



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Illinois Division

March 15, 2023

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In Reply Refer To:
HPER-IL

Mr. Don White
Policy Committee Chairman
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
456 Fulton Street, Suite 401
Peoria, IL 61602

Subject: U.S. Department of Transportation Planning Certification Review Final Report
Peoria, Illinois Transportation Management Area

Dear Mr. White:

As noted in our May 2, 2022, letter, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have completed a joint certification review of the transportation planning process in the Peoria, Illinois Transportation Management Area. At that time, we issued a finding of full certification for the transportation planning process for this region. We are now enclosing a report that documents the results of the review and offers several recommendations for continuing quality improvements and enhancements to the planning process as well as recognizing several commendations of work that is done in the region. Many of the recommendations have already been addressed and implemented by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Metropolitan Planning Organization staff.

We appreciate the cooperation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff in assisting us with the review. The next certification review will be conducted in 2026. If you have any questions regarding this certification action, please contact Betsy Tracy, FHWA at (217) 492-4642 or Cecilia Crenshaw, FTA, at (312)705-1268.

Sincerely,

Jon-Paul Kohler
Planning & Program Development Manager
Illinois Division FHWA

Enclosure

ecc: Mr. Omer Osman, Secretary of Transportation, IDOT
Ms. Holly Bieneman, Director, Office of Planning & Programming, IDOT

Mr. Mike Vanderhoof, Bureau Chief, Office of Planning, IDOT

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Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission/Peoria, Illinois Transportation Management Area

February 2023

Summary Report





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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 2-3, 2022, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Tri County (Peoria) urbanized area. 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.

1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The most recent certification review for the Tri County (Peoria) urbanized area was conducted in 2018. The previous Certification Review findings have all been adequately addressed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff.



1.2 Summary of Current Findings

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Management Area (TMA) area meets the Federal planning requirements.

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Tri-County Regional Planning Commission MPO and Greater Peoria Mass Transit District/City Link. There are recommendations in this report that warrant attention and follow-up, as well as areas the MPO is performing very well in that are to be commended.

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)	The results of the 2020 Census may have an impact on urbanized area boundaries	Monitor the 2020 Census data for changes to the urbanized area	Metropolitan Planning Area may need to be modified based upon the results of the Census	Spring 2023
MPO Structure and Agreements 23 U.S.C. 134(d) 23 CFR 450.314(a)	The MPO changed the MPO structure since the last Certification Review	Evaluate the voting membership to ensure ongoing participation and representation	MPO membership may need to be reviewed to ensure ongoing participation from all members/modes. Agreements should be modified as needed to represent the MPO members	Ongoing
Unified Planning Work Program 23 CFR 450.308	The MPO is in compliance with UPWP requirements	None	<u>Commendation:</u> The MPO provides a competitive program to program a portion of the UPWP funds for member studies and activities.	Not Applicable
Metropolitan Transportation Plan 23 U.S.C. 134(c),(h)&(i) 23 CFR 450.324	The MPO is in compliance with MTP requirements	Monitor MTP goals/objectives	Recommend annual review of the goals/objectives in the MTP and provide an update on the achievement of those measures	Annually



Transit Planning 49 U.S.C. 5303 23 U.S.C. 134 23 CFR 450.314	The MPO is in compliance with all Transit planning requirements	None		Not Applicable
Transportation Improvement Program 23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (j) 23 CFR 450.326	The MPO is in compliance with all TIP requirements	None	The MPO updates the TIP on an annual basis	Current TIP adopted July 6, 2022
Public Participation 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6) 23 CFR 450.316 & 450.326(b)	The MPO has a current Public Participation Plan that was updated in 2021	Review plan to ensure it reflects the changes with virtual public involvement since COVID	The MPO is recommended to continue to evaluate their public engagement processes	Ongoing
Civil Rights Title VI Civil Rights Act, 23 U.S.C. 324, Age Discrimination Act, Sec. 504 Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act	The MPO has a current Title VI plan that was updated in 2021		The MPO is commended for their efforts in reaching underrepresented communities, ADA and transit advocacy	Ongoing
Consultation and Coordination 23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i) 23 CFR 450.316, 23 CFR 450.324(g)	The MPO coordinates activities with the Illinois DOT and MPO members	None		Ongoing
List of Obligated Projects 23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7) 23 CFR 450.334	The MPO annually prepares the List of Obligated projects using federal funding	None		Completed annually
Freight 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 CFR 450.306	The MPO is engaged with the Illinois State Freight Advisory Committee	Continued engagement in freight planning		Ongoing



