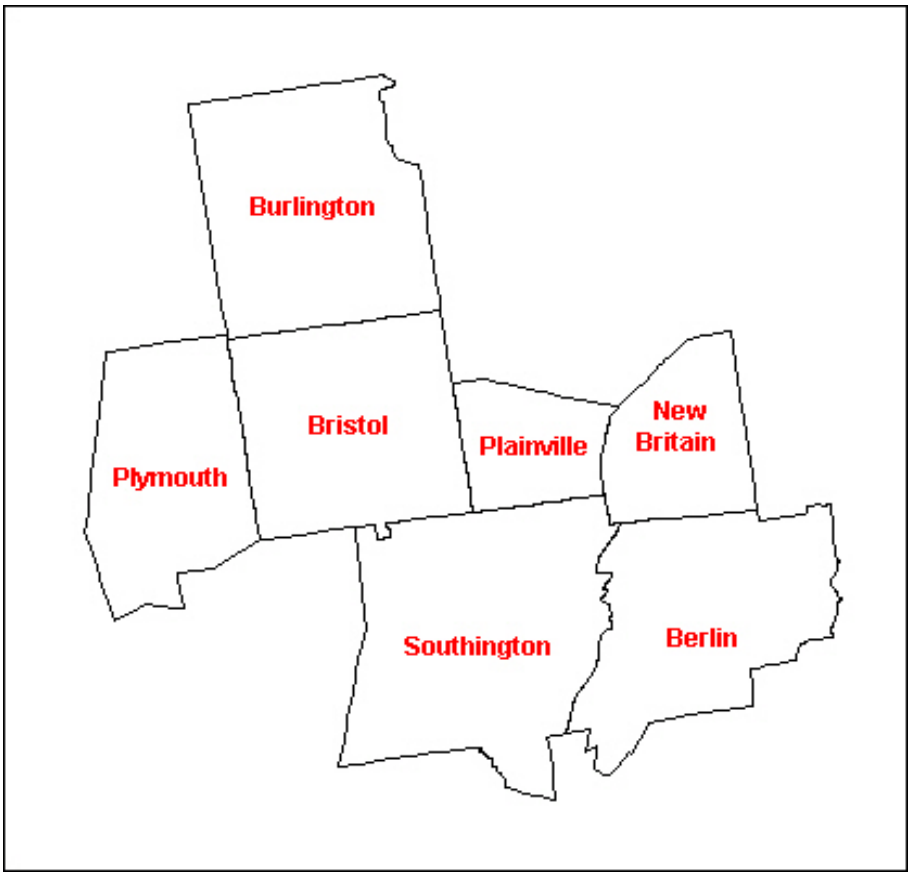
U. S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

Federal Transit Administration



Central Connecticut Region MPO

Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the Hartford Transportation Management Area

Final Report
March 2014

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List of Acronyms

CCRPA	Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
TMA	Transportation Management Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CTDOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation
GIS	Geographic Information System
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System
STP	Surface Transportation Program
MTP, also: Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Regional Trans. Plan (RTP)	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
CMP	Congestion Management Process
TIM	Traffic Incident Management
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
TCM	Transportation Control Measures
SIP	Strategic Implementation Plan
EJ	Environmental Justice
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Programs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
UZA	Urbanized Area

Preface

MAP-21, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141) is in effect as the authorizing and regulatory legislation for federally funded transportation planning activities. However, the wide majority of the time covered in this review, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 was the guiding legislation that set forth requirements for statewide and metropolitan transportation planning, following upon the predecessor Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) issued planning regulations on November 14, 2007 implementing SAFETEA-LU requirements governing the transportation planning process. These requirements are presented in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule. The Metropolitan Planning Regulations are closely tied with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Air Quality Conformity Regulations. The general requirements of periodic review by USDOT of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes are retained in MAP-21.

The metropolitan planning regulations require that the FHWA and FTA jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process conducted in each urbanized area or Transportation Management Area (TMA) with a population over 200,000 no less than every four years. This review includes meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Regulations and, in air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas, evaluation of the process to ensure conformity of plans and programs to the EPA Air Quality Conformity regulations. Upon completion of this review, FHWA and FTA will jointly Certify, Certify with Corrective Action or Decertify the Metropolitan Planning Process.

This is the sixth certification review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the Hartford Urbanized Area and the Connecticut Portion of the Springfield MA-CT Transportation Management Area, partially represented by the CCRPA since the review of 2004. Previous TMA reviews were:

- March 7, 8 and 9, 1995
- May 5 and 27, 1998
- July 11 and 12, 2001
- October 20 and 21, 2004
- July 15, 2009

The federal review team conducted a desk review of the major components of the transportation planning process and explored selected components of the planning process and major DOT initiatives in depth during the on-site review. This report identifies recommendations for consideration by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for improvement and also highlights some of the positive practices of the MPO that can serve as examples to other states and planning organizations.

Certification Action

The FTA and the FHWA have determined that the transportation planning process conducted by the CCRPA, representing the Hartford portion of the Hartford TMA and the Connecticut portion of the Springfield MA-CT Transportation Management Area, meets the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Rule, 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C and 49 CFR Part 613. The FHWA and the FTA are therefore jointly certifying the transportation planning process.

Executive Summary

As a result of this certification review, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration find that the CCRPA and its staff, in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), are conducting a transportation planning process that produces valuable products and results using the planning tools currently available.

The CCRPA has initiated and concluded several innovative projects within the required scope of planning processes. Of particular note, the reviewers were impressed with the process and results of the Transportation Demand Management project focused on student transportation options at Central Connecticut State University, one of the region's largest traffic generators. Also noteworthy is the variety of public participation strategies and valuable use of technology in the planning process employed by the MPO.

The CCRPA's planning process is hereby certified in accordance with 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C [450.443(b)] and 49 CFR Part 613. Noted below are several recommendations and commendations relative to the MPO's planning process.

Key Definitions of Federal Comments
The following definition of terms comes directly from the USDOT TMA Certification Process Field Handbook (December 2011), and are applied to most required and optional topic areas of review.

"*** Corrective Action:** 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.

*** Recommendation:** Items that, while somewhat less substantial and not regulatory, are still significant enough that FHWA and FTA are hopeful that State, local officials and transit operator(s) will consider taking some action. Typically, recommendations involve the state of the practice or technical improvements instead of regulatory requirements. The suggestions are clearly defined.

