

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CERTIFICATION

FOR

**Grand Rapids, MICHIGAN
June 2-3, 2010**

**Report Issued September 15, 2010
by the
Federal Highway Administration &
Federal Transit Administration**



This page intentionally left blank.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Acronyms	4
Preface.....	6
Executive Summary	7
Introduction.....	8
Current Certification Review Topics and Findings	11
MPO Structure	11
Agreement and Contracts.....	12
Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary	13
Unified Planning Work Program	14
Freight Planning.....	15
Metropolitan Transportation Plan.....	16
Travel Demand Model	19
Congestion Management Process and Management & Operations.....	20
Safety Planning	21
Transit Planning.....	22
Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.....	23
Transportation Improvement Program.....	24
Annual Listing of Obligated Projects	26
Non-Motorized Planning	27
Security in the Planning Process.....	27
Public Participation Plan.....	28
Consultation	30
Conclusion	31
Appendix A – Certification Review Notification Letter.....	32
Appendix B – Status of 2006 Certification Review Actions	34
Appendix C – Public Meeting Notice.....	37
Appendix D – Public Comments from June 1 Public Meeting.....	38
Appendix E – On-Site Review Agenda	39
Appendix F – List of On-Site Review Participants	41
Appendix G – Security in the Planning Process - Resources	42
Appendix H – Desk Audit Topics.....	48
Appendix I – Summary Listing of Findings	50
Appendix J – Certification Report Transmittal Letter	54

Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ACSET	Area Community Services Employment and Training Council
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
CMP	Congestion Management Process (formerly the CMS)
CMS	Congestion Management System (now CMP)
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
DASH	Downtown Area Shuttle
DOT	Department of Transportation
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EJ	Environmental Justice
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
GVMC	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
GVSU	Grand Valley State University
ITP	Interurban Transit Partnership (also referred to as The Rapid)
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LRP	Long-Range Transportation Plan (also referred to as MTP)
M&O	Management and Operations
MDNRE	Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization (member agencies include local road agencies, the State, and public transportation operators)
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan (also referred to as LRP)
MOVES	Motor Vehicle Emission Simulation
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NHS	National Highway System
NTD	National Transit Database
O/M	Operations and Maintenance
PAC	Policy Advisory Committee
REMI	Regional Economic Models, Inc.
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users of 2005
SDNT	Service Development and New Technology
SIP	State Implementation Plan

STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TDP	Transit Development Plan
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
Title VI	Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
TE	Transportation Element
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TPSG	Transportation Programming Study Group
U.S.C.	United States Code
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
UZA	Urbanized Area
YOE	Year of Expenditure
5307	Urban Area Formula Program (transit funding program)
5310	Special Needs of Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (transit funding program)
5316	Job Access and Reverse Commute (transit funding program)
5317	New Freedom (transit funding program)

Preface

“The Secretary shall 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.”

[23 U.S.C. 134(k) (5) (A) (i) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k) (5) (A) (i) (e)]

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning in a transportation management area (TMA) at least every four years. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a desk review of planning products (in advance of the on-site review), an on-site review, and creation of a report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. The certification review is not just a review of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) staff; rather, it's a review of the planning process conducted by all member agencies (local road agencies, State, and transit operators) charged with cooperatively carrying out the planning process on a daily basis. The review focuses on compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO, the State, and transit operators as they conduct the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a local metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other intermediate activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including reviewing the unified planning work program (UPWP), the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP), air-quality conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contact provide both the FHWA and FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the certification review process.

While the certification review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of the certification review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether or not they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review. To encourage public understanding and input, the FHWA and FTA will continue to improve the public involvement process and the clarity of the certification reports.

Executive Summary

Conclusion

The transportation planning process conducted in the Grand Rapids urbanized area is in substantial compliance with Federal transportation planning laws and regulations. As a result of the review, the FHWA and FTA are certifying the planning process subject to two corrective actions:

1. The first calls for an update of the planning agreements required among the MPO, State, and transit operators.
2. The second calls for the annual listing of obligated projects to include transit.

One area of commendation (non-motorized planning efforts) was identified along with some specific recommendations.

While the corrective actions will not restrict the advancement of projects, they do require attention and should be taken seriously. Failure to respond could result in a more restrictive future certification.

Purpose of a Certification review

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each transportation management area (TMA), which is an urbanized area over 200,000 in population, at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements. According to the 2000 Census, the Grand Rapids urbanized area has a population of 539,080 and, therefore, is subject to a certification review. The certification review is not just a review of the transportation planning activities conducted by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) staff; rather, it's a review of the planning process conducted by all member agencies (local road agencies, State, and transit operators) charged with cooperatively carrying out the planning process on a daily basis. The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), a multi-purpose regional planning organization, is the designated MPO for the Grand Rapids urbanized area. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is the responsible State agency and the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) is the responsible public transit operator.

Approach

The 2010 certification review officially began March 26, 2010 with a joint letter from the FHWA and FTA to the Chair of the GVMC and the Director of the Bureau of Transportation Planning at the MDOT informing them of the upcoming certification review and identifying some of the primary topics for the review (Appendix A). The review consisted of a desk audit, a June 1st public comment session, a June 2nd and 3rd on-site review, interviews with Chairs of the Technical Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Vice-Chair of the GVMC, all of which is summarized in this certification report including the findings of the review. In addition to the formal review, routine oversight, such as attendance at meetings, day-to-day interactions, and review of work products, provides a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings. An update of the status of the 2006 certification review findings was provided by the GVMC staff and was also considered during the review (Appendix B).

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each transportation management area (TMA) at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements. According to the 2000 Census, the Grand Rapids urbanized area has a population of 539,080 and, therefore, is subject to a certification review. The certification review is not just a review of the transportation planning activities conducted by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) staff; rather, it's a review of the planning process conducted by all MPO member agencies (local road agencies, State, and transit operators) charged with cooperatively carrying out the planning process on a daily basis. The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), a multi-purpose regional planning agency, is the designated MPO for the Grand Rapids urbanized area. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is the responsible State agency and the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) is the responsible public transit operator. The first GVMC certification review was conducted in 1996 with subsequent reviews in 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2010. This report details the 2010 certification review.

2010 Certification Review

The 2010 certification review officially began March 26, 2010 with a joint letter from the FHWA and FTA to the Chair of the GVMC and the Director of the Bureau of Transportation Planning at MDOT informing them of the upcoming review and identifying some of the primary topics for the review (Appendix A). The review consisted of a desk audit, a public comment session, an on-site review, and interviews with various committee chairs, all of which are summarized in this certification report. An update of the status of the 2006 certification review findings was provided by the GVMC staff and was also considered during the review (Appendix B).

Desk Audit

The desk audit is a primary information-gathering tool, allowing the on-site portion of the certification review to focus on critical issues that can best be addressed in the face-to-face setting. All planning documents were reviewed by the Federal review team. The on-site topics were selected for a number of reasons including their overall significance or because there were new planning requirements that had not yet been covered in a previous certification review. Further, on-site topics could also be selected if it was felt that Federal planning requirements were not adequately addressed, could be improved, or there are examples that could be noted as a national best-practice. Two areas reviewed during the desk audit were deemed unnecessary for discussion during the on-site visit; Air Quality and Environmental Mitigation. Write-ups on both of these sections can be found in Appendix H.

Public Comment Session

The GVMC published a press release (Appendix C) using their standard media outreach and direct mailing lists to notify the public about their opportunity to attend and/or provide comment in the certification review. The public comment session was held from 7:00pm-8:00pm, Tuesday June 1, 2010, in the GVMC Conference Room. The opportunity for written public comment was also advertised and available through July 2, 2010. All transportation planning related comments were documented and taken into consideration during the review. Those

comments are summarized in Appendix D. Although these comments are not specifically referenced in this report, they are on file in our office.

On-Site Visit

The on-site visit was conducted on June 2nd and 3rd in the GVMC Conference Room. The agenda for the on-site review can be found in Appendix E. Participants from the GVMC staff, MDOT, ITP FHWA, and FTA were all present. A list of participants by agency can be found in Appendix F.

Committee Member Interviews

In an effort to gain a more comprehensive view of the transportation planning process conducted in the MPO, the Federal review team interviewed the Chairs of the Technical Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Vice-Chair of the GVMC on August 2, 2010 and August 3, 2010. These were short interviews that consisted of high-level questions about the planning process. These interviews were very beneficial in gaining insight from the MPO Committee on the planning process conducted in the TMA. This is the first time this type of outreach to committee members has occurred for a certification review for the Grand Rapids area and the FHWA plans to continue this approach in future certification reviews as it was found to be a valuable experience.

Certification Report

A certification report summarizes the discussions and findings of the certification review. The deadline to get the certification report issued is exactly four years from the previous certification report issuance, which was September 28, 2006, in order for the MPO to continue to use Federal funding without interruption.

For each planning topic reviewed at the on-site portion of the certification review, this report will document the regulatory basis, current status, and findings as outlined below.

- **Regulatory Basis** – defines where information regarding each planning topic can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – the “Planning Regulations” and background information on the planning topic.
- **Current Status** – defines what the TMA is currently doing in regards to each planning topic.
- **Findings** – Statements of fact that define the conditions found during the review that provide the primary basis for determining the corrective actions, recommendations, and/or commendations, if any, for each planning topic. Because many planning topics are interlinked, but may have been reviewed as separate topics, some findings may reference other documents or requirements than the one being covered. Based on the outcome of the finding, the planning process could receive a recommendation(s), corrective action(s), and/or commendation(s).

Corrective Action – Indicates a serious situation that fails to meet one or more requirements of the transportation planning statute and regulations, thus seriously impacting the outcome of the overall process. The expected outcome is change that brings the metropolitan planning process into compliance with a planning statute or regulation; failure to respond will likely result in a more restrictive certification.

Recommendation – Addresses technical improvements to processes and procedures that while somewhat less substantial and not regulatory, are still significant enough

that FHWA and FTA are hopeful that State and local officials will take action. The expected outcome is change that would improve the process, though there is no Federal mandate, and failure to respond could, but will not necessarily result in a more restrictive certification.

Commendation – Process or practice that demonstrates 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, significant improvements and/or resolution of past findings may warrant a commendation.

This report was issued via the certification report transmittal letter dated September 15, 2010 which can be found in Appendix J.

Current Certification Review Topics and Findings

The following topics were covered at the 2010 on-site review

- MPO Structure
- Agreements and Contracts
- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
- Unified Planning Work Program
- Freight Planning
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Safety Planning
- Transit Planning
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Annual Listing of Obligated Projects
- Non-motorized Planning
- Security Planning
- Public Involvement (Participation Plan, Consultation, and Coordination, Visualization, and Title VI/)

MPO Structure

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.310(d) sets forth requirements for 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 re-designated, 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 area, and (c) appropriate State officials.

Current Status

The GVMC is a multipurpose planning agency and was designated as the MPO for the Grand Rapids urbanized area in 1991. There are 39 members of the GVMC Board representing 33 entities within Kent County and eastern Ottawa County, as identified in the *Grand Valley Metro Council Transportation Planning Division Committee Bylaws as of April 3, 2003*. GVMC has a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) which includes membership from local units of government, the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP), the Kent County International Airport and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). There is also a Technical Advisory Committee that includes local units of government, ITP, MDOT, and Kent and Ottawa County Road Commissions. The GVMC Transportation Department includes a Director and eight staff and is organized into two sections: Planning and Operations.

