Federal Planning Certification Review

2022

Colorado Springs Transportation Management Area

Prepared by:

Federal Highway Administration, Colorado Division

Federal Transit Administration, Region VIII

Report issued January 24, 2022
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Foreword

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning processes carried out in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) 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. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a review of planning products, a site visit, and preparation of a report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The review’s focus is on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), State Department of Transportation (DOT), and transit operator in the conduct of the metropolitan planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA certification review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect local issues and needs.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a metropolitan planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program approval, the regional transportation plan, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Findings, and air quality conformity determinations (if applicable). A range of other formal and informal contacts provide both FHWA and FTA opportunities to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the certification review process. While the planning certification review report may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the findings of the certification review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative activities of all the metropolitan planning partners throughout the planning process.

The review process is individually tailored to focus on various significant topics across the metropolitan planning area’s practices. Federal reviewers prepare a certification report to document the results of the review process. The report and certification action are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices and content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed.

To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA/FTA will continue to improve the clarity and documentation of the certification review reports.
Executive Summary

In 2021 to 2022, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Colorado Division and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region VIII conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Colorado Springs urbanized area administered by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) and its planning partners. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements. The first certification review for the Colorado Springs metropolitan area was conducted in 2009 and approved in January 2010. This was followed by reviews conducted in 2013 (approved in 2014) and conducted in 2017 (approved in 2018). The recommendations arising from the 2017/2018 Review (referred to as the 2018 Review) were reviewed at the initiation of this 2021/2022 Review (herein referred to as the 2022 Review) which served as a starting point on topics warranting focus.

The 2022 Review

The Planning Certification Review conducted in 2021/2022 proved to be innovative for several reasons. It was the first review the federal review team conducted for PPACG that followed the new risk-based approach. While FHWA and FTA still refer to the standard list of topics as in prior reviews, focus was devoted to topics that warranted more discussion from the desk review completed in spring 2021. After reviewing existing plans and documents, the federal review team then composed an annotated list of topics and questions that served as the agenda for the Site Review. The Site Review allowed the federal review team to explore topics and questions in more detail with agency staff.

Activities employed alternatives to hosting in-person meetings in order to provide for safe distancing in response to COVID-19. The review team determined the Site Review could be condensed into a one-day virtual meeting on September 30, 2021, followed by holding a focused subgroup meeting on the topic of travel modeling and data collection. Instead of hosting in-person public open houses to obtain public feedback on the transportation planning process, the team developed an online feedback tool, described later in this report. All meetings were conducted virtually. The focus on virtual meetings has led to innovations in outreach practices that will likely be utilized in future reviews as well.

FHWA and FTA hereby certify the metropolitan transportation planning process for the Colorado Springs urbanized area, conducted by PPACG, in partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT), meets federal planning requirements effective January 24, 2022. Details of the certification findings are contained in this report.
Transportation Management Area (TMA) Overview

**MPO Official Name**

The official name of the Colorado Springs metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG).

**Year Founded**

The PPACG was founded as an institution in 1967. It was designated with metropolitan planning organizational title and responsibilities for the Colorado Springs metropolitan area in April 1977.

**Annual Budget**

The PPACG receives approximately $1,259,000, including local and in-kind match, in combined FHWA and FTA planning dollars through a consolidated planning grant from the CDOT. For capital projects, the PPACG has programmed the following amounts in the TIP: $174,850,000 in FY2022, and about $61,656,000 in FY2023.

**Member Jurisdictions**

PPACG collaborates with the MPO member entities listed below.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>MPO Member Jurisdictions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Counties</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>El Paso County</td>
<td>Teller County</td>
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<td><strong>Municipalities</strong></td>
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<td>Colorado Springs</td>
<td>Town of Green Mountain Falls</td>
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<td>Fountain</td>
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<td>Monument</td>
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<td><strong>Transit Agency</strong></td>
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<td>Mountain Metropolitan Transit</td>
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<td><strong>Military (non-voting)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peterson SFB</td>
<td>Schriever SFB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fort Carson</td>
<td>US Air Force Academy</td>
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The CDOT Headquarters and Region 2 staff, while non-voting members, are active participants in the transportation planning process. The FHWA and the FTA are non-voting members and provide program oversight and technical assistance.

