

Regional Solicitation Before & After Study Phase II

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**BOLTON
& MENK**



**METROPOLITAN
COUNCIL**

Project Team

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Study Objectives

- **Task 1: Refine the approach for monitoring “after” conditions of projects that have received federal transportation funds.**
- **Task 2 - 6: Research Ways to Streamline the Application Process.**
 - Focus Groups
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Usage Measure
 - Projects Not Funded by Regional Solicitation
 - Risk Assessment
 - Best Practices for Crash Modification Factors (CMFs)

Study Approach

- Leverage past research and findings from the Phase I study (completed in April 2020).
- Expand upon our MPO research.
- Leverage input from various Focus Groups.
 - Consulting Community (7 different firms)
 - Agency Representatives

Baseline - Findings



Combined, the 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 Regional Solicitations have garnered over 538 grant applications



\$1.87 Billion

totaling over \$1.87 billion in federal funding requests



\$782 Million

Regional Solicitation process has awarded nearly half (42%) of these requests granting over \$782 million over the four cycles

Key Takeaways



Task 1: Population and Analysis of the Regional Solicitation Project Database

- 2020 and 2021 data sets (e.g., crash data, traffic volumes, and transit ridership) are not accurate/reliable – too many anomalies on how people were moving throughout the region during the pandemic.

After Condition Measures

- Congestion
- Crashes
- RBTN
- Transit Ridership
- Connections to...
 - Populations
 - Jobs
 - Activity Centers

Key Takeaways



Task 1: Population and Analysis of the Regional Solicitation Project Database

How to Manuals

- The congestion methodology has been refined to use StreetLight Data.
- A tailored crash reporting system (using GIS and MnCMAT data) is being finalized to monitor “after” conditions.

Key Takeaways



Task 2 - 6: Research Ways to Streamline the Application Process.

- Focus Groups
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Usage Measure
- Projects Not Funded by Regional Solicitation
- Risk Assessment
- Best Practices for Crash Modification Factors (CMFs)

Key Takeaways



Focus Groups

- Funding is being spread across too many funding categories, which makes it unclear as to what the Regional Solicitation process is trying to accomplish.
- It is also unclear how some of the measures relate to the funding categories, as there is some ambiguity as to how the measures associate with perceived goal of a particular category (e.g., housing, congestion, safety, multimodal elements, equity, and public engagement).
- Met Council should establish stronger goals for what it wants to achieve with the Regional Solicitation program.
- Communities are requesting greater transparency on how projects are scored and selected.

Key Takeaways



Projects Not Funded by Regional Solicitation

- The Regional Solicitation process has awarded nearly half (42%) of the funding requests - granting over \$782 million over the past four cycles. Based on these awards, 313 projects remain unfunded.
- While some projects still move forward without Regional Solicitation funding, often projects are being scaled back (e.g., fewer amenities/enhancements) or delayed until competitive funding is secured.
- Applications that did not receive funding for a given solicitation but re-submitted at a later date had varying success in their resubmittal efforts, with approximately 29% eventually receiving funding.

Key Takeaways



Bicycle and Pedestrian Usage Measure

- There are opportunities to improve the bicycle/pedestrian measures by incorporating a scoring criterion that considers the project's design and its ability to improve one's comfort level and safety.
- The Focus Group considered this a stronger measure in evaluating a project's potential for generating bicycle/pedestrian usage.
- This approach is used by other MPOs(e.g., Dallas and St. Louis).

Key Takeaways



Risk Assessment

- There are more program year extension being requested to better align projects with other projects.
 - 50% of the program year extensions were requested to help align a project's delivery/construction schedule with other programmed projects in the area. The Highway 252/66th Avenue Interchange and Highway 252/70th Avenue Pedestrian Bridge are both examples where construction schedules needed to correspond with larger improvements being programmed for the Highway 252 corridor (4 time extensions).
- There is no need to eliminate the risk assessment measure.

Key Takeaways



Best Practices for Crash Modification Factors

- Applicants are using a wide range of CMFs with varying levels of anticipated crash reductions to determine the safety benefits for similar projects. This has resulted in challenges in scoring projects.
- Begin using the CMF guide for future Regional Solicitation and HSIP applications. Additional training or directions on how to use this guide should be provided for the next solicitation.

Thank You



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