



Federal Highway Administration

Federal Transit Administration

[illegible]

September 2023

Summary Report





Table of Contents

1.0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1.1	Previous Findings and Disposition	3
1.2	Current Findings.....	3
2.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.1	Background	4
2.2	Purpose and Objective.....	5
2.3	Disposition of Previous Findings	6
3.0	SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	7
3.1	Review Process	7
3.2	Documents & Resources Reviewed	8
4.0	PROGRAM REVIEW	9
4.1	MPO Structure and Agreements.....	9
4.2	Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries	12
4.3	Unified Planning Work Program	13
4.4	Metropolitan Transportation Plan.....	15
4.5	Transportation Improvement Program	17
4.6	Public Participation	20
4.7	Transportation Security Planning	23
5.0	LOCAL STP/STBG BUDGETING AND OBLIGATIONS	25
6.0	PUBLIC COMMENT	32
7.0	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33



7.1	Conclusion.....	33
7.2	Commendation	33
7.3	Recommendations & Proposed Assistance	33
APPENDIX A – SITE VISIT PARTICIPANTS		36
APPENDIX B – SITE VISIT AGENDA		37
APPENDIX C - STATUS OF FINDINGS FROM LAST REVIEW		39
APPENDIX D – NOTICES.....		47
APPENDIX E – PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION SIGN-IN SHEET		51
APPENDIX F – PUBLIC COMMENTS		52
APPENDIX G – CASE STUDY TRANSPORTATION EQUITY		53
APPENDIX H - LIST OF ACRONYMS.....		59



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 31-February 1, 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) facilitated the certification review site visit meetings to discuss the transportation planning process for the New Orleans urbanized area (UZA), as conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each UZA over 200,000 in population, known as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), at least every four years to determine if the process meets Federal planning requirements.

This review is risk-based, focusing on areas of greatest concern for non-compliance. The FHWA and FTA joint review team determined areas of risk by reviewing previous certification review findings, and considering recent MPO meetings, experiences, the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), the 2020 Census, and current Federal transportation policies.

1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The previous certification review report was issued in May of 2019. Those findings and their dispositions are provided in full in Appendix C. A corrective action was issued requiring the MPO to include representation by providers of public transportation on the board or committee with final transportation decision-making authority for the New Orleans TMA. The MPO staff and the MPO Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) successfully addressed this corrective action.

1.2 Current Findings

The current review, detailed in this report, found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the New Orleans UZA and associated Metropolitan Planning Area substantially meets Federal planning requirements. FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by the New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization, the public transportation providers, and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD).

However, the Federal review team offers recommendations that warrant close attention and follow-up. See section “4.0 Program Review” to read the recommendations in context and section “7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations” to see the recommendations presented in one list.



2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Pursuant to United States Code (U.S.C.) Title 23 Section 134(k)(6) 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 a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in an urbanized area (UZA) with a population of over 200,000, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning products (before and after the site visit), and preparation of a certification review report that summarizes the review and offers findings.

The review focuses on compliance with Federal laws and regulations, and the cooperative relationship between the MPO, the State Department of Transportation (DOT), 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. Consequently, 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, 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 interaction provide FHWA and FTA an opportunity to learn about and comment on the planning process. The results of these other experiences are considered in the certification review process. While the certification review report may not fully document those many intermediate encounters, the “findings” are based upon the cumulative knowledge gained through the formal certification review effort and other formal and informal experiences.

The review process is also individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Certification reviews may cover the full range of planning topics, or the reviews may be risk-based, focusing on those areas with the greatest risk for non-compliance with Federal statutes and regulations.

Federal reviewers prepare certification reports to document the results of the review process. The report is the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the local planning process.



To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA and 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, FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process in all Transportation Management Areas, which are UZAs over 200,000 in population, to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134, 40 U.S.C. 5303, and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 23 Part 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.

The New Orleans MPO, hosted by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), is the designated Federal transportation planning organization for the New Orleans UZA. With a population of over 200,000, the New Orleans MPO is classified as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). The RPC also serves the UZAs on the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain: Hammond, Mandeville-Covington, and Slidell. This certification review only addresses the TMA, which includes the UZA and associated Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) for New Orleans only.

The geographic bounds of the New Orleans MPA include all or part of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist Parishes. The City of New Orleans is the largest population center. See the map of the New Orleans MPA on this report's cover.

The decision-making body for the MPO is the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). Membership of the TPC consists of elected officials and citizens from political jurisdictions, and representatives of transportation modal organizations and major public transportation providers in the Greater New Orleans area, including the MPAs on the Northshore.

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is the State's planning district for Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John, St. Tammany, and Tangipahoa Parishes and is the host and fiscal agency for the MPO. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) is the agency responsible for Federal transportation planning and programming in the State, and the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and Jefferson Parish Transit (JP Transit, formerly JeT) are the major local public transportation operators.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in TMAs. The certification review is also an opportunity to assist with new programs, to strengthen the metropolitan transportation planning process, and enhance the ability of the TPC and MPO staff to make well-informed planning, capital, and operating investment choices.



2.3 Disposition of Previous Findings

In the 2019 Certification Review Report, a corrective action, commendations, and recommendations were issued (see Appendix C). The corrective action required the MPO to include representation by providers of public transportation on the board or committee with final Federal transportation decision-making authority. The MPO staff and the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) successfully addressed this corrective action. The Bylaws were revised and approved by the RPC and TPC in 2019 to specify that the TPC “is designated under 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 as the Metropolitan Planning Organization policy board that implements the Federal transportation planning process and is the final decision-making body for transportation policy and planning issues for all qualifying urbanized areas within its geographic jurisdiction.”



3.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Review Process

This certification review was conducted as a risk-based review, focusing on the areas with greatest potential for non-compliance with applicable Federal statutes and regulations. This report finalizes and documents the review, which consisted of a desk audit, a formal site visit on January 31-February 1, 2023, and a public listening session on of January 31, 2023.

During the desk audit, the findings from the 2019 Certification Review report (see Appendix C), planning products, and other documents and resources were reviewed. In addition, routine stewardship and oversight activities were also considered for these certification findings.

FHWA and FTA facilitated the certification review site visit meeting to discuss the transportation planning process. Participants included representatives of FHWA, FTA, LADOTD, and RPC/MPO staff. A full list of participants is found in Appendix A and the agenda is included in Appendix B. The following topics were selected, based on likely risk, for discussion at the site visit.

1. Organization
 - A. Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
 - B. Transportation Policy Board
 - C. Agreements, Policies, Bylaws
2. Public & Stakeholder Participation
3. Equity
4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including Performance Based Planning & Programming
5. Transportation Improvement Program, including Performance Based Planning & Programming
6. Congestion Management Process
7. Intelligent Transportation Systems Regional Architecture
8. Safety, including Regional Coalition
9. Financial Planning
10. UPWP, including Progress Reports
11. Security

After the discussion at the site visit meeting, the following topics were selected by FHWA and FTA staff, based on risk, for inclusion in this report:

1. MPO Structure and Agreements
 - Transportation Policy Board
 - Agreements, Policies, Bylaws



2. Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
3. Public Participation
4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
5. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
6. Unified Planning Work Program
7. Transportation Security Planning

Areas of risk were determined by reviewing previous certification reviews, and considering recent events, Federal experience with the MPO, the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), the 2020 Census, and Federal policies.

This report presents the regulatory basis, status, and findings for each of the topics listed above, as well as a commendation (C), recommendations (R), and proposed assistance (PA), as appropriate.

3.2 Documents & Resources Reviewed

The following documents and resources were consulted and/or evaluated as part of this review:

- New Orleans Planning Certification Review Summary Report; May 15, 2019
- Transportation Improvement Program New Orleans 2023-2026; September 13, 2022
- Transportation Improvement Program New Orleans 2023-2026; Amended
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2052; August 9, 2022
- Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects Federal Fiscal Years 2021 & 2022
- Unified Planning Work Program 2023 Fiscal Year; May 26, 2022
- Unified Planning Work Program Fiscal Year 24 Draft v3, May 2023
- Title VI Program Plan; May 2022
- Public Participation Plan; 2022
- Congestion Management Process; No Date
- Congestion Management Process: System Performance Report; June 2022
- New Orleans Regional Freight Profile; 2020-2021
- 2022 New Orleans Regional Freight Mobility Plan; October 2022
- FY 2024 Call for Studies
- Technical Advisory Committee FY 2024 Call for Studies Application
- 2021 Annual Report Projects and Performance Measures
- RPC-TPC Bylaws; September 10, 2019
- TPC Meeting Minutes; September 10, 2019
- The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission website
- Financial Management Information System reports



4.0 PROGRAM REVIEW

4.1 MPO Structure and Agreements

4.1.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.310 require the decision-making body of a transportation management area (TMA) to include local elected officials; officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, including public transportation; and appropriate State officials.

23 CFR 450.314(a) states the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities are to be clearly identified in written metropolitan planning agreements executed among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator/s serving the MPA. The written agreement(s) shall include specific provisions for the development of financial plans that support the MTP, the metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP), and development of the annual listing of obligated projects (ALOP).

In addition, 23 CFR 450.314(h) requires the MPO, State, and providers of public transportation to develop a written agreement for cooperatively developing and sharing transportation performance data and information, performance target selection and reporting, and collection of data for the State's National Highway System (NHS) asset management plan. This agreement may be part of the metropolitan planning agreement (described above), or it may be a separate agreement.

4.1.2 Current Status

The RPC hosts the MPO for the New Orleans UZA. The MPO's Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) is the Federal transportation decision-making body and is composed of elected officials from local governmental entities, citizens, and representatives of agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation, including providers of public transportation. The TPC membership is described in the RPC-TPC 2019 Bylaws, with member seats provided by parish and mode. Some parishes have not filled all of the seats they are allotted or have substituted one type of member for another type of member (usually because the type of member specified by the Bylaws did not accept the position). The MPO staff does encourage each parish to fill all of their available seats according to the 2019 Bylaws.



The list below details the TPC membership and seat count by parish and mode, and notes if seats are vacant:

TPC Membership

Jefferson Parish (5)

1. President
2. Mayor of a Municipality
(currently City of Kenner)
3. Councilmember at Large
(Council Chair specified in Bylaws)
4. Citizen
5. Citizen

Orleans Parish (5)

6. City of New Orleans Mayor
7. Councilmember at Large
8. Councilmember at Large
9. Citizen (vacant)
10. Citizen (vacant)

Plaquemines Parish (5)

11. President
12. Council Chairman
13. Elected/Appointed Official
(currently a Councilmember)
14. Citizen
15. Citizen

St. Bernard Parish (5)

16. President
17. Councilmember at Large
18. Councilmember
19. Citizen
20. Citizen

St. Charles Parish (5)

21. President
22. Councilmember
23. Councilmember
24. Citizen
25. Citizen

St. John the Baptist Parish (5)

26. President
27. Councilmember
28. Councilmember
29. Citizen
30. Citizen

St. Tammany Parish (8)

31. President
32. Elected/Appointed Official
(currently a Councilmember)
33. Elected/Appointed Official (vacant)
34. Citizen
35. Citizen
36. City of Slidell Mayor
37. City of Mandeville Mayor
38. City of Covington Mayor

Tangipahoa Parish (6)

36. President
37. City of Pontchatoula Mayor
38. Citizen
39. Citizen (vacant)
40. City of Hammond Mayor
41. Chair of Tangipahoa Parish Council

Major Modes (8 Total, 1 Each)

42. Greater New Orleans Expressway
Commission (GNOEC)
43. Jefferson Parish Transit
44. Louis Armstrong New Orleans
International Airport
45. Louisiana Motor Transport Association
46. New Orleans Public Belt
47. Port of New Orleans
48. New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
49. Louisiana Department of Transportation



The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) includes professional staff from the governments of member parishes, cities, and transportation modes. The purpose is to maintain regional communication on common issues and to increase regional collaboration.

The most recent planning activity apportionment agreement between the RPC, as the responsible legal entity for the MPO, and the LADOTD is dated November 15, 2018. It includes sections on membership, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), transportation modeling, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), public participation, performance management, public transportation funds, and grant and plan development.

The agreement addresses public participation requirements for developing and maintaining the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP) but does not include specific provisions for the development the ALOP document.

The agreement also addresses coordination on performance targets for the Federal highway performance measures and for Federal transit asset management. But it does not include specific statements addressing cooperative development and sharing of transportation performance data and information. For example, the agreement does not identify types of data to be used, who will collect or obtain the data, and how it will be shared. The agreement also does not address the collection of data for the State's NHS asset management plan.

