



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA)**

**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)**

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**FHWA/FTA Joint Certification Review of the Lincoln  
Metropolitan Planning Organization Certification Review**

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**Date of Certification Review  
May 5-6, 2009**

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## **Background**

According to federal law “the Secretary shall ensure that the metropolitan planning process in each transportation management area is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal Law” [Ref: 23 USC 134 (i)(5)(A)(i) and 49 USC 5305 (e)]. As required by the aforementioned laws, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMA) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census, with a population of over 200,000. Generally, the review consists of a desk audit (completed in advance of the on-site review), a site visit, and preparation of a report summarizing the review. The report also identifies any corrective actions, recommendations, and commendations as a result of the review.

This review conducted in May 2009 focused on compliance with Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) that revised 23 USC 134 metropolitan transportation planning requirements upon its passage in 2005, as well as the subsequent FTA / FHWA joint metropolitan planning federal-aid regulations updating 23 CFR 450 (federal register notice February 14, 2007). The on-site MPO review and desk audit included a review of the Lincoln metropolitan planning processes that included successes, challenges, and experiences of the “3-C” planning activities.

The FHWA/FTA federal certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of the local metropolitan planning process. Other activities include the annual review and approval of the Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP), review of the metropolitan long range plan, review and approval of both the metropolitan and statewide transportation improvement programs (TIP / STIP), and FHWA/FTA contact with the metropolitan transportation planning partners.

While the actual planning certification review might not fully document all of the ongoing contact between FHWA/FTA, Nebraska Department of Roads, and the Lincoln MPO, the final certification of the metropolitan transportation planning process is based upon the cumulative findings of the entire process.

The previous on-site planning TMA certification review was conducted on May 4-5, 2005. The Lincoln MPO was jointly certified by FHWA/FTA December 6, 2005. There were no corrective actions identified during the 2005 certification review, but there were a number of recommendations for improvement and commendations for acknowledged strengths.

## **Certification Review Format**

The current FY 2009 federal onsite certification review was held May 5-6, 2009 in Lincoln, Nebraska. The federal review team held a public hearing session in the evening on May 5<sup>th</sup> at the city-county building located in downtown Lincoln. A complete transcript of that hearing can be found in the appendix section of this report. A listing of the various federal review team members, various agency participants of the on-site certification review, and a summary of a questionnaire prepared by the MPO are also included in the Appendix section of this report.

The onsite federal certification review began on May 5<sup>th</sup> and consisted of discussion on the following planning emphasis areas including: MPO Agreements/Overview, Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Process, Financial Planning, Public Involvement, Title VI/Environmental Justice, Transportation Modeling and Technical Process, Land Use/Growth, Transit Planning. These topics were included as part of the proposed FHWA/FTA certification review announcement letter as shown in the appendix section. The onsite federal certification review concluded with an exit interview conducted by the federal review team on May 6<sup>th</sup> to the Mayor of Lincoln, the MPO and stakeholder participants. The key findings were discussed and presented during this exit interview. The federal review team agreed to present its certification report findings to the Lincoln MPO officials committee.

The remainder of this federal certification report will summarize the onsite review discussions and conclude with the review teams findings and certification action

## **Planning Agreements**

Discussion occurred during the on-site review concerning the planning agreements which were in place to define the MPO. The updating of the MPO planning agreements was a recommendation of the 2005 review report. The MPO agreements are 20 years old and the federal review team considers them to be outdated. One concern is that since the inception of those agreements, there has been three separate transportation authorization acts. The MPO agreements also identify the Metropolitan Statistical Area as the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary. The Metropolitan Statistical Area has since been updated by the Office of Management and Budget to include Seward County. The MPO/State/transit operator need to ensure planning roles/responsibilities are adequately defined, including such items as who consults with land management/natural resource agencies, how is public involvement handled (especially when planning activities overlap between the agencies), or how is revenue forecasting addressed, as a few examples. The agreements don't have to specify all the details and can refer to other documents, but those relatively "new" responsibilities that need to be addressed in a cooperative manner need to be acknowledged in updated agreements.

## **Description Of The Metropolitan Planning Area**

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary is identified as and covers all of Lancaster County. Lancaster County was the Metropolitan Statistical Area as defined by the Office of Management and Budget when the MPO was formed. The Metropolitan Statistical Area as identified in 2003 is Lancaster County and Seward County.

Prior to the Certification review there was confusion over how the MPO defined the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary. The MPA Boundary determines where the Lincoln MPO can expend its federal-aid transportation dollars, as well as where the MPO is responsible for conducting transportation planning. During the certification review, the MPO identified geospatially an MPA of something less than Lancaster County based on the urbanized area plus a 20-year forecast period.

## **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The current FY 2009 UPWP was approved by the FHWA and FTA on July 1, 2008. The UPWP lays out the planning priorities facing the Metropolitan Planning Area for a given Fiscal Year. The Lincoln MPO utilizes a one-year UPWP to prioritize nine planning activities. Each of the nine planning activities identified by the Lincoln MPO has various subtasks associated with them. These subtasks are very broadly defined and do not have specific information about who will perform the work, the schedule for completion of the work, and the intended planning products. As required by 23 CFR 420.111 (b) (1), all the planning activities covered in a work program must include a description of work to be accomplished and cost estimates showing the federal/state/local share in those costs by activity or task. The Lincoln MPO identifies a financial summary for each activity, but does not go into specific detail. The Lincoln MPO needs to more clearly define what products it is producing, with cost estimates for each activity.

The UPWP needs to be inclusive in its development, soliciting input from the various stakeholders of the planning process. The tasks identified by the MPO should have been prioritized to achieve the core mission of the MPO, which at the very least, is to produce the required planning products as identified in Federal transportation legislation and regulation. The planning activities should be clearly tracked and their status reported to interested parties. The Lincoln MPO should amend the UPWP whenever any of the activities change either in scope, timing, or budget. The federal review team has noted the FY 2010 UPWP already includes some items requiring action as identified in the findings section of this report. The MPO, however, may need to amend the FY 2010 UPWP to incorporate additional planning activities required as result of this certification report, but not adequately addressed in the current UPWP. The activities included in the FY 2010 UPWP will need to cover, at a minimum, all of the corrective actions identified at the end of this report.

## **Long Range Transportation Plan/Financial Planning Element**

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), developed for the Lincoln TMA region by the MPO, is a chapter found within the City of Lincoln/County of Lancaster Comprehensive Plan. The text contains detailed information on a variety of transportation policies and programs currently promoted by the City/County and which lays the groundwork for future decision-making. The transportation plan is also intended to be consistent with and support other elements of the local comprehensive plan.

While the LRTP is certainly an integral part of the comprehensive plan for the City and County, it could be difficult to ascertain that transportation section is also representing the LRTP developed by the MPO for the transportation management area. While the City of Lincoln does make up a vast proportion of the TMA, there is little in the discussion to differentiate the “LRTP” from just another chapter of the comprehensive plan.

For example, while meeting the needs of the City/County comprehensive plan, the transportation chapter comes across as a policy/strategy document, not as a project-specific plan. The LRTP does include a great amount of discussion about non-motorized transportation needs, goals, and policies pertaining to sidewalks and trails, however, no such projects are specifically identified to receive funding through the transportation plan for implementation over the short and long term. Specific project details, funding, and priorities are also missing for the transit element.

A long list of street projects is included, but again, specifics about the projects, including budget information, are left out. Overall, the financial element of the transportation plan lacks details and does not include much background information on the assumptions behind revenue projections, which funds are reasonably anticipated versus those that may require additional strategies to increase the likelihood of their availability, or how overall cost estimates were developed. Since little information is provided regarding the costs of specific projects, it is difficult to determine whether those costs are reasonable and if they are provided in “year of expenditure” (YOE) dollars.

Descriptions of key environmental resources are limited and the transportation plan does not include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities or documentation of attempts on the part of the MPO to consult with natural resource, environmental protection, land management or historic preservation agencies (or similar organizations). If the transportation system plan has been compared to maps or inventories of natural or other environmental resources, the plan document does not describe how that was done or the outcomes of such a comparison. Other elements of the comprehensive plan, however, do appear to address consideration of certain environmental issues, but references between the transportation element and those other elements are not readily apparent. The above deficiencies related to the LRTP in the transportation planning process are presented as corrective actions and further discussed in the findings section of this report which follows.

## **Transportation Improvement Program**

Through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MPO is expected to implement the projects and other activities initially identified in the LRTP. It is important to note that both the LRTP and TIP are public disclosure documents. The TIP, as a programming document, is intended to provide more detailed project descriptions and associated costs of project or project phases (e.g., project design, right of way purchase, and various construction activities) within a four year timeframe. The TIP needs to also document how it connects with the broader policies and priorities articulated in the LRTP and either include or refer to a financial plan that defines the fiscal resources needed to implement the projects identified in the TIP.

The current City of Lincoln/Lancaster County TIP provides very little background information on the purpose and role of the TIP, particularly as it fits into the broader transportation planning process. Currently, no strong links exist between the LRTP and the TIP. The TIP document does not describe how goals, policies, and projects in the LRTP affect the selection of projects in the TIP (although the federal review team was assured that selection process is based on elements of the LRTP). In addition, no formal project selection process is described or referenced in the TIP.

The financial plan in the TIP lacks longer term cost/revenue details and there is no linkage to the financial elements in the LRTP (such as those currently exist). The budget information in the TIP lacks costs in YOY dollars and lacks a discussion of what funds are anticipated to be available and how their availability will be assured. If this information is not included in the TIP itself, then the TIP should refer back to the financial plan in or associated with the LRTP.

Representatives of the MPO indicated that most available funding is going to the Antelope Valley project, a major priority of the City of Lincoln, and not much is leftover for other major transportation projects within the MPO boundaries. In part, that can explain the lack of a documented project selection process since funding for other transportation projects is limited.

During the review of various MPO documents, it came to the attention of the federal review team that occasionally, when the NDOR approves the TIP or a TIP amendment for inclusion in the STIP, the NDOR (as the Governor's designee) has removed individual projects from TIP after the TIP has been adopted by the MPO Board. Under the federal transportation planning process, the Governor's designee can approve or disapprove the TIP or TIP amendment in its entirety, but cannot selectively approve or disapprove individual projects unilaterally. The FHWA and FTA will communicate the issue of TIP inclusion into the STIP without change with NDOR separately. Corrective actions for deficiencies in the transportation planning process related to the TIP are included in the findings section.

## **Land Use/Livability Activities**

Development of the Lincoln TMA transportation plan is based on current and planned land use development, as evaluated by and directed through the joint City-County land use/comprehensive plan. Strong ties obviously exist between land use decision-making and transportation planning since the City-County Planning Office, responsible for land use planning and making recommendations to the local decision-makers, also houses the MPO staff. As stated by local and MPO planners during the certification review, the transportation plan and inputs into the transportation model are based primarily on the land use plan and development trends and not so much on Census or other sources of data relied upon by many other MPOs. It is also apparent that in the City of Lincoln, there are strong neighborhood planning activities to maintain and protect the characteristics and qualities of older, more traditional neighborhoods. There are also significant efforts to make the downtown friendly to pedestrians, particularly through the use of pedestrian traffic signals at intersections. To promote and encourage bicycling, a “bicycle corral” for parking bicycles has been established in downtown Lincoln which provides secure, covered parking for bikes. A second corral is being considered for another part of downtown due to the success of the first.

The current LRTP, as mentioned above, contains extensive discussions of pedestrian, trail, and bicycle facility goals, policies, and descriptions of existing and preferred systems. While there are strong sidewalk/pedestrian and bicycle policies in place covering the entire City-County planning area, specific projects or priorities for expenditure of funds on non-motorized transportation projects, however, are not described in the transportation plan. Additionally, the plan does include some consideration of environmental resources and issues, but a more complete discussion of environmental mitigation as it pertains to regional transportation planning is limited or not well documented. Some environmental data are available, but it is not obvious how that was applied in the development of the transportation plan.

## **Congestion Management Process**

Among the most significant changes under SAFETEA-LU is the updated requirement for a Congestion Management Process (CMP) in TMAs. The change in name (formerly Congestion Management Systems) reflects a substantive shift in perspective and practice to address congestion management through a process that provides for effective management and operations of the transportation system as a whole. The result of an effective CMP should be serious consideration and implementation of strategies that advance the most efficient and effective use of existing and future transportation facilities through an objectives-driven, performance based approach to determining and selecting programs and projects.

The Lincoln MPOs LRTP currently deploys a congestion management and mitigation strategy. This strategy is a carry over from previous legislation. However, with the enactment of SAFETEA-LU, the MPO is required to develop and implement a

Congestion Management Process by July 1, 2007. The Lincoln MPO currently does not have a Congestion Management Process in place which includes the following from 23 CFR 450.320:

(1) Methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multimodal transportation system, identify the causes of recurring and non-recurring congestion, identify and evaluate alternative strategies, provide information supporting the implementation of actions, and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented actions;

(2) Definition of congestion management objectives and appropriate performance measures to assess the extent of congestion and support the evaluation of the effectiveness of congestion reduction and mobility enhancement strategies for the movement of people and goods. Since levels of acceptable system performance may vary among local communities, performance measures should be tailored to the specific needs of the area and established cooperatively by the State(s), affected MPO(s), and local officials in consultation with the operators of major modes of transportation in the coverage area;

(3) Establishment of a coordinated program for data collection and system performance monitoring to define the extent and duration of congestion, to contribute in determining the causes of congestion, and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented actions. To the extent possible, this data collection program should be coordinated with existing data sources (including archived operational/ITS data) and coordinated with operations managers in the metropolitan area;

(4) Identification and evaluation of the anticipated performance and expected benefits of appropriate congestion management strategies that will contribute to the more effective use and improved safety of existing and future transportation systems based on the established performance measures. The following categories of strategies, or combinations of strategies, are some examples of what should be appropriately considered for each area:

(i) Demand management measures, including growth management and congestion pricing;

(ii) Traffic operational improvements;

(iii) Public transportation improvements;

(iv) ITS technologies as related to the regional ITS architecture; and

(v) Where necessary, additional system capacity;

(5) Identification of an implementation schedule, implementation responsibilities, and possible funding sources for each strategy (or combination of strategies) proposed for implementation; and

(6) Implementation of a process for periodic assessment of the effectiveness of implemented strategies, in terms of the areas established performance measures. The results of this evaluation shall be provided to decision makers and the public to provide guidance on selection of effective strategies for future implementation.

The federal review team made note of the recent MPO efforts to address this provision of the regulation. The Lincoln MPO has established a working group to put in place a Congestion Management Process utilizing the eight step CMP approach identified in the CMP Guidebook. The eight step approach identified in the guidebook encompasses the requirement of the regulation. The goal of this working group is to amend the LRTP to include this vital process into key planning products and decisions. Corrective actions for deficiencies in the transportation planning process related to the CMP are included in the findings section.

## **Transportation Modeling and Technical Process**

The FHWA certification review team was provided with a model documentation report (dated January 2006) to review prior to the certification review. FHWA and Lincoln MPO staff discussed the key properties of the models, efforts undertaken to calibrate and validate the model, and data sources used for model development activities. The current TransCAD version 4.8 chosen by the MPO reflects a base year of 2004. The primary data sources used for model development and calibration efforts include the 2001 National Highway Travel Survey for Des Moines, Omaha, and Kansas City (trip generation, distribution, and computation of non-auto shares prior to assignment). Traffic count data was used for calibration of the assignment model, and to inform the calibration of auto-occupancy factors used to establish total vehicle trips.

The model contains several examples of ‘good practices’ in travel forecasting, including:

- ◆ A relatively detailed zone system for a small sized urban area (560 zones)
- ◆ Conflation of street networks to reflect true geographic and link distances.
- ◆ Trips generated using non-auto modes were separated from the total person trips.
- ◆ Incorporation of “feedback” loop that provides congested travel time information for up-stream model components

Although counts (appear to) have been historically used in Lincoln for highway assignment calibration, detailed counts that encompass all local travel may also be useful

for the development and calibration of trip tables (e.g. “ODME” methods) to further improve the accuracy of the model.

