

CHAPTER TEN -- IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter is a discussion of specific activities on which Cache MPO should focus its future work in addition to a schedule for those activities. Work is divided into planning products such as socioeconomic projections and data collection.

I. Planning Products

A. Demographic Projections

In order to more efficiently proceed through the Regional Transportation Plan update process, Cache MPO will regularly examine socioeconomic data including population, households, and employment in the Cache region. Annual evaluations of existing socioeconomic conditions and projections will make the RTP process update more straightforward in that travel demand model information will be more accurate and readily available for use.

Included in these regular assessments of the region's socioeconomic information will be recent trends in housing and employment growth, broad economic development initiatives of area entities, and data projection work done by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. In addition, updated census information should be incorporated into existing and future conditions analysis when available.

B. Financial Projections

Cache MPO staff will meet with UDOT Region 1 officials to discuss transportation funding priorities, assumptions, and funding source projections so that project list priorities can be revised as necessary. In addition, local funding assumptions should be periodically examined as well as operations and maintenance costs so that RTP update funding assumptions are consistent with project lists and projected available funds.

C. Long/Short Range Transit Plan

The Cache Valley Transit District will work with Cache MPO staff and officials in updating its long and short range transit plans. These transit plans are important components in the region's long range plan for transportation, and continuous coordination with the transit districts is important to the work of the MPO.

D. Trail/Bicycle Plan

The Cache MPO will continue to work with Cache County and regional municipalities to update the trails plan and incorporate the goals and objectives of the RTP within it. In adopting an inclusive bicycle and pedestrian trails plan, the Cache MPO will consider an "Ultimate Trails Plan" that is consistent with the Ultimate Functional Classification map for roads and highways. This would define the vision for bicycle and pedestrian trails planning in the Cache Valley and offer a build-out plan on which nearer-term trails plans could be based. The importance of this trails plan lies in the consistency of plans between cities and at municipal borders more so than specific trail plans within each city.

E. Freight Plan

The Cache MPO recognizes the importance of the freight moving industry to the economic sustainability of Cache Valley (see Appendix C). It is vitally important that the existing Union Pacific “Cache Valley Branch” railroad line be preserved. Although lightly used at present, this route links Hyrum, Logan, Smithfield, and Richmond, Utah, in addition to Preston, Idaho, with UP’s Ogden to Pocatello mainline at Cache Junction. Having rail service in place allows the Cache Valley to attract businesses that require direct access to railroad freight service, which is far more economical and energy efficient than trucks for many commodities. In pursuit of this, several steps are detailed for future work related to freight planning. First, the Cache MPO and local governments should continue to work closely with the Cache Valley Initiative group to ensure that freight issues are properly identified and addressed at all levels of local and regional planning. It is imperative that the freight industry, including trucking, rail, aviation, and warehousing have a clear voice in the planning process and that local government planners and leaders have a clear understanding of freight service and issues as they impact Cache Valley.

Second, there is a need for more comprehensive data on freight movement in the Cache Valley, just as there is a similar lack of accurate data on freight traffic in Utah and across the West. The Cache MPO should work closely with UDOT and other regional agencies in a cooperative effort to identify what data is needed and then in collecting such data over the next two years. Trucking and warehousing companies, as well as large shippers should also be involved in this effort. Additionally the Cache MPO should consider the following in future planning related to freight:

1. Create truck flow diagrams by using existing vehicle classification counts and conducting new visual surveys on major truck routes.
2. Identify truck trip generation from major businesses and industries by updating past telephone surveys. Additional truck trip estimation may be estimated by using FHWA’s Quick Response Freight Manual.
3. Identify potential short term – low cost freight related transportation improvements by updating the existing survey of Cache Valley businesses and industries. A field review should be made of the potential sites identified for improvements.
4. Incorporate as part of ongoing and future corridor studies, the impact the projects will have on the movement of freight.
5. Existing projects in the TIP and the Long Range Plan that may have an impact on freight movement should be identified.
6. As part of incorporating safety in planning, safety hot spots related to truck and rail movement should be identified. These sights should be reviewed as part of a road safety audit conducted in cooperation with UDOT.
7. Potential funding sources for freight related projects should be identified.
8. A freight advisory board should be formed to assist in identifying transportation projects that will assist in the movement of freight. The committee should meet once or twice a year to assist in development of freight related planning products.
9. Site and land use planning should be conducted to support freight activities and use of the existing freight rail services.

F. RTP Update

The Cache MPO will update their existing Regional Transportation Plan every four years and will incorporate the information gathered under the “Data Collection” program in each updated document. The project list will be re-examined based on new data, including updated travel demand model information, funding projections, socioeconomic data, and the region’s goals and objectives.

G. Corridor Vision Plans

Following the adoption of this Regional Transportation Plan, the Cache MPO board will undertake a process by which they will develop Corridor Vision Plans for the major transportation corridors in the Cache region. These Corridor Vision Plans will consider such things as existing and future functional classification, road width, surrounding land uses, primary purpose of the corridor, access management principles such as signal and access spacing, provision of alternative mode such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and overall purpose, function, and character of the corridor. These Corridor Vision Plans should be reexamined periodically as the region grows and changes.