Findings

The committee membership and structure are in compliance, but the bylaws seemed to be out of date compared to current practice. For example, how the PAC chair is selected. The *Grand Valley Metro Council Transportation Planning Division Committee Bylaws* states, “officers shall be elected by the officially designated Committee members”, however during the on-site review

the review team was told that the “policy chair is selected through an open process; a different process than what is in the bylaws”.

Recommendation 1

The Bylaws of the GVMC should be updated to clearly define the membership, function, authority, and delegated responsibilities of the Policy Advisory Committee as an entity of GVMC with responsibility of overseeing transportation planning for the region.

Agreement and Contracts

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.314 sets forth requirements for the MPO to work cooperatively with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process and cooperatively determine, and clearly identify in agreements or memorandums of understanding (MOUs), their mutual responsibilities for carrying out transportation planning activities. These regulations also require an agreement between the MPO and the designated agency for air-quality planning under the Clean Air Act.

Current Status

There are currently four agreements in place. The agreements include:

- A 1998 document titled Memorandum of Understanding for Accuracy and Compliance of Section 450.310
- A 2005 pre-SAFETEA-LU document titled the Master Planning Agreement
- A 2009 Interagency Agreement between GVMC and the Interurban Transit Partnership
- A 1999 Travel demand Modeling Memorandum of Understanding

The Master Planning Agreement referenced laws prior to the passage of SAFETEA-LU.

Findings

The agreements are out of date and do not clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the parties and were not posted on the GVMC website and readily available for public review. In addition there was some confusion regarding the MOU for Accuracy and Compliance reference in 23 CFR 450.314. Note that the agreement listed above cites section 310 and not 314. Of the documents listed above the one titled “Master Planning Agreement” is actually the one that serves as the contractual document between the State and the MPO. During the review the review team was informed that the MOU and the Master Planning Agreement were being redone but there would still be two separate documents. In digging into the two “old” agreements in question, there was a self certification form shown as Appendix P of the Master Planning Agreement. Unfortunately, the list of laws under which the MPO was self-certifying was outdated and only helped to confuse matters.

There was also concern with what was included (and excluded) in the Master Planning Agreement. The document itself is quite generic and in fact is used throughout Michigan by many of the MPOs. The agreement is ambiguous and does not reference when things will be done or who will do the work, it only references “the Agency” and the “Department”.

There is an agreement with ITP, which was updated in 2009, however, only GVMC and ITP are parties to the agreement and it too suffers from being vague. The only definition of any agency's responsibilities was shown in Attachment A, which was a matrix that listed activities like "Transit Surveys" with a column that listed "ITP" as the lead agency and "GVMC" as the support agency; it is unclear what this means. Where this becomes concerning is with the "Long Range Transportation Plan--Transit Element". With the ITP listed as the lead agency for the Transit Element (TE) of the Long Range Plan (LRP) it leads to a situation where the TE is done independently of the MPO regional planning process. While this is more of an issue with the LRP, the review team believes that it all starts with the vagueness of the agreement(s) and the lack of a "true" regional planning agreement for transportation planning in the Grand Rapids region.

The Travel Demand Modeling agreement was found to be outdated, (February 22, 1999) yet more conducive to what one would find in a planning agreement. As with the other agreements and MOUs, there was the omission of where transit fit in.

One final finding was that the review team was told that an air quality planning agreement was in place but due to time constraints it was never produced. The agreement could not be found on-line.

Corrective Action 1

The MPO, State, and transit operator must update all of the agreements required by 23 CFR 450.314. To the extent possible a single agreement between all responsible parties should be developed. A draft of the revised agreement(s) must be submitted to FHWA and FTA for review by March 31, 2011 and the final(s) signed by the responsible parties by October 1, 2011. The agreement(s) shall clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all parties and committees in cooperatively carrying out all aspects of the transportation planning process defined in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C, including the development of work programs, fiscally constrained plans and TIPs, air quality conformity findings, and annual reporting of obligated projects. The approach for integrating highway, transit (including the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan), and non motorized planning deserves special attention along with specific timelines for when documents are due and planning cycles are repeated.

Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary

Regulatory Basis

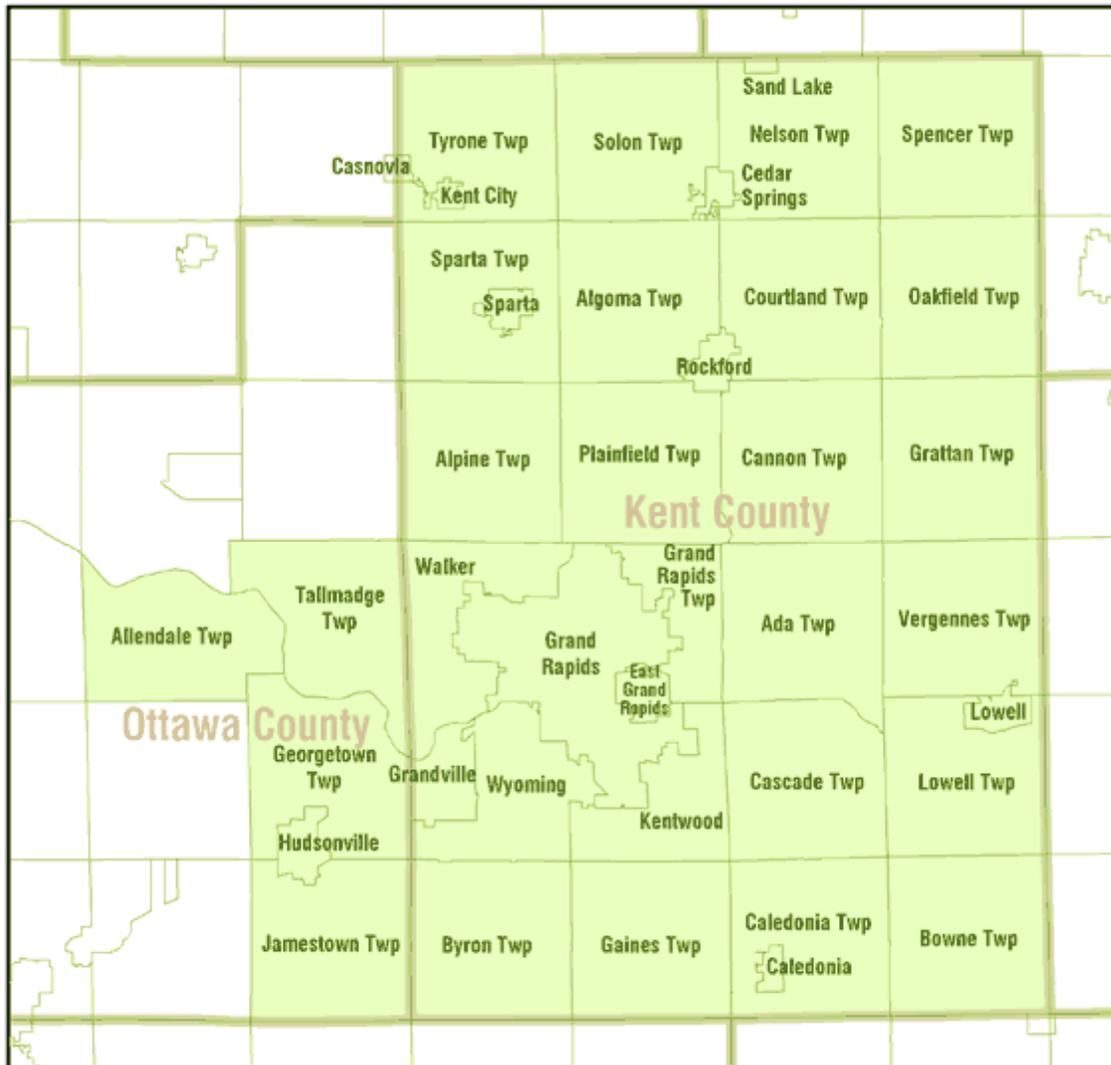
23 CFR 450.312 set forth requirements for the metropolitan planning area (MPA) boundaries that "at a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the metropolitan transportation plan." The MPA boundary refers to the geographic area in which the MPO, the State, and transit operators have agreed to conduct the metropolitan transportation planning required in 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305. The MPA defines the area in which federally funded projects must be part of the financially constrained MTP and TIP.

Current Status

The MPA includes all of Kent County and the eastern portion of Ottawa County.

Findings

GVMC meets the requirements of the regulations for MPA.



Unified Planning Work Program

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.308 and 23 CFR 420.111 set forth requirements for each MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators, shall develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that documents:

- 🕒 A discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area;
- 🕒 A description of metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities proposed by major activity and task (including activities that address the eight planning factors in 23 CFR 450.306(a)) for the next one- to two-year period;
- 🕒 Who will perform the transportation planning activities (e.g., MPO staff, State, public transportation operator, local government, or consultant);
- 🕒 The schedule for completion of the work;

- The intended products, including all activities funded under Title 23 and the Federal Transit Act;
- The proposed funding by activity/task; and
- A summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds.

Current Status

The current document (FY 2010) that was posted on the GVMC website at the time of the desk audit and on-site review was the “draft” document; the “final” document as was later presented during the on-site review. What was posted on the GVMC website was incomplete and did not contain the funding summary tables. This discovery was not made until it was questioned during the onsite review. At the time of the site visit, the “draft” version was still the document posted for public inspection.

The UPWP contained a list of the laws that the MPO was self-certifying against. This list represented the pre-SAFETEA-LU list. A review of the “final” document had similar issues. A review of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) document revealed there was a SAFETEA-LU self-certification in place.

Findings

A major point of concern found by the review team was the suspicion that the document is not reflective of the actual work being performed in the region. Some concerns, for example, were the statements on page 8 suggesting that a mode-split element was being developed for the travel model yet upon discussing this activity we learned it was not being done. It was also mentioned as a task under the LRP element.

Another example where the actual work being done did not appear to match what was identified in the work program was a statement on page 10 that reads “We will also develop a comprehensive LRP and TIP development and amendment process”. In discussion, there seemed to be confusion among the MPO staff if this was being done and its status. Following up on this, the statement on page 23 regarding the TIP element mentions “Project selection will adhere to the Revised Planning Process developed jointly by the MPOs, state and FHWA.” Upon questioning, it was learned that there was no project prioritization process short of the implementing agencies sitting in a room and making a list. While this is not directly related to the UPWP, it did raise questions about the integrity of what is in the document.

Recommendation 2

It is strongly recommended that the UPWP reflect the work that is being done by GVMC staff. The MPO should align the goals identified at the beginning of the document to the work elements.

Freight Planning

Regulatory Basis

SAFETEA-LU legislation specifically calls for the need to address freight movement as part of the transportation planning process (Reference: 23 U.S.C. §134 and 23 CFR §450.306 - Metropolitan Transportation Planning).

Current Status

GVMC staff has participated in a number of technical sessions and workshops that have been offered on freight recently through the FHWA-Michigan Division and MDOT. GVMC staff is making an active attempt to broaden their knowledge and expertise in this area and that attempt is noted.

During the desk review, a number of issues were identified that the review team thought required more analysis. The LRP and the TIP had very little information on items such as truck routes, the freight rail network, inventories of freight related facilities, and maps showing these networks. At the site visit, GVMC staff provided a detailed list of freight related items that will be appearing in their LRP update including a comprehensive freight network inventory map which will be very helpful moving forward. It was learned at the site visit that GVMC staff will be conducting a freight survey in the near future as well.

Findings

There seemed to be a number of efforts in freight planning that GVMC staff was engaged in that were not being accounted for in any of their major documents. GVMC staff identified challenges in getting the private sector to attend meetings and participate in their freight planning discussions. GVMC staff has had success in working with regional economic development agencies and chambers of commerce to discuss how freight related issues impact those organizations and how they can provide meaningful input to the transportation planning process. GVMC staff will be working with the MDOT on a new State Rail Plan.

