

Certification Review information - from FHWA website
<http://www.planning.dot.gov/Documents/Primer/intro.asp>

Introduction

23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(1)(A) & (B) requires the Secretary of Transportation (the Secretary) to designate as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) each urbanized area with a population of over 200,000 individuals and any additional area at the request of the Governor and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) designated for the area, respectively. Within the TMA, the transportation planning process shall:

- Be based on a continuing and comprehensive planning process carried out by the MPO in cooperation with the State and transit operators;
- Include a congestion management system providing for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities; In nonattainment area TMAs, advance federally funded capacity-increasing projects for single occupant vehicles only when the projects are part of an approved CMS;
- Select all federally funded projects (except those on the National Highway System, or under the bridge replacement and Interstate maintenance programs) within the TMA's boundaries in consultation with the State and any affected public transit operator;
- Except for TMAs designated under (B), receive a proportional share of the funds suballocated under 23 U.S.C. 133(d)(3)(a)(i) based on the relative population of such areas; and
- Be certified by the Secretary not less often than once every three* years.

* *SAFETEA-LU now requires certification every four years*

Consistent with 23 U.S.C 134(i)(5) and 49 U.S.C 5305(e), the primary purpose of a certification review is to formalize the continuing oversight and day-to-day evaluation of the planning process. The certification review process ensures that the planning requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 to 5305 are being satisfactorily implemented. In a broader sense, the certification review process is a valuable opportunity to provide advice and guidance to a TMA, defined as an urbanized area with a population over 200,000, for enhancing the planning process and improving the quality of transportation investment decisions.

While the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) interact with TMA planning officials on a routine basis - reviewing and approving planning products, providing technical assistance, and promoting good practice - the formal assessment of a certification review provides an outside view of the TMA transportation planning process. It can serve as a catalyst to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning process, and help ensure that the major issues facing a metropolitan area are being addressed. In addition, by identifying noteworthy practices, which can be shared with other states, MPOs, and transit operators, the certification provides an opportunity for continued progress in expanding the art of transportation planning while implementing the regulations.