

Meeting Minutes

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tuesday November 7, 2017

PAC Business and Minutes

Ms. Bacharach asked for one minor change to minutes, and were approved as amended unanimously.

MSP Administrative Guidelines – Overall Status/Update

Ms. Honish began by explaining that Metro would allow sub-regions to self-certify the application of their own developed performance measures. She noted however that all metrics would be subject to oversight and review including audit with reports on project and eligibility expenses.

At this point, Ms. McMillan acknowledged Metro's CEO Phil Washington who was in attendance. Regarding the funding agreement, she relayed that if a sponsor needed a Letter of No Prejudice, Metro staff would provide a streamlined version for signature. She emphasized that any expenditures incurred by a jurisdiction before the adoption of the administrative guidelines needed to have an LONP on file.

Mark Christoffels asked whether Metro would withhold 10% of planning funds until final audit, similar to the process for major project funding. Ms. McMillan responded that Metro staff were working to develop a process, but that it would make the most sense for planning funds to be fully allocated and audited later.

Robert So asked whether Caltrans needs a funding agreement in addition to their existing cooperative agreement with Metro. Ms. McMillan responded that there would be special considerations pertaining existing agreements with the State, and that Metro staff would work to formalize these considerations.

Ms. Estolano asked when the funding agreement template would be available to jurisdictions. Ms. Honish replied that the template would be available at the same time as the administrative procedures, in December 2017.

Public Participation Process

Mark Yamarone presented the framework for the Public Participation element of the MSP Five-Year Plans, developed per PAC request. Each COG would be responsible for developing Public Participation element that should address and identify processes to engage interest groups and stakeholders. The guidelines are flexible, and allow sub-regions with existing public engagement processes to use those while providing tools for sub-regions developing new processes. The plan should be developed to respond to the following four questions:

- Who has interest in MSP development by program? (COGs, cities/counties, communities, stakeholders?)
- What processes and procedures will be followed in order to meaningfully involve these groups?
- How will interested groups be engaged in development of MSP Five-Year Plan?
- What is the timing of the Public Participation element?

Ms. McMillan added that the Public Participation process must be in original Five-Year Plan. She emphasized that the public must be involved throughout the life of the program, not just at the end. Sub-regions will fill out the form provided by Metro, answering the four questions above. Those regions with existing processes will respond detailing how their processes fulfill the goals of the MSP Public Participation element. Those without a process can use the half-percent planning funds to hire a consultant tasked with process development.

Mr. Christoffels asked whether there would be a separate, project-specific participation plan in addition to program one. Ms. McMillan responded that the Program Public Participation element should address what happens on a project-specific basis. Mr. Christoffels concluded that the Public Participation Plan had two parts: 1) Participation during Five-Year Plan development, and 2) Participation on a project by project basis. Ms. McMillan concurred, noting that further detail could be found in Section 3 of the Public Participation handout.

Ms. Meaney asked whether community-based organizations can provide input in the drafting of the Public Participation element. Ms. McMillan replied that that was not precluded. Steve Lantz commented that the process should be left to each individual COG. Mr. Dipple noted that cities typically make those decisions with staff involvement and in public meetings. The city council, as the representatives of the residents, then votes to approve or reject. He expressed that it would be atypical to have groups other than city staff drafting documents. Ms. Estolano envisioned COG staff would draft initial answers to Metro's questions, get initial reactions from the public, then go to COG Board, before finally going to the Metro Board to secure the funding. KeAndra Dodds said that community groups would like to play an advising role, not act as part of the approval process, in order to have more influence than the standard public comment. Ms. Norton added that with push for public-private partnerships, there should be a place for community engagement because of all unique perspectives.

Ms. Estolano moved that the PAC endorse Metro's Public Participation element. Ms. Meaney asked for further discussion in order to move more toward consensus.

John Bwarie asked what changes PAC thought were necessary. Ms. Meaney responded that the guidelines should specify that when a working group sits down to discuss how the Public Participation plan will work, that a member of a community-based organization be involved.

Ms. Estolano proposed adding the following language to the end of Section 3: "Stakeholders shall be involved and engaged in the process of developing the plan components." Ms. Dodds agreed with the language, and called for further clarification. Ms. Bacharach noted that South Bay COG has various working groups along with lists of stakeholders that are involved in all COG decisions. She noted that the

PAC might not be able to reach consensus on the Public Participation element, and that the result should be communicated to Metro's Board.

