



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

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# **FHWA/FTA Certification Review for the LUBBOCK MPO**

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## Background

As required by 23 U.S.C. 134 (k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303 (k)(5), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMA) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census, with a population of over 200,000. Generally, the review consists of a desk audit (completed in advance of the on-site review), a site visit, and preparation of a report that summarizes the review and provides the findings of the review.

This review focused on compliance with title 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 Federal planning laws and regulations; successes; challenges; and experiences of the cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous planning process of the transportation partners – the MPO staff, TxDOT, Lubbock CitiBus, the City of Lubbock, Lubbock County, and other local partners. The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of the local metropolitan planning process. Other activities include review and approval of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), review of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), review and approval of the metropolitan and statewide transportation improvement program (TIP/STIP), and on-going meetings and contact with the transportation planning partners.

While the actual planning certification review report may not fully document all of the on-going contact between FHWA/FTA and the local and state planning partners, the final certification of the metropolitan transportation planning process is based upon the cumulative findings of the entire process. In June 2020, a desk audit was completed by members of the Federal review team based upon their knowledge and involvement in the Lubbock MPO planning process; the review and approval of the planning products (UPWP, TIP/STIP, MTP); and the planning certification briefing notebook (notebook) that was provided by the MPO staff, and included materials covering the focus areas of the certification review.<sup>1</sup> The following section discusses the results from the MPO certification review completed in 2016.

## Results from Previous Certification Review

The initial certification review was conducted in 2004. Subsequent certification reviews were conducted in 2008, 2012 and 2016. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided below. This report details the fifth review, which consisted of a remote virtual session lasting 2 days and a public involvement opportunity, conducted in July, 2020. Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, TxDOT, CitiBus, and Lubbock MPO staff. A full list of participants is included in the Appendix.

One of the priorities of each certification review is assessing how well the planning partners in the area have addressed corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification review. This section identifies the corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification and summarizes discussions of how they have been addressed. There were no corrective actions from the last Certification Review. Recommendations annotated within the 2016 certification report include the following:

## **2016 Certification Recommendations and MPO Responses**

**TDM/TSM Recommendations:** To develop a quantitative process for assessing the effectiveness of TDM/TSM, including the eight CMP requirements and incorporate CMP into project selection. Currently, no illustrative map shows LOS on Lubbock streets. A recommendation would be to obtain this data to help with future congestion projections.

**Response:** In March 2019, the LMPO and District began developing aspects of a project selection tool called Decision Lens. Over the next 19 months the LMPO built and tested the package and it was approved by the Advisory Committee and Policy Committees and adopted as the LMPO project selection tool. The MPO has completed a project list developed with Decision Lens including public involvement. These projects will go through another public involvement with the rest of the components of the 2045 updated long range plan scheduled for adoption in 2021. As the selection criteria for the scoring scheme was developed the LMPO included the Quality of Life aspect of Congestion Management as one of the overall goals. The same goal also measures community and environmental impacts along with local economic development. Although not numbered in the order they are presented in the FHWA guide book, the 8 requirements of CMP are contained in the Decision Lens criteria. For example, under the goal "Project Impacts" the subheadings that are measured and recorded are safety, widening, barriers, traffic items, traffic volumes, alternative mode capacity increases, roadway preservation, pavement condition, alignment with CMP goals, ITS components, documented LOS, SOV programs, and "no score" for no CMP activity. There is also a scored category for EJ and environmental impacts. The LMPO is also updating their Congestion Management Process and adding the Congestion Management Process Assessment Tool (COMPAT). They have developed the criteria and scoring values and proceeded to TAC approval. The LMPO will present the analysis every quarter with the call for TIP/STIP revisions and have defined their monitoring network along with congestion values. The TAC recommendation will be to use the tool for a year then re-evaluate the congestion values and change them if necessary. The tool can also be used for freight and truck analysis.

**Performance Measures Recommendation:** The MPO is encouraged to ensure that all requirements are met and to develop performance measures associated with safety, congestion, freight, maintenance, operations, environment, land-use and other key goals associated with the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan. A clearer

understanding of what the performance measure(s) for safety is needed. Include any safety statistics that are being reported on regularly and base goals on actual numbers as much as possible. Citibus can share safety data into the MPO and the City process, which can incorporate into existing data.

**Response:** In so far as the performance measures requirement is concerned, the LMPO has previously adopted the PM 1 Safety Measures on March 19, 2019, the PM 2 Infrastructure measures and the PM 3 System Performance measures on February 19, 2019. In addition, the Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan was adopted June 21, 2019. Additionally, the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) was approved at the TAC level and recommended to the Policy Committee. Lastly, as an update to the safety targets the board took action to endorse the Commissions next round of targets by approving them on May 19, 2020. The staff utilized the reported findings from the 2020 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the Highway Safety Program (HSP) to report to the Board the success that TxDOT had in the previous year toward meeting their goals. The reports indicate that TxDOT made “substantial progress” toward achieving their goals.

**Title VI and EJ Recommendation:** The MPO should adopt and implement DOT order 1050.2A requiring recipients of federal financial assistance to abide by and include specific assurances in contracting documents for Title VI and Environmental Justice.

**Response:** The LMPO adopted and has implemented DOT order 1050.2A as evidenced by the Resolution 2012-01. Further, as the LMPO contracts with vendors or performs as a sub-recipient, it includes language to satisfy the contracting requirements for Title VI and EJ. Prime examples of requirement implementation would be the recent Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan agreement and the Wolfforth Thoroughfare and Land Use Plan update. Regarding the general application of Title VI and EJ guidance, the LMPO displays the information about what to do if an individual were to experience discriminated at every TAC and TPC meeting.

**ITS Recommendation:** The LMPO with its transportation partners should continue to examine the effectiveness of the regional ITS architecture and report a reasonable timeframe of when new ITS investments could occur.

**Response:** The effectiveness of the District’s ITS effort is summarized in the biannual Traffic Management System Status Report (attached) dated March 2020 and submitted to TxDOT’s Chief Engineer. In summary, next year the District plans on installing CCTV cameras at all major intersections along Loop 88 as well as strategically placing DMS boards. Plans also include additional in-house CCTV cameras at IH-27 and Spur 326/Ave Q. The District Director of Transportation Operations also reports that he has contracts to install 4 additional DMS boards in the District but is currently unsure where they will be installed. Going forward, the MPO will invite the District to present this report to the Policy Committee twice a year following the current bi-annual schedule.

**Transit Recommendation:** To improve the Public Transportation database Citibus could incorporate into existing MPO/City data.

