

8. Operations and Management

SAFETEA-LU and the associated implementing regulations include “promote efficient system management and operation” as a required planning factor in the MPO planning process. SAFETEA-LU also states that “A [long-range] transportation plan...shall contain, at a minimum...Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.” While federal law and regulation has required some focus on transportation system management and operations for a number of years, management and operations strategies such as incident response, special event planning, and work zone management have received relatively little attention. However, during the last two decades, various constraints have highlighted the need for coordination of regional operations strategies within the planning process. Among the factors making it increasingly difficult to construct new highway and transit capacity are:

- Environmental, Community, and Space Constraints - In many metropolitan areas, there are fewer opportunities for highway or transit capacity expansion along congested corridors. Often the environmental and community impacts that would result from new or widened roadways go beyond what is acceptable to the public. In some cases, there is little or no additional space within public right-of-ways. These constraints on traditional infrastructure construction have placed increased pressures on public officials and transportation agencies to find new ways of enhancing the effective capacity and reliability of the existing transportation network.
- Funding Constraints - As transportation construction costs have increased, State and local budgets have become more strained. Some transportation capacity projects move forward despite community, environmental, and space constraints, but overcoming these constraints requires longer construction periods, frequent project mitigations, and more complex construction techniques. This means that each project consumes a bigger share of available funds. At the time that project costs are increasing, many States and localities are facing infrastructure deterioration from years of deferred maintenance. These funding challenges mean that few agencies can build all of the facilities that might be desired.
- Inability to Respond to Short-term Problems - Major construction projects rarely deliver new capacity in the short term. In fact, some large-scale projects take well over a decade to complete. At the same time, transportation patterns are more diverse and less predictable than ever. New transportation challenges emerge unexpectedly as a result of economic shifts or short-term trends. Thus, there is a need for transportation solutions that can respond quickly to congestion, safety, and economic concerns.

Thus, interest in improving the reliability and operating efficiency of the transportation system is now becoming paramount in importance for MPOs. This is because an effective transportation system requires not only the provision of highway and transit infrastructure for movement of the public and freight, but also the efficient and coordinated operation of the regional transportation network in order to improve system efficiency, reliability, and safety. Furthermore, linking planning and operations is important to improve transportation decision-making and the overall effectiveness of transportation systems.

Planning for Operations

“Planning for operations” can be defined as a set of activities with the intent of making investment decisions and/or establishing and carrying out plans, policies, and procedures that enable and improve transportation systems management and operation. For a regional transportation system Management and Operations (M&O) program to be effective, those directly responsible for operating the system must agree on what measures to use to assess performance, a concept for how the system should be operated on a regional basis, and how to make changes to achieve desired improvements in system operating performance.

The statutes and regulations that govern the transportation planning process have the flexibility to accommodate and, in fact, encourage M&O solutions. It has become clear that MPOs, State DOTs, and other agencies that lead transportation planning efforts can use the planning process as an important forum and tool for collaboration between planners and operators. Coordination between planners and operators helps ensure that regional transportation investment decisions reflect full consideration of all available strategies and approaches to meet regional goals and objectives.

Goals in Management and Operations

The McLean County Transportation Study and MCRPC goal is to link operations and planning of the regional transportation system to solve operational problems, improve system performance, and improve communication across transportation-related agencies. There are many programs in the Bloomington-Normal urbanized area that, in order to be successful, must cross functional and jurisdictional boundaries; examples include corridor signal system coordination, pavement management, traveler information services, response to weather events, and emergency management. These programs depend on an unprecedented level of collaboration, coordination, and integration to achieve optimum performance and truly benefit the region’s residents, businesses and travelers. The MCRPC planning

guidance for operations at the regional level is therefore a deliberate, collaborative, and coordinated activity that takes place when transportation agency managers responsible for day-to-day operations work together at a regional level with transportation planners.