<p>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</p>	None	None	None	Not Applicable
<p>Transportation Safety 23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(B) 23 CFR 450.306(a)(2) 23 CFR 450.306(d) 23 CFR 450.324(h)</p>	The MPO works with Illinois DOT and members to implement safety measures	Continue to identify opportunities for funding for safety action plans and projects for MPO members	The MPO assisted with the Highway Safety Improvement Program funds implementation for low -cost safety improvements	Ongoing
<p>Transportation Security Planning 23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(C) 23 CFR 450.306(a)(3) 23 CFR 450.306(d) 23 CFR 450.324(h)</p>	None	None		Not Applicable
<p>Nonmotorized Planning/Livability 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 U.S.C. 217(g) 23 CFR 450.306 23 CFR 450.3224f (2)</p>	The MPO has participated in numerous bike/ped projects and assisted members applying for funding	Walkability data collection, Complete Streets Pop Up, bridge amenities, trail planning and technical support provided	The MPO assists members and advocates for non-motorized transportation	Ongoing
<p>Integration of Land Use and Transportation 23 U.S.C. 134(g)(3) 23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(E) 23 CFR 450.306(a)(5)</p>	None	None	None	Not Applicable



Travel Demand Modeling Forecasting 23 CFR 450.324(f)(1)	The MPO has a working Travel Demand Model	The TDM is being updated by consultants	Continue to utilize the TDM for local transportation planning efforts	Ongoing
Air Quality Clean Air Act 42 U.S.C. 7401 40 CFR Part 93 23 CFR 450.324(m)	Continue to monitor local air quality readings	Monitoring of air quality readings	The MPO region is in attainment status for criteria pollutants	Ongoing
Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) 23 CFR 450.322	The MPO is updating their CMP process in 2022	Update of CMP is underway through consultants	CMP update has been completed	Approved August 2022

Details of the certification findings for the above items are contained in this report.



2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the FHWA and the FTA must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in 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 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (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 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 Tri County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is the designated MPO for the Peoria urbanized area. IDOT is the responsible State agency and is the responsible public transportation operator. Current membership of the TCRPC MPO consists of elected officials and citizens from the political jurisdictions in Peoria TMA. The study area includes all of the TMA urbanized area with the City of Peoria 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 provide assistance 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

Certification reviews are conducted every four years. The last certification review was conducted in 2018. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided in Appendix B. This report details the 2022 review, which consisted of a formal site visit and a public involvement opportunity, conducted in March 2022.

Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, IDOT District 4 and Central Office staff, Greater Peoria Mass Transit District/City Link Transit Provider staff, and TCRPC 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:

- Key Regional Transportation Issues
- Strategic Transportation Planning Session (April 28, 2022)
- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
- 2020 Decennial Census
- MPO Structure and Agreements
- Unified Planning Work Program & Planning Studies
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)



- Transit Planning, Projects & Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Public Participation Plan
- Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)
- Consultation and Coordination
- List of Obligated Projects
- Freight Planning
- Environmental Mitigation/Planning & Environmental Linkages
- Transportation Safety
- Transportation Security Planning
- Nonmotorized Planning/Livability
- Integration of Land Use and Transportation
- Travel Demand Modeling
- Air Quality
- Congestion Management Process/Intelligent Transportation System

