



Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

2017 FHWA - FTA Certification Review



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

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Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council Transportation Certification Review

Certification Report: April 2018

On-Site Review: November 6th -8th, 2017

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Preface

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to review, evaluate, and certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in each Transportation Management Area (TMA), an urbanized area of 200,000 population or more, at least every four years. The intent of the statutory and regulatory requirements is to develop a transportation system that serves the mobility interests of people and freight through a multifaceted metropolitan planning process. The certification review is to assure that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and that the planning process is being conducted in accordance with:

- (1) 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303, and this subpart;
- (2) In nonattainment and maintenance areas, sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506(c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93;
- (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21;
- (4) 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity;
- (5) Section 1101(b) of the FAST Act (Pub. L. 114-357) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in DOT funded projects;
- (6) 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts;
- (7) The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38;
- (8) The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance;
- (9) Section 324 of title 23 U.S.C. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender; and
- (10) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
- (11) Super Circular Reference - 2 CFR Part 200
- (12) All other applicable provision of Federal law.

The Federal certification review evaluates a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) transportation planning process, identifies strengths and weaknesses (as appropriate), and makes recommendations for improvements. Following the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA can take one of four certification actions:

- Full certification of the transportation planning process: this allows federally funded programs and projects of any type to be approved in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) over the next three years in accordance with the continuing planning process.
- Certification subject to specified corrective actions being taken: this allows all projects to move forward in the process while corrective actions are taken; this option may take the form of a temporary certification for a certain number of months rather than the full three years.



- Limited certification: this allows only certain specified categories of program and project funding to move forward while corrective actions are being taken.
- Certification withheld: approval of funding in whole or in part for attributed FHWA and FTA funds that the metropolitan area receives is stopped until the deficiencies in the planning process are corrected.

Within the context of the certification review the following terms may be used: Corrective Action, Recommendations, and Commendations.

- Corrective Action includes those items that fail to meet the requirements of the transportation statute and regulations, thus seriously impacting the outcome of the overall process. The expected change and timeline for accomplishing it are clearly defined.
- Recommendations are those items that, while somewhat less substantial and not regulatory, are still significant enough that FHWA and FTA are hopeful that State and local officials will consider taking some action. Typically, Recommendations involve the state of the practice or technical improvements instead of regulatory requirements.
- Commendations and noteworthy practices are those elements that demonstrate innovative, highly effective, well-thought-out procedures for implementing the planning requirements. Elements addressing items that have frequently posed problems nationwide could be cited as noteworthy practices.

During the autumn of 2017, FHWA and FTA conducted a certification review of the transportation planning process in the Syracuse, New York urbanized area as carried out by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). This report documents the Federal review.

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Executive Summary

Main Conclusions

The transportation planning process in the Syracuse, NY urbanized area, as carried out by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, is a very professional endeavor but due to the need to address a number of corrective actions it is hereby certified with conditions.

Background

The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration reviewed the SMTC transportation planning process in accordance with the requirement of 23 CFR '450.334' that all urbanized areas over 200,000 be reviewed at least every four years to assure that the planning process is in accordance with federal regulations.

The review included a desk-audit, a site visit to Syracuse, discussions with member agencies and the Central Staff, and an opportunity for input from the public, the Policy Committee, the executive committee, and the planning committee members an opportunity for input.

Noteworthy Practices

There are many examples of good transportation planning practices that SMTC executes. We note in the report, for example, SMTC's *Bridge and Pavement Management System*, their involvement with the *Syracuse University Connective Corridor* project which in 2015 received Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Excellence Award and is a good example of FHWA's Every Day Counts 4 Community Connections initiative, SMTC's leadership and support with the New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization (NYSAMPO); NYSDOT, SMTC, and CenterState CEO's part in hosting the *FHWA Administrator's Beyond Traffic 2045 Roundtable on the Freight Economy* event in May 2016. We also noted the excellent working relationship of all those involved in the planning and programming process in making steady improvement to the SMTC TIP performance, especially the SMTC Executive Committee, Policy Committee, and Planning Committee. We specifically commend the professional work of the SMTC Staff and Director James D'Agostino for his dedication.

**Recommendations
And Concerns**

Besides the frequent commendations of existing practices, the report offers a few recommendations for consideration in furthering program excellence. These areas include the Long Range Transportation Plan's (LRTP) Financial Plan and certain elements that should be included such as demonstration of fiscal constraint; the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the requirement to include scheduling information for each task; assisting local municipalities in accessing Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds; and incorporating Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Traffic Incident Management practices in to the planning process.

Corrective Actions

The Federal Review Team has issued 2 corrective actions in the following areas:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan (1)
2. Unified Planning Work Program (1)

Recommendations

The Federal Review Team has issued 14 recommendations in the following areas:

1. Unified Planning Work Program (1)
2. Transportation Improvement Program (1)
3. Transit/Human Service/Non-motorized - Bicycle/Pedestrian (1)
4. Public Involvement (4)
5. Title VI/Environmental Justice (1)
6. Freight Planning (2)
7. Intelligent Transportation Systems (1)
8. Planning Environmental Linkage (1)
9. Safety and Security Planning (2)

Commendations

The Federal Review Team has provided 6 commendations in the following areas:

1. Unified Planning Work Program (1)
2. Transportation Improvement Program (1)
3. Transit/Human Service/Non-motorized - Bicycle/Pedestrian (1)
4. Freight Planning (1)
5. Intelligent Transportation Systems (1)
6. Safety / Security in the Planning Process (1)

Introduction to the Certification Review Process

Regulation: 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5)(A), 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5)(A)

(5) Certification. -

(A) In general. - The Secretary shall -

(i) ensure that the metropolitan planning process of a metropolitan planning organization serving a transportation management area is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal law; and

(ii) subject to subparagraph (B), certify, not less often than once every 4 years, that the requirements of this paragraph are met with respect to the metropolitan planning process.

Background

The primary purpose of the Federal Certification Review is to ensure that the MPO process is satisfactorily meeting the planning requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303. The recommendations that result from the review hopefully will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning process. There are also broader benefits to the review, as the Federal Review Team identifies good or innovative practices to share with other states and metropolitan planning organizations.

Overview of the 2017 Certification Review

The 2017 certification review of SMTC officially began in September 2017 with a joint FHWA/FTA letter to Mr. Brian Schultz, the Chairman of SMTC, informing the MPO about the upcoming review and identifying the primary topics for the review (*Appendix A*). The dates of the site visit were coordinated with Mr. James D'Agostino, Director of SMTC. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) received individual copies of the letter. The SMTC staff notified the SMTC member agencies and the public about this review.

In preparation for the on-site visit, FHWA and FTA conducted an internal desk audit of SMTC process and materials, including the SMTC 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, the 2017-2018 Unified Planning Work Program, and the 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

Site Visit

The FHWA New York Division and FTA Region II office, herein referred to as “The Federal Review Team,” conducted the site visit from November 6th through November 8th, 2017. The team consisted of Cyrenthia Ward (FTA, Region II Office), Maria Chau, Kara Hogan, Tim Crothers, and Christine Thorkildsen (FHWA, New York Division Office).

The on-site review took place at the SMTC office. Detailed discussions were primarily with the MPO Director, members of the SMTC staff, and Mark Frechette (NYSDOT Region 4 Regional Planning & Program Manager). The Federal Review Team met with members of the Executive Committee, Policy Committee, as well as SMTC staff on November 8th, 2017 in a round-table forum to discuss their thoughts on the overall transportation planning process in the region and major regional opportunities and issues.

Public Input

As part of the certification review process, the Federal Review Team solicits input from the communities and stakeholders within the region where they are offered the opportunity to submit both verbal and written comments on SMTC's transportation planning process. The Federal Review Team met with members of the Executive Committee, Policy Committee, and Planning Committee in one session and stakeholders in another session. The public was offered the opportunity to provide written comments which were accepted through December 6th, 2017. The solicitations for written comments were publicized through SMTC's mailing list and the local Syracuse newspaper *The Post Standard* (Appendix C). These arrangements were made through the generous assistance of SMTC. A summary of comments can be found in Appendix D of this document.

Overall SMTC experiences a cooperative, collaborative, and positive relationship within the region.

Corrective Actions, Commendations, and Recommendations

Below is the compiled list of *Corrective Actions*, *Commendations*, and *Recommendations* from the Federal Team's review of work products and processes that are the result of the MPO transportation planning process. Each of these comments can also be found at the end of their respective Certification topic section. There are two corrective actions, fourteen recommendations and, six commendations for SMTC as a result of this review.

Corrective Action (2)

Long Range Transportation Plan (1)

- The LRTP financial plan does not meet the requirements of 23 CFR 450.324(f) (11) (ii, iv, viii) in that it does not provide revenue projects by fund sources for fiscal years 2023 through 2050, it does not identify all financial sources from all public and private sources, and that the LRTP does not demonstrate fiscal constraint and provide a clear sense on how the adopted regional transportation plan can be implemented. SMTC must update the Financial Plan to include and clarify these elements amending it into the LRTP by December 31, 2018.

Unified Planning Work Program (1)

- The UPWP does not meet the program and monitoring requirements as required by 23 CFR 420.117. SMTC does not provide a detailed close out on activities and an expenditures report for the end of the annual UPWP cycle. SMTC must provide a close out of the current UPWP activities and an expenditures report by June 30, 2018.

Recommendations (14)

Unified Planning Work Program (1)

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC consider the balance of investments and tasks in the UPWP in alignment with the LRTP.

Transportation Improvement Program (1)

- The Federal Review Team recommends SMTC provide information in the TIP on public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the TIP and recommend any additional financing strategies needed for projects and programs. Examples of these sources may include local property taxes, bonds, sales taxes, an allotment from general funds.

Transit/Human Service/Non-motorized - Bicycle/Pedestrian (1)

- The Federal Review Team recommends SMTC to seek health related grants to support human services, bicycle and pedestrian initiatives.

Public Involvement (4)

- For the next iteration of the Public Participation Plan (PPP), SMTC should (1) document the consultation process including all parties involved, (2) develop a method to gauge the success of public outreach efforts with measures such as number of attendees, response rates, and other measures, and (3) capture these results to perform an analysis that can inform improvements to the process.
- If no comments are received on documents such as the TIP or UPWP, then the final document should include a summary stating the process and methods utilized to include the public and that no comments were received and include this summary in the appendix as stated in the PPP.
- SMTC should consider for their website including a search feature for plans and studies and/or organize them by topic area and making available the Meeting Minutes for Policy Committee, Executive Committee, and Planning Committee meetings at an easily accessible location.
- The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC staff to attend the “Public Involvement in Transportation Decision Making” course offered by National Transit Institute or National Highway Institute and reach out to other MPOs to explore innovative ways to connect with the public and tribal nations especially on how to increase public involvement and in documenting feedback.

