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September 3, 2008

Honorable Ken Ulman, Chairman  
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board  
2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310  
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

In Reply Refer To: HDA-MD  
(724)

Dear Mr. Ulman:

Re: Federal Certification of the Baltimore Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
(MPO) Planning Process

As you are aware, the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) retained and reinforced the requirements for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to review and certify the Transportation Management Area (TMA) planning processes at least every three years. The recent enactment of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) revised the certification cycle to at least every four years.

The recent review of the Baltimore MPO's planning process included a site visit conducted by representatives from the FHWA and FTA on June 23-25, 2008. Significant time was spent with the Baltimore MPO staff, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), State Highway Administration, and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to discuss the current status of the MPO's "3-C" planning process. Throughout the site visit, opportunities also were afforded to local elected/appointed officials and the general public to provide their insights on the MPOs' planning process. In addition to assessing the MPOs' progress in addressing findings from prior certification reviews, the recent site visit focused on the MPOs' current and/or future implementation of metropolitan transportation planning requirements.

Enclosed for your consideration is the final *TMA Certification Review Report* that documents the various components of the recent FHWA/FTA certification review of the Baltimore MPO. The report provides an overview of the TMA certification process, summarizes the various discussions from the recent site visit, provides a series of review findings and issues the FHWA/FTA certification actions.

In general, the review determined the continued existence of a "3-C" metropolitan transportation planning process that satisfies the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 1607, and associated Federal requirements. The review team highlighted noteworthy practices in the Baltimore MPO's planning process in a number of areas. The review team also identified a number of recommendations to improve the current process. These recommendations should be addressed by December 31, 2008.

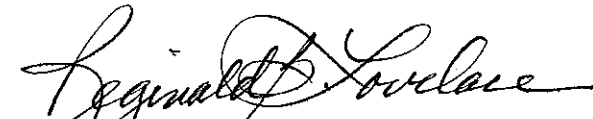
Based on the overall findings, the FHWA and FTA hereby certify the Baltimore MPO's planning process. This certification is in effect until September 3, 2012. A representative from the FHWA and FTA will formally present the review findings and the FHWA/FTA certification action at an upcoming MPO board meeting.

If you have any questions concerning this Certification review process and/or the *MPO Certification Review Report* please contact Kwame Arhin, FHWA, Delmar Division, (410) 779-7158, or Gail McFadden-Roberts, FTA Region III, (215) 656-7100.

Sincerely yours,



Nelson J. Castellanos  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration



for Regina A. Thompson  
Regional Administrator, Region III  
Federal Transit Administration

Enclosure:

Cc: John D. Porcari, MDOT  
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Martin Kotsch, EPA Region 3  
Harvey Bloom, Baltimore MPO  
Spencer Stevens FHWA HQ



2008  
Certification Report

**Baltimore Region**

*Metropolitan Planning  
Organization*

Prepared by:

**Federal Highway Administration**  
Delmar Division  
Maryland Office

**Federal Transit Administration**  
Region 3

September 3, 2008

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## **SUMMARY**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly reviewed and evaluated the transportation planning process carried out for the Baltimore Metropolitan Planning Area over a four-year period. This review and evaluation concluded with a comprehensive certification review meeting on June 23 - 25, 2008, in Baltimore, Maryland.

The review has shown that the Baltimore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has made significant improvements to its transportation planning process in many areas during the last four years. The MPO has instituted a number of noteworthy practices that indicate a commitment to continually improving the planning process, and which may be used as examples for other MPOs. Further, a number of recommendations have also been identified concerning upcoming needs that the MPO must address, as well as suggested improvements for the MPO to consider. We recommend the MPO to address these recommendations by December 31, 2009. The review team acknowledges, based on recent correspondence from the MPO that the MPO has already begun to address some of the recommendations, and we commend these initiatives.

Based on this review, the review team has determined that the metropolitan transportation planning process in the Baltimore MPO continues to meet the requirements of 23 USC 134 and 23 CFR 450.334. The result of the review is that FHWA and FTA are jointly certifying the transportation planning process for the Baltimore MPO.

This FHWA/FTA certification will remain in effect until **September 3, 2012**, for a maximum of four years from the issuance date of this report.

## I. Introduction

### A. Overview of the Federal Certification Process

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) established a requirement in 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 1607 for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to jointly certify the transportation planning processes in metropolitan areas with over 200,000 population (i.e., Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)) at least every three years. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 continued this requirement, but extended the timeframe to at least every four years.

23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5)(B) states that these certifications may be issued if: (i) the transportation planning process complies with the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 1607 (as amended) and other applicable Federal requirements and (ii) there is a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the TMA that has been approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Governor (or Governor's designee). Moreover, the FHWA/FTA certification finding remains in effect for four years, unless a new certification finding is issued sooner.

The FHWA Delmar Division, Maryland Office and the FTA Region 3 Office began conducting TMA Certification Reviews in Maryland in May 1995, utilizing a process that consists of four primary activities for each review:

- A “desk review” of selected TMA planning process documents;
- A site visit with staffs from the Baltimore TMA various planning agencies (e.g., Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Maryland Transit Administration, and other participating State/local agencies), including opportunities for local elected officials and the general public to provide comments on the TMA planning process;
- FHWA/FTA preparation of a *TMA Certification Review Report* that documents the certification review's findings; and
- A formal FHWA Division Office presentation of the review's findings and FHWA/FTA certification action at a future meeting of the respective MPO Policy Board.

### B. Scope of the Certification Review

The purpose of this review was to allow FHWA and FTA to evaluate whether the transportation planning process meets joint FTA and FHWA planning regulations, and to certify, as appropriate, the planning process as required by 23 CFR 450.334, entitled “Metropolitan Planning Process: Certification.” As part of this review, the team considered products and materials related to the transportation planning process including the:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP);
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); and
- Congestion Management Process (CMP).

### **C. Objectives of the Certification Review**

The objectives of the planning certification review are to determine if:

- Planning activities of MPO, MDOT, and other agencies with responsibilities for transportation planning are conducted in accordance with FHWA and FTA regulations, policies, and procedures including the provisions of ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU;
- The transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning organization is a (3-C) (continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive) process that results in the development, implementation, and support of transportation improvements;
- The UPWP adequately documents MPO’s transportation planning activities and all other significant transportation planning activities occurring in the area;
- The transportation planning products, including the LRTP and TIP reflect the identified transportation needs, priorities, and funding resources;
- Products of the transportation planning process are multi-modal in perspective, complete, based on current information, and interrelated;
- Requirements and objectives of ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are considered and incorporated where appropriate into the planning process and supported through development activities; and
- The issues raised during the last Federal Certification review have been addressed by MPO.

Oversight of the compliance with federal rules and regulations by those receiving federal highway and transit funds is accomplished by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Delmar Division Maryland Office and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 3 Office. Among other activities, FHWA/FTA have responsibility for: reviewing and approving the annual unified planning work program; reviewing the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); reviewing amendments to the Long Range Transportation Plan; FHWA approving highway amendments to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and FTA approving transit only STIP amendments; FHWA making a finding of conformity in Air Quality areas; and making various eligibility determinations.

## **II. REVIEW OF MPO'S TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

### **A. Federal, State, Local and Public Participation in the Review**

The site visit portion of the Baltimore MPO certification review took place June 23-25, 2008. The Federal Review Team was composed of the following individuals:

- Kwame Arhin, FHWA – Delmar Division;
- Tashia Clemons, FHWA – Delmar Division;
- Jazmin Casas, FHWA – Delmar Division;
- Breck Jeffers, FHWA – Delmar Division;
- Rosemarie Morales, FHWA – Delmar Division;
- Esther Strawder, FHWA – Delmar Division;
- Spencer Stevens, FHWA – Headquarters;
- Gail McFadden-Roberts, FTA – Region III;
- Joanne Waszczak, FTA – Headquarters ;
- John Sprowls, FTA – Headquarters; and
- Martin Kotsch, EPA – Region III

The review team met with representatives of the MPO, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and State Highway Administration (SHA). A list of the participants in the certification meetings is included as **Appendix 1**. The site visit agenda is shown in **Appendix 2**.

The public was presented an opportunity to provide input to the review team and express their concerns on transportation planning issues during the course of the review. A public meeting, designed to elicit comments from the public on the MPO planning process, was conducted on June 24, 2008. A copy of the public notices is included as **Appendix 3**. Comment forms were also provided for those who wanted to submit comments, but did not speak publicly. The summary of public comments and written testimony received are included as **Appendix 4**.

