



2022 Certification Report

**Pensacola Transportation
Management Area**

Florida-Alabama TPO

Prepared by:

Federal Highway Administration

Florida Division

**Federal Transit Administration
Region 4**

December 2022

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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.

As a part of the TMA certification review process, FHWA and FTA utilize a risk-based approach containing various factors to determine which topic areas required additional evaluation during the certification review. The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. This certification review was conducted to highlight best practices, identify opportunities for improvements, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

Transportation planning for the Pensacola TMA is conducted by the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (FL-AL TPO). The last certification review was completed in 2018. The Federal Review Team conducted a site visit for the current review of the FL-AL TPO on July 19, 2022. The Federal Review Team recognizes three noteworthy practices, identifies one corrective action, and offers two recommendations the MPO should consider for improving their planning processes. More information related to these findings can be found in the Findings/Conclusions section of this report.

Based on the overall findings of the certification review, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Pensacola Transportation Management Area, which is comprised entirely by the FL-AL TPO, substantially meets the federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C subject to the MPO satisfactorily addressing the corrective action stated in this report. The MPO is encouraged to provide the FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the corrective action in accordance with the noted deadline. This certification will remain in effect until **December 2026**.

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FL-AL Transportation Planning Organization

Section I. Overview of the Certification Process

Under provisions of 23 CFR 450.336(b) and 49 CFR 613.100, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the planning process of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) “not less often than once every four years.” This four-year cycle runs from the date of issuance of the previous joint certification report.

The primary purpose of a certification review is to formalize the continuing oversight and evaluation of the planning process. The FHWA and the FTA work cooperatively with the TMA planning staff on a regular basis. By reviewing and approving planning products, providing technical assistance, and promoting best practices, the formal assessment involved in a certification review provides an external view of the TMA’s transportation planning process.

A certification review generally consists of four primary activities. These activities include: 1) a “desk audit” which is a review of the TMA’s planning documents (e.g. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); 2) a “site visit” with staff 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; 3) a Certification Report, which the Federal Review Team prepares, to document the results of the review process; and, 4) a formal presentation of the review findings at a future FL-AL TPO Board Policy meeting.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in metropolitan areas. The certification review also helps ensure that the major issues facing a metropolitan area are being addressed. The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Since 2018, to initiate the TMA certification review process, the Federal Review Team has utilized a risk-based approach containing various factors to determine which topic areas required additional evaluation during the certification review. **Appendix A** summarizes the risk evaluation, and the report notes in the relevant sections which topic areas were not selected for review due to existing stewardship and oversight practices after considering the risk factors.

The review for the FL-AL TPO was held July 19, 2022. During this site visit, the Federal Review Team met with the staff of the FL-AL TPO, FDOT, Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT), Baldwin Regional Area Transit System (BRATS) staff, committee representatives, other partnering agencies, and the public. See **Appendix B** for a list of

review team members and site visit participants, and **Appendix C** for the TMA Certification Meeting Agenda.

The purpose of the public engagement process is to inform the public of the Federal transportation planning requirements and allow the public an opportunity to provide input on the transportation planning process to the Federal Review Team. A public meeting for this certification review was held in person and virtually (GoTo Webinar) on July 19, 2022. For those that could not attend the public meeting or who did not want to speak during 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 and/or request a copy of the certification review report. There were three additional comments received during the 30-day comment period.

A copy of the public engagement notices can be found in **Appendix D**. Screenshots of public input, comments received during the 30-day comment period and the Certification Review, minutes from the public meeting, and a summary of public comments including a listing of commenters are provided in **Appendix E**.

A summary of the 2018 corrective actions and recommendations and their status can be found in **Appendix F**.

An explanation of planning acronyms can be found in **Appendix G**.

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

A. Description of Planning Area

Observation(s): The FL-AL TPO is located in northwest Florida, an area commonly known as the Panhandle and sometimes called the Emerald Coast. As a result of the 2010 urban area census designations, the MPO boundary encompasses the southern portions, which are the coastal areas, of Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in Florida, as well as part of Baldwin County in Alabama. Municipalities within the planning area in Florida include Pensacola, Gulf Breeze and Milton, and Orange Beach and Lillian in Alabama. The area also includes Pensacola Naval Air Station (PNAS).

The FL-AL TPO is uncertain if or to what extent its boundaries may change due to the upcoming 2020 US Census designation. However, MPO staff maintains regular contact with Mobile MPO, Eastern Shore MPO, and Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) so that it is prepared for both northward and westward expansion of its boundaries, should the designations change.

The FL-AL TPO boundary is visually depicted in the following map:



FL-AL Transportation Planning Organization

B. Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure

Observation(s): The MPO is made up of representatives from the local governments contained within the urbanized planning area, including Escambia County, Santa Rosa County, Baldwin County, the City of Pensacola, the City of Gulf Breeze, the City of Milton, and the City of Orange Beach. The following is a breakdown of MPO membership. Each member has one vote.

Florida	Escambia County	5 Members
	Santa Rosa County	5 Members
	City of Pensacola	5 Members
	City of Gulf Breeze	1 Member
Alabama	Baldwin County	1 Member
	City of Orange Beach	1 Member

The FDOT District 3 Secretary and the ALDOT Southwest Region Engineer hold non-voting board seats.

Both Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT) and Baldwin Regional Area Transit System (BRATS) are represented by the MPO board members for their respective county. Since the last joint federal certification, Escambia discontinued operation of transit services through a contract provider, removing the need for separate board membership by ECAT. In addition, MPO staff closely coordinates with ECAT and BRATS, serving on provider committees and in at least one case, providing General Planning Consultant (GPC) assistance with developing emergency routes after Hurricane Sally.

The director of the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) is also the director of the FL-AL TPO and is ultimately responsible for ensuring staff charges time to the appropriate entity and that each MPO maintains a distinct and accessible presence in their respective designated planning areas. The FL-AL TPO asserts the ECRC as an effective catalyst for providing services and maximizing production, without the duplication of efforts or products inherent in staffing separate organizations. The MPO as part of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) emphasizes the responsibility for a seamless transportation network throughout the region.

Evidence collected during the certification review supports the MPO's assertion. For example, the ECRC now has four public involvement specialists, all with specific government and corporate backgrounds and all skilled in the use of electronic outreach and geospatial data tools. Moreover, all appreciate the need for performance measurement and data analysis. Generally, smaller independent MPOs are able to hire only one PI specialist, if any, and are unlikely to offer a sufficiently competitive salary. With RPC staffing, the MPO benefits by both more and a higher level of expertise.

The Review Team sees other potential benefits to housing the MPO under an umbrella RPC, such as better integration of land use and transportation planning, especially important as Pensacola is experiencing unprecedented growth and development north and west of the city, and as the impacts of east-west freight corridors extend far beyond the MPO's boundaries. In addition, as ECRC, the MPO can compete for funding grants from a variety of government agencies, opportunities that would be closed to the MPO absent a regional identity. In fact, the MPO is doing currently doing so and with some success.

The MPO has had some changes to their committees and procedures since the last certification review. Due to difficulties in filling vacancies and retaining members on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the process was changed and now board members appoint a CAC member from their district. The CAC meeting times have changed to the evenings to accommodate members who are working. The Bicycle Pedestrian Sub Committee's area of coverage has been changed to the entire region instead of just within the MPO boundaries. The MPO has also seen an increase in participation at all levels since they moved to make hybrid meetings a permanent format for all MPO Meetings.

The MPO is staffed by ECRC, to which it charges staff time. The MPO explained the process for tracking and monitoring timesheets. The system requires timesheets for employees at all levels of the organization to be checked and reviewed. Software restricts charge codes by employee. When managers review the timesheets with the finance unit, they know what is charged, by whom and to what program. Employees are limited to charge to those codes that are associated with them in the system. The employee must monitor their charges and timesheets day-to-day and week-to-week. The timesheets and charge codes are quality reviewed before submission for reimbursement.

