

Incorporating Megaregional Concepts into Long-Range Plans



George Thomas ("St. Louis skyline HDR," Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Scaling Up: Thinking Megaregionally in Long-Range Planning
New Partners for Smart Growth, St. Louis, MO
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American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

planning.org/nationalcenters/green/megaregions/

Overview

1. The Local Benefits of Megaregional Thinking
2. APA's Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places
3. Local Comprehensive Planning Guidance

The Local Benefits of Megaregional Thinking

- Competitive advantages
- Quality of life improvements
- Grateful neighbors

Competitive Advantages



Andre Gunawan ("Tech in Asia," <https://www.techinasia.com>, Flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Quality of Life Improvements



Grateful Neighbors



Karakorum90

APA's Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places



- 7 Required Principles
- 2 Required Processes
- 2 Required Attributes

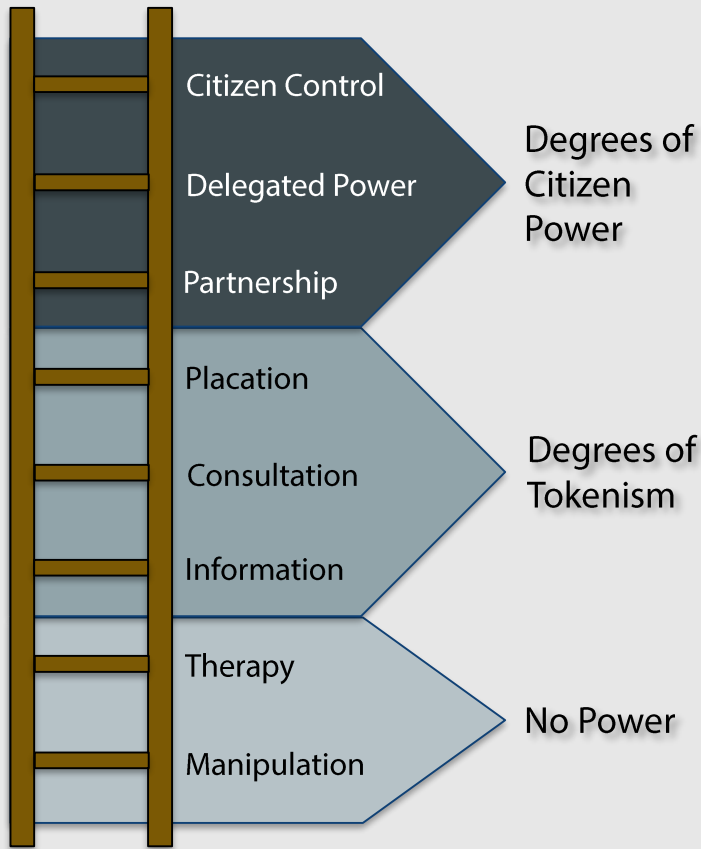
Required Principles



Required Processes

Authentic Participation

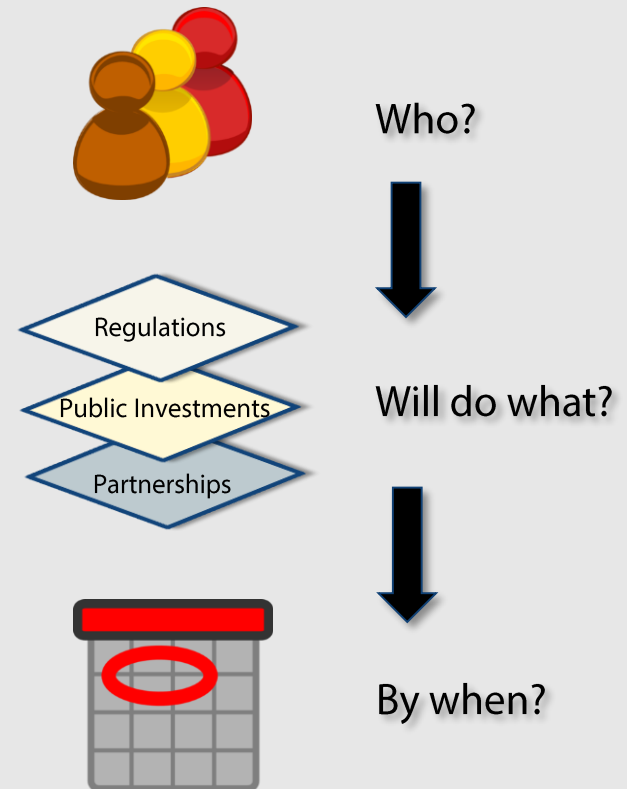
- 7 Best Practices



Adapted from Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *JAIP*, 35(4): July 1969.

