



MEMORANDUM

To: CMAQ Project Selection Committee
From: Transit Focus Group
Date: June 30, 2011
Re: GO TO 2040 Focused Programming: Transit Project Package

GO TO 2040 seeks a world-class transit system in our region, making transit the preferred travel option for as many of the region's residents as possible. This requires attention to not only how transit operates, but how it is perceived. A system that functions well, with on-time and frequent service and seamless connections between modes, is a necessity. But so are features that make transit attractive, such as clean stations, modern transit vehicles, clear information, and easy pedestrian access. – GO TO 2040, p. 19

The Transit Focus Group proposes a package of projects that will achieve **operational improvements and mode shift**. That is, this package will modernize the transportation system and make transit the mode of choice for more of this region's residents and visitors.

Taken together, the projects in this package **focus investment on modernization**. The projects also accomplish the following:

- They adopt best practices in new technologies
- They establish seamless coordination between modes
- They include transit components as part of highway major capital projects

The MPO Policy Committee requested that the Transit Focus Group identify projects of particular significance in advancing the goals, objectives and action areas of the GO TO 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan for the CMAQ Project Selection Committee. To identify such projects, the Transit Focus Group evaluated FY 2012-2016 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program project proposals using measures consistent with the

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guidance suggested by the MPO Policy Committee in adopting the focused program approach for CMAQ projects.^{1,2}

The criteria reviewed in support of this effort included three areas:

- Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas — an analysis of how likely a project was to advance each action area specifically identified in the GO TO 2040 focused program approach adopted by the MPO Policy Committee.
- Plan Basis — an analysis of the project's relationship to specific GO TO 2040 major capital projects or other adopted plans.
- Project Readiness – an evaluation of how ready the sponsor is to implement the project.

The recommended package of projects can be expected to have an impact on the following measures:³

- Percent of work trips by mode;
- Unlinked transit passenger trips per capita;
- Percent of transit stations and transit rolling stock that are ADA compliant;

Lastly, a number of these projects focus on providing greater mobility in high employment corridors with serious highway congestion issues. This consideration of existing land use and traffic conditions will bring extra dividends for the transit investments recommended.

The primary economic benefits of transit come through the additional mobility that it permits. With a strong transit system, residents have more choices concerning where they can live and work and how they travel, and can avoid the harmful effects of congestion. – GO TO 2040, p. 291.

The improvements in this package are expected to result in measurable travel mode shifts and transit service operational improvements for metropolitan Chicago. The package consists of six well-defined project recommendations and an Arterial Rapid Transit System Development Program, as explained below.

A description of projects not included in this package are included under separate cover.

Questions about the following package can be addressed to staff, Jose Rodriguez at jrodriguez@cmap.illinois.gov or at 312-386-8806.

¹ Bike-Ped Task Force Memo on CMAQ Program Methods (Feb 2009)

² CMAQ Focused Programming Approach (January 2011)

³ <http://www.metropulsechicago.com/#app=23dc&3ea4-selectedIndex=0>

A package of well-defined transit projects totaling \$169 million in federal dollars is recommended for funding, the goal of which is to modernize the transit system. This modernization is expected to result in a measurable shift of travel mode to transit while simultaneously improving the operation of the system. The transit package is composed of six projects:

1. Regional Transit Signal Priority Integration Plan: Priority Corridors (TI13123796)

Description and benefits: This project is a five-year program to implement transit signal priority at more than 1000 signals along approximately 388 miles of priority corridors and strategic CTA and Pace bus routes. Transit signal priority is used to assure schedule adherence for transit vehicles by adjusting signal timing at highway traffic signals on an as-needed basis. This system provides the schedule adherence with a minimum impact on other users, and can in fact be expected to improve traffic flow through the signal optimization work that is part of the implementation process.

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This project will advance the following action areas:

- Adopt best practices in new technologies
- Focus investment on maintenance and modernization

Plan Basis: This project supports the RTA Regional Transit Signal Priority Integration Plan, the Pace Transit Signal Priority Regional Deployment Plan, and the RTA Moving Beyond Congestion strategic plan.

Project Readiness. The project has corridors identified for which engineering is largely complete and which can be implemented in FFY 12. There are additional corridors which can be engineered early in the coming five-year program, and for which implementation in the later years of the program can be reasonably expected. Since this project helps provide reliable operations and reduces costs, timely implementation of the projects by transit agencies can be expected. Prior working experience with highway agencies during previously funded CMAQ pilot projects reduces the risk of implementation delays.

