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The Mid-Region Council of Governments here, we use IDAS for evaluating ITS projects primarily for Transportation Improvement Program, or the TIP, or Metropolitan Transportation Plan -- long-range ITS project programming.

The IDAS tool allows us to prioritize ITS projects for their benefits on a cost-benefit basis. And what that allows us to do is establish a cost-benefit which can be used directly in a ranking. Some of the ITS elements that IDAS was used to calculate cost-benefits included incident management, incident detection, arterial management, dynamic message signs, CCTV, RTMS, roadway weather information systems; and subsets of combinations thereof. That was another key feature of the IDAS tool was it allowed you to combine ITS elements on a particular project.

A recent ITS program evaluation that we had performed involving IDAS resulted in cost-benefit assessment on a project-by-project basis. This allowed us to identify the benefits of certain projects. In particular, we had projects that were identified on the interstate system and various deployments on the interstate system such as dynamic message sign, courtesy patrols, connectivity with the Traffic Management Center. Well, the IDAS tool allowed us to identify those anticipated cost benefits. Some of the larger projects really showed a very positive cost-benefit result from the IDAS analysis.

The IDAS tool allowed us to evaluate ITS projects on a project-by-project basis based on the ITS elements that are included in each one of those projects. For example, on the interstate system, we had proposals for projects that included various degrees of ITS deployment. The IDAS tool allowed us to identify a higher cost-benefit ratio with additional ITS deployment per project.

For example, some of the projects that included just say an interchange on the freeway system, that maybe included dynamic message signs or signal upgrades, various telemetry, as part of our ITS implementation plan. Those would result in a certain cost-benefit, say around two or three... versus one of our longer ITS projects that was proposed that included numerous interchanges and longer sections of freeway as well as integration with the arterial system. That demonstrated through IDAS a much higher cost-benefit analysis -- over ten, in some cases.

One thing that I did in the IDAS analysis was I used the national defaults. One of the reasons for that was based on the recency of ITS deployments within our region here. The fact that we don't have a lot of history of ITS deployments in order to come up with certain factors. However, we have been deploying ITS in this region for a while now and the next round of IDAS analysis that I anticipate for our next TIP programming and MTP programming, I want to explore the possibility of using locally generated data for certain statistics. Our courtesy patrol has been in operation for a while so we could utilize performance-data from the Freeway Courtesy Patrol and then put that directly into IDAS.

I anticipate additional uses of the output of IDAS once we have our architecture maintenance plan fully integrated into our process.

We found the IDAS tool very useful for our project prioritization -- especially with the cost-benefit analysis. It provided us a clear comparative mechanism to evaluate benefits of projects that -- inherent with ITS deployments that -- aren't necessarily apparent or considered in the normal project programming and prioritization process.

The IDAS program was well within our budget -- the cost was very reasonable for its intended use and benefit to the programming conducted by this MPO.