



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) STP Project Selection Committee Meeting Minutes

October 31, 2019

Committee Members Present: Dan Burke – CDOT, John Donovan – FHWA, Jesse Elam – CMAP, Lorri Newson – RTA, Kevin O’Malley – CDOT, Chad Riddle – IDOT, Jeffery Schielke – Council of Mayors (via phone), Leon Rockingham – Council of Mayors, Jeffrey Sriver – CDOT, Eugene Williams – Council of Mayors, John Yonan – Counties

Others Present: Elaine Bottomley, Len Cannata, Maria Choca-Urban, Jack Cruikshank, , Emily Daucher, Grant Davis, Jackie Forbes, Mike Fricano, Benet Haller, Scott Hennings, Kendra Johnson, Emily Karry, Mike Klemens, Daniel Knickelbein, Kelsey Passi, Dan Persky, Ryan Peterson, Leslie Phemister, Tom Rickert, David Seglin, Troy Simpson, Mike Sullivan, Kyle Whitehead

Staff Present: Kama Dobbs, Doug Ferguson, Nicholas Ferguson, Jen Maddux, Tim McMahon, Russell Pietrowiak, Todd Schmidt, Jeff Schnobrich

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Chairman Elam.

2.0 Agenda Changes

There were no agenda changes or announcements.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

A motion by Mayor Rockingham, seconded by Mr. O’Malley, to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2019 meeting as presented, carried.

4.0 Local Distribution Formula

Ms. Dobbs provided background information and options for incorporating improvement into the local distribution formula for the first formula re-calibration scheduled for FFY 2025, as called for in the agreement between the Council of Mayors and City of Chicago. She stated at the time the agreement was developed there was

both concern that councils that improved conditions would lose funding in the performance-based distribution and a desire to incentivize investments and policy shifts.

She described three options for defining improvement related to the performance categories, and noted some additional policy-related ideas. She stated staff recommends considering the improvement to the percentage of each council's facilities or factors in bad condition. The committee discussed the complexity of the math behind the options presented. Ms. Newson asked how improvement is seen through an equity lens. Mr. Elam noted that equity is addressed in the scoring, as it is not related to performance.

Ms. Dobbs next described options for determining how much of the regional allotment should be dedicated to improvement. She stated staff recommends a set-aside that is equal to the overall percentage of improvement in the region. Ms. Choca-Urban asked how realistic it is to expect measurable change year to year or over five years. Mr. Elam noted that it is not easy to predict and that the region has not previously had consistent data sets for all measures, but based on data such as bridge condition on the NHS the region has seen improvement. Ms. Dobbs added that the table shown on the slide regarding "count the boxes" shows that from the estimates of performance in 2017 to the actual measuring of performance in 2019, some measures improved across the entire region, and others got worse across the region, with a couple measures being more random. Mr. Haller suggested setting a minimum threshold for improvement to ensure significance and prevent both over- and under-rewarding improvement. Mr. Donovan asked if the agreement language would allow for the improvement set-aside to be zero. Ms. Dobbs stated that doing nothing is an option in phase 1 engineering, and could certainly be one here. She added that the agreement tasks the committee with determining the direction to take.

Lastly, Ms. Dobbs described options for distributing the funds set-aside for improvement. The committee continued to discuss the complexity and merits of the options, with an understanding of both the concerns regarding funding loss and the desire to incentivize investments. The committee requested examples of the options for consideration in November.

5.0 Evaluating the Lessons Learned

5.1 Program Goals

Ms. Dobbs reported that staff is seeking re-affirmation of the program goals for the STP-Shared Fund. She stated that future discussion of lessons learned and potential changes to the program should consider these goals. There was consensus from the committee that the goals presented remain valid.