**Response:** The City of Lubbock houses and maintains the LMPO database pursuant to a continuing sub-recipient agreement. Since the transit operations are City of Lubbock as well, there is ample opportunity to share data without combining files. This is particularly true with regard to the MOU between the MPO, City, and Citibus regarding duties and responsibilities. LMPO and Citibus administrations are currently unable to see how combining databases would improve either one.

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## July 2020 Certification Review

Because of health and travel concerns related to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the current planning certification review meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft TEAMS on July 22 and 23, 2020. Interviews with MPO Policy Committee members were completed on July 22, 2020. The public participation opportunity was advertised in the local English and Spanish-Language newspapers, and on the MPO website as per the LMPO public participation plan. The MPO also published a newspaper ad which asked that any comments be submitted to the Federal Review Team no later than August 23, 2020 to be considered for incorporation in the final FTA-FHWA certification review report.

The certification review meeting consisted of discussions on the following planning focus areas: Agreements, Roles and Responsibilities; FAST Act Planning Factors; Unified Planning Work Program; Travel Demand Forecasting; Congestion Management System/Process; Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP); Transportation Improvement Program; Public Involvement; Title VI and Environmental Justice; Corridor Studies; and Air Quality. The virtual TMA certification review meeting concluded with a close-out meeting held between the Federal review team and the MPO in order to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations. As a result of this TMA certification review, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration found that the metropolitan transportation planning process in the Lubbock Urbanized areas meets Federal planning requirements (e.g., Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450 and Title 49 CFR Part 613 Planning Assistance and Standards.)

The current metropolitan planning area boundary (MPA) or the geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process is carried out was last updated and approved by the Governor on January 31st, 2008 pursuant to Texas Transportation Commission minute order 111213. The MPA includes the Census-defined urbanized area (UZA) and all contiguous geographic areas likely to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period covered by the 2012-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The geographic area contained within the urbanized area boundary (UAB) provides for an effective planning process that ensures connectivity between modes and promotes overall efficiency. Also, from a planning perspective, Lubbock's UAB should contain the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defined nonattainment and/or maintenance areas in accordance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone or carbon monoxide but since Lubbock is an "attainment" community, this requirement is not relevant. In the last 6 years, Idalou, a census designated place, has petitioned to join the LMPO. However, although the initiative was approved by the TPC, due to local politics and constantly changing administrators, the request never achieved fulfillment. In similar fashion, the LMPO staff asked the board to initiate a study to include the census designated place of Shallowater in the MAB. Again, the vote was defeated and to date, no other changes have been made. Lubbock currently has a population of approximately 250,000, about 50,000 of which are students or work at

Texas Tech University located west of the downtown area. Growth continues to accelerate to the south and east portions of the city.

## **Agreements, Roles, and Responsibilities**

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 metropolitan planning area (MPA).

The City of Lubbock, Texas is the designated fiscal agent of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization. For the proper management of its fiscal and personnel matters, a Memorandum of Understanding defining the Roles and Responsibilities of the City of Lubbock and the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization was first approved in July 2003. The entities agreed to participate in a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning process for the Lubbock Urban Transportation Study area as provided in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962.

More recently, the By-Laws were amended to accommodate Senate Bill 585 signed by the Governor on June 19, 2009 amending Section 472.034 of the Texas Transportation Code relating to Standards of Conduct and Ethics Policy. Also noted is that the by-laws are consistent with the new FAST Act requirement of having a public transportation seat on the Policy Board with full voting rights and privileges associated with the rest of the membership. Although not enacted, the board has also discussed an amendment recently to provide for virtual meetings in the wake of a similar natural disaster as we have experienced with the COVID-19 virus. These by-laws are scheduled to be reviewed and updated as a contingency to the updated long-range plan scheduled to be completed in 2021.

The Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization (LMPO) is the forum for cooperative transportation planning and decision-making by officials of the urban area's local governments and transportation agencies. The LMPO is comprised of a Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Transportation Planning Director, MPO Staff and a Fiscal Agent. The TPC is the decision-making body of the LMPO tasked with the creation of other committees and sub-committees for a special purpose or to ensure adequate pro-active public participation in the transportation planning process. The TAC is responsible for providing technical support for the TPC.

The LMPO Policy Committee includes the cities of Lubbock and Wolfforth, Lubbock County, TxDOT, three elected officials (Lubbock), one elected official (Wolfforth) and Citibus. The LMPO TAC consist of 13 Members which includes Texas Tech University.

### Policy Organization

The policy organizational unit, as outlined in the most recent designation agreement, is the TPC. The TPC is composed of elected and appointed officials representing the cities of Lubbock and Wolfforth, Lubbock County, TxDOT, and Citibus. The responsibilities of the TPC are as follows:

- Provide a forum for cooperative decision-making by principal elected officials of general purpose local government;
- Carry out the urban transportation planning process as required by law for urbanized areas in conformity with applicable federal regulations and guidelines;
- Provide routine guidance to the planning process;
- Designate responsibility for the development of the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan;
- Establish and approve policy procedures for transportation planning;
- Examine the adequacy of the continuing planning process;
- Review the limits of the Study Area and, if necessary, make revisions;
- Review and approve an annual budget for transportation planning activities as outlined in the Unified Planning Work Program;
- Designate such technical committees or task forces as necessary to carry out the planning process; and
- Approve the National Highway System map, the functional classification system map, the urban area boundary map, and the metropolitan area boundary map.

The TPC consists of eight members and provides for one vote per member. The committee consists of the City of the Lubbock Mayor and City Manager, two City Councilmen, one County Commissioner, one County Judge, the Mayor of Wolfforth, and the TxDOT-Lubbock District Engineer. Currently Jeff Griffith Lubbock City Councilman is the Chairman of the TPC.

### Technical Organization

The TAC, which reports directly to the TPC, has the following responsibilities:

- Provide routine guidance on the technical procedures employed in the transportation planning process;
- Review the technical accuracy of transportation plans and documents resulting from the transportation planning process and either take action on the work completed or make a recommendation to the TPC;

- Review any item requested by the TPC and report its findings to that Committee;
- Review and submit a recommendation on the Unified Planning Work Program and subsequent amendments;
- Review and submit a technical recommendation on the Transportation Improvement Program, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and subsequent amendments to each; and
- Establish and/or approve any technical procedures necessary to carry out the transportation planning process. These will be sent to the TPC for their review and, as necessary, appropriate action.

The Lubbock MPO has current cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding identifying planning responsibilities among LMPO, TxDOT and Citibus. The TxDOT operating agreement is the agreement the MPO typically uses. The MPO also makes use of TxDOT's DBE plans. The MOU's between Citibus and the City, Citibus and TxDOT are all current and up-to-date. The cooperative agreement with TxDOT is due to expire in 2024. The TxDOT Planning Agreement and the MOU between the MPO and the City of Lubbock were renewed on October 9, 2018. The TxDOT agreement will expire on its own terms in 2024 pending any effort on TxDOT's part to extend. The Citibus agreement was amended in May 2018.