* *Corrective Actions* and *Recommendations* describe what needs to be done and are the primary vehicles by which FHWA and FTA convey the need for improvement and change. The primary difference between a *Recommendation* and a *Corrective Action* is that the former addresses technical improvements to processes and procedures that would be enhancements but are not specifically required by law, whereas the latter indicates a serious situation that does not meet one or more requirements of the transportation planning laws and regulations. The expected outcome of a *Corrective Action* is change that brings the metropolitan planning process into compliance with a law or regulation; failure to respond will likely result in a more restrictive Certification. The expected outcome of a *Recommendation* is also change. While the change suggested by a *Recommendation* would improve the process, there is no Federal mandate, and failure to respond will not necessarily result in more restrictive Certification.

*** Commendations and noteworthy practices:** 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. Also, FHWA and FTA may wish to offer Commendations for significant improvements and/or resolution of past findings."

Summary of Commendations

Public Involvement, Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency

- The CCRPA initiated a "Pilot Transportation" program with Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). The pilot transportation program granted the CCRPA access to CCSU's internal email listing of 15,000 transportation users. In addition, CCRPA successfully created transportation focus groups with student participants.

Technical Capabilities & Other Services

- The MPO has been diligent in its efforts to provide training for staff to deepen their skills in the technical areas of transportation planning and has produced imaginative planning initiatives that take full advantage of a wide range of technical tools for analysis and visualization, to portray studies graphically to stakeholders and the public.

Environmental Mitigation

- The MPO's detailed evaluation of environmental impacts of proposed projects and concepts for mitigation are notable and should be considered for other MPOs.

Summary of Recommendations

Public Involvement, Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency

- It is recommended that the CCRPA continue to be proactive in community outreach and public participation. The MPO should consider creating a transportation focus group for students with disabilities or extend the scope of the group to individuals with disabilities within the CCRPA jurisdiction.

- It is recommended the State conduct a Title VI assessment of the LEP, low-income and minority populations affected by the redrawing of regional boundaries. The report should include demographic data with specific strategies to timely mitigate potential Title VI inequities as the result of the reorganization.

Intermodal Transportation Planning and Livability/Sustainability – Freight Planning

- The CCRPA should inventory truck and rail freight terminals and distribution centers in the region with the routes most frequented by truck freight. A graphic inventory of these freight elements should also include sites with freight restrictions and safety considerations. The nodes where truck freight meets rail freight should also be highlighted. This planning activity should include input with the private sector, such as shippers and carriers located in the region, along with trucking associations.

Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan

- In the next update of the TIP, the CCRPA should include estimated available revenues alongside the project cost summary, so that fiscal constraint can be easily confirmed.

- In the next update of the TIP, the CCRPA should include a description of the project selection and prioritization procedures, including a clear description of how projects flow from the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Project detail descriptions may also include a reference to relevant section or goal from the MTP supporting the project.

Congestion Management Process

- The regulations governing CMP require a TMA-based effort. Future CMP activities should be TMA-wide and involve the process of cooperation and collaboration among all MPOs in the TMA.

Planning for Operations, ITS, and Safety

- Under Safety, the CCRPA should consider requesting the services of the Safety Circuit Rider to provide assistance to the region with further planning for safety, safety training and technical assistance, and safety data for analysis. We also encourage the CCRPA to become actively involved with providing input to CTDOT on the development of Connecticut's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). This participation may be helpful to the region in having some of their safety activities, strategies and projects considered and included in the SHSP.

- Under Planning for Operations, funding for the operations of the existing highway system (such as traffic signal operations) seems to be significantly underrepresented within the CCRPA's 2011 transportation plan and program. Moving forward, an increased emphasis and consideration towards the development of policies, goals, objectives, performance measures, and needs for use in developing strategies and projects to improve the operation and management of existing highways and public transportation facilities is highly recommended and in coordination within the entire TMA. Training and technical assistance should also be considered, requested, and pursued from FHWA to assist the CCRPA in planning for operations and management. An Integrating Planning for Operations into Metropolitan Transportation Plans and Programs workshop is available from FHWA and other training or technical assistance opportunities should be investigated.

- Under ITS, communication and coordination with CTDOT is highly recommended to determine whether improvements in the region regarding traffic signal coordination on State arterial routes, additional variable message signs on Interstate highways and expressways, updates to the ITS regional architecture, or development of a comprehensive ITS strategic plan are warranted and should be advanced.

MPO Organization/Structure

- CCRPA should amend its policy board structure to meet the MAP-21 requirement for transit representation and state transportation departments on MPO boards. FTA published draft guidance for this requirement on September 30th, 2013; final guidance will be forthcoming.

- CCRPA should work with its State, Federal and MPO partners to ensure that the RPO consolidation process fosters an effective multimodal transportation planning process, aligns land use planning, MPO, and Census urbanized area boundaries to the greatest extent practicable, and supports existing MPO practices such as population-weighted voting that help foster an equitable and participatory planning process.

Agreements/Contracts

- CTDOT, CCRPA, CRCOG, and the other MPOs in Connecticut should update their MOUs to reflect the reality of the 5307 funding distribution process, including procedures for formally transferring funds from one UZA to another in the event that this becomes necessary to fulfill the program's goals. The parties to the MOU should also consider developing a procedure by which long-term funding distribution is taken into account in selecting projects, to help ensure that all regions and recipients receive an equitable share over time.

- Providers of public transportation in the Central Connecticut region should be included as cosigners of the updated MOU.

Consultation and Coordination

- FHWA, FTA, and the CCRPA should work together to ensure that MPO leadership, representatives of local transit agencies, and interested members of the public are included in the next planning certification review meeting.

- The CCRPA, CTDOT, and the region's transit providers should work together to clearly establish transit planning roles and responsibilities for the region. In particular, they should ensure that all areas and corridors in the region have an agency responsible for service planning, identifying new routes and re-configuring service as necessary to satisfy unmet demand or adapt to demographic changes.

- In order facilitate quantitative studies and performance measurement, the CCRPA, CTDOT, and the CRCOG should better coordinate their data sharing efforts, working to make as much data (such as traffic safety data, transit ridership data, etc.) as possible widely available via compatible systems and in compatible formats.

Specific Items of Discussion at the On-site Review

In meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Regulations set forth in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule, MPOs have the flexibility to focus their particular planning expertise on the needs that they define for their planning region through their planning process. The purpose of the on-site review meeting was to assess the technical capability of the MPO staff in meeting these planning needs, and their ability to involve the public who may be affected by transportation investments in the transportation decision making process. In addition, the review team used these sessions to help assess the multi- modal nature of the MPO planning activities as well as their ability to respond to various DOT initiatives. As this TMA comprises three Metropolitan Planning Organizations, interregional cooperation and activities were a major focus of the certification review effort. The extent to which the public is involved in the transportation planning process and the decision making process were overarching themes during this review.