Title VI/Environmental Justice (1)

- For the next iteration of the Title VI Plan, the Federal Review Team recommends SMTC document existing processes used to ensure planning decisions do not have unintended discriminatory effects, enhance those practices, and capture them as procedures.

Freight Planning (2)

- The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC to convene a Regional Freight Advisory Committee to pursue the development of a Regional Freight Plan and encourages SMTC to explore other methods of outreach that provide the regional freight community opportunities to engage in decisions being made on the transportation system that may impact them.
- The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC to further their efforts and complete a Regional Freight Plan that provides clarity on freight infrastructure investments the region is interested in pursuing.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (1)

- The Federal Review Team Recommends the follow strategies to incorporate Intelligent Transportation Systems into the planning process:
 - Identify opportunities to support the regional Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program, including through participation in the established multi-disciplinary TIM working group and by supporting development of TIM performance measures.
 - Include ITS infrastructure in the development of asset management strategies and tools, including GIS inventory.
 - Incorporate ongoing and envisioned Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) strategies in the LRTP. This should be consistent with the Regional ITS Architecture (RITSA) and Strategic Plan.

Planning Environmental Linkage (1)

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC conducts an analysis of environmental considerations in the Region and consider developing a GIS layer that geolocates links to planning studies that have been completed for easy access for potential users of these studies beyond the planning phase. When feasible and appropriate, conduct PEL studies that include National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) level analysis for some of the larger transportation projects that may be classified as an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA.

Safety and Security Planning (2)

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC work with FHWA, FTA, and NYSDOT on identifying strategies in addressing high accident locations on the local system.
- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC assesses their role on transportation security planning needs in the region and consider different types of reoccurring and non-reoccurring events determining how the MPO should provide supports in these areas including how they and their partner agencies may address growing cybersecurity risks in the development and implementation of technologies.

Commendations (6)

Studies and Planning Resources

- The Federal Review Team commends SMTC for the development of the June 2015 Transportation Atlas. This atlas serves as an excellent reference tool that details written information and data maps on regional demographics, land use and environment, infrastructure, mobility, and safety for SMTC's planning area and has been cited by planners, policy maker, news media, and other interested citizens interested in Central New York.

Transportation Improvement Program

- SMTC made significant improvements to their TIP Performance managing projects through a very high the level of cooperation in the Region by meeting frequently to monitor projects programmed in the TIP for obligation readiness and moving projects to the year they are likely to be obligated.

Transit/Human Service/Non-motorized - Bicycle/Pedestrian

- The Federal Review Team commends the regional efforts of Syracuse University's Connective Corridor project which has received Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Excellence Award in 2015 and is a good example of an Every Day Counts - 4 Community Connections initiative.

Freight Planning

- NYSDOT, SMTC, and CenterState CEO are commended for their part in hosting the *FHWA Beyond Traffic 2045 Administrator's Roundtable on the Freight Economy* in May 2016. Syracuse was selected as one of twenty-six cities around the country to host the roundtable, which provided a platform to present the new National Freight Program and discuss Freight issues and priorities on the National, State, and Regional level.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

- SMTC has helped to meet a key statewide need for macroscopic analysis and optimization of intersections with software (Synchro) support and training which they have provided to partner agencies both inside and outside their geographic area.

Safety Planning

- SMTC is commended for their work on developing bicycle and pedestrian education materials for the public and successfully broadcasting the videos on various television stations to educate the public.

Status of 2013 Certification Review Findings

The following is a summary of the Corrective Actions and Recommendations from the 2013 Certification Review. There were three corrective actions and eight recommendations which are listed below.

The follow is the status on the **Corrective Actions**:

Corrective Action	Status
<p>1. <i>Long Range Transportation Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LRTP does not currently articulate the 20-year horizon of the Syracuse MPA as required by 23 CFR 450.322(a). The MPO must provide an approved LRTP by October 2015 to ensure that decisions made on transportation funding accurately reflect the needs/vision of the region. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC published their 2050 LRTP which articulates a horizon of over 20 years in September of 2015 as required by 23 CFR 450.322(a).
<p>2. <i>Financial Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC's current financial plan does not meet the requirements outlined in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii). SMTC must revisit the regulation and companion resources and develop a financial plan that meets these requirements by October 2015. 	<p>Completed with condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC developed their LRTP financial plan to reflect the regulations which was published their 2050 LRTP as required by 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11) (formerly 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii)). The Federal Review reviewed the Fiscal Constraint portion of the Financial Plan and determined that it does not meet the regulatory requirement.
<p>3. <i>Congestion Management Process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC must provide a plan to update its CMP to ensure full compliance with 23 CFR 450.320(c) six months from the issuance of this report and have the CMP updated by October 2015. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC submitted their CMP workplan on 10/27/2014 and completed their CMP update which was adopted by the SMTC Policy Committee on 9/29/2015.

The follow is the status on the **Recommendations**:

Recommendations	Status
<p>1. <i>Unified Planning Work Program</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC maintain a UPWP process by which a sponsor of a proposal that was not selected can understand the basis for their denial. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pending approval of a work program, a detailed letter as to why a project was not chosen for inclusion is provided to the project applicant. In addition, SMTC routinely holds pre-application meetings for potential sponsors interested in submitting a UPWP application and provides feedback directly to applicants regarding their proposal.
<p>2. <i>Transportation Improvement Program</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend SMTC include a statement in their TIP document describing how the TIP is fiscally constrained. - We recommend SMTC continue to work with their operating agencies to increase the rate of obligation of projects that have made it through the selection process and included on the TIP. - The Federal Review Team believes that instead of using a revenue-based approach when the sources of revenues are uncertain, SMTC would be better served to use a cost-based approach. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the latest TIP (adopted June 2016) provides a statement on how the TIP is fiscally constrained and will be modified and more clearly pronounced in the next TIP update scheduled to begin 2018. - SMTC staff held several meetings each FFY with respective operating agencies to monitor projects in the TIP for project readiness and have increased the rate of obligation of their unamended TIP to 75% in FFY 2017 and 100% amended TIP in the past several years. <p>In Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC plans on discussing a cost-based approach with their Capital Projects Committee for consideration.
<p>3. <i>Financial Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Federal Review Team recommends that the SMTC utilize the following resources to develop financial plans in order to satisfy the regulations contained in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii): <p style="padding-left: 40px;">USDOT Transportation Planning Capacity Building website http://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_fiscal.asp</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Fiscal Constraint in Long-Range Transportation Planning: Best Practices Case Studies http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/fiscalConstraint_rpt.pdf</p>	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC considered the recommended resources when developing their latest LRTP financial plan which includes a new financial plan which was adopted September 2015.

Recommendations	Status
<p>4. <i>Public Involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend SMTC document the multitude of methods used for the I-81 project, note their challenges and benefits, and assess their usefulness in the region. This documentation should serve as the basis for the methods of outreach needed for the LRTP, TIP process and other federally required planning products. - SMTC should develop a framework to serve as a clearing house on livability and sustainability and should consider how to facilitate dialogue between advocate groups and public agencies on this topic. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC incorporated outreach methods used throughout the I-81 planning project in their new Public Participation Plan published in December 2016. - In 2014, the SMTC completed the Sustainable Streets project which included a Sidewalk Reference Manual. SMTC also maintains an interactive online mapping tool that displays the results of pedestrian demand model, priority zones available to members as resources for planning livable and sustainable communities.
<p>5. <i>Title VI and Environmental Justice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend that SMTC include a "Plain Language" glossary of frequently used terms and the MPO's mission and purpose in an easily accessible location on their website and publications that would make the program and services provided by the MPO better understood by the public. It would allow the public to better understand their rights under Title VI, why their involvement is important and provide a clearer understanding of the work products and processes the SMTC utilizes. - We recommend that SMTC continually update their Environmental Justice Analysis to include all completed work products to assure a full understanding of impacts to protected groups. - We recommend that SMTC attend training opportunities to keep up to date with the most recent information from NYSDOT and FHWA concerning Title VI, Environmental Justice and LEP. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC developed a glossary on their website. The mission of the MPO is located on the agency's website homepage. <p>In Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A standalone EJ report is updated periodically and an updated EJ report will be prepared as part of the 2018/2019 UPWP utilizing the latest American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year dataset. <p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC participated in all known training opportunities in the state which includes the following: Title VI/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) training (Albany, Jan. 2016), hosted ADA training (Syracuse, May 2016) for over 40 participants and

Recommendations	Status
<p>Continual communication with NYSDOT for these opportunities is recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend that the SMTC's Public Participation Plan dated May 2007 be updated to reflect the most current public involvement activities and accomplishments. It is difficult to reach and engage certain portions of the public and it is recommended that SMTC research best practices from other MPOs, NYSDOT and other State/City Agencies. 	<p>completed a series of NHI EJ related webinars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The latest Public Participation Plan was adopted in December 2016 and is available on the SMTC website at: www.smtcmpo.org/docs/publications/SMTC_PublicParticipationPlan_2016.pdf
<p>6. <i>Freight Planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC engage with freight stakeholders such as facility owners or users of the system to further their understanding of freight stakeholder needs in the region. - The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC develop a regional goods movement plan that highlight both mobility needs of freight in the region, such as geometric challenges for trucks and intermodal connectors, and potential impacts or needs to assist in economic development. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC staff conducted a regional freight questionnaire to understand freight stakeholder needs in the community and may be updated and sent to stakeholders for additional input. Also, SMTC hosted a FHWA "Beyond Traffic: Freight Roundtable" in May 2016 that brought stakeholders to the table. - In July 2017 SMTC finalized a regional Freight Transportation Profile containing survey responses from freight stakeholders, provide a general overview of freight transportation system, commodity flows, and near and long-term projects. SMTC will consider the development of a full regional goods movement plan as part of the next UPWP cycle that will append the Freight Transportation Profile.
<p>7. <i>Congestion Management Process (CMP)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Federal Review Team suggests that SMTC identify additional "SMART" performance measures in its next CMP update to ensure that planned congestion mitigation activities address specific goal-driven needs. - The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's CMP excels in appropriately scaling its degree of analysis to the nature of congestion in the Syracuse region. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC developed a glossary on their website. The mission of the MPO is located on the agency's website homepage. - No action required. The latest CMP continued to appropriately scale the degree of analysis commensurate to the area conditions.

