



**2017
Florida Federal
Planning Finding
(Statewide Annual
Assessment)**

Federal Highway Administration

**Federal Transit Administration
Region 4**

September 2017

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I. BACKGROUND

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have joint stewardship responsibilities to ensure that both the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes satisfy the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134, 135, 303 and 315; 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305, 23 CFR Part 450 and 500 (Subparts B, C and appendix A), and 49 CFR Part 613 (Subparts B, C and Appendix A). From a statewide planning perspective, the State certifies the process through the submittal of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), while Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the State jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning processes through the submittal of the MPOs' Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). Based on our review of the STIP, TIPs, our annual program and risk assessments, and our day to day stewardship and oversight activities, FHWA and FTA are responsible for issuing the following types of planning findings and approvals:

- A. *Metropolitan planning findings based on review of MPO TIPs and certification statements.* Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.328(a), the FHWA/FTA must jointly find that each metropolitan TIP is based on a “3-C” (continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative) planning process by the MPO, State Department of Transportation, and transit service provider(s). In Florida, this finding primarily has been based on the annual MPO/Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) joint certification statements on the respective metropolitan planning processes. Information collected from the quadrennial FHWA/FTA certification reviews of the planning processes in Florida's Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), pursuant to 23 CFR 450.334(b), also has provided substantial input for FHWA/FTA to issue these annual “3-C” planning findings.
- B. *FHWA/FTA review of the statewide planning process and issuance of a related statewide planning finding to support FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP.* As outlined under 23 CFR 450.218, the FHWA/FTA Statewide planning finding, made in conjunction with the FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP, ensures, at a minimum, that the process from which the STIP was developed is consistent with the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 and 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305. A joint FHWA/FTA planning finding accompanies the annual FHWA/FTA approval of Florida's STIP. In Florida, this process was formerly known as the “annual assessment” of the statewide planning process. It is now known officially as the “Federal Planning Finding” to better align with the regulatory responsibilities.

The primary objective of this report is to substantiate the issuance of the FHWA/FTA Statewide Planning Finding for supporting FHWA/FTA approval of Florida's Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18 - 2020/21 STIP.

II. FORMAT

The findings in this report are based in part on the information received during the annual statewide assessment meeting held on July 11, 2017, with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) staff responsible for the topic area activities. The numerous topics discussed are related to FDOT's statewide planning process and are listed in the Meeting Agenda shown in Appendix A. The list of meeting participants is provided in Appendix B. Documentation received from FDOT on the topics covered during the Statewide Assessment Review process meeting was used to support the Findings and is on file at the FHWA Division Office.

III. TOPICS OF INTEREST

A. Findings and Recommendations from the 2016 Statewide Annual Assessment

Provided below are the overall findings from the 2016 annual assessment report, and the status of the recommendations.

1. **ADA Transition Plan** - On November 17, 2014, the Headquarters Office of Civil Rights issued a memo requiring that Divisions confirm ADA Transition Plan compliance with the regulations at [28 CFR 35.150\(d\)\(3\)](#) as a condition of STIP approval by FHWA and FTA. Though acknowledging the strength of FDOT's program, the Division declined to approved the FDOT Transition Plan because it lacked the specified regulatory elements.

Working with FDOT, the Division developed a four-phase implementation strategy intended to incorporate ongoing self-evaluation and transition planning into FDOT's Roadway Characteristics Inventory (RCI) and Highway Performance Monitoring System processes by 2019. The Division recommends that FDOT continue to implement its strategy of institutionalizing transition planning as part of its RCI and quality assurance processes. Until that is completed, the Division further recommends that FDOT undertake annual reviews of statistically significant samples of the system, validating transition or otherwise addressing any features that remain inaccessible or unusable for those with disabilities.

Status: FDOT is implementing its ADA transition plan through annual validation of facilities through the integrated roadway and asset identification system, currently the RCI. They have been building the data-collection methods to provide the necessary data (RCI, Video-Log reviews, etc.) that will include ADA features such as curb ramps, detectable warnings, and pedestrian push-buttons. Using statistically significant samples compiled by Transportation Data and Analytics Office, FDOT validates transition of features in the logs, addressing any features that remain inaccessible or unusable for those with disabilities.

2. **Transportation Performance Management (TPM)** - As performance measures laid out in MAP-21 and furthered with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act are rolled out and finalized in the coming year, it is recommended that FDOT and Florida's MPOs continue to work closely with FHWA and FTA to address and implement the planning, performance measures and other associated final rules once released.

Status: FDOT is continuing to work with FHWA and the MPOs to ensure compliance with the Performance Management Regulations. FHWA is planning on holding one-on-one sessions with each MPO later this year. FDOT plans to do site visit outreach workshops in September to the Districts and their MPOs. Focus areas would be:

- *Status of MAP-21 requirements on the state and the MPOs;*
- *Target setting for the state and the MPOs (plan to distribute applicable calculations for 2014-2016 for the state and each MPO before the end of August);*
- *Roles of FDOT Central Office and Districts, and MPOs; and*
- *Preparation for the October MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) meeting (emphasis on performance measures).*

The Department will coordinate its efforts with the FHWA one-on-one sessions.