Measuring Performance of the Regional Transportation System

One of the critical components in developing regional management and operational strategies is establishing performance measures. Performance measurement involves the act of developing specific transportation system performance criteria and quantitatively tracking those measures. Performance measures have many functions and can be used to:

- Identify what attributes of the transportation system are most important
- Provide information on current system conditions and performance
- Evaluate the success of implemented and on-going projects and programs
- Provide a metric for communicating with decision-makers and the public about past, current, and expected future transportation system conditions
- Serve as criteria for investment decisions made in the transportation planning process

Efforts to focus on system performance often result in better recognition of the value associated with management and operational improvements. Data on system performance can highlight the value of investments in programs that minimize incident-related delays, provide information on real-time travel conditions, and improve emergency response times by showing how they can improve transportation system reliability and reduce travel times for riders.

Performance measures can also help link planning and operations by focusing attention on customer-oriented outcomes and elevating attention to M&O strategies within the transportation planning process. By focusing attention on system characteristics that are important to the traveling public, the issues faced by operators such as incident response, work-zone management, and provision of traveler information take on greater importance. Incorporating these issues into the planning process will help focus MCRPC planning on those issues which are of the highest importance to the traveling public in the region. MCRPC planning will therefore be more reflective of management and operations planning and investment needs.

Approaches to Management & Operations

In order to integrate transportation system M&O into the regional planning process, the MCRPC planning process will identify key transportation performance measures of relevance to the region, and coordinate with transportation system operators and providers to collect appropriate data for those measures, compile and analyze the data and produce regular reports on the performance of the region's transportation system. This information will be used by MCRPC to help develop Long Range Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs by facilitating the development of more cost-effective and performance-based transportation investments and actions.

Creation of Performance Measures

Performance measures developed for this region will be multimodal (e.g., highway, transit, non-motorized modes) and address a cross-section of key issues, including congestion, safety, mobility, reliability and accessibility. As MCRPC's experience and capabilities related to M&O evolve, the number and categories of performance measures may be expanded to provide additional detail on the performance of the region's transportation system for planners, policy-makers and the public.

Performance measures can be grouped into three categories:

- Input measures - which generally address the supply of resources;
- Output measures - which address the delivery of transportation programs, projects, and services; and
- Outcome measures - which address the degree to which the transportation system meets policy goals and objectives.

While input and output measures are the easiest to implement, outcome measures focus on the effects that the traveling public most cares about - issues such as travel time and delay, safety, and reliability.

The MCRPC will initially focus on a core set of *output* measures, as data is available for analysis. Using simpler output performance reporting can inspire the attention and collaboration necessary to design measures that address the most important aspects of the system performance. As the MCRPC gains experience and temporal data on various measures, a blend of both output and *outcome* measures may be preferable to using either type alone. Output measures provide an immediate indication of accomplishment for those activities whose benefits accrue over the long term (i.e., where "outcomes" are not immediately apparent).

However, the MPO will attempt to monitor outcomes over the long term as data and expertise allow.

Categories of performance measures that the MCRPC may use to frame development of a set of core regional performance measures include:

Table 4 – System Performance Measures

Category	Examples of Possible Core Performance Measures
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Change in Number of K (Fatal) and A (incapacitating injury) types of crashes · Change in Number of Crashes/Million Miles Traveled · Pedestrian or Bike Accidents per Year · Number of Traffic Fatalities/Injuries within Region
Congestion & Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Change in average travel time between selected origins & destinations · Total hours of delay in region · Person-miles (or hours) of travel in congested conditions · Travel Time Index
Accessibility & Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Percent of region's population within ¼-mile (OR 15 minute walk distance) of transit services · Total transit ridership OR transit mode share · Number of access permits granted on congested roadway segments
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Change in mobile source emissions (or appropriate proxy) · Change in energy consumption (or appropriate proxy) · Acres of wetlands created/impacted/banked due to transportation projects

The actual performance measures ultimately employed by the MCRPC will be dictated to a great extent by (1) the system operation and management priorities determined to be of highest importance by the MPO and its planning partners and (2) the extent to which data to support a particular measure can be obtained in a cost-effective and usable manner. The focus on management and operations requires more detailed data than has traditionally been analyzed by the MPO. The system focus means that data on conditions are needed virtually everywhere on the transportation system, across jurisdictions and modes. Issues such as data formats, accuracy, consistency, and appropriate use can complicate the process of establishing inter- and intra-agency data sharing programs.

