



U.S. Department of Transportation

Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Federal Highway Administration

Federal Transit Administration

Youngstown, OH-PA Transportation Management Area Eastgate Council of Governments (Eastgate)



October 2020
Summary Report



Photos on cover, sources: SMART2 Network Groundbreaking, Eastgate website; MTP Gears, MTP 2018 update; Eastgate logo; Youngstown Micro mobility Blueprint, June 2019; Regional Freight Study; Connecting Boardman, Active Transportation Plan; Connecting Boardman, Active Transportation Plan





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PREFACE

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning 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. After the 2010 Census, the Secretary of Transportation designated 183 TMAs – 179 urbanized areas over 200,000 in population plus four urbanized areas that received special designation. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), a site visit, and preparation of a Certification Review report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal law and regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO, the State DOT, and transit operators in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA Certification Review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect regional issues and needs. Consequently, the scope and depth of the Certification Review reports will vary significantly.

The Certification Review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other stewardship and oversight activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) approval, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), metropolitan and statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal interactions provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

While the Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of Certification Review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort. The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare certification reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review. To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA/FTA will continue to improve the clarity of the Certification Review reports.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 11-12, 2020, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Youngstown, OH-PA urbanized area. FHWA and FTA are required to review, evaluate, and certify—at least every four years—the transportation planning processes for each Transportation Management Area (TMA). This report focuses on the certification review conducted on the Eastgate Council of Governments (Eastgate).

This certification review determines whether the Eastgate MPO meets the Federal requirements of Section 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450 (23 CFR 450), Subpart C and 49 CFR 613 - Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming. The review may also suggest opportunities to enhance the quality of the planning process and ensure that Federal projects can advance without delay. In addition, as a TMA designated as a “maintenance” area for certain air pollutants, the certification review must evaluate Eastgate’s planning processes to ensure it meets the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) air quality conformity requirements contained in 40 CFR 51—Requirements for Preparation, Adoption, and Submittal of Implementation Plans.

The TMA certification review process used by FHWA and FTA includes three parts: 1) Conduct a desk review of key documents and materials that demonstrate compliance with Federal planning laws and guidance; 2) conduct a site visit and lead discussions with TMA staff to clarify and understand how the MPO approaches its obligations under 23 U.S.C. and 49 U.S.C.; and 3) transmit the TMA Certification Review Report.

This report documents the major findings and recommendations of the review. These certification reviews can result in “corrective actions,” “recommendations,” or “comments.” Corrective actions describe conditions that lead to a failure to meet Federal planning regulations and maintain USDOT certification and provide tasks for the TMA to undertake to rectify these conditions. Recommendations should be addressed to enhance existing processes and more fully comply with Federal planning requirements. Comments are opportunities for FHWA and FTA to provide observations or commendations for the work accomplished.

On August 11 and August 12, 2020, the Federal team held a virtual on-site review that included discussions with MPO staff, Western Reserve Transit Board (WRTA) and Trumbull County Transportation Board (TCTB), state and local government staff, and MPO policy board members. See Appendix A for a list of the participants. A virtual public meeting, was held on August 11, 2020 with a public comment period consistent with Eastgate’s public involvement procedures, requesting comments from the public on Eastgate’s planning process. The public comment period was open August 6 through August 17, 2020. See Appendix C for more details



on the certification review process and public comments. The Federal TMA certification review of Eastgate resulted in no corrective actions for the TMA certification review but contains recommendations and commendations.

FHWA and FTA find Eastgate to be compliant with all applicable Federal transportation planning requirements, and therefore, jointly certify the transportation planning process in the Youngstown, OH-PA Transportation Management Area.

This report documents the certification review process and indicates three commendations highlighting noteworthy practice and two recommendations to enhance the overall transportation planning process. The recommendations and commendations are listed below.

Recommendation 1: The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate ensure that their public involvement program is inclusive and consistent for all their activities in both the general planning and transit planning environments. Their public involvement should be clearly defined, highlighted and documented in a cohesive and transparent manner. Eastgate should project and highlight their public involvement activities and processes in documentation and on their web site. When reviewing their planning documents, they should actively seek comments as a result of their public involvement efforts beyond Federal agencies and member organizations. It is recommended that Eastgate develop a stand-alone document to fully outline their public participation process and assess its effectiveness. In addition, a separate area on the web site should be created to allow people to provide comments, find out how to be involved in the planning process, and refine and clarify the Citizen’s Advisory Board page.

Recommendation 2: While the Federal Review Team recognizes that Eastgate is following the processes outlined in the current ODOT MPO/RTPO Title VI Manual, necessary revisions have been identified for that ODOT manual to more accurately follow the complaint process for complaints received under Title VI regulations, as outlined by the US DOT and FHWA regulations. Once these updates have been made, all Ohio MPOs and RTPOs, including Eastgate, will need to revise their individual Title VI Plans to conform with these changes. The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate coordinate with ODOT at that time, to ensure their Title VI Plan reflects all necessary changes.

Eastgate should identify Title VI policies for the Title VI protected groups, specifically race, color, and national origin. Many MPOs around the state have inadvertently included other populations in Title VI policies, including elderly, zero car households, disability status, etc. However, plans and other material should explicitly state Title VI coverage as it is indicated by law. Finally, Eastgate should consider having an updated schedule for its Title VI Implementation Plan on an annual basis, including documentation of its accomplishments for the year past, as well as goals the coming year.



Commendation 1: The Federal Team *commends* Eastgate for its proactive approach to develop and conduct a Multimodal Network Connectivity Analysis study to examine the transportation network and explore in detail, how the network fits together and provides for the future. The use of a measured data approach to designate targeted areas and focus attention on them has led to a better understanding of deficiencies within the existing transportation network, especially related to bike and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility. Their willingness to participate and share with FHWA and other agencies promotes the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.

Commendation 2: Eastgate is *commended* for their coordination efforts in the use of a U.S. DOT BUILD grant to develop the Youngstown SMART² network. They are working with other transportation partners to make mobility improvements, improve safety, and integrate technology such as a self-driving circulator shuttle, into a modern and efficient multi modal transportation system in downtown Youngstown. They have used data to designate some current alternative fuel-ready corridors and have solicited other potential corridors using data to pinpoint locations that meet EPA's criteria. They have created a database to track station locations which can be updated by communities, as stations are added and be directly downloaded into EPA's database. As the project team leader, Eastgate is urging their partners into a new level of recognition by coordinating meetings and assuring progress on the project with project team members, designers, and other parties. Specific to the autonomous shuttles, Eastgate is working diligently with ODOT, DriveOhio, and other project partners to assure the shuttles are ready for implementation once the roadway projects are complete.

Commendation 3: Eastgate is *commended* for developing the Funding Performance Measures Report (2019) which documents how analysis of seven performance targets is used as a tool to assess how well priorities are set for the program and how the agency is administering its planning funds. Eastgate uses the report to add value to the regional transportation process and contributes to the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.



2020 EASTGATE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (Eastgate) TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA (TMA) CERTIFICATION REVIEW

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) review, evaluate, and certify—at least every four years—the transportation planning processes for each Transportation Management Area (TMA). This report focuses on the certification review conducted on the Eastgate Council of Governments.

This certification review determines whether the Eastgate Council of Governments (MPO) meets the Federal requirements of Section 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450 (23 CFR 450), Subpart C and 49 CFR 613 - Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming. The review may also suggest opportunities to enhance the quality of the planning process and ensure that Federal projects can advance without delay.