5.2 Rolling Focus

Ms. Dobbs reviewed the concept of rolling focus for project eligibility that had been considered in 2018 but was not implemented due to partner comments

received at that time. She reviewed the applications received and funded by project type and noted that a good mix was both submitted and funded. She reviewed options for considering rolling focus going forward, including proceeding as proposed in 2018, proceeding with revisions to the project types or schedule, shifting focus to points in the evaluation process, or continuing with an open call for the next cycle and revisiting the concept in the future. She also noted that future discussions should consider comments received throughout the process regarding eligibility for additional project types.

Mr. Peterson and Ms. Choca-Urban asked about bus speed improvement projects, which had few applications and were not chosen for funding. Ms. Dobbs noted that these projects did score well for both the Shared Fund and CMAQ, and a couple were selected for CMAQ funding. Ms. Choca-Urban suggested that if CMAQ is a more appropriate fund source, perhaps this project type should be eliminated for the Shared Fund. Mr. Doug Ferguson noted that because the mix of project applications varies from cycle to cycle, and the CMAQ transit category includes several types of projects, it is impossible to predict if these types of projects will score well in future programs. Mr. O'Malley stated that he is hesitant to restrict eligibility to a limited set of project types. Mr. Sriver agreed and stated that it seems strategic but is actually arbitrary. In response to a question from Mr. Whitehead, Ms. Dobbs stated that a discussion regarding adding project types for funding consideration would occur at a future meeting. Ms. Phemister commented that rolling focus does not help disadvantaged communities that received funding for phase 1 engineering, but would have to wait 2-5 years after completing the engineering in order to apply for funding of future phases. Mr. Haller stated a preference that transit projects never be off the table in a call for projects.

5.3 Completion of Phase 1 Engineering

Ms. Dobbs reviewed the current language regarding requirements for phase 1 engineering to be substantially complete by June 1. She stated staff is concerned that "substantially complete" leaves a lot of room for interpretation by applicants, IDOT, and CMAP, that there are differences between transit and highway processes, and that the June 1 deadline means that eligibility for funding consideration isn't confirmed until the evaluation and scoring of applications is nearly complete. She requested consideration of more defined criteria and shifting the deadline to the time of application.

Mr. Donovan asked how many applications had not completed engineering at the time the application was received. Ms. Dobbs stated she wasn't sure of the exact numbers at this time, but believes that only about 15-20% of applicants had received phase 1 design approval. Mr. Riddle noted that establishing design approval received as the criteria for eligibility would make it easier for IDOT to

confirm project status and would eliminate individual field engineers making judgement calls about individual projects. He also noted that a decision should be made right away if the deadline will be changed from June 1 to mid-March, so that applicants can start immediately. Mr. Rickert commented that since phase 1 can take eighteen months to complete, it may be too late to change the deadline. Mr. Snyder noted the burden that phase 1 reviews may place on IDOT and asked Mr. Riddle if sponsors continue with projects or drop them if they do not receive funding. Mr. Riddle stated that a fair amount do go forward, but there is always a significant number of unfunded projects with design approval. Mr. Donovan expressed concern regarding the number of projects that lack substantially complete engineering. Ms. Dobbs noted that having a solid scope of work and cost estimate is critical when evaluating applications for funding. Mr. Burke stated that design approval can be held up for issues not related to scope or cost. Mr. Donovan stated that substantially complete is generally acceptable. Ms. Dobbs responded that this is acceptable to staff, as the burden is on IDOT to make a determination; however, staff requests that the committee consider making the due date for the determination the same as the application due date. Ms. Newson asked if the definition of substantially complete is always consistent. Mr. Riddle stated there are four field engineers assigned by geography that make the determinations, but he tries to make sure differences are minimal.

6.0 FFY 2021 – 2025 Local Programming Marks

Ms. Dobbs provided a summary of the marks development process.

7.0 Proposed 2020 Meeting Dates

A motion by Mayor Williams, seconded by Mr. Burke, to approve the proposed 2020 meeting dates, carried.

8.0 Other Business

There was no other business.

9.0 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2019.

11.0 Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. O'Malley, seconded by Mr. Sriver, the meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.