The MPO now includes formal coordination with Panhandle military installations: The Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola has a seat on the FL-AL Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). Further, the MPO works with the Northwest Base Alliance group, a regional consortium that includes planners from the Panhandle military installations. The consortium provides planning cohesion for those who live and work on the bases, as well as residents in the area. The MPO also occupies a seat on the NAS Whiting Field, the First Place Partner's Group and the Santa Rosa Military Affairs Committee, a subcommittee of the Chamber of Commerce. The FL-AL MPO is a member of these groups to build relationships, hear concerns of the bases, and work to develop and implement plans and projects for the greater good of the Emerald Coast. Membership in these groups also helps the MPO to be proactive for issues in the horizon.

Finding: The MPO's boundaries and organization substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.310 and 312.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice and offers one recommendation regarding the Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure. For more details about these practices and recommendation, please see Section XI.

C. Agreements

Current Agreement(s)/Date(s) Adopted:

Staff Services Agreement	12-10-2014
MPO Funding Agreement	07-01-2020
MPO Funding Agreement	06-10-2022
Intergovernmental Public Transportation JPA	06-09-2010
Interlocal Cooperation Agreement	02-09-2022
Interlocal Agreement Creating FL-AL TPO	10-07-2015
Resolution Designating ECRC as RPC	04-23-2020
Resolution Removing ECAT from TPO Board	04-13-2016

Observations:

Under the Staff Services Agreement, the MPO is staffed by the West Florida Regional Planning Council, now called the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC). ECRC is a Regional Planning Council (RPC) consisting of FL-AL TPO, Okaloosa Walton TPO, Bay

County TPO, and the Boards of County Commissioners of Washington and Holmes counties.

Finding: The MPO's agreements substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.314.

Section III. Transportation Performance Planning (23 CFR 450.306(a), 306(d), 314(h), 324(f), 326(c), 326(d))

Observations: The MPO sets all targets for safety, bridge, pavement, and system performance and for Transit Asset Management (TAM) within the prescribed timeframes. They documented setting Safety performance Measure Targets (PM1) on February 14, 2018 and have since been adopted annually by February 27th. Most recently, the MPO adopted Resolution FL-AL 22-01 on February 7, 2022, wherein the MPO adopts – Florida “0” to support FDOT’s “0” target for traffic fatalities and supports FDOT’s Vision Zero. The MPO supports ALDOT’s Safety performance Measure Target of “961”, which is a 5-year rolling average for traffic fatalities, and supports ALDOT’s “Towards Zero Deaths Initiative” The MPO adopted targets for Pavement and Bridge System Performance on September 12, 2018 by Resolution 18-24 for targets in 2021, which supported the DOT targets and will need to be adopted again by April 1, 2023. However, ALDOT adjusted its 4-year target in 2021, which the FL-AL MPO adopted January 13, 2021 by Resolution FL-AL 21-02. The MPO coordinates with ECAT , BRATS and numerous stakeholders in Florida and Alabama to develop State of Good Repair Performance Measure for Transit Asset Management (TAM). The FL-AL TPO’s TAM targets were adopted on September 12, 2018 by Resolutions 18-30, as documented in the current approved TIP – [FY2023-2027 TIP Performance Report](#) and the [FL-AL TPO 2045 LRTP System Performance Report](#).

The MPO has written provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to transportation performance data, selection of performance targets, reporting of targets, reporting of performance to be used in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes and reporting of data. These were documented through the approval of the FDOT and MPOAC: Transportation Performance Measures Consensus Planning Document” by the FL-AL TPO Board on July 8, 2020 ([Resolution FL-AL 20-13](#))

In the development of the LRTP, the MPO included a description of the performance measures and targets to assess the transportation system performance. The FL-AL MPO integrated the FDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program’s, Strategic Highway Safety Plan’s, Asset Management Plan’s and Freight Plan’s goals, objectives, measures, and targets directly into the LRTP. They also included a system performance report and evaluated the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the federally required performance targets, including progress achieved by the MPO in meeting the performance targets in comparison with system performance recorded in previous reports and baseline data.

In the development of the TIP, the MPO designed their TIP to make progress toward achieving the targets and described how they linked their project selections and investments to anticipate target achievement. Specifically, the MPO includes specific investment priorities that support the MPO's goals including safety, efficiency, connectivity, economic vitality, security, quality of life and the planning process which guide the Evaluation Criteria. The Evaluation Criteria in the LRTP filters down to Project Priorities, and the TIP.

Finding: The MPO's transportation performance planning activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306, 314, 324, and 326.

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

A. Transportation Planning Factors

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment.

Finding: The MPO's planning process substantially satisfies the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306(b).

B. Air Quality

Finding: The FL-AL MPO is currently designated as an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Activities

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's bicycle and pedestrian planning activities substantially satisfies the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306(b), 324(f), and 326.

D. Transit

Observations: The Escambia County Transit Authority (ECAT) provides transit for Escambia County. While ECAT is legally independent, the Board of Directors is comprised of the five (5) members of the Escambia County Commission. These same commissioners also make up the Board of Directors of the FL-AL TPO. ECAT operates fixed route bus and paratransit service throughout Escambia County with a focus on Pensacola and surrounding areas. Per the 2020 National Transit Database report, ECAT operates 31 fixed route buses and 51 paratransit vehicles in maximum service. Average daily weekday unlinked trips were 3,607 with an annual 1,025,304 unlinked trips on 5,378,463 passenger miles. This represents about 70% of the reported 2019 trips.

The ECAT Board of Directors is comprised of the Escambia County Board Commissioners, who work cooperatively with ECRC Board Members to develop

transportation planning products, coordinate activities, and implement transit projects. The ECAT is a full partner in the FL-AL TPO's planning process.

Baldwin Regional Area Transit System (BRATS) provides door-to-door public transit designed for everyone. BRATS almost doubled its trip in a year. The system does not analyze ridership of paratransit and on-demand separately.

Finding: The MPO's transit activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 49 CFR 613.100 as well as the transit supportive elements outlined in 23 CFR 450.

E. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's ITS activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306, 322, and 23 CFR 940.

F. Freight Planning

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's freight planning activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306, 316, 324, and 326.

G. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's security planning activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306, 324(f), 324(h), and 326.

H. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's safety planning activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.306, 324(h), and 326.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation related to Safety Considerations in the Planning Process. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section XI.

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

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's UPWP substantially satisfies the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.308.

Section VI. Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316)

A. Outreach and Public Participation

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process. transportation processes.

Finding: The MPO's outreach and public participation activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.316.

Noteworthy Practices: The Federal Review Team recognizes two noteworthy practices related to Interested Parties – Outreach and Public Participation. For more details about these noteworthy practices, please see Section XI.

B. Tribal Coordination

Observations: There are no tribal lands within the MPO's planning boundaries requiring the MPO to provide tribal coordination.

C. Title VI and Related Requirements

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's Title VI and related activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 49 CFR 21, 49 CFR 27, 23 CFR 200, 23 CFR 450.316 and 336(a).

Section VII. Linking Planning and NEPA (23 CFR 450.318, 320, 324(f)(10), 324(g))

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's linking planning and NEPA activities substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.318, 320, 324(f)(10), and 324(g).

Section VIII. Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.322)

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's congestion management process substantially satisfies the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.322.

Section IX. Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.324)

Current Document Title: FL-AL TPO 2045 LRTP Final Report and Amendment 1

Date Adopted: October 14, 2020

Amendment 1: January 13, 2021

A. Scope of LRTP

Observations: The FL-AL TPO's LRTP addresses a 20-year horizon period and includes long-range and short-range strategies that provide for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system. The plan includes current and projects transportation demand, existing and propose, facilities, operational and management strategies, assessment of strategies to preserve existing infrastructure, transportation and transit enhancement activities, and a financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted plan can be implemented.