3. **STIP Approval Planning Consistency** - As part of the STIP approval process, FHWA randomly reviewed 54 projects in the proposed STIP, two from each MPO throughout the state, for general consistency between the TIP, STIP and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) documents. The results of this year's review indicate that emphasis is still needed in this area to ensure that projects are accurately reflected in both the TIP and STIP and that these projects are flowing from and are found to be consistent with the MPO's LRTP. Consistency between the TIP and STIP was noted in 72% of the projects reviewed. Identifying/locating an LRTP project associated with a particular STIP project continues to be a challenge, and only 55% of the projects reviewed were deemed consistent with the LRTP. FHWA will share the information with the applicable Districts and MPOs. It is recommended FDOT districts and MPO partners work together to address any specific findings highlighted during this review, and explore ways to improve the transparency of the planning process.

Status: FDOT anticipates that the planned updates they will be conducting to the Annual MPO Certifications process will address the statewide consistency issues (see Recommendation #6) and give FDOT more insight into improving the transparency of the MPOs' planning process.

4. **Federal Lands Projects in TIP/STIPs** - As part of the STIP approval process, the STIP is reviewed overall to determine if it meets federal requirements. During the STIP review, the listing of midyear update projects from Eastern Federal Lands' (EFLs') TIP provided in March 2016 could not be located. It was stated that FDOT used to attach the listing to the last page of the STIP document when it was printed, but had not continued that practice with the electronic version. Per 23 CFR 450.216(e), the Federal Lands Highway Program TIP shall be included in the STIP, directly or by reference.

FDOT is required to include the listing of approved EFLs' TIP projects in the STIP. When the new EFL TIP becomes available or EFL projects are submitted, they need to be included in the new STIP. How that is accomplished will be up to FDOT to determine based on coordination with FHWA and FTA. In any event, in the process that is developed, once the projects are included, FDOT needs to provide a notification to FHWA and FTA that the process is completed.

Similarly, these EFL projects were not included in most of the affected MPO TIPs either. FDOT did provide the list to their Districts to notify the affected MPOs to add them to their current TIP. However, TIP checks revealed only three of the affected eight MPOs have the projects included in their current TIPs. It is strongly recommended that FDOT ensures that the MPOs include the appropriate approved EFL's TIP projects in their TIP as an appendix.

Status: FDOT has added language to the STIP webpage on their website that references the EFL's TIP. FDOT's Office of Policy Planning intends to add EFL's projects to its TIP review checklist to ensure the MPOs are including these projects in their submission. FHWA performed a random check of MPO TIPs and found the EFL TIP projects were included in all but one instance.

5. **Tracking System for Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funding** – More MPOs have begun to utilize funding sources other than planning (PL) funds to undertake planning activities. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and a tracking system provided by the Work Program Office has traditionally been the method used to track PL fund expenditures for the 27 MPOs and the MPOAC. And although STP funds used for planning activities are now being included in the UPWP, there is no easy method by which FHWA and FTA can determine if these types of funds are indeed available for the MPOs to use. It is recommended that FDOT work with FHWA and FTA to develop a tracking system method for STP funds that would readily provide this information to the approving agencies.

Status: Discussions regarding a tracking system for STP funds are currently ongoing within FDOT between the Office of Policy Planning and the Office of Work Program and Budget.

6. **Annual Certification Process** – It appears that minimal guidance is provided by FDOT Central Office to the District MPO liaisons on the annual certification process, and as such, the process and documentation can vary greatly from district to district. No known quality assurance/quality control efforts are being conducted by central office to ensure a standardized approach to the reviews, raising some concern as to the effectiveness and thoroughness of the process in some cases. It is recommended that FDOT strengthen their oversight responsibilities in this area to include more prescriptive guidance to the districts for the annual certification process with their MPO sub recipients, and develop a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) process/plan to ensure a more uniform approach in this effort.

Status: FDOT has identified the need for consistency in the Annual Certification Process, and has a plan to create a consistent process statewide. This effort evolved out of the need for a consistent approach to the MPO Risk Assessment, which will be a part of the Annual Certification for FY 16-17, conducted in January of 2018.

FDOT intends to review the existing Annual Certification questions in the MPO Program Management Handbook and update the list as necessary to create a consistent list of Certification questions for the District MPO Liaisons to ask their MPOs, regardless of whether they are conducting a full or modified Certification. In order to incorporate the MPO Risk Assessment into the Certification process, a list of mandatory questions for

both the full or modified Certification process will be included related to the management of Federal funds. Additionally, a tracking list will be created and managed by FDOT Central Office to maintain a higher level of involvement and awareness of the Annual Certification process.

7. **STIP Amendment Criteria** – FHWA, at the request of FDOT, has developed draft guidance to clarify what documentation is needed to accompany a STIP amendment for approval. FHWA will work with FTA and FDOT to finalize this information and move to implement it to better streamline the STIP amendment approval process.
Status: The “STIP Amendment Supporting Documentation Requirements” guidance developed by the Division was finalized and sent to FDOT on February 16, 2017. FDOT implemented the guidance to decrease the need to return and resubmit STIP amendments due to incomplete or incorrect supporting documents. FDOT is also in the process of creating Computer Based Training (CBT) modules to provide information regarding STIP Amendments to anyone interested. The modules will cover all aspects of STIP Amendments, including the required documentation in a simple, user-friendly manner. The STIP CBT Modules should be completed by the end of 2018. The Office of Policy Planning also plans on creating similar CBT Modules for the Metropolitan Planning Program, to assist Central Office and District staff in understanding the MPOs, their processes, and FDOT’s role.
8. **State Planning and Research (SPR) Part A** – the SPR approval and amendment process has been very confusing and time consuming over the last few months, as new players in both FHWA and FDOT are trying to learn and understand the process. Moving forward, it is recommended that FHWA and FDOT work together to find ways to streamline and enhance the process as a means of improving review and approval turnaround times and overall program efficiency.
Status: The SPR Part A has undergone a complete overhaul from FY 16-17 to FY 17-18. The new SPR format was created to reduce confusion by FDOT and FHWA staff when updating or reviewing the SPR, or processing amendments. Over the years, Florida’s SPR had evolved into a document that incorporated a lot of unnecessary information verified through consultation with FHWA staff that it was not required by Federal Regulation and offered no additional benefit.