Review of Findings from 2009 Federal Transportation Management Area Certification Review

At the on-site meeting, the CCRPA provided the federal review team with an outline of CCRPA's responses and actions to the 2009 Certification recommendations. A summary of the CCRPA's responses to the 2009 certification recommendations is included below.

- RECOMMENDATION: The technical staff who has worked on the Google Transit data project are encouraged to prepare a grant proposal to fund continuing work in developing online public information on transit and other transportation services. This noteworthy effort can be expected to yield significant benefits in providing conveniently accessible, practical information to the public on the use of transit services.
    - RESPONSE: The CCRPA applied for the State's Regional Performance Incentive (RPI) grant in 2011 to do a statewide Google Transit project. However, the grant was not awarded. Since the 2009 certification review, all 8 CT Transit systems have been added to Google Transit. Staff serves on the Connecticut Pedestrian and Bicycle (CTPAB) Board. This Board is expected to recommend that State funding for transit systems not yet on Google Transit be conditioned on participation in the program.

- RECOMMENDATION: The CCRPA should view the FHWA informational presentation on freight planning and continue to pursue opportunities to work with providers, FHWA and other relevant Federal agencies, the State, and other MPOs to develop effective approaches to freight planning.
    - RESPONSE: The CCRPA notes the following inclusions under planning documents: LRTP – *Freight* sections under *Major Improvements* and *Systems,* CEDS – Recommends upgrading rail system, the Hartford TMA is too dependent on truck freight, POCD – Recommends preservation of rail ROW for potential future freight use, encourage freight-intensive land uses in proximity to rail lines and highway access, Highway Diversion Plans – Maintains effective freight flow on appropriate alternate routes when necessary. The MPO also noted the following actions: Coordinated with the CTDOT on the Central Connecticut Rail Study (between Waterbury-Bristol-New Britain-Berlin) to reestablish passenger rail service and improve freight access, pursued opportunity to enhance regional truck stops (Travelcenters of America), pursued opportunity to enhance highway rest stops, supported legislative efforts to enhance maintenance of short line railroads, attended freight conferences and webinars, performed traffic studies for industrial developments, and Proposed transportation projects to improve highway access.

- RECOMMENDATION: Efforts in recent years to enhance technical capabilities at the CCRPA have produced good results and should be continued in the future.
    - RESPONSE: Since 2009, the CCRPA has trained current staff and hired new staff with advanced GIS skills and technical drawing skills. The CCRPA continues to develop concept plans using GIS, CAD, and Sketchup. Three staff members have GIS certification. The CCRPA listed the following under staff expertise and background: Land use and zoning, economic and community development, land-use

planning and urban design, transportation planning and engineering, urban and regional planning, environmental science, Hydrology, ecology and natural resources management, geographical/spatial analysis, statistical analysis, Survey and research, and paratransit services . Additional response is included in the section on Technical Capabilities including software in use at the MPO and staff training to increase capacity.

- RECOMMENDATION: The CCRPA should investigate approaches to communicating project benefits to the public. Examples of effective practice by other MPOs may provide useful insights that can be adapted to circumstances in Central Connecticut.
    - RESPONSE: The CCRPA has totally revamped their Public Participation Plan which has included:
        - Detailed formal outreach procedures.
        - Public hearings for all planning and capital projects
        - Press releases for major projects
        - Provision of notices to stakeholder groups and interested parties, including municipal clerks (for redistribution)
        - Development of stakeholder groups to guide development for major plans
        - Public workshops for transportation projects

        Response also included specific project references including outreach methods such as in-person and mail-in surveys and focus groups.

- RECOMMENDATION: The CCRPA and partner agencies in the metropolitan planning process should continue to look for opportunities to strengthen coordination and resource sharing in the Hartford Urbanized Area.
    - RESPONSE:
        - Congestion Management Process (CMP) data sharing with Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and Midstate Regional Planning Agency (now RiverCOG)
        - Paratransit service coordination with neighboring providers - Greater Hartford Transit District (GHTD)
        - Study coordination:
        - CTfastrak Transit Service Plan
        - CRCOG Greater Hartford Transit Analysis Study
        - Inter-regional Bike Share Study (CRCOG, GHTD)
        - Central Connecticut Rail Study (Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, CTDOT)

        Regular meetings and committee participation for:
        - Corridor Advisory Committee for CTfastrak and NHHS High Speed Rail
        - Sustainable Knowledge Corridor - CRCOG, Pioneer Valley Planning Council (PVPC), approximately 40 partner agencies
        - Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership (CRCOG, PVPC, and universities/colleges)
        - Hartford UZA Coordination (with CRCOG, RiverCOG, Litchfield Hills, Windham Council of Governments, COGCNV)
        - CTfastrak Operations Fire/Life Safety Committee
        - Job Access / Reverse Commutes (CRCOG, GHTD)
        - CT Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Board

        Coordination with municipalities in neighboring MPO's as needed on specific projects
        - Waterbury-Bristol Bus Service Proposal
        - Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Completion
        - Regional Aerial Orthophotography
        - Discretionary Projects

- RECOMMENDATION: The CCRPA is encouraged in its efforts to provide a stronger connection between the expansive vision established through the metropolitan transportation plan and the projects included in the TIP.
    - RESPONSE: The CCRPA reports an overhaul to both the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and

the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) including the following:

- LRTP directly references the TIP
- CCRPA continues to develop LRTP-listed projects into projects for future TIP inclusion
- Interim update for LRTP is planned

Transportation Committee and Public Input

Observations:
Policy Board and Transportation Committee member from New Britain, Steven Schiller, commented that City of New Britain was pleased with the work of the MPO and characterized the working relationship with staff as good. No other board/committee members, planning partners, nor public provided any other comments. Additionally, no written comments on the MPO's planning process were received by the review team.

Public Involvement, Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency

Regulatory Basis – Outreach/Public Participation:

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).

Regulatory Basis – Title VI:

It has been the long-standing policy of U.S. DOT to actively ensure nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI 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" Title VI bars intentional discrimination (i.e., disparate treatment) as well as disparate-impact discrimination stemming from neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups based on race, color, or national origin. The planning regulations [23 CFR 450.334(a)(3)] require the MPO to self-certify that "the planning process . . . is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements of . . . Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21.".

