



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration  
Region V  
200 West Adams St., Suite 320  
Chicago, IL 60606-5253  
312-353-2789  
312-886-0351 (fax)

Federal Highway Administration  
OH Division  
200 North High St., Room 328  
Columbus, OH 43215

Doris Herringshaw, Chair  
Executive Committee  
Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments  
300 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Suite 300  
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Dear Ms. Herringshaw:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have completed a Certification Review of the transportation planning process carried out by the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) for the Toledo, Ohio Transportation Management Area (TMA). We appreciate the hospitality shown to our review team by TMACOG and the commitment to providing an exemplary transportation planning process in the Toledo region.

The review was performed in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 requiring a review of the transportation planning process for all metropolitan areas with a population of 200,000 or greater. The objective of the Certification Review was to determine whether the transportation planning process meets the Federal transportation planning requirements outlined in 23 CFR 450.300.

The review team found that the transportation planning process carried out by TMACOG for the Toledo region meets the federal transportation planning requirements. Therefore, FTA and FHWA jointly certify the planning process. The enclosed report documents the results of the review. This report includes a commendation and three recommendations for enhancing the regional transportation planning process.

A representative of the review team would like to present the primary results of this report at an upcoming Board of Directors meeting. Arrangements will be made with your staff. In the meantime, please contact Mr. Frank Burkett of FHWA at (614) 280-6838 or Mr. Stewart McKenzie of FTA at (312) 353-2866 if you have any questions regarding this certification action.

**KELLEY  
BROOKINS**  
Digitally signed by  
KELLEY BROOKINS  
Date: 2020.03.20  
09:09:11 -05'00'

Kelley Brookins  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

Sincerely,

**MICHELLE  
L HERRELL**  
Digitally signed by  
MICHELLE L HERRELL  
Date: 2020.03.24  
08:06:36 -04'00'

For: Laura S. Leffler  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Federal Highway  
Administration

Federal Transit  
Administration

# Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

---

## **Certification Review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the Toledo, Ohio Transportation Management Area (TMACOG)**

**March, 2020**

**Summary Report**





# Table of Contents

1.0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	2
1.1	Previous Findings and Disposition.....	2
1.2	Summary of Current Findings.....	3
2.0	INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.1	Background.....	5
2.2	Purpose and Objective.....	6
3.0	SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY.....	6
3.1	Review Process.....	6
3.2	Documents Reviewed.....	7
4.0	PROGRAM REVIEW.....	8
4.1	Unified Planning Work Program.....	8
4.2	Transportation Safety Planning.....	9
4.3	Congestion Management Process.....	10
4.4	Freight.....	11
4.5	Transit Planning.....	12
4.6	Listing of Obligated Projects.....	14
4.6	Public Outreach and Involvement.....	15
5.0	CONCLUSION, COMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	17
5.1	Commendation.....	17
5.2	Recommendation.....	17
	APPENDIX.....	19



## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 14, 2020 the certification review of the transportation planning process was conducted for the Toledo, Ohio Transportation Management Area (TMA) carried out by the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Toledo, Ohio region. The Federal Review Team (Review Team) consisted of representatives from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region V, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Ohio and Indiana Divisions.

Based on this certification review, the TMACOG transportation planning process was found to be in substantial compliance with the requirements of the metropolitan planning regulations per 23 CFR 450. As such, the Review Team certifies the planning process for the Toledo, Ohio TMA.

This report documents the certification review process and indicates one three recommendations to enhance the overall transportation planning process.

### 1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The prior certification review for the Toledo urbanized area was conducted in 2016. The 2016 Certification Review findings are summarized as follows.

#### **2016 Recommendation**

*TMACOG should coordinate with its local public agencies to identify which entities have ADA Transition plans in place and promote compliance with the ADA/504 requirements, which could include sharing data and other pedestrian facility information; identifying partners in need of training or assistance; and reporting to ODOT or FHWA innovative programs or cost effective tools that might assist public agencies with meeting accessibility requirements.*

#### **Resolution**

This recommendation has been resolved. TMACOG responded to the recommendation by:

- distributing a survey to local public agencies and using the survey results to assess the status of existing transition plans and training needs of the greater regional transportation community.
- holding multiple events in conjunction with The Ability Center, Toledo/Lucas County Commission on Disabilities, Ohio LTAP and others to train and educate local public agencies. Training that has been held and is planned includes:



- September 22, 2017 –LTAP ADA Coordinator and Transition Planning Basics Seminar
- September 28, 2018 –LTAP ADA Self-Review & Transition Planning Seminar
- September 27, 2019 –LTAP Access to Buildings under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Seminar planned for Fall of 2020

### **Status**

TMACOG has successfully addressed the recommendation from the 2016 review.

