



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Planning Coordinating Committee

**Date:** March 4, 2009

**From:** Erin Aleman, Associate Planner

**Re:** Public Engagement for *GO TO 2040*

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This memo describes upcoming public engagement activities to support the scenario evaluation process of the *GO TO 2040* plan. A variety of opportunities will be available during summer 2009 for the general public and stakeholders to be engaged in the review and discussion of alternative scenarios, which will lead to the development of a preferred scenario during fall 2009. Major public engagement opportunities are described below.

**Activities involving the MetroQuest software.** The primary public involvement tool that will be used during the scenario evaluation process during summer 2009 is MetroQuest, a software which has been developed for CMAP's use by a consulting firm. This software allows the user to experiment with different types of transportation investments and development patterns and view the outcomes of these decisions. The primary target for the software is the general public.

Three versions of the software have been developed, each with distinct uses:

- One version is designed for use at public meetings. It requires a facilitator to be used effectively, and several CMAP staff have been trained for this role. At least 20 public meetings will be held during early summer 2009, and this number over the entire summer could increase to as many as 50. The public meetings should ideally have 50-100 attendees, and last approximately two hours. These workshops are expected to be termed "Invent 2040" workshops.
- Another version is designed for individual online use. This also allows users to experiment with transportation and development options, but provides more explanation of the ramifications of choices through text and graphics, rather than requiring explanation by a facilitator. Users can choose the depth of their experience; either brief visits to the website or detailed explorations

of alternatives are possible. CMAP hopes to attract many visitors to this website, as it has very high potential to both inform and collect input from users.

- Finally, a much shorter version will be used in situations where a very brief introduction to planning ideas makes sense. This will be installed in several stand-alone kiosks that can be placed in various high-traffic locations, and will also be installed on laptops and brought by CMAP staff to events around the region. The location of kiosks is expected to rotate to allow sufficient regional coverage.

Local governments or other stakeholders who wish to support CMAP's scenario evaluation process can participate in a number of ways. Organizations can co-sponsor "Invent 2040" workshops; provide links to the website; or assist in installing a kiosk in a high-traffic place in their community.

Staff will be demonstrating the use of the MetroQuest software at the Board meeting immediately following the Planning Coordinating Committee. In addition, each working committee will be introduced to the software at their March or April meetings.

**Stakeholder workshops.** The MetroQuest software is designed for the general public, and minimal knowledge of planning issues is assumed. CMAP expects that many of our stakeholders, particularly those that have been involved in the *GO TO 2040* process since its inception, will desire an opportunity to discuss the alternative scenarios, and the policy and investment alternatives that they contain, in more depth. For example, appropriate groups for these more detailed workshops could include county planning or transportation departments, municipalities or COG committees, environmental stakeholders, or civic organizations, to name a few examples. The format of these workshops is still under development, but they are expected to be held in late summer 2009.

**Design workshops.** It is often difficult for the public to interpret regional maps and graphics, and it is important to "translate" how regional scenarios would affect local communities. CMAP is working with several communities across the region to create illustrations of how the alternative scenarios would affect sites within these communities. A variety of areas, from urban to rural, have been selected to represent the range of community types across the region. For each, municipal or county staff, other local representatives, and a team of architects and urban designers will be working with CMAP staff to create a series of illustrations, each showing how that site might look under each of the alternative scenarios.

At the March 11 meeting, staff will describe these public engagement opportunities in detail, and will request feedback from the Planning Coordinating Committee.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Discussion.