H. Annual Transportation Fair/Open House

The Cache MPO will be consistent and comprehensive in its approach to public involvement, both with respect to its Regional Transportation Plan update process as well as other projects and initiatives. First, the CMPO will host an annual Transportation Open House or Transportation Fair which will highlight current projects in the region. City participation will be strongly encouraged as local government involvement is a key element of the success of these events. Invitations to the event will be methodical and all-encompassing. In addition, the MPO will hold informational meetings for specific projects if the timing of such does not coincide with the annual open house. The scope of these project-specific events can be more limited in terms of advertising, but should still be broad enough to consider any individuals or groups impacted by the project.

I. Performance Measures

The CMPO Regional Transportation Plan represents a substantial public investment with a significant impact on the quality of life of citizens in Cache Valley. The ability to evaluate the success of the planned investment and make mid-course adjustments in future plan updates is paramount to the success of the plan. Given the projected 75 percent increase in population in the MPO area over the life of the plan, it is clear that the ability to maintain a quality transportation system in Cache Valley must depend on wise transportation investments coupled with a balance approach to transportation modes and various “smart growth” planning principles. This plan identifies several key performance measures which must be tracked on an ongoing basis by the MPO for them to remain meaningful. Specific data related to performance measures are listed under “data collection.”

II. Data Collection

A. Annual Report Card

The intent of this tracking is to provide for an on-going “report card” of the success of the plan and an accountability to the planning stakeholders and the general public. Several performance measures will be tracked with every decennial Census (in the absence of significant changes to the Census structure) and include the reliance of various modes of transportation to work. This decennial data should be tracked on an annual or biennial basis with a small sample workplace survey.

The CMPO should strive to gradually reduce the percentage of commuters driving in single occupant automobiles and track the success of these measures. UDOT and the Utah Governor’s Office of Planning & Budget track vehicle mile growth and population growth, respectively, on an annual basis.

The CMPO should strive to reduce the growth rate of vehicle miles traveled to the point where the growth is less than the growth in population. Finally, the Texas Transportation Institute tracks a national “Congestion Index” represented by the comparison of average travel time during congestion to average travel times in the absence of congestion. A similar congestion index should be developed in the CMPO based on a defined set of roads and travel runs, such as the average of travel times over five peak and five off-peak “floating car” speed runs over the length of SR-91 (Main Street) in the Urban Area.

Performance measures identified in this plan represent a narrow review of available data and targeted development of easily obtainable measures which can be tracked by the CMPO staff. The value of performance measures is in the development of long term tracking and not one time analysis. A more detailed discussion of the base measures used in this Plan is found in the Needs Assessment Chapter. The CMPO will continue to track these measures and couple the annual Open House with the availability of a “report card” to display the progress of the plan.

B. Project Accountability Report

On an annual basis, Cache MPO is required to provide FHWA a Project Accountability Report that describes TIP (specifically federally funded) projects that were completed during the previous year. This requirement can become more than a computer print-out and will include before and after pictures, comments from affected individuals, before and after speed and capacity studies, and an assessment of the improvements offered to transit and pedestrians. What is presently a bland and internal federal requirement will be a meaningful assessment which will only add a fraction of a percent to each project cost. The CMPO will make these reports a requirement of project sponsors and use them as displays at annual open houses.

C. Traffic Counts

Cache MPO will coordinate with city staffs to implement an annual traffic count program on major transportation corridors in the region. These traffic counts are intended to supplement the average daily traffic (ADT) volumes provided by the Utah Department of Transportation in their annual publication, *Traffic on Utah Highways*. Traffic information will be collected for both daily traffic volumes as well as peak hour volumes. This data will be used in order to calibrate

the region's travel demand model and in corridor planning processes throughout the area. The CMPO will work with UDOT to establish protocols for count duration, seasonal adjustments, and related data integrity requirements.

D. Speed Data Collection

Cache MPO staff will establish a program through which travel time will be collected and recorded in alternate years. Travel time runs on alternate years shall be in addition to travel time runs for the annual travel time index, and will be used primarily to build a speed data base. Specific routes and times will be established so that conditions are held constant to the extent available. This activity will give the MPO valuable information related to speed and congestion conditions on key routes through the valley.

E. Peak Period Model

The existing regional travel demand model gives results in daily traffic volumes and speed information from the model is not as accurate as it would be with peak period model results. As air quality becomes a bigger issue in Cache Valley, speed data will be important information in development of air quality plans. A peak period model should be developed so that speed data can be collected. Speed data collection identified in the previous activity would be used to calibrate speed information for a peak period model.

F. HPMS Expansion

Highway Performance Model System is a traffic count collection system whereby UDOT officials supply traffic volume information to FHWA. Cache MPO officials will work with UDOT to determine the locations where additional traffic volume information should be collected as well as the appropriate level of accuracy for each functional class type.

Activities outlined in this chapter form the basis of implementation of the RTP and future work for the Cache MPO. While specific timeframes are not necessarily associated with each element of the future work plan, care should be given in determining the most efficient and effective schedules. Table 10-1 below offers a summary of the various data elements and planning processes and products outlined in this plan.

