



MEMORANDUM

**To:** UWP Committee

**From:** Angela Manning-Hardimon  
Deputy Executive Director, Finance and Administration

**Date:** September 1, 2021

**Re:** FY 2023 New UWP Competitive Program Recommendations

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During the planning of the FY2022 budget process, the UWP Committee voted to recess the FY2022 UWP Competitive program to explore opportunities to enhance in light of the declining UWP competitive funding and to reduce the average length of time projects take.

The committee held 4 meetings between February and May 2021 to discuss how to reduce barriers to project starts, strategic funding for projects, measuring project performance, and selection and evaluation criteria. Based on these discussions, CMAP staff have developed the following recommendations for the Committee. The goal is to vote to approve an updated UWP Competitive program process at the September 22, 2021 UWP Committee meeting.

### **Reducing Barriers to Starting Projects**

**Recommendations:** To better align the projects selected with the Committee's goal of reducing the agreements from 5-years to 3-years, it is important to have a complete picture of the project's timeline and scope at the time of submission. Based upon the discussion held at this meeting, key adjustments to the existing program guidance related to starting projects are as follows:

- UWP Competitive proposals submitted should include fully developed and approved scope of work with no material modifications after vendor selection that would impact the project timeline.
- Project proposals should also include the procurement timeline as part of the full proposal project plan. Factoring into the proposal the procurement timeline provides the full project timeline from start to end and is an important consideration in determining if a project can realistically be completed in the approved funding period.
- Agencies can enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of an agreement with CMAP for the purpose of securing a funding commitment to start the procurement process prior to the execution of an IDOT agreement and sub-recipient agreement with CMAP, can indicate this option as part of their competitive proposal submission with their proposed procurement and project timeline.

## Strategic Funding of Projects

**Recommendations:** The UWP Committee discussed, as FHWA noted in our 2018 Certification Review<sup>1</sup>, the region's competitive program has dwindled in size. For the past few years the dollar amount available has supported 2-3 projects in the region. Additionally, a number of high quality projects that were unable to receive funding through the region's program have been funded through IDOT's State Planning and Research (SPR) competitive program, which has a larger pool of funding. Based upon the discussion held at this meeting, key adjustments to the existing program guidance related to the strategic funding of projects are as follows:

- Fund small dollar, short-term projects, under \$100,000, that align with a specific stated regional goals for that fiscal year.
- The UWP committee will work to align the Call for Projects to better leverage and align resources available through IDOT's SPR Call for Projects process and coordinate with IDOT to determine eligibility for projects not selected for the competitive program.
- The program funding will shift from five year agreements to three year agreements.

## Project Performance

**Recommendations:** Ensuring that projects are progressing toward timely completion, meeting timelines and important milestones, expending funds in accordance to spend budgets, and providing for an effective way to monitor and report project performance is critical to the region's ability to implement performance based planning principals, as FHWA noted in our 2018 Certification Review.<sup>1</sup> In addition, it was cited by FHWA during the working meetings that effectively managed projects can result in more federal dollars to the region. In addition, at the March Board meeting, several of the CMAP Board members emphasized the importance of the UWP Competitive program being performance based focused with the approval of the FY2022 UWP.

Based upon the discussion held at this meeting, key adjustments to the existing program guidance related to the project performance are as follows:

- UWP Competitive projects should be monitored quarterly with CMAP staff utilizing the Full Project Plan Approach.
- Full project plans at a minimum should track actual against projected budgets, timeline (plus rebased timelines), and milestones/deliverables.
- Updated plans should be submitted to CMAP staff quarterly for review and to support completion of BOBs reporting.
- If required, quarterly meetings will be conducted to discuss project challenges that maybe impacting timeline, budget or milestones/deliverables, and provide guidance for quarterly BOBs reports.

