



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration
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TPB Technical Committee
Item #2

Federal Highway Administration
DC Division
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JUN 6 2005

Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
c/o Mr. Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4201

Re: Transportation Planning Process Certification Review

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the transportation planning process for your metropolitan area on September 15, 19-21, 2005. These dates were selected in consultation with Ron Kirby, of your staff. The review will look at the cooperative planning process as conducted by the District, States, transit operators, and local governments in the area. You and all participants in the planning process are welcome to attend the review.


The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century continues the requirement for certification of the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 in population once every three years. Certification reviews are conducted with the objective of evaluating the transportation planning process. Consequently, we will not be conducting a pass/fail review, but rather we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvements. The Certification Process will rely extensively on knowledge gained throughout the year from routine contact with the planning process in the area, as well as the scheduled Certification Review meeting.


Enclosed is a draft agenda, which outlines the specific focal points we are proposing for the Certification Review. On September 15, 2005, the federal team will join the scheduled Citizens Advisory Committee meeting for an open dialogue concerning public involvement in the transportation planning process. On September 19-20, 2005, the federal team will meet with TPB members and staff to discuss organizational, policy, and technical issues. TPB staff will provide a brief overview and update on each topic, followed by a discussion involving all participating agencies. Finally, on September 21, 2005, the federal team will present their preliminary observations from the Certification Review to the TPB.

Mr. Phil Mendelson
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Should you have any questions regarding the Certification Review, please contact Deborah Burns of the FTA Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Office, at 202-219-3056, Tony Tarone, of the FTA Region III Office, at (215) 656-7061, or Sandra Jackson, of the FHWA District of Columbia Division, at (202) 219-3521.

Sincerely,


Susan Borinsky
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration


Gary L. Henderson
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Enclosure

cc: Dan Tangerlini, District of Columbia Division of Transportation
Richard White, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
JoAnne Sorenson, Northern Virginia District Office, VDOT
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Sherry Ways, FHWA Maryland Division
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Pat Kampf, FTA Region III
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Martin Kotsch, EPA Region III
Charlie Goodman, FTA Office of Planning

**Federal Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process
September 15, 19-21, 2005**

Washington Council of Governments, Washington, D.C

DRAFT AGENDA – 5/25/2005

Thursday, September 15th

6:00 p.m. The federal team will join the scheduled TPB Citizens Advisory Committee meeting for an open dialogue concerning public involvement in the transportation planning process.

Monday, September 19th

8:30 a.m. Federal Review Team Meeting

10:00 a.m. Introductions
Discussion of the FHWA/FTA Certification Process
Discussion of Major Regional Issues
Discussion of Findings and Recommendations from the 2002 Certification Review Final Report

11:45 a.m. Lunch

12:45 p.m. Overview of the Transportation Planning Process
Agreements: Cooperation and Coordination
Long Range Transportation Plan
Unified Planning Work Program
Transportation Improvement Program
Planning Factors

2:15 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. Air Quality Planning, SIP Planning and Conformity Issues

4:00 p.m. Adjourn

Tuesday, September 20th

8:30 a.m. Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint

10:00 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. Public Transit and Intermodal Planning

11:15 a.m. Goods Movement/Freight Planning

Noon Lunch

1:00 p.m. Safety and Security in the Transportation Planning Process

1:30 p.m. Congestion Management System and Travel Demand Forecasting

Draft Agenda

Re: Federal Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process

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- 2:15 p.m. Land Use and Transportation Planning
- 2:45 p.m. Break
- 3:00 p.m. Public Involvement Process, Title VI, and Environmental Justice.
- 4:00 p.m. Concluding Remarks/Adjourn

Wednesday, September 21st

- 8:30 a.m. Federal review team meets to develop draft findings
- Noon Discussion by Federal Team of Certification Review Preliminary Observations

Federal Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process for the National Capital Region

September 15, 19-21, 2005

Questions for MPO – 9/2/2005

1. Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that TPB evaluate the accuracy of prior forecasts of costs and revenues: “This will increase confidence in TPB’s financial analysis and validate predictions that new revenue sources will be required.”

