



Meeting Notes

Planning Information Forum:

Evaluation Approach for Regionally Significant Projects in ON TO 2050 -- Transit

November 18, 2016

Attendees (non-CMAP staff)

Name	Organization
David Kralik	Metra
David Tomzik	Pace
David Spacek	Regional Transportation Authority
Leah Mooney	Chicago Transit Authority
Tony Greep	Federal Transit Administration
Michael Connelly	Chicago Transit Authority
Peter Fahrenwald	Regional Transportation Authority
Mark Pitstick	Regional Transportation Authority
Brenda McGruder	Chicago Department of Transportation
Jessica Hector-Hsu	Regional Transportation Authority
Patrick Knapp	Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors
Mike Albin	DuPage Mayors and Managers Association

Summary of presentations

- **Metra** (David Kralik). David gave an overview of the cost-benefit analysis that Metra is undertaking for its proposed commuter rail improvements and extensions, which is similar in concept and timeline to the regionally significant project evaluation for ON TO 2050. Metra divided its candidate projects into Tier 1 and Tier 2, the former being improvements to existing service and the latter extensions to new areas. The primary tool being used to analyze project benefits is the Federal Transit Administration’s STOPS model. Besides ridership, the study is also estimating operating costs, improvements to state of good repair, and evaluating reliability benefits, among other things.
- **Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning** (Jesse Elam). Jesse gave a presentation of the proposed approach and metrics for the regionally significant project evaluation for ON TO 2050. The evaluation would have three components: a needs analysis, an analysis of travel benefits, and a screening against planning factors. The needs analysis would focus on the extent to which the project addresses observed capacity constraints, assets in disrepair, reliability issues, and ADA noncompliance. The travel benefits analysis would use STOPS to evaluate ridership, travel time, etc., as well as computing the improvement in job accessibility after building a project. Planning factors would include infill support, benefits to disadvantaged populations, economic impact, and several others. The benefits and impacts of the projects would be provided without developing a weighted scoring or prioritization system. Evaluation of strictly state of



good repair or system preservation projects would more limited and would focusing on documenting the need for the project. The slides for the presentation are available [here](#).

Discussion

- Participants asked about other measures that could be used in the Metra study, such as improvement to destination accessibility or an assessment of new markets. Metra staff indicated that other factors could come into decisions ultimately made about investments, but that the purpose of the study was to provide raw data, not a prioritization, for consideration by executives and the Metra board.
- Considerable discussion was devoted to Metra's STOPS modeling process and the level of detail about the service plans needed to assess their feasibility, such as crew requirements, rolling stock availability, yard capacity, recycle time, etc.
- To the question of whether infill stations were considered, David indicated that station needs were being separately considered in a station optimization study. To a question about how service levels were defined, David indicated that this was based on a reasonable increase from base, with more limited service lines having lower increases.
- To a question about whether the study captured benefits to freight rail or Amtrak, David indicated that the study would not, primarily because STOPS is not suited for that and because the project is being undertaken to examine Metra's needs.
- Some discussion was given to how to rate ADA improvements, with opinions varying on whether to use a simple yes/no approach or a more complex rating.
- On the CMAP presentation, several staff from the service boards indicated their concern over the level of time that would be needed from them. Jesse indicated that most analysis would be undertaken by CMAP or RTA and that the service board role would mostly be review, but that specific data and analysis on state of good repair and reliability improvements would be needed.
- Several participants asked whether transit and highway projects would be directly compared, and whether the allocations to transit and highway projects would be the same as or different from GO TO 2040. Jesse said the same types of measures (needs, travel benefits, planning factors) would be evaluated for transit and highway, but that he would not recommend directly comparing them on a common scale. The overall level of investment in highway and transit projects would be determined through the planning process and would need to be approved by CMAP's governing boards, but Jesse invited the transit agencies to stay engaged in the planning process and advocate for what they see as the appropriate level of investment in transit.

Considerations for ON TO 2050

Based on the discussion at the forum, staff suggests that the Transportation Committee (TC) consider the following:



- Given the connection between ON TO 2050 and the RTA strategic plan, the service boards, RTA, and CMAP should continue to refine the capital project evaluation through discussion at the RTA strategic plan meetings.