The previous Eastgate Certification Review, completed in 2016, resulted in no corrective actions, but did include recommendations and commendations. Appendix B summarizes the resolutions to the recommendations in the 2016 Certification Review. The current 2020 Eastgate Certification Review also did not identify any corrective actions. There are recommendations in this report that warrant close attention and follow-up, as well as areas that Eastgate is performing very well and that are to be commended. The review did identify two recommendations and three commendations. The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Youngstown, OH-PA urbanized area meets Federal planning requirements. The table below provides a summary of the review elements.

Review Area	Finding
Recommendations/Commendations/Comments	
Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements relating to Metro Planning Area boundaries
None	
Transportation Planning Process, MPO Structure and Agreements	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements that responsibilities be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operators serving the MPA.
None	
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
Eastgate is <i>commended</i> for developing the Funding Performance Measures Report (2019) which documents how analysis of seven performance targets is used as a tool to assess how well priorities are set for the program and how the agency is administering its planning funds. Eastgate uses the report to add value to the regional transportation process and contribute to the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.	
Transit Planning	Transit is integrated into Eastgate’s planning process and fulfills the regulatory requirements.



None	
Transportation Improvement Program	The Eastgate TIP is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations and practices.
None	
Unified Planning Work Program	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements relating to the development of a regional UPWP.
<p>The Federal Team <i>commends</i> Eastgate for its proactive approach to develop and conduct a Multimodal Network Connectivity Analysis study to examine the transportation network and explore in detail, how the network fits together and provides for the future. The use of a measured data approach to designate targeted areas and focus attention on them has led to a better understanding of deficiencies within the existing transportation network, especially related to bike and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility. Their willingness to participate and share with FHWA and other agencies promotes the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.</p> <p>Eastgate is <i>commended</i> for their coordination efforts in the use of a U.S. DOT BUILD grant to develop the Youngstown SMART² network. They are working with other transportation partners to make mobility improvements, improve safety, and integrate technology such as a self-driving circulator shuttle, into a modern and efficient multi modal transportation system in downtown Youngstown. They have used data to designate some current alternative fuel-ready corridors and have solicited other potential corridors using data to pinpoint locations that meet EPA’s criteria. They have created a database to track station locations which can be updated by communities, as stations are added and be directly downloaded into EPA’s database. As the project team leader, Eastgate is urging their partners into a new level of recognition by coordinating meetings and assuring progress on the project with project team members, designers, and other parties. Specific to the autonomous shuttles, Eastgate is working diligently with ODOT, DriveOhio, and other project partners to assure the shuttles are ready for implementation once the roadway projects are complete.</p>	
Public Participation	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements relating to public participation in the planning process.
<p>The Federal Review Team <i>recommends</i> that Eastgate ensure that their public involvement program is inclusive and consistent for all their activities in both the general planning and transit planning environments. Their public involvement should be clearly defined, highlighted and documented in a cohesive and transparent manner. Eastgate should project and highlight their public involvement activities and processes in documentation and on their web site. When reviewing their planning documents, they should actively seek comments as a result of their PI efforts beyond Federal agencies and member organizations. It is recommended that Eastgate develop a stand-alone document to fully outline their public participation. process and assess its effectiveness. In addition, a separate area on the web site should be created to allow people to provide comments, find out how to be involved in the planning process, and refine and clarify the Citizen’s Advisory Board page.</p>	
Civil Rights: Title VI, Civil Rights Act, Age Discrimination Act, Sec. 504 Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act	Civil Rights is integrated into Eastgate’s planning process and fulfills the regulatory requirements.



While the Federal Review Team recognizes that Eastgate is following the processes outlined in the current ODOT MPO/RTPO Title VI Manual, necessary revisions have been identified for that ODOT manual to more accurately follow the complaint process for complaints received under Title VI regulations, as outlined by the US DOT and FHWA regulations. Once these updates have been made, all Ohio MPOs and RTPOs, including Eastgate, will need to revise their individual Title VI Plans to conform with these changes. The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate coordinate with ODOT at that time, to ensure their Title VI Plan reflects all necessary changes.

Eastgate should identify Title VI policies for the Title VI protected groups, specifically race, color, and national origin. Many MPOs around the state have inadvertently included other populations in Title VI policies, including elderly, zero car households, disability status, etc. However, plans and other material should explicitly state Title VI coverage as it is indicated by law. Finally, Eastgate should consider having an updated schedule for its Title VI Implementation Plan on an annual basis, including documentation of its accomplishments for the year past, as well as goals the coming year.

Consultation and Coordination	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements for consultation and coordination throughout the transportation planning process.
None	
List of Obligated Projects	Eastgate planning for a regional list of obligated projects is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations and practices.
None	
Freight	The review team finds that Eastgate is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements for freight planning.
None	
Environmental Mitigation/Planning Environmental Linkage	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements that environmental mitigation be set forth in connection with the MTP and include discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities for the transportation improvements and potential areas to carry them out. Eastgate actively provides for linking transportation planning and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes.
None	
Transportation Safety	Eastgate planning for safety and security is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations and practices.
None	
Transportation Security Planning	Eastgate planning for safety and security is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations and practices.
None	
Nonmotorized Planning/Livability	The review team finds that Eastgate is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements for nonmotorized planning and livability.
None	
Integration of Land Use and Transportation	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements for integration of land use and transportation.
None	
Travel Demand Forecasting	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements for travel demand forecasting.
None	
Air Quality Clean Air Act	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements that their planning process integrate air quality and metropolitan transportation planning, such that transportation investments support clean air goals.
None	



Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations/ Performance-based Planning and Programming (PBPP)	Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements for a congestion management process (CMP) as a systematic approach for managing congestion through safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system. The Review Team finds that Eastgate is in compliance with requirements at the MTP include Management and Operations (M&O) of the transportation network as an integrated, multimodal approach to optimize the performance of the existing transportation infrastructure. This includes M&O strategies including measurable regional operations goals and objectives and specific performance measures. The Review Team finds Eastgate in is compliance with the requirements for PBPP.
None	



SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Review Process

The initial certification review was conducted in 2004. Subsequent certification reviews were conducted in 2009, 2012, and 2016. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided in Appendix B. This report details the fifth review, which consisted of a formal virtual site visit and a virtual public involvement opportunity, conducted on August 11, 2020.

Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, ODOT, WRTA and TCTB, and Eastgate MPO staff. A full list of participants is included in Appendix A.

A desk audit of current documents and correspondence was completed prior to the site visit. In addition to the formal review, routine oversight mechanisms provide a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings.

The certification review covers the transportation planning process conducted cooperatively by the MPO, State, and public transportation operators. Background information, current status, key findings, and recommendations are summarized in the body of the report for the following subject areas selected by FHWA and FTA staff for on-site review:

- Transportation Planning Process including MPO Structure and Agreements
- Unified Planning Work Program
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Transit Planning
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Public Participation
- Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)
- Freight Planning
- Transportation Safety
- Nonmotorized Planning/Livability
- Air Quality
- Congestion Management Process /Management and Operations/Performance Based Planning and Programming



Documents Reviewed

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

- Eastgate Planning Prospectus
- MOU Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MPA Interagency Performance Planning Agreement
- Coordination of the Transportation Planning Processes between Eastgate and Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS)
- Coordination of the Transportation Planning Processes between Eastgate and Mercer County Regional Planning Commission
- Letter of Agreement to Distribute FTA Funds Among the Western Reserve Transit Authority, Trumbull County Transit Board, and the City of Sharon, PA
- MOU for Cooperative Transportation Planning between Eastgate and the Trumbull County Transit Board
- MOU for Cooperative Transportation Planning between Eastgate and the Western Reserve Transit Authority
- Designation of Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA) for the Youngstown OH-PA UZA
- Gohio Commute Interagency Agreement between Eastgate and Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
- Fiscal Year 2021 Unified Planning Work Program
- MPO MTP, 2040
- FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program and Self-Certification
- Annual Listing of Projects Using Federal Funds FY 19
- Funding Policy Guidelines
- Funding Performance Measures Report
- Western Reserve Transit Authority Transit Asset Management Plan
- Trumbull County Transit Board Transit Asset Management Plan
- Trumbull County and YSU Agreement - Trumbull County ADA Transition Plan
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
- Regional Bicycle Plan
- Title VI Plan/ Public Participation Process
- Regional Freight Study



PROGRAM REVIEW

Transportation Planning Process (Including MPO Structure and Agreements)

Regulatory Basis

In urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 or more, Federal planning law (23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 CFR 450) calls upon local officials to cooperate with states and public transportation providers in undertaking a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) multi-modal transportation planning process.