- *How has the TPB evaluated the accuracy and formally validated prior forecasts of costs and revenues?*
- *What adjustments to financial plans have been made in response to this evaluation?*

2. Congestion Management System and Travel Demand Forecasting

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that the TPB continue to develop the CMS as an effective tool to analyze the relationships between transportation decisions and congestion: “It will be particularly important to understand these connections when the region is reclassified as ‘severe’ under the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments.”

- *What progress has TPB made in developing the CMS as an effective tool to analyze the relationships between transportation decisions and congestion, especially in light of the region being reclassified as “severe”?*
- *How has the CMS been integrated into critical stages of the metropolitan planning process, e.g., in the long-range plan, public involvement, or TIP project selection?*

3. Public Involvement Process

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that TPB evaluate the effectiveness of public outreach efforts to identify how it might be improved.

- *How has TPB evaluated the effectiveness of its public outreach efforts to identify how outreach might be improved? Was there a formal plan for this evaluation?*
- *What was learned from the evaluation and how has this been applied to improve public involvement?*

4. Transportation Improvement Program

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that TPB document the project selection processes used by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, the District of Columbia and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in developing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): “Documentation in the TIP of these processes would make them more transparent and understandable to stakeholders.”

- *How has the TPB documented the project selection processes used by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and WMATA in developing the TIP?*
- *For discussion: How is project selection related to the strategic direction and priorities established in the long-range plan?*

5. Organization and Management of the Planning Process

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that TPB complete and formalize Memoranda of Agreements to reflect all responsibilities for meeting the TEA-21 planning requirements: “The TPB needs to expedite the signing of this agreement in order to avoid corrective actions.”

- *Have the TPB and its partners completed and formalized MOAs to reflect all responsibilities for meeting the TEA-21 planning requirements?*
- *How has the TPB worked with FAMPO to develop an MOA on conducting the transportation planning process, including programming of transit and other funds, in the portion of Stafford County that is part of the urbanized area?*
- *For discussion: How accurately do current MOAs reflect the actual metropolitan planning process? Are the MOAs useful to formalize commitments of participating agencies to the process and roles and responsibilities?*

6. Americans with Disabilities Act

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that TPB formulate an ADA policy and elevate the importance of ADA requirements among the jurisdictions in the region

How has the TPB formulated an ADA policy and elevated the importance of ADA requirements among the jurisdictions in the region and within the planning process?

7. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)

2002 Certification Review: Suggested the 2002 Certification Review suggested that TPB and its partner agencies commit to maintain and use the regional ITS architecture to support the planning process/TIP development as well as use it in eventual project development/implementation.

How have the TPB and its partner agencies committed to maintaining and using the regional ITS architecture to support the planning process/TIP development as well as in eventual project development/implementation?

8. Title VI and Environmental Justice

2002 Certification Review: Suggested that TPB document how Title VI requirements are incorporated into the transportation planning processes: “The TPB could identify ways to enhance visibility of compliance with Title VI requirements.”

How has the TPB worked with its state and local partners to document how TPB and its partners incorporate Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements into their transportation planning processes?

9. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

How are planning funds distributed to local jurisdictions in the region? How is funded work coordinated? Please describe and provide any documentation on distribution methodologies, including formulas, for the distribution of funds.

For discussion: how does the TPB ensure that all planning funds support coordinated planning and priorities of the metropolitan area?

10. Travel Demand Models and Forecasting

What progress has TPB made on improving the travel demand-forecasting model?

What were the recommendations of the peer review panel, were they implemented, and how have they been helpful?

11. Conformity and Air Quality

What is the new oversight structure between the intergovernmental council and the MWAQC.

For discussion: how is the structure working?

12. Vision Planning

What progress has been made with the Vision Policy?

For discussion: how has vision planning contributed to the metropolitan transportation planning process? What are future plans to use vision or scenario planning?