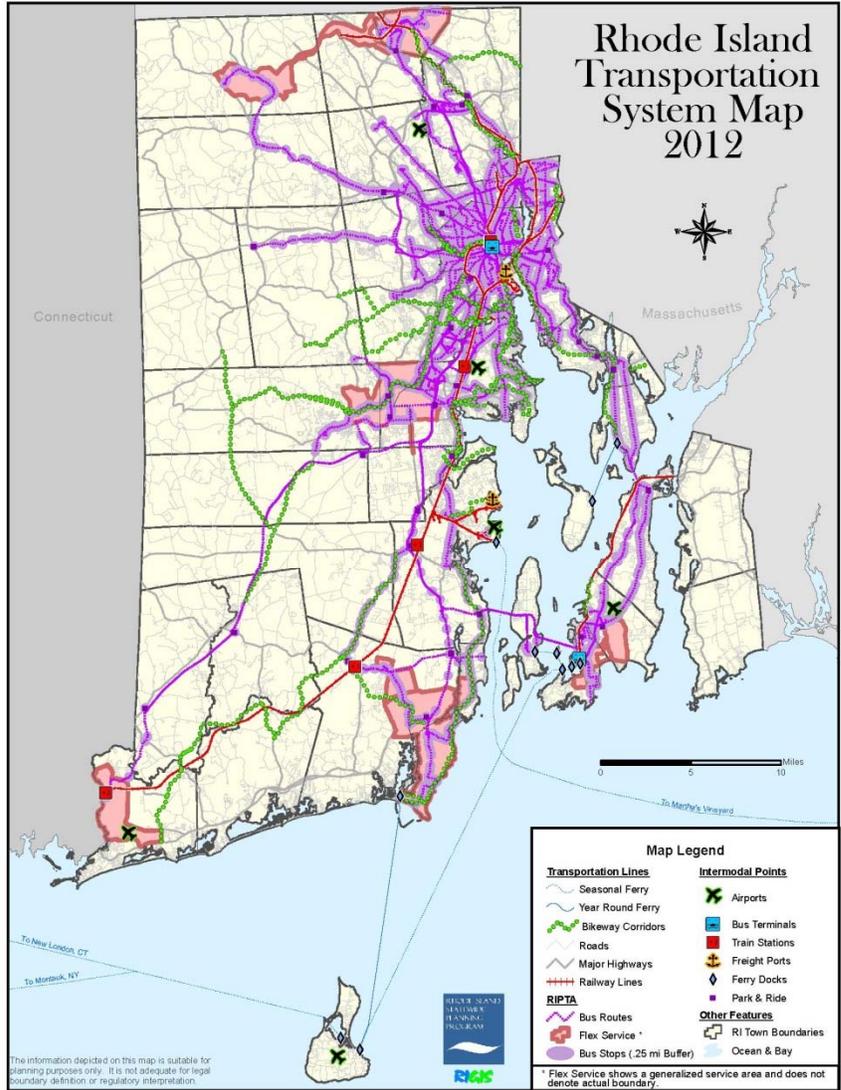




U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

Federal Transit Administration



Transportation Planning Certification Review

for the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the

Providence Transportation Management Area

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Part I: Summary of Findings

Previous Findings and Disposition

This section summarizes the 2010 Providence Transportation Management Area (TMA) Federal Certification Review findings and their disposition by the Statewide Planning Program (SPP), which is the staff for the State Planning Council (SPC).

Corrective Actions

Fiscal Constraint in TIP

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) shall include the required categories for funding in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Statewide Planning Program (SPP) staff should work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials to create a new format for the TIP that best meets Rhode Island's needs while conforming to the Federal regulations for funding categories.

Update from SPP: As the State prepared to update the TIP, RIDOT and MPO staff met regularly with FHWA field staff to agree on a new format for the document that would include the required categories for funding. Barbara Breslin of the FHWA Division office was exceptionally helpful in assisting the State in meeting this requirement by providing feedback and examples of other TIP documents. As a result of this collaboration, the fiscal year (FY) 13-16 TIP expands and improves the format and content of the TIP funding table to provide additional transparency to the general public. The TIP table now includes a funding category so it is clear what type of federal funds are proposed to fund each individual project.

Recommendations

Prior Year Expenditures

SPC should include the prior year's expenditures in the TIP to provide an additional level of transparency to the public. The prior year's expenditures should be published as a separate supplement on an annual basis. The SPC should work with FHWA and FTA to find a mutually agreeable date to publish this supplement.

Update from SPP: SPP has worked with RIDOT and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to publish prior year expenditures to provide an additional level of transparency to the public. RIDOT's FY13 TIP Status Report, which shows federal project authorizations, is available at http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/mpo/TIP_Status_2013.pdf. In addition, RIDOT also compiled a FY13 TIP Status Report which shows RIDOT project expenditure. This Document is available at:

http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/mpo/Expenditure_By_Project_by_Type2013.pdf.

RIPTA's expenditures for FY13 by TIP Category are available at:

http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/mpo/RIPTA%20_expenditure.pdf.

Staffing

The State should examine whether the level of staffing in key positions within the State Planning Program is adequate to maintain continuity of the program.

Update from SPP: *At the time of the last certification, staffing concerns were focused on the number of vacancies within the SPP. With 23 full-time employees, the Program is now fully staffed. A full organizational chart is available at <http://www.planning.state.ri.us/about/>.*

Transit Plan

SPP, RIDOT, and RIPTA should work together to more fully integrate public transit as part of regional multimodal systems planning. One potential mechanism to bring the agencies and modes together would be a consolidated planning grant (CPG), which allows FHWA and FTA planning funds to be combined into a single consolidated grant administered by one of the agencies.

Update from SPP: *Rhode Island has been combining FHWA and FTA planning funds into consolidated planning grants since FY12, at which time all available FTA planning funds were requested for consolidation. Since that time, an annual request for consolidation is made with each Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In addition, the MPO has undertaken several projects in the UPWP in an effort to more fully integrate public transit as a part of the regional multimodal systems planning. Please see Task 1050 of the current UPWP for examples: <http://www.planning.state.ri.us/documents/fy14.pdf>.*

Since 2012, the CPG program has been working great. RIPTA, RIDOT, and the MPO have increased planning coordination, coordinated funding sources more efficiently, and found it easier to implement multimodal planning.

Maintain Freight Advisory Committee

SPC should maintain their Freight Advisory Committee as a standing committee to guide future freight planning efforts and maintain a high level of activity and attention in this area, including in TIP development.

Update from SPP: *A Freight Working Group, consisting of staff from FHWA, the Maritime Administration (MARAD), RIDOT, SPP, the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC), the Quonset Development Corporation (QDC), and the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center (URITC) has been meeting since 2012 to address the need for coordinated freight planning in RI. Over time, several other interested agencies have actively participated in working group meetings: RI Airport Corporation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), RI Resource Recovery Corporation, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The group has developed a Draft White Paper (<http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/mpo/DraftFreightWhitePaper.pdf>), which provides background information on the need for freight planning and makes recommendations on how to move forward. The Freight Working Group has received a positive response from the RI legislature, emergency management community, and other stakeholder groups.*

Congestion Management Task Force

The Congestion Management Task Force (CMTF) should develop and apply performance measures that will expand the significance and utility of the Congestion Management Process (CMP). The SPP should apply these performance measures to examine alternatives and connect the CMP to long-term planning goals. Measures may include travel delay, levels of service, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

***Update from SPP:** The CMTF has developed a series of performance measures to expand the significance and utility of the CMP. These measures include: Travel Time Index, Buffer Index, Incident Rate, Incident Clearance Time, Crash Rate, and intelligent transportation system (ITS) equipment uptime.*

Using these performance measures, a baseline average of congestion was established. The CMTF used this information to identify bottlenecks on the highway system. Addressing these issues is not only important from an operational standpoint (Rhode Island Transportation Management Center (TMC)) but also from a safety standpoint. To be able to take a more holistic approach to solving these issues, RIDOT's Traffic Management and Highway Safety unit was invited to serve as a tri-chair of the CMTF along with the RI TMC and the RI MPO.

Air Quality

The SPP should continue to work with the RIDEM to submit Rule VIII, which outlines the process and criteria for State agencies to determine air quality conformity for transportation plans and projects, to the EPA in a timely fashion, and no later than September 2010.

