



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Transit
Administration

REGION IX
Arizona, California,
Hawaii, Nevada, Guam
American Samoa,
Northern Mariana Islands

201 Mission Street
Suite 2210
San Francisco, CA 94105-1838
415-744-3133
415-744-2728 (fax)

APR 27 2005

The Honorable Mufi Hannemann
Mayor
Honolulu Hale
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Mayor Hannemann:

Thank you for meeting with me during my recent business trip to Honolulu. In our meeting, you outlined efforts and activities underway to develop and advance a major transit capital investment project to address traffic congestion on Oahu.

I was pleased to hear that the State Legislature is making progress to enable the creation of a new stable revenue source to support such an investment project. Under the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) "New Starts" Program, in order for a proposed project to advance beyond alternative analysis and a draft environmental impact statement, FTA requires that such projects be supported by an acceptable degree of local financial commitment, including evidence of stable and dependable financing sources to construct, operate and maintain the transit system.

I understand that Honolulu intends to conduct alternative analysis on a high capacity transportation system between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. In addition, Honolulu's preliminary concept in analyzing a fixed guideway high capacity transit alternative may include an option that implements the first segment of a fixed guideway without federal funds. While such an approach is a local decision, I would note that other transit project sponsors throughout the nation similarly have constructed the initial operating segments of their fixed guideway systems without FTA assistance.

My staff and I have enjoyed a fine working relationship with Honolulu in the past and look forward to working with your Administration to expand transportation mobility options on Oahu.

Sincerely,


Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

REGION IX
Arizona, California,
Hawaii, Nevada, Guam
American Samoa,
Northern Mariana Islands

201 Mission Street
Suite 2210
San Francisco, CA 94105-1839
415-744-3133
415-744-2726 (fax)

DEC 29 2003

RECEIVED
JAN 2 - 2004

OMPO

Mr. Gordon Lum
Executive Director
Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization
Ocean View Center, Suite 200
707 Richards Street
Honolulu, HI 96813-4623

Re: 2003 OMPO Certification Review Report

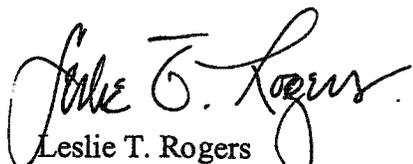
Dear Mr. Lum:

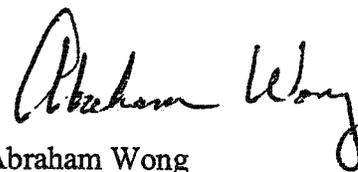
The final report for the 2003 Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO) Certification Review is enclosed. This review and evaluation conducted was conducted in accordance with 49 CFR 450.334. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) jointly certify the transportation planning process in the Oahu metropolitan area. This certification remains in effect for three years, or until the next required federal review.

There are no corrective actions identified, however, there are five recommendations in areas of concern that will require attention. FTA and FHWA will review the OMPO's progress in these areas beginning with the next upcoming Intermodal Planning Group meeting.

We thank OMPO for its cooperation during the certification review. If you have any questions on the report, please call either Donna Turchie at 415-744-2737 or Jonathan Young at 808-541-2700, extension 325.

Sincerely,


Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration


Abraham Wong
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Enclosure

Oahu Metropolitan Area 2003 Certification Review Report

SUMMARY

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly reviewed and evaluated the transportation planning process conducted by the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO) and its partners for the Oahu Metropolitan area on April 29-30, 2003.

The review team determined that the planning process conducted by OMPO and its partners meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.334; therefore, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify the transportation planning process in the Oahu Metropolitan area. This certification remains in effect for three years, or until the next required federal review.

While the team cites no corrective actions in this review report for failure by the area to satisfy either statutes or regulations related to metropolitan transportation planning, the Federal Team identifies five areas of recommendations for improvement. Progress on these recommendations will be evaluated with the next Intermodal Planning Group Meeting.

Review Team

The Federal review team consisted of the following participants:

Federal Highway Administration

Bruce Turner, Division Office, Hawaii

Jonathan Young, Division Office, Hawaii

Federal Transit Administration

Leslie Rogers, Region IX, San Francisco

Ray Sukys, Region IX, San Francisco

Donna Turchie, Region IX, San Francisco

As part of the on-site review, the Federal team met with staff and others representing OMPO and its partner agencies involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. This included: OMPO Executive Director, Gordon Lum; Department of Transportation Services (DTS) of the City and County of Honolulu Director, Cheryl Soon; Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) Director, Rodney Haraga; and various members of the OMPO Policy Committee and/or their staffs.

The Federal team conducted an evening meeting for members of the public to provide comments on the transportation planning process in the Oahu metropolitan area. The meeting was held at a centrally located school cafeteria.