Stephanie Ramirez appreciated that COGs had pre-developed public outreach methods. She said that it wasn't enough, however, and that there are many people living in LA that don't have access to the channels necessary to reach completely. She agreed with the idea that there should be a community representative at the table to help reach out to stakeholders.

Mr. Dipple stated that it was unrealistic to mandate that a representative from a community-based organization be present. He noted that his COG engages in community outreach both in public meeting settings as well as at community events throughout the sub-region, and that a mandate was unnecessary. Ms. Dodds expressed that there were difficulties when developing the mobility matrices, and that the Public Participation element was a way to avoid those difficulties going forward. Ms. Estolano suggested that it would be reasonable for the Guidelines to state that sub-regions shall "consult with stakeholders" in development of a public engagement plan. The interpretation of that addition, she noted, would inevitably vary throughout the sub-regions.

Bridget Smith agreed with Ms. Estolano, and concluded that there was general support for a required level of public engagement, but a question of how much. Ms. Smith called to amend Ms. Estolano's "encourage" to "require." Ms. Dodds seconded. Mr. Lantz requested that that the word "consult" be used instead of "engage." Ms. Bacharach disagreed with the amendment and did not like the word "require." She was in support of Ms. Estolano's original language, using the terms "encourage" and "consult." A vote was called to approve Ms. Smith's amendment to Ms. Estolano's proposed addition (11 in favor, 6 opposed; amendment approved). The PAC then voted to approve Ms. Estolano's addition to the Guidelines as amended with the following text: "...Sub-regions shall consult with stakeholders in the development of a Public Participation plan element." (12 in favor, 6 opposed, motion passed).

Performance Measures

Ms. Honish explained that one consensus item of the PAC was that there should be accountability and transparency throughout the MSP process. She presented a 3 tiered option with the following high, medium, and low levels of metrics:

1. Countywide quantitative measures
2. Opportunity where COGs articulate the benefits (without quant.)
3. Completely voluntary for sub-region

The themes identified in Measure M (community, economic vitality, accessibility, safety, sustainability, and quality of life) would each be subject to performance measures. She asked the PAC which of the three approaches was preferred to measure project success.

Mr. Christoffels said that the San Gabriel Valley COG would advocate for Option 2, which was the process that COG used to develop mobility matrices. He said that Option 1, quantitative measures, burdened smaller cities. He warned that very few cities would work through the process simply due to

lack of manpower. Bryn Lindblad did not see quantitative measures as a burden, but as an opportunity to obtain more data that could be beneficial to sub-regions. She suggested that Metro should provide support to COGs by supplying some of that data. Ms. McMillan made clear that Metro lacked staff capacity to do project by project quantitative analysis for every COG. She suggested that Metro could assist in identifying and locating metrics that could be helpful to COGs. Ms. Honish added that data would still need to be provided by the cities and would still prove burdensome to smaller municipalities. Ms. Estolano was in favor of COGs being allowed to take a qualitative approach, and also agreed with Ms. McMillan's idea that Metro could support those COGs that wanted to take a quantitative approach.

Ms. Meaney asked whether it would be possible to develop a metric to show reduction in VMT. Ms. McMillan responded that before and after scenario would be necessary, with little precision and high costs. She explained that measurement methods would need to be in place, and that those methods would be different for an interchange project, a bicycle lane, etc. She then referenced a chart where Metro staff identified common metrics that could be quantitatively translated to show increases/decreases. The metrics were sorted by corresponding Measure M theme. Ms. McMillan noted that Metro could provide guidance for each of the listed metrics as necessary.

Ms. McMillan also noted that projects may not fall into traditional boundaries. For that reason, benefits would not be limited to just one area. She said that countywide benefits of the MSP as a whole can be modeled, but that finer breakdowns became difficult as variables are common. She suggested to Ms. Meaney that benefits of VMT would need to be examined at a sub-regional or even regional level, and not at a project level, in order to be accurate and useful.

Kerry Cartwright commented that the best way for Metro to monitor post-project improvements would be through constant travel times along transit routes for a sense of speeds on the roadway and freeway systems. He noted that this type of monitoring was very limited. Steve Lantz noted that congestion management data did not collect data on a project-specific basis. Mr. Christoffels said that it's dangerous to just use one or two quantitative measures as there are many ways for a project to benefit that might be overshadowed. Ms. Lindblad said that Metro was emphasizing a VMT target as part of their sustainability metrics development process, and therefore perhaps some sort of project-by-project metric would be useful.

