and school. Regional transportation access ensures economic and social connections that spur growth and community flourishing. However, transportation is only part of the equation: coordinating regional housing distribution across a region is no less essential. But because regional and local governments have fragmented power over land use planning across localities, there are few incentives to adequately produce and efficiently distribute housing, or to coordinate housing planning with transportation investments.

On a regional level, the lack of centralized decisionmaking about land use helps explain the overuse of exclusionary, low-density zoning among wealthy communities and the resultant inefficient underproduction of housing in attractive regions. William Fischel's (1987) assessment of the economic principles governing different jurisdictions' housing production incentives and powers noted that suburbs tend to act as housing "monopolists," often at the behest of homeowners who dominate local politics. In response to resident demand to preserve home values by limiting construction or preventing their tax dollars from being used for redistribution, residents in many suburban areas in attractive labor markets resist annexation into larger central cities and sometimes organize to incorporate, meaning they assemble their unincorporated land to form a new local government, which increases regional fragmentation in both cases (Savitch and Adhikari 2016; Wyndham-Douds 2023). The underlying intention of these monopolists is to provide only large, high-cost housing for purchase by high-income individuals who require relatively few public support dollars, resulting in lower ratios of property tax to consumption and higher per capita public resources (Wegmann 2020; Whittemore 2019). Others argue

that even renters may oppose new development, not because of a desire to boost home values, but because of a fear that new development will increase rents (Been 2018).

Localities have the power to create land use laws that restrict housing supply, to the detriment of potential developers and individuals who would otherwise want to produce and consume more housing—especially affordable housing—within each jurisdiction. Because they are incentivized to limit construction, even when good transportation options are available, and even when there is a market for construction, many cities do not alter their land use policies to enable adequate housing supply (Freemark et al. 2023). And monopoly powers enable jurisdictions, via high housing costs, to exclude residence by people of classes—and races—they deem unattractive (Massey and Rugh 2017; Whittemore 2018).

Localities in attractive labor market regions thus have an incentive to underproduce housing. Although these jurisdictions' residents benefit from the regional economy and its supply of lower-wage laborers who fill necessary roles in those labor markets, they bear few of the costs of providing services to support those laborers and instead become free riders on the region's attractiveness (Freemark 2022). Moreover, those laborers often must commute long distances—typically by expensive means because of inadequately planned and chronically underfunded public transportation options. Although many MPOs attempt to prioritize public transit and higher-density development such as through transit-oriented development, these efforts are sometimes unpopular with the public and their elected officials who implement policies. Ultimately, regions produce inadequate housing while high-income localities perversely benefit from housing shortages, to the detriment of housing affordability and transportation access for residents of the region overall.

In the face of local jurisdictions inclined to pursue their residents' interests over the region's needs as a whole—generating the market failures described above—regulation by higher levels of government may be both economically and socially beneficial (Savitch and Adhikari 2017). Higher levels of government (or deliberative councils of local governments) could more fairly distribute positive and negative externalities and costs from labor market attractiveness by considering both the interests of people who need more affordable housing and wealthier people who potentially oppose it. For example, they could ensure effective collocation of jobs and housing through the coordinated planning of housing and transportation investments. This raises the question of how effectively MGPOs are responding to this need.

The Current State of Regional Transportation and Housing Planning

Regions need to plan for both transportation and housing across multiple jurisdictions to improve quality of life and efficiently grow their regional economies. Planning for those policy areas can maximize the benefits of each. Housing and transportation are typically administered through separate funding, policy, and planning mechanisms at all levels of government.² This may lead to inefficient allocations of resources, frustration between departments, and ultimately the waste of households' time and money on excess commuting and transportation costs (table 1).

TABLE 1

A Simplified View of the Disconnect between Housing and Transportation Investments

	Initiators	Primary actors	Primary funding sources
Housing investments	■ Private actors	■ Private developers ■ City zoning/planning departments ■ Local housing authorities	■ Private capital, limited and prescriptive public subsidies from HUD, localities, philanthropy
Transportation investments	■ Public agencies	■ MPOs ■ Transportation agencies ■ Transit agencies ■ Local departments of public works	■ Federal DOT funds, local or state tax revenues, bonds

Source: The authors, based on previous research.

Notes: HUD = US Department of Housing and Urban Development; MPOs = metropolitan planning organizations; DOT = US Department of Transportation.

Housing is mostly built parcel by parcel as private actors initiate market-driven deals; less frequently, local housing agencies may direct housing projects themselves (particularly subsidized housing projects).³ In contrast, transportation projects largely arise in the context of government planning. In the housing space, the primary actors who determine what projects get built include the local zoning and planning department staff who implement the relevant laws passed by local councils, and who review development applications. In transportation, MPOs, state departments of transportation, and local departments of public works are lead actors, working to set long term plans and distribute funding for projects to state and local transportation agencies. Larger MPOs often have a greater impact on these decisions through the suballocation and awarding of federal funds to help support regional goals (even though federal funds tend to represent a minority of total project funding, with the rest of funds and thus decisionmaking power coming from state entities). When it comes to funding, most housing projects use private capital, with limited (and narrowly prescribed) funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Low Income Housing Tax Credits; and sometimes philanthropic, local, and state funding sources for low-income housing projects. In contrast,

transportation project funding is derived almost entirely from public sources, including the Highway Trust Fund, local and state tax and toll revenues, and bonds. The disjoint between the scale, timing, funding, and actors for planning housing projects and transportation projects impedes the coordination of housing and transportation investments and policies.

When it comes to regional planning, transportation has a much more robust and developed history than housing planning. Federal legislation funding and authorizing transportation programs (most recently IIJA) is clear about the responsibilities MPOs have in implementing regional planning processes for transportation investments, with the broad goal of achieving comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning. The federal government requires MPOs to coordinate transportation planning in metropolitan areas with populations over 50,000. Although there is significant flexibility in terms of MPO design (e.g., embedded within a larger COG, county government, or other regional organization; or acting as a standalone entity) and the planning approach each takes, federal legislation treats them the same and their rights and responsibilities are generally consistent (Griffith 2021). MPOs must develop transportation improvement programs (TIPs), a list of transportation investments planned over the following four years, including capital and noncapital transportation projects; bicycle, pedestrian, car, and public transportation enhancements; and safety planning projects.⁴ These are driven by long-term regional plans meant to represent planned investments over the next 20-year period. Although all MPOs must produce these documents, a significant difference in statute is that larger MPOs that serve TMAs have the ability to suballocate federal funds. In practice this means they have the opportunity to prioritize projects that advance goals of these long-range plans. This is not to say that planning for the future necessarily results in positive outcomes from the perspective of achieving greater social equity, for example; MPO voting structures determined by state law or regional agreement may result in wealthy areas outvoting poorer communities, reinforcing uneven distribution of funding (Lewis 1998; Nelson et al. 2003).

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development requires local housing comprehensive planning in order to receive funds from the Community Development Block Grant program, but no federal law requires any cross-departmental or cross-regional coordination between transportation and housing funding and activities. Nor is there a federal mandate to authorize or require cross-jurisdictional coordination when it comes to residential land use planning. A select number of states, such as California, Oregon, New Jersey, and Washington, have smart growth or affordable housing statutes that require regional housing needs assessments and growth projections, where counties and regions create forecasts of population growth (some by income strata) to project and allocate housing production needs across local jurisdictions.

Certain regional organizations have taken steps, moreover, to plan for housing and transportation in concert with one another. Minnesota has, by statute, empowered a metropolitan council to coordinate state and federal funding across jurisdictions in the Twin Cities region; this often includes overseeing regional housing and transportation plans. In the Denver, San Diego, and Seattle regions, regional agencies have slowly expanded their roles in housing planning (Patronella 2023). And some regional planning councils in Florida have a role to play in influencing land use coordination between municipalities (Kwon and Park 2014).

Outside of examples like these, though, the role that MGPOs play in coordinating land use and housing plans and policies among member jurisdictions varies immensely and is poorly understood, despite decades of research indicating a need for better coordination and understanding of this issue (Goldman and Deakin 2000; Wolf and Fenwick 2003). Given growing national concerns about rising housing prices, the federal government has opened the door to influencing regional housing planning through the aforementioned housing coordination plans included in IJJA. Such plans could enable MPOs to collaborate with local jurisdictions to expand housing supply near transportation options and increase the share of households with affordable access to transportation networks. Yet, despite interest from legislators (for one example, see Cortez Masto et al. 2022), no federal guidance has yet emerged for MPOs to assist them in undertaking and structuring such housing coordination plans. Neither has a dedicated source of federal funding been identified or made available to MPOs to advance plan implementation. And little is known about what efforts regional organizations have taken thus far to think about regional structures of joint housing and transportation planning—and what obstacles now stand in their way. Our study seeks to examine those issues.

Study Questions

To clarify the extent to which joint coordination between transportation and housing is taking place at the regional level in the United States, we designed a study to answer the following questions:

- How do MGPOs influence the housing planning undertaken by member jurisdictions?
- To what degree do MGPOs integrate housing and transportation planning processes?

Methods

Our primary method for data collection was a national web-based survey we distributed to staff of MGPOs nationwide. We complemented this work by convening in-person sessions in association with

the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). This section outlines our data collection and analysis methods.

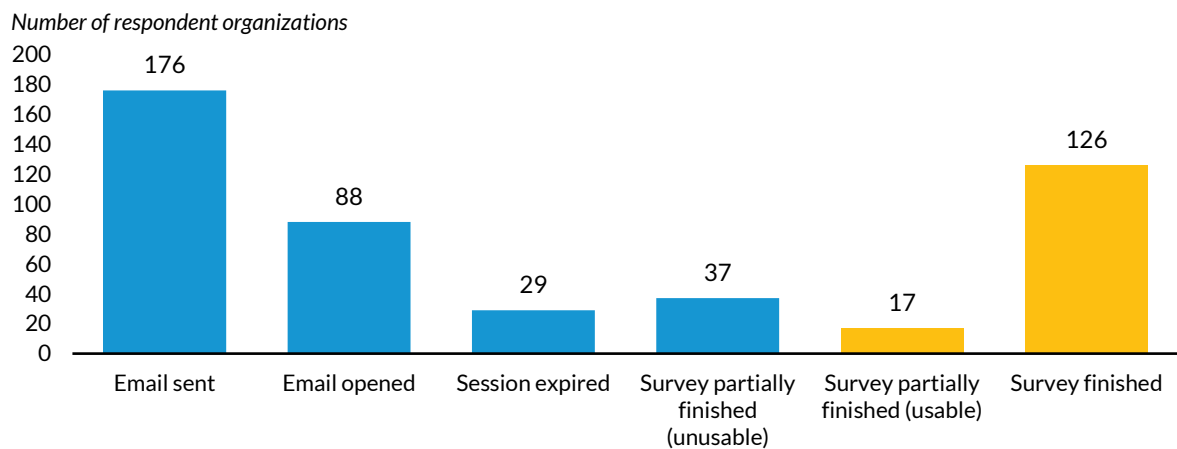
Data

We developed a survey to collect responses from a large sample of staff from regional governance organizations and federally authorized MPOs across the country. Our survey questions arose from conversations with NARC and AMPO about what information related to housing and transportation planning would benefit their members. These conversations informed the design of a 44-question survey (Appendix A) that covered organizations' structures, activities, and housing-related planning approaches that would enable us to understand the efforts different organizations pursued and the degree to which housing and transportation planning activities informed each other.

To gather contact information for staff of as many MGPOs across the country as possible, we worked with NARC and AMPO, whose staff sent us lists of their members with contact information for their executive directors. We supplemented our outreach list using the public database of federal MPOs and their primary contacts. After deduplication, we sent out a first invitation in February 2024. For all organizations whose emails bounced, we manually looked up the appropriate contact listed on the organization's website and sent out a fresh invitation. Ultimately, 473 organizations received the survey invitation. For reference, as of the 2020 Census, there were 410 MPOs nationwide, plus COGs and other regional organizations.

We ultimately collected 143 usable responses; we excluded those for which 60 percent or less of the questions were completed. These usable responses included information about MGPOs in 44 states and the District of Columbia (appendix table B.1). Responses were collected in February and March 2024. Our survey completion rate was 27 percent (126 of 473); our overall response rate including partial responses was 30 percent (figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Respondent Status at Survey Close



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Source: Author analysis of survey response statuses.

Notes: Each bar is mutually exclusive of the other, such that the total sum of all bars is 473. Surveys with more than 60 percent of questions completed were usable for analysis. Surveys with less than 60 percent of questions completed were excluded.

Respondents' click-through and response rates varied over time, corresponding closely with the timing of reminder emails. We varied the timing and date of the reminder emails to cover every day of the week and a blend of morning, midday, and afternoon reminders in case respondents were more likely to have availability to respond to the survey at any one of those times (see Appendix B figure B.1). We also reached out to NARC and AMPO to ask them to notify members initially and then, midway through fielding, to remind their members to complete the survey.

Because the survey link saved progress and could be opened by multiple people, we encouraged email recipients to share the link with the staff members who would know the answers for the different survey sections. Given the variety of organization structures, types, and responsibilities in our sample, our invitation and reminders emphasized that because we were looking to understand how often organizations engaged in different activities, all responses—especially from staffers who, on reading through the survey, reported that the question did not apply to them or that they did not have any of the activities listed—were valuable.

We assessed whether the survey was biased in terms of who responded to it by comparing the characteristics of and areas represented by all MGPOs to which we sent requests with those of just the MGPOs with completed surveys to gauge the degree to which responses should be interpreted as nationally representative. Respondents represented metropolitan areas with similar population sizes and racial compositions as those of nonrespondents (table 2). There were some significant differences

between the groups, however (Appendix B figure B.2). COGs or official regional government planning bodies (counties, associations of governments, planning commissions, etc.) represented a higher share of respondents than nonrespondents, with MPOs recording lower response rates. This may be because of our sample design; all official government planning bodies were referred to us by NARC and all benefitted from NARC’s reminder emails, while MPOs were a blend of AMPO members and cold-outreach organizations that did not all receive AMPO’s notice and reminders. Alternatively, this outcome may be because smaller MPOs (especially those that do not have a COG associated with them) have funding restrictions that prevent them from working on anything outside of federally authorized uses related to transportation. Additionally, we received a larger share of responses from organizations in Western census regions and a lower share of responses in Southern census regions than our sample would have predicted (Appendix B tables B.2 and B.3).

