



2017 Certification Report

Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area

Hillsborough MPO
Forward Pinellas
Pasco County MPO

Prepared by:

Federal Highway Administration
Florida Division

Federal Transit Administration
Region IV

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Executive Summary

Federal Law requires the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to jointly certify the transportation planning processes of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years (a TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000). A certification review generally consists of four primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning documents (in advance of the site visit), the development and issuance of a FHWA/FTA certification report, and a certification review closeout presentation to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) governing board.

The joint FHWA/FTA Federal Review Team conducted site visit reviews of the Tampa Bay TMA on **March 27 - 30, 2017**, and **April 11 - 12, 2017**. The Tampa Bay TMA is comprised of the Hillsborough MPO, Pasco County MPO, and Forward Pinellas. Since the last certification review in 2013, this TMA has made significant improvements to its transportation planning processes, including its regional coordination efforts.

This certification review was conducted to highlight best practices, identify opportunities for improvements, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. The Federal Review Team identified 18 noteworthy practices, 17 recommendations and three corrective actions during the review, which can be found in the Findings/Conclusions section of this report.

Based on the overall results of the certification review, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Tampa Bay TMA, comprised of the Hillsborough MPO, Forward Pinellas, and Pasco County MPO, substantially meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C, subject to the TMA satisfactorily addressing the corrective actions outlined in this report. The TMA is encouraged to provide FHWA and FTA with evidence of the satisfactory completion of the corrective actions prior to the noted deadlines. The MPO's progress in meeting the corrective actions will be monitored and evaluated. This certification will remain in effect until **June 2021**.

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Overview of the Certification Process

Under provisions of 23 CFR 450.334 (a) and 49 CFR 613.334 (a), the FHWA and the FTA must jointly certify the planning process of TMAs “not less often than once every four years” (a TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000). This four-year cycle runs from the date of the previous jointly issued Certification report. The primary purpose of a Certification Review is to formalize the continuing oversight and evaluation of the planning process.

A certification review generally consists of four primary activities. These activities include: a “desk audit”, which is a review of the TMA’s main planning process documents (e.g. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)); a “site visit” with staffs from the TMA’s various transportation planning partners (e.g. the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), local/regional transit service provider, and other participating State/local agencies), including opportunities for local elected officials and the general public to provide comments on the TMA planning process; the preparation of a “FHWA/FTA TMA Certification Review Report” that documents the certification review’s findings; and a formal FHWA Florida Division presentation of the review’s findings at a future MPO Board Policy meeting.

The Tampa Bay TMA is comprised of three MPOs: Hillsborough, Pasco County, and Forward Pinellas. The certification review of the TMA includes a review of the transportation planning processes for each of these MPOs and regional coordination activities. The review for the Hillsborough MPO was held April 11 - 12, 2017, in Tampa Florida. The review for Forward Pinellas was held March 27 - 28, 2017, in Clearwater, Florida. Lastly, the review for the Pasco County MPO was held March 29 - 30, 2017, in New Port Richey, Florida.

During these site visits the Federal Review Team met with the staffs of the Hillsborough, Pasco County, and Forward Pinellas, the FDOT, the associated transit authorities, committee representatives, other partnering agencies, and the public. See **Appendices A, C and E** for a list of review team members and site visit participants for each MPO, **Appendices B, D and F** contain the agendas for all site visits, **Appendix G** provides a copy of the Public Notice provided for all three public meetings which announced the Federal Certification Review public meeting. A public meeting was held separately for each MPO for this certification. The public meeting for the Hillsborough MPO was April 12, 2017. The public meeting for the Forward Pinellas was held Wednesday, March 29, 2017, and the meeting for the Pasco County MPO was held Monday, March 27, 2017.

The purpose of these public meetings is to inform the public about Federal transportation planning requirements and allow the public the opportunity to provide input about the transportation planning process, more specifically how the process is meeting the needs of the area. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers, direct mail, and on Hillsborough, Pasco, and Forward Pinellas individual MPO websites.

For those that could not attend the public meetings or who did not want to speak at the public meeting, contact information for the Federal Review Team was provided. Members of the public were given 30 days from the date of the public meeting to mail, fax or email their comments; they may also request a copy of the certification review report via these methods. Additional comments were received within the 30-day period. A summary of the public comments for all three MPOs, along with how they were incorporated into this report, is included in **Appendix H**. **Appendix H** also contains public comments either via public meeting, via MPO staff and website, via FHWA email), or via FHWA mailing address.

Part 1: Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization

Section I. Previous Certification Findings Status/Update

The following is a summary of the previous recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to the Hillsborough MPO. The report for the MPO's last certification review was published in **July 2013**. There were no Corrective Actions identified in the prior report.

A. Recommendations

1. **Agreements:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO re-visit and revise, where necessary, the 2004 Interlocal Agreement and at a minimum provide an updated date of the most recent review of the Agreement.

Update: The ICAR Agreement was updated and executed on September 4, 2014, and amended on August 19, 2015, to add the School Board as a voting member.

2. **Safety:** The planning regulations call for the transportation planning process to be consistent with Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) [23 CFR 450.306(h)]. While the Federal Review Team commends the Hillsborough County MPO staff for their efforts related to Safety, it was not clear during the site visit review how the staff had integrated concepts included in the SHSP into their planning process. Since the FDOT recently updated this plan in 2012, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO review this plan and continue to coordinate with FDOT to ensure that the goals, objectives and safety plans of the MPO are consistent with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and begin documenting this connection in the next LRTP. The updated plan can be found at the following link: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/SHSP2012/SHSP-2012.shtm>

Update: During the development of the 2040 LRTP and Policy, the MPO considered safety as their number one goal and are aligned and consistent with the FDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The MPO explicitly considered eight focus areas: aggressive driving, intersection crashes, vulnerable road users, lane departure crashes, impaired driving, at-risk drives, distracted driving, traffic data, and developed performance measures for reducing crashes.

3. **Public Participation Plan (PPP):** As with most organizations, much if not all the MPO's documents are available via the website, as well as in paper format at libraries and other public facilities. However, the plan is so extensive that downloading the full document may be time consuming, creating an unintentional barrier to public access. The MPO should consider breaking its electronic PPP into parts so that the public may more quickly access essential information. For example, a dropdown menu would allow the public to choose the body of the PPP, or an appendix such as the MPO's toolbox, strategies or acronyms list. The

MPO may also wish to consider reviewing the plan in an effort to remove redundant or extraneous information.

Update: The PPP & Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) report landing page on the MPO website was redesigned and reformatted to comply with the recommendation on July 13, 2016. The reports are now easily downloadable and divided into sections for interested parties to review the reports.

4. **Tribal Coordination:** The Federal Review Team strongly encourages to MPO staff to work with the FDOT to consider alternative strategies to effectively engage the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The MPO should ensure that tribal coordination outreach is documented and kept as a part of the MPO's documentation diary. This process will prove extremely valuable as the MPO prepares to update the LRTP.

Update: The MPO coordinates with the FDOT District 7 Environmental Administrator and since the last Certification review added one new contact for Seminole Tribe of Florida to the stakeholder database. However, the MPO has not received any feedback from the contact.

5. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Hillsborough MPO annually reviews its Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program documents for sufficiency and to ensure nondiscrimination in its programs, services and activities in compliance with 23 CFR 200.9(b)(5) and (6). The MPO will shortly undertake its review of the program for 2013. As it does so, FHWA recommends that the MPO ensure that its program documents contain:

- a. The name and contact information for the employee designated the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator.
- b. An organization chart that shows direct, dotted line access from the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator to the Executive Director of the MPO.
- c. Consistent use of nondiscrimination language and the protected classes wherever the MPO references nondiscrimination. The MPO may wish to consider developing a standard nondiscrimination statement that contains a link with the full policy and complaint filing procedure. The MPO may then ensure optimum access by placing the language and link on all documents meant for the public.