A recent TRB report on the state of metropolitan travel forecasting practice (report #288) noted that many MPOs do not pay sufficient attention to the data resources need for careful validation, and that in general “validation is hampered by a dearth of independent data sources”. In other cases existing data resources may be underutilized, or perhaps not disseminated in a useful way to support model calibration/validation steps.

Model validation is also a critical step that helps describe how the model performs at each step and to identify model errors prior to assignment. The absence of locally available data sources that describe the origin and destinations of travel for the most important travel markets makes it difficult to fully evaluate the model’s performance. Recommended actions for deficiencies in the transportation planning process related to the Transportation Modeling are included in the findings section.

## **Title VI / Environmental Justice**

The City of Lincoln has a Title VI ombudsman who leads multicultural communication efforts in the TMA. The ombudsman is based in the Mayors Office. A primary function of the position is to deal with and respond to complaints from those individuals protected by Title VI and/or ADA who believe they have been subject to discrimination, as defined by those laws. A complaint can also be filed on-line via the City’s website. All complaints are retained for at least three years.

To fulfill its Title VI requirements in formulating an LRTP update, the MPO has prepared an Environmental Justice Action Strategy in order to obtain feedback from the community on transportation related planning and projects. The Strategy is composed of four elements which encompass fundamental principles of Environmental Justice (EJ). These elements are population definitions, EJ target populations, EJ participation process, and work task.

In regard to transit services, StarTran also works with the City’s ombudsman. Per Title VI requirements, StarTran must show that its transit services are distributed in an equitable manner with no discrimination on the basis of race or national origin. StarTran’s Title VI program was approved by the FTA Office of Civil Rights in October 2007. In its Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP), which accompanies its Title VI Program, StarTran has addressed the ability of persons with limited English proficiency to utilize transit services.

As stated previously there have been no Title VI related complaints received by StarTran since the 2005 Certification Review.

## **Public Involvement**

The MPO recognizes the need to update its public involvement process to develop a Public Participation Plan (PPP) to meet current planning requirements. The 2005 Certification Review Report stated that the Public Involvement Process would be updated in conjunction with the 2007 LRTP Update effort, which would include evaluating the public involvement process on its effectiveness in getting the public to participate in Lincoln's transportation planning process. However, this task was not undertaken and, consequently, the MPO now has a fifteen year old public involvement plan since it was completed was in 1994. The MPO plans to update its public involvement process and create a PPP utilizing survey findings included in the Sigma Group Report released in September 2008. The major focus of that report was an evaluation of the MPO's public involvement program using surveys. Of the respondents, 42% are very familiar or somewhat familiar with the MPO planning process. Seniors tended not to prefer Internet communications as much as younger respondents. The PPP also needs to be developed in consultation with a wide array of "interested parties" and include multiple outreach efforts and consideration of the use of visualization techniques to inform the public.

In order to generate public involvement; the MPO, the City of Lincoln, and StarTran staffs try to accommodate the public by having evening meetings and meetings at locations more accessible to the public. For example, StarTran's annual meeting continues to be held by a bus stop in the downtown area. Planning documents are posted in StarTran's bus shelters and on the buses. It was stated at the Review that Planning Commission meetings, which are also held in the evening, are good conduits for public outreach. The commission meets every two weeks and its meetings are shown on "City5 TV" and can also be viewed on line. In addition, the MPO and the Planning Commission do not only hold meetings at City Hall but also go out into the community with proposed plans/projects. Planning documents are also available on the City's and County's internet site, "InterLinc," which often generate substantial public input. All information regarding the transportation planning process is entered on this website by the MPO.

The MPO states that it updates and reviews its list of interested parties on a regular basis and also for major planning efforts. For example, the MPO will be updating this list for the upcoming LRTP update. For planning document reviews, the MPO has extra meetings. The MPO and StarTran use "Babel Fish" software program for allowing documents to be readable by eight different languages including Spanish, Vietnamese and Bosnian languages. The Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) has identified 46 languages and dialects, and recognizes 56 nationalities within the Lincoln public school system. All language groups and nationalities may have extra difficulty addressing or commenting on the transportation planning process however, the City of Lincoln, including StarTran and the MPO works to reduce this communication difficulty by working with LPS to obtain interpreters on an as needed basis. In addition, the Planning Department's website has an on line program that translates on line text to eight non-English programs.

In addition to standing committees for various modes of transportation including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes and adopted standard public hearing procedures, a key component of current public involvement activities is to create special public participation task forces as needed to address specific planning activities. For example, for the 2007 LRTP Update, a Citizens Advisory Committee was convened to oversee public participation. The Mobility and Transportation Task Force conducted regular meetings to oversee development of the LRTP update. Additional citizen participation made available through citywide and neighborhood-level workshops and open houses were held at key decision points during the LRTP update process. The MPO also has outreach meetings with special populations, including an advisory committee with Native Americans which proved to be particularly satisfactory with the Indian Center project. Corrective actions for deficiencies in the transportation planning process related to the Public Participation Plan are included in the findings section.

## **Transit Planning**

StarTran is committed to a coordinated public transportation system, including working with other transportation providers in the Lincoln metropolitan area. This is expected to help with the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall public transportation system for delivering transportation service to Lincoln area patrons. In 2008, StarTran provided 1,975,458 rides with its fleet of sixty 35 feet long coaches which represented an almost 20 percent increase from 2005 ridership of 1,648,744 reported at the previous 2005 Certification Review. This percentage increase is due mostly to the implementation of a discounted fare program for eligible low-income individuals and an increase in gas prices. Although StarTran has seen ridership increases since the previous Review due mostly to the discounted fare program and higher gas prices, the level of transit service in Lincoln is still lower than what StarTran would like to see and StarTran would like to provide more transit service in Lincoln but additional funding will be needed.

Service hours are Monday through Friday 5:15 AM - 7:10 PM and Saturday from 5:55 AM to 7:10 PM. After much public involvement, StarTran modified its routes in June 2008, and in October 2008, raised its fare 50 cents which, along with reduced gasoline prices, likely contributed to a decrease in ridership. Ridership has continued to be lower than in 2008, again due to significantly lower gasoline prices.

Revenues for StarTran approximate \$9 million a year from various sources which include \$1,900,000 of funding from FTA, \$1,000,000 of fare box revenue, \$425,000 from the state and \$5,900,000 of City of Lincoln general funds. StarTran continues to look into the possibility of becoming a transit authority. The City of Lincoln/StarTran has pursued the potential of StarTran being designated a taxing authority through changes in State legislation. A transit authority would likely result in a more consistent local revenue stream, which then could be anticipated in development of the budget revenues and expenditures.

StarTran reported no ADA and no Title VI complaints since the 2005 Certification Review. StarTran continues to find that wheelchair access takes less time on its low-floor buses.

Since the 2005 Certification Review, all of StarTran's buses have been converted to use ethanol blended diesel fuels that have lower air pollutant emissions than diesel fuel. Also since the 2005 Review, interior cameras have been installed on the entire StarTran bus fleet which enhances the safety and security of its patrons. An upcoming plan to be implemented in the very near future is StarTran having a trip planner moving to a Google platform utilizing an automated vehicle location (AVL) tracking system which has been installed on all of StarTran's buses. The AVL technology combined with the Google platform is to be designed to give StarTran riders "real time" information concerning bus locations and expected bus stop times for StarTran buses. StarTran is also expected to have City emergency systems, snow plow operations and maintenance and some rural transit systems tie into the AVL system.

StarTran is looking into providing an evening shuttle service and providing later service hours as well as Sunday service, however, there are currently no additional funds for such expansion of services. The downtown master plan includes a recommendation for downtown trolley service. Currently, StarTran operates a radial "pulse" bus network that operates out of downtown. There are also plans looking into a secondary transit hub in the east part of Lincoln so StarTran patrons would not have to transfer in downtown Lincoln.

StarTran also intends to add bike racks to its bus fleet. Since StarTran will not be able to park all of their 35 feet buses with bike racks installed on the front in their storage facility, StarTran will in the future be acquiring smaller 30 feet buses which with bike racks mounted on the front can be stored in the storage facility mixed with 35 feet buses with bike racks.

New pedestrian standards developed by the city of Lincoln, may consider including pedestrian access to bus stops. To ensure that bus stops are accessible, StarTran looks at stops on an individual basis in response to patron feedback. Buses are allowed to stop at every intersection outside the downtown core and where major stops are accessible by sidewalk

A long term goal of the MPO is to utilize modeling software (TransCAD) to develop modeling capability for transit trip making. This planned effort would be one of the first assessments of modeling transit trips made by a small-medium MPO in FTA's Region 7 which includes the states of Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska.

Overall, the MPO and StarTran have a strong relationship and they work very well together. A major reason for this coordination is that both StarTran and the MPO are departments with City of Lincoln government. An example of this coordination that occurred since the 2005 Certification Review, is the participation of the MPO and StarTran with FTA's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF)

Programs and partnering with FTA's Section 5310 (Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities) Program. In order to participate in these programs, the MPO developed the prerequisite Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan as mandated by SAFETEA-LU. The MPO has selected two New Freedom and three JARC projects which meet the Coordinated Plan's goal and objectives. The two NF projects include funding for a mobility manager housed in the Lincoln Aging Department and reimbursing operating costs for the transporting of ADA patrons during StarTran's non-service hours. The three JARC projects include transportation vouchers to places of employments and job training; and partially funding two transit routes that serve key employment locations.

## **DISPOSITION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM THE 2005 PLANNING REVIEW**

The following are recommendations from the previous Certification Review. The review team has assessed each prior recommendation and has made a determination as to the status of the recommendation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

***1. The MPO's outreach efforts are exemplary. We recommend an evaluation of the effectiveness of the outreach efforts.***

*MPO Response: The Lincoln MPO commissioned a public participation survey in 2008 to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities within the Lincoln Transportation Planning Process. This was a two part survey with one part seeking responses from the general public and the other responses from community leaders in the area. The overall research effort was intended to document public attitudes toward various communication issues facing the City and County and to direct future transportation planning efforts within Lincoln and Lancaster County as new planning activities are initiated.*

*The further objective of this study is to provide a series of "benchmarks," against which future measurements can be compared, to assess the degree of success achieved in meeting the transportation planning and development of public input and communication goals of the Lincoln MPO and Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department. The information gained in attempting to meet these stated objectives was intended to be used to better understand how "public opinion" can be more effectively sought and included in the Public Participation Plan in the overall transportation planning process.*

*The report is located on the Lincoln MPO web page, [www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo)*

**Current Status:** This recommendation is considered resolved.

**2. We recommend the MPO perform an evaluation of the effectiveness of its Environmental Justice (EJ) efforts. As part of this evaluation, we suggest that the MPO survey low-income and minority communities in the Lincoln metropolitan area for these communities' evaluation of the MPO's EJ efforts.**

MPO Response: *The Lincoln MPO public participation survey of 2008 specifically included community leaders and informed known leaders within the low-income and minority communities.*

**Current Status:** The MPO still needs to perform an evaluation of the effectiveness of its EJ efforts. The 2008 survey is one step in the overall evaluation. This recommendation continues.

**3. We recommend that all partners in the Lincoln area consider ITS technology as an integral part of every project rather than consideration of such technology being given at or near the end of project design in order to meet a minimum Federal requirement.**

MPO Response: *An ITS Regional Architecture Plan was developed to advance the development and application of ITS within the Lincoln Metropolitan area and across the region in order to increase highway safety, mobility, security, economic health, and community environment. The ITS Regional Architecture Plan is a key element in the MPO Transportation Planning process and implements the ITS strategies of the Transportation Plan.*

**Current Status:** This recommendation is considered resolved.

**4. After the MPO has rewritten its planning prospectus, we recommend that the MPO, due to its now being a TMA, revisit and (if needed) update the interagency agreements.**

MPO Response: *Lincoln MPO staff is in the process of updating our Prospectus (Operations Plan) to ensure full compliance with current Federal transportation planning regulations and it is consistent with contemporary transportation planning practices. This updating process has involved participation from a variety of entities represented on the Lincoln MPO to make certain a range of ideas and guidance is received on how to best structure the MPO. The area of focus during this initial review have been on the structure and working relationships of the Lincoln MPO participants.*

**Current Status:** This recommendation continues, as a corrective action.

**5. The MPO needs to proactively institute a method to gain involvement from the freight industry in the transportation planning process.**

MPO Response: *A Freight and Goods Movement study was undertaken in 2001 for the purpose of providing a greater understanding of current freight trends and issues, and ensure freight and goods movement elements are incorporated into the long range transportation planning process. This initiated a greater commitment by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department to establish a stronger linkage between transportation and economic development in order to accommodate the increasing importance of goods movement in our economy.*

*The Lincoln MPO and Public Works and Utilities Department developed and administered a survey for freight carrier companies with facilities located within the Lincoln metropolitan area and Lancaster County during 2006. The overall objectives of this survey was 1) to establish a general inventory of local transporters with the type of goods they transport as well as the size of their fleet, 2) to determine the key transportation issues and transportation related problems in the Lincoln Metropolitan Area and throughout Lancaster County and 3) to establish a list of potential roadway improvements based upon the need and degree of difficulty for implementation.*

**Current Status:** This recommendation continues through the Lincoln MPO's new subcommittee which will include outreach efforts to the freight industry to include in the transportation planning process.

**6. *The MPO and StarTran are aware of FTA's Access to Jobs program. In the event this program is determined to be beneficial to the Lincoln metropolitan area, the MPO and StarTran are encouraged to first develop an Access to Jobs plan and subsequently pursue and attain Access to Jobs funding from FTA.***

MPO Response: *The Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan was developed as a result of new provisions in SAFETEA-LU. This initiative allowed three FTA funding programs to be implemented within the planning area. These programs include the Elderly Person and Person with Disabilities Program (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (Section 5316) and New Freedom Program (Section 5317). StarTran was successful in obtaining supporting funding through the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program to partially fund two transit routes to employment locations.*

**Current Status:** This recommendation is considered resolved.

**7. *The Federal government needs to provide timely information concerning available federal transportation funding to the MPO.***

**Current Status:** The Federal government strives to provide timely federal transportation funding apportionments to the MPO. Providing timely information to the MPO regarding transportation will continue to be a goal of the FHWA Nebraska Division and FTA

Region VII offices. The NDOR should also be providing continuous outreach to the MPO about federal transportation funding. The federal-aid transportation authorization bill provides multi-year apportionments when enacted. The NDOR should be able to provide funding estimates for planning purposes in a timely fashion as well. This recommendation is considered resolved.

## Overview of Finding Descriptions

It is important to understand the specific meaning for terms that describe the outcome of the certification review. These terms are defined as follows:

**Corrective Actions:** Those items that fail to meet the requirements of the Federal regulations, seriously impacting the outcome of the overall planning process.

**Recommendations:** Items, while somewhat less substantial and not requiring action, that are significant enough that FHWA and FTA would have the State and local officials consider taking some action. Typically the recommendations involve the state of the practice instead of regulatory requirements.

**Commendations - Noteworthy Practices:** Elements that demonstrate well thought out procedures for implementing the planning process. Elements that address items that have been difficult for other MPOs could be cited as noteworthy practice. Also FHWA and FTA may wish to offer commendations on significant improvements and/or resolution of past findings.

The findings from this Certification Review include corrective actions, recommendations for improvement and a listing of commendations of the strengths of the Lincoln metropolitan transportation planning process.

