

November 17, 2011

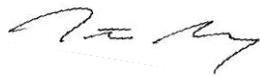
The Honorable Randy Hultgren
427 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Hultgren:

Please support performance measures and strategic transportation planning in the next transportation authorization. Today, we spend transportation dollars based on arbitrary formulas divided into isolated silos that fragment road, highway, transit, rail, bike, and pedestrian projects. Instead, we should be making targeted investments that advance strategic coordinated regional goals and a strong national vision that outlines clear priorities for our transportation system. Precisely because there is a limited supply of federal dollars, we must evaluate potential investments based on their ability to reduce hours spent in traffic, curb emissions, and connect affordable homes and jobs, similar to the federal TIGER program. The criteria should not be about how much is spent, but rather whether each investment gets us closer to our goals.

In consultation with the Bipartisan Policy Center, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and Transportation 4 America, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) suggests the following issues be incorporated into the next federal transportation bill.

Sincerely,



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Proposed Measures to Enhance the Performance and Accountability of a Proposed 6 Year Surface Transportation Bill

Measures to Advance Performance

The outline for the proposed T&I Committee bill generally supports transition to a performance-based program, providing states increased flexibility to spend funding on projects they choose, but holding them accountable for those decisions through the application of performance measures. To be effective, the legislation needs to include essential details for laying the foundation for a true performance-based program with accountability for real and nationally significant results. The overall goals of this type of performance based program are to ensure spending on transportation is an investment that furthers national goals and that transportation investments spur state and local economic development and promote a high quality of life for residents. Proposed measures include:

- **National Objectives.** The most critical foundation for a performance-based program is the specification of national goals or intended outcomes of federal support for transportation investments. The goals or national interests in transportation include:
 - Advancing economic growth
 - Improving national connectivity
 - Promoting metropolitan accessibility
 - Advance livability and sustainability
 - Improving energy security and environmental protection
 - Providing mobility options
 - Fostering safety

These should be incorporated into the planning and programming of transportation funds through a strategic planning process as outlined below.
- **Increased flexibility for performance.** To support both states and MPOs to begin transition to a strategic, programmatic focus for transportation planning, planning needs to focus on achievement of nationally significant goals and consolidate all capital investments to focus on broad investment programs rather than lists of projects. Maximum flexibility should be provided to states and MPOs on priorities, means, and strategies provided that funds are spent to help achieve measurable outcomes. Incentives should be provided to encourage partnership, innovation and collaboration.
- Provide direct **support for needed data, research, tools,** and continued refinement and validation of outcome-oriented performance metrics. This is essential because a major challenge in advancing a performance program is current limitations in the data, its breadth, depth, and reliability, and analytical capacity in state and local planning agencies. This support can be a combination of funding for all recipients of planning funds as well as a focused pilot program for

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entities taking leadership in applying and refining the application of a strategic performance-based planning effort.

- **Leveraging funds, partnering with the private sector.** Better leveraging federal funds and increasing the involvement of the private sector will require broadening current flexibility for tolling the interstates – rather than narrowing it exclusively to new lanes. **Increasing the TIFIA cap**, but combine it with a New Toll and User fee discretionary grant assistance program for early project development and feasibility analyses with 50 percent cost sharing, and expanded and improved Tax Code Incentives (PAB, PBB, QTCB, SIBS) to promote private participation. However, it is critical that the TIFIA program retain the existing project selection criteria to ensure that these limited resources are used to advance the best projects. In addition a **new Maintenance of Effort program** can be very effective in incentivizing and rewarding states and metropolitan regions for the generation of sustainable revenues with bonus funds.
- **Prioritize state of good repair.** Improve the condition of existing transportation facilities and systems with particular emphasis on projects that minimize life-cycle costs.
- **Strategic Metropolitan Planning Process**
 - **Transportation Plan.** An identification of the key elements of the transportation system of the region and an analysis of the problems and opportunities affecting that system to at least a 20-year forecast period. This analysis shall include integrated strategies and investments to enhance the region’s surface transportation investments including operational improvements, demand management strategies, capital investments, land development patterns, tolling, intelligent transportation system improvements, and other strategies. A metropolitan planning organization may develop an accessibility sub-plan for each sub-region within the metropolitan planning area. Further the plan shall include an analysis of regional goods movement and specialized transportation services for elderly individuals, individuals with disabilities and low income individuals, especially as they relate to access to health, human services and jobs. To the extent possible, analysis shall examine problems and opportunities at the sub-regional scale. The transportation plan should focus on a comprehensive set of projects that advance national goals.
 - **Scenario analysis.** Metropolitan Planning Organizations should complete multiple scenarios for consideration as a part of the development of the transportation plan and adopt a final preferred scenario to serve as the basis for the transportation plan, which should be incorporated into the

