

Federal Highway Administration

and

Federal Transit Administration

Joint Certification Review

of the

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization

February 27, 2008

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Glossary of Acronyms

ADA –	Americans with Disabilities Act
BRT -	Bus Rapid Transit
CATS -	Charlotte Area Transit System
CDOT -	Charlotte Department of Transportation
CFR -	Code of Federal Regulations
CMP –	Congestion Management Process
CMPC	Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission
CPD -	Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department
CMAQ –	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CRMPO -	Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization
CRAFT -	Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation
CTC -	Charlotte Transit Center
CTSP -	Countywide Transit Service Plan
DHS -	Department of Homeland Security
EJ –	Environmental Justice
EPA -	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA -	Federal Highway Administration
FTA -	Federal Transit Administration
HOV/HOT -	High Occupancy Vehicle/High Occupancy Toll
ITS –	Intelligent Transportation System
JARC-	Jobs Access and Reverse Commute
LPA-	Lead Planning Agency
LRT -	Light Rail Transit
LRTP –	Long Range Transportation Plan
MOE-	Maintenance of Effort
MPO –	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTC-	Metropolitan Transit Commission
MUMPO -	Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization
NCDAQ -	North Carolina Department of Air Quality
NCDENR-	North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NCDOT-	North Carolina Department of Transportation
NCILT-	North Carolina Interagency Leadership Team
NCTA -	North Carolina Turnpike Authority
NECLRP-	Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project
PL –	Planning Funds
RFATS -	Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation System Planning Area
RPS-	Rapid Performance System
RTDM -	Regional Travel Demand Model
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act A Legacy for Users
SCDOT -	South Carolina Department of Transportation
SCLRP -	South Corridor Light Rail Project
SHSP -	Strategic Highway Safety Plan
SIP-	State Implementation Plan
SPS -	Special Transit Service
SRTS -	Safe Routes to School
SSP -	System Service Plan
SSPP-	System Safety Performance Plan
STP-DA-	Surface Transportation Program – Direct Apportionment

STS-	Special Transportation Service
TCC –	Technical Coordinating Committee
TDP-	Transit Development Plan
TIP –	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA -	Transportation Management Area
TOD-	Transit Oriented Development
UPWP –	Unified Planning Work Program
UZA-	Urbanized Area

FORWARD

Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Review Reports

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 1607, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. There are 9 TMAs in North Carolina. In general, certification reviews consist of three primary activities: a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), a site visit, and preparation of a 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 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), State Department of Transportation (DOT) and transit operators in the conduct of the metropolitan planning process.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a local metropolitan 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 assessment, including review and/or approval of the Unified Planning Work Program, the multi-modal long-range transportation plan, the Metropolitan and Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs, air quality conformity determinations (in non-attainment 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 activities are considered in the certification review process.

While the Planning Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of certification review, in fact, is 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 content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether or not they relate explicitly to the formal “findings” of the review.

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

Executive Summary
For The Certification Review of The Mecklenburg-Union Transportation Management Area

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 1607, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas at least every three years. In general, certification reviews consist of three primary activities: a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), a site visit, and preparation of a report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-Region 4, conducted a joint certification review of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MUMPO) planning process October 16-18, 2007.

The Federal Highway Administration North Carolina Division and the Federal Transit Administration-Region 4 conducted the review. Other participants in the review consisted of representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 4, Mecklenburg-Union MPO, the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (CMPC), the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS).

Observed during the review were several noteworthy practices, recommendations for improving the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization planning process, and **one** corrective action. Noteworthy practices include areas where the MPO is doing well. Recommendations are areas where the review team suggests ways to improve the planning process. Corrective actions are areas where the review team believes the MPO has not done enough to implement a particular planning requirement.

MUMPO has a transportation planning process that addresses local and regional transportation issues facing the area. The review team identified the following significant positive efforts and make recommendations for improving the transportation planning process:

Noteworthy Practices

- A) Initiating a regional HOV/HOT lane study to help address congestion from a regional approach.
- B) Including truck data; vehicle classification, and volume counts in the modeling process to better integrate freight in the planning process.
- C) CATS provides exemplary local, express, and regional transit service and its regional rail and streetcar plan, using Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for some corridors, is well-supported locally and regionally.
- D) CATS, the MUMPO, and the city of Charlotte have developed exemplary local transit oriented development (TOD) land use policies and plans; and CATS reports more than one-half billion dollars in new TOD around South Corridor Light Rail

Project transit line (SCLRP) stations (and the system just opened November 24, 2007).

- E) The NCDOT has provided considerable State capital support in the range of 20% to 25% of all capital costs for the SCLRP (about \$ 120.0 million of the \$ 499.0 million total cost for the SCLRP to date) and proposes a similar percentage of capital cost for the proposed NECLRP and the North Corridor commuter line as part of the NCDOT's New Starts support.
- F) CATS takes advantage of the highest AAA bond rating of the City of Charlotte to issue debt service to back transit capital improvements (low rates of interest).
- G) CATS and MUMPO exhibit a high degree of coordination in their planning and operations efforts
- H) The review team continues to be impressed with the level of coordination that occurred for the development of the RTDM and collection of data, maintenance of the model and we hope it will continue.
- I) MUMPO is commended for initiating the process to make their website ADA compliant.
- J) MUMPO is commended for its effort to continually evaluate its public involvement process.

Recommendations

- o MUMPO should establish and implement a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- o The MPO should document the evaluation process for the project rankings for each project in the LRTP and include that documentation in the plan.
- o The MPO should review the goals and objectives of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan) SHSP and document how the 2035 LRTP can help implement the SHSP.
- o The MPO should expand their efforts to involve the freight industry in the planning process.
- o The resource agencies should be contacted and a consultation process developed cooperatively with the appropriate environmental resource agencies for use with the next plan update due by May 3, 2009.
- o To meet the Final Transportation Planning Rule, per SAFETEA-LU, the MPO needs to include inflation and year-of-expenditure dollars in the 2035 LRTP.
- o MUMPO should develop more detailed model protocol agreements that address future LRTP, TIP, amendments to the LRTP and TIP and conformity processes in the future.
- o MUMPO is encouraged to continue regional efforts for model management and coordination.
- o MUMPO should begin communications with the Metrolina regional partners to lay out the roles and responsibilities of the 09-15 TIP, 2035 LRTP update and for future TIP/LRTP amendments.
- o MUMPO should keep the transportation conformity interagency partners informed during the transportation conformity process especially when deadlines are not going to be met. Information such as updated schedules should be shared with the transportation partners.

- MUMPO should share air quality information (SIP or transportation conformity) with the Metrolina Area transportation partners prior to submission to NCDAQ.
- MUMPO should develop a dispute resolution process for regional efforts such as air quality and modeling.
- The MUMPO should develop goals, strategies and performance measures for the Public Involvement Plan and base future public involvement plan updates and annual reports on how well they are performing.
- The NCDOT should share the inflation rate and year-of-expenditure estimation process with the MPOs.
- It is recommended that MUMPO update its demographic profile and that they consider using other data sources as appropriate in addition to census data.
- It is recommended that MUMPO develop a database/mailling list that is specific to the MPO's minority and low-income populations.
- MUMPO must develop a process to determine how minority and low-income communities are impacted by the long range transportation plan. The process must be completed by May 3, 2009, and include:
 - Measures/analytical methods to determine overall transportation system equity in an effort to identify both burdens and benefits;
 - Identification of any negative impacts on minority and-low income populations; and
 - Avoidance and/or mitigation measures as appropriate.

Corrective Action

The MUMPO must develop and implement a Congestion Management Process (CMP) that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.320 by May 3, 2009.

Certification

The Federal Review Team, consisting of staff from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, issues this certification subject to addressing the aforementioned corrective action by May 3, 2009. This certification is valid for four years from the date of this report, pending acceptable completion of the corrective action.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA)/FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) JOINT CERTIFICATION REVIEW OF THE MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MUMPO)

October 16-18, 2007

Introduction

The North Carolina Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Region 4 Office of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), conducted a joint certification review of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MUMPO) planning process October 16-18, 2007. The review was conducted in accordance with 23 CFR 450 and 49 CFR 613 which requires FHWA and FTA to jointly review and assess the transportation planning process for all transportation management areas (TMAs) at least once every four years. A transportation management area is defined as an urbanized area with a population of more than 200,000 as defined by the latest decennial census. The last certification review site visit conducted for this area occurred in September 2003.

The purpose of the review is to assess the extent of compliance with the planning requirements, to recognize noteworthy practices, to identify problem areas, and to provide advice and assistance as appropriate. The review consisted of a series of discussions on transportation planning issues with State and local transportation officials directly involved in highway and transit planning activities of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In addition, the MUMPO scheduled a meeting to provide the public an opportunity to offer comments on the MUMPO transportation planning process. This meeting was held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on October 17, 2007. Both the review and the public meeting were held at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street. This report contains the findings and recommendations of the review team.

In preparation for the review, the MUMPO staff made available on the MPOs website packets of information which included an agenda, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Prospectus, Public Involvement Plan, Memorandum of Understanding and MPO Bylaws, Transportation Improvement Program, Conformity Analysis and Determination Report, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and 2030 Integrated Transit Land Use Plan. The agenda is attached as Appendix A.

Federal Review Team Members and Participants

The Federal Review Team consisted of the following individuals:

Ms. Loretta Barren, Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Division
Mr. Eddie Dancausse, Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Division
Ms. Lynise DeVance, Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Division
Ms. Jill Stark, Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Division
Mr. Keith Melton, Federal Transit Administration, Region 4
Ms. Lynorae Benjamin, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

Other participants in the Review consisted of staff from the Mecklenburg-Union MPO, the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (CMPC), the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), as listed below:

Robert Cook, MUMPO
Stuart Basham, MUMPO
Barry Mosley, MUMPO
Tim Gibbs, CDOT
Anna Gallup, CDOT
Eldewins Haynes, CDOT
Andy Grzymiski, CDOT
Vivian Coleman, CDOT/Pedestrian Program
Ken Tippet, CDOT/Bicycle Program
David McDonald, CATS
John Rose, CATS
Megan Makoid, CATS
Jonathan Parker, NCDOT-TPB
Jack Flaherty, NCDOT-PTD

MUMPO Background

The MUMPO includes the following member jurisdictions with the following number of votes (in parentheses): the City of Charlotte (16), Mecklenburg County (2), City of Monroe (2), Union County (2), Town of Cornelius (1), Town of Davidson, (1), Town of Huntersville (2), Town of Indian Trail (1), Town of Matthews (2), Town of Mint Hill (2), Town of Pineville (1), Town of Stallings (1), Town of Weddington (1), Town of Waxhaw (1), Village of Wesley Chapel (1), Town of Wingate (1) and a member of the North Carolina Board of Transportation (1), Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department (advisory, non-voting), Charlotte Area Transit System (advisory, non-voting), Federal Highway Administration (advisory, non-voting), North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) (advisory, non-voting).

The City of Charlotte serves as the Lead Planning Agency (LPA). The MUMPO has a

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) that consists of transportation professionals from the member agencies and the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, the City of Charlotte Bicycle Coordinator and the Metropolitan Transit Commission. The TCC reviews materials and forwards recommendations to the MUMPO for action.

Follow-up from Previous Planning Process Certification Review

As a result of the previous Review conducted in September 2003, the review team issued one Corrective Action and ten Recommendations. Each of these is listed below with a finding and discussion of follow-up action.

Corrective Action

MUMPO needs to evaluate the effectiveness of its public involvement plan and it should also address how low-income and minority populations are included in the planning process.

Finding: MUMPO satisfactorily completed the corrective action as required, on April 15, 2005. Many actions in the PIP are being implemented, i.e. website, public involvement e-mail group, EJ techniques.

Recommendations

1. MUMPO should evaluate the effectiveness of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Congestion Management System (CMS) plan, and the financial plan.
 - a. With the annual development of the UPWP the MPO has made program improvements. This review has been done in cooperation with the FHWA, but it has not been documented.

Finding: MUMPO should work in cooperation with all involved partners to evaluate and document the FY 2008-2009 development of the UPWP.
 - b. The current CMS process is the evaluation and selection of congested intersections within the City of Charlotte. The MPO has begun interviews with a consultant to develop a Congestion Management Process (CMP) based on SAFETEA-LU. Just beginning negotiations does not put the MPO in compliance with federal regulations.

