

**MEMORANDUM**

To: MPO Policy Committee

Date: January 6, 2011

From: Bob Dean, Deputy Executive Director for Local Planning

Re: Implementation of GO TO 2040: Technical Assistance

Following the adoption of GO TO 2040 in October, staff has now shifted focus to the plan's implementation. The plan recognizes the central role that communities have in shaping the future of our region, and calls for CMAP and other groups to support local planning projects. Therefore, staff proposes an active program of technical assistance to communities, beginning in early 2011.

This memo describes two elements of CMAP's technical assistance work that involve direct assistance to individual communities. These include:

- A program of **staff assistance**, funded primarily through the federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant received by CMAP.
- A **grant program** for local governments, funded primarily through Unified Work Program (UWP) funds.

While the goals of these programs are very similar, they are described separately in this memo, as there are differences in how they will be administered.

Staff assistance program

The federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant, received by CMAP shortly after the adoption of GO TO 2040, will be used to support CMAP's technical assistance activities. This \$4.25 million grant will be used primarily to support additional staff who will be responsible for working with communities on planning activities consistent with GO TO 2040; a portion of this funding will also be used for a series of small grants that complement staff assistance.

Project types and eligibility

In general, the technical assistance program will support planning activities that advance the implementation of GO TO 2040. A variety of projects are possible, and sample project types are listed in the application materials (<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/local-planning/call-for-projects>).

Local planning projects that address issues of transportation, land use, and housing in some way are eligible for assistance; those that treat these issues comprehensively and also address the natural environment, economic growth, and community development are ideal.

Staff assistance will be able to be provided to municipalities, counties, interjurisdictional groups, or nongovernmental organizations, though in the case of nongovernmental groups, participation of the appropriate local governments is also required. Because the purpose of the program is to build local capacity in addition to assist with projects, the staff assigned to work on local projects will be based within the community if desired by the local project sponsor.

Allocation process and timeline

It is expected that there will be more requests for assistance than can be accommodated with available resources, so review and prioritization of requests for assistance is needed. However, it should also be accessible to communities without full-time planning staff, meaning that a simple application form is desired. To be most effective, the program will need to offer a clear process for offering assistance to communities as well as provide enough flexibility to allow projects to be locally customized and respond to locally-identified needs. It is also necessary to begin working on projects quickly, as the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant has a three-year lifespan.

Interested communities will be asked to submit applications which describe in several paragraphs what type of assistance is requested and attach any relevant supporting information. The application forms are very simple, and applications need be no more than one page in length. Communication to communities about this technical assistance opportunity has been occurring in a number of ways: local governments were sent application materials directly, staff are available to make presentations on request, materials have been distributed through the weekly email and posted online, and local Councils of Government and Counties have also assisted in spreading the word.

Once applications are submitted, staff will be responsible for following up with communities to collect any additional information needed to fully understand the proposed project. It is likely that some projects will be fully scoped and ready to begin immediately, while others will be in an earlier stage of development and will need to be further scoped before they can begin.

Below are criteria that will be used to evaluate the requests:

- Alignment of the project with the recommendations of GO TO 2040.
- Local need for assistance.
- Feasibility and ability to implement.
- Collaboration with other groups, including neighboring governments and local nongovernmental groups.
- Input from relevant Counties and Councils of Government (COGs).
- Geographic balance.

Staff proposes accepting applications for assistance several times each year, with the first due on January 28, 2011. After receiving the applications, staff will review them with CMAP's committees as well as other technical assistance providers and funders. Following these discussions, staff will identify projects to be immediately pursued and will initiate work on them in March. At the same time, sponsors of applications that showed promise but could not be pursued immediately will be scheduled for future allocation of resources, or will be advised on ways that their applications could be improved and resubmitted.

For future applications, this process will likely be revised to reflect lessons learned in the initial round. For the initial round of applications, staff believes that this proposed process meets the goals of having a defensible, open, and criteria-based process; directing resources to where they have the most benefit; beginning to undertake projects quickly; and allowing staff sufficient flexibility to customize projects to local needs.