Basic Requirement - Executive Orders Pertaining to Environmental Justice (EJ) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

Environmental Justice Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, issued February 11, 1994, provides that "each Federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high or adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations . . . ". In compliance with this Executive Order, the U.S. DOT Order on Environmental Justice was issued on April 15, 1997. Furthermore, FHWA issued order number 6640.23 on December 2, 1998, entitled "FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," to establish policies and procedures for the FHWA to use in complying with Executive Order 12898. FTA Circular 4703.1, Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients was published on August 15, 2012.

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 that may face challenges accessing employment and other services, be sought out and considered.

Limited English Proficiency Executive Order 13166, issued August 11, 2000 directs federal agencies to evaluate services provided to Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons and implement a system that ensures that LEP persons are able to meaningfully access the services provided consistent with and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of each federal agency. Additionally, each federal agency shall ensure that recipients of federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their Limited English Proficiency applicants and beneficiaries.

Observations:

Public Participation

- The CCRPA completed an overhaul of their website to make it more succinct for the public
- Public hearings/information sessions for all Capital Improvement Projects
- The CCRPA uses the collaborative charette process to ensure to feedback from the participants is accurately captured.
- There are press conferences for large projects
- The CCRPA conducts a vast array of surveying of the public (in-person, mail, drivers)
- There is an ADA advisory group

Title VI, Environmental Justice & Limited English Proficiency

CCRPA has demonstrated compliance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act as well as the regulations pertaining to Environmental Justice and addressing concerns of Limited English Proficiency communities. CCRPA has conducted extensive research and analysis of minority, limited English proficiency and low income populations (groups traditionally underserved) within their boundaries as well as the entire State of Connecticut. As a result of organization's extensive research in these areas, CCRPA representatives have expressed concerns about potential Title VI, LEP and Environmental Justice impacts, if the State of Connecticut moves forward with plans to redraw regional boundaries. The FHWA Civil Rights Specialist was provided copies of the CCRPA's extensive research in this area. This information was also shared with FTA's Civil Rights Specialist. As noted above, Title VI bars intentional discrimination (i.e., disparate treatment) as well as disparate-impact discrimination stemming from neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups based on race, color, or national origin.

Conclusion:

The Review team is equally concerned about potential Title VI, LEP and Environmental Justice inequities as the State moves forward with redrawing regional boundaries. The issue becomes what actions are being taken to mitigate Title VI, LEP & EJ imbalances.

CCRPA is currently in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 12898, Executive Order 13166 and 23 CFR 450.316 (a)(1)(vii).

Commendation:

The CCRPA initiated a "Pilot Transportation" program with Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). The pilot transportation program granted the CCRPA access to CCSU's internal email listing of 15,000 transportation users. In addition, CCRPA successfully created transportation focus groups with student participants.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the CCRPA continue to be proactive in community outreach and public participation. The MPO should consider creating a transportation focus group for students with disabilities or extend the scope of the group to individuals with disabilities within the CCRPA jurisdiction.

It is recommended the State conduct a Title VI assessment of the LEP, low-income and minority populations affected by the redrawing of regional boundaries. The report should include demographic data with specific strategies to timely mitigate potential Title VI inequities as the result of the reorganization.

Intermodal Transportation Planning and Livability/Sustainability

Regulatory Basis - Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process:

23 U.S.C. 134 (a) and 23 CFR 450.306(4), 450.316(a), 450.316(b), 450.104 - Metropolitan transportation planning section indicates that:

> "It is in the national interest to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and between States and urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation related fuel consumption and air pollution through metropolitan and Statewide transportation planning processes identified in this chapter; and encourage the continued improvement and evolution of the metropolitan and Statewide transportation planning processes by MPOs, State departments of transportation, and public transit operators as guided by the planning factors identified in subsection (h) and section 135(d).

Observations:

Freight planning has been approached by the MPO through integration with other agency focus areas such as economic development and land use planning, along with transportation planning.

Conclusion:

Although the freight planning elements appear in other planning areas within the MPO's work program, a concerted focus on local and regional freight issues and opportunities needs to be explored.

Recommendation:

The CCRPA should inventory truck and rail freight terminals and distribution centers in the region with the routes most frequented by truck freight. A graphic inventory of these freight elements should also include sites with freight restrictions and safety considerations. The nodes where truck freight meets rail freight should also be highlighted. This planning activity should include input with the private sector, such as shippers and carriers located in the region, along with trucking associations.

Basic Requirement - Livability and Sustainability

While current statute and transportation planning regulations do not make direct references to land use or livability planning, the transportation planning process is required to be coordinated with "planned growth" and similar activities that exist in the region. In addition, MPOs and State DOTs must, when appropriate, consult with other agencies that have responsibility for land use and resource management. Also, Metropolitan planning regulations (23 CFR 450.306) require that the scope of the transportation planning process include consideration of both "motorized and non-motorized users". Furthermore, planning must "Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns", as well as "Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight."

Observations:

The CCRPA has incorporated the six Federal livability principles into their planning program, and the principles are evident in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) currently in effect. The MPO is actively involved in the Sustainable Communities Initiative with other area MPOs and communities. The CCRPA has worked on a number of alternative transportation activities under a policy that supports environmental, economic and transportation sustainability.

Conclusion:

The MPO, through policy and activity has shown strong adherence to the principles of livability and sustainability.

Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program

Regulatory Basis – Long-Range Transportation Plan:

In accordance with 23 CFR450.322 (a) "The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon…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."

Regulatory Basis – Transportation Improvement Program:

23 CFR 450.324 requires the MPO to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, 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 450.324 (a)]
- The TIP should identify all eligible TCM's included in the SIP and give priority to eligible TCM's and projects included for the first two years which have funds available and committed; [23 CFR 450.324 (i)]

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 whether or not the projects are to be funded with Title 23 or Title 49 funds. In addition, all federal and non-federally funded, regionally significant projects must be included in the TIP and STIP and consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (or Long-Range Transportation Plan) for information purposes and air quality analysis in nonattainment and maintenance areas; [23 CFR 450.324 (c),(d)]

Regulatory Basis – Financial Planning:

The metropolitan planning statutes state that the long-range transportation plan and TIP (23 U.S.C. 134 (j) (2) (B)) must include a "financial plan" that "indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the program" . Additionally, the STIP may include a similar financial plan (23 U.S.C. 135 (g)(5)(F)). The purpose of the financial plan is to demonstrate fiscal constraint. These requirements are implemented in our transportation planning regulations for the metropolitan long-range transportation plan, TIP, and STIP. These regulations provide, in essence, that a long-range transportation plan and TIP can include only projects for which funding "can reasonably be expected to be available" [23 CFR 450.322(f)(10) (metropolitan long-range transportation plan), 23 CFR 450.324(h) (TIP), and 23 CFR 450.216(m)(STIP)]. In addition, the regulations provide that projects in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas can be included in the first two years of the TIP and STIP only if funds are "available or committed" [23 CFR 450.324(h) and 23 CFR 450.216(m)]. Finally, the Clean Air Act's transportation conformity regulations specify that a conformity determination can only be made on a fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan and TIP [40 CFR 93.108].