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require metropolitan planning organizations, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators, to develop long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning for metropolitan areas of the State. 23 CFR 450.314(h)(1) requires that MPO(s), State(s), and providers of public transportation jointly agree upon and develop specific written provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to transportation performance data, including data collection, selection and reporting of performance targets, and reporting of performance to be used in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the region of the MPO.

In April 2018, the Lubbock MPO, TxDOT, and the City of Lubbock (representing Citibus) signed an MOU that identified, in general terms, how the parties will cooperate and coordinate in implementing performance-based planning. The MOU pertains to all performance measures associated with PM-1, PM-2, PM-3, and Transit Asset Management categories.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock Urbanized area meets Federal MPO structure and agreement requirements

**RECOMMENDATION:** The MPO is encouraged to amend the MOU to add reference to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) targets, which will need to be set by the MPO and have progress tracked and reported in the System Performance Report.

### **Transportation Planning Process**

The scope of the transportation planning process according to 23 CFR 450.306 and 318 defines the relationship, among other things, of corridor and subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. The results of the transportation planning process carried out by the Lubbock MPO is demonstrated in the 2012-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) which can be found at <http://LubbockMPO.org/publications>. The eight amendments to the 2040 MTP are also included. The MTP addresses the ten planning factors contained in the FAST Act including transportation system development, land use, employment, economic development, human and natural environment, and housing and community development and is carried out in coordination with the statewide transportation planning process. Other documents used in conjunction with the MTP that also demonstrate the results of the transportation planning process include the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) found at <http://LubbockMPO.org/publications>. These documents contain principles and techniques that help define TIP priorities and transportation investment decisions including system safety, operations, preservation, and maintenance. The documents are also consistent with the development of applicable regional intelligent transportation systems (ITS) architectures, the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The process also ensures participation by federal lands management agencies and tribal governments in the development of all projects and programs as per 23 CFR 450.316(c) (d) and (e).

## **Planning Factors**

### Ten Planning Factors

- Support economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
- 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
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and

between modes, for people and freight

- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system
- Enhance travel and tourism

Lubbock MPO's UPWP, TIP/STIP, and MTP address the ten planning factors by ensuring environmental quality, enhancing the safety of the traveling public, fostering appropriate land use patterns, advancing alternative modes of transportation and increasing accessibility for all users. The MTP identifies opportunities to improve and enhance the regional transportation system and preserve the investment in the existing transportation system; increase the efficiency of the transportation system and decrease traffic congestion; invest in a public transit system that meets the needs of the region; address the social and environmental issues of the region in transportation planning efforts; support economic activity, employment growth and encourage innovative partnerships; continue to facilitate the involvement and participation of communities, agencies, organizations and the general public in the transportation planning process; ensure the transportation planning efforts are coordinated with local land use plans to support future growth and development patterns; maintain a focus on safety; and continue to pursue long-term, sustainable revenue sources to address regional transportation system needs.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

MPOs are required to develop Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) to govern work programs for the expenditure of FHWA and FTA planning and research funds (23 CFR 450.308). The current UPWP includes a discussion of planning priorities facing the MPO and the requisite work proposed for the next one year period by major activity and task. Activities that correspond to the planning factors in 450.306(a) are addressed in sufficient detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds.

According to the LMPO FY 2020 UPWP total funds available for the area are \$1,137,285. The MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), in coordination with MPO staff, will continue to identify priorities for the upcoming year. Priorities may include refinements to the MPO's processes, databases, or other aspects of multi-modal transportation planning to include travel demand modeling, demographic development, public involvement, geographic subareas or corridors, transit, bicycle and/or pedestrian, freight, environmental, congestion management or others. These priorities can then become funded planning studies.

As required by federal and state regulations, LMPO adopts a document (UPWP) detailing the transportation planning tasks and their budgets for the study area for a given time period. The LMPO currently adopts a one-year UPWP. In February of the UPWP development year, the TAC, in coordination with MPO staff, identified priorities for the upcoming year time period. Priorities included refinements to the MPO's processes, databases, or other aspects of multimodal transportation planning to include travel demand modeling, demographic development, public involvement, geographic subareas or corridors, transit, bicycle and/or pedestrian, freight, environmental, congestion management or others.

Although not explicitly required by regulations, the MPO was encouraged by FHWA/FTA to provide an opportunity for public involvement regarding the development and adoption of the UPWP, with documentation as appropriate. For each of the four fiscal years following the 2012 certification review, the LMPO has taken its budget (UPWP) to public involvement as recommended. The campaign includes at least one meeting at some neutral site with additional meetings hosted at both the TAC and TPC before any action is taken.

**Finding.** The LMPO continues to provide accurate, quality UPWP documents. The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock Urbanized area meets Federal UPWP requirements.

### **Travel Demand Forecasting Model**

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.

The LMPO works with City of Lubbock for Demographic estimates and with modeling groups from TTI and TxDOT. Household, work place, and commercial vehicle travel surveys were conducted in March, April, and May of 2012. An external survey using passive data was conducted in 2017. Currently the MPO is working with TxDOT and consultants to develop a model that will include travel surveys to input into the Lubbock travel model. According to the LMPO, the next round of surveys is tentatively scheduled to coincide with the next round of saturation counts scheduled for the spring of 2022.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock urbanized area meets the TDM requirements.

### **Congestion Management Process**

A Congestion Management System (CMS) was originally required by law both in ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) and TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21 Century) and SAFETEA-LU. The FAST Act continues the requirement. The law states

that “The transportation planning process in a TMA (transportation management area) shall address congestion management through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies”(23CFR 450.322a).

Additionally, the law requires that “In TMAs designated as nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide, the congestion management process shall provide an appropriate analysis of reasonable (including multimodal) travel demand reduction and operational management strategies for the corridor in which a project that will result in a significant increase in capacity for SOVs is proposed to be advanced with Federal funds. As of 2020 the Lubbock region remains in attainment of all NAAQS.

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.

Lubbock is currently not near non-attainment, however the MPO wants to start proactively working on solutions now. The City of Lubbock’s Traffic Engineering Department will continue updating the LMPO Congestion Management Process as necessary to allow personnel to determine the level of congestion based upon criteria approved by the MPO Transportation Policy Committee. The City of Lubbock’s Traffic Engineering will provide Collision and Fatality Data as necessary to the TAC (ie. crashes, traffic counts, intersection congestion, etc.) to keep the Congestion Management Process Plan data current.