Finding: The general scope of the MPO's LRTP substantially satisfies the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.324.

B. Travel Demand Modeling/Data

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's travel demand modeling processes substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.324(e).

C. Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint

Observations: A review based on the 2018 FHWA/FTA LRTP Expectations Letter was conducted during the desk audit.

The FDOT, ALDOT, and other planning partners worked together to identify and provide estimates of federal and state revenue available over the life of the LRTP. These agencies also collaborated to develop estimates of administrative, operations and maintenance costs over the life of the plan. Revenue estimates from State/federal sources are included in the Cost Feasible Plan (CFP), Chapter 7, and Appendices H and I. The plan identifies funding revenue sources, project costs and project phases.

Revenue sources include Federal, State, Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties in FL and Orange Beach and Baldwin County in AL. Year of Expenditure costs are used in the plan. Although the LRTP provides revenues and project costs separately, the LRTP does not include a financial plan that clearly demonstrates fiscal constraint for each planning time frame.

Finding: The financial plan/fiscal constraint of the MPO's LRTP does not substantially satisfy the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11).

Corrective Action: The Federal Review Team has identified one corrective action related to the LRTP Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section XI.

Section X. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.326, 328, 330, 332, 334)

Current Document Title: FY 2023 – 2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Date Adopted: June 8, 2022

Observations: This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

Finding: The MPO's TIP substantially satisfies the federal requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 450.326, 328, 330, 332, and 334.

Section XI. Findings/Conclusions

The following items represent a compilation of the findings that are included in this 2022 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 Florida-Alabama TPO 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 or potential risks and are intended to assist the FL-AL TPO in improving the planning process. Noteworthy practices highlight efforts that demonstrate innovative ideas or best practices for implementing the planning requirements.

A. Noteworthy Practices

1. **MPO Planning Organization Structure:** The Review Team was impressed with the MPO's multi-level involvement with the Panhandle military installations. Each joint federal certification review conducted in past years encouraged better coordination with the various military bases located in the Panhandle. The MPO took note, assigning a dedicated Community Liaison to build relationships with military facility planners and groups that support or depend upon the installations. The Community Liaison works with the Northwest Base Alliance, a regional consortium of Panhandle installations, to obtain military input for the LRTP and coordinate planning activities that impact transportation on and off base. The consortium provides planning cohesion for those who live and work on bases in the region, as well as residents in the area. In addition, the MPO partners with the Santa Rosa Military Affairs Committee and the First Place Partners for outreach on activities such as yearly project priorities and collaboration focused on resolving traffic pressure associated with commuting to and from Eglin Air Force Base (AFB).

The results of the MPO's efforts communicating, coordinating, and cooperating with military installations surpassed what the Review Team envisioned, going far beyond simple inclusion of the military in long range planning to actual partnership with these entities, addressing connectivity, congestion, emergency management, freight, development, land use planning and more.

2. **Interested Parties – Outreach and Public Participation:** The ECRC staffed a full public involvement cadre and now has four public involvement specialists who contribute to FL-AL TPO activities, all with specific government and corporate backgrounds and all skilled in the use of electronic outreach and geospatial data tools. Given this change, the MPO has elevated its public outreach and public participation in innovative and creative ways, working with local and regional entities to maximize public engagement opportunities. Some examples include: a new social media strategy, data identification and analysis platforms, specialty landing pages for projects and programs, new Title VI/ADA compliance tracking, QR Codes to specific website pages, and public awareness videos.
3. **Interested Parties – Outreach and Public Participation:** The MPO is commended for its outreach on the West Cervantes Street project (US 98) in Pensacola. The MPO staff led innovative public involvement efforts such as: community forums, one-on-one outreach, translations (Spanish), surveys, and community open houses. This project is a major east-west connector for area commuters, freight, and local traffic, with commercial facilities lining both sides. It bisects one of Pensacola's oldest neighborhoods, primarily black and lower income. During the past decade, increasing traffic volumes and speeds caused a marked rise in the number and severity of crashes involving vulnerable users,

culminating in a tragic, high-profile accident with pedestrian fatalities in 2018. The MPO brought together many traditional and nontraditional partners that generally do not work together. Additionally, the FL-AL TPO conducted outreach on weekends and after hours, mostly at the site of the proposed project. The FL-AL TPO's level of effort to provide outreach to underserved groups and bring these partners together to address safety concerns is notable.

B. Corrective Actions

1. **Long Range Transportation Plan – Fiscal Plan/Fiscal Constraint:** In reviewing the 2045 FL-AL TPO LRTP adopted on October 14, 2020, and amended on January 31, 2021, the Federal Review Team found financial information in various formats in Chapters 5 and 7 and in Appendices F, H and I. However, the LRTP does not clearly demonstrate overall fiscal constraint in accordance with 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11).

In August 2022, the FL-AL TPO proactively developed an LRTP Addendum that clearly demonstrates fiscal constraint which would address this corrective action. **The MPO must modify the LRTP to clearly demonstrate fiscal constraint by March 31, 2023.**

C. Recommendations

1. **Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure:** In discussions with the MPO about anticipated impacts of the 2020 Census, the FL-AL TPO stated that they did not expect the MPO to expand its northern boundaries since the area in the north is rural. During the site visit discussion, the MPO indicated that the northern portion of the county remains rural at this time, and they are working to put together a rural planning group for future development in the north. The Federal Review Team recommends that considering the ongoing development in the area, the discussion of development in the northern part of the county, and because the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary encompasses the areas(s) likely to become urbanized within the next 20 years, that the MPO conduct a more in-depth analysis on whether the boundary should be expanded to the north.
2. **Safety Considerations in the Planning Process:** During the certification site visit, the Federal Review Team observed MPO outreach activities, including two public service videos created in-house by the MPO's talented public involvement staff. The Federal Review Team recommends the MPO coordinate with FDOT to educate the general public as DOT screens and implements safety solutions such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) mid-block crossings and upgraded intersections along W. Cervantes. Design and construction of safe facilities is only part of the project's challenge. To fully realize the safety benefits,

the project will likely require a robust public safety campaign. The MPO is well-suited for this task, thanks to its recent staffing of a full cadre of PI specialists.

D. Training/Technical Assistance

At the conclusion of the site visit, the Federal Review Team asked the MPO for a list of training or technical assistance needs. The MPO asserted that it is always seeking training, particularly ways of identifying and using geospatial tools to improve how the MPO gathers and presents during planning and programming activities. The MPO indicated that peer-to-peer learning opportunities in the past were beneficial for staff. It hopes it might be selected for one or more peer exchanges, to share information with other agencies in regions like the Panhandle (largely rural with intense urban concentrations, military presence, partially constrained by geography, etc.). Moreover, at least two board members asserted the importance of transportation education for elected officials, suggesting board retreats that include MPOAC. In addition, the MPO recently hired a new Title VI Coordinator and will ensure she and the entire staff receive updated nondiscrimination training as soon as possible. Finally, the MPO asks that FDOT and FHWA keep the FL-AL TPO in mind for pilot initiatives or any volunteer opportunities both here and nationally. The FL-AL MPO is willing to assist whenever and however possible. FHWA and FTA will work with the MPO to provide resources in these areas.

E. Conclusion

Based on the overall findings of the certification review, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Pensacola Transportation Management Area, which is comprised entirely by the FL-AL TPO, substantially meets the federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C subject to the MPO satisfactorily addressing the corrective action stated in this report. The MPO is encouraged to provide the FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the corrective action in accordance with the noted deadline. This certification will remain in effect until **December 2026**.

