



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAA) STP Project Selection Committee

Minutes

February 28, 2018

Offices of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAA)
Cook County Conference Room
Suite 800, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois

Committee Members Present: Dan Burke – CDOT, John Donovan – FHWA, Jesse Elam – CMAA, Luann Hamilton – CDOT, Tom Kelso – IDOT, Lorri Newson – RTA, Kevin O'Malley – CDOT, Mayor Leon Rockingham – Council of Mayors, Mayor Jeffery Schielke – Council of Mayors, Chris Snyder – Counties, Mayor Eugene Williams – Council of Mayors

Others Present: Mark Baloga, Jen Becker, Ryan Bigbie, Len Cannata, Karen Darch, Grant Davis, Kristi Delaurentiis, Jackie Forbes, Mike Fricano, Mark Fowler, Emily Karry, Mike Klemens, Kelsey Mulhausen, Leslie Phemister, Brian Pigeon, Tom Rickert, David Seglin, Cody Sheriff, Mike Sullivan, Brent Truxell, Mike Walczak

Staff Present: Mandy Burrell, Anthony Cefali, Kama Dobbs, Doug Ferguson, Elizabeth Irvin, Tom Kotarac, Jen Maddux, Kevin Peralta, Russell Pietrowiak, Todd Schmidt, Jeff Schnobrich, Gordon Smith, Simone Weil

1.0 Call to Order

Mr. Elam called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no agenda changes or announcements.

3.0 Approval of Minutes – January 24, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes as presented, made by Mayor Williams, seconded by Mayor Rockingham, carried.

4.0 Shared Fund Program Structure and Project Eligibility

Ms. Irvin presented an overview of the STP shared fund goals, proposed priority project types, eligibility criteria, and implementation strategies for calls for projects.

Ms. Irvin first discussed programming principles and ON TO 2050 recommendations then presented the staff recommended priority project types. Mr. Snyder commented that local programs of projects, such as central signal systems and intersection improvements throughout a corridor, should be considered for eligibility since individual projects may not meet the proposed minimum project cost threshold, but the system would. He also noted the ability to build on previous work over time is critical for implementing large projects. Mayor Schielke noted that the city of Rochelle, just outside the region, is building a large railroad center that is projected to increase road and rail traffic in the region and CMAP should monitor progress and advocate for more federal funding. Ms. Newson asked how disadvantaged communities will fare with the proposed priority project types. Mayor Williams asked how the shared fund will ensure geographic equity over time. Mr. Elam stated that the list of unfunded projects shows the need for the proposed priority project types in all communities, including those that are disadvantaged. Ms. Irvin stated that all projects will be scored in the same way and the evaluation could include a measure of effects on disadvantaged communities. Mr. O'Malley asked if new roads and bridges would be eligible. Mr. Elam replied that these types of projects could fall under the road expansion category.

Ms. Irvin discussed the definition of regional projects to be considered for funding from the shared fund and explained the staff proposal for a total project cost threshold of \$5 million or a project within three or more jurisdictions. She explained that staff also recommends that council support for projects should be addressed in project ranking criteria, rather than being a requirement to apply for funding. Ms. Newson stated that project applications should have council support. Ms. Hamilton asked whether multi-jurisdictional projects under the proposed minimum cost threshold would be considered. Ms. Irvin answered that, based on the data reviewed, multi-jurisdictional projects are not likely to be under the proposed \$5 million minimum project cost threshold. Mayor Schielke stated that some council funded STP projects languish for a variety of reasons and that eligibility criteria should include a provision that projects are ready. Ms. Irvin stated that active program management is important and will be carefully thought out, noting that other MPOs use project scoring criteria related to a project sponsor's ability to deliver. Mr. Elam stated that the committee should also consider project complexity in evaluations. Mayor Schielke stated that some communities cannot provide the local match to federal funds and the committee should find a way to support them. Mr. Elam stated that leveraging federal funds is a big part of the program and stressed the importance of encouraging participation by all communities. Mayor Rockingham stated that if a project does not fall within the jurisdiction of three communities and it costs more than the local council allotment but

less than the proposed minimum cost threshold, it may never get built. Mr. Elam stated that the committee will need to consider these types of things and, while the proposal addresses many concerns, it may not hit every mark. Ms. Hamilton asked if a council could fund parts of a project and apply to the shared fund for the remaining costs. Ms. Irvin clarified that the \$5 million minimum cost threshold is the total cost of the project. Mr. Snyder asked whether the proposal considers jurisdictional limitations. Mr. Elam replied that was not being considered. Mr. O'Malley asked whether there's a chance the shared fund will become a funding gap filler program. Mr. Elam recognized this as an important question but noted that large projects often have multiple fund sources and unfunded elements and these types of projects should not be precluded.

