

ACTION TRANSMITTAL 2014-34

DATE: May 7, 2014
TO: Technical Advisory Board
FROM: Transportation Advisory Committee
PREPARED BY: Heidi Schallberg, Senior Planner (651-602-1721)
SUBJECT: 2017 STP and CMAQ System Management Schedule Recommendations
REQUESTED ACTION: Metropolitan Council requests a recommendation for TAB approval to include the 2017 funds for the STP program and the roadway system management portion of CMAQ in the next full solicitation, which is expected to be released in Fall 2014.
RECOMMENDED MOTION: Recommend approval of the inclusion of 2017 STP and roadway system management CMAQ funds in the next full Regional Solicitation, which is expected to be released in Fall 2014.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: In September 2013, the Funding and Programming Committee was presented with information about 2017 funding allocation options. TAB proceeded with conducting two separate solicitations for 2017, one for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds and one for regionally-significant transit projects with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

At its February 20, 2014, meeting, the Funding and Programming Committee discussed potential options for addressing the anticipated \$7 million of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding and the anticipated \$4 million of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program funding for roadway system management for 2017. In that discussion, the committee concluded the amount of funding was not large enough to justify a special solicitation and that the best way to allocate the funding would be to include it in the next full solicitation. After the design of a new solicitation this summer, the next solicitation is expected to be released in late September or early October.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: TAB develops and issues a Regional Solicitation for federal funding.

STAFF ANALYSIS: By including these 2017 funds in the next Regional Solicitation, TAB should clarify how these funds should be handled in the context of setting modal funding ranges for the next Regional Solicitation when it makes that decision in Summer 2014.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION: At its April 17, 2014, meeting, the Funding and Programming Committee unanimously recommended approval of the inclusion of 2017 STP and roadway system management CMAQ funds in the next full Regional Solicitation with the comment that projects that would be ready to go in 2017 should be identified as part of that solicitation. At its May 7, 2014 meeting, the Technical Advisory

Committee unanimously recommended approval of the inclusion of 2017 STP and roadway system management CMAQ funds in the next Regional Solicitation.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	April 17, 2014
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	May 7, 2014
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	

Metro Transit – Additional Information

On June 4, Metro Transit staff met with TAB members Kenya McKnight, Randy Maluchnik, and Robert Lilligren. The meeting was arranged to discuss the 2016 Chicago Avenue grant (2011 TAB solicitation) reassigned in May to 2017 CMAQ Transit solicitation projects by TAB at Metro Transit's request.

The TAB members identified concerns including shelter quantities, placement, and amenities, particularly in north Minneapolis transit corridors. While Metro Transit is making progress, an additional 16 shelters and 15 replacement shelters are planned for 2014, higher infrastructure station projects such as arterial BRT on Penn Ave and Emerson-Fremont are constrained by current available funding. These stations would include the necessary sidewalk and curb reconstruction to connect power and communications infrastructure for dedicated light, heat, cameras, and technology such as real time "NexTrip" arrival signs.

The group discussed recent service investments on the corridor, with Route 5 (Chicago-Fremont) service growing by 7 percent and Route 19 (Penn Ave) hours growing 15 percent. Staff explained the evolution of the Chicago Avenue service grant. Initially intended as a Chicago-only route enhancement when applied for in 2011, the longer corridor was evaluated in 2013 and found to offer significant benefits.

The Chicago Ave grant covered only additional transit service, which TAB members agreed was not the focus of desired investment at this time. Better stations and shelters were preferable to added bus service. While this requires larger capital project funding to become available, the urgency to develop this infrastructure as an equitable investment is increasing. In addition, TAB members made clear that greater skills in cultural competency and increased focus on equitable investments, not simply striving toward equal investments per Council standards, are desired.

Plans for increased investment in disadvantaged areas, particularly in racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs), have been underway. This focus has increased with related equity commitments sought, focusing on north Minneapolis. As these plans unfold, the arterial BRT program continues with focus in 2014 on Penn Avenue BRT/Community Works. In addition, an arterial BRT "pilot station" at 7th Street and Olson Highway will feature a station with greater technology and passenger comfort infrastructure. Station civil work is anticipated fall 2014 with station installation early in 2015. This station would become part of both the Chicago Avenue and Penn Avenue BRT corridors, and will provide a robust connection to the Green Line Extension (SWLRT) at adjacent Royalston Station.

Though not explicitly stated, all parties seemed to agree that a capital-focused station/shelter investment program was of stronger interest than an attempt to reconstruct the bus and service Chicago Ave grant.
