



MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Transportation Operations Coalition
From: CMAP staff
Date: May 2015
Re: RTOC & ATTF roles in development of next long-range plan

Development is now beginning on the next comprehensive regional plan, which is due in 2018. The next plan is expected to build upon GO TO 2040's foundation by refining its major recommendations and offering more specific policies and strategies, as well as by identifying limited new policy directions. This memo proposes two potential roles for RTOC in the first year of plan development for discussion by the committee: developing a white paper ("strategy paper") on highway operations, and helping develop a method to score performance of the highway network for use in needs assessment for the plan.

Strategy paper on highway operations

Similar to GO TO 2040, it is expected that a series of strategy papers will be developed on transportation, land use, natural resources, and other topics. Each strategy paper will provide agency direction on new topics or explore refinements to existing plan recommendations. To develop each paper, either existing CMAP committees will guide and contribute to the effort, or a new working group will be formed when special expertise or cross-functional membership is needed. A typical strategy paper would define the strategy, describe its potential benefits and drawbacks, and characterize the opportunity for implementing it (or increasing its use). For reference, the [GO TO 2040 strategy papers](#) on transportation topics included:

- Alternative Fuels
- Arterial Operations–Access Management
- Arterial Operations – Roundabouts
- Bicycling
- Car-sharing
- Context Sensitivity
- Interregional Transportation
- Pricing and Managed Facilities
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Public Transportation
- Transportation Demand Management
- Transportation Security / Incident Management

In the upcoming fiscal year starting July 1 (FY 16), staff hopes to develop four strategy papers on transportation topics, with another set to be developed in the following fiscal year. An initial list of topics is:

- Asset management
- Alternative transportation system funding concepts
- Transit modernization
- Highway operations / advanced traffic management

It is proposed that the highway operations paper would be developed through RTOC. This would involve guiding the development of the scope, reviewing drafts, and as individuals potentially contributing analysis in areas of interest. The timeline is roughly as follows:

- July 2015 – draft scope
- January 2016 – annotated outline
- March 2016 – draft paper
- May 2016 – final paper

Highway needs analysis

One area of increased specificity in the next plan may be in the analysis of needs on the transportation system. At its March 2015 meeting, RTOC received a presentation from CMAP staff on initial ideas for how to evaluate and rank highway network performance. The approach relies on observed data in the categories of mobility, safety, reliability, and infrastructure condition and rescales these observations to a 1 – 100 range. The presentation on the approach and individual maps are available on the [RTOC webpage](#) under the March 17, 2015 meeting.

While there was a suggestion at the March RTOC meeting to form a smaller group to help guide score development, staff would prefer not to form another group if RTOC would suffice. Thus staff is again seeking input from RTOC on whether or not it should be the main avenue by which CMAP seeks technical feedback on network scoring. A few questions have also been identified to help guide the discussion:

- Does performance on safety, mobility, etc. indicated in the scoring reflect individual members' experience with their systems?
- The system was intended to be a fairly intuitive picture of need on the highway network. Does this scoring method achieve that?
- Would it be better to use thresholds, like "acceptable" versus "not acceptable?"
- Are important performance measure categories missing? Some consideration has been given to accessibility as a performance measure, but how to include is not resolved.
- Do geometric deficiencies (such as inadequate shoulder width or improper horizontal curvature) need to be included, even if they do not appear to affect performance data?
- Would it make sense to combine the intersection and segment safety scores somehow? Except for the safety category the intersection score is based essentially on segment data.
- Does scoring HERE-derived data on the basis of the worst direction and worst time of day make sense? It may lead to some inflation.

- How might weighting be accomplished between the performance measure categories (safety, congestion, etc.)?

Again, the scoring system is meant to help in the long-range plan development process by painting a clearer picture of current needs on the highway network. The approach can also be adapted to evaluate proposed projects, supplementing the more traditional evaluation that CMAP conducts through travel demand modeling. The network scoring system will ultimately be brought to the CMAP Transportation Committee to discuss, likely in late fall 2015 or early spring 2016.

Action requested: Discussion