The SPR Narrative was condensed through consultation with FDOT staff in the Offices and Districts to re-center the focus of their respective sections on their use of HP funds, and include a table that shows each Office or Districts HP funded by Federal Project Number (FM Number). The SPR Finance Table was updated to include a summary table on the first sheet of the workbook that, through formatting the workbook as an electronic document, allows the user to navigate through the workbook pages via hyperlinks. Each Office and District from the Narrative has its own sheet in the workbook that shows a basic and detailed description of each HP funded task by FM Number, the initial allocation of HP funds, and a space to provide the amount of funds expended for the two updates that FDOT provided FHWA for FY 17-18.

The new SPR format was vetted through consultation with FHWA Florida Division staff and seems to have simplified the process for all involved, while providing clearer information to FHWA. FHWA will continue to work with FDOT on clarifying the documentation to determine eligibility. A discussion with FHWA to create SPR Amendment thresholds is upcoming in addition to streamlining the implementation of scope reviews through a risk-based approach.

B. FY 2017 - FY 2020 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

Title 23 U.S.C. requires the State to develop a STIP. The portion of the program that is urbanized must be developed in cooperation with the MPOs. The state must also have a process for developing priorities with local officials in the rural areas. The STIP is a list of priority projects for the next four fiscal years. The projects are expected to be consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), which serves as the statewide plan, and to incorporate the TIPs as adopted from within each metropolitan area. The STIP document has been submitted in Adobe PDF format on CD and is available on the FDOT website at: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/OWPB/Federal/STIP_ProjectDetailListing.shtm. STIP modifications are also captured daily and displayed in the current STIP document as noted online.

Before the STIP was required under Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, the state of Florida had developed a process for having a statewide improvement program. This document is the Five-Year Work Program and essentially serves as the STIP. Section 339.135, Florida Statutes, authorizes and sets the guidelines for the FDOT to develop a State Transportation Five-Year Work Program. It is the State's project-specific list of transportation activities and improvements that meets the goals and objectives of the FTP. Although FDOT's Five-Year Work Program serves as the basis for creating the STIP, it is important to note that FHWA and FTA only recognize the four-year element of the STIP, which is derived from FDOT's Work Program, for the purposes of programming federal funds.

Since the FDOT Work Program serves as the basis for creating the STIP, FHWA and FTA look to the FDOT's Work Program development process to ensure compliance with Federal law. There are summary documents that are helpful in understanding how the work program is developed and financed, and more detailed documents and procedures that provide specific instructions for Work Program development. Some of these documents are located on FDOT's website: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/OWPB/WorkProgramResources.shtm>. Other resources are also available upon request from FDOT's Work Program Office.

Public Participation is also a major component in the development of the STIP. The Work Program is developed by the Districts and Central Office, working with the MPOs and local governments. Input is also included from the Legislature, Governor's office, and public hearings. More detailed Information related to the Public Involvement process utilized by FDOT to develop the Work Program and the STIP can be found at: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/OWPB/Federal/STIP_PI_Process.pdf.

As part of the Division's routine oversight activities for the statewide planning process, and in accordance with the Division's Standard Operating Procedure for the STIP, the planning unit conducts both an overall checklist review of the STIP and a spot check review of a few randomly selected projects from each MPO area to assess the consistency in project information between the STIP, TIP and LRTP planning documents. The results of these reviews are evaluated and considered during the development of this report.

The FY 2017/18-2020/21 STIP needs to be fiscally constrained by year. In an effort to demonstrate how much funding is available for projects, FDOT has developed a process and summary tables to show the available funds including balance forward, estimated new funds, and the programmed projects. The 2018 STIP Production Accomplishment Report (P.A.R.) report is developed annually by FDOT to demonstrate financial constraint for the new STIP. This new STIP is based on the Five-Year Work Program adopted by FDOT on July 1, 2017. Ending balances in each of the major categories are positive in each of the years of the STIP. The summaries are located on the following pages.