The MCRPC will work collaboratively with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), local governments and the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System to address these challenges and develop a core performance measurement program. In particular, the MCRPC will work with IDOT to use information available through the Illinois Roadway Information System (IRIS) for developing and reporting

performance measures. IRIS is a computerized database managed by IDOT in which a variety of condition and performance data is collected and maintained on all public highways as defined in Illinois Compiled Statutes.

Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture

Intelligent Transportation Systems are defined as those elements of transportation infrastructure which permit the ongoing exchange of information between system users, government agencies, law enforcement and the media regarding system performance, components, maintenance and other aspects of transportation operations and maintenance.

The Long Range Transportation Plan incorporates by reference the State Plan for Intelligent Transportation Systems, which was mandated under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), and supporting regulations, and consistent with the National ITS Architecture. The TEA-21 directive regarding intelligent transportation systems planning and implementation continues under SAFETEA-LU.

Current implementations of ITS are in the process of being inventoried for the Plan for Intelligent Transportation Systems.

9. Public Participation

Robust public participation in the planning process is an essential component in developing plans that effectively address community concerns and incorporate community visions. Bringing the public into transportation planning consists of two principal elements; efforts on the part of the Regional Planning Commission to reach into the community and communicate about transportation planning issues, and the means made available to the public, including interested groups and stakeholders, to be involved in the planning process, to comment, and to participate fully at all stages of transportation planning.

Public Participation Plan

As required under the provisions of SAFETEA-LU, the Regional Planning Commission has revised its public participation plan. The main text of the plan is included below. Additional information on the participation plan, including comments received during public review, and the details of its adoption, are available from the Commission or on the Commission website at www.mcplan.org.

The text of the plan is as follows:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission, acting as the metropolitan planning organization [MPO] for the Bloomington-Normal, Illinois urbanized area, and through the Policy Committee of the McLean County Transportation Study, adopts the following Plan to promote public involvement in transportation planning.

The intent of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission Participation Plan is to provide a process for meaningful public input into transportation decision-making. This process includes offering reasonable opportunities for the public to be informed and involved in the development of transportation plans and programs in the metropolitan area. Proactive outreach to educate and inform the public about transportation issues and options, and to elicit input from the public on transportation issues, is integral to the process. Consistent with the principles underlying SAFETEA-LU, outreach is conducted early in the planning process, and is designed to ensure participation by traditionally underserved populations. The metropolitan transportation planning area refers to the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and the adjoining portions of McLean County anticipated to be developed over the next 20-year period, and as defined in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Therefore, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall provide a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed plans for citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of

transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of persons with disabilities, and other interested parties.

Components or objectives of the existing public involvement process followed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission have been revised to incorporate elements required of a Participation Plan process by 23 CFR Part 450.316 pursuant to Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU),(Public Law 109-59, August 10, 2005). Sections A thru C of the Participation Plan address the participation process. Section D addresses the agency consultation process required by SAFETEA-LU of the metropolitan transportation plans and programs.

Section A: Participation Plan Elements

1. Public notification will be provided not fewer than 15 days nor more than 30 days in advance of consideration of action by the Policy Committee of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission on proposed long range [metropolitan] transportation plan updates, transportation improvement programs, and amendments to these planning documents.
 - a. To provide time for full public review and comment on the draft participation plan, and pursuant to 23 CFR §450.316(a)(3), public notification will be provided no less than 45 days in advance of consideration of action on this document by the Policy Committee of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission.
 - b. The draft Transportation Improvement Program [TIP] will be reviewed by the members of the Technical Committee and will be made available to the general public, as specified below, for review and comment. Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)(iv), the public review and comment period will extend a minimum of 30 days. Comments during the thirty-day period should be submitted in writing. One public hearing for the TIP will be held prior to its adoption, during which public comments will also be received. TIP amendments shall be considered and acted upon in the course of public meetings of the Technical and Policy Committees, as required pursuant to 23 CFR 450.104. Events defined as requiring an amendment to the TIP include major changes to a project, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope.
 - c. The Long Range Transportation Plan will be available to the general public for a 45 day review and comment period. A public hearing on the Long Range Transportation Plan will be held prior to its adoption.
2. A meeting notice will be provided electronically to local news media,

including local public television as applicable, one week in advance of each regular Policy Committee and Technical Committee meeting. Reasonable access to available information about MPO sponsored transportation studies in the metropolitan area will also be provided.