During the 2020 certification review the federal team inquired how Decision Lens was incorporated into the project selection process; where was the threshold for congestion coming from (LOS or B/C rates); and how does the LMPO look for strategies in the Range of Alternatives.

After receiving the 2016 federal certification review final report, the MPO began addressing the comments and recommendations. One of the major efforts was updating the CMP to make it a more integrated part of project selection process. In March 2018 the Decision Lens concept was introduced as a tool to use in the project selection process. The MPO and TxDOT worked cooperatively to incorporate the CMP into Decision Lens as a project scoring criterion.

The Lubbock MPO received the Travel Demand Model (TDM) in January of 2018 and the Decision Lens concept was introduced in March of that year. The Decision Lens scoring

process replaced the project evaluation/scoring sheet that was used to evaluate, compare, select, and prioritize projects previously. After the MTP 2045 call for projects the technical advisory committee (TAC) and transportation policy committee (TPC) approved Decision Lens scoring categories and sub categories and in September 2019 adopted a resolution to use Decision Lens. In February 2020, Decision Lens scores were presented to the TAC and TPC and the project list was approved.

One of the major project scoring criteria in Decision Lens is “Quality of Life”. Within “Quality of Life”, there are four Sub Headings, including “Alignment With CMP”. The “Alignment With CMP” Sub Heading, which accounts for approximately 23% of the “Quality of Life” Major Heading, includes four criteria for which TAC and TPC members can assign scores for each project. One of the four criteria may be selected and assigned to the corresponding score of a project. Project sponsors may also score their nominated projects and MPO staff members individually score each project. Criteria include:

- ITS and/or Intersection Cameras – project includes upgrading or adding new Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) with Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) boards and cameras to monitor traffic flow and notify the public with the DMS of incidents or unusual traffic patterns or project includes upgrading or adding cameras at signalized intersections to monitor and increase the efficiency of the intersections (up to 1 point).
- Increased LOS – project includes adding travel lanes or two-way left turn lanes to increase the level of service (LOS) of the existing roadway (up to 0.66 points).
- Reduce SOV – project includes other modes including transit, walking, biking, carpooling, and van pooling to encourage travelers to reduce Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) travel (up to 0.33 points).
- No CMP – project does not include ITS, cameras, increase LOS, or reduce SOV (receives a score of 0).

Examples of projects that scored well in “Alignment With CMP Goals” include:

- SL 88 – phase 3C – convert non-freeway to freeway (1 point for ITS and/or Intersection Cameras)
- 88 – phases 3A and 3B – convert non-freeway to freeway (1 point for ITS and/or Intersection Cameras)
- 114th Street (Quaker Ave. to Indiana Ave.) – convert 2-lane road to 5-lane road (0.66 points for Increased LOS)
- Woodrow Road (Indiana Ave. to Slide Rd.) – convert 2-lane road to 5-lane road (0.66 points for Increased LOS)
- Woodrow Road (SL 493 to Indiana Ave.) – convert 2-lane road to 5-lane road (0.66 points for Increased LOS)

- Upland Ave. (66th St. to 82nd St.) – convert 2-lane road to 5-lane road

### **Using Range of Alternatives to Identify Strategies**

The MPO works with engineers and planners from partner agencies to identify the root causes of congestion and travel delay on corridors where congestion had been occurring and is anticipated to occur or worsen in the future. As development continues to happen along and near corridors such as Woodrow Road, 114th Street, and Upland Avenue, the MPO, working with partner agencies, determined that additional travel lanes would provide necessary additional capacity. Furthermore, the MPO and partners determined that inclusion of a two-way left-turn lane would improve traffic flow by removing left-turning vehicles from the travel lanes while they wait to make their turning maneuvers. This process is how it was determined that converting some 2-lane roads to 5-lane cross-sections would improve and potentially minimize future congestion.

In other cases, the MPO and partner agencies look at solutions such as traffic signal timing to determine if it is appropriate to adjust the “green time” for one road versus the intersecting road. Other examples include analyzing the potential benefits on congestion of reversing ramps on freeway segments. Another example is studying intersection geometrics and determining if improvements would ease congestion. The US 84/SL 289/MLK Blvd. interchange is a result of such a study.

### **CMP Feedback Loop and Baseline**

23 CFR 450.314(h)(1) requires that MPO(s), State(s), and providers of public transportation jointly agree upon and develop specific written provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to transportation performance data, including data collection, selection and reporting of performance targets, and reporting of performance to be used in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the region of the MPO.

During the time since the 2016 FCR, the only tool available was an outdated TDM, and its LOS, that had a 2012 base year to gauge congestion performance monitoring. The MPO received the new TDM in January 2018 and this was the first time to have new evidence of congestion in the Lubbock area. Soon after the model was received, the travel time and delay data became available, along with the COMPAT tool and the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS). The MPO began learning about these data sources and tool and began incorporating them into the current CMP update.

The COMPAT data is available for most of the major roads in the Lubbock area – and each year data is made available for additional roads. The overall goal is for the MPO to use the travel time index (TTI) and its corresponding delay levels as the baseline for each monitored road. Until those data are available for the entire congestion monitoring network, TDM will be used on roads for which TTI is not available. The annual update of the TTI data provides an opportunity each year for the MPO to monitor mobility performance on the roads and

provide feedback on roads where congestion improvement projects have been built or implemented. The feedback will help the MPO and partner agencies identify which types of improvements have had the best benefits and how future projects may be developed to yield better results in order to satisfy CFR 450.322(d)4.

While the travel delay data are very reliable, the MPO will perform ground-truthing travel time runs as necessary to confirm congested corridors and intersections. The MPO will also perform travel time runs if deemed helpful in preparing feedback loop information related to performance monitoring after projects are completed and open to the traveling public.

### **Threshold Development**

Realizing that congestion is relative, not only among metropolitan areas, but within any given metropolitan area as well, the MPO went through a process to develop a “congestion threshold.” While there is not a widespread congestion in the Lubbock area, there are corridors and intersections in which travel delay occurs on a recurring basis. Furthermore, with the presence of Texas Tech University and its athletic, graduation, and other special events, there are opportunities to minimize travel delays.

The MPO, is changing from using the traditional level of service (LOS) to travel time index (TTI) as a congestion gauge. The MPO decided to develop a congestion threshold that represents an acceptable level of travel delay for motorists in the Lubbock area. By analyzing TTI data from the COMPAT tool and the “Texas 100” congested roadways, the MPO selected a TTI of 1.25 for the current CMP update. The TPC adopted that threshold with the understanding that because the CMP is a dynamic process, they will take an opportunity in a year to review the threshold and decide if it is appropriate to modify it.