## **1.2 Summary of Current Findings**

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Toledo area meets Federal planning requirements. As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments TMACOG) and Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) subject to the recommendations in this report that warrant follow-up. The following sections of this report contain a discussion of the documents reviewed, the issues discussed, and the recommendations made for enhancing the process where appropriate. The commendations and recommendations are listed below.

### **Commendation**

TMACOG is commended for its continuing commitment to provide exemplary transportation planning services to the greater Toledo region as demonstrated through the effective and timely resolution of the recommendation from the previous certification, the consistently high quality of their work products, and the consistently high levels of participation in their planning committees.

### **Recommendation**

TMACOG should present the Federally approved Annual Work Program in the same area on its website that it presents the consolidated version. Also, a brief explanation as to the difference between the two versions should be provided. The MPO misses an opportunity to present to the public, the costs associated with performing its planning function and the time it takes to complete its work.

### **Recommendation**

TARTA and TMACOG should meet regularly to discuss areas where the MPO could increase its transit planning role in support of TARTA. This could be in the areas of capital needs assessment, ridership surveys, mobility needs of specialized populations, to name a few. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.306(h) and FTA Circular 9070.1G, Cycle and Duration of the Coordinated Plan, TARTA, with the support of the MPO and ODOT should update the coordinated plan by re-evaluating transit gaps, needs, priorities, and the project selection process. Projects chosen for applicable funding should be added to the



coordinated plan consistent with the timing of their selection. The MPO in conjunction with TARTA should work with ODOT to review its Section 5310 application process to ensure that participation requirements are not discouraging potential applicants.

**Recommendation**

The MPO, TARTA and ODOT are strongly encouraged to revisit and/or develop, and adhere to a formal procedure in its Cooperative Agreement to submit the fund-obligation information necessary for the MPO’s annual report of obligated projects (or, conversely, unobligated projects). It is imperative that the MPO and ODOT also be aware of TARTA’s projects that are obligated and not completed as TARTA has had an ongoing problem of not completing previously awarded projects due to limited local funding.



## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. After the 2010 Census, the Secretary of Transportation designated 183 TMAs – 179 urbanized areas over 200,000 in population plus four urbanized areas that received special designation. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), and preparation of a Certification Review Report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO(s), the State DOT(s), and public transportation operator(s) in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA Certification Review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect regional issues and needs. As a consequence, the scope and depth of the Certification Review reports will vary significantly.

The Certification Review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) approval, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), metropolitan and statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contact provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

While the Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of Certification Review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare Certification Reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether or not they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review.

To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA/FTA will continue to improve the clarity of the Certification Review reports.



## 2.2 Purpose and Objective

Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the FHWA and FTA, are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process in all urbanized areas over 200,000 population to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134, 40 U.S.C. 5303, and 23 CFR 450. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), extended the minimum allowable frequency of certification reviews to at least every four years.

TMACOG is the designated MPO for the Toledo urbanized area. ODOT is the responsible State agency and TARTA is the responsible public transportation operator. Current membership of the TMACOG MPO consists of elected officials and citizens from the political jurisdictions in Toledo. The study area includes all of Lucas County with the City of Toledo as the largest population center.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in such areas. The certification review is also an opportunity to provide assistance on new programs and to enhance the ability of the metropolitan transportation planning process to provide decision makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions.

## 3.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Review Process

A desk review was conducted by FHWA and FTA on December 1, 2019 in preparation for the site visit. In addition to the formal review, routine oversight mechanisms provide a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings. The following individuals on the Federal Review Team (Review Team) participated in the desk review:

#### **Federal Transit Administration-Region V Office**

Stewart McKenzie – Community Planner

#### **Federal Highway Administration**

Frank Burkett – Senior Planning Specialist, Ohio Division

Erica Tait – Planning and Environmental Specialist, Indiana Division



The certification review covers the transportation planning process conducted cooperatively by the MPO, State, and public transportation operators. Background information, current status, key findings, and recommendations are summarized in the body of the report for the following subject areas selected by FHWA and FTA staff for on-site review:

- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
- MPO Structure and Agreements
- Unified Planning Work Program
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Transit Planning
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Public Participation
- Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)
- Consultation and Coordination
- List of Obligated Projects
- Freight Planning
- Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage
- Transportation Safety
- Transportation Security Planning
- Nonmotorized Planning/Livability
- Integration of Land Use and Transportation
- Travel Demand Forecasting
- Air Quality
- Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations

### **3.2 Documents Reviewed**

The following MPO documents were evaluated as part of this planning process review:

- ODOT/MPO Agreement, 2020
- FY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program for the Toledo MPO
- MPO MTP, 2045
- MPO FY-2016-2020 TIP and Self-Certification
- FY2018 and FY2019 Annual List of Obligated Projects



## 4.0 PROGRAM REVIEW

### 4.1 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

#### **4.1.1 Regulatory Basis:**

23 CFR 450.308 identifies the requirements for the unified planning work programs (UPWP) to be prepared in TMAs. 23 CFR 420.111 governs work programs required for the expenditure of FHWA highway planning and research funds.

MPOs are required to develop UPWPs in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies. [23 CFR 450.308(c)] Elements to be included in the UPWP are:

- Discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area
- Description of all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air-quality planning activities anticipated within the following one-to-two-year period, regardless of funding source, indicating:
  - Who will perform the work
  - The schedule for completion of the work
  - The intended products, including all activities funded under Title 23 and the Federal Transit Act. [23 CFR 450.308)(c)]...

In addition, 23 CFR 420.111 should not be overlooked. Those and associated regulations in 23 CFR part 420 identify several requirements for projects receiving FHWA highway planning and research funds, including:

- Description of the work to be performed
- Cost estimates for each activity
- A financial summary indicating the shares of funding to be provided from Federal, State, and local sources

#### **4.1.2 Status**

The Federal team found that TMACOG adopted an Annual Work Program (AWP) that was dated March 2019 and approved by ODOT, FHWA and FTA with an effective date of July 1, 2019. The AWP included all of the required elements.

#### **4.1.3 Finding**

In reviewing TMACOG's website, the Federal team found that a "consolidated" AWP dated June, 2019 was posted and did not include financial elements or a timeline/schedule for completion of work. When the Federal team pointed this out at the certification review, TMACOG proceeded to show where the full document was located. It was not easily found. At the time of this report, the only full version of an AWP found was from FY2015 and not FY2020.



#### **4.1.4 Recommendation**

TMACOG should present the Federally approved Annual Work Program in the same area on its website that it presents the consolidated version. Also, a brief explanation as to the difference between the two versions should be provided. The MPO misses an opportunity to present to the public, the costs associated with performing its planning function and the time it takes to complete its work.

## **4.2 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLANNING**

### **4.2.1 Regulatory Basis**

The requirements for addressing safety within the MPO transportation planning process can be found in multiple regulations. One of the eight planning factors, found in 23 CFR 450.306(a), states the metropolitan planning process will “increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users”. In addition, per 23 CFR 450.306(h), “the metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, as specified in 23 U.S.C. 148, and other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs, as appropriate.”

23 CFR 450.322(h) states “the metropolitan transportation plan should include a safety element that incorporates or summarizes the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects for the MPA contained in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan required under 23 U.S.C. 148 [...].”

The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) emphasized performance management through Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) and target setting. Per 23 U.S.C. 150 and 23 U.S.C. 134, states and MPOs must set targets to assess the nationally set performance measures. Section 23 U.S.C. 150(c)(4) indicates the States will use the measures to assess the number and rate of serious injuries and fatalities. The final rule to establish the measures has not been implemented.

### **4.2.2 Status**

TMACOG incorporates transportation safety in their long range and short-range planning activities and documents.

- A primary goal in the 2045 Plan is to “reduce traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries across all modes.”
- Safety is included in the project scoring for the MTP and TIP.
- The UPWP contains a project number specifically for safety planning

TMACOG has developed and is in the process of publishing a Regional Safety Plan that was developed with stakeholder input that included:



- *ODOT*
- *County and Local Engineers*
- *Law Enforcement*
- *Education and Advocacy Groups*
- *Hospitals*
- *The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA)*
- *Metroparks, and*
- *AAA*

#### **4.2.3 Finding**

TMACOG continues to effectively integrate safety in their regional transportation planning process. TMACOG received a commendation for incorporating safety in their policies, process, and work products as part of their 2016 certification. These commendation-worthy practices have been continued into this review period.