### **B. Findings from Previous Review and MPO Responses**

No corrective actions were issued to the Baltimore MPO as a result of the 2004 certification review. There were six recommendations identified in the 2004 Certification Report for the Baltimore Region MPO. Specifically, the recommendations focused on MPO Board structure, planning partner agreements and contracts, public involvement, Title VI and Congestion Management process.

#### MPO Board Structure

“Although the MPO has made improvement in raising the level of direct involvement of the Board in policy and decision-making for the MPO, there is still a need for continued improvement. Elected and appointed officials should increase the frequency for their direct involvement in setting policy and decision making for the MPO.”

#### *Response*

*The MPO decided to decrease the number of official Board members meetings that include the direct participation of local elected officials and State agency official. However, the MPO has adopted “a variety of methods to improve the direct involvement of their respective local and State official prior to official BRTB meetings to discuss agendas and assist in setting policy decisions.”*

#### Agreement and Contracts

The Federal Team recommended that the agreement between the BRTB and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) should be updated to include the responsibilities that will be undertaken by MDOT through the State operated transit agency, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). In addition, the Federal Team suggested that BRTB develop agreements with operators of public transit services (other than state operated transit service) that describe cooperative procedures for transportation planning and programming

#### *Response*

*The MPO has created the Regional Transit Work Group that includes State, local and private transit operators. By participating on this Group all transit operators have opportunity to coordinate their plans with the region’s long range transportation plans and programs. The MPO has also recruited the active participation of three private transit operators on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Furthermore the MPO have adopted a Memorandum of Agreement specifying the planning responsibilities and roles between the Maryland Transit Administration, the region’s local transit operators and the MPO.*

#### Public Involvement

The Federal Team recommended that the MPO improve the quality of planning partner participation, and that the MPO evaluate the regional planning process and how well the MPO process addresses partner priorities.

#### *Response*

*The MPO has taken the following step to address this recommendation: (1) expand the CAC to include representation from suburban and urban jurisdictions, community-based organizations, transportation facility operators and advocates, businesses and disability organizations; and (2) MPO leaders and CAC have developed strategies establishing effective public participation practices including direct BRTB Vice-Chair meeting with the CAC every month.*

#### Title VI

The MPO was encouraged to develop a formal Limited English Proficiency (LEP) implementation plan with methodology for how it will provide information to LEP population.

#### *Response*

*Limited English Proficiency Plan was adopted by the MPO on November 27, 2007.*

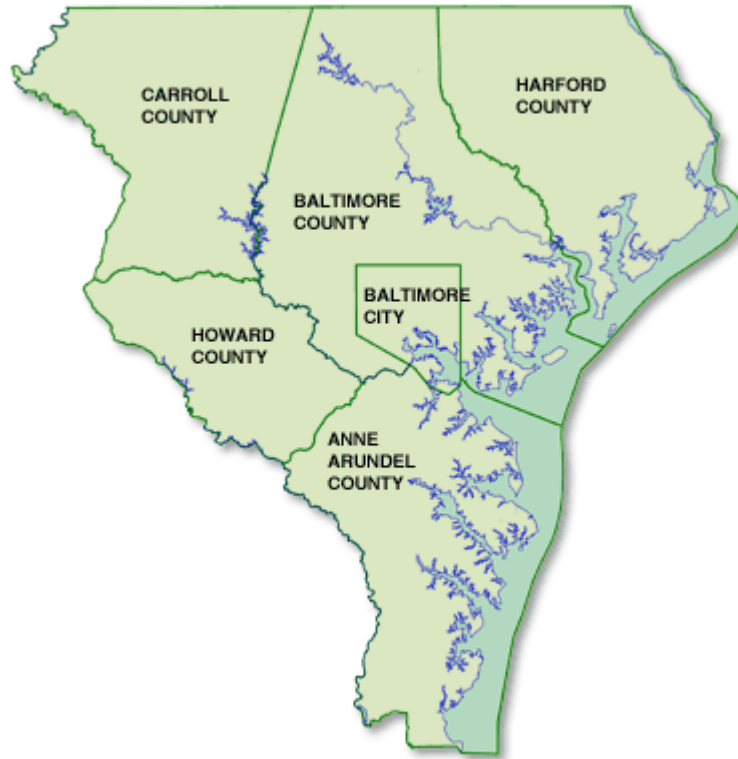
#### Congestion Management Process (CMP)

During the 2004 Certification review the Federal Team suggested that the MPO should develop a CMP previously known as Congestion Management System (CMS) and use the data output from the CMP to select and prioritize projects during the LRTP and TIP updates.

#### *Response*

*The information and data collected through the activities and work tasks of the region's CMP have and continue to enhance the region's travel demand modeling skills and performance. The prioritization process employed during the project selection activity of Outlook 2035 was linked to data collection efforts undertaken through the UPWP funded CMP work tasks. Data collection efforts throughout FY 2008 will provide regional decision-makers with a better understanding of the potential travel implications associated with the military realignment initiative known as BRAC. In keeping with the intent of the FHWA's Urban Partnership Agreement initiative, the BRTB has directed BMC staff to assemble a multi-disciplined/multimodal team to explore congested regional travel corridors for the opportunity to create a menu of applicable congestion mitigation strategies possibly in lieu of a major capital investment. The maturing of this CMP activity will be linked to the congestion mitigation actions prioritized in future updates of the region's LRTP.*

## D. Organization and Management of the Planning Process



### 1. Description of the Planning Area

On October 28, 2003 the Baltimore Region Transportation Board (BRTB) adopted a new urbanized area boundary for the Baltimore Region. The MPO planning area includes seven jurisdictions: the cities of Annapolis, and Baltimore, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard. This area includes approximately 2,608.5 square miles, making it one of the most densely populated metropolitan areas (1,019 people per square mile) in the nation. Due to the expanse of the area, challenges exist regarding the MPO's outreach efforts. Based on 2006 estimate, the Baltimore region has 2.6 million population and ranks among the top 20 largest metropolitan areas nationally. The composition of more than 2.6 million population includes 65.8 White, 28.7% African-American, 3.7 Asian, Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders, and 2.9% Hispanic. The region per capita personal income in 2005 is \$41, 320

### 2. Organizational Structure of the MPO for the Baltimore Region

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Baltimore Region. The BRTB comprised of ten members representing the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, the counties

of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard and the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of Environment and the Maryland Department of Planning. Alternative representatives have been designated and empowered by their elected officials or Secretary in the absence of official members of the BRTB. The Board meets every month.

Each member has one vote with the exception of the Maryland Department of Environment and the Maryland Department of Planning. These agencies serve the BRTB in an advisory role.

Staff to the MPO is provided by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC). The MPO staff develops the transportation plans, and programs for the BRTB. The staff includes transportation planners, traffic modelers, demographers, urban designers and other planning professionals.

The primary committees associated with the transportation planning process in the MPO include: Executive Committee; Technical Committee (TC); Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC); Cooperative Forecasting Group (CFG); and Baltimore Regional Operations Coordinating Committee (BROC).

The MPO also has a number of subcommittees and taskforce involved in the transportation planning process. These include the Traffic Signal Committee, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Group, Budget Subcommittee, Freight Movement Task Force, Interagency Consultation Group, Transportation Management & Operations Partnership, Transportation & Public Works Subcommittees, and Travel Analysis Advisory Group. The MPO staff stated during the Certification review that the ancillary committee members have been providing expert advice on many transportation issues enabling the MPO to utilize their resources more efficiently and producing better planning products.

The agreements listed below were executed on March 25, 2008:

- Inter-local Agreement for the creation of the MPO;
- Transportation Planning Funds Joint Participation Agreement; and
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Review and Public Transportation Coordination Joint Participation Agreement.

#### **D. Products of the Planning Process**

1. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

The Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA LU) require that the metropolitan transportation planning process explicitly consider and analyze a number of specific planning factors assumed to reflect sound planning principles. SAFETEA LU1 requires that the planning process provide for consideration and analysis of projects and strategies that:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area by enabling global Competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation,
- improve quality of life and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of transportation systems across and between mode, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient management and operation; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

These eight factors are reflected in the following seven MPO goals: (1) improve safety; (2) maximize transportation system and operation; (3) increase accessibility and mobility; (4) preserve the environment; (5) improve transportation system security; (6) link transportation investment to land use and economic development; (7) foster inter-jurisdictional participation and cooperation

The MPO adopted a new LRTP on November 27, 2007. The 2035 LRTP serves as the cornerstone for comprehensive transportation planning throughout Baltimore Region over the next 27 years. The Plan is a collective effort to address the development of a balanced, community-wide transportation system.