Please note the following points regarding these summaries:

1. For this year and all future years, the STIP will be based on the Department's Five Year Work Program as officially adopted on July 1st of each year. The FY 2018 STIP is based on the Adopted Work Program as of July 1, 2017. This approach will provide more consistency from year to year than attempting to use a snapshot of the Adopted Work Program that is closer to the October 1st effective date of each annual STIP (e.g. last year 9-1-16 was used and the year before 8-1-15 was used).
2. Annual funding amounts are presented net of Obligation Authority Constraints.
3. The underlying funds supporting the rollups include funding levels authorized in the FAST Act through FY2020 (FY2021 assumes the same levels as FY2020), but do not include Florida's portion (\$366 million) of the \$7.6 billion rescission of Contract Authority authorized in the FAST Act to take place on July 1, 2020. Reasons for excluding this rescission from the projections of federal aid funds are twofold:
 - It cannot reasonably be predicted which categories of funding will be impacted this far in the future, as the rescission will be based on the relative balances of almost all program categories (with some exceptions) on July 1, 2020, and
 - There is a high likelihood that Congress will repeal that provision of the FAST Act prior to its implementation on July 1, 2020, similar to the action Congress took to reverse the rescission of contract authority which took place on the last day of the MAP-21 legislation. If this provision is implemented on July 1, 2020, FDOT will adjust its project programming accordingly, deferring selected planned projects to a later date when funding becomes available. This approach will ensure fiscal constraint of the STIP is preserved.

4. Included is a breakout, by major fund rollup category, of the estimated AC conversions anticipated to be done each year to fully consume the annual Obligation Authority subject to lapse at each fiscal year end.

Based on the summaries and other documentation received throughout the year, the FY 2017/18 – FY 2020/2021 STIP is shown to be fiscally constrained by year given the funding levels that are reasonably expected to be available over the time frame of the STIP.

2018 STIP P.A.R. Rollups

	Fiscal Years			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	5,382,266	2,985,571	2,385,571	2,385,571
Net Annual Allocations Available	13,491,687	13,721,649	13,983,385	13,995,797
Less: Program of Projects	(15,888,382)	(14,321,649)	(13,983,385)	(13,995,797)
Balance Forward to Next Year	2,985,571	2,385,571	2,385,571	2,385,571
Discretionary and Other Programs				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	20,645,858	4,784,134	34,336	34,336
Net Annual Allocations Available	12,230,162	5,793,178	5,793,178	5,793,178
Less: Program of Projects	(28,091,886)	(10,542,976)	(5,793,178)	(5,793,178)
Balance Forward to Next Year	4,784,134	34,336	34,336	34,336
National Freight Program				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	62,110,048	7,366,156	1,673,745	1,673,745
Net Annual Allocations Available	54,908,336	61,695,381	68,467,392	68,528,168
Less: Program of Projects	(109,652,228)	(67,387,792)	(68,467,392)	(68,528,168)
Funds Available before AC conversions	7,366,156	1,673,745	1,673,745	1,673,745
Planned AC Conversions	-	-	-	-
Balance Forward to Next Year	7,366,156	1,673,745	1,673,745	1,673,745
National Highway System Performance Program				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	469,907,720	338,942,416	359,744,230	399,738,142
Net Annual Allocations Available	1,105,165,923	1,081,785,046	1,149,914,119	1,149,339,058
Less: Program of Projects	(286,131,227)	(60,983,232)	(59,920,207)	-
Funds Available before AC conversions	1,288,942,416	1,359,744,230	1,449,738,142	1,549,077,200
Planned AC Conversions	(950,000,000)	(1,000,000,000)	(1,050,000,000)	(1,100,000,000)
Balance Forward to Next Year	338,942,416	359,744,230	399,738,142	449,077,200
Planning and Research Programs				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	32,932,855	15,475,509	5,992,379	5,992,379
Net Annual Allocations Available	60,947,210	62,299,906	63,778,074	63,778,073
Less: Program of Projects	(78,404,556)	(71,783,036)	(63,778,074)	(63,778,073)
Balance Forward to Next Year	15,475,509	5,992,379	5,992,379	5,992,379
Safety Programs				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	108,759,021	20,696,147	2,147	2,147
Net Annual Allocations Available	113,855,037	122,935,001	125,568,891	125,553,891
Less: Program of Projects	(201,917,911)	(143,629,001)	(125,568,891)	(125,553,891)
Balance Forward to Next Year	20,696,147	2,147	2,147	2,147
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	208,625,327	30,076,125	28,150,532	24,707,335
Net Annual Allocations Available	578,602,605	634,416,568	601,940,640	601,940,640
Less: Program of Projects	(707,151,807)	(586,342,161)	(565,383,837)	(573,385,707)
Funds Available before AC conversions	80,076,125	78,150,532	64,707,335	53,262,268
Planned AC Conversions	(50,000,000)	(50,000,000)	(40,000,000)	(40,000,000)
Balance Forward to Next Year	30,076,125	28,150,532	24,707,335	13,262,268
Transportation Alternatives Program				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	29,407,768	6,025,981	2,262,640	2,262,640
Net Annual Allocations Available	47,940,981	47,881,610	47,823,618	47,866,067
Less: Program of Projects	(71,322,768)	(51,644,951)	(47,823,618)	(47,866,067)
Balance Forward to Next Year	6,025,981	2,262,640	2,262,640	2,262,640
Grand Totals - All Programs				
Balance Forward from Prior Year	937,770,863	426,352,039	400,245,580	436,796,295
Net Annual Allocations Available	1,987,141,941	2,030,528,339	2,077,269,297	2,076,794,872
Less: Program of Projects	(1,498,560,765)	(1,006,634,798)	(950,718,582)	(898,900,881)
Funds Available before AC conversions	1,426,352,039	1,450,245,580	1,526,796,295	1,614,690,286
Less: AC Conversions	(1,000,000,000)	(1,050,000,000)	(1,090,000,000)	(1,140,000,000)
Balance Forward to Next Year	426,352,039	400,245,580	436,796,295	474,690,286

C. Summary of the 2017 Annual FDOT/MPO Certifications

Each FDOT District and MPO must jointly certify annually that the transportation planning process is addressing the major issues facing the metropolitan area. The purpose of the MPO certification review is to establish that the MPO's planning process is being conducted in accordance with 23 CFR 450.334. The reviews also provide the opportunity to recognize noteworthy practices, provide recommendations for consideration, and identify corrective actions needing resolution within the timeframe specified in the Certification Report. Many of the joint certification statements listed findings, such as noteworthy achievements and areas for future emphasis. A general compilation of the topic areas from the FDOT/MPO certification reviews conducted this year are noted and do not necessarily apply to every MPO.