In metropolitan areas, Federal planning law (23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5304) requires each MPO to cooperate with the state and local officials, to develop a long-range metropolitan transportation plan, transportation improvement program, and unified planning work program (UPWP). These planning and programming documents are developed through a 3C process carried out on a statewide basis but coordinated with the metropolitan planning processes of the MPO. Funding is available from FHWA and FTA to support metropolitan transportation planning. Planning programs are jointly administered by FHWA and FTA.

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a) state the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator serving the MPA.

Current Status

Eastgate completes required transportation planning activities and ensures that all member jurisdictions are included in planning and project level decisions made by the Eastgate Policy Board.

Eastgate has established a strong leadership role and developed effective partnerships with member agencies. Its organizational structure supports a positive framework for conducting a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) planning process.

The Eastgate Policy Board supports strategic leadership for enhancing the role of the MPO using the Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee to guide the direction of the MPO.



Eastgate has made significant enhancements to its data management system by developing and maintaining appropriate data sets used in its reports and regional GIS mapping system.

The collaborative planning activities completed by Eastgate and explained in the UPWP contributes to the successful execution of the 3C planning process.

Eastgate and the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC – it's MPO is the Shenango Valley Area Transportation Study or SVATS and is responsible for the Pennsylvania portion of the TMA) have a MOU in place to coordinate the transportation planning process for Mahoning, Trumbull and Mercer Counties. The MOU defines the roles and responsibilities of the two MPOs and how the federally mandated 3C transportation planning process is conducted between the MPOs in the Youngstown, OH-PA area. Each agency coordinates state and regional Transportation Plans, Transportation Improvement Programs, Transportation Planning Work Programs, Air Quality Maintenance and Conformity, Transit planning activities, and other federal, state, and regional planning activities. (latest MOU dated August 15, 2016).

Finding

Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements in undertaking a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) multi-modal transportation planning process.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Commendations

None

Unified Planning Work Program

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.308 sets the requirement that planning activities performed under Titles 23 and 49 U.S.C. be documented in a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operator, shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the MPA and the work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate the agency that will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding, and sources of funds.



Current Status

The Eastgate UPWP is prepared annually and coincides with the state fiscal year which runs from July 1 through June 30. The Federal team reviewed the active FY2021 Eastgate UPWP in preparation for this review.

The current UPWP identifies a \$1,353,926 annual budget to carry out the federally-funded transportation planning activities throughout the region.

The UPWP identifies Eastgate's continuing prioritization of collecting data to assess the region's transportation needs, setting performance measures to maintain transportation assets in a state of good repair, and ensuring transit services are directed to areas of need.

FHWA/FTA, ODOT and Eastgate use the annual UPWP update meetings to discuss TMA certification-related topics, as well as other technical and training opportunities.

Eastgate identifies Title VI, Environmental Justice (EJ), Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) planning priorities and activities as part of its annual UPWP.

The UPWP identifies Eastgate's role in acting as the lead entity for selecting Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects throughout the region.

With the use of planning funds, Eastgate also acts as the regional lead for the Gohio Commute program that helps Ohio commuters commute efficiently. Through this work, Eastgate has been encouraging carpooling as a more viable commuting option along with other possibilities.

Finding

Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements relating to the development of a regional UPWP.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Commendations

The Federal Team *commends* Eastgate for its proactive approach to develop and conduct a Multimodal Network Connectivity Analysis study to examine the transportation network and explore in detail, how the network fits together and provides for the future. The use of a measured data approach to designate targeted areas and focus attention on them has led to a better understanding of deficiencies within the existing transportation network, especially



related to bike and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility. Their willingness to participate and share with FHWA and other agencies promotes the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.

Eastgate is *commended* for their coordination efforts in the use of a U.S. DOT BUILD grant to develop the Youngstown SMART² network. They are working with other transportation partners to make mobility improvements, improve safety, and integrate technology such as a self-driving circulator shuttle, into a modern and efficient multi modal transportation system in downtown Youngstown. They have used data to designate some current alternative fuel-ready corridors and have solicited other potential corridors using data to pinpoint locations that meet EPA's criteria. They have created a database to track station locations which can be updated by communities, as stations are added and be directly downloaded into EPA's database. As the project team leader, Eastgate is urging their partners into a new level of recognition by coordinating meetings and assuring progress on the project with project team members, designers, and other parties. Specific to the autonomous shuttles, Eastgate is working diligently with ODOT, DriveOhio, and other project partners to assure the shuttles are ready for implementation once the roadway projects are complete.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Regulatory Basis

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.322 (a) "The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon...the transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of a multi-modal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand."

The MTP is required to provide a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process. The plan needs to consider all applicable issues related to the transportation systems development, land use, employment, economic development, natural environment, and housing and community development.

23 CFR 450.324(c) requires the MPO to review and update the MTP at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every 5 years in attainment areas to reflect current and forecasted transportation, population, land use, employment, congestion, and economic conditions and trends.

Under 23 CFR 450.324(f), the MTP is required, at a minimum, to consider the following:



- Projected transportation demand
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities
- Operational and management strategies
- Congestion management process
- Capital investment and strategies to preserve transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of proposed transportation facilities
- Potential environmental mitigation activities
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities
- Transportation and transit enhancements
- A financial plan

Current Status

Work is progressing on the new MTP (2050), the scope is being developed to specifically address and include each of the National Planning factors under 23 CFR450.324(f). The National Planning Factors are the foundational elements of the 2050 MTP and are the establishing structure for the document. Eastgate is also structuring the new MTP to seamlessly integrate with the vision that ODOT has set forth for the State of Ohio's transportation system in the Access Ohio 2045 long range transportation plan. Developing goals, objectives, and trends that are complementary to what was identified in Access Ohio 2045, Eastgate's 2050 MTP will reflect a long-range transportation plan that best represents the needs of the local communities as well as the priorities statewide.

The details of the *2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update* provided context on planning factors utilized by ODOT and clarified that Eastgate works through ODOT for its travel demand model, therefore no modeling takes place at Eastgate. Even though the level of detail may be less, the elements that are being discussed in the new plan are being given full disclosure, clarity, and the required detail to make the intent and function known. Working with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and structuring the Overall Work Program, has laid the groundwork for the *2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan's* planning process.

Eastgate is fully incorporating existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, public transportation facilities, intercity bus facilities, multimodal and intermodal facilities, nonmotorized transportation facilities (e.g., pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors) to function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan. This includes due consideration of bicyclists and pedestrians per 23 U.S.C. 217(g).