Recommendation 3

The Federal review team encourages GVMC staff to continue promoting freight planning and to document efforts taking place with the transportation planning process related to freight planning.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Note: The following sections for the Travel Demand Model, Congestion Management Process (CMP), Management & Operations (M&O), and Consultation are interlinked to the MTP, but their regulatory basis, current status, and findings have been documented separately from this section. Please see these sections for findings that also relate to the MTP.

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.322 sets forth requirements for the development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), a key product of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

MTP development requirements include:

- ② The metropolitan transportation planning process shall address at least a 20 year planning horizon;
- ② The MTP shall include both long and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand;

- ⌚ The MPO shall review and update the MTP at least every four years in air quality nonattainment areas to confirm the transportation's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends; and
- ⌚ The MPO shall base the update on the latest available estimates and assumptions for population, land use, travel, employment, congestion, and economic activity.

MTP content requirements include:

- ⌚ The projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan;
- ⌚ Existing and proposed transportation facilities that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, including major roadways, transit, multimodal, and intermodal facilities;
- ⌚ Management and Operational (M&O) strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods (See Congestion Management Process (CMP) section of this report for more information);
- ⌚ Consideration of the results of the congestion management process (CMP), including identification of SOV projects that result from a CMP (See CMP section of this report for more information);
- ⌚ Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity increases based on regional priorities and needs;
- ⌚ Design concept and design scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail, regardless of funding sources, in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas for conformity determination under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) transportation conformity rule (40 CFR part 93)
- ⌚ A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the MTP (See Environmental Mitigation section of this report for more information);
- ⌚ Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities; and
- ⌚ A financial plan

Current Status

The current MTP was developed under guidance of a steering committee that included representatives from all modes of transportation, as well as land use and interested citizens. GVMC staff began the update by meeting with every unit of government in the MPA to discuss socio-economic conditions in the area, including growth rates and location. The information on growth rates was then compared against the Regional Economic Model, Inc. (REMI) and any differences were rectified. Staff also met with MDOT Grand Region and freight companies to discuss future needs.

The *2035 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area* was adopted by GVMC on April 23, 2007 and is compliant with SAFETEA-LU requirements. GVMC staff is currently working on an update to the 2035 MTP for adoption in 2011.

Findings

The *2035 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area* includes a transit section that provides an overview of existing services and transit planning efforts. During

the site visit, ITP staff indicated that they are also in the process of updating their Transit Master Plan. Once this effort is complete, the document will be incorporated into GVMC's updated 2035 MTP.

Revenue estimates for the MTP were based on annual average of the FY 2006-2008 TIP levels. That baseline was then projected for the life of the MTP using methodology provided by MDOT. However, the Federal review team could not determine if this revenue estimation methodology was only for road projects (both MDOT and local) or if it was also used for transit. The financial section of the MTP also includes a description of current Federal programs and revenue sources. No information was provided on operating and maintenance (O/M) costs and it is unclear as to how these costs are accounted for in the financial determination. During the review, staff of GVMC discussed the difficulty in obtaining State and local information to determine the O/M costs of the transportation system. The Federal review team recognizes these challenges; however, it is necessary information to provide a complete and accurate reading of funding that will be available for transportation improvements in the future.

Several segments of State trunklines and freeways were identified in the plan as currently or projected to be capacity deficient by the year 2035. This section also indicates that other trunkline deficiencies identified by the model will continue to be monitored. Yet, there is over \$300 million (three hundred million dollars) in unassigned revenue for improvements. MDOT has included illustrative projects that account for most of the unassigned revenue in the MTP. However, the 2035 MTP does not take advantage of the opportunity to provide a complete transportation vision over the 20-year planning horizon. If the State is not identifying improvement priorities for the state highway system for the out years of the MTP, the MPO can and should conduct its own analysis using the planning process and technical tools available to fill this void to address at least a 20 year planning horizon. The local agencies and transit operators have identified proposed improvements and strategies to cover the full 20 year life of the MTP.

The MTP includes a general discussion of the environmental justice (EJ) activities completed by GVMC. Staff uses census information and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to identify possible areas that would qualify as an EJ area. During MTP development, public meeting notices are sent to those households that are adjacent to proposed capacity projects. Even though much effort has been made in reaching out to households potentially impacted, the EJ analysis is weak in that it does not include discussion of areas of significant minority and low-income populations analyzed for the MPO as a whole, nor does the EJ analysis indicate how staff came to the conclusion of "no disproportionate and adverse impact".

Recommendation 4

It is strongly recommended the MPO improve the documentation in the financial plan of the MTP. This would start with the GVMC, ITP, and MDOT creating a structured, cooperative, and transparent financial revenue estimation process that would then be documented in MTP. The MPO, ITP, and MDOT should continue working to obtain, refine, and document system-level operations and maintenance cost information that would be deducted from available revenue in the MTP to show revenue available to start new capital projects.

Recommendation 5

The Federal Review team strongly recommends that the GVMC, ITP, and MDOT staff develop a cooperative approach to assess and prioritize regional capital investments and other strategies or

measures necessary to preserve the existing system and to meet future needs to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the mobility of people and goods for the road network to provide a true 20 year horizon. If funding short falls limit what can be included in the adopted plan, consideration should be given to filling this gap by including such improvements in an illustrative plan.

Recommendation 6

The GVMC should update the financial constraint demonstration tables and documentation in the MTP when amendments are made to the MTP.

Recommendation 7

The GVMC has taken steps to identify EJ areas, but now needs to take a more proactive review of accessibility in the transportation system by comparing the data to the existing transportation network, as well as, applying it in the development of the MTP. An EJ analysis of transit should also be included.

Travel Demand Model

Regulatory Basis

Travel demand forecasting models are a tool used in the planning process to evaluate the impacts of alternative transportation investments and to identify deficiencies in future year transportation systems. In air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas, they are also used to estimate regional vehicle activity for use in mobile source emission models that support air quality conformity determinations.

Current Status

The modeling work done for the region is done in house by the GVMC staff on a TransCad platform. A model calibration was completed and published in February of 2010. During the site visit the new model calibration report was presented. Prior to the site visit the only documentation available was from March of 2007. From 2007 to 2010 there was a recalibration of the model and cursory review of the validation metrics looked much better.

During the discussion of the model it was stated that there is not a mode split element in the regional model and that for a recent Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) new/small start analysis, a separate transit analysis was done. While this was not a concern for the new/small start effort, it does raise a question about the relationship of transit in the larger context of the regional model and the future year projections.

The MDOT staff who helped guide the modeling work of the MPO did suggest that they would like to do another travel survey sometime around 2014 and 2015. The model is currently using the results of a travel survey that was recently completed.

Findings

Generally the travel model for the GVMC looks to be in good shape and well documented. Currently, the travel demand model is used to identify deficiencies and to analyze the implications of the regional transportation plan as a whole after the implementing agencies have identified their individual priorities. The strength of the models as a tool to evaluate and prioritize regional alternatives is underutilized. Neither the model documentation nor the MTP

documented employment forecasts. Population forecasts were presented for both 2030 and 2035 yet all the documents were silent on employment.

Recommendation 8

Once the 2035 MTP is adopted, it is strongly recommended that work begin on an approach to use the travel demand models in conjunction with area goals and objectives to evaluate specific transportation improvements or combinations of improvements before they are included in the plan. This approach could help to identify the combination of improvements that, for example, would have the greatest impact in terms of congestion relief for the region as a whole. The approach would better position the area to respond to performance based planning currently being discussed as part of reauthorization. We would urge a meeting with FHWA and MDOT within one year to explore this and develop a workable approach that could be applied in the next update cycle or next plan amendment.

Congestion Management Process and Management & Operations

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.320 sets forth requirements for the congestion management process (CMP), formerly the congestion management system (CMS), in TMAs. The CMP is a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that provides for a safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction and management and operational (M&O) strategies.

23 CFR 450.322(f) (3) is a requirement of the MTP for M&O as an integrated, multimodal approach to optimize the performance of the existing transportation infrastructure. M&O strategies enable transportation agencies to provide higher levels of customer satisfaction in the near term without incurring the high costs and time to implement major infrastructure projects. Effective M&O strategies include measurable regional operations goals and objectives and specific performance measures to optimize system performance.

23 CFR 450.320(e) addresses this need for the CMP to provide an appropriate analysis of reasonable (including multimodal) travel demand reduction and operational management strategies for the corridor in which a project that will result in a significant increase in capacity for SOVs is proposed to advanced with Federal funds.

Current Status

GVMC uses the CMP as a major tool used in the development of the MTP to identify congested locations. The MPO has a policy that they will not implement capacity projects on roadways that are not shown as deficient in the CMP. However, the congestion solutions are still chosen by the implementing agencies from a “cafeteria listing”. While this may limit the building of unwarranted additional capacity, it does not ensure that the best fixes are being implemented.

Since the MTP does not include all of the projects that could be implemented with the funding that is likely available in the area, the use of the CMP is limited in evaluating potential system-wide effects of corridor improvements.

Findings

The review team was pleased to see the extensive documentation of the GVMC identification of congested roadways and the large “cafeteria listing” of possible strategies. Missing is an analysis of which strategies are appropriate for each identified location, as well as, an approach for evaluating and prioritizing improvements on an area wide basis.

Recommendation 9

MDOT, GVMC, and the ITP should strengthen the CMP by providing decision makers with tools that will help them chose the most effective solution from the “cafeteria listing” from both a project and a systems perspective. The integration of congestion related goals, objectives, and performance measures with the area wide travel demand models would provide a means to perform analyses that compare the benefits of alternative solutions. Such analyses would be performed by the planning staff with recommendations provided to decision makers.

Safety Planning

Regulatory Basis

SAFETEA-LU 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. SAFETEA-LU emphasized the importance of safety, as first identified in TEA-21, by separating safety and security into individual considerations in the planning process, thus highlighting the importance of each issue.

In addition, SAFETEA-LU established a core safety program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (23 U.S.C. 148), which introduced a mandate for Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs) that are collaborative, comprehensive and based on accurate and timely safety data.

23 CFR 450.306 (h) states that the metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the SHSP, and other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs as appropriate.

23 CFR 450.322 (h) encourages the inclusion of a safety element in the MTP that incorporates or summarizes the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects for the MPA contained in the SHSP, as well as (as appropriate) emergency relief and disaster preparedness plans and strategies and policies that support homeland security (as appropriate) and safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized users.

Safety also appears in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning rule as a consideration in the CMP (450.320), Development and Content of the MTP (450.322), and Development and Content of the TIP (450.324).

Current Status

The GVMC staff is reorganizing its safety activities into specific emphasis areas as part of the MTP update. The information about the updated process was provided at the site visit. Staff indicated that improvements identified in the Wayne State University Safety Study are being addressed with Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. There is a safety forum

being hosted in the area by another agency so, GVMC staff has chosen not host a similar event due to redundancy.

Findings

The desk review revealed very little mention of safety approaches in the current planning documents. The Strategic Safety Planning Process handout documents GVMC staff's efforts to significantly increase safety related planning and data collection as part of the upcoming MTP development.

Recommendation 10

The Federal review team encourages GVMC staff to continue to pursue and document the efforts taking place within the transportation planning process related to safety planning. The review team hopes that GVMC staff will follow through on the elements laid out in the Strategic Safety Planning Process handout and urges Staff to incorporate the elements of the process into GVMC's planning documents.

