



GO TO 2040: Proposing a major capital project amendment

Evaluation process and guidelines

March 11, 2013

As part of its goal to invest strategically in transportation, [CMAP's GO TO 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan](#) includes a set of major capital projects (section 10.8). The projects were assembled specifically to support the plan's four themes of promoting livable communities, human capital, efficient governance and regional mobility.

These guidelines describe the process to be followed by a project sponsor in providing data and information to CMAP to support its independent evaluation of a proposed major capital project amendment to GO TO 2040. CMAP will conduct its evaluation from two perspectives: 1) a **qualitative evaluation** of the proposal's consistency with the major themes of GO TO 2040 and 2) a **quantitative evaluation** of the proposal comparing the various forecasting assumptions and resulting performance metrics.

The purpose of the **qualitative evaluation** is to determine the proposal's consistency with the policy intent of GO TO 2040. The evaluation format will address each of the four themes of GO TO 2040 as well as the plan's context and best practices for successful plan implementation. In this part of its evaluation, CMAP will consider the attributes of the proposal and the impacts on each of the above topic areas as they might support or undermine the implementation of GO TO 2040. In its evaluation, CMAP will not consider arguments for the project beyond those that support the themes, context and best practices of the adopted Plan.

The purpose of the **quantitative evaluation** is to assess the proposal's effect on the Plan's performance indicators and to discern the proposal's relative priority with regard to currently recommended major capital projects. The quantitative analysis will also supplement conclusions drawn in the qualitative analysis.

Data and Information

The starting point for CMAP's evaluation is the sponsor's own assessment of how the proposed project promotes the success of GO TO 2040. The sponsor is also expected to provide relevant project data and information to CMAP in support of the agency's evaluation of the proposal. In its evaluation, CMAP will consider data and information transmitted by the project sponsor, but may also analyze additional independent resources. Upon receiving an official proposal to amend GO TO 2040, CMAP will schedule a technical consultation between relevant parties to

clarify the evaluation process, agree on technical details, and establish the timetable for handling and transmitting resources.

It is CMAP's intent to maintain open communication between all relevant parties to facilitate the necessary data and information transmittals including, but not limited to, the following:

- If the project sponsor has prepared **alternative socioeconomic or land use forecasts**, [CMAP's Forecasting Principles](#) provide guidance for preparing, describing and transmitting these to CMAP for evaluation. The principles specifically require that alternative scenario data be transmitted to CMAP in the format prescribed by the agency's travel demand models.
- If the project sponsor has conducted its own **travel demand modeling**, CMAP requests conventionally coded model networks, trip-tables, demand coefficients and resulting traffic assignments for all relevant planning-level scenarios as well as any methodological documentation needed to interpret these resources.
- If the project sponsor has conducted its own **environmental evaluation**, CMAP requests relevant GIS feature layers, appropriate data tables and methodological documentation relevant to GO TO 2040 indicators or plan themes.
- If the project sponsor has conducted its own **financial evaluation**, CMAP requests summary assumptions regarding project construction and operating costs as well as any subsidies, fares, tolling, pricing or other revenue considerations for all relevant planning-level scenarios. Documentation of the financial evaluation methods used along with any relevant data tables and forecasting assumptions should be included.

Timetable

CMAP requires that proposed major capital project amendments to GO TO 2040 be submitted for consideration six months (26 weeks) in advance of the desired action by the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee. This is to permit sufficient time for the sponsor to demonstrate the proposal's value to GO TO 2040 and for CMAP to conduct its own evaluation. Within this six month timeframe there are several intermediate milestones intended to facilitate technical exchange and timely evaluation of data products. A specific timetable of deadlines for data and information transmittals and evaluation deliverables will be agreed upon at the initial technical consultation meeting. The milestones below are approximate:

- At **one** week: Sponsor and CMAP staff consult to establish protocols and schedule for evaluation as well as to discuss any initial ideas or concerns regarding the project proposal's compatibility with GO TO 2040. An initial itemization of data resources and timetable for transmittal to CMAP will be established and official point-of-contact managers identified.
- At **six** weeks: Sponsor submits to CMAP a detailed assessment of the project proposal specifically tailored to addressing GO TO 2040's four themes as well as the plan's guidance for context and best practice. Within this timeframe, the sponsor also

transmits agreed upon information and data resources for CMAP's use in its independent evaluation.

- At **eight** weeks: CMAP reviews the data transmittal and provides the sponsor with either an acknowledgement that the submittal is sufficient for independent evaluation or a request for additional information.
- At **ten** weeks: Upon receipt of a request for additional information, the sponsor either accommodates all or part of the request for additional information and/or notifies CMAP that it can/will not provide the additional data or information.
- At **sixteen** weeks: CMAP completes its evaluation with the intent of including it with information released for the required 30 day public comment period.
- At **twenty-one** weeks: Based on the staff evaluation and response to public comment, CMAP prepares its final staff recommendation to the Board and MPO Policy Committee.

Staffing

The project sponsor's initial request should identify an official point-of-contact manager for the CMAP evaluation process. CMAP will likewise identify its own point-of-contact manager. These point-of-contact managers are accountable for arranging the initial technical consultation meeting, developing a detailed timeline of interim deadlines, and keeping the successive information and data transmittals on schedule. The CMAP point-of-contact manager is also accountable for maintaining complete records of all correspondence related to the request.

A CMAP technical team will be assembled based on the subject-matter expertise required to evaluate the project. In most cases, this will include a data modeler, urban planner, environmental specialist and policy analyst. A technical lead will be designated from this group to prepare the draft evaluation memo by the assigned date.