***Update from SPP:** Rhode Island is currently classified as an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Prior to entering into attainment in 2013, the MPO worked very closely with the RIDEM, RIDOT and the RIPTA to adopt Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 49, Transportation Conformity (http://www.dem.state.ri.us/pubs/regs/regs/air/air49_11.pdf). This rule, which is also referenced and incorporated in the State Planning Council Rules and Standards, outlined the process and criteria for State agencies to determine air quality conformity, when necessary, for transportation plans and projects. It has been reviewed and approved by the EPA.*

This new rule was implemented during the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation 2035, and the FY13-16 Transportation Improvement Program. Please see

http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/mpo/Air_Quality_Conformity_LRTP.pdf and http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/mpo/RIDEM_conformity_letter_TIP.pdf for RIDEM Air Quality Conformity determinations.

Summary of Current Findings

This section summarizes the findings of the 2014 Providence TMA Certification Review.

Corrective Actions

This review has not resulted in any corrective actions.

Recommendations

MPO Organizational Structure: The MPO should maximize transparency by documenting the process by which MPO board committee members are selected, and by making this document available on their website.

Agreements and Contracts: The MPO should update their MOU to provide more detail and to make it MAP-21 compliant in 2015. The MOU should reflect the new cooperative efforts that have been established through staff efforts.

Agreements and Contracts: The MPO should develop a single, detailed MOU detailing the respective roles of RISPP, RIPTA, and RIDOT in the planning process. In particular, this MOU should include a description of the various partners' responsibilities in developing the UPWP.

Unified Planning Work Program: Going forward, the MPO should continue to work with FHWA and FTA to ensure that the UPWP contains sufficient detail and information to allow those agencies to confidently make a determination of project eligibility for planning funding, and to demonstrate that each work item has a clear transportation nexus. In the case of interdisciplinary planning activities with both transportation and non-transportation elements, the UPWP should break down the tasks and expenses to the level of detail necessary to separate eligible activities from ineligible activities.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): The MPO should perform a full update of the metropolitan transportation plan during its next update cycle, to ensure that the plan reflects any changing demographics and transportation priorities in the region.

Financial Planning: The MPO should work with RIDOT to improve planning level cost estimates, especially for large projects, concentrating on keeping them up to date in the MTP and TIP.

Air Quality Conformity: The MPO should continue preparing for possible revised non-attainment status by maintaining and improving air quality analysis and modeling efforts.

TIP Development & Project Selection: The MPO should continue its development of an interactive GIS-based STIP tool and to incorporate these efforts to the greatest extent possible with efforts to develop an STIP system.

Public Outreach and Public Involvement: The MPO should review and revise the Public Participation Guide, where appropriate, to reflect the most current information and analysis. It should also reflect practices to facilitate compliance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.316 and the SPC's Standards and Rules.

Public Outreach and Public Involvement: As the MPO relies heavily on external resources for handling requests for auxiliary aids and services to allow the deaf/ hard-of-hearing, and visually impaired to participate in public forums, the MPO should interview Mr. James Pitassi, the Rhode Island Department of Administration's Point of Contact for ADA Accommodations, to ensure that sufficient services can be made available within three (3) business days. The protocols for procuring those services should also be reviewed. We also recommend that the MPO's Title VI Coordinator speak with the appropriate person

managing the State's Master Price Agreement for Language Interpretation/Translation services to validate the three-day lead time for procuring on-site interpreters for public meetings/hearings. Based on this review, the lead time indicated in public notices should be adjusted, where appropriate.

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Notification to Beneficiaries and Complaint Procedures:

Given the broad applicability of Title VI and the related statutes to transportation planning, the MPO should provide a direct link for "Civil Rights" from the MPO's home page (Statewide Planning). The Translation Services contact person information should be moved to the Statewide Planning page. The Policy should be revised to fully comply with 49 CFR 21.9(d), Appendix C to Part 21, and FTA Circular 4702.1B. Specifically, the MPO should give examples of the type of discrimination prohibited by Title VI, as it relates to planning. A statement about how to request additional information should also be provided. Having only a summary of the policy on the MPO's website is acceptable; however, in this case, a link to a more comprehensive policy (or notice to beneficiaries) would be appropriate. Where the protections under the Title VI (race, color, national origin (Including LEP)) are stated, the MPO should also recognize the related statutes that prohibit discrimination on the bases of sex, age, and disability. (These additional protections should be distinguished from those afforded under Title VI.)

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Notification to Beneficiaries and Complaint Procedures:

With regard to providing documents in languages other than English, the existing language should be revised for clarity. To ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the MPO should make its program documents available in plain text or HTML.

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Notification to Beneficiaries and Complaint Procedures:

The MPO should recognize within its complaint procedures that complaints in languages other than English may be submitted and reasonable accommodations will be provided for impaired individuals. We offer the following sample language: *"Complaints may be accepted in languages other than English.*

Individuals with physically or sensory impairments requiring assistance in filing a complaint should contact"

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Notification to Beneficiaries and Complaint Procedures:

The MPO should remove "Religion" and "Familial status" from its form and process, unless covered by a State equivalent statute that prohibits discrimination in public programs. Reference to "retaliation" should also be removed. We also note that the internal version of the Title VI/Nondiscrimination complaint process should be revised to cover complaints on the basis of sex (gender) and age to be consistent with the relevant nondiscrimination statutes. Currently, the language in this procedure states, *"A written statement of the complaint, including the following details: (b) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin or language, disability, religion, familial status, or retaliation).*

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Data Collection and Analysis:

The MPO's data collection and analyses should be more consistent in its consideration of all groups protected under Title VI and the related statutes. We encourage the MPO to continue its monitoring of program equity, while using a metric that examines program benefits received by Title VI populations as compared to non-Title VI Populations.

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Data Collection and Analysis: Consistent with the recommendations above and to expand the protections afforded under the related nondiscrimination statutes, we note that data collection and analysis should not be limited to “minority and low-income.” As indicated above, the related statutes prohibiting discrimination in federally assisted programs provide protections on the basis of disability, age, and sex (gender).

Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination - Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE): The MPO should review its procedures relative to DBE participation on consultant contracts. Specifically, the MPO should coordinate with Vanessa Crum, RIDOT DBE Liaison Officer, to identify the pertinent Federal-aid civil rights provisions and to establish procedures for determining how and when contract goals will be established. The MPO should also report to RI DOT the total value of its United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)-assisted contracts, as well as the value of work assigned to and performed by DBEs as part of these contracts. RIDOT requires these figures in its semi-annual reports submitted to FHWA and FTA, where applicable.

Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process: The MPO should formalize the current freight working group as a standing State Freight Advisory Committee, and expand its membership beyond the public sector to incorporate private sector, academia, and appropriate intermodal stakeholders.

Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process: The MPO should update its Public Participation Plan to officially incorporate intermodal private sector freight perspectives.

Intermodal Transportation Coordination: RIPTA should work with MBTA to pursue fare integration, so that customers traveling to, from, and within Rhode Island can experience a more seamless multimodal transportation system.

Environmental Justice and LEP: The analysis and plan should be revised to reflect the above observations. Specifically, the MPO should: 1) Provide more cost analysis and information to justify why key or vital document translations should only be in Spanish, whereas the populations of other LEP language groups exceed 1,000; 2) Identify the specific resources and how those resources will be procured, including any budget identified in the UPWP; and 3) Develop a timeline for completing the steps identified in its four-factor analysis and implementation plan.

Visualization Techniques: The MPO should continually review and implement improvements to its website to improve transparency and accessibility for members of the public. Transportation documents should be visually engaging, and grouped together in a prominent location. The MPO should look for opportunities to link to websites that may be of interest to its visitors, such as those of the transit operators and jurisdictions. In addition, the MPO should request that transportation providers and decision makers link to its website to increase awareness of the MPO and its role in regional transportation decisions. Finally, the MPO should consider new ways to communicate its committee structures, and processes and how the committee operates. This could include maps illustrating the representatives for various areas and a chart depicting the organizational structure.

Commendations

MPO Organizational Structure: The MPO includes a wide variety of stakeholders and interest groups as full voting members on its board.

Intermodal Transportation Coordination: Transit signal prioritization efforts have allowed RIPTA to improve service along the R-Line rapid bus route while reducing the number of vehicles needed on the route. This effort represents a best practice for cost-effectively improving transit service, and it is worth investigating whether this model is viable along other transit corridors as well.