Finding: The MPO needs to develop and implement a CMP that is SAFETEA-LU compliant.
 - c. With the development of the 2030 LRTP the MPO partnered with the other two MPOs and two RPOs in the region to develop a regional financial plan that included an individual MPO outlook. This process was well documented in the 2030 LRTP.

Finding: This recommendation has been satisfactorily completed.
2. MUMPO is encouraged to develop a continuity of operations plan. This recommendation was made to encourage the MPO to evaluate the security surrounding data storage in the event of a disaster.

Finding: The MPO states that it follows the City of Charlotte's file management and back-up plan, which is required of all departments under the city umbrella. Files are

electronically backed-up on an on-site server, which is subsequently backed-up off-site by; for additional security the back-up system is further backed-up at another off-site location. This recommendation has been satisfactorily completed.

3. (3)MUMPO should examine ways to get the freight industry more involved in the transportation planning process.
(4)MUMPO should examine ways to get the freight industry more involved in the transportation planning process. MUMPO is encouraged to contact the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to discuss how ARC involved the freight industry in their planning process.

The following response combines items 3 & 4.

The MPO has displayed a good working relationship with the Charlotte Douglas International Airport and Norfolk Southern Railroad in the support of an intermodal facility at the airport, and roadway access and improvements surrounding the airport and other distribution facilities. The MPO hired a consultant firm based in Atlanta, GA to conduct a freight study for the MUMPO area. The same consultant was the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) freight consultant. The consultant provided similar recommendations to MUMPO as they did to ARC on techniques to help engage the freight community.

Finding: The MPO is making efforts to involve the freight community, but it should not end here. The MPO is encouraged to continue to look for ways to get the freight community to the transportation planning table and involved in the transportation planning process.

4. (5)MUMPO is encouraged to work with CATS as needed to help develop cost benefit software to use in the new RTDM.
(6)MUMPO should continue the outstanding project management efforts for the development of the LRTP and the RTDM.
(7)MUMPO is encouraged to continue to work with the RTDM partners to complete the LRTP and RTDM prior to April 15, 2005.

Finding: Items 5, 6 & 7 all related to the development of the Regional Travel Demand Model (RTDM) which was satisfactorily completed with the development of the 2030 LRTP.

5. (8)MUMPO is encouraged to begin the interagency consultation process as soon as possible.
(11)MUMPO is encouraged to continue to work with new proposed air quality areas on the conformity process.
(12)MUMPO is encouraged to rely on and use the federal partners as a resource throughout the conformity process to help avoid delays.

Finding: Items 8, 11, 12 were all completed on schedule with the development and adoption of the 2030 LRTP.

6. (9)MUMPO is encouraged to address Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice in all aspects of the planning process.
(10)MUMPO should participate in environmental justice and public involvement training.

Finding: MUMPO hired a consultant to develop a Public involvement and Environmental Justice plan, as well as to provide training. The MPO successfully completed training, and development of a public involvement plan that incorporates EJ. The MPO incorporates EJ elements in its project selection and project mapping

processes. The MPO should continue to address EJ in all aspects of the planning process.

Current Certification Review

MPO Comments

The MUMPO has made a lot of progress in the last four years. Their web site is fully operational with a separate web address, www.mumpo.org, than the City of Charlotte. The MPO posts meeting agendas and minutes, project level information, public meeting information, TIP, LRTP and conformity reports on the website, as well as other MPO related materials. The MPO believes the web site has been a very useful tool in reaching the public. The MPO has established a speaker's bureau and they are now doing presentation to civic and citizen groups regarding the MPO planning process. The MPO also finds it useful to attend other meetings in the area to get the word out about the MPO and transportation planning. The MPO has worked to make the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) a more open and understandable process. Based on a recent review, the project ranking process is being updated. The MPO is also very excited about the ongoing High Occupancy Vehicle/High Occupancy Toll (HOV/HOT) study that is underway in the region. The MPO believes that the results from that study will be used to improve congestion and enhance development of the LRTP.

MUMPO Concerns and Needs

The MUMPO expressed the following concerns and needs as they plan for the future:

- The MPO is concerned that meeting Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) will require more staff and more time to implement. They don't envision any new staff in the future.
- The MUMPO needs assistance from FHWA in meeting SAFETEA-LU requirements for the 2035 plan update.
Response: The FHWA recognizes this need and will avail its staff to provide assistance.
- The MPO is concerned about impacts of the 2010 Census which might require reorganization of the MPO or a combining of area MPOs.
- The MUMPO would like FHWA and NCDOT support for enhancing regional cooperation, especially for environmental consultation and air quality conformity.
Response: The FHWA has worked to develop a list of resource agencies to assist the MPOs with this effort. The web address for the agency list is www.ncilt.org. Should obstacles occur in meeting this consultation requirement, FHWA will be available to assist.
- The MPO would like FHWA to provide information and assistance on how to address low-income and minority service equity in the LRTP.

MPO/NCDOT Coordination

The MUMPO stated that the level of coordination, cooperation and participation on the part of the NCDOT continues to improve. While there is more involvement in the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), there is less money in the program to coordinate over. The development of the Regional Travel Demand Model and transportation planning processes continues to be a cooperative process. The NCDOT provides funding and the assistance of a modeler. The MUMPO continues to support and participate in the Merger 01 process. They believe the merger process is a very effective way of getting early involvement and buy-in from all interested parties.

The NCDOT believes that the most successful coordination effort to date has been development of the RTDM as is evident from the hard work the staffs have done and from the pooling of funds to implement the process thus far.

As the City of Charlotte continues to move forward with the implementation of their urban street design standards the MUMPO, once again, would like to encourage the NCDOT to be more flexible in the design of their urban streets. The City believes that their proposed design standards would make urban streets more accessible for disabled persons, pedestrian and bicyclists, and would calm traffic flow. The City and the MPO encourage the NCDOT to cooperate with them as they move toward implementation of their design standards.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The MUMPO last updated their Prospectus in 2002 and believe it adequately addresses their needs. In 2004, the MPO worked with NCDOT and FHWA to develop a UPWP that was category-based instead of line item based. However, the MPO has decided to move back to the line item based approach. After evaluation of the category-based approach, the MPO found it easier to track expenditures by line item and there was more control over charges. The NCDOT provides the MPOs with their annual Planning (PL) fund total. The MPO solicits projects and studies from its member jurisdictions. The MPO ways requests submitted from member agencies with requirements for the upcoming year, such as, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and LRTP development. Tasks in the UPWP are implemented by the staff's of the member agencies, the MPO or consultant. The MPO has worked with the City of Charlotte to improve internal billing and tracking of charges to the PL account, but the MPO has never evaluated the effectiveness of the program. In the past the MPO has relied on the NCDOT to provide program oversight, but this is not enough, the MPO has first responsibility for the accuracy and effectiveness of the program. **The Review Team recommends that the MPO evaluate the effectiveness of the UPWP.** The evaluation should include how charges are made to line items, how cost are determined, whether funds are spent appropriately, whether projects are completed in a timely manner and within budget.

Recommendations

- The MUMPO should evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of the UPWP and document the results.

Congestion Management Process (CMP)

As mentioned in the previous review, the MPO needs to develop a Congestion Management Process to meet Federal regulations. SAFETEA-LU put more emphasis on congestion planning and the development of the CMP by moving the CMP from the management systems 23 CFR 500.109 to the metropolitan planning section 23 CFR 450.320. Development of the CMP has been discussed with the MPO on many occasions since the previous certification review and little effort was made to comply with the regulation until the spring of 2007. **The review team recommends that development of the CMP be a corrective action.** The MPO is in contract negotiations with URS to develop a CMP for highways and transit. The contract is expected to be signed later this fall and should be complete by June 2008. The MPO does not believe the CMP will have an impact on any planned major roadway projects, but it could impact smaller minor thoroughfares. The area is experiencing such high growth and commuter traffic continues to increase thereby warranting the need to widening many major facilities.

Even though the MPO is without a CMP the area is not without congestion relief efforts. As noted in the previous review the City of Charlotte uses preemptive signal prioritization for transit service. The machine vision system was installed to replace the current loop system. The MUMPO meets with planners, engineers and other city staffs from within the planning area weekly to discuss upcoming projects and the impacts and/or benefits particular projects might have on the transportation system. The MUMPO regularly makes recommendations to the various planning commissions regarding the approval of land use projects and/or impacts from land use on the transportation system. The MUMPO continues to review land use projects in Mecklenburg and Union Counties and makes changes to its Thoroughfare Plan as appropriate.

The region currently has a consultant studying HOV/HOT managed lanes. The study should provide information on which facilities would benefit from having HOT/HOV lanes and impacts associated with managed lanes. Data from the study will be used for future LRTP updates, and the congestion planning process. **The Review Team believes this is a positive step towards managing congestion in the region.**

The MPO and the City of Charlotte continue to monitor and make improvements to their identified congested intersections. The City of Charlotte typically funds intersection improvements within the City of Charlotte, while the remainder of the planning area relies on the NCDOT to fund congested related projects in the STIP.

Noteworthy Practice

- A) Initiating a regional HOV/HOT lane study to help address congestion from a regional approach is commendable.

Corrective Action

1. The MPO must develop and implement a Congestion Management Plan that meets CFR 450.320 by May 3, 2009.

Freight

The Charlotte-Douglas Airport is a member of the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The TCC discusses matters concerning freight mostly as it relates to the airport. The MUMPO has identified intermodal facilities in the area and the 2030 LRTP recommends improvements to the Norfolk Southern Intermodal facility in the uptown Charlotte area or the replacement of said intermodal facility. All of the MPOs planning efforts have taken place with limited involvement from the freight industry. **Including truck data; vehicle classification and volume counts in the modeling process is an admirable way to better integrate freight in the planning process.** This will help to better identify and address short and long term freight needs and improvements in the MPO area. The MPO has worked and supported the relocation of freight rail lines out of neighborhoods and to provide better access to I-77 for trucks. There are designated truck routes in the Cities of Charlotte and Monroe. The MUMPO hired URS to develop a freight plan and they are beginning to work from the plan. **The MPO should expand its efforts to involve the freight industry in the planning process.** The MUMPO has developed a list of companies to begin contacting for the upcoming plan update.

Noteworthy Practice

- B) Including truck data; vehicle classification and volume counts in the modeling process are admirable ways to integrate freight in the planning process.

Recommendation

- o The MPO should expand its efforts to involve the freight industry in the planning process.

Safety

The MPO includes safety as a criterion in the project ranking process. The high accident location for areas with Mecklenburg and Union Counties, as well as engineering knowledge of geometric design is used to evaluate projects. **SAFETEA-LU requires that LRTPs include a section on safety and how the MPOs process can help achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).** The FHWA has shared information with the MPOs on ways to implement this portion of the regulation and will provide assistance in this area for the 2035 LRTP update.

Recommendation

- o The MPO should review the goals and objectives of the SHSP and document how the 2035 LRTP can help implement the SHSP.

ITS

The MPO continues to support Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) planning. The transportation management centers for the NCDOT and the CDOT are linked to enhance sharing of traffic data and video between the two centers. Variable message boards and cameras are being installed along the interstate and other thoroughfares where needed. ITS features are not normally considered in development of a project and its cost. Stand alone ITS projects are not ranked by the MPO.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

The City of Charlotte has a bicycle and a pedestrian planner, both of which have a seat on the TCC. They both do planning with surrounding cities and towns regarding border connections and regional projects. They work with advocacy groups to proactively affect bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the area. The MPO will be a stakeholder on the City of Charlotte's upcoming bicycle plan update. The City of Charlotte has a bicycle advisory group, the Town of Davidson has a Greenway Advisory Group and there are many others in the MPO area that feed information and plans into the LRTP process. All areas within the MPO are beginning to plan for projects that meet the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) criteria for funding.

In uptown Charlotte, pedestrians benefit from ITS features. Pedestrian crossing signals include a countdown for the time remaining to cross the street, as well as the loud beep noise. Some intersections are being equipped with a push button, talking pedestrian crossing signal that will identify the street that is being crossed. The system gives priority to the pedestrian and the disabled.