3. Available resources, including web-based mapping, published maps and illustrations and other graphic data will be used by the MPO to visually convey information related to and improving understanding of metropolitan transportation plans and programs.
4. Public information related to transportation plans and programs and meeting notices of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission will be provided electronically on the World Wide Web, including draft and final versions of the Participation Plan. The website will also provide meeting agendas and minutes, information on the purpose, programs and structure of the Regional Planning Commission, information on MPO planning projects and studies, and contact information for MPO staff.
5. Public meetings sponsored by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission will be held at convenient locations and times. A citizen information period will be provided during each regular MPO meeting.
6. Public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the transportation improvement program will be given consideration by the MPO. Significant public comments received will be reported by staff to the Policy Committee and the Technical Committee.
7. Outreach efforts seeking input on metropolitan transportation plans and programs from low income and minority households traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems will be continued and documented. All public participation activities of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall be conducted to permit involvement by persons with disabilities, and by persons with limited English proficiency, upon request.
8. Public notices advising citizens in the metropolitan area of the availability of draft transportation plans, transportation improvement programs and conformity reports in local public libraries will be continued. Additional opportunity for public comment will be provided if the final metropolitan transportation plan or transportation improvement program or conformity analysis differs significantly from the version initially made available for public review.
9. The implementation of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission Participation Plan will be coordinated with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes

developed, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the metropolitan area that are affected by transportation.

10. The overall effectiveness of procedures and strategies contained in the Participation Plan to ensure a full and open participation process will be reviewed periodically by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission.

Section B: Disposition of Significant Comments

1. When significant comments are received on the draft Long Range Transportation Plan or the Transportation Improvement Program as a result of the Participation Plan, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Section C: Agency Consultation on Other Planning Activities

1. As the transportation plan and the transportation improvement program are developed, the MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities in the metropolitan area affected by transportation in order to coordinate planning functions to the maximum extent practicable. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission, through technical assistance and direct participation, contributes to the planning processes of its constituent governments, agencies and partners. Such contributions involve the formulation of regional and local planning and development policy, and the implementation of program and project objectives.
2. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission process for public review, participation and comment on the Transportation Improvement Program serves as the public participation process for the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System Program of Projects.
3. The nature of the consultation shall include comparison of metropolitan plans and transportation improvement programs, as they are developed, with the plans maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies.
4. Interested parties, public and private, responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation in Bloomington-Normal and McLean County shall be included in the planning consultation process, as appropriate. Interested parties whose early and continuous involvement

shall be sought include but are not limited to affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation users and employees, freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and citizens. Interested parties shall have access to timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes, and to avenues for direct involvement in the transportation planning process.

5. Metropolitan transportation plans and transportation improvement programs shall be developed with consideration for governmental agencies and non-profit organizations receiving Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation for the design and delivery of non-emergency transportation services.
6. The MPO, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, shall provide to all interested parties access to an annual listing of Federally Obligated Projects.
7. The MPO will consider the future development of an operations plan for consulting with other governmental agencies responsible for the development of plans affected by transportation in the metropolitan area

Section D: Public Participation Plan Evaluation

1. Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), the McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall conduct periodic review of public participation activities and initiatives, and shall revise or amend the Public Participation Plan as needed to enhance public participation in the transportation planning process.
2. Distribution of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission newsletter VISIONS shall be monitored, and changes in the volume distributed assessed. VISIONS is disseminated as a printed document via the U.S. Postal Service, as an electronic document distributed to an email list, and as a downloadable document posted on the Commission website (www.mcplan.org).
3. Postings to the Commission website shall be inventoried and monitored to assess completeness, timeliness and ease of access. Technology to assess frequency of website viewings shall be used to evaluate the impact of the website in providing information and participation opportunities to interested parties and the public.
4. All meeting agendas and minutes of the Transportation Technical and Policy Committees shall be made available on the Commission website. As practicable, supporting documentation cited in agendas and minutes

shall also be made available through the website. Website postings relating to the Committees shall be monitored and evaluated pursuant to Section D, paragraph 3, above.

5. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall conduct ongoing assessment of the implementation of the Public Participation Plan elements as set forth in Section A, paragraphs 1 – 9, above.