Livability & Sustainability: As a coastal region facing the impacts of climate change, the MPO is commended for their ongoing climate change resiliency transportation planning activities.

Description and Overview of MPO

MPO Official Name: Statewide Planning Council (SPC) (Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program).

Year Founded: 1992

Chair Name: Richard Licht, Rhode Island Department of Administration.

Annual Budget: \$6.6 million (Federal Fiscal Year 2014 including FHWA PL funds and FTA 5305 funds).

Organizational Type/Status: State Agency which includes MPO function.

Member Jurisdictions and Number Represented: 39 cities and towns, the Narragansett Indian Tribe, and several special-purpose units such as water and fire districts.

MPO Area Boundaries: Entire state of Rhode Island.

Population Served: 1,050,292 (2012)

Vision and Mission: Rules and Standards of the SPC may be found at http://www.planning.state.ri.us/documents/council/SPC_Rule_%202014.pdf

Major Transit Operators: [RIPTA](#) (bus), [RIDOT/MBTA](#) (commuter rail)

Major Upcoming Projects: I-95 Providence Viaduct (The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grant program (TIGER)), Routes 6 and 10 Interchange, and the Providence Streetcar.

Link to desk review documents: <http://www.planning.ri.gov/council/transportation/mpo.php>

Part II: Certification Review Findings by Topic

Section 2-1: MPO Organizational Structure

Regulatory Basis

Federal legislation (23 U.S.C. 134(d)) requires the designation of an MPO for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. When an MPO representing all or part of a TMA is initially designated or redesignated according to 23 CFR 450.310(d), the policy board of the MPO shall consist of (a) local elected officials, (b) officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the metropolitan area, including representation by providers of public transportation, and (c) appropriate State transportation officials. The voting membership of an MPO that was designated or redesignated prior to December 18th, 1991, will remain valid until a new MPO is redesignated. Redesignation is required whenever the existing MPO seeks to substantially change the proportion of voting members representing individual jurisdictions or the State or the decision-making authority or procedures established under MPO bylaws.

The addition of jurisdictional or political bodies into the MPO or of members to the policy board generally does not require a redesignation of the MPO.

Observations

The [State Planning Council](#) serves as the MPO for the Providence TMA, and oversees the Statewide Planning Program, which acts as staff for the MPO. While many MPOs are structured as Councils of Governments (COGs), with a board consisting of representatives from each of the member jurisdictions, the SPC is made up of a wide variety of stakeholder groups, with representatives from state agencies, RIPTA, the City of Providence, industry, non-profits and advocacy groups, and the general public.

One benefit of the SPC's unique structure is that it leads to a highly inclusive and diverse MPO membership. For example, as RIPTA already has a voting seat on the board, the SPC should be in compliance with the new MAP-21 requirement for transit representation on MPO boards. However, one benefit of the simpler COG structure is that the method by which representatives are selected is simple and transparent. With a more complex structure such as that of the SPC, the method by which members are selected and new voices heard is not always as clear.

Findings of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for MPO organizational structure.

Recommendation: The MPO should maximize transparency by documenting the process by which MPO board committee members are selected, and by making this document available on their website.

Commendation: The MPO includes a wide variety of stakeholders and interest groups as full voting members on its board.

Section 2-2: Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

Regulatory Basis

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

Observations

The SPC includes most of the Providence, RI urbanized area, as well as small portions of the Norwich-New London, CT and the Boston, MA urbanized areas. The entire State is the metropolitan planning area. This matches the MPO's statutory jurisdiction, as well as the operating areas of both RIDOT and RIPTA.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for metropolitan planning area boundaries.

Section 2-3: Agreements and Contracts

Regulatory Basis

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

Observations

The SPC has several MOUs, which help guide the transportation planning process and meet the requirements. These MOUs cover areas of mutual responsibility such as TIP amendments, planning document preparation (MTP, TIP, etc.), air quality analysis, training, data sharing, and other areas.

Although the MPO signs an annual cooperative agreement with RIDOT on the subject of the UPWP, this agreement focuses only on the exchange of grant funds necessary to fund the activities in the UPWP. The MPO does not maintain an interagency agreement outlining the respective roles and responsibilities of the MPO, RIDOT, RIPTA, and other parties in the development and execution of the UPWP.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for agreements and contracts.

Recommendation: The MPO should update their MOU to provide more detail and to make it MAP-21 compliant in 2015. The MOU should reflect the new cooperative efforts that have been established through staff efforts.

Recommendation: The MPO should develop a single, detailed MOU detailing the respective roles of RISPP, RIPTA, and RIDOT in the planning process. In particular, this MOU should include a description of the various partners' responsibilities in developing the UPWP.

Section 2-4: Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Regulatory Basis

MPOs are required to develop a UPWP to govern the expenditure of FHWA and FTA planning and research funds (23 CFR 450.308). The UPWP must be developed in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies, and contain the following elements:

The UPWP shall identify work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task (including activities that address the planning factors in § 450.306(a)), in sufficient detail to indicate who (e.g., MPO, State, public transportation operator, local government, or consultant) will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds.

Observations

The MPO has been working with FHWA and FTA staff over the course of FFY2014 to improve its UPWP. In particular, FHWA and FTA have requested that the MPO provide more detail in its documentation of project funding eligibility. In past UPWPs, some task descriptions did not clearly demonstrate a 'transportation nexus', which is required for the receipt of federal transportation planning funds.

Furthermore, the MPO lacks an MOU describing the mutual roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved in the development of the UPWP. See [Section 2.3: Agreements and Contracts](#).

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC substantially meets the federal requirements for development of the Unified Planning Work Program.

Recommendation: Going forward, the MPO should continue to work with FHWA and FTA to ensure that the UPWP contains sufficient detail and information to allow those agencies to confidently make a determination of project eligibility for planning funding, and to demonstrate that each work item has a clear transportation nexus. In the case of interdisciplinary planning activities with both transportation and non-transportation elements, the UPWP should break down the tasks and expenses to the level of detail necessary to separate eligible activities from ineligible activities.

Section 2-5: Consultation and Coordination in the Planning Process

Regulatory Basis

The requirements for consultation are set forth in 23 CFR 450.316(b-e), which calls 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 (f)(7) related to environmental mitigation.

The MPO should engage in a consultation that includes (1) comparison of the MTP with State conservation plans or maps, if available, or (2) comparison of the MTP with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

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

Observations

The SPC appropriately considers the eight planning factors in the transportation planning process and demonstrates close coordination with transportation agencies, state and local governments, and the public. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is a standing committee of the SPC that reviews and provides input on the transportation planning products such as the MTP and the TIP. The TAC consists of 24 members representing local and state government, interest groups, and the public. The TAC, which includes RIDOT and RIPTA, also plays a key role in encouraging public involvement in the transportation planning process. Furthermore, the MPO coordinates with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) on cross-border transit, highway, and bicycle connections.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for consultation and coordination in the transportation planning process.

Section 2-6: Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Regulatory Basis

In accordance with 23 CFR450.322 (a), the MPO must develop a long-range metropolitan transportation plan, updated at least every 4 years (in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas) or 5 years (in air quality attainment areas):

The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon...the transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of a multi-modal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

Observations

The current MTP, entitled Transportation 2035, was adopted in 2012, and is part of the larger constellation of plans known as the State Guide Plan. Due to update schedule cycle conflicts with the TIP, not all sections of the previous (2008) MTP were updated for the current version. The next update of the MTP is scheduled for 2016.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC substantially meets the federal requirements for development of the long-range metropolitan transportation plan.

Recommendation: The MPO should perform a full update of the metropolitan transportation plan during its next update cycle, to ensure that the plan reflects any changing demographics and transportation priorities in the region.