Regulatory Basis – List of Obligated Projects:

The MPO, transportation operators and the State must cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the previous year in accordance with 23 CFR 450.332 The listing must include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year and at a minimum, the following for each project:

- The amount of funds requested in the TIP
- Federal funding obligated during the preceding year

- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years
- Sufficient description to identify the project of phase
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase

Observations:

The CCRPA's Transportation Improvement Program contains a good breakdown of project costs by year and program, as well as project details. Fiscal constraint is ensured through use of revenue projections provided by CTDOT in developing the TIP. However, the summary table contains no direct comparison of project costs to available revenues.

The TIP document also lacks a description of project selection and prioritization procedures. These procedures must be documented in order to demonstrate that projects are being programmed based on a cooperative decision-making process based on the projects and goals outlined in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), also referred to as the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Recommendations:

In the next update of the TIP, the CCRPA should include estimated available revenues alongside the project cost summary, so that fiscal constraint can be easily confirmed.

In the next update of the TIP, the CCRPA should include a description of the project selection and prioritization procedures, including a clear description of how projects flow from the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Project detail descriptions may also include a reference to relevant section or goal from the MTP supporting the project.

Congestion Management Process

Management Systems - Regulatory Basis

The State and the MPO must develop a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that "provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system. The Congestion Management Process (CMP) applies to transportation management areas (TMAs) based on a cooperatively development and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies." (23 CFR 450.320 (a))

Observations:

The CCRPA updated their CMP in 2012 covering major commuting routes within the region utilizing GPS/GIS technology with staff-driven, privately-owned cars as probe vehicles. The MPO developed criteria measures to quantify congestion in relation to road segment speed limits.

Conclusion:

The MPO is working to keep the CMP current and relevant to its planning process and project-selection procedures. Some technical difficulties were attributed to preventing the production of a TMA-wide report during the interim period between certification reviews. Despite the difficulties, a useful screening report was produced that can help monitor and pinpoint areas of roadway congestion in the region.

Recommendation:

The regulations governing CMP require a TMA-based effort. Future CMP activities should be TMA-wide and involve the process of cooperation and collaboration among all MPOs in the TMA.

Planning for Operations, ITS, and Safety

Regulatory Basis – Management and Operations:

Federal statute 23 U.S.C. 134 (h)(1)(G), requires the metropolitan planning process to include the consideration of projects and strategies that will *promote efficient system management and operation;*

Federal statute 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(D), which provides the basis for 23 CFR 450.322(f)(3), specifies that: *Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods;*

Additionally, 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i) further requires that the financial plan for the MTP – and per the 23 CFR 450.324(h), the financial plan for the TIP – must include: *For purposes of transportation system operations and maintenance, the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways and public transportation.*

Regulatory Basis – Intelligent Transportation Systems:

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.

From 23 CFR 940.5 (Policy): "ITS projects shall conform to the National ITS Architecture and standards in accordance with the requirements contained in this part. Conformance with the National ITS Architecture is interpreted to mean the use of the National ITS Architecture to develop a regional ITS architecture, and the subsequent adherence of all ITS projects to that regional ITS architecture. Development of the regional ITS architecture should be consistent with the transportation planning process for Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning."

Additionally, from 23 CFR 940.9 (Regional ITS Architecture): "(a) A regional ITS architecture shall be developed to guide the development of ITS projects and programs and be consistent with ITS strategies and projects contained in applicable transportation plans. The National ITS Architecture shall be used as a resource in the development of the regional ITS architecture. The regional ITS architecture shall be on a scale commensurate with the scope of ITS investment in the region. Provision should be made to include participation from the following agencies, as appropriate, in the development of the regional ITS architecture: Highway agencies; public safety agencies (e.g., police, fire, emergency/medical); transit operators; Federal lands agencies; State motor carrier agencies; and other operating agencies necessary to fully address regional ITS integration.

(f) The agencies and other stakeholders participating in the development of the regional ITS architecture shall develop and implement procedures and responsibilities for maintaining it, as needs evolve within the region.".

Regulatory Basis – Transportation Safety Planning:

49 U.S.C. 5303 requires MPOs to consider safety as one of 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 of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

Regulatory Basis – Security in the Planning Process:

Federal legislation has separated security as a stand-alone element of the planning process (both metropolitan 23

CFR 450.306(a)(3) and Statewide 23 CFR 450.206(a)(3) 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.

Observations:

The CCRPA has identified Safety as one of its four core principles in its 2011 long-range plan. There is focus on safety in the region demonstrated via the various safety planning strategies that were noted in the desk review and during the on-site review. Some noteworthy safety planning activities and strategies include the identification of needed improvements in the electronic collection, geocoding, and analysis of crashes, the submittal of applications to CTDOT for funding under the Local Road Accident Reduction Program (LRARP), the need for improvements in access control along identified corridors, continuation of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects, and the recommendation of roundabouts at several locations to improve intersection safety and operations.

The CCRPA has identified the need for the installation of new variable message signs and the development of diversion plans in the region to enhance notification to travelers for making of informed decisions relative to the use of alternate routes when significant congestion occurs. The need for traffic signal coordination on several State roads to improve traffic operations was identified in the Congestion Management Plan (CMP).

Conclusion:

The Federal review team noted a strong focus, leadership, commitment, and collaboration of the CCRPA with State and local officials in advancing a variety of safety strategies and projects. Of particular note is CCRPA's planning efforts to advance both traditional safety projects as well as several of FHWA's proven safety countermeasures, such as roundabouts, road diets, and corridor access management (reference: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/).

Recommendations:

Under Safety, the CCRPA should consider requesting the services of the Safety Circuit Rider to provide assistance to the region with further planning for safety, safety training and technical assistance, and safety data for analysis. We also encourage the CCRPA to become actively involved with providing input to CTDOT on the development of Connecticut's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). This participation may be helpful to the region in having some of their safety activities, strategies and projects considered and included in the SHSP.

