

2020 Regional Solicitation Public Comment Report

Transportation Advisory Board
December 18, 2019



Comments Received

- 12 Commenters including 5 cities, 4 counties, 2 transit providers, one advocacy group
- 33 distinct comments
- Comments grouped by Regional Solicitation change topic
- Comments often on both sides of a topic, i.e. in support and opposition

Process Moving Forward

- Today: TAB reviews the TAC recommendations; votes to amend any additional changes into the draft Solicitation; and adopts the final Regional Solicitation as amended

Comments on Modal Funding Ranges and Unique Project Funding (Page 4 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
1	Increase roadway modal category by \$4 million and the bicycle/pedestrian modal category by \$1 million, bringing them back to their traditional proportions.
2	Support the proposed additional regional funding to transit, whether through an increase to the modal funding range of transit projects or by over-programming across all modes.
3	Eliminate the proposed 2.5% set-aside for the Unique Projects category.
4	Supports the creation of the Unique Projects category.
5	Redirect the \$5 million proposed for Unique projects to restore roadway and bike/pedestrian amounts; then backfill Unique projects as additional funds become available.
6	Recommend that highways receive a minimum of 60% of available funding, consistent with historical levels.

- **TAB Request: Any input on modal funding ranges or unique projects set-aside?**
 - **F&P:** Lots of discussion, but no agreed-upon input. Motion made to return to original 2018 modal funding ranges failed on a 7-9 vote.
 - **TAC:** There is adequate flexibility using the 2018 modal funding ranges. Shifting of funding to other modes can wait until TAB knows what projects are submitted and how they score.
 - **TAC:** Maintain unique project funding. If there are no unique projects (besides TBI) selected in 2022, the funding will be allocated within the other Solicitation categories.



Comments on Minimum and Maximum Awards

(Page 5 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
7	The proposed adjustments to the minimum and maximum project awards will have a positive impact.
8	The increase to the \$10 M for Roadway Expansion is inconsistent with the other categories – all categories are experiencing inflation.
9	One or more projects should be eligible for a \$5.5 million max in the multiuse trail application category.
10	Support a \$10 M million maximum for bridge projects.

- TAB Request: Could an option with one large multiuse trail project at \$5.5M be possible from a technical perspective, while keeping the maximum for other projects at \$4M?
 - F&P: This is feasible, but it creates confusion for applicants regarding how to size a project.
 - TAC: Echoed F&P’s comment that having only one \$5.5M award is difficult for applicants to understand how to apply.
 - TAC Action: Recommend a \$5.5M maximum award and expressed consensus that a single maximum amount is preferred.

Comments on Bridge Category Funding Minimum (Page 5 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
11	Support keeping the \$10 million minimum set-aside for the Bridge application category

- F&P: TAB could set a “general target” as opposed to a rigid rule.
- TAC Action: Recommend setting a \$10M minimum “target” for the Bridge Category
 - This is meant to provide some certainty, but also gives TAB more flexibility than currently exists as it is not binding when developing funding options.

Comments on Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Program & New Market Guarantee (Page 6 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
12	The creation of a new category specifically for Arterial Bus Rapid Transit precludes other agencies to compete for these funds. Support a broader interpretation of Bus Rapid Transit, which would allow multiple agencies to compete in this new category.
13	Supports the proposed Arterial BRT category.
14	The proposed \$25 million maximum for Arterial BRT projects and up to \$7 million for an additional BRT project selected through Transit Expansion of Transit Modernization categories leaves little funding for fixed route services.
15	The addition of the Arterial BRT category will reduce funding in other modal categories and limit the ability to improve the A-minor arterial roadway system, which is the primary system used by buses.
16	Support creation of a Transit New Market guarantee.
17	If broader BRT is not feasible, award at least one project in Transit Exp and at least one project in Transit Mod to a STA provider.
18	Support limiting BRT funding to ensure other transit projects can still be funded.

- TAB Request: Should the proposed ABRT program be broadened to include all BRT projects? Could a new scoring system be developed, or should it be worked on and then implemented for the 2022 cycle?
 - F&P: Consider establishing a competitive scoring process in 2022 so all BRT project types can compete for the \$25M maximum award.
 - TAC: Recognized there are many complex trade-offs with this topic and no consensus was reached.



Comment on Long-Term Transit Operations

(Page 6 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
19	Reinstate the requirement that transit applicants must demonstrate financial capacity to operate projects beyond the life of awarded projects.