Section 2-7: Financial Planning

Regulatory Basis

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

Observations

The SPP demonstrates financial constraint in both the MTP and the TIP. The 2013-2016 STIP is fiscally constrained and includes only projects for which funds are available. RIDOT and RIPTA provide project cost estimates for projects they propose, and RIDOT develops or verifies costs for locally proposed projects. Cost estimates for large RIDOT projects in the MTP tend to be fairly cursory, fail to acknowledge uncertainty, and are allowed to grow “stale” (not updated). This can lead to “sticker shock” when the project enters the TIP and the estimate is brought up to date. *Transportation 2035*, the MTP, dedicates Part 3 to Transportation Financing; this Part includes current funding sources, amounts, and allocations as well as alternatives to address state funding shortfalls. Part 3 also contains a fiscal constraint analysis that shows how constrained federal funding is allocated among major STIP programs and projects. The costs of projects listed in the STIP do not exceed the total Federal funds authorized for

each of the four years included. A significant challenge for the SPP is the severe State budget shortfall that has limited the State's ability to meet transportation needs over the past several years. SPP reports the following progress on state funding:

Recognizing the mismatch between Rhode Island's transportation needs and available funding, the previous Governor established a Blue Ribbon Panel which published its final report in December 2008. Since the Blue Ribbon Panel was convened, the General Assembly and current Governor took action as part of the FY 2012 and FY 2013 State Budgets. Typically, \$40 million in bonds were issued annually to match FHWA capital funds and to pay for projects with 100 percent State costs. Reliance on bond funds for matching federal funds was an unsustainable practice that threatened to severely limit available resources for operating as debt service costs grew to a disproportionate share of gas tax revenue, and gas tax revenue declined. Prior to the actions of policymakers, the continued issuance of bonds were projected to result in debt service of \$62.93 million in 2023, creating an estimated \$30 million gap in RIDOT's operating budget.

Several steps have been taken in the last three years to address the issue of bond borrowing as a match for Federal funds and to smooth the sharp peak that had been anticipated in debt service over the next decade, as a result of prior borrowing. During the 2011 General Assembly session, legislation was enacted that will gradually replace bond borrowing with registration and license fees, along with Rhode Island Capital Plan (RICAP) funds. These funds will be collected in the Rhode Island Highway Maintenance Trust Fund. Registration and license fee increases will be phased-in over a three (3) year period, and by 2016 there will be no bond funds required to match federal funds. The State Budget Office refinanced existing General Obligation bonds to soften a sharp peak in debt service payments. Although the refinancing has a net cost of \$5 million over the full term, the immediate savings are substantial.

At the same time, the General Assembly included \$8 million in General Revenue for RIDOT operations in FY 2013 to offset reduced gas tax revenue and increased operating costs. The Governor has proposed greater debt relief and increased funding for transportation infrastructure in his current proposed budget.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for financial planning.

Recommendation: The MPO should work with RIDOT to improve planning level cost estimates, especially for large projects, concentrating on keeping them up to date in the MTP and TIP.

Proposed Technical Assistance: FHWA can provide notable examples of planning level cost estimation techniques and accounting for operations and maintenance costs in planning documents.

Section 2-8: Air Quality Conformity

Regulatory Basis

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

Observations

Rhode Island is currently classified as an attainment area for all NAAQS. Although currently in attainment, there is some concern that the region may re-enter nonattainment status in the near future if and when the EPA updates air quality standards.

Prior to entering into attainment in 2013, the MPO worked very closely with the RIDEM, RIDOT and the RIPTA to adopt Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 49, Transportation Conformity. This rule, which is also referenced and incorporated in the SPC Rules and Standards, outlined the process and criteria for State agencies to determine air quality conformity, when necessary, for transportation plans and projects. It has been reviewed and approved by the EPA. This new rule was implemented during the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the MTP, Transportation 2035, and the FY 13-16 TIP.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for air quality conformity.

Recommendation: The MPO should continue preparing for possible revised non-attainment status by maintaining and improving air quality analysis and modeling efforts.

Section 2-9: TIP Development & Project Selection

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.324 requires the MPO to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include, but are not limited to:

- An updated TIP covering a period of at least four years that is compatible with the STIP development and approval process [23 CFR 450.324 (a)];
- The TIP should identify all eligible Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) included in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and give priority to eligible TCMs and projects included for the first two years which have funds available and committed [23 CFR 450.324 (i)]; and
- The TIP should include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other transportation enhancements; Federal Lands Highway projects and safety projects included in the State’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The TIP and STIP must include all regionally significant projects for which an FHWA or FTA approval is

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

Observations

In the State of Rhode Island the TIP and the STIP are the same document. The current STIP covers FYs 2013-2016 and includes a complete listing of projects that are programmed for that period.

SPP is currently in the process of developing an online, interactive GIS-based TIP tool, that will be usable by both MPO staff and the public.

Note: Based on a corrective action in the last certification review, the MPO has redesigned the TIP to comply with federal requirements for fiscal constraint documentation. See [page 2](#) for more detail.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for development of the transportation improvement program and project selection process.

Recommendation: The MPO should continue its development of an interactive GIS-based STIP tool and to incorporate these efforts to the greatest extent possible with efforts to develop an STIP system.

Proposed Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA can connect SPP staff to eSTIP resources and technical assistance as needed.

Section 2-10: Public Outreach and Public Involvement

Regulatory Basis

The MPO is required under 23 CFR 450.316 to engage the public in the metropolitan transportation planning process. In particular, public involvement in the development of the MTP and the TIP is required and further described under 23 CFR 450.322(i) and 23 CFR 450.324(b).

Observations

The MPO maintains a public participation plan called the Public Participation Guide. This document was published in 2007 and contains information about the MPO's practices that promote public participation. We also note that the SPC maintains Standards and Rules relative to public participation. Based on a review of these documents and the current planning structure, it appears that the Public Participation Guide should be revised.

Regarding public meeting access, it appears that the MPO relies on DOA resources to handle requests for accommodations. We note that in its public notices, the MPO states that requests must be made at least three business days prior to each meeting. This indicates that the office handling the request has the ability to provide necessary auxiliary aids and services within a very short timeframe. Due to the limited number of resources that are typically available to recipients, i.e. American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Communications Access Realtime Translation (CART) operators, the MPO may

experience difficulty in fulfilling such requests. The same consideration should be given to the agency's ability to provide interpreters/translators to accommodate LEP persons. The Title VI Coordinator stated that he has been able to provide written translation of documents into Spanish consisting of three pages or less on a 24 to 72 hour notice. These services were accessed from the State's Master Price Agreement with private contractors.

Regarding the Social Equity Advisory Committee (SEAC), we feel that this structure has and will continue to improve representation in the planning process of traditionally underserved communities. While the SEAC provides a unique perspective that helps to influence planning decisions, we feel it could be more effectively integrated into the planning process.

Finally, we note that the MPO is cognizant of its specific obligations concerning the various aspects of public participation. This is evidenced in its documented efforts to comply with the requirements at 23 CFR 450.316, as outlined in its Public Participation Guide. We encourage the MPO to continue building its stakeholder list to ensure all individuals and organizations serving people protected under the statutes have been identified and given an opportunity to participate.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for public involvement and outreach.

Recommendation: The MPO should review and revise the Public Participation Guide, where appropriate, to reflect the most current information and analysis. It should also reflect practices to facilitate compliance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.316 and the SPC's Standards and Rules.

Recommendation: As the MPO relies heavily on external resources for handling requests for auxiliary aids and services to allow the deaf/ hard-of-hearing, and visually impaired to participate in public forums, the MPO should interview Mr. James Pitassi, the Rhode Island Department of Administration's Point of Contact for ADA Accommodations, to ensure that sufficient services can be made available within three (3) business days. The protocols for procuring those services should also be reviewed. We also recommend that the MPO's Title VI Coordinator speak with the appropriate person managing the State's Master Price Agreement for Language Interpretation/Translation services to validate the three-day lead time for procuring on-site interpreters for public meetings/hearings. Based on this review, the lead time indicated in public notices should be adjusted, where appropriate.

Section 2-11: Self-Certifications

Regulatory Basis

Under 23 CFR 450.334, the MPO must periodically (at least once every 4 years) self-certify that they are meeting the requirements of the transportation planning process. FTA and FHWA must carry out a joint Certification Review of the planning process in TMAs at least once every four years, in addition to the required self-certification by the MPO and State.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for self-certification of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Section 2-12: Title VI Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination

Regulatory Basis

It has been the long-standing policy of USDOT to actively ensure nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. Title VI states that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”. Title VI bars intentional discrimination (i.e., disparate treatment) as well as disparate-impact discrimination stemming from neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups based on race, color, or national origin. In addition, discrimination is prohibited under the following statutes: the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, (23 U.S.C. § 324 et seq.), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq.), as amended, (prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability); The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, (42 U.S.C. § 6101 et seq.); and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.). The planning regulations [23 CFR 450.334(a)(3)] require the MPO to self-certify that “the planning process . . . is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements of . . . Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21.”