Consistent with 23 CFR 450.334, after review and evaluation of the TMA planning process, the FHWA and FTA shall take one of the following actions:

- (i) If the process meets the requirements of this part and a TIP has been approved by the MPO and the Governor, jointly certify the transportation planning process;
- (ii) If the process substantially meets the requirements of this part and a TIP has been approved by the MPO and the Governor, jointly certify the transportation planning process subject to certain specified corrective actions being taken; or
- (iii) If the process does not meet the requirements of this part, jointly certify the planning process as the basis for approval of only those categories of programs or projects that the FHWA and the FTA jointly determine, subject to certain specified corrective actions being taken.

If, upon the review and evaluation conducted under paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section, the FHWA and the FTA do not certify the transportation planning process in a TMA, the Secretary may withhold up to 20 percent of the funds attributable to the metropolitan planning area of the MPO for projects funded under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 in addition to corrective actions and funding restrictions. The withheld funds shall be restored to the MPA when the metropolitan transportation planning process is certified by the FHWA and FTA, unless the funds have lapsed.

## Findings from the 2009 Certification Review

### Corrective Actions:

#### Long Range Transportation Plan

1. The financial element of the LRTP must be expanded to address the estimated total project costs for “regionally significant” projects and other projects and programs important to the community. To accomplish this, the transportation plan must include:
  - a. details of street and road projects sufficient to assign reasonably expected total costs to those projects,
  - b. descriptions and related estimated costs of proposed non-motorized improvements sufficiently significant in scope or cost to list as stand-alone projects, as defined by the MPO,
  - c. descriptions and related estimated costs of major ITS/operational improvements,
  - d. descriptions of major transit projects proposed over next 20 years, if funding is reasonably expected to be available, and
  - e. estimates of expenditures on smaller projects “grouped” into categories covering such activities as surface treatments, landscaping, system preservation, etc.
2. The financial plan element of the LRTP must provide current and forecasted revenues available for projects. The financial element can be included as part of the LRTP or the MPO may include a summary of financial information in the plan document with reference to more detailed information in another separate, but public document. This needs to include strategies for acquiring any needed additional revenues. The financial element must describe what and how inflation rates have been applied to project cost estimates to meet year of expenditure (YOE) requirements and the assumptions behind choosing those rates. The financial element will also identify the growth rates (positive or negative, which may not necessarily be tied to the cost inflation factors) applied to forecasted revenues available for transportation projects during the life of the plan.
3. The LRTP is required to address environmental mitigation strategies, at least at the regional or systems level. These strategies need to be based on consultation efforts with appropriate natural resource, environmental, land management and similar agencies, and may include results of outreach activities to other environmental interest groups. In addition, the transportation plan is to be compared to State conservation plans or maps or inventories of natural and historic resources, if available.

4. The LRTP needs to identify the areas of their current planning process in which they are coordinating with environmental resources agencies. In the LRTP update the MPO must include a discussion of environmental mitigation strategies, or at least increase efforts to contact resource and environmental protection agencies and offer them opportunities to participate in the planning process. This next Transportation Plan update needs to adequately involve appropriate agencies and make significant strides in comparing the transportation system map to natural resource/conservation maps, plans, or inventories.

### **Transportation Improvement Plan**

5. The TIP financial plan must be upgraded to include,
  - a. total project costs (i.e., full funding), or
  - b. reference to the financial element in the LRTP (assuming it is adequate)
  - c. project costs in year of expenditure dollars
  - d. Strategies which can be employed to assure future anticipated funds.
6. The MPO, with its planning partners, must document the project selection criteria and process for the TIP. This project selection process should also incorporate the appropriate criteria (or actual strategies/projects) from the Congestion Management Process.
7. Individual projects cannot be deleted (or added) to the TIP unilaterally by the State DOT once the MPO Board takes action on the TIP. In particular,
  - a. the entire TIP (or TIP amendment) is approved by the Governor's designee for inclusion in the STIP, or the TIP or amendment is returned to the MPO for appropriate follow-up action, and
  - b. any concerns about the eligibility or funding of a project included in a TIP or TIP amendment must be resolved before the State takes final action on the formal request for action by the MPO.

### **Congestion Management Process**

8. There is some evidence the MPO is identifying congestion in their planning process, however this is not well documented. The Congestion Management Process shall be developed in accordance with 23 CFR 450.320. The MPO shall adhere to the CMP Guidebook found at ([www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/cmpguidebook/cmpguidebook.pdf](http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/cmpguidebook/cmpguidebook.pdf)) for developing the Congestion Management Process.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

9. The Unified Planning Work Program must provide more detailed descriptions of the planning products. Each of the planning products produced in a given activity need to clearly define time frames, activity costs, associate funding sources, activity champions, and give a deadline when the public can expect a deliverable product. The current UPWP should be amended to include the work activities that address the corrective actions (and implement the Action Plan) identified as a result of this certification review.

### **Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

10. In the 2005 certification review report, the updating of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was identified as a recommendation since the then and current Lincoln MPO PIP was created in December 1994. Now, it is even more crucial that the MPO updates its public involvement process to bring it into compliance with 23 CFR §450.316 (i.e. meet the requirements of a Public Participation Plan). The MPO must make certain to identify and invite stakeholders who may wish to be involved in the development of the PPP

### **Planning Agreements**

11. The planning agreements need to be updated to more clearly define roles and responsibilities of the MPO and the State. Having official written agreements in place helps to ensure the 3C process is executed as intended and that it can be readily understood by the participants in the planning process and the public. The Lincoln MPO planning agreements are extremely dated and should be updated to reflect the current planning process. The planning agreements need to clearly define the MPO Planning Area Boundaries, the MPO structure, the roles and responsibilities of planning activities. This was a recommendation from the previous certification review which was not implemented.

### **Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary**

12. The MPO must clearly define the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary so all concerned parties know what areas are within that boundary. The MPA boundary descriptions shall be provided for informational purposes to FHWA and FTA. The MPA boundary descriptions shall be submitted either as a geo-spatial database or described in sufficient detail to enable the boundaries to be accurately delineated on a map.

# Recommendations:

## **Long Range Transportation Plan**

1. The LRTP should be clearly distinguished as a product developed for and through the MPO and 3-C planning process, as well as meeting needs of City/County Comprehensive Plan. To accomplish this,
  - a. the website can be restructured to better define the special role, structure, and goals of the MPO vs. the City/County-oriented planning activities, and
  - b. all documents developed through and for the MPO should be developed with this distinction in mind (with explanatory material included, if needed).
2. Transportation projects without sufficient funding expected to be available over the life of the plan may be identified as “illustrative” projects or as desired projects in a “vision” plan. If and when sufficient funding is deemed available for these projects within the life of the plan, those projects can be moved from the illustrative list or the vision plan into the fiscally constrained LRTP.

## **Travel Model Validation Efforts**

3. While the travel model has been demonstrated to produce assignment results that fall within FHWA specified standards for model calibration – based on the aggregation of volumes across facility classes -- the MPO is encouraged to conduct checks on upstream model components to ensure that they sufficiently replicate current travel demand patterns in the region. A comprehensive origin-destination (OD) survey, or perhaps several smaller surveys that capture OD geography, would help inform future year model updates/validation efforts in Lincoln and would lessen the reliance on national or ‘borrowed’ insights from other areas. In the absence of OD data, carefully designed count programs can help ‘fill in the gaps’ and offer a valuable source to extract specific travel behavior information required for the model. Reliable trip tables may also offer a foundation for testing alternative scenarios, including those focused on alternative land development assumptions and offer the ability to provide a more complete evaluation of transportation alternatives in the Lincoln metropolitan area. Additional thought should also be given to the incorporation of sensitivity tests as a model validation strategy to examine how the model behaves as key inputs are changed.

## **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

4. The MPO should establish the identity of the TIP as a key document of the metropolitan transportation planning process, which includes state and locally sponsored transportation projects addressing regional needs and priorities. The public should understand that the TIP is separate from the local Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

5. The TIP document should include more discussion of how the TIP implements or advances major elements of the LRTP and is an extension of the LRTP.

### **Upcoming “Livability” Federal Policy/Legislative Proposals**

6. The MPO should monitor new federal policy initiatives and/or federal legislative proposals which are expected to emphasize “livability”, climate change, and related issues. It is very probable that requirements related to those issues will become more entrenched in the transportation planning process and will affect the roles and responsibilities of the MPOs, transit operators, and the State DOTs, among others.
7. The MPO and its planning partners should consider convening an environmental and community stakeholders committee or ad hoc group to be part of the identification of key issues affecting regional “livability” and environmental resources and the development of expanded livability programs and environmental mitigation strategies.

## **Commendations:**

1. **Non-Motorized Transportation Planning** -We commend the transportation plan for providing much attention to policies applying to sidewalk, bicycle facility, and trails planning and general approaches to improving those systems within the City of Lincoln and the adjacent County areas. This should provide an excellent basis to determine how the MPO will identify, fund, and implement individual non-motorized transportation projects, either as stand alone projects or as part of larger street/highway or even transit investments.
2. **Long Range Transportation Plan Livability Policies** - We commend the transportation plan for including policies and proposed actions to maintain and improve the “livability” of the Lincoln/Lancaster County region. (This is evidenced through the strong interrelationships between land use and transportation planning and the significant attention directed to such subjects as sidewalk and trails development).
3. **Promotion of Non-Motorized Transportation and Transit** - We commend the City-County Health Department’s initiatives in the transportation planning process including the promotion of non-motorized transportation, and transit.
4. **Bicycle Parking Initiative** - We commend the development of bicycle parking, “Bicycle Corrals” with the use of funding from bicycle organization and City parking revenue.

5. **Transportation Planning Outreach** -We commend the MPO's commitment for having transportation planning outreach meetings during nontraditional times at community centers, schools, libraries and other more convenient locations for the public.
  
6. **Outreach to non-English Speaking Population** - We commend the MPO and StarTran for its use of the "Babble" software and for supplying translated documents upon request for non-English speaking residents of the Lincoln TMA.

## **Certification Action**

The Lincoln Transportation Management Area's (TMA) planning process substantially meets the federal planning requirements. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.334 (b)(1)(ii), the FHWA and FTA hereby jointly certify the transportation planning process in the Lincoln metropolitan area through September 30, 2013, subject to addressing the corrective actions identified in the findings section of this report. The corrective actions identified in the report are important to the planning process, but the immediate situation does not warrant withholding project approvals. The FHWA, FTA, and Lincoln TMA will agree to milestone dates as established in a corrective action plan, in which identified corrective actions have a time frame to be remedied. Failure to respond and remedy the corrective actions could lead to a more restrictive certification.

## APPENDIX A:

### List of Participants for Joint FHWA/FTA Certification Review

**Review Sessions: May 5, 2009**

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**MPO Executive Officer**

- ✓ Mayor Chris Beutler
- ✓ Trish Owen, Mayor's Office

**Federal Highway Administration**

- ~~Joseph Werning, Nebraska Division Administrator~~
- ✓ Justin Luther, Nebraska Division Planning Engineer
- ✓ Robin Smith, Transportation Planner
- ✓ Melissa Maiefski, Environmental Program Manager
- ✓ Jonathan Wiegand, Transportation Engineer
- ✓ Danny Briggs, Transportation Engineer

On the phone:

Eric Pihl, Transportation Model Resource Planner  
FHWA, Resources Center in Lakewood, CO

**Federal Transit Administration**

- ~~Mokhtee Ahmad, Region VII, Division Administrator~~
- ✓ Mark Bechtel, Region VII, Community Planner

**Nebraska Department of Roads**

- ✓ Randy Peters, Planning & Project Development Division Head
- ✓ Brad Zumwalt, Planning & Project Development
- ✓ Ron Schlautman, Planning & Project Development
  
- ✓ Jerry Wray, Rail & Public Transportation Division
- ✓ James Miller, Local Projects Section
- Raitis Tigeris, Local Projects Section
- Rich Ruby, District 1 Engineer
- Dan Waddle, Traffic Engineering

**Lancaster County Engineering**

- ✓ Don Thomas, Lancaster County Engineer
- ✓ Doug Pillard, Engineer, Design Division Head

**Public Works & Utilities Department**

- ✓ Greg MacLean, Director
- ✓ Roger Figard, City Engineer
- ✓ Randy Hoskins, City Traffic Engineer
- Thomas Shafer, Design & Construction

**Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization  
2009 Certification Review  
Participants and Attendees**

**Review Sessions: May 5, 2009** (continued)

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**StarTran**

- ✓ Larry Worth, Transit Manager
- ✓ Brian Praeuner, Transit Planner

**Urban Development Department**

David Landis, Director  
Ken Smith, Parking Manager

**Planning Department**

- ✓ Marvin Krout, Director
- ✓ Kent Morgan, Assistant Director
- ✓ Mike Brienzo, MPO Transportation Planner
- ✓ David Cary, Multimodal Planner

**Planning Commissioner**

- ✓ Gene Carroll
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

**Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department**

- ✓ Rick Thorson, Assistant Chief - Environmental Health: Air Quality Section
-

**Public Hearing: May 5, 2009**

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**Federal Highway Administration**

- Joseph Werning, Nebraska Division Administrator
- ✓ Justin Luther, Nebraska Division Planning Engineer
- Robin Smith, Transportation Planner
- ✓ Melissa Maiefski, Environmental Program Manager
- ✓ Jonathan Wiegand, Transportation Engineer
- Danny Briggs, Transportation Engineer

**Federal Transit Administration**

- ✓ Mark Bechtel, FTA Region VII, Community Planner

**Planning Department**

- ✓ Marvin Krout, Director
- ✓ Kent Morgan, Assistant Director
- ✓ Mike Brienzo, MPO Transportation Planner
- David Cary, Multimodal Planner

**Public Works & Utilities Department**

- Greg MacLean, Director
- Roger Figard, City Engineer
- Randy Hoskins, City Traffic Engineer

**StarTran**

- ✓ Larry Worth, Transit Manager
- ✓ Brian Praeuner, Transit Planner

**Citizens Presenters**

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**Review Sessions: May 6, 2009**

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**Federal Highway Administration**

- Joseph Werning, Nebraska Division Administrator
- ✓ Justin Luther, Nebraska Division Planning Engineer
- ✓ Robin Smith, Transportation Planner
- ✓ Melissa Maiefski, Environmental Program Manager
- ✓ Jonathan Wiegand, Transportation Engineer
- ✓ Danny Briggs, Transportation Engineer

On the phone:

- ✓ Eric Pihl, FHWA Transportation Model Resource Planner

**Federal Transit Administration**

- ✓ Mark Bechtel, FTA Region VII, Community Planner

**Nebraska Department of Roads**

- ✓ Randy Peters, Planning & Project Development Division Head
- ✓ Brad Zumwalt, Planning & Project Development
- ✓ Ron Schlautman, Planning & Project Development
- ✓ Jerry Wray, NDOR, Rail & Public Transportation Division

**Public Works & Utilities Department**

- ✓ Roger Figard, City Engineer
- ✓ Randy Hoskins, City Traffic Engineer

**StarTran**

- ✓ Larry Worth, Transit Manager
- ✓ Brian Praeuner, Transit Planner

**Urban Development Department**

David Landis, Director  
Ken Smith, Parking Manager

**Planning Department**

- ✓ Marvin Krout, Director
- ✓ Kent Morgan, Assistant Director
- ✓ Mike Brienzo, MPO Transportation Planner
- ✓ David Cary, Multimodal Planner

**Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department**

- ✓ Rick Thorson, Assistant Chief - Environmental Health: Air Quality Section
-

**Exit Interview: May 6, 2009**

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**Federal Highway Administration**

- ✓ Joseph Werning, Nebraska Division Administrator
- ✓ Justin Luther, Nebraska Division Planning Engineer
- Robin Smith, Transportation Planner
- ✓ Melissa Maiefski, Environmental Program Manager
- ✓ Jonathan Wiegand, Transportation Engineer
- Danny Briggs, Transportation Engineer

**Federal Transit Administration**

- ✓ Mark Bechtel, FTA Region VII, Community Planner

**Nebraska Department of Roads**

- ✓ Randy Peters, Planning & Project Development Division Head
- ✓ Brad Zumwalt, Planning & Project Development
- ✓ Ron Schlautman, Planning & Project Development
- Jerry Wray, NDOR, Rail & Public Transportation Division

**Public Works & Utilities Department**

- ✓ Greg MacLean, Director
- ✓ Roger Figard, City Engineer
- ✓ Randy Hoskins, City Traffic Engineer

**StarTran**

- ✓ Larry Worth, Transit Manager
- ✓ Brian Praeuner, Transit Planner

**Urban Development Department**

David Landis, Director  
Ken Smith, Parking Manager

**Planning Department**

- ✓ Marvin Krout, Director
- ✓ Kent Morgan, Assistant Director
- ✓ Mike Brienzo, MPO Transportation Planner

**APPENDIX B:**  
**FHWA Review Team**

# Federal Review Team

Justin K. Luther  
Planning/Realty Officer  
Federal Highway Administration  
100 Centennial Mall North  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
Office: 402.437.5964  
[Justin.Luther@dot.gov](mailto:Justin.Luther@dot.gov)

Robin Smith  
Federal Highway Administration  
Office of Planning  
Office: 720-963-3072  
Fax: 720-963-3041  
12300 W. Dakota  
Suite 175  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
[Robin.Smith@dot.gov](mailto:Robin.Smith@dot.gov)

Mark Bechtel  
Community Planner  
Federal Transit Administration - Region VII  
901 Locust Street, Suite 404  
Kansas City, MO 64106  
[Mark.Bechtels@dot.gov](mailto:Mark.Bechtels@dot.gov)  
816-329-3937 Voice  
816-329-3921 Fax

APPENDIX C:  
Public Hearing Testimony

**Present:** Mark Bechtel, Federal Transit Administration; Justin Luther, Robin Smith & Joe Werning, Federal Highway Administration; Andre Mick, Lincoln Independent Business Association; Roger Figard, Public Works & Utilities - RTSD; Lin Quenzer, Ombudsmen, Mayor's Office; Kent Morgan and Mike Brienzo, Lincoln MPO/ Planning Department.

