

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: December 22, 2015
TO: Technical Advisory Committee
FROM: TAC Funding and Programming
PREPARED BY: Steve Peterson, Planning Analyst (651-602-1819)
Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator (651-602-1717)
SUBJECT: Regional Solicitation Funding by Roadway Functional Classification

BACKGROUND: At its December 16, 2015, meeting, TAB reviewed Action Item 2015-51 (attached), which provided three options for potentially changing the Regional Solicitation to fund a project in each of the A-minor classifications. Options considered included:

1. Guarantee that a minimum of one project will be funded in each of the four A-minor classifications. For the 2014 solicitation this would have entailed funding the 14th-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: Augmentor, Connector, Expander, and Reliever) receives the maximum score in these measures (e.g., heavy commercial traffic, person throughput, forecast traffic volume, and multimodal elements and connections). For the 2014 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.

The TAC recommendation as included in the Action Item recommended Option 2.

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

TAC FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING DISCUSSION: At its December 17, 2015, meeting the Funding & Programming Committee gave general input to help staff develop the pros and cons list shown below. **The committee seemed to reach a consensus that they preferred a slight modification to Option 1. This option would read:**

“Guarantee that at least one A-Minor Connector will be funded.” Connectors was the one functional class that was not funded in the previous Regional Solicitation. The committee stated that it 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 Item 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 Item 2015-51.

The F&P 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 four A-minor 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 ‘best’ 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 5 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 ‘best’ projects are funded.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	12/2/2015
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	12/16/2015

ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2015-51

DATE: December 16, 2015
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
PREPARED BY: Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)
Steve Peterson, Planning Analyst (651-602-1819)
Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator (651-602-1717)
SUBJECT: Regional Solicitation Funding by Roadway Functional Classification
REQUESTED ACTION: Adjust the scoring of some measures to make all A-minor roadway classifications competitive 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 (Principal Arterial and the four A-minor classifications: Augmentor, Connector, Expander, and Reliever). This allowed same-classification roadways to compete with each other, resulting in funding for at least one project in each.

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. Three of the four classifications were funded in the 2014 Regional Solicitation with no 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 21st. The 2014 Regional Solicitation survey results indicated a desire to revisit the issue to consider whether all parts of the A-Minor system should be funded.

Options considered by TAC at its December 2 meeting:

1. Guarantee that a minimum of one project will be funded in each of the four A-minor classifications. For the 2014 solicitation this would have entailed funding the 14th-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: Augmentor, Connector, Expander, and Reliever) receives the maximum score in selected measures (e.g., forecast traffic volume). For the 2014 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.

TAC recommendation: Option 2 – Adjust some of the measures so that the top performing project in each functional classification receives the maximum score in selected measures. TAC felt that Option 1 could lead to discomfort if a project is funded ahead of better-scoring projects and that Option 3 would cause uncertainty among potential applicants regarding whether to submit Connector projects given uncertainty in funding. If TAB selects Option 2, then TAC Funding and Programming at its December 17 meeting and TAC at its January 6 meeting will discuss specific scoring options.

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 discussed this item extensively and did consider it to be a policy decision. Initially TAC discussed seeking guidance from TAB on which way to proceed, but at the end did vote on 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.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	12/2/2015
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	