Under Planning for Operations, funding for the operations of the existing highway system (such as traffic signal operations) seems to be significantly underrepresented within the CCRPA's 2011 transportation plan and program. Moving forward, an increased emphasis and consideration towards the development of policies, goals, objectives, performance measures, and needs for use in developing strategies and projects to improve the operation and management of existing highways and public transportation facilities is highly recommended and in coordination within the entire TMA. Training and technical assistance should also be considered, requested, and pursued from FHWA to assist the CCRPA in planning for operations and management. An Integrating Planning for Operations into Metropolitan Transportation Plans and Programs workshop is available from FHWA and other training or technical assistance opportunities should be investigated.

Under ITS, communication and coordination with CTDOT is highly recommended to determine whether improvements in the region regarding traffic signal coordination on State arterial routes, additional variable message signs on Interstate highways and expressways, updates to the ITS regional architecture, or development of a comprehensive ITS strategic plan are warranted and should be advanced.

Technical Capabilities & Other Services

Basic Requirement: Visualization Techniques

The requirements for the use of visualization techniques in metropolitan plans and TIPs can be found as part of 23 CFR 450.316 - Interested parties, participation and consultation. The specific section is 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(iii), and the reference reads as follows: *The participation plan shall …. describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for: …. Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs.*

Observations:

The MPO produces visualization products that employ a variety of sophisticated graphics and conceptual renderings to accompany its presentation of planning products. Training in technical skill sets is offered and encouraged for staff.

Conclusion:

The training budget and the large amount of supportive data generated in the MPO's work products reflects a priority on building skills among staff and increasing the overall capabilities of the region's planners.

Commendation:

The MPO has been diligent in its efforts to provide training for staff to deepen their skills in the technical areas of transportation planning and has produced imaginative planning initiatives that take full advantage of a wide range of technical tools for analysis and visualization, to portray studies graphically to stakeholders and the public.

Other Services & Integrated Transportation Planning

Observations:

At the on-site meeting, the integration of transportation planning and other planning fields that MPO works in was emphasized as a focus of the Agency's efforts.

Conclusion:

The Agency's work products and processes support their emphasis for integration across all planning disciplines, which also is reflected in the MPO's involvement in the Sustainable Communities Program which emphasizes an integration of plans under the planning grant awarded by the HUD-EPA-DOT Partnership and is stressed under the six livability principles.

Planning Requirements Covered by this Review Organization

MPO Organization/Structure

MPO Organization/Structure - Regulatory Basis

Federal legislation (23 U.S.C. 134(d)) requires the designation of an MPO for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. When an MPO representing all or part of a TMA is initially designated or redesignated according to 23 CFR 450.310(d), the policy board of the MPO shall consist of (a) local elected officials, (b) officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the metropolitan area, and including representation by providers of public transportation. (c) appropriate State transportation officials. The voting membership of an MPO that was designated or redesignated prior, will remain valid until a new MPO is redesignated. Redesignation is required whenever the existing MPO seeks to substantially change the proportion of voting members representing individual jurisdictions or the State or the decision-making authority or procedures established under MPO bylaws. The addition of jurisdictional or political bodies into the MPO or of members to the policy board generally does not require a redesignation of the MPO.

Observations:

The CCRPA is governed by an Agency Board consisting of representatives from each of its member towns. Each town has two or three representatives based on its population, a practice that encourages equitable transportation decision-making. The CCRPA also has a Transportation Committee that makes recommendations to the Board. CTDOT, FHWA, and FTA are invited to serve in a non-voting capacity on the Transportation Committee. There is no specifically designated representative of public transit on either the Transportation Committee or the CCRPA Board.

The State legislature recently initiated an effort to consolidate Connecticut's regional planning organizations (RPOs); this is likely to significantly change the inter-agency landscape in coming years, particularly if the RPO consolidation includes or is followed by a parallel consolidation of MPOs.

Conclusion:

The Central Connecticut Region MPO meets the requirements for organization and designation of 23CFR 450.306 for the period covered under this review, but the MPO must ensure that its board structure meets the requirements of MAP-21 by October 1st, 2014.

Recommendations:

CCRPA should amend its policy board structure to meet the MAP-21 requirement for transit representation and state transportation departments on MPO boards. FTA published draft guidance for this requirement on September 30th, 2013; final guidance will be forthcoming.

CCRPA should work with its State, Federal and MPO partners to ensure that the RPO consolidation process fosters an effective multimodal transportation planning process, aligns land use planning, MPO, and Census urbanized area boundaries to the greatest extent practicable, and supports existing MPO practices such as population-weighted voting that help foster an equitable and participatory planning process.

Boundaries

Regulatory Basis:

The metropolitan planning area boundary (MPA) refers to the geographic area in which the metropolitan

transportation planning process must be carried out. The MPA shall, at a minimum, cover the Census-defined, urbanized area (UZA's) and the contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period covered by the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Adjustments to the UZA as a result of the transportation planning process are typically referred to by FHWA as the urbanized area boundary (UAB). In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 (e), the boundary should foster an effective planning process that ensures connectivity between modes and promotes overall efficiency. The boundary should include Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-defined nonattainment and/or maintenance areas, if applicable, in accordance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone or carbon monoxide.

Observations:

The boundaries of the MPO were designated by the Governor and are spelled out in enabling legislation. The MPO consists of the seven contiguous municipalities in the Central Connecticut Region. The 2000 Census revised the Hartford Urbanized Area to include the geographic entities that comprise the Capitol Region, the Central Connecticut Region and the Midstate Region. The urban boundary is delineated in the metropolitan transportation plan and the MPO brochure. This urbanized area was not altered greatly with the 2010 Census. The entire TMA is part of the Greater Connecticut Nonattainment Area and all seven member municipalities are entirely within the nonattainment area.

Conclusion:

The boundaries of the Central Connecticut Region MPO are a contiguous geographic area with a finite boundary, thus meeting the federal statutory requirements for this topic area.

Agreements/Contracts

Regulatory Basis:

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134, MPOs are required to establish relationships with the State and public transportation agencies under the cover of specified agreements between the parties to work in cooperation in carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3 C's) metropolitan planning process. The agreements must identify the mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. These agreements must identify the designated agency for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act and address the responsibilities and situations arising from there being more than one MPO in a metropolitan area.