TABLE 2
Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organization Respondent and Nonrespondent Characteristic Analysis

	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Statistical significance of difference between shares
N	143 (30%)	330 (70%)	
Share MPOs	49%	61%	*
Share in South	34%	44%	*
Share in Northeast	17%	14%	
Share in Midwest	25%	25%	
Share in West	24%	16%	*
MSA population	1,312,615	1,013,869	
Share MPO TMA status (>200k population)	50%	48%	
MSA share non-Hispanic white	67%	67%	

Source: Author analysis of National Metropolitan Housing Planning Survey data.

Notes: p-value significance levels are * <0.05. MPO = metropolitan planning organization; MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area; TMA = Transportation Management Area.

We also provide detailed information about MGPO staff size (Appendix B table B.4 and figure B.4); MGPO budget size (Appendix B table B.5 and figure B.3); and the fragmentation of MGPO service areas (Appendix B figure B.5) in Appendix B.

In addition to administering the survey, we attended two summit convenings with MGPO staff in Washington, DC, to publicize the survey during its fielding (in February and March 2024). At these convenings, we discussed considerations, limitations, and potential factors influencing MGPOs’ activities related to housing planning and the integration of housing and transportation planning. These discussions informed our analysis of the survey findings.

How Do Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations Integrate Planning for Transportation and Housing?

We undertook a detailed analysis of survey responses to study how MGPOs integrate housing, land use, and transportation planning as part of their standard governance and planning activities. We review major findings in this section, and provide more detailed results in Appendix B.

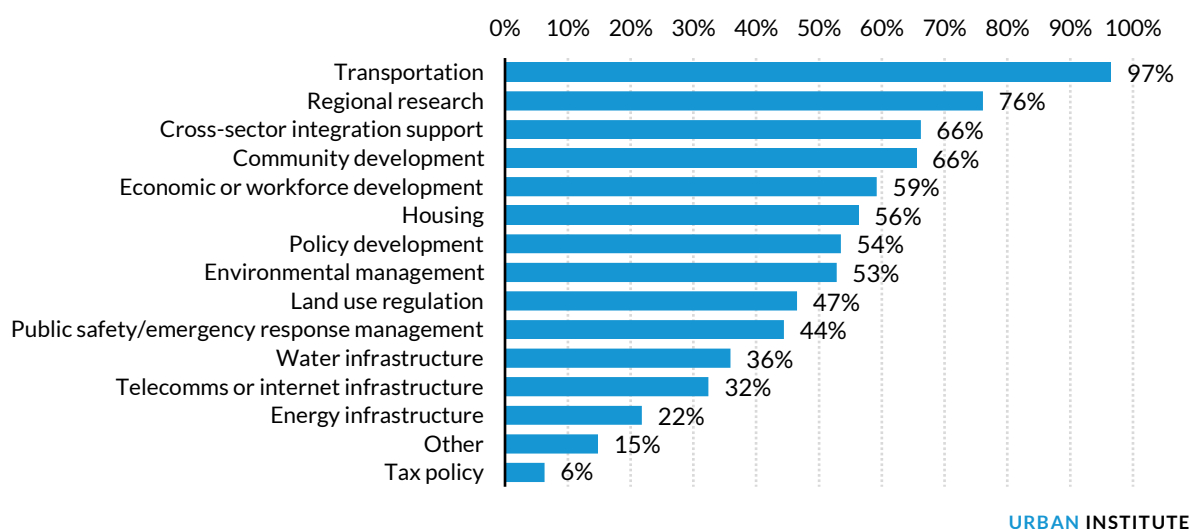
Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations Engage in Housing Planning—but Few Integrate That Work with Transportation Planning

Assessing the degree to which MGPOs engage in housing planning and how well integrated their housing and transportation plans are first requires assessing MGPOs' full range of activities. Among the issue areas in which MGPOs reported investing in, addressing, and/or coordinating within their regions, respondents most commonly reported that their organizations engage in activities related to regional transportation, research, and cross-sectional coordination and community development (figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Roughly Two Thirds of Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations Are Involved in Community Development or Housing Work

Share of organizations that reported addressing, investing, and/or coordinating regional issue areas



Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Note: N = 142.

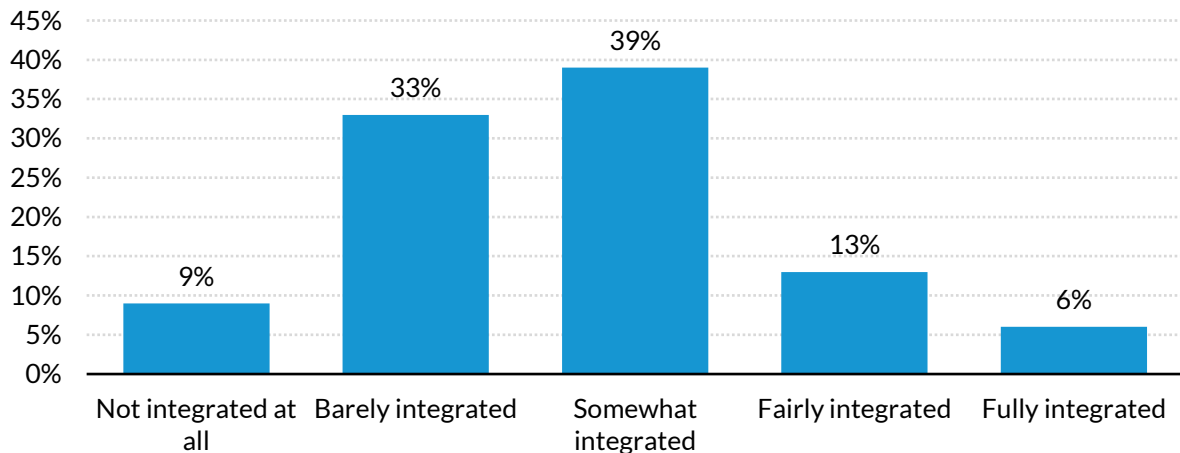
It is unsurprising that 97 percent of respondents reported that their organizations are working on transportation planning and policy, given that the most common regional body among the sample of respondents is an MPO, which is primarily involved in transportation. However, the 56 and 66 percent of organizations whose staff reported working on housing- or community development-related issues, respectively, indicates new, previously undocumented activity that departs from earlier survey results (Goldman and Deakin 2000; Wolf and Fenwick 2003). Indeed, when asked how their organizations' scope of work related to housing had changed in the past five years, a wide majority of respondents answered it had increased.

Despite MGPOs' increasing focus on housing, however, abundant evidence points to deep divisions between housing and transportation planning teams and processes. We asked respondents about the depth of integration of their organizations' regional planning processes, allowing responses along a five-point scale ranging from "not integrated at all—any transportation or housing plans are created entirely separately of each other and do not mention each other" to "fully integrated—the plans are developed within a single or shared team." Staff from just six respondent organizations reported having fully integrated processes; less than a fifth reported being at least "fairly integrated" (figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Less Than One Fifth of Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations Report Having At Least "Fairly Integrated" Housing and Transportation Planning

Share of organizations, by degree of integration between their housing and transportation planning



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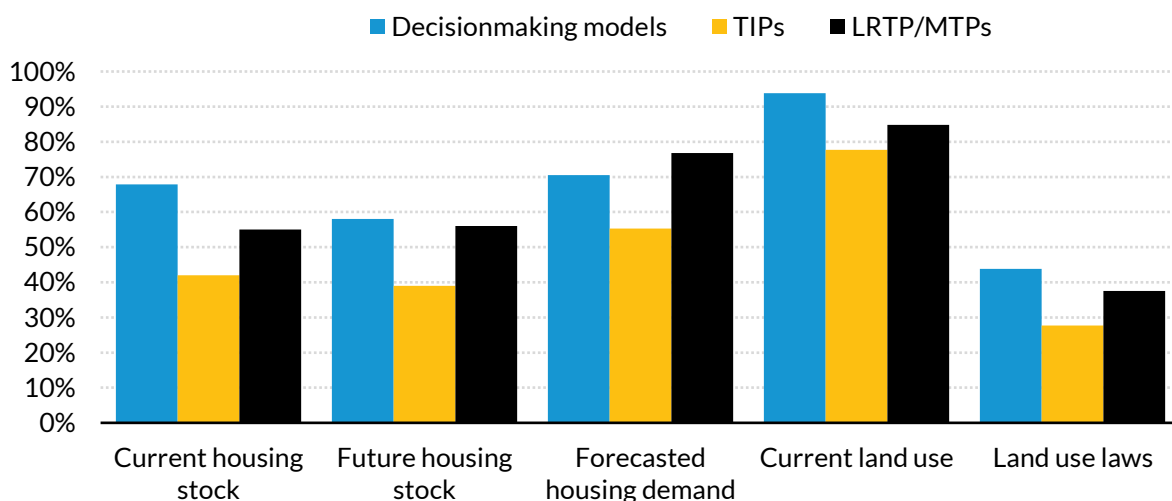
Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: N = 101.

Given that housing planning traditionally happens at the local level, whereas transportation has more established regional planning processes, we examined the degree to which surveyed MPOs reported incorporating housing into their decisionmaking and planning processes (this was a subset of the full group of MGPOs from which we collected responses). Fewer than half of respondents said that they considered land use laws—which are one of the upstream determinants of housing production, distribution, affordability, and even demand—in any of their planning processes, including their TIPs or long-range/metropolitan transportation plans. Instead, MPOs were much likely to consider existing land use (which may or may not be related to land use laws) and forecasted demand (figure 4). And, perhaps most surprisingly, staff from only about half of MPOs reported that they consider the amount of existing or planned housing in their TIPs or long-range/metropolitan transportation plans. These responses corroborate the stories MPO staff shared in open-ended responses; they described themselves as being “more reactive” to housing forecasts and plans—which they noted were determined with fierce territorialism by local jurisdictions. They were less likely to proactively influence them as regional bodies.

FIGURE 4
Less Than Half of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Consider Land Use Laws in Their Planning or Decisionmaking

Share of respondents integrating land use law into their decisionmaking models, short-range transportation improvement plans, and long-range transportation plans



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Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: N = 112. TIPs = short-range transportation improvement plans; LRTP/MTPs = long-range transportation plans. Even though metropolitan planning organizations comprised only 49 percent of respondents, respondents’ answers still reflect their metropolitan governance and planning organization’s metropolitan planning organization practices as we encouraged collaboration on filling out the survey across metropolitan governance and planning organization departments.

We asked respondents to provide additional details about how they have integrated housing and land use issues into their regional plans (separate from Metropolitan Transportation Plans, which all MPOs are required to create). Roughly 60 percent of respondents who answered about their regional planning activities noted that they had a regional plan or were in the midst of passing one, with 10 percent reporting having no regional plan and 25 percent reporting being unsure of whether their region had a formal plan. Within these regional plans, organizations most commonly reported addressing land use and regional housing supply and demand forecasts (table 3). On the other hand, far fewer organizations have integrated housing affordability issues directly into their regional plans. For example, just 11 percent said they had coordinated their regional transportation and housing planning, and only 16 percent were actively considering the fairness of the distribution of Housing Choice Vouchers across their metropolitan areas.

TABLE 3
Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organization Regional Plan Components

Regional plan component	Respondent share
Land use/zoning	58%
Regional housing supply and demand forecasts	58%
Transit-oriented development	47%
Growth management	32%
Local housing supply and demand forecasts	32%
Affordability assessments	26%
Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) distribution	16%
Distribution of housing-related grants	11%
Coordinating regional transportation and housing planning	11%
Other	16%

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: N = 30.