## **4.3 CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP)/PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING (PBPP)**

#### **4.3.1 Regulatory Basis**

Per 23 CFR 450.320(a), the Congestion Management Process (CMP) applies to TMAs and is a systematic approach for managing congestion 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.”* Federal regulations also require that the CMP include methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multimodal transportation system.

As provided for in current law, as well as supported in FHWA and FTA programs, PBPP represents a fundamental shift for statewide and metropolitan area transportation planning toward an emphasis on performance and measurable outcomes. PBPP will assist in the achievement of seven national goals, per 23 U.S.C. 150, including congestion reduction.

#### **4.3.2 Status**

Staff, committee members and the public use TMACOG’s current 2018 Congestion Management Process (CMP) to assess system conditions and identify potential plan projects. TMACOG uses data from the CMP for TIP and Plan project scoring. The 2018 CMP is based upon travel time reliability metrics in order to provide consistency with



performance measures. Recurring and non-recurring congestion are evaluated by using NPMRDS and other data sources.

#### **4.3.3 Finding**

TMACOG fully integrates its CMP throughout the metropolitan planning process. In addition, TMACOG has integrated PBPP into the update of their 2045 Transportation Plan by including performance measures and targets for congestion, freight movement, safety, infrastructure condition and personal mobility.

## **4.4 FREIGHT**

#### **4.4.1 Regulatory Basis**

Requirements for addressing freight movement as part of the transportation planning process can be found within three of the eight planning factors in 23 CFR 450.306(a). These freight-related factors include the following:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

#### **4.4.2 Status**

TMACOG continues to integrate freight into their planning process via the following activities.

- Freight-related projects, initiatives, and policies are included as an important part of the MTP and TIP.
  - One of the eight 2045 Plan goals is to “strengthen freight access to national and international trade markets to support economic development.”
  - 32 freight-related projects and 4 policies were included in the MTP.
  - 8 projects that are freight-related or will benefit freight movement are in the current TIP.
- All modes of freight transportation, including marine and pipeline, are involved in short- and long-range planning efforts.
- TMACOG assists or coordinates freight planning efforts with the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, the City of Toledo and others.
- TMACOG continues to engage the freight community via their own longstanding TMACOG Freight Advisory Committee and in leading efforts for the annual Ohio Conference on Freight.

#### **4.4.3 Finding**

TMACOG continues their role as a leader in integrating freight into the metropolitan transportation planning process within its region, Ohio and the nation. TMACOG was issued a commendation in the 2016 certification for their role in planning and



programming freight projects in the region. Their commendation-worthy practices have been continued through this review period.

## 4.5 TRANSIT PLANNING

### 4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

*23 CFR 450.300(a) states: ...the MPO designated for each urbanized area is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process... to serve the mobility needs of people and freight... 23 CFR 450.306(b)(6) states: The metropolitan transportation planning process shall...enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes... 23 CFR 450.306(h) states: Preparation of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, as required by 49 USC 5310 should be coordinated and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.*

### 4.5.2 Status

The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) is the primary provider of public transit services in the TMACOG region and is a voting member of the Transportation Policy Committee of TMACOG's board. Representatives from TARTA were present to discuss the agency's transit situation and their relationship with the MPO. Over the past few years, TARTA has experienced significant financial shortfalls due to a revenue stream that is based on decreasing property taxes. The agency is also experiencing major staffing shortages with a new General Manager just having come on board in December 2019.

TARTA faces ongoing challenges to continue operating without cutting service. Federal funding has been concentrated in the areas of preventive maintenance and operating assistance, while the agency suffers from an aging bus fleet that needs immediate replacing. Many capital needs that are essential to transit operators are going unmet. To make matters worse, the agency has yet to adopt or share a TARTA-specific (non-ODOT) Transit Asset Management Plan with the MPO.

TMACOG staff are well-aware of the many challenges that TARTA currently faces. The MPO's support of TARTA and transit planning was manifest throughout the certification review, and is apparent in its planning committees, planning documents and online. TMACOG has posted a Transit Frequently Asked Questions page on its website that effectively answers why transit is not always readily available to the region's riding public. The page includes an explanation as to how a regional sales tax may increase transit services in the region. TARTA will be taking a sales tax levy to the ballot later this year and will likely count on the MPO to assist in informing the public how the tax levy will impact them.



#### **4.5.3 Finding**

Based on the testimony of TARTA's new General Manager, the agency is currently lacking the personnel to effectively plan its operations and assess its near term and long-term capital needs. The MPO, while already a significant partner, could play an even larger role in helping TARTA to maximize the use of existing and future federal funds. The onsite review highlighted their mutual needs for increased pedestrian access to transit stops. TARTA has FTA grant funding that has been awarded but not spent that must be allocated to associated transit improvements such as bike access/equipment, pedestrian and ADA enhancements (i.e. sidewalks, pathways), etc.