Accountable Implementation

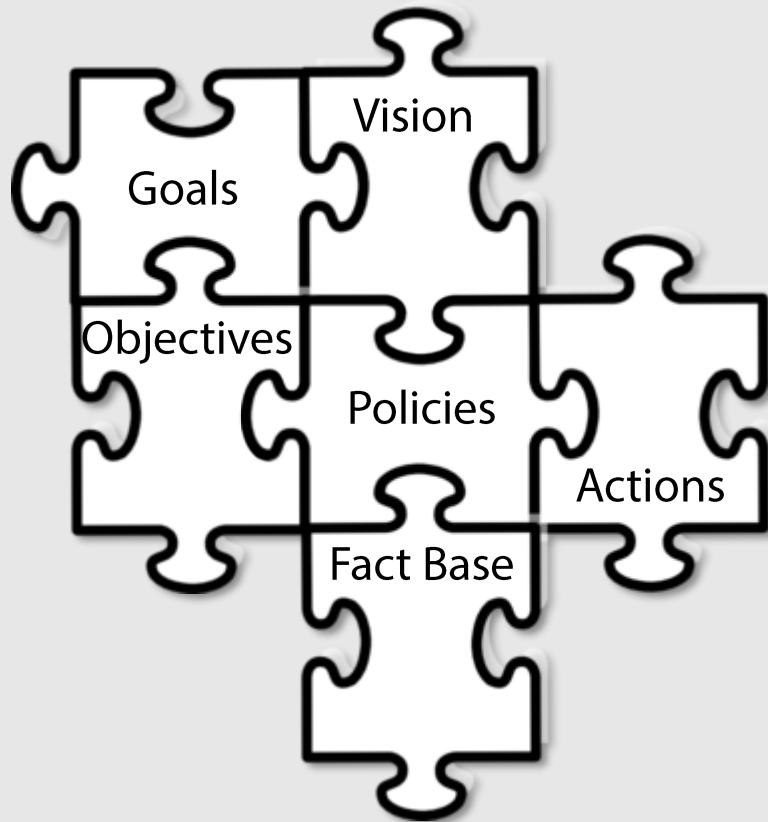
- 8 Best Practices



Required Attributes

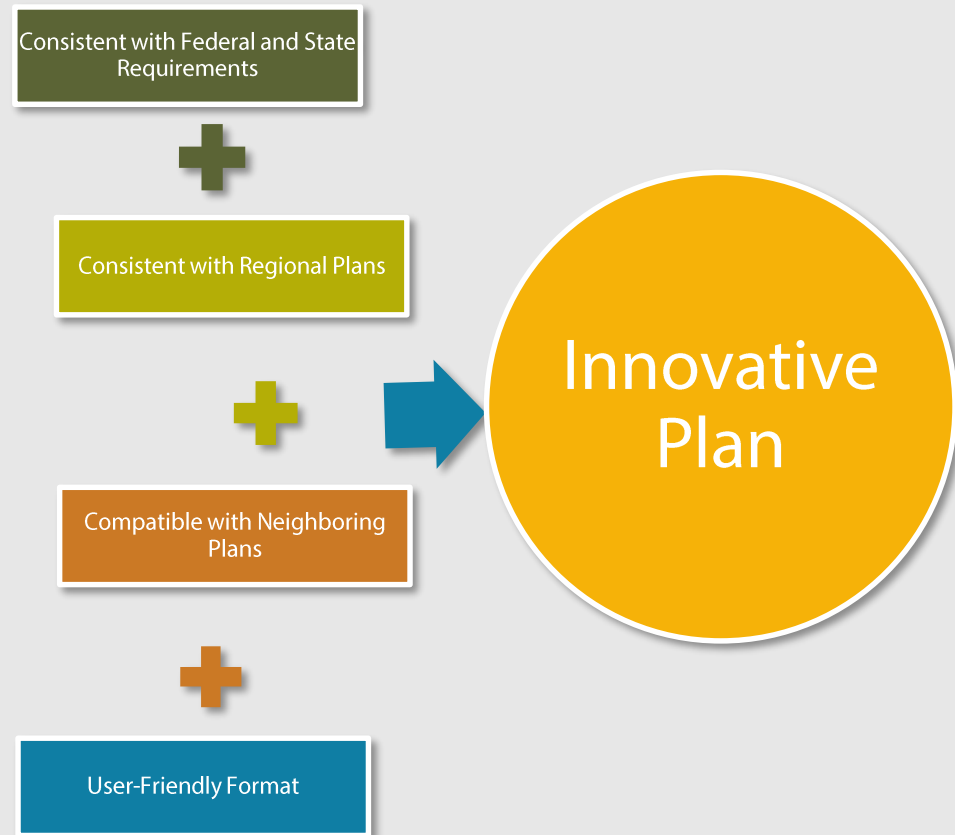
Consistent Content

- 8 Best Practices

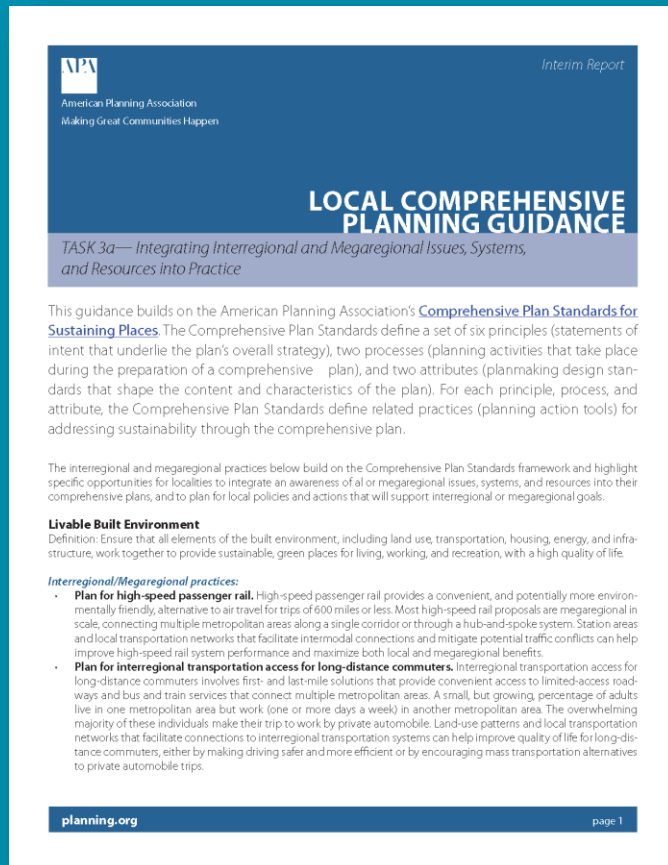


Coordinated Characteristics

- 9 Best Practices



Local Comprehensive Planning Guidance



- 26 Recommended Practices
- Organized Under the Comprehensive Plan Standards Principles, Processes, and Attributes

A Few Highlights

Livable Built Environment

- Plan for interregional transportation access for long-distance commuters.

