

**Information Item**

**DATE:** May 12, 2017  
**TO:** TAC Funding and Programming Committee  
**PREPARED BY:** Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)  
**SUBJECT:** 2016 Regional Solicitation Survey Results and Key Questions

Council staff has received the following number of responses to the surveys on the 2016 Regional Solicitation:

- TAB: 12 Replies
- TAC and F&P: 17 Replies
- Scoring Committee Members: 22 Replies
- Applicants: 23 Replies

The attached list of 20 key questions is derivative of the surveys along with feedback obtained at committee meetings. Also attached are survey replies.

## FEEDBACK ON 2016 REGIONAL SOLICITATION

Based on survey responses, scoring committee feedback, and comments heard at the committee meetings, staff has compiled the following key questions to help guide potential changes for the 2018 Regional Solicitation.

### Application Categories:

1. Should interchange projects have their own application category?
2. Should the use of two transit application categories (Transit Expansion and Transit Modernization) be continued?
3. If so, how can more clarity be provided to applicants about what types of projects should be applied for in Transit Expansion versus Transit System Modernization?

### Qualifying Criteria and Rules:

4. Should different project elements on the same transit route be allowed to apply in both transit categories in consecutive Regional Solicitation cycles?
5. Should the \$5.5M maximum federal award in the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities category be reduced?
6. Should applicants be required/allowed to attach a one-page project overview pdf of their project?
7. Should TAB continue to fund at least one project from each of the five-eligible roadway functional classifications?

### Scoring Criteria:

8. Should the point distribution, criteria, and measures for the Roadway System Management application category be revamped to better-reflect the types of projects applying to it and to allow bundling of projects?
9. Should any measures for the Travel Demand Management projects be revamped to better-reflect the types of projects applying in the category?
10. Should more points be given to the freight measures of roadway projects?
11. Should the “infrastructure age” criterion be removed from Roadway Expansion and Roadway System Management since many of these projects include new elements compared to the Roadway Reconstruction application category?
12. What improvements can be made to the way cost effectiveness is measured?

### Scoring and Project Selection Practices:

13. Should the scoring committees have the flexibility to consider an alternative to prorating scores when high-scoring outlier projects diminish the separation given to most projects?
14. Do scoring measures that auto-calculate need to be scored by outside scorers or can it be done by Council staff?
15. Should the methodology to distribute funds within a mode be tied back to priorities in the Transportation Policy Plan?
16. What other ways should regional balance of awarded funds be measured?

### Measures:

17. How should the results of recently completed and ongoing studies (e.g., Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study, Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study, and Bicycle Barriers Study) be incorporated into the scoring?
18. Should the “average distance to other arterials” measure be removed from Roadway Expansion, Roadway Reconstruction, and Roadway System Management due to the difficulty in accurately comparing projects?
19. Should the 70 points for “housing performance score” be reduced?
20. Should the “equity” measure be modified to better-incorporate the potential negative impacts of projects of various populations? If so, how?

## 1: INTERCHANGE PROJECTS

### Should interchange projects have their own application category?

Interchange applications were successful during the 2016 Regional Solicitation. In the Roadway Expansion category, five of the seven projects funded were interchange projects (the other funded projects included one lane expansion and one new underpass).

The success that interchange projects had in the Roadway Expansion category prompted survey respondents to suggest a new application category be made just for interchanges. The below table summarizes the Roadway Expansion category by project type (i.e., interchange vs. non-interchange).

	<b>Funded</b>	<b>Not Funded</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>Application Ranks</b>
Interchange	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	538	1-3, 5, 7, 9-10
Non-Interchange	2 (14%)	12 (86%)	379	4, 6, 8, 11-21

Any changes that come about should allow for incorporation of the Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study into the scoring.

Possible Actions:

- Create a new interchange category, which could include various combinations of project types such as:
  - Include interchanges on existing non-freeway facilities only (allows easy incorporation of the Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study into the scoring).
  - Include new interchanges/new ramps on the existing freeway system and the first bullet point.
  - Include interchange reconstruction projects (currently fits into Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization) and the first two bullet points.
  - Include all grade separation projects (interchanges, overpasses, underpasses).
- Guarantee funding for at least one non-interchange expansion project each funding cycle.
- No action.

## 2: TRANSIT CATEGORIES

### Should the use of two transit application categories (Transit Expansion and Transit Modernization) be continued?

Confusion regarding which proposals fit into which category lead to the question of whether the two transit application categories should still be used. If not, should they be merged or new transit categories be created?

Possible Actions:

- Combine transit categories into one application type.
- Create new transit application categories (e.g., transitway-related projects and non-transitway projects).
- No action.

### **3: TRANSIT EXPANSION VERSUS TRANSIT SYSTEM MODERNIZATION**

#### **How can more clarity be provided to applicants about what types of projects should be applied for in Transit Expansion versus Transit System Modernization?**

Some applicants expressed uncertainty as to whether a transit application fit in the Transit Expansion or Transit System Modernization category. Each application states “If a project has both transit expansion and transit system modernization elements, then the project should apply in the application category that requires the majority of the project costs.” This may provide uncertainty for some projects. Another source of uncertainty could be whether an improvement that indirectly enables expansion (such as bus storage space) is an expansion. The definition of these measures could be adjusted to clear up confusion.

Possible Actions:

- Establish Transit Expansion as any project that expands capacity in the form of more frequent service, expanded routes, more park-and-ride spaces, or new routes.
- The response may depend on the direction given on question #2.

### **4: FUNDING FROM TRANSIT EXPANSION AND SYSTEM MODERNIZATION**

#### **Should different project elements of the same transit route be allowed to apply in both transit categories in consecutive Regional Solicitation cycles?**

Several 2016 applications requested funding in the Transit System Modernization category for upgraded transit stations along arterial bus rapid transit (ABRT) routes that were funded in the Transit Expansion category in 2014 for new bus purchases. Survey feedback questioned whether this should be allowed given other limitations to funding multiple projects in the same corridor and whether you can modernize a facility before the new buses are in use.

Conversely, the purpose of ABRT is to provide incremental improvements on an existing, high-use transit corridor. Both the bus purchases in 2014 and the station upgrades in 2016 had independent utility (i.e., they did not rely on other investments for them to have value).

Possible Actions:

- Write language assuring that a project is not broken into two pieces to be funded in two solicitations.
- Write language stating that modernization funds cannot be spent on yet-to-exist elements.
- Increase the maximum award size in the transit categories.
- No action.

## **5: MAXIMUM AWARD FOR MULTIUSE TRAILS AND BICYCLE FACILITIES**

### **Should the \$5.5M maximum federal award in the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities category be reduced?**

Prior to the 2016 Regional Solicitation, the maximum federal award for the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities category was a topic of much discussion. TAC recommended that the maximum be \$3.5M, but TAB approved keeping the maximum at \$5.5M. The rationale for reducing the maximum was that more projects could be funded and that an award of \$3.5M was high enough to fund most large trail bridge projects when added to the 20% local match. The rationale that led to the eventual retention of the \$5.5M maximum was that past Regional Solicitation history had applicants that requested the full \$5.5M, so that there is a demand for these larger projects.

The result of the 2016 Regional Solicitation was that three projects at \$5M or more federal were funded, all to the same applicant. If the maximum would have been \$3.5M, the extra funds could have been used to fund an additional four trail projects for this high-demand category (only 12 of 39 requests were funded).

Possible Actions:

- Reduce the maximum award for Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities.
- Increase the point value for cost effectiveness so that small projects can better compete with larger projects.
- No action.

## **6: APPLICANT SUMMARIES**

### **Should applicants be required/allowed to attach a one-page project overview pdf of their project?**

An applicant commented in the survey that applicants should be allowed to provide a one-page project overview to present key “attachment” information to scorers, who may not always read all the longer attachments. The short summaries could also be used by TAB to better understand the types of projects submitted.

Along with some survey respondents, staff is interested in reducing the length of applications and suggests consideration of this option with a limit to other attachments that can be included. Some application files end up being several-hundred pages, which becomes cumbersome for scorers. Consideration could also be given to limiting attachments to 8.5” X 11,” as large attachments make the PDF applications difficult to navigate.

A one-pager could serve as an opportunity for an applicant to provide any “highlight” information it would like, including:

- Maps
- Links to plans and large maps.
- Photos or other illustrations.
- Expanded summary or list of attributes.

Possible Actions:

- Allow or require for one-pager.
- Include limits to size and number of attachments.
- No action.

## **7: FUNDING FOR ALL ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS**

### **Should TAB continue to fund at least one project from each of the five-eligible roadway functional classifications?**

In response to concerns that A-minor connectors (two-lane roadways that connect rural town centers) are not competitive in Roadway scoring, TAB established a rule that at least one project from each roadway classification (principal arterials and four A-minor classifications) must be funded. Four of the five functional classifications were funded due to their high scores. However, to fund at least one A-minor connector, 15 higher scoring projects had to be skipped over to get the #28 ranked project out of 33 projects in the Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization application category.