The boundaries for the MPO are shown on the attached graphic. It should be noted that there are several jurisdictions that are members of the Council of Governments that are not included in the MPO boundaries, and therefore are not shown on the attached graphic. These jurisdictions are: City of Cripple Creek, City of Victor, Town of Ramah, Town of Fairplay, Town of Alma, Town of Calhan, and Park County.

**Population Served**

The entire region contains about 772,000 people as of 2020. The population is projected to increase to over 1,065,000 by 2045. Employment is forecasted to increase from 468,175 in 2020 to about 541,984 by 2045. The region has 13 cities that have over 538,000 inhabitants combined. The total in population in the three unincorporated areas combined ranges from 202,220 (El Paso County) to 15,256 (Teller County).

**Major Transit Operators**

Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT) is the FTA Section 5307 designated recipient that provides a full array of fixed route and paratransit services throughout the Colorado Springs metropolitan region. PPACG now administers Section 5310 funds to human service providers within the urban area. CDOT provides supplemental 5311 and 5310 (rural) transit funding to small service providers that also operate in the region, serving senior, disabled and intercity passengers.
**MPO Area Boundaries**

**Note:** Peterson and Schriever are now Space Force Bases (SFB)
Certification Review Findings

Important in the TMA Certification Review process is the determination of findings, observations, and notable practices. The report highlights both the exemplary and praiseworthy practices and the recommended areas for improvement for the metropolitan planning process. These are presented in this report as Commendations and Recommendations.

A classification system has been established that categorizes specific topics by importance and impact on the planning process.

**Commendations** - This category identifies exemplary examples of activities and products that exceed meeting the regulations and guidance set by the federal agencies.

**Recommendations** - This category identifies activities that, while meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements, are either dated or need improvement to fully implement the metropolitan transportation planning process. While these activities do not seriously diminish the regional planning process, they are in danger of becoming future corrective actions if not remedied within the next certification cycle. Typically, recommendations highlight misinterpretations of regulations or guidance and identify inadequate procedures or actions taken to accomplish the federal planning requirements.
Commendations

Commendations are activities that the regional planning partners engage in that are innovative, highly effective, and well-thought-out procedures for implementing the planning requirements. Credit is given to significant improvements or resolutions from past findings that are above and beyond compliance with Federal requirements. These features contribute to the general advancement of transportation planning as they can be shared with other agencies around the country.

Regional Collaboration

Collaboration among regional transportation partners (PPACG, CDOT, MMT and various member jurisdictions) is one of the strengths of PPACG’s regional transportation planning process. PPACG and partners have worked diligently over last several years to strengthen relationships among partners. This can be evidenced from conversations during recent Board and TAC meetings down to monthly technical staff coordination calls. When unforeseen issues arise, the stakeholders work collaboratively to resolve them.

In addition, PPACG staff have taken a leadership role in disseminating information during challenging times contributed by uncertain legislative, funding and pandemic-related events. An example is the hosting of a series of workshops held in 2021 for regional partners to attend presentation by national and state technical experts on such topics as the future of national transportation funding and Colorado’s proposed greenhouse gas regulations.

The effort in building strong relationships is evident to the public as well, as evidenced from the feedback received from the public outreach survey as demonstrated by the following specific comments received:

- Collaboration is terrific and PPACG and the jurisdictions work well together. PPACG is willing to gather and maintain regional data for use by member governments. They do well with getting member jurisdictions emerging information and issues.
- Communicate regularly with regional stakeholders. Always looking at ways to leverage funding programs for studies and plans to improve regional transportation planning.
- There are lots of communications in the committees.

