

ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2018-63

DATE: December 12, 2018

TO: Transportation Advisory Board

PREPARED BY: Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)
Steve Peterson, Manager of TAB/TAC Process (651-602-1819)

SUBJECT: 2018 Regional Solicitation Programming: City of St. Paul Unique Project

REQUESTED ACTION: Council staff requests that TAB determine whether to include the City of St. Paul's unique project request in the funding scenario scenarios and, if so, how much funding to award the project and what mode(s) to take the funding from to stay under budget.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: The City of St. Paul, in partnership with HOURCAR, applied for a \$6.76 million federal award in the Transit Expansion category of the 2018 Regional Solicitation. Council staff recommended disqualification of the project from the category, as it was a better fit for the travel demand management (TDM) category. The applicant stated that it did not want to apply in the TDM category because that category carries a \$300,000 federal maximum award. TAB agreed to consider it for a unique project award.

If funded, the project will come at the expense of one or more other projects. The funding scenarios shown in the information item highlight projects that might be removed from the program via an "off the top" approach (i.e., taking funds from multiple modes) to accommodate the \$6.67 million request for this project. However, TAB could provide direction to take from one larger project, several smaller projects, and/or one specific mode. TAB also could provide direction to fund only a portion of the \$6.67 million federal request, to which the applicant has indicated it may be amenable.

The project summary from the original application reads as follows:

This project will create 70 mobility hubs in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Each mobility hub will have 4 Level 2 EVSE chargers for battery electric vehicles (BEVs). A subset of these hubs (up to 20) will also have Level 3 DCFC fast chargers, which will be community-facing and available for use by the public. The mobility hubs will support a fleet of 150 BEVs that will be purchased for this project.

Make-ready construction for the project will be undertaken by Xcel Energy. Make-ready service encompasses all electrical infrastructure up to the charging equipment used to power electric vehicles, including line extensions, transformer upgrades, conduit, cabling, cuts, trenching, and sidewalk restoration.

The City plans to contract with HOURCAR, our partner on the project, to operate the shared mobility fleet. HOURCAR is a St. Paul-based nonprofit carsharing company that currently operates in both St. Paul and Minneapolis, as well as serving as the exclusive carsharing provider for the University of

Minnesota, Macalester College, St Katherine University, and Augsburg University.

We have estimated the length of the project by measuring the shortest driving distance between its farthest points: 500 State Street in St. Paul and 1900 West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis, a total of 15 miles. Because our project is not fixed route, this is a conservative estimate, given that users of the service are able to travel far beyond the service area.

This project is eligible for CMAQ funding under the provisions of the FAST Act and MAP-21. According to federal guidance, Carsharing (#10) is an eligible activity. Portions of the project are also eligible under Alternative Fuels and Vehicles (#14), in particular the charging infrastructure and EVSE. This project meets the CMAQ requirement of reducing mobile source emissions. In addition to reducing VMT by providing flexible, shared-use vehicles that encourage multimodal transit, our project has the additional benefit of using zero emission BEVs. This constitutes a substantial emissions reduction over and above the automated calculation in the proposal.

The automated VMT-based emission reduction does not account for another important benefit: BEVs have no local emissions. Our low-income and non-white populations are disproportionately exposed to higher levels of local air pollution due to proximity to corridors(1). This program will reduce emissions in precisely the neighborhoods where air quality improvements are most needed.

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 problems 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.

The Regional Solicitation includes a provision for “unique projects” with the following language: “In some cases, there are unique projects that are federally eligible, but will not be included in the competitive process because they cannot be easily compared to other similar projects. These project types should request funding directly from TAB.”

STAFF ANALYSIS: A quantitative comparison between this project and projects at the scoring margins that could be eliminated in its favor is not feasible. The decision whether to include this project in the final program must be made by TAB by January at the latest. At this point, TAB should either decide whether to fund the project or give direction as to how many funding scenarios it should be considered moving forward. If the direction is to include the project in scenarios moving forward, TAB should also decide how much federal funding to award it and what mode(s) and project(s) to remove.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	-