Update: The MPO website includes name and contact information for the Title VI Specialist/Coordinator. See the attached link below:

<http://www.planhillsborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Hillsborough-MPO-Title-VI-Complaint-Procedure1.pdf>

An organization chart has been updated to reflect the direct line from the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator to the MPO Executive Director, see the attached link below:

https://planhillsborough.sharepoint.com/MPO/_layouts/15/questaccess.aspx?foldid=04b903e824a664d9ba8ebd25934fa43f2&authkey=ATPdP_HrkjVeejL793uAfg6s

The MPO has consistent, correct language and protected classes reference wherever nondiscrimination is referenced. Also, the MPO website includes the contact information on all MPO committee agendas, publications for LRTP, TIP, and UPWP see link below:

<http://www.planhillsborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/MPO-March-2017-AGENDA-Full-Packet.pdf>

- 6. Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Hillsborough MPO uses protected class and underserved community data to ensure Environmental Justice through targeted outreach and public involvement. The MPO also has solid examples of using demographic data as part of prioritizing services and measuring the effectiveness of its activities. Due to unavailability of all the recent census tools, the MPO has not yet completed its Community Impact Assessment. Once in place, the MPO should begin using this information to track or trend possible discrimination and to analyze plans/projects to assess equitable distribution of benefits and avoidance of disproportionate adverse impacts. FTA has already released specific guidance on how to collect, analyze and use demographic data in evaluating service equity, and FHWA will be providing additional information in the coming year. In the meantime, the Review Team urges the MPO to continue its innovative exploration of data in relationship to its work products to identify benefits and burdens, and to ensure nondiscrimination.

Update: The MPO has been expanding their knowledge and expertise with using demographic data as part of prioritizing services and measuring the effectiveness of their activities. The MPO updated agendas, created a webpage that clearly explains their commitment to Non-discrimination and other Requirements and has a direct link for the public to contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination/Coordinator.

- 7. Transportation Improvement Program (Fiscal Constraint):** The Federal Review Team acknowledges that the Hillsborough MPO includes broad language related to fiscal constraint within the financial plan and financial summary sections of the 2012/13-2016/17 TIP. Although these explanations convey an understanding of fiscal constraint, the Federal Review Team recommends additional documentation to support the TIP in displaying fiscal constraint beyond the general statement that the TIP is constrained by year and the MPO adheres to the FDOT Work Program and Capital Improvement Program. For example, through the use of additional text or illustrative tools, such as tables or figures

consistent with MPO statements, the MPO will be transparent to the public on the TIP's fiscal constraint.

Update: FDOT D-7 provides funding to the MPO and from there a summary table was provided to illustrate funding broken down by Federal, State, and Local to reflect how fiscal constraint is made more transparent for the public. http://www.planhillsborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/FINAL-TIP-16-17_Amended_02-08-17.pdf

8. **Transportation Improvement Program:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO include information in the executive summary of the TIP, which details for the public the procedures for revisions, amendments and administrative modifications, actions or adjustments made to the TIP, in accordance with CFR 450.326. The MPO is encouraged to coordinate and align the inclusion of this information with information included in the public participation plan. Providing this information in the executive summary of this planning document ensures that a member of the public is fully aware of the amendment/modification process without having to refer to another document to get the information.

Update: The MPO's TIP webpage has a section devoted to TIP amendments and it includes a link for future meetings of the board and committees, which all provide an opportunity for public comment. The MPO follows the process outlined in the MPO's Public Participation Plan, for revisions, amendments, and administrative modifications. The TIP contains a reference to the PPP and provides a link so that the public can be aware of the specific amendments and modification procedures.

<http://www.planhillsborough.org/transportation-improvement-program-tip/>

Section II. Boundaries and Organization (23 CFR 450.310, 312, 314)

A. Description of Planning Area

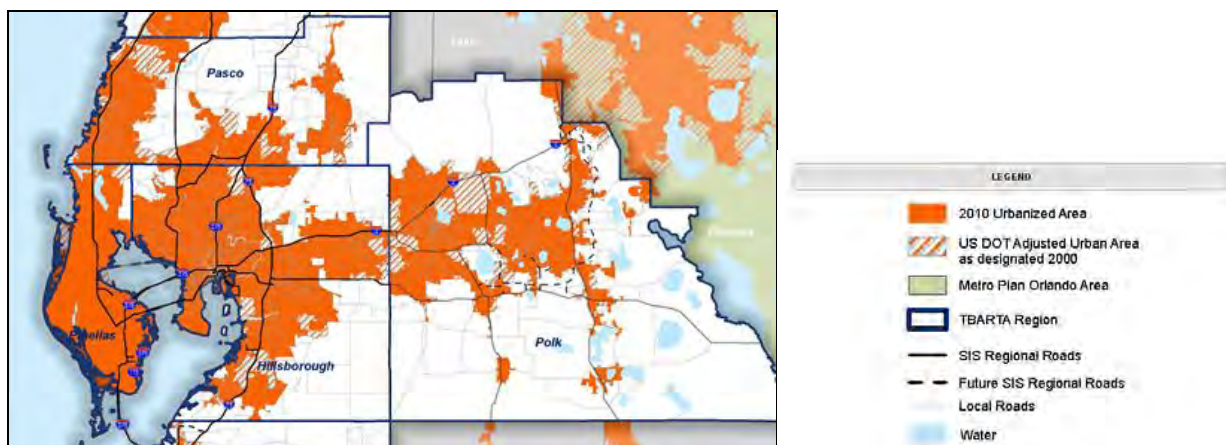
The Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area is the 18th largest metropolitan statistical area in the country, and according to the 2013 census estimate, has increased by 3.1% for a total of over 2.8 million people. Hillsborough County, along with Pinellas and Pasco counties are part of the Tampa Bay TMA.

The Hillsborough MPO transportation planning area includes the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City, as well as the entire Hillsborough County area. The County is bordered by Pinellas County on the west, Manatee County on the south, Polk County on the east, and Pasco County on the north.

Hillsborough MPO's population, according to the results of the 2010 census, is over 1.2 million residents. Between 2010 and 2013 the Hillsborough MPO has grown 5.1%, which is higher than the 4% growth rate for the State of Florida during that period.

Hillsborough County's population increased by nearly 50,000 residents between 2013 and 2016 respectively (from 1,263,050 to 1,311,360), according to the results of the American Community Survey (ACS). Also within the same timeframe, the County's housing stock increased by approximately 30,000 units respectively (from 539,526 to 568,470). The MPO noted that much of the population growth and housing stock increase occurred in the unincorporated county, including the suburban communities of Riverview, FishHawk, and Apollo Beach.

The MPO noted that since the last Cert Review in 2013, the growth rate for Hispanics and/or Latinos has increased more than other ethnic groups. The ACS showed that in 2013, this group accounted for 25.3% of Hillsborough County's total population, and the 2016 numbers showed an increase in the County's Hispanic/Latino population percentage to 26.1%.



B. Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure

The Hillsborough MPO Board is comprised of sixteen voting members, including elected officials appointed from each of the following local governments and representatives from the transportation authorities noted below. Voting members include the City of Tampa (three members), Hillsborough County Commission (five members), City of Plant City (one member), City of Temple Terrace (one member), the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) Authority (one member), Hillsborough County Aviation Authority (HCAA) (one member), Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority (one member), and the Tampa Port Authority (one member). A representative from the Hillsborough City-County Planning Commission and Hillsborough County School Board also serve as voting members. The voting structure of the MPO is one vote per member. Membership from the local governments is based on the proportion of the total population that resides within each jurisdiction.

The overall MPO organization/structure has changed since the last certification review. The Executive Director of the MPO is appointed by the MPO Board. The MPO staff provides day-to-day transportation planning expertise to the MPO and executes the direction of the MPO Board and its advisory committees. The Hillsborough MPO has several standing committees including: the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Committee, Livable Roadways Committee (LRC), Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee, and the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB).

C. Agreements

The MPO's agreements have been reviewed and substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.314 (a).

Section III. Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306)

A. Transportation Planning Factors

23 CFR 450.306 requires that the metropolitan transportation planning process explicitly consider and analyze a number of specific planning factors that reflect sound planning principles. The Hillsborough MPO addresses the required planning factors throughout the planning process and in the development of transportation planning products such as the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP. The planning factors are also incorporated into the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the LRTP.

B. Air Quality

The Hillsborough MPO is currently in an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). However, the MPO seeks out and attends courses related to Air Quality and Climate Change when available, and the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission provides status reports on air quality annually to the board and several committees.

C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Activities

The Hillsborough MPO incorporates bicycle and pedestrian planning in the development of its LRTP through several strategies that include the coordination and collaboration with other planning partners. The Hillsborough MPO, Pasco County MPO, and Forward Pinellas all participate in the new regional Tri-County Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

The MPO has a BPAC that plays an important role in leading the planning for these activities. The BPAC works closely with the community to solicit input for bicycle/pedestrian facilities and includes disabled representation on its committee.

The MPO is updating its Comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans. This effort has a regional focus for adding new trails and side paths, and utilizes data and information from neighboring bicycle/pedestrian plans including: Tampa Walk-Bike Plan, Tampa/Hillsborough County Greenways Plans, and Temple Terrace Multi-modal plan.

