Meeting Minutes
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Tuesday October 3, 2017

Meeting called to order at 1:30pm

After PAC Member and audience introductions, there was a call for approval of the September meeting minutes. KeAndra Dodds called for one revision to clarify a report she delivered at the September meeting. Bryn Lindblad moved to approve the minutes with the change, Cecilia Estolano seconded, and the minutes were approved as amended.

Ms. Estolano then summarized the agenda items. She noted that the PAC would have an important final discussion on the Work Plan. Next, the PAC would discuss Measure M, specifically performance metrics and community engagement for the Multi-Year Subregional Programs. Rather than having work groups, PAC Officers decided to have the whole Council meet together in order to effectively resolve the issues. The meeting would conclude with next steps.

Kalieh Honish presented the PAC Work Plan. Referring to the handout, she started by addressing the question of how Metro staff came up with the various proposed deadlines and dates. She noted that both Measure M and the LRTP has deadlines set by the Metro Board, and that staff wanted to make sure all drafted materials were filtered through the PAC for information, engagement, etc. Ms. Honish encouraged PAC Members to sign up to receive status updates on any policy papers that were of interest to them. Jessica Meaney noted that the deadline for submitting comments on the public participation plan was approaching soonest.

Ms. Honish clarified that Metro staff would draft each document and work with PAC Members to develop it further.

Ms. Meaney asked for clarification regarding at what point the PAC Member work groups would be contacted for advice. Ms. Honish responded that staff were currently working on outlines which would be distributed to PAC work groups upon completion. She reminded members that the policy papers were not due to the Board until Spring 2018. She also discussed that the process for PAC engagement would differ depending on necessity for each category. Some topics could need just a conference call, while some could require a full separate meeting.

Ms. Dodds requested that Metro staff give PAC Members, especially the Consumer category, as much notice as possible so that they would have time to reach out to the constituencies they are representing. Ms. McMillan reinforced that, similarly to the scoping element of an environmental document, the review of the policy paper outlines by the PAC was an essential part of the overall development process.

Ms. Estolano asked whether the Financial Forecast Workshop shown in the Work Plan would include information about discretionary funds. Ms. McMillan responded that the financial forecast workshop
would lay out the key assumptions attached to the various revenue sources that undergird the LRTP. She noted that there would be assumptions about what percentage of funds would be discretionary, but that there would not be detail regarding from where those discretionary funds came.

Jacki Bacharach asked when PAC Members could expect to see the policy paper outlines. Ms. Honish predicted that staff could send out several of the outlines in November 2017. Ms. Bacharach requested that all PAC Members get information on all of the policy papers instead of just the ones in which they expressed interest. Manjeet Ranu assured Ms. Bacharach and the PAC that all Members would receive information. The policy paper signups were meant to ensure those who wanted additional information received the deep dive details.

**LRTP Update - Kalieh Honish**

Ms. Honish began to update members on the current status of the LRTP. She informed PAC Members that in addition to the policy paper outreach, Metro staff would present additional opportunities to provide feedback. She encouraged Members to read over the work plan in order to stay on top of important deadlines, and stated that Metro staff would provide an additional schedule with more detailed dates.

In response to a question by Ms. Meaney, Ms. McMillan informed the PAC that the Financial Forecast Workshop would be presented to the Planning and Programming Committee on the afternoon of October 18. Prior to that meeting, there would be a related workshop in order to give a more detailed overview of the forecast with background information and findings.

Mr. Ranu then began to discuss the Acceleration/Deceleration Policy of the LRTP. He noted that it was introduced to the Executive Management Committee, and draft language would go back to the Committee in October, before the Board in November. The purpose of the Policy, he continued, is to establish clear criteria for guiding discussions about acceleration and deceleration of projects in the Measure M Ordinance. The policy would ensure a transparent process.

Mr. Ranu explained that the policy would pertain to projects that are accelerated or decelerated outside of Metro’s control relative to the Measure M Expenditure Plan that includes timing and sequencing of all projects in the Measure. The policy states that projects can be accelerated as long as the acceleration does not negatively impact other sequenced projects. A decelerated project is one that negatively impacts other projects, and becomes a drag on the entire Expenditure Plan. Four categories of accelerators/decelerators were proposed: funding, processes, partnerships, and innovations. Metro staff is considering changes in response to feedback from the Board. Those changes would be forwarded to PAC Members as they were completed.

Mr. Ranu announced that a non-determinative screening tool was developed to give project sponsors an idea of whether a project is eligible for acceleration or deceleration. If the final score was over a certain threshold, Metro staff would conduct an analysis. The results of the analysis would be sent to the Board, who would make the final determination. A detailed list of these factors would be provided to PAC Members. Ms. McMillan reiterated that the draft Accel/Decel Policy would go to the Executive Management Committee in October, and the final would go to the Board in November.
Ms. McMillan concluded the discussion by clarifying that the Policy would not talk about taking money away from any project and redistributing it. The Policy rather would address the timing at which each funding commitment would be realized.

