



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

January 30, 2020

Committee Members Present: Grant Davis – CDOT, John Donovan – FHWA, Jesse Elam – CMAP, Leon Rockingham – Council of Mayors, Jeffery Schielke – Council of Mayors (via phone), Jeffrey Sriver – CDOT, Mike Sullivan – IDOT, Eugene Williams – Council of Mayors

Others Present: Holly Bieneman (via phone), Elaine Bottomley, Len Cannata, Emily Daucher, Jackie Forbes, Michael Fricano (via phone), Tim Gustafson, Scott Hennings, Kendra Johnson, Mike Klemens, Daniel Knickelbein, Matthew Pasquini, Kelsey Passi, Dan Persky, Ryan Peterson, Leslie Phemister, Tom Rickert, Chad Riddle (via phone), David Seglin, Troy Simpson, Joe Surdam

Staff Present: Erin Aleman, Claire Bozic, Teri Dixon, Kama Dobbs, Tina Fassett Smith, Doug Ferguson, James Gross, Timi Koyejo, Ben Krochmal, Kathy Lane, Stephanie Levine, Jen Maddux, Amy McEwan, Russell Pietrowiak, Jeff Schnobrich, Simone Weil, Laura Wilkison

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m. by Chairman Elam.

2.0 Agenda Changes

There were no agenda changes or announcements.

3.0 Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2019

A motion by Mayor Rockingham, seconded by Mayor Williams, to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2019 meeting as presented, carried.

4.0 Evaluating the Lessons Learned: Eligible Project Types, Scoring and Program Development

Ms. Dobbs presented a schedule for committee discussion of various lessons learned topics throughout 2020. She then reviewed comments received during the 2019 call for projects regarding eligible project types. She stated that staff recommends consideration

of the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian projects as an eligible project type. Further, staff recommends continuing eligibility for the current transit projects types: bus speed improvements and transit station rehabilitation/reconstruction projects and considering additional project types for future call cycles, pending research by staff and other regional partners to identify project types that can impact ridership, as well as project evaluation methods that would be consistent with existing shared fund scoring methods. Finally, she stated that staff recommends that railroad track improvement projects remain ineligible due to their eligibility for FTA formula funds and potential difficulty evaluating the readiness, transportation impact, and support of planning factors for these projects in a manner that is similar to other Shared Fund project types.

Mr. Davis noted that the \$5 million minimum total cost threshold may weed out smaller bicycle/pedestrian projects from consideration. Chairman Elam noted that a project such as a regional trail probably would meet the threshold. Mayor Rockingham suggested that adding new bicycle/pedestrian facilities or filling major gaps when completing a road project that is not funded through the shared fund could be considered. Ms. Phemister suggested that bicycle/pedestrian grade separations from rail crossings are particularly important, especially near school crossings. Mr. Seglin noted that the corridor/small area safety category could also include treatments for bike/ped. Mr. Simpson asked how the jobs + households scoring method would apply. Ms. Dobbs noted that this is one of the questions that staff will be working to address to develop recommended evaluation criteria for discussion at a future meeting. Chairman Elam noted that current scoring methods do not allow bike projects to be put on a network, like vehicles and transit. Mr. Klemens noted that there is a regional trail connection in Lake County that exceeds the available funding in the TAP-L program, and would be a good candidate for the Shared Fund.

Mr. Elam stated that staff is curious about how to define and evaluate projects that would increase transit ridership. Mr. Donovan added he is interested in partners thoughts. In response to a question from Mr. Davis, Ms. Dobbs noted that impacts to transit are not accounted for in the current scoring methods. Mr. Davis and Mr. Shriver suggested perhaps impacts to transit should be a part of the scoring criteria. In response to a question from Mr. Seglin, Mr. Donovan confirmed that there is some flexibility to fund non-capital transit projects with STP funding, however operations are not eligible for funding. In response to a question by Mr. Donovan, Ms. Dobbs stated that the number of project types is manageable at the current number, and Mr. Elam added that the committee is looking for small adjustments at this stage.

Ms. Dobbs next reported that staff proposes that for the next call for projects cycle, applicants should request scoring in specific categories only, and that additional descriptions of the project types be developed and included in the application booklet as guidance for applicants.

Ms. Dobbs also reported that staff proposes making “inclusion in plans” an eligibility requirement for applying for the shared fund, rather than a scoring criterion of project readiness. She explained that in the 2019 call for projects, this criterion had little impact on total scores, and that only one application of the 71 received would have been deemed ineligible if inclusion in plans was an eligibility criterion.

In response to a question from Mr. Davis, Ms. Dobbs stated that staff proposes that an application be eligible if the project is specified or supported by a planning document. Ms. Phemister expressed concern about low income communities being able to complete plans. Ms. Dobbs noted that the plan does not have to be municipal; it could be a county or implementer – IDOT, service board, etc. – plan. Ms. Dobbs also noted opportunities, such as CMAP’s LTA program and the upcoming call for Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) projects which will allow 100% funding for disadvantaged communities and will emphasize multi-jurisdictional plans. The SPR program would be a good opportunity for a council, for example, to prepare a plan for their entire membership, potentially with no matching funds required. Mr. Burke expressed concern that “state of good repair” projects could potentially be found ineligible with this proposed requirement. Ms. Dobbs noted that this concern would be the same with the current scoring for inclusion in plans, but assured the committee that staff would work with members to develop language to address this concern. Mr. Donovan noted that this committee can take action on any exceptions that arise during a call for projects. Mr. Elam stated that there seems to be no major issues with plan inclusion, but there are small details to be resolved.

5.0 Shared Fund Status Update

Ms. Dobbs reviewed the format of the active and contingency program status reports. She highlighted two projects within the active program with target authorization dates that are close to the obligation deadlines and noted that extension requests may be forthcoming following the next quarterly status updates due in March. She added that these status reports will always be available to the public as part of the committee meeting materials and on the Surface Transportation Program page of the CMAP website.

6.0 FFY 2020 Local Program Status

Mr. Elam reported on the current status of funding to complete FFY 2020 local program projects. Mr. Rickert expressed concern, and suggested that if there are extra shared funds available those should be shifted to the local program. Ms. Dobbs noted that according to the status reports, all shared fund projects programmed in FFY 2020 are currently on track to meet their obligation deadlines, and that the active program management policies allow for extensions and carryover of funds as well as advancing out year or contingency project phases, so the likelihood that any extra funds would become available prior to the end of the FFY is minimal.

7.0 Other Business

There was no other business.

8.0 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2020.

10.0 Adjournment

On a motion by Mayor Rockingham, seconded by Mr. Davis, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.