Transit Planning

As part of the MUMPO certification review, the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) representatives provided an overview of the transit system. CATS' reports moving over 65,000 riders each day (2007), with more than 1,757,737 trips made by CATS in FY2007. According to CATS, ridership is up 67% since 1998 and up 21% over the last 3 years, resulting in a growth rate of about 6% per annum. CATS has an extensive network of transit routes in the core of the Charlotte Region and rapidly growing express and regional express routes that reach into the surrounding counties. CATS has also constructed a new 9.5 mile light rail line from I-485 on the south to Uptown Charlotte (with NCDOT and FTA as funding partners) and is planning another 11 mile extension to the northeast. CATS' regional transit plan also includes street car, bus rapid transit and commuter rail lines as modes of choice to be added. CATS has established policies to prioritize service, continuously monitor and improve existing routes and has a regular fare adjustment policy that keeps fare box recovery in line with local inflation. On November 6, 2007, the citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Co. approved a continuation of its one-half of one cent regional sales tax that funds CATS operations in a "landslide" of 70% in favor of retaining the transit sales tax. This is a strong vote of confidence in CATS and their regional rail and bus system.

Noteworthy Practices of Planning, Operations and Cooperation

- C) CATS provides exemplary local, express and regional transit service and its regional rail and streetcar plan, with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for some corridors is well-supported locally and regionally.
- D) CATS, the MUMPO and the city of Charlotte have developed exemplary local transit oriented development (TOD) land use policies and plans; and CATS reports more than one-half billion dollars in new TOD around South Corridor Light Rail Project transit line (SCLRP) stations (prior to opening in November 2007).

- E) The NCDOT has provided considerable State capital support in the range of 20% to 25% of all capital costs for the SCLRP (about \$ 120.0 million of the \$ 499.0 million total cost for the SCLRP to date) and proposes a similar percentage of capital cost for the proposed Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project (NECLRP) and the North Corridor commuter line as part of the NCDOT's New Starts support.
- F) CATS, which is a unit of Charlotte's consolidated government with Mecklenburg County, takes advantage of the highest AAA bond rating of the City of Charlotte to issue debt service to back transit capital improvements (low rates of interest).
- G) CATS and MUMPO exhibit a high degree of coordination in their planning and operations efforts

Types of Local and State Funding for Transit and Likelihood of Continued Support

Local funding is made up of the following sources: (1/2 cent sales tax, fair box recovery, maintenance of effort payments which requires that after the 1/2 cent sales tax in 1998 is maintained and other capitol income which is other source agreements with other municipalities). CATS maintains a \$100 million minimum balance in reserve and a high commitment with local funding. CATS' also may provide the FY2007 Annual Management Report. The top four sources of local funds are:

- Half Cent Sales Tax for Public Transportation (\$ 65.0 m per annum, approx.)
- Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Payments
- Operating Revenues (Farebox Recovery)
- Other Capital Revenues

These sources of revenue justify a "high" rating for local funding support.

Planning and Operational Improvements

With regards to operations, CATS has dramatically improved the operating frequencies on local routes and developed a 5-year transit services plan (updated regularly) to guide the development of new bus service. Additionally, CATS is working closely with the Planning Departments in each of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) member towns to develop a coordinated Transportation and Land Use strategy in support of the 2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan and the updated and recently adopted 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan. This plan and these strategies define the local vision of Rapid Transit prioritization over the next 30 years and are incorporated into the MPO adopted Long Range Transportation Plan and TIP. CATS continues to work with the City of Charlotte Planning Department to encourage and strengthen transit oriented development.

Planning & Transit Systems

The Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) is the policy body for the Charlotte Area Transit System. The MTC sets the priorities for short and long term investment in the Transit System through the adoption of short and long range plans such as the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan and the Countywide Transit Services Plan. They have also adopted service policies for the continued monitoring and improvement of individual routes. CATS utilizes these priorities and policies to evaluate transit system needs and to prepare the transit portion of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Local Transportation Improvement Program for adoption by the MPO. The MTC adopted

CATS Financial Policies govern the development of the transit portion of the financially constrained LRTP and TIP. These policies require the establishment of a balanced budget that anticipates future revenues and estimates year of expenditure costs for capital and operating costs. CATS utilizes a financial model to test various implementation scenarios for financial capacity and feasibility prior to submission to the MTC and MPO for adoption.

Division of Federal and State funds for Transit

The Transit Plan is adopted by the MTC and then the MPO for setting priorities then assigning funding categories. CATS is a direct recipient of FTA formula funds and budgets these federal funds and state matching funds annually toward the MTC approved long and short term transit programs. These funds are applied first to eligible debt service payments and second to the purchase and maintenance of infrastructure and related assets and then for additional service. CATS applies for project specific grants for numerous projects and applies the awarded grants and any state matching funds that are approved. Grants for specific projects are also pursued directly by CATS. Flexible funding is used for CMAQ funds which are transferred from highway to transit uses.

New Starts Process for Fixed Guideway Transit Projects

Federal and State New Starts funds are an integral part of the budget and the future funding of rapid transit, including Light Rail Transit (LRT) in the region. CATS utilizes the priorities established by the MTC to guide development of financial plans and applications for Federal and State New Starts grants for the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan. Finally, State Operating Assistance is applied to eligible transit system operating costs. CATS reports this process is working well per its Adopted Financial Policies.

Other Capital Improvements

The Countywide Transit Services Plan (CTSP) is a five year planning document which identifies and prioritizes specific transit service enhancements, on a year-by-year basis, for implementation in Mecklenburg County and the region. The document makes recommendations for transit capital facilities such as community transit centers, park and rides, as well as for transit amenities such as shelters, benches and waiting pads. The CTSP is updated every five-years and was recently adopted by the MTC.

Comprehensive Operational & Route Analysis

CATS currently provides Express Bus Service and Midday Service. However, the Countywide Transit Services Plan (CTSP) and public involvement identified a continued need to make improvements to these areas. CATS' fastest growing market segment is the Express Bus Service. Specifically one area of deficiency relating to Regional Express Routes which originate in other counties is the leverage for financial participation. The participation from the local governments outside of the county is necessary in order to increase service and provide permanent park and ride facilities to meet the growing customer demand. CATS has a system wide Transit Services Plan updated every 5 years as well as several operating policies updated routinely and revisited annually done in house. Rapid Performance System reporting (RPS). CATS' Countywide Transit Services Plan (CTSP) includes an operational analysis of its routes every five years. In addition to the CTSP, CATS conducts quarterly and annual performance reviews of all routes. CATS uses Parsons Brinkerhoff (PB) consultants to assist in the development of the comprehensive operational analysis which includes the Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Fare Structure

The fare structure is determined by the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). The MTC has adopted a fare policy which establishes the fare structure and scheduled fare increases. The adopted MTC policy recommends a modest increase in fare levels every two years to ensure that fare revenues keep pace with inflation and reflect a fair-share contribution by riders to the costs of operating a transit system. The base fare increase is \$0.10 or the percentage increase in CPI whichever is greater, every two years. The last fare increase went into effect on July 2, 2007.

SERVICE TYPE	FARE
Local	\$1.30
Express routes within Mecklenburg County	\$1.75
Express Plus routes to neighboring Counties	\$2.60
STS (ADA Service)	\$2.00
STS yellow tickets (Book of 10)	\$20.00
ADA pink tickets (Book of 10)	\$6.50
Reverse Commute Express	\$1.30
Activity Center Services: Gold Rush	FREE
Village Riders, Beatties Ford, Eastland, Hidden Valley Arrowood and other neighborhood services	60¢
Charlotte Trolley	\$1.30
People 62 years and up, people with disabilities, w/ Transit ID or Medicare card & Children 12 and under with Transit ID accompanied by an adult (Local/Express/Express Plus)	65¢/85¢/\$1.30
Children 46 inches tall or less accompanied by an adult	FREE
Students through high school with Transit ID (Weekdays 6:00am - 4:30 pm) (Local service only)	65¢
<i>Adopted MTC CATS Fare Structure, Effective: July 2, 2007.</i>	

Public Involvement & Environmental Justice (EJ) and Other Communities

CATS identifies “Review Routes” that are primarily serving EJ communities. These routes are monitored and routinely evaluated versus the system to identify any discrepancies in service between these communities and the system as a whole (see CATS Equitable Service Delivery Policy: CATS OPS 101 and Title VI 2005-Program Update). CATS core services are well aligned with the EJ communities and provide mobility and accessibility to these populations, many of which have no other means of private transportation. Additionally, CATS Travel Markets Policy prioritizes CATS investment and expansion of service within our Primary and Secondary Markets.

Continuing, Cooperative and Comprehensive Planning Process

CATS is an integral part of the MUMPO LRTP and TIP development process and is an active member of the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC). CATS plans are integrated with the member jurisdictions of the MPO and are continuing, cooperative and comprehensive. CATS is an active member of the TCC and continuously updates and includes the MPO and member jurisdictions in the development and implementation of the Transit portion of the LRTP and TIP. CATS works closely with NCDOT in the development of the LRTP and TIP and is proactive in our efforts to coordinate transit and roadway improvements.

Modeling and Air Quality Conformity and LRTP Update

The regional travel demand model is maintained by the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) for the MPO. CDOT utilizes this model and consultant services provided by CATS to develop project level forecasts and ridership to address regional service issues. The air quality conformity work is handled by CDOT and includes the transit elements of the LRTP. The next update of the LRTP is due by May 2009. In addition, CATS has hired a consultant, AECOM, to work with the Charlotte Department of Transportation on the improvement of the Mode Choice portion of the Travel Demand Model and to assist in the forecasting and documentation of transit system ridership. CATS works cooperatively with CDOT to collect data and evaluate model enhancements to improve the quality of transit ridership projections. CATS is currently conducting a system-wide origin-destination survey that will be utilized in future models.

Linking Planning, Land Use and the Environmental Process

CATS has a strong commitment to the integration of land use and rapid transit planning. The 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan is a product of the adopted Center and Corridors Plan and the Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan developed in 1998. CATS has worked closely with the MPO member jurisdictions in our core service area to develop Joint Development Principals and Policies that have been adopted by Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson and Matthews. An attachment called Joint Development Principals and Policies is available from CATS. Additionally, CATS actively considers potential environmental impacts/benefits in planning future corridors and facilities.

Public involvement (PI) for Transit

CATS conducts over 70 transportation fairs each year at area businesses, organizations and community events. These events and other outreach opportunities engage citizens in a one-on-one manner to inform them of services and gain valuable feedback to improve the system. In addition to the transportation fairs and participation in other public forums, CATS conducts an annual market research study. This past year over 1,800 customers were surveyed on issues relating to on-time performance, safety at bus stops and quality of service. CATS utilizes this information along with feedback from requests, inquiries and complaints made to our website and “336-RIDE” information line to actively manage and improve our services.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Paratransit & Targeted Populations

CATS provides ADA complementary paratransit service through Special Transportation Service (STS). STS provides door-to-door transit services within Charlotte city limits, including the towns of Pineville and Matthews. Individuals must undergo a functional assessment and certification process to be eligible for STS services. STS operates Monday through Friday 4:45 am to 2:00 am, Saturday from 5:00 am to 2:00 am and Sundays from 5:15 am to 2:00 am. The one-way fare is \$2.00. CATS also provides STS II, an extended paratransit service to certified individuals in the remainder of Mecklenburg County. The fare for STS II is mileage based (Monday through Friday 7:00 am to 6:00 pm). CATS participates with a number of advocacy agencies to educate the elderly, disabled and special populations on transit services. “Seniors in Motion” is a nationally recognized educational program that seeks out and encourages seniors to use public transportation. Travel training programs have been established to assist people with disabilities and seniors learn how to navigate fixed route services. Also, bus schedules are available in alternate formats.

Coordinated Mobility

CATS staff initiated the coordinated human services transportation planning effort by tasking Simon and Simon Resources to convene a project planning team, identify stakeholders, inventory existing services, identify gaps, and work with stakeholders and the planning team to collectively prioritize needs. CATS is the designated recipient of Federal transit funds within MUMPO. CATS is pursuing a locally coordinated plan for New Freedom, United We Ride, and Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) programs and funding with Mecklenburg Co. Dept. of Social Services and other interested stakeholders. CATS has utilized JARC funding in the past and anticipates the future use of these funds upon the completion of the Coordinated Mobility Plan.

Security

CATS has a System Safety Program Plan (SSPP), System Security Plan (SSP), and Emergency Action Plan. CATS follows the FTA’s “See Something, Say Something” campaign for any suspicious packages. However, CATS is currently developing a formal CATS policy for handling suspicious packages, including explosive devices. CATS has a Transit Security budget, with funding for security training and was recently awarded U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants to expand this program. All CATS Bus and Rail Operators (approximately 900 employees) have attended the National Transit Institute (NTI) Security Awareness Program. This program will be expanded utilizing the DHS Grant Award. All CATS fixed-route buses and light rail trains are equipped with

camera systems. All major transit centers, rapid transit stations, transit centers, park and ride lots all CATS major facilities are equipped with cameras.