Eastgate has developed a Transportation Asset Management Plan that provides an assessment of highway infrastructure. They also work closely with transit agencies as they assess their assets. Eastgate has conducted a review of existing and proposed transportation facilities, as population decline and minimal increase in travel demand pose obstacles in summarizing future needs.

Eastgate has developed a new Congestion Mgt. Plan (2019) and the 2019–2023 *Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (Eastgate) Transportation Safety Plan*. In the region, while transit is available as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the most common way to travel remains by car. The Plan presents solutions to the most challenging safety issues in the region and crash data was reviewed with stakeholders in the area. This document presents the best approach to lowering fatalities and serious injuries in the region, and includes: **Vision, Goal and Objectives** providing a framework for identifying safety programs, projects and policies; Four emphasis areas, **Intersections, Distracted Drivers, Speed, and Alcohol Impairment** identifying the biggest safety challenges in the region; and an **Action Plan**, identifying locations, outlining programmatic and project solutions and showing stakeholders where to focus their time and resources to make the most difference.

Finding

Eastgate is in compliance with the requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

Eastgate is *commended* for developing the Funding Performance Measures Report (2019) which documents how analysis of seven performance targets is used as a tool to assess how well priorities are set for the program and how the agency is administering its planning funds. Eastgate uses the report to add value to the regional transportation process and contribute to the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.



Transit Planning

Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.300(a) states: ...the MPO designated for each urbanized area is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process... to serve the mobility needs of people and freight... 23 CFR 450.306(b)(6) states: The metropolitan transportation planning process shall...enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes... 23 CFR 450.306(h) states: Preparation of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, as required by 49 USC 5310 should be coordinated and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Current Status

The Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA) is the primary provider of public transit services in the Eastgate region. The Trumbull County Transit Board (TCTB) is also a transit provider in the region. Both agencies are voting members of Eastgate's General Policy Board. Representatives from both WRTA and TCTB were present to discuss the agencies' transit situations and their relationship with the MPO. The City of Sharon in Pennsylvania also operates transit in the urbanized area. Sharon does not play a large role in the urbanized area due to the region's population being concentrated on the Ohio side in Mahoning and Trumbull counties.

Since the last certification review, WRTA became the sole designated recipient of Section 5307 (Urbanized Areas Formula) funding in Ohio. Sharon continues to be the Section 5307 designated recipient in Pennsylvania. WRTA has a well-defined service area in Youngstown. Since becoming the sole designated recipient, WRTA has been coordinating with Eastgate to address transit connections between Mahoning and Trumbull counties. Coordination efforts include holding regular public meetings to direct service to needed areas. WRTA received a State of Ohio data collection grant to supplement information collected from rider input. Eastgate is also working with the Trumbull County commissioners to address the transit needs within Trumbull County. The Section 5307 coordination work between WRTA, Eastgate and Trumbull County is ongoing and will ultimately lead to WRTA operating in a wider service area.

TCTB and WRTA continue to be designated recipients of Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) funding. TCTB and WRTA have had discussions with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) becoming the sole designated recipient of Section 5310 funding in the Youngstown urbanized area. It is WRTA's preference to have the Section 5310 program administered by ODOT, and TCTB does not currently have a dedicated local funding source to match Federal funding received from FTA. As such, Eastgate has programmed the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) without projects for TCTB to



maintain fiscal constraint. Eastgate has worked with both agencies to develop and adopt Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans (coordinated plans) for both providers. Eastgate is working with ODOT, TCTB and WRTA to update and consolidate their coordinated plans into a single regional plan. Eastgate plans to incorporate a similar regional planning approach for transit into its long-range plan update. The effort will reflect the feedback the MPO received from transit riders expressing the need for reliable, coordinated regional transit service.

Finding

Transit is integrated into Eastgate's planning process and fulfills the regulatory requirements.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

None

Transportation Improvement Program

Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c),(h) & (j) set forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under 23 CFR 450.326, the TIP must meet the following requirements:

- Must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years.
- Surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations, are required to be included in the TIP.
- List project description, cost, funding source, and identification of the agency responsible for carrying out each project.
- Projects need to be consistent with the adopted MTP.
- Must be fiscally constrained.
- The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.



Current Status

The Eastgate TIP, covering state fiscal years 2021-2024, programs all federally-assisted surface transportation projects throughout the region. The TIP meets the fiscal constraint requirements for SFY21-24 in that all projects in the region do not exceed the Federal amounts available for each fiscal year. The TIP incorporates highway and transit performance measures and demonstrates that projects are prioritized to keep assets in a state of good repair. The TIP is also consistent with Eastgate's adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Eastgate actively works with its transit partners to program transit related projects based on transit performance measures. The Eastgate website provides the public up to date mapping graphics that visually represent where projects programmed in the TIP are located. The TIP also provides mapping visualizations of the region's environmental justice areas overlaid by projects programmed in the TIP.

Finding

The Eastgate TIP is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations and practices.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

None

Public Participation

Regulatory Basis

The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.316, to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation and consultation throughout the development of the MTP and the TIP and is also included in 23 CFR 450.322 (f) (7) and (g) (1) (2), (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 (b). The MPO is also required to ensure that its public participation process is inclusive and nondiscriminatory under Title VI (49 CFR 20.5), Section 504 (49 CFR 27.7) and the ADA (28 CFR 35.130).

Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to



describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and a periodically reviewing of the effectiveness of the participation plan.

Current Status

Eastgate's TIP Public Involvement process is documented in appendix C of the TIP document. It identifies how the public is notified of future projects and how they can comment on possible effects and changes. Eastgate is constantly assessing barriers to access concerning the internet and information availability. They are taking a step-by-step approach and are cognizant of trying new ways to reach out to those who don't have access to the internet. Discussions are ongoing in anticipation of public participation for the new MTP development.

The 2020 national pandemic caused some confusion concerning how to conduct public involvement with the inability to have in-person access or meetings. Eastgate had some success in the recent past with virtual options and so felt they were a little ahead of other agencies. They were able to augment traditional avenues for public participation with various social media and e-mail blasts to let people know they should get in touch with their representatives and how to attend virtual meetings. In general, the public were supportive and appreciative of these options.

Citizen Advisory Board - There are currently 12 Citizen Advisory Board members responsible for engaging the public and conveying their thoughts, concerns and issues to Eastgate. CAB members sit on and vote on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the General Policy Board. CAB, TAC and Policy Board members are all provided information on a monthly basis on policy and projects and have specific access and/or are engaged on a day to day basis with Eastgate staff.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - The new MTP is scheduled to be completed by July 2023 and includes stakeholder involvement and public input activities in keeping with the current limitations. They have used resources like the USDOT guidebook on public involvement to help them develop new ways to connect with and provide access to the Eastgate planning process. Eastgate has an emphasis on improving the visualization of the Planning process and is exploring ways to make it more user-friendly, including working with FHWA Resource Center staff to assist them in their efforts.

Eastgate consistently adds to its tools to expand its outreach to marginalized populations and has a network of resources to enable outreach to various groups that have not traditionally



been afforded the opportunity to participate in the 3C Planning process. They continually ask if there are groups that aren't participating enough and explore new methods of outreach. They explore equity issues by examining which communities have received funding in the past and how, through their participation in the process, they inform Eastgate of their needs.

Environmental Justice - Eastgate identifies those projects in the TIP that may affect minority and/or low-income areas. They assure these areas are afforded the chance to participate by identifying these project locations, reaching out to local officials and residents, and working toward a solution through discussion of components of the future projects that may impact their everyday life.

Technology Challenged – Eastgate utilizes options such as a call-in option, in addition to an on-line connection, so people do not need to have a computer to have access – just a phone. They do feel that the in-person option is the optimum, to be fully conducive, and will never veer from in-person meetings, however, they are exploring other options to be used in conjunction with the in-person meetings.

