



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Federal Highway
Administration

Federal Transit
Administration

Huntsville Transportation Management Area



May 15, 2021

Summary Report

Revised on June 25, 2021





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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Huntsville urbanized area on April 13 and 14, 2021. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements (23 CFR 450.336(b)).

1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The first certification review for the Huntsville urbanized area was conducted in 2005. The second and third certification reviews were conducted in 2009, 2013, and 2017 respectively. The 2017 Certification Review findings and their disposition are provided in Appendix B and summarized as follows.

Finding	Action	Corrective Actions/ Recommendations	Disposition
The review identified noteworthy practices of the MPO, no corrective actions and several recommendations and suggested improvements	Recommendation Commendation	No Corrective Actions were issued to the MPO in the 2017 Certification review. Recommendations included enhancing the description of activities listed in the UPWP, methods to document the activities of the Policy Board, and adding Bicycle and Pedestrian activities to the LRTP (23 CFR 450.308).	The MPO responded to each of the Recommendations, and made progress to complete each task starting as early as March 2018 through June 2020.

1.2 Summary of Current Findings

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Huntsville urbanized area Conditionally meets the Federal planning requirements.

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of the Huntsville Area Transportation Study (HATS), and the Department of Parking and Public Transportation of the City of Huntsville. There is one corrective action listed in this report, with a timeline for resolution, recommendations in this report that warrant close



attention and follow-up, as well as areas that MPO is performing very well in that are to be commended.

The following summary table provides a brief description of the certification findings for each area reviewed. Details of the certification findings for each of the following items are contained in sections 4.1 through 4.12 of this report.

Review Area	Finding	Action	Corrective Actions/ Recommendations/ Commendations	Resolution Due Date
Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries 23 U.S.C. 134(e) 23 CFR 450.312(a)	None	None	None	N/A
MPO Structure and Agreements 23 U.S.C. 134(d) 23 CFR 450.314(a)	COOP does not include health-related emergency events, maintain meeting minutes are not accessible on the web	None	The MPO will update the COOP and UPWP	By December 2022
Unified Planning Work Program 23 CFR 450.308	None	None	None	N/A
Metropolitan Transportation Plan 23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h)&(i) 23 CFR 450.324	Comprehensive planning activities for 2050 Plan, System Performance Report	Corrective Action Commendation	LRTP does not include a System Performance Report (23 CFR 450.324 (f))	By December 2022
Transit Planning 49 U.S.C. 5303 23 U.S.C. 134 23 CFR 450.314	Transit Asset Management Plan	None	None	N/A
Transportation Improvement Program 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(h) & (j) 23 CFR 450.326	None	None	None	N/A
Public Participation 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6) 23 CFR 450.316 & 450.326(b)	Virtual Public Involvement, effectiveness of public involvement activities	Commendation Recommendation	Diversify contact list in PPP; implement strategies for Virtual Public Involvement	By the next PPP update
Civil Rights Title VI Civil Rights Act, 23 U.S.C. 324, Age Discrimination Act, Sec. 504 Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act	Title VI Guidelines and complaint process	Recommendation	Title VI Complaint Process to be made available on MPO website, establish project prioritization schedule	By the next Certification Review



Freight 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 CFR 450.306	None	None	None	N/A
Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(D) 23 CFR 450.324(f) (10) 23 U.S.C. 168 Appx. A 23 CFR Part 450	None	None	None	N/A
Non-motorized Planning/Livability 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 U.S.C. 217(g) 23 CFR 450.306 23 CFR 450.3224f) (2)	Greenway Plan, Bicycle Planning coordination	Commendation	Regional Greenway Plan (Singing River Trail) and B.A.S.C Citizen's group contribute to successful non-motorized planning in area	N/A
Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) 23 CFR 450.322	CMP reports and local partnerships	Commendation Recommendation	Regional Commuter Study data provides MPO with visual analysis of current trends. MPO to enhance partnerships with the City of Huntsville and law enforcement to improve safety goals	By the next Certification Review



2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. After the 2010 Census, the Secretary of Transportation designated 183 TMAs – 179 urbanized areas over 200,000 in population plus four urbanized areas that received special designation. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), and preparation of a Certification Review Report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO(s), the State DOT(s), and public transportation operator(s) in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA Certification Review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect regional issues and needs. 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, the MTP, metropolitan and statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contact provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

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

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



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

2.2 Purpose and Objective

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

The Metropolitan Planning Organization of the Huntsville Area Transportation Study (HATS) is the designated MPO for the Huntsville urbanized area. Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is the responsible State agency. The Public Transit Division for the City of Huntsville and Madison County's transit program which is also known as Transportation for Rural Areas of Madison County (TRAM) are the responsible public transportation operators. Current membership of the Huntsville MPO consists of elected officials and citizens from the political jurisdictions in City of Huntsville, City of Madison, Madison County, Town of Owens Cross Roads, and Town of Triana. The study area includes the geographic area of all the aforementioned cities and towns with the City of Huntsville as the largest population center.

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



3.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Review Process

The initial certification review was conducted in 2005. Subsequent certification reviews were conducted in 2009, 2013, and 2017. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided in Appendix B. This report details the most recent review, which consisted of a virtual site visit and a virtual public involvement opportunity, conducted in April 2021.

Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, ALDOT, City of Huntsville Public Transit Division, and the Huntsville MPO staff. A full list of participants is included in Appendix A.

A desk audit of current documents and correspondence was completed prior to the site visit. In addition to the formal review, routine oversight mechanisms provide a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings.

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

- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
- MPO Structure and Agreements
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)/Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Transit Planning
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Public Participation
- Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)
- Freight Planning
- Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage
- Non-motorized Planning/Livability
- Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations

3.2 Documents Reviewed

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



- MPO FY 2020 UPWP
- MPO LRTP/MTP, 2045
- MPO FY 2020-2023 TIP and Self-Certification
- MPO Draft 2018 Public Participation Plan
- MPO By Laws, 2021
- Financial agreement between ALDOT and the City of Huntsville, 2008
- 3C agreement between MPO member governments and ALDOT, 2016
- Transit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MPO and transit operator



4.0 PROGRAM REVIEW

4.1 Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

4.1.1 Regulatory Basis

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

4.1.2 Current Status

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of the Huntsville Area Transportation Study (HATS) was officially designated in 1976. The Huntsville urbanized area was designated by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) in 2002.