Data Collection and Travel Demand Modeling

PPACG has been instrumental in sharing data with various partner jurisdictions and agencies throughout the region, such as in the case of crash data. PPACG has noted there can be challenges in coordinating data sharing with local jurisdictions. They agreed to look for innovative practices in this area, and to continue to work on coordinating with local agencies on land use assumptions. PPACG staff will be conducting ongoing meetings with
staff of local jurisdictions to discuss and develop land use assumptions as part of the upcoming long range planning effort during 2022 and 2023. PPACG will be poised to take a leadership role in changes that arise as part of the 2020 Census. PPACG completed updating their travel demand model last year (2020), and they continue to share results with stakeholders when requested. The updated model will prove valuable in better evaluating transportation decision related impacts to traditionally underserved communities.

Assumption of Human Services Coordination

PPACG took over the administration of the FTA Section 5310 program from MMT on January 1, 2021. The 5310 program provides funding for essential transit trips made by senior and disabled patrons – a program for which demand is increasingly outpacing funds available.

The transition was a regional decision made to improve efficiencies of administering the program and to better leverage FTA funds with other funds being administered by PPACG, such as Older Americans Act funds. With administering the Section 5310 funds, PPACG can streamline such efforts as posting calls for projects and evaluating application proposals, thereby providing efficiencies of scale, and reducing redundant efforts. With the filling of the Mobility Coordinator position in 2020, PPACG devoted the resources to expand coordination efforts with MMT and human service providers, crucial for successfully administering the program. Taking on this program added notably to PPACG’s portfolio of services offered to the community and the associated workload of PPACG staff. This is yet another example demonstrating how PPACG serves as a leader in the transportation planning arena for the region.


**Recommendations**

This section identifies activities currently being done in compliance with Federal requirements, but for which improvements are needed to ensure effective implementation of the metropolitan transportation planning process currently and in the future. While these activities do not seriously diminish the regional planning process, they are potentially in danger of becoming future corrective actions if not remedied.

**Regional Transportation Plan**

*Linkage to Project Selection and Implementation*

The RTP does not appear to directly interact with nor advise the project scoring criteria, selection, or prioritization. The RTP is developed after project selection, therefore not contributing nor informing the project selection process. In its current state, the document appears to serve primarily as a narrative to show transportations' impact on the region through various means (safety, environment, infrastructure). What is not evident to the federal review team, at this time, is whether the RTP currently being developed will improve on the prior process.

The TIP purpose is to reflect the investment priorities and identified strategies and objectives established in the regional transportation plan. The investment priorities and strategic direction are developed in the RTP by determining the region’s forecasted future demand mixed with today’s current needs and creating actions necessary to address them. This is supported by the examination of multiple aspects of the multimodal transportation network and provides instruction for the implementation of projects in the TIP. Analysis and recommendations arising from transit development planning work should be incorporated into the new RTP.

Each project or project phase included in the TIP shall be consistent with the approved RTP, per federal regulations. An example of this inconsistency came up recently with a major project being contemplated in a TAC meeting. Revisions were amended to the TIP that were not necessarily consistent with the project described in the RTP. The RTP creates an expectation and vision of the region’s future state and guides decisions to facilitate that reality. PPACG and their planning partners must find a better way to develop the RTP in a manner that builds the network they want and solves the issues that hamper regional transportation.

**Recommendation**: Improvement is necessary in utilizing the RTP process to inform the implementation of projects and decisions, most notably those documented in the TIP. Emphasis on incorporation of transit needs and proposed projects is encouraged.
**Financial Planning – Financial Disaggregation**

Regarding the revenue and cost estimates in the existing 2045 RTP, the lump sum totals over the horizon year are not disaggregated, and sensible cost bands after the first 10 years of the plan’s life cycle are not provided. The planning regulations state that only after the first 10 years of the planning horizon can the financial information be aggregated/cost-banded for reasonably expected fund estimates, but flexibility is provided so the region can adopt this concept in a way that is beneficial for them. The first 10 years of the planning horizon needs a micro level perspective that adequately documents and compiles available revenue and expenditures from different sources in a realistic manner to coincide with the timeframe for project implementation in the TIP. This level of detail supports the demonstration of fiscal constraint and shows how the immediate strategies and objectives of the RTP can be implemented and supported through the TIP.