Underrepresented – Eastgate utilizes members of the community that other feel comfortable talking to, known as peer guides. The peer guides relay the information and input to Eastgate to be taken into consideration in Eastgate's decisions.

Seniors - Eastgate has been reaching out to various agencies including the United Way, Independent Living Council, and others, on how to actively engage with seniors and educate them on participation and input opportunities for the planning process and various documents.

Transit – Transit meetings are well attended by Seniors and other underrepresented groups. Public participation associated with transit is working well and they are receiving information and input.

At this time, there is no schedule or process for review of the effectiveness of the public involvement procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process. Eastgate would like to develop an assessment process and then have it translate into a plan of action for moving forward. Although they encourage people to attend meetings and engage in the process, they have often found they are unable to have people fully commit and participate in the process. They have acknowledged this is an area that they need to focus on and assess its effectiveness. Eastgate does not have an established timeframe but is working to incorporate these assessment efforts into their next work program and as part of the public involvement and Title VI plans.



Finding

Public participation is integrated into Eastgate’s planning process and fulfills the regulatory requirements.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate ensure that their public involvement program is inclusive and consistent for all their activities in both the general planning and transit planning environments. Their public involvement should be clearly defined, highlighted and documented in a cohesive and transparent manner. Eastgate should project and highlight their public involvement activities and processes in documentation and on their web site. When reviewing their planning documents, they should actively seek comments as a result of their PI efforts beyond Federal agencies and member organizations. It is recommended that Eastgate develop a stand-alone document to fully outline their public participation. process and assess its effectiveness. In addition, a separate area on the web site should be created to allow people to provide comments, find out how to be involved in the planning process, and Eastgate should refine and clarify the Citizen’s Advisory Board page.

Civil Rights (Title VI, EJ, LEP, ADA)

Regulatory Basis

USDOT ensures nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (and other non-discrimination statutes). Title VI states “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate-impact discrimination (that stemming from neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups).

Planning regulations [23 CFR 450.334(a)(3)] require FHWA and FTA to certify that “the planning process . . . is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of . . . Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794.” The Title VI assurance adds sex (gender) and disability to characteristics protected against discrimination.



Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994), provides that “each Federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high or adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income population ...”. In compliance with this Executive Order, the USDOT Order on Environmental Justice was issued in 1997. Planning regulations (23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vii)) require that the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households that may face challenges accessing employment and other services, be sought out and considered. Executive Order 13166 - Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, ensures that, consistent with Title VI, persons with LEP have meaningful access to Federally conducted and funded programs and activities. The Order requires all agencies that provide Federal financial assistance to issue guidance on how Title VI applies to recipients of that assistance in their contact with persons who have LEP.

Current Status

Title VI Coordinator:

Eastgate currently has an employee designated as its Title VI Coordinator.

Title VI Implementation Plan:

Eastgate reports that it has no specific goals for its Title VI program but aims for compliance with federal regulations per its Title VI Implementation Plan. The Plan was last updated in 2018 to coincide with federal legislation. Eastgate reports that it used ODOT’s manual for Title VI and other resources ODOT has made available for subrecipients to update its own Title VI document and resources. Eastgate intends to update this plan as necessary. The plan is available to the public via a link on its website.

Title VI Pamphlet:

Eastgate reports that it has created a pamphlet on Title VI requirements that is distributed to its members agencies and to the public. It has received a significant amount of positive feedback from ODOT on the pamphlet and worked with ODOT’s Title VI and ADA Coordinators to improve its compliance with federal regulations. The pamphlet contains information regarding Title VI, Limited English Proficiency, Public Involvement and Eastgate’s Title VI complaint process.

Title VI Complaint Process:

Eastgate has not received Title VI and/or nondiscrimination complaints since the last Certification Review and has documented its complaint process in accordance with ODOT’s



MPO/RTPO Title VI Manual. It also makes this information available to the public via a link on its website.

Title VI in planning documents:

Eastgate has incorporated discussion of Title VI in Chapter 6 of its TIP and Chapter 3 of its MTP.

Census and other data for identifying protected groups in the planning process:

Eastgate reports that it has developed a demographic profile of the metropolitan planning area, as well as a demographic profile for the small area geography within the planning area.

Based on data from the American Community Survey five-year estimates 2018(ACS), Eastgate focused on two population groups, minority and low-income residents. The profile summarizes the data for both population groups by U.S. Census Tract. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a census tract as a geographic region defined for the purpose of taking a census. Eastgate reports that usually these coincide with the limits of cities, towns, and other administrative areas and several tracts commonly exist within a county. There are 125 census tracts in Mahoning and Trumbull County. A person was counted as a member of a minority group if they claimed any of the following: Black, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, or Hispanic.

Based on data used in this analysis, minorities comprise 18.7 percent of the Eastgate population. Therefore, any census tract with a percentage of population considered minority that is above 18.7 percent is considered to have a regionally significant concentration of minority population. A similar approach was taken to establish regionally significant concentrations of low-income populations. Based on the data used in the five-year 2014-2018 ACS, it was determined that the regional poverty rate was 17.6 percent of the population. Therefore, any census tract with a percentage of population considered in poverty that was above 17.6 percent was considered to have a regionally significant concentration of low-income population.

Identifying access and mobility needs of protected populations in the planning process:

Eastgate reports identifying the access and mobility needs of protected populations through its UPWP products, including a Sidewalk Gap Map, Multimodal Network Connectivity Study, Transit Demographic Interactive Map, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Inventory.

The process by which protected groups and those “traditionally underserved” can comment on the UPWP, the TIP, the Transportation Plan, and other documents prepared through the planning process include:

- Community events to provide the public with the opportunity to review, comment, and



provide feedback on transportation plans and activities by setting up displays at public events and places

- Holding office open houses to provide the public with the opportunity to tour agency offices and observe the tools and equipment used in the transportation planning process as well as review, comment, and provide feedback on transportation plans, reports, and activities
- Citizens Advisory Board meetings to inform specific and general audiences through the focused distribution of pertinent information and to encourage involvement through promotion of opportunities for the public to become active in the process
- Public opinion surveys to access widespread public opinion on various transportation plans and reports, activities, and miscellaneous issues in the area
- Social media to inform audiences through the distribution of pertinent information and to encourage involvement through promotion of opportunities for the public to become active in the process.

Standard Title VI Assurances:

Eastgate reports that it includes Title VI Assurances in all required documents as indicated in Appendix 4 of its Title VI Implementation Plan.

Finding

Civil Rights is integrated into Eastgate's planning process and fulfills the regulatory requirements.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

While the Federal Review Team recognizes that Eastgate is following the processes outlined in the current ODOT MPO/RTPO Title VI Manual, necessary revisions have been identified for that ODOT manual to more accurately follow the complaint process for complaints received under Title VI regulations, as outlined by the US DOT and FHWA regulations. Once these updates have been made, all Ohio MPOs and RTPOs, including Eastgate, will need to revise their individual Title VI Plans to conform with these changes. The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate coordinate with ODOT at that time, to ensure their Title VI Plan reflects all necessary changes.

Eastgate should identify Title VI policies for the Title VI protected groups, specifically race, color, and national origin. Many MPOs around the state have inadvertently included other



populations in Title VI policies, including elderly, zero car households, disability status, etc. However, plans and other material should explicitly state Title VI coverage as it is indicated by law. Finally, Eastgate should consider having an updated schedule for its Title VI Implementation Plan on an annual basis, including documentation of its accomplishments for the year past, as well as goals the coming year.