The plan addresses the following modes of transportation including: transit; light and heavy rail; bicycles and pedestrians; freight and economic development; and specialized transportation. It incorporates a number of

strategies to address: safety; congestion, environment and preservation of the existing transportation infrastructure.

Several investment alternatives were reviewed to select a Preferred Alternatives plan that included projects from 2008 to the planning period. These projects were further evaluated and ranked based upon a screening process that identifies projects that are most important based on their policy, regional significant and technical merit. Projects that are fully funded and will be completed by 2012 were considered Committed. While the Preferred Alternative plan included projects from 2013 to 2035. Because transportation needs exceed available revenues, the projects in the LRTP are prioritized so that the highest priority projects are in the “cost feasible” part of the Plan. Regionally Significant projects are not subject to prioritization process.

A detailed description of the project prioritization measures and listing of the priority corridors is given in the LRTP document.

The 2035 LRTP envisions transportation improvements designed to reinforce the desired growth patterns for the five Counties and the Cities of Annapolis, and Baltimore. The principal forces guiding land use planning and growth management in the region has been the State Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). PFAs permit growth to occur in areas of urban characteristics that might otherwise consider being rural and restricted for development. The future use for the Baltimore region particular the City of Annapolis encourages employment centers, commercial uses and residential development to locate in close proximity to each other. To ensure consistency of the LRTP with local government comprehensive plans (LGCPs), the MPO typically reviews its goals, principles and objectives for consistency with LGCPs

The estimated expansion, operation and preservation costs of improvements needed between 2008 and 2035 are \$35.5 billion. Looking at all funds, 54.5% are used for highway projects and 45.5% for transit. The 2035 Plan further break down improvement cost as follows: expansion 25.6 percent, operation 51.4 percent, and preservation 23 percent.

An extensive public involvement process was conducted, during the recent update of the 2035 LRTP, including specific efforts to engage minority and other traditionally under-represented groups. All of these outreach efforts were in addition to the public hearings required to adopt the LRTP. More information on the public involvement efforts for the LRTP is included in the Public Involvement and Title VI sections of this report.

The plan includes projects from the MPO’s Congestion Management Process (CMP) Program, which studies some of the region’s most heavily trafficked roadways. The Plan also includes bicycle and pedestrian projects to enhance mobility and improve the safety and convenience for pedestrians and cyclists. ITS using computerized traffic control and communication technology is also included in the 2035 LRTP.

Every four years in conjunction with updating the LRTP and every year with the TIP, the MPO, reviews and updates the population and socioeconomic data that serve as inputs to the Baltimore Regional Planning Model.

## 2. Transportation Improvement Program

The Baltimore region MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a five-year listing of all federally funded transportation improvement projects that have been prioritized for funding within the MPO area. Non-federally funded projects are included for information. Projects identified in the first two years of the TIP are funded using current/available revenue sources listed in the State six-year Consolidated Transportation Program CTP. Annually, each jurisdiction provides MDOT with a letter identifying Priority Projects which are considered for the MDOT CTP. All projects not programmed in the MDOT CTP are advanced into the current List of Priority Projects. Projects must support the MPO's long-range transportation plan goals before they can be included into the TIP. In addition, capacity projects must come from the region's approved long-range transportation plan.

Proposed projects received by MPO staff are reviewed for consistency with the MPO LRTP, MDOT's CTP, the local Transit Development Plan, and adopted local government comprehensive Plans. The MPO works with its subcommittees, to review the proposed list of projects. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group reviews all proposed projects and makes a recommendation, included in the adopted TIP, if the project could improve biking and walking conditions based on LOS data.

Projects are evaluated by the subcommittees, and based on results of the evaluation the proposed projects are ranked.

Public involvement for development of the TIP is provided primarily through the CAC. The MPO further holds a TIP adoption hearing to provide greater opportunity for public comments.

The MPO also include in the TIP listing of projects for which federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. The estimated total cost of projects in the 2008-2012 TIP is \$2.1 billion.

## 3. Financial Factors

The Long Range Transportation Plan incorporates all existing dollars and anticipated funding sources as identified through the statewide transportation revenue forecasting process. A financial analysis identifies the source and amount of money reasonably available to build and operate projects during the period of the LRTP. Input is sought from state and local agencies to quantify how much money (cost and revenue estimates) can be expected from each revenue source and each implementing agency. Revenue estimates for State and Federal funds are provided by MDOT. The federal and state funds are derived mainly from fees on gasoline, trucks and trailers, tire, and vehicle registration.

The MPO uses historical financial information to forecast Local capital and operating expenditures.

These revenue and cost estimates include operating and maintenance costs for transit and local facilities. Once the financial resources are determined and compared to the prioritized needs, those projects identified for funding compose the Cost Affordable Plan. The State and the MPO use 2.4 inflation rate to convert constant dollars to “year of expenditure” dollars for their financial constrained Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Operations and maintenance costs, for both highway and transit are included in the LRTP, as part of the Financial Resources document and project cost analyses. For the highway component, the costs include ordinary/routine maintenance work such as patching, landscape maintenance, traffic signals and signal maintenance and bridge maintenance. Highway operations and safety costs could include exceptional work, such as resurfacing, traffic control devices, safety lighting and signals, guardrails, and pavement markings. For the transit system, the operations and maintenance costs are funded through revenues from passenger fares, state operating assistance, and local funds.

For operation and maintenance costs associated with state roads, revenue is allocated statewide through MDOT. The Department has provided written correspondence to the MPO indicating that sufficient funding will be available to maintain the state facilities within the MPO areas.

When amendments are needed in the future, the fiscal constraint will be maintained by either identifying a new revenue source or deleting or deferring an existing cost affordable project.

#### 4. Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is the Baltimore MPO’s annual transportation planning work program. The MPO begin developing the program in November and FHWA/FTA approves it by June 30. The UPWP identifies the planning budget and the planning activities to be undertaken during the program year. The total funding proposed for the FY 2009 transportation planning activities for the Baltimore region is \$5,714,200. The development of the UPWP is a joint responsibility of the MPO and MDOT. Other local agencies responsible for carrying out transportation and related planning activities also assist in the development and approval of the UPWP through their participation on the Technical Committee.

The UPWP includes a description of planning tasks and an estimated budget for each task to be undertaken by the agencies participating in the MPO's metropolitan planning process. The UPWP also serves as the project budget for planning tasks funded by the FHWA and FTA. In addition, the UPWP supports the MPO’s priorities.

In most cases, the MPO has been timely in their submittal of the draft and final report for approval. However, the Federal Review Team recommended during the Certification review that the MPO and MDOT increase their efforts to close out projects, and submit invoices in a timely manner.

The MPO adopted their most recent UPWP on April 22, 2008.

The MPO produces quarterly reports for each planning grant, which document staff salary, planning consultant, and other expenditures.

## 5. Public Involvement

The MPO has continued to implement various efforts to engage citizens in the transportation planning process. MPO staff indicates that these public involvement activities include a recently formed joint MPO-CAC Public Involvement Task Force. The purpose of this task force is to review and evaluate recent public involvement techniques, particularly as they relate to the LRTP, and new strategies for public involvement and outreach.

In the past, the MPO has focused much of its public involvement effort on its Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Group, etc. The CAC was recently revamped so members would serve a three-year term. These terms are staggered; ten new members start each year. Second- and third-term members mentor first-term members. The MPO also reaches out to the general public to request comment about specific work tasks, such as the LRTP, the TIP and corridor studies.

The MPO tracks its outreach events on an Excel spreadsheet, recording the name of the event date/time/location, topic presented, and number of attendees. During the review MPO staff also mentioned that more than 4,500 people subscribe to the MPO's array of e-newsletters that includes the following: B'More Involved, BikePed Beacon, Environmental News Brief, Legislative Weekly Report, Maryland Moves: A Freight News Monthly, On Transit, Press Releases, and Requests for Proposal.

The MPO has developed a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) which is periodically reviewed and, as necessary, revised based on input from staff, the MPO's advisory committees and the public. The PIP describes the programs and procedures that the MPO follows to provide public access to the planning process, including:

- The MPO maintains a website that includes minutes of past MPO committee meetings; agendas for upcoming meetings; documents distributed for public review; and publications.
- The MPO sends direct mailings to 80+ interested parties regarding new public review and comment periods.