The transportation planning process in the LMPO addresses congestion management through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding (CFR 450.322a). The level of system performance has been deemed acceptable by TxDOT and local transportation officials (CFR 450.322c). The congestion management process implemented by LMPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process includes methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multimodal transportation system; identifies and evaluate alternative strategies and appropriate performance measures assess congestion and evaluate of the effectiveness of congestion strategies; and establishes a coordinated program for data collection and monitoring to define congestion. (CFR 450.322d).

The LMPO addresses the 8-step CMP guidelines by developing objectives to focus on congestion management (step 1) within the MPA (step 2). The system/network of interest includes both highway and transit facilities within the MPA (step 3). Performance Measures were developed in conjunction with state (TxDOT) goals and objectives (step 4).

Performance monitoring, the identification and implementation of strategies, and the monitoring of effectiveness are accomplished using COMPAT and Decision Lens applications (steps 5-8).

**Finding:** The FHWA and FTA review found that the requirements of 23USC134(k)(3) and 450.322 on a CMP systematic approach for managing congestion are adequately addressed.

## Metropolitan Transportation Plan

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) and (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 set forth requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The 2040 MTP was adopted, on August 21, 2012. The MTP was collaboratively developed for the MPO study area and is financially constrained. The basic framework for the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization's "3-C" regional transportation planning efforts for the next twenty-five years provides for the efficient, safe, and convenient transportation of people and goods.

The LMPO re-adopted their 2012-2040 MTP in August, 2017 because their updated TDM was not yet available. Therefore that action reset the clock of the MTP to 2021. Also moving to forecast year 2045 allows LMPO to be more consistent with a majority of statewide Metropolitan Transportation Plans.

The next plan will be MTP 2045 and the biggest challenge for the LMPO will be incorporating new funding opportunities with a limited MPO staff. LMPO will attempt to leverage available funding in order to increase staff. There have been discussions on changing the base year 2012 with horizons of 2020 and 2025. The base year for the previous model was 2012 with a horizon year of 2045. 2020 and 2025 were interim years to allow for periodic updates as necessary. In order to accelerate the model schedule, TxDOT assigned Lubbock's model to Alliance Consultants. Alliance established the base year for the new model as 2017 with a forecast year of 2045 in order to synchronize with the majority of models in the state. This is the model LMPO is currently using.

23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) requires that the MTP shall contain at a minimum a description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system in accordance with subsection 450.306(d). 23 CFR 450.324(f)(4) requires that the MTP shall contain at a minimum a system performance report and subsequent updates evaluating the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets described in subsection 450.306(d), including progress achieved in meeting the performance targets. Consideration of performance measures and targets in the planning process also takes place when the TIP is updated. Under 23 CFR 450.326(d), the TIP "...shall include, to the maximum extent practicable, a description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving the performance targets

identified in the metropolitan transportation plan, linking investment priorities to those performance targets.”

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock urbanized area meets Federal MTP requirements.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The next update of the MTP, expected in August 2021, must include a description of all performance measures (PM-1, PM-2, PM-3, Transit Asset Management, and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan) and performance targets for each of those measures used in assessing the performance of the transportation system, In addition, a system performance report must be included in the MTP that evaluates the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets, and progress achieved in meeting the performance targets in comparison with system performance recorded in previous reports, including baseline data.

It is strongly recommended that preparation of the Transit Element of the MTP Update, expected by August 2021, utilize and be consistent with the 10-year look ahead now underway by CitiBus. Further, the 10-year look ahead by CitiBus should utilize the most recent land use forecasts prepared by the City of Lubbock.

The Federal Team recommends the MPO prepare for the anticipated shortfall in funds associated with the current health and economic crisis.

The Federal Team also recommends that the MTP should account for minority groups in the Lubbock area not just low-income groups.

## Transportation Improvement Program

As part of the metropolitan transportation planning process and pursuant to 23 CFR 450.324, the Lubbock MPO has developed a TIP to support the planning process and demonstrate implementation of the long-range plan. The most recent TIP, 2019-2022 covers the mandated 4-year planning horizon and is compatible with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development and approval process (23 CFR 450.424(a)). All other requirements are met and the current TIP can be accessed at the LMPO website <http://LubbockMPO.org/publications>. The LMPO has adopted TxDOT’s measures and targets for PM 1, PM 2, and PM 3 measures. The LMPO has also reported to the Policy Committee in May 2020 how well TxDOT was able to advance toward meeting those measures and targets. Data was taken from the 2020 HSIP report as well as the annual HSIP report to measure TxDOT’s achievement and they measured significant achievement., the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) addresses 23 CFR 450.326 federal-aid regulations administered jointly by the FTA and the FHWA. It is required, as a condition of the receipt of federal capital and operating assistance to maintain the transportation system covered by the “3-C” metropolitan planning process. The TIP is generally a four-year prioritized listing of highway

and transit projects and programs included as part of a fiscally constrained program that will be implemented over a four-year period. The current TIP shows various project phases including: 1) construction; 2) preliminary engineering; and 3) right-of-way (ROW) phases.

The prioritization of project funding is based on a scoring matrix. The sponsor ranks the projects, then the MPO advisory committee compares rankings and aligns the projects on a priority basis. Four percent is the inflation rate used for construction projects over the life of the TIP. Projects come from the constrained plan and rely on the TxDOT district to move the forward. Although it is not stated explicitly, the Financial Plan required in the TIP is a component of the Financial Plan included in the MTP, which appears to support fiscal constraint demonstration of both the MTP and the next STIP Update in January 2021. The prioritization of projects is balanced well and achieves consensus among the Policy Committee members, CitiBus and TxDOT. The Public is provided an opportunity to participate and comment at Policy Committee meetings. Policy Committee meetings are live-streaming and archived.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock urbanized area meets Federal MTP requirements.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** With the next update or amendment of the TIP, the MPO is encouraged to include a description of the anticipated effect of TIP implementation toward achieving all applicable performance targets, linking investment priorities to those presentation targets. This should reflect performance targets for PM-1, PM-2, PM-3 and Transit Asset Management. After July 20, 2021, targets for Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) performance also need to be included

With the next update or amendment of the TIP, the MPO should include the TIP portion of the Financial Plan contained in the MPO or include a statement that identifies how demonstration of fiscal constraint of the TIP is provided by the Financial Plan supporting the MTP and refers readers to that document for more information.

### **Financial Planning**

The LMPO's MTP and TIP both include the requisite financial plan that indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the transportation program. Likewise, the projects included in the long range plan and the TIP are the projects that represent only those for which funding can reasonably be expected to be available (23 CFR 450.322 (f)(10)). Further, since Lubbock is an "attainment" community, the Clean Air Act's conformity regulations have no impact on the financial planning process (40 CFR 93.108). Financial Plans can be accessed at [www.LubbockMPO.org/publications](http://www.LubbockMPO.org/publications).