Possible Actions:

- Eliminate requirement to fund all roadway classifications.
- No action.

## **8: ROADWAY SYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

### **Should the point distribution, criteria, and measures for the Roadway System Management application category be revamped to better-reflect the types of projects applying to it and to allow bundling of projects?**

Roadway System Management (RSM) projects differ from other roadway projects in that they tend to be low-cost improvements implemented across several corridors or systemwide. Most of the measures in the RSM application category match those in the other roadway categories, for which they were designed. “Date of Construction” (as discussed in item #11) may not be appropriate. Survey respondents provided feedback that it may be impractical to score emissions and congestion with the Synchro model, as is done for Roadway Expansion and Reconstruction/Modernization. Further, safety may have too many points (200) assigned to it for this application category. Given the differences between RSM projects and traditional roadway projects, it may be worth exploring whether the point values are appropriately distributed, whether scoring methodologies should change, whether any additional criteria or measures should be added, and whether any measures should be deleted. RSM projects strongly align with regional highway investment policy and should continue moving forward.

Additionally, “bundling,” while discouraged in construction categories may be worth encouraging in the RSM category. RSM projects tend to be about “networks” as opposed to “corridors” and the application category should be designed to avoid compromising the effectiveness of projects.

Possible Actions:

- Several actions could occur, including allowing bundling, removing scoring measures, or shifting point values.
- Remove signal retiming projects that can use Synchro to assess congestion reduction from other system management improvements.

## **9: TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT**

**Should any measures for the Travel Demand Management projects be revamped to better-reflect the types of projects applying in the category?**

Travel Demand Management (TDM) projects tend to relate to carpooling, telework strategies, bike sharing, car sharing, and technology meant to limit single-occupancy vehicle travel during peak hours. Projecting the usage of these project types is difficult to do in a fair manner. Unreliable usage numbers in turn impact the reliability of the congestion reduction and air quality measures.

Possible Actions:

- Several actions could occur, including removing scoring measures, and shifting point values.

## **10: FREIGHT**

**Should more points be given to the freight measures on roadway projects?**

Freight is assessed in a few measures in the Regional Solicitation. Applicants are required to obtain a heavy commercial traffic count within the project area and this is worth 50 points (30 in Roadway System Management and 35 in Bridge). The specific freight benefits related to the project (e.g., adding wider shoulders or longer turn lanes) is worth 15 points (10 in Roadway System Management). Finally, existing manufacturing/distribution employment, combined with total jobs, within one mile of the project is worth 30 points. Given the importance of freight in the FAST Act, survey comments suggested that more points should be given to freight than 85 out of 1,100. The results of the Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study could be used as a replacement to some of the freight measures moving forward.

Possible Actions:

- Increase points allocated to freight.
- Incorporate the results of the Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study.
- No action.

## **11: INFRASTRUCTURE AGE**

**Should the “infrastructure age” criterion be removed from Roadway Expansion and Roadway System Management since many of these projects include new elements compared to the Roadway Reconstruction application category?**

Scoring “Infrastructure Age” has been challenging in the Roadway Expansion category, given that some roadway expansion applications are for new roadways. There had been discussion of new roadway projects receiving a score of zero, but committee members found that to be unfair. Perhaps even more difficult is scoring the measure for Roadway System Management projects, which often have brand new infrastructure along with various types of existing infrastructure of various ages.

Staff feels that this measure is not only difficult to score, but not particularly vital to project selection. Staff does believe that “Infrastructure Age” is both practical and vital in the Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization category.

Possible Actions:

- Removal of infrastructure age from Roadway Expansion and/or Roadway System Management.
- Add a “hold harmless” exemption for new roadways in Roadway Expansion like is already part of the Housing Performance score for townships.
- No action.

## **12: COST EFFECTIVENESS**

**What improvements can be made to the way cost effectiveness is measured?**

For 2016, Cost Effectiveness was set apart as its own measure, dividing total score by total project cost. At times, there has been sentiment to use the federal request to determine cost effectiveness.

Advantages of using federal requested amount:

- Encourages leveraging the federal dollars with local funds.
- Reduces variability in the total cost estimates.
- Reduces the incentive to “game” the score by estimating a low total project cost.
- Rewards projects that have significant local contributions.

Disadvantages of using federal requested amount:

- May provide an advantage to larger projects / sponsors who can provide a larger local match.

Further, for the purposes of this measure, noise walls are not counted as part of the cost, in recognition that it’s difficult to predict the presence of noise walls that far in advance. One application included a \$3.9M noise wall, while another’s noise wall made up 40% of the cost.

The Cost Effectiveness measure was impacted in Transit Expansion by a LRT station that had no operating costs and a 70-year useful life. Is there benefit to simplifying transit Cost Effectiveness?

Finally, there could be an opportunity to reward private contributions in this category.

Possible Actions:

- Base cost effectiveness on federal request.
- Exempt privately-contributed funds from the cost for scoring this measure.
- No action.



## **13: OUTLIERS**

### **Should the scoring committees have the flexibility to consider an alternative to prorating scores when high-scoring outlier projects diminish the separation given to most projects?**

Several survey respondents commented that one outlier project greatly impacted some scoring measures. The most notable example was the Ridership measure in Transit System Modernization. This measure was worth 300 points and none of the 12 projects that did not come out on top scored more than 96 points. There are several other examples in which the second-place project scored fewer than half the possible points.

Over the past two Solicitations, scoring committee members have suggested spacing scores at equal intervals or using the second- or third-ranked score as the basis for pro-rating the other scores. While this can spread lower scores out better, it is also an artificial diminishment of a high-performing application's attributes in a given measure.

Outliers were much less prevalent in the 2014 Regional Solicitation, though a few measures were adjusted through strategies discussed above.

#### **Possible Actions:**

1. Continue prorating scores regardless of the existence of outliers.
2. Continue prorating scores, but mute the impact of outliers by basing the proration of the other applications of an average of the top two scores instead of just the top score.
3. Stop prorating scores in certain measures. Staff urges caution before selecting this option because a) many prorated measures do not have significant outliers and b) it is not possible to know, in advance of the application deadline, which measures will have outliers.
4. Keep the prorated measures as written but provide the scoring committees the flexibility to determine whether a different approach is appropriate.

## **14: AUTO-CALCULATED MEASURES**

### **Do scoring measures that auto-calculate need to be scored by outside scorers or can it be done by Council staff?**

There was some survey feedback that many scoring measures are essentially auto-calculated and scoring them perhaps not the best use of a professional expert's time.

Staff agrees that several experts are scoring measures that are subject to little-to-no interpretation. Further, staff would be able to score these with minimal workload impact. Note, however, that newcomers to the scoring process are usually provided easier scoring measures to introduce them to the process.

Some survey commenters also felt that their expertise should have been better-utilized. The demand (i.e., the number of interested potential scorers), particularly in transit and bicycle/pedestrian measures, far exceeds the supply (i.e., the number of scoring measures). Staff tries to place scorers in appropriate/requested categories but it is not possible to please all scorers. A possible alternative would be to have Council staff score some of the auto-calculated measures and have two volunteers team up to score some of the more involved measures.

## **15: FUNDS DISTRIBUTION WITHIN THE MODES**

### **Should the methodology to distribute funds within a mode be tied back to priorities in the Transportation Policy Plan?**

Following the completion of scores, staff provides “starting points” for funding scenarios. The first priority in establishing these starting points is to fall within the TAB-established modal funding ranges. However, less direction exists regarding how to distribute funds within those ranges. In recent Regional Solicitations, staff has started by using the number of applications provided in each category within a mode as an approximation of demand. That is, if one-half of roadway applications are in the Reconstruction/Modernization category, then roughly one half of the roadway funding will be provided to that category in the scenario. This is subject to change based on TAB constraint (e.g., the mandated amount of funding to bridges) or scoring circumstances (e.g., a thin scoring margin in one category).

Feedback on this currently-used approach has been mixed, as some find it to be an arbitrary starting point and suggest that, in theory, Roadway Expansion could see more funding than Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization despite Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) guidance to prioritize reconstruction projects.

Staff does not feel that using number of applications as an approximation of demand is necessarily the ideal way to spread funds within a mode. However, the TPP may not necessarily provide clear guidance on how to distribute funds between modes and within modes. Further, conflicting interpretations of how to adhere to the TPP could be at play. It would be possible to make stronger ties to the TPP including the matching up the application category names to the ones used for these project types in the TPP.

