

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: November 15, 2024

Subject: Congestion Management Strategy update

Action Requested: Information

CMAP staff will provide an overview of the Congestion Management Strategy (CMS) to the Transportation Committee. The CMS is a current initiative to comprehensively update the region's Congestion Management Process (CMP), a federally required planning activity. During the committee meeting, staff will outline the required components of the CMP, review the scope of work of the current CMS effort, 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."¹ The development, establishment, and implementation of the CMP is intended to be integrated into the overall metropolitan transportation planning process.²

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 then support the measurement of congestion and overall system performance and should aid in measuring progress towards the objectives. Finally, the network identifies the geographic area of application and system components to which the process applies.

¹ 23 CFR 450.322(a)

² 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))

- *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) technology applications, and where necessary, additional system capacity. These strategies can be organized into a hierarchy of preferred improvement types, to support the identification of right-sized strategies that align with the CMP objectives and regional transportation planning goals.³

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 identified congestion management strategies. The corridor study template will establish a framework for multijurisdictional and multiagency coordination, to plan and implement the strategies, particularly for priority corridors.

To ensure the congestion management strategy is developed in consultation with CMAP committees, regional stakeholders, and experts, CMAP staff has organized resource group of key transportation implementers and partners. The resource group will guide each step of the CMP update process in alignment with federal regulations and FHWA guidance.

Next steps

Over the coming months, CMAP staff and the consultant team will finalize the objectives, performance measures, and network, based on feedback from the resource group. From there, CMAP staff, the consultant team, and resource group members will focus on establishing the process to analyze congestion. CMAP staff will return to the committee in 2025 with a progress update and to seek feedback from the committee members. The updated CMP, guidebook, and corridor study template are expected in summer of 2025.

³ 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