3.2 Documents Reviewed

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

- MPO Memorandum of Agreement, 2018
- PPUATS Technical Bylaws – April 2015
- PPUATS Policy Bylaws – June 2017
- TCRPC Bylaws – July 1, 2021
- FY 2022 & FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Programs for the TCRPC MPO
- MPO Metropolitan Long Range Transportation Plan, 2020-2045
- MPO FY-2023-2026 TIP and Self-Certification
- Performance Agreements



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 long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

4.1.2 Current Status

The TCRPC MPO MPA has not changed since approved by the MPO Policy Committee in 2013. The MPA has a population of approximately 300,054 as reported in the Census American Community Survey estimate. Since 2000 there has been an increase in population of the region of about 2%. The City of Peoria is the largest community, accounting for 37.84% of the MPA population and 44.35% of households.

4.1.3 Findings: The MPO Policy Committee approved the urbanized boundary and 20-year planning area, which meets the criteria of this section of the regulation.

The results of the 2020 Census should be made available by the end of calendar year 2022. It is recommended that the MPO staff continue to monitor the Census timeline and determine if changes to the urbanized or planning area should be made based on the outcome of the Census.

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

On May 3, 1976, the Governor of the State of Illinois designated the TCRPC as the MPO for the Peoria/Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS). In early 2020 the Chairmen of the PPUATS Policy Committee and the TCRPC directed the MPO staff to research MPO membership requirements and analyze the membership of their respective organizations. The exercise resulted in a combined PPUATS-TCRPC board for the purpose of streamlining the organization. In July 2020 the two boards were combined. There are 21



voting members on the Policy Committee and 22 voting members on the Technical Committee.

The combined boards include the following member jurisdictions and voting members for the Commission Policy Committee:

Peoria County- 2 votes

Tazewell County – 2 votes

Woodford County – 2 votes

City of Peoria – 3 votes

City of Pekin – 1 vote

City of East Peoria – 1 vote

City of Washington – 1 vote

Village of Bartonville – 1 vote

City of West Peoria – 1 vote

Village of Morton – 1 vote

Village of Peoria Heights – 1 vote

Village of Creve Coeur – 1 vote

City of Chillicothe – 1 vote

Village of Germantown Hills – 1 vote

City Link (Transit Provider)– 1 vote

Illinois Department of Transportation – District 4 – 1 vote

Technical Committee voting members include:

Peoria County – 2 votes

Tazewell County – 2 votes

Woodford County – 1 vote



City of Peoria – 3 votes

City of Pekin – 1 vote

City of East Peoria – 1 vote

City of Washington – 1 vote

Village of Bartonville – 1 vote

City of West Peoria – 1 vote

Village of Morton – 1 vote

Village of Peoria Heights – 1 vote

Village of Creve Coeur – 1 vote

4.2.3 Findings – In July 2021 there was a change in the governance of the MPO which made the Regional Planning Commission members the official MPO Policy Committee. TRCRPC assumed the role, duties, and responsibilities of the MPO. The Commission consists of 21 members: 13 representatives from 11 municipalities, two representatives from each of the three counties, one representative from IDOT and one representative from the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District.

Prior to July 2021, PPUATS was considered the MPO and included a Technical and Policy Committee. However, the MPO Executive Director and staff are employed under the Regional Planning Commission. Funding requests and document approvals continued to go thru the commission, but it was at times unclear the role of the commission and the role of the Peoria MPO.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the MPO periodically review the Agency membership for the Policy and the Technical Committees to ensure that the voting members routinely participate in the MPO meetings. Any MPO members who do not attend meetings can affect quorum for the MPO. The existing Memorandum of Agreement should also be revisited from time to time to determine if it should be updated to reflect the changes in how the MPO functions.

The Cooperative Agreement between the Commission, City Link, East Peoria Mass Transit, and the State of Illinois needs to be revised because the PPUATS Policy Committee has been dissolved and replaced by the Commission.



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 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 12-month period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate the agency performing the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding, and sources of funds.

4.3.2 Current Status

The MPO staff prepares an annual UPWP, in cooperation with the State DOT and transit operators, identifying who is responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process. The PPUATS Regional Planning Commission approves the Annual Budget.

