

MPC 4b – Attachment 1 - FHWA and FTA Cover Letter and Executive Summary from Transportation Planning Certification Review Central Lane Area



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration
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AUG 21 2003

IN REPLY REFER TO
HPL-OR
724.42

Mr. George Kloeppe
Executive Director
Lane Council of Governments
99E Broadway, Suite 400
Eugene, Oregon 97401-3111

RE: Eugene Area Transportation Planning Certification Review – Final Report

Dear Mr. Kloeppe:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are pleased to provide you with the final report on our Planning Certification Review of the Central Lane Metropolitan Area. As you are aware, because your metropolitan area now exceeds 200,000 population and has been designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), FHWA and FTA staff conducted a joint review of the area's transportation planning process on May 7, 8 & 9 2003. An overview of our initial findings was provided verbally at the close out session and a draft of this report was informally shared with you and your staff in mid-June for comment. The enclosed report formally documents the results of our review.

The primary result is that FHWA and FTA are jointly certifying the transportation planning process in the Central Lane Metropolitan Area, subject to the corrective actions summarized in the Executive Summary section of the final report. This certification will remain in effect for three years from the date of this letter.

Although this report includes some specific recommendations for improvements and corrective actions, our impression of the area's transportation planning process as you transition to TMA status, is quite positive. We want to recognize that, prior to our visit, your staff had already identified and begun to implement many needed changes.

We especially appreciate the time and assistance that your staff provided during the course of this review. Please convey our thanks for their excellent support.

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Please contact Fred Patron of FHWA Oregon Division at (503) 399-5749, and/or Bill Fort of FTA Region 10 at (206) 220-4461 if you have any questions regarding this review or any follow up actions.

Sincerely,



Date 8/19/03

David O. Cox
FHWA Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration



Date 8/21/03

R. F. Krochalis
FTA Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

Enclosures

cc:

LCOG (Tom Schwetz)
FTA (Bill Fort, Region 10)
FHWA (Fred Patron, OR Div)
ODOT (Craig Greenleaf, TDD)
(Erick Havig, Region 2)
(Martin Loring Public Transit)
DEQ (Dave Nordberg)
EPA (Wayne Elson)
LTD (Executive Director – Ken Hamm)
(Stefano Viggiano)
LRAPA (Brian Jennison)

FP/ma



Transportation Planning Certification Review Central Lane Area

(Cities of Eugene, Springfield & Coburg, and portions of Lane County, Oregon)

May 7-9, 2003

Final Report August, 2003

Prepared by
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration

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Executive Summary

This review has two purposes. First, for the reasons described in the “Introduction” section of this report, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) is required to review and evaluate the transportation planning processes in metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000 persons no less than once every three years. Upon completion of the review and evaluation, the results must support a joint certification by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that the transportation planning processes substantially meet federal planning regulations. The review covers actions by all agencies (State, MPO, transit operator, local governments) that are charged with cooperatively carrying out the processes on a daily basis. Failure to certify is significant as it can result in the withholding of USDOT funds. A second, but equally important reason for the review is to enhance the quality of the planning process and ensure that Federal projects can advance without delay.

In February 2003, FHWA and FTA provided a preliminary list of review questions to the Lane Council of Governments, corresponding to the major topics shown in the table of contents of this report. The questions were drawn from federal regulatory requirements and set the stage for a later on-site review.

In April of 2003, LCOG staff provided the USDOT review team with responses to the initial questions and copies of relevant documents such as agreements, and planning products. Using these materials, the review team developed a final agenda for the on-site review.

On May 7-9, 2003 the federal review team conducted an on-site review which included meetings with MPO, transit district, state and local government staff; the MPO policy board and other elected officials; and a public meeting where comments on the planning process were sought. The body of this report documents the major findings, corrective actions, and recommendations of the review. “Corrective actions” describe activities needed to address conditions, which if left uncorrected, might result in failure to meet federal planning regulations and maintain USDOT certification. “Recommendations” are suggestions that may be considered to enhance processes that already meet minimum federal requirements.

The outcome of this review is that the FTA and FHWA have jointly certified the planning process in the Central Lane Area, subject to the corrective actions and recommendations summarized below.

Full text of all major findings, corrective actions, comments and recommendations can be found in the relevant sections of the report.

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Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Study Area Organizational Structure	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MPO is commended for restructuring the MPC and delegating all MPO policy decisions to that body.
Metropolitan Planning Boundaries	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCOG & ODOT should work together to update the Federal-aid urban boundary and highway functional classifications
Agreements and Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within one year, define transportation planning and programming roles and responsibilities of the MPO, the State, LTD and LRAPA in an agreement or MOU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While regulations encourage a single agreement, separate agreements are acceptable. Good practice is to attach agreement(s) to UPWP. The agreement(s) should reflect participation in the planning process and be basis for significant work performed by participants.
Unified Planning Work Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand 2004-2005 UPWP to describe all metropolitan transportation and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the area, regardless of funding source or agency conducting the activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include information about anticipated non-federal planning work (e.g. ODOT studies, TGM grants, LTD transit studies, air quality planning, etc.) in UPWP ODOT should consult with the MPO when establishing priorities for planning activities Show studies committed by ODOT and others in the UPWP
Transportation Planning Process	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop matrix showing how “planning factors” being addressed (Could include in annual MPO self-certification)
Congestion Management System	Produce initial CMS prior to January 8, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise UPWP to deliver initial CMS by 1/ 8/04 (see body of report for recommended elements)

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Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete next metropolitan transportation plan update (and the supporting USDOT regional air quality conformity determination) prior to December 13, 2004 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the UPWP to expedite plan update. • Maintain link between local TSPs and the metropolitan transportation plan • Include ODOT in the freight task force. • During plan update, note Regional Planning/Fiscal Constraint recommendations
TIP and Project Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise TIP project selection process and criteria within two years • Do not group projects in next TIP unless not of appropriate scale for individual identification • In next TIP, identify the status/progress of major projects in the previous TIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more information on relationship between TIP projects and RTP • Coordinate and consolidate MPO, ODOT, LTD and local public involvement opportunities. • MPO is commended for initiating the review of its TIP project selection procedures. • In revised TIP procedures, create stronger tie between metropolitan plan priorities and project selection
Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend MPO participate in ODOT's update of the assumptions used to project revenues, operations and maintenance costs for long-range plan updates • Be vigilant of proposed legislation for formula and major capital investment funding

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Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Public Outreach	Update Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning within two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When updating Citizens Guide, consider including a Flow Chart Toward Approval, linking overview of planning process (Fig.1) to specific agencies and/or committees where decisions are made. • Review resources in area that facilitate public outreach communication in other languages, particularly Spanish • Updating Citizens Guide provides opportunity to address issues about access too and understanding the planning process
Air Quality	None	None
Self-Certifications	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue including annual self-certification in each UPWP • Provide status of corrective actions and recommendations from USDOT review in future self-certifications
TITLE VI and Related Requirements	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and use MPO-wide information to evaluate future planning products • Review need for bilingual presentation of transportation planning information
Intelligent Transportation Systems	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued strong regional support of ITS plan development is encouraged • Consider sharing ITS equipment with other activities, such as ODOT data collection

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