Ms. McMillan asked PAC members to recognize the synergies of the studies Metro conducts to support the development of the LRTP and what Metro and the COGs will recognize as the specific performance related elements in the various MSPs. She noted that anything funded with Measure M dollars will be evaluated through the processes laid out in the LRTP. She continued that the MSPs themselves have a different opportunity in that they were more community-based and smaller scale. As a result, MSP-specific performance metrics should be developed keeping the smaller scale in mind.

Ms. Dodds asked how Metro uses the findings of the high-level LRTP analysis to adjust processes at the MSP level. Ms. McMillan acknowledged that this was a good question that should be explored as part of the PAC's LRTP discussions.

Jerard Wright (BizFed) asked whether the quantitative analysis mandated by the performance measures would work as a way of circumventing the CEQA environmental process. He also brought attention to how the level of pricing for the qualitative analysis plays into what types of metrics Metro decides to use.

Jean Armbruster (LA County Public Health) asked if there was one performance metric that could unify the goals of COGs throughout the region. She suggested a fatal and severe injury metric as an example. Mr. Christoffels responded that in his region, after implementing a series of bike lanes, the number of injuries rose significantly. It would not be reasonable, however, to deny bike lane projects simply because of the rise in severe injuries.

Thomas Yee did not think that consensus for metrics would be found at this juncture. He hoped that the PAC continued to strive for the development of appropriate metrics going forward. He suggested that the PAC add language into the Plan saying that additional metrics will be studied and identified at a later date. He noted that other agencies including SCAG require quantitative impacts as part of grant application processes, meaning that it is possible to develop.

Ms. Bacharach commented that she wanted performance measures, but wanted to hold her COG's Board of Directors accountable.

Ms. Estolano moved that Metro use Option 2, with the 2nd paragraph deleted, and a new sentence that read: "If a sub-region wishes to adopt a quantitative metric, Metro will advise sub-region on best practices for metrics appropriate to their MSP and identify potential data sources to fund that MSP subject to periodic review and PAC discussion." She also suggested that PAC come back in 9 months to see what was adopted by each sub-region. Ms. Bacharach seconded. Mr. Christoffels recommended periodic discussion. (16 in favor, 1 opposed, item passed)

Jess Arden commented that VMT reduction would be a good metric, but was curious as to whether companies such as Uber and Lyft that actively collect and use this data could provide data to Metro and the COGs.

Marla Westervelt (Metro Office of Extraordinary Innovation) discussed Visionary Seed Funding. She noted that it generates \$500,000 each year to spark and develop new ideas for future implementation. Metro provides this as a competitive grant program every 3 years to allow eligible applicants to come forth with a problem statement that could be solved with Metro's assistance. Eligible projects include safety/security improvements, substantial travel time improvements, major reductions in emissions or other environmental externalities, improvements in access for disadvantaged populations, and use of new and innovative technology solutions outside of transit solutions. Eligible applicants include Metro, municipal and regional transit operators, and public and private sector staff. The unsolicited proposal process will also be considered for incorporation. Mr. Lantz asked that the list of eligible applicants include COGs.

Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Ranu asked that PAC members submit comments to Public Participation Plan element of the LRTP in advance of the November Metro Board Meeting. Ms. Honish said Metro staff would give a foundational presentation on legislative, regulatory requirements the Metro faces when doing an LRTP update. Additionally, she noted Metro staff already begun to develop the next set of performance metrics for the LRTP, and that the framework would be distributed to the PAC as early as December. Ms. Honish mentioned that the working groups would be utilized in upcoming PAC meetings, and that the Equity, Performance, TOC and Visioning topics would be discussed in the near future.

On the topic of the Acceleration/Deceleration Policy, Mr. Ranu conveyed that Metro staff had been working with the Board and with public stakeholders, and that the Policy was developing. The Policy would emphasize early project delivery, and include language to ensure collaboration between Metro and partners in order to deliver projects on time and within budget. Mr. Ranu asked that PAC Members provide feedback to the draft Policy by email upon distribution in the near future. Mr. Lantz expressed concern that some projects applying for acceleration were ill-defined and without environmental impact reports. He warned that those projects should not be taken to the Metro Board without further definition.

Ms. Meaney then asked if there were any public comments. There were none, and Ms. Meaney proceeded to adjourn the meeting at 3:27.