



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: February 5, 2014

Re: Schedule for Future Applications

Staff expects to conduct a call for LTA projects in 2014, and intends to use a process and schedule similar to last year's. This memo is meant to summarize staff's recommendations for several elements of the proposed application process, including approximate dates, application forms, project eligibility, and selection criteria.

Schedule and key dates

Key points in the technical assistance application process are as follows (all dates in 2014):

- Early May – begin call for projects and release application materials
- May and June – informational meetings and presentations to potential applicants
- Late June or early July – applications due
- Late September – special meeting of Local Coordinating Committee to discuss program (if necessary)
- October 8 – Local Coordinating Committee, Board, and MPO Policy Committee consider approval of program

The application schedule will be coordinated with the RTA's Community Planning Program, but the schedules differ in the approval process. CMAP and the RTA will be combining efforts again this year to publicize the program. Outreach efforts are expected to include, at a minimum, a webinar-type meeting, presentations at meetings of the suburban Councils of Government (COGs) and Councils of Mayors (COMs), and mail and email communication to municipalities. This year, CMAP will be involved in a track of presentations about the LTA program at the GreenTown conference scheduled in Chicago on May 22; these conferences typically draw several hundred attendees. 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.

Application forms

The RTA is coordinating closely with CMAP on application forms, as in past years. This is ongoing, and draft forms are not yet available for review.

The same application form will be used to request assistance from a variety of programs, including Community Planning Program grants from the RTA, implementation assistance from the RTA, and staff and/or consultant assistance from CMAP. The initial form will be simple and easy to complete. Once the initial application is received, CMAP and RTA will determine the most appropriate type of assistance for that particular project, and then will follow up to gather more information as necessary.

Eligibility

Eligibility for LTA project types is broad, but is limited somewhat by the range of funding available to CMAP. Following the expiration of HUD funds in January 2014, CMAP is primarily funded through federal transportation sources. Most projects, such as comprehensive plans, corridor studies, zoning ordinance updates, and other projects that affect land use and transportation are eligible to be pursued using transportation funds. However, some specialized types of projects, like those that focus on water resources or local food, will no longer be able to be pursued using this funding unless they have significant transportation elements.

CMAP has secured outside funding to support the LTA program from sources including the Illinois Attorney General, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the federal Economic Development Administration, and the Chicago Community Trust. These sources do allow some projects without transportation elements to be pursued. However, the funds received through these grants are limited, so projects seeking to use these funds will need to be carefully prioritized.

Eligible applicants for technical assistance include municipalities (including the City of Chicago), counties, townships, Councils of Government, multijurisdictional groups, and nonprofit or community-based organizations, provided that these organizations have the full support of the local government(s) in the project area.

Selection criteria

In past years, LTA applications have been 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, with a heavier emphasis on implementation than in past years. Also, because the implementation of past LTA plans is an increasing focus for CMAP, projects that advance past LTA plans may also be given higher priority.

Committee discussion of the contents of this memo is requested.

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

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