

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** MPO Policy Committee

**From:** CMAP Staff

**Date:** March 6, 2025

**Subject:** Congestion Management Strategy update

**Action Requested:** Information

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**Purpose**

CMAP staff will provide an overview of the Congestion Management Strategy (CMS), the current initiative to comprehensively update the region's Congestion Management Process (CMP). The CMP is a federally mandated metropolitan transportation planning activity, and the region's current CMP documentation dates from 2013. During the committee meeting, staff will outline the required components of the CMP, review the scope of work of the current CMS effort in alignment with those required components, and describe anticipated next steps for the project.

**Overview of federal Congestion Management Process requirements**

Federal regulations require that urbanized areas with populations greater than 200,000 maintain a Congestion Management Process that "provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy."<sup>1</sup> The development, establishment, and implementation of the CMP is intended to be integrated into the overall metropolitan transportation planning process.<sup>2</sup>

According to FHWA guidance, key components of a CMP include the following:

- *Objectives, performance measures, and network:* Objectives establish the desired outcomes to be achieved through the process. These objectives should be consistent with the broader regional transportation planning goals. Performance measures define and describe congestion and help the region assess progress towards meeting the

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<sup>1</sup> 23 CFR 450.322(a)

<sup>2</sup> Federal regulations identify that several components of the congestion management process can inform or be incorporated directly into the Regional Transportation Plan, such as performance measures and strategies (23 CFR 450.322(b))

objectives over time. Finally, the network identifies the geographic area of application and system components to which the process applies.

- *Process to analyze congestion problems and needs:* Once the objectives, performance measures, and network are established, the CMP lays out a process to analyze congestion, which includes the identification of problem areas and root causes of congestion at those locations. This process serves as the foundation for the evaluation and ranking of priority corridors.
- *Identify, evaluate, and apply strategies:* Examples of strategies include demand management measures, operational improvements, public transportation improvements, intelligent transportation system (ITS) applications, and, where necessary, additional system capacity. These strategies can be organized into a hierarchy of improvement types, to support the identification of right-sized strategies that align with the CMP objectives and regional transportation planning goals.<sup>3</sup>

### **Development of a Congestion Management Strategy**

The current congestion management process documentation dates from 2013. As such, this CMS initiative will refresh each component of the CMP, with a focus on an updated process to analyze congestion problems and needs. This comprehensive update will set a foundation for a new approach to evaluate, identify, and rank priority corridors for planning and investment.

The CMS will include two primary deliverables to support implementation: a guidebook and a comprehensive corridor study template. The guidebook will lay out the prioritized congestion management strategies. The corridor study template will establish a framework to plan and implement these strategies, particularly for priority corridors. Future corridor planning in this context is anticipated to involve multiple agencies and span jurisdictional boundaries.

To ensure the congestion management strategy is developed in consultation with the region's stakeholders and experts, CMAP staff has convened a resource group of key transportation implementers and partners. The resource group informs each step of the CMP update process in alignment with federal regulations and FHWA guidance. The group is scoped to convene six times over the course of the comprehensive update (through June 2025) and has met four times to date.

### **Next steps**

Over the coming months, CMAP staff and the consultant team will develop and finalize the guidebook and the comprehensive corridor study template, based on feedback from the resource group. CMAP staff will return to this committee later in 2025 to present the updated CMP and to engage the committee members on opportunities to utilize the final deliverables across planning, programming, and project development.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the definition and regulations for the congestion management process, and to access federal guidance documents, see the FHWA webpage: [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/plan4ops/focus\\_areas/cmp.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/plan4ops/focus_areas/cmp.htm)