Recommendations	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The identification of the Level of Service (LOS) goal (“to improve LOS of at least the top ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020”) is an excellent first step towards the identification of additional “SMART” performance measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The latest CMP included the identification and inclusion of SMART performance measures.
<p>8. <i>Intelligent Transportation Systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC should stay involved with the update to Syracuse’s Regional ITS Architecture and, per 23 CFR §450.306 (f), ensure that the metropolitan planning process remains consistent with the Architecture in the future. - SMTC should work with its member agencies to update the region’s Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan, originally published in 2003. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMTC remains involved in the ITS update and served as a stakeholder on NYSDOT Region 3 interim plan updated in 2016 and the ITS Strategic Plan in 2017 under the I-81 project activities.

Overview of the Region

SMTC Organization and Boundaries

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) requires every metropolitan area with a population of over 50,000 to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to qualify for the receipt of federal highway and transit funds. As designated by the Governor of the State of New York, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) was created in 1966 to carry out the continuous, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, which includes all of Onondaga County and small portions of Madison and Oswego Counties. (See Appendix G: Map of SMTC Region)

Organizational Structure

The SMTC is comprised of officials representing local, state, and federal agencies (non-voting) having interest or responsibility in transportation planning and programming. To facilitate and encourage maximum interaction among these groups and the local community, the SMTC has adopted a committee structure that consists of a Policy Committee, a Planning Committee, and an Executive Committee. These committees are supported by the SMTC central staff, and oversee SMTC transportation planning activities.

The Policy Committee consists of representatives that have an interest or responsibility in transportation planning and/or programming in the MPA. The primary responsibility of the Policy Committee is to establish policies for the overall conduct of the SMTC.

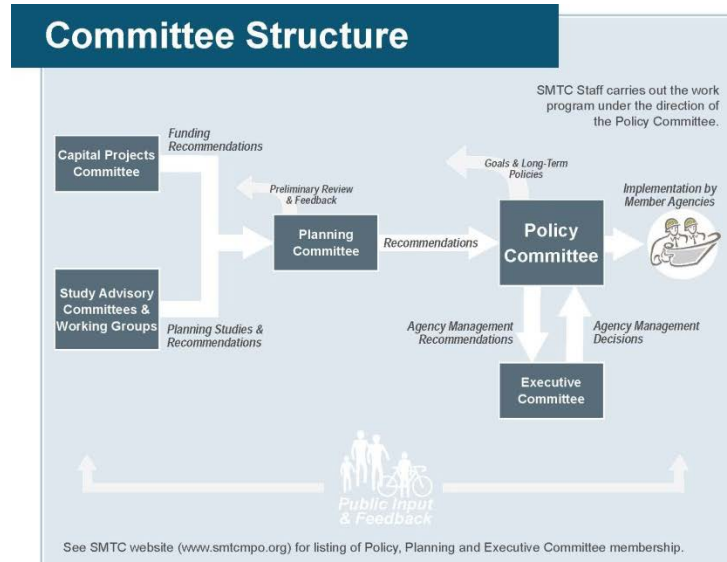
SMTC Policy Committee members include representatives from:

- The CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity,
- The City of Syracuse Office of the Mayor,
- The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB),
- The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA),
- The Empire State Development Corporation(ESDC),
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC),
- The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT),
- The New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA),
- The Onondaga County Office of the Executive,
- The Onondaga County Legislature,
- The Onondaga County Planning Board,
- The Syracuse Common Council, and
- The Syracuse Planning Commission.

Oswego and Madison Counties are represented on the Policy Committee as non-voting, advisory agencies, as is the Onondaga Nation. As depicted in Figure 1-1, the Policy Committee oversees both the Executive Committee and the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee, which is established by the Policy Committee, is composed of professional representatives of Policy Committee member agencies having direct or indirect responsibility for transportation planning and implementation. Their primary responsibility is to monitor all technical activities, including the development of a draft UPWP and TIP for recommendation to the Policy Committee. They also provide an initial screening of all major studies and planning activities for funding recommendations to the Policy Committee.

The Executive Committee is comprised of Planning Committee members. It provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the MPO and its central staff, including financial management, personnel, and other administrative requirements.

Figure 1-1



Policy Committee

- Establishes goals and long-term policies
- Approves and adopts the UPWP, TIP, and LRTP
- Reviews and acknowledges completion of planning studies

Planning Committee

- Monitors progress of planning studies
- Approves scope of work for planning studies
- Established by the Policy Committee and composed of professional/technical representatives

Executive Committee

- Manages administration within the SMTC
- Coordinates with the SMTC Director, who manages SMTC staff
- Consists of Planning Committee members

Capital Projects Committee

- Managed by SMTC Staff
- Reviews, prioritizes, and recommends projects to be funded with federal transportation dollars to the Planning Committee

Study Advisory Committees and Working Groups

- Managed by SMTC Staff
- Provides guidance throughout planning studies

2017 Certification Topics / Results of the Certification Review

The Federal Review Team selected the topics to discuss with the MPO during the certification review. These topics relate to the federal regulations MPOs operate under. Topics are typically chosen if it is considered an area of federal emphasis, a high risk, a new initiative in transportation legislation, or a recurring challenge. They can also be selected to highlight a best practice.

To determine if an MPO should be certified or re-certified the Federal Review Team considers the discussions at the in-person meeting, the desk audit, the public meeting, and observations of the MPO's operations. These findings are detailed in the following section along with any corrective action, recommendations, and commendations.

Below is a list of the topics that were selected:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Transit Activities - Human Services Transportation Plan - Non-Motorized Bicycle/Pedestrian
- Title VI/Environmental Justice (Title VI/EJ)
- Public Involvement
- Freight Planning
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- Planning Environmental Linkages (PEL)
- Safety/Security/Resiliency
- Performance Based Planning

Long Range Transportation Plan

Basic Requirement:

23 CFR 450.322(a) the metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon as of the effective date. The transportation plan shall include both Long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of a multi-modal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the effective date of the transportation plan shall be the date of a conformity determination issued by the FHWA and the FTA. In attainment areas, the effective date of the transportation plan shall be its date of adoption by the MPO.

Finding

The SMTC Policy Committee approved their 2050 Long Range Transportation (LRTP)-Moving Towards a Greater Syracuse on September 29, 2015. This is the first entirely new long range transportation plan prepared by SMTC since 1995. To develop this documents, SMTC drew upon other plans and planning processes that have recently been prepared for Central New York. In addition to these plans, SMTC also used input from key stakeholders, and the results of a public outreach program that included a survey and multiple public meetings to define a new set of goals and objectives for the regional transportation system.

The well-written 2050 LRTP includes new goals and objectives in response to recent changes in federal legislation and other recent planning efforts in the SMTC region. It also encompasses a slightly larger area than previous plans, as the SMTC's Metropolitan Planning Area expanded farther into Oswego and Madison counties based on the 2010 Census.

The financial plan of the current LRTP is a vast improvement from the previous financial plan. It defines system level cost estimates for both the transit and highway programs summarizing for transit the short term, mid-term and long term funding costs and revenue projections in Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1¹. It lists anticipated future highway projects and costs in Table 6.2². It also provides recommendations on additional funding strategies to finance the Regional system, such as CHIPS which is a New York State program for local roads and TIGER, a federally competitive grant.

Though the financial plan includes many of the elements that are requirements of 23 CFR 450.324(f) the Federal Review Team found specific elements that lacked clarity, could have been strengthened, or did not meet requirements. Specifically, the LRTP Financial Plan does not provide revenue projects by fund sources for fiscal years 2023 through 2050 in Table 6.3. SMTC did not

¹ SMTC 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 6 Financial Analysis, p.91 and 94 respectively

² SMTC 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 6 Financial Analysis, p 92-93

clearly identify revenue sources to fund projects and programs outside of the Federal-aid program. It is also not clear how the SMTC LRTP demonstrates fiscal constraint. Table 6.4³ provides information on anticipated federal-aid compared to future capital project cost by year of expenditure dollars. According to the table the Short-term (FFY 2017-2022), Mid-term (FFY 2023-2032), and Long-term (FFY 2033-2050) federal-aid balance do not cover the cost of projects by 46%, 22%, and 37% respectively. The Federal Review Team finds that the LRTP Financial Plan lacks clarity or does not meet requirements of certain elements of 23 CFR 450.324(f) (11), specifically (ii, iv, viii).

Corrective Action

- The LRTP financial plan does not meet the requirements of 23 CFR 450.324(f) (11) (ii, iv, viii) in that it does not provide revenue projects by fund sources for fiscal years 2023 through 2050, it does not identify all financial sources from all public and private sources, and that the LRTP does not demonstrate fiscal constraint and provide a clear sense on how the adopted regional transportation plan can be implemented. SMTC must update the Financial Plan to include and clarify these elements amending it into the LRTP by December 31, 2018.

³ SMTC 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 6 Financial Analysis, p.96

Unified Planning Work Program

Basic Requirement

Under 23 CFR 350.308(b), MPO's are required to develop Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) in Transportation Management Areas (TMA's) to govern work programs for the expenditure of FHWA and FTA planning and research funds. The UPWP must be developed in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies and include the required elements.

Finding:

Program and Monitoring

The UPWP is developed annually through a cooperative process that includes SMTC member agencies, SMTC staff, and stakeholders within the Syracuse Metropolitan Region. SMTC staff expressed that they fund as many planning studies as they can and generally are able to accommodate most projects/tasks proposed to them that are eligible for Federal-aid planning funds. The Federal Review Team reviewed the UPWP and note that many of the tasks programmed in the document are bicycle, pedestrian, and trail planning initiatives, but incongruently address other focuses in their LRTP such as bridges and safety. While SMTC annually produces, the *Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System* report that provides condition rating of the infrastructure system by owner it is unclear how UPWP investments are balanced to reflect LRTP goals and objectives.

The SMTC's UPWP document is well organized providing information on the purpose of the UPWP, development of the program, the MPO structure and framework, and summary of major programmed activities. Each of the tasks listed states the objective, methodology, end product, and amount budgeted. It also identifies the requesting/participating agencies.

The Federal Review Team reviewed SMTC's semi-annual report on UPWP activities and noted that there was no concluding report on the performance or expenditures of UPWP activities at the end of the UPWP cycle. There is no annual report on whether a task is progressing, continuing, or completed and SMTC does not provide the details specified in 23 CFR 420.117 which requires Statewide Planning & Research (SPR) and Planning Program (PL) work plans to submit a performance and expenditure report that include at a minimum:

1. Comparisons of actual performance with established goals;
2. Progress in meeting schedules
3. Status of expenditures
4. Cost overruns or underruns
5. Approved work program revisions; and
6. Other pertinent supporting data

This should be documented either within the UPWP or in a close out report coordinated with NYSDOT.