37:00

Mark Christoffels asked whether there would be different criteria for transit projects and highway projects. Ms. McMillan responded that the Policy is made to be mode-neutral, but that the type of funding made available by the Policy might be transit-specific or highway-specific.

Bryn Lindblad asked what kind of public notice would be required for accelerated/decelerated projects. Ms. McMillan answered that until the project in question is considered by the Board for an amendment, no public notice would be necessary. The procedures stipulated in the Ordinance require a 2/3 majority vote by the Board as well as public notice for any amendment.

**Measure M Multi-Year Subregional Programs**

Ms. McMillan began the discussion on the Multi-Year Subregional Programs (MSP) Funding Estimates provided by Metro staff. She noted that the coversheet makes a few clarifications, specifically that the estimates are for planning purposes only. Any particular project would still have to adhere to cash flow procedures being developed. The estimates, however, allow project sponsors to be aware of their “envelopes” in order to start their planning processes. Ms. McMillan next stated that funding capacity (not funds themselves) could be swapped between MSPs if desired. She then relayed that the half-percent planning funds, which were calculated separately for each MSP, can use up to the aggregate of 5 years for planning purposes through contractual agreements with Metro. If the contract with a planning consultant goes beyond the 5-year aggregate, sponsors must identify a separate funding source.

Joanna Hankamer asked whether the half-percent planning funds carry over to the next fiscal year if not encumbered. Ms. McMillan verified that the planning funds could be used within that five year period. She then explained that planning funds would not be waiting for sponsors in an escrow account. Rather, sponsors would present a project with a plan for sequencing and costs to Metro, and Metro would allocate the corresponding planning funds.

David Somers asked at what point the sponsors could encumber the planning funds in order to identify specific projects. Ms. McMillan explained that each subregion is responsible for developing and approving a 5-year program which is to be adopted by the Metro Board. It is only after the plan is adopted that subregions can begin planning processes for specific projects.

Ms. Bacharach asked whether sponsors could bill against the planning funds in order to develop the 5-year program. She noted that time and resources would be necessary to create the program, all before an official funding agreement with Metro was in place. Ms. McMillan responded that Metro will follow up with what documents and materials will be required in the 5 year plan.

Mr. Somers next asked how MSP funding could be used as a match. Ms. McMillan stated that cases like this would be evaluated by Metro staff on various criteria including eligibility and timing. She reminded PAC Members that the rules and requirements of other Metro, local, state and federal fund sources govern when MSP funds are being used as a match.
Ms. McMillan pointed out that the funding estimates presented to the PAC include Measure M and other funds.

Performance Metrics

Ms. Estolano began by discussing the conference call between several PAC Members from a few weeks prior on the subject of performance metrics. She explained that Metro staff had put together a handout to be presented to the PAC with a list of items of consensus and outstanding issues. She reminded Members that, regardless of whether or not the PAC came to a consensus on performance metrics, Metro staff would draft administrative procedures.

Roderick Diaz commented that there were two different conversations surrounding performance metrics. The first was where performance metrics are used to select projects that go into the MSP. The second was what types of performance measures are recorded for all projects once they are in the program in order to evaluate how they are implemented. Ms. Estolano acknowledged that each subregion is different with varying levels of desire for any particular metric, but stated that it would generally be good practice to have a method in place by which to inform voters on how effectively the funds were spent.

Ms. Honish reiterated that the performance metrics were PAC-driven, and as such, points of consensus would be appreciated in order to make the process less burdensome. She acknowledged the points of consensus before addressing the areas of disagreement and inconclusiveness among Members.

Ms. Honish and Ms. Meaney suggested that the PAC begin by discussing whether the performance measures would be used for prioritizing projects in the near-term or for reporting on the effectiveness of projects in the future. This would determine when the metrics were shared with the public.

Ms. Bacharach expressed concern with the idea of “consistent definitions” for metrics across the subregions. Ms. Estolano noted that Metro had prepared a memo in preparation for the conference call with highway-themed and transit-themed performance metrics. She proposed that sponsors could mix these themes in order to determine a subregion’s metrics for their program.

Ms. Meaney suggested that the main polarizing item was regarding whether metrics should be countywide or subregion specific. Ms. Bacharach stated that COGs should be tasked with developing their own metrics, and that local officials should be held responsible for the effectiveness of their spending.

Ms. McMillan then discussed the differences between developing the Expenditure Plan for the Ordinance and creating an implementation plan going forward. She explained that the Expenditure Plan was developed through a complex modeling process to show the benefits that the major projects might have. This style of forecasting is not applicable to the implementation of a project of a smaller scale. The main ideas, she continued, such as mobility, safety, sustainability, quality of life, etc., remain as key drivers of discussion in developing the metrics.

Ms. Hankamer asked a question regarding the burdensome nature of developing performance metrics. Ms. Estolano added that the Ordinance did not require performance metrics. Ms. Hankamer continued by encouraging PAC Members to decide whether the performance metrics would be used to guide
discussions in the earlier stages at the COG level or whether they would be an additional reporting requirement that was not included in the original ordinance.

