BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY
CERTIFICATION NARRATIVE
FY 2016

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study Policy Committee is designated by the Governor of New York as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Binghamton NY-PA urbanized area.

Under Federal law, metropolitan planning organizations in metropolitan areas of less than 200,000 population are not subject to direct certification of their program by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). It is jointly the responsibility of the MPO and the State to certify compliance with Federal metropolitan planning regulations and other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements [23 CFR 450.334]. This narrative forms the basis for the certification of the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study by the BMTS Policy Committee and the New York State Department of Transportation.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) was signed into law (P.L. 112-141), on December 4, 2015, reauthorizing programs of the FHWA and FTA. The information in this certification is based upon the current Federal Metropolitan and Statewide Planning Regulations of February 14, 2007 and the Federal guidance that is currently available for the FAST Act, as regulations have not yet been promulgated.

A. Required Agreements

All necessary agreements for the operation of BMTS are in place. As a result of the 2000 U.S. Census, the Binghamton urbanized area was extended into Pennsylvania. As a result, the BMTS Unified Operations Plan was modified and a new Resolution and Memorandum of Understanding to Establish Responsibilities and Cooperative Procedures of the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (MOU) reflecting the membership changes and the legislative language of TEA-21 was executed.

Following a regular update cycle, the MOU and Unified Operations Plan (UOP) were again updated, and adopted on February 11, 2009. The primary change was the inclusion of language to fulfill §450.314(a) of the 2007 Final Rule, which states "The MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO… [that] shall include specific provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to the development of financial plans that support the metropolitan transportation plan and the metropolitan TIP and development of the annual listing of obligated projects." The adopted UOP, included by reference in the MOU, spells out the specific

responsibilities of BMTS, NYSDOT, and Broome County (the transit operator designated as recipient of FTA funds) with respect to the Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects.

SAFETEA-LU Compliance: §450.314(e)(1) states "Where the boundaries of the urbanized area or MPA extend across two or more states, the Governors with responsibility for a portion of the multistate area, the appropriate MPO(s) and the public transit operator(s) shall coordinate transportation planning for the entire multistate area."

There is ongoing coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission that meets the requirements of this section.

The host agency contract between New York State and Broome County has been renewed, and extends through the SFY 2021.

B. Planning and Technical Studies

1. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The BMTS Policy Committee adopted the 2016-2017 BMTS Unified Planning Work Program on March 10, 2016. It represents a balanced program of technical studies and support services. The UPWP both leads the long range plan by establishing a technical foundation and exploring new planning issues; and follows it with recommended studies like corridor plans. The Transportation Plan update (see below) is a central element of the UPWP. The technical studies range across modes, and include both short range and long efforts. Collection of system level data, modeling, and GIS form the foundation of the support for the modal studies and the transportation plan. Public participation activities are also funded through the UPWP, and are responsive to the environmental justice initiative of the USDOT and the requirements in the final rule for use of the internet and visualization techniques.

2. Transportation Plan. *Looking Forward 2040* was approved by the BMTS Policy Committee in September 2015. This is an update to *Transportation Tomorrow 2035 ~ Creating a Sustainable Future*. The Plan includes summaries of current conditions and projections of future needs for the transportation system, and recommendations for prioritizing projects and implementing the plan. The required planning factors that need to be addressed by MPOs and States are addressed by the goals established for the LRP. BMTS followed the public involvement procedures set forth in its Public Participation Plan for this update.

   The next Transportation Plan will be updated and adopted in 2020.

3. Transportation Improvement Program. The BMTS 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program was approved on June 5, 2013 and will be in effect until September 30th, 2016. It was incorporated into the New York State STIP as required by law. The STIP was approved by FHWA and FTA on October 1, 2013.

   The TIP is fiscally constrained and reflects the priorities of the long range transportation plan. Included in the TIP is a table demonstrating the fiscal plan for the TIP along with tables describing each project programmed.

   BMTS is currently completing the 2017-2021 TIP update. This document will be considered for adoption on the same date as the self-certification, June 9, 2016. The 2017-2021 TIP will go into effect on October 1, 2016. The TIP update process included a 30 day public comment period and outreach per the BMTS Public Participation Plan.

   §450.324 addresses the development and content of the TIP. BMTS complied with these requirements in developing the 2014-2018 TIP.

4. Technical Emphasis Areas. The Unified Planning Work Program identifies technical studies and activities designed to provide timely information for decision-making on relevant current and future issues. Technical studies identified in the current UPWP are generally proceeding on schedule. The process of UPWP development ensures that the work is relevant, and will lead to plan and/or program decisions. Examples of technical studies across modes include:
   - Traffic Signal Warrant Study. BMTS staff is working with local municipalities in evaluating their traffic signals to determine if traffic signals are still warranted and developing a list of candidate projects for removal.
   - Corridor Safety Assessments. In previous years BMTS has conducted Roadway Safety Assessments. Staff has worked in conjunction with AARP and other community members to conduct pedestrian safety audits at various locations. As part of the current UPWP, staff will be indentifying high accident locations and targeting them with safety audits.
   - BMTS continues promotion of ridesharing with Broome Tioga Rideshare.
   - Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning. BMTS has become recognized for expertise in this area, including unique work with public health partners in both the public and private sectors in the area of walkability and active living by design. BMTS completed the pedestrian plan update in the spring of 2013 and the bicycle plan in March 2015. BMTS continues to work with municipalities to implement the recommendations in these plans.
   - Complete Streets Policy. BMTS' Complete Streets Policy will be considered for adoption on June 9th. Once adopted, BMTS will work with municipalities

to adopt similar guidelines when they undertake a reconstruction, paving, or pavement striping project.