Appendix A. Summary of Risk Assessment

Florida TMA Certification Review Risk Assessment	
MPO:	FL-AL TPO
Date of Assessment:	January 2022
Cert Review Report Date:	July 2022
Topic Area	Selected for additional review?
Organization of MPO/TPO (23 CFR 450.310, 312, 314)	No
Transportation Performance Planning (23 CFR 306(a), 306(d), 314(h), 324(f), 326(c), 326(d))	Yes
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Transportation Planning Factors	No
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Air Quality	No
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Activities	No
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Transit	Yes
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)	No
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Freight Planning	No
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Security Considerations in the Planning Process	No
Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306) - Safety Considerations in the Planning Process	No
Unified Planning Work Program (23 CFR 450.308)	No
Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316) - Outreach and Public Participation	No
Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316) - Tribal Coordination	No
Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316) - Title VI and Related Requirements	No
Linking Planning and NEPA (23 CFR 450.318, 320, 324(f)(10), 324(g))	No
Congestion Management Process (23 CFR 450.322)	No
Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.324)	No
Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.324) - Travel Demand Modeling/Data	No
Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.324) - Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint	No
Transportation Improvement Program (23 CFR 450.326, 328, 330, 332, 334)	No
<p>*Note: With the exception of Transit, if all areas are a "No", then the top 3 areas will be reviewed. The additional areas are: Organization of the MPO/TPO and LRTP - Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint.</p>	

Appendix B. Site Visit Participants

FL-AL TPO

Austin Mount, ECRC
Mary Beth Washnock, ECRC
Jill Nobles, ECRC
Gary Kramer, ECRC
Mary Jo Gustave, ECRC
Tiffany Bates, ECRC
Angela Bradley, ECRC
Katie Fults, ECRC
Rae Emary, ECRC
Jill Strickler, ECRC
Dawn Schwartz, ECRC
Leandra Meredith, ECRC
Howard Vanselow, ECRC
Kathy Wetmore, ECRC
Zakkiyyah Osuigwe, Santa Rosa County
Commissioner Steven Barry, Escambia County

ECAT

Cathy Goetz

BRATS

Loren Lucas

HDR

Cory Wilkinson

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Carlos A. Gonzalez
Stacie Blizzard
Carey Shepherd
Joseph Sullivan
Aaron Dawson (Federal Team, not able to attend the site visit)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

John Crocker

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Bryant Paulk
Erika Thompson
Mike Neidhart

Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)

Bryan Fair, Barrett Dees, Brad Lindsey

MPOAC

Mark Reichert

Appendix C. TMA Certification Site Visit Agenda

**FL-AL Transportation Planning Organization
TMA Certification Review
July 19, 2022**

*4081 E. Olive Rd., Suite A
Pensacola, FL 32514*

AGENDA

Day 1 Tuesday	July 19, 2022	Webinar Link - https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7638151571228482827
Federal Certification Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Carlos A. Gonzalez (FHWA, FL), John Crocker (FTA) ➤ Stacie Blizzard (FHWA, FL), Carey Shepherd (FHWA, FL), ➤ Aaron Dawson (FHWA, AL) 	

Time (CST)	Item	Lead
8:30 a.m.	Welcome / Introductions Roles/Responsibilities/Key Activities of MPO and Transit Agency Staff	Federal Team
9:00 a.m.	Site Visit Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purpose of the Certification Process ➤ Discussion of Risk Assessment ➤ Review schedule and close-out process 	Federal Team
9:15 a.m.	Discussion of Previous Review Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Federal TMA Certification ➤ State/MPO Annual 	Federal Team, TPO, ECAT, FDOT, ALDOT
9:30 a.m.	MPO Overview including changes within MPO since last TMA Certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demographics ➤ Boundaries ➤ Political ➤ Process Changes 	Federal Team, TPO, ECAT, FDOT, ALDOT
10:00 a.m.	Break	

Time (CST)	Item	Lead
10:15 a.m.	Share Best Practices and Lessons Learned (90/Cervantes St., Innovative Public Outreach, Coordination, others...) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the MPO most proud of over the last four year? • What are examples where the FL-AL TPO led 3C multimodal planning activities? • What challenges have you encountered & addressed? 	TPO, ECAT, FDOT, ALDOT
10:45 a.m.	Technical Topic: Transit	Federal Team
11:30 a.m.	Technical Topic: Transportation Performance Management (TPM); Performance Based Planning and Programming (PBPP)	Federal Team
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	Technical Topic: Organization of the TPO	Federal Team
1:45 p.m.	Procurement Review	FHWA
2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:45 p.m.	Technical Topic: LRTP – Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint	Federal Team
3:30 p.m.	Technical Assistance & Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Future Needs ➤ Additional Questions 	Federal Team, TPO, ECAT, FDOT, ALDOT
3:45 p.m.	Preliminary Findings Discussion with Federal Team	Federal Team
4:45 p.m.	Preliminary Findings Discussion with TPO staff	All
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn Site Visit	
5:00 p.m.	Prepare for Public Meeting	
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Public Meeting Gulf Breeze Recreation Center Clay Ford Conference Room 800 Shoreline Drive Gulf Breeze, FL 32561	Webinar Link https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6451648782700550412
7:30 p.m.	Conclude Public Meeting	

Appendix D. Public Engagement Notices

Notice on the FL-AL TPO Website Prior to the Review

Florida-Alabama TPO

FEDERAL CERTIFICATION REVIEW

Every four years the [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#) and the [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\)](#) conduct a Federal Certification Review of the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (MPO). The main purpose of the review is to certify that the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization is satisfactorily meeting the planning requirements as defined in Federal laws and regulations. This process also provides FHWA and FTA the opportunity to add value to the Florida-Alabama TPO's planning process through the sharing of best practices, techniques, and/or technology.

A certification review generally consists of four primary activities:

1. a "desk audit" which is a review of the TMA's main planning process documents (LRTP, TIP, UPWP);
2. a "site visit" with staffs from the TMA's various transportation planning partners (MPO, FDOT, local/regional transit service provider(s), and other participating state/local agencies) and this includes opportunities for local elected officials and the general public to provide comments on the planning process;
3. the preparation of a "FHWA/FTA TMA Certification Review Report" that documents the certification review's findings; and
4. a formal FHWA Florida Division presentation of the review findings at a future MPO meeting.

The review process for 2022 begins July 19, 2022, with a site visit from Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration officials. Details below:

Site Visit

July 19, 2022, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Emerald Coast Regional Council
4081 E. Olive Road, Suite A
Pensacola, FL 32514

The agenda for this meeting can be found [here](#)

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Part of the review includes an opportunity for public input on how the FL-AL TPO carries out the transportation planning process. You can submit comments beginning July 19, 2022, through August 20, 2022, via the methods below:

Submit your input online via e-Comment [here](#).

- FL-AL TPO's contact information found at www.ecrc.org/FLALTPO

- The FHWA webpage - www.fhwa.dot.gov/fldiv/ma.cfm (Click Pensacola TMA)

Your comments will be submitted to Carlos A. Gonzalez, FHWA and John Crocker, PhD. You can also click here to comment: [Federal Certification Review](#)

You can participate and provide input by attending the public meeting in person or virtually.

