

## **2015 DCHC MPO Certification Review –Desk Review Questions**

### **ORGANIZATION AL STRUCTURE OF STUDY AREA**

1. What is the status of the MPO designation for the urbanized area?
2. Who are the members of the MPO? Who is represented on the policy board? Is the central city represented? Area transit agencies?
3. Are there any operators of major modes of transportation that are not members of the MPO?
4. What is the voting structure of the MPO?

### **METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES**

1. What is the date of the last MPO and the governor approvals for the UAB? For the MPA?
2. Where multiple MPOs are sharing geographical portions of a TMA, are agreements in place to address the responsibilities of each MPO for its share of the overall MPA?
3. Which, if any, areas are under consideration for inclusion in an expanded MPA over the next 20 years? What factors will determine the decision on expanded boundaries?
4. If the MPA has been adjusted, did it change the representation of the policy board? If so, how? Were representatives of major modes of transportation added to the policy board?

### **AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS**

1. Do agreements specify the responsibilities of the State, the MPO, the public transportation operator, and the designated air quality agency? What official cooperative agreements or MOUs have been established among these parties?
2. Do the parties to the metropolitan planning process actually adhere to the process identified in the agreements?
3. Do procedures identified in agreements correspond to a genuine 3C process?
4. Are agreements final, signed, and in effect? What updates are being developed or contemplated? What changes are planned?

### **UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

1. How are the State and public transit agencies involved in the UPWP development?
2. How are UPWP activities developed, selected, and prioritized?
3. How is the final version approved?

- d. Local and regional land use plans and development objectives, housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, environmental resource plans, and the area's overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives?
7. What strategy has been developed to implement provisions of the MTP? Have implementation priorities been established?

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING**

1. What supporting documentation is included in the fiscal constraint demonstration of the MTP?
2. Are revenue forecasts for the MTP developed cooperatively between the State, MPO, and public transportation operators? How much variation from past numbers and assumptions has been identified? Are there charts, tables, and narrative that describe the current fiscal constraint demonstration?
3. Do costs and revenue estimates incorporate inflation rates reflecting year of expenditure (YOE) dollars?
4. How often are cost estimates used in the MTP reviewed for accuracy?
5. How are system-level estimates of operation and maintenance costs for Federally supported facilities and services taken into account when estimating resources remaining available for capital expenditures?
6. How are recommendations for new funding sources and strategies for securing their availability incorporated into revenue estimates?
7. Does the TIP include all projects receiving Federal funding and all regionally significant projects that are not Federally-funded?
8. Are there any innovative funding techniques, including Advance Construction (AC) listed and documented in the TIP?
9. How does the fiscal constraint process lead to a meaningful course of action for establishing project priorities?
10. How is the financial plan made available to the public?
11. What steps are taken to ensure the financial plans for the TIP are consistent with the STIP?
12. How are cost estimates between the long-range planning (MTP) conceptual cost estimates and the programming (TIP) conceptual cost estimates reconciled?
13. What triggers an update of an estimate during the long-range planning and programming process?
14. Which of the agencies responsible for operations and maintenance (O&M) on the Federally-supported system are involved in the development of O&M estimates?
15. When amending the TIP or MTP, how is fiscal constraint ensured?
16. How does the financial plan illustrate adequate non-Federal revenue to cover AC projects?

6. 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?
7. How is public access provided to technical and policy information used in the development of the MTP and TIP?
8. How does the public involvement process demonstrate consideration and responsiveness to public and interested parties' input received during the planning and program development process? What kind of feedback do the public/interested parties receive on the proposals and questions they put forward?
9. How is the disposition of comments and changes in the final MTP or TIP documented, analyzed, and reported when significant oral and written comments are submitted?
10. What opportunities are provided for participation by traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies, commuter rail operators, airport authorities, appropriate private transportation providers, and city officials?
11. What opportunities are provided for participation and consultation by State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation where appropriate?
12. Is key information being made available in electronic format?
13. Who are the following members of the "public" in the MPO planning area:
  - a. Individual citizens
  - b. Affected public agencies,
  - c. Representatives of public transportation employees
  - d. Representatives of users of public transportation
  - e. Private providers of transportation
  - f. Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
  - g. Representatives of the disabled
  - h. Freight shippers
  - i. Providers of freight transportation services
  - j. Other interested parties

## **SELF-CERTIFICATIONS**

1. What process/procedures are used to self-certify the transportation planning process?
2. How are the transit authority, State DOT, and others involved?
3. What criteria have been established for the self-Certification?
4. What opportunities are provided for public comment? How are comments addressed?
5. How is the self-Certification process documented?

7. What information and data have been assembled regarding the location and condition of environmental features that might be affected by proposals outlined in the MTP?
8. What resources were devoted to implementing this process, including staff time and partnering with other organizations, such as local resource agencies, in addition to actual funding dollars?