Use of Local Police and Private Security

CATS does not have its own “transit police force”, but does have twelve full-time Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) Officers assigned to the “Transit Unit” at this time. CATS has also entered into a contract with a private company for “Company Police Officers,” which are armed and sworn officers. This CATS Company Police Unit will have thirty-two fulltime assigned sworn police officers, for a total of forty-four sworn police officers. All transit assigned police officers, CMPD and Company Police, are based at CATS facilities. They will be dispatched (beginning around November 15, 2007) from the CATS Police Communications Center. All officers are part of the CATS Office of Safety & Security and receive their assignments from the CATS General Manager of Safety & Security, while complying with the police department policies, rules and regulations. These 44 officers are deployed by CATS for CATS related activities.

ITS Strategy & WiFi

CATS has an ITS strategy which encompasses Transit Security, but is overseen by the CATS Technology Section. The CATS ITS strategy is to enhance the business process in a manner which allows CATS to operate more efficiently, as a comprehensive and unified entity, with no isolated pockets of performance within the Metrolina Region. To achieve the ITS strategy, all systems should be integrated as completely as possible to allow the free flow of data/information between systems. Ideally data needs are available for all users and should only need to be entered once, reducing the chance of error (in process of implementing this strategy). The strategy will be considered successfully implemented when the business units within the Metrolina Region promote the concepts of data integrity, information consistency, application/system/data security and accessibility. CATS does not have WiFi on its’ buses at this time.

Summary

When asked, CATS provided the following suggested areas for improving the transit “partnership” in the next 24 to 36 months:

- Increased Federal financial support for capital investment is critically needed to assist transit agencies to serve the needs of a changing market.
- Federal guidelines and requirements for the Small Starts and New Starts programs need to be streamlined to reduce the complexity of pursuing these projects.
- Federal guidance in *New Starts* need to recognize the potential economic development stimulate of Streetcar and Rapid Transit investment in the evaluation process for these projects.
- The opening of the South Corridor LYNX Blue Line Light Rail Project, scheduled to open November 26, 2007.
- SCLRP construction is almost complete and the fastest running time was 21 minutes (24-26 minutes expected upon opening).

- The ballot initiative to repeal the ½% local sales and use tax levy used only for public transportation systems, to be put to a public vote on the November 6, 2007 General Election ballot remains a huge issue (NOTE: voter's subsequently voted to retain the sales tax with a 70% landslide for CATS!)

Areas for Possible Improvement

CATS reports the following challenges and areas needing improvement: its radio system, neighborhood transit services and connections; primarily radial route and service network (operating from the Uptown Charlotte Transportation Center, CTC). CATS has experienced an increase in demand for cross-town services and has responded to customer demand by opening three Community Transit Centers to serve as transfer centers outside of Uptown and has introduced several new cross-town and community circulators. These services create more direct travel patterns, allowing customers to complete their transit trip without traveling to Uptown. In addition, CATS is revising existing fixed-route bus service along the South Corridor with the opening of the LYNX Blue Line. These revisions will coordinate transit service to connect to the rapid transit stations. CATS does not have Smart Card technology at the present time.

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The 2030 LRTP adopted May 3, 2005 is the currently adopted plan for the MPO. The development of the 2030 plan was a regional effort led by the City of Charlotte under contract with adjoining MPOs and RPOs. It was decided early in the LRTP update process that it would be a regional effort among all the MPOs in the Charlotte non-attainment area. It has not been decided whether the next update to the LRTPs in the region will be a coordinated effort among the MPOs in the non-attainment area, but a decision should be made soon, since the next plan update for MUMPO and the adjoining MPOs is May 3, 2009. The MPOs in the region have decided to extend the horizon year for the next plan update to 2035. When the 2030 plan was adopted and the travel demand model was being developed, an economist was hired to develop regional county level population and employment projections from 2002 to 2035. The MPO is planning to use the economists' 2035 population and employment projections, the NC Demographers Office, local building permit data and NC employment data for verification as they begin the 2035 LRTP update. The transportation and planning staffs from the member agencies are responsible for verifying, and allocating land use data based on locally adopted plans to traffic analysis zones.

For the 2030 LRTP, air quality, water quality and impacts on the natural environment were considered, as well as other types of impacts through the project prioritization process. There is no official documentation of the ranking process it is primarily done subjectively and the scores indicate whether there are negative impacts or benefits. Unless there is documentation with each project you would not know what caused a project to receive a low score. No projects would be eliminated because of environmental concerns. Some projects scored so low that they did not make it into the financially constrained portion of the LRTP. Projects would be pushed to a later horizon year or beyond more due to financial reasons, than environmental reasons. The MPOs

adopted project ranking methodology used to rank projects in the plan was reevaluated in October 2007. The changes to the ranking process were designed to make the process clearer to understand and to ensure that decisions being made could be supported. The MUMPO plans to better document why projects with lower scores received those scores for the next LRTP update. **The Review Team recommends that the MPO document the project ranking outcomes for each project being evaluated and include that documentation in the plan.** Documenting the ranking process will allow citizens the opportunity to review the justification for each project and comment appropriately during the review of the LRTP.

Mitigation costs to address environmental impacts were not included into the 2030 Plan, but some cost factors will likely be included in the 2035 Plan. The MUMPO relies on NCDOTs project costs in the STIP/TIP, but often times the NCDOT incorporates environmental cost after projects are under construction. The MUMPO does not have a good indication of how to calculate environmental mitigation costs, but hope the process will be improved as they involve the resource agencies in the transportation planning process. SAFETEA-LU requires that environmental agencies be consulted with during the LRTP development process. The MPO stated that, in the past, environmental agencies have not been involved with non-active projects or in the planning process. FHWA has been meeting with environmental agencies to explain the planning process, Federal requirements and to solicit agency support. In March 2007, the FHWA and the NCDOT sponsored and participated in a meeting with resource agencies and MPOs. The meeting provided a forum for resource agencies to share plans that the MPOs should consider in the long range planning process, as well as, to discuss how the resource agencies would like to participate in the transportation planning process. A list of environmental agency contacts for participation in the long range planning process has been compiled and is located on the following website: www.ncilt.org. In addition, on May 15, 2007, the FHWA developed and provided guidance to the NCDOT and the MPOs to use for future plan updates. **The Review Team recommends that the resource agencies be contacted and that a consultation process be developed cooperatively with the appropriate environmental resource agencies prior to starting the plan update process.**

The development of the 2030 LRTP led to a regional examination of the areas financial position. The MPO ranked 260 projects to include in the 2030 LRTP, but based on the revenue that was projected and the projected cost of projects, the MPO was only able to financially constrain 221 projects. The City of Charlotte developed a Transportation Action Plan to provide a comprehensive policy and strategy to achieve the City's transportation goals, and from that, the City and the MUMPO have combined to study funding opportunities to advance their transportation goals. This funding document will be a tool the MPO can use to help project revenue for the 2035 plan update. Given that SAFETEA-LU now requires that plans and TIPs reflect Year-of-Expenditure dollars for all projects in the plan, the MPO is concerned that even fewer projects will be included in the financially constrained plan. The NCDOT has a project cost estimating tool and a revenue forecasting process/formula that they can share with the MPOs. The MPO did not consult with the NCDOT for the 2030 update, but hired a consultant to develop their process. Project cost estimating included cost of right-of-way, materials and

construction. The MPO will consult with the Cabarrus Rowan and Gaston MPOs to determine, if the financial plan will be done as a regional effort for the 2035 plan update.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process has not changed since the last review. The NCDOT develops a draft State TIP and submits it to the MPOs for review. The MPOs notify the public that the draft TIP is available for review and comment. The MPO schedules a one-on-one meeting with the NCDOT Program Development Unit, Division Engineer and the Board of Transportation Member to discuss the draft TIP. Since funding has been a major issue for the State over the past several years there is very little new money in the TIP to discuss. If the MPO wants a project added to the TIP, then an existing project in the TIP would need to be removed. Now that the STIP and TIP must include year-of-expenditure dollars the MPO wonders, if that will lead to having fewer projects in the STIP and TIP. The FHWA indicated that for highway projects the current draft STIP has taken into account inflation for the year monies are to be expended. **The review team recommends that NCDOT share the revenue forecasting, project cost estimating, rate of inflation and year-of-expenditure processes with the MPOs.**

Recommendations

- The MPO should document the evaluation process for the project ranking outcomes for each project in the plan and include that documentation in the plan.
- The resource agencies should be contacted and a consultation process be developed cooperatively with the appropriate environmental resource agencies prior to starting the plan update process.
- To meet SAFETEA-LU the MPO needs to include inflation and year-of-expenditure dollars in the 2035 LRTP.
- The review team recommends that NCDOT share the revenue forecasting, project cost estimating, rate of inflation and year-of-expenditure processes with the MPOs.

Regional Travel Demand Modeling (RTDM)

In 2004, the MPO completed the development of their regional travel demand model (RTDM). The model covers 11 counties, two of which are in South Carolina. The model has been successfully used for transportation conformity. Along with the official model, a working model is maintained to accept updates for land use, and network changes. This allows the area to use the best available data because it is being collected and maintained throughout. The model Executive Committee must approve changes and the use of the most recent version of the model/data. When the model was being developed the only agreement signed by the partners was for maintenance of the model. There are no agreements to cover use of the model for TIP and LRTP updates. Additional agreements will be needed especially with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) Division of Air Quality (DAQ) recommending that the State Implementation Plan (SIP) use county level budgets. County level budgets provide the MPOs with the ability to update their plans as needed, meaning that in the future the MPOs would not have to be on the same update schedule and the model could be used more frequently. **The review team recommends that additional model agreements be developed to cover the LRTP, TIP and amendments of both and the conformity**

processes. The NCDOT provides model support with the use of a consultant on the model team to provide assistance to the Cabarrus Rowan and Gaston Urban Area MPOs and the Lake Norman and Rocky River Rural Planning Organizations (RPO). The MPO has been working with the NC Turnpike Authority and other consultants as they use the regional model to assist with possible tolling facilities in the Metrolina region. Any recommended changes from those studies would come back to the regional partners, model team and the Executive Committee for consideration and action. The TransCad model separation diversion for managed lanes is being used in the model as the MPO looks at possible toll facilities. To improve this aspect of the model, a consultant has been hired to develop a more general toll curve for the model. The region has also hired a consultant to develop a managed lane plan for HOV and HOT lanes for the region. Data from these studies will be considered for inclusion in future model updates.

Noteworthy Practices

- H) The review team continues to be impressed with the level of coordination that occurred for the development of the RTDM and collection of data, maintenance of the model thus far and we hope it will continue.

Recommendations

- o MUMPO should develop more detailed model protocol agreements that address future LRTP, TIP, amendments to the LRTP and TIP and conformity processes in the future.
- o MUMPO is encouraged to continue regional efforts for model management and coordination.

Air Quality Planning

The MUMPO currently has a conforming 2030 LRTP (*The USDOT LRTP approval date is May 3, 2005*) and a Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-2013 TIP. The USDOT transportation conformity determinations were made on both the MUMPO amended 2030 LRTP and the FY 2007-2013 TIP on June 29, 2007. The transportation conformity determination on the FY 2009-2015 TIP is due by October 1, 2008, and on the 2035 LRTP update by May 3, 2009.

MUMPO is currently working on their SAFETEA-LU compliant 2035 LRTP update. The kick-off transportation conformity interagency consultation meeting for the conformity work on the 2035 LRTP update will take place in May, 2008. Work has begun on the FY 2009-2015 TIP conformity process and the interagency consultation meeting for the FY 2009-2015 TIP conformity process was held November 29, 2007.

The NCDAQ submitted an attainment demonstration State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the 8-hour ozone standard to EPA on June 15, 2007. Since that SIP submittal there have been significant improvements to the Metrolina Regional Model and its associated model inputs. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) requested that NCDAQ consider revised data to be included in the Metrolina 8-hour ozone SIP.

NCDAQ has agreed to consider the revised data and if the submitted information is acceptable they would work on submitting a SIP revision to EPA.

The Metrolina Area is currently working on updating new socioeconomic data for use in the model by June, 2008. The new socioeconomic data will be approved in early 2009 when the MUMPO Board adopts the 2035 LRTP and the transportation conformity determination.