Even so, the MPO staff, with assistance from LADOTD, has been able to publish the ALOP and establish performance targets and report progress as required. And the LADOTD has been able to prepare their asset management plan.

4.1.3 Findings

The MPO substantially meets the requirements cited in "4.1.1 Regulatory Basis," regarding MPO structure and agreements.

Recommendations:

R1. In the next planning agreement, coordinate with LADOTD to develop a provision describing the preparation of the annual listing of obligated projects including any needed coordination or assistance.

R2. In the next planning agreement, coordinate with LADOTD to include more detail on data, such as the types of data to be used, parties responsible for collecting or obtaining each type of data, and a commitment to share the data.

R3. In the next planning agreement, coordinate with LADOTD to include a description of the collection of data for the State's NHS asset management plan.



4.2 Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

4.2.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(e) and 23 CFR 450.312(a) state that the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area (MPA) shall be determined by agreement between the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and the Governor. At a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (UZA) as defined by the Bureau of the Census, plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP).

4.2.2 Current Status

According to the 2020 Census, the population of the New Orleans metropolitan area is 914,531 people, an increase from 899,703 in 2010.

The New Orleans MPA currently includes the 2010 Census defined UZA and the area anticipated to be urbanized in 20 years, which includes all or part of six parishes: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist (see map on the cover of this report).

There are also three other UZAs on the Northshore (of Lake Pontchartrain) that are geographically and economically linked to the New Orleans MPA: Hammond, Mandeville-Covington, and Slidell. These three UZAs each have their own individual MPA.

The MPO staff report that, once more 2020 Census data products are released and confirmed, they may redraw the New Orleans MPA boundaries. The staff are considering the ramifications of establishing one large MPA for the New Orleans UZA and the three Northshore UZAs.

4.2.3 Findings

The current New Orleans MPA boundaries are compliant with 23 U.S.C. 134(e) and 23 CFR 450.312(a).

Proposed Assistance:

PA1. If the MPO staff decides to pursue an expansion of the MPA boundary to include the New Orleans, Hammond, Mandeville-Covington, and Slidell UZAs, then FHWA and FTA can help with any technical or funding issues. FHWA staff can look for examples in other states regarding how funds attributable to multiple and different UZAs that are all encompassed by one MPA boundary are allotted by contract or agreement and documented in the USDOT's Financial Management and Information Systems. FHWA can also help identify the pros and cons of different allotment strategies.



4.3 Unified Planning Work Program

4.3.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 420.111 and 450.308 establish the requirements for MPOs to detail planning activities performed under Titles 23 and 49 U.S.C. in a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). 23 CFR 420.111(a) states that the work program document must be acceptable to the FHWA Division administrator. The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators, must develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the MPA planning priorities and the work proposed for the next one- or two-year period.

Per 23 CFR 420.111(b)(1) and 23 CFR 450.308(c) the UPWP must include:

- A description of work to be accomplished and cost estimates by activity or task
- A summary of amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds
 - Federal share by fund type
 - Matching rate by fund type
 - Matching share
 - Other State or local funds
- A discussion of planning priorities
- A description of work proposed by major activity and task (including work to address the planning factors) in sufficient detail to show:
 - The party performing the work (e.g., MPO, State, public transportation operator, local government, or consultant)
 - The schedule for completing the work
 - Resulting products
 - Proposed funding by activity/task

In addition, 23 CFR 420.117(a), requires the State to monitor all activities performed by subrecipients (MPOs) and funded with FHWA planning and research funds to assure that the work is being managed and performed satisfactorily and that time schedules are met. 23 CFR 420.117(b)(1) requires the State to submit performance and expenditure reports from each subrecipient (MPO), that contain as a minimum:

- Comparison of actual performance with established goals
- Progress in meeting schedules
- Status of expenditures in a format compatible with the work program, including a comparison of budgeted (approved) amounts and actual costs incurred
- Cost overruns or underruns
- Approved work program revisions



- Other pertinent supporting data

The State must submit these reports to the FHWA Louisiana Division on a quarterly basis, per 23 CFR 420.117(c). The reports for the first three quarters of the fiscal year are due 30 days after the end of each quarter. The final reports for the fiscal year are due 90 days after the end of the fourth quarter.

4.3.2 Current Status

The draft UPWP FY 24, submitted by email on May 5, 2023, includes items listed under 23 CFR 420.111(b)(1) and 23 CFR 450.308(c), as detailed above in section 4.3.1.

The UPWP performance and expenditure reports are sometimes submitted to LADOTD late, so FHWA receives them late. As an extreme example, the final report for the fourth quarter of FY 2021-2022 was due by September 28, 2022. LADOTD received it on April 19, 2023.

In addition, the reports do not include several requirements. First, the reports describe work accomplished, but without the list of work that was proposed in the UPWP, there is no comparison of actual performance with established goals. Second, the reports include charts that are supposed to communicate progress in meeting schedules, but the reports do not include instructions for interpreting the chart. It is unclear what the charts mean. And finally, while the reports include a section to identify cost overruns, the identification of cost underruns (the amount of funds remaining) are not identified.

FHWA and FTA realize that many MPO staffs in Louisiana are having difficulties preparing performance and expenditure reports that meet all the requirements of the CFR. There seems to be a problem communicating the requirements to MPOs in a manner that is clear and easily understood.

4.3.3 Findings

The MPO substantially meets the requirements of 23 CFR 420.111 and 450.308 for the UPWP and 420.117 for the UPWP performance and expenditure reports.

Recommendations:

R4. The MPO staff should strive to submit the UPWP progress and performance and expenditure reports to LADOTD by the due dates.

R5. The LADOTD staff and the MPO staff should work together to develop a UPWP progress and performance and expenditure report format that meets the requirements of the CFR.



Proposed Assistance:

PA2. FHWA and FTA staff are assisting LADOTD in the development of guidance for the UPWP performance and expenditure reports. We hope that MPO staff will take advantage of guidance offered by LADOTD. In particular, beginning on July 13, 2023, LADOTD will host quarterly meetings for MPOs to provide information on meeting LADOTD, FTA, and FHWA requirements, and to discuss topics proposed by the MPOs. Please consider participating. In addition, LADOTD staff emailed performance and expenditure report guidance to the MPOs on May 10, 2023. Please review this guidance and then address any questions to LADOTD, FHWA, and FTA.

4.4 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

4.4.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 set forth requirements for the development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP). Among the requirements are that the MTP address at least a twenty-year planning horizon and include both long-range and short-range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated multi-modal system. The MTP should also evaluate current and future transportation demand and help create a system that facilitates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

The MTP is part of the required continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process. The plan must consider all applicable issues related to transportation systems development, land use, employment, economic development, natural environment, housing, and community development.

23 CFR 450.324(c) requires the MPO to update the MTP at least every five years in air quality attainment areas, to reflect current and forecasted transportation, population, land use, employment, congestion, and economic conditions and trends.

As detailed in 23 CFR 450.324(f), the MTP is required, at a minimum, to include the following:

- Projected transportation demand
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities
- Operational and management strategies
- Congestion management process (CMP)
- Capital investment and strategies to preserve transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of proposed transportation facilities
- Potential environmental mitigation activities
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities
- Transportation and transit enhancements
- A financial plan



In addition, 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) requires the MPO to include a description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system in accordance with 23 CFR 450.306(d). Moreover, 23 CFR 450.324(f)(4) requires the MPO to develop a system performance report (and subsequent updates) evaluating the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets described in 23 CFR 450.306(d), including:

- (i) Progress achieved in meeting performance targets in comparison to performance recorded in previous reports, including baseline data; and
- (ii) For MPOs that voluntarily elect to develop multiple scenarios, an analysis of how the preferred scenario has improved the conditions and performance of the transportation system and how changes in local policies and investments have impacted the costs necessary to achieve the identified performance targets.

Furthermore, 23 CFR 450.324(j) states that the MPO must provide individuals, stakeholders, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the plan.

4.4.2 Current Status

The most recent MTP, *Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2052* was adopted on August 9, 2022, and spans the years from 2022-2052. It was adopted within five years of the previous plan, *Greater New Orleans 2048*, which spanned the years 2019-2048.

The 2052 plan addresses a horizon of 30 years, is multimodal, includes a variety of strategies, and a staged improvement plan divided into three tiers of projects. It also includes the requirements of 23 CFR 450.324(f) listed above in section 4.4.1, and a description of the project development and selection process.

To engage the public during the development of the *MTP 2052* and provide opportunities for comment, the MPO staff identified stakeholder groups, including government agencies and officials, special interest groups and organizations, technical advisors, and underserved communities. In addition, the staff made use of their long-maintained list of individuals that have provided the MPO with an email address during any one of a number of past meetings or outreach events. The MPO staff communicated to the stakeholders and individuals by presentations to and meetings with stakeholder groups, sending newsletters and announcements to organizations and individuals, and hosting public meetings.

4.4.3 Findings

The MTP is compliant with 23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (i) and 23 CFR 450.324.



4.5 Transportation Improvement Program

4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (j) requires the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under 23 CFR 450.326, the TIP must meet the following requirements:

- Program for at least a four-year horizon and updated at least every four years.
- Provide interested parties a reasonable opportunity to comment.
- Include surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations under 23 CFR 450.326(e).
- Include project description, cost, funding source, and the responsible agency
- Consistent with the adopted MTP
- Include a fiscally constrained financial plan

In addition, 23 CFR 450.326(c) requires that the MPO design the TIP to make progress toward achieving performance targets under the Federal performance management policy. And 23 CFR 450.326(d) requires a description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving the performance targets, as identified in the MTP, linking investment priorities to those performance targets.

Per 23 CFR 450.326(f) the TIP must contain all regionally significant projects requiring action by FHWA or FTA, and regionally significant projects not funded with FHWA, or FTA administered funds even if no FHWA or FTA action is required.

Under 23 CFR 450.326(n), the TIP is required to function as a tool for monitoring progress in implementing the MTP. As such the TIP should:

- Identify the criteria and process for prioritizing implementation of transportation plan elements (including multimodal trade-offs) for inclusion in the TIP and any changes in priorities from previous TIPs;
- List major projects from the previous TIP that were implemented and identify any significant delays in the planned implementation of major projects.

Furthermore, TIP revisions are performed under 23 CFR 450.328(a). The MPO must use procedures agreed to by the cooperating parties and that are consistent with the procedures required for development and approval of a new TIP. Louisiana's agreed to procedures require that the MPO provide for public review and comment and the re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.



The Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (ALOP), required under 23 CFR 450.334, is related to the TIP. The TIP is a budget that identifies fund amounts anticipated for obligation in each program year. The ALOP reports actual obligated amounts for each program year. The MPO, State, and public transportation operator(s) must cooperate to develop the ALOP. The listing must be published within 90 days of the end of the program year. The list shall include for each project or phase:

- an identifying description,
- responsible agency,
- the amount of Federal funds requested in the TIP,
- the Federal funding that was obligated during the preceding year, and
- the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years.

4.5.2 Current Status

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program for New Orleans spans four years and was updated within four years of the previous TIP. It meets the grand majority of the requirements listed in 23 CFR 450.326. However, two requirements could be better addressed.

First, the 2023-2026 TIP includes a statement that it “contains all regionally significant projects requiring action by the FHWA or FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded under Title 23 USC Chapters 1 and 2 or Title 49 USC Chapter 53, pursuant to 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3).” (Note that 23 CFR 450.324 contains regulations for the MTP, not the TIP). From this statement, it is unclear if the 2023-2026 TIP includes regionally significant projects that are not funded by FHWA and FTA, even when no action is required by FHWA and FTA. And furthermore, since these projects are not identified, it is unclear which projects this statement refers to. Therefore, compliance with 23 CFR 450.326(f) is difficult to ascertain.

Second, the 2023-2026 TIP includes a section describing the screening and prioritization of projects. The criteria listed are: 1) project readiness, 2) relationship to MTP, and 3) contribution to achieving performance targets. But the TIP does not identify changes in priorities from previous TIPs (nor does it state that the priorities remain the same), list major projects implemented from the previous TIP (it does include a list of all projects obligated for construction under the previous TIP, but it does not identify major projects), and it does not identify significant delays of major projects. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if the TIP is meeting all of the requirements of 23 CFR 450.326(n).