**Recommendation:** The future 2050 RTP financial planning information must disaggregate, to an extent, for the first 10 years of the plan’s horizon. After that, financial data can be grouped or cost-banded in a way that provides the most benefit to the PPACG.

**Transportation Network Safety and Security Coordination**

We strongly promote PPACG and regional partners to continue leveraging existing safety and security resources and partnerships. For example, currently available opportunities, including CDOT activities (messaging, safety groups), the Drive Smart Colorado organization, and other tools may be employed to improve safety for the transportation network more proactively and inclusively instead of reactively. PPACG is encouraged to convene with regional partners on a regular basis to coordinate on regional security and safety matters. The example of Mountain Metropolitan Transit being dispatched to rescue stranded residents in the Waldo fire-ravaged neighborhoods is one example of a safety-related resource that was dispatched in a critical time. Holding annual coordination meetings would be a way to encourage the dissemination of information on resources available to the region in times of emergencies.

As discussed during the site visit workshop, developing a safety/security needs assessment is a great starting point. PPACG staff have made notable strides in compiling GIS data, including crash data. The mapping of data is valuable in informing the needs assessment, regional goals and objectives, and for interaction with the public. PPACG has noted the challenges in coordinating work in this area with local jurisdictions. They agreed to look for innovative practices in this area, including reaching out to insurance companies covering the region.
**Recommendation:** PPACG is encouraged to convene with regional partners on an annual to semi-annual basis to coordinate on regional safety and security matters and create a needs assessment for the Pikes Peak region.

**Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

*Date Specificity in the PPP*
By including specific dates for both public engagement and document development cycles, the PPP becomes unwieldy quickly since its long refresh cycle gets outpaced by the document development cycles identified within. The current PPP (April 2019) includes engagement dates that have already come and gone with new development cycles happening, but the published schedule has no way to update for these new activities. While the PPP cannot account for all engagement periods throughout its life, creating a plan without specific dates provides a framework for engagement while not excluding people from future opportunities.

One approach for consideration is the removal of specific dates for engagement and development cycles and keep the procedural and instructional elements. This is a great document to provide any member of the public, stakeholder, or decision-maker a glimpse into what public engagement means to PPACG, why it is important, and how it gets done. Process-oriented discussion can give perspective into what is expected of the public during their engagement, how it gets integrated into the process, and ways in which PPACG engages with all communities and people across the region. In addition, the federal review team asks PPACG to address the Justice40 initiative as they plan future outreach activities and make transportation decisions.

*Project Specific Outreach*
The PPP works best when addressing the broader purpose of public engagement and interaction through general techniques and procedures. Supplementary publications can then present detail about individual project/plan development activities, including those that may arise unexpectedly and/or out-of-cycle. We suggest PPACG explore developing complimentary methods that provide details on specific activities for each program's development cycle. These can provide context into what input is being requested and how it supports the reader's experience. The additional methods, while educating readers, can provide up-to-date timelines and opportunities for participation while providing feedback to the MPO and partners for the transportation decision making process.

We suggest developing and tracking public outreach activities for individual projects and specific efforts outside of the overall PPP, which is the foundation. In this way, the public
can refer to the ways in which they can become engaged on individual documents. This will help keep the public informed on how to easily submit feedback at any time that may not correspond to a specific plan or project.

Based on public feedback provided to the survey that was made available for the Federal Planning Certification Review, those commenting expressed uncertainty on how to participate and provide feedback during the process on more specific proposed changes in the transportation network including transit service and transit and roadway projects. Opportunities to provide comments on these specific activities and projects aren’t readily apparent. One asked: “Does CDOT, MMT, or PPACG conduct broad-based outreach for their efforts to obtain public opinion? Or do you more hear from people who seek you out? And do you hear from a wide variety of residents, or just the ‘squeaky wheels’?” Good questions for PPACG and partners to consider.

