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Transit Focus Group
Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Evaluation Measures and Plan Basis

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The MPO Policy Committee has adopted a new approach for the development of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. The new process will include a five-year program to help implement GO TO 2040, the comprehensive regional plan. The CMAQ program is a federally funded program that supports surface transportation projects and other related efforts that **improve air quality** and **relieve traffic congestion**.

Four program focus groups will be responsible for the ***initial review of proposed CMAQ projects*** and the ***identification of projects that advance the regional program goals***. The Transit Focus Group (TFG) is one of the four program focus groups.

CMAQ Program Goals
The overall goals of the CMAQ Program are to improve air quality and reduce congestion, as established in the Federal authorizing legislation.

CMAQ Objectives
To carry out these goals, four CMAQ objectives have been identified:

- **Localized Congestion Relief** – this will include projects aimed at reducing congestion through relieving both rail and roadway bottlenecks.
- **Mode Shift** – this will include projects geared towards shifting travel from single occupant vehicle travel to transit, non-motorized, and multiple-occupant modes.
- **Operational Improvements** – this will include projects that reduce congestion by improving roadway, intersection, rail and transit operations.
- **Direct Emissions Reduction** – this will include projects geared directly toward reducing emissions through improving the efficiency of vehicles or switching to alternate fuels (e.g. diesel retrofits, Genset technology, electric vehicles and support facilities for same).

GO TO 2040 Action Areas

The desired effect of the new approach to CMAQ programming is expedited implementation of GO TO 2040. GO TO 2040 contains recommendations and identifies action areas that implement the CMAQ objectives above. The following Implementation Action Areas are particularly relevant to the TFG and CMAQ programming:

Action Areas from GoTo 2040: (*You May Suggest a Re-Ordering of this list or only list particular action areas to better reflect Transit Focus Group priorities*)
Adopt Best Practices in new technologies
Widely implement traveler information systems
Establish seamless coordination between modes
Include transit components as part of major highway projects
Focus investment on maintenance and modernization
Prioritize and implement the CREATE program
Implement high-priority transit projects

Transit Focus Group Approach

The TFG consists of staff from the three transit service boards in Northeastern Illinois – CTA, Metra, and Pace – plus representatives of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), City of Chicago Department of Transportation, transportation planning staff from several County Departments of Transportation and the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Each is expected to have a unique set of experiences and knowledge on transit planning and transit operations. The TFG is expected to develop a package of transit-related projects, which are consistent with CMAQ goals and GO TO 2040 recommendations and action areas, as a recommendation to the CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC). The recommended package of projects should achieve an identifiable goal or set of goals over the five year time frame. Each project requires a committed implementer.

Review of Projects. The TFG has primary responsibility for review of the packet of proposed CMAQ projects that cover transit system start-up, transit facility improvement, transit service and equipment, transit transfer, and commuter parking received by CMAP by the submission deadline of April 1st, 2011. The TFG will review projects in the transit categories and possibly additional categories that are expected to facilitate transit-related recommendations and action areas in the GO TO 2040 Plan.

Identification of Projects. The TFG members, as individual agencies, will review the assigned transit category packet of projects and then identify those that are perceived to satisfy the three levels of project screen criteria. The TFG's optimal role from April 2011 onward is to identify "call" projects that most strongly meet the project screen criteria, prepare or receive presentation on the merits of those projects, and then recommend a package of those projects that meet project screen criteria most effectively to the PSC.

Transit Focus Group Role Is Advisory; Program Development by CMAQ PSC; Final Authority with MPO Policy Committee. The package of transit-related projects will then be

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sent to the CMAQ PSC for review. The CMAQ PSC will evaluate the proposals for their air quality and congestion mitigation benefits. With this information and the five-year accomplishments recommended by the focus group, the Committee will discuss and develop the 5-year CMAQ program for MPO Policy Committee approval. All projects in the recommended program must be eligible under federal regulations.

TFG Project Screen Process

The transit focus group should retain as its primary goals and objectives the same goals and objectives as the CMAQ program. However, the transit focus group should also conduct a secondary screen to determine projects that fulfill the GoTo2040 action areas via strategies enumerated on page and in terms of satisfying evaluation measures on page. The next project screen is whether the proposed project is clearly identified as a component of a plan document of the type listed on page. Finally, the project should satisfy project readiness criteria outlined on page (labled as Fourth Level Screen)..

First Level Screen: CMAQ Program - Compliant Goals

Improve Air Quality
- Reduce Emissions of VOC, Nox, PM
- Reduce Fuel Consumed

Reduce Congestion
- Reduce Congested VMT
- Divert Auto Trips to Other Modes

Second Level Screen: GoTo 2040Action Areas

Improve Mode Share for both Work and Non-Work Travel
Improve Physical Connectivity Within and Across Modes
Improve Service Coordination
Enhance User Experience
Improve Regional Coverage of Transit System
Maintain and Modernize Existing Elements of System
Improve Carrying Capacity of Existing Elements of System
Support investment on compact development areas
Support investment on employment centers
Foster Technical Innovation and Innovative Practices
Advance "Priority" Projects in GOTO 2040 Plan

Third Level Project Screen: Plan Basis

GOTO 2040
"Moving Beyond Congestion" Regional Transportation (RTA) Strategic Plan (2007)
Service Board financial plan
Service Board long range plan
Service Board strategic plan