Revisions are performed using procedures consistent with those used for approval of a new TIP and in accordance with Louisiana’s agreed to procedures outlined in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) narrative. Amendments are approved by the TPC, documented initially with a written description of the amendment prepared by staff and at the next TPC meeting with approval of the minutes. In the past these documents were not signed. But in the



last several months the TPC Chair has begun signing the amendment description and the meeting minutes to vouch for the veracity of the documents. Signed amendment descriptions are forwarded to LADOTD and then FHWA as verification of TPC approval. Signed documents are not uploaded to the website to protect the Chair from identity theft but are filed in-house for later review if needed. Signing these documents is a best practice that not only helps establish the legitimacy of the documents, but also streamlines amendment processing by LADOTD and FHWA.

The ALOP is published on the website annually. The FY 2022 report was published within the required timeframe and includes the requirements under 23 CFR 450.334, as listed in section 4.5.1.

4.5.3 Findings

The MPO substantially meets the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (j); 23 CFR 450.326; and 23 CFR 450.334 for the TIP and associated ALOP.

Commendation:

C1. The MPO staff are acknowledged and applauded for instituting a signature policy for TIP amendment descriptions and TPC meeting minutes. Not only does this provide evidence of authenticity, but it also helps the amendment process to proceed more efficiently.

Recommendations:

R6. In the next TIP, include regionally significant projects that are not funded by FHWA and FTA, even if no action is required by FHWA and FTA. And indicate which projects are the regionally significant projects included per 23 CFR 450.326(f).

R7. In the next TIP, add a section that describes progress in implementing the MTP. Identify changes in priorities from previous TIPs (or state explicitly that the priorities remain the same), identify major projects implemented from the previous TIP, and identify significant delays of major projects (or state explicitly that no major projects were significantly delayed).

Proposed Assistance:

PA3. FHWA and FTA staff are supporting LADOTD staff in the development of TIP guidance, which will include information on meeting Federal requirements. We hope that MPO staff will take advantage of any guidance offered by LADOTD. In particular, beginning on July 13, 2023, LADOTD will host quarterly meetings for MPOs to provide information on meeting LADOTD, FTA, and FHWA requirements, and to discuss topics proposed by the MPOs. Please consider participating.



4.6 Public Participation

4.6.1 Regulatory Basis

The requirements for public participation are detailed in 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), which require the MPO to develop a documented public participation plan (PPP), in consultation with all interested parties, that defines a process to involve the public (including individuals, stakeholders, and others) in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The participation plan shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

- Providing adequate and timely notice of opportunities for public participation, review, and comment at key decision points, including reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed MTP and TIP.
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information on transportation issues and processes.
- Using visualization techniques to describe plans and programs in MTP and TIP.
- Making public information (technical information, meeting notices) available on your website.
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Demonstrating explicit consideration of and response to public input on the MTP and TIP.
- Seeking and considering the needs of people traditionally underserved by the transportation system.
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment.
- Coordinating with the State's public involvement and consultation processes for transportation planning.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the PPP to ensure a full and open process, on a regular schedule.

In addition, when significant written and oral comments are received on the draft MTP and TIP as a result of the participation process, then a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be included in final MTP and TIP.

Furthermore, a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO.



Copies of the approved plan shall be provided to FHWA and FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted to the MPO's website.

Moreover, 23 CFR 450.324(j) and 23 CFR 450.326(b) reiterate the requirement that the MPO must provide individuals, stakeholders, and interested parties with opportunities to comment on the MTP and TIP, as described in the PPP developed under 23 CFR 450.316(a).

In addition, though not a regulation, Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (2021) seeks to advance equity through Federal policies and programs. This Executive Order states that the term "equity" means "the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment..." Also, the Biden Administration created the Justice40 Initiative to address the concerns of disadvantaged communities that experience underinvestment and excess burdens. As explained in the Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book, found here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/index.cfm#toc22294562, considering "equity early and often through methods such as public participation and data collection and analysis improves the planning process's ability to adequately respond to the needs of the community it serves." While Executive Order 13985 does not require any specific actions of state and local recipients of Federal funds, it does provide a basis for FHWA and FTA to remind recipients of Federal funds that we must all work to redress inequities, especially those that are barriers to equal opportunity.

4.6.2 Current Status

The public participation plan posted to the website is titled *Public Participation Plan 2022* and, on page 2, is described as a "draft." It does not include all of the requirements of the CFR, but, through experience (as describes later in this section), FHWA and FTA know that the MPO staff address these requirements in practice.

For example, the PPP includes sections describing the major planning documents required in the Federal transportation planning process but does not include details on how the public will be afforded the opportunity to comment. There is a section that states that "all persons, including minority and low-income populations and those with disability or language barriers, have meaningful opportunities to participate in RPC planning and programming processes." However, in the description of the strategies that follow, a process is described for projects, and includes references to bike and pedestrian projects and auto, truck, and freight studies. It is not clear if this process applies to planning work such as the development of the MTP, the TIP, and the PPP.

Furthermore, while the PPP describes several public involvement methods, it does not identify specific procedures and strategies to be used in the development of the MTP, TIP or PPP. It is unclear if all methods are to be used, or if the staff may pick and choose among them. In addition, the PPP does not describe visualization techniques to be employed in the MTP and



TIP, describe how to demonstrate explicit consideration of and response to input provided on the MTP and TIP, or address the public information to be included on the website.

However, the Federal review team notes that in practice the MPO employs the requirements that are supposed to be documented in a PPP. For example, during the development of the most recent long range transportation plan, the 2052 MTP, the staff identified stakeholder groups, including underserved communities, for targeted outreach. The MPO staff employed several methods to inform community groups, individuals, and other interested parties of comment opportunities and public meetings, which included sending emails and newsletters to organizations and individuals on the MPO's email list. Staff received comments via the RPC website and by email sent to individual staff and to members of the TPC.

In addition, for the development of a transit plan called New Links that was completed in 2021, the MPO prepared a public participation plan that included:

- A marketing plan
- A New Links website and New Links Facebook page
- A stakeholder committee
- Multiple public, community, and stakeholder meetings held throughout the service area
- Tabling at events
- Virtual meetings
- Surveys
- Materials translated into Spanish and Vietnamese

According to the Transportation Planning Capacity Building publication, *Case Study: New Orleans Regional Planning Commission's Data-Driven Approach to Transportation Equity* during the outreach for New Links the MPO staff "tracked the demographics of respondents...over time to adjust outreach as needed to include underrepresented groups." This helped to "ensure receipt of representative feedback." See Appendix G for the *Case Study*.

The MPO staff stated that they will finalize the draft PPP by the end of March 2024 and will offer it to the TPC for approval in April 2024, at the latest.

4.6.3 Findings

The MPO substantially meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b) and 23 CFR 450.324(j) and 23 CFR 450.326(b) in practice. However, we strongly encourage you to document your participation processes adequately per the recommendations below. The types of participation activities employed in the 2052 MTP and the New links plan should be documented in the PPP.



Recommendations:

R8. Ensure the final PPP meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), 23 CFR 450.324(j), and 23 CFR 450.326(b), as summarized above in section 4.6.1. For the MTP and TIP in particular, address the following in the PPP:

- Describe how the MTP and TIP will demonstrate explicit consideration of and response to public input. You may specify a format you prefer, but an example might be an appendix that includes a summary identifying both dominant themes and the responses from MPO staff and the TPC, or a spreadsheet including all comments and responses.
- Provide guidance on the types of information commonly included in the MTP and TIP that would benefit from visualization techniques. Identify feasible visualization techniques that may be suitable for different explanatory purposes.

For all parts of the metropolitan transportation planning process, but especially with regards to the MTP, TIP, and PPP, address the following in the PPP:

- Describe procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for public participation, including for individuals, disadvantaged communities, stakeholders, and organizations.
- Identify key points when participation and comment opportunities should be provided, the minimum length of public comment periods, and the minimum amount of notice to provide.
- Identify documents and types of information that the MPO staff should post on the website. Reference the MPO Website Checklist sent to you by LADOTD in November 2020.

R9. Forward a copy of the new approved PPP to FHWA and FTA and post the plan to your website, per 23 CFR 450.316(a)(3), by May 31, 2024. If MPO staff would, please send a final draft to FHWA and FTA for review prior to TPC consideration.

Proposed Assistance:

PA4. FHWA can provide examples of PPPs that meet requirements, additional written guidance, and/or arrange for a training class or a peer exchange. If the MPO staff thinks such assistance will be helpful, please contact FHWA Louisiana Division office staff.

4.7 Transportation Security Planning

4.7.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(C) requires MPOs to consider security as one of ten planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306(b)(3), the metropolitan transportation planning process provides for consideration of security of the transportation system.



The regulations state that the degree and consideration of security should be based on the scale and complexity of local issues. Under 23 CFR 450.324(h), the MTP should include emergency relief and disaster preparedness plans and strategies and policies that support homeland security, as appropriate.

4.7.2 Current Status

The MTP describes the Southeast Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership and explains that staff of the Regional Planning Commission (the organization that hosts the MPO) manages the work of this organization. This connection to the Partnership informs the work of the MPO staff, with member experts providing guidance for policies and projects. The MTP also states that the Partnership directly contributes to multiple MTP Priorities including safety and security; sustainability and resilience; and reliability and connectivity.

MPO staff reported that the Partnership began meeting in September 2010 and addresses issues such as hurricane season preparations; evacuation, contra-flow, and re-entry; emergency alerts, cybersecurity, threats to all types of critical infrastructure, continuity plans, supply chains, and vulnerable populations.

MPO staff also stated that much of the planning for security is included in local agency plans, such as those for the City of New Orleans and the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority. Also, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness handles many of the security issues.

4.7.3 Findings

The MPO is compliant with 23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(C), 23 CFR 450.306(b)(3), and 23 CFR 450.324(h).



5.0 LOCAL STP/STBG BUDGETING AND OBLIGATIONS

As discussed in section 4.5, 23 CFR 450.334 requires the annual listing of obligated projects. After a close review of those reports, along with Status of Funds reports available through the Federal Management Information System (FMIS), FHWA is concerned about the high balance of unobligated Surface Transportation Program (STP)/Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds provided to TMAs for local jurisdictions to sponsor projects.

Importance & Benefits of Delivering Local STP/STBG Projects

Delivering projects funded with local STP/STBG funds in a timely manner makes a significant positive impact on and demonstrates responsiveness to the community served by the MPO. It also exhibits an efficient use of the public's tax dollars. Furthermore, if a TMA delivers the TIP projects as programmed (budgeted) in each year, then, through LADOTD, they may be eligible to receive additional obligation limitation to authorize TIP projects.

FHWA Assistance

To assist with this, every two years, FHWA will review local project programming and obligations in each TMA over the past four years to identify trends that present opportunities to capitalize upon or that reveal issues that can be addressed. The goal is to enhance and/or improve the on-time delivery of locally sponsored projects and the obligation these funds.

The following tables provide two types of information. Tables I and II compare the local projects and amounts programmed (budgeted) with STP(STBG)>200K in the STIP for 2021 and 2022 to the local projects and amounts obligated with STP(STBG)>200K in the 2021 and 2022 list of obligated projects. The purpose of Tables I and II is to determine if the projects sponsored by local jurisdictions in the STIP are obligated as planned. Tables A-F provide the amounts of STP/STBG funds available at the beginning (October) and end (September) of each Federal fiscal year, as recorded in FMIS. The purpose of Tables A-F is to identify the amount of funds available for programming (budgeting). A summary of information gathered from these tables is provided after the tables are presented for each FY.

In summary, if the TMA obligates the funds as programmed, then the TMA may be eligible to receive more obligation limitation from LADOTD, delivering benefits to the community more quickly. If the TMA experiences difficulties obligating funds, then this analysis may identify solutions to deliver the projects or otherwise obligate the funds.

However, the data provided for these two years is not sufficient to identify trends, so this information will be coupled with data from 2023 and 2024 to perform a four-year analysis after the end of FY 2024. To reiterate, FHWA plans to review this data every two years in each TMA.