Another comment that has been expressed is the opportunity to improve coordination and support among MMT and PPACG on the intersection of planning for human services for the elderly and disabled and those not easily served by fixed route services.

We further encourage PPACG to prepare a periodic report which summarizes all public feedback received. The report could include evaluation metrics for scoring how well the individual activities fared in reaching various segments of the general public, including traditionally underserved communities.

**Recommendation:** PPACG is encouraged to consider the concepts described in this section related to including dates in the PPP, separate project/program outreach efforts, and the preparation of a summary and evaluation when developing the next PPP.

**Succession Planning/Continuity of Operations**

When staff turnover happens at any of the regional transportation partner agencies (including at PPACG, local governments and institutions, MMT, and CDOT), an enormous asset is lost in terms of institutional knowledge and capability. When this occurs, those responsibilities and duties cannot be lost, forgotten, or delayed. The regional partners will benefit from cooperatively developing and instituting a mechanism that prevents the loss of staff equaling the loss of knowledge and capacity. Tools to support on-going operations with minimal disruption from such departures include standard operating procedures, directions from the former employee, or some instrument that carries forward the information necessary to make informed and timely decisions.
New employees would greatly benefit from different planning-related training opportunities at the start of their tenure and not delaying this knowledge. These training events can range from federal planning to state planning and everything in-between. Local experts can cover specific topics for staff that directly impacts their job responsibilities.

**Recommendation:** To ease the burden of employee transitions, PPACG, MMT, and CDOT must develop and enact transitional guidance and continuity of operations in anticipation of staff departures and solidify training process and on-boarding for new hires.

**Congestion Management Plan**

A congestion management process (CMP) is a multi-faceted and systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system based on cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. Among the CMP elements that PPACG does well, multiple other elements can benefit from further clarity in PPACG’s planning process including the establishment of a coordinated program for data collection and system performance monitoring, defined congestion management objectives and performance measures to assess the extent of congestion and support the evaluation of implemented strategies, and a periodic assessment of the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

The PPACG actively works with datasets and collection practices that can improve the understanding of congestion throughout the region, but these practices do not transfer well when representing congestion in the RTP or elsewhere. Currently, the only way for stakeholders to get information on congestion is in the 2045 RTP Appendix H and it’s unclear how they are supposed to discover that the information is located there. Each corridor profile includes a few bullets of areas within the corridor with recurring congestion, but nothing is available for a system/region-wide perspective. Considering there are public survey results on the experience of congestion in the 2045 RTP narrative, it is curious that no follow-up or baseline of congestion is given. A change in the way congestion is represented in the RTP and other planning documents at PPACG needs attention.

In Chapter 8 of the 2045 RTP, PPACG identifies an example of congestion performance objectives through level of service grades, but it ends there. They include a discussion of the volume/capacity ratio and the difference between recurring and non-recurring congestion, but not in a way that relates to the PPACG condition. What’s missing is the regional decision to choose acceptable levels of congestion based on local context. This entire chapter is
written to provide perspective and appreciation of current congestion trends and situations, but there is no connection to what is acceptable to the region and how these measures align with system performance. Without defining what congestion is and the condition of congestion, the other aspects of the CMP are without weight. Using performance objectives to measure and understand congestion in the region is a priority for PPACG when updating the CMP, along with a better mechanism to convey this to their stakeholders.

The periodic assessment of the effectiveness of implemented strategies appears minimal in the PPACG process. There is little documentation of a process that determines the effect of implemented projects and strategies on congestion. This activity builds off the previous actions of developing performance objectives and monitoring congestion. By including the impacts of implemented projects and strategies, the region can see how their work is affecting congestion and use that to enhance decision-making in the future. This provides a significant amount of transparency and accountability to PPACG in that they display how their work and decisions are benefitting the mobility and safety of the public. The information derived from these periodic assessments can help support the next update to the CMP and other planning documents, as well.