The Urbanized Area (UZA) and Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundaries have been adjusted for the 2010 Census in 2012. The UZA was expanded to include additional newly developed areas after the certification review in 2013. The MPA remains unchanged for now, but anticipate southern area boundary adjustments will be shown in the 2030 Census. The population served within the MPA is approximately 374,475, with an estimated growth of 38 percent by year 2045. The total number of households will increase by 34 percent and total employment will increase by 18 percent. The basis of this growth is the area's diversifying economy, low cost of living compared to peer regions around the country, and solid foundation in aerospace and defense technology.

Currently, the neighboring City of Athens in Limestone County and the Huntsville Urbanized Area are not contiguous, but with rapid growth in the area, the MPO staff predicts that the City of Athens can possibly become part of the MPO between the 2020 and 2030 Census. The most up-to-date Huntsville UZA and MPA boundaries are shown in Appendix E.



4.1.3 Findings

- The MPO is anticipating major growth and future adjustments of the MPA boundaries are inevitable. Continued coordination with neighboring jurisdictions is apparent and routine communication and involvement is encouraged
- Commuter study is being completed in response to regional growth to identify commuter patterns from surrounding communities, i.e. Decatur and impact to existing infrastructure
- MPO is awaiting Census 2020 to finalize, and will coordinate with Decatur MPO if potential expansion or overlapping of two urbanized areas occurs.

Commendation: None

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations: None

Schedule for Process Improvement: NA

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will be available to assist MPO with any policy and guidance related to the expansion of an MPA.

4.2 MPO Structure and Agreements

4.2.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a) state 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 shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator serving the MPA.

4.2.2 Current Status

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of the Huntsville Area Transportation Study (HATS) also known as the Huntsville Area MPO was founded in 1976. The official name of the MPO is Huntsville Area Transportation Study. The MPO is housed in the City of Huntsville and staffed by six employees who are responsible for assisting in completion of all required planning and programming of the transportation system for the Huntsville MPA.



HATS is the lead agency responsible for determining overall policy affecting long-range and short-range transportation programs and plans for the TMA. The MPO Policy Board is composed of seven (7) voting members and four (4) non-voting members. Voting membership consists of (each member has one vote):

- City of Huntsville - 2 members
- City of Madison - 1 member
- Madison County - 1 member
- Town of Owens Cross Roads - 1 member
- Town of Triana - 1 member
- ALDOT North Region - 1 member

Non-voting membership consists of:

- TOP of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) - 1 member
- FTA - 1 member
- FHWA - 1 member
- ALDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning and Modal Programs - 1 member

The MPO Policy Board meets at least four times a year when needed. The two advisory committees associated with the transportation planning process in the Huntsville MPO include a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Prior to making decisions, the MPO Policy Board receives technical guidance from the TCC and structured citizen input from the CAC.

The Department of Parking and Public Transportation of the City of Huntsville is the main transit provider for the City of Huntsville and is listed in representation on the Technical Board. Madison County's transit program, Transportation for Rural Areas of Madison County (TRAM) is the main transit provider for demand response service in Madison County. The Department of Parking and Public Transportation of the City of Huntsville uses FTA formula funds to provide transit services for its respective areas. The Mayor of Huntsville and the Chairman of the Madison County Commission serve as the transit representatives through the MPO Policy Board.

The MPO has two active agreements, one Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and three bylaws. The first agreement is between the MPO membership governments and the State of Alabama regarding the "3C Planning Process". The second agreement is between the State of Alabama and the City of Huntsville regarding the administration of



USDOT transportation planning funds. The MOU is between the MPO and Department of Parking and Public Transportation of the City of Huntsville regarding transit planning. The MPO bylaws briefly describe the functions and duties of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and MPO Policy Board.

During the virtual site visit, the Federal Team held a discussion with the MPO elected officials about the current transportation planning process of the MPO. The discussion focused on growth management strategies for the area, coordination with board members regarding the project selection process, and the continuance of operations during pandemics and other emergency situations.

4.2.3 Findings

Commendation: None

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations:

- The MPO should make all meeting agendas and minutes available on the MPO website for public reference and archive

Schedule for Process Improvement: The MPO should implement the recommendations by December 2022.

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.

4.3 Unified Planning Work Program

4.3.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.308 sets the requirement that planning activities performed under Titles 23 and 49 U.S.C. be documented in a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operator, shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the MPA and the work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate the agency that will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding, and sources of funds.



4.3.2 Current Status

The Huntsville MPO developed its UPWP to include activities that meet the requirements of the 3-C transportation planning process in accordance of the FAST Act and accomplish the planning priorities established for the region. The established planning priorities focus on local and regional issues in response to the on-going development throughout the Huntsville Metro Area including a number of regionally significant transportation projects. The following are some planning activities the MPO programmed in the UPWP for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021:

- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Continuity of Operations (COOP)
- Data Collection Analysis
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
- Intermodal Freight Management Process
- Public Participation Process
- Title VI and Environmental Justice
- American Disability Act/Compliance
- Comprehensive Regional Transit Planning
- Transit Asset Management Planning

The MPO programmed approximately a total of \$884,000 for the FY 2021 UPWP including both Federal funds and local match.

4.3.3 Findings

- Appendix D of the UPWP includes detailed information about each of the area's major planning activities and sponsors.

Commendation: The Huntsville Area Transportation Study is not currently listed in attainment, but the MPO continues to prioritize and closely monitor air quality conditions as new employment generators and population growth occur.

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations: None



Schedule for Process Improvement: N/A

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.

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 20-year planning horizon and that it includes both long and short range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated and multi-modal system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

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

23 CFR 450.324(c) requires the MPO to review and update the MTP at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every 5 years in attainment areas to reflect current and forecasted transportation, population, land use, employment, congestion, and economic conditions and trends.

Under 23 CFR 450.324(f), the MTP is required, at a minimum, to consider the following:

- Projected transportation demand
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities
- Operational and management strategies
- Congestion management process
- 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



- A system Performance Report

4.4.2 Current Status

The Huntsville MPO adopted the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in 2020. The MPO planning staff with input and involvement of city, county, state, local government officials and the public developed the 2045 LRTP to meet the transportation needs over a 25-year planning horizon in the Huntsville MPA. Mobility needs were identified through forecasting future travel demand based on analysis of social-economic data. The plan also addresses other transportation needs such as future traffic volumes, roadway and intersection capacities, new transportation corridors, alternative transportation modes, pedestrian/bicycle trails, signalization, and funding alternatives. The 2045 LRTP is a comprehensive plan which includes elements of highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian, congestion management, environmental, and freight.

