



MINUTES
Transit Focus Group for CMAQ
May 23, 2011 - 1:30 pm
CMAP Offices

- Attendees:** Bruce Christenson- Lake County DOT (via phone); Maria Choca Urban-CNT, Michael Connelly-CTA (via phone); Bob Huffman-Pace (via phone); Bill Lenski-RTA; Mark Pitstick-RTA; Keith Privett-CDOT; David Tomzik-Pace; Jan Ward-Kane County DOT; Thomas Weaver-Metra
- CMAP Staff:** Jose Rodriguez (chair); Thomas Murtha; Ross Patronskey; Joy Schaad

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 by Chairman Rodriguez and the attendees introduced themselves.

2. Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2011

The minutes of the May 12, 2011 meeting were discussed. A question was raised about the statement "Shuttle Bug services currently in operation (14 routes) have a farebox recovery ratio at nearly 70%." Upon further discussion it was decided that a clearer explanation would be "Shuttle Bug services currently in operation (14 routes) have a cost recovery of over 50%", as there are employer contributions, but user fares are not collected. The minutes were approved with that correction on a motion by Mr. Weaver and a second by Mr. Pitstick.

3. Results of Preliminary Scoring Using Evaluation Matrix

Chairman Rodriguez explained that project applications were scored on a 3, 2, 1, 0 scale for *Strategies that Advance GO TO 2040*. He also explained that for *Plan Basis* a project can get 2 points for supporting a constrained project in GO TO 2040, 1 point for supporting an unconstrained project and one point each for being a part of up to four other supportive local or regional plans. Mr. Christenson asked why the Southeast Lake County Paratransit plan only got one point, when it is a part of the Lake County Strategic Plan and also is in the Lake County Paratransit Plan and the RTA Human Services Plan. Mr. Rodriguez said that the latter two plans were not evident in the application, but a correction can be made now.

Regarding project readiness scoring, Mr. Pitstick made the assertion that it is inappropriate to score fewer points for a project that does not have a particular schedule complication than to a project that has already overcome the same schedule complication – such as one that does not need ROW and one that already acquired the needed the ROW. Several members expressed agreement with him and then discussed employing a system based on demerits for likely schedule complications rather than positive points for the lack of potential schedule issues. There was discussion of the difficulty of quantifying various types of complications relative to each other for scoring. In terms of maximum, Mr. Rodriguez stated that for the Action Areas, 24 points was the maximum points that a project could earn. For Plan Basis, Mr. Rodriguez stated that a maximum of 5 or 6 points could be earned, depending on whether a project is located along or supports a constrained (2 points) or unconstrained (1 point) major capital project corridor.

Mr. Privett pointed out that some complications are not really a problem if the sponsor is looking for CMAQ funding in a later year and has budgeted appropriate project development time for working through the steps. Mr. Weaver cautioned that we may be showing too much trust in sponsor's ability to get such preliminary work done in time. He said, in his experience some projects seem close to implementation and then community commitments change and issues such as risk, liability, maintenance, ability to reuse the property, and local match can come up. It was agreed that the readiness aspect should not be rolled into the projects' scores but rather a paragraph should be provided for each highlighting the project's readiness status and issues.

In answer to a question about how status of current CMAQ projects is tracked, Ross Patronsky explained that for projects just getting funds in each new fiscal year, transit projects must show evidence that they have entered into an FTA grant (i.e. are a part of an FTA TEAM Report, *Transportation Electronic Award and Management Report*) and non-transit projects have to have submitted a Job Request Form (JRF) to IDOT by May. He also explained that staff is now collecting expenditure data on obligated transit projects quarterly to assure that the projects obligated in FTA grants, are actually moving forward.

Maria Choca Urban asked if it was possible to consider three additional GO TO 2040 planning actions in the ratings:

- linking transit, land use and housing;
- provide funding and financial incentives for livable communities; and
- targeting economic development to existing communities.

There was discussion on whether or not it can be assumed that commuter parking decks, as opposed to surface lots, free up land for compact redevelopment and can be considered more "livable". There was no consensus on this point. There was agreement to add the three planning actions Ms. Choca Urban suggested. It was also agreed that application would be given 1 point for each GO TO 2040 supportive plan the project is cited in and 2 points if the

project implements a constrained GO TO 2040 Major Capital Project; so these three potentially add 9 points, bringing the total of 24 up to 33.

Chairman Rodriguez offered to add the three new criteria to the action area matrix and review the applications for inputting points on them.

4. Recommendation Document(s) for CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC)

The group discussed how focus group's findings should be conveyed. It was clarified that the CMAQ PSC will receive a memo from each of the four focus groups as well as the air quality analysis results from CMAP staff. While it was generally agreed that the transit focus group would supply a description on their work, a table of the scoring and a paragraph on readiness for each application, it was decided to wait until the analysis and scoring is done before finalizing the format, etc. Ms. Jan Ward asked the group to keep open the option of supplying additional information that should be highlighted on each project, strengths or weaknesses. There was general agreement.

5. Next Meeting

The group decided to work on the next steps by email, but saw a need to meet at least once before the prioritized list and other information is provided to the CMAP staff for the PSC agenda posting on June 30th. The focus group set the next meeting at Thursday, June 16 at 1:30 at the CMAP offices.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.