Studies and Planning Resource Developed in the UPWP

SMTC Transportation Atlas – SMTC staff develop many of their planning products in-house and provides excellent resources for the SMTC members and the Region. One that particularly stand out is the SMTC Transportation Atlas which was completed along with the LRTP in June 2015. This atlas serves as an excellent reference tool that details written information and data maps on regional demographics, land use and environment, infrastructure, mobility, and safety for SMTC's planning area and has been cited by planners, policy maker, news media, and other interested citizens interested in Central New York.

Other Planning Highlights

SMTC's planning efforts have produced many achievements, many of which were initiated in the UPWP. Within the last ten years, members of the SMTC have successfully competed for competitive federal grants, such as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program bringing an additional \$10 million dollars of federal investment into the Region.

These investments include the Syracuse Connective Corridor (see Non-motorized Bicycle Pedestrian p. 26).

TIGER

2011	Syracuse Connective Corridor	\$10 Mil	TPC: \$17.2 Mil
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Note: 'TPC' indicates 'Total Project Cost'

Additionally, SMTC provides leadership to the MPOs across New York State. James D'Agostino, the SMTC Director served as the Chairman of NYSAMPO for the past three years. SMTC staff are active and engaged in all the NYSAMPO working groups. SMTC also served as the host for the 2017 NYSAMPO Conference which brought together a multitude of transportation planners across the state and some nearing states, where SMTC staff provided support in planning, hosting, and staffing the event.

Corrective Actions

- The UPWP does not meet the program and monitoring requirements as required by 23 CFR 420.117. SMTC does not provide a detailed close out on activities and an expenditures report for the end of the annual UPWP cycle. SMTC must provide a close out of the current UPWP activities and an expenditures report by June 30, 2018.

Recommendation

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC consider the balance of investments and tasks in the UPWP in alignment with the LRTP.

Commendation

- The Federal Review Team commends SMTC for the development of the June 2015 Transportation Atlas. This atlas serves as an excellent reference tool that details written information and data maps on regional demographics, land use and environment, infrastructure, mobility, and safety for SMTC's planning area and has been cited by planners, policy maker, news media, and other interested citizens interested in Central New York.

Transportation Improvement Program

Basic Requirement

23 CFR 450.326 requires the MPO to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific regulatory requirements and conditions include, but are not limited to:

- An updated TIP covering a period of at least four years that is compatible with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development and approval process; [23 CFR 450.326 (a)]*
- The TIP should identify all eligible TCM's included in the STIP and give priority to eligible TCM's and projects included for the first two years which have funds available and committed; [23 CFR 450.326 (g)(5)]*
- The TIP should include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other transportation enhancements; Federal Lands Highway projects and safety projects included in the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The TIP and STIP must include all regionally significant projects for which an FHWA or the FTA approval is required ...; [23 CFR 450.326 (e), (f)]*
- The TIP shall include a financial plan that demonstrates how the approved TIP can be implemented, indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the TIP, and recommends any additional financing strategies for needed projects and programs; [23 CFR 450.326(j)]*
- The TIP should identify the criteria and process for prioritizing implementation of transportation plan elements (including multimodal trade-offs) for inclusion in the TIP and any changes in priorities from previous TIPs; [23 CFR 450.332(c)(1)]*

Finding

SMTC's updated 2017-2021 TIP went into effect October 1, 2016. The TIP document is a well written and well-structured that, overall, meets federal requirements. It would be helpful though in the TIP financial plan to include a discussion of public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available further fulfill 23 CFR 450.326(j) in demonstrating how the approved TIP could be implemented. The financial plan also doesn't include details of what the state and local match is comprised of such as municipal general funds, sales tax, bonds, etc. This information would provide tax-payers and stakeholders with a better understanding of the source of public investment from the state and local level.

TIP Obligation Rates

Project delivery continues to be an important focus for FHWA and FTA. FHWA monitors the performance of the STIP annually by the obligation rate of the unamended S/TIP. This includes the number of projects programmed for the construction phase for that federal fiscal year compared to the portion that was obligated. This percentage serves as an indicator that the State and MPOs have considered the deliverability of projects during the planning process before it is included in the S/TIP for the year it is programmed. The FHWA national target is 75% obligation on the

unamended S/TIPs. In the SMTC Region for FFY 2015, 2016, and 2017 SMTC obligated 41.2%, 63.6%, and 76.2% respectively of their unamended TIP.

The Federal Review Team is pleased with the improvements to TIP performance for SMTC. SMTC has made a concerted effort in managing projects in the Region with a very high the level of cooperation. Their Capital Projects Committee (CPC) meets several times throughout the program year with the sole purpose of monitoring the status of projects programmed in the multi-year TIP. They go over each project line by line, phase by phase, raising up right-of-way and environmental considerations, cost changes, etc. Additionally, SMTC has reprogrammed projects in the TIP to the year they are more likely to be obligated prior to the new Federal Fiscal Year. These changes have impacted the TIP obligation rate in the Region to provide a TIP that is reflective of what the MPO is delivering on an annual basis.

Recommendation

- The Federal Review Team recommends SMTC provide information in the TIP on public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the TIP and recommend any additional financing strategies needed for projects and programs. Examples of these sources may include local property taxes, bonds, sales taxes, an allotment from general funds.

Commendation

- SMTC made significant improvements to their TIP Performance managing projects through a very high the level of cooperation in the Region by meeting frequently to monitor projects programmed in the TIP for obligation readiness and moving projects to the year they are likely to be obligated.

Basic Requirement

23 CFR 450.310 (d) provides the following:

Each MPO that serves a TMA, when designated or re-designated under this section, shall consist of local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan planning area, and appropriate State transportation officials. Where appropriate, MPOs may increase the representation of local elected officials, public transportation agencies, or appropriate State officials on their Policy Committees and other committees as a means for encouraging greater involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process, subject to the requirements of paragraph (k) of this section.

According to 23 CFR §450.300(a) the MPO process should carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process that includes accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities.

Finding

Transit

The Connective Corridor project is a success story in the Syracuse region, which was selected by The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a recipient of its 2015 Environmental Excellence Award for Collaboration and Partnership. This project is a civic engagement initiative led by Syracuse University and Onondaga County. This project consists of the construction of a network of new "green streets" with bike and pedestrian paths linking University Hill and downtown business and residential districts which were completed in fall 2015. This network, which includes all new infrastructure, completely reconstructed streets, lighting, sidewalks, street furniture, public art and innovative lighting, is helping create a more livable, walkable community along a reconstructed two-mile urban corridor.

Syracuse University worked with Centro to introduce a free public bus system connecting campus and community venues, with approximately 200,000 rides annually. The system links an art, cultural and heritage district, with campus and community venues working together to program and co-promote the district.

Human Services

The most recent Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services plan (2013-2014) reflects the 2010 census data. With over 100 agencies participating in the update, the plan continues to include the requisite components for a complete plan including. SMTC has notified the Federal Review Team that this is the most recent adopted Coordinated Human Service Plan. A new version is in development right now to be completed by end of program year.

In July 2017 SMTTC published Work Link -Accessing Transportation Options for Low Income Options study. The study which was requested by the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency is a comprehensive and collective discussion with member agencies, transportation providers, businesses and non-profit organizations on the feasibility and establishment of transportation to work services for low-income residents. This study provides recommendations that have a focus on practical solutions to low income resident transportation issues.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

SMTTC has a robust inventory of bicycle and pedestrian reports and analysis created over the years. In June 2014, the Bike Commuter Corridor Study was published and identified suburban and urban corridors within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are most likely to maintain high average cycling speeds to encourage commuter cycling from the suburbs to the city. As a planning level assessment, the Study informs road owners about cooperative opportunities to develop a seamless bicycle network based on a consistent set of treatments. Road owners may consider applying these treatments when designing and implementing roadway improvements along the identified corridors.

In July 2017 SMTTC published their Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Outreach Initiative Report as a part of the 2014-2015 UPWP. The purpose of this study was to develop and broadcast a televised educational campaign to educate drivers, bicycle riders, and walkers about the proper use of roadways when pedestrian and bicycle facilities do and do not exist. In addition, SMTTC has launched a PSA campaign for bicycle safety that ran on local TV networks. (See Safety, Security, and Resiliency Planning section)

In the UPWP 7 of 24 Tasks in Long Range Plan Section include:

- Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning
- Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Outreach
- Camillus Bike/Ped Assessment
- Carrier Park Mobility Plan
- Central DeWitt Bike/Ped Mobility Plan
- Skaneateles Multi Use Corridor

Recommendations

-The Federal Review Team recommends SMTTC to seek health related grants to support human services, bicycle and pedestrian initiatives.

Commendations

- The Federal Review Team commends the regional efforts of Syracuse University's Connective Corridor project which has received Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Excellence Award in 2015 and is a good example of an Every Day Counts - 4 Community Connections initiative.

Public Involvement

Basic Requirement

The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.316, to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation and consultation throughout the development of the MTP and the TIP and is also included in 23 CFR 450.322 (f) (7) and (g) (1) (2), (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 (b).

Findings

Public participation and public input are critical to the transportation planning process where decisions on federal funding for surface transportation are made locally within an MPO's regional boundaries. The Federal Team reviewed the 1) MPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP), 2) how the process was implemented for fundamental MPO planning processes like the development of the LRTP, UPWP, and TIP, 3) important outreach methods, like an MPO's website and social media presence, and 4) stakeholder coordination considerations.

An MPO's PPP should document how an MPO will create public awareness and provide a reasonable opportunity for public input on the decisions being made with federal funds for surface transportation. The "public" includes individuals, public and private agencies, and any entity which has interest in the MPO's planning process. SMTTC's Public Participation Plan was updated internally by SMTTC staff and includes procedures, strategies and designed outcomes for all elements listed under CFR 450.316(a)(1) (i-x). It was approved by the Policy Committee in December 2016.

SMTTC has executed many methods to engage the public. Their website (available in multiple languages) and Facebook page are easily accessible and updated regularly with current information. Their extensive outreach list consists of those who have shown interest in their program, has attended a meeting or has requested information from them, and currently has around 4000 contacts.

In reviewing materials on the SMTTC website the Federal Review Team notes that the studies were not easy to find because they are listed by year. It would be helpful to either organize them by topic or include a search feature on the website. Also, information pertaining to those individuals serving on the Policy Committee, Executive Committee and Planning Committee was difficult to find. Meeting Minutes were not posted from previous Policy Committee, Executive Committee and Planning Committee meetings for the public and/or those stakeholders who could not attend.

