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MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Freight Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: November 2015

Re: Key outcomes of the regional freight plan

The regional freight plan will have several key outcomes – updating GO TO 2040’s general policy positions, identifying prioritized lists of capital projects, recommending truck operations improvements, highlighting locations for and parameters of future local planning, and identifying specific implementation actions. The plan will also clarify CMAP’s jurisdiction for freight planning and programming.

Other major metropolitan regions have relatively straightforward freight planning issues. For example, the signature issue in some regions is improving access to a major seaport or international border crossing, or perhaps securing access to freight rail right-of-way in order to support passenger service. In contrast, northeastern Illinois has a complex freight network, involving all modes of transportation (and major points of conflict between modes) and significant shares of internal, external, and through movements of freight. As a result, the regional freight plan must cover a variety of topics across a variety of modes.

Review of GO TO 2040 Policies

Broadly speaking, GO TO 2040 supports policies that promote the region’s economic prosperity and quality of life. Within this general framework, GO TO 2040 specifically calls on the region to create a more efficient freight network. To do so, the plan includes five specific recommendations: (1) establish a national vision and federal program for freight; (2) complete the CREATE program of rail improvements; (3) make regional truck improvements, including truckways, routing, delivery time management, and restrictions; (4) organization and public policy; and (5) integrate freight needs and financing into infrastructure prioritization.

CMAP and partners have made strides in several of these areas since the plan’s adoption in 2010. The next plan should review this progress and also note emerging policy issues that were

not addressed in GO TO 2040. The result here will be a revised policy framework, into which the capital projects, truck operations improvements, local planning, and implementation will fit.

Capital Projects

One of the main deliverables for a regional freight plan will be prioritized lists of capital projects. This work is especially important for the region to successfully pursue competitive sources of funding (e.g., TIGER) or program potential new freight formula funds (e.g., as proposed in the DRIVE Act).

It is important to articulate CMAP's jurisdiction very simply and clearly: CMAP has jurisdiction over the surface transportation system. As a result, the regional freight plan will list capital projects for the highway system and, to the extent it interacts with mass transit or intercity passenger service, the rail system. Thus, while considerations regarding air, water, pipeline, or any other modal systems might be broadly discussed, the regional freight plan should focus on the adequate provision of highway connections to and transit interactions with these other modes.

Given CMAP's jurisdiction, the regional freight plan should identify capital priorities in the following areas:

- Truck bottlenecks (National Highway System only)
- Truck safety hotspots
- Highway-rail grade crossing conflicts (compare to CREATE program)
- Passenger-freight rail conflicts (compare to CREATE program)
- Adequate access to and connectivity of the NHS (potentially including analysis of intermodal drayage)

Note that data availability may vary across the above areas; it is likely that some types of improvements will be analyzed and recommended at a far greater level of detail than other improvements. For example, CMAP will likely be able to analyze trucking bottlenecks and grade crossing conflicts at a greater level of detail than passenger rail-freight rail conflicts. Similarly, the analysis of adequate access to and connectivity of the NHS will likely be a more general discussion, comparing known locations of freight transportation deficiencies to implementers' recent or proposed transportation improvements.

Where possible, this analysis will utilize CMAP's performance-based programming process to assess proposed projects. For example, proposed projects in proximity to truck bottlenecks may be evaluated for their effectiveness on similar measures to those used in CMAP's performance-based programming processes. Where data allows, approaches to this assessment will be explored in tandem with the regionally-significant project evaluation process. In addition, this project may also recommend freight-specific points or metrics for use in the evaluation of regionally significant projects in the larger regional transportation plan.

Local Regulations for Truck Operations

GO TO 2040 recognizes that trucks face numerous operational restrictions implemented by local governments, including routing restrictions, permitting requirements, parking restrictions, and time of day delivery restrictions. In addition, the state also regulates routing and permitting for state highways. These regulations are often inconsistent across boundaries, potentially inhibiting the safe and efficient movement of trucks.

Much research is already underway at CMAP on these topics. The regional freight plan can draw on this work to (1) identify key areas of inconsistent truck routing for future study, (2) outline best practices and policies for local routing decisions, and (3) recommend best practices for truck permitting processes. Additionally, other work is underway in the region to better understand off-hours delivery (e.g., UIC UTC) and truck parking (e.g., Illinois Tollway) and could potentially yield recommendations to build upon the existing policy language for those two topics in GO TO 2040.

Local Planning

Many critical freight issues are realized at a local level – first and last mile issues, inadequate geometrics for trucks, land use conflicts – and may not be consistently distributed across the region. Drawing in large part on the findings from the “Capital Projects” and “Local Regulations for Truck Operations” sections, overlaid with data on land use and development, the regional freight plan should identify subareas for future study and will also specify the types of issues to be studied. The plan could also point to general policies and best practices, such as strategies to preserve industrial corridors or mitigate land-use conflicts, for municipalities and others to plan for their freight-related land uses.

CMAP staff suspects that many freight issues will be concentrated in a handful of subregions within northeastern Illinois. Overlaying the locations of inconsistent truck routing, significant clusters of manufacturing and industrial land uses, multimodal freight facilities, and the NHS should help the plan identify locations for future study. The plan should also identify the topics to be studied in these locations (e.g., coordinated truck routing, adequate connections between industrial and freight facilities and the NHS), drawing on the review of GO TO 2040’s freight policy positions.

Implementation Prospects

The regional freight plan should identify relevant revenue sources that could be applied to implement capital projects (e.g., STP, CMAQ, etc.), appropriate implementers to deliver these projects (e.g., IDOT, CDOT, Metra, etc.), and appropriate implementers to conduct supportive plans and studies (e.g., CMAP’s LTA program). The result may be structured similar to the Implementation Action Area tables in GO TO 2040.