Since the 2018 certification review, many local Agency planning studies and regional studies have been proposed by member agencies using Federal planning funds and State Planning & Research funds including:

- City of Chillicothe – 4th. Street Corridor Revitalization Study
- City of East Peoria – Sidewalk Inventory & Transportation Plan
- City of Washington – Transportation Plan
- Peoria Heights – Commercial Area Studies
- City of Pekin – Traffic Signal Modernization
- City of Peoria – Thoroughfare Plan and Map
- Peoria County – Regional Digital Inclusion Plan
- Village of Morton – Master Bicycle Plan
- Peoria County – Smart Mobility Plan – Phase II
- Woodford County – Asset Management & Feasibility Project
- City of Peoria – Pavement Decision Optimization Technology
- City of East Peoria – Riverfront Trail and Connection to ICC Corridor Plan and Feasibility Study
- Woodford County – Pavement Evaluation and Management Plan
- Tri-County Regional Asset Management Program Software
- City of Peoria – Multimodal Transit Center Location Study
- Grey Area Paratransit Mobility Study
- Peoria County – Trail Connection Study
- Tri-County MPO – Collection and Processing of Roadway Condition Data, Asset Management Software, Travel Demand Modeling, Regional Transportation



Workshop, Online Public Engagement, Micro Transit Study, Complete Streets Symposium and Digital Orthophotography acquisition.

4.3.3 Findings: The MPO has provided an opportunity annually for Agency members to apply for Federal planning funds to complete local planning studies. At least 20 local studies have been conducted over the past five fiscal years. The MPO staff manages the contractual process for the studies.

Commendation: The MPO is commended for providing funding for the local Agencies to conduct meaningful transportation planning studies. This is a best practice for transportation planning in the Region and the State of Illinois.

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 MTP. Among the requirements, the MTP must address at least a 20-year planning horizon and include 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 five 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

The MPO identified their most recent 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Goals to include 5 core areas:

- 1) Public Health
- 2) Mobility and Connectivity
- 3) Economy
- 4) Freight
- 5) Environment

4.4.2 Current Status: The MPO updated their MTP in 2020, after the onset of COVID. They shifted from in-person meetings to using online platforms and virtual meetings to help engage the public during the time of the long-range plan update.

4.4.3 Findings: The MPO should consider monitoring the progress of the established goals and objectives as identified in the MTP.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the MPO conduct an analysis of the goals and objectives that were identified in the latest MTP on an annual basis and share results with the Technical and Policy Committee members. A visual dashboard concept could identify which objectives are making progress, which are neutral and those areas where progress is not currently being made. The MPO has agreed that they will track and report on the results of annual results.

4.5 Transit Planning

4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

49 U.S.C. 5503 requires that projects and 23 U.S.C. 134 requires the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas 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.

49 U.S.C. 5310 requires that projects selected for funding under the Enhance Mobility for Individuals Program be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services plan and the plan be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public utilizing transportation services. These coordinated plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, providing strategies for meeting these needs and prioritizing transportation services for funding and implementation.

4.5.2 Current Status



The coordination between TCRPC, the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD) and IDOT is cooperative and effective for addressing the transit needs of the region. GPMTD conducted a Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion Study and the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District Micro Transit Study. The Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion Study outlines GPMTD's mobility solutions specific to the "Grey Area" based on a transit need funding analysis.

GPMTD, also known as City Link, was established in 1970 to provide services to the City of Peoria, Village of Peoria Heights, and West Peoria Township to manage and operate the local bus services. In the same year, GPMTD's Board of Trustees approved an official partnership with the City of East Peoria to provide service east of the Illinois River. In 2001, GPMTD further expanded service to Pekin, North Pekin, and Creve Coeur. GPMTD has an active fleet of 53 transit buses, including hybrid and electric, and 36 paratransit vans.

