

California Planning Emphasis Areas for Fiscal Year 2009/2010

Planning emphasis areas (PEAs) are policy, procedural and technical topics that should be considered by Federal planning fund recipients when preparing work programs for metropolitan and statewide planning and research assistance programs. The attached PEAs address objectives identified in FHWA and FTA Strategic Plans. They also address a mix of planning issues and priority topics identified during ongoing reviews of metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes as requiring additional work.

The FHWA California Division has determined that the areas of emphasis for California's transportation planning and air quality program in Federal FY 2009 are:

- Financial planning and fiscal constraint;
- Congestion management process (CMP) and management and operations (M&O);
- Overall Work Program (priorities for CPG funding); and,
- State Implementation Plan (SIP) development coordination.

Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint

A continuing area of emphasis for FHWA and FTA, based upon SAFETEA-LU requirements and recent financial planning guidance, is financial planning and fiscal constraint. New requirements since the passage of SAFETEA-LU include: total project cost must be included in the TIP for all projects, including those projects that are not seeking to be implemented during the timeframe of the TIP; and, project development studies may be funded for PE only, but this must be detailed in the TIP listing, and no environmental documents may be signed until the listing becomes a project and has been fully funded. The FHWA's Resource Center has recently completed a three-part report on how to better reflect fiscal constraint for transportation plans and programs. MPOs should now be utilizing the revised revenue and cost estimation templates and the revised financial tables developed through this partnership for all future Plan and TIP updates. MPOs are expected to keep project cost estimates and revenue assumptions up-to-date through this process, and should seek to keep open lines of communication with projects sponsors so that cost estimation procedures are clearly spelled out and understood, and updated along with any necessary program changes.

Congestion management process (CMP) and management and operations (M&O)

SAFETEA-LU identified M&O as one of eight planning factors and requires M&O strategies to be included in the metropolitan transportation plan. FHWA and FTA are promoting an objectives-driven, performance based approach to addressing these requirements and recently issued two guidebooks: *An Interim Guidebook on the Congestion Management Process (CMP) in Metropolitan Planning and Management and Operations in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan*. SAFETEA-LU also requires Transportation Management Areas to address congestion management through a process that provides for effective M&O, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 and 49 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. In light of the guidebooks, FHWA and FTA request that all MPOs examine the manner in which they are addressing the M&O, and if applicable the CMP requirement discussed below, in the metropolitan planning process.

The FHWA and FTA transportation planning regulations (23 CFR 450.320) require the transportation planning process in each TMA to include a process to address congestion management, including the development of a congestion management process meeting federal requirements. In addition, metropolitan planning organizations in a TMA designated as nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide are subject to planning regulation restrictions regarding the inclusion of single occupant vehicle capacity increasing projects in the transportation improvement program. FHWA and FTA request that each MPO for a TMA examine the manner in which they are addressing the CMP process requirements, and in TMA areas that are designated nonattainment for Ozone or CO, how they are addressing the federal planning regulation restriction on including SOV capacity increasing projects in the metropolitan TIP.

Work Program Development

SAFETEA-LU provides metropolitan transportation planning program funding for the integration of transportation planning processes in the MPA (i.e. rail, airports, seaports, intermodal facilities, public highways and transit, bicycle and pedestrian, etc.) into a unified metropolitan transportation planning process, culminating in the preparation of a multimodal transportation plan for the MPA. Within the required framework of an integrated multimodal metropolitan transportation planning process, federal metropolitan transportation planning funds are also available to: carry out metropolitan transportation planning for highways, regional transit and bike/pedestrian improvements and strategies; to ensure coordination of transportation planning with other state and regional planning processes; and to prepare a metropolitan transportation improvement program. FHWA and FTA request that all MPOs review the OWP development process to ensure the activities and products mandated by the metropolitan transportation planning regulations in 23 CFR 450 are a priority for FHWA and FTA combined planning grant funding available to the region. The OWP should effectively demonstrate the relationship between all MPO transportation planning activities and the content of its work products.

FHWA and Caltrans will host two workshops on OPW development during November 2008. Caltrans, FHWA and FTA planning staff are available to assist MPOs who have questions concerning the development of the OWP.

Coordination for SIP Development

FHWA and FTA recommend that all MPOs in nonattainment or maintenance areas remain active participants in the process of setting emissions budgets in conjunction with their local air district, the California Air Resources Board and EPA. While MPOs are not required to be directly involved in the development process for State Implementation Plans (SIPs), the emissions budgets that result from these SIPs are crucial to meeting metropolitan transportation and air quality conformity requirements.

FHWA encourages all MPOs in nonattainment or maintenance areas to maintain or develop an understanding of the SIP development process so that the scheduling of their planning and programming process needs are accounted for in the course of the SIP development process. Upcoming issues upon which to keep current include EPA's new proposed PM 2.5 designations and the SIP Submittal deadlines in June 2009. Please ensure that any of the above items that pertain to a particular region are reflected in the MPO's activities and the work program.