



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Local Coordinating Committee

**From:** Bob Dean, Deputy Executive Director for Local Planning

**Date:** February 1, 2012

**Re:** Schedule for Future Applications

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In November, 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 in coordination with the RTA's Community Planning Program, and this was supported by the Committee. This memo is meant to provide additional detail on staff's recommendations for several elements of the proposed application process, including key dates, application forms, project eligibility, and selection criteria.

### SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES

Key dates in the technical assistance application process are as follows (all dates in 2012):

- May 9 – begin call for projects
- May/June – informational meetings and presentations to potential applicants
- August 1 – applications due
- Late September – special meeting of Local Coordinating Committee to consider recommending approval of program (if necessary)
- October 10 – Board and MPO Policy Committee consider approval of program

The application schedule (including the due date of August 1) mirrors the RTA's Community Planning Program, but the schedules differ in the approval process.

CMAAP and the RTA will be combining efforts this year to publicize the program. It will be necessary to have extensive outreach activities, as applicants will have several different programs to choose from. The purpose of the outreach activities is to let applicants ask questions about project ideas and determine which of the several programs is the best fit for their needs. Outreach efforts are expected to include, at a minimum, an event in downtown Chicago, presentations at meetings of the suburban Councils of Government (COGs) and Councils of Mayors (COMs), and mail and email communication to municipalities. CMAAP 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.

## APPLICATION FORMS

Applicants will be able to request assistance through four programs during the call for projects. They will be able to:

1. Apply for a **Community Planning Program grant from the RTA**. This will be administered in a similar way to the 2011 Community Planning Program grants.
2. Apply for a **Community Planning Program grant from CMAP**. As above, this will be administered in a similar way to the 2011 Community Planning Program grants.
3. Apply for technical assistance through CMAP's **Local Technical Assistance (LTA)** program. This will be administered in a similar way to CMAP's initial call for LTA projects in December 2010, which led to over 200 applications.
4. Request **review of existing plans and ordinances** by CMAP. This is a new, fairly small-scale activity. 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. Details of this program are still being developed.

The first two assistance types, which involve applications for grant funding, will use a shared application form developed jointly by the RTA and CMAP. It will be very similar to the shared application form used for the Community Planning Program in 2011 (available at [this link](#)), with some minor changes.

The third and fourth assistance types primarily involve staff assistance rather than formal grants, and use a shorter and simpler application form. In 2011, the application form was one page long and consisted of two questions, and a similar approach is expected this year.

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for Community Planning Program grants includes projects that links land use and transportation, such as corridor plans or bicycle/pedestrian plans, as well as general planning activities such as comprehensive plans or zoning ordinance updates that have significant transportation elements or relevance. Eligibility for LTA projects is broad, and extends to nearly any type of planning activity, as long as CMAP has sufficient staff expertise to undertake the project. Plan implementation activities such as changes to regulatory documents (zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinances, and others) are also eligible LTA projects.

Eligible applicants for Community Planning Program grants include municipalities (including the City of Chicago), counties, townships, Councils of Government, and multijurisdictional groups. Eligible applicants for the LTA program include all of the above, plus nonprofit or community-based organizations, provided that these organizations have the full support of the local government(s) in the project area.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria used to prioritize projects in 2011 worked well, and are recommended to be used again. For Community Planning Program grants, projects were evaluated for general consistency with GO TO 2040, commitment to public engagement, appropriate interagency partnerships, and overall quality and completeness. They were also evaluated for their treatment of key relevant issues within GO TO 2040, including the recommendations of the Livable Communities chapter (addressing infill and reinvestment, walkability, housing affordability, environmental considerations, interjurisdictional coordination, and consistency with federal Livability Principles) as well as the Regional Mobility chapter (addressing maintenance and modernization of the existing systems, support for multimodal transportation, and inclusion of other relevant topics like freight and innovative finance). These criteria are recommended to continue to be used.

In 2011, LTA applications were evaluated based on six criteria, including consistency with GO TO 2040, community need, interjurisdictional coordination and involvement of partners, feasibility of implementation, input from relevant Counties and Councils of Government (COGs), and geographic balance. These criteria are recommended to continue to be used. It is expected that the LTA application process will be quite competitive, so applicants will need to score well on a number of these criteria to be successful. Because some criteria are out of the immediate control of the applicant (such as community need and geographic balance), applicants will be encouraged to actively address those elements that they can control, such as involvement of neighboring communities or partner organizations.

Committee discussion on the contents of this memo is requested.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Discussion.

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