4.4.3 Findings

- MPO is currently working on employment, retail, non-retail data for the development of 2050 LRTP update
- Representatives from the Redstone Arsenal are members of the MPO's TCC, and were involved in the MPO's LRTP development, commuter studies, and other planning activities
- A Sidewalk plan is being updated currently with the ADA Transit Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to improve the safety of pedestrian facilities
- Greenway projects are completed by municipalities individually. The MPO is partnering with the North Alabama Land Trust in the development of the Singing River Trail project, a regional network of trails
- The System Performance Report was not provided in the LRTP. ALDOT is in the process of developing a template for the MPOs to use for including the system performance report in the LRTP

Commendation:

- The FHWA commends the Huntsville Urban Bike Share program (H.U.B.S.) and the staff members that work to support area residents. The program is ranked number 8 in the Nation by the National Complete Streets Coalition (2018).
- The MPO has demonstrated exemplary standards in Bicycle and Pedestrian planning in the State of Alabama through their continued coordination efforts with the Singing River Trail as well as the local bikeshare program with Tandem Mobility.

Corrective Action:



- A System Performance Report must be included with the MTP. The System Performance Report should evaluate the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets as described in § 450.306(d).

Recommendations:

- The MPO should include a more detailed safety analysis and procedures regarding project selection
- The MPO should include Title VI in the Executive Summary, not appendices of MTP
- The MPO should consider using data collected for Environmental Justice-sensitive areas to enhance project selection
- The MPO should continue to build relationships with the City of Huntsville during the Safety Campaign in EJ areas shown with an increase in reported pedestrian accidents in concentrated areas of minority and Spanish-speaking residents
- The MPO should add language to MTP to describe how performance measures are calculated for public and assist with prioritizing projects.

Schedule for Process Improvement: The MPO should implement the recommendations by the next LRTP update.

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.

4.5 Transit Planning

4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.314 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

4.5.2 Current Status

The MPO included transit planning as one of the multimodal elements in the 2045 LRTP. The City of Huntsville, the City of Madison and Madison County provide transit services within their respective areas. Madison County operates demand response transit through



the TRAM. The City of Madison operates the Madison Assisted Ride System (MARS) which is fully funded by the City of Madison, and provides transit services to Madison residents who are eligible for paratransit services. The Department of Parking and Public Transportation of the City of Huntsville is the main transit provider for the City of Huntsville. The City of Huntsville's transit program is funded directly through the FTA. Other transit services provided by the City of Huntsville's transit program include Google Transit, the Handi-Ride program, and Rideshare program etc.

4.5.3 Findings

The primary focus of the MPO's transit goals include expanded route service to local colleges and universities, extended service hours on weekdays and weekends, and bus rapid transit (BRT) alternatives.

The 2045 MTP lists transit goals under a 5-year implementation plan, and the MPO is currently advancing forward, despite the ongoing pandemic. Transit planning in the 2045 LRTP includes short-term, mid-term, and long-term plans for transit services. The MPO is also planning a light rail study in 2021, and a Regional Transit Plan to include neighboring counties in 2022.

Commendation:

- The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for their prompt and efficient response to public ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for the promotion and advancement of public/private partnerships such as 'Commuter with Enterprise'.
- The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA in its coordination and ongoing support with the Alabama A&M University electric bus program and implementation.

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations: None

Schedule for Process Improvement: N/A

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: N/A



4.6 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

4.6.1 Regulatory Basis

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

- Must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years.
- Surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations, are required to be included in the TIP.
- List project description, cost, funding source, and identification of the agency responsible for carrying out each project.
- Projects need to be consistent with the adopted MTP.
- Must be fiscally constrained.
- The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.

4.6.2 Current Status

The Huntsville MPO TIP is a prioritized list of funded transportation projects for a four-year period. Regionally significant projects that will be fully or partially funded with FHWA, FTA, state, local, and other federal funds are included in the TIP. The MPO updated its TIP in 2019. The current TIP includes a list of planned projects and projected revenues between the years, 2020 and 2023. The System Performance Report found in the MPO TIP outlines the State of Alabama's adopted targets and maintains data on required performance measures and targets, progress achieved in meeting the targets for Safety Performance Measures (PM1), Bridge/Pavement Performance Measures (PM2), and System Performance Measures (PM3).

The MPO makes TIP project information available in their website archives. This information includes user-friendly, color-coded interactive mapping features that are updated quarterly.



4.6.3 Findings

- Each project in the MPO TIP has a performance measure indicator that assists with meeting targets
- The MPO TIP is not only a standalone document; much of the data used to organize the TIP is also reflected in the project prioritization process of the MPO PPP and the MTP

Commendation: The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPO for the creation and maintenance of the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects. This document is among the most detailed, readable, and organized in the state.

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations:

- ALDOT and the MPO should continue to meet to discuss carryover balance funds and the authorization of MPO projects.

Schedule for Process Improvement: N/A

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.

4.7 Public Participation

4.7.1 Regulatory Basis

Sections 134(i)(5), 134(j)(1)(B) of Title 23 and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49, require a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. The requirements for public involvement are detailed in 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), which require the MPO to develop and use a documented participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process.

Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit



consideration and response to public input, and a periodically reviewing of the effectiveness of the participation plan.

4.7.2 Current Status

Since the last TMA Certification Review in 2017, the MPO has completed and updated the PPP. The MPO continues to monitor website activity and track public input, and traditional outreach with interactive kiosks are common at local community events. The MPO maintains an extensive list of multicultural, charity, and faith-based organizations to reach underserved populations.

The Public Hearing component of this review was conducted virtually via Zoom. 3 members of the public came and submitted comments to FHWA. Those comments were recorded and can be found in the appendix of this document. The MPO is working on an update to the 2018 Public Participation Plan (PPP).

4.7.3 Findings

- MPO plans to include virtual public involvement techniques in the update of the next PPP
- MPO updates interactive web maps monthly
- MPO keeps a list of email contacts for communication with the public; MPO doesn't mail out publications directly. Contact information is collected during meetings and events for future outreach activities

Commendation:

- The MPO made significant improvements since last certification review in sharing information with the public using MPO website and newsletters.

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations:

- The MPO should try to diversify the Citizen's committee roster to represent demographics of the entire Huntsville area, and continually recruit new members
- The MPO should update the PPP and use performance measures to gauge effectiveness. Refer to ALDOT's PPP for best practices on measuring the effectiveness of the process.

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.



4.8 Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)

4.8.1 Regulatory Basis

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. 2000d states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” In addition to Title VI, there are other Nondiscrimination statutes that afford legal protection. These statutes include the following: Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 U.S.C. 324), Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA specifies that programs and activities funded with Federal dollars are prohibited from discrimination based on disability.