**Recommendation:** During the next CMP update, the core elements need strengthening and greater attention, including monitoring and representation of congestion, agreement upon regional congestion performance objectives, and a periodic assessment of the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

**TIP Documentation and Public Understanding**

The FY23-27 TIP, currently in final draft version, does not deliver an optimal public friendly experience and feels incomplete at times, which leaves room for improvements and enhancements. The TIP is the region’s implementation guide for on-the-ground projects and strategies that will impact the region’s travelers, but it’s hard to understand the ideas and concepts as they are blunt and lack an understandable purpose. For example, some missing elements are definitions and descriptive procedures that inform, as well as educate, the reader. Tables are found without explanation as to what columns and rows mean and this can create confusion when things aren’t as they seem or are misinterpreted. The document is missing the context and tangibility necessary for the general reader to understand what’s presented. There is no discussion on what local match is in the narrative, yet it’s an integral part of project financials. Another situation that can benefit from further explanation is the fiscal constraint tables (FY23-27 TIP). Nothing in this table gets explained to the reader and it’s not intuitive by itself. There are other concepts in the TIP that are not being fully
realized for the reader and providing adequate embellishment improves the knowledge necessary for the TIP’s comprehension.

Providing the public with the opportunity to comment on the TIP and other planning documents is a cornerstone of the regional planning process. This concept has long been accepted primarily as providing accessible opportunities in which the public’s voice is heard. This idea has more than a single meaning. It touches upon not only the availability for action, but it also captures the opportunity for the public to provide meaningful and insightful comments based on their knowledge of the process. When the process does not provide and/or omits information and access, the reflection is seen in comments and participation from the public. The best way to have a meaningful conversation with citizens is through education and transparent PPACG documents that guide readers through the process and allows them to formulate responses. This idea is showcased best when weaved through all PPACG’s documents, plans, and processes.

**Recommendation:** The TIP should provide not only data and information to the public, but also instructions and guidance on how and what to comment upon. Additional narrative to explain ideas and graphics, define concepts and transportation vernacular, and simple graphical representations to support feedback is greatly encouraged.

**Transit Element**

The tracking of federal transit funds is an area warranting improvement. While a rollover column has been added in the TIP, it does not always reflect the accurate balances of unobligated funds. At the time of this report, MMT is working with PPACG to develop a process to address this issue to ensure correct data is reflected in the TIP.

**Recommendation:** MMT and PPACG to work on improving the process of ensuring unobligated transit funds are accurately reflected in the TIP.
Public Outreach for Federal Certification Review

Soliciting public feedback on the regional transportation planning process took a new form during this Planning Certification Review. Instead of hosting typical public open houses, the federal review team relied on using web-based methods to receive feedback due to the COVID-19 environment.

The federal review team compiled a survey to solicit public and stakeholder comments on the regional transportation planning process. A copy of the survey and associated flyer are provided in the Appendix. With the assistance of PPACG staff, the survey was distributed on August 12, 2021 to stakeholders and the public by email and was posted on social media and the PPACG website. It remained posted on the website for one month.

A total of eleven individuals responded to the survey. While a small number, the federal review team still found the web-based approach a convenient method for people to provide their opinions. This was especially helpful since hosting and attending an in-person meeting proved to be unworkable during 2021 amidst the COVID-19 environment.

The majority of those that responded to the survey agreed that the planning process is inclusive and opportunities to participate are provided. The results indicate that most respondents generally support the outreach work PPACG is doing, especially as being a convener of multiple stakeholders and facilitating complex discussions. However, some respondents questioned how feedback is being considered when making transportation planning decisions and whether those not typically involved in the transportation realm are really encouraged to participate. The full survey results are provided in the summary included in the Appendix.

The federal review team also created a flyer that was circulated to the same email mailing list inviting the public to submit any individual comments by email to the federal review team. A copy of this flyer is also attached in the Appendix.