In the development of the 2050 LRTP, SMTTC issued a survey on what the public considered important as transportation "Goals and Objectives" in the Region. The feedback from the survey was considered in the plan and a summary of their responses are included in the appendix. The coordination with the public in the development of the TIP and TIP amendments is clearly described in the PPP. The 2017-2021 TIP has a summary of how the public participation was

carried out, but does not include the actual comments and how SMTC addressed those comments. It is stated in the PPP that the UPWP call for projects and comments received on the draft document to be included in an appendix to the final version. A review of the final 2017-2018 UPWP did not find an appendix summarizing public comments. All final documents are to be available at the Central Library of the Onondaga county public library system, on SMTC's website and SMTC's office.

The Federal Review Team inquired of the inclusion of Tribal Nations in the planning process. The SMTC boundary includes the Onondaga Nation Indian Tribal Lands and Representatives from the Onondaga Nation are included in both the Policy and Planning Committees. During the in-person review SMTC staff informed the Federal Review Team that they send invitations and materials to the Onondaga Nation however tribal representatives have not yet attended meetings and have not yet been engaged with SMTC's planning process.

The Federal Review Team notes that it would be helpful to be able to gauge the success of public outreach efforts with measures such as number of attendees, response rates, and other methods and capture these results to perform an analysis to inform improvements to the process.

Recommendations

- For the next iteration of the PPP, SMTC should (1) document the consultation process including all parties involved, (2) develop a method to gauge the success of public outreach efforts with measures such as number of attendees, response rates, and other measures, and (3) capture these results to perform an analysis that can inform improvements to the process.
- If no comments are received on documents such as the TIP or UPWP, then the final document should include a summary stating the process and methods utilized to include the public and that no comments were received and include this summary in the appendix as stated in the PPP.
- SMTC should consider for their website including a search feature for plans and studies and/or organize them by topic area and making available the Meeting Minutes for Policy Committee, Executive Committee, and Planning Committee meetings at an easily accessible location.
- The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC staff to attend the "Public Involvement in Transportation Decision Making" course offered by NTI or NHI and reach out to other MPOs to explore innovative ways to connect with the public and tribal nations especially on how to increase public involvement and in documenting feedback.

Title VI/Environmental Justice

Basic Requirement

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. 2000d states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” In addition to Title VI, there are other Nondiscrimination statutes that afford legal protection. These statutes include the following: Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 U.S.C. 324), Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA specifies that programs and activities funded with Federal dollars are prohibited from discrimination based on disability.

Executive Order #12898 (Environmental Justice) directs federal agencies to develop strategies to address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. In compliance with this Executive Order, USDOT and FHWA issued orders to establish policies and procedures for addressing environmental justice in minority and low-income populations. The planning regulations, at 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vii), require that the needs of those “traditionally underserved” by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and/or minority households, be sought out and considered.

Executive Order # 13166 (Limited-English-Proficiency) requires agencies to ensure that limited English proficiency persons are able to meaningfully access the services provided consistent with and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of each federal agency.

Finding

Since the last review, SMTC has taken appropriate action on all of their Title VI and EJ-related recommendations. These included using plain language and creating a glossary of terms, providing continuous updates of their EJ analysis, attending Title VI, EJ, LEP, and ADA training, and updating their Public Participation Plan.

SMTC’s Title VI Policy Statement and complaint form are located on the website, along with SMTC’s most recent version of the Title VI and LEP Plan (February 2015). The Plan contains specific public outreach strategies for Title VI populations, as well as demographic profiles of the metropolitan area and maps for visual description. An important component of the Title VI Plan, as discussed during the review, is capturing processes used to ensure planning decisions do not have unintended discriminatory effects. SMTC does this through analyses that are detailed below; however, we recommend that SMTC enhance these processes and document these practices in the next iteration of the Title VI Plan.

The EJ Analysis and Priority Target Areas are used frequently by SMTC. SMTC’s most recent EJ Analysis was conducted in the 2014-2018 TIP, identifying Priority Target Areas. The LRTP, UPWP, and various studies conducted by SMTC also contain discussion of their EJ population areas and

various efforts to connect those populations to transit, as well as connecting low income communities to jobs.

Under their Transportation System Performance goals in the most recent LRTP, SMTC identified the following goals: equity and accessibility. These goals include efforts such as emphasis on accessibility for transit riders, cyclists, and pedestrians. In addition, the LRTP equity goal included an Equity Analysis assessing the TIP project locations in comparison with population maps; this, as well as the most recent EJ Analysis conducted for the 2014-2018 TIP both concluded that there is an equal distribution of projects in Target Areas and outside project areas. Although SMTC agreed that it doesn't necessarily mean anything to have a project located in an EJ area, they haven't taken a deeper dive at what this does mean yet; the Review Team recommends doing so. As part of this effort, SMTC also examined the pavement conditions in and outside of Target Areas using their Bridge and Pavement Conditions Management System and determined that the pavement conditions in both areas are, on average, "fair." This same type of analysis was conducted for sidewalk conditions and bus shelter conditions, and the same conclusion, that conditions are comparable inside and outside of Target Areas was reached. SMTC did not believe these results were necessarily because of conscious efforts they were making, but more so were the result of the natural equal distribution of transportation needs in this area, that need is equal everywhere across the board. SMTC noted that, however, they "never want to take it for granted" that there can be unintended consequences. Therefore, FHWA again recommends that SMTC put into place procedures such as these comparisons to periodically revisit their EJ Analysis and other data to make sure this isn't the case. SMTC should then capture these procedures in their Title VI Plan, as previously stated.

In regard to SMTC's TIP, it is unclear how Title VI and EJ communities are considered during project selection. Though SMTC performs EJ analysis, it is unclear how projects selected may benefit or impose burdens on those EJ communities. Instead, there is broad assessment that the projects meet the goals of the LRTP, which include equity and accessibility. It would be a good practice to include some criteria like this to more formally link the LRTP goals associated with Title VI and EJ to project selection. In addition, for studies, SMTC does use EJ analysis and other demographic assessments to determine whether they should reach out to the communities to ask about their needs and ensure the project will not conflict with those needs.

Although not necessarily captured in their Plan, SMTC employs some creative methods to seek public input. Although not always specifically targeted at Title VI and EJ populations, some of these efforts could be used for that purpose in the future. For example, they held 9 pop-up meetings at bus stops for the SMART1 study, asking riders for feedback and passing out brochures; had interns and staff interview transit riders in route; held meetings piggy-backing on existing meetings, such as the neighborhood groups, TNT meetings, and the Onondaga Citizens League meetings; and engaging key community and advocacy groups.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

SMTC's website can easily be translated into Spanish. They also offer translation services at public meetings, trying to anticipate the LEP needs in advance of the meetings and requests themselves. They do this based on population presence, not for every project. Their larger studies provide translations for key documents and summaries, and surveys are often translated as well. For example, knowing the transit rider community has representation of users with LEP needs, the bus rider survey that was available on the bus was also provided in Spanish versions. SMTC always allows for requests for translation services, but so far has not had any requests for additional translations.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

In the LRTP, accessibility for pedestrians was identified as one of SMTC's goals. They identified "priority zones" of sidewalks where improvements need to be made; of the 586 miles of City sidewalks, 57% are not in compliance, which is not uncommon for cities in upstate NY. SMTC is currently grappling with which is more important, adding new sidewalks or fixing the existing sidewalks and how to fund and support necessary sidewalk maintenance. The Federal Review Team recommended reaching out to other MPOs such as Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council and Capital District Transportation Committee, as some of their member agencies have come up with creative solutions for how to fairly implement programs to bring existing sidewalks into compliance.

SMTC sponsored an FHWA training session for their member agencies on the ADA requirements last year. The Federal Review Team discussed the possibility of SMTC creating a map in their Atlas for sidewalk conditions, as that would be a great start for their member agencies with their ADA Transition Plan requirements. SMTC noted that they do have this information in a pedestrian demand model available to member agencies in GIS map form, with "good" and "poor" type ratings. During the in person review the Federal Team had a productive conversation about how SMTC could share this information with their member agencies and start conversations with them on self-evaluation inventories. FHWA's Civil Rights Specialist offered to attend if SMTC was interested in hosting a meeting to share this data.

Recommendation

- For the next iteration of the Title VI Plan, the Federal Review Team recommends SMTC document existing processes used to ensure planning decisions do not have unintended discriminatory effects, enhance those practices, and capture them as procedures.

Basic Requirement

The MAP-21 and FAST Act established in 23 U.S.C. 167 a policy to improve the condition and performance of the national freight network and achieve goals related to economic competitiveness and efficiency; congestion; productivity; safety, security, and resilience of freight movement; infrastructure condition; use of advanced technology; performance, innovation, competition, and accountability, while reducing environmental impacts.

In addition, 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR 450.306 specifically identify the need to address freight movement as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Finding

Since the previous certification review SMTTC has worked on reengaging in freight planning efforts in the Region. This is very timely as the FAST Act, the current transportation legislation, for the first time in the nation's history, includes a National Freight Program. This includes a dedicated funding source to address multimodal bottlenecks that impact goods movement and economic development.

The National Freight Program includes two funding opportunities, 1) through allocations directly to states to administer statewide and 2) the INFRA Grant⁴ which is a nationally competitive grant to fund projects of National or Regional significance. This new program significantly changes the MPO's role in integrating freight in to their planning process. Nationally, many MPOs are developing Regional Freight Plans to compete for state allocated funding and to compete for INFRA Grants which, in total, will provide \$4.5 billion nationally over the FAST Act legislation at over \$800M per year. States and MPOs who proposes projects that include the following elements will complete well for funding:

- 1) Align and support initiatives through National Freight Strategy,
- 2) Are Nationally and/or Regionally Significance,
- 3) Collaborates with multi-jurisdictional coordination and has a variety of funding sources,
- 4) Is included in Regional and State Freight Plan and
- 5) Quantify benefits

Given these developments, SMTTC's strategy to progress freight planning in the Region includes, 1) engaging the Regional freight community in the planning process, 2) engaging in Federal, State, and statewide freight efforts, and 3) developing a Region Freight Profile

⁴ Formerly FASTLane Grant

Engaging the Regional Freight Community

In 2013 SMTC initiated efforts to engage with the freight community in the Region. Their outreach efforts included personal meetings with freight community stakeholders such as the Trucking Association of New York and developing a questionnaire instrument to gain a greater understanding of the concerns or issues with the transportation system. The response rate for the questionnaire was low and is considered inconclusive in providing substantive results, though SMTC includes the responses of those surveyed in the appendices of their Regional Freight Profile. SMTC staff are in the process of looking at other forms of outreach to connect with the freight community for their input.