Executive Order #12898 (Environmental Justice) directs federal agencies to develop strategies to address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. In compliance with this Executive Order, USDOT and FHWA issued orders to establish policies and procedures for addressing environmental justice in minority and low-income populations. The planning regulations, at 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vii), require that the needs of those “traditionally underserved” by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and/or minority households, be sought out and considered.

Executive Order # 13166 (Limited-English-Proficiency) requires agencies to ensure that limited English proficiency persons can meaningfully access the services provided consistent with and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of each federal agency.

4.8.2 Current Status

The MPO does not have any active Title VI, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or DBE complaints. All MPO planning documents and actions are made available for public review and comments prior to adoption. The MPO maintains a list of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), and contacts them when an appropriate work task is contracted. The MPO also submits information to be included in ALDOT’s Title VI Implementation Plan each



year. The MPO member governments have Title VI links on each website, and are in the process of completing ADA Transition Plans for their respective areas.

4.8.3 Findings

- Contact information for Title VI is made available in all planning documents and the local transit authority website.
- The City of Huntsville and the MPO is currently working together to implement the ADA Transition Plan

Commendation: None

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations:

- The MPO should work closely with local governments on their ADA Transition Plans, as well as ALDOT North Region to identify locations of facilities where ADA requirements must be met on ongoing and planned transportation projects within the MPA

Schedule for Process Improvement: The MPO should implement the recommendations by the next Certification Review.

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.

4.9 Freight Planning

4.9.1 Regulatory Basis

The MAP-21 established in 23 U.S.C. 167 a policy to improve the condition and performance of the national freight network and achieve goals related to economic competitiveness and efficiency; congestion; productivity; safety, security, and resilience of freight movement; infrastructure condition; use of advanced technology; performance, innovation, competition, and accountability, while reducing environmental impacts.

In addition, 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR 450.306 specifically identify the need to address freight movement as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

4.9.2 Current Status



The Huntsville MPO included freight planning as one element in its 2045 LRTP with identified air, rail, water, and truck routes through the area. The freight element in the LRTP identified the various modes of transportation which are critical components of an efficient intermodal freight transportation system for the region. The various modes of transportation include an international airport operation, truck-rail intermodal facilities, truck-rail service facilities, truck routes, railroad facilities, and waterway facilities. The MPO also provided in the LRTP projection and analysis of growth and demand in the movement of goods and services for each mode. In supporting ALDOT's effort to develop a Statewide Freight Plan that is in compliance with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the MPO identified freight bottlenecks within the MPA which are included in the state freight plan.

4.9.3 Findings

- The MPO anticipates that supplemental funding will be required for future Freight activities

Commendation: None

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations: None

Schedule for Process Improvement: NA

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: NA

4.10 Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage

4.10.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(D) 23 CFR 450.324(f)(10) requires environmental mitigation be set forth in connection with the MTP. The MTP is required to include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities for the transportation improvements and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan.

23 U.S.C. 168 and Appendix A to 23 CFR Part 450 provide for linking the transportation planning and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. A Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study can incorporate the initial phases of NEPA through the consideration of natural, physical, and social effects, coordination with environmental resource agencies, and



public involvement. This will allow the analysis in the PEL study to be referenced in the subsequent NEPA document once the project is initiated, saving time and money with project implementation.

4.10.2 Current Status

The 2045 MTP for the Huntsville MPO provided an overview of environmental/land use factors that must be considered to determine the viability of proposed PEL projects. The MPO MTP provided detailed maps of environmentally sensitive areas, and proposed project locations. Corridors identified for improvement are analyzed for environmental concerns, so that mitigation activities can be considered during the planning phase. The MPO conducts discussions with other agencies as applicable to determine any environmental concerns regarding the overall proposed future network and any environmental mitigation strategies that can be developed prior to the project design phase.

During the 2017 Review, the FHWA provided the Huntsville MPO a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) website to provide information on how the planning process can consider the feasibility of projects to include environmental coordination, scoping, elimination of infeasible alternatives and the costs of a project. The Huntsville MPA is starting a new PEL study near the Redstone Arsenal.

4.10.3 Findings

- The Huntsville MPA, ALDOT, and FHWA are collaborating in the area's first PEL study.

Commendation: None

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations: None

Schedule for Process Improvement: N/A

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance and training as requested.



4.11 Non-motorized Planning/Livability

4.11.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 217(g) states that bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by each MPO under 23 U.S.C. 134. Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities.

23 CFR 450.306 sets forth the requirement that the scope of the metropolitan planning process "will increase the safety for motorized and non-motorized users; increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; and protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life.

4.11.2 Current Status

The Huntsville MPO created and published a bicycle and pedestrian plan and has included a bicycle and pedestrian elements in the 2045 LRTP. The MPO summarized in the LRTP the different bicycle and pedestrian plans that the MPO desires to implement within the MPA. Some projects that will further enhance the area's Bikeway, Greenway, and sidewalk plans carry a focus of shared use paths, road diets, and paved shoulders, alternative modes of transportation, and last-mile connectivity.

The MPO developed a list of future roadway projects and described how these projects will address or consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in the 2045 LRTP. The bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Huntsville MPA is a map which compiles existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities listed in the different local plans, as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations that will be addressed and considered in conjunction with visionary roadway projects proposed in the 2045 LRTP.

4.11.3 Findings

- The MPO has a vibrant, active Bicycle civic group and is involved at every step of the MPO process
- The 2021 MPO Bikeway Plan emphasizes 8 major goals; among those listed are an improved focused approach to involving local leadership to secure funding for



bike/pedestrian accommodations, incorporating transit into walking and biking, and increasing the safety culture by investing in education and awareness.

Commendations:

- The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA on its efforts to merge bicycle technology and ridership trends with the addition of bicycle storage equipment on local public transportation
- The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for its aggressive research and data collection related to trip generators and inter-city connectivity. This information is found in many of the MPO's documents and maps.

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations: None

Schedule for Process Improvement: N/A

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.

4.12 Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations

4.12.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) and 23 CFR 450.322 set forth requirements for the congestion management process (CMP) in TMAs. The CMP is a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that provides for a safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system. TMAs designated as non-attainment for ozone must also provide an analysis of the need for additional capacity for a proposed improvement over travel demand reduction, and operational management strategies.

