

Operations Plan



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The South Eastern Council of Governments,
the Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Harrisburg, Hartford, Sioux Falls and Tea,
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and the
South Dakota Department of Transportation

In cooperation with:
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
PPP	Public Participation Plan
SDDOT	South Dakota Department of Transportation
SECOG	South Eastern Council of Governments
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UDC	Urbanized Development Commission
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program

INTRODUCTION

∞ **Background**

Federal law requires that all urbanized areas in the United States with populations of more than 50,000 persons establish a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for area transportation planning and programming activities. The metropolitan planning process establishes a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative framework for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas. The governmental entities involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process include: South Eastern Council of Governments (SECOG); the Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Harrisburg, Hartford, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties; and the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT). Program oversight is a joint responsibility of the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

As part of the metropolitan planning process, the MPO is required to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

∞ **Purpose**

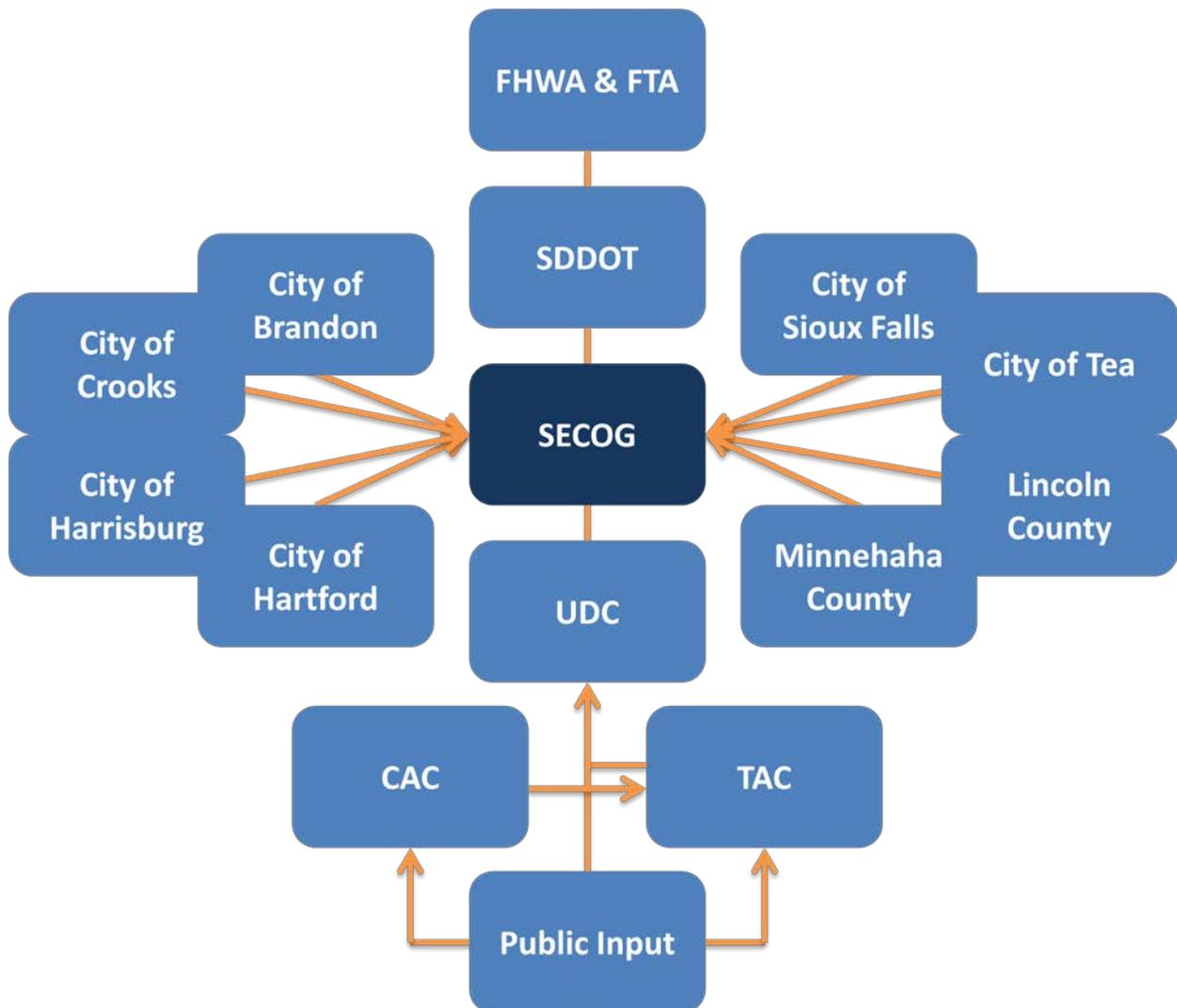
The Operations Plan outlines the ongoing planning process for the Sioux Falls MPO including operating policies and procedures. It describes the products, roles, and responsibilities for the planning process and serves as a tool to direct transportation projects through the transportation planning review and decision-making process. The Plan shall be maintained cooperatively by the participating agencies as set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all participating agencies within the Sioux Falls MPO planning area.