In December 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act applied new program rules to all FTA funds. One of the changes required Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans. Those plans had to be updated to reflect the changes established by the FAST Act legislation. The Heart of Illinois Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) was updated in 2017 to serve the seven-county rural Central Illinois region and the Peoria-Pekin urbanized area. An HSTP Steering Committee was formed with representatives from the public, private nonprofit transportation human service providers and the public. The MPO staff coordinates the HSTP Steering Committee meetings and updates the HSTP documents.

Section 20019 of MAP-21 amended the Federal transit law by adding section 5326 to Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code. The provisions of this section require the Secretary of Transportation to establish and implement a national Transit Asset Management (TAM) which defines the term of State of Good Repair, requires that all Chapter 53 recipients and subrecipients develop a TAM Plan, establishes annual reporting requirements, and includes technical assistance (49 U.S.C. Section 5326(b)). As the primary transit provider, GPMTD was required to develop and adopt a (TAM) Plan and update that plan each year. GPMTD internally works with a representative from their Maintenance, Operations and Finance Departments to track, assess and preserve their transit assets. GPMTD finds the TAM plan to be a sound business tool for the region.

4.5.3 Findings

The FHWA/FTA Review Team finds Transit planning in compliance with the regulatory requirements. The Review Team also finds the TAM plan meets the requirements of 49 U.S.C. Section 5326.

Recommendations:

The review team recommends that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission update the Heart of Illinois Human Services Transportation Plan. It is noted that since this review was conducted, the MPO has updated the Human Service Transportation Plan, and it was approved by the TCRPC. It is also recommended the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District publish their Transit Asset Management plan on their website.



The MPO has completed the updated HSTP plan document and it was approved at the February 1, 2023, Commission meeting. The GMPTD staff will add the TAM Plan to their website.

4.6 Transportation Improvement Program

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 MPO has a TIP that documents the federally funded projects for Fiscal Years 2023-2026. It is updated on an annual basis, and it is fiscally constrained.

4.6.3 Findings: The TIP document is maintained, updated annually and amendments are added in a timely fashion as they are needed.

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 the effectiveness of the participation plan.

4.7.2 Current Status: The MPO updated both the Title VI Plan and the Public Participation Plan in 2021. Due to COVID, the public engagement processes have been modified to include various online platforms and virtual meetings. Some of the more unique public involvement activities have included:

- Purchase of equipment to support software to conduct virtual meetings.
- Developed a Monthly Newsletter that is distributed to over 1,200 subscribers via email.
- Visited high schools to encourage careers in planning.
- Regional presentations made to organizations such as Bradley University, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Rotary Club of Peoria.

4.7.3 Findings

Commendation: The MPO seeks innovative ways to engage with the public, including the use of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn pages that are maintained and periodically updated.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the MPO track the number of public engagements over time to help evaluate the effectiveness of their public outreach methods.

The MPO will track the number of public engagements over time and use this information to determine and reflect effectiveness methods in updated Public Participation Plans.

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 has an adopted Title VI policy that was updated in 2021, highlighting environmental justice and limited English proficiency considerations. There have not been any Title VI or ADA complaints since the last certification review was conducted.

4.8.3 Findings: The MPO has been involved in several activities that have addressed Environmental Justice in the Tri-County area including focus on underrepresented communities and ADA accessibility and transit availability throughout the Region.

Commendations:

- 1) The MPO worked on the 2020 Census data collection and worked with many organizations to host a meaningful Census event that took place in an underrepresented part of the City of Peoria. They provided food and backpacks while aiding residents in completing the Census forms.
- 2) The MPO prioritized marginalized communities when assessing the transit 5310 funding applications.
- 3) Staff also helped prepare two grant applications to improve low-income housing in Peoria Heights.
- 4) Additionally, ADA sidewalk surveys were done in East Peoria, Hanna City, Delevan, and Bartonville.
- 5) The MPO is working with MPO members to identify funding to improve ADA accessibility elements at bus stops and gaps in sidewalks. They are also coordinating efforts with the Mass Transit provider to temporarily extend paratransit services to Washington.

