



MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Committee

From: CMAP staff

Date: August 2014

Re: Programming of the Federal Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Transportation Alternatives Program Funds and Management of the Program

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) created the new Transportation Alternatives program (TAP) to fund non-motorized transportation, giving larger MPOs such as CMAP the responsibility to program a portion of each state's apportionment. Earlier this year, the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee approved the programming of the FFY 2013-2014 TAP funds suballocated to northeastern Illinois.

As it appears likely that Congress will extend MAP-21 (although probably only for a short duration), it is important to ensure that the region is prepared with a program of projects that can utilize these funds when they are authorized and establish regular procedures for program management. This memo describes how staff proposes to program the next round of TAP funding and describes general policies for the ongoing management of the program.

Overall Process

Based on [previous guidance](#) from the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee, the TAP program would focus on bicycle facilities. It is not anticipated that a higher funding level will be authorized for the program. In consequence, the relatively small amount of funding from TAP (anticipated at approximately \$7.5 million per year) should not be spread among additional project categories given the known demand for bicycle facilities. Because of uncertainty around longer-term authorization of the program, staff recommends programming only two years of funding. The program development cycle would match that of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program. The call for proposals is anticipated to be in January 2015, the specific schedule will be available to sponsors prior to the call.

Projects would be scored by first applying a set of basic screening criteria, then ranking the remaining projects according to evaluation criteria. It is proposed that the criteria remain the same as in the FFY 2013-14 program. The prospects for timely implementation will continue to be a major factor in project selection. Staff will hold one-on-one meetings or phone calls with the

sponsors of the higher-ranking projects to verify project details and assess complications that might affect project readiness. The CMAP Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force will be consulted during the development of the recommended program.

The recommended program would be presented to the Transportation Committee during the summer of 2015 with a request to release the program for public comment. During the public comment period staff would seek the feedback of the other Working Committees. Staff will respond to public comments and make adjustments to the recommend program as necessary prior to bringing the proposed program back to the Transportation Committee for its consideration. Following Transportation Committee approval, the proposed program will be considered by the Regional Coordinating Committee followed by the CMAP Board, as well as by the MPO Policy Committee. The target for final program approval is October 2015.

Project Scoring

The screening criteria would be as follows:

1. Sponsors must have substantially completed Phase I Engineering prior to the programming of funds.
2. Sponsors must show that their project is featured in at least one formally adopted or approved bike plan, comprehensive plan, or other plan by a local government, subregional council, CMAP, or the State of Illinois.

Following screening, projects would be evaluated on a 100-point scale using the same criteria as in the FY 13-14 program shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation criteria for Transportation Alternatives program

Completion of Regional Greenways and Trails Plan (30 points max)	
30 Points	Connects two existing trail sections
25	Extends an existing regional trail
20	Builds a new isolated section of planned regional trail
10	Builds a new facility that intersects an existing regional trail
Population + Employment Density within Buffer Area [proxy for usage] (30 max)	
30	Top quartile of region
24	Second quartile
16	Third quartile
8	Lowest quartile
Level of accommodation for non-motorized transportation (30 max)	
(Score after less score before) * 6	Safety/attractiveness rating: 0: Impassable barrier for walking and bicycling 1: Arterial road with no bike/ped accommodation 2: Arterial road with some bike/ped accommodation, including marked shared lanes, and collector streets with no accommodation; 3: Low-speed, local streets with no bike/ped accommodation 4: Unprotected bike lane; local and collector streets with full accommodation 5: Trail or arterial sidepath, cycletrack, protected bike lane, or buffered bike lane
Bonus (10 max)	

5	No ROW or easements to obtain
5	Phase II Engineering complete
100	Points total

These criteria were originally chosen because GO TO 2040 specifically recommends prioritizing greenway trails in the programming of Transportation Enhancements (now Transportation Alternatives) funding. GO TO 2040 also uses miles of trails completed as an indicator of plan implementation. The level of accommodation for non-motorized transportation, as measured by the “safety/attractiveness rating,” has been used successfully by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, and density in the vicinity of the project is a basic proxy for the market for the facility. Other things being equal, a better facility is one that is likely to receive more use.

Management of Program

Funding Sunsets and Project Accomplishment Goals

MAP-21 included fairly stringent funding sunsets for the Transportation Alternatives program, with funds available for three years from the end of each federal fiscal year in which funding was authorized. As this helps to stimulate timely project implementation, sponsors will be asked to meet the interim milestones described below. Monitoring sponsors’ progress toward interim milestones should help keep projects on track and, for projects that do not stay on track, also give time for CMAP to reprogram the funds to other projects that are proceeding. Without this active program management, funding could be rescinded or lapse and become unavailable to the region. Given this, staff recommends the following active program management techniques.

Regardless of the fiscal year for which funding is programmed, the following milestones should be met. For projects not requiring easements or right-of-way (ROW) acquisition:

- By the end of February 2016, project sponsors must submit locally-executed agreements for Phase II Engineering to IDOT (if Phase II Engineering will be federally funded).
- By the end of July 2016, a Phase II Engineering kickoff meeting between the sponsor and IDOT’s Bureau of Local Roads and Streets must have taken place.
- By the end of June 2017, pre-final plans must have been submitted to IDOT.
- By the end of September 2017, federal authorization of construction must have taken place.

For projects requiring easements or ROW acquisition, the following milestones should be met:

- By the end of February 2016, project sponsors must submit locally-executed agreements for Phase II Engineering to IDOT (if Phase II Engineering will be federally funded)
- By the end of July 2016, a Phase II Engineering kickoff meeting between the project sponsor and IDOT’s Bureau of Local Roads and Streets must have taken place.
- By the end of September 2016, plats and legal documentation must have been prepared.
- By the end of December 2016, appraisals must have been prepared.

- By the end of June 2017, ROW negotiations must be concluded.
- By the end of June 2018, pre-final plans must have been submitted to IDOT.
- By the end of September 2018, ROW must be certified by the IDOT Bureau of Land Acquisition.
- By the end of September 2018, federal authorization of construction must have taken place.

Following project selection, CMAP staff will monitor progress toward completing projects. To do this, CMAP staff will request status updates after every milestone listed above. If three milestones are missed or it is clear that a project is falling severely behind schedule, CMAP staff may bring the project to the CMAP Transportation Committee to request its removal from the program due to lack of progress. If the project is removed from the program, staff may recommend reprogramming the funding towards another eligible project. The project removed from the program will be eligible to reapply during a future call for projects if progress has been made towards accomplishment.

Scope Changes and Cost Increase Requests

Given the screening criteria of having substantially completed Phase I Engineering and inclusion within a plan, cost estimates should be well-developed and the priority of the project for the sponsor should be evident. These factors, together with the extremely limited funding, lead to the recommendation that cost increases not be allowed for projects programmed with TAP funds. This approach promotes realistic cost estimates and submission of the highest priority projects for funding, and furthermore makes clear from the outset what the sponsor's responsibilities are regarding cost increases. Given the scope definition that occurs in preliminary engineering, major scope changes (a change in **work type** in the TIP or a TIP amendment for a location change) should not be needed for projects that are selected for funding. Minor scope change requests may be submitted to staff, which will be responsible for making changes in the TIP for consideration at the following Transportation Committee meeting.

Action Requested: Discussion