Observations – General

PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) recently compiled an Equity Profile for the State of Rhode Island. Understanding where the state stands in terms of equity is a critical first step in planning for greater equity. It was developed to assist in effectively addressing equity issues throughout the RhodeMap RI planning process, but it also serves as a useful tool for many others including advocacy groups, elected officials, and planners.

Finding of Federal Review – General

The SPC substantially meets the requirements pertaining to Title VI and Non-Discrimination.

Observations – Notification to Beneficiaries and Complaint Procedures

The MPO’s Title VI Policy (aka Notice to Beneficiaries) is posted to its web site. The MPO’s policy includes information on how to submit complaints. It is provided in both English and Spanish. While the MPO’s policy meets the spirit of the notification requirement, it does not indicate how the nondiscrimination requirements apply to the program, and there is no procedure for requesting additional information regarding the MPO’s obligations. To locate this information from the Statewide Planning home page, users must go to the Transportation page, and then to the Public Involvement page where the information appears.

On the Public Involvement page, along with the MPO’s policy, the following information is also provided:

“Any individual requiring the services of an interpreter to participate in any meetings of the State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, or RIGIS Executive Meeting contact Michael Moan at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

In addition, translations of the executive summaries of key transportation documents including Transportation 2035, the FY 13-16 Transportation Improvement Program, and the Public Participation Guide, and can be provided in Spanish with seven (7) business days notice. Please contact Michael Moan to arrange this service.”

We note that the second paragraph contains an incomplete sentence, making the notice unclear with regard to the availability of translations in languages other than Spanish.

The complaint form that is linked to the policy includes protections based on “Religion”, “Retaliation”, and “Familial Status.” These protections are closely related to Title VII (employment) and are not appropriate here. The complaint form does, however, include additional protections for age, sex (gender), and disability consistent with the statutes related to Title VI; however, age and disability are not mentioned in the policy narrative.

The MPO’s complaint process states that all complaints “...must be in writing...” without recognizing the obligation to provide language access or reasonable accommodations for impaired persons.

Lastly, we noted that the documents available on the MPO’s web site are provided in PDF only. Many types of screen readers used by the visually impaired do not convert or translate PDF.

Finding of Federal Review – Notification to Beneficiaries and Complaint Procedures

Recommendation: Given the broad applicability of Title VI and the related statutes to transportation planning, the MPO should provide a direct link for “Civil Rights” from the MPO’s home page (Statewide Planning). The Translation Services contact person information should be moved to the Statewide Planning page. The Policy should be revised to fully comply with 49 CFR 21.9(d), Appendix C to Part 21, and FTA Circular 4702.1B. Specifically, the MPO should give examples of the type of discrimination prohibited by Title VI, as it relates to planning. A statement about how to request additional information should also be provided. Having only a summary of the policy on the MPO’s website is acceptable; however, in this case, a link to a more comprehensive policy (or notice to beneficiaries) would be appropriate. Where the protections under the Title VI (race, color, national origin (Including LEP)) are stated, the MPO should also recognize the related statutes that prohibit discrimination on the bases of sex, age, and disability. (These additional protections should be distinguished from those afforded under Title VI.)

Recommendation: With regard to providing documents in languages other than English, the existing language should be revised for clarity. To ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the MPO should make its program documents available in plain text or HTML.

Recommendation: The MPO should recognize within its complaint procedures that complaints in languages other than English may be submitted and reasonable accommodations will be provided for

impaired individuals. We offer the following sample language: *“Complaints may be accepted in languages other than English. Individuals with physically or sensory impairments requiring assistance in filing a complaint should contact”*

Recommendation: The MPO should remove “Religion” and “Familial status” from its form and process, unless covered by a State equivalent statute that prohibits discrimination in public programs. Reference to “retaliation” should also be removed. We also note that the internal version of the Title VI/Nondiscrimination complaint process should be revised to cover complaints on the basis of sex (gender) and age to be consistent with the relevant nondiscrimination statutes. Currently, the language in this procedure states, *“A written statement of the complaint, including the following details: (b) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin or language, disability, religion, familial status, or retaliation).”*

Observations – Data Collection & Analysis

With regard to the MPO’s Equity or Benefit Analysis presented in its 2012 Title VI Report to RIDOT, we found that the populations evaluated were central to Title VI and included low-income. The analysis did not consider LEP populations, or other populations based on age, sex, and disability. (Including these populations in the analysis is critical to determining transportation needs and program distribution.) We also noted that the MPO’s analysis concluded that there were no disparities or inequities with regard to program distribution. However, the metrics used in this analysis compared only the percentage of projects to statewide averages for each protected population (based on Census Tracts with greater than average representation). We believe a more accurate metric would compare the number and value of projects in or spanning Title VI populated Census Tracts versus non-Title VI Populated Census Tracts.

Finding of Federal Review – Data Collection & Analysis

Recommendation: The MPO’s data collection and analyses should be more consistent in its consideration of all groups protected under Title VI and the related statutes. We encourage the MPO to continue its monitoring of program equity, while using a metric that examines program benefits received by Title VI populations as compared to non-Title VI Populations.

Recommendation: Consistent with the recommendations above and to expand the protections afforded under the related nondiscrimination statutes, we note that data collection and analysis should not be limited to “minority and low-income.” As indicated above, the related statutes prohibiting discrimination in federally assisted programs provide protections on the basis of disability, age, and sex (gender).

Observations – Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

In Section 5 of its 2012 Title VI Report to RI DOT and in its response to the Desk Review Questionnaire, it appears that the State’s MBE/WBE program requirements (RI General Law, Chapter 37-14.1) are being applied to USDOT-assisted consultant contracts. (USDOT advises that recipients are prohibited from implementing contract goals under a state or local business program on US DOT-assisted contracts.)

Regarding DBE Program requirements, there doesn’t appear to be a system in place to set contract goals and monitor compliance (when appropriate), and report semi-annual participation to RI DOT.

Additionally, it is likely that the pertinent civil rights provisions, including those relative the DBE requirements, are not being incorporated into all Federal-aid contracts.

Finding of Federal Review – Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

Recommendation: The MPO should review its procedures relative to DBE participation on consultant contracts. Specifically, the MPO should coordinate with Vanessa Crum, RIDOT DBE Liaison Officer, to identify the pertinent Federal-aid civil rights provisions and to establish procedures for determining how and when contract goals will be established. The MPO should also report to RI DOT the total value of its United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)-assisted contracts, as well as the value of work assigned to and performed by DBEs as part of these contracts. RIDOT requires these figures in its semi-annual reports submitted to FHWA and FTA, where applicable.

Section 2-13: Congestion Management Process

Regulatory Basis

The State(s) and the MPO must develop a systematic approach for managing congestion as outlined in 23 CFR 450.320:

The transportation planning process in a TMA shall address congestion management through a process that provides for 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 operational management strategies.

Observations

From prior reviews, staff remarks, information on the website as well as a handout provided during the review, the Federal Team understands that the CMP is an integral part of the metropolitan transportation planning process and has been since development of *Transportation 2030* and *Transportation 2035*. In general, the CMP is used to identify, analyze, and evaluate the causes of congestion (recurring, nonrecurring) as well as the effect of implemented multimodal CMP strategies. Staff continually reviews and evaluates decisions made to ensure decisions are made on readily available, consistent and reliable SPP, RIPTA and RIDOT data.

To implement the CMP, the State established a Congestion Management Task Force (CMTF), which has met quarterly for several years. Its membership is composed of: RIDOT/TMC, SPP, RIPTA, RIDOT/Design, RIDOT/Intermodal Planning, RIDOT/Construction and Maintenance, FHWA, and local government.

As part of their congestion management efforts, performance measures were chosen by RIDOT with input from Statewide Planning. The selection criteria included: follow FHWA/AASHTO recommendations; allow assessment of TMC functions; help improve safety and traffic operations; demonstrate the benefits derived from ITS; and data that is: reliable, consistent, and readily available with an ability to compute periodically.

To date, the focuses of the CMTF have included, but have not been limited to, the following:

- an increased multimodal approach to congestion management;
- establishing a process that includes systematic analysis of congestion;
- establishing a planning process for the established average baseline congestion;
- identifying planning, management and operational solutions to identified problems;
- expanding the significance and utility of the CMP; and
- refinement of the established performance measures: Travel Time Reliability Measures, Average Travel Time, 95th Percentile Travel Time, Planning Index, Buffer Index, Incident Clearance Time, Crash Rate, and ITS Equipment Uptime.