The MPO has undertaken an analysis to identify needed connections in bicycle/pedestrian trails and the gaps in those facilities on bridges that cross the Hillsborough River. The MPO is also conducting an evaluation of the existing conditions of bicycle and pedestrian facilities which includes analysis of destinations and origins from the neighborhoods and looking at commercial and other economic locations.

The MPO has completed several bicycle and pedestrian planning studies that have included: pedestrian accessibility to transit, providing safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities, connecting neighborhoods and parks, providing a network of multi-use trail facilities throughout the county, connecting bike and pedestrian planning to complete streets planning, and identifying alternative options for enhancing pedestrian and bicycle travel.

The MPO planning process also analyzes bicycle/pedestrian investment projects in relationship to the performance measures in the LRTP. One performance measure is to reduce crashes and vulnerability with the criteria being the project's effect on total fatal and bicycle/pedestrian crashes.

In 2016, Hillsborough County received a grant from Aetna and the American Public Health Association to assist neighborhoods in Tampa in "food desert" areas with access to affordable food nutrition through walking and bicycling.

D. Transit

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) is the primary provider of transit service in Hillsborough County. HART operates 162 fixed route buses; 36 ADA para-transit vehicles and three streetcars. According to the National Transit Database (2014), HART provides over 15.4 million transit trips per year (all modes) and reports its weekday ridership at approximately 51,644; with 27,495 on Saturdays, and 16,983 on Sundays. Hillsborough County is also served with express routes from the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and with the van pool and commuter assistance program from the Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA).

HART serves on the Hillsborough MPO board and several MPO subcommittees (Citizen Advisory, Technical Advisory, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Transportation Disadvantaged, and Livable Roadways). HART is closely involved in the MPO planning process with the review of the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP through the various subcommittees. There are also members of the MPO board that serve on the HART board. The above working relationships have established a high level of cooperation between HART and the MPO in the transportation planning process for the metropolitan area.

It is a common practice for HART and the MPO to coordinate on various major planning studies. A few of the studies include: Tampa Bay Express, Transit Assets and Opportunities (a study of expanding commuter use of Tampa's streetcar and freight rail corridors), South Shore transit circulator, Tampa Innovation District, Northwest County bus service review, and a Maintenance Facility Feasibility Study. The MPO also coordinated with HART in conducting the 2014 onboard ridership survey and participated in the transit feasibility study. During the public meeting, comments were received about area transit operations, including ridership, bus schedules, shuttle buses, phone apps, and ridership studies. The comments are included in the report at Appendix H. FTA suggests that this issue be addressed via the local collaborative planning process.

The MAP-21/FAST Act established the requirement for a performance management approach to the transportation planning process. Towards this effort, HART has collaborated with the MPO in the development and sharing of performance data. For example, HART provides data to the MPO on its routes regarding level of service and location that feeds into the analysis of performance measures in the LRTP.

The MPO is the sub-recipient of FTA Section 5305(d) Statewide and Metropolitan Planning program funding awarded and passed through from FDOT. The FTA Apportionment for Section 5307 Urbanized Area formula funds is to the Tampa-St. Petersburg UZA, which includes HART, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), Pasco County Public Transit (PCPT) and the Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA). HART, PSTA and PCPT are all FTA designated recipients. There is a split agreement in place that is applied to the UZA Apportionment to divide the funding between each transit agency. The split agreement is provided to FTA annually. After the funds are divided, each transit agency submits an application to FTA for the Section 5307 funds. Since 2013, TBARTA is also included in the annual split of 5307 funds as a Direct Recipient. Transit funding is also provided to HART by FDOT. HART staff and the Hillsborough MPO staff collaborate to establish project funding priorities.

E. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

The Hillsborough MPO has an ITS Committee that acts as a forum to discuss operations and maintenance issues and to review performance measures. The committee meets quarterly to discuss ITS issues and provides the opportunity to exchange information on new ITS projects. Examples of items discussed from a recent meeting were varied and detailed, including subjects such as autonomous transit and a crash mapping tool. The meetings are well attended and fully documented on the Hillsborough MPO's website: (http://www.planhillsborough.org/calendar/action~agenda/tag_ids~664/).

The ITS committee also evaluates funding project requests through the MPO's TIP process.

The ITS Master Plan was updated in 2013 just after the completion of the last TMA certification review. While the plan was developed and approved some time ago, it is constantly referred to, and the projects related to its implementation are continuously updated and implemented. The plan is a comprehensive document identifying the most congested areas in the county and appropriate actions that can be taken to assist in alleviating congestion through ITS methods and technologies. The regional architecture is fundamental to all the strategies, needs, and projects identified in the ITS Master Plan. In addition to coordination of the ITS Master Plan, the MPO's focus has continued extensively on coordinating the planning process with other implementing agencies including FDOT, the local governments, law enforcement agencies, HART and other partners. The MPO makes sure that investments are reflected accurately in the ITS Master Plan, as the metropolitan system continues to be developed by multiple partners; and that strategies and projects that are identified as next steps in the ITS Master Plan are well coordinated with the implementers' individual ITS or Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) plans. All of these investments are consistent with the regional architecture.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to ITS. For more details about this item, please see Section X.

F. Freight Planning

The Hillsborough MPO area is a major hub of freight movement in both exports and imports in Central Florida. The FHWA's Freight Analysis Framework indicates that the total domestic freight on highways of the Tampa Bay Region will increase from 295 million tons in 2011 to nearly 496 million tons in 2040, and that 97% of all freight moved within the region will be moved by truck. Hillsborough County has 12 large manufacturing base and distribution areas. Also, these facilities are the second largest contributor to freight in the Tampa Bay Region, with moving cargo into and out of the central Tampa and the Port by CSX Transportation railroad. By 2040 it is projected that nearly 24 million truck trips will move through the Tampa Bay area along the highways annually, including the robust rail network of CSX.

The 2040 LRTP contains a specific goal to promote freight movement, and multimodal freight needs and considerations are interwoven throughout the goals for improving system continuity and connectivity, increasing safety for the system users and promoting multi-modal solutions. The LRTP identified the freight activity centers, corridors, and distribution routes within the MPO area. The LRTP also used the results of an analysis – which identified freight flows, the routes various freight providers used, and freight concerns and potential improvements – in the development of the Cost Feasible Plan.

G. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

The MPO's 2040 LRTP contains a safety goal that includes increasing the security of the transportation system for all users. This security element also incorporates the goals from local transit provider safety and security planning review processes, plans and programs. Security considerations were used in the development of the 2040 LRTP, and a UPWP task was identified that included the testing and evaluation of the MPO's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). A COOP plan is in place for both the MPO and Planning Commission, and was tested on September 1, 2016, due to Tropical Storm Hermine. The MPO's COOP is consistent with the Hillsborough County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The Imagine 2040 Plan also includes a security performance measure that ties funding levels to different levels of resilience to storm surge and flooding.

H. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

Safety is Goal 1 in the 2040 LRTP and is consistent with the Florida Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). In assessing needs for the 2040 LRTP, the MPO explicitly considered the SHSP's eight (8) focus areas (aggressive driving, intersection crashes, vulnerable road users, lane departure crashes, impaired driving, at-risk drivers, distracted driving, and traffic safety). The staff works closely with many transportation providers, agencies, professionals, businesses and citizens to ensure that the goals, objectives and safety plans of the MPO are consistent with the FDOT's SHSP and are documented in the 2040 LRTP. The MPO is also an active member of FDOT District 7's Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST). Since the last Federal TMA Certification, the MPO has focused on creating safety-related improvements using safety studies and short ranged, funded, and implementable transit and highway projects. The MPO's IMAGINE 2040 LRTP explicitly addresses goals to improve safety and security for all users in relation to transportation (biking, walking, transit, auto and freight).

The MPO also went a step further and created an investment program in the 2040 Plan to address these safety problems, with a goal of reducing crashes on all roads by 20-50% by 2040. The Imagine 2040 LRTP Plan will focus on programs to address safety that will implement three levels of funding. The first level proposes to spend over \$498 million by 2040 and anticipates reducing crashes by 9%, fatal crashes by 9.7%, and bicycle & pedestrian crashes by 136 crashes per year.

The second level intends to spend over \$919 million by 2040 and reduce total crashes by 20%, fatal crashes by 20%, and reduce bicycle and pedestrian crashes by 294 crashes per year. The third investment level proposes to spend over \$2.2 billion by 2040 and is anticipated to reduce total crashes by 50.8%, fatal crashes by 50.7%, and reduce bicycle and pedestrian crashes by 704 crashes per year.