Andre Mick, representing Lincoln Independent Business Association, first thanked the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and the Lincoln Area MPO for holding this meeting. Additionally, they wanted to thank the City of Lincoln for continuing to work on road funding. They recognize that dollars are tight and road funding dollars are a dwindling resource.

Mick stated that LIBA wanted to express their concern regarding the removal of the South Expressway project from the State of Nebraska and Lincoln long-term CIP plan. They had previously delivered a statement to State Senators, the Mayor of Lincoln, City Council members and County Commissioners expressing this concern based on safety issues and the need for continued development. They appreciate the City's willingness to hear their concern and hope that as the City reviews processes and establishes criteria for projects that merit funding, the City will consider the Lincoln South Expressway and encourage the State to put this back in the CIP.

Smith asked Mick if she feels there is enough opportunity to participate in the planning process. Mick stated that there are several ways to comment including at Planning Commission, County Commission and City Council meetings. Most often, they have found that if they can't comment publicly, they can call and visit by phone.

Smith then asked Mick if she is aware of opportunities for the community to get in on the ground floor with developing the transportation plan. Mick stated that she personally has not been a part of that process.

Bechtel asked Mick if she or her organization communicates or participates with StarTran in their transit planning activities. Mick stated that there has been extensive communication between LIBA and StarTran.

Brienzo noted for the record that he received an email from Elaine Hammer expressing her concerns about the trail building review process.



To: Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Transit Administration  
Lincoln Metropolitan Administration  
From: Coby Mach, LIBA President & CEO  
Date: May 5, 2009  
Re: Lincoln South Expressway for CIP

The Lincoln Independent Business Association (LIBA) would like to first thank the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Lincoln Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for holding this public meeting.

Additionally we want to thank the City of Lincoln for continuing to work on road funding. We recognize that dollars are tight and road funding dollars are a dwindling resource.

Very briefly, we would like to share our concern regarding the removal of the South Expressway project from the State of Nebraska and Lincoln long-term CIP plan. In a statement previously delivered to State Senators, the Mayor of Lincoln, City Council members, and County Commissioners, we have expressed this concern based on safety issues and the need for continued development. We appreciate the City's willingness to hear our concern and hope that as you review your processes and establish criteria for projects that merit funding, you will consider the Lincoln South Expressway and encourage the State to put this back in the CIP.

## Michael D. Brienzo

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**From:** elaine [elaine.hammer@windstream.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2009 9:21 AM  
**To:** Michael D. Brienzo  
**Subject:** Concern about trail review process

To: Mike Brienzo

From: Elaine Hammer  
5000 N 7th St  
Lincoln, NE 68521

Re: Trail building review process

We have received notice of a public hearing process in regard to the transportation planning process in our area. While this concern is not directly part of the planning, I wish to comment on the review process after government bodies receive grants for projects. I am speaking specifically to the building of trails for Lincoln City and the Lower Platte South Natural Resource District agencies.

Through the Great Plains Trails Network, I have been involved in raising over 1.5 million dollars from private donors for the building of trails. This money is used for matching grants from transportation enhancement funds. We raise the money, the governmental bodies receive the grants, then the process gets delayed and delayed due to the many layers of government, including state and federal that seem to be required to build the facilities. It is often 2 to 3 years of paperwork and reviews which take place. By the time the facilities are built, the donors to whom we are most grateful have long forgotten that they donated to the project. It is ridiculous, and I cannot help but think that many hours of taxpayer dollars are spent in this unnecessary process.

Hopefully, there will be appropriate revision of these processes, so that projects can be built sooner.

HAMPTON Enterprises, Inc.  
HAMPTON Commercial Construction, Inc.  
1660 South 70th Street, Suite 203  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506  
www.hampton1.com

402/489-8858 • FAX 402/489-9287



HAMPTON

May 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

As a long time individual who has had a long standing interest in a viable street road system, I would like to share my concerns with you.

I watched the west bypass stumble along until it reached its most expensive stage to construct. I have watched this same process emerge in the improvement of 'O' street and Highway 6—the partial construction of the southeast diagonal and the death of the northeast diagonal. A similar situation happened in the 1970's with the south bypass, now proposed in the area of Saltillo, rather than Yankee Hill Road, and now the east bypass is in the vicinity of 120<sup>th</sup> street, rather than 98<sup>th</sup> street, as it was originally planned.

There seems to be no relief for the high truck traffic and increase in number of fatalities now occurring on Highway 2. How many people must die on Highway 2 before we start to pay attention, or must we wait for the most expensive solutions as has been the practice in the past? Can we not start to create a viable plan for a south and east bypass instead of the present plan of procrastination? It is disappointing to see Omaha planning for a loop around their progressive city, and I commend them for their foresight and vision. I regret the lack of it at the city and state level for Lincoln.

Sincerely,

Joe Hampton

Appendix D:  
Lincoln MPO Questionnaire and  
Responses

**OVERVIEW**

1. Please provide a general briefing of the metropolitan area, i.e. demographics, development trends, etc., and discuss any major transportation issues in the area, highlighting any changes since the previous Certification Review.

- City of Lincoln is the Metropolitan Planning Organization
  - Lancaster County
  - 846.51 Square Miles

- **Population**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Lincoln</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Lancaster</u>	<u>Change</u>
1960	128,521	+ 30.0%	155,272	+ 29.7%
1970	149,518	+ 16.3%	167,972	+ 8.2%
1980	171,932	+ 15.0%	192,884	+ 14.8%
1990	191,972	+ 11.7%	213,641	+ 10.8%
2000	225,581	+ 17.5%	250,291	+ 17.2%
2007 (est.)	248,744	+ 10.3%	275,665	+ 10.1%

- **Population Density in Lincoln**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Total Sq. Miles</u>	<u>Population per Acre</u>	<u>Population per Sq. Mile</u>
1960	16,556.8	25.87	7.76	4,968
1970	31,756.3	49.62	4.71	3,013
1980	38,056.3	59.46	4.52	2,892
1990	40,671.5	63.55	4.72	3,021
2000	48,679.5	76.06	4.63	2,966
2007 (est.)	52,960.0	82.75	4.70	3,006

- **The major transportation issues facing the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area .**
  - ▶ Lincoln faces continuing challenges in identifying practical funding alternatives in the provision of basic municipal services including transportation infrastructure to keep pace with urban growth.
  - ▶ Both local and federal dollars are needed to continue major improvements that are currently underway within the urban area.
    - 1) Antelope Valley Project that includes roads, creek canalization, trails, urban revitalization. This project is very large for a community the size of Lincoln and requires considerable funding.
    - 2) Funding is needed for and construction of the South and East Lincoln Beltway System.

- ▶ Corridor Preservation efforts to protect the right-of-way for the future South and East Beltway Corridors.
  - ▶ As Lincoln continues to develop north of I-80, ways of developing new transportation linkages crossing this barrier and hindering urban travel needs to be developed.
  - ▶ A need to continue to find way to maintain a balance between arterial system development within the urban core and preserving the character of neighborhoods.
  - ▶ Continue to look for opportunities to develop alternative modes of transportation.
  - ▶ Financing Transit improvements in an expanding urban environment is getting more difficult given the increase in operating costs that impact the ability to provide adequate public transit services.
  - ▶ Coordination of special transportation providers in order to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of transportation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.
  - ▶ Multi-modal issues continue to surface for the support of alternate modes of travel.
- **Significant changes in the transportation system that have taken place recently.**
    - ▶ New StarTran bus service and route changes were implemented in June 2008 as a result of the “Transit Development Plan”.
    - ▶ StarTran is implementing an Automatic Vehicle Location System (AVL) on all buses and vehicles during this fiscal year.
    - ▶ StarTran has increased the mobility opportunities for persons with disabilities with the introduction of low-floor buses into the StarTran fleet.
    - ▶ All of the StarTran buses are using ethanol blended diesel fuels that result in lower emissions in the transportation system.
    - ▶ The development of the coordinated special transportation system will improve the efficiency and allow the community to better meet the transportation needs of persons with disabilities.
    - ▶ Several significant changes in the transportation management system improvements have take place recently. These include:
      - 1) Implementation of cash-flow budgeting and the development of a project scheduling system.
      - 2) The development of a state-of-the-art “pavement management system” that will allow us to utilize video imaging technologies in evaluating the infrastructure conditions.
      - 3) Developed a Regional ITS Architecture which is being coordinated with the City, County and State. This technology will maximize traffic flows.
      - 4) Completion of a major portion of the Antelope Valley project, creating streets, trails and sidewalks in the heart of the City, while eliminating at-grade railroad crossings.
    - ▶ The Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership was created which includes the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Lower Platte South NRD, the Nature Conservancy, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Nearly 590 acres of land containing saline wetlands has been set aside.
    - ▶ The Lincoln Public School (LPS) system has installed diesel retrofit oxidation catalyst devices on all school buses and has implemented a "no idling" policy.
      - The addition of the first bike lanes in the downtown core.
      - Increased emphasis on grade separation between vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists.
      - Traffic signal upgrades to improve pedestrian friendliness (timings and the use of countdown pedestrian heads).

- The 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan includes proposed studies to be initiated for the following areas to determine if any facility improvements or road closings will be planned for these locations.
  - ▶ North 44th at BNSF RR
  - ▶ Beltway and Fringe Arterial - Explore options for promoting the maximum utilization by local traffic of the west, south, and east Beltway, Interstate 80, and major urban fringe arterial in order to minimize the impact of future traffic growth on existing interior roadways within the built environment.
  - ▶ North 70th to North 84th Streets and Havelock Ave. to Bluff Road Area Study. Completed
  - ▶ Highway 2 Corridor Study from 9th Street to 84th Street, including grade separations.
  - ▶ Cornhusker Highway Corridor Study from I-80 Exit 399 to I-80 Exit 409, including grade separations.
  - ▶ 98th Street and Highway 2 Area Study, including grade separation. Interim study completed
  - ▶ A study that encompasses the general area bounded by NW 48th Street and NW 27th Street, West Webster to US-34. The study is to include north/south and east/west roadway needs and alignments, including the West Fletcher corridor and US-34 access considerations.
  - ▶ As part of the US-77/West Beltway freeway project, study for a potential overpass at US-77 and Old Cheney Road and Rokeby Road. The study is to be a joint State/County/City feasibility study, including a traffic analysis, a citizen participation element, an appropriate environmental review, and will be started no later than one year prior to the contract letting of the West Bypass freeway upgrade. The study will comply with FHWA procedures for Federal Aid projects and will attempt to maintain an Old Cheney connection to 1st Street. (Study for a potential overpass at Rokeby Road has been approved by the County Board only.)
  - ▶ Nebraska Highway 2 through the urban area is identified for corridor protection to include the retention of all property within the State's present right-of-way, denial of any additional access points to the roadway, elimination of existing access points should such opportunities arise, and the acquisition of additional right-of-way should it become available. This will enable the widening of Nebraska Highway 2 from four to six through lanes as identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

## **MPO ORGANIZATION**

*Federal legislation (23 U.S.C. 134(b)) requires the designation of an MPO for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. When an MPO representing all or part of a TMA is initially designated or redesignated according to 23 CFR450.310 (d), the policy board of the MPO shall consist of (a) local elected officials, (b) officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (c) appropriate State transportation officials. The voting membership of an MPO that was designated or redesignated prior to December 18, 1991, will remain valid until a new MPO is redesignated. Redesignation is required whenever the existing MPO seeks to substantially change the proportion of voting members representing individual jurisdictions or the State or the decision-making authority or procedures established under MPO bylaws.*

2. How are the members chosen for the MPO's executive and technical functions and what jurisdictions do they represent? What are the committee's structures and the responsibilities of each? Are all jurisdictions represented? Are all modes represented?

- A. How are the members chosen for the MPO's executive and technical functions and what jurisdictions do they represent? What are the committee's structures and the responsibilities of each?
- The Officials Committee is be comprised of elected officials who represent the governmental bodies which make policy decisions.

The Lincoln MPO Officials Committee membership consists of elected officials representing the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the State of Nebraska. The Committee is comprised of five voting members and three non-voting members. The voting members review and act upon transportation related programs and studies recommended by of the MPO Technical Committee which serve as short- and middle-range development programs to implement the transportation plan. Reviews the recommendations of the Officials Committee are for compliance with the established planning process and the policies of the general purpose governments and agencies which they represent. The non-voting members represent the federal transportation agencies for the region and provide policy guidance to the Committee.

The Officials Committee review the work of the Technical Committee for compliance with the policies of the general purpose governments and agencies which the members represent and make recommendations to the MPO on their findings. Transportation related programs and studies serve to implement the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, with the recommendation made to the MPO for final action. If development programs constitute a need for revision of the comprehensive plan, the committee forwards the recommendation to the Technical Committee and the Lincoln City-Lancaster County Planning Commission following comprehensive plan amendment procedures. In regard to the development of the transportation portion of the comprehensive plan or amendments, the Officials Committee reviews the Technical Committee, the Planning Commission, the Lincoln City Council and the Lancaster County Board actions and recommends the proposed plan or amendments to the MPO.

The Officials Committee is comprised of the following elected officials who represent the governmental bodies which make policy decisions:

*Voting Members:*

1. Mayor of the City of Lincoln
2. Chairperson of the Lincoln City Council
3. Chairperson of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners
4. Member of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners
5. Governor of the State of Nebraska or a duly appointed representative from the Nebraska Department of Roads

*Non-voting Members:*

6. Division Engineer of the Federal Highway Administration
7. Regional Representative, Federal Transit Administration, Region VII
8. Airport System Planner, Federal Aviation Administration, Central Region

The Officials Committee holds meetings at least twice yearly and subject to call as circumstances warrant. The meetings are posted and open to the public and are held at such time and place as generally convenient to the membership.