The general public and interested stakeholders were also invited to provide comments on regional transportation planning process at the PPACG Transportation Advisory Committee meeting held on August 19, 2021.
Appendices
Mr. Stan VanderWerf  
PPACG Board of Directors, Chair  
Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments  
15 South 7th Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80905-1501

Subject: Colorado Springs Transportation Management Area – 2022 Federal Planning Certification

Dear Mr. VanderWerf:

Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.336(b), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the transportation planning process every four years for the Colorado Springs Transportation Management Area (TMA).

The recent planning certification review of the transportation planning process in the TMA included a desk review of plans and materials, a virtual site visit on September 30, 2021, and an online public outreach survey to receive comments. FHWA and FTA consulted with staff from the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) to review the metropolitan transportation planning process for the region.

The planning certification review is one of several methods employed by FHWA and FTA to monitor and assess the implementation of the transportation planning process in a TMA. Other methods include the review and approval of the PPACG Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), review of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and participation at committee and coordination meetings.

The 2022 Colorado Springs TMA Planning Certification Report contains an overview of the federal planning certification process, discussions from the site visit, identifies observations and recommendations, and documents the FHWA/FTA certification action. Upon request, representatives from FHWA and FTA are available to present the review findings and the FHWA/FTA certification action at an upcoming PPACG Committee meeting.

The FHWA/FTA review team found the metropolitan transportation planning process satisfies the provisions of 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303-5306, 23 CFR 450.300, and other associated federal requirements. Based on the overall findings, the FHWA and FTA hereby certify the PPACG’s transportation planning process. This certification is active on Monday, January 24th, 2022 and lasts four years.
Should any questions arise, please contact Aaron Bustow (FHWA) at 720-963-3022, Aaron.Bustow@dot.gov, or Kristin Kenyon (FTA) at 303-362-2391, Kristin.Kenyon@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

John M. Cater, P.E.
Division Administrator
FHWA Colorado Division

Cindy Terwilliger
Regional Administrator
FTA Region 8
Transportation Planning Process Survey

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) welcome your comments on the transportation planning process in the Colorado Springs metropolitan region during the Federal Planning Certification Review of the region’s transportation planning process.

Providing opportunities for the public to comment on the transportation planning process conducted in the metropolitan area is a part of the Federal Planning Certification Review. The review focuses on the federally-required transportation planning process administered by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) as the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), in cooperation with local governments, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT), and other stakeholders.

For each of the questions to the right, please respond by selecting agree, disagree or neutral. Responses reflect how you feel PPACG and its partners are doing related to the planning process.

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<th>Agree</th>
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<td>Information on how to participate is accessible?</td>
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<td>Technical information is accessible?</td>
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<td>Appropriate agencies and stakeholders are well represented and provide input in the process? (jurisdictions, general public, military)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPACG and its partners consider and respond to public comments?</td>
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<td>Major issues are being addressed in the regional transportation planning process?</td>
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<td>Transportation Plans reflect the region's priorities/needs?</td>
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What do PPACG and its partners do well?

Please share any suggestions on how PPACG and its partners may improve our transportation planning process

You can provide your suggestions directly to the transportation planners at the U.S. Department of Transportation, or you can submit this form by clicking the “Submit Form” button below. Comments are due by Friday, September 17th, 2021
PPACG FHWA Transportation Planning Process Survey

- Opened August 12 with Social Media and PPACG Website Posting, additional posts on August 30, and September 7, sent reminder emails on September 7 to PPACG BOD, CAC, RAC, TAC, AQTC, WQMC, COA, MCC, and PPRTA CAC
- Closed September 18 at 8:30 AM
- Received 11 responses

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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>Information on how to participate is accessible?</td>
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<td>Technical information is accessible?</td>
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<td>Appropriate agencies and stakeholders are well represented and provide input in the process? (jurisdictions, general public, military)</td>
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<td>PPACG and its partners consider and respond to public comments?</td>
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<td>Major issues are being addressed in the regional transportation planning process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation Plans reflect the region’s priorities/needs?</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Feedback:

What do PPACG and its partners do well?
1. Collaboration is terrific and PPACG and the jurisdictions work well together. PPACG is willing to gather and maintain regional data for use by member governments. They do well with getting member jurisdictions emerging information and issues.