## **16: REGIONAL BALANCE**

### **What other ways should regional balance of awarded funds be measured?**

In theory, the Regional Solicitation funds projects that are of most benefit to the region. However, there has been some sentiment that project awards are not adequately spread throughout the region. While “regional balance” is a secondary lens used by TAB, it is not a part of scoring. However, there is one policy that addresses the issue; the funding of at least one roadway project in each of the five roadway classifications.

Thus far, distribution of regional funds has been discussed in simple terms of total federal dollars vs. county population. Determining the appropriate geographic spread of funds may need to take other elements into consideration.

Possible Actions:

Possible “regional balance” criteria include:

- Population.
- Vehicle-Miles Travelled (VMT).
- Commute patterns.

Possible geographies include:

- Thrive land use classifications.
- Council districts.
- Inside vs. outside of 494/694.
- NE/SE/NW/SW quadrants.

## **17: ONGOING STUDIES**

**How should the results of recently completed and ongoing studies (e.g., Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study, Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study, and Bicycle Barriers Study) be incorporated into the scoring?**

The following studies were recently completed or are in process:

- Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study. Completed.
- Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study. Completed.
- Congestion Management Safety Plan IV. Ongoing.
- Bicycle Barriers Study. Ongoing.
- Park-and-Ride Study. Ongoing.

These studies are meant to inform the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), which informs the Regional Solicitation. Therefore, staff believes it makes sense to consider incorporating elements of these studies into the measures and scoring guidance. However, the timing of study completion could prove challenging.

## **18: SPACING**

**Should the “average distance to other arterials” measure be removed from Roadway Expansion, Roadway Reconstruction, and Roadway System Management due to the difficulty in accurately comparing projects?**

The “average distance to other arterials” measure has proven difficult for both applicants and staff, as a great deal of post-application re-mapping has had to occur during the past two Solicitations. Further, four measures populate the “Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy” criterion, where points are spread very thinly.

Staff also questions the value of measuring the average distance to parallel roadways, particularly for Roadway Reconstruction projects, and given that measure is calculated through oddly-shaped polygons on maps.

Possible Actions:

1. Remove this measure and reallocate the points to the new regional studies that have just been completed or to other measures.
2. No action.

## **19: THE IMPACT OF THE HOUSING PERFORMANCE SCORE**

### **Should the 70 points for “housing performance score” be reduced?**

Concern has been expressed during recent Solicitation creation and survey feedback that housing performance score is not directly related to the project and provides scores that carry no nexus to a proposed project’s value or effectiveness. The score is also inconsistent in its impact on more regional projects that benefit more than the city in which they are located, as discussed when the scoring process was made more complex for interchanges located near city boundaries. Housing, however, has been in the Regional Solicitation since the 1990s.

Possible Actions:

1. Reduce the points for this measure in one or more of the application categories and reallocate the points.
2. No action.

## **20: EQUITY MEASURE: CAPTURING THE TRUE IMPACT**

### **Should the “equity” measure be modified to better-incorporate the potential negative impacts of projects of various populations? If so, how?**

In the survey, concern was expressed that the negative impacts on traditionally disadvantaged communities are difficult for a scorer to capture.

Staff believes that the measure has been valuable in helping shape project applications with an eye toward serving the traditionally under-served populations. However, while applicants have done a good job at highlighting the positive attributes of their projects, a far more difficult task is assuring that negative externalities are captured and reflected in scoring.

Staff research shows that a few MPOs have tried to capture negative impacts of projects. Scoring rubrics also exist that provide additional guidance to scorers.

1. Explore changes to this measure to reflect any potential harm that the project could do on under-served populations.
2. No action.

**SUMMARY OF TAB RESPONSES TO 2016 REGIONAL SOLICITATION SURVEY**

Twelve TAB members replied to the survey; three from cities, three from counties; two state agency representatives; three citizen representatives; and one freight representative.

The survey asked whether respondents have concerns related to any of the following.

- Distribution of funds between the roadways, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian modal categories (4 responses)
- Weighting/distribution of points (3)
- Number and type of sub-categories within the three modal categories (0)
- Geographic distribution of funds (3)
- Criteria/measures used to score applications (3)
- Other (2)

**Themes**

- The process is reflective of regional policy

TAB Responses

**TAB Replies (12 Respondents)**

1. Agency type (check one)

	<b>Responses</b>
State	2
County	3
City	3
Citizen representative	3
Transit representative	0
Freight representative	1
Non-motorized representative	0
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>12</b>

2. Do you have concerns related to any of the following? (Check all that apply)

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>2014 Responses</b>
Distribution of funds between the roadways, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian modal categories	4	2
Weighting/distribution of points	3	3
Number and type of sub-categories within the three modal categories	0	0
Geographic distribution of funds	3	N/A
Criteria/measures used to score applications	3	4
Other (2016 response shown below)		
-1. Safety. 2. Immediate Impact		
-Would like to explore how to determine a base target within modes that is not based just on the # of applications (as a proxy for demand or need)	2	2
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

3. Please provide specific comments to help articulate the concerns alluded to in the above question.

1. -
2. -
3. A Arterial need more consideration.
4. -
5. I think there should be more emphasis on maintaining and modernizing roadways, especially those with high traffic counts and/or significant safety challenges. I do not think any money should go to adding lane miles or otherwise expanding existing roadways, or to building new roadways. More funds should be allocated to transit and bike trails, and less to roadways.
6. Lack of funding in Area F
7. -.
8. Suburban bus routes can't compete with a route on Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. We should have two separate pots of money for the geographic areas. If the route goes towards a transit way, there should be more points awarded.
9. No concerns
10. -
11. I would suggest giving more weight to projects helping solve a demonstrable and recognized safety need and/or those offering immediate improvement of the lives of our citizens.
12. I am not sure how to do it better. Perhaps using the A-Minor need study, historical averages, etc

4. Are there specific changes you would make to the criteria/measures established?

1. -

TAB Responses

- 2. -
- 3. Not separate pots
- 4. -
- 5.
  - o (1) More weigh should be given to projects that serve a lot of residents - i.e. transit and roads with high vehicle counts.
  - o (2) Eliminate awarding points for racial/economic justice/affordable housing to roadway projects. Roads are used by people and businesses from all over the metro area and beyond, not just nearby residents. And many residents of low-income areas don't have vehicles.
- 6. -
- 7. -
- 8. See above answer
- 9. None
- 10. No
- 11. No. I believe Staff - Steve, Elaine and Joe - and participating TAC members do an extraordinary job of vetting, focusing and refining the criteria while simultaneously having an open mind to improve same.
- 12. -

5. How well did the regional solicitation process reflect regional policy?

- 1. -
- 2. -
- 3. Current regional policy puts us at a disadvantage in global competitiveness.
- 4. I believe the process reflected the regional policy properly.
- 5. I am not certain that we have consensus on what regional policy should be, so it is difficult to say whether the regional solicitation process accurately reflected it.
- 6. -
- 7. I believe it well reflected current policy. However, if that policy were to change, then the scoring and the process would need to change as well.
- 8. -
- 9. I think there was a reasonable amount of debate and discussion leading to a good outcome.
- 10. Pretty well. Debate reflects a lack of resources in general.
- 11. Remarkably well especially considering the wide-ranging needs of the applicants vis-a-vis their local projects and the diversity of opinion among a thoughtful and talented TAB membership. This is due principally to the Chair's – assisted by the Vice Chair's – collegial and collaborative conduct of the meetings and the policy input of the Met Council via its representative.
- 12. -

6. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), do you agree with the following?

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Avg	2014 Avg
TAB had adequate time to discuss funding options	0	0	2	5	5	12	4.25	3.13
The funding options provided to TAB by TAC made sense	0	0	1	4	7	12	4.50	3.88

7. How well did the regional solicitation process reflect regional policy? Were there any issues/concerns you raised during the solicitation process that were not addressed? Please provide a brief description of the issue and how the issue was not addressed.

- 1. -
- 2. -

## TAB Responses

3. Need to reduce max project trail funding from 5 million back to 3 or 3.2 million.
  4. -
  5. I commented that TAB hasn't discussed the development of driverless vehicles, and their potential impact on our roadway system, and that this needs to be factored into our roadway funding decision-making. There has been no follow-up on this issue.
  6. -
  7. -
  8. See answer to above questions
  9. No
  10. -
  11. No
  12. I would like to see more time to discuss and decide which 4-5 scenarios are presented to TAC/TAB
8. What one item would you change about the solicitation above all else?
1. Bike/Ped is weighted too high.
  2. -
  3. Separate pot for A Arterials
  4. I am comfortable with the process!
  5. Project scoring should place greater emphasis on projects which will benefit the greatest number of people and vehicles - i.e. roads with high traffic counts and/or major safety challenges, and mass transit.
  6. -
  7. -
  8. The allocation of new routes rather than enhancing routes. You can't enhance a route that doesn't exist. That currently happens.
  9. Get more money in the system!!
  10. -
  11. Again I might suggest that an optional (but public) pre-vote workshop/learning session be held by staff for any TAB member that wants to attend similar to the meetings hosted by Joe, Steve and Katie on the Monday before the monthly TAB meeting. Those meetings enhance understanding of the how, why and what, i.e., content, of the issues with the understanding that policy matters are reserved for the Executive Committee and the entire TAB.
  12. I would livestream both the TAC and TAB meetings to provide more transparency



**SUMMARY OF TAC/F&PC RESPONSES TO 2016 REGIONAL SOLICITATION SURVEY**

Seventeen TAC and Funding & Programming members/alternates replied to the survey; two from cities, six from counties, four from state agencies, and five others.