Public Meeting:

July 19, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Gulf Breeze Recreation Center
Clay Ford Conference Room
800 Shoreline Drive
Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

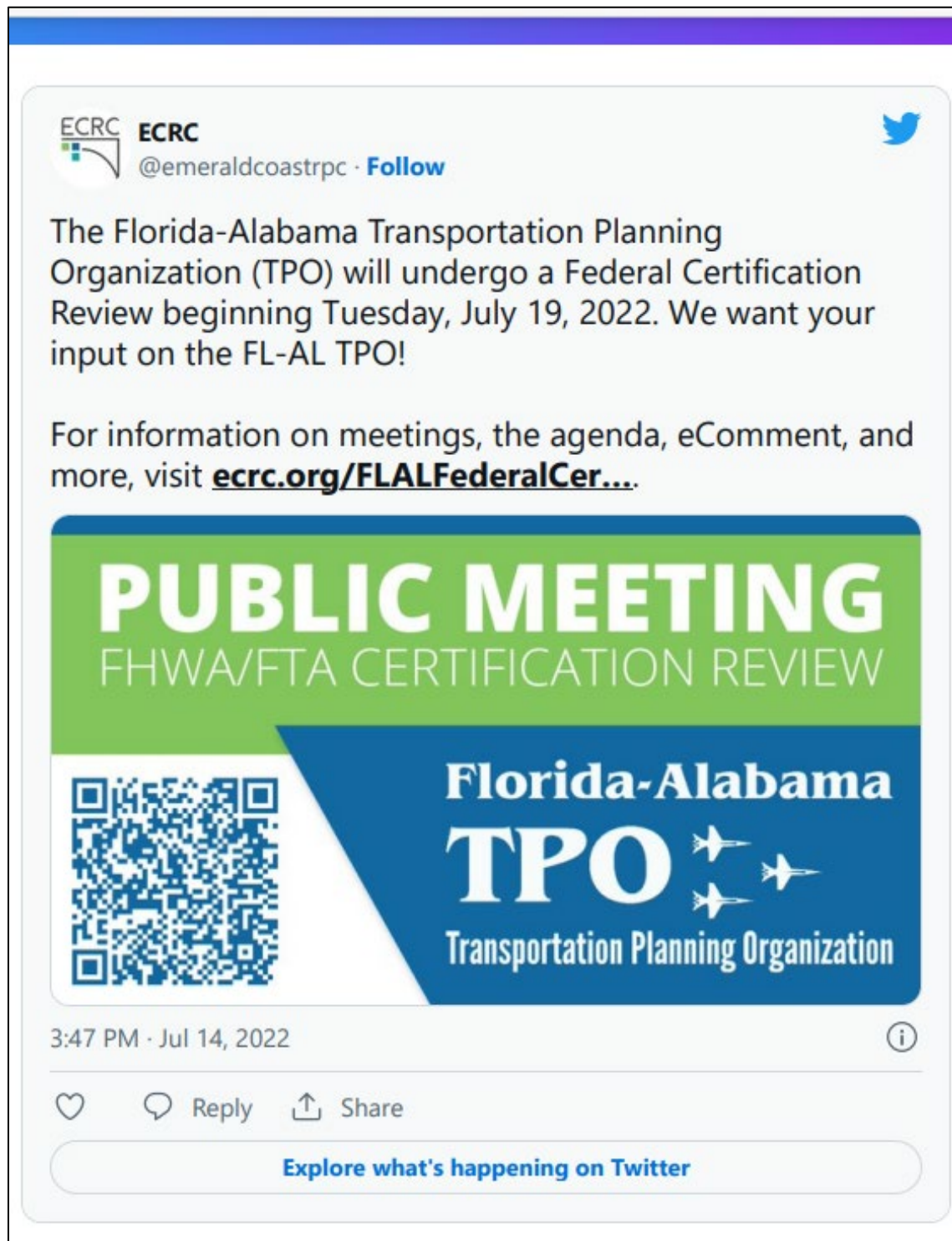
Attend virtually via GoToWebinar!

Visit www.gotostage.com/channel/ecrc and register for the FL-AL Federal Certification Public Workshop. An email confirmation will be sent.

[2018 Federal Certification Report – Final](#)

For more information please contact [Jill Nobles](#) at 850-332-7976, ext. 212.

Twitter Post (July 14, 2022)



Twitter Post (July 19, 2022)



Facebook Post (July 14, 2022)

Emerald Coast Regional Council
Published by Katie Fults · July 14 at 7:00 PM ·

The Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) will undergo a Federal Certification Review beginning Tuesday, July 19, 2022. There are many components to the Certification process and part of that is the gathering of public input.

For information on meetings, the agenda, eComment, and more, visit www.ecrc.org/FLALFederalCertification.

PUBLIC MEETING
FHWA/FTA CERTIFICATION REVIEW

Florida-Alabama TPO
Transportation Planning Organization

See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

3

Like Comment Share

Write a comment...
Press Enter to post.

Facebook Post (July 19, 2022)

**Emerald Coast Regional Council**July 19 · 🌐...

The Florida-Alabama TPO Federal Certification Review Public Meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. tonight (July 19). If you are unable to attend the meeting in person in Gulf Breeze, you can attend online. Register at www.gotostage.com/channel/ecrc to attend via Webinar!

PUBLIC MEETING

FHWA/FTA CERTIFICATION REVIEW



Florida-Alabama TPO



Transportation Planning Organization

 3

 Like  Comment  Share

FL Administrative Register (FAR)

 20220712 FAR Notice D....pdf

Notice of Meeting/Workshop Hearing

REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS West Florida Regional Planning Council

The Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) announces a public meeting to which all persons are invited.

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: Gulf Breeze Recreation Center, Clay Ford Conference Room, 800 Shoreline Dr, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED: Every four years the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct a Certification Review of the FL-AL Transportation Planning Organization's transportation planning process, as required by law. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the TPO's compliance with Federal transportation rules and regulations. Part of the review includes an opportunity for public input on how the FL-AL TPO carries out the transportation planning process. Your comments will be submitted to Carlos A. Gonzales, FHWA, and Dr. John Crocker, FTA.

You can participate and provide input by attending the public meeting in person or virtually.

To attend in person: Gulf Breeze Recreation Center, Clay Ford Conference Room, 800 Shoreline Dr, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

Join us live via GoToWebinar!

1. Visit the URL below to register and a confirmation will be emailed to you:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6451648782700550412>

2. When it's time for the webinar, click the emailed link, then choose one of the following audio options:

TO USE YOUR COMPUTER'S AUDIO:

When the Webinar begins, you will be connected to audio using your computer's microphone and speakers (VoIP). A headset is recommended.

-- OR --

TO USE YOUR TELEPHONE: If you prefer to use your phone, you must select "Use Telephone" after joining the webinar and call in using the numbers provided.

You can also submit comments beginning July 19, 2022, through August 20, 2022, via:

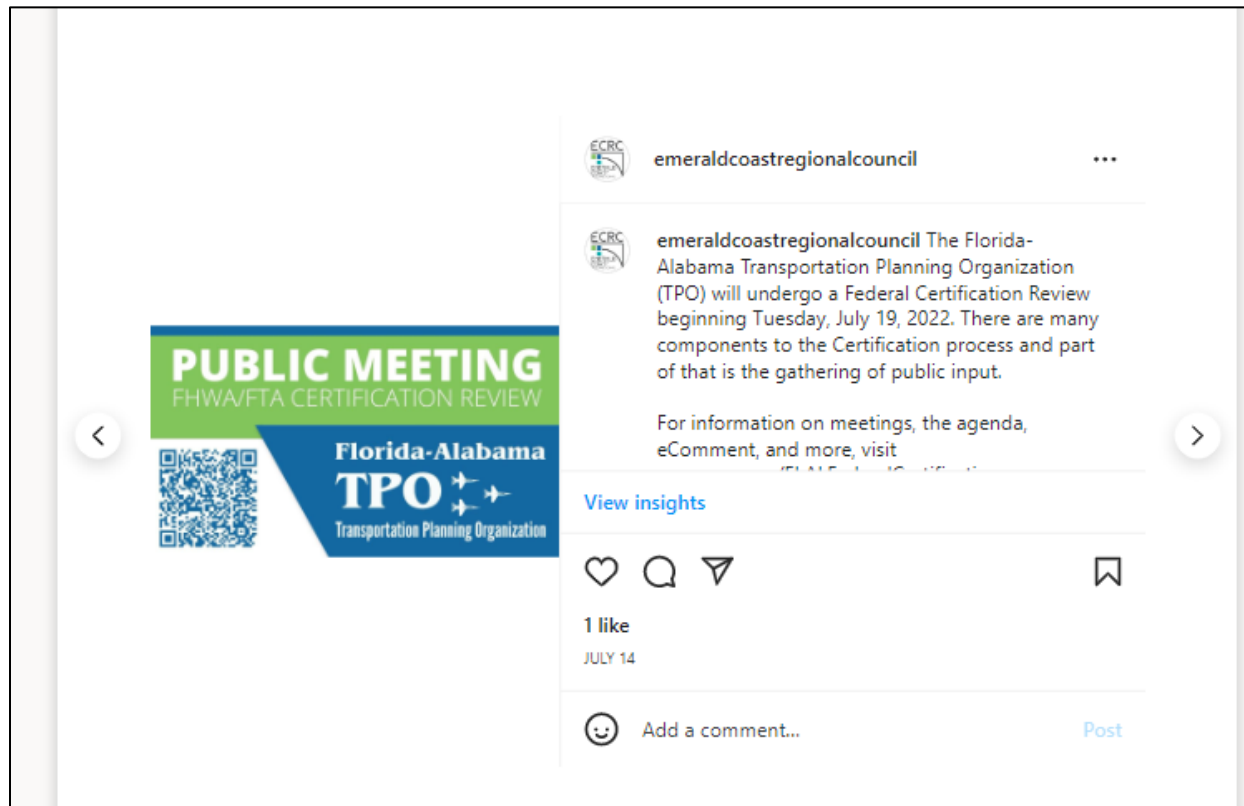
- FL-AL TPO's contact information found at www.ecrc.org/FLALTPO

- The FHWA webpage - www.fhwa.dot.gov/fldiv/ma.cfm (Click Pensacola TMA)

A copy of the agenda may be obtained by contacting: Public Involvement at publicinvolvement@ecrc.org.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this workshop/meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 48 hours before the workshop/meeting by contacting: Public Involvement at publicinvolvement@ecrc.org. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1(800)955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800)955-8770 (Voice).

Instagram



E-Mail w/ Final Agenda

From: [Jill Nobles](#)
Cc: [Transportation](#); [Public Involvement](#); [Austin Mount](#); [Carlos Gonzales](#); [John Crocker](#)
Subject: FL-AL TPO Federal Certification - Tuesday, July 19
Date: Thursday, July 14, 2022 12:01:05 PM
Attachments: [FL-AL TPO Certification Review \(July 19 2022\) - Final Agenda.pdf](#)

Florida-Alabama TPO, TCC, and CAC Members and Interested Parties,

Every four years the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct a Federal Certification Review of the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). The main purpose of the review is to certify that the Florida-Alabama TPO is satisfactorily meeting the planning requirements as defined in Federal laws and regulations. This process also provides FHWA and FTA the opportunity to add value to the Florida-Alabama TPO's planning process through the sharing of best practices, techniques, and/or technology. A certification review generally consists of four primary activities:

1. a "desk audit" which is a review of the TMA's main planning process documents (LRTP, TIP, UPWP);
2. a "site visit" with staffs from the TMA's various transportation planning partners (TPO, FDOT, local/regional transit service provider(s), and other participating state/local agencies) and this includes opportunities for local elected officials and the general public to provide comments on the planning process;
3. the preparation of a "FHWA/FTA TMA Certification Review Report" that documents the certification review's findings; and
4. a formal FHWA Florida Division presentation of the review findings at a future TPO meeting.

Site Visit (agenda attached)
July 19, 2022, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Emerald Coast Regional Council
4081 E. Olive Road, Suite A
Pensacola, FL 32514

Part of the review includes an opportunity for public input on how the FL-AL TPO carries out the transportation planning process. Your comments will be submitted to Carlos A. Gonzales, FHWA, and Dr. John Crocker, FTA.

You can participate and provide input by attending the public meeting in person or virtually.

Public Meeting
July 19, 2022 6:30 pm
Gulf Breeze Recreation Center
Clay Ford Conference Room
800 Shoreline Drive

Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

Join us live via GoToWebinar!

1. Visit the URL below to register and a confirmation will be emailed to you:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6451648782700550412>
2. When it's time for the webinar, click the emailed link, then choose one of the following audio options:

TO USE YOUR COMPUTER'S AUDIO:

When the Webinar begins, you will be connected to audio using your computer's microphone and speakers (VoIP). A headset is recommended.

-- OR --

TO USE YOUR TELEPHONE:

If you prefer to use your phone, you must select "Use Telephone" after joining the webinar and call in using the numbers provided.

You can also submit comments beginning July 12, 2022, through August 11, 2022, via:

- FL-AL TPO's contact information found at www.ecrc.org/FLALTPO
- The FHWA webpage - www.fhwa.dot.gov/fldiv/ma.cfm (Click Pensacola TMA)

Sincerely,

Jill L. Nobles
Transportation Planner



Working to preserve and enhance the quality of life in northwest Florida.

PO Box 11399, Pensacola, FL 32524
850-332-7976, ext. 212 | Fax: 850-637-1923
ecrc.org

Appendix E. Summary of Public Feedback

FHWA and FTA would like to thank everyone who participated in and contributed comments for the FL-AL TPO TMA Certification Review. Public comments are a vital element of the certification review, as they allow citizens to provide direct input on the transportation planning process for their transportation planning area. The in-person and virtual meeting had three participants, who complimented the MPO for its work coordinating with local governments and residents of the area. One participant praised the MPO for its ability to work with local governments and residents, educating them about the transportation planning process, and answering questions about upcoming or ongoing transportation projects. One of the attendees was a Santa Rosa County Commissioner. He indicated that FL-AL TPO staff regularly attends city and county meetings, and they seamlessly provide responses to questions from the public about transportation processes or projects. We received three additional comments were received during the 30-day public comment period following the public meeting date/site visit date. One comment criticized the FL-AL TPO and the FDOT wasting Federal transportation dollars on unnecessary highway expansion projects and for merely checking the boxes instead of truly engaging the public. The other comment focused on US 98, specifically on how FL-AL TPO and FDOT should re-consider widening it into Alabama. The final comment lauded the professionalism of the organization and its staff. We have reviewed all comments and have taken them into consideration throughout the writing of this report. The public meeting minutes and the public comments received begin below.

Hybrid Public Meeting (In Person and Virtual), July 19, 2022

In-Person

Dave Piech, Santa Rosa County Commissioner (USAF Colonel, retired)

Drew Wright, CAC Member (USAF Colonel, retired)

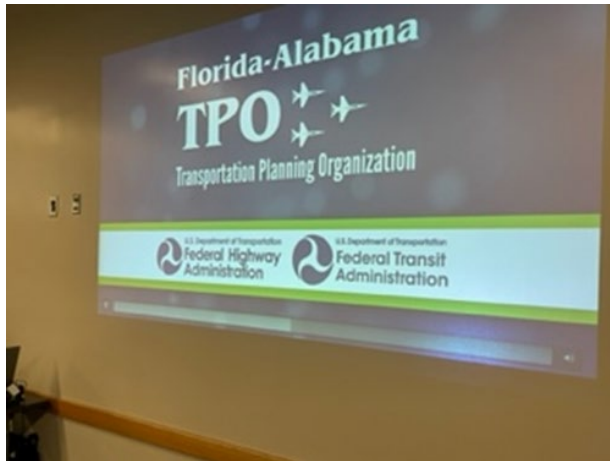
Councilman Vernon Compton, City of Milton

Virtual

Robert Mullins

Brad Lindsey

Brittany Ellers



The public meeting as part of the 2022 FL-AL TPO Certification Review, held in Gulf Breeze at the community center on Shoreline Drive, began at 6:30 p.m. The FL-AL TPO and FDOT staff were present. Comment cards displaying the MPO logo provided to all interested parties. Carlos and the MPO encouraged use of the cards or commenting virtually. Comment period closes 30 days from 7.18.22 (08-18-2022).