The MPO also has a Project Level 2 ½ that will address (450 miles) of complete street treatment and (300 miles) of new sidewalks that are projected to lower the total number of crashes and fatal crashes by over 20% by investing approximately \$1.3 billion by 2040. The MPO considers safety as a top priority and the development of the Vision Zero Plan (2016-2017) will aid in increasing the safety of the transportation system for all users.

The MPO is heavily involved in Safety, and Safety is a key component of their transportation planning process. Hillsborough is currently working to develop a Vision Zero Plan. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. (<http://visionzeronetwork.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>)

The action plan for Hillsborough involved a lot of brainstorming, and the MPO Board's Policy Committee members have hosted and championed the meetings of the Vision Zero Coalition. There are four action items for the vision zero process: Paint saves lives; One message, many voices; Consistent and fair; and the Future will not be like the past. Four workshops were held to raise community awareness and to gain input on the action plan. The MPO has participated as a member of the Vision Zero Network, where MPOs across the nation who are seeking to develop or implement action plans can discuss their efforts, challenges, and opportunities to create vision zero plans. A Facebook page has been created to get local citizens attention and involvement, and a speaker's bureau is currently underway. There has also been local media involvement, including the broadcasting of victim's and family's stories. A Vision Zero goal resolution was adopted by the Tampa City Council, Hillsborough Commission, Temple Terrace City Council, Plant City Commission, and by the School Board of Hillsborough County.

One of the goals that the MPO is looking at achieving for the 2040 Imagine LRTP is safety and making the region safer for bicyclist and pedestrians. The state of Florida and the Tampa Bay area lead the nation in bicycle and pedestrian fatalities. Several plans the MPO has created address bicycle and pedestrian safety. The Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, the 2025 Hillsborough MPO Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan and the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan all discuss safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice pertaining to Safety in the transportation planning process. For more details about this item, please see Section X.

Section IV. Unified Planning Work Program (23 CFR 450.308)

The Hillsborough MPO adopted their most recent UPWP in May 2016. The Hillsborough MPO FY 2016/17 – 2017/18 UPWP covers transportation planning activities/products for two fiscal years and contains sufficient description of the costs and activities the MPO plans to complete. All eligible staff and contractual charges are compiled in quarterly grant invoices. Any invoice must be approved by an MPO project manager and his/her supervisor prior to payment to the consultant or vendor. Invoices are accompanied by quarterly grant reports to document staff activities and progress towards completion of end products listed in the UPWP.

Since staff is shared between the MPO and Planning Commission, it is important to ensure time is allotted and charged to the proper entity. The Planning Commission, the MPO's sponsoring agency, uses timekeeping software to track staff time charged to various UPWP tasks and grant-funded deliverables, as well as hours charged against non-MPO work. Staff charges are monitored continuously to ensure they are within authorized budget limits.

A two-year UPWP and budget is developed based on available federal and State funds. In addition to budget summary tables of all major UPWP tasks, each task also has an estimated budget detail table by fiscal year that breaks down personnel services, consultant services, travel, direct expenses, and the indirect rate. The MPO utilizes an indirect cost rate that FDOT approves and is updated annually. Indirect costs are charged to federal grants consistent with the indirect cost rate allocation plan included in the UPWP.

HART staff works closely with the MPO staff to identify transit needs, priorities and candidate projects, as well as planning studies for inclusion in the UPWP. The MPO also coordinates with local agencies, FDOT, and representatives of the Port Tampa Bay and the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority to ascertain planning projects that address specific community needs for consideration in the UPWP.

Hillsborough MPO also collaborates with neighboring MPOs to identify and develop regional tasks for the UPWP. This coordination supports consistent reporting in the respective MPO UPWPs to ensure that regional coordination continues to occur. Each MPO or TPO dedicates a portion of their UPWP budget to support the regional tasks. Under the interlocal agreement, a lead MPO for any regional task may be designated by the group to financially administer contracts using the funds approved by the other MPOs in their UPWPs for this work.

As part of this certification, the Federal Review Team conducted a financial review of the Hillsborough MPO. The primary objective of this financial review was to establish the level of reliability, effectiveness, and compliance with Federal requirements that can be placed on the MPO's internal controls in order to review, analyze, and submit reimbursement for federal funds. Primary emphasis was placed on determining the

adequacy and completeness of management internal controls, documentation, and standard operating procedures.

The Hillsborough MPO has written policies and procedures in place for managing financial and accounting activities. Their operating policy for Grants Management outlines internal controls for compliance with regard to both State and Federal funding. The Financial Manager is responsible overall for the monitoring of fiscal compliance with grant requirements that establishes accountability. Each year the grant accounts are audited by an independent firm that also audits Hillsborough County.

The operating procedures include an entire section that addresses the process of managing contracts and purchasing. The guidelines in this document appear to provide for sufficient internal controls for financial management.

The Hillsborough MPO also provided evidence of their participation in a timekeeping system referred to as “Dovico” and “Kronos”. Dovico is a system that tracks weekly staff hours to work program tasks and time off. Kronos is another time keeping system used to track and manage timecards, requests for leave, and payroll. These systematic approaches to timekeeping and payroll provide for adequate accountability and approvals.

The results of the financial review disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other findings that are required to be reported under FHWA standards or policies. Furthermore, the Federal Review Team has reasonable assurance that Hillsborough MPO’s financial processes and internal controls are compliant with applicable laws, regulations, policies and agreements to ensure general financial integrity.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice pertaining to the UPWP. For more details about this item, please see Section X.

Section V. Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316)

A. Outreach and Public Participation

Already extensive, Hillsborough MPO has nonetheless significantly expanded its Public Involvement since the last federal certification. Outreach is creative, diverse and targeted. Moreover, each project, study or plan uses multiple public involvement strategies designed to best engage partners, stakeholders and the public. Among many examples of its involvement, the MPO’s use of social media has grown, now reaching thousands of users. Like other larger MPOs, Hillsborough has a dedicated social media staff member who touts Twitter and similar products as a ‘fun form of art’ that cross-supports other agencies, serves as a real-time news feed and provides a platform for public input that is transparent and often thought provoking.

The MPO maintains a list of all questions and comments, and each receives a response from the staff member responsible for the applicable program or plan. Among other electronic outreach efforts, the MPO produces e-newsletters specific to transportation and related issues that are distributed to a Constant Contact list of over 7000 recipients, as well as more general posting via the web. The distribution list has grown significantly in the past few years, almost doubling since the last certification. The MPO has further advanced the use of electronic and real time polling, particularly for controversial projects where opposition voices can quell those of others in public meetings. Not only do these polls provide faster and more varied responses, participation is much higher than via traditional outreach methods, due to both the ease of participation and to innovative MPO marketing, such as placing poll links inside fortune cookies for distribution at community events. While Hillsborough sees value in expanding electronic participation, it has not lost sight of the need for traditional involvement methods. Print media sources include the daily free newspaper, as well as Spanish language and minority focused papers. The MPO also relies on the county's extensive services and facilities to distribute information in public buildings and via mail using property tax rolls.

Responding to a certification recommendation about the size and complexity of its Public Participation Plan (PPP), the MPO divided the document into logical segments, each with a dedicated link. The MPO also regularly updates the Plan and the resulting measures of effectiveness report, most recently in 2016. Nevertheless, the MPO does not appear to rely on the PPP as a master document, but rather a policy document that must be updated to fit an ever-growing program. The PPP is among the plans easily located on the MPO's webpage, but is obviously not where the MPO expects the public to go to 'be involved', which has a separate and dedicated tab. All of these efforts could and probably should lead the MPO to eventually reexamine the PPP, ensuring that it meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316 but eliminating extraneous language that serves no practical purpose in guiding public involvement.

The MPO ensures participation of minority and low income populations by partnering with health care and social other committees, and holding or attending outreach events in targeted communities. As with all MPOs, Hillsborough struggles with demographic representation on its advisory committees. To address this problem, the MPO took the firm step of setting aside seats on its Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), for representatives of minority and other traditionally underserved communities. Affirmative measures like this can be unpopular with governing boards, and the Review Team applauds the MPO for its proactivity. Public involvement by committee is only as effective as it is representative of the population.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice and offers two recommendations related to outreach and public participation. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

B. Tribal Coordination

Since the last Certification Review, the Environmental Administrator from FDOT District 7 identified one additional contact for the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The MPO has a long-established practice of sending information regarding LRTP and TIP amendments and updates directly to the Seminole Tribe. However, the MPO has not had any response thus far. The MPO acknowledges that Tribal coordination is an area they hope to strengthen. The Federal Review Team encourages staff to continue to seek feedback from the Tribe regarding the transportation planning process and to document all public outreach efforts.