If more than one MPO has been designated to serve an urbanized area, there shall be a written agreement among the MPOs, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) describing how the metropolitan transportation planning processes will be coordinated to assure the development of consistent metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs across the MPA boundaries…"*23 CFR 450.314(d)*

Observations:

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Hartford-area MPOs dates from 2003, but the CCRPA and its partner MPOs are currently working on an update, which they expect to complete in early 2014. The existing MOU describes a process by which FTA's 5307 transit formula funds are pooled at the State level and distributed on a needs basis to the regions, rather than per the formula apportionments published by FTA.

This innovative needs-based distribution policy effectively addresses the issue of the "lumpy" costs of running a transit agency (that is, a transit agency may have very high costs one year due to a large bus replacement, while in subsequent years its needs might be much lower). However, there appears to be a misalignment between the process described in the current MOU and the process that has historically been carried out in compliance with FTA regulations.

In Connecticut, a large proportion of transit expenses are statewide in scope (CTTransit, passenger rail), giving the State a high degree of flexibility in how it distributes funds across UZAs. To actually transfer FTA 5307 funds from one

UZA to another, however, would require that the designated recipients and the governor follow the procedure outlined in FTA Circular 9030.1E (Section III.5: Transfer of Apportionments).

The current MOU is signed by CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA, and COGCNV (the four MPOs that overlap with the Hartford UZA), as well as the CTDOT Bureau of Planning. The CTDOT Bureau of Public Transportation is not a signer of the 2003 MOU, nor are any of the direct providers of public transportation in the region.

The Unified Planning Work Agreement (UPWP) contains a section that defines subject roles, responsibilities and cooperative actions within the TMA. The CTDOT provides guidance and participates in development of the metropolitan transportation plan, which is coordinated with the statewide transportation plan.

***Conclusions**:*

The CCRPA has a number of MOUs that help to define the planning process. While the Region does not have an MOU with the CTDOT comparable to the Memorandum of Understanding for Transportation Planning with both CRCOG and MRPA, the description of roles and responsibilities in the UPWP serves as the MOU between the CCRPA and the CTDOT, as allowed under a 2004 change in federal regulations.

Recommendations:

CTDOT, CCRPA, CRCOG, and the other MPOs in Connecticut should update their MOUs to reflect the reality of the 5307 funding distribution process, including procedures for formally transferring funds from one UZA to another in the event that this becomes necessary to fulfill the program's goals. The parties to the MOU should also consider developing a procedure by which long-term funding distribution is taken into account in selecting projects, to help ensure that all regions and recipients receive an equitable share over time.

Providers of public transportation in the Central Connecticut region should be included as cosigners of the updated MOU.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development

Regulatory Basis:

MPOs are required to develop Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) to govern work programs for the expenditure of FHWA and FTA planning and research funds (23 CFR 450.308). The UPWP must be developed in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies and include the required elements.

Observations:

As part of the desk review, the CCRPA website and the UPWP were reviewed. The UPWP includes a list of all transportation related activities and issues that the CCRPA will be involved in over the next two fiscal years. The UPWP lists the tasks necessary to carry out the objectives of the Central Connecticut Region Long-Range Transportation Plan and elements of the transportation planning process. For each project or activity, the CCRPA outlines the funding sources, products that will be produced, the anticipated work schedule, and sponsoring agencies and participants. Additionally, the UPWP reflected priority aspirations (safety, nature, access, and place) from the MPO's long-range transportation plan

***Conclusion*:**

CCRPA meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.308 for the UPWP.

Transportation Planning Process

Regulatory Basis:

The scope of the transportation planning process according to 23 CFR 450.306 and 450.318 defines the relationship of corridor and other subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. The transportation planning process must also ensure participation by Federal lands management agencies and tribal governments in the development of products and programs in the planning process as per 23 CFR 450.316 (c) (d) and (e) .

Observations:

There is no recognized tribal nation within the region, and, while there are limited Federal lands in Plymouth, the management agency of those lands is not a participant in the MPO's planning process.

Air Quality

Regulatory Basis:

For MPOs that the EPA classifies as air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, many special requirements apply to the metropolitan planning process. Section 176 (c)(1) of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) states: "No metropolitan planning organization designated under section 134 of title 23, United States Code, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110". The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) includes provisions in response to the CAAA mandates.

Observation:

The MPO prepares air quality reports and provides public access to such reports for the required time periods. The MPO provides the mandated Policy Board resolutions stating compliance with the requirements of CAAA.

Conclusion:

The CCRPA complies with all regulatory requirements regarding air quality reporting and procedures, in cooperation with the CTDOT.

Project Selection Procedures

Regulatory Basis:

CFR 23 Section 450, Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Program spells out a comprehensive planning process for MPOs to follow. Generally, the development and selection of projects for funding shall be completed through a comprehensive planning process with local input. Projects should be identified in the Transportation Plan and listed in the Transportation Improvement Program, and be developed through various planning methods.

Observations:

The CCRPA employs a system of weighted criteria to prioritize proposed projects for their STP-Urban, TAP, and CMAQ programs. Current TAP projects were prioritized utilizing similar criteria developed for the older Transportation Enhancement Program. Proposed projects are prioritized through a transparent process that considers local and public input.

Conclusion:

CCRPA follows an appropriately comprehensive, transparent, and cooperative process for selecting projects for Federal funding, meeting the requirements of *CFR 450.330*.

Self-Certification

Regulatory Basis:

Self-Certification of the metropolitan planning process, at least once every four years, is required under 23 CFR 450.334. The State and the MPO shall certify to FHWA and FTA that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of 23 CFR 450.300 and:

- 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and Sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act (if applicable)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State
- 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity
- Section 1101(b) of SAFETEA-LU and 49 CFR Part 26, regarding involvement of DBE in U.S. DOT-funded planning projects
- 23 CFR Part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts
- ADA and U.S. DOT regulations governing transportation for people with disabilities [49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38]
- Older Americans Act as amended, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age Section 324 of Title 23 U.S.C., regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and 49 CFR Part 27, regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities
- All other applicable provisions of Federal law (e.g., while no longer specifically noted in a self-certification, prohibition of use of Federal funds for "lobbying" still applies and should be covered in all grant agreement documents (see 23 CFR 630.112).

A Certification Review by FTA and FHWA of the planning process in TMAs is required at least once every four years, in addition to the required self-certification by the MPO and State.

Observation:

Documentation review revealed compliance with the requirements of this section. Such documentation consisted of annual resolutions executed at official policy board meetings in a format that is acceptable to the federal review team and demonstrated that the MPO provided public review and comment opportunities at those official meetings, and that the federally required documents (long-range transportation plan, TIP, and public participation plan) were complete, up-to-date and officially endorsed.