Transit Planning

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.314(a) states the MPO, in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. Transit should play a major role in developing a comprehensive regional multimodal transportation network.

Current Status

The Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP), also known as "The Rapid," is the primary transit provider in the Grand Rapids urbanized area. The Rapid operates fixed route, demand-response services for people with disabilities and those living outside the fixed-route service area, and car and vanpooling programs among other services. The Rapid also operates The Campus Connector, which is a limited stop express service between Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in Allendale and the GVSU downtown Grand Rapids Pew campuses. All buses on fixed routes are lift accessible. The Rapid operates GO!Bus, which is an advance-reservation, door-to-door transportation service for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The Rapid also coordinates with the City of Grand Rapids to operate the downtown area shuttle (DASH), which serves the central business district and is free and open to the general public.

Currently, The Rapid is pursuing Very Small Starts funding (approximately \$37 million) for the Silver Line BRT system. The service will feature 18 stations and run 9.6 miles along Division Avenue from 60th Street in Kentwood, north through Wyoming to downtown Grand Rapids. The project has been approved by FTA into project development and will be funded contingent upon completion of the NEPA evaluation process and the securing of local funding to support operations. A referendum to pass a millage to support the project will be forthcoming later this year or in 2011.

The Rapid is completing its Transit Master Plan update which will emphasize a transit vision into 2030. Based on public input through workshops, surveys and visioning sessions, the transit priorities of the region were identified as expansion of existing service, improving service

frequencies, expanding choices (i.e., BRT, Streetcar), extending service outside of The Rapid's service area and improving service in underserved areas. The Rapid is currently engaged in a study to determine the feasibility of a downtown streetcar system. Federal dollars have been made available for The Rapid to look more closely at funding and operational models to find the right strategy for this project.

The Rapid is a member of the GVMC technical and policy committees and provides the transit components in the updating of the MTP and TIP. The Rapid has a public involvement process that has been utilized by the MPO for certain activities. The Rapid's website has information on all transit-related services, planning activities, with a call for public participation online or in-person.

Findings

While the relationship between The Rapid and GVMC is positive and supportive, the planning process doesn't appear to be. The planning processes for the MPO and The Rapid seem to exist as separate and independent entities that support each others' products and procedures. One instance of this separate application and approach would be in the financial planning for transit within the MTP which is only fiscally constrained for the first five years, yet the MPO is required to plan for 20 years. This discrepancy is said to exist because the State cannot commit to any match beyond that period. The Rapid does not know what its future revenue will be in the out years and the team found it difficult to determine what role the MPO plays in working with The Rapid in assessing transit needs and the effectiveness and impact of transit investments and service within the region. While it appears that the MPO takes more of a support agency role in these activities, it is unclear what that role entails. This is critical because the MPO is expected to take some responsibility for transit planning and capital investments as they are a policy and programming agency for the urbanized area.

Recommendation 11

It is strongly recommended that GVMC and ITP work together to more fully coordinate and integrate transit planning into the regional transportation decision-making process.

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Background

SAFETEA-LU requires that proposed projects under three FTA formula funding programs, Special Needs of Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (5316), and New Freedom (5317), must be derived from a locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, as well as the public. Local officials are to determine the appropriate lead agency for developing the plan which can be, but is not required to be, the MPO. Preparation of the plan should be fully coordinated and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Current Status

The Rapid is the designated recipient for Section 5316 and 5317 funds for the metropolitan urbanized area. The 2006 certification report recommended The Rapid and GVMC should decide the lead agency for the development of a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services

Transportation Plan. Since that time, The Rapid has assumed this lead role yet it is not reflected in the December 8, 2009 Interagency Agreement between the two agencies. The closest activity listed was Senior/Disabled Programs, but that applies to Section 5310 and possibly Section 5317. It should not be assumed that this identifies a lead and support agency for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.

The Rapid offers a service called “County Connection” which provides rides to anywhere in Kent County (curb to curb) at a rate of \$14 per person one way, with kids under five riding for free. Riders are to call a day or more in advance but same day service can be available at \$19. All services are subject to availability, but are offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week except major holidays.

The Rapid also participates in “RideLink,” a network of area transportation providers that offer transportation to persons aged 60 or older to any necessary destination, including doctors’ visits, recreational visits, and shopping trips throughout Kent County. Providers include Hope Network, American Red Cross, Senior Neighbors, Area Community Services Employment and Training Center (ACSET), and United Methodist Community House. RideLink passengers are encouraged to make a \$2.00 donation per trip.

The GVMC is the recent recipient of a Service Development and New Technology (SDNT) grant from the MDOT. The grant will be used to complete a needs assessment for transit services in Kent County. The GVMC will be supported by The Rapid and will be gaining public input and insight from the community about unmet transportation needs in suburban/rural Kent County that could be addressed through public transportation.

Findings

The GVMC’s involvement with the coordinated planning process through the Kent County Needs Assessment may provide an opportunity to work closer with The Rapid and provide an ongoing opportunity to identify human service transportation providers and needed services throughout the region.

Recommendation 12

It is recommend that The Rapid update its Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan to incorporate opportunities for coordination that may result from the Kent County Transit Needs Assessment and take advantage of funding opportunities through the JARC and New Freedom program.

Transportation Improvement Program

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.324 sets forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a transportation improvement program (TIP) that is consistent with the MTP and is financially constrained. The TIP must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years. Additionally, the TIP must list all projects in sufficient detail outlined in the regulations, reflect public involvement, and identify the criteria for prioritizing projects.

Current Status

The current TIP of record at the time of the on-site review was approved by FHWA and FTA as part of the FY 2008-2011 STIP on January 31, 2008. The MDOT provides revenue estimates to the MPO for highway funding. The growth rate for Federal funding is “consistent with the projected increases in the national authorization level of the federal highway program”, but the methodology, base, trends, and assumptions used to estimate revenue is not documented in the TIP. The financial plan does not mention growth trends for state, local, or transit funding. There was no documentation in the TIP for the YOE rate for highway or transit projects or how they were developed. There is a brief explanation in the TIP on local funding that can be used for operations and maintenance, but there is no documentation of system-level estimates of costs needed to adequately operate and maintain the system and nowhere is it documented that this local funding is deducted from local revenue before starting new projects. There is no mention of O/M costs for MDOT. The MPO has updated, but not formally approved, their policy document *Policies and Practices for Programming Projects*. The TIP has a general discussion of the EJ activities completed by GVMC but is lacking the minority and low-income populations maps used or a conclusion drawn from the analysis. In an effort to gain public input from minority and low-income populations, GVMC sends out letters to all parcels located on corridors in EJ designated areas where projects are scheduled in the TIP.

Findings

Revenue estimates for TIP development were provided to GVMC by MDOT (similar projections are provided to all MPOs in Michigan). The review team was pleased to see that there is a consistent method for revenue projection statewide. Documentation on how these projections were derived (base, trends, assumptions) for federal, state, and local revenues and the required consultation between MDOT and the MPOs is lacking. A review of the financial analysis for the current TIP noted that the revenue and expenditures for O/M costs for highway and transit projects were not being adequately considered. It is stated in the TIP that “general estimates were provided by the road implementing agencies in the Grand Rapids area for both [operations and maintenance funds and non-operations and maintenance funds] funding areas” however these estimates were not documented in the financial plan. While the *Policies and Practices for Programming Projects* appears to be an effective way of determining if projects are eligible for funding, it does not document, nor does anywhere else in the TIP, a process for prioritizing projects for inclusion in the TIP that will help the MPO implement the goals and objectives of the metropolitan transportation plan. It doesn’t appear that MDOT uses this document to determine eligibility of their projects. The EJ analysis is incomplete as it only analyzed highways projects and the analysis never leads to a conclusion of the effects of the projects to be implemented.

Recommendation 13

It is strongly recommended that the MPO improve the documentation in the financial plan of the TIP. This would start with the GVMC, ITP, and MDOT creating a structured, cooperative, and transparent financial revenue estimation process that would then be documented in the TIP. The MPO, ITP, and MDOT should continue working to obtain, refine, and document system-level operations and maintenance cost information that would be deducted from available revenue in the TIP to show revenue available to start new capital improvements. It is also strongly recommended that GVMC document their year of expenditure (YOE) assumptions.

Recommendation 14

It is strongly recommended that the MPO create and document a project prioritization process for highway and transit projects that demonstrates how the projects are included in the TIP and implement the multimodal goals and objectives of the MTP.

Recommendation 15

The GVMC has taken steps to identify EJ areas, but now needs to take a more proactive review of accessibility in the transportation system by comparing the data to the existing transportation network, as well as, applying it in the development of the TIP. An EJ analysis of transit should also be included.

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.332 sets forth requirements that the MPO (local road agencies, the State, and public transportation operators) cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S. C. Chapter 53 have been obligated in the previous year. 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:

- ② The amount of funds requested in the TIP
- ② Federal funding obligated during the preceding year
- ② Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years
- ② Sufficient description to identify the project or phase
- ② Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase

The listing of projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, must be published or otherwise be made available in accordance with the MPO's public participation criteria for the TIP within 90 calendar days of the end of the program year. Further, cooperative procedures among the MPO (local road agencies, the State, and transit operators) to submit the fund-obligation information necessary for this report should be set forth in the MPO Agreement as set forth in 23CFR 450.314(a).

Findings

A copy of the GVMC annual listing of federally obligated projects was reviewed during the desk review for this certification. While the GVMC report is laid out in the same format as the TIP project listing, it includes information that would be incomprehensible to the general public who is the main audience for this report.

The annual listing of projects did not identify any transit projects, as required in 23 CFR 450.332.

Recommendation 16

The information in the annual listing of obligated projects should be presented with a table that spells out all acronyms used in the listing and not assume that the reader would have examined or be familiar with the TIP to know what all of the acronyms in the listing are.

Corrective Action 2

The Annual Listing of obligated projects must include all obligated transit projects. The Annual Listing document for the past year (2009) must be updated to include transit projects and a copy submitted through MDOT to FHWA and FTA by November 15, 2010. The Annual Listing for the current programming year (2010) must be prepared listing both highway and transit projects within 90 calendar days of the end of the program year.

Non-Motorized Planning

Regulatory Basis

In accordance with 23 USC 217 and 23 CFR 450.322(b)(3), pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities must be included in the transportation plan.

Current Status

Staff has developed a Non-Motorized Plan in 2009 that serves as an update to an earlier effort that was developed in 2006. GVMC has an established non-motorized transportation committee that meets regularly and is very active in providing input on bicycle and pedestrian issues in the Grand Rapids area.

Findings

The 2009 Non-Motorized Plan is comprehensive in scope and provides detail both in the inventory of current facilities as well as planned improvements. Maps within the Plan very clearly show the existing non-motorized network and the location of future facilities. The Plan also contains evaluation criteria for future projects based on level of need and future performance, a noteworthy approach. MPO Staff has provided a solid framework for involving stakeholders in the process and considering their input in the development of priorities.

Commendation 1

The Federal review team would like to commend GVMC Staff on their non-motorized planning efforts. We specifically cite the extensive work they have done in conducting a facilities inventory, prioritizing future improvements, and using effective visualization tools to convey information to stakeholders and the public.

Security in the Planning Process

Regulatory Basis

Prior to SAFETEA-LU, safety and security were combined into one planning factor; however SAFETEA-LU separated security as a stand-alone element of the planning process. Decoupling the two concepts signified a heightened importance of both safety and security to transportation decision-making.

23 CFR 450.306(a) sets forth requirements for the metropolitan transportation planning process to be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address eight planning factors, with the third planning factor being “increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users”. The regulations also state that the degree and consideration of security should be based on the scale and complexity of many different local issues. Per 23 CFR 450.322(h), the MTP should include “(as appropriate) emergency relief and disaster

preparedness plans and strategies and policies that support homeland security (as appropriate) and safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized users”.