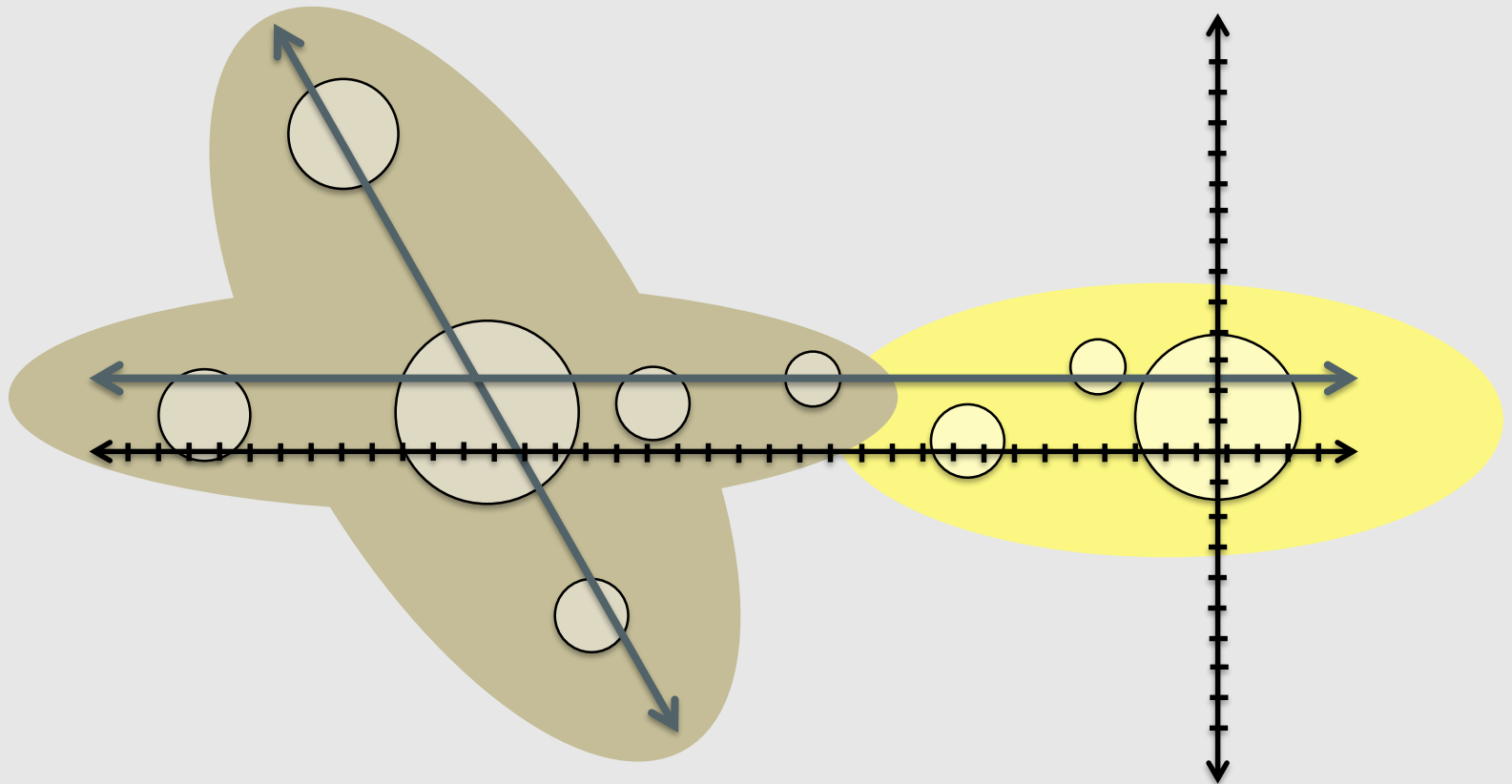
An Errant Knight ("Directional signs at Salt Lake City Intermodal Hub," Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0)