23 CFR 450.324(f)(5) requires the MTP include Management and Operations (M&O) of the transportation network as an integrated, multimodal approach to optimize the performance of the existing transportation infrastructure. Effective M&O strategies include measurable regional operations goals and objectives and specific performance measures to optimize system performance.

4.12.2 Current Status



The Huntsville MPO developed Congestion Management Process (CMP) as part of the 2045 LRTP. The CMP developed by the MPO is a step by step process which includes data collection, establishment of performance measures and system monitoring. Data collected for the CMP include traffic counts from the most recently adopted transportation model, work zone data, and public transit service statistics. Performance measures established for the CMP include congestion based measures, system efficiency based measures, system accessibility based measures, system mobility based measures, and non-recurring measures. System monitoring for the CMP includes the following steps:

- Network monitoring and evaluation
- Corridor ranking
- Corridor and segment strategy screening
- Strategy development
- Programming
- Strategy implementation
- Strategy effectiveness evaluations

The MPO identified the top ten congested corridors using the Congestion Management Process and strategies to reduce congestion for these corridors.

Since 2010, the City of Huntsville and the State of Alabama initiated the Restore Our Roads program, in which the City will match 50% local funds with 50% federal funds on critical projects. Several previously identified congested corridors in 2010 have been identified as Restore Our Roads projects. The MPO will use real-time observations in the field to determine the improvement's success once these projects are complete.

4.12.3 Findings

- The MPO is completing a Regional Commuter Study
- The MPO is searching for low-cost implementation strategies for congestion management
- The MPO is working to seek guidance for Public Safety initiatives to assist with safety goals and the training for local first responders
- The MPO is working to improve coordination with the city of Huntsville as it relates to the future of congestion management

Commendation:



- The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for its development of the corridor analysis using volume to capacity ratios and the Commuter Study (2021).

Corrective Action: None

Recommendations:

- The MPO should continue close coordination efforts with the ALDOT North Region Transportation Systems Management Center, as growth is expected to increase exponentially over the next 10 years.
- The MPO should consider incorporating CMP strategies that are low cost alternative on local and ALDOT projects. Low cost alternative strategies may include adaptive signals, improvements of turn lanes, and system operations, hard shoulder running, etc.
- The MPO should consider updating the current Congestion Management Process to reflect the findings of the Regional Commuter Study.
- The MPO should adapt a regional ITS Architecture Plan.
- The MPO should continue coordination with ALDOT in the implementation of the interstate 'ASAP' vehicle congestion management and safety program.

Schedule for Process Improvement: The MPO should implement the recommendations by the next Certification Review.

Proposed FHWA/FTA Technical Assistance: FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested.



5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Huntsville urbanized area conditionally meets Federal planning requirements as follows.

5.1 Commendations

The following are noteworthy practices that the Huntsville MPO is doing well in the transportation planning process:

1. The Huntsville Area Transportation Study is not currently listed in attainment, but the MPO continues to prioritize and closely monitor air quality conditions as new employment generators and population growth occur.
2. The FHWA commends the Huntsville Urban Bike Share program (H.U.B.S.) and the staff members that work to support area residents. The program is ranked number 8 in the Nation by the National Complete Streets Coalition (2018).
3. The MPO has demonstrated exemplary standards in Bicycle and Pedestrian planning in the State of Alabama through their continued coordination efforts with the Singing River Trail as well as the local bikeshare program with Tandem Mobility.
4. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for their prompt and efficient response to public ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for the promotion and advancement of public/private partnerships such as 'Commute with Enterprise'.
6. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA in its coordination and ongoing support with the Alabama A&M University electric bus program and implementation.
7. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPO for the creation and maintenance of the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects. This document is among the most detailed, readable, and organized in the state.
8. The MPO made significant improvements since last certification review in sharing information with the public using MPO website and newsletters.
9. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA on its efforts to merge bicycle technology and ridership trends with the addition of bicycle storage equipment on local public transportation
10. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for its aggressive research and data collection related to trip generators and inter-city connectivity. This information is found in many of the MPO's documents and maps.
11. The FHWA commends the Huntsville MPA for its development of the corridor analysis using volume to capacity ratios and the Commuter Study (2021).



5.2 Corrective Actions

1. A System Performance Report must be included with the MTP. The System Performance Report should evaluate the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets as described in § 450.306(d).

5.3 Recommendations

The Federal Review Team noted 2 recommendations from the 2017 review that are included in this report and strongly recommend high priority attention from the Huntsville MPO.

The recommendations are:

1. The MPO should consider incorporating CMP strategies that are low cost alternative on local and ALDOT projects. Low cost alternative strategies may include adaptive signals, improvements of turn lanes, and system operations, hard shoulder running, etc.
2. The MPO should work closely with local governments on their ADA Transition Plans, as well as ALDOT North Region to identify locations of facilities where ADA requirements must be met on ongoing and planned transportation projects within the MPA

The Federal Review Team made numerous recommendations to the MPO. Detailed descriptions of these recommendations can be found in sections 4.1 through 4.12 of this report.

5.4 Training/Technical Assistance

FHWA and FTA will provide technical assistance as requested by the MPO.



APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the Huntsville urbanized area virtual site review:

USDOT Review Team

Vontra Giles, FHWA Alabama Division
Jeff Shelley, FHWA Alabama Division
Aaron Dawson, FHWA Alabama Division
Lian Li, FHWA Alabama Division
Linda Guin, FHWA Alabama Division
Jeff Dogan, FHWA Alabama Division
Stephanie James, FHWA Alabama Division
Tim Heisler, FHWA Alabama Division

Huntsville MPO

Dennis Madsen
Shontrill Lowe
James Moore
James Vandiver
Ken Newberry

Department of Parking and Public Transportation, City of Huntsville

John Autry
Kim Smith

Scott Freeman
Stephen Forrester

City of Huntsville

Kathy Martin
Melissa Stokes

Madison County



Mary Beth Broeren, City of Madison

Jennifer Barger

Katrina Bankslove

Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)

Bryan Fair

James Giles

Cornell Tatum

Sonya Baker

Toni Arrington

Sundae Ragland

Allen Teague

Eddie Hoff

Charles Wood

MPO Board Members

Tommy Battle, City of Huntsville Mayor

Paul Finley, City of Madison Mayor

Redstone Arsenal

Kaela Hamby

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG)

Erin Tidwell

Sarah James

Others

John Kvach

Taron Thorpe, CAC

Stan Simpson, Town of Gurley Mayor

Trent Griffin, CAC



APPENDIX B - STATUS OF FINDINGS FROM 2017 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 identifies the corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification and summarizes discussions of how they have been addressed.

