

**ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2016-16**

**DATE:** January 11, 2016

**TO:** Transportation Advisory Board

**FROM:** Technical Advisory Committee

**PREPARED BY:** Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)  
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**SUBJECT:** Recommend approval of guaranteeing that a minimum of one project in each of the five eligible roadway functional classifications will be funded in the 2016 Regional Solicitation

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That TAB approve the guarantee that a minimum of one project in each of the five eligible roadway functional classifications will be funded in the 2016 Regional Solicitation

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:** Prior to 2014, roadway applications in the Regional Solicitation were divided by roadway functional classifications (Non-freeway Principal Arterial and the four A-minor classifications: Augmentor, Connector, Expander, and Reliever). This allowed same-classification roadways to compete only with each other, resulting in funding for at least one project in each functional classification.

The 2014 Regional Solicitation rearranged roadway project applications into two new categories: Expansion and Reconstruction/Modernization. Within these categories, projects from all classifications competed against each other. Four of the five classifications were funded in the 2014 Regional Solicitation with no A-Minor Connector projects being funded. Five Connector projects applied in the Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization category. Of 21 applications in that category, the five Connector projects ranked 14th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21<sup>st</sup> (the eight highest scoring projects were funded). Some comments received during the 2014 Regional Solicitation survey indicated a desire to revisit the issue to consider whether all parts of the A-Minor system should be funded in each solicitation.

This topic was first addressed via Action Transmittal 2015-51 which was discussed at the December TAB meeting. Action Transmittal 2015-51 offered three options for TAB's consideration as follows:

1. Guarantee that a minimum of one project will be funded in each of the functional classifications (Principal Arterial and the four A-minor classifications: Augmentor, Connector, Expander, and Reliever). For the 2014 Regional Solicitation this would have entailed funding the 14<sup>th</sup>-ranked Roadway Reconstruction/ Modernization project, "leap-frogging" five projects with higher scores.
2. Adjust the scoring of some of the measures so that the top performing project in each functional classification (Principal Arterial and the four A-minor classifications) receives the maximum score in selected measures (e.g., heavy commercial traffic, person throughput, forecast traffic volume, and multimodal elements and connections). For the 2014 Regional Solicitation, this type of scoring would have resulted in one different

Reconstruction/Modernization project being funded and four different Expansion projects being funded. The top A-Minor Connector project would have been much more competitive than before, but still would not have been funded.

3. Make no changes in the solicitation application with TAB making a decision after project applications have been received, scored, and ranked as to whether it will fund a project in each A-Minor classification. This is how functional classifications were addressed in the 2014 Regional Solicitation.

**RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY:** The Regional Solicitation is a key responsibility of the TAB. Through this process, federal funds can be directed to a variety of locally-initiated projects that address transportation needs and help implement regional transportation and development policies. The Regional Solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

**COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION:** At its December 2, 2015, meeting, TAC had discussed Action Transmittal 2015-51 extensively and considered it to be a policy decision. Initially TAC discussed seeking guidance from TAB on policy direction, but ultimately voted for Option 2 and unanimously recommended adjusting some of the measures so that the top performing project in each functional classification receives the maximum score in selected measures.

At its December 16, 2015, meeting, TAB discussed the three options contained in Action Transmittal 2015-51 extensively and determined not to adopt the TAC recommendation for Option 2. Instead TAB returned the Action Transmittal to TAC Funding & Programming and TAC, requesting that the committees provide the technical pros and cons associated with each of the options.

At its December 17, 2015, meeting the Funding & Programming Committee gave general input to help staff develop the pros and cons list shown below. **No formal action was taken, but the Committee reached a consensus that it preferred a slight modification to Option 1. This option would read: "Guarantee that at least one A-Minor Connector will be funded." Connectors were the one functional classification that was not funded in the previous Regional Solicitation.** The Committee stated that Connectors could be funded either through scoring high enough based on its merits or if no Connectors scored above the funding line, then TAB would fund the highest-scoring Connector project to ensure that all parts of the system are funded. The committee recognized that if TAB adopted this recommendation, the recommended changes to the scoring guidance in Action Transmittal 2015-52 for roadway measures 1B, 2A, 2B and 7A would not need to be adopted. Adjustment to the scoring of these measures will only be required if TAB adopts Option 2 under Action Transmittal 2015-51.

The Funding & Programming Committee was generally not in favor of Option 2 due to its potential indirect consequences that affect the ranking and selection of projects in the other A-Minor categories and the fact that it may not result in funding a Connector project in the end. The group did not come up with any additional technical changes to improve Option 2. Option 3 was not preferred because it would be no change from current practice and would likely result in applicants not wanting to invest the resources to submit an application for A-Minor Connectors if there was not a guarantee that at least one would be funded.

### Pros & Cons of the Three Options:

Option 1: Guarantee that a minimum of one project will be funded in each of the functional classifications.

- Pro: A guarantee of funding for one project will be an incentive for Connector applications to be submitted.
- Pro: Supportive of A-Minor Arterial Study recommendations to use A-Minor classification to direct federal funds.
- Pro: This approach is more transparent and objective than either changing the measures in Option 2 or making a decision at the end as with Option 3.
- Con: Skipping over higher ranked projects is inconsistent with the premise of the Regional Solicitation that the highest scoring projects are funded.

Option 2: Adjust the scoring of some of the measures so that the top performing project in each functional classification receives the maximum score in selected measures.

- Pro: Supportive of A-Minor Arterial Study recommendations to use A-Minor classification to direct federal funds.
- Con: This option would have changed the order and selection of five projects in the 2014 Solicitation and still would have not funded a Connector project.
- Con: There is no guarantee that a Connector (or any other functional classification of project) will be selected.
- Con: This approach is less transparent because the policy decision to fund all functional classes is not overt, while this is incorporated into the scoring guidance.

Option 3: Make no changes. TAB can make the funding decision once all projects are scored.

- Pro: No changes are needed in the adopted Regional Solicitation Process.
- Pro: Provides TAB with the greatest flexibility in its decision-making and allows the decision to occur after technical project scoring.
- Con: Without a guarantee of funding, Connector project applications might not be submitted.
- Con: Skipping over higher ranked projects is inconsistent with the premise of the Regional Solicitation that the highest scoring projects are funded.

At the January 6, 2016, TAC meeting, the committee agreed with the pros & cons list provided to them by TAC F&P and did not make any additional changes. In addition, TAC wanted to take formal action on the options to provide a clear recommendation to TAB. With the new information on the effect of utilizing Option 2 in the last solicitation (five different roadway projects would have been funded and no A-Minor Connector project would have been funded), the Committee reversed its previous recommendation in Action Transmittal 2015-51. **Instead, the group unanimously voted for Option 1 and clarified that there are five eligible functional classes (Principal Arterial and the four A-minor classifications: Augmentor, Connector, Expander, and Reliever) that would have at least one project funded.** In addition, a functional classification would only need to be funded at least once (this could be part of either the Roadway Expansion or Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization application categories). Since TAC provided more than the

TAB-requested pros & cons list and took formal action on the options, the former Action Transmittal 2015-51 is now returning to TAB as 2016-16.

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**ROUTING**

<b>TO</b>	<b>ACTION REQUESTED</b>	<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>
TAC Funding & Programming	Review & Recommend	December 17, 2015
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	January 6, 2016
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	