TABLE I

New Orleans

FY21

Local Projects Budgeted in STIP Fiscal Year 2021 with STP>200K (STBG>200K) Funds

Compared to Local Projects and Funds Obligated in FY21

Using the last version of the 2019-2022 STIP at the end of FY21

Project #	Project Name	Improvement	STIP FY	Sponsor: STIP	Sponsor: Obligation List	FY21 Cost Final STIP for FY21	Other FY Cost Final STIP for FY21	FY21 Obligations
1	H.012373.6	ML KING BLVD: S CLAIBORNE - ST. CHARLES	21	ORLEANS	ORLEANS	\$3,344,000.00	0	\$3,521,281.85
2	H.007273.6	MAGAZINE ST (LEAKE AVE TO EAST DRIVE)	21	NEW ORLEANS	ORLEANS	\$3,339,600.00	0	\$3,729,920.67
3	H.013945.6	ST BERNARD BIKEWAYS	21	DOTD, ST BERNARD	ST. BERNARD	\$470,800.00	0	\$460,728.86
4	H.014367.6	LA 44: KCS RR XING (LAPLACE)	21	DOTD, RR, ST JOHN	ST. JOHN	\$187,440.00	0	\$206,372.20
5	H.011779.6	POWER BLVD MEDIAN IMPROVEMENTS	21	DOTD, KENNER	-	880,000.00	0	0
6	H.012012.6	RIDGEWOOD/STROELITZ (AIRLINE TO LOUMOR)	21	JEFFERSON	-	1,261,920.00	0	0
7	H.013813.6	VINTAGE DR MU PATH: POWER - WILSON	21	DOTD, JEFFERSON	-	1,029,600.00	0	0
8	H.013842.4	CAUSEWAY BLVD-EARHART EXPRESSWAY PH 1A	21	DOTD, JEFFERSON	-	80,000.00	0	0
9	H.007274.6	MAGAZINE ST (EAST DRIVE TO NASHVILLE)	21	NEW ORLEANS	-	2,640,000.00	0	0
10	H.014344.4	LA 428 PHASE 1:BEHRMAN AVE TO MERRILL ST	21	DOTD, NEW ORLEANS	-	40,000.00	0	0
11	H.014345.4	LA 428 PHASE 2: MERRILL ST TO WILTZ LN	21	DOTD, NEW ORLEANS	-	60,000.00	0	0
12	H.012752.4	LA 46 @ WEINBERGER RD INTERSECTION	21	DOTD, PORT OF ST BERNARD	-	240,000.00	0	0
13	H.012752.6	LA 46 @ WEINBERGER RD INTERSECTION	21	DOTD, PORT OF ST BERNARD	-	1,183,600.00	0	0
14	H.013494.6	LA 52 (PH1): BLUEBERRY HILL - ANGUS DR	21	ST CHARLES	-	3,050,292.96	0	0
15	H.011752.6	SEVERN AVE: VETERANS - W. ESPLANADE	19	JEFFERSON	JEFFERSON	0	\$1,232,000.00	\$217,864.08
16	H.011798.6	AIRLINE PARK BLVD (CAMPHOR - W NAPOLEON)	19	DOTD, JEFFERSON	JEFFERSON	0	\$5,271,200.00	\$284,418.22
17	H.013939.6	VETERANS BLVD TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY	20	DOTD, JEFFERSON	JEFFERSON	0	\$366,080.00	\$87,238.20
18	H.011731.6	W. ESPLANADE BRIDGES @ DUNCAN CANAL	19	DOTD, KENNER	KENNER	0	\$7,993,920.00	\$402,296.99
19	H.012371.6	MARCONI DRIVE: CITY PARK AVE - I-610	19	DOTD, ORLEANS	ORLEANS	0	\$3,263,040.00	\$32,446.45
20	H.011797.6	AMES BLVD (WB EXPY - HAPPY ST)	20	JEFFERSON	JEFFERSON	0	\$624,800.00	\$147,523.32
21	H.013211.6	LA 46: LA 39 - ST. BERNARD P/L	-	-	DOTD, PORT OF N.O.	0	0	\$506,610.85
22	H.012473.6	MARCONI DR SHARED-USE PATH	-	-	CITY PARK	0	0	\$31.01
23	H.011276.6	N.O. AIRPORT CONNECTOR ROAD	-	-	KENNER, NOIA (MSY)	0	0	-\$1,768,423.47
24	H.007271.6	CANAL BLVD (R.E. LEE - AMETHYST)	-	-	ORLEANS	0	0	\$623,234.28
25	H.009763.6	ST CHARLES EBANK LEVEE MU PATH, PHASE 6	-	-	ST. CHARLES	0	0	\$237,236.01
Totals →						\$17,807,252.96		\$8,688,779.52
Total Local STP>200K Budgeted for FY 2021:						\$17,807,252.96		
Total Local STP>200K Obligated for FY 2021:						\$8,688,779.52		
Difference:						\$9,118,473.44		



TABLE A

**STATUS OF FUNDS - NEW ORLEANS
AS OF 09/30/2020**

FUND	CODE	FY - 2020 APPORTIONMENT	AVAILABLE FY - 2020	OBLIGATIONS FY - TO - DATE	UNOBLIGATED BALANCE
STP- URBANIZED AREAS>200,000 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L230			-\$3,592.23	\$3,592.23
STP- URBANIZED AREAS S-LU EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23E			-\$1,102,167.77	\$1,102,167.77
STP-URBANIZED AREAS RE. 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23R		\$11,821.96	-\$103,122.91	\$114,944.87
STP - URBANIZED - TEA21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	Q230		\$8,655.94	-\$464,836.28	\$473,492.22
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M230		\$4,556.42		\$4,556.42
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M23E		\$20,569.56	-\$636,596.36	\$657,165.92
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z230	\$22,860,074.00	\$26,220,776.26	\$7,309,032.43	\$18,911,743.83
TOTAL STP URBANIZED	-	\$22,860,074.00	\$26,266,380.14	\$4,998,716.88	\$21,267,663.26

TABLE B

**STATUS OF FUNDS - NEW ORLEANS
AS OF 10/31/2020**

FUND	Code	FY - 2021	AVAILABLE	OBLIGATIONS	UNOBLIGATED
		APPORTIONMENT	FY - 2021	FY - TO - DATE	BALANCE
STP- URBANIZED AREAS>200,000 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L230		\$3,592.23		\$3,592.23
STP- URBANIZED AREAS S-LU EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23E		\$1,102,167.77	\$712,983.05	\$389,184.72
STP-URBANIZED AREAS RE. 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23R		\$114,944.87		\$114,944.87
STP - URBANIZED - TEA21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	Q230		\$473,492.22		\$473,492.22
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M230		\$4,556.42		\$4,556.42
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M23E		\$657,165.92		\$657,165.92
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST EXT 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z23E	\$22,708,728.00	\$22,708,728.00		\$22,708,728.00
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z230		\$18,911,743.83	\$1,288,632.94	\$17,623,110.89
TOTAL STP/STBG	-	\$22,708,728.00	\$43,976,391.26	\$2,001,615.99	\$41,974,775.27



TABLE C

**STATUS OF FUNDS - NEW ORLEANS
AS OF 09/30/2021**

FUND	CODE	FY - 2021 APPORTIONMENT	AVAILABLE FY - 2021	OBLIGATIONS FY - TO - DATE	UNOBLIGATED BALANCE
STP- URBANIZED AREAS>200,000 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L230		\$3,592.23		\$3,592.23
STP- URBANIZED AREAS S-LU EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23E		\$1,102,167.77	\$800,580.60	\$301,587.17
STP-URBANIZED AREAS RE. 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23R		\$114,944.87	\$7,905.06	\$107,039.81
STP - URBANIZED - TEA21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	Q230		\$473,492.22	\$263,552.12	\$209,940.10
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M230		\$4,556.42		\$4,556.42
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M23E		\$657,165.92	\$569,382.42	\$87,783.50
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST EXT 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z23E	\$22,708,728.00	\$22,708,728.00	\$3,521,281.85	\$19,187,446.15
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z230		\$18,911,743.83	\$8,973,113.14	\$9,938,630.69
TOTAL STP/STBG	-	\$22,708,728.00	\$43,976,391.26	\$14,135,815.19	\$29,840,576.07

Summary of Local STP>200K Project Advancement in FY 2021

14: Local Projects Budgeted/Programmed in the STIP for FY 2021

04: Number of those Budgeted/Programmed Projects Obligated in 2021

10: Projects Not Programmed for 2021, but Obligated in FY 2021

At the end of FY21, fourteen local projects were programmed in the STIP for 2021. Of those projects, four were obligated in FY21 and ten were not. Funds were obligated for a different set of ten projects that were not originally programmed for 2021. Six of those were programmed in the STIP for either 2019 or 2020. The remaining four were originally programmed in a previous STIP. One project de-obligated funds.

Summary of the Use of Local STP>200K Funds in FY 2021

\$41,974,775: Local STP>200K Unobligated Balance Beginning of FY 2021

\$17,807,253: Amount Budgeted/Programmed for FY 2021

\$8,688,780: Total Amount Obligated in FY 2021

\$29,840,576: Unobligated Balance End of FY 2021



TABLE II

New Orleans

FY22

Local Projects Budgeted in STIP Fiscal Year 2022 with STP>200K (STBG>200K) Funds

Compared to Local Projects and Funds Obligated in FY22

Using the last version of the 2019-2022 STIP at the end of FY22

Project #	Project Name	Improvement	STIP FY	Sponsor: STIP	Sponsor: Obligation List	FY22 Cost Final STIP for FY22	Other FY Cost Final STIP for FY22	FY22 Obligations
1 H.010570.6	LA 49/WILLIAMS BLVD CORRIDOR IMPROVS	ACCESS MANAGEMENT/SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS, BIKE LANES, SIDEWALKS	22	KENNER	DOTD, KENNER	\$5,974,320.00	0	\$6,164,632.19
2 H.013842.6	CAUSEWAY BLVD - EARHART EXPRESSWAY PH 1A	REHABILITATION BRIDGE, ROAD, ADD ON RAMP	22	DOTD, Jefferson	DOTD,	\$13,943,600.00	0	\$16,790,168.74
3 H.013525.6	ST. BERNARD PARISH 40 ARPENT TRAIL, PH 1	CONSTRUCTION OF A 8.5 MILE X 10' WIDE, MULTI-USE TRAIL	22	DOTD, St. Bernard	ST. BERNARD	\$4,005,760.00	0	\$5,727,208.03
4 H.014368.5	IC RR XINGS (NEW SARPY)	UPGRADE RR CROSSINGS TO GATES	22	St. Charles	ST. CHARLES	\$20,000.00	0	\$21,000.00
5 H.007181.6	L&A ROAD IMPROVEMENTS	NEW ROADWAY AND ALIGNMENT	22	Jefferson	-	\$3,960,000.00	0	0
6 H.007214.6	EAST AMES BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENTS	WIDEN FROM 2 TO 3 LANES	22	Jefferson	-	\$6,512,000.00	0	0
7 H.012012.6	RIDGEWOOD/STROELITZ (AIRLINE TO LOUMOR)	CONCRETE OVERLAY	22	JEFFERSON	-	\$1,826,000.00	0	0
8 H.012885.2	LA 466: 5TH ST IMPROVEMENTS (GRETNA)	BIKE LANES, MULTI-USE PATHS, ADA SIDEWALKS	22	GRETNA	-	\$8,000.00	0	0
9 H.012885.5	LA 466: 5TH ST IMPROVEMENTS (GRETNA)	BIKE LANES, MULTI-USE PATHS, ADA SIDEWALKS	22	GRETNA	-	\$220,000.00	0	0
10 H.007274.6	MAGAZINE ST (EAST DRIVE TO NASHVILLE)	REHABILITATION	22	NEW ORLEANS	-	\$2,640,000.00	0	0
11 H.013150.6	ANDREW HIGGINS: MAGAZINE TO CONVENTION	ROADWAY REHABILITATION, SIDEWALK AND	22	ORLEANS	-	\$1,899,040.00	0	0
12 H.014344.4	LA 428 PHASE 1:BEHRMAN AVE TO MERRILL ST	BIKE LANES	22	DOTD, New Orleans	-	\$40,000.00	0	0
13 H.014344.6	LA 428 PHASE 1:BEHRMAN AVE TO MERRILL ST	BIKE LANES	22	DOTD, New Orleans	-	\$2,466,640.00	0	0
14 H.014345.6	LA 428 PHASE 2: MERRILL ST TO WILTZ LN	ACCESS MANAGEMENT FOR BIKE/PED/TRANSIT	22	DOTD, New Orleans	-	\$2,354,000.00	0	0
15 H.012752.6	LA 46 @ WEINBERGER RD INTERSECTION	INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT	22	DOTD, PORT OF ST BERNARD	-	\$1,183,600.00	0	0
16 H.013936.6	40 ARPENT TRAIL BIKE/PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE	GRADE SEPARATION TRAIL - BIKE/PED BRIDGE	22	DOTD, St. Bernard	-	\$4,364,800.00	0	0
17 H.014050.6	WILLOWDALE BLVD: US 90 - E. HEATHER DR.	PAVEMENT REHAB, TURN LANE	22	DOTD, St. Charles	-	\$325,600.00	0	0
18 H.014051.6	LAKEWOOD DR. RECONSTRUCTION	RECONSTRUCTION	22	DOTD, St. Charles	-	\$3,520,000.00	0	0
19 H.013239.6	US 61: LA 3188 TO LA 44 SIDEWALKS	BIKE/PED IMPROVEMENTS	22	St. John	-	\$2,904,000.00	0	0
20 H.014368.6	IC RR XINGS (NEW SARPY)	UPGRADE RR CROSSINGS TO GATES	22	St. Charles	ST. CHARLES	\$825,000.00	0	0
21 H.011731.6	W. ESPLANADE BRIDGES @ DUNCAN CANAL	BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	19	-	KENNER	0	\$7,993,920.00	\$72,738.90
22 H.012373.6	ML KING BLVD: S CLAIBORNE - ST. CHARLES	REHABILITATION ASPHALT OVERLAY AND ADA COMPLIANT CURBS	21	-	NEW ORLEANS	0	\$3,344,000.00	\$1,055,969.83
23 H.007175.6	LAPALCO (VICTORY - WESTWOOD)	Widening to 6 lanes	-	-	JEFFERSON	0	0	-\$783,193.62
24 H.007175.3	LAPALCO (VICTORY - WESTWOOD)	Widening to 6 lanes	-	-	JEFFERSON	0	0	-\$7,818.64
25 H.007265.6	ST CHARLES AVE (LA AVE-CALLIOPE ST)	Overlay	-	-	NEW ORLEANS	0	0	\$10,260.13
26 H.007271.6	CANAL BLVD (R.E. LEE - AMETHYST)	Reconstruct Existing 4 Lane Divided	-	-	NEW ORLEANS	0	0	\$157,257.24
27 H.010973.6	VETERANS BLVD LIGHTING(AIRPORT-LOYOLA)	Roadway Lighting	-	-	KENNER	0	0	\$26,395.32
28 H.011457.6	WILLIAMS/US61 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS	Intersection Enhancements	-	-	DOTD, KENNER	0	0	-\$66,898.52
Totals →						\$58,992,360.00		\$29,167,719.60

