



## Land Use & Natural Resources Committee

Item #17-3-3  
Information

February 23, 2017

### Transportation Project-Level Performance Evaluation

**Issue:** Update on project-level performance assessment methods and their potential application for the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy update (MTP/SCS) and future funding rounds.

**Recommendation:** None. This is an information item for discussion.

**Discussion:** In response to Board direction and input, SACOG staff has begun exploring tools and methods to analyze transportation investments at the project-level. The process builds from SACOG's existing strengths in performance evaluation at the regional, or system-wide, level with augmented capacity to identify cost-effective transportation projects with high performance benefits.

The Board was last briefed on project-level performance evaluation during the November, 2016 committee cycle. At this March, 2017 committee cycle project staff will provide a brief status update to:

1. Inform new Board members of this ongoing agency work activity.
2. Present the discussion of the first Project Performance Assessment Working Group of local agency staff and regional stakeholders. Attachment A includes a brief description of the effort that staff provided to members of the working group.

One of the guiding principles of the 2016 MTP/SCS was the importance of prioritizing cost-effective transportation investments in a time of funding constraints. The overall goal of the project-level performance assessment effort is to develop a methodology which could be utilized in the 2020 MTP/SCS and possibly the next regional flexible funding round. Staff will provide on-going committee updates and seek board member input as the project progresses.

Approved by

Kirk E. Trost  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

Key Staff: Kacey Lizon, Planning Manager, (916) 340-6265  
Matt Carpenter, Director of Transportation Services, (916) 340-6276  
Bruce Griesenbeck, Principal Transportation Analyst, (916) 340-6268  
Clint Holtzen, Associate Analyst, (916) 340-6246  
Garett Ballard-Rosa, Associate Analyst, (916) 319-5183

## Project Performance Assessment Working Group

### Introduction

The Sacramento region is on the rise. We have been on the cutting edge of smart transportation and land use planning for nearly two decades. In the past few years, technology advances have improved regional planning processes. Also, as we have changed, so have the state and federal governments. Increasingly performance-based processes are being used to secure state and federal money. We see this as good news. With strong board leadership, the SACOG region has a proven track record for being a leader in performance-based planning—from the Sacramento Region Blueprint to the 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

### Background

In 2016, the SACOG Board of Directors directed staff to begin research to improve performance-based planning within the agency. A performance-based approach examines information about roads and transit systems, the form and function of neighborhoods and communities, and the people living in those communities to try to make sound investment decisions. SACOG currently uses tools including travel models, traffic studies, and other analyses in performance-based planning. Yet many of these tools are best suited for the regional-scale. This created the need for new tools to assess individual transportation projects.

In response to the Board of Directors, SACOG is convening a Project Performance Assessment Working Group to assist in a review of methods for implementing project performance assessment. SACOG has identified two feasible methods for taking a closer look at individual transportation projects: benefit-cost analysis and performance outcomes analysis.

### Benefit-Cost Analysis

A benefit-cost analysis (BCA) places a dollar value on the various benefits of a transportation project, for example, improved travel time, decreased accidents, or fewer emissions. Then the BCA compares these monetized benefits to the project's costs to determine cost effectiveness. Typically, a BCA uses a travel demand model to estimate the benefits associated with an individual transportation project.

A BCA is practical for large investments (e.g., major passenger rail expansions, highway and expressway projects) that will likely affect the travel of many people, yet is limited to projects large enough to run through a travel model. In contrast, a performance outcomes analysis looks at a much broader range of transportation projects.

### Performance Outcomes Analysis

A performance outcomes analysis begins by connecting a vision for improving mobility and quality of life with key performance outcomes (e.g., reducing congestion, improving safety, or supporting the economy). The method then draws on project scope, existing infrastructure, and neighborhood characteristics to estimate how a transportation investment affects these benchmark performance outcomes.

### **Project Performance Assessment Working Group Details**

The working group will convene monthly, or less frequently, through the Fall of 2017 at locations in Sacramento and the surrounding area. SACOG will use input from the working group to inform discussions with the SACOG Board about the potential application of project performance assessment in the development of the 2020 MTP/SCS and future regional funding programs.

#### ***But I don't know anything about these models...Why am I invited?***

The members of this group were identified by SACOG staff. You each bring expertise that will contribute to a healthy and provocative dialog. The range of sectors included are transportation planners, public health, infill development, new construction, active transportation, new mobility, disadvantaged communities, and environmental protection. Thank you in advance for helping to bring the best analysis forward.

For more information, please contact Garrett Ballard-Rosa at [gballard-rosa@sacog.org](mailto:gballard-rosa@sacog.org) or (916) 319-5183.