4.9 Consultation and Coordination

4.9.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i)(5)-(6) and 23 CFR 450.316(b-e) set forth requirements for consultation in developing the MTP and TIP. Consultation is also addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.324(g)(1-2) and in 23 CFR 450.324(f)(10) related to environmental mitigation.

In developing the MTP and TIP, the MPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies as described below:

- Agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities (State, local, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight)



- Other providers of transportation services
- Indian Tribal Government(s)
- Federal land management agencies

4.9.2 Current Status: The MPO works closely with the State DOT, mass transit provider and local members as they develop the MTP, TIP and UPWP.

4.9.3 Findings: The MPO timely prepares all required documents and works closely with the member Agencies as they develop the documents.

4.10 List of Obligated Projects

4.10.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7) and 23 CFR 450.334 requires that the State, the MPO, and public transportation operators cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S. C. Chapter 53 have been obligated in the previous year. The listing must include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year and, at a minimum, the following for each project:

- The amount of funds requested in the TIP
- Federal funding obligated during the preceding year
- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years
- Sufficient description to identify the project
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project

4.10.2 Current Status: The MPO prepares the Listing of Federally Obligated projects on an annual basis.

4.10.3 Findings: The listing of projects is shared with the Technical and Policy Committee members to show where Federal funds have been spent locally in the prior fiscal year.

4.11 Freight Planning

4.11.1 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.



4.11.2 Current Status: The MPO serves on the Illinois State Freight Advisory Committee. They have also served on the Steering Committee for the IDOT sponsored Illinois Marine Transportation System Plan and Economic Development and are active with the local waterway transportation system planning.

4.11.3 Findings

Recommendation: The MPO should continue to remain engaged in Freight Planning in the Region.

The MPO Planning Program Manager collaborates on Freight Planning in the Region.

4.12 Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage

4.12.1 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.

4.12.2 Current Status: The MPO is aware of environmental mitigation and Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL).

4.12.3 Findings: There are not any PEL projects underway currently.

4.13 Transportation Safety

4.13.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(B) requires MPOs to consider safety as one of ten planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306(a)(2), the planning process needs to consider and implement projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

In addition, SAFETEA-LU established a core safety program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (23 U.S.C. 148), which introduced a mandate for states to have Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs). 23 CFR 450.306 (d) requires the metropolitan



transportation planning process should be consistent with the SHSP, and other transit safety and security planning.

4.13.2 Current Status: The MPO has accepted the state targets for the Safety Performance Measures, including the goals for reducing fatalities and serious personal injury crashes.

4.13.3 Findings: The MPO is working towards putting together an application for the Safe Streets and Roads for All discretionary program for development of a safety action plan. If they are successful in receiving that funding, during a future funding round they can apply for project implementation funding.

Recommendation: The MPO may want to consider reviving the Local Safety Committee as they work towards helping to make the region safer using a multi-disciplinary group to identify safety opportunities.

The MPO Technical Committee has discussed establishing a Safety Committee for the region.

Commendation: The MPO is taking a leadership role to coordinate with local Agencies in applying for the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant to develop a safety action plan.

The MPO was recently notified that they were successful in being awarded \$400,000 in Federal funding to develop a regional Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for the region.

4.14 Transportation Security Planning

4.14.1 Regulatory Basis

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

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

4.14.2 Current Status

4.14.3 Findings

The review team finds that the MPO meets the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(C) and 23 CFR 450.306(a)(3).



4.15 Nonmotorized Planning/Livability

4.15.1 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."

4.15.2 Current Status: The MPO completed the Heart of Illinois Regional Bike Plan in 2017, which will be updated in Fiscal Year 2023. They have provided technical support and advocacy for multiple rail initiatives from 2020-2022 including the Hanna City Trail Steering Committee, East Peoria Riverfront Trail planning project, Peoria Heights trailhead application, and other trail initiatives in Chillicothe, Metamora, and Germantown Hills. They have provided support and advocacy for the inclusion of a multi-use path on the new McCluggage Bridge project. In 2021 the MPO also assisted the Walkability Institute and other regional groups in putting together a Complete Streets Pop-Up event to educate the community about complete streets.

