



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** MPO Policy Committee  
**From:** CMAP Staff  
**Date:** January 3, 2019  
**Re:** ON TO 2050 Regionally Significant Projects: Proposed amendment process

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The ON TO 2050 Comprehensive Regional Plan includes a set of fiscally constrained Regionally Significant Projects (RSPs). These projects support the plan's three principles of inclusive growth, prioritized investment, and resilience, particularly emphasizing the need to use the region's limited resources to invest in existing infrastructure to modernize and improve condition to achieve a state of good repair.

All project sponsors are strongly encouraged to submit projects during the development of the regional plan, rather than at other times. However, availability of new revenues, and/or sufficient advancement through the project development process may require interim evaluation of select projects. This memo lays out an amendment process for proposed additions to the ON TO 2050 fiscally constrained project list. Note that, if development of the successor or update to ON TO 2050 is underway and project evaluation has begun, staff will defer amendment requests to that process.

### **Project definitions**

After extensive conversation with committees and its governing board, CMAP expanded the breadth of projects to be evaluated in ON TO 2050. The definition includes the large projects evaluated in GO TO 2040 and adds reconstruction projects as well as smaller scale road and transit projects that have the potential for regional impacts. Specifically, a project requiring evaluation:

1. Costs at least \$100 million and (a) changes capacity on the National Highway System (NHS) or is a new expressway or principal arterial, or (b) changes capacity on transit services with some separate rights-of-way or shared right-of-way where transit has priority over other traffic; or
2. Costs at least \$250 million, regardless of the facility type or work type.

Projects that meet these thresholds will require a plan amendment to be included within the fiscally constrained set of Regionally Significant Projects. Transportation Improvement Program

changes that bring a project over these thresholds will also require an amendment process (excepting projects that change less than 20 percent in cost, up to a maximum of a \$10 million change). Candidate projects are compared to the cost thresholds based on current dollars (any conversion to year-of-expenditure, or YOE, cost is carried out by CMAP when necessary to meet federal rules). The entire project cost, not just the cost of the added capacity, is used to determine whether the project is regionally significant.

Note that project sponsors may develop a project proposal comprising a program of similar projects if individual projects would not meet the proposed thresholds. Projects that change capacity are those with non-exempt Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) work types, in other words those that are already required under federal rules to demonstrate air quality conformity.

### **Process summary and staffing**

These guidelines describe the process for a project sponsor to follow in providing data and information to CMAP to support its independent evaluation of a proposed RSP amendment to ON TO 2050. The amendment process will begin when a project sponsor notifies CMAP's Executive Director via letter of a requested amendment, or when CMAP staff notify a project sponsor that a requested TIP change crosses the threshold to a Regionally Significant Project.

CMAP will conduct a **qualitative evaluation** of the proposal's consistency with the principles and recommendations of ON TO 2050 as well as a **quantitative evaluation** of the proposal comparing the various forecasting assumptions and resulting project performance with regard to ON TO 2050 priorities. Project sponsors will be required to provide their own assessments for both components of the evaluation.

The purpose of the **qualitative evaluation** is to determine the proposal's consistency with the priorities of ON TO 2050. The evaluation format will address each of the three principles of ON TO 2050 and the applicable goals of its five chapters. In this part of its evaluation, CMAP will consider the impacts of the proposal on each of the above topic areas as they might support or undermine the implementation of ON TO 2050. In its evaluation, CMAP will not consider arguments for the project beyond those that support the principles and goals of the adopted Plan.

The purpose of the **quantitative evaluation** is to assess the proposal's effect on the Plan's recommendations, through evaluation that addresses its impact on current needs, 2050 travel, and plan priorities. Where applicable, the quantitative evaluation may also review a project's financial plan to ensure fiscal constraint. The quantitative analysis will also supplement conclusions drawn in the qualitative analysis. Quantitative evaluation will vary by project type, matching the approach established in the ON TO 2050 plan. In particular, arterial projects will be evaluated on their impacts on the current system as well as planning priorities, but not on potential 2050 travel impacts.<sup>1</sup> This will provide a streamlined, shorter process for arterial amendments.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the ON TO 2050 Regionally Significant Project Benefits Report at <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/911391/FINAL+Regionally+Significant+Projects+Benefit+Report+Appendix.pdf/612e47c8-5038-c3f7-035e-22959ffb0c51>  
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CMAP and the project sponsor will identify official point-of-contact managers for the CMAP evaluation process. These managers are accountable for arranging the initial technical consultation meeting, developing a detailed timeline of interim deadlines, and keeping the successive information and data transmittals on schedule. The CMAP point-of-contact manager is also accountable for maintaining complete records of all correspondence related to the request.

