



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Agenda Item No. 10.0

233 South Wacker Drive
Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60606

312 454 0400
www.cmap.illinois.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: MPO Policy Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: January 2, 2020

Re: Draft 2020 Federal Agenda and Surface Transportation
Reauthorization Principles

Each year, CMAP produces a Federal Agenda to establish policy priorities and guide discussions with federal policymakers. Additionally, during years in which the federal surface transportation program is set to expire, CMAP has traditionally produced high-level principles for reauthorization. The current FAST Act authorization is set to expire in September 2020.

For your review and discussion, staff has revised the priorities contained in the Federal Agenda for 2020 and has identified five reauthorization principles. The surface transportation reauthorization principles are:

- Sustainable funding
- Reform funding to achieve national goals
- Support for goods movement
- Address the transportation system's role in climate change
- A stronger role for regions

These principles, as well as the more detailed recommendations of the 2020 Federal Agenda, are presented in the attachment. The agenda is presented in five sections, analogous to the chapters of ON TO 2050.

Staff recommends we use these principles and recommendations to guide conversations with federal policymakers. Based on your feedback and direction, we will finalize the 2020 Federal Agenda and surface transportation reauthorization principles for CMAP Board approval in February.

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

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CMAP Surface Transportation Reauthorization Principles

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act authorizes surface transportation programs through September 2020. Policymakers should ensure the following principles are reflected in the upcoming reauthorization.

Sustainable funding

Transportation revenues must provide ongoing, sufficient, and sustainable funding to improve and enhance the system. Revenues should grow sustainably by indexing them to inflation to keep pace with the costs of operating and improving the system, which inevitably increase over time. Revenues must also change to adapt to new technology and changing transportation mode preferences.

Reform funding to achieve national goals

Reauthorization presents an opportunity to use performance measurement data to distribute funds based on system needs and performance to achieve national goals. Existing statutory goals can be supplemented to prioritize how well the multimodal transportation system connects people to jobs and services. A mix of formula and discretionary programs is appropriate, as is ensuring a certain level of year over year continuity for each state or region to enable long-term planning. Improving transparency in discretionary program development can improve program effectiveness.

Support for goods movement

America's goods movement system requires sustained and flexible federal support, and the benefits of the FAST Act's two freight focused programs are becoming evident. However, the national advantages of freight movement are often accompanied by negative impacts at the local level – particularly in disadvantaged communities. The region requires both continued federal support for freight and the ability to use funding for projects that mitigate negative impacts.

Address the transportation system's role in climate change

The transportation sector is the greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Moreover, climate change is already causing stronger and more frequent weather events, creating operational and safety problems on transportation facilities that were not typically designed to handle such events. Designing federal transportation programs toward both slowing the rate of emissions growth and responding to already occurring change will help ensure the transportation system's and the country's resilience.

A stronger role for regions

Federal surface transportation programs are founded on a federal-state-regional partnership. Regions are centers of population and economic activity, and often have unique transportation and economic needs within their states. They can also play a role in piloting responses to emerging mobility services and technology. MPOs have unique knowledge of these issues and the need for multijurisdictional solutions. Providing regions with greater funding and project selection authority allows a stronger connection between regional plans and investment decisions.

CMAP 2020 Federal Agenda

Surface transportation recommendations

Ensure sustainable, adequate revenue sources for multimodal transportation investments

- CMAP supports increasing the federal motor fuel tax rate, indexing it to an inflationary measure, and in the long term replacing it with a per-mile road usage charge.
- CMAP supports continued funding for per-mile user fee pilot programs, expansion of pilot program eligibility to MPOs, and development of a streamlined national solution that allows each state to collect road usage charges from out-of-state drivers.
- CMAP supports greater flexibility for states and regions to impose user fees by removing federal restrictions on tolling the Interstate system.
- CMAP supports removal of restrictions on commercial activity on the interstate system, e.g., the provision of power to electric vehicles and parking for commercial vehicles.

Strengthen the transit system

- CMAP supports legislative initiatives that provide more resources for the maintenance and modernization of transit systems, transit-oriented development, increased transit capacity, and intercity passenger rail.
- CMAP supports revising federal requirements to eliminate the funding disparity between transit projects and highway projects.
- CMAP supports aligning transportation, housing, and economic development programs to support transit.