A Few Highlights

Resilient Economy

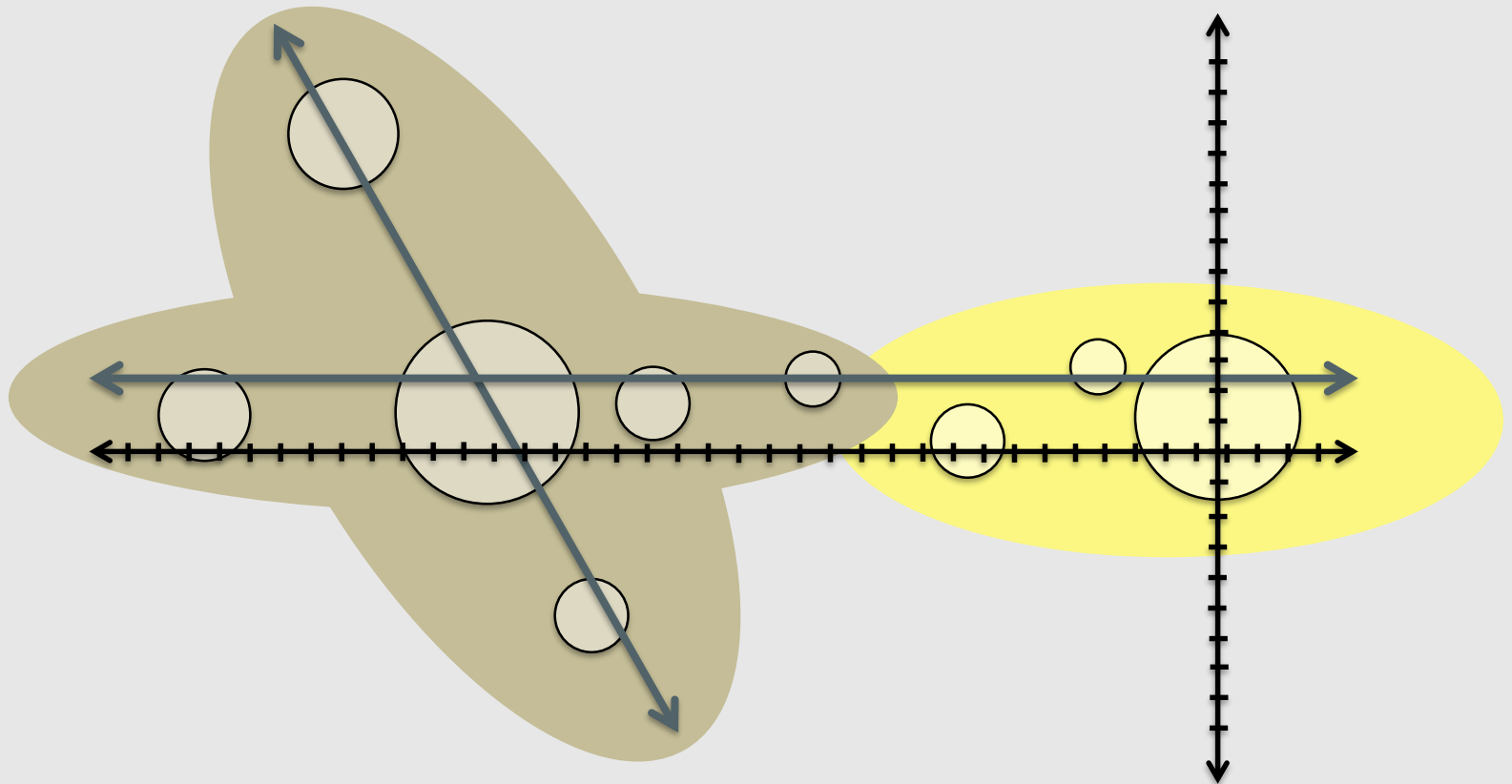
- Support interregional economies.



A Few Highlights

Consistent Content

- Incorporate interregional considerations into assessments of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.





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Overview

1. The Regional Benefits of Thinking Megaregionally
2. Regional Long-Range Planning Guidance

Regional Benefits of Thinking Megaregionally

- Megaregional/interregional systems
- Competitive advantages
- Environmental stewardship
- Equity considerations

Megaregional/Interregional Systems



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Competitive Advantages



John Getchel/Flickr

Environmental Stewardship



Equity Considerations



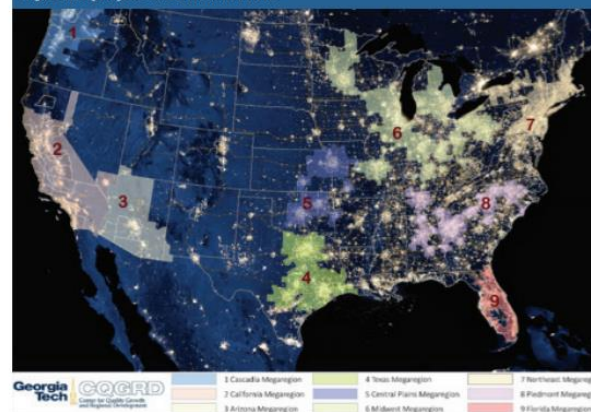
Regional Long-Range Planning Guidance



Defining Megaregions

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

Figure 1: Megaregions across the United States



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

Regional Long-Range Planning Guidance

- Four key areas for regional planning agencies to engage:
 - Long-range transportation planning
 - Convening
 - Data collection and analysis, forecasting
 - Technical assistance



Regional Long-Range Planning Guidance

- Long-range transportation planning
 - Planning guidance based on the scope of the planning process for MPOs as defined in 23 USC §134(h) and 49 USC §5303(h).
 - 31 Recommended Practices