4.15.3 Findings: The MPO has conducted a significant amount of transportation planning and coordination for non-motorized users and meets the requirements under 23 CFR 450.306.

Commendation: The MPO is taking a leadership role in bike and pedestrian planning in the region, as well as coordinating the Safe Streets & Roads for All Safety Plan competitive grant program application for the benefit of their local Agencies.

4.16 Integration of Land Use and Transportation

4.16.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(g)(3) encourages MPOs to consult with officials responsible for other types of planning activities that are affected by transportation in the area (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movements) or to coordinate its planning process, to the maximum extent practicable, with such planning activities.

23 U.S.C. 134 (h)(1)(E) and 23 CFR 450.306(a)(5) set forth requirements for the MPO Plan to protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

4.16.2 Current Status: The MPO works with economic development organizations including The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council and the Central Illinois Economic



Development District. They have also addressed local environmental issues, including sedimentation, and dredging and erosion and runoff in the region.

4.16.3 Findings: The MPO is engaged in regional issues related to land use and transportation.

4.17 Travel Demand Forecasting

4.17.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.324(f)(1) requires that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan include the projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the Metropolitan Planning Area over the period of the transportation plan. Travel demand forecasting models are used in the planning process to identify deficiencies in future year transportation systems and evaluate the impacts of alternative transportation investments. In air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, they are also used to estimate regional vehicle activity for use in mobile source emission models that support air quality conformity determinations.

4.17.2 Current Status: The MPO uses the Travel Demand Model in long-range planning and project selection. They are currently in the process of converting to an activity-based model for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

4.17.3 Findings: The MPO has a Travel Demand Model in place and uses it for transportation planning decisions in the Region.

Commendation: The MPO makes the Travel Demand Modelling available to all their local Agencies as they consider improvements to the transportation network.

4.18 Air Quality

4.18.1 Regulatory Basis

The air quality provisions of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401) and the MPO provisions of Titles 23 and 49 require a planning process that integrates air quality and metropolitan transportation planning, such that transportation investments support clean air goals. Under 23 CFR 450.324(m), a conformity determination must be made on any updated or amended transportation plan in accordance with the Clean Air Act and the EPA transportation conformity regulations of 40 CFR Part 93. A conformity determination must also be made on any updated or amended TIP, per 23 CFR 450.326(a).



4.18.2 Current Status: The Tri-County region is in attainment for all criteria pollutants currently.

4.18.3 Findings: The MPO continues to regularly monitor air quality monitoring in the region.

Recommendation: The MPO should continue to monitor the air quality and any changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards that are proposed or made by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

4.19 Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations

4.19.1 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.

4.19.2 Current Status: The most recently adopted Congestion Management Plan for the Tri-County MPO region was completed in July 2011. The MPO was updating the CMP at the time of the review's site visit.

4.19.3 Findings: The MPO updated their Congestion Management Plan, and it was adopted on August 3, 2022. The Plan is in compliance with Federal requirements.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the MPO periodically monitor the congestion mitigation strategies that were identified in the CMP to determine where operational improvements and enhancements can be made in the Region.

The MPO adopted the most recent CMP August 3, 2022, and the staff will monitor the strategies that are identified in the plan.



5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Tri-County Regional Planning Commissions MPO area meets Federal planning requirements.

5.1 Commendations

The following are noteworthy practices that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission MPO is doing well in the transportation planning process:

