

MPO Administration – TMA Federal Certification Reviews

Description

The purpose of this procedure is to document the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Process required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Authority (FTA) regulations.

Responsibility

MPO Staff – in cooperation with the State DOT, FHWA and with operators of publicly owned transit services are responsible for carrying out the Metropolitan Planning Process. As they cooperatively develop:

- a Planning Work Program (PWP) in MPOs, or a Unified PWP in TMAs
- a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and
- a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

TPB MPO Coordinator – to monitor MPO progress in successfully implementing the requirements of the planning process.

Scheduling and Time Constraints

Formal Planning Certification Reviews shall be performed by the FHWA and FTA for TMAs no less than every four years (see [TMA MPO Certification Review Schedule](#)).

Procedures

Step	Action
1	The FHWA sets a time frame for the certification review meeting 4 months prior to the certification date (this is to allow time for the public comment period and the factual review period for participants). The FHWA coordinator officially informs the MPO Coordinator of the approximate dates for upcoming certification reviews and that information is passed to the TPB Branch Manager and Group Supervisor for their information.
2	The FHWA requests and reviews copies of the existing MPO administrative documents such as the Memorandum of Understanding, Prospectus, LRTP, etc. This information may be provided by the MPO Staff or the TPB MPO Coordinator.
3	The FHWA obtains possible site visit dates from the MPO and confirms the dates with the Federal agency review team and other participants, including the TPB MPO Coordinator. The FHWA prepares an on-site review meeting agenda.
4	Once the meeting date is set, the FHWA : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asks the MPO to secure a meeting location • asks the MPO to select a date and advertise for public meeting • offers the MPO TAC the opportunity for a meeting with Federal team
5	Federal team conducts on-site review and public meeting. The <i>TPB MPO Coordinator</i> may be required to coordinate participation in the certification review by other Business Units within NCDOT. The <i>TPB MPO Coordinator</i> shall attend the

	certification review and may be required to express their opinion on how well the MPO has been operating, giving both positive and negative comments. The <i>TPB MPO Coordinator</i> and their supervisor will determine whether their attendance at the public meeting is also appropriate.
6	Upon completion of the Federal review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA must either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly certify that the transportation planning process meets or substantially meets the requirements of <i>23 CFR 450 Subpart B</i>; or • Jointly certify the transportation planning process subject to certain specified corrective actions; or • Jointly certify the transportation planning process as the basis for approval of only certain categories of programs and projects; or • Withhold certification and the approval of certain apportionments and projects.
7	The Federal Team drafts a preliminary report and allows 2-4 weeks for participant review and comment. The appropriate NCDOT Transit Division coordinator, <i>TPB MPO Coordinator</i> and possibly their supervisor and the TPB Branch Manager should be provided an opportunity to comment on the draft document.
8	The Federal Team signs the final report and distributes it to participants. FHWA presents its findings to the MPO. Note: In <u>all</u> cases, FHWA and FTA must jointly certify that the transportation planning process in a TMA meets or substantially meets federal planning regulations before recognizing the LRTP and TIP. Thus failure to certify is significant as it can result in the withholding of USDOT funds.

Policy, Regulatory, and Legal Requirements

- [23 USC Sec. 134, Metropolitan Planning](#)
- [23 USC Sec. 135, Statewide Transportation Planning](#)
- [Federal Transit Administration, Section 5303 Grant Program](#)
- [NCGS 136-18](#)

Resources

[TMA MPO Certification Review Schedule](#)

Background

Federal law requires that all MPOs annually self-certify that they are meeting the Federal planning requirements. This certification is reviewed by the State and approved by FHWA for all MPOs. In addition, for TMAs, the FHWA and FTA must certify that the TMA is meeting the Federal requirements. TMAs are MPOs with urbanized area populations in excess of 200,000 persons or other MPOs whose Metropolitan Area Boundary includes areas from an adjacent TMA who choose to be designated a TMA. Designated TMAs in North Carolina include Durham, Charlotte, Asheville, Winston-Salem, Fayetteville, Wilmington, Greater Hickory, Greensboro, Raleigh, Grand Strand and Cabarrus-Rowan. High Point is less than 200,000, however since their Metropolitan Area Boundary includes some of the Winston-Salem UZA, they are subject to the TMA certification rules.

Flowchart

None

Record of Revision

The information contained in this procedure is deemed accurate and complete when posted. Content may change at any time without notice. We cannot guarantee the accuracy or completeness of printed copies. Please refer to the online procedure for the most current version.

Version	Section Affected	Description	Effective Date
1.1	Resources & Tools	Updated link for FHWA TMA Planning Certification Review Primer	11/30/10
2	Procedures	Procedure's template was modified.	1/15/2013