Federal Funding Request: \$32 million over five years

2. Improvements at 19 Priority Interagency Transfer Locations (TI13123798)

Description and benefits: This project addresses a lack of coordination among the three service boards in providing the information necessary for passengers to make interagency transfers to complete their trip. The project will fund the construction and installation of coordinated interagency signage and information displays at nineteen transfer points. This will include an integrated suite of wayfinding signs to assist passengers in navigating between interagency boarding areas, train connection maps combining Metra and CTA information, Pace and CTA bus connection maps, bus time

panels, coordinated bus stop signs, and neighborhood maps. The project will improve the experience of customers requiring an interagency transfer.

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This project will advance the following action areas:

- Establish seamless coordination between modes
- Widely implement traveler information systems
- Consider user perception in vehicle purchase and station design

Plan Basis: This project supports the RTA Regional Transit Coordination Plan and the RTA Moving Beyond Congestion strategic plan.

Project Readiness. The CMAQ-funded pilot project work has prepared this project for quick implementation.

Federal Funding Request: \$3.36 million in FFY 12

3. I-90 Corridor Enhanced Markets (TI13123713)

Description and benefits This project will serve new and expanded markets in the I-90 corridor in conjunction with the Tollway's planned managed lane improvements on I-90, as called for in GO TO 2040. This project includes new, expanded express bus service, marketing, local distribution zones (Call-in-Ride service), new transit vehicles and construction of new park and ride lots. The project includes 25 new vehicles, service marketing, construction of four park and ride lots totaling 600 spaces, improved access at the Rosemont terminal, and improved access to and from the west in Schaumburg. Four express routes, several arterial services, and Call-in-Ride services are planned. Final service alignments and access are being negotiated with the Illinois Tollway and the RTA as part of an ongoing planning process.

The project will provide reliable and fast transit services operating in managed lanes on I-90. Service will be extended west to Randall Road.

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This project will advance the following action areas:

- Include a transit component in highway major capital projects
- Implement high-priority transit projects

Plan Basis: This project supports the GO TO 2040 I-90 Managed Lanes major capital project. The project also supports the Pace Vision 2020 Plan and the RTA Moving Beyond Congestion strategic plan.

Project Readiness. This project is coordinated with Illinois Tollway improvements scheduled along I-90 involving roadway reconstruction and the addition of a new managed lane. Engineering for the transit improvement is scheduled for 2012-2013;

construction will take place in 2014-2015; service implementation is expected in 2015-2016.

Federal Funding Request: \$38.977 million over five years, beginning in 2012. Most of the funds would be programmed for the latter years of the 5-year program.

4. I-55 Corridor Enhanced Markets (TI13123716)

Description and benefits This project will serve new and expanded markets in the I-55 corridor which will coincide with IDOT's highway shoulder improvement on I-55. The transit services would take advantage of IDOT's improvements with a bus-on-shoulders operation to improve service reliability. The bus on shoulders operation will allow transit vehicles to bypass mainline lane congestion by traveling on the highway shoulders while operating at moderate speeds to assure safety. The project includes the lease of a 150 space park and ride lot, marketing, and service expansion for the corridor. One service will extend from Plainfield to the Illinois Medical District, with a stop in Darien; the second service will extend from Plainfield to the East Loop.

The project will provide more reliable transit services on I-55, sometimes operating on highway shoulders. Service to Plainfield, Joliet, and Darien will be improved.

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This project will advance the following action areas:

- Include transit as a component of highway major capital projects

Plan Basis: This project supports the GO TO 2040 I-55 Managed Lanes major capital project. The project also supports the Pace Vision 2020 Plan and the RTA Moving Beyond Congestion strategic plan.

Project Readiness. This project is coordinated with IDOT resurfacing and shoulder improvements now underway along I-55. Enhanced service implementation beginning in FFY 12 is reasonable.

Federal Funding Request: \$2.158 million over three years, beginning in 2012.