**Themes**

The following topics were touched on by multiple respondents:

- Find a way to prevent double-dipping (as was done with some BRT projects).
- Documenting, scoring, mitigating negative impacts in the Equity measure.
- Reduce the \$5.5M maximum for trails
- Separate interchanges from other roadway projects
- Differentiating between local and regional projects (and preference toward the latter)
- Prioritizing roadway modernization over expansion, as this is more consistent with the TPP and MnDOT policy.
- Change Equity so that negative impacts are better-addressed.
- Housing performance score is not project-related.
- Proportionate scoring can have drawbacks.

**TAC Replies (17 Respondents)**

1 Member/alternate of (check all that apply)

	<b>Responses</b>
TAC	11
Funding & Programming	13
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>17</b>

2. Agency type (check one)

	<b>Responses</b>
State	4
County	6
City	2
Other	5
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>17</b>

3. Do you have concerns related to any of the following? (Check all that apply)

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>2014 Responses</b>
Weighting/distribution of points	37.5% (6)	33.3% (5)
Number and type of sub-categories within the three modal categories	18.8% (3)	20.0% (3)
Project cost inflation	18.8% (3)	6.7% (1)
Modal distribution of funds	25.0% (4)	26.7% (4)
Geographic distribution of funds	25.0% (4)	N/A
Scoring committee structure	18.8% (3)	6.7% (1)
Scoring criteria	56.3% (9)	26.7% (4)
Qualifying criteria	25.0% (4)	13.3% (2)
Process for determining final program of projects	31.3% (5)	13.3% (2)
Maximum and minimum fund requests	18.8% (3)	20.0% (3)
Restrictions (e.g., project bundling)	25.0% (4)	20.0% (3)
Other (please specify)	0.0% (0)	26.7% (4)
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

4. Please provide specific comments to help articulate the concerns alluded to in the above question.

1. Much time and effort goes into scoring the projects but less time spent on how the final projects are selected from the categories and where the cut off is made and why. Needs more discussion on how that process should occur for example reconstruction vs. expansion. Do we look at funding a % of projects applied for in categories to be consistent. What if we got more expansion applications than modernization. Is the priority then expansion because we had more applications, even if this is different than regional priorities....
2.
  - o We should consider interchanges in a separate category. They appear to have dominated the road categories.
  - o The Transit categories should be combined or there should be a qualifying criteria that you can't come back with a second application for the same project under a different category.
  - o The maximum award for multi use trails and peds should be reduced to 3.5M to fund more projects.
  - o I have a concern that we are funding reconstruction projects on expanders or relievers that have already been expanded and probably used federal funds before. There are many roads that can't compete that have never been rebuilt. We should review the scoring criteria. Maybe we should weight road age much higher?
3. Need to set parameters in advance rather than after results are tallied. Several groups had specific criteria/eligibility issues that should be followed up.

4. Make up transit scoring committee is weighted in favor of Metro Transit Staff.
5. -
6.
  - o The weighting makes little sense. Why are we trying to make such sever winners and losers when sometimes these projects are nominally different?
  - o It is hard for rural projects to compete with urban projects. The proportional distribution of points likely exacerbates this.
  - o The scoring committees are like a bunch of monkeys. You do some calculations that any person can do, talk about them in a group, and that is final. There is no leeway for discussion or disagreement in methodology. The scoring committees are more or less worthless unless you can have some ability to discuss the methodology.
7.
  - o Change system management to remove geographic specific measures so that bundling and larger projects can occur.
  - o Consider removing transit modernization or better defining what projects should be here.
  - o Tie highway application categories to TPP investment categories.
  - o New spot mobility category.
  - o Tie funding to TPP priorities
  - o Do not allow applicants to attach long reports to application
  - o No inflation moving forward and put this into application
  - o In some categories we want to encourage bundling
  - o Prioritize safe routes to school projects-many multiuse trail projects are just recreational trails.
8. Remove roadway rule that only one roadway project can be funded on a corridor every 3.5 miles. Projects must show independent utility, so 3.5 miles not needed. With 10 application categories, the projects will still be spread throughout the region. If there is a high performing corridor, they should be awarded more than one grant and construct them at the same time to limit construction impacts.
9.
  - o 1. To have a truly multi-modal transportation system as our TPP calls for, we should be more funds towards transit and bike/ped projects. Roadways have been receiving funding for decades, while the others have not.
  - o 2. Some of the projects in single categories proved difficult to compare using the scoring methodologies.
  - o 3. Demonstrating that a project is not disproportionately negatively impacting already overburdened communities should be a minimal qualifying criteria. Each project should demonstrate how it does not disproportionately harm communities of color or lower income to qualify and should receive points for bringing targeted benefits to these communities. This would align project selection with stated Thrive MSP2040 goals.
10. There seems to be risk in the amount of expansion projects on the trunk highway system from local agencies, especially in a time when the MnDOT 's investment direction is moving toward system preservation, not mobility and expansion.
- 11.
12. Seems difficult to differentiate projects that have the highest regional benefit with those that are more local in nature based on the current criteria. Expansion projects for new roadways and interchanges continue to have a hard time competing in the roadway expansion category with current roadways that are expanding or converting to an interchange.
13. -
14. -
15. See 5 and 7. Also, please provide on the electronic applications corresponding numbers so we know where we are at when looking at applications.
16. Specific to transit scoring, the following concerns need additional discussion:
  - o 1) how projects with regional benefits are scored in Usage so the value dose the skew local projects
  - o 2) how to better understand/document mitigation efforts if there are negative impacts in the Equity scores

## TAC and F&P Responses

- 3) how to handle repeat applications - specifically related to future BRT services that received 2014 Expansion funds and then applied for 2016 Modernization funds for the same corridor
  - 4) reconsider travel time savings and perhaps use a percentage rather than total
  - 5) reconsider emission benefit score as a percent savings or total cost
- 17.
- I think that project cost inflation should have been provided, given past practice and lack of clarity to applicants about a potential change in past practice.
  - Use of proportionate scoring for certain measures has drawbacks
5. Are there specific changes you would make to the criteria/measures?
1. -
  2.
    - The roadway system management criteria needs to be reviewed. They don't fit the projects submitted.
    - We should review whether the scores have become too automated. Is more verbiage needed in certain areas?
    - The RBTN score for trails is too high.
    - Review usage for trails and sidewalks to see if actual counts could be used.
    - Consider removing criteria that does not measure a transportation need. Housing score for example does not relate to a transportation issue. Communities are required to have an affordable housing goal in comp plans already. At least consider lowering the score. Employment should be scored higher than housing.
    - Use regional traffic model information (TAZs etc) info to measure employment and households served by project.
  3.
    - No double-dipping.
    - Use something like updated TED process re geographic equity (quantitative vs. current anecdotal).
  4. -
  5. No
  6. TAB/Met C staff should go back to the notes of each committee to compile a list of items that were discussed at that time. That is where you will find a specific list of issues.
  7.
    - Make interchange review approval a qualifying criteria
    - Remove "age" for roadway expansion.
    - Remove/change "avg. distance to parallel roadways"
    - Change equity scoring, so that projects identify any negative impacts
    - In risk assessment, add measure that penalizes agencies with a history of project withdrawals
    - Remove/reduce points for housing performance score since other criteria are more important to project selection
    - Incorporate PA Study, Freight Study, and Bike Barriers Study into scoring
  8. -
  9.
    - 1. I described my thoughts on disproportionate impacts/equity above, but if we are not willing to go that far, the equity portion should at least force applicants to address both negative impacts and benefits.
    - 2. For air quality, I think we could flesh out a few other criteria such as environmental justice (which would be related to equity, so possibly redundant), choices for best available technology or energy efficiency, potentially a risk factor that would relate emissions to actual exposures.
    - 3. The transit system modernization application could be improved by reducing qualitative responses and providing clearer guidance on how to calculate VMT reductions.
  10. More clear explanation of where the local match is going to come from.
  11. -
  12. Separate new roadways/interchanges from existing roadways in the expansion category.