One method that has been successful with MPOs nationally is leveraging existing relationships and convening a Regional Freight Advisory Committee. Many MPO Policy members are also part of Regional Freight Advisory Committee and generally consists of members from Cities and Regional Economic Development Councils, Business Improvement Districts, Maritime and Inland Ports, Airports, Railroads, interested elected officials, trucking associations, and private sector employers. Other methods may also include attending functions being held by freight stakeholders such as association meetings or professional societies such as the Council of Supply Chain Management Professional (CSCMP) or conducting interviews with various freight stakeholders focus group from the public and private sector as NYSDOT did for the development of the State Freight Plan.

Engaging in Federal, State, and Statewide Freight Planning Efforts

SMTC remains an active participant with Federal, State and Statewide freight planning efforts. First, one of the SMTC staff co-chairs the NYSAMPO Freight Working Group where all 14 of the MPOs statewide engage in various freight related activities. These activities include professional capacity building activities, sharing best practices, and providing a regional lens for State and Federal requests. NYSAMPO Freight Working Group has been very responsive in the development of the State Freight Plan as well as providing regional perspectives in responding to federal Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) such as designating the National Highway Freight Network and more recently designating the National Multimodal Freight Network.

Syracuse was also selected as one in twenty-six cities to the host the *FHWA Administrator's Beyond Traffic 2045 Roundtable on the Freight Economy* meeting in May 2016. NYSDOT, SMTC, and CenterState CEO hosted the event where over 50 representatives met to discuss Freight issues and priorities on the National, State, and Regional level. It also provided a platform for the FHWA Administrator to present the new National Freight Program. SMTC was able to use this forum to network with participants and collect input from Regional freight stakeholders.

In December 2016, SMTC also assisted and participated in the NYSDOT Freight Regional Workshop in Syracuse with over 40 freight stakeholders represented in and around Syracuse. This was one of four onsite opportunities for freight stakeholders to comment on the existing and future conditions of the freight system in New York that will be used for the State Freight Plan (SFP).⁵

⁵ New York State Technical Memorandum 5 Freight System and Economic Context: Existing and Future Conditions <https://www.dot.ny.gov/freight-plan/reports>

Region Freight Profile

SMTC staff incorporated freight planning elements into their latest LRTP and the Regional Atlas. Both documents were completed in 2015 with the Regional Atlas including maps and information on existing rail and freight facilities, and freight generators, and the LRTP summarizing the draft Freight Profile and providing information on the primary freight corridors in the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area.

In July 2017, SMTC completed a Regional Freight Profile. The *Freight Transportation Profile: Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Area* includes four main sections: 1) Overview of the Freight Transportation System in the Region, 2) Commodity Flows, 3) Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement, and 4) Freight Related Capital Projects⁶, which lists near-term and long term capital projects for freight. While this Regional Freight Profile consist of many of the components in a Regional Freight Plan subsequent steps to consider is to define regional goods-movement goals, propose freight projects that may help the Region attain those goals such as relieving congestion or promoting economic development, evaluate the feasibility of proposed freight projects, assess available and potential funding sources, and prioritize the collection of proposed freight project in the Region.

The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC to further their efforts and complete a Regional Freight Plan that provides clarity on freight infrastructure investments the region is interested in pursuing. A Regional Freight Plan that aligns with the SFP could assist the CNY in being more competitive for nationally competitive grant opportunities such as INFRA.

Recommendations

- The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC to convene a Regional Freight Advisory Committee if they pursue the development of a Regional Freight Plan and encourages SMTC to explore other methods of outreach that provide the regional freight community opportunities to engage in decisions being made on the transportation system that may impact them.
- The Federal Review Team encourages SMTC to further their efforts and complete a Regional Freight Plan that provides clarity on freight infrastructure investments the region is interested in pursuing.

Commendation

- NYSDOT, SMTC, and CenterState CEO are commended for their part in hosting the *FHWA Beyond Traffic 2045 Administrator's Roundtable on the Freight Economy* in May 2016. Syracuse was selected as one of twenty-six cities around the country to host the roundtable, which provided a platform to present the new National Freight Program and discuss Freight issues and priorities on the National, State, and Regional level.

⁶ Freight Transportation Profile, Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
http://www.smtcmpo.org/docs/reports/SMTC_FreightProfile_0717.pdf

Basic Requirement

The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards, issued on January 8, 2001 and codified under 23 CFR Part 940 ITS Architecture and Standards, requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the national ITS architecture, as well as to U.S. DOT-adopted ITS standards. 23 CFR 940 states that:

- *At the issuance date (January 8, 2001) of the Final Rule/Policy, regions and MPOs implementing ITS projects that have not advanced to final design by April 8, 2005, must have a regional ITS architecture in place. All other regions and MPOs not currently implementing ITS projects must develop a regional ITS architecture within four years from the date their first ITS project advances to final design.*
- *All ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), whether they are stand-alone projects or combined with non-ITS projects, must be consistent with the provisions laid out in 23 CFR 940.*
- *Major ITS projects should move forward based on a project-level architecture that clearly reflects consistency with the national ITS architecture.*
- *All projects shall be developed using a systems engineering process.*
- *Projects must use U.S. DOT-adopted ITS standards as appropriate.*
- *Compliance with the regional ITS architecture will be in accordance with U.S. DOT oversight and Federal-aid procedures, similar to non-ITS projects.*

Finding

SMTC identifies the primary mobility challenges in the region to be non-recurring, rather than recurring, in nature. This is supported by rigorous analysis in their 2015 Congestion Management Plan. Given this, the SMTC LRTP suggests congestion-mitigation strategies other than increasing the physical capacity of the transportation system.

While SMTC states that the regional ITS/Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) program is not an area where they have been especially active, it is also an area where they express interest in greater engagement, and have been pivotal in updating the ITS Strategic Plan, particularly with the 2015 Interim Update that will be fully updated as part of the I-81 project. Additionally, they are an active participant in the NYSAMPO TSMO Working Group and support the new year-round deployment of HELP patrols in the region. “Their active participation in other areas of TSMO has the potential to significantly advance the regional state of the practice, and would be worth exploring – including Traffic Incident Management, ITS Asset Management, and potentially Cybersecurity.”

To improve reliability such as making signal improvements to reduce congestion, and decreasing incident response time, SMTC should consider incorporating ongoing and envisioned Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) strategies in their LRTP. They should

also consider incorporating ITS infrastructure in the development of asset management strategies and tools, including GIS inventory and ITS/Operations strategies. To address non-recurring mobility challenges, SMTC should also consider opportunities to support the regional Traffic Incident Management program, including through participation in the established multi-disciplinary TIM working group and by supporting development of TIM performance measures. These efforts should be consistent with the Regional ITS Architecture (RITSA) and Strategic Plan.

Of particular benefit, SMTC has helped to meet a key statewide need for macroscopic analysis and optimization of intersections with software (Synchro) support and training which they have provided to partner agencies both inside and outside their geographic area.

Recommendation

- The Federal Review Team Recommends the follow strategies to incorporate ITS into the planning process:
 - Incorporate ongoing and envisioned Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) strategies in the LRTP. This should be consistent with the Regional ITS Architecture (RITSA) and Strategic Plan.
 - Include ITS infrastructure in the development of asset management strategies and tools, including GIS inventory.
 - Identify opportunities to support the regional Traffic Incident Management program, including through participation in the established multi-disciplinary TIM working group and by supporting development of TIM performance measures.

Commendation

- SMTC has helped to meet a key statewide need for macroscopic analysis and optimization of intersections with software (Synchro) support and training which they have provided to partner agencies both inside and outside their geographic area.

Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL)

Basic Requirement

The basis for addressing environmental mitigation is detailed in the following sections for the Long Range Transportation Plan; 23 CFR 450.324 (g) (10) – Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan and 23 CFR 450.316 (a) (1) (2) (3) and (b) – Interested parties, participation, consultation. Under CFR 450.320 an MPO may utilize the optional framework in this section to develop programmatic mitigation plans as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process to address the potential environmental impacts of future transportation projects.

Finding

Environmental mitigation is one of the ten federal planning factors an MPO should consider in the transportation planning process. There are many benefits that may be realized when transportation planning practices take into account potential environmental impacts early on in the planning and project development process. Some of the benefits include the protection of natural resources, the human environment, and cultural assets. Since all Federal-aid funded projects must undergo the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, linkages on environmental issues between planning documents and project scoping may verify these concerns and assist in streamlining the project delivery process.

The principal of protecting and enhancing the natural environment, cultural heritage and community appearance, and promoting energy conservation are defined in SMTC's 2050 LRTP's goals and objectives. The SMTC 2050 LRTP also references other regional efforts in addressing environmental planning. Current environmental mitigation efforts by SMTC include the use of their travel demand model to monitor air quality conformity though SMTC is in an air quality attainment area. The travel demand model is also used to assist in modeling various scenarios for large projects, security, and resiliency in the region such as the Region's *Onondaga County Sustainability Plan* in 2012.

Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL) is intended to assist in streamlining the NEPA process. By incorporating NEPA level analysis in the planning study, it helps to streamline the project delivery process since the information. The majority of Federal-aid projects in the SMTC Region are within the same foot print of the existing system and are classified as Categorical Exclusions in the NEPA process. The SMTC's 2050 LRTP lists anticipated future highway projects and costs⁷ in Table 6.2 and around 93% of the investment is targeted towards preventative maintenance, road diets, and enhancements within the current road right of way. This table does not include projects such as I-81 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) where funding for project construction has not yet been identified. It is projects like I-81 which could benefit the most from strong *Planning Environmental Linkage* practices where the planning document continues to be used as a resource for findings and data beyond the planning phase of a project or corridor. Even providing a method to easily access

⁷ SMTC 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 6 Financial Analysis, p.92-93

planning studies pertaining to a specific location would be a good step in Planning Environmental Linkage.

Given this circumstance, the Federal Review Team encourages SMTC to review their environmental mitigation efforts throughout their planning process by identifying potential environmental impacts in planning studies and consider 'Planning Environmental Linkage' opportunities, as appropriate, that would best serve Regional needs. The Federal Review Team also encourages SMTC to consider developing a GIS layer that geolocates links to planning studies that have been completed for easy access for potential users of these studies beyond the planning phase.