AGENCY ROLES & GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Professional staff from the participating entities serves as support to the planning process and are accountable for the day-to-day tasks associated with transportation planning in the Sioux Falls metropolitan area. Federal law requires that local officials, in cooperation with the State and transit operators, be responsible for determining the best transportation investments to meet metropolitan transportation needs. The staff from the participating agencies work cooperatively to develop the planning products to makes those determinations.

The three committees of the MPO serve to set policy, enact plans, and provide a public forum for the transportation decision-making process. Committee participation in the evaluation of transportation issues varies due to the roles and responsibilities assigned to each group.

∞ Transportation Planning Process



∞ **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

The Citizens Advisory Committee was organized in 1977 as a means of adding a standing process for receiving citizen input into the transportation planning process. The CAC's membership serves as the public participation forum for all transportation plans and products. As stated in the committee bylaws, "Membership for the CAC is drawn from diverse citizen groups or organizations within the current Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization boundaries. For the purposes of these bylaws, the following is a list of various organizations and citizen groups the CAC utilizes when looking to fill vacancies to represent diverse populations on the committee: Business, Community Service Boards, Concerned Citizens, Construction & Development, Education, Environment, Persons with Disabilities, Private Transportation, Retirement Community, and Safety." The current membership of the CAC can be found on the MPO's website: www.SiouxFallsMPO.org. CAC meetings are generally held on a bi-monthly basis beginning in January of each calendar year. The meetings are open to both the public and the media.

Although the CAC does not have the authority to adopt or approve specific plans or products, its responsibility of evaluating transportation products is considered crucial to a balanced process, and it fosters a "grassroots" level of input in the planning process. Upon the CAC's review of products and plans, the Committee forwards a recommendation to the Technical Advisory Committee as to whether or not the item should be approved, rejected, or modified.

∞ **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The Technical Advisory Committee was formed in 1976 as a means of providing technical review and analysis of transportation products. The TAC is comprised of professional staff from the agencies responsible for, or affected by, the implementation of transportation plans. Its role is to assist and advise the Urbanized Development Commission on technical matters as they relate to the different elements of the transportation planning process.

The voting membership of the TAC consists of:

- Sioux Falls City Engineering Department
- Sioux Falls City Engineering Department/Traffic Section
- Sioux Falls City Planning Department
- Minnehaha County Highway Department
- Minnehaha County Planning & Zoning Department
- Lincoln County Highway Department
- Lincoln County Planning & Zoning Department
- Sioux Falls School Board
- Sioux Falls Public Transportation
- South Eastern Council of Governments
- Federal Highway Administration (non-voting)
- South Dakota Department of Transportation – Office of Air, Rail and Transit
- South Dakota Department of Transportation – Office of Planning and Engineering
- South Dakota Department of Transportation – Division of Operations
- Private or Public Transportation Carrier
- Air Transportation Representative
- Trucking Representative
- Railroad Representative

A representative of the Federal Highway Administration serves as a non-voting advisory member of the TAC. The current membership of the TAC can be found on the MPO's website: www.SiouxFallsMPO.org.