Regional Housing Planning Lacks Funding and Regional Organizations Primarily Play a Data Support Role

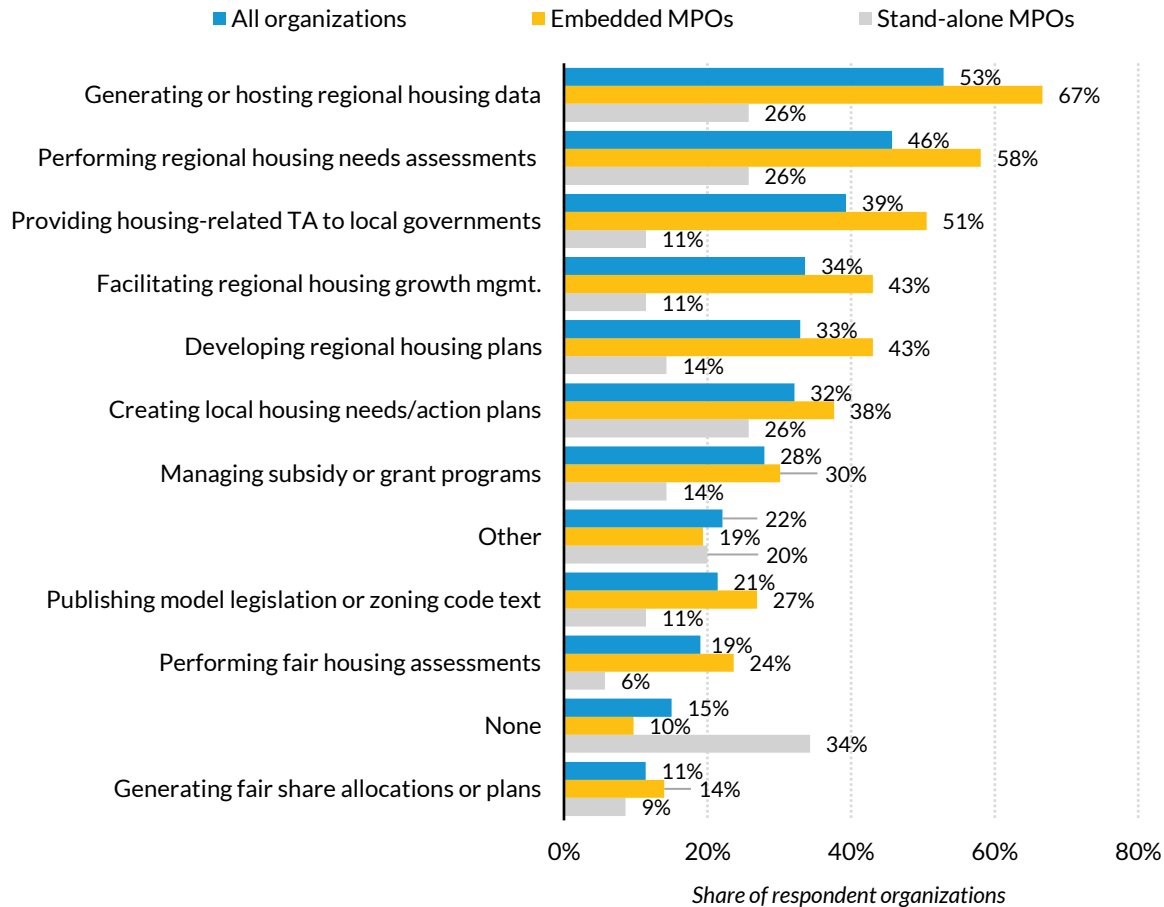
Despite a minority of MGPOs having integrated housing planning into their transportation planning portfolios, many respondents expressed their interest in pursuing this approach. Survey responses indicated a significant and growing level of activity in the regional housing planning space for regional organizations to begin to consider and potentially integrate into broader plans. Even so, few staff who responded said that their organizations had any legal power to enforce their recommendations related to regional housing planning, which could be an obstacle to ensuring that integration is most effective.

Although only 55 percent of organizations indicated they work directly on “housing” (figure 2), when asked about their whole array of activities, only 15 percent of respondent organizations report having no housing-related activities (figure 5). Of the 85 percent of organizations that report engaging in any kind of general housing activities (even those that do not undertake housing planning directly), the vast majority engage in generating regional housing-related data and performing regional housing needs assessments. On the other hand, reflecting the rarity of state legislation related to ensuring a fair distribution of affordable housing or the consideration of fair housing issues at a regional level, managing fair share allocations and performing fair housing assessments were the least commonly reported housing activities. Just one organization’s staff wrote in that they had developed a housing coordination plan, as allowed by the IIJA. Overall, organizations’ housing-related activities most commonly support opt-in coordination and playing a data or technical-assistance support role for housing policy and programming rather than influentially setting housing targets, building consensus between member jurisdictions around housing production and locations, or implementing standards for local jurisdiction residential planning practices.

FIGURE 5

Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organization Housing Activities

Share conducting activities, by type of metropolitan governance and planning organization



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: N = 140. Embedded MPO N = 94, Stand-alone MPO N = 37. MPO = metropolitan planning organization; TA = technical assistance. Embedded MPOs are those that are integrated within councils of governments or regional associations of governments. Organizations lacking a MPO are not shown with their own bar graph but are included in “All organizations.” Respondents could select any number of activities they engaged in but could only select “none” if they didn’t select any other choices. “Other” activities included (1) regional data maintenance, forecasting, and integration with transportation systems; (2) administration and management of federal and local housing programs such as Housing Choice Vouchers and HUD grants; (3) coordination and convening efforts to bring together stakeholders through summits, partnerships, and educational campaigns focused on affordable housing; and 4) integrating housing development with transportation planning, including assessments along transit corridors and establishing jobs-housing balance ratios.

Respondents, on average, selected 3.4 of the housing-related activities listed in figure 5, and those who reported engaging in more housing-related activities tended to be those with embedded MPOs, larger service areas and populations, higher median household incomes at the metropolitan statistical

level, or larger organization budgets. This logically indicates that housing-related planning activities cost money and staff to conduct, and thus organizations that have more resources can and do engage in more housing-related planning and coordination activities (or potentially vice versa).

From a regional perspective, organizations in the Northeast tended to have more housing-related activities (see Appendix B figure B.6), with an average of 44 percent of respondents from that region responding that they engaged in an activity versus 27–29 percent from other regions. Northeastern MGPO respondents' most common activities were generating or hosting regional housing data (82 percent), providing housing-related technical assistance to local governments (73 percent) and performing regional housing needs assessments (68 percent). This finding indicates a more robust regional housing planning ecosystem in the Northeast where population densities are higher and there is more transit infrastructure.

The 15 percent of organizations reporting no housing activities had a few identifiable characteristics. First, all respondent organizations in the Northeast reported having at least one housing activity, while those in the South (13 percent), Midwest (19 percent), and West (24 percent) were less likely to have any. Second, roughly a quarter of organizations serving populations of 50,000 to 200,000 people had staff report not having any housing-related activities, compared with roughly 10 percent of organizations serving larger populations. This could be attributed to earlier observations regarding TMA status allowing for more work to be done in this space, such as related to IIJA's housing coordination planning.

Similarly, organizations that were “embedded,” in that they were integrated into a COG or association of governments, were significantly more likely to conduct some housing activities, compared with the standalone MPOs that lacked this kind of connection to another body. A reasonable observation about the extended breadth of activity of a larger organization integrating a COG would be that the organization has access to revenues beyond the statutorily limited federal transportation funds. Just 2 percent of organizations with a COG had no housing activities, compared with 20 percent of organizations without a COG (the difference is statistically significant). No organizations that lacked an MPO reported an absence of housing activities, compared with 34 percent of standalone MPOs (also statistically significant).

These outcomes indicate that regional transportation planners are often deeply siloed from housing planning conversations and skillsets, and that if any housing planning happens at a regional level, it is likely led by non-MPO COG departments. Outcomes related to MGPO population service size and independent MPOs versus embedded MPOs' housing activities likely stem from the fact that small

MPOs serving fewer than 200,000 people, plus standalone MPOs, typically receive the majority of their funding from federal transportation grants that specifically preclude or bar organizations from using these funds on any housing-related activities.

The means by which MGPOs most commonly reported influencing regional housing dynamics was through hosting internal discussions about integrating housing into existing workstreams or other activities, plus conducting housing-related research or quantitative assessments/projections (60 percent of respondents). Nearly as common was convening meetings among local governments' housing departments, public housing authorities, zoning commissioners, and/or mayors to discuss housing issues (54 percent) and managing any form of regional grant or subsidy programs (45 percent).⁵ However, only 11 percent and 14 percent of respondents, respectively, reported developing model legislation or setting housing production and/or density targets for jurisdictions within their respective regions.

Respondents' views about the efficacy of MGPOs' varying housing activities indicates how they perceive their position within the local government ecosystem. Of the organizations that reported engaging in any kind of housing activities, those that manage subsidy or grant programs were most likely to have respondents report that these programs were "the most effective at or essential for addressing housing challenges" in their regions (46 percent) with those providing technical assistance coming in second (38 percent; table 4). Performing these functions requires staff capacity, which in turn requires adequate funding with flexible or specific authorizations that allow for those uses. Also, as previously noted, while larger MPOs are eligible to participate in creating housing coordination plans, they do not yet have access to any funding to aid in their development. Generally, organizations that performed fair housing assessments did not report these as being the most effective tool for addressing housing challenges (only 8 percent of those that conducted these assessments identified them as most effective or essential). Notably, respondents' understanding of what makes for an effective response to housing challenges could differ. If housing production does not result from the initiative, they may have considered the activity ineffective or nonessential. But generally, we interpreted responses as indicating that MGPO-sponsored funding programs and technical assistance most frequently changed local governments' status-quo approaches toward housing development and planning.

TABLE 4

Most Effective or Essential Housing Activities among Organizations Engaging in Them

Activity	Number of MGPOs with the activity	Number of MGPOs selecting the activity as “most effective”	Share of MGPOs with the activity selecting it as “most effective”	Activity’s share of “most effective” votes
Managing housing-related subsidy or grant programs	39	18	46%	17%
Providing technical assistance to local governments in drafting local zoning or complying with state housing/zoning requirements	55	21	38%	19%
Generating or hosting regional housing data	74	17	23%	16%
Performing regional housing needs assessments	64	14	22%	13%
Other ^a	31	12	39%	11%
Developing regional housing plans	46	8	17%	7%
Creating local housing needs/action plans for local governments	45	6	13%	6%
Facilitating regional growth management planning for housing	47	5	11%	5%
Publishing model legislation or zoning code text	30	4	13%	4%
Generating fair share housing standards or allocations	16	2	13%	2%
Performing fair housing assessments	26	2	8%	2%

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: N = 109. ^a“Other” activities included (1) regional housing needs analysis and planning, including data maintenance, forecasting, and integration with transportation systems; (2) administration and management of federal and local housing programs such as Housing Choice Vouchers and HUD grants; (3) coordination and convening efforts to bring together stakeholders through summits, partnerships, and educational campaigns focused on affordable housing; (4) providing technical assistance and strategic support to local governments for housing production, preservation, and land use; and (5) integrating housing development with transportation planning, including assessments along transit corridors and establishing jobs-housing balance ratios.

These responses identifying funding as the most effective way to influence local housing dynamics make sense given that MGPOs (and especially standalone MPOs) do not traditionally have legislative or executive authority over local policies. Indeed, just 12 of 121 respondents reported having any kind of statutory authority related to housing. Among those, their authority was primarily limited to distributing grants (5 of 12) and conducting fair housing assessments or assigning fair share housing allocations (4 of 12). Only three organizations reported having any authority to enforce requirements related to local governments’ housing action plans.

Further illustrating these organizations’ lack of ability to enforce, or even influence, local housing policies, staff from few organizations reported having the ability to encourage adherence to regional housing-related requirements or goals. Just 15 of 120 respondents reported having any incentive mechanisms in that domain. Of those, about half reported leveraging scoring preferences related to federal funding suballocation (generally related to transportation) and a third reported using locally sourced set-aside funds for housing as their primary incentive mechanisms.

We asked survey takers to describe what mechanisms would best enable MGPOs to address regional housing challenges. In line with these respondents’ views about what has been most effective in the past, respondents reported a desire for increased funding for housing planning work and affordable housing subsidies, with 70 percent and 61 percent of respondents reporting needing those supports, respectively (table 5). On the other hand, respondents were less likely to report a desire for increased authority to enforce state requirements related to housing (just 30 percent agreed). This data, paired with comments from MGPO staff at conferences discussing regional housing planning, suggested MGPO staff were hesitant to engage with housing. In light of governance structures that locate control over land use at the local (and sometimes hyper-local) level, political resistance to transit-oriented development, and siloed agencies, many MGPO staff feel that their historic lack of control over regional housing policy may obviate future direct engagement on this issue, that they lack expertise on the topic, and/or that local housing dynamics are too contentious for them to want to weigh in. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition of the need to better align housing forecasts, multimodal transportation planning, and better-distributed access to jobs and housing through transportation project scoring and prioritization, but MGPOs appear to want the least contentious path to address these needs.

TABLE 5
Respondents’ Views about Most-Needed Supports to Address Regional Housing Challenges

Potential policy or incentive approach	Share of respondents
Federal or state funding for coordination and general housing planning/policy work	70%
Greater developer or government investment in subsidized affordable housing	61%
Greater local government support for and participation in regional coordination	59%
Technical assistance and/or peer learning opportunities	51%
Greater economic development investment	38%
Greater private developer investment in market rate housing	37%
State-vested authority for regional housing requirements	30%

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Note: Respondents could select multiple answers. N = 135.

This focus on the need for increased funding harmonizes with respondents' views about how much funding is now available and dedicated for housing activities. When asked about the share of funding dedicated toward housing activities—from either federal or nonfederal sources—respondents reported a median of 5 percent and an average of just 10 percent of their budgets going toward housing activities. Indeed, MPOs serving populations under 200,000 (those that do not qualify as TMAs) may even be prohibited from using their funding for housing or land-use planning activities, depending on the interpretation of terms of grants or contracts made by federal agencies.

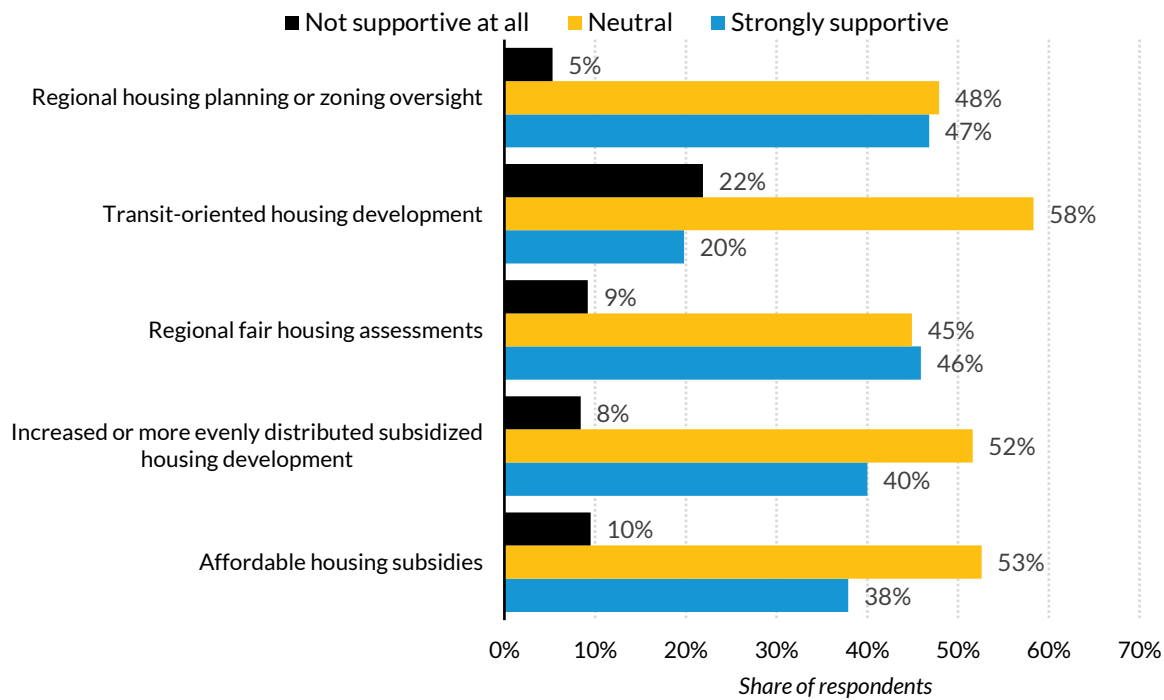
Respondents reported a median of 5 percent and an average of just 10 percent of their budget going toward housing activities.