- The Technical Advisory Committee is made up of representatives of various professional transportation and related planning disciplines which serves to investigate or review specific transportation related topics. These reviews consider the effects planning actions may have on transportation plans and programs and address appropriate federal regulations. All Technical Advisory Committees meetings are posted and open to the public.

The Technical Advisory Committee generally will serve as the administrative and technical staff to implement the MPO Prospectus/Unified Planning Work Program and to propose, develop and/or review transportation related programs, studies and proposals for the Lincoln Metropolitan Area. The Committee conducts the work necessary to produce the recommended Long Range Transportation Plan and makes recommendations to the Officials Committee on proposed amendments to the transportation plan. Short-term planning documents developed and reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee include the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Annual Transportation Systems Management Report among other implementation documents. The Technical Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the Officials Committee on proposed programs, studies and proposals.

The Technical Advisory Committee generally serves as the administrative staff to implement the MPO Prospectus and to propose, develop and review transportation related programs, studies and proposals for the Lincoln Metropolitan Area, including development and review of the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Systems Management Program, Transportation Improvement Program, etc. The Technical Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the Officials Committee on these programs, studies and proposals. The Technical Advisory Committee being constituted of representatives of various disciplines, serves in a review capacity for consideration of the effects of transportation plans and programs with regard to appropriate federal regulations. The Technical Advisory Committee conducts the work necessary to produce a recommended transportation portion of the comprehensive plan and makes recommendations to the Lincoln City-Lancaster County Planning Commission. The Technical Advisory Committee also reviews proposed amendments to the transportation plan and makes recommendations to Planning Commission.

The Technical Advisory Committee is constituted of the following members or their representatives:

*Voting Members:*

1. Director, Public Works & Utilities Department, Lincoln
2. Director, Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department
3. City Engineer, (Excitave Director Railroad Transportation Safety District) Public Works & Utilities Department, Lincoln
4. Assistant City Engineer, Public Works & Utilities Department, Lincoln
5. City Traffic Engineer, Public Works & Utilities Department, Lincoln
6. Manager, Lincoln Public Transportation System (StarTran)

7. Director, Urban Development Department, Lincoln
8. Executive Director, Lincoln Airport Authority
9. Assistant Chief - Environmental Health: Air Quality Section,  
Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department
10. County Engineer, Lancaster County
11. Division Head, Road Construction, Lancaster County
12. Multimodal Planner, Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department (*new*)
13. Director, Planning & Project Development, Nebraska Department of Roads
14. District 1 Engineer, Nebraska Department of Roads
15. Roadway Design Engineer, Nebraska Department of Roads
16. Traffic Engineer, Nebraska Department of Roads

*Non-voting Members:*

17. Planning and Research Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Nebraska Division
18. Area Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Nebraska Division
19. Transportation Systems Planner, Federal Transit Administration, Region VII
20. Chief, General Aviation District Office 12, Federal Aviation Administration
21. Chairperson, Mayor's Pedestrian/Bicycle Advisory Committee

While representatives from the cooperating governmental agencies represented on the Technical Advisory Committee may offer expertise in a variety of disciplines, it is anticipated, when necessary, that expert advice and guidance may be sought from other governmental agencies, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, and, if necessary, private consulting organizations, depending upon staff availability and budgetary considerations.

The Technical Advisory Committee holds meetings at least on a quarterly basis and subject to call as circumstances warrant. The meetings are open to the public and are held at a time and place that is generally convenient to the membership.

B. Are all jurisdictions represented?

- ▶ Not all jurisdictions are represented directly but they do have representation through County representatives and provide feed back into the planning process by consulting with County Commissioners, the County Engineer, and the County Planner.

C. Are all modes represented?

- ▶ Generally all modes are represented. Exceptions are private transportation entities such as freight carriers, railroad interests, private transit which do not have voting rights but are invited to participate in the MPO Technical Advisory Committee activities.

3. How is the MPO staff organized and what are their responsibilities?

The city of Lincoln has been designated the sole recipient of federal transportation planning funds by being named the designated agency (Metropolitan Planning Organization) for the Lincoln Metropolitan Area, by the Governor of the State of Nebraska. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Lincoln is the executive branch of Lincoln city government as

represented by the Mayor. Under the city's charter, the Mayor is a strong Mayor charged with executing the executive functions of city government. The city of Lincoln as the MPO has the responsibility for the coordination and carrying out of comprehensive and transportation planning, transit planning and programming, and transit program implementation for the city of Lincoln and for Lancaster County as a result of an interlocal agreement, in cooperation with the state and other cooperating governmental bodies.

The MPO, together with the City of Lincoln, is responsible for conducting the urban transportation planning process, pursuant to federal requirements and is responsible for assigning work as necessary to the Technical and Officials Committees in order to carry out that process. Any member of any participating group or agency in the transportation planning process may recommend to the MPO that transportation planning related work be conducted by the Technical or Officials Committees. As the MPO, the city of Lincoln is responsible for developing the long-range transportation plan and for conducting all long-range transportation planning for both the Lincoln urban area and Lancaster County. Other functions include responsibilities for annual endorsement of or action on the MPO Prospectus, Unified Planning Work Program, long-range element of the transportation plan, Transportation Systems Management activities and the Transportation Improvement Program. Following review of the Technical and Officials Committees action on plans produced as a part of the transportation planning process, the Mayor of Lincoln as Executive Director takes final action on plans and programs.

The urban transportation planning process and related activities is coordinated by the Lincoln Public Works Director representing the MPO.

- The Lincoln MPO staff is provided by the City of Lincoln for the MPO Officials Committee and Technical Committee and the implement the long range transportation planning activities. Activities include providing technical expertise in the development of transportation plans and programs, managing the public involvement process and supporting local communities in their general planning efforts. Primary staff is listed below.

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Title</u>
Greg MacLean	Director, Lincoln Public Works & Utilities
Roger Figard	Lincoln City Engineer, (RTSD) Lincoln Public Works & Utilities
Thomas Shafer	Design & Construction Manager, Lincoln Public Works & Utilities
Randy Hoskins	Lincoln Assistant-City Engineer, Lincoln Public Works & Utilities
Larry Worth	Transit Manager, StarTran
Brian Praeuner	Transit Planner, StarTran
Marvin Krout	Director, Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
Kent Morgan	Assistant Director, Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
Mike Brienzo	MPO Transportation Planner, Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
David Cary	Multimodal Planner, Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department
Michele Abendroth	Planning Specialist, Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
Don Thomas	Lancaster County Engineer
Doug Pillard	Division Head, Lancaster County Engineering
Rick Thorson	Assistant Chief - Environmental Health: Air Quality Section, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

4. Identify any implementing agencies that are not members of the MPO or policy board.

Generally all modes are represented. Exceptions are private transportation entities such as freight carriers, railroad interests, private transit which do not have voting rights but are invited to participate in the MPO Technical Advisory Committee activities. Some minor agencies that may implement pedestrian, trails, parks or enhancement type projects are absent. These include the Lower Platte South-Natural Resource District, University of Nebraska, and Lincoln Public School System.

Not all jurisdictions are represented directly but the small towns and villages in Lancaster County do have representation through County representatives and provide feed back into the planning process by consulting with County Commissioners, the County Engineer, and the County Planner.

#### **AGREEMENTS AND COORDINATION**

*Federal legislation requires the MPO to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. Transportation facilities and inter-regional travel patterns frequently cross regional boundaries. Coordination on facility and regional planning, comparison of planning work programs, regional plans, and TIPs, and general communication provides for a greater degree of consistency in transportation policy and facilities design and development. Further, new planning regulations require and encourage an increased level of interagency coordination and communication between transportation and other agencies, especially resource and land use agencies.*

5. What interagency agreements exist between the MPO, NDOR(s), and transit operators, and are such agreements current? Have there been any changes to interagency agreements between the MPO, NDOR(s), and transit operator(s) since the previous planning review? Please include all current agreements with your response packet.
  - ▶ On March 22, 1974, the State of Nebraska designated the City of Lincoln as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). A Memorandum of Understanding was executed between the city, county, state, and Planning Commission, in cooperation with the FHWA and FTA, concerning transportation planning in the Lincoln Metropolitan Area. In the Memorandum of Understanding, the cooperating agencies agreed to proceed in accordance with provisions for the transportation planning process as identified in appropriate federal laws and regulations and as documented in the Lincoln MPO Prospectus. The MPO Prospectus documents the responsibilities and functions of the cooperating agencies in the transportation planning process which was adopted in May, 1979 and amended January 19, 1989 to reflect changes in this process. The updating of the MPO Prospectus is under consideration to reflect changes resulting from the designation of the MPO as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and to reflect recent staffing changes within the Lincoln MPO organization.(*Cert Rpt*)
  - ▶ As an agency of the City of Lincoln no separate interagency agreements particular to StarTran are necessary. [BP]
  - ▶ Transportation Management Area Status. Based on the results of Census 2000 published on May 1, 2002, the Lincoln Urbanized Area obtained a population of over 200,000 and

according to Federal regulations (23 USC 134), on July 8, 2002 the Lincoln MPO was designated by the FHWA and FTA as a TMA.

- ▶ The City, County and State are the primary entities making up the MPO and the principle planning and programming activities for the MPO continue to be the City of Lincoln. The interlocal agreements that established the cooperative working relationships between City, County and State and that created the MPO were reevaluated by the Lincoln legal staff and found to be satisfactory to maintain of the current MPO. [Roper]
  - ▶ Lincoln MPO staff is in the process of updating our Prospectus (*Operations Plan*) to ensure full compliance with current Federal transportation planning regulations and it is consistent with contemporary transportation planning practices. This updating process has involved participation from a variety of entities represented on the Lincoln to make certain a range of ideas and guidance is received on how to best structure the MPO. The areas of focus during this initial review have been on the structure and working relationships of the Lincoln MPO participants.
6. Please discuss efforts of the MPO to promote communication and engage in regular coordination with adjacent (MPO) on transportation issues, MPO products and activities.
- ▶ The City of Lincoln and the Nebraska Department of Roads has an interlocal agreement which provides funding for the maintenance and operation on State and Federal Highways within the City.
  - ▶ The State is a member of the MPO Technical and Officials Committees.
  - ▶ No MPOs are adjacent to the Lincoln MPO but we do participate in the annual MPO & State Coordination Meetings.
  - ▶ County Engineer coordinates road projects with adjacent counties.
7. Please discuss how you coordinate with other local governments or agencies that impact transportation planning, and whose role may include, transit, safety, security, bicycle/pedestrian land use, zoning and other transportation related roles.
- ▶ Long Range Transportation Plan. The development of the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* and *Transportation Plan* included a series out-reach activities with other local governments or agencies. The process also included Public Open House activities held throughout Lincoln and within the rural community to initiate input which also included many of these agencies. This information was reviewed by the Planning Commission to provide direction within the planning process and to ensure broad community involvement. Newsletters were distributed and planning materials were posted on the City-County InterLinc Web site.
  - ▶ The *Long Range Transportation Plan* for the Lincoln MPO is contained in the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* and is coordinated with the Lincoln City and Lancaster County Land Use Plan and future urban area growth plans. All appropriate transportation modes are considered in the *Long Range Transportation Plan* with specific long-range plans for the Lincoln Area Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails facilities; Future Urban Street and Road Network Plans which include the Functional Street and Road Classifications, Urban Area Street Improvements, and County Road Improvements; a Goods and Freight

Movement Plan; and generalized plans for Public Transportation, Railroads, and Airports and Airfields.

- ▶ The *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* including the *Transportation Plan* was developed during 2005 and 2006 with reviews and a public hearing by the Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Commission. The Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board held a joint public hearing and adopted the Plan on November 16, 2006 and the Lincoln MPO endorsed the plan on January 4, 2007.
  - ▶ The FTA office of Safety and Security conducted a security review of StarTran in 2001. This review resulted in a "Transit Security Review Report" which addresses the eleven review categories. It is also acknowledged that StarTran, as the public transit operator within a TMA, is required to prepare a System Security Program Plan. This plan has been developed and reviewed/acted upon by the MPO Technical Committee on September 26, 2002. The plan has also been forwarded to FTA for their review. [LW]
  - ▶ StarTran, per federal requirements, utilizes one percent of its Urbanized Area Formula Grant funds for transit safety/security. [LW]
  - ▶ Due to the unpredictable nature of disasters, both natural and man made, local efforts are directing resources to addressing evacuation routes and other transportation-related aspects of emergency operations management. Lancaster County, the City of Lincoln, and other cities and villages in Lancaster County are placing a high priority on emergency planning so that it can offer leadership, help and information. In preparation for a major emergency or a disaster, the *Lancaster County Local Emergency Operations Plan* (July 2, 2002) establishes the policies, plans, guidelines and procedures that allow the community's emergency resources to function effectively, as a team, when disaster strikes. The Plan is consistent with the current nationwide concept embodied in the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS) in that the Plan provides for performing specific functions across the full spectrum of hazards. This is a multi-hazard functional plan that provides guidelines to City and County staff responding to incidents and forms an integral part of ongoing planning, training, exercising and testing process in the preparation for a major emergency event. The *Local Emergency Operations Plan* was approved by resolution by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, City Councils and Village Boards. [KS]
8. Please discuss interaction between the NDOR, FTA and FHWA in providing support and technical assistance to the MPO. Is there a need to improve the working relationships or responsiveness of those agencies?
- ▶ na

## **METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES**

*The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) defines the geographic area in which the MPO, the NDOR, and transit operators have agreed to conduct transportation planning under 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305. The MPA defines the area in which federally funded projects must be part of a financially constrained Transportation Plan and a financially constrained TIP. The primary application to Certification is a determination that the MPA has been established in*

*accordance with the regulations, and that the planning and program development processes cover the entire area.*

9. Please provide a map(s) showing the following boundaries: Census-Urbanized Area (UZA), FHWA Urban Area Boundary (UAB), Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPA).
  1. Have there been any changes to the metropolitan planning area boundary since the previous planning review?
  2. Which, if any, areas are under consideration for inclusion in an expanded MPA in the next 20 years?
  3. What factors will determine the decision on expanded boundaries?
- ▶ The “Adjusted Urban Area Boundary” is identified in the long range transportation plan which was adopted by resolution by the City, County and MPO. The 2000 census data identified the need to expand the urbanized area boundary to accommodate the existing growth of the urban area. The land use planning process during 2001 and 2002 also identified an expanded future growth area for the 20 year planning period. Updating of the Transportation Plan at the same time as the future land use plan allowed these factors to be considered and the new “Urban Area Boundary” to be adjusted to include the future growth area and future transportation network serving this area. The proposed National Functional Classification and Urban Area Boundary map was submitted to the Nebraska Department of Roads for review and approval.
- ▶ The National Functional Classification system and the Urban Area Boundary for Lincoln and Lancaster County was accepted by the State and approved by the FHWA and become effective October 31, 2003. The National Functional Classification system revised September 12, 2008 to add collectors streets to the network. The Urban Area Boundary remained unchanged.
- ▶ The current Urban Area Boundary encompasses the future 20 year growth area for the urban area and will be part of the review process when updating of the LRTP occurs.

#### **UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)**

*23 CFR 450.308 identifies the requirements for unified planning work programs (UPWP) (also referred to as transportation planning work programs) to be prepared for MPOs. CFR 420.111 governs work programs required for the expenditure of FHWA highway planning and research funds. MPOs are required to develop UPWPs in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies. [23 CFR 450.308c]*

10. What is the process to develop and prioritize the work items in the UPWP? How are the needs of each unit of government in the area determined and addressed in the UPWP? How are the major transportation needs and policy priorities reflected in the UPWP?
  - ▶ Annual Review Variables, Inventories and Evaluations are activities described within the long range transportation planning activities and involve compiling data annually. Many other activities include routine departmental or agency functions which relate directly to monitoring data needed to evaluate the transportation plan.
  - ▶ Transportation planning reports are prepared that document planning activities that have been

completed, present monitoring data relating to the transportation planning process, outline expected planning activities, and describe the procedures for conducting the transportation planning process.