Corrective Actions: There were no Corrective Actions as a result of the 2017 Review.

Recommendation 1: The MPO Policy Board should continue pre-scheduled meetings so the public will be made aware of well in advance when the meetings will take place.

Disposition: *The MPO has established a quarterly meeting schedule up to 24 months in advance. The schedule is confirmed with all Policy Board members, and posted on the MPO website, and includes CAC, TCC, and Policy Board meeting dates, times and locations. In addition, public materials and presentations for the quarterly meetings advertise the dates and times for the following meetings.*

Recommendation 2: The MPO may have an open call for CAC membership to all citizens within the MPA to encourage more public participation and promote a more diverse representation of different local citizen groups, e.g. bicycle and pedestrian advocates, people with disability, older population, and other special interest groups, etc.;

Disposition: *MPO Staff have engaged Policy Board leadership, as well as interested stakeholders to identify and attract a broader constituency of CAC membership. Partner organizations like BASC have been asked to suggest candidates, and both cycling and pedestrian advocates are currently seated on the Committee. MPO Staff continues to look for representative and diverse members by reaching out to organizations that have not typically been involved, like Phoenix Industries, a local organization that develops job opportunities for the disabled.*

Recommendation 3: The TCC and CAC may have more scheduled meetings to discuss ongoing activities and issues within the MPA before reporting to the Policy Board.

Disposition: *The CAC and TCC have had workshops where topics such as Performance Measures were discussed by ALDOT officials and consultants. On 10/05/2018, ALDOT staff and consultants presented Performance Measures to the CAC and TCC. In February 2019, Huntsville Public Transit and consultants presented the Transit Study Update to the committees. In June 2020, Huntsville Public Transit presented the update PTASP to the CAC and TCC committee members. During the 12/02/2020 MPO meetings, ALDOT staff*



and consultants presented Performance Measures 3 to the group. During the LRTP update in 2019, the CAC and TCC had some workshops on projects etc. for the updating of the LRTP.

Recommendation 4: The MPO may have more technical workshops with participation of TCC and CAC to educate and inform the public transportation related issues within the MPA.

Disposition: *On 10/05/2018, ALDOT staff and consultants presented Performance Measures to the CAC and TCC. In February 2019, Huntsville Public Transit and consultants presented the Transit Study Update to the committees. In June 2020, Huntsville Public Transit presented the update PTASP to the CAC and TCC committee members. During the 12/02/2020 MPO meetings, ALDOT staff and consultants presented Performance Measures 3 to the group. During the LRTP update in 2019, the CAC and TCC had some workshops on projects etc. for the updating of the LRTP.*

Recommendation 5: The MPO should conduct MPO 101 training regularly for new members of TCC and CAC and newly elected officials to bring them up to speed on transportation planning process.

Disposition: *MPO staff utilizes the MPO 101 time with each newly elected official to understand their strengths and weaknesses and to educate them on the planning process.*

Recommendation 6: The term MPO used in MPO's official documents should be clearly defined so there will not be any confusion about whether the term MPO refers to the MPO Policy Board/members, or the MPO subcommittees (TCC and CAC), or the MPO planning staff.

Disposition: *Documents such as the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, etc. have been updated to reflect the difference between MPO Policy Board or MPO staff.*

Recommendation 7: The MPO should use its official name consistently in all agreements, MOUs, resolutions, and other official planning documents to prevent confusion and promote clear understanding;

Disposition: *While founding documents utilize Huntsville Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization, current and future documents utilize Huntsville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.*

Recommendation 8: The MPO should officially document and adopt the roles and responsibilities of the MPO planning staff and types of support the staff will provide to assist each MPO member government. The adopted document should be made available for the public to review.



Disposition: The MPO has created this document and the information is available for review on the MPO website.

Recommendation 9: The MPO should also officially document and adopt how the Policy Board, TCC, CAC, and planning staff work together and communicate with one another. The adopted document should also be made available for the public to review.

Disposition: *Communication among the bodies is conducted on both a formal and informal basis. Formally, the projects and agendas are communicated via e-mail, and meeting minutes are shared across all groups. As the quarterly meeting sets progress, comments from earlier sessions are communicated via the presentations to subsequent meetings, culminating with the Board meeting. Staff also provide regular project updates via the regularly-distributed urban funds report, so that all members are up-to-date on project statuses. Informally, Staff maintains an extensive and updated contact list for the members of committees and Board, so that individuals can connect directly off-line. This process, as well names and contact information for all members, is posted on the website.*

Recommendation 10: The MPO should provide documentation on how FTA formula funds are distributed to Transportation for Rural Areas of Madison County (TRAM).

Disposition: *FTA formula funds for TRAM are distributed by ALDOT. ALDOT is the designated recipient for all rural Section 5311 fund recipients in the State of Alabama.*

Recommendation 11: The MPO may include in the UPWP the development of the Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM) and State of Good Repair Plan as planning activities.

Disposition: *The MPO has included these elements in the 2021 UPWP.*

Recommendation 12: The consolidated planning funds column in the summary budget table as well as the source for PL funds in the Financial Responsibilities Table for each individual task listed in the UPWP should indicate that both FHWA and FTA are contributing to the consolidated planning grant.

Disposition: *As soon as the 2017 TMA Certification Review process was complete, UPWP table listings were changed to reflect financial responsibilities. (See Attachment 1 – UPWP FY2021 Appendix C page 49-50).*

Recommendation 13: Although it is not required according to 23 CFR 450.324, transit planning in the LRTP should be developed more in depth to discuss how the transit system is to be



maintained and expanded in intermediate term (10 to 15 years) based upon needs for the next 25 years.

Disposition: *Chapter 6 of the TRIP 2045 LRTP includes Regional Transit Goals—specific transit investments for the short term (5 years), midterm (10-15 years), and long term (15-25 years).*

Recommendation 14: The MPO and transit operators should emphasize re-investment in the regional transit system during the next update of the LRTP, and consider a range of investments to improve state of good repair and safety throughout the time horizon of the LRTP and TIP.

Disposition: *Chapter 6 of the TRiP 2045 LRTP document includes short-term projects planned by member jurisdictions that operate or plan to operate transit services, including vehicle replacement and pedestrian connectivity to stops.*

Recommendation 15: Since the MPO has limited funding for operating and maintaining a simple fixed route transit system, the MPO should omit any reference to light rail in its planning documents.