The certification review team emphasized to MUMPO the importance of regional coordination not only for the modeling work, but also for the transportation conformity process. Communication is vital not only with the Federal and State interagency consultation partners, but also with the transportation partners with in the Metrolina Area.

Recommendations

- MUMPO should begin communications with the Metrolina regional partners to lay out the roles and responsibilities of the FY 2009-2015 MTIP, 2035 LRTP update and for future TIP/LRTP amendments.
- MUMPO should keep the transportation conformity interagency partners informed during the transportation conformity process especially when deadlines are not going to be met. Information such as updated schedules should be shared with the transportation partners.
- MUMPO should share air quality information (SIP or transportation conformity) with the Metrolina Area transportation partners prior to submission to NCDAQ.
- MUMPO should work with regional partners to develop a dispute resolution process for regional efforts such as air quality and modeling.

Title VI

Demographic Profile

Although MUMPO's staff indicated that the MPO maintains a demographic profile, they did not provide any documentation in support of the profile at the certification review. Instead, MUMPO staff verbally described the profile and indicated that the MPO has maps that were created in 2004 that identify minority and low-income areas by census tracts. Additionally, staff stated that the MPO has overlaid its projects onto the maps in an attempt to address potential project impacts on minority and low-income populations. Staff also indicated that their demographic data is definitely cross-checked with personal knowledge. A couple of days after the review, staff did provide two maps - one identifying minority areas and one identifying low-income areas. Each map also depicted all planned projects based on horizon years 2010, 2020, and 2030. **It is recommended that the MUMPO update its demographic profile and consider more sources in addition to Census data.**

MUMPO does not have a prescribed process for analyzing potential transportation system impacts on minority and low-income areas. No particular measures have been developed and no quantitative analyses have been conducted. The primary method used for identifying potential project impacts is that of consensus based on the personal

knowledge of staff. This method is evident during their project selection process in which each project is ranked based on a set of 10 criteria. One of the criteria used is entitled “Supports minority and low-income communities” which is roughly defined as either positive connectivity/accessibility benefits or negative disruption impacts. For each project, MUMPO staff discusses this criterion (along with the others) and then identifies a score for the criterion based on group consensus.

Planning Process

With regard to MUMPO’s planning process, they have adopted formal goals or policies concerning Title VI. The long range plan contains the following goal: Provide equitable transportation options for low income and minority neighborhoods. Additionally, MUMPO’s Public Involvement Plan includes a strategy to “Develop and Implement a Plan to Reach Non-Participating Minority and Low-Income Populations”. It was also noted that MUMPO stated that in the next LRTP update and Public Involvement Plan update, it will more specifically address Title VI. It was also learned, however, that little has been done regarding a needs analyses of minority and low-income populations. **It is recommended that a needs analysis or some type of method for understanding the transportation options needed/wanted by those traditionally underserved should be done.** This will help the MPO achieve its EJ goal as expressed in the LRTP.

When asked how MUMPO addresses low-income and minority populations in its modeling and LRTP/TIP development, staff indicated that the State DOT primarily controls those processes and that the MPO only has a limited amount of influence on things such as the scheduling of projects. The MPO tends to focus on avoiding project delays versus telling the State DOT what projects are to be advanced and when. Therefore, little analysis has been done on determining if projects with impacts to low-income and minority populations are programmed in an equitable manner.

Public Involvement

MUMPO has developed a fairly comprehensive Public Involvement Plan. This plan targets the general public overall, but also contains specific strategies to engage minority and low-income populations. MUMPO makes extensive use of minority media outlets including radio stations, newspapers, and television. In an effort to ensure opportunity for the Hispanic community to become educated about and involved in the transportation planning process, MUMPO has translated several of its brochures into Spanish. Additionally, one strategy that MUMPO used that was found to be effective was the use of a Latino church for a focus group meeting. Because the meeting was held following mass, attendance was higher than usual for this type of meeting – approximately 30 people signed in. MUMPO has successfully used this technique in the African American community as well.

MUMPO also maintains a huge overall mailing list that consists of approximately 7000 people. However, the MPO does not maintain a list that specifically targets minority and low-income populations and does not know how many of the 7000 on the overall mailing list are considered minority and/or low-income. **The review team recommends that the MPO ensure that its mailing list specifically includes minority and low-income citizens.** As a starting point, it is suggested that the MPO identify minority and low-income organizations to be added to the mailing list.

When asked about perceived barriers to the participation of minority and low-income citizens, the MPO indicated that the barriers were different for different groups. For the African American community, the primary barriers appear to be historical distrust and animosity. For the Hispanic community, barriers include the newness of the process as well as the relatively high rate of illiteracy among Hispanics. **For low-income citizens, the primary barrier appears to be job schedules particularly regarding third shift workers. MUMPO's insightful observations are quite noteworthy.** These observations will assist the MPO in its mitigation efforts which will be addressed as part of the next plan update.

One of the most effective strategies that the MPO has used is that of “piggybacking”, that is taking advantage of opportunities to address transportation at other public events and meetings such as using churches as discussed above. The MPO has also found that the website has been quite effective. **Staff additionally indicated that they are working on making the website ADA compliant within the next one to two years and the review team believes this to be commendable.** It was noted however that there are currently no Spanish translations on the website, and, as a suggestion, the MPO may want to consider this.

Overall the MPO does a good job regarding its efforts to engage minority and low-income populations. One factor that may contribute to this is that the MPO conducts regular evaluations of their public meetings. All meeting attendees are provided with a comment sheet that also includes questions that allows them to evaluate things such as meeting time, location, publicity, etc. The MPO is encouraged to continue this practice and to continue exploring ways to improve and expand upon current efforts to engage minority and low-income populations.

Noteworthy Practices

- I) MUMPO is commended for initiating the process to make their website ADA compliant.
- J) MUMPO is commended for its effort to continually evaluate its public involvement process.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that MUMPO update its demographic profile and that they consider using other data sources as appropriate in addition to census data.
- It is recommended that MUMPO develop a database/ mailing list that is specific to the MPO's minority and low-income populations.
- It is recommended that MUMPO develop a process to determine how minority and low-income communities are impacted by the long range transportation plan. The process must be completed by May 3, 2009, and include:
 - Measures/analytical methods to determine overall transportation system equity in an effort to identify both burdens and benefits;
 - Identification of any negative impacts on minority and-low income populations; and
 - Avoidance and/or mitigation measures as appropriate.

Public Involvement

The MPO adopted a new public involvement plan in 2005 as a result of a corrective action issued with the 2003 Certification Review. The MPO has implemented many of the strategies in the plan. MUMPO is very responsive to the public's request for information and frequently makes presentations to a variety of civic and neighborhood groups. MUMPO also attends land use planning meetings to answer transportation related questions for the planning commission. As stated earlier in the report, the MUMPO believes that their process for involving the public in transportation planning efforts is by and large effective. The MUMPO continues to stress that citizens are more vocal and more apt to attend public meetings, if there is some direct impact from a specific project, than they are for meetings regarding the development of general plans, and therefore, attendance at general transportation planning meetings is low.

The MUMPO has developed an MPO web site to give the public more frequent access to planning information. The web site is being used to display the MUMPO and Technical Coordinating Committee meeting agendas and minutes, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, Conformity Analysis Report and other related information. While the MPO has not tracked hits to the website they agreed to investigate the possibility with their web designer.

The MUMPO publishes an annual Performance and Evaluation Report on its public involvement efforts. The most recent evaluation was for fiscal year 2006. While the evaluation addresses a variety of new techniques implemented by the MPO, it does not include any documentation to support the effectiveness of the different techniques or reasons to continue or discontinue techniques. **The Review Team recommends that a more in-depth evaluation of the public involvement plan be done.**

Recommendation

- The MUMPO should develop goals, strategies and performance measures for the Public Involvement Plan and base future public involvement plan updates and annual reports on how well they are performing.

Public Involvement Meeting/Comments

A public comment period (for the review process) was advertised from October 7, 2007 through November 12, 2007. The public was invited to a special public meeting on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, for the purpose of fulfilling the public involvement portion of the Certification Review. While there were zero attendees at the public meeting, one citizen, Mrs. Gore, submitted a comment via e-mail to the FHWA during the public comment period. The citizen was concerned that funds were being spent in the southern portion of Mecklenburg County without regard to the congestion problems citizens in northern Mecklenburg County are facing. A response to Mrs. Gore's e-mail is attached to the report. The MUMPO Board was invited to meet with the review team one-on-one, but due to scheduling conflicts none were able to attend. The public notification and comment public comments are attached as Appendix B

Summary of Findings

Noteworthy Practices

- A) Initiating a regional HOV/HOT lane study to help address congestion from a regional approach.
- B) Including truck data; vehicle class and volume counts in the modeling process to better integrate freight in the planning process.
- C) CATS provides exemplary local, express and regional transit service and its regional rail and streetcar plan, with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for some corridors is well-supported locally and regionally.
- D) CATS, the MUMPO, and the city of Charlotte have developed exemplary local transit oriented development (TOD) land use policies and plans; and CATS reports more than one-half billion dollars in new TOD around South Corridor Light Rail Project transit line (SCLRP) stations (and the system just opened November 24, 2007).
- E) The NCDOT has provided considerable State capital support in the range of 20% to 25% of all capital costs for the SCLRP and proposes a similar percentage of capital cost for the proposed NECLRP and the North Corridor commuter line as part of the NCDOT's New Starts support.
- F) CATS takes advantage of the highest AAA bond rating of the City of Charlotte to issue debt service to back transit capital improvements (low rates of interest).
- G) CATS and MUMPO exhibit a high degree of coordination in their planning and operations efforts.
- H) The review team continues to be impressed with the level of coordination that occurred for the development of the RTDM and collection of data, maintenance of the model thus far and we hope it will continue.
- I) MUMPO is commended for initiating the process to make their website ADA compliant.
- J) MUMPO is commended for its effort to continually evaluate its public involvement process.

Recommendations

- MUMPO should establish and implement a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- The MPO should document the evaluation process for the project rankings for each project in the plan and include that documentation in the plan.
- The MPO should review the goals and objectives of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan) SHSP and document how the 2035 LRTP can help implement the SHSP.
- The MPO should expand their efforts to involve the freight industry in the planning process.

- The resource agencies should be contacted and a consultation process developed cooperatively with the appropriate environmental resource agencies prior to starting the plan update process.
- To meet the Final Transportation Planning Rule, per SAFETEA-LU, the MPO needs to include inflation and year-of-expenditure dollars in the 2035 LRTP.
- MUMPO should develop more detailed model protocol agreements that address future LRTP, TIP, amendments to the LRTP and TIP and conformity processes in the future.
- MUMPO is encouraged to continue regional efforts for model management and coordination.
- MUMPO should begin communications with the Metrolina regional partners to lay out the roles and responsibilities of the 09-15 TIP, 2035 LRTP update and for future TIP/LRTP amendments.
- MUMPO should keep the transportation conformity interagency partners informed during the transportation conformity process especially when deadlines are not going to be met. Information such as updated schedules should be shared with the transportation partners.
- MUMPO should share air quality information (SIP or transportation conformity) with the Metrolina Area transportation partners prior to submission to NCDAQ.
- MUMPO should develop a dispute resolution process for regional efforts such as air quality and modeling.
- The MUMPO should develop goals, strategies and performance measures for the Public Involvement Plan and base future public involvement plan updates and annual reports on how well they are performing.
- It is recommended that NCDOT share the revenue forecasting, project cost estimating, rate of inflation and year-of-expenditure processes with the MPOs..
- It is recommended that MUMPO update its demographic profile and that they consider using other data sources as appropriate in addition to census data.
- It is recommended that MUMPO develop a database/ mailing list that is specific to the MPO's minority and low-income populations.
- It is recommended that MUMPO develop a process to determine how minority and low-income communities are impacted by the long range transportation plan. The process must be complete by May 3, 2009, and include:
 - Measures/analytical methods to determine overall transportation system equity in an effort to identify both burdens and benefits;
 - Identification of any negative impacts on minority and-low income populations; and,
 - Avoidance and/or mitigation measures as appropriate.

Corrective Action

The MUMPO must develop and implement a Congestion Management Process that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.320 by May 3, 2009.

Certification

The Federal Review Team, consisting of staff from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, issues this certification subject to addressing the aforementioned corrective action(s) by May 3, 2009. This certification is valid for four years from the date of this report, pending acceptable completion of the corrective action.

