

Capital District Transportation Committee Transportation Certification Review

Certification Report: September 2016

On-site Review: March 14-16, 2016

FINAL DRAFT

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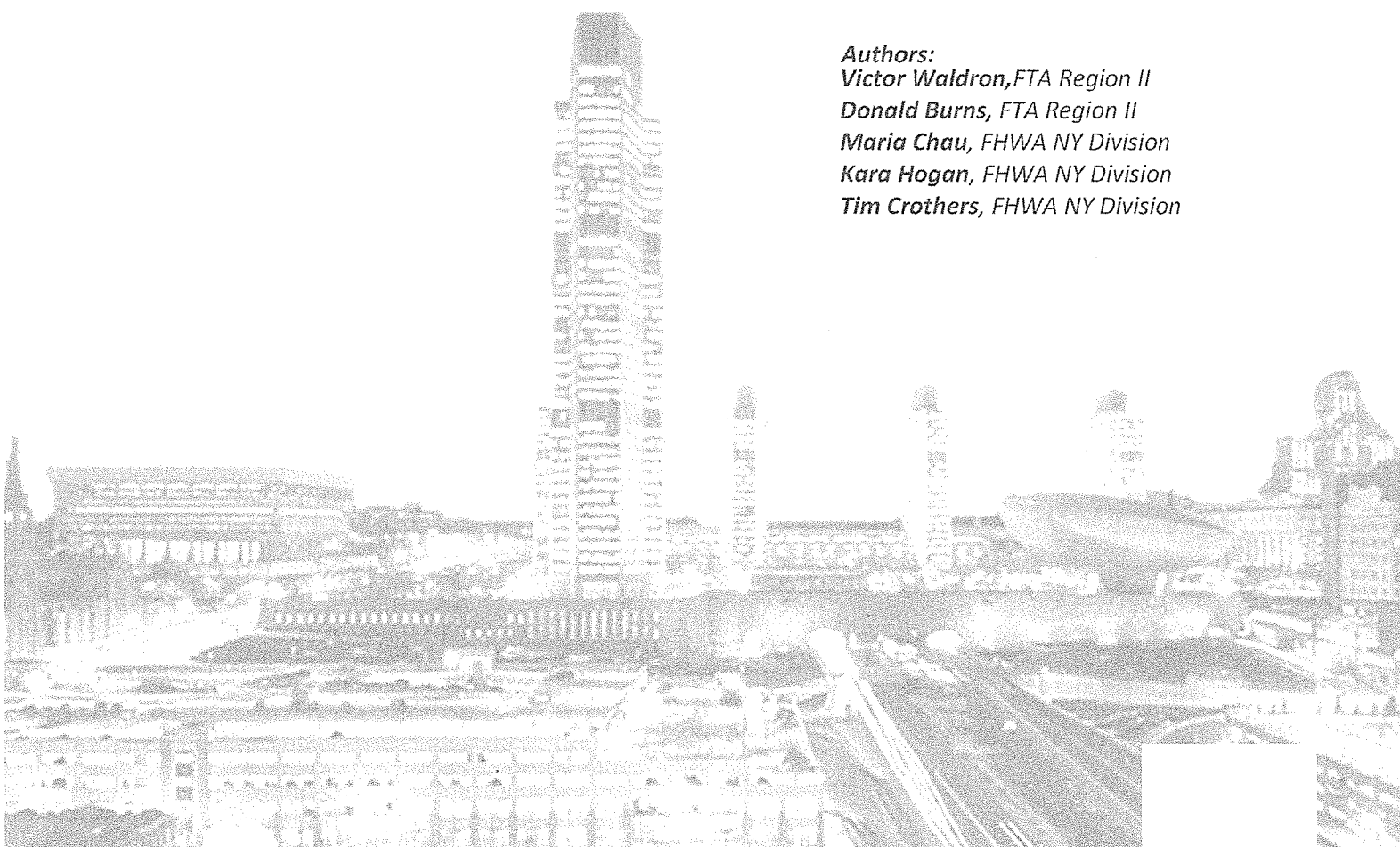
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Executive Summary

Main Conclusions

The transportation planning process in the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), NY urbanized area, as carried out by the CDTC, is a very professional endeavor but due to the need to address corrective actions it is hereby certified with condition.

Background

The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration reviewed the CDTC transportation planning process in accordance with the requirement of *23 CFR 450.336 (b)* that all urbanized areas over 200,000 be reviewed at least every four years to assure that the planning process is in accordance with federal regulations.

The review included a desk-audit, a site visit to Albany, NY (March 2016), discussions with member agencies and the Central Staff, a night meeting for public input, and a published 30 day commenting period.

Noteworthy Practices

There are many examples of good transportation planning practices in the CDTC process. We note, for example, the TIP development's use of Benefit Cost Analysis and Merit criteria scoring, NYSDOT and CDTC's Bridge Assessment Study which assisted local municipalities to engage in preventative maintenance practices, CDTC's reengagement in Freight Planning Activities, and working with municipalities in the development of ADA Transition Plans. We specifically commend the professional work of the CDTC Staff and Executive Director for his dedication.