Total Local STP>200K Budgeted for FY 2022: **\$58,992,360.00**

Total Local STP>200K Obligated for FY 2022: **\$29,167,719.60**

Difference: **\$29,824,640.40**



TABLE D

**STATUS OF FUNDS - NEW ORLEANS
AS OF 10/31/2021**

FUND	CODE	FY - 2022	AVAILABLE	OBLIGATIONS	UNOBLIGATED
		APPORTIONMENT	FY - 2022	FY - TO - DATE	BALANCE
STP- URBANIZED AREAS>200,000 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L230		\$3,592.23		\$3,592.23
STP- URBANIZED AREAS S-LU EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23E		\$301,587.17	\$157,257.24	\$144,329.93
STP-URBANIZED AREAS RE. 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23R		\$107,039.81		\$107,039.81
STP - URBANIZED - TEA21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	Q230		\$209,940.10		\$209,940.10
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M230		\$4,556.42		\$4,556.42
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M23E		\$87,783.50		\$87,783.50
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST EXT 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z23E	\$1,931,996.00	\$21,119,442.15		\$21,119,442.15
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z230		\$9,938,630.69	\$72,738.90	\$9,865,891.79
TOTAL STP/STBG	-	\$1,931,996.00	\$31,772,572.07	\$229,996.14	\$31,542,575.93

TABLE E

**STATUS OF FUNDS - NEW ORLEANS
AS OF 09/30/2022**

FUND	CODE	FY - 2022	AVAILABLE	OBLIGATIONS	UNOBLIGATED
		APPORTIONMENT	FY - 2022	FY - TO - DATE	BALANCE
STP- URBANIZED AREAS>200,000 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L230		3,592.23	3,592.23	
STP- URBANIZED AREAS S-LU EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23E		301,587.17	301,587.17	
STP-URBANIZED AREAS RE. 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	L23R		107,039.81	107,039.81	
STP - URBANIZED - TEA21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	Q230		209,940.10	68,853.32	141,086.78
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M230		4,556.42	4,556.42	
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 EXT 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	M23E		87,783.50	87,783.50	
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST EXT 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z23E		19,187,446.15	12,947,810.05	6,239,636.10
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z230		9,220,630.69	7,599,140.83	1,621,489.86
STBG-URBANIZED >200K IJJA 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Y230	25,084,220.00	25,084,220.00	16,790,168.74	8,294,051.26
TOTAL STP/STBG	-	25,084,220.00	54,206,796.07	37,910,532.07	16,296,264.00



TABLE F

**STATUS OF FUNDS - LOUISIANA
AS OF 10/31/2022**

FUND	CODE	FY - 2023	AVAILABLE	OBLIGATIONS	UNOBLIGATED
		APPORTIONMENT	FY - 2023	FY - TO - DATE	BALANCE
STP - URBANIZED - TEA21 00022 - NEW ORLEANS	Q230		\$141,086.78	-\$7,693.81	\$148,780.59
STP-URBANIZED >200K MAP-21 00085 - SHREVEPORT	M230		\$6,500,988.54		\$6,500,988.54
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST EXT 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z23E		\$6,239,636.10		\$6,239,636.10
STBG-URBANIZED >200K FAST 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Z230		\$1,621,489.86	-\$266,308.33	\$1,887,798.19
STBG-URBANIZED >200K IJJA 62677 - New Orleans, LA	Y230	\$25,585,904.00	\$33,879,955.26		\$33,879,955.26
TOTAL STP/STBG	-	\$25,585,904.00	\$48,383,156.54	-\$274,002.14	\$48,657,158.68

Summary of Local STP>200K Project Advancement in FY 2022

20: Local Projects Budgeted/Programmed in the STIP for FY 2022

04: Number of those Budgeted/Programmed Projects Obligated in 2022

05: Projects Not Programmed for 2022, but Obligated in FY 2022

At the end of FY22, twenty local projects were programmed in the STIP for 2022. Of those projects, four were obligated in FY 2022 and the remaining sixteen were not. Funds were obligated for five projects that were not originally programmed for 2022. Of those, one was programmed in the STIP for 2019 and one for 2021. The remaining three were originally programmed in a previous STIP. Three projects de-obligated funds.

Summary of the Use of Local STP>200K Funds in FY 2022

\$31,542,576: Local STP>200K Unobligated Balance Beginning of FY 2022

\$58,992,360: Amount Budgeted/Programmed for FY 2022

\$29,167,720: Total Amount Obligated in FY 2022

\$16,296,264: Unobligated Balance End of FY 2022



6.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

This section summarizes the opportunities that FHWA and FTA provided for comment on the transportation planning process and the comments received.

The FTA Region 6 Director of Planning and Program Development and the FHWA Louisiana Division Deputy Division Administrator sent a letter to Chair of the Transportation Policy Committee, Mr. Matthew Jewell (St. Charles Parish President), on January 20, 2023, notifying him of the certification review site visit, including the public listening session, and inviting him and any other transportation planning process participants to attend. The letter also offered Mr. Jewell and other local elected officials the opportunity to meet separately with FHWA and/or FTA staff. Staff at the MPO and LADOTD were copied on the letter.

In addition, FTA staff sent an email directly to transit agency contacts inviting them to the site visit and requesting input.

A general notice inviting participation in the public listening session and with instructions for submitting written comments was sent to the MPO's contact list and published on the home page of the RPC's website. The notice was also distributed to all in attendance at the TPC meeting prior to the site visit. See Appendix D for all notices.

The public listening session, held on January 31, 2023, was facilitated by the FHWA review team. The team provided a sign-in sheet, public speaker cards, and comment cards. One person attended, an engineer from the Jefferson Parish the Capital Projects Department, Mr. Neil Schneider. FHWA staff, with the aid of a slideshow, presented information on the metropolitan planning process and then invited comments.

Mr. Schneider provided several remarks regarding transportation planning and the project delivery process. Regarding planning, he explained that Jefferson Parish has an adequate opportunity to participate in the planning process. He added that every year he sends a letter to LADOTD describing the Parish's priorities. Currently, their first priority is to finish the widening of I-10 through Jefferson Parish. He also stated that Jefferson Parish would like another crossing of the Mississippi River and proposed including it in the MTP and undertaking a feasibility study.

No written comments were received during the listening session.

A written comment was emailed to FTA from a consultant working for Tangipahoa Parish, Mr. John Dardis. He stated that Tangipahoa Parish would like to continue with their agreement with the MPO to provide public input services for FTA planning and other efforts to advance transit services. See Appendices E & F for the public listening session sign-in sheet and the complete account of comments received.



7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

Jointly, FHWA and FTA find that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted for the New Orleans UZA and associated MPA substantially meets Federal planning requirements. The New Orleans MPO planning process is certified.

7.2 Commendation

4.5 Transportation Improvement Program

C1. The MPO staff are acknowledged and applauded for instituting a signature policy for TIP amendment descriptions and TPC meeting minutes. Not only does this provide evidence of authenticity, but it also helps the amendment process to proceed more efficiently.

7.3 Recommendations & Proposed Assistance

The following recommendations (R) are provided to help improve the planning process. Refer to the status portions of the corresponding Program Review sections for observations to support these recommendations. “PA” is proposed assistance.

4.1 MPO Structure and Agreements

R1. In the next planning agreement, coordinate with LADOTD to develop a provision describing the preparation of the annual listing of obligated projects including any needed coordination or assistance.

R2. In the next planning agreement, coordinate with LADOTD to include more detail on data, such as the types of data to be used, parties responsible for collecting or obtaining each type of data, and a commitment to share the data.

R3. In the next planning agreement, coordinate with LADOTD to include a description of the collection of data for the State’s NHS asset management plan.

4.2 Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

PA1. If the MPO staff decides to pursue an expansion of the MPA boundary to include the New Orleans, Hammond, Mandeville-Covington, and Slidell UZAs, FHWA and FTA can help with any technical or funding concerns. FHWA staff can look for examples in other states regarding how funds attributable to multiple and different UZAs that are all encompassed by one MPA boundary are allotted by contract or agreement and documented in the USDOT’s Financial



Management and Information Systems. FHWA can also help identify the pros and cons of different allotment strategies.

4.3 Unified Planning Work Program and Progress & Expenditure Reports

R4. The MPO staff should strive to submit the UPWP progress and expenditure reports to LADOTD by the due dates.

R5. The LADOTD staff and the MPO staff should work together to develop a UPWP performance and expenditure report format that meets the requirements of the CFR.

PA2. FHWA and FTA staff are assisting the LADOTD in the development of guidance for the UPWP performance and expenditure reports. We hope that MPO staff will take advantage of any guidance offered by LADOTD. In particular, beginning on July 13, 2023, LADOTD will host quarterly meetings for MPOs to provide information on meeting LADOTD, FTA, and FHWA requirements, and to discuss topics proposed by the MPOs. Please consider participating. In addition, LADOTD staff emailed performance and expenditure report guidance to the MPOs on May 10, 2023. Please review this guidance and then address any questions to LADOTD, FHWA, and FTA.

4.5 Transportation Improvement Program

R6. In the next TIP, include regionally significant projects that are not funded by FHWA and FTA, even if no action is required by FHWA and FTA. And indicate which projects are the regionally significant projects included per 23 CFR 450.326(f).

R7. In the next TIP, add a section that describes progress in implementing the MTP. Identify changes in priorities from previous TIPs (or state explicitly that the priorities remain the same), identify major projects implemented from the previous TIP, and identify significant delays of major projects (or state explicitly that no major projects were significantly delayed).

PA3. FHWA and FTA staff are supporting LADOTD staff in the development of TIP guidance, which will include information on meeting Federal requirements. We hope that MPO staff will take advantage of any guidance offered by LADOTD. In particular, beginning on July 13, 2023, LADOTD will host quarterly meetings for MPOs to provide information on meeting LADOTD, FTA, and FHWA requirements, and to discuss topics proposed by the MPOs. Please consider participating.

