



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**MEMORANDUM**

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: John Swanson, Principal Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Suggested Approach for a RTPP/CLRP Comparative Assessment and Description of Future Work Activities

DATE: March 7, 2014

Overview

At the TPB meeting on February 19, board members expressed a desire for information about how the forthcoming Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) compares with the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP). At the conclusion of this discussion, TPB Vice Chair Tim Lovain, who chaired the meeting, asked staff to develop a “plan” for assessing the CLRP in comparison with The RTPP. He also asked staff to identify steps for integrating the RTPP with other planning work at COG, including activities related to COG’s *Region Forward* planning efforts.

This memo responds to Mr. Lovain’s direction by describing a suggested approach for conducting the RTPP/CLRP comparative assessment. It also provides an overview of work over the next year that will promote understanding of the RTPP and seek opportunities to coordinate the RTPP with other planning activities at COG.

Suggested Approach for the Assessment

For the April TPB meeting, we will provide an initial assessment of how the CLRP update compares with the RTPP. This assessment will be designed to provide decision makers with information that will help them understand the wider context of the CLRP as they consider 2014 project submissions in April and full approval of the 2014 plan in the fall.

Some key points:

- *The assessment will be largely qualitative.* For the most part, the RTPP did not identify measurable targets. Therefore, the assessment largely will provide a qualitative analysis supported by data and illustrative examples whenever possible.
- *The assessment will be based on the full transportation system that is anticipated for 2040, not just new 2014 submissions.* That means it will reference projects that are already in the CLRP as well as projects that have been submitted for this year’s update. The assessment will not attempt to use the RTPP as a screen to evaluate specific projects.

- *The assessment will be released in two phases.* Because the RTPP was only approved in January and the 2014 CLRP development process is still underway, staff will not have time to develop a full assessment in time for the approval of the 2014 CLRP project submissions. Therefore, in the April 10 TPB mailout, staff will provide an initial RTPP/CLRP comparative assessment. In the fall, staff will present additional information on the assessment. Findings from this assessment will be incorporated into the 2015 CLRP Call for Projects, which is currently scheduled to be released in draft form in October 2014.
- *The different phases of the assessment will use whatever data and information is available at the time.* The 2014 CLRP is a work in progress. New project submissions will be available in April for use in the assessment, but staff will not have time to analyze the full 2014 network until much later in the year. Therefore, the April assessment will reference the 2013 CLRP performance to provide relevant contextual information about anticipated trends. Regarding funding issues, the April assessment will use whatever information is available in early April from the CLRP financial analysis.

Framework for April 2014 Assessment

Staff will base the assessment upon the three broad priorities that were identified in the Priorities Plan. These priorities were described as building blocks to illustrate the fact that our vision for the future must be built upon a solid foundation of system maintenance and effective institutional practices.

I. Meet our Existing Obligations

Based upon preliminary financial information, the assessment will make the case that “State-of-Good-Repair” needs for transit and highways are anticipated to be fully funded in the 2014 CLRP.

The assessment will note that maintenance funding needs were identified in the 2010 CLRP financial analysis and it will describe accomplishments to address maintenance challenges, including the MetroForward program, PRIIA funding, and the states’ continuing road maintenance programs. It will also describe recent developments, including the 2013 revenue increases in Virginia and Maryland.

II. Strengthen Public Confidence and Ensure Fairness

The RTPP called for planners and decision makers to pursue institutional practices to promote three strategies: ensure accessibility for traditionally disadvantaged populations; engage and communicate with the public; and promote system efficiency through management and operations.

Many of the process-oriented actions necessary to implement these strategies will not be explicitly included in the CLRP. Therefore for this priority, the assessment will include broadbrush and illustrative descriptions of programs throughout the region that are advancing these objectives.

III. Move More People and Goods More Efficiently

Priority Three identified a wide range of strategies to alleviate congestion and crowding, and accommodate future growth. The assessment will use the following approaches to provide information on how this priority is reflected in the future transportation system that is represented in the CLRP update.

- *Analysis of broad trends*
Using the 2013 CLRP performance analysis and other information, the assessment will examine broad trends related to three objectives that were identified under Priority Three in the RTPP:
 - 1) Transportation demand reduction
 - 2) Increased transportation choice
 - 3) A focus on connections between and within Regional Activity Centers

- *Focus on RTPP strategies that are reflected in CLRP projects*
The assessment will specifically reference strategies that are focused on increased transportation capacity which will be reflected in CLRP projects. Four strategies in the RTPP fall into this category: 1) *Expand capacity on the existing transit system*; 2) *implement BRT and other cost-effective transit alternatives*; 3) *implement tolling and road pricing*; and 4) *alleviate roadway bottlenecks*.

- *Reminder that the many important RTPP strategies will not be explicitly reflected in the CLRP*
The assessment will note that many capital improvement strategies that are highlighted in the RTPP – ped/bike improvements or bus stops, for example -- are not typically included in the CLRP. The assessment will note that these types of projects are important for our future, and the TPB intends to promote their implementation at a variety of levels and highlight efforts that are advancing these objectives.

Future Work Activities

As noted above, staff will develop a more detailed final RTPP/CLRP assessment for the September TPB meeting.

In addition, staff will conduct other activities throughout this calendar year to promote the priorities of the RTPP and seek integration between the RTPP and other policy documents at COG. The activities described below have been included in the Draft FY2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

- Outreach on the RTPP – COG/TPB staff will engage policy officials and staff of the TPB's member jurisdictions to promote dialogue on the RTPP and to further the realization of its objectives. Outreach activities will promote discussion that connects the regional policy framework provided by the RTPP with the planning and decision-making activities conducted by the TPB's members. Staff will also conduct outreach with members of the general public that will seek input from a variety of constituencies, including representative citizens, historically disadvantaged communities, opinion leaders and community activists, as well as stakeholders who are already involved in the TPB process.

- Enhanced Linkages to COG’s Place + Opportunity Report – Many of the strategies and priorities laid out in the RTPP are closely connected to COG’s Place + Opportunity Report, which focuses on enhancing the region’s 141 Activity Centers. In FY2015, COG/TPB staff will identify ways to further promote those linkages through analysis and outreach.
- Conduct Other Planning Activities and Analysis Related to the RTPP – In addition to the work identified above, staff will identify and conduct other analysis and planning activities related to key issues and themes identified in the RTPP. Activities may include developing new/revised transportation and land-use scenarios, conducting analysis of those scenarios, and other research and analysis efforts, such as benefit-cost analysis. This analysis may also include evaluation of transportation metrics and targets that were established in other COG documents, such as Region Forward, as well as those related to MAP-21.