5. Special Considerations

   a. Title VI
      - Civil Rights and DBE Involvement. BMTS was found to be in compliance in its last Title VI Compliance Review by the NYSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity Development and Compliance, with no corrective actions required. Broome County, as the host agency of BMTS Central Staff, maintains a DBE Plan, and approves contract opportunities. There have been no discrimination complaints filed against BMTS. DBE reports are submitted to NYSDOT semi-annually to be compiled and submitted to FHWA and FTA.

      - Americans with Disabilities Act. Broome County has an approved ADA Plan for Public Transportation that was prepared by BMTS. Broome County maintains paratransit services for persons with disabilities that are fully compliant with ADA requirements. BMTS also works with advocates for both visually and mobility impaired people to ensure ADA requirements are met in roadway and intersection project design. In this context, BMTS requires the installation of accessible pedestrian signals (APS) where applicable. BMTS is available to provide assistance to members as they develop their ADA Transition Plans.

      - LEP. BMTS completed a Limited English Proficiency Plan that was approved by the Policy Committee on December 15, 2011. The Plan analyzed 2000 census data and 2009 ACS data. This will be updated under the 2016-2017 UPWP.

      - Environmental Justice. As required, BMTS completes an environmental justice analysis of the TIP and Transportation Plan whenever an update occurs. The Transportation Plan was updated in 2015 and an analysis was just performed for the 2017-2021 TIP. The analysis uses US Census data and GIS to identify the location of low income and minority populations. Because of the modest size of the Binghamton metropolitan area, no special methodology is needed to relate the location of TIP and Plan projects to these populations. The analysis yields a determination that (1) EJ populations have access to transportation facilities and services; and (2) EJ populations do not experience disproportionate negative outcomes from the investments represented by TIP and Plan projects.

b. Private Operators: BMTS makes an effort to involve private operators of transportation services in the metropolitan planning process. They are notified early in both the Plan and TIP development process, and provided an opportunity for input. Note that BC Lift, Broome County's ADA paratransit service, is operated by a private firm.

c. Planning Factors: BMTS has been explicit in addressing Planning Factors in our long range plan and related planning activities. Our current plan, *Looking Forward 2040* was adopted in September 2015. All planning factors were reevaluated and addressed in the context of the long range plan update.

d. Congestion Management Process: This does not apply to non-TMA MPOs.

e. Public Participation Plan*: §450.316* required that "the MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing…reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process."

   BMTS has always had a robust public involvement program. In response to this requirement, a Participation Plan was developed in consultation with interested parties and the public. This Plan was approved by the BMTS Policy Committee on February 28, 2007, and an update is scheduled for the fall of 2016.

   Of particular note are §450.316(a)(1)(iii) and (iv), which respectively require the use of visualization techniques and use of the World Wide Web. BMTS maintains a Web site, www.bmtsonline.com in cooperation with the Broome County Department of Information Technology, expanding its public access avenues. Meeting notices, draft and final reports, and project information is routinely posted on the site. BMTS also established a presence on Facebook, noting the importance of social network media in attracting input from those less likely to participate in traditional efforts.

f. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan: BMTS adopted its plan in March 2007. An update was done in 2013 and a second update will occur in the fall of 2016. The plan was developed with the guidance of an advisory committee that is broadly representative of both the human service agency and transportation provider communities. This committee continues to meet quarterly to oversee plan implementation and identify additional service issues and opportunities. The Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Committee was actively involved with the 2013 plan update and will also be involved in the upcoming 2016 update. BMTS has also

been working with the Rural Health Network of South Central New York and Participating on a Mobility Management Planning Team.

C. Administrative and Management Issues

1. Progress Reports: Reports are filed with FHWA, FTA, and NYSDOT on a semi-annual basis.

2. Bills: BMTS bills quarterly on behalf of Broome County, its host agency. Bills are typically submitted to the County Finance Department for approval within 30 days of the end of the quarter.

3. Audits: BMTS participates in Broome County's Federal Single Audit.

4. Annual Program: It is anticipated this year's closeout will occur on schedule.

5. Budget: The BMTS grant budget, as specified in the UPWP is managed through the quarterly bills.

6. Consultant Selection: BMTS uses a standard consultant selection process, in which the RFP includes evaluation criteria. Proposals are evaluated on the basis of content and qualifications. For planning studies, cost is considered after proposals are scored on technical merit.

7. Central Staff: Host Agency Relationship: In general the relationship between Broome County and BMTS Central Staff is positive. The County Executive and County Legislature have been willing to abide by the UPWP Staffing Plan adopted by the BMTS Policy Committee in conjunction with the UPWP. They have also accepted the proposed operating budget (which matches the UPWP grant budget) without modification.

   BMTS is at full staffing levels with a Director, Transportation Analyst, Traffic Engineer, two Sr. Transportation Planners and an account clerk.

8. Decision Making: The Planning and Policy Committees are appropriately structured, as provided for in the BMTS Unified Operations Plan. Level of participation is high, and consensus is typically achieved on all decisions. Decisions have been reached on the intended schedule.

9. Governance: The Planning and Policy Committee operate according to the Unified Operations Plan that was approved on February 11, 2009. The Unified Operations Plan is updated periodically with an update currently underway. There is a MOU with Broome County to house BMTS through SFY 2021and is

renewed yearly. Members of both the Planning and Policy Committees are given a "Member's Guide" that outline their role as a member of BMTS. BMTS staff has a good working relationship with all members and their respective municipalities.

10. Procurement: BMTS staff is aware of the FTA procurement requirements. BMTS rarely makes procurements with FTA funds. If there are any FTA procurements in the future BMTS will comply with the FTA Circular Guidance 4220.1F, Third Party Contracting Requirements and the current FTA Master Agreement. FTA related expenditures are documented.