Ms. Lindblad expressed that there is value in having metrics, as they serve as the most transparent way to measure impact. Ms. Dodds seconded Ms. Lindblad's point, mentioning that the priorities that were used in the forecasting for Expenditure Plan carry over well to the MSPs.

Terry Dipple pointed out that there may not have been consensus amongst PAC Members to even pursue the development of performance measures. With the diverse circumstances in each of the sub-regions, Mr. Dipple asserted that it was ridiculous to try to put in place countywide performance metrics. He encouraged PAC Members to reconsider what is in the ordinance so as not to get sidetracked by the development of the performance metrics.

Mr. Diaz summarized that COGs and project sponsors tended to desire flexibility, though there was also a strongly expressed desire for standardized accountability across the County. He proposed that Metro staff could develop a “menu” of metrics that could or could not be used by developers, sponsors and COGs to evaluate their projects' impact. He asked the PAC whether this approach was acceptable.

Ms. Reynolds expressed that she wanted a method by which elected officials and city staff could have a conversation about how to measure project and program impact. She said that she did not see the performance metrics as a necessary tool for project selection, but that for retrospective evaluation, they were critical. Ms. Lindblad seconded Ms. Reynolds’ call for transparency and accountability. Ms. Dodds agreed as well.

Mr. Dipple said that it was admirable to have a list of expectations for projects in MSPs, but that measuring and comparing the outcomes between one COG and another was unnecessary. Ms. Reynolds responded that the results of the performance metrics would show how a project performed on its own merits, rather than compare one project to another.

Jerard Wright asked which stakeholders the PAC wanted to appease with the performance metrics. He explained that a project’s impact should be measured differently depending on who the recipients were.

Ms. Hankamer then expressed support for the performance metrics and suggested that a set number of metrics should be defined with the same calculation methods. This way, consistency would be guaranteed on a per metric basis regardless of which performance measures a particular COG decided to use. Ms. Estolano commended the PAC for making strides to ensure accountability and transparency. She also expressed support of having standardized measurement methods in order to create “harmonious” conversations throughout the County.

**Community Engagement – Manjeet Ranu**

Mr. Ranu discussed the PAC responses to questions asked as a result of a related conference call held earlier in the month. He referred to the handout which separated the responses into five general themes: Transparency in process and decision making, clarity of roles and responsibilities, basic uniform standards for process and decision making as long as COGs have flexibility, COG willingness to improve process and level of consistency, and the idea that engagement on priority set in guidelines will be different than engagement in programs and projects. Mr. Ranu explained that the conference call
focused mostly on current standard practices, and improvements that could be made going forward by way of the Administrative Guidelines.

Hilary Norton expressed that the call was positive, and that with all of the moving parts related to developing an MSP “system,” a great opportunity was presented.

Ms. Lindblad commented that there tends to be a lot of engagement at the city level, but not as much of a public process around funding prioritization at the COG level. She noted that this “gap” at the COG level might warrant further discussion.

Thomas Yee commented that the performance metrics and the community engagement discussions were intertwined, as a sponsor cannot have an engaging conversation without effective performance metrics. He called for either Metro staff or PAC Officers to develop recommended solutions to the non-consensus issues in order to move the discussions forward.

Ms. Bacharach stated that many decisions regarding project prioritization were made at the City Council level, citing an example from her own sub-region. She noted that these decisions were not likely to change at the COG level. Mr. Dipple added that the COGs often use timelines set by the cities to determine their funding prioritization schedules.

Ms. Dodds saw a benefit in identifying what decisions are made at a COG level.

Steve Lantz expressed that at a COG level, he typically considers project eligibility as well as the neighboring cities’ projects when creating a plan. He conceded that with the Measure M projects, quality of project might also be a factor. He said that the process to get a consensus around a five year plan takes months, and that by the time the plan is taken to the Metro Board, people are content. The only missing ingredient, Mr. Lantz admitted, was the community groups. He said that a forum should be put in place so that their interests were considered. Mr. Lantz advocated for a flexible system to match the wide range of stakeholders.

Ms. Meaney concluded by expressing appreciation for the historical perspective. She also encouraged PAC Members to avoid a “business as usual” approach in order to engage more stakeholders whose voices may not traditionally be heard.

Next Steps

Ms. McMillan summarized the discussions, noting that the next step was for Metro to create a draft set of metrics that emphasized accountability and transparency. She expressed that there needed to be justification for expenditures in situations when there was not an abundance of funding. By default then, there would need to be metrics and questions asked on which to base those justifications.

Ms. Estolano proposed that every subregion for each MSP should state what goals they wish to achieve, and how each project within the MSP achieves those goals. She proposed that after five years, COGs pick similar metrics to measure their success. She noted that while the metrics may not be identical, they would most likely be similar. In terms of community engagement, Ms. Estolano supported having open meetings, but emphasized the importance of having a Technical Advisory Committee with key technical stakeholders at the table constantly in order to most effectively represent various interests.

Ms. Meaney adjourned the meeting at 3:30pm.