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MEMORANDUM

To: **Environment and Natural Resources Committee**

Date: **September 26, 2008**

From: **Jesse Elam, Senior Planner**

Re: **Draft recommendations from the Volpe Center on climate change considerations for the *GO TO 2040* Plan**

The Volpe Center, part of the USDOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, is completing a report to CMAP providing recommendations on how CMAP might incorporate goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, prepare for climate change impacts on transportation systems, and reduce energy within the *GO TO 2040* plan. The intent is to assist CMAP as it incorporates policies, investments, and other actions within the scenario planning process to accomplish climate change and energy goals. When it is complete it will be released to stakeholders for comment. In the meantime, CMAP staff is looking for feedback on initial recommendations and conclusions, which are presented below.

Please note that these recommendations have been made to CMAP by the Volpe Center and do not reflect adopted CMAP policy. They are meant to spark discussion by the ENR committee and others on the *GO TO 2040* plan's role in climate change mitigation.

1. **Integrate climate change and energy throughout vision/scenario planning**
   Climate change mitigation and energy should be fully integrated into vision/scenario planning -- there should be high-level goals, targets and investment criteria based on carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and energy use.

2. **Connect climate change and energy directions in the vision plan to on-going transportation planning**

The vision plan can provide the policy foundation to guide transportation decision-making at the network and project levels that can result in reduced GHG emissions and energy use. Provide a high profile in the plan for GHG reductions and energy savings -- not just calculated as an "after the fact" benefit claimed for actions pursued for other reasons. Incorporate GHG and energy reductions into the analysis of scenarios and investments at all stages of the plan and its on-going implementation. Set a high-level policy target (through the CMAP Board) to reduce regional CO_2 to "*x* by *y* date." In conjunction, provide incentives for member communities to meet the target, provide incentives for transportation partners (planning and implementing agencies) to meet the target, etc., align targets with those of the City of Chicago, and explore the feasibility of different targets through technical analyses and in-depth review of peer applications.

3. **Pursue and engage in key partnerships**

GO TO 2040 should include new partnerships to pursue actions related to climate change and energy. Since few potential actions fall completely under CMAP's discretion, it will need to enlist city and county agencies to support land use actions and modal transportation authorities to support regional transportation actions. *GO TO 2040* should clearly state that there is no redundancy or ambiguity in roles – the plan should define CMAP's role as a partner by supporting a regional "overlay" to support current and future local government GHG reductions. *GO TO 2040* should be open-ended enough to accommodate future GHG targets of partners – additional cities, counties, or transportation agencies (e.g., as may be likely for public transit). Consider developing a high-level (policy-oriented) *Regional Climate Change Plan* that provides a "regional overlay" for current and future plans of partners if pursued regionally.

CMAP should work closely to coordinate the new regional GHG emissions baseline with cities and counties that have similar baselines and encourage other communities to conduct similar analyses. CMAP also should coordinate with organizations involved in directly related initiatives in region, i.e., Center for Neighborhood Technology, ICLEI, RTA, and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

4. **Model CO_2 emissions when constructing and using scenarios**

CMAP should model CO_2 emission reductions and energy savings in its transportation planning process and under various long-range growth scenarios. It is important for CMAP to capture the range of possibilities for scenarios, policies, and investments over the planning horizon while considering critical national and international trends and risks.

5. **Focus on Carbon Dioxide**

CMAP should focus on CO_2, the dominant GHG, in its vision plan. Climate Change plans of states, cities, and related planning by peer MPOs focus on CO_2 as the key GHG that these entities can influence through transportation and land use. *GO TO 2040* can provide a focus on GHG emission reductions with targets and actions that complement those being pursued under the Chicago Climate Action Plan, and that later be pursued by other cities and transit agencies. Adaptation to climate change should not be seen as a major part of the *GO TO 2040* plan.

6. **Approach CO_2 emission reduction as a co-benefit**

Although MPO peer examples demonstrate use of CO_2 emission reductions as a top priority goal for vision and long range plans, these are closely anchored to parallel regional goals, including reducing VMT for congestion relief; mode shifts to improve access promote social equity; or reduced energy consumption. GHG reductions can be presented as a co-benefit, rather than a new policy goal.

7. **Develop and apply climate change and energy specific indicators**

CMAP should explore how to use GHG emissions be "one of the primary indicators" in the regional planning process. This paper suggests a range of robust indicators including:

- Direct climate change indicators: CO_2 in million metric tons, or per capita, passenger mile, or freight ton.
- VMT, particularly avoided auto trips, as a surrogate for energy and CO_2 reductions
- Use indicators to set incremental goals, such as reduction in CO2 by *x*% in 5 years, *y*% in 10 years, etc. This will introduce short term manageable milestones, transparency, and accountability for CMAP and its partners.
- Align indicators with those in the Chicago Climate Action Plan.

8. **Communicate about climate change and energy**

CMAP could develop a communications package tailored to key stakeholder groups – explaining its approach to climate change and energy combined with the broad vision, directed at informing, gaining support, and enlisting partners.

9. **Engage in state and multi-state level climate change planning activities**

CMAP could advocate for state legislation to empower the regions to play a lead role in climate change. CMAP could also consider how it might support regional GHG reductions at the multi-state level.

10. **Build on supportive national trends and policies**

Federal policies, national initiatives, and major trends related to climate change and energy will have profound impacts on CMAP's actions to reduce CO_2 emissions and energy consumption. As it develops *GO TO* 2040, CMAP should

attempt to anticipate these trends in scenarios, and identify how these trends could amplify intended effects of actions.

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