TAC and F&P Responses

- 13. –
- 14. –
- 15. Providing the more detailed info on how scorers set up their scoring on the more subjective scoring categories would be helpful.
- 16. –
- 17. I would not use any proportionate scoring of one project to the top project. In both transit project categories, this resulted in certain measures having less weight (and others having more weight) than intended because the top project resulted in other projects having virtually no points. It could raise issues when for future scope changes for the top scoring project that may have resulted in a different score or even scoring order had the scope change been part of the original application. This is a new problem with the 2016 solicitation.

6. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), do you agree with the following?

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Avg</b>	<b>2014 Avg</b>
TAC F&P & TAC had adequate time to discuss funding options	0	0	1	8	7	16	4.38	3.69
The funding options provided to TAC by TAC F&P made sense	0	0	2	10	4	16	4.13	4.00

7. What one item would you change about the solicitation above all else?

- 1. -
- 2. -
- 3. Set the rules of the game before it's underway
- 4. -
- 5. I wonder if there is some way to address geographic equity concerns from Washington County other than subsidizing bad projects. Maybe guidance on selecting better projects? They do have significant population, but it is very spread out other than portions of Woodbury/Stillwater/Cottage Grove. Their concern is legitimate, but straight geographic weighting seems like a bad idea.
- 6. The committees ability to have some leeway with methodology.
- 7.
  - o Continue to simplify and reduce measures
  - o Give points for private sector contribution
  - o Projects must get 50% or more of top scoring project to get funded
- 8. Prioritize roadway system management projects since these are low cost-high benefit projects and most consistent with TPP philosophy.
- 9. #1 would be to revisit why we are funding roadway projects so much more than other modes. It seems we are just doing this because we've always done it that way. I think TAC and F&P had enough time to review and discuss based on the level of review and discussion that is actually requested, since we basically just recommend the same funding allocation strategy as the past solicitation. I know transit is a tough sell in some areas, though, so I'm probably shouting into the wind on this a bit.
- 10. -
- 11. -
- 12. Schedule the regional solicitation and the HSIP solicitation further apart and provide more time for the regional solicitation. The same staff are often completing both, and it is very challenging with other workload/commitments.
- 13. Include in the solicitation the areas within the Wright and Sherburne Counties that are a part of Met Council Planning area. As noted in the Arterial Intersection Conversion Study, there are some areas/corridors in need of project investments that are directly related to the safety and prosperity of the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul Region
- 14. –
- 15. The Maximum in the trails category is way too high at 5.5 million. The average Federal request in 2016 (did the math) was about 2Million. The category maximum should be more in line with this type of request amount. The trails have one of the highest number of applications and could have funded more projects in the region if the maximum was reduced to 2 or 2.5 million.
- 16. –
- 17. -

## **SUMMARY OF SCORING COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSES TO 2016 REGIONAL SOLICITATION SURVEY**

Twenty-two scoring committee members replied to the survey. Nine of 22 respondents are not members/alternates of TAC or either of its subcommittees. At least two participants from each of the 10 application categories responded.

### **Themes**

The following themes resonated across multiple respondents.

- Many scoring measures essentially auto-calculate. Consider not having anyone score those and use their expertise more appropriately. Allow more flexibility for scoring committees to consider an adjustment to the methodology if the result does not make sense.
- Awarding of full points to the top application and distributing points proportionately to the remaining projects creates very low (and not well-separated) scores when there is an outlier project.
- Interchanges were very successful. This could be partly a result of taking the “cost effectiveness” out of individual measures.
- Re-examine the low point value of the new Freight measure.

Scoring Committee Member Responses

**Scoring Committee Member Replies (22 Respondents)**

5. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), do you agree with the following?

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Total
Information from the applications was easy to find and interpret	0.0% (0)	9.1% (2)	9.1% (2)	59.1% (13)	18.2% (4)	4.6% (1)	22
The scoring committee structure was effective	4.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (4)	22.7% (5)	50.0% (11)	4.6% (1)	22
The way to distribute scores within the measure made sense	4.6% (1)	13.7% (3)	18.2% (4)	31.8% (7)	27.3% (6)	4.6% (1)	22
My scoring methodology was consistent with the scoring guidelines	0.0% (0)	4.6% (1)	9.1% (2)	18.2% (3)	63.6% (14)	4.6% (1)	22
The scoring guidelines were useful/understandable	0.0% (0)	9.1% (2)	18.2% (3)	22.7% (5)	40.9% (9)	9.1% (2)	22

6. Please provide any comments you may have for question number 5

1. -
2. None.
3. The scoring for my particular category was more straight forward than last year. Because cost did not factor in and the highest score received 100 points, the scoring methodology was relatively straight forward. I only scored one category for expansion. For consistency, it may be good to have scorers score the same criteria, based on name, in each project category (expansion, modernization, etc.)
4. The question is open ended but I think that is useful for the freight measure D. The scoring is based on the applicants written response to the question and a review of the full project by the scorer. Recommend changing the language "upgrading a non 10-ton road to a 10-ton road" to "upgrading pavement section beyond typical design requirements to accommodate specialty freight requirements." Also add "relieving congested freight pinch points" as an example for getting points.
5. -
6. Met Council was attempting a new scoring strategy for this particular measure (TDM...Innovation). It was a little challenging following the methodology. It seemed to be loosely applied by the various scoring members
7. This year in several scoring categories, there were some worrisome ways to "game" the system, in which atypical projects were put at a disadvantage, or in which routine projects were submitted in a way that seemed less than ethical.
8. -
9. The scoring methodology was clear but rating projects against each other made some pretty extreme winners and losers in a category where all the projects were almost the exact same project. As for the scoring committee, I find it a bit ridiculous that we are asked to score and have no ability to discuss the scores or the methodology as to how someone applied it. What is the point of a committee getting together? There were a few instances in the areas where scoring was subjective that committee members disagreed with how something was scored but there was no way of changing it.
10. -
11. Transit expansion was very easy, but transit modernization was challenging because it was a qualitative measure and the quality of the information provided varied widely.

## Scoring Committee Member Responses

12. I scored ADT and future ADT, and they were pretty straight forward measures.
  13. There's a lot of leeway in scoring, which is nice because you want flexibility so the good projects come through, but it can be difficult to defend how you scored things. It's nice to say because the project met A, B and C. On the other hand, overly defining the scoring can let worse projects get ahead of the better ones. It's a difficult balance.
  14. The 4b load posting measure could be improved in that if a bridge has a separate span in each direction one span may be load posted and one may not be load posted. If this is the case the measure reads that the bridge should get a score of 100. Seems it should get a 50 in this situation? One of the applications met this criteria and was scored a 100.
  15. -
  16. Would have been helpful if the completed applications on line had the same section numbering as the application.
  17. -
  18.
    - o It would be helpful to have the applicant include a map of their count location or a screen shot of the 50-series map. I looked up each 50-series map to verify the AADT.
    - o When I compared the applicant entries to the 50-series map, 4 out of 9 did not match. I brought this up as a question but was told the count doesn't have to be from the 50-series map. The application says "The applicant must identify the location along the project length and provide the current AADT volume from the MnDOT 50-series maps." This inconsistency needs to be fixed for the future.
    - o Transit ridership had a large impact on the score in this category. It limited the impact of the AADT number, which does have importance. I would separate these two scores instead of combining them into throughput.
  19. -
  20. -
  21. The format printed for each application makes it awkward to scroll to my section. Could hyperlinks from a cover page to each section be automatically inserted when the document is generated? Could maps be placed directly after their text sections?
  22. -
7. Are there specific changes you would make to the qualifying criteria/requirements established to determine whether projects are eligible?
1. -
  2. None.
  3. No.
  4. -
  5. Criteria needs to be re-evaluated to fit with project types.
  6. -
  7. No
  8. -
  9. no
  10. -
  11. I believe we should not be funding projects that disproportionately negatively impact communities of color and lower income. I think it would make sense for a project to have to show that it is not disproportionately harming these communities in order to be eligible for consideration.
  12. -
  13. No
  14. -



## Scoring Committee Member Responses

15. -

16.

- "One-Way Commute Trips" needs to be better defined, that a person going to work in the morning and home in the evening produces two one-way trips. Some applicants only counted one in-bound trip.
- The AQ emissions reduction calculation is co-linear with VMT reduction and redundant. A method that takes into account some variation by road type, road speeds, and county should be looked into to improve AQ assessments.

17. My categories were daily person throughput and ADT, it was simply doing the math as described in the application with nothing that was open to interpretation. If the category can be auto-calculated why assign a scorer to it? I did find value being on the committee and involved in discussions of other criteria

18. No.

19. -

20. -

21. -

22. -

8. Were there any issues/concerns you raised during the solicitation process that were not addressed?

Please provide a brief description of the issue and how the issue was not addressed.