A CMAP technical team will be assembled based on the subject-matter expertise required to evaluate the project. In most cases, this will include a data modeler, urban planner, environmental specialist and policy analyst.

### **Required data and information**

CMAP's evaluation will begin with the sponsor's assessment of how the proposed project promotes the success and implementation of ON TO 2050. The sponsor should provide relevant project data and information to CMAP in support of the agency's evaluation of the proposal. In its evaluation, CMAP will consider this information, but may also analyze additional independent resources. Necessary data and information transmittals include, but are not limited to, the following:

- CMAP encourages the project sponsor to use the ON TO 2050 forecasts. If the project sponsor has prepared **alternative socioeconomic or land use forecasts**, the sponsor should provide at least one analysis using the official regional forecast. CMAP must also concur on the methodology for any alternative forecast.
- If the project sponsor has conducted its own **travel demand modeling**, CMAP requests conventionally coded model networks, trip-tables, GTFS files and other relevant input datasets, demand coefficients and resulting traffic assignments for all relevant planning-level scenarios as well as any methodological documentation needed to interpret these resources.
- If the project sponsor has conducted its own **environmental evaluation**, CMAP requests relevant GIS feature layers, appropriate data tables, and methodological documentation relevant to ON TO 2050 indicators or plan themes.
- If the project sponsor has conducted its own **financial evaluation**, CMAP requests summary assumptions regarding project construction and operating costs as well as any subsidies, fares, tolling, pricing, or other revenue considerations for all relevant planning-level scenarios. To the extent possible, the sponsor should provide information about the potential structure, public and private cost, term, and other relevant information if the project is proposed as a public private partnership. Documentation of the financial evaluation methods used along with any relevant data tables and forecasting assumptions should be included.

### **Timeline**

The evaluation timeline depends upon the project type. Evaluation will mirror the methods used in the ON TO 2050 development process, although the availability of more recent data across a variety of measures may limit direct comparisons to the 2050 project set. If the

evaluation timeline significantly overlaps with the initiation of project evaluation for development of the region’s long range comprehensive plan, staff will request that the sponsor defer to that process.

For **expressway and transit projects**, CMAP requires that proposed regionally significant project amendments to ON TO 2050 be submitted for consideration six months (26 weeks) in advance of the desired action by the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee. This timeline permits sufficient time for the sponsor to demonstrate the proposal’s value to ON TO 2050, for CMAP to conduct its own evaluation, and for required public notice and comment to occur. Staff will work with the project sponsor to set a schedule that aligns with other processes, such as regular air quality conformity updates, where possible to improve efficiency of the process.

Evaluation of arterial projects will be simpler, and directed to a single, annual process. CMAP requires that any proposed **arterial project amendments** to the regionally significant project list be submitted for consideration by October 1st, with evaluation completed and recommendations considered in the subsequent meetings of the Transportation Committee, the CMAP Board, and ultimately the March MPO meeting. Public noticing will take place with TIP and Conformity amendment notifications. As in the ON TO 2050 process, arterials will be evaluated on their impact on today’s transportation system as well as planning priorities.

The table below provides approximate milestones for proposal evaluation, with milestones noting a preferred maximum amount of time for each stage. Projects may proceed more quickly if all required information is submitted ahead of these milestones. Specific deadlines for data and information transmittals and evaluation deliverables will be agreed upon at the initial technical consultation meeting.

**Approximate regionally significant project amendment timetable**

	Milestone	Transit or Expressways	Arterials
Data and information gathering	Technical consultation meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish protocols and schedule</li> <li>- Outline data and information needs</li> <li>- Discuss project fit with the ON TO 2050 plan</li> </ul>	Week One	
	Sponsor assessment and data sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsor submits project assessment for fit with ON TO 2050 principles and goals</li> <li>- All agreed upon information and data is provided to CMAP in the required format</li> </ul>	Week Six	Week Four
	Content verification: CMAP informs sponsor of any additional data or information needs	Week Eight	Week Six
Evaluation	Sponsor provides all remaining information and/or notifies CMAP if information is unavailable	Week Ten	Week Eight
	CMAP completes project evaluation and summary memo on the proposed amendment	Week Fifteen	Week Eleven

Public Comment and Amendment	Public comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff releases evaluation for 30 day public comment</li> <li>- Staff discusses evaluation with CMAP Committees</li> </ul>	Week Sixteen	Week Twelve
	Board and MPO review and determination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff provides recommendation memo and summary of comment</li> <li>- Transportation Committee, CMAP Board, and MPO vote on the amendment</li> </ul>	Week Twenty Two	Week Eighteen <i>(Annual March meeting of the MPO)</i>

Note: The final timetable will be adapted to the needs of each project.

ACTION REQUESTED: Information

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