

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Item #2

MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Andrew J. Meese, AICP
Systems Management Planning Director

DATE: October 3, 2008

SUBJECT: Congestion Management Process in the Constrained Long Range Plan
(CLRP) Call for Projects, Including the Congestion Management
Documentation Form

Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit the Travel Management Subcommittee's recommendations for changes to the Call for Projects documents. If accepted, the changes will be incorporated into the Call for Projects by staff prior to transmission to the TPB for their approval at the October 15, 2008 meeting.

Early in 2008, the Travel Management Subcommittee requested the opportunity to consider revisions to the Congestion Management Process (CMP) portions of the Call for Projects. The draft Call for Projects process and document for the FY2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program and FY2009 CLRP were released for comment by the TPB in September, and the Travel Management Subcommittee met on September 23, 2008 to discuss and develop recommendations.

Background

The inclusion of the CMP in the Call for Projects has its origins in the Congestion Management Systems (CMS) requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. ISTEA, its successor laws, and associated federal regulations all include CMP (formerly CMS) requirements for air quality non-attainment major metropolitan areas including the Washington region. One of those requirements is that, in association with any major federally-funded highway capacity increases, the region must demonstrate that congestion management alternatives were considered, and, if feasible, integrated into the capacity increasing projects. Under SAFETEA-LU and its associated regulations, these requirements remain in effect.

The federal CMP requirement is addressed in our CLRP process in part by the Congestion Management Documentation Form in the Call for Projects. The form and associated criteria were developed under the guidance of a special CMS Task Force convened under the TPB in the early-to-mid 1990s. The CMS Task Force focused the

CMS on major capacity increasing projects, adopting criteria on what projects would and would not require a Congestion Management Documentation Form. Projects needing documentation were limited to ones on freeways and other principal arterials that generated at least one lane mile of new capacity. Other "exemption criteria" clarified what was in the law and regulations, confirming that non-construction projects, non-highway projects, and grandfathered pre-ISTEA projects already under construction at that time were not subject to the CMS requirements. Given the length of time that has passed since the development of the form and associated criteria, it was prudent to reexamine the process and criteria for necessary updates.

Recommended Changes

Based upon staff review and discussions at the September 23 Travel Management Subcommittee meeting, there are four notable changes recommended to the Call for Projects CLRP Project Description Form and associated instructions (noting that these are all now in an online format). The notable changes are:

1. **Question 26 Restructuring:** Several changes have been suggested to the wording and structure of Question 26 to help clarify when a Congestion Management Documentation Form is or is not needed.
2. **Non-Federally Funded Projects:** The statement, added during last year's process, that non-federally funded projects are exempt from the Congestion Management Documentation Form is re-confirmed and should be moved up to the top of the list of exemptions. This states that a project is exempt if it "...will not use federal funds in any phase of development or construction (100% state, local, and/or private funding)."
3. **Cost Criterion:** Previous years' criteria exempted projects with construction costs of less than \$5 million; it is now recommended that the limit be raised to \$10 million. This defines a separation between major and minor construction projects. A review of the federal Producer Price Index for civil engineering construction projects showed that \$5 million in construction costs in the mid-1990s, when the criterion was originally adopted, equates to nearly \$10 million in 2008.
4. **Dropping Items No Longer Needed:** A portion of Question 25 requesting the estimated level of service on the facility has been dropped, because results have not proven to be useful in regional analysis. Two previous exemptions under Question 26 that addressed grandfathered pre-ISTEA projects have been removed, since such projects have long since worked their way through the system.

Attached to this memorandum are the relevant portions of the Call for Projects instructions and CLRP Project Description Form, showing recommended strikes and adds. Additional minor wording changes are also incorporated into those documents.

Attachments

Congestion Management Process Documentation

The following section addresses the SAFETEA-LU component called the Congestion Management Process. Please see the discussion on Congestion Management Documentation in Section 2 of this document for more information. Questions 25 and 26 should be answered for every project. In addition, a Congestion Management Documentation Form should be completed for each project or action proposing an increase in SOV capacity.

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Deleted: Questions 26 through 28 still apply to any new projects that propose an increase in SOV capacity.

25. Congested Conditions

- a. *Do traffic congestion conditions on this or another facility necessitate the proposed project or program?*

Check “Yes” if this project is being planned specifically to address congestion conditions.

- b. *If so, is the congestion recurring or incident-related non-recurring in nature?*

Use the checkboxes to identify either option.

- c. *If the congestion is on a different facility, please identify it:*

Identify the name of the congested parallel or adjacent route that this project is intended to relieve.

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26. Capacity

The federally-mandated Congestion Management Process requires that alternatives to major highway capacity increases be considered and, where reasonable, integrated into capacity-increasing projects. Except if projects fall under at least one of the exemption criteria listed under part (b), projects in the following categories require a Congestion Management Documentation Form:

- *New limited access or other principal arterial roadways on new rights-of-way*
- *Additional through lanes on existing limited access or other principal arterial roadways*
- *Construction of grade-separated interchanges on limited access highways where previously there had not been an interchange.*

- a. *Is this a capacity-increasing project on a limited access highway or other principal arterial?*

Check “Yes” if the project will increase capacity on an SOV facility of

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Use the drop-down menu to select the level of service (LOS) and indicate whether this is a measured or estimated LOS. .

functional class 1, 2 or 5.

b. If the answer to Question 26.a. was yes, are any of the following exemption criteria true about the project? (Choose one, or indicate that none of the exemption criteria apply).

Review the list of potential exemption criteria and determine if any of them are true, thus exempting the project from needing a separate Congestion Management Documentation Form. If more than one criterion is true, please select just one to be the primary criterion. Use the pull-down menu to identify the exemption criterion.

If the project is not exempt and requires a Congestion Management Documentation Form, click on the link provided to open a blank Congestion Management Documentation form.

- None of the exemption criteria below apply to this project – a Congestion Management Documentation Form is required.
- The project will not use federal funds in any phase of development or construction (100% state, local, and/or private funding).
- The number of lane-miles added to the highway system by the project totals less than one lane-mile
- The project is an intersection reconstruction or other traffic engineering improvement, including replacement of an at-grade intersection with an interchange
- The project will not allow private single-occupant motor vehicles, such as transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities
- The project consists of preliminary studies or engineering only, and is not funded for construction
- The construction costs for the project are less than \$10 million.

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¶
<#>New limited access or other principal arterial roadways on new rights-of-way¶
<#>Additional through lanes on existing limited access or other principal arterial roadways¶
Construction of grade-separated interchanges on limited access highways where previously there had not been an interchange.

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Use the checkboxes to identify the exemption criteria: .

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<#>Any project that was already under construction on or before September 30, 1997, or for which construction funds were committed in the FY98-03 TIP. Note that funds being committed in the FY99-04 TIP does not exempt a project.¶
Any project whose

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FINANCIALLY CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR 2030 PROJECT DESCRIPTION FORM



EXCERPT

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

25. Congested Conditions

- a. Do traffic congestion conditions necessitate the proposed project? Yes; No
- b. If so, is the congestion recurring or non-recurring? Recurring; Non-recurring
- c. If the congestion is on another facility, please identify it:

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26. Capacity

- a. Is this a capacity-increasing project on a limited access highway or other principal arterial? Yes; No

b. If yes, are any of the following exemption criteria true about the project? (Choose one, or indicate that none of the exemption criteria apply). If the project is not exempt and requires a Congestion Management Documentation Form, click here to access a form.

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Deleted: If yes, does this project require a Congestion Management Documentation form under the given criteria (see page 34 of the *Call for Projects* document)? Yes;

None of the exemption criteria below apply to this project – a Congestion Management Documentation Form is required.

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The project was already under construction on or before September 30, 1997, or construction funds were already committed in the FY98-03 TIP.¶

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The project will not use federal funds in any phase of development or construction. (100% state, local, and/or private funding).

The number of lane-miles added to the highway system by the project totals less than one lane-mile.

The project is an intersection reconstruction or other traffic engineering improvement, including replacement of an at-grade intersection with an interchange.

The project will not allow private single-occupant motor vehicles, such as a transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facility.

The project consists of preliminary studies or engineering only, and is not funded for construction.

The construction costs for the project are less than \$10 million.