1. -

2. None.

3. None.

4. -

5. -

6. -

7. No

8. -

9. Someone needs to go through all the meeting summaries from all the scoring committee meetings and get a list of the issues raised. I don't trust that 1) people will remember everything that they stated 6 months ago and 2) will fill out this survey in any detail. There were multiple issues that were brought up that need to be addressed in either the application process or the scoring.

10. -

11.

- 1. For transit modernization I think we need to try to provide more specific guidance on how to conduct some of the calculations. The assumptions made for VMT reductions varied widely and it was difficult to determine what was reasonable.
- 2. I think we should try to minimize qualitative criteria or provide clearer guidance on what the qualitative response must contain and how the scorer weights the pieces of the response.
- 3. Improvements should be made to the equity score. At the very least it should separate out a response related to mitigating harms from bringing benefits. We need to figure out a way to get applicants really thinking about the potential harms rather than just ignoring them.

12. -

13. No

14. -

15. I did freight. Worth very few points. Since freight is playing a big role in FAST act the points given didn't seem to make it relevant

## Scoring Committee Member Responses

16. No.
17. -
18. Yes, staff responded to my questions.
19. -
20. We need to come up with a better methodology or emissions model that we can use to show better emissions reductions on some of the roadway categories. The emissions model we use now do not provide more credit to some of the roadway categories like reconstruction/modernization, roadway expansion and system management.
21. -
22. -

### 9. What one thing would you change about solicitation scoring above all else?

1. -
2. Prorating some of the scores (safety, delay, infrastructure age, etc.) resulted in a top heavy allocation of points since some of the projects included high crash occurrences, really old roadways, or eliminated intersections which provided a ridiculous amount of benefit, leaving few points on the table for other projects to be eligible for.
3. The types of projects that were funded during this solicitation were heavily weighted towards interchanges, which are typically high-dollar projects. I think the previous solicitation, because cost did play a role in many categories, resulted in more project types being awarded funding which, to me, should be the goal. I do like that, although they are good at improving safety, reducing delay, etc., high-dollar projects such as interchanges were equalized due to cost and other projects were able to compete. It would be good to find a way to have cost be more of a detriment than it was in this solicitation.
4. -
5. -
6. -
7. I would make it a requirement that the applicant choose the \*best\* Crash Modification Factor (CMF) for their safety portion and provide a brief justification why they chose that particular CMF. This should help to reduce gamesmanship, and will allow the scorer to dock points if a questionable CMF is used. For the delay reduction, may need to specify that the model needs to reflect a typical daily peak hour, rather than a peak event such as day-after-thanksgiving shopping or some other atypical event.
8. -
9. Committees need to be provided with flexibility when the methodology doesn't make any sense. We are professionals and were asked to be on these committees because we are experts in our fields. We should be able to have some flexibility when a methodology doesn't add up when done in practice.
10. Either take the Connectors out into its own category or let the chips fall where they may in the present category they are in. Don't artificially fund 1 in its present category.
11. The way we are handling equity.
12. -
13. Nothing major stands out.
14. -
15. Seems like a huge effort between applications, scoring and time spend deliberating on scores and scenarios
16. Having to award full points to top scoring application.
17. Assign people with specific expertise to relevant measures.
18. Remedy inconsistency in AADT instructions vs. score. Look at how throughput is scored and consider separating transit and AADT into two scores within Usage score.
19. -

## Scoring Committee Member Responses

20. –

21. I would like to develop better examples/materials for people to look at when filling out the equity criteria parts.

22. I would not use any proportionate scoring of one project to the top project. In both transit project categories, this resulted in certain measures having less weight (and others having more weight) than intended because the top project resulted in other projects having virtually no points. It could raise issues when for future scope changes for the top scoring project that may have resulted in a different score or even scoring order had the scope change been part of the original application. This is a new problem with the 2016 solicitation. For transit usage, scoring levels - high, medium, low, etc - might be a better approach.

10. Please provide any comments you have on your application scoring experience. Please highlight specific issues that can be addressed in the Regional Solicitation update. Examples could include imbalances in score distribution, criteria that are too rigid or lacking in specificity, lack of clarity in the scoring guidelines, and methodology.

1. -

2. Since I am responsible for filling out applications for both the Regional Solicitation and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), it is taxing on me to go through that 3 month period.

3. None, other than what was provided.

4. Perhaps looking how other states may score or weigh specific freight elements. Maybe this is a question for the freight industry on what infrastructure is lacking in the transportation system currently that needs attention as we move forward.

5. -

6. Scoring was adjusted to help new projects. I generally tend to favor established, successful programs. hard to rectify the differing philosophies

7. -

8. Overall I feel that the scoring and the scoring structure was very fair and thorough, and seemed to be an improvement over the previous round.

9. -

10. If you want freight to matter, it needs more points allocated to it.

11.

- 1. I think emissions reductions for transit expansion was very clear and straightforward as long as the VMT calculation is reasonable, so we should make sure we're providing clear and specific guidance on how VMT should be calculated.
- 2. For transit system modernization I would us to develop better guidelines on how to calculate an emissions reduction for these types of projects. The quality of responses was much to variable.
- 3. Again, we need to reconsider how the equity question is handled. First, I don't think we should be funding projects that have disproportionate negative impacts on communities of color or lower income and that should be a qualifying measure. However, if we don't go that far, we should at least work on ways to get applicants to call out potential harms and tell us how they plan to mitigate those harms. Then talk about benefits specifically targeted at these communities. Just saying that a project is good and benefits everyone, including disadvantaged communities shouldn't be enough (I'm not necessarily saying anyone responded like that this time, but just putting a point on it.
- 4. I would like us to think too about other ways we might consider emissions. Perhaps considering technologies (preferring electric to diesel, for instance) or efforts to include environmentally friendly/energy efficiency measures into infrastructure (EV charging at

## Scoring Committee Member Responses

parking ramps, for instance), or exposures are some ideas I have, if there were a desire to explore this further.

- 5. Thanks for all the work staff puts into constantly improving and thinking critically about this process!
12. -
  13. :)
  14. -
  15. -
  16. See answers to questions 7 and 9.
  17. I was assigned to the roadway management committee, my specialization is in transit planning and skills would of been better utilized on one of the other committees
  18. See above about throughput score. Transit score is important, but it limited the value in the AADT number in the scoring.
  19. -
  20. Some of the measures are well represented by using qualitative approach rather than quantitative
  21. I think the logic behind the scoring process, the various steps and the participation could be explored with and more clearly explained to outsiders and new members. I suspect that some trust might be lost because of lack of understanding (an all sides). Thank you for all your work on this!
  22. The scoring criteria for usage in both modernization and expansion needs to be revised. On modernization, using existing route-level ridership for all bus routes using the project overinflates ridership. On expansion, the scorer had the discretion to deduct 50% if no methodology or a faulty methodology was provided, but still had to use the ridership provided by the applicant as the base - even with 50% deduction, some projects scored high on this measure because the ridership provided was so high.

**SUMMARY OF APPLICANT RESPONSES TO 2016 REGIONAL SOLICITATION SURVEY**

Twenty-three applicants replied to the survey; four from state agencies, nine from cities, six from counties, three transit representatives, and one nonprofit representative. At least one respondent completed an application in each of the ten categories.

**Themes**

The following themes resonated across multiple respondents.

- Attachments were difficult for some.
- Reconsider proportionate scoring
- Applicant selection of transit routes was time-consuming and inconsistent...automate, if possible.
- Mapping function was difficult for some
- Interchange projects dominated the Roadway Expansion scoring.

## Applicant Responses

### Applicant Responses (23 Respondents)

#### 1. Agency type (check one)

	Responses
State	4
City	9
County	6
Other	4
-Metro Transit	
-Transit	
-Nonprofit	
-Metro Transit	
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>23</b>

#### 2. Category you submitted in (Check all that apply)

	Responses
Roadway Expansion	21.7% (5)
Roadway Reconstruction & Modernization	13.0% (3)
Roadway System Management	17.4% (4)
Bridges	8.7% (2)
Transit Expansion	13.0% (3)
Transit System Modernization	13.0% (3)
Travel Demand Management	17.4% (4)
Multi-use Trails & Bikeways	21.7% (5)
Pedestrian Facilities	13.0% (3)
Safe Routes to Schools	4.4% (1)
Total Respondents:	23

#### 3. Are there specific features of the online application that should be changed?

1. The mapping tool was very frustrating and difficult to use. The application kept crashing and I had to start over many times. I wasn't able to include the full project and had to include many footnotes about the incomplete maps.
2. Some of the text boxes do not have adequate room to describe the project
3. I found the mapping function difficult.
4. –
5. No
6. No, the process seemed streamlined.
7. The online application worked well, but was not a good fit for system-wide projects. There was no clear guidance on how to submit a system-wide project with respect to location-specific criteria like Measure A (Average Distance to Parallel Roadways)
8. Worked great for me.
9. The application process, while an improvement over the long paper process used in solicitations in the past, is quite clunky. The online mapping tool is difficult to use. If you make a mistake, there is no option to erase or undo only a portion of what you've done, you have to undo all the work you've done so far. Even though the mapping component is online, the applications still require applicants to manually enter the results of the mapping, introducing the possibility of user error - this was particularly tedious for the connecting transit routes portion as the projects I submitted connected to a lot of routes. Additionally, there are discrepancies between the values the mapping tool provides and the values that are requested in the application. For example, the post-secondary enrollment values are for one-mile on the map but 1/2 mile is asked for on the application. In general, information about the application requirements is difficult to find on the

## Applicant Responses

website and often incomplete, contradictory, or wrong. For example, the sample application forms (in MS word format) available on the website, do not correspond directly with the electronic applications.