One of the unique functions that occur at the TAC meetings is the conducting of official public hearings on all federally required products of the local transportation planning process. It is during these events that the public is presented the opportunity to address questions to the technical staff as well as have their comments and concerns recorded.

Like the CAC, the TAC does not have the authority to adopt or approve plans or transportation products. Its primary role is to review products and plans and to consider various technical aspects such as costs, construction phasing, engineering design, and associated issues. With consideration of the recommendations forwarded by the CAC and through its own review, the TAC forwards a recommendation to the Urbanized Development Commission as to whether or not an item should be approved, rejected, or modified. The TAC's meetings are generally held on a bi-monthly basis and are open to the public and the media.

∞ **Urbanized Development Commission (UDC)**

The Urbanized Development Commission was established in 1976 with the purpose of functioning as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the federally-required transportation and transit planning process for the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Area. The UDC has, through formal agreement, been delegated such authority by the parties of the Memorandum of Understanding to foster a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing local transportation and transit planning process for the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Area.”

Also, as stated in the MOU, “The Urbanized Development Commission has the authority to develop and approve the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvements Program, the Unified Planning Work Program, and other transportation planning policies relating to the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Area.”

The UDC is comprised primarily of elected officials from the local governmental participants in the planning process. The voting membership of the UDC consists of:

- Mayor of the City of Sioux Falls
- Four Sioux Falls City Council members
- Three Lincoln County Commission members
- Three Minnehaha County Commission members
- Lincoln County Mayoral Association member
- Mayor of the City of Brandon
- South Dakota Transportation Commission member

A representative of the Federal Highway Administration serves as a non-voting advisory member of the UDC. The current membership of the UDC can be found on the MPO's website: www.SiouxFallsMPO.org.

∞ **South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT)**

Federal law requires that States, MPOs, and transit agencies must work cooperatively to “develop estimated future levels of funding from local, State or Federal sources that may reasonably be expected to be available to metropolitan areas.” This necessitates an extensive involvement by SDDOT on the development of products and plans within the MPO.

In addition to having voting membership on both the TAC and UDC, SDDOT, as part of its technical assistance to the MPO, reviews and comments on all plans and products developed through the transportation planning process. Likewise, SDDOT provides a listing of projects from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for inclusion in the MPO’s TIP. Along with the listing of construction projects, SDDOT provides revenue estimates to the MPO for inclusion in the annual update to the TIP and on an as-needed basis for updates to the LRTP.

∞ **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration are heavily involved in the local planning process. Similar to the role played by SDDOT, FHWA reviews and provides comments on all plans and products developed through the transportation planning process as part of its technical assistance to the MPO. FHWA and FTA do not approve transportation plans. However, FHWA and FTA do review the transportation plans to ensure compliance with planning requirements listed in Federal law. In addition, the State and MPO annually self-certify to FHWA and FTA that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements. FHWA staff serves as a non-voting member of the TAC and UDC.

FEDERALLY-REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

This section of the Operations Plan includes a description of products and plans that are mandated through Federal law, SDDOT, or other regulations. These work products are especially important to the MPO because they:

1. **Confirm** the need for the metropolitan transportation planning process.
2. **Establish** a strategic direction for the participating agencies to follow when considering future improvements.
3. **Describe** the work activities and programmed improvements for the immediate future, along with proposed funding sources.
4. **Create** a process by which the public is involved in the transportation planning process.

Each of these activities requires the input and commitment by the different participating entities within the MPO. For many products and processes however, a single agency typically assumes a lead role. To provide a basic understanding of the general roles and responsibilities, the description for each of the activities identifies which agency serves as the coordinator. Also listed is a time frame for how often the product is updated.