- The MPO has a Speaker Bureau that will provide a speaker to groups upon request.
- The MPO has conducted online surveys to evaluate public opinion of its plans and programs and phone surveys for selected topics such as customer satisfaction of the transportation network.
- The MPO provides an online translation tool that allows users to translate web-based documents into 12 languages including, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, Italian, Greek, German, French, Dutch and two Chinese languages.
- The MPO publishes several e-newsletters (mentioned above).
- The MPO operates a library, called the Regional Information Center, in partnership with the Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore City's public library system).

The Federal Team recommended during the Certification Review that the MPO develop clear, focused, proactive strategies that are specifically intended to inform and engage low income and minority populations, people traditionally underserved by transportation systems, the transportation disadvantaged, and groups that are and/or have been historically under-represented in the planning process and/or disproportionately negatively affected by transit projects. It should be noted the BRTTP does advertise in the Afro-American newspaper for public meetings.

#### 6. Title VI//Transportation Disadvantaged Program

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis 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.

The Public Involvement Coordinator serves as the Title VI Officer for the BRTB. The MPO adopted its Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan in November 2007. The LEP plan also includes a formal process for handling Title VI complaints. It is suggested that the MPO needs to add to this plan how complaints against the MPO are addressed. The Federal team emphasized that the LEP and the Title VI complaints process are one aspect of the Title VI Program requirement. It was recommended that the MPO develop a Title VI plan that includes: Title VI program structure, roles/responsibilities; signed assurances; goals; accomplishments; process and procedure in determining compliance; and data collection.

The planning process has also prompted the development of a demographic profile of the metropolitan planning area that includes identification of the locations of socioeconomic groups, including low-income, and minority populations as covered by Title VI provisions.

The MPO annually certifies to FHWA and FTA that the metropolitan planning process is being carried out with all applicable requirements. However there is no documentation to support how the following requirements are met: implementation of an equal employment opportunity program; involvement of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) in USDOT funded contracts; prohibition of discrimination based on gender; provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act; discrimination against individuals with disabilities; etc. It is recommended that the MPO document the process used to certify the above mentioned requirements.

## 7. Transit

Federal regulations for the metropolitan transportation planning process require that “the MPO in cooperation with the State and with the operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process... and shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in the conduct of the planning process”.

Consideration of transit in the planning process is accomplished in various ways. There are transit advocates from local organizations who are members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) as citizen members and not as official representatives of a transit organization. Some members are also members of the Maryland Transit Administration’s Citizens Advisory Council; again, membership is not as representatives of MTA’s Advisory Council. They bring knowledge of transit issues and needs to CAC discussions, in part, because of their affiliation with various transit groups.

MTA is an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the MPO’s Technical Committee that has responsibility for providing technical advice to the BRTB on plans and programs and for developing initial drafts of the UPWP and TIP. In addition to MTA’s participation in UPWP development as an ex-officio Technical Committee member, the statewide transit agency also has joint responsibility with the MPO and MDOT for the UPWP as stated in the February 26, 2008 memorandum of agreement (MOA). This responsibility includes documenting the transit planning activities anticipated within the region during the upcoming year.

There is no agreement with the publicly owned local transit systems that describes roles, responsibilities and procedures for their participation/involvement in the transportation planning process. The MPO functions as if the agreement with MTA is an agreement with local operators as well. Local operator agreement with this process of representation by the

statewide transit agency must be documented. The federal review team recommends documentation occur by revising the February 26 MOA to articulate representation for local transit operators through the statewide transit operator, outline a procedure for amending/changing this representation should a local operator no longer desire indirect representation through MTA and concurring signatures from the local transit operators or their jurisdictional representatives (counties, City of Annapolis).

Although local operators are absent from the MOA the following examples show the role of transit operators in the planning process and in development of planning documents: agency representatives serve on various committees and workgroups, BRTB board representatives of elected officials that represent county transit systems discuss and vote on policy options, MTA coordinates local transit submissions for inclusion in planning process documents.

In response to the 2004 Planning Certification review findings, the BRTB created the Regional Transit Work Group of the Technical Committee. Group members are representatives of public transportation operators that operate regional and local bus systems, rail and commuter rail systems. In this forum operators discuss issues and needs and receive information from other transit agencies on new programs, guidelines, initiatives that are underway. Work Group participants are also able to share their plans and have those plans considered as the region's long range transportation plans and programs are developed.

Increased coordination between the MPO and transit operators has occurred through activities that include: MPO and MTA (any other transit operators included?) establishing a process to coordinate public meetings and do joint meetings where possible, establishing a quarterly meetings between MPO and MTA, MPO staff attendance at local operator meetings when possible, MPO on distribution list for materials from local operator meetings and more frequent information exchanged and presentations on major transit construction projects to the MPO board.

A major effort was undertaken to review and address several areas of the Regional Travel Demand Model for use by MTA in a corridor planning exercise to meet the FTA New Starts Summit requirements. BRTB staff have worked closely with the MTA consultant, Bill Allen, and with the MTA's lead consultant, PB. Staff have accompanied MTA to meet with FTA officials in terms on model capabilities for the Red Line. Further, the Cooperative Forecasting Group has provided ongoing review of socio-economic data in the region with emphasis by Baltimore City on reasonable projections for the Red Line corridor. The BRTB will be sharing data from the Household Survey as soon as it is cleaned up and likewise, the MTA will be sharing data from an On-Board Transit Survey they recently completed. Earlier this year the BRTB co-

sponsored a Baltimore City Forum for neighborhoods and communities within the Red Line corridor.

## 8. Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

The MPO has a full-time Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator who has responsibility for implementing the Bicycle and Pedestrian program and for providing staff support to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group (BPA); managing the Transportation Enhancements Program and bicycle/pedestrian planning studies funded through the UPWP; preparing the Bicycle and Pedestrian transportation section of the Long Range Transportation Plan and TIP; distributing information on bicycling and walking upon request, making presentations.

In 2001 the MPO adopted a bicycle Action Plan that proactively supports planning and funding initiatives. The plan includes twelve broad strategies that aims to increase safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians through capital improvement, education, encouragement, evaluation and enforcement programs. Funds for the implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian plan are included in the financially constrained Outlook 2035.

Bicycle and pedestrian travel are included in the design of state roadway projects. However, very few designated on-road bicycle facilities currently exist. It was mentioned during the review that Maryland Transit Administration permits (MTA) bicycle on Baltimore Metro Subway and Light Rail trains, and has installed bicycle racks on some of its buses.

The projects in the non-motorized element of the 2035 LRTP were identified based on the demand for bicycling and walking (from a latent demand model), the quality of roads for bicycling (from the Bicycle LOS model), the quality of roads for walking (from the Pedestrian LOS model).

The 2009 UPWP includes a project to analyze bicycle crashes in a similar way and to develop appropriate safety countermeasures based on the types and locations of crashes. The MPO is also participating in two national initiatives related to pedestrian safety: The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's (NHTSA) "Pedestrian Safety Demonstration Program for a Large City Jurisdiction" and FHWA's "Pedestrian Safety Engineering and ITS-Based Countermeasures Program." Both projects are supported by the MPO's pedestrian crash data GIS system.

The majority of the Federally funded bicycle and pedestrian projects are prioritized through the Transportation Enhancement Program. Applications are solicited from local governments and other groups, and reviewed by the BPAG.

The MPO is involved in many different public involvement activities regarding bicycle and pedestrian issues. These efforts include: participated in the review

process for the statewide distribution of Safe Route to School funds (SRTS), reviewing TEP funding proposal, and disseminating brochures via e-mail, the internet, and the MPO website.

## 9. Congestion Management Process

23 CFR 500.109 states “A congestion management process is a systematic and regionally accepted approach for managing congestion that provides accurate, up-to-date information on transportation system operations and performance and assesses alternative strategies for congestion management that meet State and local needs.”

The MPO has an established a Congestion Management Process (CMP) that collects data and monitors system performance. This program defines the extent and duration of congestion and its causes. It also provides measures to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented actions. The regional roadway network includes 3 types of road ways: freeways, principal arterials and minor arterials.

Every three years MPO staff uses aerial surveys to monitor traffic quality on the freeway system in the metro area. The surveys measure traffic congestion over time and also enable them to highlight trends and identify possible solutions to relieve congestion. The first survey of the freeway system was conducted during peak morning and evening periods of commuter travel in 1999. Surveys were also conducted in 2002 and 2005. Another survey is scheduled to be completed in 2008. By repeating the survey program on a three-year cycle; long-term trends are monitored, and the effects of changes on the system are evaluated.