5. Clark/Division, LaSalle/Division Station Improvements (TI01123760)

Description and benefits. This project on the CTA Red Line includes two construction phases, to be completed in sequence. Weekday boardings in May, 2011 at this station totaled about 7,400.⁴ Overall station capacity will increase from 3,400 persons/hour to 10,400. First, a new station mezzanine will be constructed at LaSalle/Division, including elevators both from the street to the mezzanine and from the paid area of the mezzanine to the platform for full ADA compliance, which is not feasible at the current entrance location. ROW acquisition is required for this project element. Second, the current

⁴ http://w.transitchicago.com/assets/1/ridership_reports/2011-5.pdf

platform and Clark/Division mezzanine will be fully reconstructed and modernized, including escalators, lighting, electrical, mechanical, communications, architectural finishes, column cladding, doors, painting, signage, a new security system of cameras and monitors, and ADA compliant platform level. To increase station capacity, the number of rotogates will increase from 4 to 6 (including one ADA-width). In addition, one of the five stairs will be converted to a second escalator, and the mezzanine will be enlarged. Thus, a substantially expanded, fully modernized, ADA-accessible station will be provided at this location.

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This project will advance the following action areas:

- Focus investment on maintenance and modernization
- Consider user perception in vehicle purchases and station design

Plan Basis: This project supports the City of Chicago Central Area Plan, the Chicago Climate Action Plan, and the CDOT 15-year Transit Station Renovation Plan.

Project Readiness. This project has been underway for some time. We understand it is nearly “ready-to-go.”

Additional Federal Funding Request: \$8.640 million in FFY 12 (for LaSalle), \$20 million in FFY 13 (for Clark)

6. Consolidate Randolph/Wabash and Madison/Wabash stations into Washington/Wabash station (TI01123775)

Description and benefits. This project would construct a new CTA station at Washington Street and Wabash on the Loop Elevated tracks shared by five CTA lines. This consolidation will provide a modern station to users of the two existing stations. It will also improve travel times on all Loop elevated train lines by consolidating two closely spaced stops into one. This station will replace two other stations on Wabash: Randolph/Wabash and Madison/Wabash (both built 1896, each one block away.) Despite piecemeal improvements, both are well past a 50-year useful life and have platforms that are narrow by contemporary standards.

The project includes all elements of the station including platform, ADA-accessible elevators, fare collection, lighting, electrical, mechanical, communications, signage, a new security system of cameras and monitors, and demolition of the two existing stations. Further, the new station requires extension of higher capacity electrical lines to the station area and replacement of portions of the structure itself.

Weekday boardings in May, 2011 at these two stations totaled about 13,300.⁵ In addition, all users of the loop elevated will benefit from faster transit times. Average weekday boardings at all loop elevated stations totaled more than 71,000 in May, 2011.⁶

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This project will advance the following action areas:

- Focus investment on maintenance and modernization
- Consider user perception in vehicle purchases and station design

Plan Basis: This project supports the City of Chicago Central Area Plan, the Chicago Climate Action Plan, and the CDOT 15-year Transit Station Renovation Plan.

Project Readiness. Preparation of plans and specs is scheduled for FFY 2013. Construction is proposed for FFY 2015.

Additional Federal Funding Request: \$63.6 million

This package proposes that an ART System Development Program be undertaken by the region. This should begin with implementation of one or two corridors on a pilot basis as an opportunity to develop a full understanding the processes and challenges related to implementing the system. This includes physical, institutional, and financial aspects.

Arterial Rapid Transit System Development Program

Adopt best practices in new technologies. The use of transit signal priority systems, ART concepts, and traffic signal coordination in general are supported, particularly when integrated multi-modally to form “smart corridors.” – GO TO 2040, p. 301

Description and Benefits: Strategic improvements and modernization are two main priorities of GO TO 2040. Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) is an important means of applying these priorities to transit services. ART will connect the region’s major suburban centers to each other and to major transit hubs with faster, more reliable, and more attractive to customers. This will include integrating ITS elements as native features of the bus system, rather than as a retrofit.

⁵ http://w.transitchicago.com/assets/1/ridership_reports/2011-5.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

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Such an ART System Development Program would build on the work completed to date in the region. As a first step, completing phase-1 engineering is suggested for one or two suburban corridors. The exact nature of this phase-1 process, including the relationship to established intersection design process for queue bypass elements, needs to be determined.

This program should be developed so as to launch an ART pilot project within five years.

Advancement of GO TO 2040 Action Areas: This program will advance the following action areas:

- Adopt best practices in new technologies
- Focus investment on maintenance and modernization
- Consider user perception in vehicle purchases and station design

Plan Basis: ART is supported by GO TO 2040. In addition, this program supports the Pace Vision 2020 and RTA Moving Beyond Congestion strategic plan.

Project Readiness: Substantial study of this concept has taken place. Further refinement of proposals to a pilot project for implementation is now required. Some ART elements are suitable for transit grant processes, but others may require highway engineering processes consistent with intersection design.