Disposition: *The TRiP 2045 LRTP does not mention light rail. Considering the increasing congestion and population growth in the Huntsville area, the MPO is funding an upcoming Regional Transit Study that will explore all forms of mass transit, including rail.*

Recommendation 16: The MPO and transit operators should explore alternative funding source by developing partnerships with office parks and creating Vanpools which are eligible for FTA Section 5307 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program funding.

Disposition: *The City of Huntsville (Huntsville Transit) has a current partnership with “CommuteWithEnterprise”, the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), and Toyota / Mazda to expand vanpooling in the region. Employer and Federally subsidized vanpools currently operate to and from the TVA – Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Redstone Arsenal (which will be the new location for the US Space Command), 2 Alatrade locations, Gemstone Foods in Decatur, and others. Over the past 2+ years, planning for regional park-n-ride service to the new Toyota / Mazda facility on Huntsville’s west side continues at the local, MPO, and national levels.*

The local Rideshare program now operates through the CommuteSmart system online (<https://www.commutesmart.org/huntsville>) that links all major cities in Alabama. Links to both



the CommuteSmart and CommuteWithEnterprise databases are provided on the Huntsville Transit webpage.

Recommendation 17: The MPO should have a formalized process on how the MPO calls for projects, prioritizes and selects projects to be included in the TIP including how the MPO planning staff, TCC, CAC, Policy Board, and transit agencies work and interact with one another during this process.

Disposition: This process is defined on page 24 of FY2020-2023 TIP. The MPO also utilizes the CMP and modeling efforts for problematic corridors within the region.

Recommendation 18: The MPO should review the priorities of the TIP periodically, e.g. once a year, to make sure the priorities meet current transportation demands within the MPA.

Disposition: *MPO Staff conduct a review of the TIP on an annual basis, balancing the current roster of projects against traffic model updates, demographic information, funding availability, and anticipated congestion. These discussions are reviewed with the CAC, TCC, Board and impacted municipalities.*

Recommendation 19: The MPO should have a formalized process on how the MPO administers TA funding including call for projects and selection of TA projects.

Disposition: *The MPO website (www.huntsvillempo.org/tap) is updated with new guidelines, deadlines, funding limits, etc. for the local TA funds as well as advertised ALDOT TA funds.*

Recommendation 20: The MPO should involve transit agencies in the TA process.

Disposition: *In MPO is in regular contact with local transit partners, and is actively coordinating with the Transit Authority to document their level of involvement.*

Recommendation 21: The MPO should program for two years of TA projects at the beginning of the TIP, and have a call for projects each following year to maintain a two-year program of TA projects.

Disposition: MPO Staff has had preliminary discussions about extending the TA budget planning beyond one year, and is prepared to advance that into practice.

Recommendation 22: The MPO should include in the TIP an overall map of where projects are, and refer project information provided for each project on the overall map.



Disposition: *An interactive TIP map on the Huntsville Area MPO website (<http://www.huntsvillempo.org/maps/>). The map is not directly included in the content of the TIP.*

Recommendation 23: The MPO should include in the PPP a contact list of special interest groups, such as aging population, walking and bicycling enthusiasts, and people with disability etc., and make efforts to expand the contact list.

Disposition: *The MPO staff maintains several databases of contacts which include MPO committee memberships; news media; local elected officials; appropriate Federal, State, local, and non-profit agencies and organizations; businesses; and civic organizations that desire to be informed of transportation issues. The Hispanic Latino Advisory Council (HLAC), Huntsville's Bicycle Advisory and Safety Committee (BASC), and other committees and interest groups are listed and are well diversified. Although, the MPO continuously look to expand and diversify the contact lists. (See Attachment 2 - 2018 Public Participation Plan (PPP) Appendix F).*

Recommendation 24: The MPO should provide on its website links to Facebook pages of municipalities and any ongoing transportation related initiatives.

Disposition: *The MPO has a 'Title VI and ADA Information' page on its website (<http://www.huntsvillempo.org/ada/>). The MPO webpage also has related links to each individual municipality and their respective coordinators. The public can also access each municipality's social media pages to find any other related initiatives.*

Recommendation 25: The MPO should provide more information on its website about Title VI and ADA, and create a link on the front page for the public to file Title VI and ADA related complaints, and submit questions and comments.

Disposition: *The MPO has a 'Title VI and ADA Information' page on its website (<http://www.huntsvillempo.org/ada/>). The MPO webpage also has related links to each individual municipality and their respective coordinators. The MPO also require the member jurisdictions to disclose of complaints etc. every 4 years during the process of updating the TIP. The MPO does not have its own complaint page but does have links to each jurisdictions' pages.*

Recommendation 26: The MPO should make agendas and other documents to be reviewed at the meetings available well in advance at the MPO's website so that the public will have enough time to review them and provide comments.



Disposition: *All available materials for each meeting such as agendas, resolutions, and minutes from past meetings are displayed on the website 2 weeks in advance of the meetings according to the PPP.*

Recommendation 27: The MPO should work closely with local governments on their ADA Transition Plans, as well as ALDOT North Region to identify locations of facilities where ADA requirements must be met on ongoing and planned transportation projects within the MPA.

Disposition: The MPO has a signed agreement with the State of Alabama that affirms the MPO's commitment to following all Title VI rules and a commitment to non-discrimination. The Huntsville-Area MPO has charted each jurisdiction's good faith efforts to create their own specific ADA Transition Plans for their respective jurisdictions. Each plan should identify locations of facilities where ADA requirements should be met on ongoing and planned transportation projects. No ADA transition plans have been received by FHWA.

Recommendation 28: The MPO should involve ALDOT North Region representative at TCC meetings to talk about installation of ADA curb ramps in the area.

Disposition: *ALDOT regional representatives are encouraged to talk about what is currently ongoing during the 'Agency Reports' on the TCC Agenda.*

Recommendation 29: The ALDOT and MPO should avoid vague descriptions of projects such as "various locations" when programming projects in the STIP and TIP whenever possible. The description should describe location of intersections including route and street names.

Disposition: *The MPO has discontinued use of vague project descriptions, and added more detail more detail to locations and extents.*

Recommendation 30: In order to make the best use of federal funds, avoid potential project delays and repayment of PE costs, the MPO should encourage local governments to use Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) to determine whether or not a transportation project is technically and financially feasible, and better understand the potential environmental challenges, benefits, and burdens of a proposed project.

Disposition: *The City of Huntsville and ALDOT are currently doing a PEL on the Arsenal East Connector project and plan to continue this process on other projects in the future.*

Recommendation 31: The MPO should consider having a committee/ working group focusing on bicycle and pedestrian planning for the Metropolitan Planning Area and including the public.