Grant program for local governments

Beyond staff assistance, CMAP has also initiated a grant program to provide funding for planning projects to local governments. CMAP has partnered with the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to expand their existing Community Planning Program to offer more opportunities for the integration of transportation and land use planning. This is a competitive grant program that provides funds for municipalities in the northeastern Illinois region to participate in the planning of local transportation, transit and transit-related development. The available funding for the CMAP contribution originates primarily from federal transportation planning funds, allocated annually through the Unified Work Program (UWP) and from supplementary state funds.

The partnership between the two agencies will provide additional funding to an expanded base of eligible applicants, facilitate inter-agency coordination and strive to provide assistance that attains results. While CMAP's grant program and the RTA's program will remain separate and distinct, they will share application materials and solicit projects during the same time frame. This is intended to reduce the burden on applicants, as they will only need to submit one application for both programs, rather than separate applications. CMAP has committed \$700,000 for this program with the expectation that individual grants will range from \$100,000 and \$150,000. In the past, total program funding from the RTA ranged totaled from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 annually. Below is a summary of the program guide and application process.

Eligible applicants

Municipalities located within the CMAP region are eligible to apply to the Community Planning Program. The program will strive to achieve geographic balance within the seven-county region (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will). Counties in the CMAP region already access UWP funds directly through application to the UWP committee.

Eligible projects

CMAP's program will focus on the intersection between land use and transportation in general; the RTA's program is narrower and focuses on Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) projects and local transit improvements.

Match requirements

For the projects selected by CMAP, applicants will be asked to contribute up to 20% of the total project cost for each project either in cash or in kind contributions based on demonstrated need. For projects selected by RTA, this match is required in cash only.

Project selection process and timeline

A Call for Projects will be issued in April 2011, with applications due in June. Once applications are received, CMAP and the RTA will jointly review applications, and will determine which funding source is more appropriate for each project. Each agency will then work with applicants to fully scope projects and will follow its designated approval process. In CMAP's case, this will involve discussing a proposed program of projects with the working committees during summer 2011, and ultimately receiving formal approval in August 2011. In keeping with the goal of maintaining the same grant process to achieve seamless program integration and to reduce the burden on communities, staff recommends that applications be submitted to the RTA following their established submittal procedures. Applicants will be asked to submit no more than a 10-page document that describes the proposed projects and respond to questions related to how the projects address program goals.

CMAP Project Selection Schedule	
2011 Date (s)	Action
April 6	Call for Projects released
April / May	Outreach activities
June 9	Applications due before 3:00pm CST
June	RTA and CMAP Staff call applicants to follow up on application
July	RTA and CMAP Staff review projects utilizing evaluation criteria
July	Review of recommended projects by CMAP committees
August	Approval of recommended projects (either at special meeting of MPO Policy Committee, OR by giving authority to the Transportation Committee to approve the program of projects)
August	Debrief for unsuccessful applicants upon request
November 2011- January 2012	Projects launched

Project evaluation criteria

A higher level of detail on evaluation criteria will be stipulated in the program application materials that will be released in April 2011. The following section summarizes the general

criteria for screening and evaluating proposals. CMAP and RTA will jointly screen projects based on the level at which they address the following criteria:

1. Overall support for GO TO 2040 goals
2. Appropriate coordination with partners (including relevant transportation agencies)
3. Appropriate level of public participation
4. Quality and completeness of application

While the RTA will have separate ranking criteria for their programs, CMAP will select projects based on consistency with the goals of GO TO 2040 with primary focus on the principles of Livable Communities and Regional Mobility.

Livable Communities:

- Support for infill and reinvestment
- Addresses density, mixing uses (vertical or horizontal), and walkability
- Addresses housing affordability, particularly near transit
- Incorporates environmental features such as water and energy efficiency, parks and open space, forestry programs, and green infrastructure for stormwater management
- Involves interjurisdictional coordination
- General consistency with “Livability Principles” of the federal Sustainable Communities Initiative

Regional Mobility:

- Support the maintenance and modernization of the existing transportation system
- Advance new transportation investments recommended in the plan (strategic expansions, Bus Rapid Transit or Arterial Rapid Transit, major capital projects)
- Support the use of alternative transportation including walking, biking, and transit
- Provide support for transit through small-scale infrastructure investments, supportive land use, or other policies
- Include innovative finance (parking pricing, value capture, etc)
- Incorporate approach to freight

ACTION REQUESTED: Information and discussion.

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