APPENDIX A

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization Certification Review Agenda

MUMPO Certification Review Agenda

October 16-18, 2007

Tuesday, October 16, 2007	
8:30 am to 9:00 am	Introduction and Overview
9:00 am to 10:00 am	MPO Overview/Update – Process Accomplishments/concerns/assistance
10:00 am to 10:15 am	Follow-up from previous certification
10:15 am to 10:30 am	Break
10:30 am to 11:30 am	EJ/Title VI
11:30 am to 12:45 pm	Lunch (on your own)
12:45 pm to 1:30 pm	Agreements/Contracts/Mou/By-laws
1:30 pm to 2:15 pm	UPWP
2:15 pm to 3:00 pm	Congestion Management Process (CMP)
3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Freight/ITS/Safety/Bike/Pedestrian Integration
4:00 pm to 6:00 pm	MUMPO Board one-on-one meeting
Wednesday, October 17, 2007	
8:15 am to 9:00 am	LRTP/Financial Planning
9:00 am to 9:45 am	Environmental integration
9:45 am to 10:30 am	Public Involvement Planning
10:30 am to 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am to 11:30 am	Modeling Process
11:30 am to 12:15 pm	Coordination: NCDOT/Regionally
12:15 pm to 1:30 pm	Lunch - On Your Own
1:30 pm to 2:15 pm	Air Quality Planning
2:15 pm to 3:00 pm	TIP/STIP
3:00 pm to 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm to 5:00 pm	Transit Planning
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	Public Involvement Meeting

Thursday, October 18, 2007

8:30 am to 9:00 am	Planning Factors/Self-Certification
9:00 am to 10:00	Remaining issues/Questions and Review Closeout
10:00 am to 11:30	Federal review team meeting/Break
11:30 am	Preliminary results presentation

DRAFT

APPENDIX B

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization Certification Review Public Meeting Notices/Advertising

TURNKEY MEDIA SVC/PSI 30026739

LOCAL/B007/

Client Name: Advertiser: Section/Page/Zone: Description:

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Ad Number: Insertion Number: Size: Color Type:

The Charlotte Observer

Publication Date: 10/07/2007

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District 3 Snapshot

- Only district where a majority of voters (53 percent) said yes to 2005 school bonds.
- Largest proportion of black and Democratic voters.
- 62 percent of 83,671 registered voters are Democrats, 18 percent Republicans and 20 percent unaffiliated.
- 56 percent are black, 39 percent white, 1 percent Hispanic.
- This year's bonds include \$73.3 million for renovations and/or additions at Garinger and Vance high, Ransom and Hawthorne middle, and Grier and Newell elementary.
- No new schools would be built in District 3 through these bonds.



At Garinger, a desire to give students fair shot

Bonds from 18

dents from low-income homes, a stark contrast with the new, majority-white Audrey Kell in the south suburbs.

Audrey Kell opened last August and immediately became a top-scoring school. Garinger has been under the gun for years because of low performance.

But there's a twist: Last spring the district's top algebra I and geometry scores came from Garinger freshmen taking part in a new "small schools" experiment. Garinger is splitting into five schools, an approach to academic reform that's popular but largely unproven nationwide. The early success of New Technology High provides hope.

Lloyd, a District 3 resident who teaches at Garinger's math/science school, still hears rumblings of the voter skepticism that weakened support for school bonds in 2005. That defeat delayed Garinger's new labs. "They have to trust at some point," she says. "How else will we educate our kids the best we can?"

In Heidi Haug's astronomy class, students recently demonstrated Newton's laws of physics by making two-stage rockets from balloons, shooting them along fishing line string between pipes.

Haug would love to have a real science room, with tables for students to work on projects, counters to display them and a computer screen to enhance her lesson with visuals of real rocket launches. Instead, she settles for low-tech paper space shuttles hang from the ceiling.

Lloyd's biology room has one sink for up to 29 students. Without lab stations, fume hoods or an eye-wash station, she wonders how she'll teach the college-level labs required for Advanced Placement biology.

James Miller, a 10th-grader at Garinger's international studies school, says without good science labs, "We're doing things mostly out of the books."

He went to Myers Park High for a football game and was struck by how everything seemed "more advanced."

"They have more basically everything than Garinger," he said. Superintendent Peter Gorman holds up Garinger's small schools as an example of academic turnaround - and its building as an example of the need for money to make kids competitive in a global economy.

"Part of the solution is to encourage more kids to get involved in science," he said. "But we also need the facilities."

Garinger's low pass rates on state exams have sparked pressure from state and local officials, as well as Wake County Superior Court Judge Howard Manning Jr. Principal Jo Ella Ferrell decided to split Garinger into five small schools with academic specialties. She eased into the change last school year, with two small schools of freshmen. This year, all ninth- and 10th-graders are in small schools.

Ferrell's gamble paid off for New Technology High, where 96 freshmen worked with eight teachers, using laptops to incorporate real-life projects into classroom work. Their test scores matched or surpassed those for peers at low-poverty, high-performing schools.

But a schoolwide victory is far from clinched. Districts across the country have struggled with academic slumps when they try to convert large high schools Olympic, which put all students

More Voices

"Why should I vote for a bond when they're not going to distribute the money equitably? They're asking for more money and they're not trying to fix what's broke in the system."

MAXINE GOODWIN WHO ORGANIZED PARENTS UPSET ABOUT RUN-DOWN CONDITIONS AND PERSONNEL DECISIONS AT GARINGER LAST YEAR. HER SON NOW GOES TO VANCE HIGH.

"I'm still kind of up in the air. I was wanting to vote for them - anything to help schools."

MICHAEL SPATES WHO MOVED FROM FAYETTEVILLE A YEAR AGO AND HAS A CHILD AT MOUNTAIN ISLAND ELEMENTARY. HE SAYS HIS RESERVATION IS HE'S HEARD COMPLAINTS ABOUT STUDENT ASSIGNMENT.

"We have to have them. Even though the growth this year was not what it was projected to be, next year it might be over. I think Dr. Gorman has had a good influence. He's responsive to the community, and the community's a bit more responsive to him."

LOIS LEE UPTOWN RESIDENT AND RETIRED PRINCIPAL OF MYERS PARK TRADITIONAL ELEMENTARY.

NOEL MERCADEL 35, WHO LIVES NEAR W.T. HARRIS BOULEVARD.

"They keep asking for more money and I don't see any improvements with the kids."

NOEL MERCADEL 35, WHO LIVES NEAR W.T. HARRIS BOULEVARD.

into small schools in 2006-07, saw its scores drop. Even the other group of Garinger freshmen saw less impressive gains.

The split makes renovations more complicated. Instead of consulting with one principal, CMS planners will now talk to five about how to build new labs.

One science wing shared by all five schools would be more cost-effective than scattering them, says CMS planner Mike Raible.

That would also let Garinger switch back to one school should the experiment fail, adds Associate Superintendent Guy Chamberlain. "There are cycles to some of these things," he said.

—STAFF WRITER STEVE LITTLE CONTRIBUTED

Know the Issues Capacity measures found to be flawed

For years, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has struggled with how to measure school crowding.

At first, officials multiplied the number of classrooms by a fixed number of students - 22 in elementary and middle schools, 20 in high schools.

That yielded fairly simple numbers: A 1,500-seat high school using mobiles to hold 2,250 students was 50 percent over capacity.

But it didn't account for smaller student-teacher ratios at high-poverty schools.

Since 2003, CMS has tinkered with the formulas, trying to make them reflect different situations at different schools. Critics accused officials of trying to mask suburban crowding and empty seats in the center city. Under one formula, identical schools ranged from a capacity of 430 at a high-poverty city school to 770 in the suburbs.

This year there's a new approach: Officials compare the number of classrooms in the building to the number of classroom teachers. When teachers are in mobiles or makeshift space, that counts as a classroom shortage; the greater the shortage the more crowded the school.

But flaws remain. When CMS posted the new numbers, Garinger was listed as 44 rooms short - more crowded than such schools as Independence (39), Hopewell (35) and North Meck (27). Mallard Creek High, which opened in August, was listed as short 11 classrooms, even though it doesn't have seniors yet.

After the Observer questioned those numbers, officials acknowledged both are "erroneous." Mallard Creek actually has 48 classrooms to spare this year, according to a CMS recalculation.

Garinger actually needs about 23 classrooms, CMS planner Mike Raible said this week. When the classroom count was done in January, officials were expecting more than 2,000 students this year, actual enrollment at Garinger is 1,774. —ANDROSS HELMS

Textile town tales retold at reunions

Life in mill villages lives on in memories of those who were there



Linda Rhinehart's late husband, Quentin Rhinehart, who grew up in North Belmont and was dubbed the "mayor" of North Belmont, died in March. He was to be remembered at a reunion this weekend at North Belmont Elementary School.

Time was closely measured in North Belmont's five mill villages. Shrill whistles announced shift changes at the scattered textile plants.

Day and night, Belmont Abbey's big clock tolled the passing hours.

At work or play, folks went about their daily lives probably never thinking there was anything special about it. And probably never dreaming that one day they'd be trying to recapture those times.

The old mill neighborhoods are lost. But the time lives on in memories. A great sharing of stories was in the offing this weekend at a reunion of folks who lived in the original unincorporated mill villages of North Belmont: Perfection, Linford, Stowe Spinning, New Acme and Old Acme.

The event was to start Saturday at North Belmont Elementary School and end today at 5 p.m. Hundreds of people were expected to attend what has become one of Gaston's largest textile reunions.

The man who helped start it, my friend Quentin Rhinehart, died of leukemia March 26 at age 70. He organized the first reunion of the five villages in 2003 and it's been growing ever since. There was no reunion last year, mostly because Quentin wasn't feeling well.

I met Quentin in 2004 when I attended a meeting of the North Belmont ROMEOS at McAdenville's Village Restaurant. ROMEOS, I learned, can stand for Retired Old Men Eating Out or Reminiscing Old Men Eating Out. It didn't matter.

Quentin was the honorary self-appointed "mayor" of the lost town, presiding with five "aldermen." About 30 or 40 other ROMEOS were at the meeting in the same back room where they gathered for lunch

once a week. As usual, the agenda was all about trading memories of the mill villages.

I never lived in a mill village, but I enjoy hearing about life here. I'm interested in the dynamics of any community.

Nada Hedrick, 74, who grew up in North Belmont, recently told me something I've always suspected: Life in Southern mill villages has been slightly romanticized.

"It was a hard life," she said. "But it was a good life."

For her, home was a three-bedroom house on Coles Street in the New Acme village, where her dad ran twisters in the textile plant. The mill whistle blew at 5:30 a.m. to wake you up, and at 6 a.m. to tell you the shift was starting. The next whistles sounded at 1:30 p.m., 2 p.m.,

9:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. In between, Nada said Belmont Abbey's clock chimed the hours and struck once on the half-hour.

"You were always aware of the time," she said. The new "mayor" of North Belmont is Eddie Isenhour. I hope he and the ROMEOS keep the storytelling tradition going. Anyone can come to the meetings or the reunions, and it doesn't matter if they're from a textile background.

Even a slightly romanticized version of life in the mill villages can be useful. No matter where we live or in what time period, hearing about the workings of a close Carolina community can help us be better neighbors.

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Speak Up...
 Public comments are strongly encouraged for a review of planning activities and procedures of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO). Every four years, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct a certification review to determine whether MUMPO follows a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process.
 A 30-day public comment period will begin on Monday, October 8 and conclude on Wednesday, November 7. Anyone wishing to provide written comments should send them to Loretta Barron of the FHWA at Loretta.Barron@hwa.dot.gov.
 A public meeting regarding the certification review is scheduled for:
Wednesday, October 17, 6-8 pm
 Room 266, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
 600 East 4th Street, Charlotte, NC
 For more information or if you are a person with disabilities in need of special provisions to attend this meeting (requires at least 48 hours notice), contact the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department at 704-336-2205.

APROBADO POR
EL DEPARTAMENTO
DE SALUD

Charlotte, NC 28212
(704) 537-8001



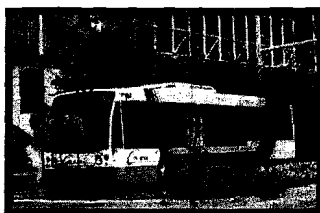
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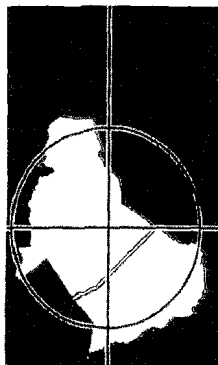
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Queremos oír tu voz ...