- TAB Request: Should any technical changes be made to this qualifying requirement? “The applicant must have the capital and operating funds necessary to implement the entire project ~~and commit to continuing the service or facility beyond the initial three-year funding period for operating costs.~~”
 - F&P/TAC Action: Recommend adding text shown in red: “The applicant must have the capital and operating funds necessary to implement the entire project **and certify that they will provide funding, if the service or facility project continues beyond the initial three-year funding period for transit operating funds.**”

Comments on Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities Measures (Page 7 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
20	Revise the new bonus point scoring added to criterion 4A (Deficiencies and Safety). Remove Part 2 scoring and bonus point option.
21	Revise and redistribute the 50 additional points proposed for criterion 2A Potential Usage to other measures. This measure of population and employment within 1-mile does not accurately capture facility usage in rural or rural center communities or for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that serve as the primary connection between communities.
22	Develop a process to update the RBTN map.
23	Give multiuse trails that connect to an existing or future transitway station the full 200 points in the RBTN criteria.

- TAB Request: Should Washington County’s request to add a Tier 1 RBTN trail alignment along the Gold Line be considered? Note: RBTN map is being adopted for use in the Regional Solicitation as a separate Business Item at this meeting.
 - TAC Action: Recommend amending RBTN map to include the Gold Line trail alignment.
 - TAC: Staff should develop a process for updating the RBTN prior to the 2022 Solicitation.

Comments on Roadways and Spot Mobility Categories and Measures (Page 7 of Report)

Comment	Comment Summary
24	The Spot Mobility category will be beneficial in allocating funding to small improvement projects that will provide significant value at lower costs
25	Support new emphasis given to pedestrian safety. However, 41% of scoring is still related to existing congestion and mitigation, which may counteract potential safety improvements.
26	Safety scores based on travel speeds is counter-intuitive and has inverse relationship with crash severity and lacks context sensitivity with new state law allowing cities to set speed limits.
27	Consider the addition of negative points for projects that negatively impact non-motorized travel.
28	Scoring should be based upon new/improved pedestrian facilities, not for upgrading facilities to ADA standards.
29	Measures A and B in the roadway modernization/reconstruction category should both use daily person throughput
30	The measures have a continued focus on congestion, vehicle mobility, capacity expansion and highway investment which is counter to regional policy, climate change and greenhouse gas reduction.
31	There is a new roadway measure for pedestrian safety, however, most of the measures and points continue to emphasize travel time and congestion displacement.

- TAC Action: Recommend these comments for the 2022 Regional Solicitation.

General Comments

Comment	Comment Summary
32	<p>Completed Council-led studies are used in the scoring criteria, but the results of these studies, in particular the maps, are often out-of-date. With no process to update these maps and rankings to reflect changing demographics, potential projects are unable to be considered for funding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add an option to allocate points for projects that meet the intent of the study map or used in the scoring criteria, specifically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Give the at-grade intersection with the highest traffic volumes on Highway 36 the full 80 points from the PAICS and b. Roadways with a heavy commercial volume of 1,000 should receive the full 80 points from the Truck Freight Corridor study. 2. Develop a process to update maps and investment rankings prior to each future regional solicitation, specifically including the RBTN map, Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study rankings, and Truck Freight Corridor Study map
33	Support inclusion of the Bike Barriers Study results into the scoring
34	The 2020 Regional Solicitation process circumvented the role of technical committees.
35	Support the required completion of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans.

- TAB Request: Should/can anything be done to address concerns about outdated information in studies or interest in giving full credit under certain circumstances.
 - F&P: Work towards updating data for future funding cycles.
 - TAC Action: Recommend Council staff to prepare a schedule and process for updating studies.
 - TAC: In the future consider how to be flexible with study-related scores for developing areas.

Bridge Condition Scoring

(Page 3 of Action Transmittal 2019-62)

- TAB requested TAC review whether the scoring selects the “worst” bridges
- TAC requested feedback from technical experts on the best measure for bridge condition
- Meeting took place on 11/26 with bridge technical experts from Saint Paul, MnDOT, and Hennepin County
- TAC Action: Recommend replacing the existing Bridge Sufficiency Rating with the National Bridge Inventory Ratings for Deck, Superstructure, and Substructure as both a qualifying criterion and scoring measure (applicants would be awarded points based on the worst condition of these 3 areas)

National Bridge Inventory Rating Scale (0-9)

		9 8 7 Good	6 5 Fair	4 3 2 1 0 Poor
Bridge	Deck	≥ 7	5 or 6	≤ 4
	Superstructure	≥ 7	5 or 6	≤ 4
	Substructure	≥ 7	5 or 6	≤ 4

Questions

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