Disposition: *The MPO has the Bicycle Advisory Safety Committee which was created initially as a Citizen Advisory Committee, but now is composed of Cyclists from the MPO area and help to implement the 2021 MPO Bicycle Plan.*

Recommendation 32: The MPO should develop its bicycle and pedestrian planning program to provide more information on its past and future plans to develop an overall “master plan” that will result in a fully connected multimodal network.

Disposition: *The MPO recently completed its updated and first ever MPO Bicycle Plan which will begin to address many bicycling and pedestrian issues within the MPO area. The Plan revolves around connectivity and safe travels for all alternate modes of transportation.*

Recommendation 33: Although it is not required, the MPO should consider having a standalone bicycle and pedestrian plan and/or a bicycle and pedestrian implementation plan to better explain to the public about the bicycle and pedestrian planning process, and how the MPO addresses bicycle and pedestrian needs for all users within the MPA.

Disposition: *The MPO just approved of the Updated Bicycle Plan that will address these issues. There is also a MPO website that will make the plan accessible by anyone on line. Included in the plan is strategies to educate the public by social and print media in addition to campaigns on safety.*

Recommendation 34: Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations may not be feasible on the mainline of an expressway due to limited access, e.g. I-565, Memorial Parkway in Huntsville. However, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations should be addressed and considered on frontage/service roads that are parallel to an expressway, at interchanges that are on the expressway, and at crossroads that are either above or under the expressway. For example, project numbers 44, 45, and 46 listed in Table 4.2 of the LRTP should consider accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians on frontage/service roads, and at interchanges and crossroads along Memorial Parkway.

Disposition: *The MPO is identifying alternative routes to those same destinations. The City of Huntsville has received numerous requests from concerned residents about the dangers for pedestrians and cyclists crossing US-231/Memorial Parkway.*

Recommendation 35: The MPO should include transit providers in the bicycle and pedestrian planning process.

Disposition: *Pedestrian and bicycle improvements have been planned and implemented over the past 3 years. City of Huntsville Planning and Transit staff discussions of transit and bikeways*



is ongoing. The Huntsville Transit Study completed in January 2019 looked at pedestrian access and sidewalks as part of the study. Pedestrian infrastructure improvements are included in the 5-Phase Transit Improvement Plan. Most of the recommended pedestrian infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, curb cuts, etc.) have been completed during Phase I of the plan implementation. A new transfer hub was constructed in North Huntsville at the Richard Showers Recreation Center that also includes bicycle maintenance amenities. Similar bike amenities have also been included at the downtown bus transfer station; and new bus stops along Clinton Avenue at the Campus 805 locations. Huntsville Transit continues to equip all fixed route buses with bicycle racks for first and last mile connections.

Recommendation 36: The MPO should obtain the ALDOT North Region Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) plan when available and incorporate strategies as part of the CMP. The MPO may also consider developing its own Transportation Systems Management and Operations strategies to incorporate into the CMP.

Disposition: *The MPO has obtained a copy of the North Region TSMO Plan. Since the last TMA certification, ALDOT has opened a regional TMC in Huntsville, and member jurisdictions are coordinating with them. TSMO improvements are planned along I-565 and I-65 in the next few years, including ITS components such as traffic cameras and message signs. Chapter 7 of the TRiP 2045 LRTP (the current CMP) includes seven ITS components applicable to the Huntsville MPO.*

Recommendation 37: The MPO should consider incorporating CMP strategies that are low cost alternative on local and ALDOT projects. Low cost alternative strategies may include adaptive signals, improvements of turn lanes, and system operations, etc.

Disposition: *The MPO and its member jurisdictions have incorporated low-cost alternatives on projects, including adaptive signalization, adding turn lanes and shoulders, and intersection improvements (e.g. roundabouts).*

For example, the Madison County Transportation Plan for unincorporated areas (currently under development) prioritizes low-cost alternatives for congestion relief and safety improvements, such as access management policies, over increasing capacity. ALDOT also has scheduled RTOP traffic signal optimization projects in Huntsville and Madison in FY 2023.



APPENDIX C – PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Trent Griffin commented that he liked the MPO’s transportation planning process, but sometimes the MPO was slow to respond to input or comment from the public
2. Larry larry@hubscoop.net said that as a member of the CAC, he doesn’t feel that the CAC members get a chance to talk about what the CAC wants to see in terms of future projects. He wasn’t sure how far and how much the CAC can contribute in terms of decision making because a lot of times, a decision has already been made by the time the CAC gets to review something. He wanted to know if he’ll have more chance to provide input before a project is selected and programmed in the TIP
3. John Kvach commented on a great and useful working relationship with the Huntsville MPO during the development of the Singing River Trail project which is a 150-mile-long proposed green trail that connects the region, promotes active transportation, emotional and physical wellness, economic growth, and equity. He said the MPO’s planning process has made everything easier in the early planning part of the Singing River Trail.



APPENDIX D - LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
ALDOT: Alabama Department of Transportation
AMPO: Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
APPLE: Advanced Planning, Programming and Logical Engineering
CAA: Clean Air Act
CAC: Citizens Advisory Committee
CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
CMP: Congestion Management Process
CPMS: Comprehensive Project Management System
DBE: Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
DOJ: Department of Justice
DOT: Department of Transportation
EJ: Environmental Justice
FAST: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
FY: Fiscal Year
HATS: Huntsville Area Transportation Study
HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
ISTEA: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
JARC: Job Access and Reverse Commute
LEP: Limited-English-Proficiency
LOS: Level of Service
LRTP: Long Range Transportation Plan
M&O: Management and Operations
MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MARS: Madison Assisted Ride System
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding
MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act
PE: Preliminary Engineering
PEL: Planning and Environmental Linkages
PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}: Particulate Matter
PPP: Public Participation Plan



SAFETEA-LU: The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

STBG: Surface Transportation Block Grant

STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program

TA: Transportation Alternatives

TAP: Transportation Alternatives Program

TCC: Technical Coordinating Committee

TDM: Travel Demand Management

3C: Continuing, Comprehensive, and Cooperative

TARCOG: TOP of Alabama Regional Council of Governments

TIP: Transportation Improvement Program

TMA: Transportation Management Area

TRAM: Transportation for Rural Areas of Madison County

TSMO: Transportation Systems Management and Operations

U.S.C.: United States Code

UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program

USDOT: United States Department of Transportation

UZA: Urbanized Area



APPENDIX E – HUNTSVILLE UZA AND MPA BOUNDARIES





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