Since 1998 the MPO has used GPS units to collect travel time and travel speeds on 30 of the heaviest traveled roadways in the region on a yearly basis. The results from these reports are used to help to prioritize projects in the LRTP and help calibrate the MPO travel demand model to improve the accuracy of traffic forecasting.

The CMP has influenced the work activities of the MPO’s metropolitan planning process. Three of the seven goals that have been identified in the region’s long range plan relate directly to the CMP- safety, management and operations and mobility. These goals provide the direction for the region and significantly influence the project prioritization process included in the plan. Regional tasks include a wide range of traffic monitoring tasks and a technical analysis of the congested corridors in the Baltimore region. The UPWP also includes a program to develop an overall framework for congestion management in the region and incorporate into the regional planning process for the purpose of identifying congestion in the region and evaluating strategies recommended as a solution to corridor congestion.

The MPO has implemented a number of programs and strategies to address congestion through its management and operations committee. The management and operations committee structure includes stakeholders from local, state, and federal agencies as well as neighboring regions and other relevant organizations, such as universities. Many of the M&O sub-committees include representatives from emergency response agencies to ensure their views are considered and incorporated in plans, programs, and projects.

To fully document the outputs of their CMS, the MPO should post all of its recent reports to its website, and continue to make the best use of its Congestion Management Process. This information is essential in providing the MPO with the data it needs to address congested locations and corridors. Additionally, this report should include a section denoting proven success of implemented strategies and measures of effectiveness in the CMP.

#### 10. Intelligent Transportation Systems

23 CFR 940.5 states, “ITS projects shall conform to the National ITS Architecture and standards in accordance with the requirements contained in this part. Conformance with the National ITS Architecture is interpreted to mean the use of the National ITS Architecture to develop a regional ITS architecture, and the subsequent adherence of all ITS projects to that regional ITS architecture. Development of the regional ITS architecture should be consistent with the transportation planning process for Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning.”

The applicable ITS Architecture for the Baltimore Region is the Maryland Statewide ITS Architecture. The Maryland State Highway Administration led the development of the MD Statewide ITS Architecture and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council staff was actively involved in its development. The Maryland Statewide ITS Architecture was completed in April 2005 and it scheduled to be updated in late 2008. BRTB staff will once again be very active in the update efforts. All ITS projects in the region comply with the Maryland Statewide ITS Architecture.

The MPO has implemented a number of programs and strategies to address congestion through its management and operations committee. The management and operations committee structure includes stakeholders from local, state, and federal agencies as well as neighboring regions and other relevant organizations, such as universities. Many of the M&O sub-committees include representatives from emergency response agencies to ensure their views are considered and incorporated in plans, programs, and projects.

The Management & Operations Partnership is the MPO’s oversight committee for ITS. It meets quarterly and provides general guidance and direction for the region’s ITS program and to its subcommittees.

In FY 2007, the BRTB completed the *M&O Strategic Deployment Plan (SDP)*, which provides a framework for continued implementation of M&O and ITS in the region as well as identifying eight high priority projects. A wide range of stakeholders were involved in the development of the M&O SDP, including transportation, transit, emergency responders, and neighboring MPOs.

The Baltimore Regional Operations Coordination (B-ROC) Committee has been meeting since 2000 and addresses multi-agency coordination in daily traffic incident management operations. The committee, which meets bi-monthly, includes representatives from a wide variety of response agencies operating in the region. In April 2008, the B-ROC Committee hosted the fourth Baltimore Region Traffic Incident Management Conference. The event, which was attended by almost 100 responders, addresses the highest priority identified in the *M&O SDP*, providing incident management training opportunities. The B-ROC Committee will continue to meet to identify and address daily traffic incident management issues in the region. The B-ROC Committee also performs regular traffic incident management self-assessments as requested by FHWA.

The Traffic Signal Subcommittee, which has been meeting quarterly since 2001, identifies and addresses operation and coordination issues related to the regions traffic signals. This committee holds Traffic Signal Forums about every 18 months to provide an opportunity for traffic signal engineers, supervisors, and technicians to share ideas and learn from each other.

#### 11. Intermodal Activities/ Freight Planning

The Baltimore MPO does not see freight planning as a stand-alone effort; it is integrated within many of the planning processes. The task force has been used as a regional forum to discuss freight-related transportation issues and to identify short-term intersection improvements, truck parking studies, and a regional freight profile. Once identified by the task force, these efforts are supported by consultant services funded through the UPWP, generally in the range of \$25,000 to \$30,000.”

The MPO Freight Movement Task Force (FMTF) represents a mix of freight experts from different modes including: railroad operators, port operators, trucking firms, airport operators, freight shippers, economic development organizations, and academics. The FMTF’s main function is to provide the public and the freight movement community a voice in the regional planning process.

The regional transportation model is used to project surface transportation improvements needed to serve goods movement/Intermodal facilities. As part of the regional modeling process, staff developed a new truck model to capture trips made by the following three different types of vehicles: commercial light-duty vehicles, medium trucks, and heavy trucks. Trucks trips are generated

based on type of employment (retail, industrial and office). This new truck model has enabled the regional demand model to better predict freight travel, traffic congestion, and air quality emissions.

The MPO has strong partnership with staff and participants at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to ensure mid-Atlantic interests are represented. This relationship encourages issues that are larger than one MPO. Similarly, the MPO is a member of the I-95 Corridor Coalition and among other opportunities participates in the inter-modal committee and shares in work on the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations (MAROPS) Study and the Mid-Atlantic Truck Operations (MATOPS) Study.

Among the criteria used by the MPO to prioritize projects in the LRTP is goods movement, defined as projects that will facilitate the movement of products or freight. This criterion takes into account designated truck routes and roads providing access to intermodal terminals, warehouse districts and distribution centers.

A recent study conducted by the FMTF, the *Baltimore Regional Freight Profile* that is modeled on the Maryland Statewide Freight profile provided a data source in the LRTP update. Freight interests were contacted and asked to provide information during the study's development. The study provided tonnage, value directional and economic data on freight movements and trends in the region.

Some of the MPO freight-related publications include: *Maryland Moves* a quarterly facts sheet highlighting freight movement activities in the region highways, railways, waterways, and airspace.

## 12. Air Quality/CMAQ Considerations

Section 176(c)(1) of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment (CAAA) states: "No metropolitan planning organization designated under section 134 of title 23, United States Code, shall give its approval to any project, program or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110" The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 subsequently included provisions responsive to the mandates of the CAAA. Implementing regulations have maintained the strong connection.

Provisions governing air quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations, rather than be the primary focus of one or several regulations. For MPOs that are declared to be air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, there are many special requirements in addition to the basic requirements for a metropolitan planning process. These include formal agreements to address air quality planning requirements, requirements for setting metropolitan planning area boundaries, interagency coordination, Transportation Plan content and updates, requirements for CMS, public meeting requirements, and conformity findings on the Transportation Plan and TIP.

The Baltimore metropolitan area is a moderate nonattainment area for the 8-hour ozone standard and is also nonattainment of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> annual standard. This area encompasses Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard Counties as well as Baltimore City and Annapolis. The BRTB is the lead organization responsible for providing documentation for a determination that the Transportation Improvement Program and long range plan conforms to the region's air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP). These determinations are based upon the technical analyses conducted by the BRTB staff, in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). In addition the MPO shares relevant transportation planning data with the Transportation Planning Board, which is the MPO for the Washington D.C. metropolitan planning area.

The traffic volume and speed data required for running the emissions model are obtained through network travel demand modeling by BRTB staff. The MDE uses the traffic volumes and speeds to run the appropriate MOBILE emissions model for comparison of emissions results against the appropriate SIP emissions budgets. The BRTB staff also has the ability of running the MOBILE emissions model, and uses the model to analyze the emission reduction potential of control measures and emission impact of alternative transportation scenarios. For the purpose of conformity determinations, the emissions analysis is coordinated between the BRTB staff and MDE.

Clean air planning has been identified as a regional work task priority in order to assure timely attainment of the air quality standards and to protect human health. The BRTB has continued to improve their transportation modeling capabilities on a continuous basis. The following travel demand model enhancements have been carried out in order to develop "state of the practice" capabilities: validation of a new base year of 2000, including an updated Transportation Analysis zone (TAZ) structure, transportation networks in the Geographic Information System (GIS), new truck and commercial vehicle models, equilibrium assignment methodology, and network speed and capacity updates.

An Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) was established in 1996 to provide coordination in meeting regional air quality conformity through a Memorandum of Understanding between the BRTB, and the Maryland Departments of Transportation and Environment. The MPO interagency consultation agreements for conformity are in place and were submitted to the U.S. EPA as an amendment to the State Transportation Conformity SIP as revised in July 2008 which is a part of the state SIP.

The region is involved in several innovative programs to help meet its air quality goals. A contractor was hired to review and recommend potential emission control strategies for potential endorsement for the region.

The Environmental Protection agency has recognized the BRTB for the initiatives that are being undertaken. These activities include transportation model improvements such as updating mode choice, use of the TP and VIPER model, sponsoring Clean Commute Month, participation in the Clean Cities Program; participation in the Mid-Atlantic Diesel Collaborative, participation in the Clean Cars for Clean Air Campaign, and participation in the Clean Air Partners. The BRTB is also being recognized for being proactive in looking at green house gases and climate change efforts within the region.

The conformity analysis for the 2008-2012 TIP and the 2035 Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan demonstrates that VOC and NOx emissions are lower than the 2005 ozone SIP mobile emissions budgets and the PM2.5 mobile emissions are lower than the 2002 base year. In addition the MPO has:

- Developed and maintained a high level of public participation in the air quality planning and conformity processes;
- Addressed all EPA requirements for each conformity analyses done and submitted.
- Provided ample opportunities for governmental and public entities to participate in the air quality and conformity planning process.
- Has provided technical support to MDE during the SIP planning process in terms of developing mobile emissions budgets which contribute to the State air quality attainment goals for both ozone and PM2.5.

The MPO can make significant contributions to any future 8-hour ozone or PM2.5 SIPs which may required under the new air quality standards which EPA has promulgated by providing technical support to MDE in developing mobile emission budgets and emission reduction strategies which will contribute to the attainment of the air quality standard. The MPO can also be proactive in the future in addressing mobile emissions for any future green house gases or climate change requirements that may occur at the State or Federal level.

### 13. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

The Baltimore MPO proactively includes Safety and educational activities in the transportation planning process. The MPO has been an active member on the steering committee of the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). It assisted in developing the SHSP emphasis areas, strategies and action steps for reducing the number of crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The MPO held a regional safety forum on May 9, 2007, to present to participants of SHSP goals, objectives and strategies to reduce fatalities and injuries on all public roads by the year 2010.

The MPO has also approved funding for a regional public safety campaign. This campaign began in June 2008 as radio PSA targeted at the parents of teen

drivers in an effort to reduce distracted driving crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving young drivers. Other safety and educational activities supported by the MPO include the Community Traffic Safety Team, Pedestrian Awareness Day and other initiative to inform and educate the public on roadway safety issues.

Safety is an explicit goal in the MPO planning process and is one of the factors in the prioritization of candidate projects for LRTP funding. Crash history for the most recent three-year period is used for project prioritization in the planning process.

#### 14. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

The Baltimore MPO addresses security and emergency preparedness through its management and operations plans, programs and activities. The primary committee that addresses security issues for the MPO is the Transportation and Public Works Subcommittee. Other committees such as the Management and Operations Partnership, Baltimore Regional Operations Coordination Committee and traffic Signal Subcommittee address security issues as needed. The M & O subcommittees include representatives from MDOT and local public works departments and departments of transportation. The M & O subcommittees provide forums for the representatives to discuss security.

In FY 2007 the BRTB adopted the Regional Protective Action Coordination Guidelines to provide a framework for coordination in the event of a large-scale emergency. The guidelines include the Regional Protective Action Coordination Agreement that tries to ensure that protective actions are coordinated regionally in a major emergency that affects multiple jurisdictions in the Baltimore Metropolitan area. The Agreement addresses specific elements of a regional response that require multi-jurisdictional coordination to effectively protect the public in a severe, widespread, or prolonged emergency. Elements include command and management, communications, public information and warning, evacuation, and reception and shelter. The Agreement builds upon the existing Baltimore Region Emergency Assistance Compact (BREAC), a document developed by the BMC Board.

MPO staff participates on security committees and in emergency preparedness exercises to help convey the transportation perspective to those stakeholders as well as to bring back the security perspective to the MPO. Specifically, MPO staff attends meetings of the Urban Area Homeland Security Work Group, Maryland Shelter and Evacuation Task Force, and Regional Transit Security Work Group.

### **E. Findings from the Current Planning Process Review**

The following section summarizes the overall findings and recommendations for further action that are included in this certification review report. The findings,

described as recommendations and noteworthy practices included in the report, are intended to not only help ensure continuing regulatory compliance of the Baltimore MPO transportation planning process with Federal planning requirements, but to improve the transportation planning program and process in the Baltimore Regional Transportation Planning area.

The review has shown that the Baltimore MPO has made significant improvements to its transportation planning process in many areas since the last certification review. The MPO has instituted a number of noteworthy practices that indicate a commitment to continually improving its planning process, and that may be used as examples for other MPOs. The review also indicated no need for corrective actions. However, a number of recommendations have been identified that the MPO should consider. We recommend the MPO to address these recommendations by December 31, 2009.

Based on the review, the FHWA and FTA Review Team have determined that the metropolitan transportation planning process for the Baltimore MPO is to be certified as meeting the requirements of 23 USC 134 and 23 CFR 450.334. In addition, since the Baltimore MPO is a non attainment area for transportation related pollutants, FHWA and FTA have determined that the MPO has an adequate process to ensure conformity in accordance with procedures contained in 40 CFR, part 51.

The result of this review is that FHWA and FTA jointly certify the transportation planning process for the Baltimore MPO. This FHWA/FTA certification will remain in effect until **September 3, 2012**, for a maximum of four years from the issuance date of this report.

#### 1. Noteworthy Practices

- Unique Committee Structure: The Baltimore MPO continues to make effective use of committees outside the standard committee areas for input on transportation planning programs and products. The MPO has created more than 13 unique committee structures appropriate to the needs of the area, including those focusing on the Traffic Signal Committee, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Group, Budget Subcommittee, Cooperative Forecasting Group, Freight Movement Task Force, Interagency Consultation Group, Transportation Management & Operations Partnership, Transportation & Public Works Subcommittees, and Travel Analysis Advisory Group.
- National & Regional Planning Participation: The MPO is commended for participating in a number of national and regional planning activities including: AMPO travel demand modeling, air quality and M&O committees, ITS MD, MD State Geographic Information Coordinating Committee, I-95 Corridor Coalition HOGS and traveler information subcommittees, TRB subcommittee on Planning for Operations, Maryland Clean Cities, and Mid-Atlantic Diesel Collaborative.
- Data Collection Effort: The MPO has remarkably improved its data collection and reporting process. These include the 2007/08 Household Travel Survey,

2006/07 External Survey, annual traffic count program (Volume, Classified), Auto Occupancy Survey (12 Activity Centers, 107 observation sites), GPS Speed Data (Freeways, Arterials, BRAC routes), Building Permit Data System, Aerial Photography Survey for Measuring Traffic Congestion, Bicycle and Pedestrian Level of Service Data, Signal Timing, and Roadway Geometry.

A strength of data collection program is that BRTB has developed several customized GIS/web-based applications. These applications not only facilitate the use of these resources in-house to support regional planning process but also allow staff to provide the data to the public and other planning organizations through the BRTB web site.

- Air Quality Initiatives: The MPO is recognized for the initiatives that are being undertaken in the air and CMAQ program. These activities include transportation model improvements such as updating mode choice, use of the TP+ and VIPER model, sponsoring Clean Commute Month, participation in the Clean Cities, Program; participation in the Mid-Atlantic Diesel Collaborative, participation in the Clean Cars for Clean Air Campaign, and participation in the Clean Air Partners. The MPO is also being recognized for being proactive in looking at green house gases and climate change efforts within the region.
- Methodology for LRT Projects Selection & Prioritization: The MPO has developed an elaborate process for project selection & prioritization into the LRTP. The evaluation considers both roadway and transit projects, using the established MPO Goals/Objectives.
- Public Involvement: The MPO is commended for being proactive in implementing an innovative strategy to strengthen the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC was recently revamped so members would serve a three-year term. These terms are staggered; ten new members start each year. Second- and third-term members mentor first-term members. The MPO is also commended for publishing a number of e-newsletters, allowing members of the public to access information based on their interests; for hosting public meetings with extended hours (i.e. 3-7 p.m.) to accommodate various schedules of members of the public; and for including the document “*How to Make Public Comments to the BRTB*” in the 2007 Participation Plan.