2. working with stakeholders, but I am pretty sure the general public doesn't even know what PPACG is, let alone what they do. Pretty common for most agencies though.

3. Communicate regularly with regional stakeholders. Always looking at ways to leverage funding programs for studies and plans to improve regional transportation planning.

4. There are lots of communications in the committees.

5. I do not know this process well enough to accurately respond, but the professionalism and dedication is definitely evident.

6. Not super familiar with what PPACG is doing and how they're structured.

Please share any suggestions on how PPACG and its partners may improve our transportation planning process

1. Need to change funding, starting at the state level and going down to the local level. We are way underfunded compared to many other states and I think all agencies that deal with transportation funding and municipalities, should be talking to elected officials to make transportation more of a priority.

2. None at this time.

3. Many of the websites are blocked by DoD due to invalid certifications.

4. We know from local research that residents are dissatisfied with public transportation (about 40% are satisfied). And while I stay on the lookout for options to share my opinion as a resident, don't see many options for input forwarded to me (outside of this one). This survey is super brief .... and doesn't get to the heart of resident desires - maybe that's a separate effort. Does CDOT, MMT, or PPACG conduct broadbased outreach for their efforts to obtain public opinion? Or do you more hear from people who seek you out? And do you hear from a wide variety of residents, or just the 'squeaky wheels'?
Good Afternoon,

I wanted to share with you this opportunity for public comment: **PPACG Transportation Planning Process Survey**

The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) welcome your comments on the transportation planning process in the Colorado Springs metropolitan region during the Federal Planning Certification Review of the region’s transportation planning process.

Providing opportunities for the public to comment on the transportation planning process conducted in the metropolitan area is a part of the Federal Planning Certification Review. The review focuses on the federally-required transportation planning process administered by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) as the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), in cooperation with local governments, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT), and other stakeholders.

Fill out the survey at [http://ppacg.org/fhwasurvey](http://ppacg.org/fhwasurvey) or provide your suggestions to the transportation planners at the U.S. Department of Transportation by Friday, September 17th, 2021:

- Aaron Bustow (Federal Highway Administration, Colorado Division)  
  - aaron.bustow@dot.gov
- Kristin Kenyon (Federal Transit Administration, Region 8)  
  - kristin.kenyon@dot.gov

Individuals in need of auxiliary aids or services are asked to contact PPACG by calling (719) 471-7080 x139 or emailing jmcmullen@ppacg.org

**About the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments**

The Pikes Peak region’s 16 local governments join together in PPACG to collaborate on issues that cross political boundaries and to reach solutions that benefit the entire region. PPACG’s primary focus is regional planning in transportation, aging issues, military impact planning and air and water quality.

###
How are we doing in planning for your transportation future?

Tell us your views on the transportation planning process in the Colorado Springs metropolitan area by Friday, September 17th, 2021.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) welcome your comments on the transportation planning process in the Colorado Springs metropolitan region during the Federal Planning Certification Review of the region’s transportation planning process.

Providing opportunities for the public to comment on the transportation planning process conducted in the metropolitan area is a part of the Federal Planning Certification Review. The review focuses on the federally-required transportation planning process administered by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) as the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), in cooperation with local governments, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT), and other stakeholders.

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Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.336(b), FHWA and FTA are required to certify, at least once every four years, that the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 population complies with Federal requirements. The last Certification Review for the Colorado Springs metropolitan area was completed in January 2018. Although Certification Reviews are conducted with the primary objective of evaluating federal compliance of the metropolitan transportation planning process, we intend also to highlight effective practices, provide technical assistance and information exchange, and identify opportunities for improvements. For more information and a summary of Certification Reviews go to [https://www.transportationplanningcertificationreview](https://www.transportationplanningcertificationreview).