



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
819 TAYLOR STREET, ROOM 8A36
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-9003

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
300 E. 8TH STREET
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

June 7, 2007

Refer to: HPP-TX

Issuance of Final Joint Rulemaking on FTA/FHWA
Metropolitan & Statewide Planning Regulations

Mr. James Randall, P. E.
Director, Transportation Planning and Program Division
Texas Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 149217
Austin, Texas 78714-9217

Mr. Eric L. Gleason,
Director, Public Transportation Division
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

Dear Mr. Randall:

On February 14, 2007, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a joint set of final rules pertaining to the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes as required under title 23 USC 134 and 135. The final rule became effective on March 16, 2007 and revises regulations governing the development of metropolitan transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas, State transportation plans and programs and the regulations for the Congestion Management Process required within Transportation Management Areas (TMA). While the final rule generally follows the statutory language and terminology of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), there are some notable changes (e.g., fiscal constraint) which were not previously identified in our discussions with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). We will continue to work with your office and the MPOs to address these issues.

The following is a link to an electronic version of the final rule:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/07-493.pdf>

Over the past year our staff has met with your staff, TxDOT's District staff and MPO staff to review changes stemming from SAFETEA-LU. The intent of these meetings was to identify actions and revisions to our current Statewide and Metropolitan planning provisions to ensure timely compliance with the provision of SAFETEA-LU and the final rule. In accordance with the phase-in requirements of the final rule, Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP) and non-administrative STIP amendments adopted or approved after July 1, 2007 must be based on a Statewide and Metropolitan planning processes meeting the requirements of the final rule. In support of our expected FY 2008-2011 STIP approval in October 2007, we request that TxDOT and the MPOs provide documentation summarizing their actions to comply with the final rule provisions. This documentation should be submitted with the FY 2008-2011 STIP submittal, but is not intended to be a part of the STIP or TIPS. As we have discussed, early submission of this documentation is encouraged, so that we may review and if necessary recommend follow-up action by the MPOs and TxDOT to ensure timely approval of the FY 2008-2011 STIP.

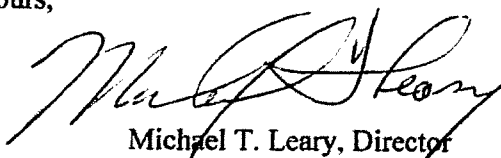
Enclosed is a draft of the documentation being developed by the Austin MPO to summarize their efforts to comply with the provisions of the final rule. Please note that the documentation and applicable planning provisions will vary by MPO (e.g., TMA status and non-attainment designation).

Please forward copies of this letter to Texas' MPOs for their information and action. For questions and comments regarding the final rulemaking issues as cited above, please contact Mr. Jose Campos of the FHWA at (512) 536-5932; or Mr. John Sweek, FTA at (817) 978-0571.

Sincerely yours,



Peggy Crist, Director
Planning and Program Development
Federal Transit Administration



Michael T. Leary, Director
Planning and Program Development
Federal Highway Administration

cc: HPP-TX

Jack Foster, TxDOT-TPP(S)
Karen Dunlap, TxDOT-PTN