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) te invita a extender tus comentarios con la finalidad de repasar actividades de planeación y procedimientos. Cada 4 años la Administración Federal de Carreteras (FHWA) y la Administración Federal de Tránsito (FTA) conducen una evaluación para determinar si MUMPO realiza continuamente el proceso de planeación de transporte de una manera continua, comprensiva y cooperativa.

A partir del Lunes 8 de Octubre iniciaremos con una sesión de opiniones abierta para escuchar tus comentarios que concluirá el miércoles 7 de noviembre. Cualquiera que desee proveer comentarios por escrito favor de enviarlos a Loretta Barren de la FHWA al correo electrónico Loretta.Barren@fhwa.dot.gov



MECKLENBURG-UNION
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**Una reunión pública referente a la revisión de la certificación programada para el miércoles
17 de octubre de 6 a 8 pm
Cuarto 266, Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center
600 East Fourth St, Charlotte, NC**

Para mayor información o si usted es un a persona con discapacidad que necesite de ayuda para acudir a la reunión (favor de enviar notificación 48 horas antes de la reunión), contactar Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department al 704-336-2205

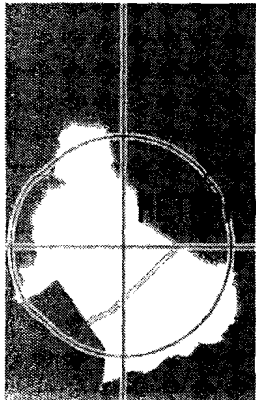
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METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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NEWS

Mixed memories of the mill

Textile heritage event brings back memories of Huntersville mill life. Not all of them good.

BY BRITT GODFREY

Former workers at Huntersville's old textile mill on Church Street share a common thread but their experiences are made of different strands woven at different times.

For James William "Pop" Howard, working at the mill variously known as the Anchor or Magla Mill, meant dealing with segregation and Jim Crow laws.

For women like Betty Grier, who worked at the same mill 25 years later, mill work and mill life represented freedom and a chance for respect that her parents never knew.

Last week, some of those workers gathered at the old mill site as part of a ceremony commemorating

Textile Heritage Week. They met at the mill's older water tower, which is still standing, to remember those who had worked at the mill. The first-of-its-kind celebration was organized by Huntersville activist Betty Jane "Bee Jay" Caldwell, whose grandfather worked at the mill. Caldwell became interested several years ago when she met Howard at the Huntersville Oaks nursing home. Both were there to visit loved ones.

"He asked me if I was related to Lawrence Caldwell," Bee Jay Caldwell says, "and then, he told me stories about how they used to work together."

Five former mill workers were on-hand for the event, and naturally the event served as sort of reunion/homecoming. Later on, the five former employees took a little time to remember the way things were.

James William "Pop" Howard recalled the quaint-sounding time when Huntersville may or may not have been a one-horse town, but when it was certainly a one-policeman and one-doctor town. The later was Tom Craven, whose office and house was in the white

house on Highway 115 North besides Cashion's gas station in downtown Huntersville. But, most of Howard's memories are of the time of Jim Crow and segregation, and as result, are anything but pleasant. Howard says that in his day, summer off from school didn't equal a summer vacation. The Huntersville Negro School closed in the summer so the students could help pick cotton.

The 16-year-old Howard walked the five miles to the mill from his home on Huntersville-Concord Road in the summer of 1944, looking for work. He found it, but found a liberal dose of segregation as well while spending his days separating fiber from debris while "doffing" spools in the weeding room, among other duties. For black employees, just having a job was considered reward enough, says Howard.

"We never discussed pay," Howard says. "I was taken to Lawrence Caldwell and told 'this is your boss, have a nice day.'"

'Keep your mouth shut'

Caldwell, Bee Jay Caldwell's grandfather, was a black supervi-



James William "Pop" Howard stands tall in front of a water tower, the only remnant of the Huntersville mill where he worked in the summer of 1944.

BRITT GODFREY

sor at the mill, an unusual position for an African-American at that time. Most blacks were only allowed to clean the mill and do labor-intensive tasks, such as spool doffing. While his white

counterparts made about \$20 every two weeks, Howard earned about \$6 per week, working eight-to-10-hour days. Howard wasn't on the payroll, and thus received no benefits. He was paid in cash, by hand. Howard says Caldwell taught him the basics that helped him earn a wage and stay out of trouble.

"He told me, 'do your work, keep your mouth shut, don't get too close to the opposite race, no playing, no taking a break, nothing,'" Howard says. He remembers Caldwell as a "soft-talking, fair but firm" man.

Besides a mentor of sorts in Caldwell, Howard had another African-American counterpart in the mill in Reid Hicks. Hicks worked in the boiler room, and Howard says there was no clock except for Hicks.

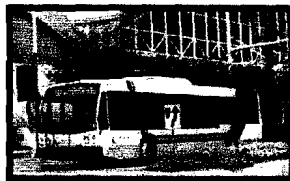
"He'd pull the whistle to start work, stop for lunchtime, to go back to work, and when it was time to quit," Howard says. "But the end of the day for me usually wasn't then."

His duties kept him late at the mill, and sometimes he had to walk the five miles back to his house long after dark.

Bee Jay Caldwell says her family was too poor to have a clock or a radio, but could plan their day by the Huntersville mill's whistle, hearing it all the way in Cornelius.

Howard, Caldwell and Hicks were the only non-whites in the mill, which employed about 15 other workers.

"They didn't bother us and we didn't bother them," Howard says



Speak Up...

Public comments are strongly encouraged for a review of planning activities and procedures of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO). Every four years, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct a certification review to determine whether MUMPO follows a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process.

A 30-day public comment period will begin on Monday, October 8 and conclude on Wednesday, November 7. Anyone wishing to provide written comments should send them to Loretta Barren of the FHWA at Loretta.Barren@fhwa.dot.gov.

A public meeting regarding the certification review is scheduled for:
Wednesday, October 17, 6-8 pm
Room 266, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
600 East 4th Street, Charlotte, NC



MECKLENBURG-UNION
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

For more information or if you are a person with disabilities in need of special provisions to attend this meeting (requires at least 48 hours notice), contact the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department at 704-336-2205.

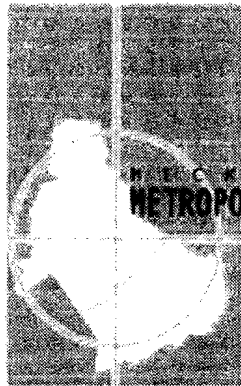
See Mill/page 7



Speak Up...

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MECKLENBURG-UNION
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Wednesday, October 17, 6-8 pm
Room 256, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
600 East 4th Street, Charlotte, NC

For more information or if you are a person with disabilities in need of special provisions to attend this meeting (requires at least 48 hours notice), contact the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department at 704-336-2205.



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P.O. No.	Terms	Project
	upon receipt	

Description	Qty	Rate	Amount
City of Charlotte - Corporate Communications - Print Ad Campaign Mecklenburg - Union Metropolitan Planning Organization			
Charlotte Observer - Local City Zone 4 column x 5.5" B&W Ad / October 7, 2007		1,890.00	1,890.00
Charlotte Post 5 column x 5.5" B&W Ad / October 11, 2007		727.00	727.00
The Enquire Journal 4 column x 5.5" B&W Ad / October 7, 2007		830.00	830.00
Que Pasa 5 column x 5.5" B&W Ad / October 11, 2007		490.00	490.00
Huntersville Herald 4 column x 5.5" B&W Ad / October 12, 2007		390.00	390.00
Tax ID 56-2127524	Total		\$4,327.00

APPENDIX C

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization Certification Review Comments

From: Audrey J. Gore [audreymclaughlin@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, November 03, 2007 1:31 PM
To: Barren, Loretta
Subject: Review Comment for MUMPO

November 3, 2007

Dear Ms. Loretta Barren and Federal Highway Administration,

In reply to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) meeting and conducting a certification review to determine if Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) is following a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process I would like to share some comments, facts, concerns, and suggestions.

I, along with most in the Greater Charlotte Area, am thoroughly disappointed, discouraged and upset with the current situation of transportation particularly in Northern Mecklenburg County. I am concerned for the safety of family, friends, relatives and fellow citizens due to the congestion and air quality as result of the slow and non-existent planning and development of highways. There has been significant growth for decades in this region, but the far more relief continues to go to Southern Mecklenburg and Northern Union counties, while Northern Mecklenburg County has been neglected. South Charlotte already has three or four lanes of I-77 for more miles outside of downtown than the North side. The South side also between two and three lanes of I-485, and the North side's section of I-485 does not exist. The South side also has the Light Rail System built, and it nearly ready to function, and again the North side's Light Rail system does not exist, may never exist. Northern Mecklenburg County has been the stepchild of Charlotte for too long. We are located the same amount of miles outside of Charlotte than South Charlotte and parts of Union County yet no one seems to care about our well-being. Even the radio stations will announce slow traffic on I-77 Northbound on the South side of the city in the morning, and never say one word about the North side, while I am sitting in a parking lot on I-77 South for the second year in a row. We as a city need to look at the facts.

I am so dismayed and upset that I-485, 60 miles of road, is still not finished. If completed when now predicted, it will take 24 years, (1989-2013), which is unlikely. That is approximately building 2.5 mi. per year. Let me compare that rate to some other cities. Atlanta, GA and Columbus, OH also have an outer-belt, which is approximately the same total mileage as I-485. Those cities took half the amount of time to complete them. To top it off, Atlanta completed their outer-belt with four lanes all the way around in that time, and Charlotte is working on only two. Kansas City has a 95 mi. outer-belt that took approximately only 10 years to build. So it is possible to complete roads more quickly, but NC chooses not to do it. Let me give you another examples.

I-77 Southbound on the North side of Charlotte is a nightmare. How would you like to try to go to work every morning before 7 a.m. just to sit in a parking lot on the highway? Well, my husband and I whom used to carpool, along with thousands of others, from Northern Mecklenburg County deals with just this. It regularly took us, from Exit 28-Exit 23, to drive five miles, 40 minutes to an hour EVERY day! This is even before the heart of rush hour. I could not imagine the people that leave after 7 a.m. I know my husband still deals with on a daily basis on the CATS bus, but I could not deal with it, so took a job that did not require me to take I-77. Park Road, once again on the South side of Charlotte, is wider than the highway in many places! Has the Department of Transportation has even proposed widening the highway in Northern Mecklenburg and Iredell county? Nope. The traffic problem is worsening very rapidly. This area is the fastest growing area in Mecklenburg County. Yet, on NC's schedule, it may take 15 years or more by the time anything is done about this problem. An entire neighborhood in Iredell County is sold their homes so roads can be widened because traffic is so bad. It took me 1.5 hours to travel 23 miles to work daily, and it has taken me over 2.5 hours on several occasions, and over half that time is spent on five miles on the North side of town. Furthermore, this not only a problem during the week, but it not any better on the weekends. My husband and I tried to go downtown to a football game on a Sunday morning, and spend money on Charlotte's economy, but we had to turn around because it took us forty-five minutes to travel less than four miles South. We need to learn to plan, and take action in advance, not only fix our existing problems. We need to this not only for ourselves, but also for our future generations.

Traffic problems may deter people from moving to Charlotte. Thus Charlotte's economy will suffer, and not be able to grow or strengthen to its full potential. The ozone is weakens everyday by cars sitting on the highways, and the longer we sit in traffic the more dependent on foreign oil we become.

Charlotte also is having an issue with smog, and it gets worse each day thousands of cars burn up the Earth's natural resources while sitting in standing traffic. This adversely affects the citizens' health, will cost the government more in health care.

If there ever was an emergency, such as a hurricane or terrorist attack, and North Charlotte area would have to evacuate, but instead thousands of citizens may perish. Charlotte is the only city in the nation that has two nuclear power plants in the close proximity of a city, thus the National Department of Defense has identified Charlotte as a possible terrorist target.

I am aware that there is an evacuation plan in place, but how can we evacuate if we cannot even move when to watch a Sunday football game. Charlotte, NC and the federal government need to invest more money into the roads to prevent these issues. If this is not done, this shows me that the Department of Transportation of NC, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) cares little about the environment, or about their health and safety of its citizens. The good news is we can change.