4.6 Public Participation

R8. Ensure the final PPP meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), 23 CFR 450.324(j), and 23 CFR 450.326(b), as summarized above in section 4.3.1. For the MTP and TIP in particular, address the following in the PPP:



- Describe how the MTP and TIP will demonstrate explicit consideration of and response to public input. You may specify a format you prefer, but an example might be an appendix that includes a summary identifying dominant themes and responses from MPO staff and the TPC, or a spreadsheet including all comments and responses.
- Provide guidance on the types of information commonly included in the MTP and TIP that would benefit from visualization techniques. Identify feasible visualization techniques that may be efficacious or suitable for different explanatory purposes.

For all parts of the metropolitan transportation planning process, but especially with regards to the MTP, TIP, and PPP, address the following in the PPP:

- Describe procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for public participation, including for individuals, disadvantaged communities, stakeholders, and organizations.
- Identify key points when participation and comment opportunities should be provided, the minimum length of public comment periods, and the minimum amount of notice to provide.
- Identify documents and types of information that the MPO staff should post on the website. Reference the MPO Website Checklist sent to you by LADOTD in November 2020.

R9. Forward a copy of the new approved PPP to FHWA and FTA and post the plan to your website, per 23 CFR 450.316(a)(3), by May 31, 2024. If MPO staff would, please send a final draft to FHWA and FTA for review prior to TPC consideration.

PA4. FHWA can provide examples of PPPs that meet requirements, additional written guidance, and/or arrange for a training class or a peer exchange. If the MPO staff thinks such assistance will be helpful, please contact FHWA Louisiana Division office staff.



APPENDIX A – SITE VISIT PARTICIPANTS

The following people participated in the New Orleans MPO on-site review meeting held on January 31, 2023, and February 1, 2023:

- FHWA, Louisiana Division

Mary Stringfellow, Program Delivery Team Leader
Laura Phillips, Transportation Planner
Betsey Tramonte, Transportation Safety Specialist
John Broemmelsiek, Intelligent Systems/Traffic Operations Engineer

- FTA Region, Region 6

Michelle Bloomer, Community Planner*
Ronisha Hodge, Community Planner*

- MPO

Jeff Roesel, Executive Director
Jason Sappington, Deputy Director
Karen Parsons, Principal Planner
Lynn Dupont, Principal Planner/GIS Manager
Tom Haysley, Principal Planner
Leslie Couvillion, GIS Coordinator/Senior Planner
Malissa Dietsch-Givhan, Public Outreach Coordinator
Chris LaBorde, Senior Transportation & Incident Management Planner

- LADOTD

Mary Elliott Bergeron, Transportation Planning Administrator
Dawn Sholmire, Statewide Planning Engineer
Tina Athalone, Urban Program Manager/Coordinated Human Services Planning*

*Attended virtually



APPENDIX B – SITE VISIT AGENDA

New Orleans Certification Review Site Visit

Agenda

Tuesday, January 31st-Wednesday, February 1st, 2023

Regional Transportation Management Center

10 Veterans Memorial Blvd New Orleans, LA

Tuesday

Time	Topic	Discussion Lead
8:30-8:45	Convene; Welcome	Laura Phillips, FHWA
8:45-9:00	Introductions & Purpose	Laura Phillips, FHWA
9:00-10:00	Organization A. Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries B. Transportation Policy Board C. Agreements, Policies, Bylaws	Laura Phillips, FHWA
10:00-10:45	Public & Stakeholder Participation	Laura Phillips, FHWA
10:45-11:15	Equity	Laura Phillips, FHWA
11:15-11:45	Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including PBPP	Laura Phillips, FHWA
11:45-1:00	Lunch Break	
1:00-1:45	Transportation Improvement Program including PBPP	Laura Phillips, FHWA
1:45-2:30	Congestion Management Process	John Broemmelsiek, FHWA
2:30-3	Intelligent Transportation Systems Regional Architecture	John Broemmelsiek, FHWA
3-3:45	Safety, including Regional Coalition	Betsey Tramonte, FHWA
3:45-4:30	Financial Planning	Ronisha Hodge & Michelle Bloomer, FTA
4:30-4:45	Other Business; Wrap-Up; Adjourn	Laura Phillips, FHWA
4:45-5:00	Break	
5:00-5:30	Public Listening Session: Set-up and Convene (10 Veterans Memorial Blvd)	
5:30-6:30	Public Listening Session: Presentation and Public Comment (10 Veterans Memorial Blvd)	Laura Phillips, FHWA
6:30-7:00	Public Listening Session: Wrap-Up	



Wednesday

Time	Topic	Discussion Lead
8:30-8:45	Introductions	Laura Phillips, FHWA
8:45-9:30	UPWP, including Progress Reports	Laura Phillips, FHWA & Dawn Sholmire, LADOTD
9:30-10:00	Security	Laura Phillips, FHWA
10:00-10:30	Other Business; Wrap-Up; Adjourn	Laura Phillips, FHWA



APPENDIX C - STATUS OF FINDINGS FROM LAST REVIEW

One of the priorities of each certification review is assessing how well the planning partners in the area have addressed corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification review. This section includes the findings from the previous certification review report, from 2019, and summarizes responses.

Review Area	Finding	Description CA: Corrective Action, C: Commendation, R: Recommendation	RPC Staff Response
Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries 23 U.S.C. 134(e) 23 CFR 450.312(a)	Compliant		
MPO Structure and Agreements 23 U.S.C. 134(d) 23 CFR 450.314(a)	Not Compliant	CA1. Based on 23 USC 134(d)(2), one of two courses of action shall be implemented. One, the RPC Board membership shall be revised to include "officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, including representation by providers of public transportation." Or two, the RPC shall amend its By-laws to make the TPC the final decision-making body for MPO matters. Evidence of this action shall be provided to FHWA by October 31, 2019.	RPC staff presented new bylaws to meet the requirements of 23 USC 134(d)(2) for consideration to the RPC Board and the TPC. On 9/10/19 RPC Board and the TPC voted to amend the agency bylaws. In these 2019 Bylaws, the TPC is identified as the final decision-making body for federal transportation. Other changes were made to clarify the rules of order, open meeting laws, selection of officers, and Parish membership.
		R1. Since the RPC Board currently acts on MPO matters, it is important for the RPC's By-Laws, agreements, establishment ordinances, and website to concur on the parishes participating and the members seated on the Board. The list of parishes and positions that are afforded seats on the RPC Board should be corrected in the By-Laws and all other documents should agree with it.	See response for CA1.



		<p>R2. The RPC should clearly and consistently present each MPO as an individual organization. Each MPO should produce and publish their own set of planning products including the UPWP, PIP, and List of Obligated Projects. At the least, the planning products should explicitly identify up front the MPOs to which the product applies. The List of Obligated Projects may be organized by parish, but the parishes should be organized by MPO. If the Slidell and Mandeville-Covington MPOs agree that their planning issues are similar enough to warrant collaborating on the MTP and TIP, then they should collaborate on their other planning products and documents as well. In the future, the certification reviews and assessments will be conducted for each individual MPO, so it should be easy to locate the planning products and information for the MPO in question.</p>	<p>The RPC staff has been presenting the MPO as one MPO serving four MPAs. The staff describe the TPC as the Federal transportation decision-making body for the MPO. RPC staff publish an MTP and TIP for each MPA. The UPWPs for each MPA are published together in one document with a separate chapter for each MPA. The Annual List of Obligated Projects is published as one document with a separate list for each MPA. One PIP is published.</p>
		<p>R3. The RPC website, By-Laws, and the Policies and Procedures Manual should be updated to agree on TPC membership, and the positions seated on the committee. The list of positions that are afforded seats on the TPC should be correct in the By-Laws and all other documents should concur with it.</p>	<p>There are some discrepancies between the website and the 2019 Bylaws. But this is because some parishes do not fill all of their seats, or they fill a seat with a different type of representative because they can't get the person filling the position named in the Bylaws to sit on the committee. The MPO staff encourage all parishes to fill all of their seats according to the Bylaws.</p>
		<p>R4. Update RPC By-Laws to include a description of the decision-making process to clarify to whom each committee makes their recommendations and which group is the final decision-maker for the MPOs.</p>	<p>See response for CA1.</p>



		R5. Create standard operating procedures (SOP) or bylaws for the TPC and TAC, including committee purpose, membership, the selection of officers, terms of office, officer duties, meeting schedule, call of special meetings, voting procedures, quorum, rules of order, SOP amendment procedures, preparation of action summaries or meeting minutes, committee's place in the MPO decision-making process, etc. It would be good practice to create separate bylaw documents for each committee and post them on the website.	The 2019 Bylaws adopted in response to CA1 address the procedures for the RPC, TPC, TAC, and the Budget and Personnel Committee. The 2019 Bylaws are not posted on the website.
		R6. The organizational relationships and the associated transportation decision-making process between the RPC Board, TPC, TAC and the four MPOs is unclear. Create a diagram that illustrates their hierarchal connections and each group's position in transportation decision-making process. To aid in transparency, share this diagram with LADOTD Planning Section and FHWA and post it to your website.	A diagram was created and included in the 23-24 UPWP.
Unified Planning Work Program 23 CFR 450.308	Compliant		
Metropolitan Transportation Plan 23 U.S.C. 134(c),(h)&(i) 23 CFR 450.324	Compliant	R7. Greater use of mapping and other visualization techniques in the Northshore MTPs would aid the public in understanding existing conditions and proposed plans.	The 2052 MTPs for the Northshore MPAs, adopted 8/9/22, each include a map of the planning area, a diagram of the project development and selection process, and a few trendline and bar charts.
		R8. Prior to the next MTP public outreach efforts, consider reviewing the previous public involvement work to determine other strategies for reaching minority and low-income residents, and residents in parishes other than Orleans and Jefferson.	Previous public involvement work was reviewed, and a new strategy was employed in the development of MTP 2052, adopted 8/9/22.



		R9. Future MTPs should discuss how the proposed projects impact regional and local environmental assets and functions. It should also suggest possible policies, programs, and strategies to mitigate the impacts. See 23 CFR 450.324(f)(10).	A chapter titled Natural Environment was included in the MTP 2052, adopted 8/9/22.
		C1. The MPOs are commended for the thorough explanation of the performance-based planning activities that is provided in the new MTPs, and for planning to assess performance annually with the publication of Annual Performance Reports.	
Transit Planning49 U.S.C. 530323 U.S.C. 13423 CFR 450.314	Not Compliant	Refer to the corrective action under MPO Structure and Agreements in section 4.2.3.	See response for CA1.
		C2. The RPC is commended for spearheading the production of multiple planning products on behalf of transit providers and remaining actively involved with transit agencies and their plans.	
Transportation Improvement Program 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(h)&(j) 23 CFR 450.326	Compliant	R10. Update the Policies and Procedures Manual to clarify which Project Ranking Scorecard (Policies and Procedures Manual and MTP) should be used under which circumstances.	According to the project selection process described in the MTP, a project ranking scorecard is no longer used.
		C3. The effort to link the projects in the TIPs to achievement of performance targets is commended.	
Public Participation 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6) 23 CFR 450.316 & 450.326(b)	Compliant	R11. Update the PIP to address visualization techniques, as described in 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(iii), more explicitly and completely.	Visualization is not addressed in the 2022 PPP. But staff report that the PPP is not final and will be updated.
		R12. Update the PIP to define what is considered “adequate” notice. You may choose to include notices for standard meetings and notices for specially-called meetings.	2022 PPP defines the notice for public hearings, but not for public meetings including those of the TPC. However, the new 2019 Bylaws (see CA1), include the notice requirements for TPC meetings.



		C4. The MPOs' staff is commended for approaching social media carefully and thoughtfully by preparing policy guidance.	
Civil Rights Title VI Civil Rights Act 23 U.S.C. 324 Age Discrimination Act Sec. 504 Rehabilitation Act Americans with Disabilities Act	Compliant	R13. Once Nik Richard's position is filled, all Title VI Plan documentation where Mr. Richard's name was noted will need to be updated.	The 2022 Title VI document includes the name of the new Title VI Coordinator.
		C5. The MPOs are complimented for efforts involving advisory committees and the use of social media outlets when appropriate.	
		C6. The MPOs are complimented for their annual DBE Goal. Historically, the DBE goal was around 18%. In coordination with the DBE community and LADOTD, the RPC conducted an analysis based on historical data and raised the DBE goal to 21%.	
		C7. The MPOs are commended for their proactive measures to reach out to LEP populations.	
Consultation and Coordination 23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i) 23 CFR 450.316 23 CFR 450.324(g)	Compliant		
List of Obligated Projects 23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7) 23 CFR 450.334	Compliant	R14. In the next List of Obligated Projects, include the amount of funds requested in the TIP and the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years.	The Annual Lists of Obligated Projects now include this amount of funds requested in the TIP and the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years.
Freight 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 CFR 450.306	Compliant	C8. The New Orleans MPO is commended on including freight as a weighted element to the MTP/TIP project selection process, ranking and scoring. The MPO does a great job in identifying freight needs and incorporating projects into the TIP.	



