



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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Transit Focus Group for CMAQ

1:30p.m., Monday March 21, 2011

**DuPage County Conference Room
233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois**

In Attendance: Sarah Chadderdon, McHenry County; Mike Connelly, CTA; Mark Pitstick, RTA; Bill Lenski, RTA; Keith Privett, CDOT; Tom Weaver, Metra; Jan Ward, Kane County DOT; Paula Trigg, Lake County DOT; David Tomzik, Pace Suburban Bus (via telephone); Bob Huffman, Pace Suburban Bus (via telephone); Maria Choca Urban (CNT);

CMAQ Staff: Jose Rodriguez, Thomas Murtha, Ross Patronskey

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

2.0 Meeting Minutes from 2.23.11

RTA recommended one change to the 2.23.11 minutes. Bill Lenski stated that Mark Pitstick's statement on the third page in Section 3.0, 4th paragraph down, should read "Pitstick cautioned the Transit focus group should *not* narrowly focus" on air quality since those reduction guidelines will be part of the selection process anyway".

3.0 Goals and Objectives of Transit Focus Group CMAQ Approach

Rodriguez described the draft synthesis document "Transit Focus Group – Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Evaluation, Measures and Plan Basis" and indicated that he felt the focus group had clearly stated that the goals and objectives should be those from the CMAQ program – improving air quality and reducing congestion, through

achieving the objectives (localized congestion relief, mode shift, direct emissions reduction, operational improvements) listed from the CMAP Board and Policy Committee approved CMAQ-focused programming document released in January.

4.0 GOTO 2040 Action Areas

Rodriguez felt that the focus group may seek to expand the number of GOTO 2040 implementation action areas that it addresses through CMAQ project prioritization. Seven (7) were listed on the draft synthesis document. He listed several additional action areas from the Improve Transit section (p. 300-303) of the full GOTO 2040 Plan (copies of pages 300-303 distributed at meeting) on page 2 of the draft synthesis.

Mark Pitstick of RTA indicated that there seemed to be little or no relationship between the action areas related to land use and the goals and objectives of the CMAQ program. Pitstick added that several action areas are better achieved via the UWP or capital project program.

Keith Privett – These action areas are in the spirit of promoting GOTO 2040.

Rodriguez indicated that he was overly inclusive of action areas because if CMAQ projects are presented as meeting the action areas related to land use et al they may also meet guidelines of other funding programs- thus the transit focus group (hereafter TFG) would act in a similar manner to RTOC for project prioritization.

Maria Choca Urban asked if land use studies are eligible for funding. Jan Ward seemed to indicate no; Ross Patronsky replied that land use studies were not eligible for funding.

Tom Weaver of Metra indicated that one solution to address the role of satisfying action area objectives would be to have a three-part structure for project prioritization: the first step was minimum adherence to the air quality and congestion management guidelines of CMAQ; the next step would be whether a project satisfied the specific strategy goals set forth within the TFG, and thirdly would be the project readiness guidelines Weaver provided in his response draft document (listed as performance measures in the draft synthesis).

Beyond AQ/CM evaluation, the most likely objective criterion the TFG would pursue would be mode shift, stated Privett. According to Tom Murtha, the aim of the CMAP MPO Policy Committee in regards to Plan-focused CMAQ programming was to satisfy the 7 original action areas spelled out in the GOTO 2040 FOCUSED PROGRAMMING APPROACH FOR THE CMAQ PROGRAM document approved in January 2011. Privett also stated that action areas may also be divided into ones that should be fulfilled by the particular CMAQ project and ones that the CMAQ project should support. Privett added that we (TFG) should not be preparing a new plan of its own, but fit the prioritized projects to the existing GOTO 2040 Plan.

Weaver asked what workload this group could expect to see in terms of projects to review. Ross Patronskey stated that in a typical application period CMAP receives 180 project applications but that we should see a slightly higher number for this upcoming 5-year period. He then added that the project categories that the TFG would be reviewing () would expect to see 30 or slightly higher.