Recommendation

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC conducts an analysis of environmental considerations in the Region and consider developing a GIS layer that geolocates links to planning studies that have been completed for easy access for potential users of these studies beyond the planning phase. When feasible and appropriate, conduct PEL studies that include NEPA level analysis for some of the larger transportation projects that may be classified as an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA.

Safety, Security, and Resiliency Planning

Basic Requirement

Federal legislation has separated security as a stand-alone element of the planning process (both metropolitan and Statewide planning). The regulations also state that the degree and consideration of security should be based on the scale and complexity of many different local issues.

MPOs are required to consider safety and security as two of the eight planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306, the metropolitan transportation planning process provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

Findings

Safety

'Safety' is one of the main goals listed in SMTC's LRTP Table 2.1⁸ which includes all the goals and objectives of the region. Specifically, the goal for safety states '*Increase the safety, security, and resiliency of the transportation system*'. Related to that goals SMTC identifies two objectives 1) '*Reduce serious injuries and fatalities from vehicle crashes*' and 2) '*Reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes*'. In SMTC's LRTP "Goals and Objective" survey at least 70% of survey respondents indicated these statements as two of the seven most important objectives in the SMTC region from a list of thirty-one objectives.

SMTC has been very engaged in promoting and developing educational materials for bicycle and pedestrian safety. There are two main activities directly related to safety in the UPWP, 1) Traffic Safety and 2) Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Outreach both of which methodology is for SMTC staff to participate in working groups such as the '*NYSAMPO Safety Working Group*' and advisory boards such as the '*Onondaga County Traffic Safety Advisory Board*'. Through the NYSAMPO working group SMTC is connected to many federal and state agencies that work on transportation safety, like the NYSDOT, the Governors Traffic Safety Committee, ITSMR, the National Traffic Safety Administration, the NYSDMV. They also participated in the development of NYSDOT's 2016 Strategic Highway Safety Plan and will be involved in scoring projects from NYSDOT's HSIP Solicitation. Through the Bicycling and Pedestrian Safety Outreach task SMTC was able to run a bicycle safety campaign from May 9 to June 10 on Spectrum News, Fox, CNN, and MSNBC. This campaign was very successful reaching an estimated 201,000 households broadcasting 350, 30 second commercials within five weeks. This has peaked the interest of the NYSAMPO Safety Working Group as well as AAA and League of American Bicyclist. Given their success SMTC ran a second campaign from September 4th to October 8th.

⁸ SMTC 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 2 Goals and Objectives, p. 23

Fatalities and serious injuries occur on both the state and local transportation system. These High Accident Locations (HALs) are important to address on both systems by implementing safety countermeasures in order to make the transportation safer for the traveling public. In reviewing the SMTC TIP it is noted that local municipalities do not have many projects programmed with Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding, which is the main source of federal funding to address HALs and other safety countermeasures. During the in-person review SMTC staff, NYSDOT and the Federal Review Team started to discuss why this may be the case and it was inconclusive. The SMTC Transportation Atlas identifies the accident locations for auto vehicles, bicyclist, and pedestrians as well as the severity of these accidents and could be a good resource in identifying where improvements could be addressed on the local level.

Security, Resiliency

While security planning for transportation has always been an area of considerations for MPOs, in recent years there has been a greater emphasis as a result of the number of serious weather events and security issues around the country. In 2011 Schoharie County was impacted by hurricane Irene and parts of the Mid-Hudson region by tropical storm Lee damaging homes and washing away roads. More recently in 2017 Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Harvey cause widespread flooding and devastation in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Houston, TX, California wildfires continues to destroy and affect their natural environment.

In the recent update to federal regulations MPOs are to consider 10 planning factors one of them being resiliency and mitigation of storm water impacts. During the in-person review, SMTC showcased their *Syracuse Urban Area Comprehensive Storm Sewer Mapping Project* where they received an award from the New York State GIS Association as the recipient of the 2017 GIS Applications Award Finalist. This project developed the region's first interactive digital municipal storm sewer system map that assists regulated Municipal Separated Storm Sewer System operators in protecting and improving regional surface water quality in compliance with the New York State Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separated Storm Sewer systems. This GIS mapping layer serves as resource and tool for their region for assessing current MS4 capacity relative to new development, and for siting drainage remediation and retrofit project, as well as water quality remediation projects.

Since SMTC participated in the planning activities that developed the *2012 Hazard Mitigation Plan for Onondaga County* there has not been an update of the plan. The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC assesses their role on transportation security planning needs in the region and consider different types of reoccurring and non-reoccurring events determining how the MPO should provide supports in these areas including how they and their partner agencies may address growing cybersecurity risks in the development and implementation of technologies.

Recommendations

- Given the emphasis of safety in performance measures and the reduction of fatalities as a National Goal, the Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC work with FHWA, FTA, and NYSDOT on identifying strategies in addressing high accident locations on the local system.
- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC assesses their role on transportation security planning needs in the region and consider different types of reoccurring and non-reoccurring events determining how the MPO should provide supports in these areas including how they and their partner agencies may address growing cybersecurity risks in the development and implementation of technologies.

Commendation

- SMTC is commended for their work on developing bicycle and pedestrian education materials for the public and successfully broadcasting the videos on various television stations to educate the public.

Basic Requirement

§ 23 CFR 450.306(d) (2) Establishment of performance targets by metropolitan planning organizations. (i) Each metropolitan planning organization shall establish performance targets that address the performance measures or standards established under 23 CFR part 490 (where applicable), 49 U.S.C. 5326(c), and 49 U.S.C. 5329(d) to use in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the region of the metropolitan planning organization. (Note: This requirement was not in effect during this TMA Certification reporting period.)

Finding

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) was enacted on December 3, 2015 continuing MAP-21's development of National Performance Management. These measures include:

Goal area	National goal
Safety	To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads
Infrastructure condition	To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair
Congestion reduction	To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System
System reliability	To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
Freight movement and economic vitality	To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development
Environmental sustainability	To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment
Reduced project delivery delays	To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices

As such, SMTC has been preparing for the congressionally enacted changes. Over the past four years, SMTC staff has hosted and attended performance measure workshops both from FHWA and FTA. They also have been participating regularly on the NYSAMPO task group whose goal is to prepare and coordinate the state for performance management and comprises of staff at NYSDOT, a number of MPOs across the state, and the federal agencies. This group met periodically to monitor the movement of federal rules on Performance Measures and responded to Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM). SMTC also includes a section on their *Transportation System Performance Goals and Objectives* in the 2050 LRTP which were developed to incorporate local planning efforts, the eight planning factors for MPOs and in relation to MAP-21.

NYSDOT has been proactive in supporting all the MPOs in the state by providing them with data analysis tools. NYSDOT developed a geodatabase and analytic framework for performance analysis and visualization of congestion, mobility and reliability. These activities include working with the MPOs on the use of the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS), developing a statewide bottleneck map, and identifying data needed for MPO modeling and forecasting networks.

As the final rules for each of the performance measures have come online this task group is charged with developing methods and standards to implement these new requirements in the state of New York.

Appendix A: FHWA/FTA Letter



**United States
Department of Transportation**

Federal Transit Administration – Region 2

One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004-1452

Federal Highway Administration – NY Division

Leo O'Brien Federal Building,
11 A Clinton Avenue, Suite 719
Albany, NY 12207

In Reply Refer To:
TRO-02
HEP-NY

SEP 26 2017

Mr. Brian Schultz
SMTC Policy Chairman
Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
100 Clinton Square, 126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100
Syracuse, NY 13202

Dear Mr. Schultz,

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the transportation planning process for your metropolitan area on November 6 - 8, 2017. These dates were selected in consultation with Mr. James D'Agostino, the staff director of the MPO (SMTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Syracuse Metropolitan area.

Titles 23 and 49 of the United States Code require the Secretary of Transportation to designate urbanized areas over 200,000 in population as Transportation Management Areas (TMA). As a result of the 2010 Census, the Syracuse Urbanized Area continues to be a TMA. Designated TMAs are subject to special planning and programming requirements. In accordance with 23 USC 134(k) (5), the Secretary must certify compliance of the MPO in each TMA with the metropolitan planning regulations not less than once every four years. This is a joint responsibility of the FHWA and FTA. The four-year cycle runs from the date of the previously jointly signed Certification Report, which was June, 2014.

The primary purpose of the Certification Review is to ensure that the planning requirements of 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 are being satisfactorily implemented. As in past reviews, we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvements. The review in November will include a field visit and the opportunity for public participation. At the present time, we see our discussions primarily with the MPO's staff. We are also requesting participation of the Executive Committee, Policy Board, Planning Committee, and local member agencies for a separate session during the review and value their presence throughout the review to offer comments and their insights.

Appendix A: FHWA/FTA Letter (Con't)

SMTC 2017 TMA Review Announcement

2


Some of the focal points we are proposing for the Certification Review meeting include the following:


- Status of recommendations from previous certification
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Unified Planning Work Programs
- TIP Development and Project Selection
- Financial Planning
- Transit Activities- Human Services Transportation Plan
- Public Outreach
- Title VI and Related Requirements
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Congestion Management Process
- Environmental Mitigation
- Consultation and Coordination
- Transportation Safety and Resiliency Planning
- Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process
- Non-motorized Bicycle-Pedestrian Transportation Planning
- Performance Based Planning and Programming

By October 6, 2017, we request that SMTC provide us with a description of the status of recommendations from the previous 2013-2014 certification and a description of what SMTC does to incorporate those recommendations in the planning process. You may accompany the descriptions with any backup documentation that you would like to provide.

Further details, including a draft agenda for the on-site discussion, will follow under separate cover. The Federal contacts for the review are Maria Chau of FHWA, (518) 431-8878 and Cyrenthia Ward of FTA, (212) 668-2183. The review is a positive means to advance our mutual goals to maximize the effectiveness of the planning process. We look forward to our on-site visit.

