



MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Committee
From: Todd Schmidt
Date: 1/7/2014
Re: Major Capital Projects Evaluation

During the months of October and November, CMAP staff consulted with the project implementing agencies to develop the universe of major capital projects that will be considered for the plan update. CMAP staff met one-on-one with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (ISTHA), Pace Suburban Bus, and Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to discuss existing major capital projects identified in GO TO 2040 and if they would like to submit new major capital projects to be included in the plan update. The universe of projects was released for Transportation Committee review in mid-December and is available online at: <http://cmap.is/mcpuniversememo>.

This memo will provide information on project evaluation, which is the next step in the major capital project update process.

Major Capital Project Definition

Major capital projects are large projects with a significant effect on the capacity of the region's transportation system, including extensions or additional lanes on the interstate system, entirely new expressways, or similar changes to the passenger rail system. Arterial expansions and intersection improvements are not defined as major capital projects; neither are bus facilities, unless they involve a dedicated lane on an expressway.

This is the same definition that was used for major capital projects in GO TO 2040. Other recommended projects that might not meet the threshold of being a major capital project, but fully support the regional priorities identified in GO TO 2040 include projects related to CREATE, arterial rapid transit, and bus rapid transit. CMAP will include BRT projects on arterials in the fiscally constrained plan, but they will not fall under the Major Capital Projects expense allocation in the financial plan. Instead, they will fall under the Systematic Improvements/Strategic Enhancements allocation.

Major Capital Projects Evaluation

As part of the GO TO 2040 plan update, all major capital projects will be evaluated using updated baseline data and the regional travel demand model. CMAP staff is working with the implementing agencies to insure that the most up-to-date information is utilized to evaluate each major capital project. As in GO TO 2040, there will be a list of fiscally constrained major capital projects for which sufficient revenues have been identified in the updated financial plan, and a list of unconstrained projects. Constrained and unconstrained major capital projects will both be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively. CMAP staff have reviewed the process that was applied to evaluate the major capital projects for GO TO 2040 and made a few modest improvements to the evaluation method, which are discussed in this memo.

Quantitative Measures

The quantitative evaluation measures used in GO TO 2040 will remain mostly intact for the plan update. Staff recommends that the energy use and air quality metrics be streamlined into a single measure for the plan update. Staff also decided to add two additional evaluation measures, a freight measure and an economic impact measure, to be included in the major capital project analysis. Since freight is a key industry for the region and creating a more efficient freight network is a GO TO 2040 recommendation, staff determined that it should be included in the major capital project evaluation process. CMAP staff also elected to include an economic impact measure as an evaluation measure. The quantitative evaluation measures that will be used for the major capital projects update include the following.

- Long term economic development
- Congestion
- Work trip commute time
- Mode share
- Jobs-housing access
- Air quality
- Natural resource preservation
- Infill and reinvestment
- Peak period utilization
- Facility condition
- Value of travel time saved
- Freight

Highway and transit facilities will be evaluated on the same evaluation measures, but with more mode specific calculations for each of the measures. This will provide a set of project outcomes that will be more easily understood by CMAP stakeholders. For example, the jobs-housing access measure for expressway projects will be associated with auto travel and transit projects with transit travel.

Major capital projects will also be evaluated at the regional and corridor level. A five mile geographic buffer around the project will define the project corridor limits. This will provide a more localized picture of the project impact, especially on existing communities and facilities in close proximity to the major capital project. Evaluation measures that will be calculated at the corridor level include congestion and freight impacts.

Qualitative Measures

The qualitative measures used in GO TO 2040 will remain the same, except for an additional measure that will detail how the project supports the recommendations of GO TO 2040. CMAP staff also plans to do a more in depth qualitative analysis for major capital projects that are identified as fiscally constrained. The qualitative evaluation measures that will be included in the plan update include the following.

- Connectivity
- Safety and security
- Multi-modal design
- Consistency with GO TO 2040 and sub-regional plans

Other Evaluation Considerations

The final menu of fiscally constrained projects will be evaluated for financial constraint, air quality conformity, and environmental justice. As mentioned above, the final list of constrained projects must be evaluated against the updated financial plan to determine that the region will have sufficient revenues available to implement the projects. The fiscally constrained projects must also conform to air quality standards. The environmental justice measure, which is federally required for long range transportation plans, assess the potential impacts that the fiscally constrained projects will have on minority and disadvantaged population groups in the CMAP region. The environmental justice measure will be evaluated the same for the plan update as in GO TO 2040.

ACTION REQUESTED: Input and Discussion