5.0 Strategies

Rodriguez commenced the discussion on specific strategy aims the transit focus group would pursue as listed in the draft synthesis (pages 4-5). When he prompted the group for any additions or other changes, the following strategy areas were discussed:

Shared Ride Services. Sarah Chadderdon asked where Shared Ride Service improvements were listed. Rodriguez responded that he structured the strategy list to include two sections titled “Implement Transit Services Addressing Emerging Markets” and “Implement Mobility Management Practices for Users in Lower-Density Markets” that could be construed to include institutionally-managed (e.g. Pace Rideshare Services) rideshare programs. Mobility management, as described by Dave Tomzik, focused not only on type of service provided, be it rideshare, dial-a-ride, or private taxi, but much more specifically on coordination between those services and the pursuit of operational efficiencies, e.g. centralized dispatch services. Rideshare may be components of improving transit services in non- traditional markets, whereas mobility management may be an element of improving service coordination.

Clarification of Capital Project Mitigation, Implement Transit Services, Emerging Markets. Tom Murtha sought a clarification of that strategy. Rodriguez indicated that CMAQ given its available funding dollars and other constraints may support capital projects in the GOTO 2040 Plan by providing alternative services during construction periods (e.g. BRT or ART on North Side arterials during Red/Purple Line Reconstruction) or even starter-level services for planned transit components (e.g Elgin O'Hare/IL 53 services). The term construction mitigation services should be used instead. Starter Services may also be added under the Emerging Markets category. Privett brought up the example of Chicago River Taxi services receiving CMAQ funds in anticipation of the Wacker Drive reconstruction project.

Traffic Signal Optimization at Scale Appropriate to Targeted Services. Will be placed as a component strategy under Implement Bus Advantage Operational Improvements.

Intersection Channelization. Jan Ward questioned why interchange improvements were not listed as a specific strategy item in the synthesis draft. Rodriguez, Tomzik and Privett concurred that it should be listed as a component of Non-Capacity Adding Resolution of Traffic Bottlenecks.

Marketing. Privett recommended that Marketing be added as a component of Improve Available Service Information.

6.0 Evaluation Measures

Rodriguez then asked the group to comment on the draft synthesis' performance measures (page 6). Again, Weaver reiterated that many of these, particularly the quantitative measures on ridership and congestion reduction, could be secondary analysis measures contingent on whether a proposed CMAQ project passes the initial thresholds of pollutant and congestion reduction. He also questioned whether CMAP staff resources would be adequate to evaluate the universe of submitted projects for each of these measures.

Patronsky added that many of these measures listed may be viewed from a qualitative view point. Patronsky also stated that a sponsor truly interested in seeing the project being approved for funding is more likely to provide additional results for performance measures in their respective application. The CMAQ

committee expects to see a “report card” based on agreed-upon strategy support and performance measure criteria from the Transit Focus Groups for the bundle of project applications assigned to it.

The group will discuss and seek clarification on evaluation measures identified by focus group participants. Measure relevance to program objectives and effectiveness in demonstrating project benefit will be determined.

7.0 Plan Basis

RTA recommended the following clarifications and additions to the Plan Basis section:

- “Moving Beyond Congestion” Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Strategic Plan (2007)
- Regional Transit Signal Priority Integration Plan (2003)
- County Transportation Plan(s)
- County Bicycle Plan(s)
- Regional Greenway Plan

Rodriguez asked whether corridor plans, specifically the RTA Cook-DuPage Plan should be added as well. Pitstick said it would be allowed.

However, Pitstick did express disappointment that this draft synthesis exercise did not produce distinct strategy goals that would clearly determine which projects would be advanced or not be advanced by the Transit focus group. He felt that the group simply added strategy targets to a list.

8.0 Other Business

9.0 Next Meeting

Rodriguez added that he would refrain from convening the group until the full project review bundle was ready for review and that he would distribute it to group members for an individual (internal) review and then obtain their respective internal rankings. Based on these internal preliminary rankings, he would convene the group to meet and decide upon the final rankings.

10.0 Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 3:20pm