Noteworthy Practices

Several notable achievements have been undertaken by the MPOs in Florida and were recognized as part of the annual certification process this year. These highlighted activities included extensive use of technology and social media to enhance and improve public involvement efforts, and website updates/improvements to support public transparency and generate public input. Many MPOs have also transitioned from paper to interactive online documents that allow the public to more easily understand and become involved with the MPOs' duties, responsibilities, and planned transportation projects. Florida's MPOs were also commended for their Public Outreach and Involvement Plans and strategies, and their engagement in regional, and inter-regional planning efforts. These efforts convey an understanding of the importance of a regional perspective in their planning processes.

In addition, several MPOs have also excelled in the implementation of the Complete Streets Program, and are holding workshops and outreach events with local governments and the public to explain how the Complete Streets design principles will be incorporated into future transportation projects. Lastly, many MPOs are also conducting extensive bicycle and pedestrian outreach programs to engage the public in safe practices for bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers and in turn, reduce injuries and fatalities. These events include distributing maps and literature, providing bicycle helmets, and holding public events to spread awareness.

Correction Actions

A total of two corrective actions were issued during the 2017 joint FDOT/MPO certification process. One corrective action was issued to two separate MPOs. These corrective actions are outlined below.

- **Documentation of Time and Effort** - FDOT recommended that the MPO Director review staff timesheets thoroughly so that time is allocated properly. FDOT also advised the MPO to submit invoices for reimbursement at least quarterly.
Status: The MPO has adopted a new timesheet format and is working with the District to ensure that timesheet reporting is done accurately. They have also developed and implemented a telecommuting policy. The necessary actions to address this corrective

action have been taken and FDOT is monitoring timesheet tracking as part of the invoice review process.

- **Intergovernmental Coordination and Review (ICAR) Agreement** - At the time of the 2017 Certification, the ICAR Agreement had not been executed.
Status: The MPO Board approved the agreement at their August 29, 2017 meeting and it is awaiting further approval by associated local government entities.

Recommendations

FDOT's recommendations to Florida's 27 MPOs included items such as keeping FDOT involved and updated on progress towards updating the MPO's LRTP, UPWP, and TIP. Another recurring theme was FDOT requesting that the MPOs provide updates on Performance Measure Implementation. FHWA, FDOT and the MPOs are all working together to ensure that the required Performance Measures are incorporated into the MPO's planning documents as required by Federal Regulation. This process is expected to continue through 2022 with the last of the scheduled LRTP updates.

D. Summary of the Fiscal Year 2017 FHWA/FTA Certification Reviews of the Transportation Management Areas

During State FY 2017 (July 2016 – June 2017), FHWA/FTA completed TMA certification reviews for **North Florida TPO** (Jacksonville TMA), **Collier MPO** (Bonita Springs TMA), and **Capital Region TPA** (Tallahassee TMA). All three TMA planning processes were certified pending resolution of any corrective actions. The observations presented below are provided in a general format and are not attributable to any specific TMA. Copies of the TMA reports with complete details are on file in the FHWA Florida Division Office.

Noteworthy Practices

This year's certification reviews included highlighted practices that were noted in many areas, including: Air Quality (Clean City designation); Transit; Intelligent Transportation System; Freight Planning; Safety; Title VI, Travel Demand Modeling; LRTP; Public Participation; and Planning and Environmental Linkages.

Recommendations

The topic areas of Title VI and Public Participation were noted the most frequently in terms of recommendations. Consequently, the Division's Civil Rights Specialist has begun hosting Pre-Certification Review Civil Rights and non-discrimination trainings and document reviews across the state, and the planning team has increased technical assistance in these areas. The topic areas of Safety, Security, Agreements, and Freight also received multiple recommendations. Other recommendation topics included: UPWP, MPO Planning Structure, and ITS. While recommendations are not required by regulations, they are intended to help improve the planning processes of the MPO and often have the potential to prevent future corrective actions.

Corrective Actions

For the three reviews conducted during this timeframe, corrective actions were issued related to determining and evaluating the effectiveness of Congestion Management Process strategies, Transit projects not being included in the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects, Public Participation, Title VI and Related Requirements, Environmental Mitigation, and the TIP.

E. Program Accountability Review Results

The purpose of the Program Accountability Reviews (PARs) conducted this year throughout Florida was to verify that the FDOT, in coordination with local jurisdictions, is carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive statewide multimodal transportation planning process as it relates to the statewide transportation planning and programming requirements set forth in 23 CFR 450 Subpart B. The FHWA Florida Division Planning staff conducted a total of 15 PARs on delegated State and locally administered planning projects during Performance Year (PY) 2017 (June 1, 2016 to May 30, 2017).

