



MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: October 7, 2015

Re: Discussion on transportation topics in the next comprehensive regional plan

CMAP has begun the development of its next comprehensive regional plan, which will be the successor of GO TO 2040. Through a visioning session last year, the CMAP Board has **directed** staff to build upon the foundation of GO TO 2040 and refine its major policy objectives in a manner that is supportive of the agency's core land use and transportation responsibilities, as well as to identify limited new policy directions that are complementary to CMAP's role. Feedback from stakeholders and partners as well as staff experience through the Local Technical Assistance program has identified the need for greater specificity on the recommendations provided in the next plan. Building on the goal of continued implementation of GO TO 2040, staff conferred with committees and key stakeholders throughout fiscal year 2015 as well as conducted an internal **charrette** in August 2015 to identify transportation topics anticipated to be of particular importance in the region's next long-range plan. As we begin development of the plan in earnest, staff request preliminary discussion on critical transportation topics by the Board and MPO Policy Committee during their October joint meeting. To generate discussion about the next plan, three transportation topics and questions are outlined below.

Transportation Revenues

The agency's previous financial plans have included a suite of reasonably expected revenues to fiscally constrain desired maintenance, modernization, and expansion activities that might otherwise lack sufficient funding. The financial plan for the GO TO 2040 Plan Update included a near-term increase in the state motor fuel tax (along with a proposed replacement for it over the longer term), congestion pricing on the existing system, performance-based funding, and variable parking pricing as transportation policy priorities for reasonably expected revenues. Most of these potential revenue sources were also included originally in the GO TO 2040 plan, but to date significant progress has not been made on addressing the state's and region's transportation funding needs.

How can the next plan and its development process advance the recommendation to increase transportation revenues and ensure adequate funding for system maintenance and operations, enhancements, and expansions?

Guidance for Programming

It is essential to be strategic about project prioritization given the limited funding and resources available for transportation improvements. This next plan provides a new opportunity to discuss the merits of individual projects as well as to develop policy guidance for programming more generally. As an example, it may be that the plan could encourage a greater or lesser focus on a certain strategy than the region has had in the past. To do so, the plan could perhaps recommend shifting the criteria for allocation of funds to accommodate the increased or decreased focus on that strategy.

How can we most effectively provide guidance for transportation programming based on our regional goals?

Projects to Include in the Plan

GO TO 2040 defined “major capital projects” as large projects with significant capacity additions to the expressway system or comparable changes to the transit system (generally meaning a rail extension). Conversations with key partners, committees, and the Board have indicated that, to truly assess all projects that have a regional impact, a larger and more inclusive set of transportation projects should be considered in the next plan. The U.S. DOT’s [2014 MPO certification review](#) echoed this conclusion, suggesting that transportation projects should be evaluated based on impact rather than scope and indicating that the next plan should include some non-capacity improvements. Expanding the range of transportation projects included in the plan provides an opportunity to offer greater information and transparency and recognize a broader range of projects that meet regional needs. However, it will be essential to select regionally significant projects in a way that aligns with the agency’s policy priorities and avoids unnecessary administrative burden.

How can project evaluation and selection best advance our broader transportation goals?

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

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