Table 1: Planning Factors

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.	
PRACTICES	OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS
1.1. Address the concept of megaregions in the plan's fact base. This includes acknowledging the region's location within a megaregion and discussing interregional connections (e.g., economic, transportation, environmental). This should also involve analysis of current conditions and future trends, including demographics, economic and environmental indicators, and land-use and transportation patterns. Addressing megaregions in the plan's fact base will lend support for policies and investments that relate or respond to megaregional systems, issues, or trends.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
1.2. Coordinate regional proposals within the region and interregionally. This involves accounting for, connecting with, and supporting the plans of localities within the MPO's jurisdiction as well as those of neighboring MPOs and localities. Coordinating proposals within the region and interregionally ensures that local and regional plans, programs, and policies are not at cross-purposes, and that plans of neighboring regions are complementary.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
1.3. Plan for an interregional jobs-housing balance with equitable transportation connections. A jobs-housing balance is defined by the ratio of jobs to housing within a commuter shed. As interregional commuting increases, commuter sheds transcend metropolitan area boundaries. One of the forces behind expanding commuter sheds is a lack of affordable housing options located in close proximity to employment centers or connected by safe and convenient transportation options. Planning for a jobs-housing balance with equitable transportation options that connect the areas where people live and work can support economic vitality and productivity by increasing access to employment opportunities, while reducing the transportation cost burden and the need for long-distance commuting.	7

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

2.1. Coordinate interregionally on intelligent transportation systems.

1, 4, 9, 10, 11

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) incorporate information and communications technologies into transportation infrastructure, including vehicles. ITS techniques, such as vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-signal communication, can improve safety and reduce casualties associated with vehicle crashes. It can also increase both safety and mobility by providing both motorized and nonmotorized users with real-time updates that can help them make decisions about routes and transportation modes. Coordinating interregionally on ITS may help make user experiences more consistent and predictable over large geographic areas, while also maximizing efficient deployment.



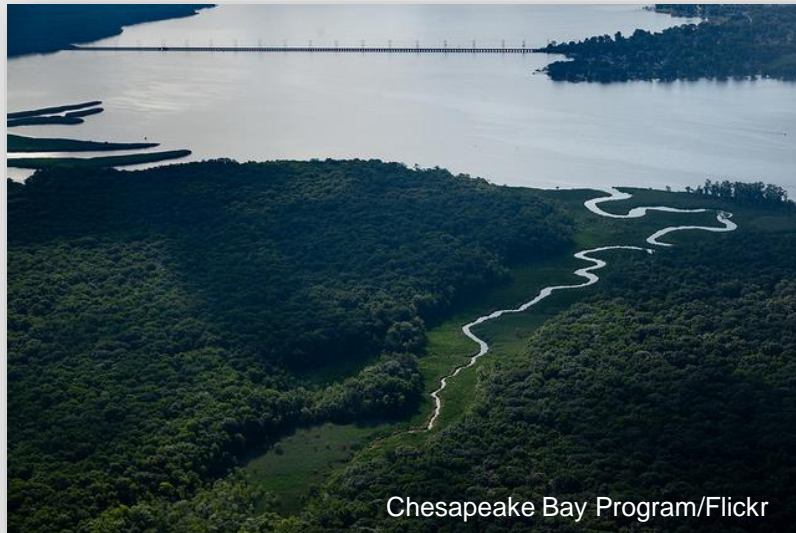
<http://www.dot.nd.gov/imgs/its.jpg>

5. Protect and enhance the environment

5.2. Protect interregional water resources.

1, 7, 8

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



Chesapeake Bay Program/Flickr



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7. Improve quality of life for the community

7.1. Promote interregional environmental justice.

1, 5, 8

Interregional environmental justice is characterized by land-use decision making processes for facilities intended to serve multiple metropolitan areas that afford the same level of protection from environmental and health hazards to all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income. Some facilities—such as landfills, incinerators, waste-transfer stations, coal-fired power plants, and intermodal freight hubs—serve customers in multiple metropolitan areas but have negative environmental effects that are often borne disproportionately by lower-income communities of color. Working at the interregional scale to address the land-use policies that increase exposure to environmental risk can improve quality of life for all community members.



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