## 2. Recommendations

- Air Quality: It is recommended that the MPO continue to make significant contributions to the future development of any new 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 SIP development including development of relevant CMAQ projects which will contribute to overall improved air quality. The MPO can be proactive in the process of switching from the EPA MOBILE model to the EPA MOVES

model as it is released as the official EPA emissions model. Can be a leader in developing mobile source control strategies in addressing green-house gases and climate change programs that may occur in the future both on a State and Federal level.

- TIP project Selection and Prioritization: The MPO has developed an elaborate process for project selection & prioritization into the LRTP. Similar project selection and prioritization process should also be included in the TIP.
- Congestion Management Process: To fully document the outputs of the CMP, the BRTB should post all of its recent reports to its website, and continue to make the best use of its Congestion Management Process. This information is essential in providing the MPO with the data it needs to address congested locations and corridors. Additionally, this report should include a section denoting proven success of implemented strategies and measures of effectiveness in the CMP.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems: Currently the BRTB uses the Maryland Statewide ITS Architecture to satisfy the requirements of 23 CFR 940 Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture and Standards. In the future the BRTB may want to consider developing Baltimore Metro Area ITS Architecture. This will more closely align the regional ITS architecture development and maintenance with the local planning process.
- Unified Planning Work Program: It is recommended that the MPO and MDOT increase its efforts to close out projects, and submit invoices, in a timely manner.
- Public Involvement: It is recommended that BRTB develop clear, focused, proactive strategies that are specifically intended to inform and engage low income and minority populations, people traditionally underserved by transportation systems, the transportation disadvantaged, and groups that are and/or have been historically under-represented in the planning process and/or disproportionately negatively affected by transit projects.
- Annual Certification: The MPO annually certify to the FHWA and FTA that the metropolitan planning process is being carried out with all applicable requirements, however there is no documentations to support how the following requirements are met: implementation of an equal employment opportunity program; involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in USDOT funded contracts; prohibition of discrimination based on gender; provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act; discrimination against individuals with disabilities; etc. It is recommended that the MPO documents the process used to certify the above mentioned requirements.
- Title VI Plan: It is recommended that the MPO develop a Title VI plan that includes: Title VI program structure, roles/responsibilities; signed assurances;

goals; accomplishments; process and procedure in determining compliance; and data collection.

3. Corrective Actions.

- There are no corrective actions.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MPO for the Baltimore Region Certification Review Meeting Participants June 23-25, 2008**

#### Federal Review Team

Kwame Arhin, FHWA – Delmar Division;  
Tashia Clemons, FHWA – Delmar Division;

Jazmin Casas, FHWA – Delmar Division;  
Breck Jeffers, FHWA – Delmar Division;  
Rosemarie Morales, FHWA – Delmar Division;  
Esther Strawder, FHWA – Delmar Division;  
Spencer Stevens, FHWA – Headquarters;  
Gail McFadden-Roberts, FTA – Region III;  
Joanne Waszczak, FTA – Headquarters;  
John Sprowls, FTA – Headquarters; and  
Martin Kotsch, EPA – Region III

Baltimore MPO

Harvey Bloom  
Regina Aris  
Monica Haines  
Jamie Kendrick  
Tyson Byrne  
Jeff Drinkwater  
Carl Balser  
Sara Tomlinson  
Dunbar Brooks  
Charles Baber  
Amber Blake  
Jody McCullough  
Russ Ulrich  
Eileen Singleton  
Jamie Bridges

MDOT

Mike Nixon  
Don Halligan  
Theo Ngongang

MTA

Diane Ratcliff

SHA

Keith Kucharek

## APPENDIX 2

### MPO for Baltimore Region Certification Review Agenda

<b><u>Monday June 23, 2008</u></b>		
<u>Meeting Location:</u> MPO for the Baltimore Region 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310 Baltimore, MD 21224		
<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Participants</u> *
9 a.m.	Welcome / Introductions Purpose of the Certification Process Review schedule and close-out process	<b>Federal Review Team, MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,</b>
9:15 a.m.	Overview of the Baltimore Metropolitan Planning Organization and Transportation Planning Process; Opportunity to Share "Best Practices," "Lessons Learned" and Future Needs	<b>MPO, MDOT and Federal Review Team</b>
9:30 a.m.	Discussion of Previous Review Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations</li> </ul>	<b>Federal Review Team, MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,</b>
10:30 a.m.	Break	
10:45 a.m.	Organization and Management of the Planning Process (Discuss the flow of input from subcommittees to the MPO and staff coordination with other agencies and MPOs); Planning Area; Agreements & contracts	<b>Federal Review Team, MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,</b>
11:30 a.m.	Break for Lunch: Working Lunch Provided by the MPO	
	Adjourn	

- **Bold text indicates discussion lead**

## MPO for Baltimore Region Certification Review Agenda

### Tuesday June 24, 2008

Meeting Location:

MPO for the Baltimore Region  
2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310  
Baltimore, MD 21224

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Participants</u> *
9:00 a.m.	MPO Board Meeting	
12:00 noon	Lunch	
1:30 p.m.	Discussion of the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long Range Transportation Plan</li> <li>• Cost and Revenue Estimate/Fiscal Constraint</li> <li>• Transportation Improvement Program</li> <li>• Unified Planning Work Program</li> <li>• Freight</li> </ul>	<b>Federal Review Team,</b>  MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,
3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit</li> </ul>	<b>Federal Review Team,</b>  MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,
5:30 p.m.	Adjourn	
6:00 p.m.	Public Involvement Workshop for Certification	<b>Federal Review Team</b>
7:45 p.m.	Closing and Adjourn	

• **Bold text indicates discussion lead**

## Baltimore TMA Certification Review Agenda

### Wednesday June 25, 2008

Meeting Location:

MPO for the Baltimore Region  
2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310  
Baltimore, MD 21224

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Participation*</u>
8:30 a.m.	Discussion of the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Quality</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Travel Demand Forecasting</li> <li>• MPO Self Certification</li> <li>• SAFETEA-LU Compliance</li> </ul>	<b>Federal Review Team,</b> MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,
10:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Involvement</li> <li>• Bicycle &amp; Pedestrian</li> </ul>	<b>Federal Review Team,</b> MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,
10:45	Break for Lunch	
1:00	Discussion of the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title Vi</li> <li>• Disadvantage Business Enterprise</li> <li>• Transportation Disadvantage/Welfare-to-work</li> <li>• Congestion Management Process</li> <li>• Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Security</li> </ul>	<b>Federal Review Team,</b> MPO and MDOT, MTA SHA,
2:45	Break	
3:00	Break/Federal Review Team to Discuss early findings	
3:45	Discussion of Preliminary Findings & MPO Needs	
4:30	Adjourn	

\* **Bold text indicates discussion lead**

## APPENDIX 3

### Baltimore TMA Regional Public Meeting Notices

How is your  
MPO  
doing?

2008 Federal  
Certification  
Review

#### 2008 Federal Certification Review of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board



As part of a federal certification process, conducted every four years, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Baltimore Region; including the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard, will hold a joint meeting with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to enable the public to comment on work done by the MPO.

The MPO for the Baltimore region is responsible for the 20-Year Long Range Transportation Plan for the Baltimore region, for implementing that plan with a 4-year list of projects, and for coordinating with state and local partners.

#### Share your thoughts

The federal reviewers would like to hear from you directly. If you are unable to attend the hearing, public comments may be sent in writing to:

Mail: 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD 21224.

E-mail: [comments@baltometro.org](mailto:comments@baltometro.org) Fax: 410-732-8248

Web: Using the public comment form at [www.baltometro.org](http://www.baltometro.org)

All comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9, 2008

#### Submit your comments at a Public Hearing

A public hearing will take place on Tuesday, June 24, 2008 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD 21224

#### For more information

Visit [www.baltometro.org](http://www.baltometro.org) or contact Monica Haines at 410-732-0500 x1047 or [mhaines@baltometro.org](mailto:mhaines@baltometro.org).

Accommodations during meetings for qualified individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Please contact Monica Haines at 410-732-0500 x1047 one week in advance for provisions of appropriate auxiliary aid and services. Hearing Impaired individuals may also request assistance through the Maryland State Relay Service at (TTY/TDD) 1-800-735-2258.