Table 10-1: Planning Products and Data Collection Program

Products	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Demographic Projections	X	X	X	X	X
Financial Projections					X
Long / Short Range Transit Plan	X			X	
Trail/ Bicycle Plan		X			
Freight Plan		X			
LRP Update	X				X
Corridor Vision Plans					
Annual Open House	X	X	X	X	X
Data					
Annual Report Card	X	X	X	X	X
Project Accountability Report	X	X	X	X	X
Traffic Counts	X		X		X
Speed Data Collection		X		X	
Peak Period Model		X			
HPMS Expansion					

III. Other Activities

A. Air Quality

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 strengthened the relationship between transportation planning and air quality. Specifically, regionally significant transportation projects in air quality non-attainment (and maintenance) areas must be derived from a Regional Transportation Plan which “conforms” to the State Implementation Plan for air quality. In the State of Utah, portions of the WFRC and the Mountainland AOG are non-attainment areas and each of these MPOs dedicates approximately one full-time staff person towards addressing the transportation planning issues associated with air quality conformity. Although currently no portion of the CMPO is a federally-designated air quality non-attainment area, planning activities and staffing should anticipate this designation in the near future.

Recently the EPA revised the 24 hour PM 2.5 standard by lowering it to 35 ug/m³. Based on this new threshold, sometime in December 2007 the Utah DAQ is preparing to certify to EPA that Cache Valley exceeded the standard based on the relevant reporting years. By EPA’s published timeline the effective date of non-attainment designation will be April 2010. That assumes that the re-evaluation of the most recent three years worth of PM 2.5 data (as 2010 approaches) does not show the Cache Valley back in compliance with the standard. With this timeline transportation conformity for the CMPO’s Regional Transportation Plan and programs will apply April 2011.

As evidenced in this brief description, air quality issues are both complex and rapidly evolving. Although significant progress has been made, the science of PM2.5 (particles of approximately 1/30th the diameter of a human hair) and the specific causes of the problem in Cache County are

still not fully understood. Staff at the Cache MPO should continue to work with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality (DAQ) to determine the types of data needed to evaluate this issue. Staff should also continue to work with the Cache Valley Air Quality Advisory Board. Since air quality conformity involves the comparison of future transportation emissions against maximum allowable levels, the ability of the travel model to simulate base year data will be important. While it is too early to anticipate the level of modeling required until data collection programs are established, the CMPO should anticipate improvements to travel speed modeling since the present model has been calibrated only towards traffic volumes. Because conformity requirements are not “triggered” until the area is officially designated non-attainment, the CMPO should be supportive of near-term mitigation measures identified by the Utah DAQ to avoid the classification of a non-attainment area. However, once classified, the CMPO should re-direct its focus towards understanding and implementing the types of longer-term controls that will assist in conformity issues that are often a trade-off against more immediate “quick fixes” that are proposed by DAQ.

B. Meeting Administration

It is important for the Cache MPO to meet regularly, provide agendas in advance, and distribute meeting minutes after meetings have occurred. This is true for both Cache MPO board meetings and technical advisory committees. Maintaining written record of meeting discussions and votes is important in providing an accurate depiction of board and committee activities. As mentioned, the process of meeting and discussing key regional issues is as important as the products produced, so a written record of the process is paramount to the success of the CMPO to affect regional improvements.

C. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Deployment

The Cache MPO, UDOT, and FHWA have initiated the process of implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) for the Cache Valley area. ITS refers to a system of transportation-related technologies that provide up-to-the-minute information about current network conditions. ITS allows for more efficient operation of transportation infrastructure as well as better management and improvement in service from government and private transportation providers.

Key components of an ITS system include traffic signal control, freeway management, transit management, incident management, and emergency response, among others. According to the U.S. DOT, the benefits of ITS systems that have been demonstrated in other areas include travel time improvements ranging from eight to 25 percent, reduced crashes by 24 to 50 percent on freeways while handling eight to 22 percent more traffic at speeds 13 to 48 percent faster than pre-existing congested conditions, and reduced delay associated with congestion caused by incidents by 10 to 45 percent.

In June 2006 the CMPO Executive Council approved the Cache Valley Regional ITS Architecture report (can be found on the enclosed CD). This plan is meant to guide the deployment and programming of ITS project in the Cache Valley. This report should be updated before the next Regional Transportation Plan Update.

D. Safety

Safety is a key consideration in transportation planning as evidenced by the emphasis it receives in the SAFETEA-LU planning factors as well as FHWA's suggestion that safety should be a priority in the planning process. The Mountainland Association of Governments was offered as a good example of a thorough discussion of safety in their LRP including school zones and high accident rate zones. Each project identified in MAG's Long Range Plan must include a safety discussion/analysis in order to be included on the region's project list.

The Cache MPO will undertake a prioritization process by which the various elements of safety will be ranked and weighted. Also included in this process will be the identification and quantification of specific reduction goals. The outcome of this process will be used in evaluating each transportation project with respect to increasing safety or reducing accidents.