By design, all the selected projects were located outside of the MPO planning areas within Florida, and the PARs centered on consistency between the FTP, the STIP amendment process, and project authorizations. The PAR results for 2017 largely indicated that:

1. All 15 projects reviewed were found to be consistent with the long-range statewide transportation plan as identified and included in the STIP, and the project information found in the Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS) was consistent with the information that was included in the STIP. Similarly, the project costs of all projects reviewed consistently reflected the estimated project costs in FMIS that were identified in the approved STIP.
2. Additionally, all projects reviewed were found in the approved STIP at the time of authorization.
3. Questions related to consultation found that non-MPO local officials were consulted on projects during the STIP development or amendment process.
4. Additionally, it was found that the State's process for consulting non-MPO local officials was followed for all projects reviewed.

This was the third performance year that the annual PAR reviews were geared exclusively towards non-MPO projects and the processes utilized by the FDOT to ensure that applicable federal requirements were met. The PAR reviews largely indicate that FDOT, in coordination with local jurisdictions, is satisfactorily carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive statewide multimodal transportation planning process as it relates to the statewide transportation planning and programming requirements set forth in 23 CFR 450 Subpart B.

Therefore, the PY18 Planning PARs will be redirected during the next cycle of project reviews to focus on MPO self-certifications which have been identified through a risk-based analysis process. The PARs will start with a review of the non-TMAs in Florida. It will take three performance years to conduct reviews of all nine non-TMAs, but the results will help identify and resolve any compliance issues that are discovered. The results of the PARs will continue to be shared with FDOT and the MPOs to help improve the certification processes.

F. Training/Technical Assistance Needs

During the certification review site visits this year, the following technical assistance/training needs were identified: Environmental Justice; safety performance measures; traffic safety data management; transportation and land use evaluation; automated/connected vehicles; public involvement; Title VI; Census; and Planning Grants Management. FHWA and FTA will work with the MPOs and FDOT to provide resources in these areas.

IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FHWA/FTA highlighted the following Noteworthy activity underway by FDOT this year:

STIP Amendment Training - The Federal Aid Management Office at FDOT, in coordination with Policy Planning, is commended for their development of a STIP Amendment Application Computer Based Training (CBT) course to educate FDOT staff on Florida's STIP amendment process. FDOT has analyzed their STIP amendment data from recent years to help identify areas where improvements can be made to the process. FDOT noted that issues related to supporting documentation was the most common reason that FHWA rejected STIP amendments. Working with FDOT, FHWA developed a "STIP Amendment Supporting Documentation Requirements" document that is highlighted in this training to help outline acceptable documentation to alleviate wasted time and effort involved to resubmit returned/rejected amendments. The CBT is broken out into four modules: Module 1 – overview of the TIP/STIP Background, Module 2 - introduces the methods used to determine if an amendment is required, Module 3 - will demonstrate the process to amend the MPOs' TIP and finally Module 4 - will be the step-by-step process in building the STIP amendment, utilizing the STIP Amendment application. FDOT anticipates having at least the first training module up and running for users by the end of 2017.

The following Corrective Action requires action for compliance with the federal planning regulations and must be completed within the timeframes noted:

Year of Expenditure (YOE) in the STIP - Upon review of the draft STIP and the STIP webpage information provided by FDOT, there is no mention of the STIP being presented in YOE dollars as required in 23 CFR 450.216 (l). FDOT must confirm/verify that project costs are in YOE dollars and state that fact, either on the STIP website page or in the document itself. If the project costs shown in the STIP are not presented in YOE dollars, the

costs will need to be revised to reflect YOE. The STIP must document YOE dollars by **December 31, 2017**.

The following Recommendations are made to continue implementing improvements to the transportation planning process within the State of Florida:

1. **ADA Transition Plan** - Pursuant to the FHWA November 17, 2014 memorandum, FDOT's compliance with the ADA transition planning regulations (28 CFR 35.150(d)) is a condition of STIP approval by FHWA and FTA. FDOT long maintained that its aggressive focus on ADA improvements in the work program coupled with extensive design specifications resulted in a substantially completed transition plan. However, historically FHWA declined to accept the plan due to a lack of any corroborating evidence of completion.

In 2016, FDOT and FHWA undertook independent reviews of the program that included data collection and verification of pedestrian facilities, with favorable results. Consequently, FHWA accepted the plan in 2016 with the understanding that FDOT would continue its validation and reporting efforts, ultimately integrating transition planning with its RCI in 2019.

FDOT is implementing its ADA transition plan through annual validation of facilities through the integrated roadway and asset identification system, currently the RCI. Though the RCI will not be completed until 2019, FDOT has undertaken annual statewide reviews of its video log system, and validates transition of features in the logs (curb ramps, detectable warnings, condition issues), addressing any features that remain inaccessible or unusable for those with disabilities. FDOT will annually submit an update of those features identified and repaired as part of its Transition Plan Accomplishments & Goals Report. The next report is due to FHWA on October 1, 2017, commensurate with the beginning of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). The FFY 2017 report indicated that approximately 95% of features surveyed were transitioned for accessibility since the ADA became effective in 1992.

