

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CERTIFICATION

SUMMARY REPORT

**TMA _____
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

**PREPARED BY
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

Report Issued

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Preface

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census, with a population of over 200,000. There are 153 TMAs in the U.S. based on the 2000 Census. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: review of planning products, a site visit, and preparation of a report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO, State DOT, and transit operator in the conduct of the metropolitan planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA certification review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect local issues and needs. As a consequence, the scope and depth of the certification review reports will vary significantly.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a local metropolitan planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program approval, the long-range plan, Metropolitan and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Findings, air quality conformity determinations (in non-attainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contacts provide both FHWA and FTA opportunities to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the certification review process.

While the planning certification review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the "finding" of the certification review, in fact, is based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare certification reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices and content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether or not they relate explicitly to formal "findings" of the review.

To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA/FTA will continue to improve the clarity of the certification review reports.

Executive Summary

On *date*, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the *name* urbanized area. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements. The first certification review for the *name* metropolitan area was conducted in *year1*. The second, third, and fourth certification reviews were conducted in *year2*, *year3*, and *year4*, respectively.

The current review found that the transportation planning process conducted in the *name* area

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by MDOT, *MPO name* and *Transit operator* subject to addressing the corrective actions. Details of the certification findings are contained in this report.

I. Introduction and Background Information

Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process in all urbanized areas over 200,000 population to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 USC 134, 40 USC 5303, and 23 CFR 450. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), extended the minimum allowable frequency of certification reviews to at least every four years. Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in such areas. The certification review is also an opportunity to provide assistance on new programs and to enhance the ability of the process to provide decision makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions.

The initial certification review was conducted in *year1*. Subsequent certification reviews were conducted in *year2*, *year3*, and *year4*. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided in Appendix C. This report details the *number* review, which consisted of a formal site visit and one public meeting, conducted in *month, year*. Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), *transit operator*, and *MPO* staff. A full list of participants is included in Appendix A. A desk audit of current documents and correspondence was completed prior to the site visit. In addition to the formal review, routine oversight mechanisms provide a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings.

The certification review covers the transportation planning process conducted cooperatively by the MPO, State, and Transit Operators. The *organization name* is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the *name* urbanized area. MDOT is the responsible State agency and *transit operator* is the responsible Transit Agency. Current membership of the *MPO name* consists of elected officials and citizens from the political jurisdictions in *geographic area*. The study area includes all of *geographic area* with the City of *city name* as the largest population center. The *census name* urbanized area is the *rank* largest Michigan MPO in population, with a 2000 Census population of *population*. Background information, current status, key findings, and recommendations are summarized in the body of the report for the following subject areas selected by FHWA and FTA staff for on site review:

- MPO Status and Structure
- Transportation Plan/ Congestion Management Process
- Travel Demand Forecasting Model
- Transit Planning
- Air Quality
- Participation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Safety Planning

- Non-Motorized Planning

II. MPO Status and Structure

Background

Section 134(d) of Title 23 and Section 5303 of Title 49 set forth requirements for urbanized areas over 50,000 in population to designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that is responsible for carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. Regulation 23 CFR 450.314 further requires that responsibilities for carrying out transportation planning activities be clearly identified in an agreement(s) or memorandum(s) of understanding between the MPO, State DOT, and transit operators.

Section 134(e) of Title 23 and Section 5303 of Title 49 set forth the requirements for the area to be included in the metropolitan planning process as follows: “Each Metropolitan Planning Area shall encompass at least the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the transportation plan; and may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.”

Current Status

Findings

Recommendations

III. Transportation Plan/ Congestion Management Process

Background

Sections 134(c) and (i) of Title 23 and Section 5303(c) and (i) of Title 49 require Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop long-range transportation plans that cover at least a 20-year horizon and include both long range and short range strategies that lead to an integrated intermodal transportation system that provides for the efficient movement of people and goods. Regulation 23 CFR 450.322 outlines additional requirements, including items to be addressed in the plan, update cycles, and coordination with Environmental Protection Agency conformity rules for areas that are designated as non-attainment or maintenance for National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The transportation goals, objectives, and analyses documented in

the metropolitan transportation plan, provides the basis for identification of system-wide transportation improvement priorities.