Respondents' desires—which reflect the points of view of staff—may differ from the desires and actions of their boards, composed of elected and appointed officials. To explore MGPOs' board inclinations, we asked how supportive the boards were of housing-related decisions in different arenas. Generally, according to staff, organizations' boards are most strongly supportive of regional housing needs assessments, planning, and/or zoning oversight.⁶ Boards are most commonly opposed to transit-oriented housing development, though the majority of board members are neutral on this front (figure 6). The largest number of respondents who believed their boards would be opposed to transit-oriented development (10) came from the West, but those opposed represented the largest share of respondents from the Northeast (35 percent of all Northeast respondents were opposed to making decisions related to transit-oriented development). This minority opposition to transit-oriented housing development from a sizable number of boards may stem from a fear of regional MPOs or transit bodies blurring the lines between constructing infrastructure and investing directly in residential properties, which would likely require significant restructuring of public authorities and generate conflicts with local governments related to both zoning and funding. Alternatively, it may reflect local antidensity or antitransit preferences, as the majority of these respondents' organizations represented heavily car-oriented, sprawling regions.

FIGURE 6

MGPO Boards May Be Skeptical of Developing Housing-Related Policies

Board support for housing-related decisions among metropolitan governance and planning organizations



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Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

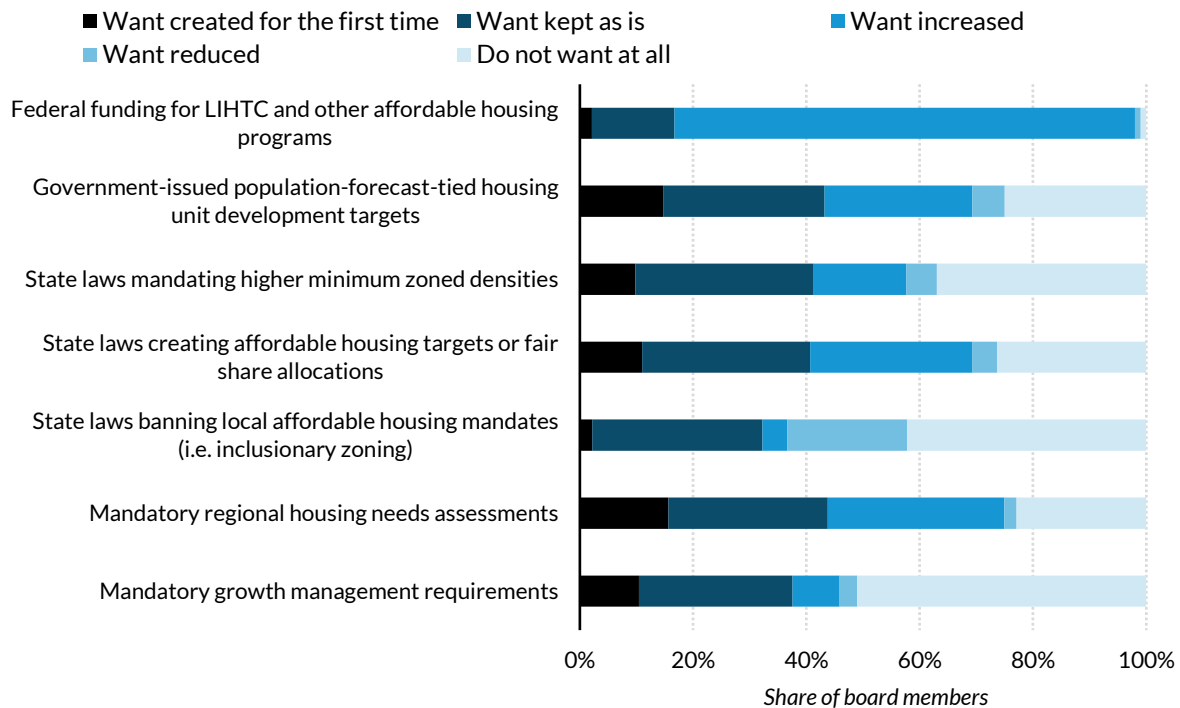
Notes: N = 98.

Finally, we asked respondents to explain how they thought their respective boards would perceive the introduction of a variety of housing- and land use-related policies (figure 7). Despite the high share of respondents reporting that their boards were supportive of—or, at least neutral toward—regional oversight, the highest share of respondents indicated that most of the policies their boards would like to see more of related to funding and indicated a desire among MPO board members to be subject to fewer state-level mandates. The highest share of any agreed-upon response was that federal funding for Low Income Housing Tax Credits and other affordable housing programs should increase (81 percent of respondents). After federal funding, the policies that respondents believe would have the strongest board support (with responses indicating boards would like to see them created, kept, or increased) were for mandatory regional housing needs assessments (75 percent support), government-issued population-forecast-tied housing unit development targets (69 percent), and state laws creating affordable housing targets or fair share allocations (69 percent).

FIGURE 7

Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organization Boards Are Likely to Support Increased Funding for Affordable Housing, but Are Skeptical of Growth Management

Metropolitan governance and planning organization board attitudes toward potential housing-related policy changes



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: N = 96. LIHTC = Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.

On the other hand, respondents were divided in their views on the value of imposing new mandates at the local level, to be enforced by MGPOs (figure 7). Of survey takers, 42 percent said that their board would be opposed to state laws banning local affordable housing mandates, such as through local inclusionary zoning laws, while 36 percent argued that boards would want such a policy kept as is, increased, or created for the first time. Respondents also suggested that boards would be hesitant to support state efforts to impose mandatory growth management requirements (51 percent responded that they would want to keep such a policy nonexistent), or mandate higher minimum densities (37 percent said they would be opposed to the creation of such a policy). That said, 10 percent of staff responded that their boards would support the creation of these policies for the first time.

Recommendations

MGPO staff told us they were keenly aware of the need for improved regional coordination and action to resolve interjurisdictional conflicts and inequities related to housing. The great irony of the current divide between housing and transportation planning is that regional councils, associations of governments, and MPOs are inherently regional conveners. They are the long-standing table around which local jurisdictions gather to plan for integrated and coordinated regional transportation systems. Indeed, MPOs are the primary regional force in leading coordinated transportation improvements, in some regions bringing together hundreds of municipalities and stakeholders. So why is housing planning still so fragmented in most metropolitan areas?

Because of state and federal funding usage restrictions, most MPOs have not systematically integrated land use and housing into their plans, as they have effectively been told to stay in their proverbial transportation lane. As our survey responses illustrated, organizations that rely primarily on federal transportation grants (i.e., small or standalone MPOs) are barred from using those funds for housing-related activities by their grant restrictions. As a result, other organizations must step in to coordinate regional housing activities; this function is sometimes performed by separate agencies, by separate departments within COGs, or by no organization at all. Over decades, these funding and guidance restrictions have carved a divide between the disciplines. As a result, MPOs' products, plans, and—potentially most important—staff subject matter experts focus almost entirely on transportation.

Even though the IIJA has granted MPOs limited permission to step into the housing arena, and COGs have typically had these abilities, MPOs have had very little guidance on how to do so effectively—either from federal sources or through peer-learning opportunities (until recent offerings through NARC and AMPO, which launched working group conversations among MGPOs). Change will not be achieved by simply flipping the switch and making housing eligible for transportation funding. Training, resources, and guidance are necessary to support MPOs as they step into the housing space and begin the process of repairing decades of division between planning for housing, land use, and transportation. For COGs, additional funding and guidance that encourages local jurisdictions to coordinate their housing plans with their transportation improvement programs and long-range transportation plans would be a helpful start to bridging the gap between the two practices.

MGPOs desire greater guidance about using their funds to create housing plans and desperately need investment. The scale of money going toward addressing regional housing planning (just 5 percent of the median MGPO's funding) pales in comparison with the scope of underproduction (a 1.5 million home deficit in 2025; National Association of Home Builders 2025). Survey takers emphasized that

subsidy and grant programs would be most effective in resolving housing challenges. MPOs are adept at using and equipped to handle federal funds, yet those who have a plan have not been given dedicated funds to advance it.

Finally, MGPOs' lack of land use and housing authority should be acknowledged. In most cases, this authority remains within the purview of cities and counties, and many MPO staff are uninterested in assuming that authority, as indicated in survey results. But MPOs do not need such strict authority to act as conveners or to craft a unified regional vision that integrates transportation and housing. With flexible financial support to hire subject matter experts, additional guidance, and the means to implement plans through grants, MPOs can begin linking land use, housing, and transportation through their role as regional leaders. Ambitious states willing to test out new ideas could go further, giving MPOs direct oversight over local housing plans or mandated coordination with local land use and housing planning policymakers to ensure that they are able to integrate housing plans and policies with the transportation system.

Even so, policymakers still need additional evidence to determine whether MPOs (and/or MGPOs more broadly) are the right type of organization to lead regional housing planning. Federal agencies and states should invest in research or pilot programs to investigate whether and how regional housing planning efforts might incorporate more housing planning activities akin to MPOs' transportation planning exercises—which involve data generation, regional forecasts, growth planning, community engagement, and jurisdictional negotiations—to solve housing production challenges and inefficiencies. They should also evaluate the relative benefits of different types of organizations taking on those roles, whether MPOs, COGs, or other MGPO agencies. Providing dedicated funding to implement regional housing coordination plan goals and widening eligibility for existing federal transportation funds that support plans are two possible starting places for investment.

Appendix A. Survey Instruments

Regional Housing Planning Survey Fielding

Start of Block: Consent and Intro

Intro/Consent

National Metropolitan Housing Planning Survey

The Land Use Lab at the Urban Institute (a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Washington DC), is conducting this survey to understand both how regional governing bodies coordinate housing planning and how regional governing bodies are administratively structured. We are reaching out to you because your organization is a member of either the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) or the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) or a federally designated MPO, and because you have expertise on the responsibilities, structure, activities, and preferences of your organization.

This survey asks about your organization's structure and size, overall activities, housing-related planning and coordination activities, and board and funding structures. At a maximum, the survey contains 44 questions, and the estimated time required is between 15-25 minutes. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary (we cannot offer any compensation), but your participation will help our team develop and publish findings that will help regional organizations better understand how regional housing planning takes place across the country and what models or practices lend themselves well to effective and equitable regional housing outcomes.

Our written publications will report data in aggregate. We will not ask for your name and your responses will be kept anonymous. In cases where we have very few respondents, there is a slight risk that readers may be able to discern your organization's service area and identity from context, but we will attempt to minimize this possibility to the greatest extent possible.

If you have any questions about the project or survey, please email Lydia Lo (Llo@urban.org) or call her at 202-261-5845.

By clicking "Next" you are consenting to take the survey.

Note: This survey was designed to be taken collaboratively as one individual may not know all the answers to the questions. The survey may only be completed once, but your link is unique to your organization and may be reopened multiple times by you and others within your organization as long as you do not submit the survey. If you mistakenly submit the survey before intending to, please contact Lydia Lo for assistance.

End of Block: Consent and Intro

Start of Block: Baseline Information

Q1 What is the name of your organization?

Q2 What is your organization's primary address? (address, suite/office/unit, city, state, zip)

Q3 We need you to help us identify the region you serve. How would you prefer to do this?

- Select the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from a dropdown list
- Find and enter the 5-digit census FIPS code for the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from a census data file we will provide a safe link to download

Display This Question:

If We need you to help us identify the region you serve. How would you prefer to do this? = Select the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from a dropdown list

Q4 Select the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from the following list

- Abilene-Sweetwater, TX
- Albany-Schenectady, NY
- Albuquerque-Santa Fe-Los Alamos, NM
- Allentown-Bethlehem-East Stroudsburg, PA-NJ
- Altoona-Huntingdon, PA
- Amarillo-Borger, TX
- Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah, WI
- Asheville-Waynesville-Brevard, NC
- Atlanta—Athens-Clarke County—Sandy Springs, GA-AL
- Baton Rouge-Hammond, LA
- Birmingham-Cullman-Talladega, AL
- Bloomington-Bedford, IN
- Bloomington-Pontiac, IL
- Bloomsburg-Berwick-Sunbury, PA

- Boise City-Mountain Home-Ontario, ID-OR
- Boston-Worcester-Providence, MA-RI-NH
- Bowling Green-Glasgow-Franklin, KY
- Brookings-Crescent City, OR-CA
- Brownsville-Harlingen-Raymondville, TX
- Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Olean, NY
- Burlington-Fort Madison, IA-IL
- Burlington-South Burlington-Barre, VT
- Cape Coral-Fort Myers-Naples, FL
- Cape Girardeau-Sikeston, MO-IL
- Carbondale-Marion-Herrin, IL
- Cedar Rapids-Iowa City, IA
- Champaign-Urbana-Danville, IL
- Charleston-Huntington-Ashland, WV-OH-KY
- Charlotte-Concord, NC-SC
- Chattanooga-Cleveland-Dalton, TN-GA-AL
- Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI
- Cincinnati-Wilmington, OH-KY-IN
- Cleveland-Akron-Canton, OH
- Columbia-Jefferson City-Moberly, MO
- Columbia-Sumter-Orangeburg, SC
- Columbus-Auburn-Opelika, GA-AL
- Columbus-Marion-Zanesville, OH
- Corpus Christi-Kingsville-Alice, TX
- Dallas-Fort Worth, TX-OK
- Davenport-Moline, IA-IL
- Dayton-Springfield-Kettering, OH
- Denver-Aurora-Greeley, CO
- Des Moines-West Des Moines-Ames, IA
- Detroit-Warren-Ann Arbor, MI
- Dixon-Sterling, IL
- Dothan-Enterprise-Ozark, AL
- Duluth-Grand Rapids, MN-WI
- Eau Claire-Menomonie, WI
- Edwards-Rifle, CO
- El Paso-Las Cruces, TX-NM
- Elmira-Corning, NY
- Erie-Meadville, PA
- Evansville-Henderson, IN-KY

- Fairmont-Clarksburg, WV
- Fargo-Wahpeton, ND-MN
- Fayetteville-Lumberton-Pinehurst, NC
- Findlay-Tiffin, OH
- Florence-Muscle Shoals-Russellville, AL
- Fort Wayne-Huntington-Auburn, IN
- Fresno-Hanford-Corcoran, CA
- Gainesville-Lake City, FL
- Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI
- Green Bay-Shawano, WI
- Greensboro--Winston-Salem--High Point, NC
- Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC
- Greenville-Washington, NC
- Harrisburg-York-Lebanon, PA
- Harrisonburg-Staunton-Stuarts Draft, VA
- Hattiesburg-Laurel, MS
- Hot Springs-Malvern, AR
- Houston-Pasadena, TX
- Huntsville-Decatur-Albertville, AL-TN
- Idaho Falls-Rexburg-Blackfoot, ID
- Indianapolis-Carmel-Muncie, IN
- Ithaca-Cortland, NY
- Jackson-Vicksburg-Brookhaven, MS
- Jacksonville-Kingsland-Palatka, FL-GA
- Johnson City-Kingsport-Bristol, TN-VA
- Johnstown-Somerset, PA
- Jonesboro-Paragould, AR
- Joplin-Miami, MO-OK-KS
- Kalamazoo-Battle Creek-Portage, MI
- Kansas City-Overland Park-Kansas City, MO-KS
- Keene-Brattleboro, NH-VT
- Kennewick-Richland-Walla Walla, WA
- Knoxville-Morristown-Sevierville, TN
- La Crosse-Onalaska-Sparta, WI-MN
- Lafayette-New Iberia-Opelousas, LA
- Lafayette-West Lafayette-Frankfort, IN
- Lake Charles-DeRidder, LA
- Lansing-East Lansing-Owosso, MI
- Las Vegas-Henderson, NV

- Lawton-Duncan, OK
- Lexington-Fayette--Richmond--Frankfort, KY
- Lima-Van Wert-Celina, OH
- Lincoln-Beatrice, NE
- Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR
- Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA
- Louisville/Jefferson County--Elizabethtown, KY-IN
- Lubbock-Plainview, TX
- Macon-Bibb County--Warner Robins, GA
- Madison-Janesville-Beloit, WI
- Mankato-New Ulm, MN
- Mansfield-Ashland-Bucyrus, OH
- Marinette-Iron Mountain, WI-MI
- Mayag-Aguadilla, PR
- McAllen-Edinburg, TX
- Medford-Grants Pass, OR
- Memphis-Clarksdale-Forrest City, TN-MS-AR
- Miami-Port St. Lucie-Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Middlesborough-Corbin, KY
- Midland-Odessa-Andrews, TX
- Milwaukee-Racine-Waukesha, WI
- Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI
- Mobile-Daphne-Fairhope, AL
- Monroe-Ruston, LA
- Montgomery-Selma, AL
- Moses Lake-Othello, WA
- Mount Pleasant-Alma, MI
- Myrtle Beach-Conway, SC
- Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro, TN
- New Bern-Morehead City, NC
- New Haven-Hartford-Waterbury, CT
- New Orleans-Metairie-Slidell, LA-MS
- New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT-PA
- North Port-Bradenton, FL
- Oklahoma City-Shawnee, OK
- Omaha-Fremont, NE-IA
- Orlando-Lakeland-Deltona, FL
- Paducah-Mayfield, KY-IL
- Parkersburg-Marietta-Vienna, WV-OH

- Peoria-Canton, IL
- Philadelphia-Reading-Camden, PA-NJ-DE-MD
- Phoenix-Mesa, AZ
- Pittsburgh-Weirton-Steubenville, PA-OH-WV
- Ponce-Coamo, PR
- Portland-Lewiston-South Portland, ME
- Portland-Vancouver-Salem, OR-WA
- Pueblo-Cañon City, CO
- Pullman-Moscow, WA-ID
- Quincy-Hannibal, IL-MO
- Raleigh-Durham-Cary, NC
- Rapid City-Spearfish, SD
- Redding-Red Bluff, CA
- Reno-Carson City-Gardnerville Ranchos, NV-CA
- Richmond-Connersville, IN
- Rochester-Austin-Winona, MN
- Rochester-Batavia-Seneca Falls, NY
- Rockford-Freeport-Rochelle, IL
- Rocky Mount-Wilson-Roanoke Rapids, NC
- Sacramento-Roseville, CA
- Saginaw-Midland-Bay City, MI
- Salisbury-Ocean Pines, MD
- Salt Lake City-Provo-Orem, UT-ID
- San Antonio-New Braunfels-Kerrville, TX
- San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland, CA
- San Juan-Bayamón, PR
- Savannah-Hinesville-Statesboro, GA
- Seattle-Tacoma, WA
- Shreveport-Bossier City-Minden, LA
- Sioux City-Le Mars, IA-NE-SD
- South Bend-Elkhart-Mishawaka, IN-MI
- Spencer-Spirit Lake, IA
- Spokane-Spokane Valley-Coeur d'Alene, WA-ID
- Springfield-Amherst Town-Northampton, MA
- Springfield-Jacksonville-Lincoln, IL
- St. Louis-St. Charles-Farmington, MO-IL
- Starkville-Columbus, MS
- State College-DuBois, PA
- Syracuse-Auburn, NY

- Tallahassee-Bainbridge, FL-GA
- Tucson-Nogales, AZ
- Tulsa-Bartlesville-Muskogee, OK
- Tupelo-Corinth, MS
- Tyler-Jacksonville, TX
- Union City-Martin, TN
- Victoria-Port Lavaca, TX
- Virginia Beach-Chesapeake, VA-NC
- Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA
- Wausau-Stevens Point-Wisconsin Rapids, WI
- Weatherford-Elk City, OK
- Wichita-Arkansas City-Winfield, KS
- Williamsport-Lock Haven, PA
- Youngstown-Warren-Salem, OH
- Other Metropolitan Area - Not Listed

Display This Question:

If We need you to help us identify the region you serve. How would you prefer to do this? = Find and enter the 5-digit census FIPS code for the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from a census data file we will provide a safe link to download

Q4 Find and enter the 5-digit CBSA code for the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from this National Bureau of Economic Research CSV file from the census: <https://data.nber.org/cbsa-csa-fips-county-crosswalk/cbsa2fipsxw.csv>

If you prefer to navigate to the CSV rather than download it directly from the link above, you can find it on the NBER website here: <https://www.nber.org/research/data/census-core-based-statistical-area-cbsa-federal-information-processing-series-fips-county-crosswalk>

Search for your metropolitan area city/cities in column D (making sure the state listed in Column I is correct) and copy the corresponding code in column A. Please only copy and paste the CBSA code, not the CSA codes. If your service area straddles two CBSAs, please list both codes separated by a comma.

Display This Question:

If Select the metropolitan area in which your service area lies from the following list = Other Metropolitan Area - Not Listed

Q4.1 What are the names of the counties comprising your service area?

Please list these with a capitalized name, comma, and two-letter abbreviated state name, each separated by a semicolon (e.g., Name, ST; Name, ST; etc.)

Q5 What is the size of the population your organization serves?

- Small (pop between 50,000-200,000)
- Medium (pop between 200,000-1,000,000)
- Large (pop above 1,000,000)

Q6 What best describes the nature of the organization on whose behalf you are responding? (Select all that apply)

- A non-profit association of local governments (i.e., a council of governments)
- A non-profit planning organization (e.g., the Regional Plan Association)
- A statutorily authorized regional government
- An MPO
- An Economic Development District
- An Area Agency on Aging
- Other: _____

Carry Forward Unselected Choices from "What best describes the nature of the organization on whose behalf you are responding? (Select all that apply)"



Q6.1 Does your organization have any of the following additional entities within or associated with it? (Select all that apply)

- A non-profit association of local governments (i.e., a council of governments)
- A non-profit planning organization (e.g., the Regional Plan Association)
- A statutorily authorized regional government
- An MPO
- An Economic Development District
- An Area Agency on Aging
- Other: _____

Q7 Is your organization part of or hosted (i.e., housed) by another agency or organization (e.g., council or association of governments, regional council, regional planning commission, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

Skip To: Q8 If Is your organization part of or hosted (i.e., housed) by another agency or organization (e.g., council or association of governments, regional council, regional planning commission, etc.)? = No

Display This Question:

If Is your organization part of or hosted (i.e., housed) by another agency or organization (e.g., council or association of governments, regional council, regional planning commission, etc.)? = Yes

Q7.1 What is the name of your host agency?

Display This Question:

If Is your organization part of or hosted (i.e., housed) by another agency or organization (e.g., council or association of governments, regional council, regional planning commission, etc.)? = Yes

Q7.2 Which of the following types of agencies acts as the host for your organization? (Select one)

- Council of Governments/Regional Council (or equivalent)
- County (or equivalent) government
- Municipal (or equivalent) government
- An independent authority [transit agency, toll authority, seaport/airport, etc.]
- Department at state level
- University or center of expertise sponsored by university
- Other (please explain): _____

Q8 How many total local governments are in your overall organization's service or planning area?

▼ 1 ... >70

Q9 What array of issues does your organization (including host and other sub-entities, if applicable) currently address, invest in, and/or coordinate regionally? (Select all that apply)

- Transportation (including roads, bike trails/lanes, and highways; public transit including bus, light rail, tram, subway, etc.; Rail infrastructure; Air traffic/transit/port infrastructure; and/or water transportation/freight/port infrastructure)
- Telecommunications/internet infrastructure
- Water infrastructure
- Energy infrastructure
- Tax policy
- Environmental management (e.g., natural resource conservation, water and air quality monitoring)
- Public safety and/or emergency response/management coordination
- Housing (e.g., housing production, affordability, needs assessments, subsidies, home ownership, weatherization, home repair, and fair housing)
- Land use regulation (e.g., zoning, land use policy development)
- Community development (e.g., planning, major development site coordination)
- Land banking
- Economic or workforce development/access
- Regional research and data analysis (e.g., demographic or environmental projections)

- Cross-sector integration support (e.g., integration of transportation, housing, economic development, environmental decisions)
- Policy development or government affairs
- Other: _____

End of Block: Baseline Information

Start of Block: RQ 1 - Housing Planning Activities

Q10 This next section explores your overall organization's activities related to housing. Examples of such activities might include work related to housing affordability, stock preservation, construction, subsidy distribution, ownership or counseling programming, needs assessments, and/or zoning

Q11 Does your organization (including your host organization or other sub-entities, if applicable) have any current or planned activities directed at regional housing planning?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q12 Is there another entity in your metropolitan area that manages regional housing planning or coordination with local governments in your service area?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Display This Question:

Is there another entity in your metropolitan area that manages regional housing planning or coordination with local governments in your service area? = Yes

Q13 What is the name and/or website of the organization that manages regional housing planning or coordination in your service area? (If there are multiple, please list them all and separate them with a ; semi-colon)

Q14 What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? (Select all that apply)

- Performing regional housing needs assessments (including elements such as demographic forecasts, housing production and stock projections, and/or gap analyses)

- Developing regional housing plans
- Generating fair share housing production, housing density, or affordable housing standards and allocations
- Managing subsidy or grant programs (e.g., for affordable housing or home ownership, weatherization/home repair, land remediation for residential purposes, transit-oriented development, pre-development, etc.)
- Publishing model legislation or zoning code text
- Facilitating regional growth management planning for housing
- Performing fair housing assessments (such as analysis of impediments, assessments of fair housing, or equity plans)
- Creating local housing needs/action plans for local government adoption
- Providing technical assistance to local governments in drafting local zoning or complying with state housing/zoning requirements
- Generating or hosting regional housing data
- Managing a regional land bank or land trust
- Other: _____
- None—We have no housing-related activities

Skip To: Q24 If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-enti... = None—We have no housing-related activities

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q15 How does your organization accomplish the activities you noted above? (Select all that apply)

As a reminder, you selected: **#{DISPLAY OF CHOICES SELECTED FOR Q14 }**

- Convening or facilitating meetings among local government housing departments, PHAs, zoning commissioners, or mayors
- Hosting internal discussions around housing and/or integrating housing into existing workstreams
- Conducting research or quantitative assessments/projections
- Managing grant or subsidy programs
- Developing legislation
- Reviewing or drafting member government housing plans
- Providing technical housing planning expertise to build local capacity
- Setting housing production and/or density targets or standards for jurisdictions within the region
- Acquiring blighted properties within the region for sale and/or redevelopment
- Other: _____

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? (Select all that apply)"

Q16 Of the housing-related activities you listed your organization engages in, which do you believe has been most effective at or essential for addressing the housing challenges in your region?