Information regarding the CMP is found on the MPOs website as well as Appendix A of the MTP.

RIDOT as part of its congestion (and safety) efforts has developed a program dubbed Rhode Island's Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions or 'RI*STARS'. Congested (and safety) locations initially targeted for improvement are on Aquidneck Island (i.e., the communities of Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth.)

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for the CMP.

Section 2-14: List of Obligated Projects

Regulatory Basis

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

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

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for the list of obligated projects.

Section 2-15: Environmental Mitigation

Regulatory Basis

The specific requirements for environmental mitigation are set forth in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.322 (f) (7). However, the basis for addressing environmental mitigation is detailed in sections addressing consultation (23 CFR 450.316 (a) (1) (2) (3) and (b) – Interested parties, participation,

consultation; 23 CFR 450.322 (g) (1) (2), (i), and (j) – Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan.

Observations

Statewide Planning meets the requirements of environmental consultation with resource agencies. Statewide Planning held an Environmental Mitigation Consultation in April of 2007 to gather interested parties and agencies and generate ideas for mitigation strategies. The following agencies participated in this session: Federal Highway Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, RI Department of Transportation, RI Public Transit Authority, RI Department of Environmental Management, RI Coastal Resources Management Council, RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission, RI Statewide Planning Program, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Grow Smart RI, Sierra Club, and Save the Bay. Further benefits could be obtained by convening these agencies periodically.

Transportation 2035 includes discussion of environmental mitigation activities, resulting from the environmental mitigation consultation of 2007. Strategies to address impacts are also included. The MTP Includes mapping of water supply, wetlands, rare species habitats, parks and conservation lands, historic sites, and flood risk and sea level rise areas.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for environmental mitigation.

Section 2-16: Management and Operations Considerations

Regulatory Basis

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

Federal statute 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(F), which provides the basis for 23 CFR 450.322(f)(3), specifies that the transportation plan include “operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods”.

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

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for management and operations.

Section 2-17: Transportation Safety Planning

Regulatory Basis

49 U.S.C. 5303 requires MPOs to consider safety as one of eight planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306, the metropolitan transportation planning process provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

Observations

The MPO is an active participant in State DOT activities such as the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, multi-modal safety assessments, vulnerable users survey and action plan, complete streets, and a “Healthy Places by Design” initiative.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for transportation safety planning.

Section 2-18: Security in the Planning Process

Regulatory Basis

Federal legislation has separated security as a stand-alone element of the planning process (both metropolitan 23 CFR 450.306(a)(3) and Statewide 23 CFR 450.206(a)(3) planning). The regulations also state that the degree and consideration of security should be based on the scale and complexity of many different local issues.

Observations

The MPO relies on the emergency management agency to handle evacuation security issues. The traffic model was used to establish an evacuation route to be used in the event of a hurricane or super storm. Storm surge and sea level rise mapping is being done by the climate change and resiliency group.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for security in the planning process.

Section 2-19: Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process

Regulatory Basis

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

It is in the national interest to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and between States and urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation related fuel consumption and air pollution through metropolitan and Statewide transportation planning processes identified in this chapter; and encourage the continued improvement and evolution of the metropolitan and Statewide

transportation planning processes by MPOs, State departments of transportation, and public transit operators as guided by the planning factors identified in subsection (h) and section 135(d).

Observations

As expressed on the MPO's website, *'freight planning is an important component of the state's transportation planning process as it impacts the economy, safety, congestion, air quality, and quality of life.'* During the review, it was expressed that *"The State of Rhode Island is in the logistics 'sweet spot' for the northeast corridor."*

Recognizing the importance of freight, the MPO has:

- named a staff champion for freight planning;
- expanded the freight discussion via peer exchange(s) and freight academy;
- staffed the Freight Working Group;
- inventoried intermodal terminals (passenger, freight);
- linked land use/development with marine infrastructure decisions;
- engaged in discussion regarding climate change and sea-level rise; and
- identified the need for effective public involvement.

The State's Freight Working Group, created in 2012, addresses coordinated freight planning and implementation issues. The group consists of staff from FHWA, MARAD, RIDOT, SPP, Commerce RI, QDC, and URITC. Other interested agencies (i.e., RI Airport Corporation, FMCSA, RI Resource Recovery Corporation, RIEMA, and RIDEM) also actively participate at working group meetings. The Working Group does not constitute a formal MPO committee (such as the MPO Technical Committee or the Housing Resources Committee), and its membership is limited to public sector stakeholders.

Given the economic implications of goods movement, a primary recommendation of the Freight Working Group was for the State to move forward with the development of a State Freight Plan. At the time of this review, an RFP was under development with MAP-21 funding in place for FY15 project advancement. The (stand-alone) State Freight Plan will be a source of data for the travel demand model. Depending on the State's finances, the responsibility may fall under the purview of a new team responsible for long-term freight infrastructure planning.

Multimodal Freight maps are also being drafted that will include volumes, corridors, shipping facilities, weigh-in-motion, and classified counts, among many other freight assets. Some important regional commodities include: port petroleum, coal, cement, de-icing road salt and auto imports.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for integrating freight into the planning process.

Recommendation: The MPO should formalize the current freight working group as a standing State Freight Advisory Committee, and expand its membership beyond the public sector to incorporate private sector, academia, and appropriate intermodal stakeholders.

Recommendation: The MPO should update its Public Participation Plan to officially incorporate intermodal private sector freight perspectives.

Section 2-20: Intermodal Transportation Coordination

Regulatory Basis

Federal transportation planning statute and regulation make clear the need for coordination in the planning process. For example, 23 CFR §450.316(b) states that “In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities.” Furthermore, 23 USC §134(h) defines the scope of the planning process as including:

- Consideration of both motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Efficiency, environmental protection, and energy conservation; and
- Enhancing the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

Observations

RIPTA is the primary provider of fixed-route bus service in the region. Rhode Island is also served by commuter rail managed by RIDOT, which contracts with the MBTA to provide the service. Currently, these bus and rail services have separate fare and ticketing structures.

RIPTA released its first strategic plan in March of 2011. This document presents a vision for future investment and improvement of the transit system in the state. This plan helped make the case to decision-makers to support the R-Line, Rhode Island’s first rapid bus route, which began service in June 2014. The service consolidates RIPTA’s two highest-ridership bus routes and uses a combination of operational improvements and signal prioritization to improve service along the route. In addition, the improved efficiencies from signal prioritization allows RIPTA to maintain the same level of service while operating two fewer buses per hour. This has resulted in significant cost savings for the agency, freeing up funds to improve service elsewhere.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for intermodal transportation coordination.

Recommendation: RIPTA should work with MBTA to pursue fare integration, so that customers traveling to, from, and within Rhode Island can experience a more seamless multimodal transportation system.

Commendation: Transit signal prioritization efforts have allowed RIPTA to improve service along the R-Line rapid bus route while reducing the number of vehicles needed on the route. This effort represents a best practice for cost-effectively improving transit service, and it is worth investigating whether this model is viable along other transit corridors as well.

Section 2-21: Environmental Justice and LEP

Regulatory Basis

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

The planning regulations, at 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vii), require that the needs of those “traditionally underserved” by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and/or minority households that may face challenges accessing employment and other services, be sought out and considered.

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

Observations

It is evident that the MPO has taken initial steps to meet its obligations to provide meaningful language access. First, the MPO has completed its initial Four-factor Analysis and has identified the steps necessary to fully develop its language access plan. Although many of the steps identified have not been completed, the MPO plans to demonstrate its progress by conducting annual updates. One area of concern is that the analysis or implementation plan does not specifically identify the MPO’s ability to obtain translation/interpretation services and how those services will be procured, including the available budget. We further note that there is no certain commitment for acquiring resources and implementing protocols the MPO has identified as necessary.

We also note that the MPO intends to deploy Google Translator on its web site. It should be noted that the translations created by this tool are direct and do not account for differences in grammatical structure. That said, Google Translator should not be a substitute for translation of key/vital documents, but rather a tool to supplement the vast information that is available through the agency’s web site.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency.

Recommendation: The analysis and plan should be revised to reflect the above observations. Specifically, the MPO should: 1) Provide more cost analysis and information to justify why key or vital document translations should only be in Spanish, whereas the populations of other LEP language groups exceed 1,000; 2) Identify the specific resources and how those resources will be procured, including any budget identified in the UPWP; and 3) Develop a timeline for completing the steps identified in its four-factor analysis and implementation plan.