More of the city's, state's, and nation's budget needs to be spent on building roads that compensate for the growth of the city. I, among thousands of others, am willing to pay extra taxes to help solve the issue.

In the year of 2005, NC had a budget surplus, which I cannot understand seeing the road conditions of this state. Obviously, the state's system to allocate their transportation budget is not working, nor is the way of raising the money to make changes. Some other cities have a city income tax to help with these types of problems. Maybe we can do that. So please get to work, plan ahead, and care about the citizens of this city, as well as the environment. Thank you for your time and support. I look forward to seeing changes in the near future.

Sincerely,
A Concerned, Upset Citizen trying to make a difference

Do You Yahoo!?
Tired of spam? Yahoo! Mail has the best spam protection around
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Mrs. Gore,

Thank you for taking the time to comment on the Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MUMPO) planning process. As the Federal Highway and Transit Administration's conducted the review we discussed several planning areas that relate to your comments. We discussed how the MPO prioritizes and ranks projects for implementation, that there is not enough money to go around, how the public is involved, and how they address air quality and congestion in the planning process.

The MPO along with other transportation partners in the Metrolina region are studying the potential need for additional high occupancy vehicle lanes or Fast Lanes as the study is titled and they are currently developing a Congestion Management Process that will provide additional data needed to better identify and address congestion the Mecklenburg Union MPO area. Both these studies will provide short and long term solutions to traffic congestion in the Mecklenburg area. As these studies progress there will opportunities for public involvement and comment. Additional information regarding these studies can be found on the MPOs website, www.mumpo.org.

The MPO also develops a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to guide transportation needs and to plan for implementation of those needs/projects usually for 20 to 30 years in the future. The MPO and the NCDOT also develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), respectively, as the project selection and implementation document for the LRTP. The TIP and STIP detail which projects will be funded in a given year and how much money will be authorized for certain phases of a project. As you are probably aware not everything can be funded or built in a given year, so priorities are set at the MPO level and shared with the NCDOT for programming.

The MPO is in the process of kicking off the development of their next 2035 LRTP and the help of concerned citizens, such as you, is always welcome. They have a very proactive public involvement process for the development of the LRTP, so if you are interested in participating, please contact Robert Cook the MPO Planning Manager at 704-336-8643, or via email at rwcook@ci.charlotte.nc.us. Also visit the MPO's website for area specific information.

I have attached the executive summary of the review report. The full report will be posted on the MPOs website in the very near future.

If you have additional comments or questions of me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Loretta Barren, Community Planner
Federal Highway Administration
310 New Bern Ave., Suite 410
Raleigh, NC 27601
(O) 919-747-7025
(F) 919-747-7030
loretta.barren@fhwa.dot.gov
www.fhwa.dot.gov/ncdiv



M E C K L E N B U R G - U N I O N
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202-2853
704-336-2205
www.mumpo.org

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WAXHAW
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WINGATE

TO: Loretta Barren
FROM: Robert W. Cook, AICP
DATE: January 3, 2008
SUBJECT: Draft Certification Review
MUMPO Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Joint Certification Review. Listed below are comments on the draft's Recommendations, followed by comments on the Corrective Actions.

Recommendations

1. The MUMPO should establish and implement a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
MUMPO response: Are there any good examples that have been used in North Carolina to evaluate the effectiveness of the UPWP?
2. The MPO should document the evaluation process for the project rankings for each project in the LRTP and include that documentation in the plan.
MUMPO response: No comment
3. The MPO should review the goals and objectives of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and document how the 2035 LRTP can help implement the SHSP.
MUMPO response: This will be done as the 2035 LRTP is developed.
4. The MPO should expand their efforts to involve the freight industry in the planning process.
MUMPO response: MUMPO is currently working on its Congestion Management Process and will use the contacts made through that effort to better involve the region's freight industry in our process.
5. The resource agencies should be contacted and a consultation process developed cooperatively with the appropriate environmental resource agencies for use with the next plan update due by May 3, 2009.
MUMPO response: This Consultation process has already started. Federal, state and local agencies have been contacted and requested to provide their latest maps, inventories, plans and strategies.
6. To meet the Final Transportation Planning Rule, per SAFETEA-LU, the MPO needs to include inflation and year-of-expenditure dollars in the 2035 LRTP.

MUMPO response: This will be done as the 2035 LTRP is developed.

7. The MUMPO should develop more detailed model protocol agreements that address future LRTP, TIP, amendments to the LRTP and TIP and conformity processes in the future.

MUMPO response: The phrasing of this recommendation implies that MUMPO is solely responsible for model protocol agreements, whereas the effort to develop such agreements involves a number of partners, most notably the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The recommendation should be rephrased to reflect that responsibilities for the development of these agreements will fall upon multiple parties.

8. The MUMPO is encouraged to continue regional efforts for model management and coordination.

MUMPO response: The phrasing of this recommendation implies that MUMPO is solely responsible for regional efforts related to model management and coordination. NCDOT and MUMPO's regional partners are key players in this effort. This should be reflected in the recommendation's phrasing.

9. The MUMPO should begin communications with the Metrolina regional partners to lay out the roles and responsibilities of the 09-15 TIP, 2035 LRTP update and for future TIP/LRTP amendments.

MUMPO response: The communication process is currently underway. Tim Gibbs of the Charlotte Department of Transportation will guide the regional partners in the process.

10. The MUMPO should keep the transportation conformity interagency partners informed during the transportation conformity process especially when deadlines are not going to be met. Information such as updated schedules should be shared with the transportation partners.

MUMPO response: Additional information on why this recommendation is being made is requested because MUMPO is not responsible for the conformity determinations of its regional partners.

11. The MUMPO should share air quality information (SIP or transportation conformity) with the Metrolina Area transportation partners prior to submission to NCDAQ.

MUMPO response: No comment

12. The MUMPO should develop a dispute resolution process for regional efforts such as air quality and modeling.

MUMPO response: The phrasing of this recommendation implies that MUMPO is solely responsible for regional efforts related to the development of a dispute resolution process related to air quality and modeling. NCDOT and MUMPO's

regional partners are key players in this effort. This should be reflected in the recommendation's phrasing.

13. The MUMPO should develop goals, strategies and performance measures for the Public Involvement Plan and base future public involvement plan updates and annual reports on how well they are performing.

MUMPO response: No comment

14. The NCDOT should share the inflation rate and year-of-expenditure estimation process with the MPOs.

MUMPO response: This will be done as the 2035 LTRP is developed.

15. It is recommended that the MUMPO update its demographic profile and that they consider using other data sources as appropriate in addition to census data.

MUMPO response: Additional information on why this recommendation is being made is requested because MUMPO is currently in the process of updating its demographic profile. In addition, MUMPO uses other data sources.

16. It is recommended that the MUMPO develop a database/ mailing list that is specific to the MPO's minority and low-income populations.

MUMPO response: This effort is already underway.

Corrective Actions

1. The MUMPO must develop and implement a Congestion Management Process (CMP) that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.320.

MUMPO response: The development of MUMPO's CMP is currently underway.

2. The MUMPO must develop a process to determine how minority and low-income communities are impacted by the long range transportation plan. The process must include:

- Measures/analytical methods to determine overall transportation system equity in an effort to identify both burdens and benefits;
- Identification of any negative impacts on minority and low income populations; and
- Avoidance and/or mitigation measures as appropriate.

MUMPO response: MUMPO will strive to improve its environmental justice practices as it develops its 2035 LRTP. However, we believe that imposing the recommended Corrective Action is unwarranted and inappropriate. This opinion is based upon the following:

- a. *MUMPO's current efforts at determining impacts on minority and low-income communities as a part of developing its LRTPs are significantly understated in the Environmental Justice and Title VI section of the draft Certification Review. The description in the Demographic Profile subsection fails to account for the rigorous LRTP evaluation and ranking*

process to which each project is subjected and implies that MUMPO staff is the sole arbiter of determining impacts on environmental justice populations throughout the planning area.

To ensure that each project is properly evaluated, a great deal of time is spent on analyzing projects that have been nominated for ranking. The planning area is broken down into sub-areas to ensure that a detailed focus can be applied to each project, and a variety of essential data are available for participants to consider. However, the key to the success of our ranking process is the active participation of municipal staff members who have intimate knowledge of the communities they serve. These staff members have a comprehensive understanding of their communities, and because of the dynamic growth in the Charlotte region and the resulting demographic changes being experienced, they are crucial in helping MUMPO identify where potential environmental justice impacts might be located. Because of this strong focus on using local resources, and not merely on quantitative information that may be outdated, MUMPO's LRTP better reflects the current demographic realities of the community.

- b. *MUMPO's last Certification Review (2003) did not indicate a need for major changes to its environmental justice-related practices; certainly not one rising to the level of a Corrective Action. In fact, that review listed the following as Noteworthy Practices:*
- *The MUMPO staff developed a priority ranking system for project selection that is supported by the MPO board.*
 - *MUMPO identified and mapped low-income and minority populations and uses the information when evaluating project impacts and for public involvement.*

The "priority ranking system" and the mapping were, and remain, the primary means by which MUMPO assesses the impact of its LRTP on low-income and minority citizens. Therefore, it questions why what was once considered noteworthy is now seen as a serious flaw in its planning process.

- c. *MUMPO does not contest the recommendation for the Corrective Action related to the Congestion Management Process; the recommendation is based upon the lack of a component to our planning process that is clearly outlined in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning rules. By contrast, the rules do not contain a similar mandate for the specific process being recommended by the environmental justice Corrective Action. In essence, MUMPO is being asked to address a Corrective Action with the development of a process for which there are no established guidelines, thereby leaving it vulnerable to arbitrary interpretations of what constitutes an adequate process.*

*Based upon the above, MUMPO respectfully objects to the recommended
Corrective Action being included in the final Certification Review.*

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Certification Review.
If you have any questions about the above comments, please feel free to contact me
at 704-336-8643, or via email at rwcook@ci.charlotte.nc.us.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: FHWA Response to the Mecklenburg Union
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Comments (MUMPO) Regarding the
Certification Review Report

Date: February 22, 2008

From: /s/ Loretta W. Barren for
John F. Sullivan, III, P.E.
Division Administrator
Raleigh, North Carolina

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-NC

To: Robert W. Cook, AICP
MUMPO Secretary

Thank you for providing comments on the Certification Review Report for the Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO). They are appreciated and will be included in the report. After reviewing your comments I wanted to share some initial responses. Other more detailed responses may be forthcoming.

I want to reiterate that we make recommendations on the planning program and processes even when we are aware and actively involved in their development. We believe this emphasizes our continued commitment to improving an area's planning processes.

Loretta will work with you to develop and implement a process to meet the recommendation in the Report regarding the analysis of the Unified Planning Work Program.

There were several recommendations in the Report regarding the modeling and air quality communication process, specifically recommendations 7-12 in your letter. We do agree with you in that these recommendations are not solely the responsibility of MUMPO; however MUMPO does have a responsibility to cooperate and participate in the development and implementation of these recommendations. We are drafting a letter to the other Metrolina area transportation partners recommending that they participate in the development and implementation of these regional model and air quality recommendations. We will copy you on this letter.

**MOVING THE
AMERICAN
ECONOMY**



Loretta and I appreciated you, TAC Chairman Mayor Myers, and TCC Chairman Wayne Herring taking the time to discuss the Certification Review process and in particular the corrective action surrounding Environmental Justice (EJ) with us. We believe it shows your dedication to the MUMPO planning process and your area. I do agree with you in that the corrective action regarding EJ measures and impacts should have been a recommendation. Loretta will be revising the report to reflect that decision as well as to change the reference from E J to Title VI. Since you are in the process of updating your transportation plan the recommendation requires that a process be developed and implemented with the 2035 plan update. It is also recommended in the Certification Review Report that you document the outcomes and discussions used to rank your transportation projects. This documentation and additional mapping could be a tool for helping to determine the equitable delivery of your transportation program.

I hope that you will agree with me when I say that we at the Federal Highway Administration are indeed your partner in the planning process and are available to provide assistance and support for any recommendations, corrective actions and all transportation planning efforts you undertake.

Loretta will work with you to set up a schedule to ensure implementation of the near-term recommendations and corrective action in the report. The FHWA Planning and Program Development Team are planning to conduct mid-term reviews of the progress the Transportation Management Areas are making towards addressing all findings in the certification review reports. Loretta will lead this effort as well.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

File:

Reading File: 8b22pd01.lwb

LWBarren:kws:02/22/08