## **Public Involvement**

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.

The Lubbock MPO has a documented public involvement policy adopted by the MPO Transportation Policy Committee in 2014. Under the current public involvement policy an MPO will under federal law "... provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan." In accordance to federal law, the MPO's public participation process must also adhere to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, special provisions for identifying and engaging disadvantaged communities are not apparent in the public participation plan.

Now in its sixth year of use, the LMPO determined it is time for the 2014 public participation plan to undergo careful review and update. In fact, the document itself mentions a 3-year period for evaluating the effectiveness of the participation plan and updating, as appropriate.

The MPO's website is easily accessible for local citizens and other interested persons and allow citizens easy access to MPO documents, plans and MPO Newsletters. As required by State law, MPO Policy Committee meetings are "livestreamed" to allow citizens to watch a meeting live via the internet. Opportunities are provided for public participation and agency involvement at key decision points in the planning, programming, and project development phases of transportation decision-making. The MPO has a Facebook page and links to MPO Facebook page are on outside organization's websites. One idea under consideration is to use tailored post cards based on zip code or insert a bulletin in the water/electric bill to advertise public meeting events.

The LMPO follows the mandate to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation and consultation throughout the development of the MTP and the TIP as promulgated at 23 CFR 450.316. To that end, the LMPO launched a public participation campaign pursuant to federal requirements and consistent with its own public participation plan which can be accessed on the LubbockMPO.org website. In addition to the public input, the LMPO sent letters demonstrating the coordination required between state agencies, stakeholders and the MPO with regard to the development of the 2045 MTP. With regard to the TIP, the LMPO

exercised the same level of completeness and consistency with each planning product. The public involvement process associated with the current 2019-2022 TIP was greatly supplemented from previous campaigns in order to meet the anticipated enhanced public involvement changes associated with the FAST Act. In addition to the four posted and advertised public meetings, the staff presented the proposed projects and recommended priority listing to the Lubbock Planning and Zoning Commission, Lubbock Citizens Traffic Commission, Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, Lubbock United Neighborhood Association, and the South Plains Regional Transportation Planning Organization for their input. Of note, the MPO has not amended its public involvement plan or process in some time. However, with each new call for projects or information the LMPO staff attempts to engage a new provider or reach some tangent not used in the past. The plan is scheduled for an update in 2021 with the new 2045 MTP and the LMPO will endeavor to include something to provide for virtual meetings as was accomplished to accommodate COVID-19.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock MPO urbanized area meets Federal public participation requirements.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** In advance of the August 2021 MTP update, the MPO is encouraged to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the public participation plan, update the plan as needed (following the required 45-day public comment period), and then use the updated plan to guide the public engagement in support of the MTP update. The MPO is encouraged to schedule future evaluation and update cycles of the participation plan to align and support future MTP updates. Also, the public participation plan update should also identify special considerations and techniques for identifying and engaging disadvantaged communities in the planning process.

## **Title VI/Environmental Justice**

The MPO is charged with planning for transportation and mobility at the regional level and including all members of the community in those plans. MPOs must assess the potential impacts to natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources including Title VI (environmental justice communities), air and water quality, land use and vegetation/agricultural implications at the planning and project development levels as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

As part of the 2040 MTP, the MPO indicated that Environmental Justice planning is applied throughout the entire MTP and considered in the development of the three planning scenarios, environmental concerns specifically air and water quality, public transportation services, the development of the roadway network and the cumulative and indirect effects of potential managed lanes and toll facilities in the region. Environmental Justice is part of overall public involvement and outreach efforts and is needed for effective transportation decision making. MTP 2045, currently underway, will also contain these provisions.

There are Title VI protected populations found in the metropolitan area. Minority groups are distributed evenly throughout the region, but majority are in the eastern portion of Lubbock. Population numbers of each racial group in the Lubbock area provided in the MTP. The LMPO has a Limited English Proficiency Involvement Plan. Persons traditionally underserved by transportation systems, such as low-income, minority or limited English proficiency persons, are actively sought out for involvement in the planning process. Information is distributed in the majority of publications geared towards groups, communicating through commissions, distribution through LUNA (Lubbock United Neighborhood Association), posting in community centers and senior centers to bring in the public. (Note: LUNA is a community-based organization dedicated to organizing, promoting, and supporting neighborhood associations throughout the City of Lubbock). The MPO has identified a Title VI Liaison and has developed procedures for the proper handling of Title VI complaints as well as the collection of Title VI data through research studies and in-person and on-line initiatives. The MPO has also adopted a Title VI nondiscrimination policy statement and has placed this information on their website.

The planning regulations at [23 CFR 450.334 (a)(3)] require the MPO to self-certify that “the planning process...is being carried out in accordance with applicable requirements of...Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000 d-1) and 49 CFR part 21”. The LMPO’s Public Participation Plan and Limited English Proficiency document are both built on this premise, 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.” These documents are accessible on the LubbockMPO.org webpage. In addition to the Census data that is available to help with the analysis for meaningfully greater neighborhoods, with the 2045 update the LMPO will also have the FHWA tool, NEPA ASSIST that can be used to do demographic analysis. EJ and Title VI will be reviewed and updated with the 2045 MTP update.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock MPO area meets Federal civil rights requirements.

## **FREIGHT**

The LMPO has participated in the statewide process to create and adopt a statewide freight plan and will begin the process of building support with the Lubbock freight community. Freight truck traffic is a data point that will be analyzed in the new congestion management process using the previously discussed COMPAT freight analysis tool.

The Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor was designated as a High Priority Corridor in 1998 by Congress. The Corridor provides the efficient transportation of goods and people from

Mexico, through west Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and ultimately Canada and the Pacific Northwest. In 2011, the Texas Transportation Commission approved \$230 million for highway expansion and reliever routes from Proposition 12 funding. Currently the four lane highway along US 87 and 277 is complete from San Angelo through Lubbock and all the way to Interstate 25 in Raton, NM.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

23 U.S.C. 134 (a) and 23 CFR 450.306 (4), 450.316 (a), 450.316 (b), 450.104 demonstrates that it is in the national interest to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management and operation of a transportation network that serves the mobility needs of people and freight.

The Lubbock MPO is behind many of the other MPOs with regards to incorporating freight into their planning processes. The MPO needs to look beyond the Ports-to-Plains Corridor as their only freight corridor. The freight community needs to be involved in all aspects of planning within the MPO. One recommendation would be to add a member of the freight community to the Policy or Technical committees. If offered in the future, the MPO would also benefit from participation in the Freight Planning for Small and Medium MPOs workshops that took place in 2018.

**Safety**

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.

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.