Section 2-22: Visualization Techniques

Regulatory Basis

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

23 CFR 450 includes references to putting documents related to the planning process on the worldwide web. 23 CFR 450.210 (a)(1)(vi) specifically states that *“to the maximum extent practicable, make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web...”*

Observations

Since the advent of the 3C planning process in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, federal planning regulations have encouraged greater and greater transparency and accessibility in the planning process. Planning agencies can foster transparency by prominently posting key documents, meeting minutes, and maps on their public website.

While the required major planning documents are all available on the MPO’s website, these documents may not be easy to find for those not familiar with the website.

Maps and other visually engaging products of the planning process are also excellent items to feature prominently on a website. Online mapping of transportation routes and projects can help engage the public in the planning process in a way that a simple listing of programmed projects cannot. The MPO is in the process of developing an online, GIS-based STIP tool that could function both as a public-facing involvement tool as well as a programming tool for MPO staff and a step towards a fully electronic STIP process.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for visualization techniques.

Recommendation: The MPO should continually review and implement improvements to its website to improve transparency and accessibility for members of the public. Transportation documents should be visually engaging, and grouped together in a prominent location. The MPO should look for opportunities to link to websites that may be of interest to its visitors, such as those of the transit operators and jurisdictions. In addition, the MPO should request that transportation providers and decision makers link

to its website to increase awareness of the MPO and its role in regional transportation decisions. Finally, the MPO should consider new ways to communicate its committee structures, and processes and how the committee operates. This could include maps illustrating the representatives for various areas and a chart depicting the organizational structure.

Recommendation: The MPO should continue development of interactive GIS-based STIP tool and use this tool both to enhance public involvement activities and to develop an electronic STIP process.

Section 2-23: Livability and Sustainability

Regulatory Basis

Federal statute encourages land use-transportation coordination through the requirement that the transportation planning process be coordinated with “planned growth” and similar activities that exist in the region. In addition, MPOs and State DOTs must, when appropriate, consult with other agencies that have responsibility for land use and resource management. Also, Metropolitan planning regulations (23 CFR 450.306) require that the scope of the transportation planning process include consideration of both “motorized and non-motorized users”. Furthermore, planning must “Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns”, as well as “Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.”

Observations

Rhode Island Statewide Planning currently coordinates with RIDEM, the RI State Energy Office for the analysis of greenhouse gases (GHG). The GHG analysis is analyzed using the MOVES model. The Statewide Planning is a part of the Rhode Island GHG process and represents a unique effort on the state level to reduce the GHGs that cause climate change. The Rhode Island GHG process successfully formulated a GHG Action Plan for the State of Rhode Island in 2002, and has continued meeting to implement the plan.

Rhode Island Statewide Planning is involved with activities relating to climate change adaptation, resiliency, and hazard mitigation. A project is currently underway to determine the state’s risk and vulnerability to potential climate change impacts such as sea level rise and extreme weather.

The climate change resiliency project includes notable planning coordination activities. Phase 1: Exposure, the first phase of the resiliency project, was to develop, map, and assess threats to transportation infrastructure such as roadways, transit lines, rail lines and bridges (i.e., determine “where is it going to be wet”). Concerns were identified that the bulk of roads are local roads that are not eligible for state and federal funding.

Phase 2: Vulnerability involves assessing the magnitude of the impact on transportation assets and system function, attempting to product how soon these impacts will be felt. The next step will be to prioritize those assets that are immediately at risk. Risk and Resiliency analysis and information can then be incorporated into the decision-making process. To implement strategies from this effort, the

statewide and local comprehensive plans will address adaptation concerns for both transportation and land use.

As part of the Rhode Island State Energy Plan (State Guide Plan Element 781), the State of Rhode Island is transitioning the state fleet to alternative fuel vehicles. Rhode Island will implement a network of up to 50 electric vehicle charging stations to be installed throughout the state.

The MPO has also fostered interdisciplinary planning coordination by participating with the Rhode Island Division of Planning HUD grant to develop a plan, called “A Sustainable Rhode Island,” which will deal with gaps in the state’s Guide Plan having to do with housing and economic development. In addition for many years the State Guide Plan is Rhode Island’s centralized and integrated long-range planning document included, State Transportation Plan 611: Transportation 2035: Long Range Transportation Plan is included in the State Guide Plan. The current RI State Guide Plan part 121—Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan—was developed in 2006. The State Guide Plan has four functions. It sets long-range policy (generally 20 years), provides a means to evaluate and coordinate projects or proposals of state importance, sets standards for local comprehensive plans, and serves as a general background information source on various topics.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for livability and sustainability.

Commendation: As a coastal region facing the impacts of climate change, the MPO is commended for their ongoing climate change resiliency transportation planning activities.

Section 2-24: Travel Demand Modeling and Forecasting

Regulatory Basis

An MTP requires valid forecasts of future demand for transportation services. These forecasts are frequently made using travel demand models, which allocate estimates of regional population, employment and land use to person-trips and vehicle-trips by travel mode, route, and time period. The outputs of travel demand models are used to estimate regional vehicle activity for use in motor vehicle emissions models for transportation conformity determinations in nonattainment and maintenance areas, and to evaluate the impacts of alternative transportation investments being considered in the MTP.

Observations

The SPC maintains a statewide travel demand forecasting model that is a four step gravity model with enhancements added every few years. Given the State’s slow growth and well established network, the SPC hasn’t seen the need to convert to an activity based or other more advanced type of model, though they will consider doing when and if reliability and cost make it feasible. The SPC continues to make incremental improvements to the State and region’s travel demand model. Recent improvements include better integrating transit mode share, adding traffic analysis zones (TAZs), and adding compatibility with FHWA’s linear referencing requirements. In addition to the traditional uses, SPC has

used the model in hurricane evacuation planning and greenhouse gas emission analyses. Future areas the SPC is investigating for improvement include adding bicycle and pedestrian mode share data.

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for travel demand modeling and forecasting.

Proposed Technical Assistance: SPC staff may find FHWA's Travel Model Improvement Program helpful, in particular with respect to modeling bicycle and pedestrian demand.

Section 2-26: Intelligent Transportation Systems

Regulatory Basis

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

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

Finding of Federal Review

The SPC meets the federal requirements for intelligent transportation system.

Part III: Appendices

Appendix A: Certification Review Agenda

AGENDA

Providence, Rhode Island TMA Certification Review

Dates: March 27-28, 2014

Location: Statewide Planning Program
RI Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02903
Conference Room A & B

Public Meeting to be held at the TAC Meeting on Thursday, March 27, 6:30pm - 8:00pm (same location).

DAY 1 AGENDA – MARCH 27

8:00am to 9:30am

- Introduction
- Overview of the Rhode Island Transportation Planning Process
- Progress since the 2009 Certification Review
- MPO Structure and Planning Boundaries

BREAK (9:30am-9:45am)

9:45am to 12:00pm

- Congestion Management Process
- Freight Planning, Programs, and Activities
- Travel Demand Model
- Air Quality Conformity

LUNCH BREAK (12:00pm-1:00pm)

1:00pm to 2:30pm

- Transit
- Land Use, Sustainable and Livable Communities
- Climate Change, Resiliency, and Hazard Mitigation

BREAK (2:30pm-2:45pm)

2:45pm to 4:00pm

- Civil Rights and Public Involvement
- Metropolitan Planning Documents (MTP, TIP, UPWP)
- Financial Planning
- Technical Assistance

PUBLIC MEETING (6:30pm-8:00pm)

DAY 2 AGENDA – MARCH 28

8:00am to 9:45am

- MAP-21 Implementation
- Performance Management
- Multimodal Transportation Safety
- Health and Transportation

BREAK (9:45am-10:00am)

10:00am to 11:45am

- Questions
- Close-out

Appendix B: Certification Review Background Documents

Requested Documents and Information

Federal Subject Area - Title 23 CFR Part 420.105 (c); Title 23 USC Section 134(d)(1); Title 49 USC Section 5303(d)(1); Title 23 CFR Part 450.310(b); Title 23 CFR Part 450.312(a); Title 23 CFR Part 450.314; Title 23 USC Section 134(d)(2); Title 49 USC Section 5303(d)(2); Title 23 CFR Part 450.310(d); Title 23 CFR Part 450.322, 324; Title 23 CFR Part 450.320; Title 23 CFR 450.322 (h); Title 23 CFR Part 450.316; Title 42 USC Section 2000d-1; Title 49 CFR Part 21.7(a)(1); Title 23 CFR Part 450.312(j); Title 23 CFR Part 450.322 (h); Title 23 CFR Part 450 .330