C. Title VI and Related Requirements

The Hillsborough MPO continues to make meaningful nondiscrimination efforts in the development and implementation of planning products and other services. Noted in the last certification report, the MPO has advanced its partnership with health services agencies, both as part of better integrating transportation and land use planning, and also in ensuring that planning products meet the needs of vulnerable communities. Three notable examples are the MPO's George Road Health Impact study, researching the impacts of transportation on air quality and preexisting health conditions in a predominantly Hispanic area; Garden Steps, a competitive grant for connecting green spaces in an effort to improve health transportation choices; and Food Access, a project in cooperation with the University of South Florida (USF) to address a "food desert" in the University Area of Tampa. While other planning organizations are just beginning to appreciate the myriad benefits and burdens of health and transportation, Hillsborough MPO has a solid lead in exploring available funding and building the necessary partnerships.

The MPO has taken further steps to include both school representation and the millennial voice in transportation planning. What began as an inquiry about school transportation and planning from a high school student has resulted in the School Transportation Working Group, an advisory group that has voting representation on the MPO board and represents the needs specific to the eighth largest school district in the country. The Working Group has been successful in advancing several initiatives that benefit school age users, including a safety video contest for students; selection of three Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS) projects in areas with higher crash vulnerability; a teen safety driving program (associated with a general downward trend in crashes among 15 to 19 year old drivers); and exceptional implementation of the Getting to School Survey, prompted by a reduction of non-qualifying bus services impacting 7500 students. The MPO's efforts are not only introducing an entirely new group of users to transportation planning, but also producing measurable benefits for an often overlooked cross section of system users. Better still, the high school student that prompted it all has remained an active participant, and is now in college and serving on the CAC.

The MPO is increasingly a repository for vast amounts of community characteristics data, so copious that its use may present a challenge. One strategy the MPO has for using data is to verify that projects meet one of two critical categories: Safety and Access. Either the project will reduce crashes and save lives, or it will provide a real transportation choice for the community, such as gaining access to economic, health, retail or social services. Another common use of data is in layering demographics over lane miles, bus route miles, distances from transit and other similar mapping in the LRTP. Of course, project selection is only one aspect of transportation equity. Projects and activities must also be screened to ensure equitable distribution of project impacts, both positive and negative. To do so, the MPO is developing a Title VI Inclusivity Plan that will further define the area's communities of concern and assist with project selection and evaluation.

Since the last certification, the MPO has taken strong steps in furthering pedestrian and bike accessibility. Partnering with the City-County Planning Commission, the MPO's Health in All Policies initiative inventories sidewalks and other facilities to evaluate access to healthy food. It uses a geospatial tool called SUGAR Access that evaluates demographics in relation to essential services such as groceries or medical facilities. This approach helps prioritize pedestrian improvements, one of the essential elements of ADA Transition Planning. In addition, the MPO has reviewed its roadways countywide for level of pedestrian services. These are important efforts in that under 28 CFR 35.105, all public entities, including MPOs, are required to conduct a self-evaluation of programs and services for accessibility and where deficiencies are discovered, make necessary modifications for compliance. Although transition planning requirements under 28 CFR 35.150(d)(3) apply to those entities with control over pedestrian rights of way, MPOs share a common minimum obligation; to ensure that all planning products include accessibility considerations and to involve the community with disabilities and their service representatives in the planning process.

The MPO has a Title VI/Nondiscrimination and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan that was ostensibly reviewed during the last PPP update. While the MPO outlines some laudable nondiscrimination program goals, namely strengthening the connection between transportation and community health; expanding information resources and analysis techniques; and community cooperation in providing multimodal access to essential services, the Federal Review Team found some outdated and inconsistent nondiscrimination language. Further, the LEP Plan uses older demographic information and references the former Title VI Coordinator. Moreover, it discusses the LEP 'safe harbor' in a manner that suggests adoption by the MPO, though the only identified language is Spanish. To take advantage of the safe harbor affirmative defense, the MPO will have to translate all essential documents to any LEP language when the population reaches 1000 persons or 5%, whichever is less. This could be an expensive and even wasteful proposition when the MPO might meet the requirements through targeted programs and services. That said, the MPO provides its nondiscrimination information in hard copy at the MPO offices and via omnipresent links at the bottom of each webpage.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation related to Title VI and related requirements. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section VI. Linking Planning and Environment (23CFR 450.318)

MPO staff has been supporting the FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process by providing comments from both staff and citizens regarding projects going through the ETDM process. The MPO staff has been responsible for defining a project's Purpose and Need as part of the LRTP development. In addition, the ETDM process was used to evaluate each of the projects within the LRTP.

The MPO consulted with state and local agencies/governments during the development of the LRTP. Each of the seven geographic FDOT Districts has an Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) that provided the MPO with input regarding projects' potential effects on natural, cultural, physical, and community resources. During the Needs Assessment process, this information was used to conduct an evaluation of the potential impacts to wildlife, habitat, and wetlands, as well as an evaluation of the potential cost of environmental mitigation for each facility in the needs network.

According to the MPO's LRTP, as projects move beyond the planning stage, specific environmental mitigation plans will be developed. Options typically include potential use of mitigation banking or on-site mitigation to restore, create, enhance and/or preserve the natural environment.

Section VII. Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.322)

Hillsborough MPO adopted the Imagine 2040 LRTP on November 12, 2014. The LRTP 2040 Hillsborough MPO Plan was updated with the Comprehensive Plans of Hillsborough County, and the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City. These plans were jointly developed by Hillsborough MPO staff, Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, local planning agencies and municipalities. The Imagine 2040 Plan is guided by goals, objectives, and policies in addition to collaboration with previous transportation plans and studies on a regional, state and local level that have been incorporated into the Plan. Prior to Imagine 2040, the MPO hosted workshops with questions to obtain input from the public about important measures, projects, modes of transportation and sustainability in transportation for the Hillsborough MPO area.

In the Imagine 2040 LRTP, the MPO has addressed the national goals as well as the Planning Factors from MAP-21. These principles of sustainable communities integrate transportation and land use planning by defining policies to make cities sustainable and accessible for citizens of all ages, economic income levels, and physical conditions. Also, see the bike/pedestrian section of the MPO planning process and how it relates to investment projects in relationship to the performance measures in the LRTP. The MPO coordinates with HART on updates to the Transit Development Plan, TBARTA on the regional transportation master plan, and the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority and

Tampa Port Authority on updates to their master plans. The MPO's Imagine 2040 LRTP contains a specific goal to promote freight movement, and multimodal freight needs and considerations are interwoven throughout the goals for improving system continuity and connectivity, increasing safety for the system users and promoting multi-modal solutions.

Projects identified as needed or cost-feasible through the MPO's partner agencies' planning processes are included in the LRTP development for the purposes of technical analysis as well as public information and engagement. The LRTP is available on the MPO website and in the MPO office. Hard copies are available to the public upon request.

The Imagine 2040 Plan has been noted as a national best practice by FHWA for being developed using the principles of performance based planning through scenario planning. The plan has documented the performance of each growth scenario and measures the outcome. The MPO made a creative effort to develop the potential growth scenarios. While creating the Imagine 2040 Plan, the MPO sought out groups of area residents, students, business and civic leaders, retirees, and various professionals to assist them in the LRTP's development. Three interactive workshops were held where citizens could provide their input. The work group and the MPO agreed that Bustling Metro, New Corporate Centers and Suburban Dream would be the growth scenarios the MPO would analyze for plan development. To get an idea of some of the performance measures that were developed from those scenarios, the MPO chose twelve performance measures for their plan development, including efficient energy use; job creation; shorter commutes and air pollution rate.

Transit performance measures have also been developed for the LRTP and have been developed for each investment level. The investment levels are high, medium and low. There are currently three performance measures dedicated to transit for the LRTP. Transit data from HART played a major role in performance measure development.

The MPO has a State of the System report which performs as an update to the Congestion Management and Crash Mitigation Process. The report identifies goals related to the condition of the transportation network and develops objective performance measures to establish benchmarks and track trends. The report also has a robust discussion on targets. The State of the System report is the MPO's first attempt at trying to meet the future performance measure requirements. The MPO has ensured that the federal performance measures in the report are linked to the performance measures and other elements within the LRTP. There is also a discussion on Vision Zero, which is outlined further in the safety section of this report. The State of the System report for 2016 can be obtained from the MPO's website.