Sincerely,


Stephen Goodman, PE
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
Region II


Peter W. Osborn
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
New York Division

Appendix A: FHWA/FTA Letter (Con't)

SMTC 2017 TMA Review Announcement

3

cc: Mr. Alan J. Steinberg, Regional Administrator Environmental Protection Agency, Region II
Ms. Marty Neveu, Director of Statewide Planning Bureau, NYSDOT
Ms. Colleen Smith-Lemmon, Statewide Planning Bureau, NYSDOT
Mr. David Smith, Director, NYSDOT Region 3
Mr. Mark Frechette, Regional Planning and Program Manager, NYSDOT Region 3
Mr. Martin Voss, Commissioner, Onondaga County Department of Transportation
Mr. E.J. Moses, Manager of Grant Procure. & Admin., CNY Regional Transportation Authority
Mr. James D'Agostino, Executive Director, SMTC
Mr. Donald Burns, Director of Planning and Program Development, FTA Region 2
Ms. Anna Price, FHWA NY Division, Director, Office of Program Management
Ms. Valeriya Remezova, FHWA NY Division, Planning Environment Team Leader

Appendix B: Certification On-Site Review Agenda

SMTC 2017 Certification Review Schedule

Monday, November 6

PM: 1:30 to 1:45 Introductions
1:45 to 2:30 Overview of MPO / Regional Issues (SMTC)
2:30 to 3:00 Topic: Status of Items from Previous Review
3:00 to 3:15 Break
3:15 to 4:15 Topic: Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
4:15 to 5:00 Topic: Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL)

Tuesday, November 7

AM: 8:00 to 9:00 Topic: Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
9:00 to 10:00 Topic: Transit Activities / Human Services /Non-motorized (Bike/Ped)
10:00 to 10:15 Break
10:15 to 11:00 Topic: Transportation Improvement Program Development (TIP)
11:00 to 11:45 Topic: Title VI/Environmental Justice
- 11:45 to 1:00 Lunch -

Tuesday, November 7

PM: 1:00 to 1:45 Topic: Public Involvement
1:45 to 2:15 Topic: Freight Planning
2:15 to 2:30 Break
2:30 to 3:15 Topic: Intelligent Transportation System / CMP
3:15 to 4:00 Topic: Safety/Security/Resiliency
4:00 to 4:15 Break
4:15 to 5:00 Discussions/Interviews (Invitation to non-public agency stakeholders)

Wednesday, November 8

AM: 8:30 to 9:30 Topic: Consultation and Coordination
Discussion w/Executive Committee, Policy Board, and Planning Committee Group Discussion
9:30 to 10:15 Topic: Performance Based Planning
10:15 to 10:30 Break
10:30 to 11:30 Caucus by Review Team
11:30 to 12:00 Closeout

Appendix C: Notice to Receive Public Comments

Source: SMTC: *The Post Standard*—October 4th, 2017

0008379156-01

Ad Content Proof

NOTICE TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS
The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is currently conducting the quadrennial Federal Certification Review of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). The U.S. Department of Transportation requires every Metropolitan area with a population over 50,000 to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to qualify for receipt of federal highway and transit funds. SMTC is the designated MPO responsible for transportation planning in Onondaga County, the Town of Sullivan in Madison County, and the Towns of Hastings, Schroepfel, West Monroe and a small portion of Granby in Oswego County. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in accordance with 23 USC 134 (k)(5)(A)(i) and 49 USC 5303 (k) (5)(A)(i)(e) must certify that the metropolitan planning process conducted by SMTC is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal law not less often than once every four years. The primary purpose of the certification review is to ensure that the required planning activities of 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 are being satisfactorily implemented by the SMTC. FHWA and FTA are accepting written comments from the public on SMTC's implementation of the federal

tion of the federal transportation planning process until Friday, December 8, 2017. Comments may be sent to: Maria Chau, FHWA Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building Room 719 Albany, NY 12207 Maria.Chau@dot.gov and/or Cyrenthia Ward, FTA Region 02 One Bowling Green, Room 429 New York, NY 10004 Cyrenthia.Ward@dot.gov For more information, call the SMTC at 315-422-5716 or visit www.smtcmpo.org.

Appendix D: Public Comments

Non-public Agency Stakeholders - Summary of Responses – Tuesday, November 7, 2017 4:15 pm – 5 pm

Questions

1. From your perspective, how well do you understand the SMTC transportation planning process?

Summary Response: Overall the non-public stakeholders expressed that everyone knows the role of SMTC, but not necessarily the planning process. Some examples of SMTC activities include: partnering with Downtown non-profit organizations, using staff members as resources, preparing studies, and hosting meeting on studies/plan and how it relates to the region.

2. From your perspective, how well is the SMTC transportation planning process working to effectively improve transportation in the Region?

Summary Response: Non-public stakeholders identified the planning process as taking some time. An example of this is the 2 studies that SMTC completed on the Eerie Canal in the Town of DeWitt, which involved 2 phases. During the discussion, there was mention of how well SMTC engages with rural communities with ride share and with providing guidance to the aging community. In addition, a stakeholder mentioned how valuable and useful SMTC's Park and Ride Analysis for the Hill helped initiate a 2-way street to a 1-way street.

3. Are there opportunities for you to provide input on transportation issues and plans, such as the long-range plan and other studies and issues?

Summary Response: Yes, during Project Committee meetings, non-public stakeholder can share what's happening in the community. Towns such as the Town of DeWitt are invited to meetings to provide input in the planning process. In addition, there is assistance with surveying those who need transportation services.

4. Are there opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, incomes, races, to provide equal access and opportunity for input in the transportation planning process?

Summary Response: Overall non-public stakeholders agreed that there is diversity in terms of input in the transportation planning process. An example of diverse input was displayed for the I-81 project. For this project, there were a series of forums, where children could provide input. SMTC has also held meeting within various communities throughout the county to give everyone the opportunity to participate. Social media, email and face to face meetings have been additional ways to obtain a diverse input.

5. What are some things that work well?

Summary Response: SMTC's professionalism and availability to provide honest evaluation on projects that are proposed.

6. What areas do you think can be improved?

Summary Response: In addition to more funding, there is a need for better coordination between SMTC and DOT.

Appendix D: Public Comments (continued)

Executive Committee Discussion - Summary of Responses – Wednesday, November 8, 2017 8:30 am – 9:30 am

Questions

1. From your perspective, how well do you understand the SMTC transportation process?

Summary Response: There is well-written documentation of how the SMTC's process works. Also, SMTC can be contacted to explain the process, plans and any other documentation. SMTC is always available to assist.

2. From your perspective, how well is the SMTC transportation planning process working to effectively improve transportation in the Region?

Summary Response: SMTC is doing the best with limited funding. SMTC has a good handle on community issues and a broad scope of planning studies. One committee member mentioned the fact that the public doesn't understand the process and politics that go into the transportation planning process.

3. Are there opportunities for you to provide input on transportation issues and plans, such as the long-range plan and other studies and issues?

Summary Response: Yes, many of the individuals present for this discussion are on multiple SMTC Committees. There is plenty of time to review and provide input on studies. There is also transparency with each individual agency.

4. Are there opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, incomes, races to provide equal access and opportunity for input in the transportation planning process?

Summary Response: SMTC does a good job of reaching out to all sorts of demographics/ethnic groups. SMTC also provides special accommodations, such as translators for various languages.

5. What are some things that work well?

Summary Response: SMTC and the Executive Committee communicate well and have formed a strong coordination amongst MPO and Committee members to accomplish what needs to be done in the Region.

6. What areas do you think can be improved?

Summary Response: Committee members agree that there can be more funding for transportation projects. They would also like to see a streamlined process that is shortened.

Appendix E: Certification Review Site Participants

SMTC Policy Committee/Executive Committee/Planning Committee Members

Mary Robison	City of Syracuse, SMTC Executive Committee Chair
Kerry Mc Elroy	NYS DEC
Rich Lee	CENTRO Transit CEO
Chris Rauber	Onondaga County Department of Transportation
Megan Costa	SOCPA Onondaga County
David Bottar	Central New York RPDB
Peter O'Connor	City of Syracuse – DPW

Stakeholders

Sam Gordon	Town of Dewitt
David A. Mankiewicz	CenterState CEO, Senior Vice President
Mark Treier	Downtown Committee of Syracuse
JoAnne Spoto Decker	Onondaga County
Edward J. Moses, Jr.	Manager of Grants Administration CENTRO Transit
Steve Koegel	CENTRO Transit
Terence Rice	Monroe County

SMTC

James D'Agostino	Director
Mario Colone	Program Manager
Meghan Vitale	Principal Transportation Planner
Danielle Krol	Senior Transportation Planner
Michael Alexander	Senior Transportation Planner
Jason Deshaies	Senior Transportation Analyst
Kevin Kosakowski	Transportation Planner
Patricia Wortley	Administrative Assistant

NYS DOT

Michael Flynn	Planning Staff - Main Office
Colleen Smith Lemmon	Planning Staff - Main Office
David Smith	Regional Director - Region 3
Mark Frechette	Regional Planning Program Manager - Region 3
John Reichert	Planning Staff - Region 3
Julie Baldwin	Planning Staff - Region 3
Katrina Berman	Planning Staff - Region 3
Kathleen O'Leary	Planning Staff - Region 3
Julianne Delsole	Planning Staff - Region 3
Ike Achufusi	Planning Staff - Region 3
Ryan Meagher	TMC Operations Engineer - Region 3

Appendix E: Certification Review Site Participants (Con't)

FTA Region 2

Cyrenthia Ward	Community Planner
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FHWA NY Division

Maria Chau	Senior Community Planner
Christine Thorkildsen	Community Planner
Tim Crothers	ITS Operations Engineer
Kara Hogan	Civil Rights Specialist

Appendix F: Acronyms

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CARD	Centerline Audible Roadway Delineator
CFR	Code of Federal Regulation – the regulations of federal agencies
CMP	Congestion Management Process
CNYTRA	Central New York Regional Planning Transportation Authority (Centro)
CNYRPDB	The Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board
EJ	Environmental Justice
FAST Act	Fix America Surface Transportation Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
HELP	Highway Emergency Local Patrol
INFRA	Infrastructure For Rebuilding America
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LRTP	Long Range Plan or Long Range Transportation Plan
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 Century
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MPP	FTA Metropolitan Planning Program
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPMRDS	National Performance Management Research Data Set



Appendix F: Acronyms (Con't)

NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rule Making
NYSAMPO	New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSTA	New York State Thruway Authority
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation
PE	Preliminary Engineering
PEL	Planning Environmental Linkage
PL	FHWA Federal-Aid Planning Funds
RITSA	Regional ITS Architecture
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Agreed-upon, Reasonable, Time-bound
SMTTC	Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
TCM	Transportation Control Measure
TIM	Traffic Incident Management
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TMC	Transportation Management Center
TRB	Transportation Research Board
TSMO	Transportation Systems Management and Operations
TTI	Travel Time Index
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
U.S.C.	United States Code

Appendix F: Acronyms (Con't)

USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
VMT	Vehicle Miles of Travel

Appendix G: Map of SMTC Region

Source: Map 1: SMTC Transportation Atlas (Page 6)

http://www.smtcmpl.org/LRTP2050/docs/Atlas_07072015/Atlas_07072015.pdf