- Performing regional housing needs assessments (including elements such as demographic forecasts, housing production and stock projections, and/or gap analyses)
- Developing regional housing plans
- Generating fair share housing production, housing density, or affordable housing standards and allocations
- Managing subsidy or grant programs (e.g., for affordable housing or home ownership, weatherization/home repair, land remediation for residential purposes, transit-oriented development, pre-development, etc.)
- Publishing model legislation or zoning code text
- Facilitating regional growth management planning for housing
- Performing fair housing assessments (such as analysis of impediments, assessments of fair housing, or equity plans)
- Creating local housing needs/action plans for local government adoption
- Providing technical assistance to local governments in drafting local zoning or complying with state housing/zoning requirements
- Generating or hosting regional housing data
- Managing a regional land bank or land trust
- Other:
- None—We have no housing-related activities

Q17 Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have any legal authority to impose requirements related to housing activities on local jurisdictions?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

And Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have an... = Yes

Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? (Select all that apply)"



Q18 For which activities does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have legal authority to impose requirements? (Select all that apply)

- Performing regional housing needs assessments (including elements such as demographic forecasts, housing production and stock projections, and/or gap analyses)
- Developing regional housing plans
- Generating fair share housing production, housing density, or affordable housing standards and allocations
- Managing subsidy or grant programs (e.g., for affordable housing or home ownership, weatherization/home repair, land remediation for residential purposes, transit-oriented development, pre-development, etc.)
- Publishing model legislation or zoning code text
- Facilitating regional growth management planning for housing
- Performing fair housing assessments (such as analysis of impediments, assessments of fair housing, or equity plans)
- Creating local housing needs/action plans for local government adoption
- Providing technical assistance to local governments in drafting local zoning or complying with state housing/zoning requirements
- Generating or hosting regional housing data
- Managing a regional land bank or land trust
- Other:
- None—We have no housing-related activities

Q19 Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have any incentive mechanisms for encouraging adherence to regional housing-related requirements or goals?

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____
- I don't know

Skip To: Q24 If Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have an... = No

Display This Question:

If Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have an... = Yes

Or Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have an... =

Other:

Q19.1 What kinds of incentives does your organization offer to encourage adherence to regional housing-related requirements or goals? (Select all that apply)

- Preferential scoring in federal funding sub-allocation
- Locally-sourced set-aside funds for housing or related projects
- Reduction in match requirements
- Other: _____

Display This Question:

If Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have an... = Yes

Or Does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) have an... =

Other:

Q19.2 How does your organization (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) allocate its incentives related to housing? (Select all that apply)

- Performance on key metrics (e.g., density, production, affordability, access to transit and other key public goods, etc.)
- Equity considerations
- Jurisdiction population
- Other: _____

Q20 Does your region have an enacted regional plan?

- Yes, enacted
- Not yet, but it's currently in development
- No
- I don't know

Display This Question:

If Does your region have an enacted regional plan? = Yes, enacted

Or Does your region have an enacted regional plan? = Not yet, but it's currently in development

Q20.1 Of the following, what are the elements related to housing addressed within your regional plan (if any)? (Select all that apply)

- Land use/zoning
- Section 8 voucher distribution
- Affordability assessments
- Growth management
- Transit-oriented development

- Regional housing supply and demand forecasts
- Local housing supply and demand forecasts
- Distribution of housing-related grants
- Coordinating regional transportation and housing planning
- Other: _____

Display This Question:

If Does your region have an enacted regional plan? = Yes, enacted

Or Does your region have an enacted regional plan? = Not yet, but it's currently in development

Q20.2 To what extent are the following possible goals featured in your regional plan?

	Not an included goal	Included but not featured	Top priority goal
Infill housing development	☐	☐	☐
Green/LEED certified development	☐	☐	☐
Transit-oriented development	☐	☐	☐
Reducing living (housing + transit) costs	☐	☐	☐
Reducing vehicle miles traveled	☐	☐	☐
Preserving the natural environment/open space	☐	☐	☐
Increasing walking access from homes to stores and businesses	☐	☐	☐
Distributing affordable housing evenly across the region (including town/neighborhoods with currently low levels of subsidized housing)		☐	☐
Historic building preservation		☐	☐
Other:		☐	☐

Q21 Does your region have any growth management tools in force?

- Yes
- No

- I don't know

Display This Question:

If Does your region have any growth management tools in force? = Yes

Q21.1 Which growth management tools does your region use? (Select all that apply)

- Growth boundary or green belt
- Open space or land preservation ordinance
- Conservation easements
- Adequate public facilities ordinances
- Transfer of development rights
- Other: _____

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q22 How long has your organization been conducting its housing activities?

- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- >25 years

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q23 How would you describe the scope of your organization's housing-related activities this year relative to the past \${Q22/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}?

- Increased in scope
- No change in scope
- Decreased in scope

Q24 What additional supports would help your organization address your region's housing challenges (if any)? (Select all that apply)

- Technical assistance and/or peer learning opportunities
- Federal or state funding for coordination and general housing planning/policy work

- Greater local government support for and participation in regional coordination
- Greater private developer investment in market rate housing
- Greater developer or government investment in subsidized affordable housing
- Greater economic development investment
- State-vested authority for regional housing requirements
- Other: _____

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q25 In your estimation, how would the governing board that makes decisions about regional housing activities like see the following measures changed (if at all) to address regional housing challenges:

	Don't change: keep nonexistent	Reduce	Don't change: keep as they exist	Increase	Create for the first time
Mandatory growth management requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mandatory regional housing needs assessments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State laws banning local affordable housing mandates (i.e., Inclusionary Zoning)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State laws creating affordable housing targets or fair share allocations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State laws mandating higher minimum zoned densities (e.g. bans on single-family-only zoning)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Government-issued, population-forecast-tied housing unit development targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Federal funding for LIHTC and other affordable housing programs (e.g., CDBG, HOME, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning?!= None—We have no housing-related activities

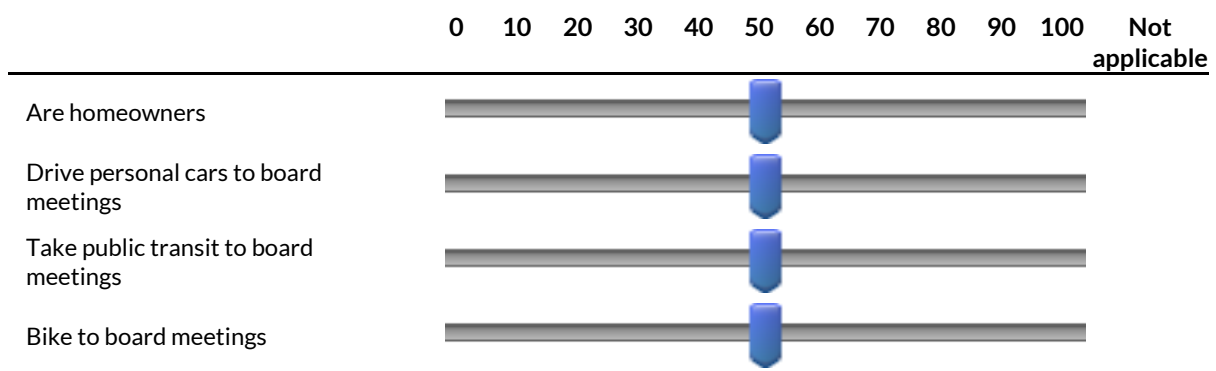
Q26 In your estimation, how supportive is the governing board making decisions about regional housing planning and/or activities toward the following:

	Not supportive at all	Neutral	Strongly supportive
Affordable housing subsidies	☐	☐	☐
Increased or more evenly distributed subsidized housing development	☐	☐	☐
Rental housing	☐	☐	☐
Regional fair housing assessments	☐	☐	☐
Transit-oriented housing development	☐	☐	☐
Regional housing planning or zoning oversight	☐	☐	☐
Performance metric decisionmaking	☐	☐	☐

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning?!= None—We have no housing-related activities

Q27 What share of the members of your organization's board:



End of Block: RQ 1 - Housing Planning Activities

Start of Block: MPO Questions

Display This Question:

If What best describes the nature of the organization on whose behalf you are responding? (Select al... = An MPO

Or Does your organization have any of the following additional entities within or associated with it?(Select all that apply) An MPO Is Selected

Q28 Does your (organization's) MPO incorporate any of the following regional housing and land use data into its transportation decisionmaking modeling: (select all that apply)

- Current housing stock
- Future housing stock
- Forecasted housing demand
- Current land use
- Land use laws
- Other housing/land use-related data: _____

Display This Question:

If What best describes the nature of the organization on whose behalf you are responding? (Select al... = An MPO

Or Does your organization have any of the following additional entities within or associated with it?(Select all that apply) An MPO Is Selected

Q29 Does your (organization's) MPO use any of the following in justifying its selection of new projects in its short range transportation improvement program: (select all that apply)

- Existing housing stock
- Planned housing stock
- Forecasted housing demand
- Current land use
- Land use laws
- Other housing or land-use related inputs: _____

Display This Question:

If What best describes the nature of the organization on whose behalf you are responding? (Select al... = An MPO

Or Does your organization have any of the following additional entities within or associated with it?(Select all that apply) An MPO Is Selected

Q30 When designing long range transportation plans, does your (organization's) MPO integrate any of the following into its decisions around which projects to include:

- Existing housing stock
- Planned housing stock
- Forecasted housing demand
- Current land use
- Land use laws
- Other housing or land-use related inputs: _____

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning?! = None—We have no housing-related activities

And If

What best describes the nature of the organization on whose behalf you are responding? (Select al... = An MPO

Or Does your organization have any of the following additional entities within or associated with it... An MPO Is Selected

Q30.1 On a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 being not integrated at all (e.g., any transportation or housing plans are created entirely separately of each other and do not mention each other) and 5 being fully integrated (e.g., the plan(s) is/are developed with a single or shared team)—how do you deeply integrated are your regional housing and transportation planning processes?

- 1 (Not integrated at all)
- 2 (Barely integrated)
- 3 (Somewhat integrated)
- 4 (Fairly integrated)
- 5 (Fully integrated)

End of Block: MPO Questions

Start of Block: Financial and Staff Management

Q31 The following three to six questions pertain to your overall organization's financial and staff management characteristics and practices.

Q32 What was your organization's estimated annual total expenses for 2023?

- Less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 — \$999,999
- \$1 Million — \$9.9 Million
- \$10 Million — \$99 Million
- Greater than \$100 Million

- I don't know

Q33 How many full-time, paid staff did your organization employ in the 2023 fiscal year?

- 0 – 9 employees
- 10 – 19 employees
- 20 – 49 employees
- 50 – 99 employees
- 100 – 250 employees
- 250 – 499 employees
- 500 employees or more

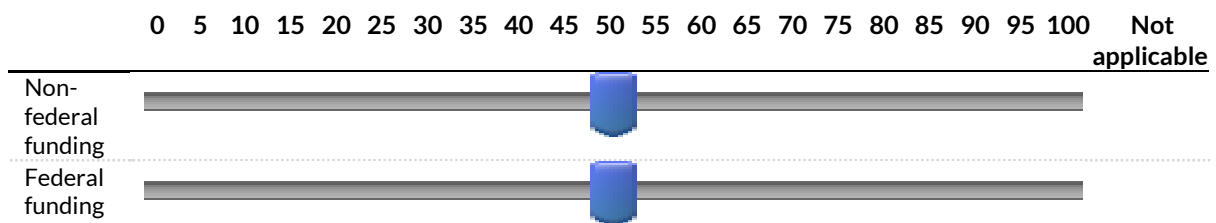
Q34 How many full-time, paid staff did your organization *including your host agency and other sub-entities* employ in the 2023 fiscal year?

- 0 – 9 employees
- 10 – 19 employees
- 20 – 49 employees
- 50 – 99 employees
- 100 – 250 employees
- 250 – 499 employees
- 500 employees or more

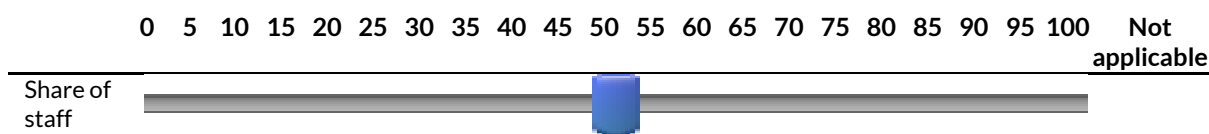
Q35 During the 2023 fiscal year, did your organization sub-allocate federal or state funding?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q36 What share of your organization's (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) funding in the 2023 fiscal year would you estimate goes toward housing-related activities? (Use the slider to indicate)



Q37 What share of staff at your organization in the 2023 fiscal year (including your host agency and other sub-entities, if applicable) would you estimate spent more than 50% of their time working on regional housing and community development planning, coordination, and/or analysis? (use the slider to indicate)



End of Block: Financial and Staff Management

Start of Block: Board Details

Q38 Does your organization share the same governing board with your host agency?

- Yes, it is exactly the same as the host agency's governing board
- Yes, but it is a subset of the host agency's governing board
- No

Q39 How many jurisdictions are represented on governing board(s) within your overall organization?

▼ 1 ... >40

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q40 How many individuals are on the highest-level governing board within your organization that makes decisions related to regional housing planning and/or activities?

▼ 1 ... >30

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q41 How many of the individuals on the highest-level governing board that makes decisions about regional housing planning are voting members?

▼ 1 ... >40

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q42 Please indicate—for the governing board[s] that make decisions about regional housing planning, how many voting board seats are allocated to the following (please avoid double counting)

- County commissioners (or equivalent) _____
- Countywide elected executive officials _____
- Municipal elected officials (or equivalent) _____

- Municipal elected executive officials _____
- State departments of housing _____
- State departments of transportation _____
- Public transit authorities _____
- Public housing agencies _____
- Toll or expressway authorities _____
- Sea/aviation port authorities _____
- Tribal governments _____
- Local school districts _____
- Colleges or universities _____
- Military installations _____
- Gubernatorial appointees (not included elsewhere) _____
- Private sector representatives _____
- Legal representatives _____
- Advisory committee representatives _____
- Other: _____

Display This Question:

If What practical activities, within your organization (including your host agency or other sub-entities), are directed at regional housing coordination or planning? != None—We have no housing-related activities

Q43 Does each voting member of the board that makes decisions about regional housing planning have an equal vote? If weighted, please explain.