Projects identified as needed or cost-feasible through the MPO's partner agencies' planning processes are included in the LRTP development for the purposes of technical analysis as well as public information and engagement. The LRTP is available on the

MPO website and in the MPO office. Hard copies are available to the public upon request.

The 2040 LRTP is data-driven and multimodal. The Hillsborough MPO provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate how each planning factor is being considered in the LRTP, and the goals and objectives of the LRTP are consistent with local comprehensive plans and the Federal planning requirements.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice pertaining to the LRTP. For more details about this item, please see Section X.

A. Travel Demand Modeling/Data

The model used by the Hillsborough MPO in the transportation planning process is the District Seven Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM), which was developed in coordination with the other regional partners through the Technical Review Team (TRT) process. There is no formal agreement governing the TRT but decisions are made in consensus with the partners. The MPOs are responsible for travel forecasting, however FDOT operates the model on behalf of the Florida MPOs.

During the LRTP development and process, the MPO staff had direct and frequent contact with FDOT and the modeling consultant. The MPO staff participates in the District 7 Model coordination, and Technical Review Team meets monthly to ensure the consistency of model applications, model refinements, and future coordination among all participants' meetings to receive the latest technical requirements for LRTP Development. The Members of MPO's Forecasting and Multi-Modal Level of Service (MMLOS) Team are responsible for providing and reviewing both inputs/outputs to the regional travel model as well as in-county model runs and analysis.

B. Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint

The Financial Plan section of the LRTP includes detailed analyses of the availability of funding from Federal, State, and County sources. The 2040 Forecast of State and Federal Revenues for Statewide and Metropolitan Plans provided the state and federal allocations attributable to Hillsborough County. The traditional revenue sources and forecasted revenues anticipated for Hillsborough County were evaluated and assessed to develop the projected revenues through the year 2040. Consistent with Federal requirements, revenues are shown in Year of Expenditure (YOE) dollars to reflect inflation. The FDOT Costing Tool was the primary source for development of the roadway project cost estimates. The current Hillsborough MPO 2040 LRTP is fiscally constrained.

Section VIII. Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.320)

The Congestion Management and Crash Mitigation Process (CM/CMP) goals, objectives and performance measures for the MPO were reviewed in 2016. A few performance measures were added to better measure progress and address the worst congestion and crash areas. MPO staff will be tracking these new measures on an on-going basis, along with the previous measures that they have been tracking for years. The CM/CMP is reviewed approximately every three years or at least with every LRTP update cycle. The MPO last updated the report in March 2016.

When the MPO last updated the CM/CMP performance report (2012), the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members were asked to serve on the steering committee. Invitations were also sent to law enforcement, the trucking industry, and others not represented on the TAC. The first hour of the TAC's regular meeting was set aside as a special workshop to review the CM/CMP goals, performance measures, and strategies. This group's input and support will continue to be crucial in implementing the recommendations.

The MPO's congestion management techniques focus on reducing the impact on congested corridors by recommending the use of technology, as well as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and multi-modal strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the corridor of the transportation network's ability to carry people and goods. The MPO supports the reduction of congestion by consistently supporting transit with an emphasis on vanpool (and carpool programs). Hillsborough MPO continues to be one of the few MPOs to allocate flexible funds to acquire transit and vanpool vehicles.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice to the Congestion Management Process. For more details about this practice, please see Section X.

Section IX. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326, 328, 330, 332)

The Hillsborough MPO TIP serves as a five-year financially feasible program of improvements for all modes of travel within Hillsborough County, including sidewalks, transit improvements, bicycle facilities, and transportation enhancement activities to be funded by Title 23 USC and the Federal Transit Act.

The MPO coordinates closely with FDOT, HART, local jurisdictions and transportation authorities in preparing the TIP. FDOT develops project costs for each project, which are balanced against the budget of available revenues, then programs the selected federally and state funded projects via the Work Program. The MPO and HART also work closely with FDOT to identify, evaluate, prioritize and fund critical transit needs. Major projects from local jurisdictions and transportation authorities' capital improvement programs are also included in the TIP.

Projects listed in the TIP are derived from a number of planning documents: the LRTP, local capital improvement elements/programs in local comprehensive plans, modal plans such as the Transit Development Plan, Congestion Management System Corridor Reports, and Bicycle, Pedestrian, Airport or Port Master Plans. The TIP also encompasses projects privately funded pursuant to development agreements.

The TIP demonstrates financial constraint by including a table summarizing the funding by Federal, State, and Local sources. This table sums all sources and compares them with the total cost of all projects in the FDOT work program. The balanced total costs and revenues are shown year by year on the bottom of Table 3 of the TIP.

The MPO utilizes an interactive Planning Information Map App Tool (PIMA) that is available to the public on the MPO's website. PIMA can be used to search county and city maps, and currently has transportation, environmental, and land use data layers use to explore. A traffic count layer is also being developed. The tool enables users to search the maps, TIP, and plan amendments for information by project number, description, address or parcel.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team recognizes two noteworthy practices and offers one recommendation pertaining to the Transportation Improvement Program. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section X. Findings/Conclusions

The following items represent a compilation of the findings that are included in this 2017 certification review report. These findings, which are identified as noteworthy practices, corrective actions, and recommendations, are intended to not only ensure continuing regulatory compliance of the Hillsborough MPO transportation planning process with federal planning requirements, but to also foster high-quality planning practices and improve the transportation planning program in this TMA. Corrective Actions reflect required actions for compliance with the Federal Planning Regulations and must be completed within the timeframes noted. Recommendations reflect national trends and best practices, and are intended to provide assistance to the MPO to improve the planning process. Noteworthy Practices highlight efforts that demonstrate innovative ideas for implementing the planning requirements.

At the conclusion of the Federal Review site visit, the Federal Review Team asked the MPO staff if they had any training or technical assistance needs. The Hillsborough MPO identified technical assistance requests for topical areas including ACV technology, public involvement, and express toll lanes reliability. FHWA and FTA will work with the MPO to provide resources in these areas.

A. Noteworthy Practices

- 1. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process:** The MPO's goal to create a Vision Zero plan for the region is commended. The MPO has diligently been working with stakeholders and the public to develop this plan. They have also looked towards social media to give the public updates on the plan's development.
- 2. Unified Planning Work Program:** The Hillsborough MPO UPWP highlights some unique activities for the MPO, such as the newly developed planning internship program in coordination with the University of South Florida (USF), which provides a few summer (undergraduate, based on project needs) and annual (one and two year graduate students) fellowship opportunities for students to obtain real world planning experience. An emphasis on planning from a health perspective is also evident with the Healthy Communities initiative and the development of a Health Impact Assessment, Hillsborough MPO Community Atlas Health and Transportation section, and research on health outcomes related to the implementation of complete streets plans.
- 3. Outreach and Public Participation:** The Federal Review Team was impressed with the MPO's actions in reserving committee seats for those in underrepresented demographics. This can be a difficult step for government entities, but a necessary affirmative measure in ensuring nondiscrimination and inclusion. The MPO's process may provide solutions to other agencies that struggle to reach parity in public involvement.
- 4. Long Range Transportation Plan:** The MPO developed a performance based scenario planning process for their 2040 Imagine LRTP with lots of public involvement and participation. The creation of growth scenarios and performance measures coming out of those scenarios are not only recognized by the Federal Review Team as a proactive, excellent example of effective performance based planning for the metropolitan planning process, but have also been recognized nationally by FHWA.
- 5. Congestion Management Process:** With FHWA's and FTA's added emphasis on performance measures, we commend the Hillsborough MPO for embracing them as a method to measure the effectiveness of CM/CMP. The use of these measures to track efforts to utilize low cost system enhancements is a best practice in both the congestion and safety disciplines. The MPO has noted that a relatively few trouble spots are causing a majority of the crash and congestion issues, and addressing those areas is a most efficient use of scarce resources.
- 6. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** The MPO is commended for the development and use of a Planning Information Map App (PIMA), a TIP mapping tool the public can use to search and access information related to the various project data layers available as well as the TIP and TIP amendments. This tool is

user-friendly, promoting and supporting transparency and open, easy access to information.