Safety is addressed as an explicit goal in the planning process and MTP. The TxDOT Lubbock District and City of Lubbock manage safety plans and the MPO relies primarily on these two agencies. Currently Citibus monitors safety data internally.

The LMPO uses Decision Lens to consider safety and data analyses as part of the project selection criteria. Currently the SHSP references in the MTP Safety section are outdated and the MTP doesn't include safety goals/objectives. The next MTP (MTP2045) will be consistent with the current Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and it will include measurable safety goals and objectives.

Bicycle/Pedestrian:

The LMPO in cooperation with Texas Tech University, the City of Lubbock, and CitiBus released the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan for Lubbock. One of the stated goals was to install bicycle lanes with striped buffers or vertical elements to improve safety and comfort. There are also several bike routes within Loop 289 in Lubbock, most of them designated by a green “bike route” sign on the side of the road, and some have shared lane markings. A recently built sidepath also exists along the north side of 19th Street. There are four bicycle and pedestrian bridges over Marsha Sharp Freeway which connect the north and south portions of the inner loop. There is also a bicycle and pedestrian bridge going over I-27 at 52nd Street, which connects the east and west portions of the inner loop. The project team also developed an online interactive map which allowed users to draw desired walking and biking routes, desired destinations, and safety concerns to walking and biking. The interactive map received a lot of helpful feedback.

The LMPO is using the recently completed Lubbock Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan to identify potential improvement locations.

**Finding. Pending completion of the review of MTP2045,** the FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock MPO area meets Federal Safety requirements

**Recommendations:**

The MPO should separate Safety into a standalone section in the next MTP. Separating the safety and security sections would serve to highlight the importance of each issue separately as these are separate planning factors.

## **ITS/Operations**

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.

Regional architecture was presented in the desk audit and discusses the appropriate role for LMPO in regional infrastructure security planning. Regional meetings were held to make sure there is compatibility of ITS throughout the regional to meet Federal funding requirements. The LMPO supports an update to ITS Regional Architecture and is committed to work with the TxDOT-Lubbock District and aid efforts to plan for new ITS investments.

In 2021 the TxDOT-Lubbock plans on installing CCTV cameras at all major intersections along Loop 88 as well as strategically placing DMS boards. Plans for 2021 also include additional in-

house CCTV cameras at IH-27 and Spur 326/Ave Q. TxDOT also reports that contracts to install four additional DMS boards would be implemented in the near future. The TxDOT-Lubbock District submits a bi-annual status report to TxDOT's Chief Engineer that describes the current status of ITS activities in the Lubbock District. The LMPO will present this report when available to the Policy Board and determine what recommendations can be implemented in the Lubbock region.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock MPO area meets Federal ITS requirements.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The LMPO with its transportation partners should continue to examine the effectiveness of the regional ITS architecture and report a reasonable timeframe of when new ITS investments could occur.

## Corridor Studies /Planning and Environmental Linkages

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.

The current MTP addresses potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas in which to carry out these activities, the MPO relies primarily on the district for PEL. Transit projects are also incorporated into this process.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock MPO area meets Federal requirements for discussing the types and locations of potential environmental mitigation activities affecting the area.

## Public Transportation

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Similarly, 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.

Review of this focus area included compliance of mandates, review of transit coordination efforts/activities, major issues and priorities faced by transit representation, service needs and partnerships in the Lubbock study area and the region, and setting of transit performance targets, among other improvements and noteworthy observations. The MPO has adopted Citibus' Transit Asset Management Plan, emphasizing the state of good repair for all capital assets.

Redevelopment is reportedly increasing exponentially in the downtown and Texas Tech University areas of Lubbock; therefore, MPO wants to improve transit options to prepare for the influx as redevelopment occurs.

Citibus is an active participant on MPO committees and in working through the cooperative, coordinated planning process in support of MTP and TIP development. And, the General Manager of Citibus currently is Chairman of the Policy Committee. The Citibus transit providers provide cost estimates to the MPO in support of preparing the MTP and TIP. The LMPO will continue to include transit performance measures and Citibus will share information with the MPO which can then feed the target measures for transit. The Lubbock MPO and Citibus work together to ensure accurate funding level information for transit (actual) is reflected in the TIP.

To perform transit market analyses and evaluate future service needs, Citibus retains consultant assistance. To ensure full recognition of transit service growth opportunities and fiscal needs, Citibus includes key planning activities, such as the Comprehensive Operational Analysis, which was noted in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Lubbock and is nearing completion, in the UPWP.

On May 20, 2020, Citibus launched a new application-based microtransit service, which is similar to ride-sharing services such as Uber or Lyft in that users schedule a ride through an application downloaded onto a mobile device. This service is intended to plug service gaps that became necessary as a result of the ongoing pandemic, which prompted Citibus to reduce the number of routes and hours of operation.

**Finding.** The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Lubbock Urbanized area meets Federal requirements for multimodal planning and that Citibus is fully engaged in the metropolitan planning process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS

This section of the certification report provides FHWA and FTA an opportunity to document comments regarding strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement, and any possible or potential corrective actions as a result of the planning certification review. USDOT is pleased to report that there are no corrective actions, and offers the following planning review observations pertaining to notable strengths and recommendations for improvement to the Lubbock MPO.

### Notable Strengths

1. The LMPO, in cooperation with Texas Tech University, the City of Lubbock, and CitiBus, is commended on completion of a bicycle and pedestrian Master Plan as part of the metropolitan planning process.
2. The MPO is commended for outreach to the public in new MTP process.
3. All of the elected officials interviewed for this review spoke highly of the availability, attentiveness and responsiveness of the Lubbock MPO staff and how the staff makes their job much easier by organizing meetings and providing on-time, concise documentation.
4. As stated in the UPWP section of this report, the LMPO continues to provide accurate, quality UPWP documents to reviews.

### Recommendations

1. The MPO is encouraged to amend the April 2018 MOU related to performance management to add reference to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) targets, which will need to be set by the MPO and have progress tracked and reported in the System Performance Report.
2. MTP 2045 must include a description of all performance measures (PM-1, PM-2, PM-3, Transit Asset Management, and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan) and performance targets for each of those measures used in assessing the performance of the transportation system. A system performance report must be included in the MTP that evaluates the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets, and progress achieved in meeting the performance targets in comparison with system performance recorded in previous reports, including baseline data.

