



MEMORANDUM

To: Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force

From: CMAP Staff

Date: March 12, 2014

Re: Recommendations on CMAQ criteria and project ranking process for Bicycle Facility Projects

As part of its FY 2014 staff work plan, CMAP is reviewing how it carries out the staff functions associated with the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ).¹ As a result of this review, staff recommends enhancing the project selection process by using a point-based ranking system to incorporate criteria drawn from previous work by the CMAQ modal focus groups. The point-based rankings would then be combined with committee deliberation to produce the program of projects for Board and MPO Policy Committee approval. The [Recommendations on CMAQ Criteria and Project Ranking Process memo](#) was presented to the CMAQ Project Selection Committee at their last meeting on February 13th providing an overview on the proposed point system and the criteria for all the project types. CMAP staff would like the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force's feedback and ideas on the criteria assigned to bicycle projects and the point scoring associated with those criteria.

Criteria for Bicycle Facility Projects

Bicycle facilities improve air quality by encouraging bicycling rather than automobile use. The following performance measures build upon [the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force's evaluations of FY14 – 18 CMAQ projects](#):

- **Safety and attractiveness.** The Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force (BPTF) has developed a "[safety and attractiveness score](#)" that awards points for the improvement in conditions for biking that result from building a facility. This simple, semi-quantitative technique allows the evaluation of travel benefits between different projects.
- **Transit accessibility.** To help ensure that a bicycle facility provides a realistic alternative to auto use, it is important to evaluate the potential to link bicycling with transit for longer trips. Previously the BPTF used a count of transit boardings/alightings near bike

¹ See the [FY 14 work plan](#) under the Performance-Based Programming Core Program.

facilities to evaluate this. In coordination with RTA and other stakeholders, CMAP is developing a more comprehensive transit connectivity index that measures the overall level and quality of transit service available at a particular location in the region. For CMAQ assessment, bike projects where transit accessibility is high would be awarded more points. To receive points on this measure, the applicant must show that the facility is designed to integrate with transit service (e.g., a bike facility must lead directly into a transit center).

- **Innovation.** As with highway and direct emissions reduction projects, the CMAQ program can help to support innovative bike facility designs. A qualitative assessment would be formalized so that promising designs that are new to the region, such as those in NACTO’s [Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#), would be given more points than conventional designs. Staff would seek input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force to refine the scoring system in advance of the call for projects. A list of innovations should be identified prior to releasing a call for projects so the sponsors have an idea of what will qualify for this criterion. BPTF input is requested to identify potential innovative designs.

The BPTF previously ranked projects based on whether they helped to implement the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan. However, the mostly off-street trails in the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan are not as conducive to shifting travelers away from cars as would be on-street facilities, so it is not included as a criterion for bicycle projects funded under CMAQ. Instead, CMAP’s new Transportation Alternatives program can more appropriately emphasize the implementation of the Greenways and Trails Plan, as it did in the FY13-14 program.

Points and Scoring

The current staff recommendation assigns a total of 30 points to each transportation impact criteria section. How those 30 points should be split among the three criteria above requires input from BPTF. The staff recommendation would be to split the points as so:

Criteria	Max points
Safety and Attractiveness	15
Transit Accessibility	10
Innovation	5
Total	30

This would place a heavier emphasis on improvements being made over what currently exists and still keep the transit connection as important criteria. The 5 points for innovation would give bonus points to inventive solutions without putting those types of projects ahead of proven solutions and designs. Input from the BPTF is being sought on how the points are divided among the criteria.

Role of the Focus Groups

The modal focus groups should continue to be part of the CMAQ program development process. During the evaluation process for the next CMAQ program, the focus groups would be asked for feedback on the projects submitted and on the project rankings developed by staff, including the air quality rankings. The focus groups would be asked for specific input on technical aspects of the projects, particularly whether there are any “fatal flaws,” as well as qualitative information that is not captured in the project rankings. Information from the focus groups would be used to refine the staff-recommended program for the Project Selection Committee to consider.

Action Requested: Discussion