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metropolitan planning organization's 20 year plan. Each scenario shall be fiscally constrained, be based on an official population and employment estimates as determined by the state and include:

- potential regional investment strategies, and land development patterns for a 20-year period
 - assumed distribution of population and employment
 - at least one of the analyzed scenarios shall improve the baseline conditions for the performance metrics
 - The Secretary may develop best practices for long-range scenario planning processes, including characteristics for consideration in the measurement of the impacts of scenarios on performance objectives. However, the Secretary shall not establish uniform standards or prescribe a specific technology or model to measure impacts of scenarios and progress towards performance objectives
 - Long term plans should be updated every ten years
- **Strategic Planning**
- A metropolitan planning organization should at a minimum use a model to evaluate each scenario on the following performance metrics:
 - congestion and goods movement
 - per capita delay on key freight corridors
 - access to jobs for low-income individuals
 - per capita average peak period travel time
 - Per capita movement of people
 - long –term economic development
 - mode share
 - jobs/housing access
 - air quality
 - daily emissions
 - energy use
 - infill and reinvestment
 - air quality standards,
 - per capita traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities
 - percentage of transportation facilities not in a state of good repair
 - per capita transportation-related oil use
 - per capita transportation user costs for low-income individuals
 - The public should weigh in on the process.

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- **Performance review.** Metropolitan planning organizations shall analyze the area’s current performance for each of the performance metrics to set a baseline. The performance metric outcomes approved as part of the preferred scenario shall be considered the area’s 20-year transportation performance goals. Every five years after the adoption of a transportation plan the metropolitan planning organization shall analyze the impacts of the projects and strategies funded and the local land use decisions made during the preceding five years. This analysis shall consider the degree to which the actions of the preceding five years impact the metropolitan planning organization’s 20-year performance goals at the end of the forecast period of the transportation plan.
- **Strategic Statewide Planning Process.**
 - The statewide long-rang transportation plan should focus on a comprehensive set of projects that advance national goals.
 - The statewide long-range transportation plan shall be consistent with the applicable metropolitan transportation plan and the preferred scenario of such plan for each metropolitan planning organization
 - The state shall help foster cooperation between adjacent metropolitan planning organizations.
 - The state shall cooperate with metropolitan planning organizations in the development of plans for areas abutting the applicable metropolitan planning area.
 - The state shall hold public meetings on the scenarios developed and shall consider public comments in evaluating the merits of each scenario and selecting a preferred scenario.
 - Scenario analysis. At least once every ten years each state shall develop multiple scenarios for consideration as a part of the development of the transportation plan.
 - Each scenario shall—
 - include the state’s investment strategies for a 20-year period
 - include assumed distribution of population and employment
 - improve the baseline conditions of the performance metrics
 - be fiscally constrained
 - be based on an official population and employment estimates as determined by the state.
 - at least one of the analyzed scenarios shall maintain or improve the baseline conditions for the performance metrics
 - Strategic planning.— States shall at a minimum use a weighted model to develop scenarios and evaluate the scenarios using the following metrics:
 - congestion and goods movement
 - per capita delay on key freight corridors
 - access to jobs for low-income individuals
 - per capita average peak period travel time

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- per capita traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities
- percentage of transportation facilities not in a state of good repair
- per capita transportation-related oil use
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- The state shall create a baseline condition for the performance metrics based on the state’s current performance for each of the performance metrics and adopt a preferred scenario to serve as the basis for the transportation plan.
- The performance metric outcomes approved as part of the preferred scenario shall be considered the state’s 20-year transportation performance goals.
- Five-year performance review. Every five years after the adoption of a transportation plan the state shall analyze the impacts of the projects and strategies funded and the local land use decisions made during the preceding five years. This analysis shall consider the degree to which the actions of the preceding five years impact the state’s 20-year performance goals at the end of the forecast period of the transportation plan.

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