1. Documentation designating the urbanized area as a MPO.
 - a. All MPO agreements defining planning and programming responsibilities with other agencies
 - i. Operators of public transit services
 - ii. State DOT
 - iii. Local Governments
 - iv. Staffing
 - v. Others (Legal Services, etc.)
 - b. Status/documentation of agreements related to the expanded TMA/UA, State, other planning agencies, etc. as applicable.
 - c. MPO structure and voting membership of the Policy Committee, including bylaws for the MPO technical, policy, and any other committees. Please include latest version of the MPO's MOU and any related bylaws and procedures referenced in the MOU.
2. Metropolitan Planning Documents:
 - vi. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP);
 1. Public Hearing Report
 2. Air Quality Conformity Analysis
 3. RIDEM – Air Quality Conformity Determination
 - vii. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
 1. Public Hearing Report

2. Air Quality Conformity Analysis
 3. RIDEM – Air Quality Conformity Determination
 - viii. L RTP and TIP project selection and/or development procedures, and scopes;
 - ix. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
 - x. List of Obligated Projects
3. Latest Congestion Management Process (CMP) and scopes for development of update to the CMP.
4. Documentation of environmental mitigation and consultation discussions with Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies.
5. Freight goods and services studies conducted by the MPO.
6. In the case of a major manmade or natural disaster, does the MPO have a Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP)? If so, please provide.
7. Please provide a list of all public and private agencies offering transit service in or through the Providence metro region.
8. Description of bike/ped committee membership, frequency of meetings and level of participation.
9. Public Involvement Participation Plan (including a portfolio for the Certification Review i.e. newsletters, meetings, etc.)
10. Other materials/documents that would be useful to the Review Team to address the review questions/items:
 - a. Title VI procedures (including complaint procedures, complaint forms and notice to the public)
 - b. Boundary Maps for the MPO (also provide in electronic format)

All documents requested above are available for review at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/council/transportation/mpo.php>.

Appendix C: On-Site Review Attendee List

Name	Agency	email
Jody McCullough	FHWA HQ	jody.mccullough@dot.gov
Barbara Breslin	FHWA RI	Bbreslin@dot.gov
Ralph Rizzo	FHWA	Ralph.J.Rizzo@dot.gov
NOAH BERGER	FTA	noah.berger@dot.gov
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Katherine Trapani	BDC	ktrapani@vrouset.com
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Karen Scott	RISPP	Karen.scott@doar.ri.gov
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Meredith Brady	RIDOT Planning & Programming	meredith.brady@dot.ri.gov
Paul Capotosto	RI Statewide Planning	paul.capotosto@dot.ri.gov
Lori Fissette	RIDOT Per ^o mgmt	lori.fissette@dot.ri.gov
Linsey Callaghan	RIDOT - Planning	linsey.callaghan@dot.ri.gov
John Preiss	RIDOT - Asset Management	john.preiss@dot.ri.gov
Jared Rhodes	DOP	Jared.Rhodes@dot.ri.gov
Ralph Rizzo	FHWA	
Nicolas Garcia	FTA	nicolas.garcia@dot.ri.gov
Christos S. Xenophontos	RIDOT	christos.xenophontos@dot.ri.gov

Appendix D: Public Hearing Notices

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5870

PUBLIC NOTICE

CERTIFICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) AND FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)

Federal regulations (23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613) require that the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration jointly certify that the transportation planning process in areas with a population over 200,000 complies with those regulations at least once every four years. The deadline for completion the current certification is October 1, 2014.

The review consists of a documentary review called a desk audit and a meeting with transportation planning staff. The Federal review team is also required to solicit input from the general public and local elected officials during the course of the review. The Federal team would especially like to hear the public's input on how well they are involved in the process, if they are given the information that they need to become involved, whether the way in which they can get involved is clearly explained, and whether they feel their input is considered and addressed by the State Planning Council, MPO for the State of Rhode Island.

The public is invited to submit comments, in person or in writing, related to the transportation planning process and public outreach activities associated with the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Unified Planning Work Program, and other activities of the MPO. All comments must be received prior to the close of the public hearing.

The State Planning Council's Transportation Advisory Committee will conduct a public hearing to accept comments at a meeting scheduled for:

Thursday, March 27, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
Rhode Island Department of Administration
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

This meeting place is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Any individual requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact James A. Pitassi, Jr. at 222-6395 (voice) or #711 (R.I. Relay) at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting. Any individual requiring the services of an interpreter to participate in this meeting should contact Michael Moan at 222-1236 (voice) at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

Written comments may also be submitted to Carlos Machado, FHWA, RI Division Administrator, 380 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 or to Mary Beth Mello, FTA Regional Administrator, 55 Broadway, Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02142.

After all parts of the review are complete, the Federal team will issue a report that contains the certification decision as well as observations and suggestions for strengthening the process. The report will be shared with those submitting comments should they so desire.



Kevin M. Flynn
Secretary
State Planning Council

CONSEJO DE PLANIFICACIÓN ESTATAL
PROGRAMA DE PLANIFICACIÓN ESTATAL
DEPARTAMENTO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE RHODE ISLAND
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5870

ANUNCIO PÚBLICO
CERTIFICACIÓN DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE PLANIFICACIÓN METROPOLITANA (OPM)
POR LA ADMINISTRACIÓN FEDERAL DE AUTOPISTAS (FHWA) Y ADMINISTRACIÓN FEDERAL DE
TRANSPORTE (FTA)

Las normativas federales (23 CFR Parte 450 y 49 CFR Parte 613) requieren que la Administración Federal de Autopistas y la Administración Federal de Transporte certifiquen conjuntamente, al menos cada cuatro años, que el proceso de planificación de transporte en áreas con una población superior a 200.000 cumple con dichas normativas. La fecha límite para completar la certificación actual es el 1 de octubre de 2014.

La revisión consiste en una revisión documental denominada auditoría de escritorio y una reunión con el personal de planificación de transporte. El equipo Federal de revisión también debe solicitar ideas del público en general y oficiales locales electos durante el período de revisión. El equipo Federal desearía escuchar en particular los comentarios del público sobre lo bien se les involucra en el proceso, si les dan la información que necesitan para involucrarse, si la manera en la que se pueden involucrar se explica claramente y si sienten que el Consejo de Planificación Estatal, OPM del estado de Rhode Island, considera y trata sus ideas.

Se invita al público a presentar comentarios, en persona o por escrito, en relación al proceso de planificación de transporte y actividades de participación pública al *Long Range Transportation Plan*, el *Transportation Improvement Program*, el *Unified Planning Work Program* y otras actividades del OPM. Todos los comentarios se deben recibir antes del cierre de la audiencia pública.

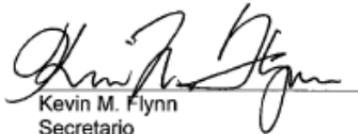
El Comité Consultor de Transporte del Consejo de Planificación Estatal realizará una audiencia pública para recibir comentarios en una reunión programada el:

Jueves, 23 de marzo de 2014 a las 6:30 p.m.
Departamento de Administración de Rhode Island
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

Individuos con discapacidades pueden acceder el lugar de las audiencias. Cualquier individuo que necesite adaptación de acceso razonable para poder participar en esta reunión, deberá contactar a James A. Pitassi, Jr. al 222-6395 (voz) o #711 (Relevo de RI) al menos tres (3) días hábiles antes de la reunión. Cualquier individuo que requiera los servicios de intérprete para participar en esta reunión, debe contactar a Michael Moan al 222-1236 (voz) al menos tres (3) días hábiles antes de la reunión.

También se pueden enviar comentarios por escrito a Carlos Machado, FHWA, RI Division Administrator, 380 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 o a Mary Beth Mello, FTA Regional Administrator, 55 Broadway, Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02142.

Una vez completadas todas las partes de la revisión, el equipo Federal emitirá un informe que incluye la decisión de certificación así como observaciones y sugerencias para fortalecer el proceso. El informe se compartirá con aquellos que presenten comentarios, si así lo desean.


Kevin M. Flynn
Secretario
Consejo de Planificación Estatal