Background

Pursuant to 23 CFR section 450.334(b), every three years the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration must jointly certify that the transportation planning process conducted by OMPO is addressing the major issues facing the area and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements listed under 23 CFR section 450.334(a). This review consisted of three primary activities: a site visit that included input from the public and local officials, a desk review of planning products, and preparation of this report summarizing the review and its findings. This review focused on compliance with federal regulations, challenges, successes, and issues surrounding the relationship between the MPO, State DOT and the transit operator in the conduct of the metropolitan planning process. Certification review guidelines provide reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect local issues and needs. As a consequence, the scope and depth of the certification review reports can vary.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a local metropolitan planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other processes provide opportunities for federal review and comment, including federal approval of the Overall Work Program and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Other less formal contacts provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process as well. The results of these other processes provide a contextual baseline for the certification review process.

While the planning Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the "finding" of this certification review, in fact, is based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare certification reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices and content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed.

The OMPO review consisted of three parts: a desk review of products and information produced by OMPO; a site visit with OMPO, HDOT, and DTS, including a public meeting, and report preparation. As part of the desk review, the team provided a questionnaire to OMPO for written response. The issues researched included the Overall Work Program, Public Involvement, Title VI and Environmental Justice, Financial Constraint, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Regional Transportation Plan, Planning Agreements and Coordination, Program Delivery and Project Management, Congestion Management System, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Planning Factors and Planning Emphasis Areas, Planning Studies, Freight, and Other Issues. OMPO's written response prior to the site visit allowed the Federal team to focus its effort during the site visit. The desk review also included OMPO's progress since the site visit.

The Oahu metropolitan area includes the entire island of Oahu which consists of one county, the City and County of Honolulu. The area is in attainment of air quality standards.

Findings and Recommendations

The Federal Team recognizes that OMPO has made progress since its last certification review in 2000. OMPO completed its Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Regional Architecture on April 17, 2003, in advance of the federal deadline of February 7, 2005. In early 2003, OMPO began action to ensure the next regional transportation plan or ORTP is on track for adoption within the federally required 5-year cycle. OMPO has scheduled award of a contract for the development of the ORTP's by April 2004. OMPO expects this course of action will help avoid the lapse date of April 6, 2006. OMPO's *Guide to Public Involvement* was recently updated. OMPO receives public input from an organized Citizen Advisory Committee and a variety of other means. OMPO is updating its Title VI/Environmental Justice database with 2000 Census data and is also developing an internet Geographic Information Systems tool for OMPO's participating agencies to use. The timeliness of the work done for its Overall Work Program can be substantially attributed to the addition of one staff person since the last certification review.

While there are no corrective actions as a result of this certification review, the Federal Team is not without reservations and as a result strongly recommends improvement in five areas. The recommendations are in the areas of: financial constraint, project prioritization process, congestion management systems (CMS), public involvement, and for OMPO to participate in the Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program. Progress in these areas will be reviewed annually at the IPG meeting held each Spring.

With regard to financial constraint, OMPO should collaborate with HDOT and DTS to identify more accurate funding estimates. These estimates should be developed in advance of RTP and TIP development to better ensure financial constraint and to promote financial planning. **If new revenue sources are required, programming of projects that are reliant on these new sources should be deferred until these sources are firmly established.**

The federal team notes that Oahu transportation continues to be hampered by growing congestion with little progress in the delivery of large transit and highway projects from the long range transportation plan. OMPO should consider actions that emphasize project readiness prior to programming projects. OMPO could assist partner agencies, such as HDOT and DTS, to reach early agreement in developing projects and maintain those agreements through the development of a project. The current lack of agreement and coordination results in delay and in some cases project termination. For example, DTS' Primary Corridor Transportation Project is shown in the ORTP as fully funded. However, local and other funding was not fully available. This has resulted in project reduction to an initial operating segment.

OMPO should emphasize short range planning, spanning at least 5 to 6 years, with its partners. Projects not identified in a short range plan should have reduced consideration for future programming in the metropolitan TIP. Short range planning provides the linkage to

an orderly and systematic project selection from the ORTP. Also, OMPO's project selection/evaluation criteria should emphasize project readiness to enhance project delivery. OMPO currently has no project selection criteria for transit; and highway project criteria were developed but need further refinement and should be fully implemented to improve decision making.

OMPO should increase its role in monitoring progress of TIP projects. Also, OMPO should set forth clear schedules to HDOT so the state can secure FTA's Section 5303 planning funds. Continuing delays by HDOT is seriously affecting this program and resolution is necessary. The Federal team plans to address this matter during its consideration of future state planning findings.