### **4.5.4 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

#### **4.5.5 Status**

TARTA is the Designated Recipient of FTA's Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. As Designated Recipient, TARTA is responsible for making sure that projects funded under Section 5310 are supported by a locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (coordinated plan). The Federal team found that the MPO has staff dedicated to support TARTA in the project solicitation, review and selection process.

#### **4.5.6 Finding**

The coordinated plan for the Toledo area was adopted in December 2012 and has not been updated in more than seven years. The MPO defers to TARTA, per their agreement, as being the responsible agency to adopt and update the coordinated plan. During the site visit, TARTA stressed that it does not currently have the financial resources or technical capacity to complete the update. Both parties agreed that it is in the region's best interest to have an up-to-date coordinated plan. They should consider tasking the Public Transit Committee, which meets regularly and includes MPO and TARTA staff, to coordinate with ODOT's Office of Transit and FTA to identify and secure funding to update the coordinated plan.

#### **4.5.7 Recommendation**

TARTA and TMACOG should meet regularly to discuss areas where the MPO could increase its transit planning role in support of TARTA. This could be in the areas of capital needs assessment, ridership surveys, mobility needs of specialized populations, to name a few. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.306(h) and FTA Circular 9070.1G, Cycle and Duration of the Coordinated Plan, TARTA, with the support of the MPO and ODOT should update the coordinated plan by re-evaluating transit gaps, needs, priorities, and the project selection process. Projects chosen for applicable funding should be added to the coordinated plan consistent with the timing of their selection. The MPO in conjunction with TARTA should work with ODOT to review its Section 5310 application process to ensure that participation requirements are not discouraging potential applicants.



## 4.6 LISTING OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS

### 4.6.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.334 requires that the State, the MPO, and public transportation operators cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 have been obligated in the previous year. The listing must include all Federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year and, at a minimum, the following for each project:

- 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
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase

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

### 4.6.2 Status

The FY2018 and FY2019 Annual List of Obligated Projects were listed on TMACOG's website and reviewed for this certification review. The Review Team noted that the highway projects listed included the Project Identification Number (PID) that is associated with projects as they appear in the TIP. The listings include a Project Name, Description, County, Project Sponsor, Primary Work Category and Federal Funds Obligated. The transit projects, appear within the same formatted table. However, they were identified by the FTA grant award number which cannot be easily correlated with specific projects listed in the TIP. Furthermore, the project name and project descriptions were identical and were simply general FTA grant scopes that encompass multiple projects. Also, the Section 5310 grant which included several projects for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, was not listed.

### 4.6.3 Finding

TMACOG stated that there was no submission of obligated projects by the transit agency and that the information they received was provided by the Ohio Department of Transportation.



#### **4.6.4 Recommendation**

The MPO, TARTA and ODOT are strongly encouraged to revisit and/or develop, and adhere to a formal procedure in its Cooperative Agreement to submit the fund-obligation information necessary for the MPO's annual report of obligated projects (or, conversely, unobligated projects). It is imperative that the MPO and ODOT also be aware of TARTA's projects that are obligated and not completed as TARTA has had an ongoing problem of not completing previously awarded projects due to limited local funding.

## **4.7 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT**

### **4.7.1 Regulatory Basis**

Sections 134(i)(5), 134(j)(1)(B) of Title 23 and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49 require an MPO to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. The requirements for public involvement are detailed in 23 CFR 450.316, which requires the MPO to develop and use a documented participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process. Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participated in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to the public input, and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the participation plan. In addition, the MPO must seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.

### **4.7.2 Status**

TMACOG is engaged in promoting and seeking public involvement early and continuous throughout the transportation planning process. The organizational structure of TMACOG includes several advisory committees which provide opportunity for the public to participate in various components of the planning process. In addition, the MPO uses social media and web visualization tools to engage the public regarding transportation projects, products, and processes. TMACOG is currently considering improvements that can be made to their website in order to enhance public involvement.

In the development of the most recent long-range plan update, TMACOG employed social media platforms, emails to stakeholders, and a public survey tool to gather public input. In addition, TMACOG conducted several public meetings in the Spring of 2019, and plans to conduct a second round of public meetings later this year.