Freight Planning

Regulatory Basis

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) established in 23 U.S.C. 167 a policy to improve the condition and performance of the national freight network and achieve goals related to economic competitiveness and efficiency; congestion; productivity; safety, security, and resilience of freight movement; infrastructure condition; use of advanced technology; performance, innovation, competition, and accountability, while reducing environmental impacts.

In addition, 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR 450.306 specifically identify the need to address freight movement as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Current Status

Since Ohio has the fourth most Interstate mileage in the nation, the Youngstown urbanized area plays a role in freight movement due to its proximity to the Ohio Turnpike. Eastgate works closely with ODOT and its neighboring MPOs including Akron, Canton, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh on the implementation of the statewide freight plan.

Eastgate completed a Regional Freight Study in 2018, which provided an overview of freight transportation assets in the region, outlined trends in the freight industry, and recommended next steps for the MPO and its planning partners to support the efficient movement of goods. The study will help Eastgate frame freight issues and potential projects into its next long-range plan.

Findings

The review team finds that Eastgate is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements for freight planning.

Corrective Actions



None

Recommendations and Comments

None

Transportation Safety

Regulatory Basis

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

In addition, SAFETEA-LU established a core safety program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (23 U.S.C. 148), which introduced a mandate for states to have Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs). 23 CFR 450.306 (d) requires the metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the SHSP, and other transit safety and security planning.

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

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

Current Status

Safety and security are part of the formula that Eastgate uses to evaluate and rank projects for inclusion in its TIP and MTP. Eastgate develops tools to quickly assist its constituent communities gather information for decision making on safety projects. This includes the MPO's work in collecting data on distracted driving studies for roadways with higher levels of traffic. Eastgate is also responsible for implementing safety strategies in statewide planning documents by participating in ODOT stakeholder meetings. Eastgate participates in meetings for ODOT's Walk.Bike.Ohio initiative, which promotes safe and accessible transportation. Within the region, Eastgate facilitated several stakeholder meetings to help aid in the



development of the MPO's most recent Regional Safety Plan. The plan incorporates safety goals and objectives, performance measures and strategies.

Findings

Eastgate planning for safety and security is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations and practices.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

None

Nonmotorized Planning/Livability

Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 217(g) states that bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by each MPO under

23 U.S.C. 134. Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities.

23 CFR 450.306 sets forth the requirement that the scope of the metropolitan planning process "will increase the safety for motorized and non-motorized users; increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; and protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life.

Current Status

Eastgate completed a Multimodal Network Connectivity Study in 2019 which measured bicycle and pedestrian levels of service throughout the urbanized area. The study found that current sidewalk coverage, especially within one mile of activity centers could be improved. The study also found that the level of service ratings are sufficient to establish performance measures to track the improvement of this infrastructure as local communities plan and implement projects. The study will help inform the completion of Eastgate's new Bicycle Regional Plan, which is scheduled to be completed in 2022. The Bicycle Regional Plan



will facilitate public engagement to prioritize areas and elements of improvement. The findings of the Multimodal Network Connectivity and Bicycle Regional Plan will inform the development of the next Metropolitan Transportation plan and lead to future bicycle and pedestrian projects programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program.

Findings

The review team finds that Eastgate is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements for nonmotorized planning and livability.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

None

Air Quality

Regulatory Basis

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

For MPOs classified by EPA as areas of air quality nonattainment or maintenance, special requirements apply to the metropolitan planning process. Section 176 (c)(1) of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) states: “No metropolitan planning organization designated under Section 134 of title 23, United States Code, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110.” The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) includes provisions in response to the CAAA mandates.

Section 176(c)(1) of the Clean Air Act (CAA) Amendments of 1990 states: “*No metropolitan planning organization designated under section 134 of title 23, United States Code, shall give its*



approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110.” Provisions governing air-quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in several metropolitan planning regulations, including: 23 CFR 450.314, 23 CFR 450.322, 23 CFR 450.320, 23 CFR 450.324, 23 CFR 450.326, and 23 CFR 450.334.

Findings

Eastgate complies with air quality conformity requirements and participates fully in the air quality conformity analysis as the Eastgate region is a 1997 ozone standard maintenance area with 2009 and 2018 (MOBILE based) budgets, and, the region is also a 2008 ozone standard and PM2.5 (1997 and 2006 standards) attainment area.

Eastgate is one of seven Ohio MPOs which are located within US EPA designated 1997 Ozone Standard “Orphan” Areas. As a 1997 Ozone Standard “orphan area” and consistent with US EPA’s November 29, 2018 guidance resulting from the South Coast vs. US EPA court case, Eastgate will advance qualitative Transportation Plans and TIP transportation conformity determinations, beginning with the 2021 –2024 TIP.

Eastgate utilizes the latest planning assumptions and maintains current travel demand model socio-economic variables and highway and transit networks used to develop the Eastgate Transportation Plans. Should a future quantitative emission analyses be needed, the MPOs and ODOT will use US EPA’s MOVES2014a emissions software. The Ohio SIP does not include any Transportation Control Measures (TCMs). The conformity process schedule of each MPO includes conducting a public review of its Plan and 1997 Ozone Standard “Orphan” area conformity determination information consistent with its adopted Public Involvement Process.

ODOT and Eastgate request Ohio’s Transportation Conformity Interagency Consultation Partners review the information and provide written concurrence/comments that the documentation meets the requirements for advancing qualitative 1997 Ozone Standard “Orphan” Area Transportation Plan conformity determinations. All partners respond including FHWA, FTA, EPA, OEPA.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

None



Congestion Management Process /Management and Operations/Performance Based Planning and Programming

Regulatory Basis

A congestion management process (CMP) applies to transportation management areas (TMAs) and is a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that “provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C., and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.” (23 CFR 450.320(a))

23 CFR 450.324(f)(5) requires the MTP include Management and Operations (M&O) of the transportation network as an integrated, multimodal approach to optimize the performance of the existing transportation infrastructure. Effective M&O strategies include measurable regional operations goals and objectives and specific performance measures to optimize system performance.

States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to take a performance-based approach to planning and programming. 23 USC 150 Performance-based planning and programming regulations establish requirements for metropolitan planning organizations to coordinate with the State DOT to set performance targets and integrate those performance targets and performance plans into their planning documents by certain dates, per 23 CFR § 450.306. MPOs are also required to reference performance targets and performance-based plans into their TIPs and Metropolitan Transportation Plans, per 23 CFR § 450.324 and 23 CFR § 450.326. The planning products must include a description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system and should include, to the maximum extent practicable, a description of the anticipated effect toward achieving the performance targets identified in the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP, linking investment priorities to performance targets.

MPOs must initiate discussions with transit agencies, state DOTs and planning partners to update Metropolitan Planning Agreements, per 23 CFR § 450.314. This presents an opportunity for MPOs and planning partners to clarify roles and responsibilities for developing and sharing performance data, setting performance targets, reporting of targets, and tracking progress towards meeting targets, through a formal agreement.



Current Status

Congestion Management - Eastgate's Congestion Management Process places a strong emphasis on identifying congestion through multiple avenues. Eastgate uses the latest transportation model, highway capacity software, and Streetlight Data to analyze congested locations and segments. Eastgate assesses all intersections and determines which are the most highly congested, identifies which projects could be done, and how Streetlight data can be used as a secondary source to rank the projects. It is used to aid in collecting and using data more efficiently toward products such as the TIP, MTP, CMP, and project prioritization and selection. Eastgate developed a new Congestion Mgt. Plan in 2019 with CMP steps including 1) defining regional objectives, 2) Develop the CMP Network, 3) Develop Performance Measures, 4) Collect Data/Monitor system performance, 5) analyze congestion problems and needs, 6) Identify and assess strategies, 7) Program and implement strategies and 8) Evaluate strategy effectiveness.