6. In addition to the evaluation described in paragraph 5, above, evaluation criteria shall include the elements presented in Table 1, below, which shall be considered by the Regional Planning Commission and the Technical and Policy Committees in assessing the Public Participation Plan:

Public Participation Plan Table 1		
Participation Tool	Quantitative	Qualitative
Mailing Lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Additions to Mailing List • Diversity of Representation • Quantity of Educational Materials Distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise and Clear Information Portrayed • Effectiveness of Newsletter • Format
Public Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Events/Opportunities for Public Participation • Number of Comments Received • Number of Participants • Number of Methods Used to Reach Disadvantaged/Disabled Citizens • Diversity of Attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of Meeting Format • Public Understanding of Process • Quality of Response Obtained • Timing of Public Participation • Meeting Convenience, i.e. Time, Location and Accessibility • Use of Public Input in Developing Plan
Commission/Committee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Comments Received • Number of Participants • Number of Methods Used to Reach Aged and/or Disabled Citizens • Diversity of Attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of Meeting Format • Public Understanding of Process • Quality of Response Obtained • Meeting Convenience, i.e. Time, Location and Accessibility • Use of Public Input in Developing Plan
MCRPC Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of MPO Documents • Number of Site “Hits” per Quarter • Number of Comments and Suggestions Submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of Document Updates • Announcement of Meetings • Accessibility of Information (Site Format) • Quality of Response Obtained

7. The Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed every five years (from date of first adoption) by the staff of the Regional Planning Commission to assess the effectiveness of its procedures.

a. Staff shall submit recommended revisions or amendments to the Transportation Technical and Policy Committees.

b. Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.316(a)(3), action by the Technical and Policy Committees to adopt revisions to or amendment of the Public

Participation Plan shall be preceded by a period of public review and comment of not less than 45 days.

Public outreach

Technology

The emergence of new communications technologies gives planners and public agencies broader choices in efforts to solicit public input into planning decisions, and to convey more information about plans and the planning process. The Regional Planning Commission website, already an important tool for outreach to the general public and other stakeholders, will continue to be enhanced and expanded to provide access to plans, information on meetings held by or through the Commission, and tools for public use, such as the web-based GIS public map generation utility. More traditional methods of public outreach continue to be used, as access to the World Wide Web is not yet universal, particularly for citizens in challenged communities.

Other alternative communications channels, such as electronic mail, are already in use to distribute the Commission's newsletter, VISIONS, and to maintain contact with stakeholders interested in the East Side Highway Phase 1 study. In addition to enabling the Commission to reach a broad audience of interested parties on a nearly instantaneous basis, the use of electronic media reduces demand for materials, and thus reduces the cost of public outreach. The Regional Planning Commission is committed to expanding the scope of its electronic contacts to provide the widest possible dissemination of information into the community, and to provide multiple avenues for public participation and comment. New technologies which support these efforts will be evaluated and, where feasible, implemented, as they emerge.

Context Sensitive Solutions

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is an interdisciplinary approach to transportation planning and programming that seeks effective multimodal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect their surroundings, or context. This process, as implemented by IDOT, is more fully discussed in Section 7 of the Plan, above. Through early, frequent and meaningful communication with stakeholders, and a flexible and creative approach to implementation and design, the resulting improvements and new facilities should improve safety and mobility for the traveling

public, while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic and natural qualities of the settings through which they pass.⁴

Stakeholders include residents and businesses affected by individual projects, travelers who use existing facilities, those who may use or be impacted by proposed facilities, elected officials, governmental regulatory and resource agencies, media, underserved or minority communities and advocates for community interests.⁵

The CSS process is already being employed in the Bloomington-Normal urbanized area in the conduct of the East Side Highway Phase 1 corridor study. Early stages of the study have included a series of public meetings, designed to offer opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the study process and bring their perspectives to the project. The involvement of the public in the process is expected to shape the discussions and analysis as the study proceeds. The East Side Highway Phase 1 study is the first non-State project in Illinois to fully implement CSS, and the process and its results are being reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the study steering and policy committees, and by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The Regional Planning Commission anticipates that CSS will be an element in future planning for regional transportation facilities. The continued growth of the urban area will create opportunities to implement context analysis of major projects identified in the plan.