- Votes are equal
- Votes are weighted (please explain) _____

End of Block: Board Details

Start of Block: Ending

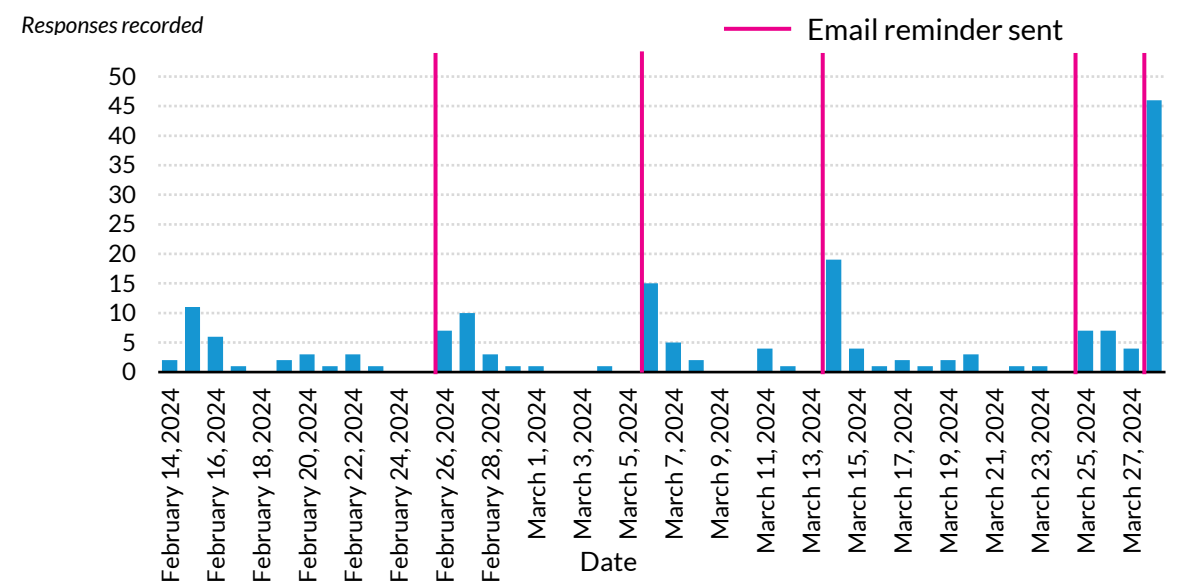
Q44 Is there anything else you think we should know about your organization related to regional housing in your planning and coordination activities?

End of Block: Ending

Appendix B. Additional Data Tables

Characteristics of Survey Responses

FIGURE B.1
Survey Responses Spiked in the Days Following Reminders
February 24 through March 28, 2024



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey responses.

TABLE B.1
Survey Respondents by State

State	Number of respondents	Share of total respondents
AL	2	1.4
AR	1	0.7
AZ	3	2.1
CA	5	3.5
CO	3	2.1
CT	4	2.8
DC	1	0.7
DE	1	0.7

State	Number of respondents	Share of total respondents
FL	10	7.0
GA	2	1.4
HI	1	0.7
IA	1	0.7
ID	1	0.7
IL	6	4.2
IN	3	2.1
KS	2	1.4
KY	3	2.1
LA	2	1.4
MA	5	3.5
MD	2	1.4
ME	1	0.7
MI	6	4.2
MO	1	0.7
MS	1	0.7
NC	6	4.2
ND	2	1.4
NE	1	0.7
NH	3	2.1
NM	3	2.1
NV	3	2.1
NY	4	2.8
OH	11	7.69
OK	1	0.7
OR	4	2.8
PA	6	4.2
SC	2	1.4
SD	1	0.7
TX	10	6.99
UT	3	2.1
VA	4	2.8
VT	1	0.7
WA	6	4.2
WI	2	1.4
WV	1	0.7
WY	2	1.4
Total	143	100

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Characteristics of Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations

Respondent organizations represented broad swaths of the US, though our survey captured a larger share of organizations in the South (table B.2). This stemmed from the large number of respondents in Florida and Texas (10 each), with only Ohio offering more respondents per state (11).

TABLE B.2
Survey Respondents Are Primarily Concentrated in the South

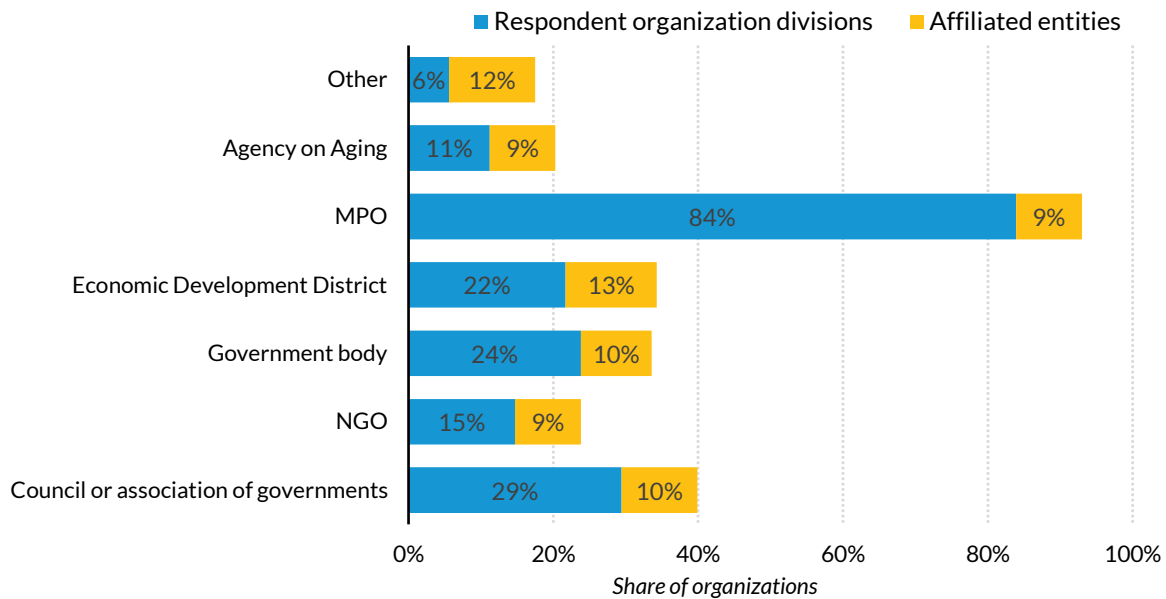
Region	Respondents	Share of total MGPOs in region
Northeast	24	17%
Midwest	36	25%
South	49	34%
West	34	24%

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Likely because of the federal mandate for MPOs’ existence and our sample design, 93 percent of respondents had an MPO as part of their organization (figure B.2). The next most popular category was an association of governments, though just 39 percent of respondents reported having one of these.

FIGURE B.2

Regional Planning and Governance Organization Structures by Division Types and Affiliated Entities



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Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Notes: "Other" organization division types included regional planning commissions, workforce development boards, and housing authorities.

Respondents were divided roughly evenly across our three service population size categories, with 23 percent serving populations above 1 million; 40 percent serving between 200,000 and 999,999; and 37 percent serving populations between 50,000 and 199,999. However, when assessing the distribution of service area populations and of the census metropolitan regions in which these regional organizations were located, there were clear regional trends (table B.3). Southern organization respondents clearly have much larger service areas than respondents in other regions despite the coastal regions' larger overall metropolitan regional populations. This indicates that southern organizations cover significantly larger territories, which may make it more difficult to provide regional transportation services and cohesively plan around housing and development across disparate environments and economies.

TABLE B.3

The South Has More Large Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations and the West Has More Small Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations

	Small (population 50,000– 199,999)	Medium (population 200,000– 999,999)	Large (population above 1 million)	Average metro region population
Northeast	42%	42%	16%	1,691,212
Midwest	44%	36%	20%	927,945
South	20%	47%	33%	1,704,734
West	50%	32%	18%	899,086

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Tables B.4 and B.5 lay out respondents' organizational size by employees and annual operating expenses. Roughly a third of all respondent organizations had under 50 employees total, which is in line with the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' estimates on the average number of employees in nonprofit organizations (42 employees).⁷ Notably, a quarter of all respondents had more than 500 employees at their organization, indicating extensive organizational complexity and functions. By expenditures, the largest share of organizations qualified as small organizations with budgets between \$1 and \$9.9 million, and the remaining shares were split between those with expenditures under \$1 million and those with expenditures above \$10 million. Generally, these expenditure amounts indicate these organizations work with larger budgets than average nonprofits, which is understandable as MGPOs frequently function as public service implementation entities disbursing government investments (Faulk 2021).

TABLE B.4

Surveyed Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations Mostly Had Greater Than 500 Employees

Full-time, paid staff, including at host agency, employed in 2023	Share of organizations
0–9 employees	8%
10–19 employees	16%
20–49 employees	8%
50–99 employees	12%
100–250 employees	16%
250–499 employees	12%
500 or more employees	26%

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Note: Host agencies included councils of governments, regional associations, local or county governments, or other organizations.

TABLE B.5

Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organization Budgets Were Mostly Between \$1 Million and \$10 Million

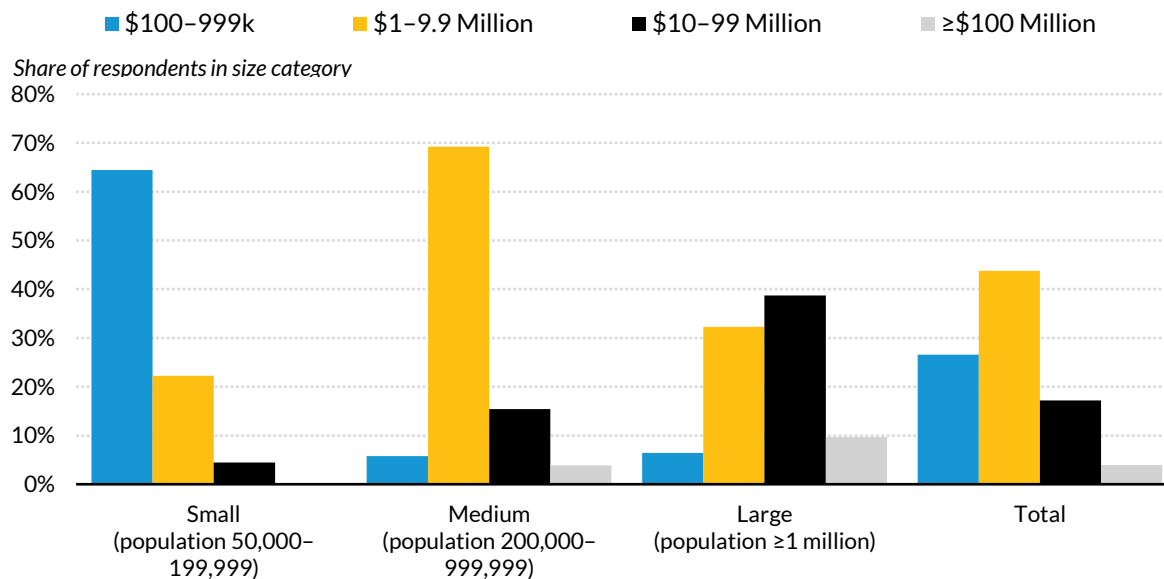
Estimated annual total expenses for 2023	Share of organizations
\$100,000–\$999,999	27%
\$1 million–\$9.9 million	44%
\$10 million–\$99 million	17%
\$100 million or more	4%
Unsure	9%
Total	100%

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Organization size tended to follow service area populations (figure B.3), with most organizations that had annual expenditures of less than \$1 million serving smaller service areas, those with budgets between \$1 million and \$10 million serving medium-sized service areas, and the highest share of organizations with budgets above \$10 million serving large service areas.

FIGURE B.3

Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organization Size by Annual Expenditures Positively Correlated with Service Areas

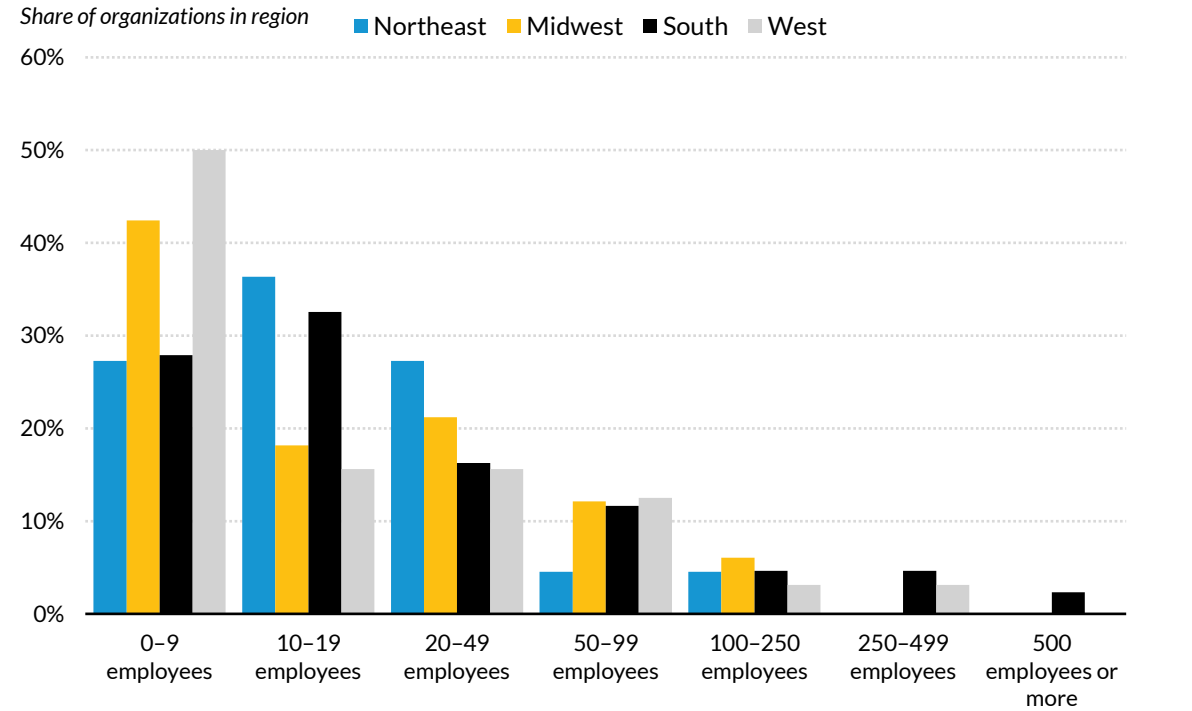


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Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

Organizations in the south tended to be larger followed by organizations in the Northeast, while midwestern and western organizations trended smaller (figure B.4). These larger organizations tended to have higher numbers of jurisdictions in their service areas (figure B.5), indicating either larger service areas or higher degrees of fragmentation. Midwestern and southern respondent organizations frequently had more than 40 jurisdictions in their service areas while most respondents in the West had 10 or fewer jurisdictions. Southern respondents had polarized responses, with near balance between organizations coordinating fewer than 10 and organizations coordinating more than 40 jurisdictions. This pattern of responses indicates that regional organizations in the Midwest and South must navigate more complex interjurisdictional negotiations, as they apparently face higher levels of fragmentation.