- 7. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** In coordination with the Florida Department of Health (DOH), the MPO has created a subject matter expert group consisting of representatives from DOH, the MPO, the University of South Florida, and Hillsborough MPO Aging Services to further the consideration of health impacts in relation to transportation planning and decision making. This group is currently developing a screening tool to examine TIP priority projects and make recommendations for their inclusion into the upcoming TIP. This approach is new to the planning process for the MPOs in Florida.
- 8. TMA Regional Coordination:** The Federal Review Team commends the Tampa Bay TMA MPOs and their regional transportation partners for their many regional coordination efforts. The consensus of the Federal Review Team and the participants of the certification review site visits is that regional coordination for this area is very strong. Although not currently a requirement in federal law, coordinating regionally with their nearby transportation partners is advantageous for highly populated and congested areas such as the Tampa Bay TMA to identify economies of scale and opportunities to leverage resources and efforts to advance mutual transportation goals and objectives. As this area continues to grow, robust regional coordination will be critical to further developing and maintaining the interconnectedness of the transportation system for residents living in the Tampa Bay TMA and surrounding counties.

B. Corrective Actions

There were no corrective actions identified in this review.

C. Recommendations

- 1. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS):** ITS creates various data streams that can be leveraged in the Planning Process. The MPO is very involved in the region's ITS programs, but makes no mention of how ITS data can be collected and distributed to further enhance its travel monitoring, safety and other programs, and supplement traditional data collection methods that reflects real or near real time information. We understand that the MPO is working with a consultant to create a Data Business Plan for collecting, sharing, and analyzing real-time traffic data between multiple agency partners and has created a Regional Data Working Group due to interest in this topic. The Federal Review Team recommends that the Hillsborough MPO continue to consider and pursue the creation of a program to leverage ITS data to further enhance its data programs.

- 2. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS):** ITS creates various data streams that can be leveraged in the Planning Process. The MPO is very involved in the region's ITS programs, but makes no mention of how ITS data can be collected and distributed to further enhance its travel monitoring, safety and other programs, and supplement traditional data collection methods that reflects real or near real time information. We understand that the MPO is working with a consultant to create a Data Business Plan for collecting, sharing, and analyzing real-time traffic data between multiple agency partners and has created a Regional Data Working Group due to interest in this topic. The Federal Review Team recommends that the Hillsborough MPO continue to consider and pursue the creation of a program to leverage ITS data to further enhance its data programs.
- 3. Outreach and Public Participation:** The Federal Review Team observed that the MPO appears to use the terms "public meeting" and "public hearing" interchangeably. From a federal perspective, these terms are very different. A public hearing must meet specific and more stringent requirements spelled out in law that may not apply to a public meeting. Federal law does not require the conducting of public hearings for planning activities. However, state law may dictate otherwise. Therefore, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO review and evaluate their processes and procedures to determine if a public hearing or public meeting is required/appropriate and revise language in their planning documents to reflect the interaction accordingly.
- 4. Public Participation Plan (PPP):** A large and comprehensive document, the MPO's PPP appears to meet regulatory requirements, and it is regularly updated and evaluated for effectiveness. There is discussion in the TIP that refers to the PPP for the TIP amendment process. We recommend that a link to the PPP also be provided in the TIP and the same cross reference format be considered in other MPO documents where appropriate. However, the Federal Review Team suggests the following:

 - a. Consider providing the copious planning acronym list in a searchable format. A tool whereby the public can enter an acronym and receive a definition and summary information would be a value-added benefit to the website instead of a long list appended to the PPP.
 - b. The MPO should make sure to include Title VI and LEP, two planning essentials that are conspicuously missing from the MPO's comprehensive acronym list.
 - c. The MPO should include a distinct section on how the PPP was developed in consultation with all parties. This description is not limited to just review and commentary, but the MPO should document and describe the process by which the public, MPO partners and stakeholders helped to develop the PPP.

5. Title VI and Related Requirements:

- a. FHWA and FDOT have updated the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Sub-recipient Assurance which includes expanded contract clauses that the MPO must insert and require its contractors to insert into all of contract instruments. Moreover, for consultant contracts, the MPO must also ensure that contracts include DBE Assurance Language. The MPO should carefully review its procurement and contract documents, verifying that the correct nondiscrimination information is present and up to date.
- b. The MPO should update its Title VI/Nondiscrimination and LEP plan, ensuring the use of the most recent available demographics; identification of the correct Title VI Program Coordinator; and that its LEP plan lists reasonable steps for meaningful access. After doing so, the MPO can either continue reviewing and updating the program plan in conjunction with its PPP, or else do so triennially.
- c. In previous years, FHWA required annual review and update of recipient and sub-recipient nondiscrimination documents. FHWA is now aligned with FTA in permitting TMAs to complete these updates every three years. The MPO should undertake a program review this year to update nondiscrimination information and correct any errors or inconsistencies. It should also complete its Title VI Inclusivity Plan and, if necessary, execute a new ([Title VI/Nondiscrimination Sub-recipient Assurance](#)).

6. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- a. Although it is noted in a few places in the narrative that project costs and revenues are shown in year of expenditure (YOE) dollars, there is no footnote/notation on the tables provided later in the document that indicates this fact. The Federal Review Team recommends that a notation be added to the appropriate tables in the TIP document to clarify that YOE dollars are being shown.
- b. There is also discussion in the TIP that refers to the PPP for the TIP amendment process. We recommend that a link to the PPP also be provided in the TIP and the same cross reference format be considered in other MPO documents where appropriate.
- c. The discussion regarding TIP amendments includes a breakdown of types of amendments into major and minor. This further breakdown seems confusing to the review team and would likely seem so to the public. Consideration should be given to determining whether this breakdown is needed/necessary or if other means or terminology would be more appropriate. From a federal perspective, an amendment has a defined meaning in regulation. Modification is also a frequently used term. The MPO is not precluded from specifying other terminology as part of their public involvement processes for TIP development and TIP amendments, but they should be clear and easily understandable to the public. The Federal Review Team recommends that the development of more definitive thresholds or criteria be considered to illustrate the parameters and elements that would determine a minor or major amendment.

Based on the overall findings, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Tampa Bay Area TMA, which is comprised in part by the Hillsborough MPO, substantially meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C. This certification will remain in effect until **June 2021**.

Part II: Forward Pinellas

Section I. Previous Certification Findings Status/Update

The following is a summary of the previous recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to Forward Pinellas in 2013. There were no Corrective Actions identified for Forward Pinellas in the prior report.

A. Recommendations:

1. **Agreements**: The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO re-visit and revise, where necessary, the 2004 Interlocal agreement and at a minimum provide an updated date of the most recent review of the agreement.

Update: The MPO's Interlocal agreements were updated October 15, 2014 and substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.314.

2. **Transit (List of Obligated Projects)**: The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO staff coordinate with FDOT and public transportation operator(s) to ensure that transit projects are included in the Annual List of Obligated projects for the next update.

Update: The MPO coordinated with FDOT and public transportation operators and provided an Annual List of Obligated projects November 9, 2016 that substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.332.

3. **Public Participation Plan**: The Forward Pinellas PPP does not reflect all the MPO's current programs, services and activities. While the MPO's website is a useful tool for advising the public on many of the MPO's public engagement activities, there is not enough explicit information provided in the MPO's Public Participation Plan. The MPO should carefully examine this document to ensure that, at a minimum, it contains all the requisite information from 23 CFR 450.316, and that the plan is a useful roadmap for advising the public of its services. The Federal Review Team strongly recommends that in the next update of the Public Participation Plan, MPO staff give careful consideration to conveying information related to thoroughly engaging the public in the planning process. Attention should be given to clarifying how, when and where committees meet, how a member of the public can serve on committee, and how the public can get involved in the development of the public participation plan and other MPO planning products. The PPP should also include information on the amendment process for the MPO planning products, including the time frame for review and

- 4. Outreach and Public Participation:** The Federal Review Team observed that the MPO appears to use the terms “public meeting” and “public hearing” interchangeably. From a federal perspective, these terms are very different. A public hearing must meet specific and more stringent requirements spelled out in law that may not apply to a public meeting. Federal law does not require the conducting of public hearings for planning activities. However, state law may dictate otherwise. Therefore, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO review and evaluate their processes and procedures to determine if a public hearing or public meeting is required/appropriate and revise language in their planning documents to reflect the interaction accordingly.
- 5. Title VI and Related Requirements:** FHWA and FDOT have updated the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Sub-recipient Assurance which includes expanded contract clauses that the MPO must insert and require its contractors to insert into all contract instruments. Moreover, for consultant contracts, the MPO must also ensure that contracts include DBE Assurance Language from 49 CFR 26.13. The MPO should carefully review its procurement and contract documents, verifying that the correct nondiscrimination information is present and up to date.
- 6. Long Range Transportation Plan:** The Federal Review Team recommends the MPO post the supporting LRTP technical documents which included with the hard copy of the plan, with the LRTP documents on the website.