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<sup>1</sup> "The UPWP Committee regularly revisits how planning funds are evaluated and allocated. As financial resources become more strained it is critical that the committee continue to evaluate and improve these processes while incorporating performance based planning principles." [https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/869185/2018-05-23+Chicago+TMA+Certification+Review+Report\\_Final.pdf/0207ab4c-e36b-1a37-7ffe-1c9a06a573b6](https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/869185/2018-05-23+Chicago+TMA+Certification+Review+Report_Final.pdf/0207ab4c-e36b-1a37-7ffe-1c9a06a573b6)

## Project Selection Criteria and Evaluation Process

**Recommendations:** In light of declining UWP competitive funding, selecting projects that achieve regional objectives and/or align with the State Long-Range Transportation plan, prioritize planning dollars for best and highest use, benefit Disadvantaged/Economically Distressed Communities, and can be implemented expeditiously to benefit the region, are criteria to support a performance based UWP program. In addition, a tool that supports the fair evaluation and scoring of projects based on clearly defined, weighted, and prioritized selection criteria is required.

Based on the discussion held at this meeting, key adjustments to the existing program guidance related to performance selection criteria and evaluation process are as follows:

- Committee utilize a performance evaluation tool similar to CMAP’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process, which awards a range of points to specific evaluation criteria for a total score. Projects are awarded based on total scores (see table below).
- Committee will use the evaluation criteria indicated in the table below to select and award projects.
- Available UWP competitive funding will determine how many projects can be awarded in a fiscal year.
- FHWA advised that projects that should be funded under an agency’s general operations budgets as core MPO activities, can’t be submitted for evaluation under the UWP Competitive program. Under the new competitive programs, these projects can no longer be considered.

Evaluation Criteria	Range of Points	Points	Total
Aligns with ON TO 2050 Priorities	(1-20)		
Project Timeline	(1-10)		
Funding Requirements	(1-5)		
Project Readiness	(1-15)		
Past Project Performance	(1-5)		
Regional Impact	(1-15)		
Completeness of Proposal	(1-5)		
Aligns with the State’s Long Range Transportation Plan	(1-15)		
Benefits Disadvantaged/Economically Distressed Communities	(1-10)		

### Summary of Recommendations:

- UWP Competitive proposals submitted should include fully developed and approved scope of work with no material modifications after vendor selection that would impact the project timeline.

- Project proposals should also include the procurement timeline as part of the full proposal project plan. Factoring into the proposal the procurement timeline provides the full project timeline from start to end and is an important consideration in determining if a project can realistically be completed in the approved funding period.
- Agencies can enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of an agreement with CMAP for the purpose of securing a funding commitment to start the procurement process prior to the execution of an IDOT agreement and sub-recipient agreement with CMAP, can indicate this option as part of their competitive proposal submission with their proposed procurement and project timeline.
- Fund small dollar, short-term projects, under \$100,000, that align with a specific stated regional goals for that fiscal year.
- The UWP committee will work to align the Call for Projects to better leverage and align resources available through IDOT's SPR Call for Projects process and coordinate with IDOT to determine eligibility for projects not selected for the competitive program.
- The program funding will shift from five year agreements to three year agreements.
- UWP Competitive projects should be monitored quarterly with CMAP staff utilizing the Full Project Plan Approach. Full project plans at a minimum should track actual against projected budgets, timeline (plus rebased timelines), and milestones/deliverables.
- Updated plans should be submitted to CMAP staff quarterly for review and to support completion of BOBs reporting.
- If required, quarterly meetings will be conducted to discuss project challenges that maybe impacting timeline, budget or milestones/deliverables, and provide guidance for quarterly BOBs reports.
- Committee utilize a performance evaluation tool similar to CMAP's Transportation Improvement Program(TIP) process, which awards a range of points to specific evaluation criteria for a total score. Projects are awarded based on total scores.
- Committee will use the evaluation criteria indicated in the table above to select and award projects.
- Available UWP competitive funding will determine how many projects can be awarded in a fiscal year.
- FHWA advised that projects that should be funded under an agency's general operations budgets as core MPO activities, can't be submitted for evaluation under the UWP Competitive program. Under the new competitive programs, these projects can no longer be considered.

ACTION: Discussion

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