

Proposed CTAP Evaluation Model For approval from the CTAP Steering Committee*

Introduction

CTAP is a complex, comprehensive, community-based, region-wide initiative. Unlike many other “top-down” growth planning or “smart growth” initiatives, CTAP is a community-based approach. This proposed evaluation model takes into account the overall community-based design.

Purpose

The Evaluation Model will help gauge the overall success of CTAP. It will also provide feedback information to help improve the overall quality of the CTAP initiative. By using the “Themes, Goals, & Outcomes” as the guiding document, we will establish whether CTAP and the yearly programs are being successfully implemented and are reaching intended goals. To assess this, a multi-level evaluation approach is necessary.

Three Levels of Evaluation Activities

Effective evaluation of this type of initiative needs to include three levels of evaluation activities. These levels include: 1) project level of evaluation, 2) measuring progress towards regional goals & outcomes, and 3) programming/policymaking evaluation. These levels of evaluation include both qualitative and quantitative information gathering and consideration. This proposed CTAP Evaluation Model describes the three levels and how it is proposed that all three levels are incorporated during the initial or start-up phase and during the later phases of this initiative.

Level 1 – Task (or Program) Level Evaluation[†]

Level 1 – Task Level evaluation takes place primarily at the project manager level. In year one, this is the level of the Year-One projects that are being managed by the four RPCs and other entities. The goal at this level is to collect and disseminate evaluation information that is consistent across tasks, on-going, and provides useful information to assist decision making. The evaluation will assess (1) if the tasks are being implemented as planned, on schedule and on budget; and (2) determine the quality of the outputs of these tasks. The Level 2 evaluation will determine if the tasks are helping to achieve the

* Information from the Kellogg Foundation (1998) was used in the development of this evaluation model.

† A task is a scope of work that the NH DOT has contracted to an implementing organization. The scope of work refers to each CTAP Year-One program as a task. For that reason, we refer to a program as a task in this document.

overall goals and anticipated long-term outcomes of CTAP. Summary reports on Level – 1 evaluation data may be provided to the CTAP Steering Committee on a quarterly basis. This information could also be posted to the CTAP website.

Data collection under Level 1 will be accomplished through three approaches:

- **Task Monitoring:** A spread sheet system will provide tracking of how each task is being completed. A spread sheet Task Monitoring system will include a task description, contact information, major deliverables, timeline, and budget for each task. The spread sheet will be submitted monthly to the DOT Project Manager.
- **Narrative Reporting Form:** The Narrative Report Form will be filled out by each Task Manager. This form requires each Task Manager to provide a qualitative measure of progress on each task. This will be submitted monthly to the DOT Project Manager along with the Task Monitoring form.
- **Major Task Deliverables:** The products of each task will be evaluated based upon measures of timeliness, quantity and/or quality. This will be completed by the client on each task at the point of delivery. For example, a survey could be given at the end of a training or when an updated GIS data set is delivered. The actual evaluation instrument will be tailored to the major deliverable.

Level 2 – Measuring Progress towards Regional Goals & Outcomes

The Level 2 evaluation will provide feedback on the success of the program at achieving overall goals and desired long term outcomes of CTAP. In order to gauge the success of CTAP it is important to understand whether the program has improved the level of knowledge, awareness, and understanding of growth and transportation planning. Additionally, the program must understand where communities presently are on the “planning curve” and whether or not communities are moved along this curve over the course of the program. Combined, this information will assist the Steering Committee and Management Team in making policy decisions regarding the future of the CTAP beyond the initial five-year period.

- **Baseline Data Survey** – A questionnaire or survey may be used to capture stakeholder and regional levels of knowledge, awareness, and understanding of growth and transportation planning. This survey must first capture a baseline of information in the first year of CTAP. If successful, it is anticipated that this questionnaire may be administered each following year. Results would then indicate if there are changes in community capacity, what types of changes, and how this varies across different stakeholder groups. It is further anticipated that a unique profile of each of the stakeholder groups that may be developed from this information could help target future CTAP assistance programs.

- **Community Planning Assessments** – This is a Year-One program that will help place communities on a “planning curve”. This program will collect and assess existing regulatory documents related to planning (i.e. zoning, open space plans, etc.) for each community. The results of these assessments will provide baseline data to determine where the community currently is in their planning for future growth. This information will be integrated with the “Baseline Data Survey” to provide a regional snapshot. Both surveys will be able to be completed in later years of CTAP to provide the Management Team and the Steering Committee information regarding the changes in the region over time.
- **Indicating Progress Towards Goals and Long Term Outcomes** – Measured indicators are another way to demonstrate progress of CTAP towards overall goals and long term outcomes under each Theme. Effective indicators must be readily available or easily measurable, reliable, and believed to be reasonably good proxies of progress towards goals and outcomes. Once developed, information may be compiled on a yearly basis. It is possible for the Theme Working Groups to build upon the work of the Logic Model and develop a number of indicators (or interim outcomes) during their 2007 meetings.

Level 3 – Program and Policy Making Evaluation

This level of evaluation draws upon information from the Level 1 and Level 2 evaluations to make long term policy decisions about the overall CTAP program. It is recommended that this be undertaken during year three or four of the program through focus groups and/or a workshop format. This element of the evaluation design needs to be developed at a later stage based upon results of evaluations at levels 1 and 2.

Guiding Principles

All levels of evaluation need to meet the following overall guiding principles:

- Accessible and easy to use yet provide enough details while being transparent for others to view.
- Timely so that issues can be identified and corrected immediately instead of at the end of the program.
- Will not require experts to use and analyze the data.
- Will be applicable to the upcoming years of CTAP to prevent having to re-invent the model every year.
- Will be neutral to all parties involved.
- Will provide qualitative and quantitative information.