Based on the overall findings, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Tampa Bay Area TMA, which is comprised in part by the Pasco County MPO, substantially meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C subject to the MPO satisfactorily addressing the Corrective Actions stated in this report. The MPO is encouraged to provide FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the corrective actions prior to the deadline. This certification will remain in effect until **June 2021**.

Part IV: Tampa Bay TMA Regional Coordination

The concept of regional planning for the Tampa Bay TMA has been at work on many levels for quite some time, both formally and informally. For example, the West Central Florida Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) have been collaborating regionally on regional plans, data forecast, priorities, and public involvement since 1993. Recently integrated with TBARTA, the MPO directors, senior level staff and FDOT representatives have been meeting in the spirit of coordination and collaboration to discuss regional transportation solutions to transportation problems and to ensure a consistent planning approach among the member MPOs. The three MPOs of the TMA also collaborate via the TMA Leadership Group to focus on those transportation issues most important to the urbanized area.

Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA): TBARTA was established by Florida Legislature in July 2007 to develop and implement a regional transportation master plan covering seven counties: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota. In addition, the MPOs participate in meetings of TBARTA's Transit Management Committee. Over the past several years, the CCC and TBARTA have integrated their planning for the region more closely. In June 2015, TBARTA updated the Master Plan, (*Connected Region for Our Future*), that identified freight, transit and roadway needs by 2050, with financial support from the CCC MPOs for a cost-feasible regional component.

Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC): The CCC is comprised of representatives from Polk, Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. The CCC members and TBARTA staff collaborate on regional plans, data forecasts, priorities, and public involvement. The CCC annually reviews and updates priorities for major regional projects, candidates for the State's Transportation Regional Incentive Program, and multi-use trail project priorities. The priorities are also reviewed by other TBARTA committees as part of the regional public participation process, and approved by the TBARTA board.

TMA Leadership Group: The TMA Leadership Group is an informal group consisting of three board members from each of the Tampa Bay TMA MPOs (Hillsborough, Forward Pinellas, and Pasco), and representatives of FDOT, TBARTA, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, the Hernando/Citrus MPO, and local transit agency partners and adjacent MPOs are participants in the TMA Leadership Group activities. The TMA Leadership Group, meets five times a year to develop recommendations for adoption by the boards. The TMA Leadership Group strives to speak with one voice on regional transportation priorities. The TMA Leadership Group attended a kick-off workshop for the Regional Transportation Planning and Best Practices Study with key stakeholders in the Tampa Bay region on May 12, 2017.

The MPOs also work closely and support joint efforts among regional planning partners, such as the FDOT, MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC), Tri-County Local Coordinating Board Subcommittee, Technical Review Team (TRT), Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTST), land management agencies, community redevelopment agencies, law enforcement and emergency services.

During the Tampa Bay TMA Certification Review Site Visit and Public Meetings, several representatives from partner agencies, city governments, MPO committees, and environmental and interested citizen groups spoke highly of the increased coordination and involvement of the MPOs in regional transportation planning activities and processes.

Regional Long Range Transportation Plan: The Regional Transportation Master Plan was updated in 2015. It identified regional transit, freight, and highway needs through the year 2050. The Master Plan was based on an extensive analysis of transportation demand as well as public outreach across the region. These transportation needs were identified based on a long-term vision for the region created in cooperation with FDOT, MPOs, transit agencies and the public.

The MPOs also participate in discussions with the adjacent counties and regions and the regional element and individual MPO LRTPs are supported with technical information from the Regional Transportation Analysis Technical Review Team (TRT). The TRT is coordinated by FDOT staff and includes technical representatives of the four MPOs in FDOT's District 7 (Hillsborough, Forward Pinellas, Pasco County and Hernando/Citrus). The TRT has oversight responsibility for the periodic updates of the Tampa Bay Regional Traffic Demand Model and the Tampa Bay Urban Land Use Allocation Model within the Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA) Project. These models are subsequently used to develop the LRTP Updates of the individual MPOs and the regional transportation element of those plans.

Regional Priorities: The CCC speaks with one voice on top regional priorities. Representatives from eight counties, six MPOs and two FDOT Districts meet and determined projects to fund that are regionally significant projects under the State's Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) that benefits regional travel.

The TMA develops regional consensus priorities across Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties, especially with respect to allocating federal and state funds, and makes recommendations to each MPO for consideration, public outreach, and action. This group meets approximately every other month with a professional facilitator from the Florida Consensus Center, who is sponsored by all three MPOs in proportion to their population size/grant budget.

Since the last certification review, the three MPOs coordinated regionally and have been able to leverage their resources and expand their partnering efforts. For example, the following regional projects have been undertaken:

- Howard Frankland Bridge – Bridge replacement with transit envelope and express lanes (Hillsborough/Pinellas)
- 18th Avenue Expressway – Gateway Expressway (Pinellas)
- Greenlight Pinellas – Referendum in Pinellas County for funding of more transit service and facilities (Pinellas)
- I-275 and SR 60 – Interchange modification (Hillsborough)
- I-275 from SR 60 to downtown Tampa – construct express lanes with express bus service (Hillsborough)
- Westshore Intermodal Center – Construct an intermodal center adjacent to I-275 in the Westshore area (Hillsborough)
- I-275 from Gateway Area to Howard Frankland Bridge – Construct express lanes (Pinellas)

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS): In January of 2017, a registry of regional ITS stakeholders was compiled, which will ultimately become the membership of the regional ITS working group. Members include ITS professionals from FDOT, and representatives of the six MPOs of the West Central Florida region, University of South Florida (USF) Center for Urban Transportation Research, local governments within the region, Tampa/Hillsborough County Expressway Authority (THEA), PSTA, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), Tampa Port Authority, and Hillsborough County Aviation Authority. The primary purpose of this group is to exchange ideas, maintain lines of communication among the various stakeholders, and maintain regional consistency among ITS applications.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): For UPWP development, each CCC MPO includes a set of regional tasks in their UPWP to ensure that regional coordination continues to occur. These regional transportation planning tasks are developed jointly between the region's MPOs and identified in the UPWPs adopted by each of the MPOs in the CCC. Each MPO dedicates a portion of its UPWP budget to support the regional tasks. Under the interlocal agreement, a lead MPO for any regional task may be designated by the group to financially administer contracts using the funds approved by the other MPOs in their UPWPs for this work.

Congestion Management Process: The Regional Congestion Management Process plan was updated in 2012. The Regional Congestion Management Process is collaboratively developed and is used to track the performance of the regional transportation system and to develop congestion management strategies on selected corridors. It also provides benchmarks to compare the area's performance with other regions similar in size.

Regional Trails: The CCC and the Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee, consisting primarily of the region's bicycle/pedestrian coordinators, meets as needed to develop and maintain a Regional Multi-Use Trails Plan and project priorities.

Through TBARTA's coordination, the MPOs in the region continue to collaborate on the development and implementation of a regional Multi-Use Trails Element of the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan. This effort has led to coordinated funding requests for trail projects through the State of Florida's Shared Use Non-motorized Trail Network (SUNTrail).

Regional Public Involvement: The CCC, through the leadership of TBARTA, is also engaged in a Regional Public Participation Plan (RP3) Working Group, which is an ad hoc committee comprised of public engagement professionals from the metropolitan planning organizations of Pinellas, Pasco, Polk, Hillsborough, Hernando/Citrus, and Sarasota/Manatee Counties. The group currently meets quarterly, or as deemed necessary by TBARTA. They provide region-oriented advice to TBARTA on effective public engagement strategies, best practices and performance measures and targets. They also assist with coordination and the provision of resources required in the development and implementation of a single regional public participation plan for the

West Central Florida region and the bi-annual Public Participation Measures of Effectiveness Report which was updated this year by TBARTA with the financial sponsorship of the Hillsborough MPO. The working group evaluates proposed goals and recommendations for the next two-year public participation period, promotes public awareness and participation in the planning and implementation of the Regional Transportation Master Plan, and helps disseminate information to local citizen groups.

Regional Transit: The MPOs within the TMA are also required to develop a Locally Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan FTA Section 5310 funding. The Tampa Bay area plan, Tri-County Area Regional Mobility Needs, is developed collaboratively by staff from the Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco County MPOs. The Tri-County Area Regional Mobility Needs Plan is focused on employee-related transportation for disadvantaged citizens within the three counties. Currently, HART is leading the development of a regional transit plan for the tri-county area of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco, and the three MPOs have committed to work together through the TMA Leadership Group.