Recommendations and Concerns

Besides the frequent commendations of existing practices, the report offers a few recommendations for consideration in furthering program excellence. We have also identified two items that the CDTC needs to attend to concerning the LRTP Financial Plan and TIP Fiscal Constraint.

Corrective Actions

The Federal Team has issued two corrective actions in the following areas:

1. LRTP - Financial Plan - 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11)(i-viii)
2. TIP - Fiscal Constraint - 23 CFR 450.326(k)



Recommendations

The Federal Team has issued recommendations in the following areas:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan
2. Unified Planning Work Program
3. Transportation Improvement Program
4. Title VI, Civil Rights, and Related Requirements
5. Integrating Freight into the Transportation Planning Process
6. Intelligent Transportation System
7. Safety and Security Planning

Commendations

The Federal Team has provided commendation in the following areas:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan
2. Unified Planning Work Program
3. Transportation Improvement Program
4. Title VI, Civil Rights, and Related Requirements
5. Integrating Freight into the Transportation Planning Process
6. Intelligent Transportation System

Long Range Transportation Plan

Corrective Action

- The LRTP Financial Plan does not meet the requirements of 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11)(i-viii) in demonstrating how the adopted regional transportation plan can be implemented. CDTC must update the Financial Plan and amend it into the LRTP by June 30th, 2017. The Financial Plan should clearly identify revenue sources and contain the forecast of revenue and cost estimates using identified inflation rates to reflect 'year of expenditure dollars' demonstrating fiscal constraint.

CDTC will address this corrective action.

Recommendation

- The Federal Team recommends that the CDTC utilizes the following resources to develop financial plans in order to satisfy the regulations contained in 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11)(i-viii):

USDOT Transportation Planning Capacity Building website

http://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_fiscal.asp

Fiscal Constraint in Long-Range Transportation Planning: Best Practices Case Studies

http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/fiscalConstraint_rpt.pdf

CDTC has no comment

Commendation

- The New Visions 2040 is well a thought out endeavor. The task groups developed excellent white papers documenting national trends, regional values, existing conditions, researching relevant best practices, and formulating attainable recommendations for the LRTP. CDTC's *funding ballot* is a good method of soliciting funding priorities from members and stakeholders and an example of cooperatively defining Regional values.



Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- We recommend that CDTC provide information on the deliverables of work plan activities and when a task began, when work plan activities are schedule begin with an estimated completion date.

CDTC will address this recommendation.

- The Federal Team encourages the CDTC to continue pursuing Planning Environmental Linkage practices in the development of their plans and studies such as the I-787 Hudson Waterfront Corridor Study. Linking the planning process to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process will position plans and planning studies in streamlining the environmental phase and be relevant beyond the planning process, especially in linking a planning study's *Vision and Goals* with *NEPA Purpose and Need*.

CDTC has been a leader in PEL practices since their inception. Whenever it is relevant, we link our planning process to the NEPA process. Included in our "Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program" Administrative Procedures is a section and discussion of PEL practices and a PEL Questionnaire that must be completed for every study where applicable.

Commendation

NYSDOT Region 1, a member of CDTC, along with the MPO staff developed a Bridge Assessment Study to assist local municipalities to implement preservation treatments which can be used to group projects on the state and local level and take advantage of economy of scale. The Federal Team considers this a best practice.

TIP Development and Project Selection

Corrective Action

- The 2016-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) does not demonstrate fiscal constraint by year as required by 23 CFR 450.326(k). Our review of the TIP indicated that it did not meet fiscal constraint with 21% being over programmed in the 1st year and 7% in 3rd year. The MPO must provide an updated Fiscal Constraint table which demonstrates and maintains *fiscal constraint by year* by March 30th, 2017 to ensure that transportation funding is accurately reflected in the TIP.

MPOs in New York State receive their planning targets from the NYS Department of Transportation (NYS DOT). Because for many reasons and for many years it has been the NYS DOT and CDTC practice to slightly over-program TIP funding, we will work with the Department to address this corrective action.

Recommendation

- The Federal Team found that some Project Descriptions (ie. ITS projects) were missing scope, element, location, and purpose. We recommend that CDTC reviews the NYSDOT STIP Project Description Reference to provide clarity in TIP descriptions for the federal agencies and the public.

CDTC will address this recommendation.

- The Federal Team recommends CDTC reviews the performance of their unamended TIP and evaluates the schedule of the projects in the TIP for readiness to be obligated in the year they are programmed. We recommend CDTC consider amending the TIP prior to the end of the Federal Fiscal Year to reflect projects whose schedules align with obligations for the corresponding federal fiscal year.

CDTC along with the NYS DOT has done this prior to the end of the Federal Fiscal Year for many years.