Eastgate has engaged its member jurisdictions and policy board effectively and worked closely with ODOT to ensure that active collaboration and coordination related to performance measures occur.

Management and Operations – Connected Vehicles/Autonomous Vehicles (CV/AV) are being incorporated in Eastgate's planning and in the regional ITS infrastructure. Eastgate is currently working with DriveOhio to perform an ITS architecture update which they anticipate to begin by the end of 2020.

Performance Based Planning and Programming - The MTP update includes references to Federal performance-based planning requirements and outlines the targets established by the state and supported by Eastgate for the region.

In anticipating the effect of the TIP toward achieving the anticipated performance targets identified in the MTP and linking investment priorities to those performance targets, Eastgate places an emphasis on incorporating performance measures into transportation planning and programming processes. When accepting project applications into the MTP, Eastgate assures the projects help to meet safety, PM2, PM3, travel time reliability, and emission reductions performance measures. These project lists directly relay projects into the development of the TIP.

Eastgate coordinates with partner agencies to develop specific written provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to transportation performance data. They work closely with partnering agencies to assure the performance targets are met. Two examples of this include coordination with the Western Reserve Transit Authority to comply



with transit performance targets, and the City of Youngstown to meet and report on targets related to the Youngstown SMART² Project.

Findings

The review team finds that Eastgate is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements for the congestion management process and Performance Based Planning and Programming.

Corrective Actions

None

Recommendations and Comments

None

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENDATIONS

The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Youngstown–PA urbanized area meets Federal planning requirements as follows.

Corrective Actions

The following are corrective actions that the Eastgate MPO must take to comply with Federal Regulations:

None

Recommendations

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

Recommendation 1: The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate ensure that their public involvement program is inclusive and consistent for all their activities in both the general planning and transit planning environments. Their public involvement should be clearly defined, highlighted and documented in a cohesive and transparent manner. Eastgate should project and highlight their public involvement activities and processes in documentation and on their web site. When reviewing their planning documents, they should actively seek comments as a



result of their PI efforts beyond Federal agencies and member organizations. It is recommended that Eastgate develop a stand-alone document to fully outline their public participation process and assess its effectiveness. In addition, a separate area on the web site should be created to allow people to provide comments, find out how to be involved in the planning process, and refine and clarify the Citizen's Advisory Board page.

Recommendation 2: While the Federal Review Team recognizes that Eastgate is following the processes outlined in the current ODOT MPO/RTPO Title VI Manual, necessary revisions have been identified for that ODOT manual to more accurately follow the complaint process for complaints received under Title VI regulations, as outlined by the US DOT and FHWA regulations. Once these updates have been made, all Ohio MPOs and RTPOs, including Eastgate, will need to revise their individual Title VI Plans to conform with these changes. The Federal Review Team *recommends* that Eastgate coordinate with ODOT at that time, to ensure their Title VI Plan reflects all necessary changes.

Eastgate should identify Title VI policies for the Title VI protected groups, specifically race, color, and national origin. Many MPOs around the state have inadvertently included other populations in Title VI policies, including elderly, zero car households, disability status, etc. However, plans and other material should explicitly state Title VI coverage as it is indicated by law. Finally, Eastgate should consider having an updated schedule for its Title VI Implementation Plan on an annual basis, including documentation of its accomplishments for the year past, as well as goals the coming year.

Commendations

The following are noteworthy practices that the Eastgate MPO is doing well in the transportation planning process:

Commendation 1: The Federal Team *commends* Eastgate for its proactive approach to develop and conduct a Multimodal Network Connectivity Analysis study to examine the transportation network and explore in detail, how the network fits together and provides for the future. The use of a measured data approach to designate targeted areas and focus attention on them has led to a better understanding of deficiencies within the existing transportation network, especially related to bike and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility. Their willingness to participate and share with FHWA and other agencies promotes the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.

Commendation 2: Eastgate is *commended* for their coordination efforts in the use of a U.S. DOT BUILD grant to develop the Youngstown SMART² network. They are working with other transportation partners to make mobility improvements, improve safety, and integrate



technology such as a self-driving circulator shuttle, into a modern and efficient multi modal transportation system in downtown Youngstown. They have used data to designate some current alternative fuel-ready corridors and have solicited other potential corridors using data to pinpoint locations that meet EPA's criteria. They have created a database to track station locations which can be updated by communities, as stations are added and be directly downloaded into EPA's database. As the project team leader, Eastgate is urging their partners into a new level of recognition by coordinating meetings and assuring progress on the project with project team members, designers, and other parties. Specific to the autonomous shuttles, Eastgate is working diligently with ODOT, DriveOhio, and other project partners to assure the shuttles are ready for implementation once the roadway projects are complete.

Commendation 3: Eastgate is *commended* for developing the Funding Performance Measures Report (2019) which documents how analysis of seven performance targets is used as a tool to assess how well priorities are set for the program and how the agency is administering its planning funds. Eastgate uses the report to add value to the regional transportation process and contribute to the goals of Eastgate, ODOT and the USDOT.

Training/Technical Assistance

The following training and technical assistance are recommended to assist the MPO with improvements to the transportation planning process:

Eastgate should continue to use the Federal resources they have utilized in the past including the Ohio Division and the FHWA Resource Center. As training and technical assistance needs present themselves, FHWA and FTA are willing to schedule, develop or participate in these types of events.



APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the Youngstown, OH-PA urbanized area on-site review:

- Carmen Stemen, FHWA Ohio Division
- Rachyl Smith, FHWA Ohio Division
- Andy Johns, FHWA Ohio Division
- Kimberly Michaud, FHWA PDP - Finance
- Mark Kane, FTA Region 5
- Stewart McKenzie, FTA Region 5
- Ken Sympson, Metropolitan Planning Director, Eastgate Council of Governments
- James Kinnick, Executive Director, Eastgate Council of Governments
- Jordan Whisler, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Planning
- Chuck Dyer, ODOT Transit
- Juana Hostin, ODOT Transit
- Steve Rebillot, ODOT District 4
- Lauren Phillis, ODOT District 4
- Dean Harris, Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA)
- Mike Salamone, Transit Admin., Trumbull County Transit Board
- Julie Marie Green, Director, Trumbull County Planning Commission
- Justin Mondok, Eastgate
- Lisa Pompeo, Eastgate
- Mirta Reyes-Chapman, Eastgate
- Stephen Zubyk, Eastgate
- Edward Davis, Eastgate
- Grant Taylor, Eastgate
- Jeffrey Gollner, Eastgate
- Luke Rueberger, Eastgate



APPENDIX B - STATUS OF FINDINGS FROM LAST REVIEW

One of the priorities of each certification review is assessing how well the planning partners in the area have addressed corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification review. This section identifies the corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification and their disposition.