Transportation Safety 23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(B) 23 CFR 450.306(a)(2) 23 CFR 450.306(d) 23 CFR 450.324(h)	Compliant	C9. The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission has fully embraced the implementation of the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan through the support of two regional safety coalitions to service their eight-parish area and the employment of two full time staff members solely dedicated to transportation safety planning.	
		C10. Safety impacts are considered on all projects using a weighted scoring methodology. Basic crash analysis is also included in the scope of work for feasibility studies.	
Nonmotorized Planning/Livability 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 U.S.C. 217(g) 23 CFR 450.306 23 CFR 450.3224f)(2)	Compliant	C11. The New Orleans MPO is commended for elevating pedestrian and cyclist planning from a specialized endeavor to a standard component of a multi-modal transportation planning process.	
Travel Demand Forecasting 23 CFR 450.324(f)(1)	Compliant	R15. The MPOs should consider developing their own regional specific household travel surveys at least every ten years, to analyze travel behavior and patterns of trips made within and outside of the urbanized areas. This creates an opportunity to monitor origins (home base or non-home based) and destinations (work, school shopping, etc.) of household and the timeliness of trips along corridors and the number of trips per week. In addition, the MPOs could monitor how these trips impact congestion, safety, land use and the environment based on demographic factors like age, income, ethnicity, and household size. This effort can be funded with Metropolitan Planning (PL), State Planning and Research (SPR), and STP funds, as well as FTA 5303 funds. The Louisiana FHWA	



		Division in cooperation with FHWA's Office Highway Policy Information can assist the MPOs in these efforts. The MPOs could join FHWA's National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) Pooled funded program to develop origin and destination products that are specific to the region.	
Congestion Management Process/ITS/Management and Operations 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) 23 CFR 450.322 23 CFR 940.5 23 CFR 450.324(f)(5)	Compliant	C12. The New Orleans MPO actively pursues operational projects and strategies that can significantly improve the operational performance of the region's transportation network. The MPO staff is very knowledgeable of operational planning and the systems engineering process used to develop projects. The MPO coordinates closely with all regional stakeholders and takes a leadership role in planning for transportation systems management and operations.	
		R16. The New Orleans MPO should emphasize the development, implementation, and use of specific performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of current and future operational strategies. The strategic development and use of measurable goals and objectives by critical stakeholders should be encouraged.	The CMP document published on the website was developed in advance of MTP 2052 and includes four regionally selected measures.
Financial Planning 23 CFR 450.324 (g)(11) 23 CFR 450.326 (j)	Compliant		
Self-Certification 23 CFR 450.336	Compliant		



Performance Based Planning 23 CFR 450.306 23 CFR part 490 23 U.S.C. 150(c) 49 U.S.C. 5326(c) 49 U.S.C. 5329(d)	Compliant	C13. The MPOs are commended for addressing performance management in their three primary planning products: MTPs, TIPs, and UPWPs.	
Financial Billing Review FHWA Order 4560.1C	Compliant	C14. The RPC financial staff has outstanding record keeping files. With the additional approval levels for times cards and invoices, the review is a much easier process. The financial standard operating procedures will make the transition easier for a new person to be able to step right in and do business as usual.	



APPENDIX D – NOTICES



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

FHWA Louisiana Division Office
5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808
(225) 757-7600
(225) 757-7601 (Fax)

Federal Transit Administration
819 Taylor Street, Suite 14A02
Fort Worth, TX 76102
(817) 978-0550
(817)-978-0575 (Fax)

January 19, 2023

Matthew L. Jewell
President & Transportation Policy Committee Chairman
New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization
C/O: St. Charles Parish Government
P.O. Box 302
Hahnville, LA 70057

Subject: New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization Federal Certification Review

Dear President Jewell:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will conduct the meeting for the certification review of the Federal transportation planning process for the New Orleans metropolitan planning area on **January 31-February 1, 2023**, at the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission office. These dates were selected in consultation with the staff serving the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as their participation is required. The review will begin on the morning of **January 31st** and will evaluate the cooperative planning process as conducted by the local area governments, public transportation operators, and the State. You and all participants in the transportation planning process are welcome to attend the review meeting.

In addition, FHWA will provide an opportunity for the public, including members of special interest groups and MPO committees, to talk directly with FHWA staff during a listening session to hear comments on the Federal transportation planning process as conducted in the New Orleans metropolitan planning area. This meeting is scheduled for **January 31, 2023**, at 5:30PM at the Regional Transportation Management Center. Also, any Transportation Policy Committee members or other local elected officials are welcome to request a separate meeting with FHWA and/or FTA staff.

Federal transportation law requires the certification of the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 in population once every four years. The certification review will result in a report that will identify corrective actions in cases of non-compliance with Federal law and regulations, opportunities for improvements, and/or best practices. The review will rely on knowledge that FHWA and FTA gained through document reviews and routine experience with the New Orleans planning process, as well as the on-site meeting. Topics for the on-site meeting include:



- Status of corrective actions and/or recommendations issued in the previous certification review report dated May 15, 2019
- MPO Organization and Planning Area
- Congestion Management Process
- Public Participation
- Equity
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (including Performance Based Planning and Programming)
- Transportation Improvement Program (including Performance Based Planning and Programming)
- Financial Planning
- Unified Planning Work Program (including progress reports)
- Safety
- Intelligent Transportation System Regional Architecture
- Security

If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact Laura Phillips with FHWA at (225) 757-7622 or laura.phillips@dot.gov and/or Michelle Bloomer with FTA at 817.978.0570 or michelle.bloomer@dot.gov.

Sincerely yours,

DAVID EDMUND
BARTELS

Digitally signed by DAVID
EDMUND BARTELS
Date: 2023.01.20
09:20:22 -06'00'

David Bartels
Director of Planning & Program Development
Federal Transit Administration

RAEGAN M
BALL

Digitally signed by
RAEGAN M BALL
Date: 2023.01.20
11:40:06 -06'00'

Raegan M. Ball
Deputy Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

cc: Jeff Roesel, RPC
Jason Sappington, RPC
Mary Elliott-Bergeron, LDOTD
Dawn Sholmire, LDOTD
S. Michelle Home, LDOTD
Tina Athalone, LDOTD
Michelle Bloomer, FTA



U.S. Department of Transportation

Notice: **Open Public Meeting for the Federal Transportation Planning Process**

A public listening session is scheduled so that you may comment directly to Federal staff on the Federal transportation planning process as conducted in the New Orleans area (see map below).

Time: 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Date: January 31, 2023

Place: Regional Transportation Management Center
10 Veterans Blvd.
New Orleans, LA

This meeting is part of a joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) review of the local transportation planning process for compliance with Federal regulations. In the New Orleans area, the planning process is carried out by the New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization (hosted by the Regional Planning Commission) in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, local transit operators, and local units of government. Your comments are a valuable part of this review.

Disabled individuals requiring aids or assistance for the meeting should contact Laura Phillips with FHWA at laura.phillips@dot.gov or the Regional Planning Commission at (504) 483-8500.

If you cannot attend the meeting, send comments by **February 15, 2023**, to FHWA and/or FTA at:

FHWA Mailing Address:
Laura Phillips, Planner
Federal Highway Administration, LA Div.
5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

FTA Mailing Address:
Michelle Bloomer, Planner
Federal Transit Administration, Region 6
819 Taylor Street, Room 14A02
Fort Worth, TX 76102

FHWA Email Address:
laura.phillips@dot.gov

FTA Email Address:
michelle.bloomer@dot.gov

New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Area





From: Bloomer, Michelle (FTA) <michelle.bloomer@dot.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 1:41 PM

To: Alisa Maniger <amaniger@rtaforward.org>; jmmarino@stpgov.org; abecker@sbgp.net; nbarrios@jeffparish.net; Harrolynn Sherman <hsherman@pphtd.com>; missycowart@tangipahoa.org
Cc: pfelarise@stpgov.org; mbayham@sbgp.net; lprejean@ppgov.net; dardisj@bellsouth.net; Hodge, Ronisha (FTA) <ronisha.hodge@dot.gov>

Subject: New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Federal Certification Review - Tuesday, January 31 - Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Hello Transit Partners,

You are invited to attend the New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Certification Review meeting Tuesday, January 31 – Wednesday, February 1, 2023. During this review the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will be meeting with the MPO staff to assess the Transportation Planning Process. This review is similar in nature to the triennial review that you all are familiar with. There are certain topics during this review where your input could be beneficial, such as:

- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Development
- Performance Based Planning and Programming (includes Transit Asset Management)

Attached is a copy of the agenda for the review. Your attendance is not required, but your input is always appreciated and beneficial, especially in the key areas mentioned above. Please let us know if you will be able to attend or send a representative. If you are not able to attend, but would like to provide input, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you,

Michelle

Michelle Bloomer

Community Planner

Federal Transit Administration - Region VI | U.S. Department of Transportation

819 Taylor St Rm 14A02 | Fort Worth, TX 76102

office: 817.978.0570

Michelle.Bloomer@dot.gov | <http://www.transit.dot.gov/>



APPENDIX E – PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION SIGN-IN SHEET

New Orleans Certification Review Public Listening Session Sign-in Sheet

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Regional Transportation Management Center

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>	<u>E-mail Address</u>
1.	NEIL SCHNEIDER	JEFFERSON PARISH	504.736.6833	nschneider@jeffparish.net
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				



APPENDIX F – PUBLIC COMMENTS

FHWA staff recorded the following notes from Mr. Schneider's comments during the listening session:

Mr. Schneider indicated that Jefferson Parish has an adequate opportunity to participate in the MPO's planning process. He stated that his experience with the MPO is good, but he noted that it is challenging to work with different levels of government. For example, the design standards used on TIP projects can cause some delay, but the 80% match makes it worthwhile.

Mr. Schneider stated that he sends a letter to LADOTD every year describing Jefferson Parish's priorities. The first priority is to finish the widening of I-10 through Jefferson Parish. Another priority is another Mississippi River crossing. Currently the crossings available are the Huey P. Long Bridge with a landing in Jefferson Parish, the Crescent City Connection with a landing in downtown New Orleans, and the Algiers Ferry with a landing at Canal Street, again in downtown New Orleans. He proposed that maybe another crossing could be included in the MTP and studied for feasibility.

He also said that Jefferson Parish hired a consultant to help them with understanding and applying for discretionary grants made available by the IJJA.

The following written comment was emailed to FTA from a consultant working for Tangipahoa Parish.

From: JOHN DARDIS <dardisj@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 8:22 AM
To: Bloomer, Michelle (FTA) <michelle.bloomer@dot.gov>
Subject: Tangipahoa Parish interaction with RPC-MPO

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you for sending the invite Mr. Bloomer. Our urbanized program in Tangipahoa Parish seeks to annually coordinate with the RPC-MPO to invite public input into our planning and progress for FTA transit services. Our Parish has an agreement with the MPO to provide public input services and we want to continue this in the future. Thanks

John Dardis
985-507-5705
dardisj@bellsouth.net



APPENDIX G – CASE STUDY TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Case Study: New Orleans Regional Planning Commission's Data-Driven Approach to Transportation Equity (<https://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/NORPC-Equity-Case-Study-Final.pdf>)



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Notice: This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The United States Government assumes no liability for the contents or use thereof. The United States Government does not endorse products or manufacturers. Trade or manufacturers' names appear herein solely because they are considered essential to the objective of this report.

Case Study: New Orleans Regional Planning Commission's Data-Driven Approach to Transportation Equity

The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (NORPC) places equity at the core of its transportation planning, including it as one of the six primary goals in the [Greater New Orleans 2048 Metropolitan Transportation Plan](#) (MTP) and, most recently, in the [2052 MTP](#). Equity is a project prioritization element within the MTP to ensure that projects contribute to greater equity in the transportation system. NORPC works to ensure representation from all parts of the region's communities as it develops plans and projects. Drawing on insights gleaned from historically underserved and overburdened communities and findings from U.S. Census and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, NORPC created an evaluation methodology for identifying vulnerable populations in its [Title VI Plan](#), further demonstrating its commitment to equitable transportation delivery within the region.