- We recommend CDTC update Figure 1. (Page 65) in the 2016-2021 TIP to include percentages in the TIP portion of the pie chart's comparison.

This has been done.

Commendation

- CDTC's updated their TIP development process for this upcoming STIP cycle to provide a rigorous evaluation process that includes Benefit/Cost ratio and Merit based criteria such as *Project Delivery, ADA, and Health Benefits* where negative impacts yielded negative scores. These changes to the criteria widen region-wide opportunities and support successful implementation of projects.

Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- None at this time.

Commendation

- None at this time.

Non-motorized - Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation Planning

Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- None at this time.

Commendation

- None at this time.

Title VI, Civil Rights, and Related Requirements

Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- In light of recent webinars and guidance from USDOT and Headquarters, we recommend CDTC begin to expand its consideration of EJ impacts in program and project-level decision making to include all populations protected under Title VI/Nondiscrimination program, (race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, low-income, and LEP). This may include finding 'community ambassadors' representative of the EJ community to encourage those within the community to engage in public outreach efforts during impact considerations.

We believe that our UPWP Task 1.66, Environmental Justice, Title VI, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, does just what is recommended above. This year we revised and updated our "Title VI and other Civil Rights Plan." We also established an Environmental Justice/Title VI Task Force whose first meeting was held at our office on September 9, 2016 and whose second meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2016. We are currently in the process of defining our Task Force objectives and expanding its membership.

- We recommend that CDTC post the information of their Title VI Coordinator, Title VI Assurance, and complaints procedure in their Title VI plan directly on their website and not only as a downloadable pdf file on the website.

CDTC is still in the process of building our new website. We will address this recommendation.

Commendation

- CDTC's establishment of the ADA Working Group is a best practice for New York State in terms of assisting municipalities in meeting these requirements and treating this as a region-wide effort.

Integrating Freight in the Transportation Planning Process

Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- We encourage CDTC to continue working with NYSDOT and the NYSAMPO Freight Working Group in the prioritization of freight projects, especially during the development of the State Freight Plan.

Because of our own interest in freight, our own newly revised Regional Freight Plan, and our active involvement in the NYSAMPO Freight Working Group, CDTC has been directly involved in the development of the State Freight Plan since the project's beginning in 2014.

- We encourage CDTC to consider working with freight stakeholders in the Region to develop projects of National or Regional Significance based on the recommendations from the CDTC's Freight and Goods Movement Study to compete for upcoming FASTlane Grant and TIGER Grant funding opportunities.

CDTC will address this recommendation.

Commendation

- CDTC reinvigorated freight planning efforts in the Region by leading and supporting a host of events to engage with Regional Freight Stakeholders, completing the CDTC *Regional Freight and Goods Movement Study in March 2016*, and served as a catalyst to resolve freight logistic issues connecting private sector employers with public sector agencies.



Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- The Federal Team recommends that CDTC ensures the consistency between the Regional ITS Architecture (RITSA) and regional planning documents. CDTC should provide project descriptions in the TIP that reflects the type of ITS work being funded and link it to ITS service packages in the Regional ITS Architecture when necessary.

CDTC will address this recommendation.

- The Federal Team recommends that CDTC supports the establishment of a stand-alone multi-disciplinary Traffic Incident Management (TIM) working group and development of TIM performance measures.
- In addition, we recommend CDTC recognizes the need to address growing cybersecurity risks in the development and implementation of technologies.

Because NYS DOT has responsibility for ITS management and operation in our region, we believe that these recommendations are more appropriately forwarded to them. As in the past, we will work with the NYS DOT to implement these recommendations.

Commendation

- CDTC is commended for its pro-active and innovative approach to incorporating signal technologies and improving signal operations, including implementing TSP, coordinating signals across multiple jurisdictions, consideration of new adaptive signal control strategies, and recognition of the potential for remote management of signal timings from the TMC.

Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- With the advent of National Performance Measures we encourage CDTC to work with FHWA and NYSDOT on implementing strategies for locals to compete for HSIP funding to address High Accident Locations (HAL).

CDTC has been working with our members to develop HSIP projects for many years. This year we implemented a 2 step approach. In the first round, we solicited and funded local HSIP projects that with staff assistance met the HSIP eligibility requirements. In the second round we will complete a Regional Safety Plan which with consultant assistance will identify additional local HSIP projects, determine their eligibility, and complete the necessary safety calculations. This second round is similar to our approach to identify local bridge projects 2 years ago, which was very successful.

- We encourage CDTC members and staff to consider developing a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) as a measure to plan for operating through emergency events.

CDTC has a Continuing Operations Plan that was drafted in 2010 and a Disaster Recovery Plan for its computer operations that was drafted in 2012, both of which will be reviewed and updated next year.

Commendation

- None at this time.

Performance-Based Planning

Corrective Action

- None at this time.

Recommendation

- None at this time.

Commendation

- None at this time.