

Summary of Proposed Recommendations and Issues for Consideration

This document summarizes recommendations and issues for consideration included in recent working group reports, and discussions during recent meetings of the Northeastern Illinois Public Transit Task Force. The issues for consideration under the ethics section should be viewed as a menu of alternatives. This document is provided to assist with task force deliberations during the meeting on Monday, March 17, 2014.

A. System Performance Working Group Proposed Recommendations

The System Performance Working Group proposes a new, broader mandate for the northeastern Illinois transit system. The system will:

- improve overall regional mobility for residents and visitors
- increase transit ridership
- increase transportation affordability
- expand access to jobs, labor markets, and other key destinations
- strengthen Northeastern Illinois' economic competitiveness.

We also recommend three specific actions:

1. **Create and implement a plan to improve regional mobility and increase transit ridership throughout the region.** The plan should be designed to achieve the targets set by CMAP in GO TO 2040: 13.5% of weekday trips be made via transit, 75% of the population and 80% of jobs be within walking distance of transit. This plan should address:
 - a. Increasing access to job centers and population centers underserved by transit
 - b. Improving system integration and connectivity and service levels and coordination
 - c. Effectively communicating transit information and benefits to current and potential riders
 - d. Identifying short-, medium-, and long-term expansion priorities
 - e. Increasing transit-oriented development and location efficiency and prioritizing development near transit
 - f. Integration of transit with new mobility options and last-mile services

- g. Expanding accessibility and ADA paratransit through a commitment to the principles of universal design
 - h. Using public investment and incentives (transit and non-transit) to achieve plan goals
2. **Leverage existing transportation, housing, economic development, and financing resources at the state, regional, and municipal levels so that transit goals are integrated with land use and development.** Prioritizing state funds for housing and economic development in existing transit zones and areas for transit expansion and new transit investment will support the efficiency of the region and maximize the value of our existing and future infrastructure investments using current expenditures. In the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, MTC Resolution 3434 requires communities served by transit extensions to develop and implement housing and land use plans to manage the impact of development. MTC now targets transportation investments to these Priority Development Areas to implement its plans and augments these transportation investments with the \$50 million Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing fund to build and preserve affordable housing in TODs.
3. **Create regional performance measures that assess progress toward implementing the plan and achieving its goals.** How we measure the performance of transit matters. In a time of scarce public resources, transit needs to maximize economic benefits to the region. System efficiencies are important, for example, but efficiencies alone won't measure the local economic or quality of life benefits that transit brings. These regional performance measures should include:
- a. **Transit service and expansion:**
 - 1. Increased ridership
 - 2. Access to jobs and other destinations
 - 3. Transit mode choices and connectivity
 - 4. Percentage of stations accessible by the disabled
 - 5. Level of service, including hours of operation and frequency
 - 6. Cost-effective operation
 - 7. Progress toward achieving a state of good repair
 - 8. Public involvement in identifying and prioritizing transit service expansion
 - 9. Speed improvements

b. Transit and economic development:

1. The degree to which regional development and investment is linked to transit
2. Transportation investments made around the system as opposed to away from it
3. How much riders save by not having to rely on private vehicle use
4. Reducing the share of share of income that is expended for transportation and housing
5. Location decisions made by businesses
6. Proportion of regional growth that is accessible to transit
7. Share of subsidized and public housing units in transit-served neighborhoods
8. Share of subsidies and incentives for businesses in transit-served neighborhoods

c. Transit and the environment:

1. Energy use and greenhouse gas emissions reduction
2. Reduction of # of cars owned, number of cars on the road, and traffic congestion

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B. Finance Working Group Proposed Recommendations

- 1. Implement a regional financial planning process that supports the guiding principles and, in the most efficient manner possible, creates a framework for allocating operating and capital funds on a consistent and sustainable basis.**
 - a. Fund operations based on a multi-year integrated, regional strategic plan tied to short- and long-term goals and performance metrics.
 - b. Tie the distribution of PTF monies to competitive and performance-based programs for the Service Boards.

- 2. Develop a public outreach program.**
 - a. Ensure that equity considerations are applied to the funding of transit.
 - b. Create greater public advocacy for increased investment in transit through new funding sources.

- 3. Identify a new funding framework for transit operations that supports the guiding principles and, in the most effective manner possible, generates adequate resources to meet the investment needs of the system on a consistent and sustainable basis.**
 - a. Eliminate the current operating formula and allocate the existing operating funds according to a formula based on performance metrics. This revised formula should include the funds currently designated as discretionary and should initially be consistent with the recent historic funding split, to provide stability for the Service Boards, but would allow change over time.
 - b. Consider new funding options to expand resources for operations and capital.
 - c. Divide new funds between a competitive program and a performance-based program.
 - d. Distribute competitive funds based on criteria that address regional transit goals.
 - e. Distribute performance funds based on the performance of the Service Boards on specific measures against an established baseline.

- 4. Revise the Capital Funding Allocation to maintain a safe and reliable system while allowing for appropriate service improvements that are aligned with regional transit goals and performance measures.**
 - a. Stop using the historic formulas for capital.
 - b. Allocate the bulk of capital dollars from current sources through a formula based on the funding needed to reach a state of good repair.
 - c. Establish a pool of funds to be divided between a competitive program and a performance-based program.

- d. Distribute competitive funds based on the ability of the Service Boards to reach regional transit goals.
- e. Distribute performance funds based on criteria that address regional transit goals and performance of the Service Boards.

5. To mitigate limited public resources for funding, eliminate barriers to entry for the private sector.

- a. Capitalize on new and innovative mobility solutions by allowing private transit providers to reach regional transit goals and compete for funds from the competitive programs.
- b. Encourage private sector partnerships where practicable.

6. Establish performance-based management practices across the system.

- a. Evaluate performance-based management practices across agencies that may generate savings for the system. These may include: joint procurements, maximizing the use and deployment of existing staff, and/or consolidating certain administrative functions.
- b. Establish five-year milestones for achieving savings through these parameters.

7. Consider new revenues.

- a. Use the public outreach program to create broad based buy-in for increased investment in transit.
- b. To ensure the region has a consistent source of capital to better leverage increasingly competitive federal funds, designate new revenues as a funding source for capital.
- c. Use new funding sources for long-term expansion.

C. Ethics Working Group Issues for Consideration

1. Appointment Process

- a. Elected officials appoint candidates first vetted by a panel including representatives of independent non-political entities, e.g. news media and good government groups.
- b. Elected officials acting independently to appoint qualified individuals based upon qualifications and requirements.

2. Removal Process

- a. Removal at the pleasure of the appointing authority.
- b. Removal by Governor based upon a recommendation of a supermajority of the board.
- c. Removal for cause by appointing authority, including official misconduct or conviction of a felony crime.
- d. Removal by appointing authority for inefficiency, neglect of duty, breach of duty, or misconduct in office after giving the member a copy of the charges against him or her, and an opportunity to be heard, in person or by counsel in the member's defense.
- e. Combination of the above options.

3. Employment Actions

- a. Complete firewall between elected officials or their representatives and agencies regarding matters of hiring, firing, promotion or demotion, as well as a mandatory public disclosure following policy violation.
- b. Allow contact by elected officials or their representatives, but only with public disclosure of contact and substance of communication.

4. Procurement and Business Dealings

- a. Complete firewall between board members, elected officials, or their respective representatives and agencies regarding matters of procurement, investment, or related business decisions, as well as a mandatory public disclosure following policy violation.
- b. Allow contact by board members, elected officials, or their respective representatives and agencies, but only with the public disclosure of contact and substance of communication.

5. Certifications regarding Employment Actions

- a. Implementation of classification of all offices, positions, and grades of employees, establishing certain exempt positions, the number of which should not exceed a limited percentage of total employees.
- b. Certification by senior management to the board of directors that exempt employees do not exceed the limited percentage, and that discrimination based upon race, color, sex, gender, national origin, disability, or religious affiliations played no role in the hiring, promotion, demotion, or firing of employees.

6. Certifications regarding Business Decisions

- a. Certification by senior management that political factor played no role in procurement or business decisions.
- b. Certification by board members to compliance with ethical requirements and duties of position.

7. Lobbying

- a. Agencies to adhere to Illinois Lobbyist Registration Act - lobbyists wishing to do business with agencies should be required to register with the state and report expenditures.
- b. Board members and senior management contacted by lobbyists should disclose publicly the date and substance of the contact.

8. Review of Prospective Board Members: Should include background checks, financial disclosure, and conflict of interest review prior to appointment.

9. Board Member Compensation: Members should not be compensated for their service, other than incidental expenses related to travel and meals.

10. Board Member Training: Members should receive training on ethics matters - including patronage hiring - on an annual basis, and should be required to certify receipt of ethics related policies and completion of training.