

2030 LRTP Update

Appendix B ***SAFETEA-LU Gap Analysis***



Appendix B: SAFETEA-LU Gap Analysis Technical Memorandum

Overview

The following describes the approach utilized to update Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization's (GHMPO's) 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) into compliance with new and/or revised planning regulations identified in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was signed into law by President Bush in August 2005. The Gap Analysis addresses new SAFETEA-LU requirements and covers planning and environmental requirements that are jointly administered by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The GHMPO conducted a “gap analysis” by reviewing contents of the current GHMPO 2030 LRTP (adopted in 2004) and compared them against the new and/or revised SAFETEA-LU regulations. The gap analysis consists of the following components:

- 1) Identification of each new and/or revised SAFETEA-LU planning regulation as stated in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning: Final Rule issued by the FHWA and FTA on February 14, 2007
- 2) Detailed description of GHMPO's approach for meeting the new planning regulations

Table-1, on the next page, provides an overview of new or revised SAFETEA-LU regulations, including the identification of any gaps in GHMPO's transportation planning process.

1. New Consultations in SAFETEA-LU

450.322(g) The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan.

The GHMPO's participation list has been expanded to include state, regional and local agencies with an interest in the areas of land use management, environmental resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation. As a result, the list now includes nearly 500 agencies and individuals. Contacts are notified and given the opportunity to comment on all transportation planning documents, such as the LRTP and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The adopted Participation Plan is available on the GHMPO's website at www.ghmpo.org under Planning Documents.

2. Consistency of Transportation Plan with Planned Growth and Development Plans

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

The GHMPO believes that the current LRTP is fully compliant with SAFETEA-LU regulations. One of the LRTP goals states that – *transportation planning will be integrated with land use decisions and other comprehensive planning tools to support economic development goals and enhance the area's quality of life.* In addition, when developing the population and employment forecasts, GHMPO staff met with local jurisdictions to consult, discuss and identify areas where future development and redevelopment will likely to occur.



Table B-1 – SAFETEA-LU Gap Analysis

Planning Regulations	Statute	Gap in GHMPO's 2030 LRTP	Action Item
New Consultations	450.322(g) The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan.	No Gap	
Consistency of Plan with Planned Growth and Dev. Plans	450.306 (a) (5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.	No Gap	
Transportation System Security	450.306 (a) (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. 450.306 (h) The planning process should be consistent with... other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs, as appropriate.	No Gap	
Operational and management Strategies	450.322 (f) (3) The metropolitan transportation plan shall include operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.	No Gap	
Participation Plan	450.316 (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation,.....with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.	No Gap	
Visualization Techniques	450.316 (a) (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs.	No Gap	
Publication of Plans and TIPs	450.322 (j) The metropolitan transportation plan shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web. 450.324 (b) The TIP shall be published or otherwise	No Gap	



	made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web, as described in 450.316		
Congestion Management Process	450.320 (c) The congestion management process shall be developed, established, and implemented as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process that includes coordination with transportation system management and operations activities.	No Gap	
Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan	As a condition for receiving formula funding under the following 3 FTA programs, proposed projects must be derived from a locally developed public transit-human services transportation plan: (1) Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities [49 U.S.C. 5310(d)(2)(B)(i) and (ii)]; (2) Job Access and Reverse Commute [49 U.S.C. 5316(g)(3)(A) and (B)]; and (3) New Freedom [49 U.S.C. 5317(f)(3)(A) and (B)].	Gap Exists	Continue coordination with Hall Area Transit in developing a Transit Development Plan. Proposed projects identified in this plan will be incorporated in the Coordinated Human Services Plan through the GHMPO planning process.
Environmental Mitigation	450.322 (f) (7): Plan shall include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan T-Plan. Discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies.	No Gap	

Source: Metropolitan Transportation Planning: Final Rule issued by the FHWA and FTA on February 14, 2007 and GHMPO 2030 LRTP

3. Transportation System Security in SAFETEA-LU

450.306 (a) (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

450.306 (h) The planning process should be consistent with... other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs, as appropriate.

As stipulated by SAFETEA-LU, GHMPO incorporated security into the transportation planning process as a stand-alone factor by making a change to one of the LRTP goals.

Revised LRTP Goal: Provide an integrated multi-modal and intermodal transportation system that includes more options to provide the desired level of accessibility and mobility of people and goods **in a safe and secure manner.**

Early in the LRTP planning process, the GHMPO developed and adopted Project Evaluation Criteria that is SAFETEA-LU compliant. One of the evaluation criteria states that projects



should be assessed to the extent they support the eight federally required planning factors under SAFETEA-LU.

The following are some of the areas and issues within the MPO study area that may require additional security considerations, which could be done at the project level:

- 1) Lake Lanier and its proximity to Buford Dam;
- 2) Population centers in the Cities of Gainesville, Oakwood and Flowery Branch;
- 3) Major regional hospitals in Hall County;
- 4) Proximity to metro Atlanta; and
- 5) Bridge crossings.