- 1) The MPO provides funding for the local Agencies to conduct meaningful transportation planning studies. This is a best practice for transportation planning in the Region and the State of Illinois.
- 2) The MPO seeks innovative ways to engage with the public, including the use of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn pages that are maintained and periodically updated.
- 3) The MPO conducts several activities related to Title VI, Environmental Justice, Housing and Americans with Disabilities, including:
 - a. The MPO worked on the 2020 Census data collection and worked with many organizations to host a meaningful Census event that took place in an underrepresented part of the City of Peoria. They provided food and backpacks while aiding residents in completing the Census forms.
 - b. The MPO prioritized marginalized communities when assessing the transit 5310 funding applications.
 - c. Staff helped prepare two grant applications to improve low-income housing in Peoria Heights.
 - d. ADA sidewalk surveys were completed in East Peoria, Hanna City, Delevan, and Bartonville.
 - e. The MPO is working with MPO members to identify funding to improve ADA accessibility elements at bus stops and gaps in sidewalks. They are also coordinating efforts with GPMTD to temporarily extend paratransit services to Washington.
- 4) The MPO is taking a leadership role in bike and pedestrian planning in the region, as well as coordinating the Safe Streets & Roads for All Safety Plan competitive grant program application for the benefit of their local Agencies.
- 5) The MPO makes the Travel Demand Modeling available to all their local Agencies as they consider improvements to the transportation network.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that could improve the transportation planning process:



- 1) The MPO should periodically review the membership of the Policy and the Technical Committees to ensure that the voting members routinely participate in the MPO meetings. Any MPO members who do not attend meetings can affect quorum for the MPO. The existing Memorandum of Agreement should also be revisited from time to time to determine if it should be updated to reflect the changes in how the MPO functions. The Cooperative Agreement between the Commission, City Link, East Peoria Mass Transit District, and the State of Illinois should be revised as the Tri-County Planning Commission is officially the MPO.
- 2) The MPO should conduct an analysis of the goals and objectives that were identified in the latest Metropolitan Transportation Plan on an annual basis and share results with the Technical and Policy Committee members. A visual dashboard concept could identify which objectives are making progress, which are neutral and those areas where progress is not currently being made. Response: The MPO will evaluate the goals annually and share the results.
- 3) The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission should update the Heart of Illinois Human Services Transportation Plan. It is noted that since the site visit was conducted, the MPO has updated the Human Services Transportation Plan, and it was approved by the TCRPC. It is also recommended the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District publish their Transit Asset Management plan on their website. Response: the MPO has updated the HSTP.
- 4) The MPO should track the number of public engagements over time to help evaluate the effectiveness of their public outreach efforts. Response: The MPO will track public engagements and use the information for evaluation and updating the Public Participation Plan,
- 5) The MPO should continue to remain engaged in Freight Planning in the Region. Response: The MPO continues to be engaged with Freight Planning in the region.
- 6) The MPO may want to consider reviving the Local Safety Committee as they work towards helping to improve safety within the region using a multi-disciplinary group to identify safety opportunities. Response: The MPO is considering the establishment of a Local Safety Committee.
- 7) The MPO should continue to monitor the air quality and any changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards that are proposed or made by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Response: The MPO continues to monitor the air quality in the Region.
- 8) The MPO members should be involved in the ongoing implementation of the Congestion Management Process. It is also recommended that the MPO periodically monitor the congestion mitigation strategies that were identified in the CMP to determine and assess where operational improvements and enhancements can be made in the Region. Response: The Congestion Management Process was updated and adopted by the Commission.



APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission MPO urbanized area on-site review:

Betsy Tracy, FHWA Illinois Division

Jon-Paul Kohler, FHWA Illinois Division

John Donovan, FHWA Illinois Division

Cecilia Crenshaw, FTA Region 5

Marjorie Hughes, FTA Region 5

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Nick Standefer, Greater Peoria Mass Transit District



Shamra Robinson, Greater Peoria Mass Transit District



APPENDIX B – PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.



APPENDIX C - LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
AMPO: Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
CAA: Clean Air Act
CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
CMP: Congestion Management Process
CO: Carbon Monoxide
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
HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
LEP: Limited-English-Proficiency
M&O: Management and Operations
MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide
O₃: Ozone
PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}: Particulate Matter
SHSP: Strategic Highway Safety Plan
STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
TDM: Travel Demand Management
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
TMA: Transportation Management Area
U.S.C.: United States Code
UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program
USDOT: United States Department of Transportation





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