- ▶ The major regional transportation needs and policy priorities are established in the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan. The UPWP attempts to reflect these priorities.

11. Does the UPWP reflect all transportation planning activities and transportation-related air quality activities in the MPO planning area, regardless of how they are funded?

- ▶ The UPWP reflects all major transportation planning activities in the MPO planning area. The State develops a separate Work Program which is reviewed by the MPO.
- ▶ Environmental studies and programs are coordinated through the UPWP which assists in identifying issues and developing cooperation between agencies regarding ways each can become involved in important environmental issues. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) reports on air quality monitoring activities, computer modeling exercises, and periodic transportation related air emissions programs.

12. How does the UPWP provide a strategic view of and a strategic direction for metropolitan area planning activities, and how do the activities in the UPWP relate to the goals and priorities identified in the LRTP? Is the UPWP used to provide the direction to the staff on their work on transportation planning work products?

- ▶ The metropolitan area planning activities in the UPWP are driven by the goals and priorities LRTP. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan includes proposed studies to be undertaken to determine if any facility improvements or road closings needs to be incorporated in the Plan.
- ▶ The UPWP includes both specific tasks and general direction on planning activiteis.

13. How are UPWP amendments developed and processed?

- ▶ Major program amendments follow the same process as adoption.

## **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

*Federal regulations 23 CFR 450.306 and 450.318 define the scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process and the relationship of corridor and other subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. In addition, 23 CFR 345.316 (c) (d) and (e) address the need for participation by Federal lands management agencies and Tribal governments in the development of key products in the planning process.*

14. Please explain how the agency carries out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process, and addresses each of the eight planning factors listed in 23 CFR 450.306.

- ▶ In 2005, the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU), added emphasis in two areas: security and the environment with transportation security as a stand alone factor. The factor relating to the environment is expanded, to promote consistency of the long-range transportation plan with planned growth and development.

In general, the scope of Lincoln metropolitan planning process carries out a transportation planning process that provides for consideration and implementation of projects and strategies and services that consider and address each of the eight planning factors.

The *Long Range Transportation Plan* for the Lincoln MPO is contained in the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*. The *Transportation Plan* is coordinated with the Lincoln City and Lancaster County Land Use Plan and future urban area growth plans. All appropriate transportation modes are considered in the *Long Range Transportation Plan* with specific long-range plans for the Lincoln Area Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails facilities; Future Urban Street and Road Network Plans which include the Functional Street and Road Classifications, Urban Area Street Improvements, and County Road Improvements; a Goods and Freight Movement Plan; and generalized plans for Public Transportation, Railroads, and Airports and Airfields. The future road plan reflects the improvement types according to specific street design standards, identifying the number of lanes and the right-of-way required for a proposed improvement.

(1) support the economic vitality of the [United States, the States, nonmetropolitan areas, and] metropolitan area[s], especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;

- ▶ All planning factors are considered in the *Comprehensive Plan* and *Long Range Transportation Plan* process and reflected in the TIP and UPWP through the setting of planning priorities.

(2) increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;

- ▶ Traffic incident management is the process of managing multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional responses to street and highway traffic disruptions. Efficient and coordinated management of incidents reduces their adverse impacts on public safety, traffic conditions, and the local economy. The focus is on managing both small and large scale incidents by having a plan, and executing it with full cooperation among all of the organizations involved. Major events require considerable planning and preparation from a wider scope of participants and may utilize pre-planning for the use of public transit which is not likely to be used in brief traffic incidents but is a critical component in addressing a major regional event.

(3) increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;

- ▶ Public Works directs resources to addressing evacuation routes and other transportation-related aspects of emergency operations management. The City places a high priority on emergency planning so that it can offer leadership, help and information. In preparation for a major emergency or a disaster, an Emergency Plan is to provide guidelines to City staff

responding to incidents. The disaster plan for both natural and man made incidents is intended to be a working document that forms an integral part of the ongoing planning, training, exercising and testing process in the City's comprehensive emergency planning development. The entire Public Works staff underwent training through the National Incident Management System. This program trains for a unified approach to incident management with standard command and management structures and an emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management.

(4) increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;

- ▶ The systems planning activity is a joint planning activity currently overseen by the Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department and Public Works Department: Engineering Services Division. Ongoing activities includes providing decision-makers direction on key transportation policies, issues and procedures, and providing technical assistance for public and private projects for urban, rural, and state transportation planning and engineering activities. Other ongoing work activities include developing and maintaining programs in traffic access management, site impact review, congestion management, intersection improvements, level of service and system performance measures.

(5) protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;

- ▶ Through systems planning activity and other ongoing system maintenance programs in traffic access management, site impact review, congestion management, intersection improvements, level of service and system performance measures

(6) enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;

- ▶ Multi-modal planning and transit coordination planning activities that emphasize a balance in multiple transportation modes to provide a choice in travel modes and enable the community to maintain a high level of mobility and accessibility.

Completed:

- The development of a Multi-modal planning report.
- A low-income transit rider program through StarTran, and the inception of a Smart Commute program providing home ownership incentives for those who live near transit routes.
- *Transit Development Plan* that is a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) to provide guidance for StarTran operations and management.

Ongoing:

- Implementation of the *Transit Development Plan* and Comprehensive Operations Analysis.

(7) promote efficient system management and operation;

- ▶ The systems planning activity is a joint planning activity currently overseen by the Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department and Public Works Department: Engineering Services Division. Ongoing activities includes providing decision-makers direction on key transportation policies, issues and procedures, and providing technical assistance for public and private projects for urban, rural, and state transportation planning and engineering activities. Other ongoing work activities include developing and maintaining programs in traffic access management, site impact review, congestion management, intersection improvements, level of service and system performance measures.
- ▶ System planning may be accomplished on an areawide basis, within a single jurisdiction, within a specific transportation corridor or in any other geographic unit. System planning includes an evaluation of how the urban area develops and how human travel characteristics change the demand for transportation. This process allows planning techniques to be used to evaluate transportation alternatives and system improvements.
- ▶ The Congestion Management plan has been used develop alternatives for widening major streets in established neighborhoods. The City, in conjunction with CarteGraph Systems, is in the implementation stage of management systems for signals, signs, pavement markings, sidewalks, parking meters, vegetation control & mowing, sanitary sewer and storm water, along with a new pavement management system.
- ▶ The annual system management report is published to provide detail on the state of the City in regards to traffic management.

(8) emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

- ▶ The City has a Pavement Management system in place that is used as a tool in determining the annual rehabilitation program.

15. If the metropolitan planning area includes Federal public lands and/or tribal lands, were the affected Federal agencies and Indian tribes invited and/or involved in the development of the plans and programs?

- ▶ The Indian Center in interviewed as part of the EJ outreach activities.

16. Are corridor studies undertaken in the MPO planning area? If so, what organizations are involved and what are their roles? Are these studies conducted so that planning decisions and analyses may be carried through to the project development and environmental review processes?

- ▶ Subarea plans are developed to implement the goals and planning concepts identified in the *Lincoln-Lancaster Comprehensive Plan* and *Transportation Plan*. Studies prepared as part of this effort identifies the future land use and transportation relationships as it applies the broader Comprehensive Plan guidelines to specific situations.
- ▶ Activities include identifying policies and physical improvements that support multi-modal

transportation systems within major corridors and sub-areas. Problems and opportunities are analyzed that relate to creating a balanced and efficient transportation system. Issues include planning for major investments, policy development, multi-modal transportation systems, congestion relief, safety, aesthetics, access management, adverse impacts, land use and urban design that supports the efficient provision and maintenance of the transportation system and other related issues. Coordination with local governments, state agencies, community groups, business owners, land owners, residents and other stakeholders in developing studies. Specific planning activities are identified for several subarea and corridors that are identified the Transportation Plan.

17. How are the public and private transit operators' planning processes coordinated with the MPO's planning process?
- ▶ Trough the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* and *Long Range Transportation Planning* process and the within the *Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Planning* process. This includes the Annual Review of the Plan.
  - ▶ Public transportation is an integral part of the City-County LRTP, developed and reviewed/acted upon concurrent with the LRTP. [BP]
  - ▶ StarTran makes available to the public a program of projects that provides a list of projects we plan to undertake under Section 5307. This program of projects is published in a manner that affords citizens, private transportation providers, and local elected officials an opportunity to examine its content and to submit comments on the proposed program. An opportunity for public hearing is provided. Concurrent with this process the program of projects is also forwarded to local private transportation providers. StarTran considers all comments from the providers in developing the final program of projects. [BP]
18. Please discuss how the MPO's incorporates freight into the planning processes.
- ▶ Railroad-related Planning. Railroad planning activities that are undertaken by the City of Lincoln Public Works & Utilities Department include general staff support for railroad planning with regard to railroad crossings and safety issues, railroad system improvements and consolidation, and railroad abandonments. Planning and engineering activities reflect coordination with the Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) and direction given in the railroad system element of the *Transportation Plan*.
  - ▶ Goods and Freight Planning. The MPO is continuing to work with the freight hauling community and stakeholders to engage them in the transportation planning process. This includes identifying the key issues and problems for the trucking industry by gathering information needed to analyze commodity movements within the planning area and to identify infrastructure investment strategies.
  - ▶ Key issues and transportation related problems the trucking industry is facing in the Lincoln planning area were identified and addressed in the planning process.
  - ▶ A comprehensive "Railroad Planning and Engineering Review" provided technical analysis and

proposed actions to enhance services and provide for improved pedestrian and vehicle safety and improve the rail/highway and rail/pedestrian grade crossings and the security.

19. Who is the freight community and how have they been engaged in the transportation planning process?
  - ▶ The trucking industry and railroad industry are the two primary freight carriers.
  - ▶ A community-wide freight carrier company survey on goods and freight movement activities was undertaken to gather information and analyze commodity movements within the planning area. The survey provided a general inventory freight carriers and stakeholders involved in freight and goods transportation within the Lincoln and Lancaster County area.
  - ▶ Direct mailing and invitations to the MPO Technical Committee, including **BNSF RR** - Manager of Public Projects (Andy Amparan), **Union Pacific Railroad** (Engineering Department), and **Nebraska Motor Carriers Association** (Mike Hybl, President).
20. Has the MPO identified a person to integrate freight into the planning process.
  - ▶ Public Works and Planning share the function. Freight issues are dealt with as part of the LRTP process and within the operations analysis.
21. What coordination has taken place in regard to other planning efforts, such as the local land use, and coordinated human service plans?
  - ▶ The *Comprehensive Plan* and *Long Range Transportation Plan* include a detailed consideration of the Urban Land Use Plan.
  - ▶ The *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* was developed in according to the new federal guidelines.

## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

*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 an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. [23 CFR 450. 322]*

22. How is the projected travel demand determined in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)? How is the travel demand model used in the long-range planning and project selection process?
  - ▶ The travel demand model is a land use based travel demand model (TransCAD) which is the functions as the base data for the trip generation model.
  - ▶ Travel demand model is integrated into the land use planning activities for the direction of growth policy discussions and alternative network analysis.

- ▶ Alternative travel modes are calculated in a mode split module but assignment projections are constructed outside the travel model.
  - ▶ Project selection is aided by travel model analysis based upon system benefits.
23. Please describe the use and reference of other planning strategies and plans including the Passenger Transit Development Plan, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, transit plans, trail plans, emergency evacuation plans, local and regional land-use plans, local housing plans, community development and employment plans, environmental resource plans and other such plans as an element of your planning and forecasting.
- ▶ As part of the Comprehensive Planning efforts for the Metropolitan Area, a future land use plan was developed for use in analyzing the relationship of the future directions of urban area growth to the community's continuing planning efforts. The adopted land uses identified in the *Comprehensive Plan* are used as the future land uses for on-going planning purposes and the base land uses for the long range transportation planning effort.
  - ▶ The LRTP for the Lincoln MPO is contained in the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*. Included in the LRTP are specific long-range plans for the Lincoln Area Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails Facilities; Future Urban Street and Road Network Plans which include the Functional Street and Road Classifications, Urban Area Street Improvements, and County Road Improvements; a Goods and Freight Movement Plan; and generalized plans for Public Transportation, Railroads, and Airports and Airfields. The Plan also contains an Intelligent Transportation Systems element and a Transportation Systems Management Strategy.
  - ▶ The transportation planning process included identification of the social, economic, and environmental impacts for alternative sketch transportation plans. This information was reviewed by the Planning Commission to provide direction within the planning process and to ensure broad community involvement.
24. Does the LRTP include performance measures that relate to the LRTP's goals, objectives and project selection?
- ▶ Transportation planning activities collect and analyze summary statistics for the transportation network. Data collection activity routinely updates tools, data, and methods to aid in monitoring the transportation system's performance. Data includes:
    - Lane Miles by Level of Service
    - Total Lane Mile Summary
    - Daily Vehicle Miles of Travel
    - Free-Flow Vehicle Hours of Travel
    - Congested Vehicle Hours of Travel
    - Daily Vehicle Delay
    - Average Congested Speeds
    - Corridor Travel time
    - Average speed within corridors
    - Travel delay at intersections
    - Public transportation usage
    - Vehicle occupancy (screen lines)
    - Crash rates
    - Pedestrian and bicycle volumes
    - Overall traffic volumes (24 ADT)
    - Volume of truck traffic
    - Turning counts at intersection
    - Computer simulations

25. Does the LRTP include management and operations (M&O) strategies that are supported by specific goals and measurable objectives contained in the plan? What involvement does the operations community have in the development of these goals, objectives and strategies, and more generally, in the planning process? Are these M&O strategies consistent with those contained in the MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP)?
- ▶ The operations community is directly involved in the development of these goals, objectives and strategies, and in the planning process.
  - ▶ The LRTP includes management and operations strategies and the City and County are committed to funding the operations, maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing street system.
  - ▶ Strategies include activities such as traveler information, traffic surveillance, incident response, freight routing, work zones management, weather response, pricing, fare payment alternatives, public transportation management, demand management, alternative routing, telecommuting, and parking management.
26. What are your procedures for consultation with State, Tribal, and local and Federal Lands Management agencies responsible for land-use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation? How are these procedures different from your other consultation procedures?
- ▶ The Nebraska Department of Roads has a seat at the MPO Technical and Officials Committee.
  - ▶ No tribal lands nor Federal Lands Management agencies are present in the planning area.
  - ▶ The Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership was created which includes the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Lower Platte South NRD, the Nature Conservancy, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Nearly 590 acres of land containing saline wetlands has been set aside land-use management.
  - ▶ The Historic Preservation Planner for the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County is located within the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department and has input on all planning activities.
27. How is the LRTP compared with State and local conservation plans and maps? How is the LRTP compared to inventories of natural or historic resources?
- ▶ The development of the Environmental section of the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* consulted with all other known environmental plans and maps, including the State and local conservation plans.
28. What environmental mitigation policies, programs and/or strategies have been identified? What information has been assembled regarding the location and condition of natural resources that might be affected by the proposals outlined in the LRTP?
- ▶ Environmental mitigation policies, programs and/or strategies are identified in the *Lincoln and*

*Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.*

- ▶ Know natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas that might be affected by transportation projects proposals are mapped and descriptions located the *Comprehensive Plan*.
29. How is the distribution of benefits and impacts to different socioeconomic and ethnic minorities identified and measured? How are benefits and burdens across all socioeconomic groups examined in the modeling and planning performed in support of LRTP development and individual project development?
- ▶ An *Environmental Justice Action Strategy* for the development of the LRTP identifies the approach to be employed by the Lincoln MPO in fulfilling its Environmental Justice (EJ) agenda. This document includes data and maps locating low-income and minority groups.
  - ▶ One major project, the Antelope Valley Project, touches any areas so designated in the EJ Strategy and an Environmental Report was completed and project mitigation was accepted by the FHWA prior to construction.
30. Are illustrative projects included in the current LRTP, and how are they treated? If not, does the MPO intend to include illustrative projects in the next updated LRTP?
- ▶ Illustrative projects were not specifically called out in this LRTP even though parts of one major project, the East Lincoln Beltway, is will likely continue into years beyond this plan.
  - ▶ Illustrative projects will likely be included in the next LRTP, but these policy decisions are usually made within the planning process and incorporated in the plan upon adoption.