**Appendix 4**  
**2008 Federal Certification Review of the Baltimore Metropolitan Planning Process**  
**Public Meeting**  
**June 24, 2008**  
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Federal Team:

Kwame Arhin, FHWA  
Jazmin Casas, FHWA  
Nelson Castellanos, FHWA  
Tashia Clemons, FHWA  
Gail McFadden-Roberts, FTA  
John Sprowls, FTA  
Spencer Stevens, FHWA  
Joanne Waszczak, FTA

Guests:

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Holly Arnold, Booz Allen  
Michael Assad, Belair-Edison Neighborhoods  
Caroline Burkhart, Canton Square  
Jannette Barth, Fells Point Task Force  
Monica Haines, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Robert Keith, Fells Point Task Force  
Eric Kunimoto, Citizens Planning and Housing Association  
Foster Nichols, Valleys Planning Council  
Judy Rose, Little Gunpowder Improvement Association  
Michele Rosenberg, Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park  
Ted Rosenberg, Gwynns Falls Watershed Association  
Barry Childress, Baltimore Bicycling Club  
Art Cohen, b'more mobile  
Edward K. Cohen, Transit Riders Action Council of Metropolitan Baltimore  
Lawrence Hawkins, Mayors Commission on Disabilities  
David Schapiro, Citizen  
Dudley Winters, Canton Square

The Public Hearing began at 6:00 PM and was held at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 210, Baltimore, MD 21224.

Kwame Arhin of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) welcomed everyone to the hearing. The remaining members of the Federal Team introduced themselves.

Kwame summarized the purpose of the TMA Certification Process and the specific purpose of this Public Input Meeting. This included distribution and showing of a detailed Power Point presentation entitled “Baltimore TMA Federal Certification Process, Public Input Meeting.”

Kwame described the objective of the hearing: Once every four years, by Federal law, transportation management areas are required to be certified by FTA and FHWA to make sure that Federal laws are being followed in regard to transportation planning. SAFETEA-LU reinforced TEA-21 to add public involvement component to that review process.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation agency that has jurisdiction over transportation decisions in areas that are larger than 50,000 in population. A Transportation Management Area (TMA) is an area that is a larger MPO, which is an area with over 200,000 in population. The Baltimore MPO planning area includes seven jurisdictions: the cities of Annapolis, and Baltimore, and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard, with total population of 2.6 million.

As part of this process, the TMA is required to establish a “three – C” process for transportation planning which means continuing, cooperative and comprehensive. The TMA is also required to develop a Long Range Transportation Plan, a Transportation Improvement Program, a Unified Planning Work Program, and other plans associated with the planning process.

The certification review process that occurs every four years includes three activities: 1) site visit; 2) completion of a report of the visit and findings; and 3) close-out presentation with MPO.

Kwame said that the Federal Team welcomes comments and said that the issues they are looking for are issues that relate to the transportation planning process itself. For instance, the Federal Team wants to know if the public has an opportunity to participate, if they are receiving information about transportation issues early enough to provide comments and information that will affect transportation decisions, if they get reasonable access to materials and information, and if they are receiving adequate notice of public involvement activities. The Federal Team also wants to know if the public has adequate time to comment on key decision points in the process, whether those comments are being taken into consideration or not, what positive aspects they may have noticed about the process, and if they have suggestions for improving the process as it exists.

At this time, public comments and written testimony were received. Full compilation of written comments can be found at the MPO website at:

[http://www.baltometro.org/bboard/MPO\\_Certification\\_2008/3559?msgCount=0](http://www.baltometro.org/bboard/MPO_Certification_2008/3559?msgCount=0)

Summary of Public Comments for June 24, 2008 Meeting

Michele Rosenberg - Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park (written testimony included)

- Participation is limited to making comments on decisions which have already been made.

- It is unlikely that whole documents will be changed to accommodate recommendations submitted by the public or CAC. When changes are made, they are often minimal.
- Would like to work in tandem with planners, not just be asked for praise, suggestions, or recommendations on plans.
- Information is not distributed early enough in the process.
  - “Often we are provided with information at a meeting giving us a week's deadline to make comments on various plans.”
- BRTB staff is as helpful as they can be.
- Concerned that the general public doesn't get announcements about public review and comment opportunities.
- B'more Involved is an excellent e-newsletter, but the average citizen doesn't know about it and thus doesn't get info about public reviews or other opportunities to get involved.
- Restore the number of meetings where elected officials are expected to attend.
- BRTB needs to follow Maryland's Open Meeting laws.

2. Ted Rosenberg - Gwynns Falls Watershed Association (verbal testimony only)

- Attitude towards public involvement is to sell ideas to the public, not to get input from the public. “We know how we're going to do it, if you want to say something you can and maybe we will make some minor changes and if you are loud then you can make it harder for things to go through as is.”

3. Robert Keith and Jannette Barth - Fells Point Task Force (written testimony included)

- The MPO has failed to recognize and assert any responsibility for public involvement in specific transit planning projects by agencies seeking federal assistance within its jurisdiction, and the amount of public input requested in practice for Baltimore transportation planning is thus insufficient and comes too late.
  - The BRTB has a good public participation process itself, with its CAC and a public input period at the beginning of each monthly meeting; but agencies of the MPO do not have a good public participation process.
  - The BRTB should establish clear public participation standards, and monitor their implementation, for all agencies required to have MPO approval for any Federal funding they seek for major transportation projects in the Baltimore Region.
- Public input when provided is not considered seriously.
  - Expressed numerous concerns about MTA Red Line project planning and public involvement processes.
- Recommend that the BRTB ask the MTA to commission a study of the long-range future of the Green Line Metro, as well as the Yellow Line now, so that accommodation and coordination with these lines can be factored into the planning of alignments and stations for the Red Line. The presence of such a study would be an essential tool in securing funding for these two additional lines in the evolving Washington, D.C. political climate.
  - The MPO should oversee the public participation element for this study, as it should with all transportation projects seeking federal assistance in the Region.

4. Barry Childress - Baltimore Bicycling Club (written testimony included)

- Many concerns about the State Highway Administration and their role in bicycle/pedestrian access.
  - SHA is ignoring state laws and putting up barriers to bicycling (cited several examples).
  - Too many plans are already developed before asking for public input.
  - SHA focus is too heavy on automobile users of roads – not heavy enough on bike/ped users.
- Need better involvement by SHA (especially Bike/Ped staff at SHA) at MPO to better address bicycle/pedestrian issues.
- Very concerned about high rate of pedestrian fatalities and injuries (cited several statistics). Need more resources to address this issue.
  - Transportation Enhancement Program should be changed – the state’s requirement of a 50/50 Federal/local financial match is too high and prevents many jurisdictions from doing important bike/ped improvements. Move to Federal rate of an 80/20 Federal/local financial match.

5. Art Cohen - b’more mobile (written testimony included)

- Transportation Outlook 2035
  - Little priority given to transit, only after major public outcry was a shift made towards more transit. Despite this, the changes were relatively minor.
  - Decisions were made behind closed doors.
- Pages 58-80 of Section M of the Q/A given to the Federal Review Team
  - Too many assertions without back up information; lots of repetition.
  - Need to evaluate cost-effectiveness of bus-based ads that encouraged the public to get involved in the Transportation Outlook 2035 process.
- Public involvement is limited to notices about opportunity to comment – public not truly involved in development of plans.
- The Federal requirements represent a minimum – many areas around the country have gone well beyond these minimums. The BRTB should also.

6. Edward K. Cohen - Transit Riders Action Council of Metropolitan Baltimore - (written testimony included)

- Many problems with the planning process; all reported tonight are true.
- Problem with integration of planning – often it seems many agencies/staff consult with each other, but don’t coordinate with each other.
- Chesapeake Bay crossing study – absurd foundation led to absurd results.
- Red Line planning process disturbs many in the region.
  - 2002 rail plan never included BRT, many who signed on then wouldn’t have if they had known BRT would be considered.
  - Promises seem to be made in order to delay and then break promises.

7. Lawrence Hawkins - (as reported by Ed Cohen) (verbal testimony only)

- Did not receive notification of this meeting until yesterday – need to improve public notice about process.
- Concerned about lack of public involvement by people with disabilities.

8. David Shapiro - citizen (verbal testimony only)

- Agencies ask for public involvement, but don't do a great job of public outreach and notice. The turnout at tonight's meeting is an example of poor turnout because people didn't know about it.
  - Improve public outreach by going to fairs and festivals, go out and ask people what they want and tell about the plans being developed.
- When input is received, policy makers don't listen.
- There is a state of emergency in this country related to transportation, the BRTB needs to stop planning as it has in the past and start addressing the needs of the future. The focus needs to be on providing transportation for all in various ways – not just highways.