10. If committing to relying on information produced within the autogenerated maps for inclusion within the application itself, ensure that information is consistently identified throughout the application process. In particular, I recall that the transit connection maps didn't consistently identify which transit routes and/or transitways were relevant to the proposed project. I don't believe this was fixed until the final day of the application process, which likely affected the scoring of applications submitted prior to the final day of the application period. Applicants who decided not to ask questions about these inconsistencies to the Regional Solicitation team likely put themselves at a disadvantage. I'm not 100% convinced the scores included within all applications are accurate considering the substantial inconsistencies produced within the autogenerated maps. Attempted standardization of information produced is good, but I think the systems in place (in particular the map generation interface) could perform better and with more reliability.
11. Whatever maps are required should be attached to application online, rather than requiring download and upload. Cost estimates should be configurable. Emissions fields asked for kg of emissions per vehicle, but would not let data be entered beyond the thousandths' place (one vehicle does not emit that much).
12. Some of the mapping tools didn't work very well.
13. There were some glitches we encountered where we lost a day's worth of data we had typed in. It was probably related to not saving the progress correctly, but the fact that there is a chance we can lose data at all is unsettling. Perhaps some warning statements within the file could help avoid these unfortunate situations or an "autosave" functionality would lessen the chance of losing data.
14. No changes recommended
15.
  - 1. The tools to define project geography are limiting and clunky to use in the mapping interface.
  - 2. Automate the process of selecting routes for transit connections. Applicants currently have to individually select each route, which is very time-consuming for projects that have multiple connecting routes and is more prone to error in selecting the wrong route.
16. -
17. No
18. No. It was pretty straightforward.
19. Adding the upload of the MOE pdf became problematic when it was scored. Also, the B/C spreadsheet (which was also embedded within the application). My suggestion would be to have these included in the "Other Attachment" section so they can be scored.
20. It would be helpful to add the numbers of the questions to the online and final versions of the application. Eliminate need to upload Synchro report twice under 5A and 5B.
21. -
22. -
23. -

4. Are there changes you would make in the application training (overall regional solicitation information, online application, mapping, MnDOT State Aid information)?

1. No. Special appreciation to Elaine for being so helpful.
2. -
3. No.
4. -
5. No.

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6. No.
7. Needs to better accommodate system-wide projects or provide clearer guidance on how to submit them.
8. None. Ample information for those who look for it.
9. See above. Overall, information seems to be scattered throughout the website rather than in one central location. A thorough QA/QC review seems like it could be helpful as well.
10. Ensure that the sample applications you provide in Microsoft Word/.DOC format are completely identical to the online interface where the information is actually inputted by the applicant.
11. -
12. No, it was fine.
13. We would like the opportunity to have more control over how our maps and graphics are presented. Attachments are not guaranteed to be reviewed so we cannot be assured that we can convey the key information via an attachment. We would suggest that each project is allowed a "one pager" summary of project information that reviewers will commit to reviewing. This limits the burden on reviewers and allows the applicants to present the key points in more ways than just text. This could actually help the reviewers better understand the project.
14. No changes recommended
15. N/A
16. -
17. -
18. -
19. -
20. Training was good and helpful.
21. -
22. Did not attend training this year, but found the application process fairly easy.
23. -

5. Are there specific changes you would make to the qualifying criteria/requirements established to determine whether projects are eligible?

1. No.
2. More points for proactive projects
3. No
4. -
5. No
6. No
7. No
8. -
9. Qualifying criteria make sense.
10. N/A
11. -
12. No, seemed reasonable.
13. We were able to meet eligibility requirements for our project and do not propose any changes. Some of the agency letter/agreement requirements were a bit cumbersome, but we managed to obtain everything we needed.
14. Consideration to include B minor arterials.
15.
  - o 1. Buffers for connections to employment, etc. Measure A: project location relative to jobs, manufacturing, and education makes applicant choose between 1/4 and 1/2 mile buffers for various responses. It would be easier to require one or the other in the future. It was unclear how choosing one buffer or the other would affect scoring in this section.



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- 2. Percent reduction in travel time. It's practically impossible for bus stop improvements to actually reduce passenger travel time. Many of the improvements such as better lighting, adding heat to shelters, or improving transit information does not definitively lead to a faster travel time for passengers. This measure seems more appropriate for transit expansion than modernization.
16. -
  17. Continue to grade projects based on population density, poverty and economic equity rather than balancing geographic considerations alone.
  18. -
  19. -
  20. Not at this time.
  21. -
  22. The scoring as it is now greatly favors intersection to interchange conversions over linear projects, as the awarded projects show. There should be discussion as to whether this is the desired bias of the scoring. The crash and congestion benefits of these conversions are clear, but they amount to spot improvements, rather than corridor improvements. I think this is an area for discussion.
  23. Yes, scoring projects that have specific service elements are afforded better defined scoring opportunities than those that support infrastructure.
6. There are a number of submittals/attachments required with applications. Were any of these difficult to produce or obtain?
1. Only as they related to mapping.
  2. -
  3. Maps
  4. The maps were difficult to produce. For two straight years it was difficult to render a simple PDF from the online program.
  5. No
  6. No
  7. Generally no, except that they did not mesh well with system-wide projects which occur at multiple locations.
  8. -
  9. No.
  10. See comment regarding #3 above. Autogenerated maps produced different results depending on what day an applicant created them.
  11. The mapping process makes little sense for non-linear projects.
  12. Yes, some of the maps created by tools within the application weren't very easy to read.
  13. The attachments were not difficult to produce but they were very limiting. We could not accurately convey the benefits of our project via the mapping within the system. Our project, for example, shows as a point on the map connecting to an existing Northstar transit station and park and ride. The mapping within the system simply pulled in a small radius around that location. We didn't feel this methodology accurately conveyed the benefits of our project as the transit stop and park and ride itself and the wider draw of those facilities were not given greater weight and a broader reach in the mapping system.
  14. No
  15. Maps. There was little guidance on defining project geography. For instance, the Heywood Garage project got to use the entirety of the routes that would run out of the garage, whereas certain bus stop improvement projects along corridors only used the geography of the specific corridor, even though customers theoretically could board on at the improved stop and travel well outside of the corridor being improved.
  16. -

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17. -
18. -
19. They weren't difficult to produce or obtain - however see my suggestion in #3 above.
20. There was a lot of confusion about what was required to submit for the safety/crash information related to the B/C. Clarify if CMF's need to be attached versus listed in response. Also, area to enter CMF used in online application would be nice if could enter multiple factors in this box or other text.
21. -
22. No
23. -

7. Was there any confusion or difficulty with any prioritizing criteria (i.e., scoring measures)? Please highlight specific issues that can be addressed.