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Pace Plans: Vision 2020, ART, TSP program, rideshare, express bus network, restructuring initiatives, posted stop program, Bus-Rail, community planning, FAST plan
Regional Transit Signal Integration Plan (2003)
Regional Transit ITS Plan (2001)
Northeastern Illinois Regional ITS Architechture
County Transportation Plans
County Transit-Specific Plans
County Bicycle/Pedestrian/Greenway plans
County DOT signal interconnect systems
Local roadway/highway/bridge projects plan
Local Transit-Specific Plans
Local Bicycle/Pedestrian/Greenway plans
Local TIP documents
IDOT Plan/project coordination
Tollway Plan/project coordination
Letters of Support from coordinating agencies
Chicago Climate Action Plan
Chicago Central Area Plan
Master Plan for the Loop Elevated Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation
Chicago Bike 2015 Plan (Transit Chapter)
Corridor/COG programs to facilitate TOD
CREATE program where directly facilitating or intersecting transit service

Fourth Level Screen: Project Readiness
Do not require coordination with a related construction project
Do not require a land acquisition phase
Do not require relocations of residences and businesses
Have their design engineering completed
Have a detailed cost estimate
Have strong community support and no known local opposition
Do not require additional environmental studies
Do not require resolution of historic preservation issues'
Have a project sponsor willing to provide local match in excess of 20%

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Strategies

- Provide infrastructure for non-motorized travel connections to existing and proposed transit facilities
  - Sidewalks
  - Bike Paths - Shared with or Protected from Motorized Traffic
  - Bicycle Parking
- Encourage development of new and improvement of existing facilities for seamless and efficient transfer between services
  - Transit Centers in Suburban Areas
  - Bus alighting/turnaround areas in train/rapid transit stations
  - Park and Ride Facilities
- Improve carrying capacity of existing and proposed stations and bus service stops
  - Extended Platforms
  - Changes to Street Parking, Bus Stop Extent
  - Addition of Parking Spaces/Facilities
  - Drop-Off/Kiss n Ride Flow Improvements
- Implement Added Value Bus Services
  - Arterial Rapid Transit - X Level Service
  - Bus Rapid Transit
  - Express Bus - Existing Expressways, New Expressways, To Be Improved Expressways
- Implement Bus Advantage Operational Improvements
  - Traffic Signal Optimization at Scale of Targeted Service (e.g. specific arterial route)
  - Transit Signal Priority (TSP)
  - Bus-On-Shoulders
  - HOT Lanes
  - Que-Jump Bypass Lanes
- Implement Transit Services Addressing Emerging Markets
  - Vanpool
  - Rideshare
  - Reverse Commute
  - Off-Peak Variable Purpose
  - Construction Mitigation Services
  - Starter Transit Services along Potential Major Capital or High Level Arterial Corridors
- Non-Capacity Adding Resolution of Traffic Bottlenecks for Targeted Service Lines
  - Grade Separation
  - Intersection Improvements
  - Streetscape improvement (lighting, design, striping)
  - Bus Stop or Station Entry Relocation
  - Parking Elimination
- Provide user amenities that improve the attractiveness, image, safety, and convenience
  - Lighting

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Shelters
Commercial development
Real-Time Passenger Information
Improvement of Parking Infrastructure

- Improve Available Service Information
  Marketing
  Alerts Systems
  Real-Time Passenger Information
  Improve information coordination between transit providers
  Timeliness of route, schedule, and operational developments
- Improve Fare Coordination and Acceptance Options
  Distance or *Purpose* Based Fares
  Cashless Fare System
  Universal Fare Card
- Improve Service Coordination and Delivery in Non-Traditional Markets
  Improve Dispatching Capabilities
  Facilitate private provider integration

Performance Measures

- AQ Measures
  VOC
  Nox
  PM
- Congestion Measures
  VMT reduction
  Auto Trips Eliminated
  Auto Trips Diverted to New Facility
  Non-Auto trips added
- Projected Ridership Increase
  System Wide Boardings Per Day
  # of Transit Rides Provided
  # of Per Capita Transit Rides Per Year
  Increase in Work-Trip Shares for each non-SOV Mode
  % of all unlinked trips made by non-SOV modes
- Project Life and Return on Investment
- Safety Indicators
  Crash Data
- Throughput Capacity
  Persons per vehicle (per Mile)
  Passenger Throughput
  Capacity of system per station

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Capacity of system per hour

- On-Time Performance
  Frequency
  Reduction in Transit Delay in Corridors
  Improvement in Transit Travel Times
  Reduction in variability between schedule and actual travel times
- Congestion Reduction
  Reduced Congested VMT
  Reduction Per Capita VMT
  Total and Per Capita Congested Hours
- Project supports ARTX/BRT/Expressway service
  # of express service routes in the region
- Improves transit mobility and performance
  Miles of Bus Routes with TSP and/or on Signal Interconnected Corridors
- Facilitates multimodal connections
  # of interagency trips
- Improve transit customer experience
  perception
  acceptance
  satisfaction
  % stations/stops with real-time information systems
  User satisfaction Ratings
- Accessibility
  Average # of access modes per station
  Bike Ped LOS within 1/4 miles of station
  # Auto/Bike Parking spaces available per station
  # of Jobs/Households within 1/4 miles of investments (1/2 mile of commuter rail)
  % of Rail/Transit boardings at ADA-accessible stations
  # of transit stations within the region
  Total # of bus route miles within the region (peak-period?)
  # of peer to peer carsharing vehicles

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