In preparation for the development of the most recent Transportation Improvement



Program (TIP), TMACOG has generated an online mapping tool to allow the public to provide comments about specific projects.

The MPO has a documented Public Participation Plan (PPP), dated January 7, 2015, that includes goals and explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process. During the site visit, the federal review team learned that the most recent Public Participation Plan was updated in FY 2018 but has not yet been formally adopted by the MPO. TMACOG incorporates Title VI and Environmental Justice within their planning activities and has used the “four-factor analysis” to identify and involve traditionally underserved and/or LEP populations in the transportation planning process.

#### ***4.7.3 Finding***

The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds that the MPO meets the regulatory requirements found in 23 CFR 450.



## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS, COMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Federal Review Team concludes that the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), ODOT, and the transit operators in the region have made commendable efforts in the continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. Based upon the findings of this review, the transportation planning process, as carried out by TMACOG for the Toledo, Ohio Transportation Management Area (TMA), meets the requirements of Federal regulations.

FTA and FHWA, therefore, jointly certify the transportation planning process carried out by TMACOG for the Toledo, Ohio TMA with the following recommendation:

### 5.1 Commendation

- TMACOG is commended for its continuing commitment to provide exemplary transportation planning services to the greater Toledo region as demonstrated through the effective and timely resolution of the recommendation from the previous certification, the consistently high quality of their work products, and the consistently high levels of participation in their planning committees.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that would improve the transportation planning process:

- TMACOG should present the Federally approved Annual Work Program in the same area on its website that it presents the consolidated version. Also, a brief explanation as to the difference between the two versions should be provided. The MPO misses an opportunity to present to the public, the costs associated with performing its planning function and the time it takes to complete its work.
- TARTA and TMACOG should meet regularly to discuss areas where the MPO could increase its transit planning role in support of TARTA. This could be in the areas of capital needs assessment, ridership surveys, mobility needs of specialized populations, to name a few. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.306(h) and FTA Circular 9070.1G, Cycle and Duration of the Coordinated Plan, TARTA, with the support of the MPO and ODOT should update the coordinated plan by re-evaluating transit gaps, needs, priorities, and the project selection process. Projects chosen for applicable funding should be added to the coordinated plan consistent with the timing of their selection. The MPO in conjunction with TARTA should work with ODOT to review its Section 5310 application process to ensure that participation requirements are not discouraging potential applicants.



- The MPO, TARTA and ODOT are strongly encouraged to revisit and/or develop, and adhere to a formal procedure in its Cooperative Agreement to submit the fund-obligation information necessary for the MPO's annual report of obligated projects (or, conversely, unobligated projects). It is imperative that the MPO and ODOT also be aware of TARTA's projects that are obligated and not completed as TARTA has had an ongoing problem of not completing previously awarded projects due to limited local funding.



## APPENDIX

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

A public meeting was held from 5:00PM until 7:00PM on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at TMACOG. Representatives from TMACOG and the Review Team attended. There were 7 members of the general public. The comments at the public meeting were all in general support of TMACOG and its staff.

The public was also afforded the opportunity to send comments directly to representatives of the Review Team until January 24, 2020. There were no written comments.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act  
**AMPO:** Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations  
**CAA:** Clean Air Act  
**CFR:** Code of Federal Regulations  
**CMP:** Congestion Management Process  
**CO:** Carbon Monoxide  
**DOT:** Department of Transportation  
**EJ:** Environmental Justice  
**FAST:** Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act  
**FHWA:** Federal Highway Administration  
**FTA:** Federal Transit Administration  
**FY:** Fiscal Year  
**HSIP:** Highway Safety Improvement Program  
**ITS:** Intelligent Transportation Systems  
**LEP:** Limited-English-Proficiency  
**M&O:** Management and Operations  
**MAP-21:** Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
**MPA:** Metropolitan Planning Area  
**MPO:** Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**MTP:** Metropolitan Transportation Plan  
**NAAQS:** National Ambient Air Quality Standards  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide  
**O<sub>3</sub>:** Ozone  
**PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>:** Particulate Matter  
**SHSP:** Strategic Highway Safety Plan  
**STIP:** State Transportation Improvement Program  
**TDM:** Travel Demand Management  
**TIP:** Transportation Improvement Program  
**TMA:** Transportation Management Area  
**U.S.C.:** United States Code  
**UPWP:** Unified Planning Work Program  
**USDOT:** United States Department of Transportation





Report prepared by:

State FHWA Division Office

Street Address

City, ST Zip Code

Phone