All urbanized areas over 200,000 in population are designated as Transportation Management Areas (TMA). Section 134 (k)(3) of Title 23 requires that all Transportation Management Areas develop and utilize a Congestion Management Process (CMP) in their planning process. An effective CMP is a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing the mobility of persons and goods. Regulation 23 CFR 450.320 outlines requirements for implementing a CMP and further requires that TMAs designated as non-attainment for ozone, provide an analysis of the need for additional capacity for a proposed improvement over travel demand reduction, and operational management strategies. CMP has been defined as a process that tests alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and improving transportation system performance in order to enhance the mobility of people and goods.

Current Status

Findings

Recommendations

IV. Travel Demand Forecasting Model

Background

Travel demand forecasting models are used in the planning process to identify deficiencies in future year transportation systems and evaluate the impacts of alternative transportation investments. In air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, they are also used to estimate regional vehicle activity for use in mobile source emission models that support air quality conformity determinations. Although travel models are not specifically mandated as part of the metropolitan planning process, the forecasting methods used by an MPO are addressed as part of the certification review to ensure they adequately support the applications for which they are being used.

Current Status

Findings

Recommendations

V. Transit Planning

Background

Section 5303 of Title 49 and Section 134 of Title 23 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.314 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

Current Status

Findings

Recommendation

VI. Air Quality

Background

Regulation 23 CFR 450.322(l) requires that “In non-attainment or maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants, the MPO, as well as the FHWA and the FTA, must make a conformity determination on any updated or amended transportation plan in accordance with the Clean Air Act and the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93).” Regulation 23 CFR 450.324(a) requires that “In non-attainment or maintenance areas subject to transportation conformity requirements, the FHWA and the FTA, as well as the MPO, must make a conformity determination on any updated or amended TIP, in accordance with the Clean Air Act requirements and the EPA’s transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93).”

Current Status

Findings

Recommendations

VII. Participation Plan

Background

Sections 134(i)(5), 134(j)(1)(B) of Title 23 and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49, require a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. Additional requirements are set forth in 23 CFR 450.316 (a), stating the MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process.

Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and a periodically reviewing of the effectiveness of the participation plan. Title VI and the Executive Order 12898 for Environmental Justice provide further considerations by ensuring that federally funded policies and programs do not subject minority populations or low-income populations to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts.

Current Status

Findings

Recommendations

VIII. Transportation Improvement Program

Background

Regulation 23 CFR 450.324 requires that an MPO cooperatively develop a TIP that is consistent with the transportation plan and is financially constrained. The TIP must cover at least a four-year program of projects and be updated at least every four years. Additionally, the TIP must list all projects in sufficient detail outlined in the regulations, reflect public involvement, and identify the criteria for prioritizing projects. TEA-21 mandated and SAFETEA-LU strengthened the requirement that MPOs provide annual listings of all projects where Federal funds had been obligated during the previous year.

Current Status

Findings

Recommendations

IX. Safety Planning

Background

Federal statute 23 USC 134 (h)(1)(B) and (C) requires that the metropolitan planning process provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP. Additionally, addressing and ensuring safety on our nation's highway system is the number one goal for FHWA and is one of three areas identified by FHWA as the "vital few." FHWA is committed to assisting States and MPOs in their efforts to improve how safety is incorporated into the transportation planning process.

Current Status

Findings

Commendation

Recommendations

X. Non-Motorized Planning

Background

Federal statute 23 USC 134(c)(2) indicates that MPO transportation plans and TIPs should include accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities as part of the intermodal transportation system for the metropolitan planning area. Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction and transportation facilities, except where bicycle and pedestrian use are not permitted.

Current Status

Findings

Commendations

Recommendation

XI. Public Comments

XII. Conclusions and Recommendations

Appendix A

List of Participants

Federal Review Team:

Michigan Department of Transportation:

Metropolitan Planning Organization:

Transportation Operator:

Appendix B

Listing of Corrective Actions, Commendations and Recommendations

Corrective Actions:

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Appendix C

Status of Previous Certification Review

One of the priorities of each certification review is assessing how well the planning partners in the area have addressed corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification review. This section identifies the corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification and summarizes discussions of how they have been addressed.

Corrective Action 1:

Status:

Corrective Action 2:

Status:

Recommendation 1:

Status:

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Recommendation 2:

Status:

Recommendation 3:

Status:

Recommendation 4:

Status:

Recommendation 5:

Status:

Recommendation 6:

Status: