2023 Regional Transit Strategic Plan

Memo Summarizing Work of Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group

October 2022

Regional Transportation Authority

Contents

Introduction

The Chicago region's transit system is at a pivotal moment. The system has faced some disruption in the recent past – driven by changes in how people get around, changes in where people work, and shifts in demographics. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic many of these trends have accelerated. This is a challenge because transit in the Chicago region is funded in part by rider fares, which have not fully returned to pre-COVID levels. Transit spurs economic growth, mitigates climate change, and enables opportunity in ways and at a scale that no other transportation mode can. The next Regional Transit Strategic Plan will guide how Chicago's regional transit system will adapt to the impacts of the pandemic to provide safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, advances equity, and combats climate change.

Beginning in the summer of 2021, RTA launched a six-month period of listening, titled *Making a Plan,* to hear and learn from transit riders, community members, and stakeholders about our regional transit system's future, including opportunities for impact, transit system adaptation, funding, equity, and engagement. Based on the input received, RTA staff developed a vision and three guiding principles that will be used to direct all activities within the plan. Additionally, staff used the input to identify six outcomes that describe what the region aims to achieve over the five-year plan.

Vision

Safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, advances equity, and combats climate change.

Principles

Commitment to change: Public transit is the core of the region's mobility network. Being committed to change means that the Strategic Plan will acknowledge that the mobility needs of the region are changing rapidly, while many long-standing mobility needs and expectations for transit are still unmet. In committing to change, the Strategic Plan process will empower the transit agencies and systems to adapt, innovate, and re-think regional transit options to better meet the needs of people and communities we serve across the region, today and into the future.

Equity: Advancing equity through the Strategic Plan means that the planning process will acknowledge, identify, and seek to change policymaking, planning, and distribution of resources. A goal is to better meet the transit needs of historically under invested and overburdened people and communities in our region across agencies, community types, and political boundaries. Our working definition of equity begins with racial equity by improving transit options and outcomes for people and communities of color as well as people who are

from low-income households, possess limited English proficiency, have a disability, and/or are Seniors.

Stewardship: Being good stewards of the Chicago region's transit system means that we are committed to using public funding wisely and maximizing our shared resources. In seeking to be stewards, we will continually consider how the Strategic Plan process will ensure the financial health of the transit agencies while also advancing the purpose of transit as a public good, regional economic development catalyst, and tool for climate action.

Outcomes

In the future our region's transit system will be:

- Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders
- In a state of good repair
- Financially stable

In the future our region will be:

- Connected
- Winning the fight against climate change
- Thriving

About the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group

As the next step in the plan development process, the RTA convened two Technical Working Groups to meet in parallel with the three Stakeholder Working Groups. The Stakeholder Working Groups had overarching tasks that included to develop goals for the regional transit system, to identify strategies and actions to meet the goals, and to craft performance measures to track progress. The groups met in the spring and summer of 2022. Additional information about the work these groups undertook is available on the RTA Working Group Hub Website.

Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group

Capital programming is a core function of the RTA. The RTA Act requires the RTA Board to annually adopt a Five-Year Regional Capital Program that is guided by a strategic plan. Strategic plan guidance for the capital program comes from the Priority Project list, Core Requirements and Strategic Goals, all included in the current Strategic Plan, *Invest in Transit*. Once the capital program is adopted, the expenditures of CTA, Metra, and Pace are subjected to continual review, so that the RTA may budget and ensure that funds available to the region are spent in an efficient manner. Full details about RTA's role in regional capital program development can be found in appendix A.

As part of the capital programming function, RTA is responsible for administering state and RTA funds as well as collaboratively developing funding allocation methods for both federal and state funding programs. In addition to reviewing and coordinating the regional capital planning activities, RTA has worked to improve transparency in communicating the direction of the Regional Capital Program, by sharing the Core Requirements and Strategic Goals that each project meets on the Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics (RTAMS) site, as well as by mapping the Regional Capital Program on the RTAMS Capital Program dashboard.

The RTA is also leading Strategic Asset Management (SAM) activities, that continue to guide capital investment decisions at the regional level by building upon the Transit Asset Management Plans and asset-related data developed and submitted by the Service Boards to the Federal Transit Administration. Furthermore, the Project Management Oversite (PMO) function of RTA also oversees execution of many large capital projects.

The focus of the technical group was on RTA's capital funding and programming roles. It was centered on continuing to improve the regional project programming processes, expand the quantity and quality of information provided about the service board and regional projects in the program, and increase overall transparency around the work that the Service Boards do in planning and funding capital projects. RTA initially proposed addressing these needs through updates to the Priority Project List, though the Working Group ultimately chose a different approach. The group had this discussion in the context of the next regional transit strategic

plan, with an emphasis on what new policies should be included in the plan to guide regular programming activities.

Another key topic that was to be discussed by this Working Group was the passage of new state legislative requirements enacted (Public Act 102-0573, Section 2.39) in August 2021. The new legislation mandates a transparent prioritization process for regional transit projects receiving State capital funding and calls out seven specific themes to include in evaluation. The Working Group carefully considered these requirements, as well as the broader legislative intent and public advocacy comments, to develop enhanced regional project evaluation procedures that are designed to capture information about the degree to which each project in the regional capital program advances the priorities mentioned in the legislation.

Over the past several years, RTA has worked in conjunction with the Service Boards to replace the historical formula split for both federal discretionary and state funds with a performance-based allocation method. The new allocation method is guided by three principles: Addressing Capital Reinvestment Need, Incentivizing Capital Expenditure Performance, and Advancing Policy Priorities. Improving the methods for distributing, programming, and expending funds has played a more important role in the region as the amount of capital funding has increased. Funding increases include the Rebuild Illinois program, that was made up of both bond funds and sustainable funding through the Motor Fuel Tax, called PAYGO, as well as increased federal funding through the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA), which provides approximately 40% more capital funds per year than previous legislation. While these funding sources are a start, there is still a great need for additional capital infusions for the transportation system.

Work on improving the capital programming process has been included in the strategic plan, while the region is rethinking its transit priorities and seeking additional operating funds to maintain the system in the changed landscape post COVID. As the system evolves, it will remain essential to address regional capital priorities, which include state of good repair projects and improvements to the system, designed to keep the existing network operational. By demonstrating responsiveness to public input and compliance with legislative mandates, the region's transit operators are better positioning themselves to advocate for future funding needs.

Priority Projects Technical Working Group Members

The Priority Projects Technical Working Group included subject matter experts from the region's Service Boards (CTA, Metra, and Pace) as well as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and RTA staff. These representatives are key staff involved in the transit capital programming process.

Members of the Working Group are listed below. In some cases, organizations sent an alternative representative to attend meetings when there were conflicts.

- Michael Connelly, CTA
- Mike Fitzsimons, CTA
- Leah Mooney, CTA
- Erin Fiorini, CTA
- Lynnette Ciavarella, Metra
- Dustin Clark, Metra
- Brian Stepp, Metra
- David Kralik, Metra
- Lorri Newson, Pace
- Kristian Skogsbakken, Pace
- Erik Llewellyn, Pace
- David Tomzik, Pace
- Ryan Thompto, CMAP
- Craig Heither, CMAP
- Brian Lowenberg, RTA
- Jill Leary, RTA
- Jessica Hector-Hsu, RTA
- Peter Kersten, RTA
- Peter Fahrenwald, RTA

Working Group Process

The RTA organized the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group to develop new guidelines related to the selection and programming of transit capital investments in the region. The aim of the process was to address new requirements for transparency from state legislation, to align the capital programming process with the emerging priorities of the new RTA Strategic Plan, and to make other structural improvements to the capital programming process. While the group's initial discussions focused on the Priority Projects List as the venue for addressing these goals, the focus quickly shifted to the Five-year Capital Program based on feedback from the Service Boards. The specific goals of the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group are below:

- Incorporate the transparent prioritization process and criteria required by state legislation (Public Act 102-0573, Section 2.39).
- Incorporate the recommended goals, strategies, and performance measures developed by the Stakeholder Working Groups for the Strategic Plan and apply them to capital project selection and advancement.
- Better connect capital programming to other regional planning processes and show which projects are next in line in the queue for Service Boards to advance when funding is available.

Review of Priority Projects List

The initial work of the technical group was focused on enhancing the Priority Project list, which was created in *Invest in Transit*, to be used as a vehicle to evaluate projects entering the Capital Program. RTA anticipated that when a project is added to the Priority Project list it would also be evaluated against regional metrics to allow for enhanced stakeholder feedback prior to projects being added to the 5-Year Capital Improvement Program.

The group discussed some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current Priority Project list. Instituted in *Invest in Transit*, the Priority Project list has been successfully operationalized to show the regional capital need, including both how much is needed to achieve the goals of the region and what part of that need is funded. The list has been successful in advocating for additional capital funds at both the state level, with the Rebuild Illinois program, and at the Federal level, with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides a nearly 40% annual increase in funding for transit capital. However, the Priority Project list is only a representative sample of the region's needs; RTA finds it difficult to capture the significant on-going maintenance needs of the region's transit assets; and the projects on the list have varying level of detail and project development.

The initial proposal of RTA, to this technical group, was to build on the successes of the Priority Project lists by improving detail and consistency, so that the lists could be used to evaluate projects entering the program. Some of the areas that the group considered addressing

included the types of projects and level of specificity about the projects that would be included in the lists. Also, the group looked at funded versus unfunded projects, as well as the time horizon of the Priority Project list, at 10 years, versus the five-year time horizon of the capital improvement program. After discussing these issues related to the Priority Project list, the Working Group members recommended that it would be best to keep and maintain the Priority Project list and related information as it is and perform the evaluation of projects at a different point in the planning and programming process, namely when projects are added to the 5-year capital program.

Members gave several reasons for this recommendation. Many current Priority Projects are unfunded and thus developed only to the conceptual level of detail, making them difficult to evaluate uniformly and consistently. Projects currently go through several different types of evaluations based on their type or funding source. Regionally Significant Projects in the ON TO 2050 long range transportation plan undergo detailed evaluation by CMAP as required by the long-range planning process and federal requirements. Projects also undergo evaluation when they are submitted to the federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Projects that are submitted to compete for discretionary funding programs, locally or federally, are evaluated by the specific program criteria. Maintenance projects are subject to TAM plan consideration and undergo evaluation by departments within each Service Board before submission in their budget process. As a result, developing a regionwide rigorous evaluation of all projects, at the 10-year timeframe of the Priority Project, could be duplicative for some projects or might need to be re-done as scopes are finalized. This would require additional staff and resources at both the RTA and the Service Boards. In contrast, projects being moved into the 5-year regional capital program are typically at a more detailed level of planning, have had some form of internal evaluation and are ready to be funded, making that step the more practical time to undertake more detailed public evaluation against a set of regional priorities.

The group agreed that the Priority Project List continues to have strong advocacy value and recommends maintaining the Priority Project Lists using the current guidelines and to continue to update them on an annual basis as part of the budget process.

Addressing New State Requirements

The Working Group also evaluated new state legislative requirements related to project evaluation criteria and transparency of the selection process. Specifically, the group reviewed Public Act 102-0573, Section 2.39, which mandates a transparent prioritization process for regional transit projects receiving state capital funding. The review was cognizant of legislative intent, including a statement from Senator Villivalam that "Illinois taxpayers deserve a system for selecting transportation and infrastructure projects that is transparent, data driven, and equitable."[1] The law calls out seven evaluation themes as specified below:

[1] Legislation to ensure transportation investments benefit public, increase equity approved by Illinois Senate. June 1, 2021. https://www.metroplanning.org/news/10139/Legislation-to-ensure-transportation-investments-benefit-public-increase-equity-approved-by-Illinois-Senate

1. Access to key destinations such as jobs, retail, healthcare, and recreation
2. Reliability improvement
3. Capacity needs
4. Safety
5. State of good repair
6. Racial equity and mobility justice
7. Economic development

Multiple approaches to meeting the legislative requirements were discussed. Options considered during the Working Group process included enhanced evaluation when projects are added to the Priority Projects List, evaluation when Service Boards assess projects internally, or evaluation when projects are added to the Five-year Capital Program. These options were judged based on how well they would achieve the objectives of transparency, consistency, influence on project development, avoiding administrative burden, and communicating value. The consensus of the group was that the preferred timeline for an enhanced project evaluation would be when projects are added to the Five-year Capital Program. The state legislation specifies that projects receiving state funding be evaluated for the seven themes. The technical group discussed different approaches to applying the legislation, including whether to apply them to the review of all projects or just state-funded projects. The RTA stated in the meetings and continues to recommend that it makes sense to publicly evaluate all projects, not just state-funded projects, as they enter the Five-year Capital Program. As detailed in the Capital Project Evaluation Processes section of this document, this recommendation goes "above and beyond" the state legislative requirements by including additional evaluation themes important to the region, which allows for additional transparency in the program and consistency in evaluating the entire program instead of a small subset that is state funded.

Collaboration with Stakeholder Working Groups

Ideas from the other Strategic Plan Working Groups influenced the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group at key points in the process. The most pertinent contributions came from the Infrastructure Investment Working Group.

An update on the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group's progress was presented by RTA staff to the Infrastructure Investment Working Group in June 2022. The presentation described the goals of the Technical Group, the current Priority Projects List, and potential adjustments that were under consideration. The feedback from the Infrastructure Investment Working Group was shared with members of the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group later in the month; this feedback focused on potential plan goals and strategies that related to evaluation themes. The Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group considered evaluation topics from all other Working Groups using polling activities such as the example shown in Figure 1.

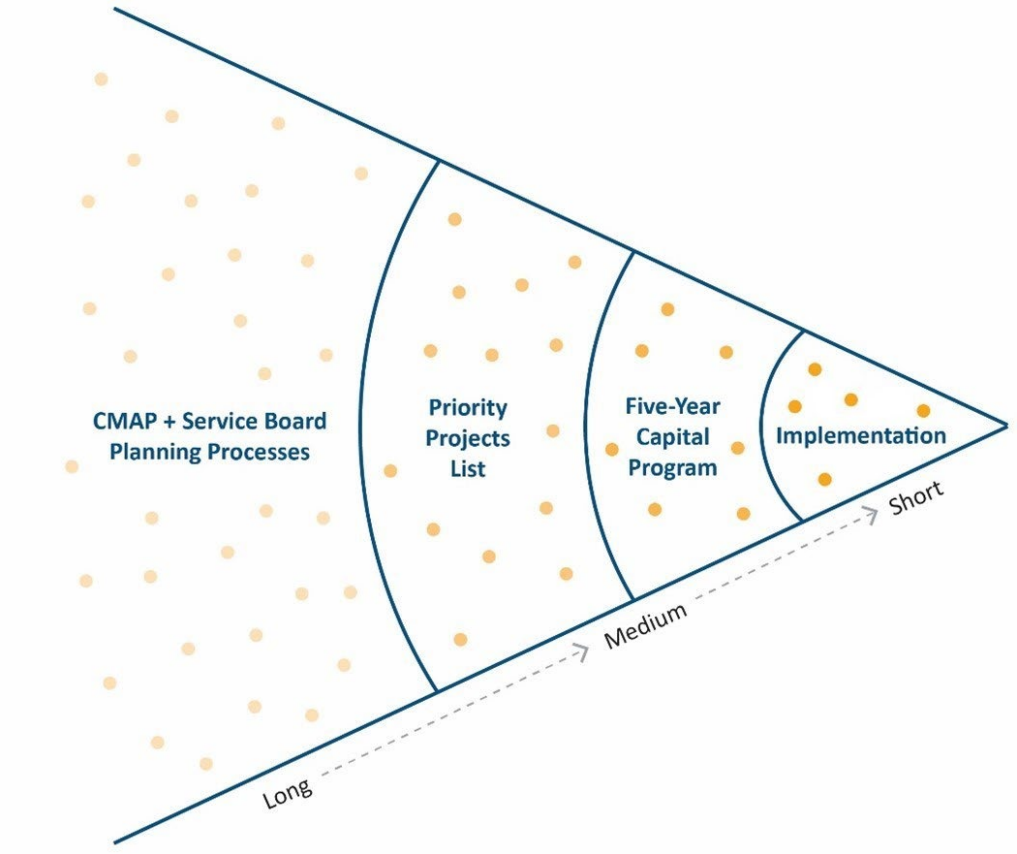
Figure 1. Example polling activity used as part of the Technical Group process

Feedback from the Working Groups reinforced the importance of enhanced transparency and raised other priorities that were embraced by the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group as evaluation themes, including environmental sustainability and customer experience. At the end of the process, the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group reviewed how their recommended evaluation themes aligned with the draft goals of the Stakeholder Working Groups; the review showed that nine of the twelve themes directly addressed similar goals from the Working Groups.

Working Group Member Input and Recommendations

The Service Board representatives, subject matter experts in capital planning and programming at each of the agencies, provided guidance throughout the Working Group process to ensure that the proposed changes will be compatible with the practical needs and limitations of their capital programming processes. These considerations were especially important when considering the preferred structure and timeline for enhanced project evaluation.

Figure 2. Timeline of key processes for advancing transit capital projects



The Service Board representatives directed the Working Group discussions away from ideas of restructuring the Priority Project List and towards an evaluation at the five-year capital improvement program; figure 2 details the timeline for capital project development. The discussions of the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group led to several recommendations:

1. **Maintain the existing Priority Projects List process**. RTA will continue to use the Priority Projects List to organize and communicate the region's transit capital priorities at a conceptual level.
2. **Use the Five-year Capital Program to evaluate projects based on twelve themes**. The Five-year Capital Program is the preferred venue for enhanced project evaluation because projects entering this program are at an appropriate stage of development and Service Boards can build upon an existing process for evaluation and communication, minimizing administrative burden. Seven of the new themes come from state legislation, and the other five themes come from other regions, other working groups, or are used internally by one of the region's Service Boards. Each theme has one or two recommended metrics, which are discussed in the section "Proposed Enhancements to Capital Project Evaluation." It is proposed that these new evaluation metrics replace the existing review of core requirements and strategic goals from *Invest in Transit*.

3. **Increased public engagement through information sharing** regarding the capital programming process, in keeping with the transparency goals of the State Legislature and advocates. This information sharing will take various forms, including presentations at budget hearings, RTA producing online content showing how projects in the Five-year Capital Program address various evaluation themes, and Service Boards publishing more detail about internal evaluation processes for project screening and selection.

The Strategic Plan should include reference to the operational process updates and include:

- Information about ongoing capital needs at the agencies, including state of good repair and maintenance requirements to address the backlog of disinvestment even as stakeholders and others are asking for enhancements.
- Information about capital improvements made during the lifespan of Invest *in Transit*, which had a heavy focus on capital and resulted in new state funding that the RTA and Service Boards have been working to invest in the system.
- The new evaluation themes and measures developed by the group.

Capital Project Evaluation Processes

Existing Capital Project Evaluation Processes by Service Boards

The Working Group reviewed the existing project selection and evaluation processes and metrics currently used by Service Boards for capital planning and programming. All three service boards follow similar annual cycles to update their capital improvement programs. The cycle begins with internal project solicitation, followed by project evaluation, project selections for programming and budgeting, public comment and hearings, and board approvals. The results of these processes are communicated in annual budget books, five-year capital programs, and other documents. More detail on the existing processes can be found in Appendix B.

The evaluation metrics used by each Service Board were reviewed closely by the Working Group. Discussions considered whether any existing evaluation metrics might be aligned with the requirements of the new state legislation such that they can be broadened to be used at the regional evaluation step. The Working Group members reinforced that the Service Boards each do thorough evaluation work in their own capital programming such that it would make sense to share that information and extend these metrics already in use to this regional evaluation where practical. Incorporation of existing metrics would make best use of limited staff time and resources and gain the benefit of experience in implementation. This discussion also highlighted that the Service Boards have already started developing other updates within their own processes based on state and federal policies; these included expanded evaluation of factors related to equity, reducing climate emissions, and economic development. More detail on the current evaluation metrics can be found in Appendix C.

This review informed the development of proposed enhancements to the regional capital project evaluation process, which will be described next.

Enhancements to Regional Capital Project Evaluation Processes

Several enhancements to the regional transit capital project evaluation process are recommended by the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group. The Working Group proposes that projects entering the Regional Five-year Capital Program be assessed based on twelve new evaluation themes, each of which is rated using one or two metrics. The new evaluation themes and metrics will replace the current evaluation process, which includes reviewing the core requirements and strategic goals identified in *Invest in Transit*. Project evaluations will continue to be conducted by each Service Board, and each rating can be accompanied by a brief written explanation. The expanded evaluation process is designed to provide a better understanding of project benefits, which can inform capital programming decisions and help RTA communicate them. RTA will review all submitted data to ensure

accuracy and eligibility of the project for the Regional Five-Year Capital program, however, RTA will not use the new evaluation results to generate overall project ratings or scores.

For each of the required evaluation themes, the Working Group considered potential metrics already used by one of the region's Service Boards, metrics suggested by the Strategic Plan Working Groups, and metrics used in other regions. This included a detailed review of the metrics currently used for internal project evaluation by Service Boards. Service Board evaluation processes are detailed in Appendix B. This conversation eventually led to the recommended evaluation themes and metrics that are described in more detail in the section "Proposed Enhancements to Capital Project Evaluation."

The evaluation is structured so that the themes reflect the emerging priorities of the strategic plan; and the metrics provide a qualitative means for the agencies, stakeholders and public to assess how the Five-year Capital Program aligns with those regional priorities. The measures used to assess the metrics are generally categorical in nature.

The details of how to apply the measures to specific projects will be included in a separate guidance document. All of the themes described in the state legislation have been included, as well as several other key themes suggested by stakeholders during Strategic Plan engagement.

Table 1 identifies the twelve new evaluation themes, the source of the theme, and the proposed metrics.

Table 1: Summary of proposed evaluation themes and metrics

Evaluation Themes	Source	Proposed Metrics
Access to key destinations	Legislation	• Access to key destinations
Racial equity and mobility justice	Legislation	• Equity based on residential geography
Economic development	Legislation	• Economic impact
Reliability improvement	Legislation	• Impact to service speed/reliability
Capacity needs	Legislation	• Capacity benefit and need
Safety	Legislation	• Impact on customer and/or employee safety • Impact on system security
State of good repair	Legislation	• Asset condition (FTA TERM Rating) • Vehicle useful life (Service Board benchmark)
Climate impact	Working groups	• Ridership/mode shift impacts • Agency operating impacts

Customer experience	Working groups	• Benefits to riders
Accessibility for people with disabilities	Service Board evaluations	• Impact on accessibility for people with disabilities
Meet regulatory requirements	Service Board evaluations	• Is project is required to comply with regulatory requirements
Impact on operating costs	Service Board evaluations	• Impact on operating costs

Details on each of the metrics and measures that are proposed to evaluate the themes is provided below. Final adjustments to measures will be provided in a guidance document, which will including details on application of the metrics and measures. This document will be completed by the end of 2022.

- **Access to Key Destinations:** This theme will be evaluated using a metric called **Access to Key Destinations**. The metric will consider the degree to which a project affects access to the region's key destinations, which will be defined as part of the forthcoming guidance document. State legislation indicates that destinations should include jobs, retail, healthcare, and recreation, and the list of key destinations for these purposes will be expanded to include other important areas such as education.

  The proposed measures for this metric are:

  - Does not impact access to key destinations
  - Maintains access to key destinations
  - Indirectly improves access to key destinations
  - Directly improves access to key destinations

- **Racial Equity and Mobility Justice:** This theme will be evaluated using the metric **Equity Based on Residential Geography** for the location(s) a project benefits. This will be quantified using data from the USDOT Justice40 Program, to align with federal policy. The specific metric, "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators," combines transportation, health, economy, equity, resilience, and environmental factors. Guidance will be provided on how to determine what are the benefit areas from a specific project.

  The proposed measures for this metric are:

  - Project is not location-specific
  - Project benefits a location that scores 0 or 1 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"
  - Project benefits a location that scores 2 or 3 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"

- Project benefits a location that scores 4 or 5 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"
- Project benefits a location that scores 6 in Justice40 metric "Sum of Disadvantage Indicators"

- **Economic Development:** This theme will be evaluated using **Economic Impact** as a metric. Economic Impact is broadly defined to include land use development, construction jobs, and long-term job impacts. Guidance will focus on how to weigh the value of regional benefits versus localized benefits as well as the differences in short term versus long term benefits.

  The proposed measures for this metric are:

  - No / minimal impact on economic development
  - Indirect impact on economic development
  - Modest impact on economic development
  - Significant benefit to economic development

- **Reliability Improvement**: This theme will be evaluated using the metric **Impact to Service Speed/Reliability**. The measure will consider the likely impact if the project is needed to maintain current service and whether the impact is direct or indirect. Example projects will be provided in the guidance document.

  The proposed measures for this metric are:

  - No Impact on service speed/reliability
  - Needed to maintain current speed/reliability
  - Indirectly improves speed/reliability
  - Directly improves speed/reliability

- **Capacity Needs**: This theme will be evaluated based on the metric **Capacity Benefit and the Need for Increased Capacity**. The capacity metric will be defined broadly to include vehicles, stations/stops, transit lines, operating right of way, and storage facilities. The responses will consider how much a project increases capacity and whether the current or planned utilization is near capacity. The timeframe for when the capacity should be utilized will be detailed in the guidance document.

  The proposed measures for this metric are:

  - No impact on capacity of transit operations or facilities
  - Project Increases capacity of transit operations or facilities where current or planned utilization is NOT near capacity

- Project moderately increases capacity of transit operations or facilities where current or planned utilization is near capacity
- Project substantially increases capacity of transit operations or facilities where current or planned utilization is near capacity

- **Safety**: This theme will be evaluated using two metrics. The first is **Impact on Customer and/or Employee Safety** and the second is **Impact on System Security**. The first metric will consider the risk and exposure levels if a project addresses a safety issue. It will include an option for maintain current safety levels, as this can be an important part of maintaining state of good repair. The second metric will consider the level of security enhancement the project makes and if the impacted location has a history of security incidents.

  The proposed measures for **Impact on Customer / Employee Safety** are:

  - No impact on safety issues
  - Project maintains current safety levels
  - Project addresses a safety issue with low risk and low exposure
  - Project addresses a safety issue with low risk and high exposure
  - Project addresses a safety issue with high risk and low exposure
  - Project addresses a safety issue with high risk and high exposure

  The proposed measures for **Impact on System Security** are:

  - Does not impact security
  - Enhances or renews existing security
  - Implements protection and prevention
  - Enhances or renews existing security in an area with a history of security incidents
  - Implements protection and prevention in an area with a history of security incidents

- **State of Good Repair**: This theme will be evaluated using two metrics, **Asset Condition** and **Vehicle Useful Life**. Asset condition will be measured using ratings from the FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) on projects where it is applicable. For Vehicles Useful Life, vehicle ages will be compared with Service Board benchmarks to prioritize replacing vehicles that are beyond their useful life.

  The proposed metrics for **Asset Condition** are:

  - Asset(s) Rated 4.5-5
  - Asset(s) Rated 3.5-4.4

- Asset(s) Rated 2.5-3.4
- Asset(s) Rated 1.5-2.4
- Asset(s) rated 1.4 or below

The proposed metrics for **Vehicle Useful Life** are:

- Over 2 years from exceeding useful life
- 0-2 years from exceeding useful life
- 0-2 years past useful life
- Over 2 years past useful life

- **Climate impact:** This theme will be measured using two metrics, **Ridership/Mode Shift Impacts** and **Agency Operating Impacts**. The metric **Ridership/Mode Shift Impacts** evaluates the inherent climate benefits from avoided emissions when travelers choose transit rather than driving. The potential responses will consider the significance and directness of expected ridership impacts. **Agency Operating Impacts** refer to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated from transit operations, including transitioning to near-zero-emissions vehicles. Response options will vary by the degree of reductions or offsets.

  The proposed measures for **Ridership/Mode Shift Impacts** are:

  - No/minimal impact on transit ridership
  - Maintains assets necessary for transit ridership
  - Moderately/indirectly improves ridership
  - Significantly improves transit ridership

  The proposed measures for **Agency Operating Impacts** are:

  - No/minimal impact on GHG emissions from transit agency operations
  - Supports moderate reductions or offsets to GHG emissions from transit agency operations
  - Supports significant reductions or offsets to GHG emissions from transit agency Significantly improves transit ridership
  - Directly supports near-zero GHG emissions from transit agency operations

- **Customer Experience**: This theme will be evaluated using the metric **Benefits to Riders**. This metric will consider if the project provides a minor or major benefit and what percentage of the agency's riders will benefit from it. Guidance will define the types of project benefits and help determine estimates for the range of riders benefitting.

  The proposed measures for **Benefit to Riders** are:

- Project does not impact riders
- Minor benefit to <5% of agency's riders
- Minor benefit to 5-20% of agency's riders
- Minor benefit to >20% of agency's riders
- Major benefit to <5% of agency's riders
- Major benefit to 5-20% of agency's riders
- Major benefit to >20% of agency's riders

- **Accessibility for People with Disabilities**: This theme will be evaluated using the metric **Impact on Accessibility for People with Disabilities**. This will focus on improvements to existing assets to make them partially or fully accessible. For new assets, not applicable should be selected, because new assets must be made accessible by default. The metric can also apply beyond station improvements, including vehicle accessibility and accessible communications. This metric was selected in part because it is already used by Service Boards internally and because it is one of the core requirements that is currently being used for evaluation from *Invest in Transit*.

  The proposed measures for **Benefit to Riders** are:

  - No impact on accessibility or Not Applicable
  - Makes minor accessibility improvements
  - Makes assets partially accessible
  - Makes assets fully accessible

- **Meet Regulatory Requirements**: This theme will be evaluated based on the metric **is project required to comply with regulatory requirements**. While the responses will be a "yes" or "no," the accompanying narrative should identify the type of regulatory requirement (federal, local, etc.) that applies. This metric was selected in part because it is already used by Service Boards internally and because it is one of the core requirements that is currently being used for evaluation from *Invest in Transit*.

  The proposed answers for **Is the Project Required to Comply with Regulatory Requirements?** are:

  - Yes
  - No

- **Impact on Operating Costs:** This theme will be evaluated based on the metric Impact on operating costs. Guidance will address how this should apply to various project types, such as asset replacements, modernizations, expansions etc. This metric was selected in part because it is already used by Service Boards internally as well as because operating cost are an important part of this current strategic plan development process.

The proposed answers for **How will the Project Impact Operating Cost?** are:

- Increase
- Cost neutral, not applicable
- Unsure
- Decrease

The results of this expanded project evaluation process will allow RTA to communicate the value of the regional Five-year Capital Program in much greater detail than in the past. It will be possible to highlight which projects best achieve equity benefits, greenhouse gas reductions, or other regional goals. The goal is to better communicate with stakeholders including elected officials, regional advocates, and the public how transit capital investments align with regional priorities.

These proposed enhancements to transit capital project evaluations will be incorporated within the 2023 RTA Strategic Plan and used as part of the 2024 budget development process. There will be opportunities for public review and feedback on the proposed changes during the ongoing strategic plan development process.

Enhancements to Public Engagement

Strategic Plan Stakeholder Working Groups expressed a strong desire to improve public engagement at regional-level capital programming processes as well as earlier project planning and design. This included several dimensions, including leveraging the public to gather information on system needs, communicating needs and the value of investment to the public, and including public and stakeholder input in the actual creation and implementation of capital programming prioritization processes. Table 2 summarizes the transparency-focused capital programming strategies developed by the Strategic Plan Working Groups.

Table 2. Strategies proposed by Strategic Plan Working Groups to enhance transparency in capital programming

Goal	Transparency Strategies
Invest in a complete transit experience to achieve a state of good repair across the system.	• Use customer feedback, including crowdsourcing, to understand what riders want in infrastructure projects in project development. • Transparently communicate the magnitude of capital needs along with the value to users of these investments
Revise capital programming to ensure that we equitably balance the needs of different markets and communities to increase ridership.	• Create an equity advisory group to ensure equity is integrated into capital investment and measured as a regional outcome.
Increase community engagement and communication during project selection, planning, and service changes.	• Employ a variety of tailored outreach and engagement methods to reach all community members and stakeholders and use the input to inform planning and decision making. • Maximize or supplement service board capacity to lead engagement with community members.

With a goal of greater investment in transit, the Stakeholder Working Groups felt that more transparency would lead to greater public, advocate, and stakeholder support for future funding.

This information was shared with the Priority Project Technical Working Group, so that the group could consider ways to share more information about the current processes and consider improvements for the future based on Stakeholder Working Group ideas and the practices of other peer agencies.

Future Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement Processes

The Working Group discussed opportunities for future engagement using some examples of other agencies around the U.S. The selected case studies from other regions include the Atlanta Regional Commission; Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority; Tri-County Regional Planning Commission; and Virginia SMART SCALE. While each example has similarities and differences to transit capital programming in the Chicago area, each provides an example of elements of transparency injected into capital project evaluation during planning and programming across a region in which projects emerge from multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Key themes in transparency across the cases include:

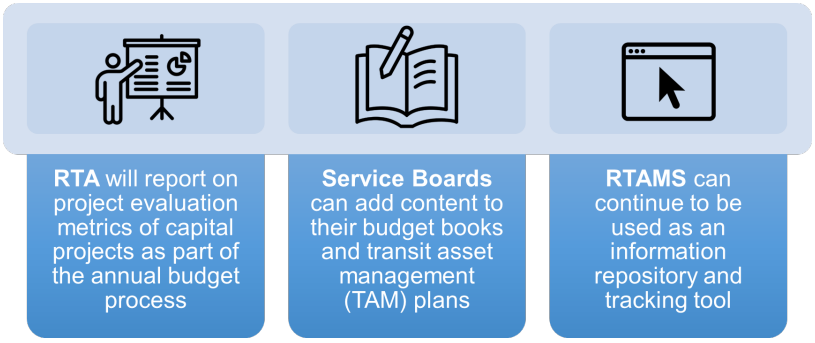
- The overall process and metrics themselves are created with public and stakeholder feedback, and the process and metrics are then publicly available online.
- Project evaluations and projects are presented and vetted in public forums, with final evaluation results and projects ultimately posted online.
- Progress is tracked through an online portal on spending and implementation for the selected projects.

Cases are described in more detail in Appendix D.

As a result of the discussion of Technical Group meetings and the examples from other regions, several transparency-focused opportunities were identified that build on existing processes (Figure 3 details the efforts):

- RTA will report on project evaluation metrics of capital projects as part of the annual budget process, including as part of public hearings, Budget Book creation, board presentations and the RTA – RTAMS website.
- Service Boards can add content to their budget books and transit asset management (TAM) plans that show their internal selection processes and the proposed project evaluation process measures and metrics created within this Working Group.
- RTAMS can continue to be used as an information repository and tracking tool for agencies and the public for agencies' selected projects: The region can continue to promote and enhance this tool.

Figure 3. Summary of opportunities for enhanced engagement

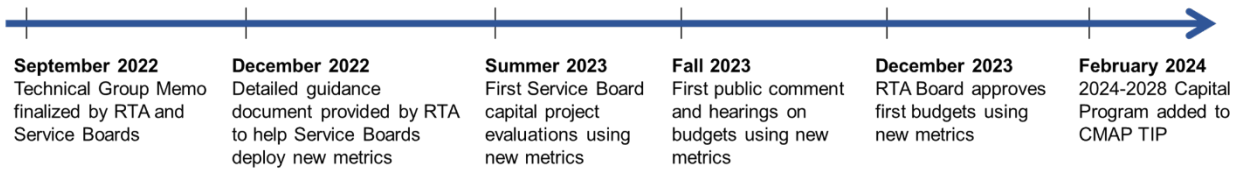


Summary and Recommended Next Steps

The changes proposed by the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group will represent another step forward toward improving transparency as required by the State Legislature and raised by the advocacy community. Under the recommended changes, the transit capital projects submitted to the Five-year Capital Program each year will be evaluated publicly using a new framework that goes above and beyond the seven themes identified in state legislation. This evaluation framework includes twelve evaluation themes, with fifteen qualitative metrics, and written explanations of the ratings. The process replaces the current process for projects entering the Five-year Capital Program, which reviews core requirements and strategic goals identified in *Invest in Transit*.

RTA also commits to ongoing communication improvements as a part of the regular capital programming process. The annual capital programming process has a long lead time that begins well before the regional budget process; as a result, planning for the 2023-2027 Regional Capital Program was already well under way during this process, and will be adopted in December 2022 by the RTA Board prior to the release of the updated strategic plan. As a result, the evolution of the capital programming processing proposed in this document, will begin with the development of the 2024-2028 Regional 5-Year Capital Program. By January 2024, RTA will share additional information about the metrics and measures that will be used to evaluate the capital program in a detailed guidance document. The Service Boards will develop their capital programs based on the normal schedule throughout the year, but the Strategic Goals and Core Requirements used to evaluate the program for the last several years will be replaced by the new metrics which have been developed by this technical group. All capital projects included in the program will be required to be evaluated based on the new metrics and this evaluation will be included in the capital program submittal in the fall of 2023. RTA will review and analyze the submittals and seek additional details as necessary. The evaluation details will be included in the Capital Program Summary as well as the RTA Budget Book. The details will be shared with the RTA Board as part of the Five-Year Capital Program, which will be brought for approval in December 2023. The adopted 2024-2028 Five-Year Capital Program, including the evaluations will be shared publicly on RTAMS shortly after adoption. Figure 4 shows the timeline of the ongoing process.

Figure 4: Timeline of Capital Evaluation Process Updates (2024 Budget Process)



RTA will also be preparing a guidance document to support the Service Boards in deploying the expanded capital project evaluations. This document will provide greater detail about how to interpret and apply the evaluation metrics. This guidance document will be provided to the

Service Boards by the end of 2022, and it is expected to evolve over time based on use and feedback.

As Service Board staff begin to operationalize the updated evaluation process, RTA will continue collaborating and providing feedback to ensure an effective process. The plan will recommend a specific approach to project evaluation, but the region will continue to evaluate the process as we move forward. The Capital Priority Projects Technical Group has been part of a longstanding dialogue between RTA and the Service Boards to improve the processes that advance our region's transit capital priorities. RTA looks forward to continuing this dialogue in the future.

The Capital Priority Project Technical Working Group recommends that the Strategic Plan include information about ongoing capital needs; a summary of these process changes; and a listing of the new evaluation themes and measures to continue the strategic plan's efforts toward more transparent capital advocacy.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: RTA Budget and Five-Year Regional Capital Program Processes

Capital programming is a core function of the RTA. Section 2.01b of the RTA Act requires that the RTA Board annually adopt a regional Five-Year Capital Program. By statute, the Five-Year Capital Program is guided by a Strategic Plan (Invest in Transit) developed by RTA and bounded by the realities of the Annual Budget and Two-Year Financial Plan. The Program must be developed in consultation with the Service Boards and regional planning agencies, including CMAP and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

RTA is responsible for suballocations of regional federal formula funds between Northeastern Illinois, Southeast Wisconsin, and Northwestern Indiana. Suballocations are calculated using existing federal formulas. Once funds are suballocated, RTA calculates funding splits of both federal formula funds as well as State PAYGO funds (received from the motor fuel tax) within the RTA region.

Funding allocations for federal formula funds and State PAYGO funds had been based on historic splits through the 2024 funding year but are now based on a new performance-based allocation method beginning with 2025 funds.

The performance-based allocation method uses a data driven approach to allocate funds based on three key principals:

- Addressing capital reinvestment need
- Incentivizing quick completion of projects
- Addressing policy priorities

The first principal is to address Capital Reinvestment need. RTA uses the 20-year State of Good Repair metric to determine the baseline allocation of funds. This measure estimates the amount of funding each service board would need to reach a state of good repair of all assets within 20 years. The proportion of need makes up the initial funding split.

The 20-year state of good repair need is determined by the Strategic Asset Management working group which includes both Service Board and RTA staff. The group is tasked with regularly updating the needs assessment with new data to reflect investments that have been made.

The second principal is to Incentivize faster Completion of Projects. 50% of funds are allocated based on the 20-year State of Good Repair Needs percentages and then are incremented based on two measures, average age of funds (which has a goal to be under 2.5 years old) and percent

of funds spent (with a goal of spending at least 20% of available funds annually); both metrics are built on a three-year average. Service Boards that meet the performance measures have no change to their available funding. If a measure is not met, funds are incrementally set-aside for future reallocation.

A decision on how to distribute withheld funds has yet to be made. Therefore, discussions for determining how to redistribute these funds will continue following the adoption of the 2023 regional strategic plan.

The third principal of the Performance-Based Capital Allocation, is that a minimum 20% of the value of the projects must meet one of the regional policy priorities, Achieving Full Accessibility, or Improving Equity, as identified in the current Strategic Plan Invest in Transit. The service boards will submit these projects as part of the capital program submittals. RTA reviews the projects to make sure that they meet the currently identified priorities.

The Five-Year Capital Program development is undertaken through the RTA budget process, which follows an annual calendar as follows:

- Spring: Budget Call Released. The RTA develops a Budget Call document in the early spring of each year that describes environmental factors considered in the budget process for the year and articulates information required from the Service Boards to develop the regional Annual Budget, Two-Year Financial Plan, and Five-Year Capital Program.
- May: Budget Call Approved. The RTA Board approves the Budget Call in May of each year describing these requirements, then sets preliminary and final funding projections for the agencies by September of each year by statutory requirement.
- Fall: Capital Programs Submitted. The RTA receives a capital program submission from each Service Board for review in the fall. RTA staff then reviews and assembles the information received from the Service Boards and publishes it in summary form with the preliminary budget documents.
- Late Fall: Public Comment and Approval. RTA conducts public hearings as required by the RTA Act and then presents the final budgets with the Executive Directors of each Service Board to the RTA Board for approval in late fall for adoption in December.

RTA assembles and reviews the Regional Five-year Capital Program before it is shared publicly. As part of the program development, RTA reviews each funding sources requirements and eligibility restrictions as projects are programmed. Staff at the agencies and RTA work together during the capital program development process to ensure that projects in the pipeline can be funded by specific funding sources at the specific time that they need to move forward.

The RTA Act stipulates that the Five-Year Capital Program can only be adopted by the RTA Board after three public hearings in Cook County and one public hearing in each of the other counties in the RTA region (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will). Once the capital program is adopted, the expenditures of CTA, Metra, and Pace are subjected to continual review so that the RTA may budget and ensure that funds available to the region are spent with maximum efficiency.

During the year, RTA regularly amends the Regional Five-Year Capital Program to include new projects, funds and adjust budgets as needed.

Appendix B: Summary of Service Board Internal Project Evaluations

This appendix serves to document the current transit capital project evaluation processes used by the region's Service Boards. A version of the following material was first published in the "Draft Framework for Transit Capital Investments," released in July 2020. During the Capital Priority Projects Technical Working Group meetings in 2022, the Service Boards provided information about subsequent updates to their process. These updates are noted at the end of each Service Board's respective section.

CTA Project Evaluation Process

CTA maintains a rolling 5-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which represents the CTA's capital investment priorities for the next five years based on anticipated available funding. The CTA President and Chief Financial Officer present CIP revisions based on information provided through CTA's decision support processes to the Chicago Transit Board for consideration and approval.

CIP development follows an annual update, review, and approval cycle in conjunction with the overall budget process. The typical timing of key steps in this process are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. CTA Capital Programming Timeline

April to June	Solicitation of new projects — CTA Finance requests project proposals and justifications from all CTA business units
July	Evaluation of project proposals and senior management review (see "Investment Decision Process Overview," below)
August	Development of draft fiscally constrained capital program and budget document based on senior management guidance and preliminary funding marks from RTA
September	Final CIP developed after RTA issues funding marks for five-year program
October	Proposed CTA Capital and Operating Budgets released for public comment
November	Public Hearing and Board Consideration/Approval of CTA Budget
December	RTA Board Consideration/Approval of Regional Budgets
February	RTA and CTA submit the approved capital programs to CMAP for incorporation into the ON TO 2050 regional plan.

In addition to the above annual budget process, CTA's capital program is continuously managed via processes such as:

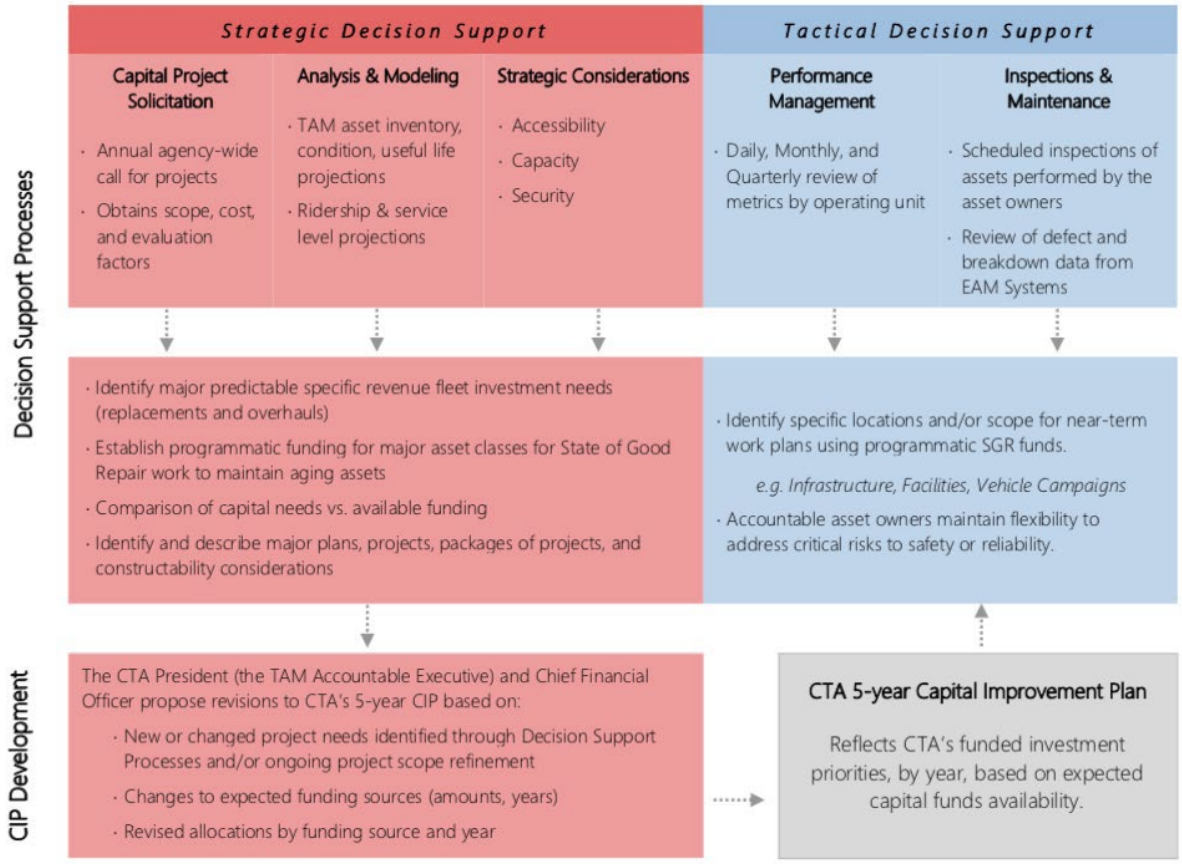
- Monthly and/or quarterly meetings with departments to review progress, status, funding sufficiency, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation, and other outstanding issues on active projects.
- Quarterly CIP updates presented to the Chicago Transit Board and RTA as necessary due to changes in project requirements or funding availability.
- Applying for, obtaining, and monitoring compliance of various capital grant funding sources.
- Ensuring all reporting requirements for grant-funded capital projects are met.

Capital Investment Decision Process and Prioritization

CTA estimates that the baseline funding needed to maintain the condition of its existing asset base is roughly $1 billion per year. In addition, CTA estimates a current backlog of $13 billion in overdue replacements. Historically, the amount of available capital funding has fallen short of the over $2.3 billion annually required to reduce or eliminate the backlog. With the inclusion of new State of Illinois *Rebuild Illinois* funding, CTA's average annual available capital funding has increased to approximately $1.0 billion per year during the period FY2020-2024, which means that trade-offs will nonetheless be required in the allocation of funding between various state-of-good-repair needs and among strategic goals.

CTA deploys several processes and tools to ensure that key decision-makers have meaningful information to guide when and where to invest scarce capital funding. These information and process flows are illustrated in Figure 5**.**

Figure 5. CTA Capital Investment Decision Process



CTA's Capital Finance department conducts an annual solicitation process to request new and revised capital project proposals from CTA departments. The solicitation is conducted and compiled using a database and standard forms, which facilitate consistent analysis and evaluation of funding requests across projects and departments. Requestors also provide information to inform an evaluation rubric and a State of Good Repair (SOGR) questionnaire.

The Request Form collects high-level information about the capital need (e.g., asset category, location, estimated costs, departmental sponsorship) as well as descriptions of the project's objectives and other justifications. Requestors also have the option to attach supporting reference documentation, as needed.

The evaluation rubric reflects the factors identified in CTA's TAM Policy Statement. CTA's primary capital project evaluation factors are:

- Safety & Security
- Customer Service
- Accessibility
- Operations & Maintenance

Additional key considerations addressed include:

- Risk avoidance/mitigation
- Regulatory compliance
- Constructability and staging (Programmatic Continuity)
- Opportunities for innovation
- Community Impacts

For projects that involve replacing or renewing existing assets, the SOGR questionnaire is used to collect TAM-specific information, such as an evaluation of age/condition against a useful life benchmark, and whether the proposed project impacts accessibility or identifiable safety risks.

Going forward, the CTA Budget Book will provide additional summaries of the entire range of CTA's identified capital investment needs and how the approved CIP is derived from them.

Transit Asset Management Plan

In accordance with its reporting obligations to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), CTA developed a Transit Asset Management Program (TAMP) that maintains asset inventory and condition information (including types, ages, locations, useful life benchmarks, etc.) and documentation of CTA's asset management policies and processes.

Information from the TAMP is used to estimate high-level SOGR investment needs across the asset base and to provide additional context in evaluating projects identified in the Call for Projects. As described in CTA's 2020 Budget Recommendations, the total investment backlog is estimated at roughly $13 billion, with total 10-year investment needs of over $23 billion, comprised of major renewal or replacement investments needed across all asset classes, including revenue vehicles, rail infrastructure, maintenance facilities, and stations.

Strategic Considerations

Fleet Management Plans

CTA has developed FTA-compliant Bus and Rail Fleet Management Plans (FMPs) to guide major capital investments in the revenue vehicle fleet. The FMPs are essential inputs to the capital programming process because they:

- Estimate the required fleet size over the next 10 years based on projected ridership, service levels, and maintenance programs.
- Identify the target timeline and sizes of major vehicle purchases and retirements, e.g., the optimal number of vehicles that much be purchased, retired, or overhauled each year over the next 10 years.
- Identify constraints or deficiencies in maintenance and operating facilities that may hinder future operations.

Strategic Initiatives
Capital investment is also informed by long-term strategic analyses. CTA has developed and is guided by several strategic investment plans, such as:

- The All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP), a roadmap to achieve 100 percent ADA accessibility across the rail system.
- Core Capacity/Modernization studies, which determine constraints on future rail ridership growth and identify mitigation projects and programs.
- System expansion and major improvements plan for rail and/or bus service.

Alignment with Regional Goals
CTA's capital program exists within a regional context. Major projects are also considered with respect to their alignment with the Regional Strategic Plan, *Invest in Transit*, and the Regional Long-Range Plan, ON TO 2050.
Invest in Transit serves as a bridge between the five-year CIP and the long-range regional plan. *Invest in Transit* documents CTA's ten-year priority program of major projects, both funded and unfunded, which serve as a guide to projects to be considered for programming as new funding comes available. Going forward, CTA will also include its ten-year priority program of projects in its annual budget book.

Funding Considerations and Fiscal Constraints
The magnitude of CTA's capital investment needs — well over $20 billion over the next 10 years, as identified by the above decision support processes — far exceeds available funding. The exact amounts of funding available each year from each funding source are also considered in project sequencing and incorporation into the final proposed 5-year CIP.

Different capital funding sources have different restrictions on how they may be used; grant funds awarded for specific projects are often non-fungible. As a result, the final CIP may sometimes fund and execute a lower-ranking project before a higher-ranking project based on funding availability.

Due to the need to always ensure service can operate safely and reliably in a scarce funding environment, CTA uses programmatic capital funding allocations in the CIP for the maintenance and renewal of certain asset classes. This approach helps to ensure that sufficient capital funding is available to address urgent targeted capital renewal needs as they arise.

Updates for 2022
CTA is making updates to its internal capital project evaluation process to align with new state legislation. For example, they are emphasizing climate, equity, and economic development considerations to reflect state priorities. The full list of CTA's internal project evaluation metrics as of 2022 can be found in Appendix C. Additional details can be found in CTA's latest Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan.

Metra Project Evaluation Process

Capital Funding and State of Good Repair (SOGR)

The RTA's 2016 Capital Asset Condition Assessment estimated the region's total capital reinvestment needs over a 10-year period $37.67 billion, which included investment needs for CTA, Metra, and Pace. According to the RTA's analysis, Metra's share of this total 10-year reinvestment need is $12 billion. Approximately 50 percent, or $6.1 billion of Metra's 10-year reinvestment need is to address assets that are past their useful life (the SOGR backlog). The remaining $6 billion addresses the baseline, "normal" reinvestment needs expected over the 10-year period. Given this, Metra should be investing $1.2 billion each year. However, Metra's annual capital program has been woefully short of funding and its SOGR backlog continues to grow. Metra's top priority is addressing its SOGR needs. The 2019 *Rebuild Illinois* state capital program is helping address those needs, but more funding will be needed in the long run to sustain operations.

Capital Programming

Metra's capital programming process is guided by "On Track to Excellence," Metra's strategic plan adopted in its final version in 2017. The development of the Metra strategic plan was subject to multiple public open houses and a public release for comments. The plan contains Metra's Mission and Vision statements, as well as five strategic goals that drive Metra's activities:

- Prioritize safety and security awareness
- Invest in our workforce
- Deliver quality customer service
- Optimize our capital assets
- Ensure financial stability

Metra also ensures that the capital program is responsive to the Regional Strategic Plan, *Invest in Transit*, which includes Metra's 10-year list of high priority projects, and the Regional Long-Range Plan, ON TO 2050, which contains many longer-term visons including improvements to Metra's existing lines as well as system expansion projects. Both documents were subject to rigorous public involvement. In addition, Metra is in regular contact with freight railroad partners, municipalities, governmental agencies (state/federal) and stakeholders throughout the Northeastern Illinois region ensuring consistency of its capital program with their needs and plans.

Metra's mission is to provide safe, reliable, efficient commuter service that enhances the economic and environmental health of Northeastern Illinois as part of the regional transportation network. This mission can only be achieved through a robust and aggressive capital program. While the availability of funding may vary from year to year, the projects included in the capital program are highly predictable and consistent. This is because most of

the projects included in the capital program are designed to sustain the existing infrastructure and comply with Federal Railroad Administration regulations while maintaining and improving upon current performance levels.

The one-year and five-year capital program development cycle begins in January of each year. The entire process from the formation of projects to the inclusion in an approved capital program is an on-going process, beginning with the long-range vison. The actual process of putting Metra's capital program together requires the efforts and cooperation of virtually every department in the agency. Projects originate at the implementer level with subsequent review and analysis as they work their way through the capital programming process under a bottom-up approach. While not exhaustive, the following list exemplifies the aspects that are reviewed by implementers as justification for a project being considered for inclusion in the capital program:

- Consistency with Metra's Strategic Plan, *Invest in Transit*, and ON TO 2050
- Asset Condition
- Safety Considerations
- Federal, State, and Local Mandates and Regulations
- Cyclical improvements
- Environmental Conditions
- Reoccurring Problem Areas
- Obsolete Technology
- Passenger Comfort and Convenience
- Increased Demand for Facilities and Service
- Cost Benefit
- Local/State initiatives/plans and studies

Once projects are justified, the proposed capital projects are then reviewed for their potential readiness, workforce availability, and the status of similar-type projects. This analysis is conducted by reviewing the proposed project descriptions, budgets, and schedules against currently ongoing capital improvement projects. Additionally, proposed projects are reviewed for their ability to be implemented by analyzing them against the status of all the active projects in their category.

Projects that meet the above criteria are then subject to a further prioritization process. Presently, Metra uses three criteria equally weighted: Condition, Criticality and Service Delivery/Accessibility. The criticality weight is equally broken down by safety risk and SOGR mandate and each criterion are assigned a score from highest (1) to lowest (5). Metra continues

to refine the investment prioritization process, reviewing the criteria, definitions, and weights. The prioritization process provides a guide for determining which projects are considered for inclusion in the draft one- and five-year capital programs. Funding availability is also a critical component as projects must be matched to the available sources.

The draft capital program is first submitted to Metra's executive team for review and concurrence. The draft program is then presented to the Metra Board, who release it for public comment. The draft plan is also presented to Metra's Citizen Advisory Board and the County Boards of each of the six counties in Metra's service area for comment. The public can provide comments at each of these meetings, as well as at a public meeting held downtown at Metra's headquarters. Comments provided by the public are incorporated into the final capital program that is then adopted by Metra's Board. The capital program is also subject to the RTA's public hearing process before it can be officially adopted, thereby providing residents, elected officials, and civic organizations across the region several opportunities to influence Metra's capital program.

Stakeholder Outreach

The capital budget process has a statutorily mandated public outreach process that is followed by the RTA and Service Boards every year that includes public hearings and County Board presentations throughout the region, as mentioned above. In addition, Metra and staff continue to actively reach out to the public regarding our capital projects and priorities. Every capital program amendment is posted on its website before every board meeting. Information about projects can be found on Metra's website, Facebook page and press releases. Throughout the year, Metra staff hold town hall meetings about projects or initiatives around the region.

Further, Metra routinely engages with municipal stakeholders across the region on planning studies involving station area improvements or service enhancements. Those planning studies are often funded by RTA or CMAP, competitively selected via a process that includes public involvement. Every year, staff presents its capital program to CMAP staff and information is posted on CMAP's website.

Metra's capital projects are included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is administered by CMAP and subject to another round of public involvement. This CMAP-led public involvement process is independent of Metra and provides a different forum for the public to comment on Metra's capital projects. Metra is always seeking ways to continue to be transparent regarding its capital priorities.

Updates for 2022

Metra is making updates to its internal capital project evaluation process to align with new state legislation. For example, they are adding the theme of reducing emissions into their evaluation process. The full list of Metra's internal project evaluation metrics as of 2022 can be found in Appendix C. Additional details can be found in Metra's latest Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan.

Pace Project Evaluation Process

Operational Needs

First and foremost, Pace's capital investments that support the agency's operational needs are a vital component to ensuring that its top priority of safety can be met. Pace is currently experiencing a significant SOGR backlog and ongoing capital reinvestment need, in excess of $2.5 billion. Fortunately, *Rebuild Illinois* is providing much needed relief to help address this backlog. New and expanded maintenance facilities--along with other capital improvements that this program is funding--will go a long way to address SOGR needs. Pace's Transit Asset Management plan includes asset inventory and condition information to help address SOGR needs as well. However, this funding does not cover all of Pace's capital needs, and additional funding is needed to address the agency's expansion needs to tap into new growth markets and other opportunities for new service.

Strategic Vision Plan Guidance

Pace projects are identified, investigated, and designed through capital, operations, service, and strategic planning processes for inclusion into the capital budget process. These may include projects that are developed through Pace staff-led planning activities and programs, as well as those that support the Regional Strategic Plan, *Invest in Transit*, the Regional Long-Range Plan, ON TO 2050, the IDOT Long Range Transportation Plan, and county, municipal and civic organization sponsored transportation plans and studies.

Many of Pace's capital investments have been guided by the agency's Vision 2020 Plan, adopted in 2002, and will be succeeded by a new strategic vision plan titled Driving Innovation in 2021. Examples of capital projects identified through these initiatives include those administered through Pace's Rapid Transit Program, which plans, designs and constructs Pulse lines and Expressway-based services, as well as those that advance improvements to technologies, vehicle fleets, trip booking, fare collection, customer information, and many others that benefit all of Pace's family of services. Other major capital projects such as those funded through the state capital program, *Rebuild Illinois*, are also referenced in Pace's Driving Innovation plan.

Pace regularly conducts robust external stakeholder outreach for all such planning efforts to achieve the agency's transparency goals, and actively investigates new opportunities for communicating emerging capital priorities to all affected stakeholders. Besides the annual budget process and hearings, this also includes measures such as: alerts to passenger subscriber lists, hardcopy posting of planning meeting notices on Pace vehicles and at passenger facilities, social media posts, press releases, website alerts, solicitation of local stakeholder meetings, open house events, electronic and hardcopy newsletters, Board of Directors and committee meeting updates, requesting partner organization support in disseminating informational materials, and various forms of advertising in large-scale distribution printed and electronic media publications.

Budget Call

Pace's capital planning process begins with the RTA's Budget Call. Pace's Budget Planning and Analysis Department sends out budget call instructions and forms to senior staff and relevant department managers, who are required to return them with their capital requests by a predetermined deadline. Supplemental documents are required as support for certain capital requests, including fleet plans for vehicle requests. The Budget Planning and Analysis Department then collects, compiles, and catalogs all complete requests.

Project Scoring

Pace's Investment Prioritization method aligns with our Capital Project Scoring Criteria**,** and the process currently used to select projects during the annual budget cycle. As mentioned previously, this process is also recapped in Pace's Transit Asset Management Plan. The General Manager/Chief Operating Officer appoints an Evaluation Committee comprised of a cross-functional team of Pace staff to conduct the scoring.

Projects are categorized as maintenance, enhancement, or expansion and projects are reviewed in the context of their ability to address the SOGR needs of the region and/or meet the strategic plans of Pace and the RTA, prioritizing operational and safety components of SOGR and then factoring in strategic growth market opportunities.

Specific evaluation criteria that are used to rank the projects include:

- Safety
- Service reliability
- Service capacity
- Comfort and/or convenience
- Accessibility
- Impact on ridership
- Impact on recovery ratio
- Asset condition (Is the project new, normal replacement, rehabilitation, or urgent?)
- Is the project committed to by a previous funding source or programmed as a high-level agency commitment?
- Is the project necessary for safety/security, regulatory mandate, or mission critical?

Projects are placed in the following asset categories:

- Rolling Stock
- Support Facilities & Equipment
- Electrical/Signal/Communications

- Stations & Passenger Facilities
- Miscellaneous

In addition to the prioritization scores, funding sources must be factored in, which may restrict how money can be spent and must be matched appropriately to specific projects. Capital projects not selected for year-one may be included in years two through five, however, projects not selected must be resubmitted for consideration every year, and there are no implicit or explicit agreements that a project that does not make it into the plan one year will be prioritized the following year. All submissions are reevaluated and reprioritized every year.

Year One Capital Budget
Within each asset category reside individual asset class projects which are scored by pre-determined criteria and scoring ranges. Each of the evaluators' scores are averaged to produce an overall asset category score to assign a ranking within the year-one program. Recommended projects are tied to available funding as established by the RTA Marks which are adopted no later than the September 15 statutory funding deadline.

Years Two through Five of Five-Year Capital Program
Years two through five are approached as an overarching strategic framework for the future direction of potential projects outside of the annual program. The investment prioritization framework is goal-orientated and objective-based in the out-years because it is dependent on the RTA receiving the fully apportioned regional federal grant estimates along with each Service Board receiving potential discretionary funding. Each program year needs to balance to the RTA Five-Year Capital Program Funding projections (Marks).

Listed below is an overview of the current year two through year five prioritization process involving Decision Support Tool Steps:

- Define unconstrained needs
- Enter the RTA Marks
- Reduce quantities/remove projects (to balance to the RTA marks) based on:
    - Scoring
    - Funding type (restrictive by scope/capital eligibility)
    - Available Staff Resources/Project timelines (phasing)
    - Dependencies on other projects (sequencing)
    - Historical funding levels, trends, or forecasts

Review by Senior Management, Pace Board, and Stakeholders
Budget Planning and Analysis staff meet with executive staff to present recommendations/information from the scoring process and to allow executive staff to make

informed decisions. Based on the feedback received from Senior staff, the proposed budgets are updated. Next, Senior staff and the Budget team introduce the draft Capital Program to the Pace Board Chairman and Directors for a review and comment period in late August/early September prior to public budget introduction at the September Board meeting.

A formal budget presentation occurs at the October Board meeting before Pace holds mandated public hearings throughout the six county Northeastern Illinois region. The budget information is made available at most public libraries, township, city, and village offices and on the Pace website. After consideration of input from the public process, the final proposed program is approved by the Pace Board in November. The proposed Capital Program is submitted to RTA in October followed by the final Capital Program in November. The RTA Board adopts the consolidated regional budget and Capital Program in December.

Updates for 2022

Pace is making updates to its internal capital project evaluation process to align with new state legislation. For example, they are weighting their environmental and equity themes more heavily to reflect state priorities. The full list of Pace's internal project evaluation metrics as of 2022 can be found in Appendix C. Additional details can be found in Pace's latest Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan.

Appendix C: Metrics Used for Service Board Internal Capital Project Evaluation, 2022

Pace Project Evaluation Metrics

Category	Max Score	Description/Notes
Safety	3	Security also a factor in addition to safety improvements
State of Good Repair	3	< 1 year beyond useful life (1 point), > 1 year beyond useful life or poor condition (3 points)
Reliability	3	Reliability of the capital item or service provided
Accessibility	3	Mobility Justice, ADA specific
Regulatory	2	Compliance with regulations (0 or 2 score)
Equity	3	Racial equity, factoring demographics of service area or location of project
Capacity	2	Expansion of service or seating or facility space
Access to Key Destinations	1	Jobs, retail, healthcare, recreation, etc.
Economic Development	1	Positive economic impact to area/location of project
Deliver Value on Investment	1	Operating impacts/ Recovery Ratio improvement and/or reduced O&M costs
Stay Competitive	2	Improvements to rider experience, technology improvements, and/or ridership increase
Environmental Impact	3	Zero-Emission/Electrification (3 points), CNG (2 points), other (1-2 points)
Agency Commitment	3	Multi-year funding, Board/Executive priority request, and/or mission critical
	30	

Metra Project Evaluation Metrics

1. A. SAFETY AND SECURITY 10 POINTS Project contributes to the safety and security of the system.					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
Safety Benefits For customers and/or employees	Limited and Indirect	Negligible and Indirect	Marginal and/or Indirect		High and direct benefit
Project Type	-	Indirect and limited impact on safety	Indirect and minor impact on safety	Direct and minor impact on safety	Direct and major impact on safety

1. B. CUSTOMER SERVICE 20 POINTS Project improves the customer experience and attracts customers.					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
Ridership Quantile Stations Only - 2018 On/Off Survey	First (lowest) quantile of ridership	Second quantile of ridership	Third (middle) quantile of ridership	Fourth quantile of ridership	Fifth (highest) quantile of ridership
Customer Facing Improvements	Indirect and limited	Indirect and minor	Direct and minor	Direct and major	Direct and significant

1. C. COST 10 POINTS Project maximizes the return on the public's investment.					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
Impact on Operating Costs	Increase	-	No change or N/A or Unsure	-	Decrease
Extends the Useful Life of Assets	-	-	N/A or Unsure	-	Yes
Dedicated funding	Competitive in grant programs	-	-	-	Yes
Project Type	Large Upfront Cost	-	Modest Upfront Cost	-	Small scale /

2. PROJECT READINESS 10 POINTS Status of pre-construction/procurement activities, schedule, and prior funding.					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
Procurement Plan	Not yet in Procurement Plan	-	N/A	-	Already in Procurement Plan
Land Acquisition	Significant risk / cause of delay	Needs Uncertain	Needs identified but not begun	Underway	Complete / Not Needed
Easements	Significant risk / cause of delay	Needs Uncertain	N/A	Underway	Complete / Not Needed
Permits	Significant risk / cause of delay	Needs Uncertain	Needs identified but not begun	Underway	Complete / Not Needed
SHPO	Significant risk / cause of delay	Needs Uncertain	Needs identified but not begun	Underway	Complete / Not Needed
Previously Programmed	No prior programming	-	N/A	Designed, construction ready	Project underway, needs funds
Schedule	No activities complete	Activities underway	Significant activity in next year	Design underway	Design complete

3. CONDITION 20 POINTS Project optimizes capital assets and improves State of Good Repair (SOGR).					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
Condition FTA TERM Condition Rating	Asset(s) rated 4.5 - 5.0	Asset(s) rated 3.5 - 4.4	Asset(s) rated 2.5 - 3.4	Asset(s) rated 1.5 - 2.4	Asset(s) rated below 1.4
Useful life FTA Useful Life Benchmark	Not exceeded	Less than 6 years	Less than 5 years	Less than 2 years	Less than 1 year or exceeded
Specific Failures	-	Failures likely or prevented	Occasional failures	Several failures; consistent rate	Several failures; increasing rate
Resiliency	-	Provides minor resiliency benefits	Provides minor resiliency benefits	Provides minor resiliency benefits	Provides minor resiliency benefits

4. MANDATE 20 POINTS Project brings assets into compliance with federal, state, or local mandates or codes.					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
Federal ADA, EPA, FRA, FTA, PTC	Minor compliance exception	Major compliance exception	Critical compliance issue	Critical compliance issue / risk	Critical compliance issue / failure
State ICC, IDOT, ADA, and others	Minor compliance exception	Major compliance exception	Critical compliance issue	Critical compliance issue / risk	Critical compliance issue / failure
Local ADA, MWRD, Building Code	Major compliance exception	Critical compliance issue / risk of failure	Critical compliance issue / failure	-	-

5. ACCESSIBILITY 10 POINTS Project helps 'Achieve Full Accessibility' and/or 'Improve Equity.'					
Criteria Factors	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
ADA Accessibility Stations Only	Currently 'Fully Accessible'	Addresses minor ADA exceptions	Improves from 'Partially Accessible' to 'Fully'	Addresses major ADA exceptions	Improves from 'Not Accessible' to 'Fully'
Access to Jobs Regional Employment Centers	Indirectly improves access to ECs	Directly improves access to ECs	-	-	-
Equity Geography	N/A	Project adjacent to Equity Geography	Project in Equity Geography	-	-

CTA Project Evaluation Metrics

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	**Score "0" Criteria**	**Score "1" Criteria**	**Score "2" Criteria**
	A - SAFETY & SECURITY			
	Project requestors should ensure to distinguish between impacts to *Safety* vs. impacts to *Security* when assigning project evaluation scores.			
A1	*Impact on customer safety*	Project does not impact customer safety and/or the assets requested for replacement are known to always fail in a safe manner	Project addresses assets that indirectly impact customer safety or assist CTA employees in monitoring customer safety	Project will mitigate the risk of future catastrophic failure and/or addresses identified safety hazard(s) in a customer-facing asset. e.g. - Revenue Vehicles - Mainline Infrastructure - Rail Station Elements
A2	*Impact on employee safety*	Project does not impact employee safety and/or the assets requested for replacement are known to always fail in a safe manner	Project indirectly improves employee safety	Project will mitigate the risk of future catastrophic failure and/or addresses identified safety hazard(s) in any asset that is operated or maintained by CTA employees
A3	*Impact on system security*	Project does not impact security threats to the CTA system	Project enhances or renews existing security measures, whether physical or technological	Project implements CTA's protection and prevention against security threats, whether physical or technological. E.g. installation of new cameras, replacement of perimeter fencing or gates, etc.

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	**Score "0" Criteria**	**Score "1" Criteria**	**Score "2" Criteria**
	B - CUSTOMER SERVICE			
B1	*Impact on service reliability*	Project does not directly impact the reliability of revenue service	Project will moderately reduces major service delays (1-10%) and/or addresses assets that indirectly support service reliability. E.g.: - Station Equipment (inc. Escalators, Elevators) - Maintenance Equipment and Infrastructure at Shops/Yards - Technology or Service Vehicles used for service management and delivery	Project is expected to result in significant reduction of > 10%+ in major service delays and/or is required due to lifecycle replacement needs of assets that directly provide revenue transit service. E.g.: - Revenue Vehicle (Bus, Railcar) projects - Mainline Infrastructure
B2	*Impact to service speeds/ travel time*	Project does not impact service speed/travel time	Project indirectly improves customer's time on CTA or reduces perceived trip time, e.g. - Station escalators/elevators - Customer communication technology	Project either clearly decreases travel times for bus or rail service, or is necessary to prevent reductions in service speed. E.g. - Track renewal to remove or prevent slow zones - Upgrades to signal/power systems that increase peak throughput - On or off street improvements that make bus operations faster or more reliable
B3	*Impact to comfort/convenience*	Project does not impact the comfort/convenience of riders	Project improves or renews the lifecycle on assets that impact customer comfort/convenience, e.g. - replacement of revenue vehicles (like for like) - maintaining stations in a state of good repair - maintaining mainline infrastructure in a state of good repair - maintaining access to the transit system and dissemination of customer information	Project will significantly and directly improve rider comfort over current conditions, by e.g.: - Improving conditions waiting for a bus/train, with improved lighting, weather protection, and furniture - Improve the ease of accessing CTA service, e.g. new entrances, new escalators or elevators, new customer information channels - Complete reconstruction/modernization of rail stations - Reducing the likelihood of experiencing crowded conditions (increased capacity of vehicle, infrastructure, stations) - Providing a significantly smoother ride
B4	*Riders impacted*	Project is several steps removed from impacting riders on a day-to-day basis, e.g. - Enterprise technology - Compliance projects	Project either indirectly impacts a large proportion of daily CTA riders or directly impacts a small number of riders, e.g. - Projects at rail stations below 10,000 riders per weekday - Infrastructure and Facility projects at Garages and Shops - Customer-facing technology	Project directly impacts and will maintain/improve service quality for a very high proportion of daily CTA riders, e.g. - Revenue Vehicle projects - Mainline Infrastructure (Power+Way) - Projects at the busiest rail stations (over 10,000 riders per weekday)

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	Score "0" Criteria	Score "1" Criteria	Score "2" Criteria
	C - OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE			
C1	*Productivity of service*	Project has no/minimal impact on operating capacity or ongoing operating/maintenance costs	Project indirectly impacts operational capacity, utilization, or operating costs through e.g. improved tools, methods, training, equipment, etc.	Project significantly increases operational capacity or reduces ongoing operating/maintenance costs**
C2	*Impact to rate of defects*	Project does not impact the rate of asset defects impacting service delivery	Project indirectly impacts the rate of defects through e.g. improved tools, methods, training, equipment, etc., and/or is expected to increase in MMBD or decrease the rate of defects/WOs by asset class by 1-10%.	Project is expected to directly yield significant increase in MMBD or decrease in WO rate by asset class (10%+) as a result of asset overhaul/replacement/ redesign
C3	*Impact to maintenance cost*	Project does not impact asset maintenance costs	Project indirectly reduces maintenance costs by 2-5% through e.g. improved tools, methods, training, equipment, etc.	Project is expected to directly yield significant reduction in maintenance costs by > 5% as a result of asset overhaul/replacement/redesign
C4	*Impact to ease of maintenance*	Project entails "like for like" replacements or otherwise does not significantly impact ongoing maintainability	Project reduces hold time/asset downtime by 2-5% by either: - renewing the lifecycle of aging assets that currently serve their function, but have pending obsolescence, or - indirectly improving maintainability through e.g. improved tools, methods, training, equipment, etc.	Project reduces hold time/asset downtime by > 5% by either: - replacing assets that are obsolete, no longer supported by their manufacturer, and/or difficult to obtain replacement parts, or - replacing assets whose inherent design or placement makes them difficult to inspect, repair, and maintain in a timely fashion

**Provide a supplemental narrative to explain how project would increase capacity or reduce operating/maintenance costs
***Provide a supplemental narrative to explain what concurrency to ongoing or planned critical capital projects exists and why the requested project cannot be deferred

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	Score "0" Criteria	Score "1" Criteria	Score "2" Criteria
	D - RISK AVOIDANCE			
D1	*Mitigation of safety, legal, or regulatory risks*	Project and timing have no/minimal impact on mitigating safety, legal, or regulatory risks	Project deferral has minor and temporary impact on risks and costse.g. may cause support equipment shutdown, etc.	Project deferral until next CIP cycle would cause significant safety/legal risks, e.g. in case of catastrophic equipment/signal failure
D2	*Mitigation of operational and service delivery risks*	Project and timing have no/minimal impact on mitigating operational or service delivery risks	Project deferral has minor and temporary impact on risks e.g. may cause fleet support failure, etc.	Project deferral until next CIP cycle would cause significant operational/service risks and costs, e.g. in cases of catastrophic vehicle failure

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	Score "0" Criteria	Score "1" Criteria	Score "2" Criteria
	E - FEDERAL/STATE COMPLIANCE			
E1	*Impact on ADA compliance*	Project maintains the same number and condition of accesibility and/or has no impact on ADA compliance	Project improves condition and renews lifecycle of existing accessibility features, e.g. replacing a bus with a lift device, rehabilitating a station that is currently accessible	Project increases number/ADA-friendly components and improves condition of accessibility features, or provides new features where none existed.
E2	*Impact to compliance w/ OSHA, building, life safety, & other codes*	Project maintains existing safety compliance with building, vehicle, and life safety codes, and has no impact on OSHA compliance	Project enhances existing safety compliance safety compliance with building, vehicle, and life safety codes, and allows OSHA codes to be met after project completion	Project significantly improves safety features and compliance with building, vehicle, and life safety codes, and/or is necessary for immediate compliance requirements

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	Score "0" Criteria	Score "1" Criteria	Score "2" Criteria
	F - INNOVATION / TECHNOLOGICAL			
F1	*Project represents new method/ technology to solve recurring problem*	Project does not/minimally impact(s) technological resolution of recurring issue	Project innovatively utilizes existing tech to increase time/cost savings for recurring problems through, e.g. automation	Project generates new technology or methodology for repeated use and delivers significant post-implementation savings
F2	*Proposed methods/tools show promise of future cost savings/ increased productivity*	Project does not impact cost or productivity as a result of technology.	(n/a)	Project expected to deliver significant cost savings/productivity gains through the use of new technology, e.g. automation of currently manual processes, improved analytics and decision support, etc.
F3	*Impact to environmental sustainability goal*	Project has no or minimal direct or indirect impact on improving resource conservation and waste reduction, e.g. installing additional security cameras	Project moderately or indirectly improves resource conservation and waste reduction by minimizing utility consumption, material waste, and harmful emissions. E.g.: - IT implementation reducing paper use	Project significantly improves resource conservation and waste reduction by minimizing utility consumption, material waste, and harmful emissions. E.g.: - E-bus procurement - LED lighting upgrade

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	**Score "0" Criteria**	**Score "1" Criteria**	**Score "2" Criteria**
	G - COMMUNITY IMPACTS			
G1	*Impact to immediately adjacent community (<1/4 mile radius)*	Project has no/ minimal localized impact to immediate surroundings in increasing ridership, residency, economic development, etc.	(n/a)	Project has significant impact to livability, economic development, ridership, residency, etc. in a localized area. E.g. rail station improvements, improvements to the appearance of CTA facilities
G2	*Impact to surrounding community (1+ mile radius)*	Project has no/ minimal impact on economic development, residency, etc over a broad area of the city.	Project has an indirect or modest impact on economic development, livability, residency, etc. over a broad area e.g. replacing revenue vehicles to improve reliability, improved customer information and technology, etc.	Project has significant benefit to economic development, livability, residency, etc. over a broad area e.g. - station improvements to a major, high-ridership transfer station - zero emissions vehicles

	SCORE ===>	0	1	2
	ATTRIBUTE	**Score "0" Criteria**	**Score "1" Criteria**	**Score "2" Criteria**
	H - CAPITAL PROGRAM CONTINUITY			
H1	*Project is physically/technically essential to complete before/ concurrent w/ other critical projects*	Project is not concurrent to any ongoing or planned critical capital projects	(n/a)	Project must move forward to sustain concurrency to ongoing or planned critical capital projects***
H2	*Efficiencies and/or economies of scale by performing this work concurrent w/ other critical projects*	Project cost subject only to inflationary increases and is not reliant on concurrence	Project concurrency is necessary to avoid project cost increase of 10-25%	Project concurrency is required to avoid project cost increase of > 25%
H3	*Project constitutes one element/phase of a multi-year program of projects*	Project is not part of a concurrent or ongoing capital project	(n/a)	Project is part of a concurrent or ongoing capital project and must move forward for completion***

**Provide a supplemental narrative to explain how project would increase capacity or reduce operating/maintenance costs

***Provide a supplemental narrative to explain what concurrency to ongoing or planned critical capital projects exists and why the requested project cannot be deferred

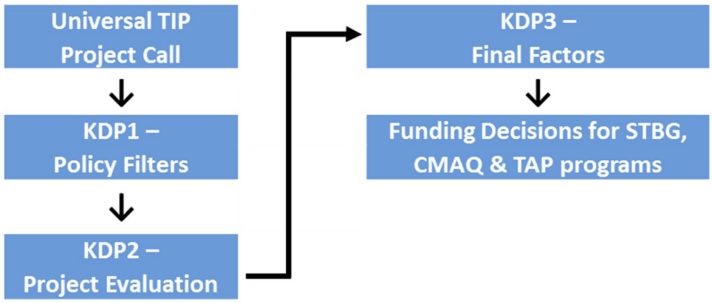
Appendix D: Other Agency Examples of Engagement in Project Evaluation

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the MPO for the Atlanta region, is well known for its robust performance-based planning and programming process. This starts with the regional transportation plan, but also extends to the programming process for the transportation improvement program (TIP), which closely reflects the priorities of the RTP.

Within the TIP process, ARC starts with a universal call for projects from local governments and agencies across all funding categories (Figure 6). At the first key decision point (KDP1), ARC staff use filters to remove projects that do not match regional policy, per the RTP; at KDP2 ARC staff apply a technical performance-based evaluation; at KDP3 ARC staff, project sponsors and policymakers will consider any final factors that cannot be accounted for in a technical exercise. KDP3 is meant to recognize that solely performance-driven decision-making can sometimes overlook important factors that could lead to vital projects being left out of the TIP. Finally, ARC staff will allocate funding to the selected projects.

Figure 6. ARC TIP Project Evaluation Framework



To develop the KDP2 process in 2016, ARC convened a working group of staff from local governments, state agencies, transit providers, non-profit organizations, and private consultants. This group, called the TIP Prioritization Task Force, developed a master performance matrix that guided the development of individual metrics used for project evaluation. This group also weighed in on the development of KDP1 policy filters and KDP3 final factors. ARC staff reconvened a subcommittee of the group and reached out to new stakeholders for revisions to the TIP Project Evaluation Framework in 2018.

In addition to the stakeholder opportunities to shape the process itself, during the TIP solicitation each year there are multiple public touchpoints and outreach methods:

- Public input opportunities include a public review and comment period; public hearings; and public opportunities during committee and board meetings for review and comment.

- ARC proactively reaches out via emails sent to ARC's interested parties and newspaper advertisements and various ARC newsletters and presentations.
- Public information is posted on the website, including details regarding the amendment project list, process, and timeline; all performance scores published in the TIP summary; and an online portal to view a summary and status of all TIP (and RTP) projects.

Extensive outreach begins with the RTP, with which the TIP closely aligns.

Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority

The Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL), a relatively new agency in Atlanta, parallels the design and function of the RTA. Federal transit funds now flow through the ATL to regional transit operators. One function they perform is creating the regional Transit Program of Projects and an Atlanta Regional Transit Plan through a process separate from ARC's TIP. The process closely resembles that of ARC's TIP, however.

Following the closure of the call for projects, the ATL evaluates submitted projects based on defined evaluation criteria, which are publicly available. The evaluation process is created in conjunction with the Transit Operators Group (TOG), essentially the "service boards" in Atlanta, and stakeholders to confirm evaluation methodology and results. In tandem with this process, ATL will engage the TOG and stakeholders on the financial analysis and funding strategies development for near- and long-term lists of projects and programs. Results of project evaluation and prioritization will be shared with the public for their feedback.[2]

ATL recommends project sponsors to submit projects that align with the RTP's project evaluation criteria, the Priority Regional Transit Network, and network analysis needs, as they are more likely to be competitive for state and federal discretionary funding consideration as well as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and formula fund recommendations within the ARTP. The 3-step evaluation process closely parallels the ARC TIP KDPs in the ARC example above.

In addition to the evaluation criteria being publicly available and the TOG and stakeholders creating the evaluation methodology and reviewing results, a public engagement process is conducted in parallel to the project submittal and evaluation process. Results of project evaluation and prioritization are shared with the public for their feedback.
While the ATL conducts public involvement activities for regional transit planning (and the Program of Projects) on behalf of regional operators and local governments, they note that it does not preclude those entities from "proactively conducting public involvement and/or public outreach as part of their individual planning process."

[2] https://engagekh.com/fastforward2022

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Peoria, IL)

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is the MPO for the Peoria area. Like most MPOs, they have an allocation process for the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program to projects proposed by local units of government within the MPO. TCRPC provides an illustrative example of a basic, performance-based approach for allocation of such funds for a small MPO.

Project applicants fill out a publicly available form and ensure their projects meet a minimum set of requirements, including:

- Projects must be located in the MPO 20-Year Metropolitan Planning Area;
- Roadways must have a Functional Classification of Minor Collector or above;
- Projects must be listed in the LRTP;
- Projects must be ready to implement/construct by the programmed fiscal year; and
- Sponsors commit to local match of 30%.[3]

The next step of the application includes a self-evaluation of the project according to a set of simple quantitative and qualitative measures that map to the RTP, which are publicly available on the TCRPC website with the application. Some measures ensure that selected projects have "regional significance" (benefit to the entire region), rather than benefits to only single communities. These are qualitative, based on narratives supplied by the applicants. These tend to be harder to measure elements, such as impacts on employment.

After the call for projects and local government self-evaluated applications, staff review all received applications for eligibility, inclusion of required information, and reasonableness of assigned points for quantitative criteria. Stakeholder and public touchpoints occur:

- Each applicant makes a brief presentation at a MPO Technical Committee meeting, which is open to the public.
- TCRPC establishes a Review Subcommittee to evaluate projects; this subcommittee recommends projects to the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee considers the subcommittee's recommendation and makes their own recommendation to the Commission in a public meeting.
- TCRPC adopts their final project selection(s) into the TIP, which is publicized.

Virginia SMART SCALE

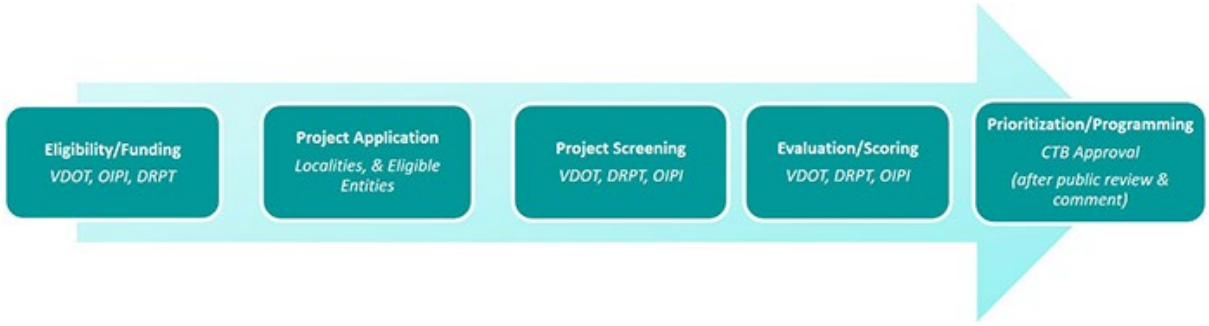
SMART SCALE is a process that helps Virginia meet its most critical transportation needs using limited tax dollars. It evaluates potential transportation projects based on key factors like how they improve safety, reduce congestion, increase accessibility, contribute to economic development, promote efficient land use, and affect the environment. The anticipated benefits are calculated, and the projects are scored and ranked. This information is used by the

[3] https://tricountyrpc.org/funding-programs/stbg/

Commonwealth Transportation Board to help guide and inform their project selection decisions.[4]

The funding going through this program is a relatively small portion of total state transportation capital, but the process is intended to allocate the SMART SCALE funds – across modes and program areas – in a transparent, performance-based manner. All projects requesting SMART SCALE funding go through the same quantifiable and transparent prioritization process (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Virginia SMART SCALE Approach



[4] https://smartscale.org/

Figure 8 illustrates the timeline and the opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement:

- The overall process and metrics themselves are created with public and stakeholder feedback
- The resulting process and metrics are publicly available
- Public hearings are held once a draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is published
- Public and stakeholder feedback is solicited between SMART SCALE rounds for lessons learned
- Project tracking is posted online

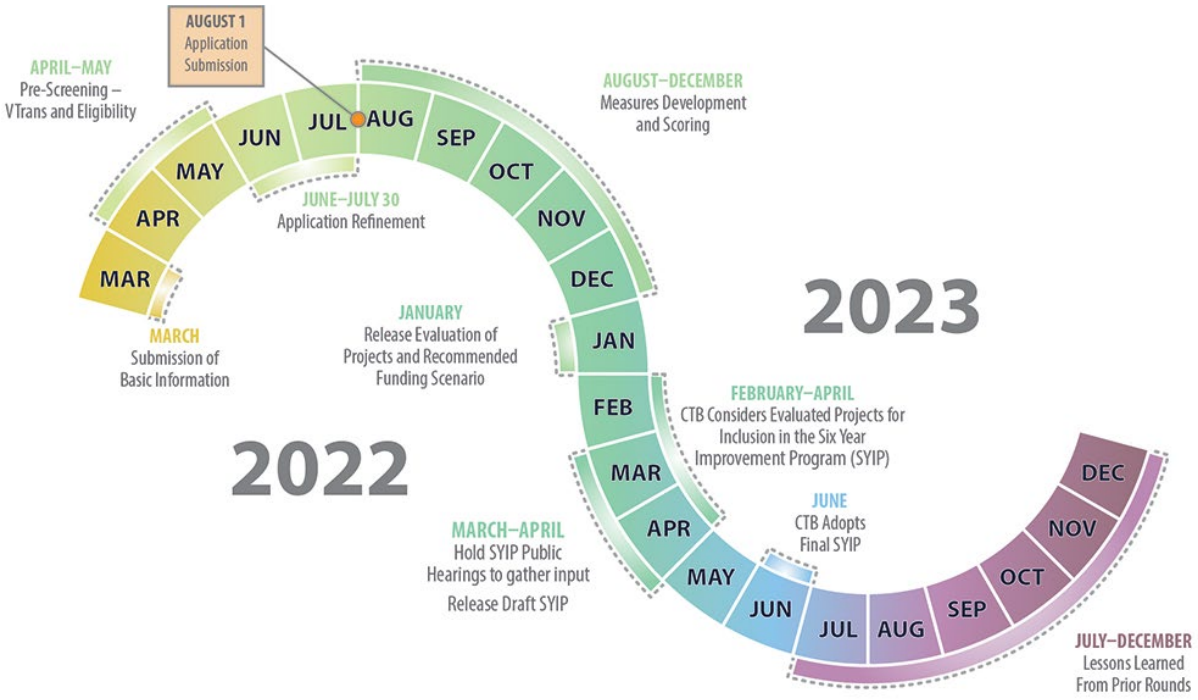


Figure 8. Virginia SMART SCALE Timeline