NORPC leads a collaborative program with local transit authorities, [New Links](#), which started as a reimagining of the regional transit network. This builds on a long-term strategy of addressing equity through transit. It includes robust public engagement and origin-destination mapping that helps identify low-income and minority populations who most need transit. This program further demonstrates the commitment to partnership in making the New Orleans area a more equitable and connected community.

Background and Demographics

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC), a board made up of local elected officials and citizen members, represents the diverse 6-parish region of southeast Louisiana that includes New Orleans, and surrounding communities, on a range of planning issues and functions as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) known as NORPC.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- The [2048 MTP](#) included an initial project prioritization scorecard that quantified equity elements.
- The [2052 MTP](#) updates the process used in the 2048 MTP approach, establishing qualitative measures to evaluate equity considerations in project selection.
- The [NORPC Title VI Plan](#) outlines a methodology for identifying vulnerable populations.

IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

- NORPC established a definition of environmental justice based on demographic data from the American Community Survey (ACS).
- Through the New Links program, NORPC partners with regional transit agencies to rethink the transit network.
- To assess underserved areas, NORPC produced a metric combining CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) with in-house calculations.



Despite population declines after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, New Orleans remains Louisiana's most populated area, as of 2016, with an estimated 982,397 people. Just over half of the regional population (52%) is white, 40% is Black, 3% is Asian, and 9% is Hispanic. The regional median household income is \$48,476, ranging from \$37,488 to \$61,691 between parishes. Overall, 18% of persons in the region are in poverty, substantially higher than the national average.¹

Advancing Equitable Practices

Equitable Long-Range Planning

NORPC uses a data-driven approach with an equity lens to establish plans and priorities. The MPO primarily uses the decennial census data, drawing on the ACS for information on employment, households, and other demographics. NORPC aims to make its data universal and communicable for a broad audience.

To assess the attributes of different geographic areas of the community, NORPC initially used CDC's SVI alongside insights gleaned from a close working relationship with the Louisiana Department of Health. NORPC's public outreach coordinator, principal planner, and GIS manager worked together to create an overall definition of environmental justice using ACS data. SVI uses 2018 data at the tract level, which did not suit the granularity of NORPC's interventions. From the SVI, NORPC extrapolated a more targeted index for calculating social vulnerability. The MPO recalculated the SVI at smaller geographic units and redid the scoring using the 4-theme score and 15-layer score². The next round of the SVI will be updated soon with the Census 2020 numbers.

2048 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The [2048 MTP](#) vision statement outlines the broad concept of connecting people and places, held up by six goals to further clarify how the region will accomplish this: Safety, State of Good Repair, Livability, Stewardship, Economic Development, and Equity. The three objectives under the equity goal further detail the intent to avoid undue burden on disadvantaged populations, emphasize improvements in access and connectivity for "communities of need", and highlight the voices of the historically underserved or overburdened in planning processes³. According to the plan, 46 of the projects identified, or 21% of total planned projects, address the equity goal⁴.

Project prioritization in the 2048 MTP

The 2048 MTP includes a scorecard (see Appendix) created to assist in project selection by attributing value to each of the six project prioritization elements. Equity is one of the prioritization elements with up to 25 points awarded, out of a total of 150 points for all elements, giving equity equal weight to each other prioritization element. Negative impacts to vulnerable communities may deduct up to 10 points

¹ NORPC. 2019. "Greater New Orleans 2048: 2019-2048 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Area – Volume I -Final Report," (adopted 2019, amended 2021). [NO Safety Target MTP Amendment 2.9.21 \(norpc.org\)](#)

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid



Transportation Planning Capacity Building



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

from the overall equity score. A project must score a minimum of 15 equity points to be moved forward. The equity score is broken down into the following categories, each individually award up to five points:

- 1) new mobility options to communities of need,
- 2) traffic calming in areas of need,
- 3) new transportation amenities for a community of need,
- 4) project development with consultation of “potentially impacted residents”⁵
- 5) another method for achieving greater transportation equity.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2052: Advancing earlier equity efforts

The [2052 MTP](#) continues to emphasize equity as a key element of the vision for New Orleans. The scorecard in this new plan has been simplified from previous versions. After using the previous version for several years, NORPC recognized its attempt to quantify a very qualitative circumstance and, therefore, pulled back from the original, more rigid approach. The new, simplified system still scores projects with very similar categories but acts more as a categorization and evaluation tool than a traditional project prioritization scoring mechanism. The scorecard helps to determine how projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and MTP align with the goals and what adjustments need to be made to better align the vision and values with reality. The equity scorecard is an in-house tool created to provide tangible proof of NORPC’s commitment to equity. It quickly proved to be a valuable tool. The current combination of data and the revised scorecard provide powerful insights upon which NORPC bases priorities for funding and action. Moving toward an equity lens will guide project development and selection processes.

Environmental Justice Policy Impacts on NORPC’s Processes

In the past year, NORPC staff worked to gain understanding of the current Federal policies related to Environmental Justice (EJ). Moving forward, scoping processes and strategic planning efforts like the MTP will include these EJ policy priorities. Regarding public transit equity, targeted efforts, such as in-person surveying and input from community leaders, provide feedback from populations with the greatest needs. NORPC’s approach focused on the city at the neighborhood level, developing goals based on neighborhoods, finding actively engaged organizations in those neighborhoods to support the goals and be champions. To increase the effectiveness of this work, NORPC recently held staff training on entering communities and coordinating thoughtful input collection.

Title VI Plan

The [NORPC Title VI Plan](#) includes a “Methodology for Identification of Target Populations (Demographics) & Spatial Concentrations of Targeted Populations”. Drawing on data from the US Census Bureau, ACS, and Louisiana Department of Social Services, that applies to the smallest geographic unit available, NORPC identifies concentrations of the following groups: low income, Federal assistance recipients, minority, elderly, limited English proficiency (LEP) or English spoken as a second language, disabled populations, and zero car households. The mobility needs of these populations are incorporated into the planning process through data analyses as well as feedback from targeted outreach at frequented locations within these community areas, NORPC participation in community

⁵ NORPC. 2019. “Greater New Orleans 2048: 2019-2048 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Area – Volume I - Final Report,” (adopted 2019, amended 2021), p. B.7. [NO Safety Target MTP Amendment 2.9.21 \(norpc.org\)](#)



Transportation Planning Capacity Building



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

meetings, surveys, and communications and announcements about the planning process posted in multiple languages.

Public Participation during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic created additional challenges for public participation. Virtual platforms provided flexibility for some public participation processes; however, virtual meetings did not provide access to all depending on availability to internet access. The situation required creative solutions and community partnerships to reach the populations. However, the bus service never stopped, which provided a connection point for NORPC to reach the community at bus stops and major transfer centers. The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) partnered with NORPC, posting flyers and signs in the buses and hosted a call line for people to get information. From now on, NORPC aims to host at least two virtual meetings for all engagement processes. Meetings are recorded and published online with allowance for additional comments in the virtual comments box outside of the scheduled meeting time.

Stakeholder Collaboration

New Links

NORPC developed the [New Links](#) transit plan to “reimagine how public transit connects Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard parishes” and guide long-term planning and evaluation of the transit network. This collaborative planning effort, led by NORPC and bringing together the two largest transit authorities in the greater New Orleans region, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) and Jefferson Transit (JP Transit), committed to a network redesign, with equity at the core. Together, these agencies analyzed [origin-destination demographic data](#), [market trends and transit needs](#), and the overall [transit system](#) and engaged the community in [evaluation](#) and [concept development](#). To ensure receipt of representative feedback, NORPC tracked the demographics of respondents across the three parishes over time to adjust outreach as needed to include underrepresented groups. In conducting a service equity analysis, NORPC identified a need to ensure that improvements meet the needs of those that rely on transit, particularly low-income households, and those without access to a car.

New Orleans Paratransit Study

As a part of the New Links network redesign, NORPC partnered with the NORTA, JP Transit, and researchers from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute to conduct a [study of the paratransit services](#) in New Orleans. This study aimed to pinpoint opportunities for improvement in accessibility and connectivity leading to the development of recommendations within the New Links plan. Representatives from NORPC, NORTA, and JP Transit served on the Project Advisory Council (PAC) to support the study. The study team is using information from the PAC, stakeholder interviews, rider focus groups, and other forms of engagement to understand the experiences of community members using paratransit services. This study began in March 2022 and is expected to be completed in January 2023.

Next Steps

Refinement of Data and Tools

NORPC is investigating new ways to use the CDC’s SVI, and other tools, earlier in the planning process, instead of waiting until the end of the process to assess the impacts. Instead, NORPC aims to develop plans tailored to community needs from the beginning of planning processes. Additionally, it plans to develop a system for identifying the most effective outreach for each type of project. This includes



Transportation Planning Capacity Building



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

engaging with contacts across its network to better understand connection points and collaboration opportunities in preparation for plans and projects.

Resilience and Environmental Justice

Given the impacts of hurricanes and other weather events due to climate change, NORPC is identifying which data sets can aid them in EJ and climate change planning. It recently led several studies that dealt with these issues and continues to work with partners, including the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, to prioritize resiliency planning in the context of EJ and identify tools to better understand the context.

Contact Information

- MPO contact information
 - Jeffrey Roesel, NORPC Executive Director, jroesel@norpc.org
 - Jason Sappington, NORPC Deputy Director, jsappington@norpc.org
- FHWA contact information
 - Laura Phillips, FHWA Louisiana Division, laura.phillips@dot.gov
- FTA contact information
 - Ronisha Hodge, FTA – Region VI, Community Planner, ronisha.hodge@dot.gov

Resources

[Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2048](#)

[Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2052](#)

[New Links: Final Recommended Network report-2021](#)

[New Orleans Paratransit Study - New Orleans Regional Planning Commission \(norpc.org\)](#)

[New Orleans Regional Transit Authority - Transit Equity \(norta.com\)](#)

[NORPC Title VI Plan](#)

[NORPC Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan](#)



Appendix : NORPC Project Prioritization Equity Scorecard (2048 MTP)

GOAL 6: EQUITY

THE BENEFITS WE ACCRUE FROM OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SHOULD BE SHARED BY ALL RESIDENTS OF OUR REGION, AND NO PERSON OR COMMUNITY SHOULD SUFFER DISPROPORTIONATELY FROM OUR DECISIONS.

EQUITY – POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACTS		
Points Possible	Description	Points Awarded
0 – 5	This project will provide new mobility options for an identified community of need, (bicycle facilities, transit connections, ADA facilities, improved roadway connectivity, etc.).	
0 – 5	This project will provide benefits of reduced traffic or traffic calming in an identified community of need (noise, congestion, safety, etc.).	
0 – 5	This project will provide new transportation related amenities to an identified community of need (streetscaping, landscaping).	
EQUITY – NEGATIVE COMMUNITY IMPACTS		
Points Possible	Description	Points Negated
(-0) – (-10)	The project is expected to have notable negative impacts on an identified community of need (increased noise, increased congestion, reduced air quality, multiple displacements, etc.).	
EQUITY – OUTREACH		
Points Possible	Description	Points Awarded
0 – 5	The project was developed in consultation with representatives of potentially impacted residents.	
EQUITY – OTHER		
Points Possible	Description	Points Awarded
0 – 5	This project achieves the equity goal in a way not addressed by the above descriptors.	

MINIMUM POINTS: 15

TOTAL POINTS OUT OF 25: _____ PROJECT ACHIEVES EQUITY GOAL: Y / N



APPENDIX H - LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALOP: Annual Listing of Obligated Projects
AQ: Air Quality
CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
CMP: Congestion Management Process
DOT: United States Department of Transportation
FMIS: Federal Management Information System
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
FY: Fiscal Year
FFY: Federal Fiscal Year
ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
JP Transit: Jefferson Parish Transit, formerly JeT
LADOTD: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NHS: National Highway System
PPP: Public Participation Plan
RPC: Regional Planning Commission
RTA: New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
STBG: Surface Transportation Block Grant Program
STP: Surface Transportation Program
TAC: Technical Advisory Committee
TDM: Travel Demand Management
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
TPC: Transportation Policy Committee
TMA: Transportation Management Area
U.S.C.: United States Code
UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program
USDOT: United States Department of Transportation
UZA: Urbanized Area





Report prepared by:

Louisiana FHWA Division Office

5304 Flanders Dr., Ste. A

Baton Rouge, LA 70808

(225) 757-7600