Carlos Gonzalez explained the certification process taking place every four years.

FTA and FHWA conduct the review through desk audit and a site visit. Emphasis of this meeting was to get the public to provide input as to how the FL-AL TPO is carrying out the transportation planning process. The meeting did not address specific projects, though FDOT and MPO staff were in the room to help with those questions. Primarily, the purpose of the public meeting was to obtain input on the process.

Public Comments

Dave Piech, Retired US Air Force Colonel

Mr. Piech said the FL-AL TPO staff was very patient when he first became an MPOMPO Board member, educating him about the transportation planning process. He now understands the process and can communicate intelligently about the topic. When he brings up a question in a meeting, the MPO staff quickly provides information on the issue. Mr. Piech said the FL-AL TPO gathers and provides information promptly to those who request and need it.

Review Team Question: *What advice would you offer to the MPO, if any?*

Santa Rosa County is growing exponentially, and the county does not always keep FDOT and the MPO informed on what the county is doing – purchasing land, etc. The MPOMPO can continue advising and serving as an information conduit between FDOT and local/ regional partners for transportation planning activities.

Drew Wright, Retired US Air Force Colonel

Mr. Wright was appointed to the CAC about 2 years ago. He said the MPO taught him how the transportation process works and how the CAC helps advance processes. Mr. Wright said the effort the MPO puts into getting information out to the public in different ways is fantastic. The MPO does everything they can to encourage folks to participate in planning processes. For the Cervantes Street project, the MPO staff worked diligently to inform, educate, convene, and have public forums.

Vernon Compton

Mr. Compton is Councilman for the City of Milton and has been involved with the MPO for about 10 years as the Chairman of the CAC. Mr. Compton said all training he received opened his eyes to the planning process and how the MPO balances the needs versus the limited funds. He lauded the MPO's works with partners to address modal issues and complicated project prioritization with limited funds. He said the MPO does a good job reaching out and getting the public involved. He concluded by saying that as Councilman it's hard to see projects undone in MPO areas while currently the City of Milton is considering implementing the same projects.

Review Team Question: *How has the MPO effectively engaged small and rural communities. From your perspective and going forward, what advice would you give?*

Several things have been effective. The MPO strives to take everything to every place in the county. It ensures that all communities have an opportunity input. The second thing is education, the MPO provided CAC members with public opportunities to learn lessons from other MPOs. That includes road trips to learn what other cities are doing well. Learning about ITS management is one example. We visited the control system and the improvements to Monroe Street. Another thing, the MPO ensures the public is not only welcome, but they encourage people to attend symposiums to hear and interact with experts to discuss all aspects of transportation planning. Those are examples of how the MPO engages small and rural communities.

Robert Mullins (virtual)

Mr. Mullins said that there is a need for public comment that is easily accessible to FDOT. Unfortunately, the legalese is quite difficult to understand. The only other thing I have to say is that it is not hard to put things out for the public using Microsoft tools.

Question from Mr. Mullins to the Review Team: *When an issue goes up to FDOT and then up to the federal roads from the public, how is that translated back to the community? If someone has a road problem on state or federal road, how is that translated back to the public?*

Bryant Paulk (FDOT) responded: Depending on where the concern comes from, we provide a response to the commenter or complainant. Sometimes in a broad manner, sometimes to the MPO, who responds to the member of the public. This is state and federal – FHWA retains oversight, but FDOT is responsible for those roads and must provide the response.

Comments Received During the 30-Day Comment Period

Richard Guman via e-mail to FHWA on July 17, 2022

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Jill Nobles](#)
Subject: FL-AL TPO Federal Certification eComment Card [#2]
Date: Sunday, July 17, 2022 8:39:13 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Name * Richard Guman

Zip Code * 32503

Please share your thoughts below: *

FHWA's states goal is "to reduce transportation related fatalities and serious injuries across the transportation system, and for this reason it fully supports the vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on the Nation's roads."

Unfortunately, the Florida–Alabama TPO and FDOT District 3 do not seem to be very committed to this agenda. Federal transportation dollars are being wasted on unsafe and unnecessary highway expansion projects and sprawl in a way that destroys the economic vitality of local communities (see: US–90 through Downtown Milton and US–98 x West Cervantes Street in Pensacola). The public input process is a farse— a mere box to be checked instead of a real effort to engage with and learn from the public.

Decisions seem to be made by an unelected and out of touch bureaucrats in Chipley, FL instead of by the people of Northwest Florida and South Alabama.

Please carefully investigate the processes of the Florida–Alabama TPO and FDOT D3. Something is seriously broken.

Patrick McClellan via e-mail to FHWA on July 18, 2022

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Jill Nobles](#)
Subject: FL-AL TPO Federal Certification eComment Card [#3]
Date: Monday, July 18, 2022 6:02:09 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Name *	Patrick McClellan
Address *	<input type="checkbox"/> 5939 No. Bay Point Dr. Pensacola , Florida 32507 United States
Email (optional)	pat@florabama.com
Phone Number (optional)	(850) 393-1818

Please share your thoughts below: *

Having been member of our Citizens Advisory Committee, I found it rather distressing that the boundaries into Alabama fell short of addressing the future transportation needs re. major corridors into Florida, specifically west of Lillian Bridge on U.S. 98! While Perdido Key Dr. (SR 292) is now under jurisdiction of the County that major corridor seems to be destined to remain 2-lanes! And while the TPO has diligently put plans to 4-lane other major corridors such as Blue Angel Pkwy AND rest of U.S. 98 it abruptly goes back to 2-lanes in Alabama. While we've given the blessing to 1, possibly two major bridges out of Orange Beach, once they drop north, we have no idea how they will connect to either the Foley Beach Express or US 98!? Obviously US 98 needs to be 4-laned to help ease congestion in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores and to be able to direct traffic into Pensacola, thus easing the constant congestion that exists presently and will only get worse on Perdido Key Dr.!! Thought FL/AL meant working together to address our future transportation needs!? Turns out everything Orange Beach/Baldwin County requests gets a rubber stamp as they always have the funding available! TPO needs to expand its boundaries to effectively and logically address our future transportation issues!

Thank You!

Sincerely,

John Robie via e-mail to FHWA on July 19, 2022

From:	
To:	
Subject:	FL-AL TPO Federal Certification eComment Card [#4]
Date:	Tuesday, July 19, 2022 10:25:38 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Name *	John Robie
Address *	<input type="checkbox"/> 704 Pickens Avenue Pensacola, FL 32503 United States
Email (optional)	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number (optional)	(404) 641-6191
Please share your thoughts below: *	
<p>I'd like to provide comments in support of the FL-AL TPO recertification. As a member of the CAC, I have been impressed at the professionalism of the organization, the quality of its work, the presence of the organization in the community, and the high quality of communication through email and the TPO website. As a relatively new member of the TPO CAC, staff have gone out of their way to educate me about TPO processes, respond to inquiries, and really lean in to public outreach and involvement. I'm happy that our area has such a high functioning organization assisting and informing local government.</p>	

Comments Received through Social Media

The July 14th and July 19th Facebook posts generated a total of six likes and zero shares. Twitter posts on July 14th and July 19th generated a total of zero likes and zero shares. Instagram post on July 4th generated one like.

Appendix F. Status of Previous Certification Findings

The following is a summary of the previous corrective actions and recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to the FL-AL TPO. The MPO's last certification review report was published in December 2018.