Action - Recommendation	Finding - Eastgate should coordinate with its local public agencies to identify which entities have ADA Transition plans in place and promote compliance with the ADA/504 requirements.
<p>Recommendation - Eastgate should coordinate with its local public agencies to identify which entities have ADA Transition plans in place and promote compliance with the ADA/504 requirements, which could include sharing data and other pedestrian facility information; identifying partners in need of training or assistance; and reporting to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) or FHWA innovative programs or cost-effective tools that might assist public agencies with meeting accessibility requirements.</p>	<p>Disposition - Eastgate accomplished the following to satisfy the recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastgate presented their Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) overviews and information on ADA Planning and Transition Plans. • ODOT gave an ADA Transition Plan presentation at Eastgate’s General Policy Board meeting. • Staff met with/spoke to 22 communities about ADA planning issues. Information collected from the web was placed on a flash drive for future use, including ADA regulations and standards, guidelines, sample transition plans, sample self-evaluations, and other general information documents. • Eastgate (assistance from ODOT) conducted an online ADA Survey which was sent to 61 communities in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. More than half responded, and results were compiled and sent to ODOT. • A Multi-modal Gap Analysis was completed to identify breaks in the bicycle and pedestrian network and the location of isolated neighborhoods – on a map. This served as an informational tool to identify potential bicycle and pedestrian projects. • Eastgate maintains attribute data on bicycle suitability with road suitability determined in a review by experienced cyclists, Eastgate staff, and community input. Factors include traffic volumes, lane and shoulder width, speed, and pavement condition. Bicycle suitability was updated in the Gap Analysis. • Eastgate with assistance from LTAP developed a template document and ADA resource webpage to help local communities with transition plans. This resource and assistance are provided to all communities. • Identified isolated locations on the Multi-modal Gap map to determine improvements to connectivity.
Action - Recommendation	Finding - EASTGATE should develop a plan to reach Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations
<p>Recommendation – Eastgate should develop a plan to reach Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations located in the Youngstown metropolitan area.</p>	<p>Disposition - When developing the 2018-2021 TIP, Eastgate analyzed various discriminatory factors in areas potentially affected by future transportation projects, to ensure they were provided the necessary information on the projects. Areas were reviewed with high concentrations of those living with disabilities, as well as, those who have limited ability to read, write, speak, and understand the English language (including identifying the languages spoken) to best serve those areas. As part of Eastgate’s annual review of its public participation plan they explore ways to better reach out to LEP areas.</p>



APPENDIX C – REVIEW PROCESS and PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eastgate 2020 TMA Certification Review Timeline

June 19 – July 10, 2020: Desk top review

August 11, 2020: Virtual on-site review - Day 1 – Discuss selected review topics, public meeting

August 12, 2020: Virtual on-site review - Day 2 - Federal Review Team on-site summary, Close-out meeting with Eastgate and planning partners

Both days’ sessions were held virtually using Webex.com

Public Meeting Notices:

Public meeting notices were sent August 4, 2020 on behalf of USDOT, posted August 4 - 17, 2020. Meeting notice posted to the 2020 TMA Certification page on the Eastgate website, the events calendar, agency social media, and the announcements section on the agency home page.

Public Meeting - Eastgate's 2020 Transportation Planning Certification Review

Aug 04, 2020

Every four years, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) must certify that each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) serving a transportation management area (TMA) – a designation by DOT of an urbanized area with a population over 200,000 as defined by the Bureau of the Census or smaller urbanized areas on request by the Governor and MPO – is carrying out the metropolitan planning process in adherence with federal statutes and regulations. FTA and FHWA conduct a review of the metropolitan planning process within each TMA and jointly issue this certification on behalf of the DOT Secretary, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5303(k).

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the Transportation planning process for the Youngstown area over the next five months. FHWA and FTA jointly view the Certification Review as an opportunity to cooperatively assess the transportation planning process within the region per Federal requirements. A Certification Review is accomplished through three phases including a desk-top review, site visit, and documentation of the process in a report.

As a part of the review, we are hosting a public meeting for you to have a chance to learn about the transportation planning process and provide input on the work that Eastgate engages in as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Information for the public meeting can be found below and make sure to register if you want to attend the meeting.

Tuesday, August 11th | 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm | Eastgate 2020 Transportation Planning Certification Review Public Meeting

Registration Link: eastgatecog.org/2020-certification-public-meeting-registration

Public Comment Form: <https://forms.gle/RsCFdcpTzq3cHX8U8>

For more information on Eastgate's Certification Review, visit this page on our website - eastgatecog.org/transportation#2020review

ALL NEWS



Eastgate Regional Council of Governments

City Center One Building
100 East Federal Street, Suite 1000
Youngstown, OH 44503

Eastgate @ BRITE
125 W. Market Street
Warren, OH 44481

Phone: (330) 779-3800
Fax: (330) 779-3838
[Get Directions »](#)

CONTACT US

NEWSLETTER SIGNUP



Tuesday, August 11th | 9:00 am – 4:00 pm | Eastgate 2020 Transportation Planning Certification Review - See “MEETING NOTICE – Member Communities” sent out to all intended attendees (FHWA, FTA, Eastgate Staff, Member Communities) on Tuesday, August 4, 2020.
Registration Link: eastgatecog.org/2020-certification-registration

EASTGATE MEETING NOTICE

Eastgate Federal Certification Review

AUGUST 11, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL MEETING

Register for Connection Information

Click here to register – eastgatecog.org/2020-certification-registration

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT
KEN SYMPSON AT 234-254-1502, ksympson@eastgatecog.org
or
LISA POMPEO AT 234-254-1508, lpompeo@eastgatecog.org

08/04/2020

Tuesday, August 11th | 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm | Eastgate 2020 Transportation Planning Certification Review Public Meeting - See “PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE – Public Distribution” sent out to media contacts and CAB lists on Tuesday, August 4, 2020, “Public Comment Sheet” attached.

Registration Link: eastgatecog.org/2020-certification-public-meeting-registration

Public Comment Form: <https://forms.gle/RsCFdcpTzq3cHX8U8>; see attached “Public Comment Sheet”

EASTGATE PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

Eastgate Federal Certification Review – Public Meeting

AUGUST 11, 2020

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL MEETING

Register for Connection Information

Click here to register – eastgatecog.org/2020-certification-public-meeting-registration

Public Comment Form - <https://forms.gle/RsCFdcpTzq3cHX8U8>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT
KEN SYMPSON AT 234-254-1502, ksympson@eastgatecog.org
or
LISA POMPEO AT 234-254-1508, lpompeo@eastgatecog.org

08/04/2020



**Eastgate's 2020 TMA Certification Review
Public Comment Sheet
August 11, 2020**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please use this form to indicate your comments on the Eastgate Certification Review process.

Comments:

Your comments may be submitted or mailed to:

Carmen M. Stemen, MUP
Planning and Environment Specialist
FHWA Ohio Division
200 North High Street, RM 328
Columbus, Ohio 43215

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY Monday, August 17, 2020

Wednesday, August 12th | 9:00 am – 12:00 pm | Eastgate 2020 Transportation Planning Certification Review – Day 2

No meeting notice, but an email was sent to FHWA, FTA, and Eastgate Staff with the registration link

Registration Link: eastgatecog.org/2020-certification-day-2-registration

August 11-12, 2020 Meeting Attendee List is in Appendix A.

No comments were received from the public regarding this review



APPENDIX D - LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
AMPO: Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
CAA: Clean Air Act
CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
CMP: Congestion Management Process
CO: Carbon Monoxide
CV/AV: Connected Vehicles/Autonomous Vehicles
DOT: Department of Transportation
EJ: Environmental Justice
FAST: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
FY: Fiscal Year
HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
LEP: Limited-English-Proficiency
M&O: Management and Operations
MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide
O₃: Ozone
PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}: Particulate Matter
SHSP: Strategic Highway Safety Plan
STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
TAC: Technical Advisory Committee
TCM: Transportation Control Measure
TDM: Travel Demand Management
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
TMA: Transportation Management Area
U.S.C.: United States Code
UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program
USDOT: United States Department of Transportation





Report prepared by:

Ohio FHWA Division Office

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