Mr. Donovan asked whether eight priority project types is too many, which may lead to the program being stretched too thinly. Ms. Irvin discussed options for the program structure and presented the staff proposal of a rolling focus program in which the priority project types rotate over the biannual calls for projects. Mayor Williams stated that scoring among different project types will be a challenge. Noting that the first call will be for a five-year program of projects, Mr. Snyder suggested the first call be open to all project types and then narrow the focus for future calls. Mr. Elam stated that starting a program with wide eligibility could cause difficulties in setting a precedence and narrowing focus in the future. He reminded the committee of the desire to remain focused on the regional goals and programming principles. Ms. Newson stated that the proposed rolling focus allows the program to be evaluated and adjusted moving forward. Mr. Donovan asked how many program cycles worth of notice will be given on the priority project types. Mr. Elam stated that it will be a balance of not going too far out but allowing for certainty in programming. Ms. Irvin added that after each call cycle, the focus area for the fourth cycle should be discussed to ensure that changing needs are addressed over time.

Ms. Irvin discussed the rolling focus program implementation options and staff proposal. Mr. Elam stated that, while it needs to be discussed more, out year priority project types can apply for the current call if they are ready to go. Mr. Donovan cautioned that the CMAQ program typically gets over \$1 billion in applications and he doesn't expect there to be a shortfall of quality projects in the focus area for each call. Mr. O'Malley asked whether the \$80 million every two years will continue. Mr. Elam replied that annual funding is currently constant to simplify the uncertainty of the phase out and account for carryover funds not spent in prior years. Mr. Snyder suggested that the list of priority project types be smaller and let scoring prioritize projects. Mr. Elam replied that narrowing the focus areas was an effort to avoid comparing apples to oranges, but that staff will work on refining project type definitions. Mayor Williams, Mayor Rockingham and Mr. O'Malley agreed that including all project types in the first call for projects is appropriate for a five year program. Ms. Hamilton stated that transit station reconstruction projects should be in the first call since they are large. Mr. Donovan asked whether there was a maximum project cost consideration. Mr. Elam

replied that it wasn't considered since the goal of the shared fund is to get regionally significant projects built, but that the committee could consider it.

Ms. Irvin discussed engineering eligibility and outlined the staff proposal to fund phase 1 engineering for high need communities only and to not program subsequent phases until phase one is complete. Mr. Snyder stated that funding phase one engineering without a guarantee of federal funding for other phases means communities may have to pay back those federal funds. Mayor Williams stated that all communities should be eligible to receive phase one engineering funding, regardless of need. Mr. Elam stated that requiring phase one engineering to be complete prior to programming other phases ensures that funds are available to program for projects ready to be built. Mr. Snyder asked about the proposed federal/local funding split of the program and suggested an incentive, such as the Federal Flexible Match program, for projects that front engineering and right of way funding locally. The committee recognized that this would require federal policy changes and would likely only benefit communities with more available resources. Mr. Donovan stated that phase one engineering is an important part of project development but project readiness is crucial to projects being built. He stated that phase one engineering projects could be considered but would likely not be competitive in a pool of ready to build projects. Mr. Kelso noted that during the most recent call for state-wide TAP projects, only about nine applications out of over 200 received had requested phase one engineering funding.

Ms. Irvin reviewed the next steps for developing the Shared Fund methodology would include discussing project evaluation methods at the committee's meeting in April. Mr. Elam noted that next month, active program management will be discussed.

5.0 Other Business

There was no other business.

6.0 Public Comment

Mr. Elam invited members of the audience to ask questions or provide comments.

Ms. Karry asked if the multi-jurisdictional eligibility criteria was limited to municipalities or if it included IDOT and transit agencies. Members of the committee suggested that the definition of multi-jurisdictional change from "local parties" to "taxing bodies".

Ms. Karry noted that Lake County faces congestion problems but the lower population density doesn't support much transit expansion and stated that road projects which increase capacity and traffic flow are important. She asked whether road projects that add new capacity are considered under the road reconstruction category. Mr. Elam stated that new capacity road projects would be considered in the road expansion category.

Ms. Delaurentiis asked whether transit projects must have council support in order to apply. Mr. Elam stated that the staff recommendation was for council support to be considered in project evaluation. Ms. Delaurentiis noted that project scoring will be important and the scoring criteria involving council support should be well thought out.

Mayor Darch asked that project evaluation consider the different communities served by different types of projects, e.g., grade separations versus transit station reconstructions and suggested that projects on designated strategic regional arterials (SRAs) serve more of the region than just the community they are within.

Mr. Rickert stated that all eight proposed priority project types should be considered in calls for projects. He said for a large part of the region, expansion projects are more important than maintenance projects.

7.0 Next Meeting

The next STP Project Selection Committee meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2018.

8.0 Adjournment

On a motion by Mayor Schielke, seconded by Mayor Williams, the meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.