The inclusion of the “as appropriate” language suggests standards and security planning needs are different for each MPO. Each MPO and State Department of Transportation (DOT) is challenged to develop a holistic approach based on area-specific assets, resources, and environment.

Current Status

The current planning documents have little mention of security activities.

Findings

While the text in the GVMC 2035 MTP clearly states that the MPO does not specifically address security in its planning process, staff mentioned quite a few instances where they were involved in discussion with the first responder community. Staff has partnered with Law Enforcement, First Responders, the HAZMAT organizations, County 911 Dispatch and others. Staff realized that at the beginning they had to “invite themselves” to these meetings, but once there were able to see the connections with security planning and transportation planning. The GVMC is in discussions to bring these groups together and host table top exercise, develop programs/policies to improve incident clearance times and other security planning endeavors. All of these efforts need to be documented to show that GVMC is in fact addressing this SAFETEA-LU planning factor

Recommendation 17

The Federal review team encourages GVMC staff to continue to promote and document efforts taking place within the transportation planning process related to security planning.

Public Participation Plan

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.316(a) (1-3) and (b) sets forth the requirements for public involvement which addresses elements of the metropolitan planning process. Public involvement is also addressed in connection with the MTP in 450.322(g)(1-2), (i), and (j) and with the TIP in 450.324(b); participation and consultation requirements, which pertain to the MTP and the TIP, also are included in 450.322(f)(7) and (g)(1-2), (i), and (j) and in 450.324(b). Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe MTPs and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan. Title VI and the Executive Order 12898 for Environmental Justice provide further considerations by ensuring that federally funded policies and programs do not subject minority population or low-income populations to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts

Current Status

The GVMC’s *Transportation Public Involvement Plan* was updated and adopted in June 2006 to meet the requirements of SAFETEA-LU. The Plan governs how the GVMC will incorporate

public involvement into their transportation planning process and includes specific procedures and techniques for MTP and TIP updates. The Plan also incorporates elements of visualization and electronic formatting to give the public greater access to information. As part of the MPOs 2035 MTP update, the Participation Plan was updated to incorporate a guide to evaluating GVMC public outreach efforts. The Plan was subject to a 45-day comment period and was adopted by the GVMC in May 2010.

GVMC's current Title VI Plan was approved by MDOT in 2003 and is available on their website. However, the Title VI Plan does not include provisions for Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Findings

Throughout the site visit, it was evident that the information posted on the GVMC website, was not the most current information. For example, the FY 2008-2011 TIP was still the "draft" document. Other documents, such as the UWP, the MTP and the model calibration report were also the original documents, even though each has been updated numerous times since being posted on the GVMC website.

With the assistance of the policy committee, GVMC staff updated the Plan shortly before the certification review site visit. The public had input during the 45-day comment period.

The review team commented on the unrealistic timelines identified in the Participation Plan. For example, Policy 1.3 states that "the notice and agenda of ... meetings shall be available to the public three days before they occur..." and Policy 1.5 states "...individuals needing special accommodations to participate in meetingsshould contact GVMC At least two working days prior to the scheduled meeting." If the meeting notice was not made available until three days before, it would mean that the accommodations would have to be requested on the same day the meeting notice was issued. To eliminate this conflict GVMC staff agreed at the review to change the notice to seven days before.

The review team also found inconsistencies in the application of GVMC's statement regarding ADA accommodations in their public meeting announcements. The GVMC website included announcements for several meetings, including two meetings regarding the update to the MTP. Neither of these meetings had standard language in them for requesting accommodations at the meeting. The GVMC Certification Review Public Meeting notice did have a statement on requesting aid or special services to attend.

In 2005 a new requirement called for all DOT Federal-Aid recipients to complete a ¹LEP Individual Assessments came into effect. GVMC has not updated their Title VI plan to incorporate the required assessment.

Recommendation 18

Documents that are available for public viewing should be clearly identified and steps should be taken to ensure the GVMC website is updated regularly to reflect the most current documents.

¹ Federal Register Dated December 14, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 239)

Recommendation 19

It is strongly recommended that GVMC complete a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) assessment for the planning area and update their Title VI Plan to reflect any needed changes. The updated Title VI Plan should be submitted to MDOT.

Recommendation 20

During the next year the Public Participation Plan should be updated, in cooperation with interested parties, to provide for longer notification timelines and a consistent approach for ADA accommodations. If the results of the LEP assessment identify special needs for accommodating such individuals or groups, the Public Participation Plan should be modified accordingly. A draft of the updated Public Participation Plan should be submitted to MDOT, FHWA and FTA for review prior to the 45 day release for public comment.

Consultation

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.316(b-e) sets forth requirements for consultation in developing the MTP and TIP. Consultation is also addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.322(g)(1-2) and in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(7) related to environmental mitigation.

In developing the MTP and TIP, the MPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies as described below:

- ② Should to the maximum extent practicable, consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) that are affected by transportation or coordinate its planning process with such planning activities;
- ② Consider other transportation services that are provided to recipients under 49 U.S.C. 53, 23 U.S.C. 204, and non-profit organizations that provide non-emergency transportation services with assistance from Federal agencies other than US DOT;
- ② When the MPA includes Federal Tribal Lands, shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal Government(s) in development of the MTP and TIP;
- ② When the MPA includes Federal Public Lands, shall appropriately involve Federal land management agencies in development of the MTP and TIP.

The consultation provisions require a MPO's planning partners to actively engage and consult with specific agencies to compare plans and data in developing the MTP and TIP. Effective consultation requires early engagement, direct outreach, information sharing, plan comparison, and evaluations to meet the Federal regulations.

Current Status

The current 2035 MTP and the FY 2008-2011 TIP includes discussion on the consultation that occurred for each document.

Findings

GVMC's consultation efforts occur on both a formal and informal basis; however the process described in their planning documents as well as during the site review, is general. An example of the formal consultation can be seen through staff sending out notices to agencies or groups to review the 2035 MTP project listing and the FY 2008-2011 TIP project listing. Informal consultation examples include phone calls, emails, or informal discussions "before or after meetings".

The MPO does identify parties to consult with and what information was sent out for review. However, there is no discussion as to what plans, maps, and inventories developed by those consulting agencies were reviewed for compatibility. Also, there was no discussion in any of the MPO plans or programs as to how comments received were addressed. During the site visit, staff stated that any comments received were forwarded onto the appropriate implementing agency, but there was no follow-up as to how that agency responded to the comments.

Recommendation 21

The MPO should develop a formal, documented and agreed to consultation process, that not only identifies the methods for outreach, but also clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, including periods for comment, what review of consulting agency plans and programs will be done, and response or consideration of comments received, for the various components of the planning process.

Conclusion

The transportation planning process conducted in the Grand Rapids urbanized area is in substantial compliance with Federal transportation planning laws and regulations. As a result of the review, the FHWA and FTA are certifying the planning process subject to two corrective actions:

1. The first calls for an update of the planning agreements required among the MPO, State, and transit operators.
2. The second calls for the annual listing of obligated projects to include transit.

One area of commendation (non-motorized planning efforts) was identified along with some specific recommendations.

While the corrective actions will not restrict the advancement of projects, they do require attention and should be taken seriously. Failure to respond could result in a more restrictive future certification.

A summary list of corrective action, recommendations, and commendation can be found in Appendix I.

Appendix A – Certification Review Notification Letter



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration
315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Federal Transit Administration
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

March 26, 2010

Mr. James Buck, Chairperson
Grand Valley Metro Council
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Ms. Susan P. Mortel, Director
Bureau of Transportation Planning (B340)
Michigan Department of Transportation
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Mr. Buck and Ms. Mortel:

GVMC - Federal Certification Review

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a certification review of the transportation planning process for the Grand Rapids metropolitan area on June 2-3, 2010. These dates were selected in consultation with the staff of Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The review will begin the morning of June 2nd and will look at the cooperative planning process as conducted by the State, transit operators, and local governments in the Grand Rapids area. You and all participants in the planning process are welcome to attend the review.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) continues the requirement for certification of the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 population. Certification reviews are conducted with the objective of evaluating the transportation planning process. Consequently, we will not be conducting a pass/fail review, but rather we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvements. The certification process will rely extensively on knowledge gained throughout the year from routine contact with the planning process in the Grand Rapids area, as well as the scheduled certification review meeting. The specific focal points we are proposing for the certification review meeting include the following:

- Status of implementing the Congestion Management Process
- The current transportation plan and update for SAFETEA-LU compliance
- Transit Planning/transit agency involvement
- Participation Plan
- Non-motorized transportation
- Safety planning
- Transportation Improvement Program prioritization process

There will be an opportunity for the public, including key MPO committee members and special interest groups, to talk directly with FHWA and FTA in an open public meeting concerning their

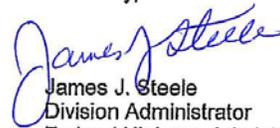
views on the transportation planning process being conducted in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. This public listening session is scheduled during the evening of June 1, 2010. We will also offer the opportunity for any committee members or other local elected officials to meet with us separately, if they so desire.

We will be working with your staff to prepare a more complete agenda for each day. If you have any questions concerning this review, please call Sarah Van Buren, FHWA, at (517) 702-1823 or Stewart McKenzie, FTA, at (312) 353-2866.

Sincerely,


for Marisol R. Simon
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

Sincerely,


James J. Steele
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

cc: Don Stypula, GVMC
Marsha Small, MDOT, Planning (B340)
Stewart McKenzie, FTA, Region 5

Appendix B – Status of 2006 Certification Review Actions

As submitted by the MPO, below is a status update for each Action identified during the previous certification review.

- 1. The MOA between GVMC and ITP should be reviewed and updated to include current roles and responsibilities, and should not be an open-ended agreement.**

The MOA between GVMC was updated on 12/08/2009.

- 2. GVMC staff should transmit updated MAB maps to MDOT, and then MDOT should forward a copy to FHWA.**

This Task has been completed back in 2006. All GVMC maps use the Updated MAB.

- 3. Demonstrating and documenting the validity of the travel demand forecasting tool is important for public and stakeholder confidence in the modeling process. GVMC staff should regularly document model validation efforts as a basis for future studies requiring travel demand model work.**

GVMC regularly update and tweak the travel demand model. Full documentation of these activities are produced and shared with MDOT for their concurrence. GVMC follows the procedures set by MDOT and FHWA in their model validation and calibration practices.

- 4. The transit portion of the plan should be updated to reflect recent ITP activities, including a discussion of the proposed corridor major investment activities currently underway.**

The latest update of the 2035 LRTP has addressed this issue.

- 5. GVMC and MDOT Staff should continue working to obtain and refine maintenance and operating cost information and include this in the current plan update that is underway.**

GVMC and MDOT cooperatively developed full revenue estimates in the last transportation plan update that was adopted in 2007. Estimates included all fiscally constrained operational and capital revenues and expenses.

- 6. GVMC and MDOT staff should develop an approach to identify and prioritize transportation investments for the state system beyond the first five years of the plan**

The latest update of the 2035 LRTP has addressed this issue. Major investments for the state transportation system are identified. Where funding is available the priorities are list as projects with identified funding source. Other priorities are listed as illustrative projects due to lack of funding and financial constraint requirement.

- 7. The Rapid and GVMC should decide the lead agency for the development of a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan and begin the process**

The MOA defines the role of each agency under this activity. ITP is the lead agency and GVMC is the support agency.