3. It is strongly recommended that preparation of the Transit Element of the MTP Update utilize and be consistent with the 10-year look ahead now underway by CitiBus. CitiBus should utilize the most recent land use forecasts prepared by the City of Lubbock.
4. The Federal Team recommends the MPO prepare for the possible shortfall in funds associated with the current health and economic crisis.
5. The Federal Team recommends that the MTP should account for minority groups in the Lubbock area not just low-income groups.
6. With the next TIP update, it is recommended that the MPO include a description of the anticipated effect of TIP implementation toward achieving all applicable performance targets, linking investment priorities to those performance targets. This should reflect performance targets for PM-1, PM-2, PM-3, and Transit Asset Management. After July 20, 2021, targets for Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) performance also need to be included. In addition, the MPO is encouraged to include the TIP portion of the Financial Plan contained in the MTP, or include a statement that identifies how demonstration of fiscal constraint of the TIP is provided by the Financial Plan supporting the MTP and refers readers to that document for more information.
7. In advance of the August 2021 MTP update, it is recommended that the MPO undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the public participation plan, update the participation plan as needed (following the required 45-day public comment period), and then use the updated participation plan to guide public engagement in support of the 2045 MTP update anticipated in August 2021. The MPO is encouraged to schedule future evaluation and update cycles of the participation plan to align with and support future MTP updates. Also, the public participation plan update also should identify special considerations and techniques for identifying and engaging disadvantaged communities in the planning process.
8. The Federal team recommends the LMPO add a member of the freight community to the Policy or Technical committees. If offered in the future, the MPO would also benefit from participation in the Freight Planning for Small and Medium MPOs workshops, and working with FHWA-Tx Division Freight Program manager.
9. The MPO should consider separating Safety into a standalone section in the next MTP. Separating the safety and security sections would serve to highlight the importance of each issue separately as these are separate planning factors.

10. The LMPO with its transportation partners should continue to examine the effectiveness of the regional ITS architecture and report a reasonable timeframe of when new ITS investments could occur.

### **FHWA/FTA JOINT CERTIFICATION ACTION**

In accordance with 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Section 450.334(b), the FHWA and FTA are required to jointly determine that the metropolitan transportation planning process in the Lubbock region meets or substantially meets the planning requirements. Upon review and evaluation of the Lubbock metropolitan transportation planning process, FHWA and FTA have jointly determined that the area substantially meets the requirements of 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613.

### **References Cited**

FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program

<https://ci.lubbock.tx.us/storage/images/Mub9HUDGd1xJhr9GeirInAEeYUZTHYDNgta1NnKR.pdf>

2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

<https://ci.lubbock.tx.us/storage/images/Hf32Xm00HXnp67V2Rrps5TGZg8JRdfqyd6amvjFI.pdf>

FY 2019-22 Transportation Improvement Program

<https://ci.lubbock.tx.us/storage/images/BBrd8TSBkapSnboFzLc3gxjdIGB3P8FMmB5Zcl2P.pdf>

The Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan 2040

<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/transportation-planning/statewide-plan.html>

Lubbock MPO Desk Review for Federal Certification Review June, 2020

Plan Lubbock 2040 -

<https://ci.lubbock.tx.us/storage/images/qLXKelyOZxc7Ke4ByQxiYk8ropy5RPZOoTvyEqC2.pdf>

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## APPENDIX SECTION

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## List of Federal Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Mike Leary	FHWA Texas Division
Jose Campos	FHWA Texas Division
Ed Burgos-Gomez	FHWA Texas Division
Greg Wood	FHWA Texas Division
Megan Dere	FHWA Texas Division
Jill Stark	FHWA-HEPP
Charles Goodman	Federal Transit Administration
Don Koski	Federal Transit Administration

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## Interviews with MPO Policy/TAC Members

### ELECTED OFFICIALS COMMENTS – July 21, 2020, 9:30 am – 11:00 am

- 1) How long have you participated on the board?

The officials served six, two, and one year on the MPO board.

- 2) What is your assessment of the following:

#### the MPO?

The officials provided a positive assessment of the MPO and stated the MPO staff are always available to help out with information and answer questions. One official reported the MPO has a good vision for future growth and gave an example of 82<sup>nd</sup> street as a project where the city and state (TxDOT) transportation teams worked closely and cooperatively to establish an urban transportation corridor.

#### TxDOT?

One official reported the relationship with TxDOT-Lubbock is exceptional and District Engineer Steve Warren does a great job of working with the city towards common goals. One official reported on the positive experience of working with TxDOT on the Ports-to-Plains corridor study.

#### Citibus?

The officials reported that Citibus did a great job on a recent route study that should point the way towards route expansion and spoke highly of the Citibus Director. He initiated a survey that will benefit Citibus ridership. New electric buses were mentioned as a positive step forward.

- 3) Describe the type of leadership the LMPO is providing for the region?

The officials described the leadership as visionary and has a great plan in place for city and regional growth. The MPO was also described as doing an amazing job with limited staff. One official said the MPO ensures the city of Lubbock remains connected to the greater region and cites Lubbock's activity as a regional medical, educational and commercial center for the panhandle region as being crucial.

- 4) How could the LMPO's leadership be improved or not improved?

The officials stated the addition of a new FTE, recently approved by the MPO board will improve the MPO's staffing needs. The new FTE would be an Assistant MPO Director. (Official 2) The official reports David Jones and his staff do an excellent job of keeping everyone informed.

5) What do you think your role is in the planning process?

One official stated his role is to acquire as much information as possible in order to make an informed decision. Another said the job requires one to be observant and work towards safe and accessible transportation system for the Lubbock region. To hear from citizens in Lubbock and the surrounding area Another official indicated they are the voice of the county and needs to ensure that all have a voice in the transportation process.

6) What are the benefits that you see being involved in the Planning Process?

The officials stated the benefits are to provide an opportunity for constituents to have a voice in the transportation process and to be able to observe and participate in the entire MPO.

7) Do you get the right information to make decisions and in a timely manner?

The officials provided a positive assessment of the MPO's ability to provide timely information to the members and stated the MPO primer provided at the beginning of the term was well thought out and essential to keep up with all the acronyms used in transportation.

8) What do you feel is the number one priority for the Lubbock region?

The officials stated the number one priority is to continue to grow and look to the future. Maintain connectivity with other Texas regions and other states and to work towards a safe and accessible transportation system for the region. The Ports-to-Plains initiative was also discussed as necessary to transport food, fuel, and fiber (cotton) to the rest of the world. A premier transportation system is needed to avoid any future breakdowns.

## **PUBLIC MEETING CITIZEN COMMENTS**

### **Public Listening Session**

Because of travel restrictions associated with the 2020 COVID-19 crisis and in the interest of public safety, an in-person Public Listening Session was not conducted for the 2020 Certification Review for Lubbock. The public was requested through postings on MPO webpages and newspaper announcements to submit any comments on the transportation system in Lubbock and the Lubbock MPO to the team for inclusion in this report. No comments or questions were received within the one month public comment period. Advertisements for public comments are included here.

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