## FINANCIAL PLANNING

*The requirements for financial analysis are contained in 23 CFR 450.322(f) (10) for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and 23 CFR 450.324(e, h-k), for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).*

31. How are cost estimates developed for the LRTP, UPWP, and TIP? How do you calculate and/or ensure that project costs are in year of expenditure (YOE) dollars? Are the projects showing the total project cost?

How are cost estimates developed for the LRTP, UPWP, and TIP?

- ▶ Carefully, for the LRTP taking an average cost per length unit cost and multiplying by the project length. Sometimes adjustments are made based on known issues and/or specific project concerns (ie bridges, rail road crossings, need for large retaining walls. For the TIP depending on how much PE work has been done the costs may be based on units and unit prices. [TS]

How do you calculate and/or ensure that project costs are in year of expenditure (YOE) dollars?

- ▶ We use a simple 5% per year as an inflation factor. [TS]

Are the projects showing the total project cost?

- ▶ Yes. [TS]

32. Do local governments, transit operator(s), and the NDOR provide timely and adequate projections of future revenue for the MPO?

- ▶ City of Lincoln - Yes. [TS]

33. How do you calculate operations and maintenance (O&M) costs? Does O&M include costs for existing, plus planned facilities (highways, transit, trails, etc.)?

- ▶ Generally speaking, yes our O&M budget projects includes an inflation factor that historically has kept up O&M for new facilities being built. [TS]

34. Please discuss any current or possible future innovative financing techniques or programs for the MPO area.

- ▶ Current we have used Highway Allocation Bonds. There is a desire to increase the local portion of the Sales Tax, this however would require approval by the state unicameral and they have been reluctant to grant the city the authority. [TS]

35. Is the TIP fiscally constrained by year? What assumptions do you use for revenue projections?

Is the TIP fiscally constrained by year?

- ▶ For the City of Lincoln - Yes. [TS]

What assumptions do you use for revenue projections?

- ▶ Very conservative grow prediction of existing revenue streams and not showing bond projects until bonds are authorized to be sold. [TS]

36. What mechanism is used to ensure project cost updates from completed environmental review documents, mega/major project cost plans, and final designs are included in the LRTP and TIP?

- ▶ Annual Reviews. [TS]

## AIR QUALITY

*Provisions governing air-quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations rather than being the primary focus of one or several regulations. For MPOs that are declared to be air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, there are many special requirements in addition to the basic requirements for a metropolitan planning process.*

37. Describe the roles and responsibilities of all the organizations responsible for air quality monitoring and analysis. Does the MPO use Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding and if so,

what types of projects have been CMAQ funded?

- ▶ The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) is designated by the EPA as a Title V agency, responsible for administering Title V of the Clean Air Act. As such, we regulate over 110 of the largest sources of air pollution in the county. Annual stationary source emission inventories are assembled and every three years, comprehensive emission inventories, including mobile source emissions, are collected. The LLCHD also monitors continuously for PM2.5 (particulate matter), carbon monoxide, and ozone. [Rick Thorson]

38. Please describe any air quality/potential nonattainment issues your planning area might be facing.

- ▶ Currently, the Lincoln and Lancaster County area is in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). As the population continues to grow, it is possible that exceedences of the ozone and PM2.5 standards could occur in the next 10 to 20 years. LLCHD works to educate the public and to conduct numerous activities to prevent that from happening. [Rick Thorson]

#### **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

*The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.324, to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators.*

39. Does the TIP contain the following?

- All of the transportation projects to be funded under Title 23, U.S.C., with the exception of categories that are specifically exempt (e.g., safety projects funded under 23 U.S.C. 402) - *yes.*
- All regionally significant transportation projects regardless of funding source or lead agency - *yes.*
- Cost estimates - *Estimated project totals*
- Project phase and implementation status - *every effort is made to identify project phase.*
- Amount of Federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year - *yes.*
- Proposed sources of Federal and non-Federal funds - *yes, when available.*
- Public Involvement Process - *yes.*
- Project Selection Process - *generally, yes.*
- Connection to LRTP - *yes.*
- Financial Plan - *funding source, yes.*
- Annual Listing of Obligated Projects - *completed projects and projects under contract are listed in the TIP. Obligated projects are reported at the end of the fiscal year.*

40. Please discuss the criteria used to determine which projects will be included in the TIP. How are projects prioritized? Are any Federal funds, such as STP or Section 5307 funds, suballocated among jurisdictions or modes? If so, how much funding is suballocated and through what process?

- ▶ All major projects are drawn from the LRTP and coordinated with transportation and urban area growth demands for service.
- ▶ The suballocated of STP funds to other jurisdictions is rare but does take place to support joint urban area projects.

- ▶ Section 5307 funds are not suballocated among jurisdictions. The only modes they are used for are capital, preventative maintenance, and planning for fixed route services (Mode: buses) and ADA reimbursement for complementary paratransit services (Mode: demand response).
  - ▶ Each jurisdiction has its own process for prioritizing projects. Generally, project selection is driven by transportation network and traffic reviews and urban area growth demands for service.
41. What is the process for ensuring that the projects in the TIP are consistent with the MPO's LRTP and the Statewide LRTP?
- ▶ Staff review, MPO Technical Committee review, Planning Commission review, public review, County Board and City Council review at the Officials Committee.
42. How successfully does the TIP serve as a management tool for implementing the LRTP?
- ▶ We depend on the TIP to reflect the goals set in the LRTP. The LRTP is the touchstone for all major projects implemented within the community.
43. Please discuss how the staff, member agencies, the NDOR, and the transit operators collaborate on the development of the TIP. Please discuss if improvements can be made to this process. What barriers exist in implementing these improvements?
- ▶ MPO staff, member agencies, NDOR and StarTran provide the listing of projects for the draft program. The Technical Committee provides the forum for discussion and coordination of projects.
  - ▶ Barriers in implementing transportation improvements is primarily in funding.
44. What process is used to ensure that projects utilize the federal funds in the year for which they are programmed?
- ▶ Federal obligation of funds.
45. Over the past three years, what percentage of projects in the TIP actually advanced to construction?

<u>FY</u>	<u>Projects Programmed</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Moved Out</u>	<u>Percent of Previous Year</u>
FY 2007-12	114	44	0	31.25
FY 2008-13	118	38	6	33.3%
FY 2009-14	119	41	1	34.7%
FY 2010-15	86	44	13	37.0%

46. What are the procedures (including public involvement) for TIP amendments and administrative modifications? Are major/minor revisions defined?

- ▶ The Public Involvement Process. The transportation planning process allows for public involvement at various points within the transportation plan and program development. This involves a series of steps from the adoption of the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* and *Long Range Transportation Plan* to the programming of projects and the actual construction of the transportation facilities. The critical decision points in the transportation planning process are: 1) the development of a 20 year transportation plan, 2) the street improvement program which identifies priorities for planned projects, 3) the development of capital improvement programs for a period of six years, 4) Project Design and Project Construction. The first two steps are included in the long range planning process, the third step consolidates the capital improvement programs of the City and County with the Transportation Improvement Program and the last step is the specific project design and development.

The City and the County each have an established procedure for adopting improvement programs. Both City and County processes include review by the City-County Planning Commission for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and formal advertised Public Hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council or County Board. The Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) also allows for public input within open advertised public meeting. The consolidation of these improvement programs are coordinated in the TIP as reviewed by the Technical Committee before it is referred to a formal hearing by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission forwards their recommendation to the MPO Officials Committee for execution and transmittal to the State for inclusion in the STIP.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

*The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(2)(3) and (b) which address elements of the metropolitan planning process. Public involvement also is addressed specifically in connection with the Transportation Plan in 450.322(g)(1)(2), (i), and OJ and with the TIP in 450.324(b); participation and consultation requirements, which pertain to the Transportation Plan and the TIP, also are included in 450.322 (f)(7) and (g)(1)(2), (i), and (j) and in 450.324(b).*

47. What opportunities are provided for public participation at key decision points in the planning, programming, and project development phases of transportation decision making? How is the process managed and updated to meet the changing needs of communicating with the public and their expectations for active involvement?
- ▶ The MPO continues to expand not only the number of opportunities for community engagement but also the methods use to inform the public and garner their ideas.
  - ▶ Expanded use of the Internet has been extremely effective in publicizing programs and planning efforts. A scientifically-valid phone survey completed several years ago showed a growing interested among community members in the use of web services as a means of staying informed and involved in transportation planning activities. We have demonstrated the value of the web with literally millions of “hits” on sites containing information on meeting dates, planning studies, and community comment boards.
  - ▶ The MPO has also employed community television as an additional focus of community outreach. Lincoln “City5TV” has become a primary vehicle for providing basic information

- about a variety of transportation planning efforts and offers visual displays of key plans as they evolve over the duration of the planning process. City5TV also presents live broadcasts of many meetings, including all City Council, County Board, and Planning Commissions sessions. Also, many community meetings are taped by City5TV and broadcasted later – with multiple broadcasts occurring on a variety of days and at various times.
- ▶ The MPO also remains committed to traditional forms of community participation, including regular public hearings, open houses, neighborhood forums, public tours of potential and developing sites, and standing public committees. [KRM]
48. How does the public participation process demonstrate explicit consideration and responsiveness to public input received during the planning and program development process? Specifically, in what instances have comments raised through public participation resulted in changes to policy, plans, programs or projects?
- ▶ Public comments are routinely captured in writing, catalogued as appropriate, and reviewed by staff as plans are prepared. The generic planning process we employ always builds into each study the time and resources necessary to afford the community ample opportunities and time to help define the project's goals, define key project parameters, craft plans, review documents, and accommodate pertinent revisions.
  - ▶ During the development of the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan several years ago, a 16 member citizen task force oversaw the complete development of the Plan. They were formed during the initial scoping process and stayed central to the process until its publication. With various community outreach activities built into the process – including numerous targeted constituent meetings, MPO-wide open houses, and mailings – the citizen task force performed a primary role in the Plan's creation and ultimately its on-going implementation. [KRM]
49. Has the MPO updated its public participation process to include the expanded list of "interested parties" identified in SAFETEA-LU?
- ▶ Yes. The MPO updates and reviews its list of interested parties on a regular basis. During a major plan update, this list will be update in detail for both hard copy mail and email. [KRM]
50. Please discuss efforts to make MPO information and documents available in electronically accessible formats.
- ▶ As noted above the MPO has made extensive use of the City's and County's website known as "InterLinc." This website is advertise throughout the community via TV and radio advertisements, utility bill inserts, bus panel ads, and billboards. The MPO places all basic information about the transportation planning process on the site, along with draft materials, background data, and interactive webpages for community input. In addition, all City libraries have PC's which can be used by anyone to access the site. The Planning Department's site includes a supplemental program which automatically translates the on-line text into eight non-English languages including Spanish, Russian, and a number of Asian dialects. [KRM]
51. How does the MPO engage in public education efforts designed to make the transportation planning process and decisions it produces easier to understand in laypersons' terms?

- ▶ The MPO is working to simplify the wording use in technical reports and how the transportation process is described to the public. In some instance, professional writers have been used to edit text. This includes staff available within the Mayor's Office and outside staff specifically hired to provide such services. [KRM]
52. What visualization techniques have been used to aid the public in understanding the transportation planning process including the UPWP, LRTP, TIP, and supporting studies?
- ▶ The MPO is working to simplify the wording use in technical reports and how the transportation process is described to the public. In some instance, professional writers have been used to edit text. This includes staff available within the Mayor's Office and outside staff specifically hired to provide such services. [KRM]

### SELF CERTIFICATION

*Self-Certification of the metropolitan planning process, at least once every four years, is required under 23 CFR 450.334.*

53. What process/procedures are used to self-certify the planning process?
- ▶ A staff report is prepared by the Lincoln City-Lancaster County Planning Department and is assisted by Lincoln Public Works & Utilities Department, City-County Health Department, Nebraska Department of Roads and other agencies as needed.
  - ▶ This report is reviewed by the MPO Technical Committee and Officials Committee before recommended to the Mayor of Lincoln is the "Executive Officer" for the MPO .
54. What educational efforts, background information, guidance or documentation is the policy board provided to help them understand the meaning of self-certification in regard to the various Federal laws and requirements listed in 23 CFR 450.334(a)?
- ▶ The staff report and Committee reviews provide for this discussion.

### TITLE VI AND RELATED

*Over the past few years, US DOT has encouraged a proactive approach to the participation of protected groups and implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (non-discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, physical handicap) and the Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice (addresses disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations) requirements. This approach is intended to ensure compliance with other related requirements, such as NEPA.*

#### **City of Lincoln Compliance Strategies/Reporting Process:**

Individuals protected by Title VI and/or the ADA who believe they have been discriminated against may file a complaint with the City's Ombudsman at the Mayor's office. A complaint can be filed using the online form under the Informational Links available on the City's website based ACTION Center or by contacting the Ombudsman. Individuals are not required to use this form; a letter with the same information is sufficient. However, the information requested in the items marked with a star (\*) must be provided, whether or not the form is used. Individuals who are unable to complete

written forms may make their complaints verbally to the Ombudsman by phone or in person. Translation or interpreter services will be provided as needed. The complaint should be submitted by the complainant as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the date the alleged discrimination occurs.

**Investigation Procedures:**

Upon receipt of a complaint, the City's Ombudsman shall evaluate and investigate the complaint. The City's Ombudsman may seek assistance of the City Attorney in investigating and responding to the complaint. The Ombudsman shall complete the investigation no later than 45 calendar days after the date the complaint is received. If more time is required, the Ombudsman shall notify the Complainant of the estimated time frame for completing the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the Ombudsman shall respond to the complaint in writing and follow up verbally if the individual is unable to read the written report. The response will explain the position of the City, and, where appropriate, offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the Complainant disagrees with the Ombudsman's response, the Complainant may appeal the decision within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the response to the Mayor or his designee. Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Mayor or his designee will respond in writing with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by the Ombudsman, appeals to the Mayor, and responses from the City are retained for at least three years.

Lin Quenzer, Ombudsman  
Office of the Mayor

55. Has the planning process developed a demographic profile of the metropolitan planning area that includes identification of the locations of socioeconomic groups, including low income and minority populations? What data was utilized for this determination? Has your planning process determined and measured the impact of projects on these identified locations of low-income and minority populations?
- ▶ The *Environmental Justice Action Strategy* identifies the approach to be employed by the Lincoln MPO in fulfilling its Environmental Justice (EJ) agenda and implementing Federal Title VI requirements in formulating a new Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan. This strategy expands upon the previous Environmental Justice strategy for the MPO. This memorandum is divided into the following five sections:
    - (1) Background and Fundamental Principles;
    - (2) Population Definitions;
    - (3) Environmental Justice Target Populations in the Lincoln MPO planning area;
    - (4) Environmental Justice Participation Process; and,
    - (5) Strategic Work Tasks of the EJ Participation Plan.
56. What strategies and efforts has your planning process developed for ensuring, demonstrating, and substantiating compliance with Title VI? As per the Environmental Justice requirements, how has the MPO sought to seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by

transportation systems (such as low income, minority households, or limited English proficiency persons) that may face challenges accessing employment and other services?

- ▶ StarTran has assessed and addressed the ability of persons with limited English proficiency to use transit services. Such assessment is included in the StarTran LEP plan that accompanies the Title VI Program. [BP]

57. Have there been any Title VI or ADA complaints regarding the MPO or the transportation planning process? What is the Title VI reporting process?