FHWA/FTA believe FDOT's ADA transition plan is substantially compliant with the regulations. We recommend that FDOT continue to provide annual updates on its transition plan implementation as a condition of Plan acceptance by FHWA/FTA each year, and continue to identify effective data collection methods to support the inventory and collection of ADA features by the 2019 deadline.

2. **Transportation Performance Management (TPM)** – Now that final rules have been issued, it is imperative that FDOT and Florida's MPOs coordinate and work closely with each other and FHWA and FTA to implement the planning regulations and performance measure requirements related to MPO products, programs and processes. Extensive coordination and communication among all parties will be essential to meet the varied timelines for compliance established in the individual rules. FHWA and FTA recommend that FDOT set up a communication process to ensure the required FDOT and MPO coordination occurs to address TPM requirements. Of particular note, updating the

underlying planning processes, which includes revising the MPO agreements, will need to be in place prior to any S/TIP amendments submitted for approval beginning May 27, 2018.

3. **STIP Approval Planning Consistency** - As part of the STIP approval process, FHWA randomly reviewed 54 projects in the proposed STIP, two from each MPO throughout the state, for general consistency between the TIP, STIP and LRTP documents. The STIP and TIPs must be consistent with the relevant LRTPs as they are developed. The results of this and previous year reviews indicate that emphasis is still needed in this area to ensure that projects are accurately reflected in both the TIP and STIP, and that these projects are flowing from, and are found to be consistent with, the MPO's LRTP. Consistency between the TIP and STIP was noted in almost 89% of the projects reviewed, which was a clear improvement from last year. However, identifying/locating an LRTP project associated with a TIP/ STIP project continues to be a challenge. The accurate reflection of LRTP page numbers with associated projects in the TIP is critical to help identify segments located within larger segments depicted in the Plan. FHWA will share the list of projects with inconsistencies with FDOT so they can work with the affected MPOs to address and resolve these issues. Projects with inconsistencies between the STIP/TIP and the respective LRTP will be shared with FDOT and will not be approved for use of federal funds or federal action until the issue(s) is addressed {23 CFR 450.330 and 23 CFR 450.218(b)}. We recommend that FDOT districts and their MPO partners work together to explore ways to improve the consistency and transparency of the planning process.
4. **Federal Lands Projects in TIP/STIPs** - As part of the STIP approval process, the STIP is reviewed overall to determine if it meets federal requirements. Per 23 CFR 450.216(e), the Federal Lands Highway Program TIP shall be included in the STIP, directly or by reference.

When the new EFL TIP becomes available or EFL projects are submitted to FDOT, it is FDOT's responsibility to ensure that those projects are included in the appropriate MPOs' TIPs and the STIP. Upon review of the STIP webpages on FDOT's website, text was added that briefly explains the EFL TIP, and a link to the document is provided. However, this information is buried on the STIP Project Detail Listings page, and no statement declaring that these projects are considered part of the STIP, either by reference or directly, is provided. In addition, this text incorrectly states that "Projects on this list that are in an MPO area should also be included in the local MPO TIP in which they are geographically located...". Federal Lands Highway projects *shall* be included in the TIP per 23 CFR 450.324 (c).

The FHWA/FTA verification as to whether the EFL TIP projects were included in the appropriate MPO TIPs revealed that all but one MPO had included the project information in their TIP as required. Once the EFL TIP is published, we recommend that FDOT: 1) notify the MPOs to include the associated EFL projects within their MPO area in their MPO TIP; 2) follow-up with the affected MPOs to ensure that this task has been completed; and 3) provide written notification to FHWA and FTA that the process has

been completed. We also strongly recommend that FDOT revise their website to:

1) expand the Federal Lands TIP discussion to include an affirmation that the STIP includes these projects, either directly in the STIP document or by reference; 2) revise the inaccurate statement on the website as noted above; and 3) move the Federal Lands discussion to the main STIP Information page on the FDOT website.

5. **Work Program Integration Initiative (WPPII)** - FDOT is currently in the process of completely revamping their Work Program process and updating the underlying programming and associated technologies used to develop and maintain the entire database system that supports this effort. This commendable undertaking is an opportunity for making improvements to the STIP format to accommodate narrative information related to meeting TPM requirements, such target reporting, etc. We recommend that FDOT consider implementing changes to the STIP format to more fully meet the intent of the STIP as a public, user friendly document that promotes transparency and fulfills the planning and TPM requirements in one complete document.
6. **FMIS Project Descriptions** – We have noticed that it has often been difficult to review and approve planning projects in FMIS due to unclear descriptions of the actions needed, or inconsistencies in the funding amounts being requested and/or funding types being affected. Thus, delays are encountered and approvals are slowed as we try to decipher the request. We recommend that FDOT work to improve internal coordination between Federal Aid, Work Program, and Planning (central and district offices as appropriate) in the development of consistent and clear planning project descriptions and actions requested as noted in FMIS approval requests.
7. **Tracking System for STP or Non-PL Planning Funding** - As noted in last year's report, more MPOs are beginning to utilize funding sources other than planning (PL) funds to undertake planning activities. The Work Program Office has a spreadsheet which has traditionally been the method used to track PL fund expenditures from the UPWP for the 27 MPOs and the MPOAC. And although STP funds used for planning activities are now being included in the UPWP, there is no easy method by which FHWA and FTA can determine if these types of funds are indeed available for the MPOs to use. We noted that little progress has been made to resolve this issue to date, although FDOT has stated that internal discussions on this topic have begun. We recognize that FDOT Central Office Planning has undergone significant personnel turnover in the last year, and a lot of the institutional knowledge and experience that had existed previously has been lost. However, new staff members are working diligently to master the learning curve and address the vast and varied array of planning issues at the statewide and metropolitan levels. We strongly recommend that FDOT work internally and with FHWA and FTA to develop a tracking method for STP funds prior to the beginning of the next UPWP cycle (July 2018) that would administer and account for funds being used for planning purposes per 23 CFR 420.119 (e) and readily provide this information to the approving agencies. Without a tracking system(s) in place for other funds used for planning activities, we will not be able to approve the planning projects funded with these other funds in the next UPWP cycle.