FIGURE B.4
Metropolitan Planning and Governance Organizations Tend to Be Smaller in the Northeast and Midwest, But the West Has the Highest Share of Small Organizations



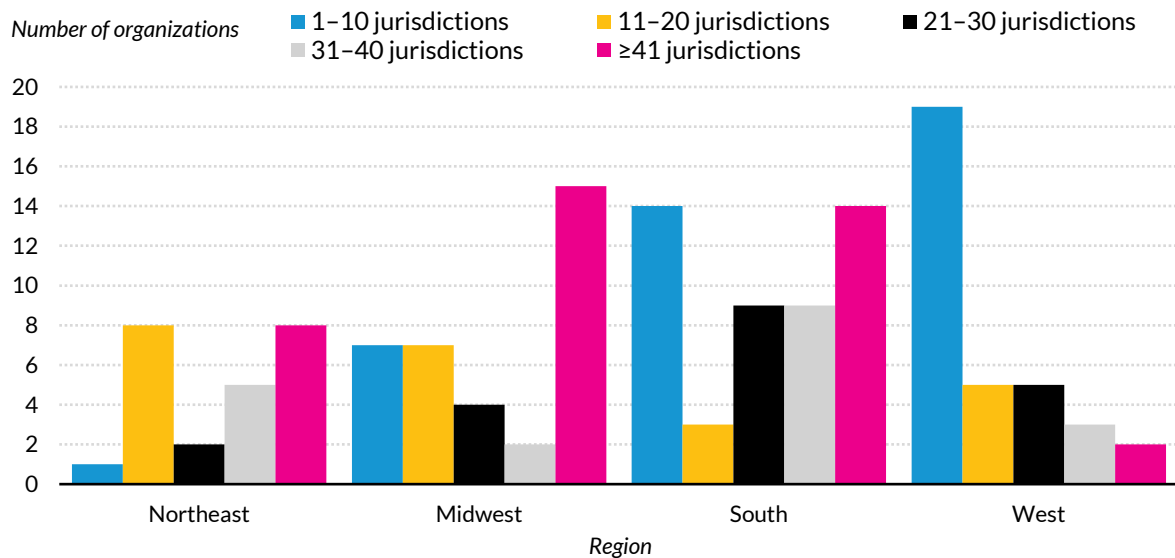
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Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

FIGURE B.5

Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations in the South Have the Most Fragmented Service Areas and Organizations in the West Are the Most Consolidated

MGPO responses to questions on the number of jurisdictions represented on their governing board(s)



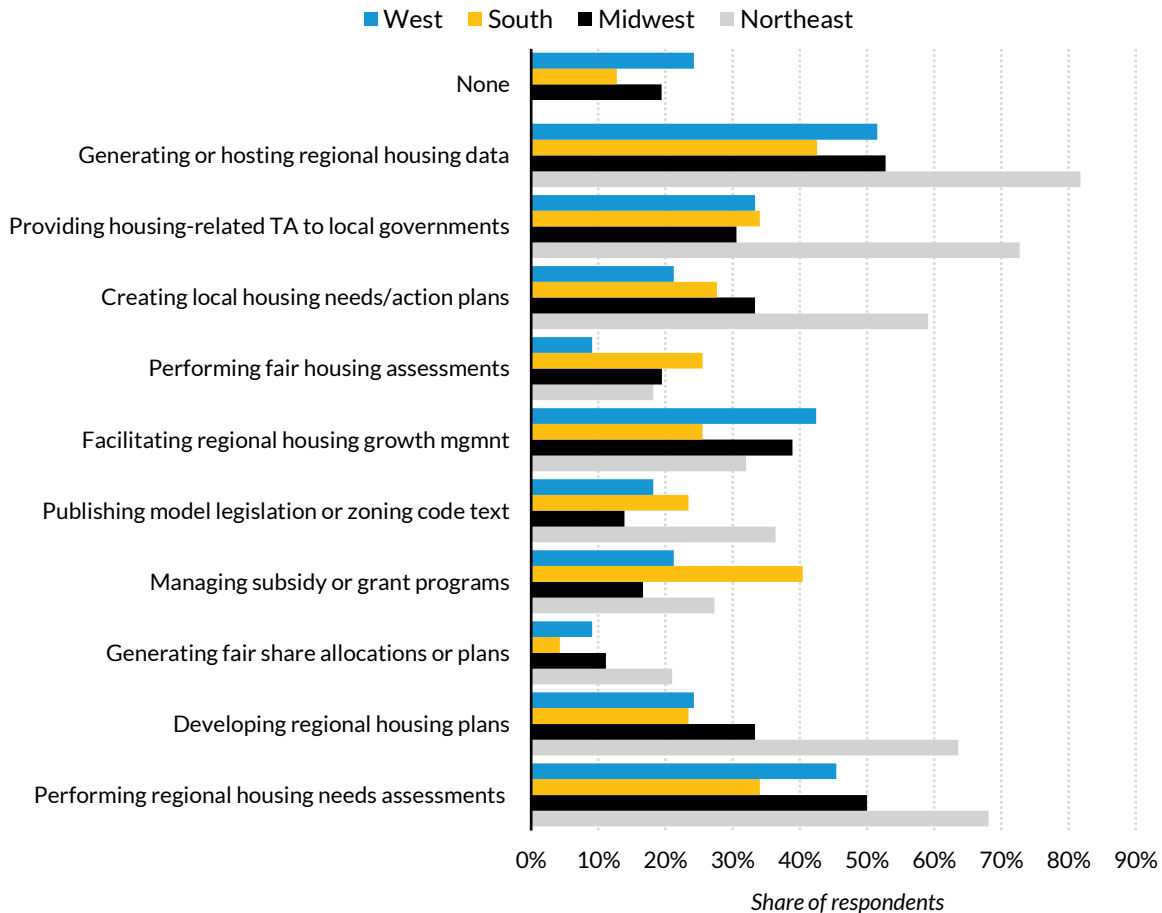
URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Author analysis of Urban Institute 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey data.

When looking at how organizations engaged in housing-related work, there were clear regional trends (figure B.6). Organizations in the Northeast had by far the most housing-related activities of organizations in any region. Northeast organizations had the highest share of respondents affirming engaging in an activity in seven of the eleven possible categories. Notably, over two thirds of northeastern MGPOs reported conducting regional housing needs assessments, providing technical assistance to local governments, and hosting regional housing data, and nearly as many reported creating regional housing plans and overseeing local housing action planning. This demonstrates a higher regional level of comfort and expertise in considering and coordinating housing planning from a regional perspective. Southern MGPOs had the highest share reporting managing subsidy programs while western and midwestern MGPOs reported facilitating regional growth management approaches.

FIGURE B.6

The Northeast Has the Highest Share of Metropolitan Governance and Planning Organizations Engaging in Housing-Related Activities



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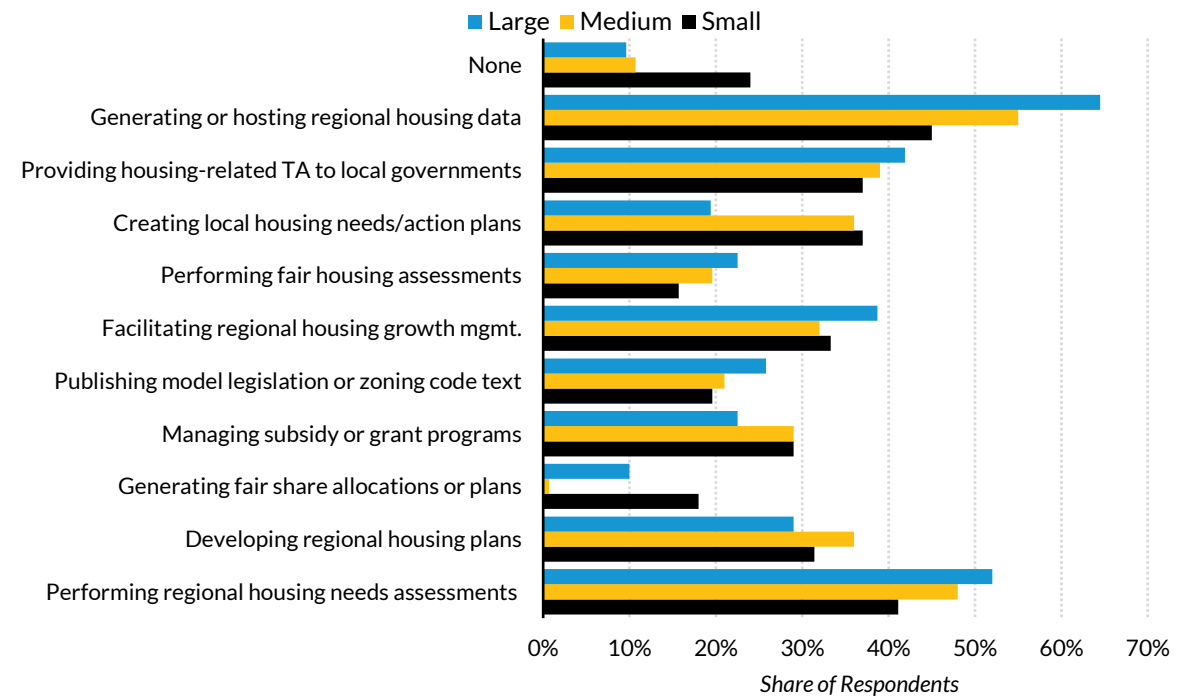
Source: The authors analysis of the 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey.

Notes: N = 138. TA = technical assistance.

After assessing housing-related activities by organization size, it became clear that the additional staff and dollars that result from serving larger populations enable organizations to do more housing-related work (figure B.7). Large organizations had a higher share reporting hosting regional data, facilitating growth management, publishing model legislation, and performing regional housing needs assessments. In contrast, small organizations had the highest share reporting not engaging in any housing-related activities (in line with our findings about TMAs being barred from using funds for activities not related to transportation). Furthermore, smaller organizations tended to run more fair-share housing allocation operations and create local housing needs/action plans. And most notably, the

highest share of organizations reporting managing housing grant or subsidy programs were small organizations.

FIGURE B.7
Regional Housing Activities Increase with Organization Size (by Service Population)



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Source: The authors' analysis of the 2024 metropolitan governance and planning organization survey.
Notes: N = 138. TA = technical assistance. Small = population 50,000–199,999; Medium = population 200,000–999,999; Large = population at least 1,000,000.

Notes

- ¹ “Transportation Planning Capacity Building: Housing in Transportation Planning,” US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration, accessed June 2, 2025, https://www.planning.dot.gov/planning/topic_housing.aspx.
- ² Yonah Freemark, “Throughout History, the US Failed to Integrate Transportation and Land Use. It’s Still Hindering Policymaking Today.” *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, May 17, 2021, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/throughout-history-us-failed-integrate-transportation-and-land-use-its-still-hindering-policymaking-today>.
- ³ Consider, for example, Montgomery County, Maryland’s, social housing program.
- ⁴ “Transportation Improvement Program (TIP),” Federal Transit Administration, accessed February 4, 2025, <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/transportation-improvement-program-tip>.
- ⁵ Just 28 percent of respondents reported managing housing-specific subsidy or grant programs, but 45 percent noted that they accomplished some of their housing goals by managing subsidy or grant programs. This nuance indicates that some MGPOs accomplish housing-related goals with non-housing-specific grant programs.
- ⁶ Only 30 percent of staff respondents reported that they thought they needed state-vested authority for regional housing requirements. In contrast, 48 percent of them believe that their boards would be supportive of regional housing planning or zoning oversight. This difference in support may be because MPO staff may not think they need statutory authority for performing a housing needs assessment, or that staff at the MPOs wouldn’t want to take on the responsibilities without an outstanding amount of financial planning dollars and staff expertise to support the activity. Separately, regional planners may be less willing to take over the responsibility held (and prized) by local planners than elected officials are to support such a move in theory. The contrast among (1) needing authority to impose requirements, (2) wanting to providing oversight and staff, and (3) boards’ opinions warrants further research.
- ⁷ US Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2024. “Nonprofits: A Look at National Trends in Establishment Size and Employment,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2024/article/nonprofits-a-look-at-national-trends-in-establishment-size-and-employment.htm>.

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