⁴ Developed from reference to the Illinois Department of Transportation website at <http://www.dot.state.il.us/css/basics.html>.

⁵ Ibid, at <http://www.dot.state.il.us/css/basics/basics.html>.

10. Human Services Transportation Plan

For some years, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, through its Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), has coordinated an ongoing process of identifying and planning for the transportation needs of area residents with transportation challenges and special needs. Participants in the Committee includes the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System, SHOWBUS, the primary provider for rural transit in McLean County, the YWCA of McLean County, which operates the Bloomington-Normal urban area Wheels-to-Work program, and the MARC Center, which provides transportation services for its clients with developmental disabilities. Other active Committee participants include the local Office of Rehabilitation Services of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Life Center for Independent Living, the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging and the McLean County Chamber of Commerce. Other agencies and stakeholder groups are involved periodically.

The Transportation Advisory Committee, meeting monthly, examines a range of issues, including transportation services for older residents and persons with disabilities, transportation options for members of the workforce with limited means, alternate transportation modes and others. In recent months, the Transportation Advisory Committee has placed substantial emphasis on the process for developing both the urban area and regional rural human services transportation plans. Several entities within the TAC are engaged in conducting rider surveys of their constituencies, which when complete, will be compiled and evaluated as part of the needs assessment and resource inventory processes required in developing the HSTP. Members of the TAC will participate in the ongoing work of developing and implementing the HSTP.

Background

An increasing number of people are unable to get to work, run errands, or reach medical services simply because they do not have access to reliable transportation. This group of transportation disadvantaged includes disabled individuals who cannot operate vehicles or travel outside of the home on their own because of medical conditions or limitations; people who cannot afford their own automobile; and people who live in areas without access to public transportation.

To enable these individuals to travel for employment, medical, education, and other needs, state and federal grants are used to provide transportation services that assist elderly persons, persons with disabilities and/or low-income persons get to their destinations. In urbanized areas, regular public transportation service and

supplemental paratransit service is often available to meet many of these needs. In rural and smaller urban areas, however, public transportation service is less available and human service providers such as senior centers must often find other ways to provide their clients with transportation.

Numerous local programs supported by state and federal agencies provide separate transportation services, including services for the elderly, hospital access for low-income individuals, services for the physically and mentally disabled and transportation for job training or job access. In Illinois, there are numerous state and federal programs administered by a variety of different state agencies that provide funding to be used for public and human services transportation. The lack of coordination among these programs and providers has led to duplication of transportation and dispatching services and an inefficient use of needed transportation and human services funds.

Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU, now requires that projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute or JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan (HSTP). The HSTP is intended to maximize the collective coverage of the targeted programs and needs to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and the users of these services.

References

The State and the MPO must follow all the requirements contained in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circulars providing Program Guidance and Application Instructions for the Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs. Consolidated excerpts and web site addresses for the circulars are listed below.

Recipient Designation: For Section 5310 funds, the state designates an agency with the requisite legal, financial, and staffing capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program. The designated State agency is the recipient of all Section 5310 funds apportioned to the State, and applies to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for these funds on behalf of private non-profit agencies and eligible local governmental authorities within the State.

For Section 5316 and 5317 funds, the state must designate a public entity to be the recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds.

- In urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000 and in non-urbanized areas, the State is the designated recipient. For these areas, the designated

State agency is responsible for administering the JARC and New Freedom program.

- In urbanized areas over 200,000 in population, the recipient charged with administering the JARC Program must be officially designated through a process consistent with 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(a)(2):

“...an entity designated in accordance with the planning process under sections 5303, 5304, and 5306, by the chief executive officer of a State, responsible local officials, and publicly owned operators of public transportation, to receive and apportion amounts under section 5336 that are attributable to transportation management areas identified under Section 5303.”

The Urbanized Area Formula (Section 5307) designated recipient provides and coordinates transportation services for the region and is familiar with FTA’s program oversight requirements; therefore, it is appropriate for the designated recipient for the JARC and New Freedom programs to be the same as the designated recipient for Section 5307 funds. Alternatively, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), State, or another public agency may be a preferred choice based on local circumstances. The designation of recipient should be made by the State in consultation with responsible local officials and publicly owned operators of public transportation. The recipient for JARC funds will apply to FTA for these funds on behalf of sub-recipients within the recipient’s area.