A. Corrective Actions

- 1. Outreach and Public Participation:** In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a), the FL-AL TPO's PPP does not have all the required elements for public involvement, specifically: explanation of how the plan was developed in consultation with other interested parties; description of the visualization techniques utilized in the LRTP and TIP; indicate timeframes for public review and comment on key planning documents, including the minimum public comment period of 45 days for PPP changes; describe strategies for seeking out and considering the needs of the traditionally underserved, minorities, and those with low incomes; nor does the document fully discuss strategies for periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the PPP. While the MPO has sporadically collected data in PPP Assessments and Outreach Tracking Reports, the PPP is unclear as to how this information is used to influence decision making. Moreover, the MPO's measures appear largely quantitative but without the corresponding baseline, target numbers and timelines that would indicate program success or challenges cannot be assessed. **The MPO must update the PPP by June 30, 2019, ensuring that it contains each requirement and that it accurately reflects the delivery of the planning program.**

Update: The MPO took necessary actions to resolve the corrective action. FHWA/FTA sent formal correspondence on September 20, 2019, confirming that the corrective action had been satisfied.

B. Recommendations

- 1. MPO Structure:** The WFRPC (Now ECRC) provides staff services for three separate Florida MPOs. When several organizations share resources, it is important to distinguish with both staff and the public, the roles, and responsibilities for each of the three separate MPOs and the [ECRC]. Additionally, while standardized templates increase efficiency, the final adopted documents should reflect the unique identity and needs of each MPO. The Federal Review Team recommends that staff continue to strengthen the distinct identity and role of the FL-AL MPO, emphasizing this region's unique traits, challenges, and stakeholders.

Update: The FL-AL TPO, the Bay County MPO, and the Okaloosa Walton MPO. have their own name, Board, location, and identity. Because the three MPOs are connected across one region, there are many similarities between them. They all share the same corridors, military bases, and tourism presence, and even resiliency challenges. The RPC strives to allow each MPO have its own identity,

which they do, but also bridging the common bonds together to create a less confusing work product for the public.

2. **Transit:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO continue regular coordination with the area transit providers to identify needs and ensure that the providers are fully integrated into the planning process. This includes agreements, public and stakeholder outreach/participation; transit studies; and project development, selection, and programming.

Update: The FL-AL TPO staff coordinates with transit providers on a regular basis to ensure they are integrated into the planning process. The MPO has assisted with Transit Development Plans, Orange Beach feasibility study, participated in Mass Transit Advisor Committee meetings, participated in Gulf Coast Rail working group, ADA bus stop accessibility plan and serve on Transit Advisory Group. Staff also helped with draft Transit Asset Management targets, various outreach events such as dump the “Dump and Pump” marketing campaigns.

3. **Outreach and Public Participation:** The Federal Review Team recommends the MPO overhaul its website so that documents, tools, resources and contacts are easily located and used. The MPO might also find it helpful to survey various community groups to test the updated website to ensure it is usable by both the tech savvy as well as those who have limited computer skills.

Update: Staff for the MPO rebranded and launched an entirely new site in 2019. Using new content management software, the MPO streamlined document organization, staff/board/committee member listings, quick links, and overall website navigation. Contemporary design elements and typography added visual diversity to provide transparent information hierarchies. The website underwent rigorous planning and testing internally as well as with partners. The website is regularly maintained and monitored for improvement potential.

4. **Outreach and Public Participation:** To better understand the needs and values of its communities, the Federal Review Team recommends the FL-AL TPO consider layering demographic maps over its priorities. This activity will not only help the MPO with targeting the nature and locations of its outreach and activities, but also in demonstrating equity and nondiscrimination in project planning and ranking.

Update: Public Involvement staff teamed with transportation planners and GIS coordinators to identify, test, and implement software or new methods of mapping to better explain project implications to members of our communities. Programs such as ArcGIS Story maps and the ESRI PowerPoint Plug-In have proved invaluable tools to prepare the public and the Boards for responsible decision-making.

5. **Outreach and Public Participation:** The regulations do not prohibit the use of a separate public involvement plan for LRTP development. However, the Federal Review Team recommends the FL-AL TPO should review such documents to ensure that they do not conflict with the overall guiding document, the PPP. Further, to the extent the MPO uses an LRTP-specific outreach plan, the MPO still needs to measure activities for effectiveness, reporting the outcome of involvement efforts and how they shaped or influenced the LRTP.

Update: Included in a major PPP update adopted in May 2019, staff specifically outlined plans for conducting, analyzing, and documenting public outreach efforts during LRTP processes. Then, in 2020, the Public Involvement team modified the language around LRTP-specific Disproportionate Impact Mitigation assessments.

6. **Long Range Transportation Plan – Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint:** Noting that the 2015 LRTP does not allocate any transit funding or projects to Baldwin County over the plan’s horizon period, the Federal Review Team recommends expanding coordination efforts with BRATS and other stakeholders, such as Orange Beach, to include long-term project development.

Update: For the 2045 LRTP (adopted in 2020), BRATS was included as a member of the Steering Committee; the City of Orange Beach Planner was the Chairman of the Steering Committee; and ALDOT provided revenue projections, including Transit, for use in the LRTP Needs and Cost Feasible Plan projects. Bicycle/Pedestrian and Roadway Projects were included for the Lillian Area and Orange Beach Area. The City of Orange Beach also identified the Wolf Bay Bridge as a locally funded project. BRATS worked with ECAT as a direct recipient to draw down the transit funds. An Express Bus Route from Pensacola to Orange Beach was identified as a Needed Project during the peak summer season. Lastly, Baldwin County provided local match to federal funds for the Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects in Lillian.

Appendix G. Acronym List

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act	NTI – National Transit Institute
AQ – Air Quality	PEA – Planning Emphasis Area
CAAA – Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990	PL – Metropolitan Planning Funds
CFP – Cost Feasible Plan (of the LRTP)	PPP – Public Participation Plan
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations	RA – Regional Administrator
CMAQ – Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality	RTIP – Regional Transportation Implementation Plan
CMP – Congestion Management Process	RTP – Regional Transportation Plan
DA – Division Administrator	SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
DBE – Disadvantaged Business Enterprises	RPC – Regional Planning Council
DHHS – Department of Health and Human Services	SFY – State Fiscal Year
EJ – Environmental Justice	SHA – State Highway Administration
ETDM – Efficient Transportation Decision Making	SHSP – Strategic Highway Safety Plan
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency	SIP – State Implementation Plan
FAST Act – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act	SOP – Standard Operating Procedures
FDOT – Florida Department of Transportation	SOV – Single Occupancy Vehicle
FHWA – Federal Highway Administration	SPR – State Planning and Research
FTA – Federal Transit Administration	STIP – Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
FY – Federal Fiscal Year	STP – Surface Transportation Program
GIS – Geographic Information Systems	TAM – Transit Asset Management
HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program	TAMP – Transportation Asset Management Plan
HPMS Reviews – Highway Performance Monitoring System	TAZ – Transportation Analysis Zone
ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act	TCM – Transportation Control Measure
ITS – Intelligent Transportation Systems	TDM – Transportation Demand Management
LEP – Limited English Proficiency	TDP – Transit Development Plan
LRTP – Long Range Transportation Plan	TEA-21 – Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
M&O – Management and Operations	TIP – Transportation Improvement Program
MAP-21 – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century	Title VI – Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement	TMA – Transportation Management Area
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding	TMIP – Travel Model Improvement Program
MPA – Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary	TPA – Transportation Planning Agency
MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization	TPCB – Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program
MPOAC – Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council	TPM – Transportation Performance Management
NAAQS-National Ambient Air Quality Standards	TPO – Transportation Planning Organization
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act	UAB – Urban Area Boundary
NHI – National Highway Institute	UPWP – Unified Planning Work Plan
NHS – National Highway System	U.S.C. – United States Code
	UZA – Urbanized Areas
	VMT – Vehicle Miles Traveled