Increased cooperation between DTS and HDOT needs to be developed to ensure full implementation of the local CMS. Existing CMS-related activities by DTS and HDOT appear to be carried out independently and are limited to a few specific projects, corridors, or strategies. OMPO leadership is necessary to promote collaboration in the CMS process. Specific activities associated with data collection, data analyses, problem identification, strategy development, project implementation, and performance evaluation is essential. OMPO should consider functioning as a central *clearinghouse* for data collection and analyses.

With regard to public involvement, it is recommended that OMPO consider holding meetings between the policy committee (PC) and citizens advisory committee (CAC) to discuss issues raised by the CAC. OMPO should consider ways to enhance the CAC role in the planning process such as regular reporting by the CAC at PC meetings, and/or including the CAC Chair as a voting or nonvoting member of the PC.

Finally, it is recommended that OMPO staff take advantage of opportunities provided by the Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program (TPCB). This joint FTA/FHWA effort provides educational resources, best practice information with examples, and peer-to-peer exchanges designed to assist MPO staff and leadership in addressing their metropolitan planning responsibilities.

In particular, it is strongly recommended that OMPO seek assistance from the TPCB in the following areas:

- Short range planning - obtain guidance on developing and implementing successful short range planning efforts that allow concepts identified in the long range transportation plan to be advanced successfully and expeditiously to the TIP and project development stage.
- Project selection criteria – continue to review experiences and examples on developing successful criteria to select projects for inclusion in the TIP, consistent with and as part of the metropolitan planning process.
- Program delivery and monitoring - seek guidance and examples on establishing interagency coordination methods and project evaluation techniques that identify, evaluate, and address obstacles to project development and implementation, while

also allowing the MPO to monitor the overall implementation of the TIP and the long range transportation plan.

- CMS development – continue to identify examples and methods of cost effective means of enhancing MPO transportation system monitoring abilities, and alternative approaches to system performance evaluation to support the regional transportation planning process.
- Freight planning - review a range of approaches that various organizations have taken to involve the goods movement community in the metropolitan planning process, and seek assistance in evaluating practices and methods that would provide the most benefit given local context and opportunities.

OMPO staff should contact Ted Matley of FTA Region IX for information on the TPCB to address this recommendation.

Attachment A – Comments received as part of the Certification Review

Oahu Metropolitan Area 2003 Certification Review Report

Attachment A

Public Meeting Summary

A meeting for the general public was conducted April 29, 2003 from 6:00-8:00 PM at Kalaukua Middle School. A brief summary of comments follows.

John Dell

- New education effort is needed for newly elected and appointed officials.
- Over 100 public meetings have been held discussing the public's views for the island. Plans have been made to move forward. Now, the newly elected officials want to start all over again with feasibility studies.
- The transportation system on Oahu is good, but with new population and land use development come the need for a system to move people with the least resistance.
- He is not for or against automobiles or any one mode or form of transportation.
- There is limited space available for transportation.
- He is looking for innovations in providing the transportation needed on Oahu.

C. C. Curry

- There is corruption in the "process" to the point that politicians are in prison.
- The lack of attendance by the public and more neighborhood boards is indicative of lack of interest in the planning process.
- She would like the CAC to have a voting member on the PC.
- The neighborhood board process is owned by the City, so the fox is guarding the henhouse.
- Health and safety issues are life and death issues literally, and are being ignored.
- She asked for names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses from the Federal team, and was provided with that info.

Tom Heinrich

- Do things better with transportation; he also is not against automobiles.
- A real success story in transportation is the A&B City Express service.
- He is concerned that there is much public turnout in many cases, but no follow-up meetings with the public to keep them informed on the progress or outcomes from their input.
- Would like to have more continuous meetings to keep abreast.
- Appreciates openness and availability of OMPO, DTS, and HDOT to being called for information.

- Credits Gordon Lum and OMPO staff on a good relationship with the neighborhood boards.
- Feels that the CAC meetings are not effective meetings for him because they don't result in changes or decisions. The CAC meetings should be much more open and accessible.
- Suggested that OMPO have a newsletter on current efforts, issues, status, contacts, etc. for big projects (eg. >\$1M.) He also suggested that OMPO have an interactive website to view various levels of infrastructure, proposed projects, schedules, etc.
- The PC is too restrictive and intimidating for the public – the time of day for PC meetings is poor, the allotted time (one minute) for comment is too short, the input is too late, and the PC already has its mind made up.
- He suggested that OMPO videotape important meetings for playback on TV at a number of times for those who cannot make meetings.

Dan Neyer

- He complained that all TIP projects end up being between Kaimuki and Waipahu, and that services need to be put beyond the end of this corridor, where people live, such as Mililani.

Pat Lee

- He said he is impressed with OMPO's efforts to include all of the population in its processes.

Dennis Russak

- He wanted to know the termini and other information for the BRT and potential light rail. Kate Diggle, DTS, offered to talk to him and to exchange contact information after the meeting.