Apportionment: Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled) funds are apportioned among the States by a formula based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each State.

Of the total Section 5316 (JARC) funds available, FTA apportions 60 percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas; 20 percent to the States for small urbanized areas; and 20 percent to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population. JARC funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in each such area bears to the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in all such areas.

Of the total Section 5317 (New Freedom) funds available, FTA apportions 60 percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas; 20 percent to the States for small urbanized areas; and 20 percent to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population. New Freedom funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in each such area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such areas.

Human Services Transportation Plan Development Process

SAFETEA-LU sets forth a series of requirements for the development of the HSTP, as interpreted below by Federal and State agencies:

- A. Overview: A locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (“coordinated plan”) identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Local plans may be developed on a local, regional, or statewide level. The decision as to the boundaries of the local planning areas should be made in consultation with the State and the metropolitan planning organization (MPO), where applicable. The agency leading the planning process is decided locally and does not have to be the State. A coordinated plan should maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan shall be developed through a process that includes representatives of public and private and non-profit transportation and human services transportation providers, and participation by members of the public. Members of the public should include representatives of the targeted population(s) including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. While the plan is only required in communities seeking funding under one or more of the three specified FTA programs, a coordinated plan should also incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.
- B. Required Elements: Projects shall be derived from a coordinated plan that minimally includes the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:
- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
 - An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
 - Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
 - Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Coordination Requirements

Projects selected for funding under Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers, participation by the

public, and representatives addressing the needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals. .

Planning Requirements

Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 projects in urbanized areas must be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Projects outside urbanized areas must be included in, or be consistent with the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan and must be included in the STIP.

Program of Projects

The program of projects (POP) for Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 identifies the sub-recipients and projects for which the State or designated recipient is applying for financial assistance. The annual POP the State submits to FTA for approval must indicate the total number of sub-recipients; identify each sub-recipient and indicate whether they are governmental authorities, or private non-profit agencies. In addition, the POP must include a brief description of each project, which includes the counties served by the project. The POP must show, for each project, the total project cost and the Federal share. The total Federal funding level for the POP cannot exceed the total amount of Section 5310 funds available. The program of projects must be identical to, or consistent with, listings contained in the applicable TIP and STIP.

The Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan: Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA–LU, requires that projects selected for funding under the Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.” The experiences gained from the efforts of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), and specifically the United We Ride (UWR) Initiative provide a useful starting point for the development and implementation of the local public transit-human services transportation plan.

Web Page Links:

Section 5310 Circular -
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html

Section 5316 Circular -
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html

Section 5317 Circular -
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html

United We Ride - <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>

Implementation

At the federal level, the United We Ride (UWR) initiative was established to break down the barriers between programs and set the stage for local partnerships that generate common sense solutions. The overall goal of this effort is to make it easier for the customer to access public and specialized transportation services by reducing transportation service duplication, increase efficient transportation service delivery, and expand transportation access for older Americans, persons with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes. The HSTP is the tool identified in SAFETEA-LU to accomplish this goal.

In Illinois, the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for ensuring that the new federal coordination requirements are met for urbanized areas and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for those parts of the state that are outside the jurisdiction of MPOs. IDOT has begun to implement the HSTP to be in compliance with the new requirements, which went into effect in federal fiscal year 2007.

Because Illinois has no formal rural public transportation planning infrastructure, IDOT has created a framework for developing the plan and project submission process for public and human services transportation funding. Through a combination of research and public involvement sub-state regions were established to facilitate the HSTP process; McLean County lies within Region 6, which will share a regional coordinator with Region 8. Each region will develop an HSTP to coordinate the delivery of services within its boundaries. McLean County Regional Planning Commission staff are coordinating with statewide and regional staff to ensure that the HSTP developed for the Bloomington-Normal urban area is correlated to the plans developed for Regions 6 and 8, and that the plan also recognizes the interrelationship with other urban areas in the regions, which include Champaign-Urbana, Danville, Decatur and Kankakee. The plan will also consider regional transportation needs for human services between the Bloomington-Normal area and the Peoria metropolitan area, represented by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.