1. (TSM) Some of the questions were an awkward fit for the project.
2. -
3. No
4. -
5. No
6. No
7. -
8. -
9. Using only "new" rides for transit expansion projects discounts the benefit an expansion of an existing route will have on current rides.
10. Proportional scoring should be reconsidered.
11. (See Letter on final page)
12. No
13. Measure 5 and the "Includes facilities/improvements for other modes" section was quite confusing as we received zero points out of 25 when we are connecting directly to a transit station and park and ride. The fact that we received no points was quite confusing. Based on the comments, it seems as though the reviewer did not believe peds would be benefitted as greatly as bicyclists would, but that does not seem like a good enough reason to provide zero points. This category could use some more definition for applicants and reviewers around scoring criteria.
14. For the roadway modernization, it would be good to specify that applicants need to use average weekday peak hour when calculating the delay and congestion.
15. 1. Percent reduction in operating and maintenance costs: Modernization projects may not always lead to lower operating and maintenance costs. Modernization projects are meant to improve existing infrastructure, which often leads to changes that will increase operating and maintenance costs. This is due to changing expectations of what improvements need to be included at bus stops (e.g., heat, light) and increased expectations regarding daily maintenance to keep busy bus stops clean. As such, it seems odd that the current scoring for this measure penalizes projects that "modernize" bus stops that need an upgrade to meet current customer demands.
16. -
17. -
18. -
19. -
20. Multimodal Elements criterion needs to be clear about how it will be scored. Since scorers develop a methodology for assigning points to the narrative, this needs to be decided on ahead of time and made available to applicants.
21. -
22. -
23. -

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8. Was the scoring guidance clear and helpful to your understanding the criteria?
1. Yes.
  2. -
  3. Yes
  4. -
  5. Yes-
  6. Yes
  7. -
  8. -
  9. -
  10. (TE/TM) Yes, but it also allowed the applicant to potentially write a response taking advantage of score methodology weakness. For example, the "Usage" question in Transit Expansion allows for 50% point deduction if no methodology is provided. Raw "Usage" numbers provided then have no accountability, and the penalty for having no documented methodology is arguably not large enough if applicants provide unchecked new annual ridership increases.
  11. -
  12. Yes
  13. (Trails) The guidance was helpful to have but does not always directly correlate to the way the reviewers scored, especially for Measure 5.
  14. Yes
  15. For the most part, the scoring guidance was clear except as noted in previous responses.
  16. -
  17. Yes
  18. -
  19. -
  20. Yes
  21. -
  22. -
  23. Not particularly.
9. What one thing would you change about the solicitation process, criteria, or scoring above all else?
1. The mapping process.
  2. Let interchange projects have their own category, they have a great regional value but other projects seem to fall short when competing with them.
  3. (TDM) I think there should be emphasis on reducing cars in areas in addition to mode shift.
  4. (Travel Demand Management)
    - o 1) The focus on vehicle miles traveled reduction only is extraordinarily silly. Like - from the scoring methodology for question #2, usage: "The applicant with the most users will receive the full points. Remaining projects will receive a proportional share of the full points. For example, if the top project had 90 users and the application being scored had 50, this applicant would receive  $(50/90)*100$  points or 56 points. Fifty percent of points can be deducted if the applicant provides no methodology. If a methodology is provided, then points should only be deducted if the estimation methodology is not sound." Following that to the letter - I could just write "one million" for VMT reduction and I would only lose half the points for not providing sound justification. That is profoundly silly. A bike advocate friend who'd also seen the scores released said something like "hey, with all the VMT reductions claimed, this \$1.2 million will pretty much end congestion in the twin cities."
    - o 2) There needs to be a stronger focus on equity. I know there are 150 points allocated to the equity question. But look at the scores - pretty much every applicant got at least 100 on that question. Whereas every other question you had people get less than 20% of the

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points. Is that because all the applicants are doing so, so well in the equity category? In MN - one of the most inequitable states in the nation - that seems like a pretty difficult position/implication to defend. I think the scorers need to have clearer understandings of equity to incorporate into their scoring. Among those needs to be - how does the racial/demographic makeup of the staff contribute to the equity in the project? It doesn't seem logical that a pretty much all-white organization should get 140 or 150 out of 150 on a question about equity.

5. (TE) Some ridership projection numbers seemed unrealistic. Perhaps a more rigorous validation of this is prudent since ridership drives much of the scoring criteria.
6. I would like to see how the rankings of projects were determined, so I can understand how/why the city project rank occurred.
7. (Roadway System Management) seems to be an easy category to game, especially in the "Safety" category. Better signal timing and incident management can indeed improve safety, but there are no good CMF's to point to. But by adding things like pedestrian countdown timers (a field construction item, rather than a system management item), it becomes possible to claim a higher safety score even though such improvements are not really what this category is supposed to be about.
8. -
9. -
10. (TE/TM) In general, establish better standardization/objective scoring. I appreciate good attempts at doing this within the last two Regional Solicitation cycles, but there are areas of potential improvement. Inconsistent autogenerated maps and wide flexibility in documenting various methodologies (like the "Usage" parameter) are a few examples. In addition, information provided via informal questions and answers with Regional Solicitation staff about how to answer specific questions for a specific application under a specific set of circumstances is hugely beneficial. Applicants who do not call with questions (for whatever reason) could be at a significant disadvantage.
11. Scoring criteria should reward all elements of projects that are eligible for funding.
12. Online application was down close to due date, which was stressful. Consider having different due dates for different categories to reduce computer traffic.
13. We would recommend that each applicant is allowed to create a one-page "Project Information Sheet" or "Project Overview" (perhaps an 11 x 17 or both sides of a 8 ½ x 11) to convey whatever information the applicant deems to be most important and descriptive about that project with the commitment that the reviewers will look at this one pager for each project as they work through the scoring. We understand that we can attach whatever supplemental information we want, but there is not a guarantee that it is reviewed. With a one-page info sheet, we'd have the opportunity to present our project as more than just a written description and the reviewers will not have a significant additional burden of review material. We think this could assist the reviewers in getting a quick visual snapshot of the project.
14. Longer period of time to complete applications, they are very time intensive. Also, more time between this solicitation and HSIP would be better.
15. Project scoring should not be dependent on other projects. In the transit modernization category, the top scoring project drastically changed the scoring for all other subsequent projects. Consider a tiered approach with high, medium, and low ratings for each measure. Points could be assigned based on rating for each measure in lieu of changing all scores based on the top performing applicant.
16. -
17. -
18. -
19. -
20. Clear outline of how Multimodal Elements category will be scored.

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21. Max project size/funding should be reduced to \$2 million (NOTE: applicant completed Multiuse Trails/Bikeways application), concerned that the scoring methodology strongly favors inner beltway projects. Reduces geographical distribution of projects.
22. –
23. Economic analysis included with some submissions was significantly flawed.

## Applicant Responses

May 2, 2016

Elaine Koutsoukos  
Transportation Advisory Board  
390 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
elaine.koutsoukos@metc.state.mn.us

Dear Ms. Koutsoukos,

The City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works (SPPW) requests that the TAC Funding & Programming Committee re-evaluate criterion scores 5A and 5B for the Arterial Corridor Management (Snelling and Lexington) application submitted for funding in the recent Metropolitan Council Regional Solicitation for Federal Funding. City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works also requests a summary of the methodology used to score the criterion in question.

Twenty percent of the available points in the Roadway System Management category are awarded for congestion mitigation and air quality improvement, and the projects are scored based on simple Synchro modeling. In the "Introduction to the Regional Solicitation for Transportation Projects" dated 5/18/2016, there are nine examples of projects that would qualify for funding in the Roadway System Management category:

- Traffic signal retiming projects
- Integrated corridor signal coordination
- Traffic signal control system upgrades
- New or replacement traffic management centers
- New or replacement fiber optic cables used for traffic control, etc.
- New or replacement closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras
- New or replacement variable message signs and other traveler information improvements
- New or replacement detectors
- Incident management coordination

Of these nine examples, only three (signal retiming, signal coordination, new detectors) could impact the results of Synchro modeling. Additionally, in order to demonstrate the improvements to be gained from a signal retiming project, applicants must perform much of the work intended to be included in the project, including data collection, data analysis, and traffic modeling.

The project submitted by SPPW includes several of the examples above that cannot be captured in a Synchro model:

- Control upgrades
- Fiber optic cables
- CCTV cameras
- Variable message signs

Additionally, the majority of the anticipated improvements to traffic flow provided by the project are centered on the proposed adaptive traffic signal timing. Adaptive traffic signal timing will significantly mitigate congestion, and improve air quality along these corridors by constantly monitoring traffic demand and adjusting signal operations in real time. Synchro does not have the ability to model adaptive traffic signal timing. SPPW included a detailed traffic analysis for nine intersections along two major arterials within the City of St. Paul in an attempt to approximate the impact of adaptive traffic signal timing in Synchro for its application. This was a conservative analysis using fifteen minute intervals, as adaptive signal control can adjust more frequently. This analysis showed a significant reduction in delay that can be expected with the project that we believe merits more favorable scoring.

In addition to requesting this re-evaluation, SPPW also requests that future applications not rely solely on Synchro modeling for determining the anticipated benefits to congestion for Roadway System Management projects, as the constraints of the program do not capture benefits for many projects that the Metropolitan Council would otherwise deem appropriate for the category, and require a significant portion of the proposed work to be completed during the application process.

The City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works thanks you for your effort in evaluating the many applications submitted, and looks forward to your response. Please contact me if you have any questions about this request, or the analysis provided in the application.

Sincerely,

Michael Seth Klobucar, P.E.  
Traffic Signal Operations Engineer  
City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works  
800 City Hall Annex 25 4th Street West  
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