

Chapter 8 - Monitoring and Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

As described in the introduction in Chapter 1, this TDP is a guiding document that should be reviewed and updated annually to reflect any changes in community priorities, funding availability, or other factors that may impact public transit services in the CSPDC region. Several analyses regarding operations, service performance, community transportation needs, and service alternatives have been completed as part of the TDP process. While Chapters 5 and 6 detailed the recommended operations and capital projects, respectively, and Chapter 7 provided the financial plan for these recommendations, it is important to remember that the TDP is a planning document. As such, when it comes time to develop grant applications and implement projects, CSPDC staff, together with the TAC, should revisit the TDP to ensure that the recommendations are appropriate and feasible given community needs and fiscal realities.

This chapter describes the processes that are recommended to periodically monitor and evaluate the progress that the CSPDC has made in implementing the TDP. Such processes include integrating TDP projects with relevant planning documents, monitoring service performance, and submitting an annual update to DRPT. Monitoring and evaluation efforts are particularly important to ensure that the CSPDC is meeting the goals, objectives, and standards that were described in Chapter 2.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Chapter 3 included the review of various transportation and land use plans developed by a number of agencies and municipalities in the Central Shenandoah region. The purpose of this review was to ensure that the TDP is consistent with local and regional transportation goals and efforts. Likewise, when relevant plans are updated in the coming years, CSPDC staff should seek to participate in such efforts to ensure that projects recommended in this TDP are included in these area plans and studies, where fitting. Many of the TAC members are involved as advisors or participants with other community groups. This involvement is a good way for TAC members to promote CSPDC service expansions and modifications that may impact new or updated transportation and land use plans in the region. Another benefit of such coordination efforts is increased awareness of CSPDC services.

At the state level, the CSPDC should ensure that the recommended projects from this TDP are incorporated into the public transportation element of the DRPT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP).

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Chapter 2 included several proposed service and performance standards for the CSPDC, the purpose of which was to develop some objective measurements that the CSPDC can use to monitor transit service performance in the future and make performance-based service planning decisions.

Should particular services fail to meet the performance standards for two consecutive quarters, the CSPDC should review the specific route or service and identify strategies to improve performance, or update the performance standards as warranted by changes in circumstance.

The results of this regular monitoring should be shared with the TAC and with DRPT through the annual TDP update.

TDP MONITORING AND UPDATES

It is recommended that the CSPDC engage in several different monitoring activities on an annual basis, which will be reported to DRPT in an annual TDP update. Whereas the service performance monitoring described above helps to determine whether goals are being met to deliver service that is cost-effective and safe, it is also important to evaluate the extent to which the CSPDC is meeting its goals with regard to serving new markets and establishing, strengthening, and marketing a brand identity for the transit program. Approaches to collect data for such monitoring efforts could include community outreach meetings as well as periodic surveys.

DRPT guidance currently requires that grantees submit an annual TDP update letter that describes the progress that has been made toward implementing the adopted TDP. The CSPDC's annual update to DRPT should document the following:

- Operating statistics for the twelve-month period, including the ridership, attributed to any new proposals implemented as a result of the TDP
- Any changes to system goals, objectives, or service standards
- A description of any service or facility improvements that have been implemented during the twelve-month period

- An update to the TDP recommendations to identify additional projects, deferment of projects to later years, or elimination of projects
- Updates to the financial plan to more accurately reflect current funding scenarios