8. **Annual Certification Process** – The recommendation was made in last year’s report for FDOT to strengthen their oversight responsibilities in the Annual Certification Process to include more prescriptive guidance to the districts for the annual certification process with their MPO sub recipients, and develop a QA/QC process/plan to ensure a more uniform approach. FDOT recognized the need for consistency in the Annual Certification Process, and has developed a plan to create a consistent process statewide. However, this process will not get underway until January of 2018. We recommend that FDOT continue to move forward to strengthen their oversight responsibilities and develop more prescriptive guidance for the districts on the annual certification process.

Based on routine coordination throughout the year with the various statewide planning participants, discussions at the “annual assessment” meeting, the review of statewide summary and planning documents provided by participating and affected offices, and the status of past “annual assessment” recommendations, FDOT continues to demonstrate that they address federal questions/concerns as such concerns are identified.

Therefore, it is hereby determined that Florida’s Statewide transportation planning process continues to substantially satisfy the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134, 135, 303, and 315; 49 U.S.C. 5303- 5305, and 23 CFR Part 450 (Subparts B, C, and appendix A) and 500; and 49 CFR Part 613 (Subparts B, C, and Appendix A) subject to FDOT satisfactorily addressing the Corrective Action stated in this report. FDOT is encouraged to provide the FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the Corrective Action in accordance with the noted deadlines. FHWA and FTA will continue working with Florida’s various planning participants (e.g., FDOT, the 27 MPOs, local /regional transit service providers, local governments, State/local resource agencies, and the public) to further address and complete the activities and commitments contained in this report.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

APPENDIX A



**2017 FLORIDA FEDERAL PLANNING CERTIFICATION
FDOT EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
TELECONFERENCE INFORMATION: 850-414-4974
PIN 250995**

Tuesday, 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Start Time	End Time	Topic	Presenter
8:30 am	8:40 am	Introduction	Mark Reichert, Carmen Monroy FHWA
8:40 am	9:00 am	Transition Plan Update <i>Status of changes to the FDOT Metropolitan Planning Program</i>	Mark Reichert, Alex Gramovot
9:00 am	9:20 am	MPO Liaison Training Update <i>Overview of the Training Plan and accomplishments</i>	Mark Reichert, Alex Gramovot
9:20 am	9:40 am	STIP Tool CBT <i>Demonstration of the STIP Tool CBT and applicability for Metro. Planning</i>	Regina Colson, Denise Strickland
9:40 am	10:00 am	Work Program Integration Initiative (WP11)	Greg Patterson
10:00 am	10:15 am	Break	
10:15 am	10:35 am	MPO Risk Assessment <i>Status and overview of the MPO Risk Assessment</i>	Mark Reichert, Alex Gramovot
10:35 am	10:55 am	MPOAC Update <i>Update by Florida MPOAC</i>	Carl Mikyska
10:55 am	11:15 pm	Rural Area Consultation Process <i>Overview of coming changes to the Rural Consultation Process</i>	Carmen Monroy
11:15 am -	11:35 am	State Planning and Research Report <i>Overview of the new SPR Format and progress</i>	Alex Gramovot, Samantha Parks
11:35 am	12:45 pm	Lunch	
12:45 pm	1:05 pm	Annual Certification Overview	Mark Reichert, Alex Gramovot
1:05 pm	1:25 pm	Revenue Forecast <i>Overview and status update of the Revenue Forecast</i>	Martin Markovich
1:25 pm	1:45 pm	TMA Certification Overview Training Update	Danielle Blackshear, Teresa Parker
1:45 pm	2:15 pm	Status of Prior Findings	FHWA, FDOT
2:15 pm	2:30 pm	Wrap-Up, Next Steps, Preliminary Findings	FHWA

APPENDIX B

2017 Florida Federal Planning Certification - Attendees FDOT Executive Conference Room

Teleconference Information: 850-414-4974, Pin 250995

Tuesday, July 11, 2017, 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Name	Organization
Mark Reichert	FDOT-CO
Alex Gramovot	FDOT-CO
Karen Brunelle	FHWA
Stacie Blizzard	FHWA
Lee Ann Jacobs	FHWA
Teresa Parker	FHWA
Carmen Monroy	FDOT-CO
Danielle Blackshear	FHWA
Shundreka Givan	FHWA
Melanie Weaver Carr	FDOT-CO
Martin Markovich	FDOT-CO
Rusty Ennemoser	FDOT-CO
Jim Wood	FDOT-CO
Samantha Parks	FDOT-CO
Cark Mikyska	Florida MPOAC
Denise Strickland	FDOT-CO