Conclusion:

The CCRPA meets the self-certification requirements of *23 CFR 450.334.*

Environmental Mitigation

Regulatory Basis:

The specific requirements for environmental mitigation are set forth in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.322

(f) (7). However, the basis for addressing environmental mitigation is detailed in sections addressing consultation (23 CFR 450.316 (a) (1) (2) (3) and (b) – Interested parties, participation, consultation; 23 CFR 450.322 (g) (1) (2), (i), and (j) – Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan.

Observation:

Environmental concerns are stated goals of the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Resource agency consultation takes place, but this action is not documented in the LRTP. Local input into the environmental impacts of transportation projects and associated land uses is reviewed, and such impacts are also evaluated by staff.

Conclusion:

Environmental concern is a top priority of the transportation planning process of the MPO, and it is reflected in the CCRPA's Long-Range Transportation Plan, as well as the work program at CCRPA. The MPO considers environmental impacts closely in the project selection process, local land use decisions and other project reviews.

Commendation:

The MPO's detailed evaluation of environmental impacts of proposed projects and concepts for mitigation are notable and should be considered for other MPOs.

Consultation and Coordination

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for consultation are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316(b-e) which calls for consultation in developing the MTP and TIP: "In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities..."

Consultation is also addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.322(g)(1)(2) and (f)(7) related to environmental mitigation.

Observations:

The integration of other regional planning products and references to environmental concerns, stated earlier, are a strong element in the long-range plan.

MPO leadership and transit agency representatives were unfortunately not able to attend the certification review meeting, making it difficult to have a comprehensive conversation about inter-agency coordination. Furthermore, although the meeting was open to the public, it was not attended by any members of the public.

The CCRPA region has many transit providers, both public agencies and private contractors, operating a variety of fixed-route and demand-response services: New Britain Transportation, DATTCO, Middletown Area Transit, North East Transportation, CTTransit (New Haven), CTTransit (Hartford), and Greater Hartford Transit District. With so many providers, coordinated and comprehensive service planning is difficult to achieve. In particular, there seems to be a lack of clear agreement or understanding around who is responsible for the service planning of Central Connecticut's transit service, and ensuring that existing routes are up-to-date and meet the transportation needs of the region's workers and residents.

The CCRPA, the CRCOG, and CTDOT collect and utilize a large quantity of data in their transportation planning efforts. However, this data is stored on a variety of different systems in a variety of different formats, and often it is not accessible via a public agency website. This makes comprehensive analysis difficult, at a time when industry practice and federal requirements are pushing performance measurement as a key transportation planning tool. For example,

the CCRPA has found it difficult to conduct a large-scale safety study because safety data is stored in a variety of incompatible systems around the state.

Conclusion:

The CCRPA works closely with local and state DOT/DEEP officials, as well as other stakeholders, in the development of the long-range plan; thus, the region is in compliance with the Federal requirements in terms of consultation mandates for the long-range transportation plan.

Recommendations:

FHWA, FTA, and the CCRPA should work together to ensure that MPO leadership, representatives of local transit agencies, and interested members of the public are included in the next planning certification review meeting.

The CCRPA, CTDOT, and the region's transit providers should work together to clearly establish transit planning roles and responsibilities for the region. In particular, they should ensure that all areas and corridors in the region have an agency responsible for service planning, identifying new routes and re-configuring service as necessary to satisfy unmet demand or adapt to demographic changes.

In order facilitate quantitative studies and performance measurement, the CCRPA, CTDOT, and the CRCOG should better coordinate their data sharing efforts, working to make as much data (such as traffic safety data, transit ridership data, etc.) as possible widely available via compatible systems and in compatible formats.

Documentation

Basic Requirement:

While the planning regulations do not specifically define the extent of documentation, various regulations do call for the preparation of products: a UPWP, Public Participation Plan (PPP), an MTP, a TIP, a CMP, an Annual Listing of obligated projects, and a revenue forecast, to name a few. Also, 23 CFR 420.117(e) calls for preparation of suitable reports that document the results of activities performed with FHWA planning funds.

Observations

All federally required documentation has been produced in a timely and appropriate fashion.

Conclusions

The CCRPA has consistently prepared the federally required documentation in a thoughtful, and frequently, innovative approach.

Appendix I – On-Site Meeting Agenda

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
Serving Berlin, Bristol, Burlington, New Britain, Plainville, Plymouth, and Southington
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Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) Certification Review

Agenda

September 26, 2013

9:00 – 9:30 Regular Transportation Committee Meeting

9:30 – 9:45 Introduction of Certification Review

9:45 – 10:30 Transportation Committee and Public Input
- Discussion with Committee members and other interested persons regarding CCRPA's planning process

10:30 – 11:00 Review of Recommendations from 2009 Certification Review

11:00 – 11:15 Break

11:15 – 12:30 Intermodal Transportation Planning and Livability/Sustainability (including an overview of recent, ongoing, and planned studies and projects)
- Freight Planning
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning
- Community Enhancement & Livability/Sustainability Projects
- Transit & TOD Planning
- Other Projects

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan

2:00 – 2:30 Congestion Management Program

2:30 – 3:00 Public Involvement Plan
- Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency

3:00 – 3:20 Planning for Operations, ITS, and Safety

3:20 – 3:40 Technical Capabilities & Other Services
- GIS/GPS
- Traffic Studies
- Computer Programming

3:40 – 4:00 Other Services & Integrated Transportation Planning
- Paratransit
- Transportation as part of the Economic Development Plan, Plan of Conservation and Development, Hazard Mitigation Plan, et al.

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Appendix II – Attendance Sheet for On-site Meeting

CERTIFICATION REVIEW PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency Certification Review
Public Meeting Sign-in Sheet

Thursday, September 26, 2013
225 North Main Street, Suite 304
CCRPA Conference Room

Name	Agency	Telephone Number	E-mail Address
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6. Ken Shooshan-Stoller	FHWA CT	860-494-7567	kenneth.shooshan.stoller@DOT.GOV
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8. Paul Strawderman	Bristol	860 584 6125	PAULSTRAWDERMAN@CI.BRISTOL.CT.US
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CERTIFICATION REVIEW PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency Certification Review
Public Meeting Sign-in Sheet

Thursday, September 26, 2013
225 North Main Street, Suite 304
CCRPA Conference Room

Name	Agency	Telephone Number	E-mail Address
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Also in Attendance:
Mark Moriarty (New Britain)
Tony Lorenzetti (Plymouth)
Stephen Mindera (Plymouth
Jim Grappone (Southington)