8. GVMC should consider calculating each sub-area's emissions separately and adding up the results

With GVMC covering the donut area in their travel demand model this issue is resolved.

9. Selection of the model validation year should be taken through the interagency consultation to ensure that the models for all three areas are compatible.

Our current practice does confirm with this recommendation. The HPMS data and the travel demand models for GVMC, Holland, and Muskegon are being calibrated to meet this goal.

10. It is recommended that GVMC, ITP, and MDOT cooperatively develop and document procedures for revenue estimation for use in TIP development and that the FY 2008-2011 TIP financial component demonstrate that adequate financial resources are available and applied to operate and maintain the current transportation system.

GVMC, MDOT, and ITP did develop new revenue estimates procedures to use in the TIP development process. The procedures adhere to financial constraints requirements and are discussed in the TIP document. FY2008-2011 was developed using the new procedures.

11. It is strongly recommended the GVMC publish, within three months after the end of FY 2006 and after the end of each fiscal year thereafter, an annual listing of obligated projects from the previous fiscal year. The annual listing should also be readily available and accessible to the public.

All annual TIP projects are published on the GVMC website as required by planning regulations.

12. It is recommended that the GVMC, MDOT, and ITP continue to refine the congestion management system including consideration of incorporating peak period congestion, performance standards which go beyond LOS such as system reliability, and identification of non-recurring congestion for the entire system.

GVMC has developed a congestion management process that will incorporate most of the indicators listed. GVMC is still assessing the scope and cost of including a peak period congestion monitoring. GVMC hopes to get all the data needed for this activity from the ITS center once all ITS technologies are implemented.

13. GVMC should continue to take full advantage of the resources available to them to address safety issues, including programs through the Michigan OHSP and assistance from FHWA and MDOT.

GVMC has two safety committees to address safety concerns within the GVMC MAB. MDOT, OHSP, and FHWA are represented on both committees (Incident Management Committee and Safety Management Committee). GVMC will continue to work with its partners and the public to address safety in this region.

14. GVMC should better document their transportation safety planning efforts so their partners and the public are aware of the work being done in this area. This includes providing current information on their website. In addition to awareness of their safety program, better dissemination of safety information may help in coordination of safety efforts in the region.

GVMC will make all safety planning issues and studies along with recommendation public through press releases and the GVMC website.

15. It is recommended that the GVMC look into various funding sources in order to implement projects identified in the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

GVMC is committed to developing a sustainable transportation system and as such the MPO is developing an investment strategy that will address all modes of transportation. The new approach expands the reliance on CMAQ and Enhancement programs to include STP and other local funding sources.

Appendix C – Public Meeting Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

An opportunity for you to talk directly with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration in an open public meeting concerning your views on the transportation planning process in the Grand Rapids area is scheduled for:

Date/Time: **Tuesday, June 1, 2010 – 7:00 p.m.**
Place: **Grand Valley Metropolitan Council Conference Room**
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

This public meeting is part of a review that will assess compliance with Federal regulations pertaining to the transportation planning process conducted by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Interurban Transit Partnership (The Rapid), and local units of government in the Grand Rapids area.

If you are not able to attend the meeting, written comments will be accepted until July 2, 2010. Please address your comments to:

Sarah Van Buren, Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division, 315 West Allegan Street, Room 201, Lansing, MI 48933; or

Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration, Region V, 200 West Adams Street, Suite 320, Chicago, IL 60606

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids for services should contact GVMC by writing or calling: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, 678 Front Avenue, Suite 200, Grand Rapids, MI 49504, Tele: (616) 776-3876, Fax: (616) 774-9292, www.gvmc.org

Appendix D – Public Comments from June 1 Public Meeting

This is a summarization of the comments received regarding the transportation planning process:

- The construction of the Central Station, located in the southern portion of the central business district, prevents minority populations from accessing jobs in the northern part of the central business district.
- A majority of ITP routes are located outside of the Grand Rapids city limits.
- The amount of time public is allowed to speak at meetings, as well as general ground rules for public comments at meetings, is not announced.
- ITP ridership numbers were questioned.
- The public was not allowed adequate input into the alternatives analysis of the Division Street BRT project before it was submitted to FTA.
- Why will the new Amtrak Station be constructed at a separate location as the Central Station?

Written Comments:

No written comments were received during the public comment period that ran through July 2, 2010.

Appendix E – On-Site Review Agenda

Grand Rapids Certification Review Agenda
 Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) Conference Room
 678 Front Avenue, NW, Grand Rapids
 June 2-3, 2010

Wednesday June 2, 2010		
Review Topic	Discussion leader	Approximate Times
Introductions & Purpose -Purpose and Overview of the Certification Process -Current Review Topics to be Covered -Timeline for Issuing the Final Report	Sarah Van Buren	10:00 – 10:15 am
Overview of GVMC -Study Organization -Agreements -Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundaries	Ed Christopher	10:15 – 10:45 am
Unified Planning Work Program	Ed Christopher	10:45 – 11:15 am
Freight	Spencer Stevens	11:15 – 11:45 am
<i>Lunch & “View the Van”</i>		11:45 – 12:45 pm
Metropolitan Plan -Metropolitan Plan -Travel Demand Model -Congestion Management Process -Management and Operations	Sarah Van Buren, Ed Christopher, Spencer Stevens	12:45 – 3:45 pm <i>Break as needed</i>
Safety Planning	Sarah Van Buren	3:45 – 4:30 pm
<i>Federal Review Team Meeting</i>		<i>4:30 pm</i>

Thursday June 3, 2010		
Review Topic	Discussion leader	Approximate Times
Transit Planning	Stewart McKenzie	8:30 - 9:30 am
Transportation Improvement Program & Annual Listing	Rachael Tupica & Stewart McKenzie	9:30 – 10:30 am
<i>Break</i>		<i>10:30 – 10:45 am</i>
Financial Planning	Spencer Stevens	10:45 – 11:30 am
Non-Motorized Planning	Rachael Tupica	11:30 – 12:00 pm

<i>Lunch and Federal Review Team Meeting</i>		12:00 – 1:15 pm
Security Planning	Spencer Stevens	1:15 – 2:00 pm
Public Involvement -Participation Plan -Consultation & Coordination -Visualization -Title VI	Sarah Van Buren & Mary Finch	2:00 – 3:00 pm
Close out/questions		3:30 – 3:45 pm
<i>Federal Team Meeting</i>		3:45 pm

Appendix F – List of On-Site Review Participants

Federal Review Team

Ed Christopher, FHWA-Resource Center – Planning Technical Services Team
Mary Finch, FHWA-Michigan Division**
Stewart McKenzie, FTA Region V
Spencer Stevens, FHWA- Headquarters Office of Planning
Rachael Tupica, FHWA-Michigan Division*
Sarah Van Buren, FHWA-Michigan Division

Michigan Department of Transportation

Sandra Cornell-Howe
Cheryl Hudson**
Dennis Kent
Dal McBurrows
Don Mayle*
Steve Redman**
Marsha Small
John Watkin*

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

Michael Brameijer
Jeremy Bergwerff*
Andrea Dewey
Andrea Faber
Abed Itani
Darrell Robinson
Jim Snell
George Yang
Michael Zonyk

Interurban Transit Partnership

Conrad Venema**

Other

Steve Stepek, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

*Attended June 2nd only

**Attended June 3rd only

Appendix G – Security in the Planning Process - Resources

Basic Approach to Planning & Security

SAFETEA-LU calls for the security of the transportation system to be a stand-alone planning factor, signaling an increase in importance from prior legislation, in which security was coupled with safety in the same planning factor. This change recognizes that planning has a role in critical elements of transportation security. FHWA committed to working with State DOTs, MPOs and other transportation planning process partners in order to promote a safe and secure transportation system. The specific action or actions a particular State or MPO might consider depends on the circumstances unique to the state or region, the transportation system and the level of risk.

Security Topics Related to the Planning Process

The following resources describe how transportation agencies can consider security as stand-alone factor in the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning process. The resources are divided into the following topic areas:

Resources of particular interest are designated with a star ★ and may be good place to begin learning about a specific security topic area.

General Transportation Planning Security Resources

- ★ NCHRP 525, “Incorporating Security into the Transportation Planning Process;” see http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=5028
- ★ Examples of security planning from Houston-Galveston Area Council, San Diego Association of Governments, Oregon State Department of Transportation and the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments. See <http://www.planning.dot.gov/state.asp#pubs>
- “The Role of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) In Preparing for Security Incidents and Transportation System Response” by Michael D. Meyer. See www.planning.dot.gov/Documents/Securitypaper.htm
- "Security Considerations in Transportation Planning" from Steven Polzin at CUTR; see <http://www.cutr.usf.edu/pubs/Security%20paper%200402.doc>
- “Volume II: Effective Practices In State Department of Transportation Security Planning;” from the Volpe National Transportation System Center; see http://www.pooledfund.org/documents/TPF-5_085/effective_practices.pdf
- A scan of 15 recently completed State long range plans includes three with sections on security planning: Arizona, Ohio and Virginia. See www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep10/state/index.html#practice.
 - While Arizona’s plan does not identify security as one of its key policies, an appended report entitled, “Security Considerations in Long-Range Transportation Planning: A White Paper for The Arizona Department of Transportation,” analyzes potential transportation security concerns for the transportation network as a whole and discusses how security can be integrated into long-range transportation planning
 - Ohio’s plan identifies four security strategies: predict, harden targets, educate and, respond and recover. As a part of its security activities, ODOT has plans, manuals,

- procedures and policies to manage security incidents, and coordinates with non-transportation security agencies
 - Virginia's plan describes extensive security preparedness measures, including coordinating with the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness and Virginia Department of Emergency management
- FHWA Emergency Transportation Operations Planning Documents located at <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/opssecurity/index.htm> and at http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/opssecurity/evac_plan_doc_flyer/index.htm
- The Infrastructure Security Partnership; see www.tisp.org
- ITE site for www.ite.org/security/index.asp

Providing a forum for Interagency Coordination in states and metropolitan areas including conducting training and exercises

- Baltimore Regional Operations Coordination Project. 2002, Baltimore Regional Transportation Board. See article in *Public Roads*, November/December 2004 (Vol. 68, No. 3) located at <http://www.tfrc.gov/pubrds/04nov/02.htm>.
- Capitol Region COG (Hartford, CT) Table Top Incident Management Exercise. 2001, Capitol Region COG. See http://www.crcog.org/homeland_sec/index.html and http://www.crcog.org/publications/TransportationDocs/IncMgmt/IM_TSBreport.pdf.
- GAO Report 04-1009, "Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness;" see www.gao.gov/new.items/d041009.pdf
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) - Hampton Roads, VA. HRPDC coordinates the Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee (REMTAC). REMTAC promotes the multilateral operation of emergency support functions such as evacuation and shelter planning and disaster planning for special needs populations. See <http://www.hrpdc.org/transport/emergency.shtml>.
- Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) - Houston, TX. H-GAC received funding from the Texas Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to prepare a regional hazard mitigation plan. H-GAC and 70 local governments developed a comprehensive plan that identifies regional hazards, vulnerabilities, and capabilities. The MPO held disaster mitigation planning workshops with community leaders as one tool for developing the mitigation plan. In the meetings participants were asked to complete a Risk and Capability Assessment; build a region wide consensus on disaster mitigation goals; and discuss possible mitigation actions. The final results from these meetings were incorporated into the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This collaborative effort kept H-GAC informed of Metro Transit Authority's Regional Transit Security Strategy Guide that was previously prepared as a result of a transit security grant. See <http://www.h-gac.com/HGAC/Programs/Disaster+Preparedness/Regional+Mitigation+Plan.htm>
- "Integrating Security into Small MPO Planning Activities." A presentation by Mark Lofgren from the Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University at the 2007 Western Plains MPO Conference; see http://www.sddot.com/pe/Projdev/planning_mpo.asp
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Regional Emergency Coordination Plan. 2002. http://www.mwcog.org/publications/departamental.asp?CLASSIFICATION_ID=16&SUBCLASSIFICATION_ID=26

- Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) – Cincinnati, OH. The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments created the Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee to provide leadership and coordination of the homeland security and domestic terrorism preparedness efforts in the region. The committee – comprised of the region’s county emergency management associations, county representatives, and other interest groups – will review these individual efforts from a regional perspective to insure that no vulnerabilities exist in the region’s response efforts. The Committee has been charged with developing a Regional Emergency Response Plan. The committee also provides a forum for the creation and implementation of new ideas related to homeland security and identification of the appropriate clearinghouse for funding regional projects. <http://www.oki.org/transportation/homelanddefense.html>.
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). ODOT prepared a series of background papers to brief the 14-member Safety and Security Committee and to provide an overview of actions taken by ODOT and its partners in preparing for man-made and natural disasters. ODOT used the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation as a means of coordinating with MPOs and transit agencies in the region on security issues. ODOT consulted with the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (the regional transit provider in Portland Oregon) on its Regional Transit Security Grant in 2005. Here is a link to the Transportation Security portion of the Oregon Transportation Plan: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/docs/otpSafety/Security.pdf>
- ✪ This joint FHWA/AMPO report summarizes the results of the workshop held in Orlando, Florida on January 30 and 31, 2008, on addressing security planning for natural and manmade disasters. Representatives from nine MPOs shared their experiences, success stories and challenges in this area. The ultimate goal of the workshop was to allow senior staff from a variety of MPOs to come together to share information and learn from each other in a facilitated open discussion setting. We developed this report to summarize the workshop discussions and results for the use and benefit of MPOs and their planning partners across the country. http://www.ampo.org/assets/library/172_securitywkshpjan08final.pdf

Modeling Emergency Response and Evacuation

- ✪ NCHRP 8-36 (53) / 20-59(27) Peer Review of Disaster Response Issues in Transportation brought together several state and MPO planning directors to discuss priority issues in security, disaster response, and planning; see <http://planning.transportation.org/?siteid=30&pageid=1399>
- ✪ Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District (Taunton, Massachusetts) Hurricane Evacuation Route Evaluation; see http://www.srpedd.org/HERE_FULLL.pdf
- “Report to Congress on Catastrophic Hurricane Evacuation Plan Evaluation” U.S. Department of Transportation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (June 1, 2006); see <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/hurricanevacuation/>
- “A Study of the Impact of Nine Transportation Management Projects on Hurricane Evacuation;” see www.its.dot.gov/JPODOCS/REPTS_TE/13940_files/13940.pdf
- Batchelor et. al. Hurricane Floyd Lessons Learned. 2000, North Carolina DOT. See <http://www.ncdot.org/doh/operations/floydlessons/PDF/HurricaneFloydLL.pdf>.
- Jafari et. al. “Technological advances in evacuation planning and emergency management: current state of the art.” 2003, Rutgers University, Center for Advanced Infrastructure & Transportation. See <http://www.cait.rutgers.edu/finalreports/EVAC-RU4474.pdf>.

- NOAA Coastal Services Center, Hurricane Planning and Impact Assessment Reports. See <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/hes/general.html>.
 - Southeast United States Hurricane Evacuation Traffic Study, 2000
 - Hurricanes Bertha and Fran in North and South Carolina: Evacuation Behavior and Attitudes toward Mitigation, March 1997
 - The Next Step Incorporating Information from Comprehensive Hurricane Evacuation and Property Loss Studies into Community Emergency Plans and Programs, 1991
 - Islands Task Force Report: A Briefing on Hurricane Evacuation Study Needs in the United States Island Communities, 2001
- Perkins et. al. "Modeling transit issues unique to hurricane evacuations: North Carolina's small urban and rural areas." 2001, The Transportation Institute, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. See <http://www.ncat.edu/~traninst/Perkins%20Final%20Report%202001.pdf>
- San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) - San Diego, CA. SANDAG created the Public Safety Committee that focuses on homeland security and emergency preparedness. SANDAG integrated the Traffic Management Centers across regional borders, in cooperation with federal intelligence agencies. SANDAG prepared a Transit Emergency Planning Manual based on the experiences of those participating in emergency preparedness. SANDAG hosted an Emergency Transportation Operations Preparedness and Response Workshop. http://www.sandag.cog.ca.us/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_1166_4520.pdf.
- Urbina, E. A. *A State-of-the-Practice Review of Hurricane Evacuation Plans and Policies*. Louisiana State University, May 2002. See http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-0418102-140236/unrestricted/Urbina_thesis.pdf
- TRB Subcommittee on Emergency Evacuation. See <http://www.rsip.lsu.edu/anb10-3/Resources/resources.htm>
- V. P. Sisiopiku et. al. *Regional Traffic Simulation for Emergency Preparedness*. 2004, University Transportation Center for Alabama. See http://utca.eng.ua.edu/projects/final_reports/03226fnl.pdf
- ITE Presentation on "Transportation for Emergency Response and Recovery" see http://www.ite.org/security/ITE_emerg_response.ppt
- Reuben B. Glodblatt and Kevin Weinisch, "Evacuation Planning, Human Factors, and Traffic Engineering Developing Systems for Training and Effective Response," *TR News* 238 (May-June 2005) see <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/trnews/trnews238.pdf>
- Identification and Analysis of Factors Affecting Emergency Evacuations - Main Report (NUREG/CR-6864, Vol. 1) see <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/contract/cr6864/v1/> or <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/contract/cr6864/index.html>. This study examines the efficiency and effectiveness of public evacuations of 1,000 or more people, in response to natural disasters, technological hazards, and malevolent acts, occurring in the United States between January 1, 1990, and June 30, 2003.
- Routes to Effective Evacuations Primer Series: Using Highways during Evacuation Operations for Events with Advance Notice (FHWA-HOP-06-109) located at http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/evac_primer/00_evac_primer.htm
- Routes to Effective Evacuations Primer Series: Using Highways during Evacuation Operations for Events with Little to No Advance Notice (FHWA-HOP-06-109) located at http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/evac_primer/00_evac_primer.htm
- Managing Pedestrians During Evacuations of Metropolitan Areas (FHWA-HOP-07-066) located at <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/pedevac/index.htm>

- CALTRANS report exploring the variables that contribute to vehicular movement in an emergency environment.
http://www.dot.ca.gov/newtech/researchreports/reports/2008/final_report_project_06-03_03-13-08.pdf

Planning for recovery, financing and system adaptation

- ☛ Washington State DOT. “Development of a Freight System Resiliency Plan” (August 2008)
This research report proposes a methodical process to develop a long-term statewide freight system recovery (defined as freight system resiliency) plan to enhance the state’s ability to rapidly recover after a disaster and restore freight service from disruptions. A set of eight practical steps is established to develop a FSR plan. The report also offers practical how-to explanations for each step with relevant example(s) as well. While developed for WSDOT, the process can be transplanted elsewhere easily for any state DOT to develop a FSR plan.
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/023FC2C7-DD28-4EB6-8203-98560DA76CB7/0/WSDOT_FSR_Report_v25.pdf
- “Conceptualizing and Measuring Resilience: A Key to Disaster Loss Reduction,” by Kathleen Tierney and Michel Bruneau in *TR News* (May-June 2007); see http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7870
- American Planning Association. “Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction” (PAS 483/484) 1998, see www.planning.org/bookservice/description.htm?BCODE=P483
Proceedings of the 1997 Post Hurricane Highway Recovery Workshop . 1997, FHWA Virginia Division. See www.sys.virginia.edu/students/capstone/past/cap1999/11_16_VDOT.doc.
- Volpe System Transportation Center. Long-Term Community Recovery Assessment Tool, 2005. See www.volpe.dot.gov/infosrc/journal/2003/pdfs/chap3.pdf
- “Potential Cost Savings from the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program,” from the Congressional Budget Office, Publication No. 2926 (September 2007); see <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/86xx/doc8653/09-28-Disaster.pdf>
- “Regional Disaster Resilience: A Guide for Developing an Action Plan” developed by The Infrastructure Security Partnership (TISP) June 2006; see http://www.tisp.org/rdr_guide
- Impacts of Climate Change and Variability on Transportation Systems and Infrastructure: Gulf Coast Study, Phase I Draft Report; U.S. Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.7 (Lead Agency: U.S. Department of Transportation; and Coordinating Agency: U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior) October 2007; see <http://www.climatescience.gov/Library/sap/sap4-7/default.php> -- While this study focuses on long-term impacts of climate change, it provides an example of scenario-based risk assessment that could be applied to security and disaster management.
- Emergency Relief Manual (Federal-Aid Highways) Interim Update - August 2003, Office of Infrastructure, Office of Program Administration, Federal Highway Administration located at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/erm/index.cfm>

Application of community and context sensitive solutions in security design

- Federal Transit Administration, The Public Transportation System Security and Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide (2003) <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Publications/Default.asp>

- Designing for Security in the Nation's Capital (2001) located at http://www.ncpc.gov/publications_press/publications.html or at http://www.ncpc.gov/planning_init/security/DesigningSec.pdf

Engaging the public on security issues from preparedness to evacuation to recovery

- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) - Hampton Roads, VA. HRPDC maintains an emergency management website which provides educational disaster preparedness information and local emergency contacts for residents of the region. See <http://www.hrpdc.org/transport/emergency.shtml>.
- “Communicating with the Public Using ATIS During Disasters: A Guide for Practitioners” Report FHWA-HOP-07-068; see <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/atis/index.htm>
- “Public Participation in Natural Hazard Mitigation Policy Formation: Challenges for Comprehensive Planning,” by David R. Godschalk, Samuel Brody and Raymond Burby in *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, Volume 46, Issue 5, pages 733-754 (September 2003) see <http://archone.tamu.edu/epsru/pdf/03-07A.pdf>
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's “Guideline for External Risk Communication” located at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/brochures/br0308/index.html>

Border security coordination (for Border States or states with major points of entry)

- Robinson et. al., *Border and Transportation Security: Possible New Directions and Policy Options* (2005) Congressional Research Service. See <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/RL32841.pdf>.
- “Border Security and Canada-US Integration: Toward a Research Policy Agenda: A Symposium at Western Washington University” Summary of Proceedings (2005). The goal of this one-day symposium was to examine the impacts of new security measures on border functions, management and economic integration in the Canada-US context; see http://www.thetbwg.org/library-library_e.htm

Appendix H – Desk Audit Topics

Air Quality

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.322(1) sets forth requirements that “In nonattainment or maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants, the MPO, as well as the FHWA and the FTA, must make a conformity determination on any updated or amended transportation plan in accordance with the Clean Air Act and the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93).” 23 CFR 450.324(a) sets forth requirements that “In non-attainment or maintenance areas subject to transportation conformity requirements, the FHWA and the FTA, as well as the MPO, must make a conformity determination on any updated or amended TIP, in accordance with the Clean Air Act requirements and the EPA’s transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93).” 40 CFR Part 93 Subpart A §93.105(a) (1) sets forth requirements in part that “The implementation plan revision shall include procedures to be undertaken ... by State and local air agencies and EPA with MPOs, State departments of transportation, and DOT in developing applicable implementation plans.”