∞ **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: As needed

The Memorandum of Understanding for the Sioux Falls MPO is the source document of the cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive planning process and serves as confirmation that the members “recognize the need for transportation and transit planning within a metropolitan planning area encompassing the City of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It shall likewise be evidence of the fact that the parties listed herein desire to cooperate in a joint effort to execute a transportation and transit planning process, which is comprehensive in scope and continuing in nature.”

∞ **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: Five years

The LRTP contains strategies and goals designed to guide multi-modal transportation planning activities for a minimum 20-year period based on regional priorities and needs, and proposed transportation and transit enhancement activities. The LRTP strives to preserve the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Transportation Planning Area’s sustainable transportation system through a balance of economics, social equity, and environmental elements. Since the MPO is an attainment area for pollutants pursuant to National Ambient Air Quality Standards and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the LRTP is only required to be updated at least every five years.

As a precursor to development of the LRTP, the MPO undertakes a comprehensive Market Research Study to gather input from the community to help assess the needs and the desires of users of the area transportation system. The data is used to understand the public’s perception of the metropolitan area’s current and future transportation issues. The Market Research Study aids in identifying priorities and investment strategies for transportation in the Sioux Falls area.

∞ **Transportation Improvements Program (TIP) and Annual List of Obligated Projects**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: Annually

The TIP is a minimum four-year prioritized and fiscally constrained program of multi-modal transportation improvement projects for the metropolitan planning area. The Sioux Falls MPO TIP is developed jointly by the SDDOT, the local participating units of government, agencies, and the committees of the MPO. It is a compilation of projects extracted from plans of the units of government and other agencies participating in the local transportation planning process. Federal aid eligible and State projects included within the TIP are also found in SDDOT’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The projects identified in the STIP have

been prioritized based on overall needs at the State level and the availability of funds for each the regions in South Dakota. The South Dakota Transportation Commission approves the TIP and STIP after the MPO acts on the TIP. A listing of projects for which federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year is created annually.

∞ **Travel Demand Forecasting**

Facilitating Entity: City of Sioux Falls

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: On-going

The traffic-forecasting model is based on demographic and land use data and is a means of estimating future conditions within the MPO. Output from the traffic-forecasting model is used to support technical analyses for project planning, evaluation, and design of future transportation improvements. Typically, the model output is used as the basis for interstate interchange justification studies, LRTP updates, and the examination of the impacts of major transportation improvements on the current system.

∞ **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Year End Report**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: Annually

The UPWP is the document which describes the annual objectives, work activities/products, and planning research studies to be accomplished by the participants of the Sioux Falls metropolitan transportation planning process. It includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area and identifies work proposed for the next one year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds. The FHWA and FTA planning (PL) funds budgeted in the UPWP are based on the estimated annual allocation and distribution formula as agreed upon by the local governmental entities and SDDOT. A year end accomplishment and expenditure report of activities completed under the UPWP is created and submitted to SDDOT annually.

∞ **Self-Certification**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: Annually

Each year, the MPO is required to certify that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable state and federal requirements. The certification document also provides an overview of the process in which the MPO performs its tasks. This includes efforts such as fostering public participation, prioritizing projects, and consideration of multimodal planning, as well as describing the major transportation issues facing the MPO. Upon completion of the final certification review document, the UDC self-certifies the MPO through approval of the document. The Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Process Self-Certification Statement is signed by the UDC Chair and SDDOT, and then attached to the TIP.

∞ **Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: As needed

The Public Participation Plan is an adopted proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs. Staff members of the MPO process are also responsible for the development of specific public participation plans for local transportation planning products.

∞ **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

Facilitating Entity: SECOG

Participating Entities: Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Hartford, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea; Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties; SECOG; and SDDOT

Frequency: Five years

Federal law requires that local projects funded through the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310) program be included in a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The plan must be developed by a process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public.

OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

In addition to the federally-required products and plans, the participating entities of the MPO are also responsible for the completion of numerous other reports, plans, inventories, studies, and tasks necessary to support the transportation planning process. These documents and work activities are identified in the UPWP for the year they are to be completed.