- ▶ For StarTran, there has not been any complaints or lawsuits filed in the last three years as it relates to Title VI and ADA. [BP]
- ▶ StarTran, per Title VI requirements, must show that transit services are distributed in an equitable manner with no discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. StarTran's Title VI program was approved by FTA Office of Civil Rights on 10/8/07. [BP]

58. Please discuss significant ADA issues in the metropolitan area. How has the planning process been utilized to implement ADA requirements and address these issues?

- ▶ For StarTran there are no significant ADA issues in the metropolitan area. [BP]

#### **TRANSIT AND COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

*Under SAFETEA-LU, as a condition for receiving formula funding under FTA's New Freedoms, Job Access Reverse Commute, and Elderly and Disabled Transportation FTA programs, proposed projects must be derived from a locally developed coordinated human services transportation plan. Under the New Freedoms and Job Access Reverse Commute programs, a fair and equitable competitive selection process for projects derived from the Plan needs to occur at intervals not to exceed two years.*

59. Does the MPO's planning area have a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan? If so, is the Plan being annually updated? Which agency coordinated the development and administers the plan? Is the plan and the process used to develop the plan consistent with the metropolitan planning process?

- ▶ *Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* for the Lincoln MPO was adopted by the MPO Officials Committee on October 30, 2007 and is not considered out of date.
- ▶ Planning Department is the coordinating department but work closely with StarTran on all aspects of Plan development and projects selection.

60. Is there a competitive project selection process? What entity conducts selection process? Was the availability of funds and selection criteria publicly advertised in appropriate formats and forums to potential applicants? Following the competitive selection process, was a list of selected projects published?

- ▶ A competitive selection program was developed by the Technical Committee *Project Selection Task Force* for these FTA programs. The initial “call for projects” was issued on February 1, 2008 and proposals were scored against evaluation criteria assessing their ability to achieve the strategies or activities set forth in the *Coordinated Plan*. Project data are collected and evaluations are ongoing.
  - ▶ The second “call for projects” for these FTA programs was issued on February 1, 2009 and proposals were reviewed and ranked by the *Project Selection Task Force* according to the evaluation criteria set forth in the *Coordinated Plan*. The *Task Force* program funding recommendations will be reviewed by the MPO Technical Advisory Committee at their next scheduled meeting. Recommendations to the Officials Committee for project funding will follow. Approved the recommendations and proposed awards will be forwarded to FTA for execution. Projects are to be included in the TIP are available for public review and comment at the Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Commission of May 13, 2009. The FTA will have final review and approval of the grant awards.
  - ▶ The list of selected projects was published on the MPO web page.
61. With the implementation of this Plan, please discuss how are federally funded transportation services are being coordinated.
- ▶ Through MPO staff, the *Project Selection Task Force*, MPO Technical Advisory Committee. Coordination is an element in the selection criteria and is strongly recommended. However, we do not mandate coordination.

## CONGESTION MANAGEMENT

Federal legislation and regulations require a Congestion Management Process (CMP) in TMAs. ... The transportation planning process in a TMA shall address congestion management 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; also see 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(3)]

*The following Congestion Mitigation questions need to be answered only by TMAs (MAPA and Lincoln)*

62. Describe how the CMP has been fully integrated into the overall metropolitan planning process. For instance, do the visions and goals articulated in the LRTP support the CMP and vice versa? Are transportation systems' management and operations strategies part of the metropolitan planning process?
- ▶ The vision and goals of the LRTP and Congestion Management Process support each other. The City has long known that there is insufficient funding available to build our way out of congestion, so we've realized that we had to find other ways to safely and efficiently move traffic. The recently completed Transit Development Plan is an example of management and operations strategies working within the metropolitan planning process. [RH]

63. Does the CMP follow the 8-Step approach, as defined by the CMP Guidebook? If not, are there any steps being taken to align the CMP with the recommended 8-Step approach?
- ▶ The MPO Congestion Management Process considers the six points of emphasis spelled out for the process. All 8 steps defined in the CMP Guidebook are covered within these six points of emphasis. The missing steps not covered in the CMP are steps 2 and 3, Area of Application and System Definition. Step 2 has generally been assumed to be the area covered by the MPO, while the system definition has been assumed to be the entire transportation system. Subsequent updates of the CMP can be edited to more clearly define and include these two steps. [RH]
64. Does the CMP address the mobility needs of people and goods? How are freight mobility needs assessed and addressed through the CMP?
- ▶ The Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization Congestion Management Process understands that a complete transportation system cannot address only cars. The Congestion Management Process identifies pedestrians, bicycles, transit and freight as being key components within the transportation system, all of which must be properly developed in order to most efficiently deal with transportation issues. [RH]
65. Please explain how the CMP leads to the development of programs and projects contained in the LRTP and TIP. How are these activities supported in the UPWP?
- ▶ The Congestion Management Process first identifies congested facilities through the collection of pertinent data. The MPO collects this data through a number of sources outlined in the UPWP. The transportation model and various other processes use the data collected to identify congested facilities. When these facilities have been identified, the process continues in an effort to determine what means or methods can be used to help mitigate congestion. Additional data is collected after the implementation of projects to determine if the applied measures were effective and whether there is a positive benefit to cost ratio. [RH]
66. What monitoring systems are being developed to provide a framework for additional effectiveness evaluation? What data sources are used to identify areas of congestion? Who collects and analyzes this data? Is this data shared with others?
- ▶ The MPO uses a variety of monitoring systems. Travel time and delay studies are used to evaluate corridors and intersections. Traffic counts are taken throughout the MPO by the various agencies. StarTran has added AVL as an additional tool that they can use to determine the performance and effectiveness of the transit system. ITS applications are used to both monitor and improve the effectiveness of the transportation system. The LLCHD has monitoring equipment that measures air quality. Police crash records are input on a daily basis, with a report annually on high crash locations, pedestrian and bicycle crashes, recommended mitigation measures, and before/after studies of implemented projects. Work is ongoing to improve the ability to automatically collect usable traffic data through existing traffic signal system detection. [RH]
  - ▶ The data is shared, both among the MPO entities as well as with the community at-large. Traffic counts are available on the City's website. Traffic monitoring cameras can also be accessed by

the public through the City's website. StarTran is in the process of opening information on arrival times to the general public via the internet. Air quality data is shared with the EPA. [RH]

67. What performance measures has the MPO established to monitor the transportation system in the region? What are the existing and future data needs for these performance measures?
- ▶ Performance measures for streets and intersections were identified in the 1990s through the Congestion Management Task Force. Public Works has set a goal of maintaining the number of crashes reported annually at or below the level reported in 2000, which means the crash rate drops as the number of vehicle miles traveled continues to increase. Sidewalks should be in place on both sides of every street and trails should be available to promote the use of alternate modes of transportation. StarTran uses multiple criteria, including service times, directness of trip and availability of routes to areas with high need for transit or serving locations that generate significant numbers of riders. Air quality monitoring ensure that Federal air quality standards are met. The data needs for these are primarily as outlined in question 66. [RH]
68. What is the status of ITS in the metropolitan area? What is the status of the regional architecture?
- ▶ The City of Lincoln has had a long history of successfully using ITS applications to improve traffic flow. The City has had a traffic signal system in place for a large number of years. Detection cameras, monitoring cameras, dynamic message signs, and AVL are some of the more recent ITS technologies that the City has employed on a widening basis. The Metropolitan Planning Organization's ITS regional architecture was completed in 2005. System engineering work is nearing completion on the communication master plan. Further implementation of recommended strategies has been slow, but steady, due to availability of funds. [RH]

## STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REVIEW

69. Please discuss the status of each of the recommendations from the previous Certification Review and the steps which have been taken to implement those recommendations.

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### **Lincoln MPO Certification Review** **May 4th & 5th, 2005**

The Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was designated by the FHWA and FTA as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) on July 8, 2002 which requires a detailed review of the transportation planning process for the MPO planning area on a three year cycle. This certification review took place over a two day period on May 4th and 5th, 2005 and included all participating agencies. The focus was to determine if the planning process met the federal regulations governing the development of transportation plans and programs for metropolitan areas as identified in federal regulations; 23 CFR, Section 450.334(b) Metropolitan Planning Process. Federal representatives interviewed staff associated with this process and received input from participating agencies and officials. This process also included a public hearing to solicit feedback from the public.

## Recommendations

1. The MPO's outreach efforts are exemplary. We recommend an evaluation of the effectiveness of the outreach efforts.
  - ▶ *The Lincoln MPO commissioned a public participation survey in 2008 to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities within the Lincoln Transportation Planning Process. This was a two part survey with one part seeking responses from the general public and the other responses from community leaders in the area. The overall research effort was intended to document public attitudes toward various communication issues facing the City and County and to direct future transportation planning efforts within Lincoln and Lancaster County as new planning activities are initiated.*

*The further objective of this study is to provide a series of "benchmark," against which future measurements can be compared, to assess the degree of success achieved in meeting the transportation planning and development public input and communication goals of Lincoln MPO and Lincoln-Lancaster County planning Department. The information gained in attempting to meet these stated objectives was intended to be used to better understand how "public opinion" can be more effectively sought and included in the Public Participation Plan in the overall transportation planning process.*

*The report is located on the Lincoln MPO web page, [www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo).*
2. We recommend the MPO perform an evaluation of the effectiveness of its Environmental Justice (EJ) efforts. As part of this evaluation, we suggest that the MPO survey low-income and minority communities in the Lincoln metropolitan area for these communities' evaluation of the MPO's EJ efforts.
  - ▶ *The Lincoln MPO public participation survey of 2008 specifically included community leaders in form known leaders within the low-income and minority communities.*
3. We recommend that all partners in the Lincoln area consider ITS technology as an integral part of every project rather than consideration of such technology being given at or near the end of project design in order to meet a minimum Federal requirement.
  - ▶ *An ITS Regional Architecture Plan was developed to advance the development and application of ITS within the Lincoln Metropolitan area and across the region in order to increase highway safety, mobility, security, economic health and community environment. The ITS Regional Architecture Plan is a key element in the MPO Transportation Planning process and implements the ITS strategies of the Transportation Plan.*
  - ▶ *Approximately 40 ITS projects have been implemented which enhance the safety, security, operations and economic well being of our residents and communities.*

4. After the MPO has rewritten its planning prospectus, we recommend that the MPO, due to its now being a TMA, revisit and (if needed) update the interagency agreements.
  - ▶ Lincoln MPO staff is in the process of updating our Prospectus (*Operations Plan*) to ensure full compliance with current Federal transportation planning regulations and it is consistent with contemporary transportation planning practices. This updating process has involved participation from a variety of entities represented on the Lincoln to make certain a range of ideas and guidance is received on how to best structure the MPO. The areas of focus during this initial review have been on the structure and working relationships of the Lincoln MPO participants.
5. The MPO needs to proactively institute a method to gain involvement from the freight industry in the transportation planning process.
  - ▶ A Freight and Goods Movement Study was undertaken in 2001 for the purpose of providing a greater understanding of current freight trends and issues, and ensure freight and goods movement elements are incorporated into the long range transportation planning process. This initiated a greater commitment by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department to establish a stronger linkage between transportation and economic development in order to accommodate the increasing importance of goods movement in our economy.
  - ▶ The Lincoln MPO and Public Works & Utilities Department developed and administered a survey to freight carrier companies with facilities located within the Lincoln metropolitan area and Lancaster County during 2006. The overall objectives of this survey was 1) to establish a general inventory of local transporters with the type of goods they transport as well as the size of their fleet, 2) to determine the key transportation issues and transportation related problems in the Lincoln Metropolitan Area and throughout Lancaster County and 3) to establish of list of potential roadway improvements based upon the need and degree of difficulty for implementation.
6. The MPO and StarTran are aware of FTA's Access to Jobs program. In the event this program is determined to be beneficial to the Lincoln metropolitan area, the MPO and StarTran are encouraged to first develop an Access to Jobs plan and subsequently pursue and attain Access to Jobs funding from FTA.
  - ▶ The *Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* was developed as a result of new provisions in SAFETEA-LU. This initiative allowed three FTA funding programs to be implemented within the planning area. These programs include the Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Program (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (Section 5316) and New Freedom Program (Section 5317). StarTran was successful in obtaining supporting funding through the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program to partially fund two transit routes to employment locations.
7. The Federal government needs to provide timely information concerning available federal transportation funding to the MPO.
  - ▶ na

## Commendations

1. The MPO is commended for having a TIP/CIP process that results in the TIP's Annual Element being financially constrained. 85-90% of projects in the Annual Element of the TIP are let to contract or approved in a grant (FTA) each year resulting in relatively few TIP amendments or revisions.
2. We commend the MPO for including a work activity in their 2006 UPWP, which meets the suggestions included under the FTA/FHWA 2005 "Human Transportation Services Coordination" Planning Emphasis Area.
3. We congratulate the MPO for completion of the ITS Regional Architecture by the April 2005 deadline. The MPO is in the process of addressing relatively minor FHWA HQ comments regarding the SE Nebraska Regional Architecture. Once the comments are addressed, the Regional Architecture will be accepted by FHWA for implementation.
4. The MPO is commended for continuing to be at the forefront of emergency planning and we commend StarTran for continuing its effort to install security cameras on its entire transit fleet of 60 vehicles.
5. We commend the MPO for attaining corridor preservation authority, through pursuing enactment of authorizing state legislation.
6. We applaud StarTran for establishing the "Ride for Five" program, which promotes transit access to jobs for low-income persons seeking employment.
7. We commend the MPO for its multi-modal transportation planning emphasis including the strong multi-modal emphasis in the Long-Range Transportation Plan, its plans to pursue multi-modal modeling for the next LRTP update, and adding a staff person specifically for conducting multimodal planning.
8. We commend the Lincoln-Lancaster metropolitan planning area for its comprehensive land use and transportation planning. The Comprehensive Plan includes a 25-Year Land Use Plan for the entire community including the "3-Mile" extraterritorial jurisdiction limit as well as the rest of Lancaster County as a single planning element. It also includes the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the City of Lincoln and for Lancaster County. In this manner, land use planning and transportation planning for the entire Lincoln-Lancaster metropolitan area is effectively guided through a single document.
9. The MPO is commended for its efforts to translate planning materials into four languages and for having translators available for meetings with non-English speaking participants.
10. Lincoln was in nonattainment for Carbon Monoxide (CO) in 1986. However, since February of 1989, Lincoln has been designated by U.S. EPA as being in attainment for all the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Lincoln has put much effort into improving and monitoring air quality to assure continued attainment with NAAQS. Efforts to improve air

quality include installation of oxidation catalysts in school buses, which also have a no idling policy, and StarTrans' use of ethanol-blended fuel, which has a lower emission of particulate matter.

11. We commend the MPO for recently installing the TransCAD modeling software, which will be used for the 2007 LRTP Update modeling. The use of TransCAD software will also allow the MPO to begin modeling transit trips, which was previously commended.
12. The MPO is commended for utilizing advanced technology for surveying pavement condition. The results of this survey will be beneficial to the MPO's Pavement Management System.
13. We commend the MPO for notifying and facilitating the large attendance of Lincoln metropolitan area transportation related agencies to the first Certification Review of their transportation planning process.

### **Certification Action**

Transportation planning activities in the Lincoln metropolitan area are being carried out in accordance with governing Federal regulations, policies, and procedures. The MPO's planning process provides adequate representation and input from all levels of local government and individual interest groups on the transportation needs of the metropolitan area. Overall, the MPO's planning activities provide for a transportation planning process that results in the support and development of transportation improvements for the entire area. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.334, the FHWA and FTA hereby jointly certify the transportation planning process in the Lincoln metropolitan area for the period October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2009.

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### **OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL COMMENT**

70. Please provide any additional comments for consideration during the Certification Review.

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