



MEMORANDUM

To: Local Coordinating Committee

From: Bob Dean, Deputy Executive Director for Local Planning

Date: February 5, 2014

Re: Future LTA Project Types

Since its initiation in spring 2011, the LTA program has provided planning assistance to communities across the Chicago metropolitan area. To date, over 50 plans have been completed, 50 more are underway, and 40 more are committed but have not yet begun. While the program has been quite popular and is considered a success, improvements can always be made. The large number of projects that have been completed provides an opportunity to evaluate the program and suggest changes for future years.

Staff intends to prepare this evaluation over the next several months. Implementation will be a key consideration, and staff will attempt to evaluate the level of success in implementing LTA plans that have been completed. This is of great importance to CMAP; it does little good to produce plans that are not implemented. Since implementation of a plan can be difficult to assess in the short term, though, this will not be the only consideration – other factors, like the quality of deliverables, community satisfaction with the result, adherence to schedule and budget, and effectiveness of public engagement will also be evaluated.

This evaluation can be used to inform the future direction of the LTA program in a number of ways. It will help determine the types of projects that are most successful, the characteristics of communities that sponsor successful projects, and the most effective use of CMAP staff and consultants. Ultimately, the evaluation of the LTA program will be used to focus future resources most effectively.

The evaluation of the LTA program has not yet begun, and staff does not have conclusions or findings to share with the Committee. However, it will still be useful for the Committee to have a general discussion of potential directions at this early stage. In particular, staff is interested in the Committee's opinions on the inclusion of different types of projects in the LTA program.

Breakdown of project types

To date, the most common projects in the LTA program have been comprehensive plans, with 33 projects of this type. Other common types include transportation plans, as well plans that focus on a specific corridor or area (which may be within a single community or may cross municipal boundaries). Between them, projects in these three categories make up nearly 60% of the projects and 70% of the resources devoted to the LTA program. More information on project types is shown in the table below.

| Project type | Total projects | Completed projects | Active/upcoming projects |
|---|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Comprehensive plan | 33 | 10 | 23 |
| Corridor or area plan | 28 | 11 | 17 |
| Transportation plan | 24 | 7 | 17 |
| Housing plan | 11 | 5 | 6 |
| Water resources plan | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| Zoning update | 9 | 1 | 8 |
| Sustainability or green infrastructure plan | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| Other | 23 | 10 | 13 |
| Total | 145 | 54 | 91 |

As implementation becomes a more important feature of the LTA program, the breakdown of projects may shift. Ideally, the projects in the LTA program in the future should reflect a shift toward implementation, should meet the needs of LTA project sponsors, and should match well with the skills and resources that CMAP can provide.

Discussion points

Items proposed for discussion by the Local Coordinating Committee include:

- What types of projects are most needed by suburban municipalities? This may require thinking beyond plans to consider other types of assistance – like revisions to zoning ordinances, development review processes, or program design.
- Counties, the City of Chicago, and community-based organizations (particularly those in Chicago) are also frequent sponsors of LTA projects. What types of assistance are most needed by these groups?
- How do the most-needed project types align with CMAP’s resources, and in particular, how do they fit within the limitations of our funding sources?
- How can lower-capacity communities – which generally have the least ability to implement the recommendations of their own plans – be successful participants in the LTA program?

As the evaluation of projects progresses, staff will provide regular reports to the Local Coordinating Committee.

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

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