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

1. How was the consultation process developed and who participated in its development?  
How is the process documented?
2. What opportunities are provided for agency consultation at key decision points in the planning, programming (TIP) phases of transportation planning decision-making?
3. Are different procedures used for consultation with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation? If so, how are they different?
4. What financial and personnel resources are devoted to implementing the consultation process?
5. How are agencies informed of consultation activities and opportunities for review at key decision points including but not limited to approval of MTPs and TIPs?
6. How does the consultation process demonstrate explicit consideration and responsiveness to input received? What kind of feedback did the agencies receive on the proposals and questions they put forward?
7. How is consultation in the metropolitan transportation process coordinated with the Statewide consultation process to enhance public consideration of issues, plans, and programs?
8. Does the MPO employ any visualization techniques to assist agencies in understanding the transportation plan elements? If so, what types of techniques? What are the results?
9. How is the MTP compared with State conservation plans and maps?
10. How is the MTP compared with inventories of natural or historic resources?

## **MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Does the MTP contain M&O strategies proposed for funding 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 CMP?

- b. Have safety goals and objectives been developed to cover all modes of transportation?
4. What safety data does the MPO collect or obtain from other sources?
5. How is safety addressed in public involvement activities of the MPO?
6. How do the MTP and TIP consider safety of all road users on all public roads?
7. What safety data collection and analysis tasks are included in the UPWP?
8. How is safety considered in determining which projects will be included in the MTP?
9. What are the plans for addressing safety in the next TIP and MTP update?

## **SECURITY IN THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

1. How have you defined security planning for your area?
2. How does the MPO collaborate with regional, State, or national security professionals during the transportation planning process? Which organizations are included and how does this collaboration occur?
3. How are security roles and responsibilities defined in the MTP, the TIP, the UPWP, or the CMP? Is security considered in corridor or other projects studies?
4. What types of natural emergencies does this region account for?
5. What plans have been created for evacuation of transportation-disadvantaged populations such as the elderly, low-income, and disabled?
6. Do the regional entities have their own Continuity of Operations (COOP)? If so, what are the principal components of the plan?

## **INTEGRATING FREIGHT IN THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

1. Has the MPO identified the transportation planning link between freight and economic development opportunities in the area? How have these planning factors been documented within the MPO planning products (e.g., TIP, MTP, UPWP, etc.)?
2. Has the MPO developed a "freight contact" list for purposes of encouraging freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services a reasonable opportunity to participate as part of the metropolitan planning process?
3. How does the MPO consider and evaluate land use and freight-oriented developments within their metropolitan planning area?
4. How is the freight community engaged in the planning process, particularly in the development of the transportation plan and TIP?
5. How is the freight community kept engaged in the planning process?

## **LAND USE AND LIVABILITY**

1. How does the MTP demonstrate comparison of the consistency of proposed transportation improvements with State and local planned growth and economic development?
2. To what extent are non-motorized modes of travel (e.g., bicycle, pedestrian movements) analyzed and addressed in the MTP and throughout the transportation planning process?
3. What, if any, environmental mitigation strategies have been included in the MTP?
4. What coordination, if any, has been achieved with the transit operator, a local jurisdiction, or other organization to foster TDM programs or land development design patterns to reduce congestion or reduce VMT growth rates?
5. Does the MPO have a regional GHG reduction goal or is this being considered? If so, is this effort coordinated with other entities?
6. Does the transportation planning process consider affordable housing plans or involve agencies/organizations responsible for identifying or addressing housing needs and options?

## **MPO Certification Review**

### **Title VI/Environmental Justice Questions**

#### *Demographic profile*

1. How were the minority and low-income (MLI) populations identified? Have LEP populations been identified? What data sources were used?
2. Have you cross-check your demographic data with personal knowledge?
3. Have you considered minority business communities?
4. Have you plotted past, current, and future projects?
5. Have you conducted a system analysis of benefits and burdens, comparing MLI areas to non-MLI areas?
6. Are there any planned projects that will potentially negatively impact MLI/LEP areas?
7. Are there any MLI/LEP areas that will be denied the benefits of planned projects?
8. How do you measure benefits and burdens? Have you developed any quantitative analyses?

#### *Planning Process*

1. Has the MPO adopted any formal goals or policies addressing EJ within the planning process?
2. How is EJ considered during the modeling and planning performed in support of LRTP development? How is EJ considered during MTIP development?
3. How does the MPO consider EJ with regard to the timing of transportation projects?
4. How does the planning process seek to identify the needs of MLI/LEP populations?
5. Is there any history of EJ problems/Title VI complaints? If so, what has been done to address the problems/complaints?

*EJ considerations in the public involvement process*

1. What strategies/techniques are used to engage MLI/LEP populations?
2. Are there any specific strategies in place to reach the Hispanic community or other LEP populations?
3. Have these strategies been effective? Are there regular evaluations of these strategies?
4. Are there efforts made to engage in dialogue with MLI/LEP communities even when there is no specific planning product or process underway?
5. Who is the lead person for public involvement and has that person attended training?
6. Do you have a mailing list that is directed toward MLI/LEP populations?
7. Have you used citizen advisory committees or focus groups?
8. What real or perceived barriers are there regarding participation from MLI groups? From LEP persons? From disabled persons? What has been done to mitigate barriers?
9. What has been the most successful or innovative technique the MPO has used?