



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee

**From:** CMAP Staff

**Date:** June 5, 2013

**Re:** Proposed approach to programming Transportation Alternatives Funding

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Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) created a new Transportation Alternatives program (TAP) by consolidating the Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School and Recreational Trails programs. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with populations over 200,000 were given the responsibility to program part of each state's apportionment under TAP. Projects that were eligible for funding under those former programs are generally eligible under TAP, although MPOs have the ability to decide on a narrower list of eligibilities. By law, MPOs must use a competitive process to select projects for funding. MAP-21 authorized transportation funding for only two years. The FY 13 mark for northeastern Illinois is \$8,650,889. The FY 14 mark is expected to be about 1.5% higher, bringing the total for both years to about \$17.5 million.

CMAP staff proposes to program both years of funding with bicycle and pedestrian projects by holding an abbreviated call for projects later in the summer. Bicycle and pedestrian projects that have already been submitted for consideration in the FY 14 – 18 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program would also be considered for funding under TAP without requiring a separate application. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will maintain its own program, which will continue to be called the Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program (ITEP) and which will fund additional categories besides bicycle and pedestrian projects. ITEP may also fund some projects within District 1. CMAP's call for projects would be timed to end on August 20 when IDOT's call ends. Project sponsors will be encouraged to apply to both IDOT and CMAP programs if they feel their project is eligible for both programs.

Staff intends to have a program of projects for consideration by the CMAP Board and the Policy Committee at their January 2014 meetings. Criteria for project selection will be discussed by the Transportation Committee, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force in early fall. A recommended program of projects will be reviewed by the Transportation Committee in November. Staff anticipates continuing the CMAQ

program's emphasis on project readiness by asking sponsors to show that they have submitted a final design report to IDOT by mid-fall.

The rationale for limiting project eligibility to bicycle and pedestrian projects is as follows. Since a relatively small amount of funding is available, a focused approach will maximize the program's impact. The eligibility of streetscaping, a major use of the previous Transportation Enhancement funds, has been eliminated as a standalone project category under MAP-21. Furthermore, in view of CMAP's commitment to performance-based programming, it is important to develop performance measures and evaluation methods for other project categories. Given the limited funding, the effort required to develop these methods and measures would not be well-spent. By contrast, CMAP's evaluation methods for bicycle and pedestrian projects are already fairly evolved, although they will be reviewed and strengthened for use in TAP. Finally, under MAP-21, TAP funds are only available for three years after the funds are authorized, raising the importance of moving quickly to program the funds. If the Transportation Alternatives program is funded at a higher level in the next reauthorization, CMAP staff would recommend broadening the program in northeastern Illinois to include other categories that relate to GO TO 2040.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Approval of the proposed direction for the Transportation Alternatives program in northeastern Illinois.

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