4. Operational and Management Strategies

450.322 (f) (3) The metropolitan transportation plan shall include operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.

The GHMPO believes that the current LRTP is fully compliant with SAFETEA-LU. The current LRTP incorporates a number of Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies including but not limited to - bicycle and pedestrian improvements, intersection and interchange improvements, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) facilities, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), local transit and commuter bus service, and intercity passenger and freight rail.

5. Participation Plan

450.316 (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation,.....with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The GHMPO updated its Public Involvement Plan to a Public Participation Plan, which is fully compliant with SAFETEA-LU. This plan expands the Public Involvement Plan to include consultation with representatives of various intermodal transportation agencies, and other interested parties on various ongoing transportation planning activities. The draft plan was made available for various agencies and the public via the GHMPO web page and a notice of the public comment period was advertised in the local newspaper. The GHMPO committees reviewed and adopted the Participation Plan in May 2007.

6. Visualization Techniques

450.316 (a) (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs.

The GHMPO is in the forefront of utilizing visualization techniques. In December 2005, the GHMPO launched its own comprehensive website (www.ghmpo.org) to efficiently communicate with the public and interested parties on its planning processes, activities and policies. To strengthen participation in the transportation planning process and specifically to assist the public in understanding proposed plans, projects, programs and strategies, the GHMPO utilizes a variety of visualization techniques. The GHMPO extensively uses maps with aerial photography and GIS attributes on display boards to visually communicate how plans, projects, programs and strategies impact the GHMPO study area. These visualization techniques also assist in illustrating the



planning process, needs, recommendation and future multi-modal improvements during scenario development or demonstrating networks and regional linkages.

7. Publication of Plans and TIPs

450.322 (j) The metropolitan transportation plan shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web.

450.324 (b) The TIP shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web, as described in 450.316

The GHMPO's website was officially launched in December 2005. Since then, additional planning documents and general information has been added on a regular basis to ensure the public has access to the latest documents and information. The entire LRTP and TIP are published electronically in PDF format on the GHMPO website. The following illustrates materials the GHMPO provides to the public on its website:

- Public meeting announcements
- Committee structure and responsibilities
- Committee meeting schedules and agenda materials
- News articles relating to transportation planning activities
- Planning documentation, presentations and reports
- Archives for planning documents and meeting minutes
- Project specific sites for studies and other planning activities
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Links to other pertinent websites
- Contact information to communicate with directly with GHMPO staff or to seek information

If an individual can not download a document or print it, the GHMPO, upon request, will provide a compact disc that makes thousands of pages of documentation or resource material available. Most important of all, the informational resources is the GHMPO staff itself who are readily available to provide information about various transportation planning plans, projects, programs strategies and activities. Local citizens can access the GHMPO staff through email, mail, telephone, and fax or in person at the Development Services Office or at MPO meetings.

8. Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

450.332 (a) In metropolitan planning areas, on an annual basis, no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the State, public transportation operator(s), and the MPO shall cooperatively develop a listing of projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year.

The GHMPO is fully compliant with SAFETEA-LU; the current list of obligated projects are provided on the GHMPO website (www.ghmpo.org) in the Transportation Improvement Program section under Planning Documents.

9. Congestion Management Process



450.320 (c) The congestion management process shall be developed, established, and implemented as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process that includes coordination with transportation system management and operations activities.

The GHMPO does not meet the federal population threshold of a TMA and thus is not required to develop a CMP. However, since a small portion (5%) of the Atlanta urbanized area is contained in Hall County, which is in the GHMPO study area, the CMP for this area is updated in the 2030 LRTP Update in coordination with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), which is the primary agency responsible to conduct and develop the CMP in the Atlanta TMA.

10. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

As a condition for receiving formula funding under the following 3 FTA programs, proposed projects must be derived from a locally developed public transit-human services transportation plan: (1) Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities [49 U.S.C. 5310(d)(2)(B)(i) and (ii)]; (2) Job Access and Reverse Commute [49 U.S.C. 5316(g)(3)(A) and (B)]; and (3) New Freedom [49 U.S.C. 5317(f)(3)(A) and (B)].

The GHMPO, working in partnership with Hall Area Transit (HAT), is currently in the process of developing a Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP will be completed by June 2008 and will provide guidance in terms of potential projects for the three FTA programs. It should be noted that HAT currently does not have projects identified under these programs. A Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan will be developed after the TDP is completed. Proposed projects identified in this new Plan will be coordinated into the MPO planning process for inclusion in next LRTP update.

11. Environmental Mitigation In SAFETEA-LU

450.322 (f) (7): Plan shall include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan T-Plan. Discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies.

In coordination with ARC, GHMPO consulted with local, state, and federal agencies responsible for environmental mitigation. GHMPO identified historical, green spaces, and water bodies that may be affected by the planned projects in the LRTP. The LRTP provides planned project maps overlaid with environmental layers to visually show impacts to these resources. The LRTP also provides a table illustrating potential impacts in the Environmental Mitigation section of the LRTP. As projects move forward in the transportation planning process, projects impacting resource areas will be examined more fully during the NEPA process.