Reform funding to achieve national goals

- CMAP supports application of performance-based funding principles across programs.
- CMAP supports amending the national highway goals in 23 USC § 150 to add a measure for how well the transportation system connects people to jobs and services.
- CMAP supports funding apportionments based on national goals, through a mix of formula and discretionary programs, while ensuring a certain level of year over year continuity for each state or region to enable long-term planning.
- CMAP supports reforms to discretionary programs such as BUILD and INFRA to increase decision-making transparency and multimodal needs.

Provide a greater role for metropolitan planning organizations in programming funds

- CMAP supports increases in the Surface Transportation Block Grant suballocation to urban areas and stronger requirements for MPO involvement in programming of these funds.
- CMAP supports MPO programming authority for a portion of transit and Highway Safety Improvement Program funds, reflecting new responsibilities for transit asset management and achieving new FHWA Safety Performance Management goals.
- CMAP supports establishment of a pilot program that allows large MPOs project selection authority for a portion of funds across various programs.

Reduce transportation emissions and adapt to climate change

- CMAP supports policies that incentivize non-single occupancy vehicle travel and improve services to provide these opportunities.
- CMAP supports funding to replace public vehicle fleets with electric or other low-emission propulsion systems.
- CMAP supports program eligibility and additional funding for projects that enable existing surface transportation assets to withstand weather events or natural disasters.

Issue Buy America waivers for air quality projects

- CMAP supports FHWA issuance of Buy America waivers for vehicle replacements and engine retrofits that substantially improve air quality.
- CMAP supports enactment of Buy America exemptions for vehicles and engine components used in emissions reduction projects.

Harness the benefits of emerging technologies and improve safety

- CMAP supports making space for innovation in emerging technology and mobility services -- with transit as the backbone -- through funding, regulations, and pilot programs.
- CMAP supports federal legislation that establishes processes to ensure transparent public access to AV safety data and establishes a role for the federal government in convening stakeholders -- including MPOs -- to establish technology standards that can enable long-range infrastructure planning by local and regional jurisdictions.
- CMAP supports federal policy that empowers local governments to enact AV policies consistent with land use and mobility goals.

- CMAP supports repeal of funding prohibitions for automated traffic safety enforcement.

Improve freight programs and acknowledge community impacts

- CMAP supports continuation and expansion of the freight programs -- both formula and discretionary -- with reforms to eliminate caps on multimodal projects.
- CMAP supports implementation of a federal fee on the cost of all shipments, regardless of mode, with revenues disbursed to states based on their freight needs.
- CMAP supports finalization of a National Freight Strategic Plan that includes a comprehensive freight system needs assessment.
- CMAP supports explicit eligibility for projects that mitigate the negative impacts of freight, such as reducing particulate pollution and reducing motorist delay at highway-rail grade crossings, through grade separations if necessary.
- CMAP supports collection of nationwide, representative grade crossing blockage data by the Federal Railroad Administration from the railroad industry and other available sources.

Address climate change and protect water and natural resources

- CMAP supports renewing the U.S. commitment to the Paris Agreement, expand renewable energy and efficiency programs, explore market mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and transition to renewable resources.
- CMAP supports actions to bolster climate resilience by investing in a more flexible and decentralized electric grid, such as the Smart Grid Investment Grant Program.
- CMAP supports additional investment in water and sewer infrastructure, and encourages the use of pricing to manage demand and recover the full cost of service through water rates.
- CMAP supports modernizing policies related to flooding, including making risk information available for property sales and reforming the National Flood Insurance Program to develop long-term solutions for properties that suffer repetitive losses or are at high risk of flooding.
- CMAP supports investments that maintain the health, recreational use, and economic benefits of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes.
- CMAP supports direct federal investment in open space preservation.

Facilitate data-driven and transparent investment decisions

- CMAP supports the collection of comprehensive data by federal agencies as well as initiatives that facilitate open exchange of data by applying best practices and technological improvements.
- CMAP supports policies that ensure data from private transportation providers can be used by the public sector to assess transportation system needs.

Promote housing options, target assistance to disinvested areas, and coordinate planning

- CMAP supports changes to federal regulations to facilitate development of multifamily and mixed use projects.
- CMAP supports policies — such as Opportunity Zones — that catalyze growth in disinvested areas.
- CMAP supports funding for programs such as the former Sustainable Communities Initiative that link planning and investment decisions across disciplines.

Improve education and workforce development to reduce inequality

- CMAP supports federal resources that further the development, implementation, and expansion of career pathway programs.
- CMAP supports federal investment in the region's talent pool through robust and reliable funding for higher education and workforce development.

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