Current Status

The Grand Rapids air quality area includes all of Kent and Ottawa Counties. The area is a maintenance area for the eight-hour Ozone standard. The Grand Rapids MPO planning area includes all of Kent County and part of Ottawa County. The Muskegon MPO and the Holland MPO are also partially within Ottawa County. Air quality conformity analyses must cover the entire nonattainment or maintenance area, which requires coordination between all three MPOs. Since the Muskegon and Holland MPO planning areas are partially within this air quality area and partially within other air quality areas, this portion of west Michigan is one of the most complex air quality conformity areas in the country.

MDOT does the travel demand modeling for the Muskegon and Holland MPOs. The models are set up to separate out the travel in Ottawa County. MDOT provides VMT and speeds by functional class to GVMC for the Muskegon and Holland areas within Ottawa County. GVMC then performs the air quality conformity analyses for the two-county Ozone maintenance area.

Challenges

When the Ozone standard is revised, it is likely that this area will be found to be in non-attainment for the revised standard. The geography of the non-attainment area may change and the details of that change, if any, could impact how conformity analyses are performed.

Another challenge will be the implementation of the MOVES emissions model. It may be difficult to use MOVES to show conformity to an emissions budget that was developed using MOBILE6.2. It is not known at this time if the State will be developing new emissions budgets for the existing maintenance areas using MOVES.

Findings

The air quality conformity process for the Kent-Ottawa County Ozone maintenance area is a mature process that has served the area well. All of the participants in the conformity process are

well aware of their roles and responsibilities in the process. They are well positioned to meet the challenges that will occur in the next few years.

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) which discusses the minimum requirements for compliance. However, the basis for addressing environmental mitigation is detailed in the sections addressing consultation, 23 CFR 450.316(a) (1-3) and (b) and 450.322(g) (1-2), (i), and (j). The MTP must include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities.

Current Status

GVMC Staff developed a framework for incorporating environmental mitigation into their planning process as part of their 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan development and compliance with SAFETEA-LU. Staff worked with the Michigan Transportation Planning Association membership on the development of this framework and shared their approach and resources with other MPOs in Michigan.

Findings

The Federal Review Team found that GVMC has a comprehensive approach to documenting activities related to environmental mitigation including the use of visualization techniques illustrating the location of proposed projects compared with specific environmental features in the greater Grand Rapids area.

Appendix I – Summary Listing of Findings

Commendation 1 (Non-Motorized)

The Federal review team would like to commend GVMC Staff on their non-motorized planning efforts. We specifically cite the extensive work they have done in conducting a facilities inventory, prioritizing future improvements, and using effective visualization tools to convey information to stakeholders and the public.

Corrective Action 1 (Agreements and Contracts)

The MPO, State, and transit operator must update all of the agreements required by 23 CFR 450.314. To the extent possible a single agreement between all responsible parties should be developed. A draft of the revised agreement(s) must be submitted to FHWA and FTA for review by March 31, 2011 and the final(s) signed by the responsible parties by October 1, 2011. The agreement(s) shall clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all parties and committees in cooperatively carrying out all aspects of the transportation planning process defined in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C, including the development of work programs, fiscally constrained plans and TIPs, air quality conformity findings, and annual reporting of obligated projects. The approach for integrating highway, transit (including the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan), and non motorized planning deserves special attention along with specific timelines for when documents are due and planning cycles are repeated.

Corrective Action 2 (Annual Listing of Obligated Projects)

The Annual Listing of obligated projects must include all obligated transit projects. The Annual Listing document for the past year (2009) must be updated to include transit projects and a copy submitted through MDOT to FHWA and FTA by November 15, 2010. The Annual Listing for the current programming year (2010) must be prepared listing both highway and transit projects within 90 calendar days of the end of the program year.

Recommendation 1 (MPO Structure)

The Bylaws of the GVMC should be updated to clearly define the membership, function, authority, and delegated responsibilities of the Policy Advisory Committee as an entity of GVMC with responsibility of overseeing transportation planning for the region.

Recommendation 2 (Unified Planning Work Program)

It is strongly recommended that the UPWP reflect the work that is being done by GVMC staff. The MPO should align the goals identified at the beginning of the document to the work elements.

Recommendation 3 (Freight Planning)

The Federal review team encourages GVMC staff to continue promoting freight planning and to document efforts taking place within the transportation planning process related to freight planning.

Recommendation 4 (Metropolitan Transportation Plan)

It is strongly recommended the MPO improve the documentation in the financial plan of the MTP. This would start with the GVMC, ITP, and MDOT creating a structured, cooperative, and transparent financial revenue estimation process that would then be documented in MTP. The MPO, ITP, and MDOT should continue working to obtain, refine, and document system-level

operations and maintenance cost information that would be deducted from available revenue in the MTP to show revenue available to start new capital projects.

Recommendation 5 (Metropolitan Transportation Plan)

The Federal Review team strongly recommends that the GVMC and MDOT staff develop a cooperative approach to assess and prioritize regional capital investments and other strategies or measures necessary to preserve the existing system and to meet future needs to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the mobility of people and goods for the road network to provide a true 20 year horizon. If funding short falls limit what can be included in the adopted plan, consideration should be given to filling this gap by including such improvements in an illustrative plan.

Recommendation 6 (Metropolitan Transportation Plan)

The GVMC should update financial constraint demonstration tables and documentation in the MTP when amendments are made to the MTP.

Recommendation 7 (Metropolitan Transportation Plan)

The GVMC has taken steps to identify EJ areas, but now needs to take a more proactive review of accessibility in the transportation system by comparing the data to the existing transportation network, as well as, applying it in the development of the MTP. An EJ analysis of transit should also be included.

Recommendation 8 (Travel Demand Model)

Once the 2035 MTP is adopted, it is strongly recommended that work begin on an approach to use the travel demand models in conjunction with area goals and objectives to evaluate specific transportation improvements or combinations of improvements before they are included in the plan. This approach could help to identify the combination of improvements that, for example, would have the greatest impact in terms of congestion relief for the region as a whole. The approach would better position the area to respond to performance based planning currently being discussed as part of reauthorization. We would urge a meeting with FHWA and MDOT within one year to explore this and develop a workable approach that could be applied in the next update cycle or next plan amendment.

Recommendation 9 (Congestion Management Process)

MDOT, GVMC, and the ITP should strengthen the CMP by providing decision makers with tools that will help them chose the most effective solution from the “cafeteria listing” from both a project and a systems perspective. The integration of congestion related goals, objectives, and performance measures with the areawide travel demand models would provide a means to perform analyses that compare the benefits of alternative solutions. Such analyses would be performed by the planning staff with recommendations provided to decision makers.

Recommendation 10 (Safety Planning)

The Federal review team encourages GVMC staff to continue to pursue and document the efforts taking place within the transportation planning process related to safety planning. The review team hopes that GVMC staff will follow through on the elements laid out in the Strategic Safety Planning Process handout and urges Staff to incorporate the elements of the process into GVMC’s planning documents.

Recommendation 11 (Transit Planning)

It is strongly recommended that GVMC and ITP work together to more fully coordinate and integrate transit planning into the regional transportation decision-making process.

Recommendation 12 (Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan)

It is recommend that The Rapid update its Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan to incorporate opportunities for coordination that may result from the Kent County Transit Needs Assessment and take advantage of funding opportunities through the JARC and New Freedom program.

Recommendation 13 (Transportation Improvement Program)

It is strongly recommended that the MPO improve the documentation in the financial plan of the TIP. This would start with the GVMC, ITP, and MDOT creating a structured, cooperative, and transparent financial revenue estimation process that would then be documented in the TIP. The MPO, ITP, and MDOT should continue working to obtain, refine, and document system-level operations and maintenance cost information that would be deducted from available revenue in the TIP to show revenue available to start new capital improvements. It is also strongly recommended that GVMC document their year of expenditure (YOE) assumptions.

Recommendation 14 (Transportation Improvement Program)

It is strongly recommended that the MPO create and document a project prioritization process for highway and transit projects that demonstrates how the projects are included in the TIP and implement the multimodal goals and objectives of the MTP.

Recommendation 15 (Transportation Improvement Program)

The GVMC has taken steps to identify EJ areas, but now needs to take a more proactive review of accessibility in the transportation system by comparing the data to the existing transportation network, as well as, applying it in the development of the TIP. An EJ analysis of transit should also be included.

Recommendation 16 (Annual Listing of Obligated Projects)

The information in the annual listing of obligated projects should be presented with a table that spells out all acronyms used in the listing and not assume that the reader would have examined or be familiar with the TIP to know what all of the acronyms in the listing are.

Recommendation 17 (Security Planning)

The Federal review team encourages GVMC staff to continue to promote and document efforts taking place within the transportation planning process related to security planning.

Recommendation 18 (Public Participation Plan)

Documents that are available for public viewing should be clearly identified and steps should be taken to ensure the GVMC website is updated regularly to reflect the most current documents.

Recommendation 19 (Public Participation Plan)

It is strongly recommended that GVMC complete a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) assessment for the planning area and update their Title VI Plan to reflect any needed changes. The updated Title VI Plan should be submitted to MDOT.

Recommendation 20 (Public Participation Plan)

During the next year the Public Participation Plan should be updated, in cooperation with interested parties, to provide for longer notification timelines and a consistent approach for ADA accommodations. If the results of the LEP assessment identify special needs for accommodating such individuals or groups, the Public Participation Plan should be modified accordingly. A draft of the updated Public Participation Plan should be submitted to MDOT, FHWA and FTA for review prior to the 45 day release for public comment.

Recommendation 21 (Consultation)

The MPO should develop a formal, documented and agreed to consultation process, that not only identifies the methods for outreach, but also clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, including periods for comment, what review of consulting agency plans and programs will be done, and response or consideration of comments received, for the various components of the planning process.

Appendix J – Certification Report Transmittal Letter



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division

315 West Allegan, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Federal Transit Administration, Region V

200 W. Adams St., Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60606

September 15, 2010

Mr. James Buck, Chairperson
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Mr. Kirk T. Steudle, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Buck:

Dear Mr. Steudle:

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council - Federal Certification Review

Our agencies completed a joint certification review of the urban transportation planning process for the Grand Rapids area in June 2010. The objective was to determine if the process meets the Federal transportation planning requirements which are prerequisites to the advancement of Federal transportation projects in urbanized areas. With two exceptions, we found the process to be in substantial compliance with the Federal planning regulations. With this finding, we jointly certify the transportation planning process for the Grand Rapids, Michigan, area subject to two corrective actions:

- Update the agreements among the MPO, State, and transit operator
- Include transit project in the annual listing of obligated projects

If resolved quickly, neither of these corrective actions will impact the area's ability to advance Federal transportation projects.

The details of our review and expectations regarding these corrective actions are contained in the enclosed joint report. Through such reviews and a continuing cooperative interactive process among all affected agencies, it is our goal to enhance the overall ability of the transportation planning process to provide decision-makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions. With this goal in mind, the report contains a number of recommendations that will enhance the process, ranging from work program development, to

processes for establishing regional priorities. Non-motorized planning conducted by the GVMC was identified as a commendable practice.

We sincerely appreciate the cooperation of you and your staff in assisting us with the review. Please contact Sarah Van Buren, FHWA at (517)702-1823, or Stewart McKenzie, FTA at (313)353-2866 if you have any questions regarding this certification report and findings.

Sincerely,



Russell L. Jorgenson
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Sincerely,



Marisol R. Simon
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

Enclosure

cc: D. Stypula, GVMC
A. Itani, GVMC
S. Mortel, MDOT, Planning
M. Small, MDOT, Planning
P. Varga, ITP

