



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Agenda Item No. 5.0

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MEMORANDUM

To: Local Coordinating Committee

From: Bob Dean, Deputy Executive Director for Local Planning

Date: November 2, 2011

Re: Schedule for Future Applications

In August, the Local Coordinating Committee discussed the schedule for future technical assistance applications. Staff proposed that the next call for projects would occur in spring 2012, and this was supported by the Committee. This memo is meant to provide additional detail on several elements of the proposed application process.

The 2012 application schedule is expected to mirror the 2011 schedule for Community Planning Program grant applications. In 2011, the call for projects was issued in April, with applications due in early June. Through June and July, CMAP discussed the applications received with working committees and other stakeholder groups. The Local Coordinating Committee met in August to consider recommending approval of the program to the Board. If it had been necessary, the Committee had been ready to hold an additional special meeting in late July to review preliminary staff recommendations (in reality, the special meeting was judged to be unnecessary). Exact dates for the start of the call for projects and the due date for applications are still to be determined. *Please note that this schedule may change based on potential revisions by the RTA of their grant application process, which are currently under discussion between RTA and CMAP.*

In 2011, CMAP held two application processes for technical assistance, including the initial call for Local Technical Assistance (LTA) projects and the application process for Community Planning Program grants. The schedules for these two initial application processes were responsive to external factors, rather than planned strategically by CMAP. The application process for LTA projects was launched as quickly as possible after CMAP was notified of its grant award (the call for projects began shortly after the first Board meeting following the grant announcement). The Community Planning Program grants were scheduled to align with the RTA's longstanding application process schedule, in the interest of coordinating closely with this existing program.

In 2012, the application processes for LTA projects and Community Planning Program grants are recommended to be combined. Additionally, CMAP also intends to begin to offer

communities small-scale assistance in reviewing plans and ordinances. This review service will not be as intense as an LTA project, as CMAP will simply review the documents and offer comments, rather than managing the development of new plans and ordinances. The plan review service will also be publicized during the 2012 call for projects.

Coordination efforts with the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will continue, and CMAP expects a continued partnership with the RTA. One of the purposes of the 2011 Community Planning Program grants was to coordinate closely with the RTA to link CMAP's efforts with the RTA's existing grant programs. The two agencies developed a shared application form, used an identical schedule, and coordinated during the project review and evaluation process. CMAP intends to partner with the RTA in a similar way this year. It is possible that coordination with other organizations will occur, but this has not yet been determined at this point.

Estimates of available resources cannot currently be made with much accuracy, because of the source of the Community Planning Program grants (federal Unified Work Program [UWP] funding) is allocated on a year-by-year basis and the application process for this funding has not yet begun. If funding is at a similar level to last year, 6-10 additional projects could be pursued. For LTA projects, staff estimates that there is room in the program for approximately 10-15 additional projects beyond those that are currently committed.

It will be necessary to have extensive outreach activities, as applicants will have several different programs to choose from. CMAP intends to continue its commitment to making application forms simple, meaning that the forms must be paired with an effective outreach and communications approach to avoid confusion. CMAP will seek to attend meetings of the Councils of Governments (COGs) and Councils of Mayors (COMs) during April and May to promote the program, and also will schedule several in-person and online "workshops" to let applicants ask questions about project ideas and determine which of the several programs is the best fit for their needs. CMAP will also make direct contact with high-need communities that do not have professional staff to ensure that they are aware of the assistance opportunities and are capable of submitting appropriate applications. High-need groups that did not apply for assistance last year – such as high-poverty communities in south Cook County, or Latino neighborhood groups within the City of Chicago – will be particularly targeted for outreach.

At the February meeting of the Local Coordinating Committee, staff will present further detail on the application process, including:

- Exact dates for the beginning and end of the application cycle, as well as scheduled outreach activities
- Criteria to be used for project evaluation within the different programs
- Coordination opportunities with other external grant or technical assistance programs
- Updates on expected resource levels

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Committee discussion on the contents of this memo is requested.

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion.

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