

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: June 10, 2021
TO: TAC Funding and Programming Committee
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SUBJECT: 2022 Regional Solicitation: Potential Measure Changes

Through the surveys and meeting discussions, partners and applicants had comments on specific scoring measures, particularly new measures. Below are scoring measures that were commented on with frequency and seem to have room for improvement. At this point, members should discuss potential changes.

Highway-specific potential measure changes will be addressed at the July meeting.

1. Risk Assessment

The risk assessment includes five elements: layout (25% of points); review of Section 106 historic resources (15% of points); right-of-way (25% of points); railroad involvement (15% of points); public involvement (20% of points). Two of these elements need thorough examination (and a third may need attention as well):

- **Layout:** This element awards 100% for a layout approved by the applicant and impacted jurisdictions, 50% for a completed layout not approved by all jurisdictions, and 0% for a layout that has not been started. This proved challenging from a scoring perspective because “layout has not been defined. Further, there is room in between “completed but not approved...” and “not been started.” Some ways to address:
 - Define what a layout is.
 - Add points (e.g., 25%) for a layout that has been started
 - Clarify that approval includes MnDOT approval for a MnDOT trunk highway project
 - Are there any projects for which a layout is not applicable (e.g., signal timing)?
- **Right-of-way:** It appears that some applicants do not understand that any acquisition is a right-of-way acquisition; therefore, a better definition is needed. It was also suggested to add a line for whether a MnDOT agreement/limited-use permit is required and whether it has been initiated.
- **Public Involvement:** Public involvement was added for 2020, with the premise that lack of outreach is a risk to the project not being completed. In the long-run, TAB will need to consider whether including outreach within the risk assessment makes sense. In the meantime, the scoring element includes space to list meeting dates, targeted online/mail outreach, and the number of responses. It also includes checkboxes (with assigned percentages) for the degree to which the meetings were targeted to the project and an open-ended response box. This created confusion for scorers and applicants regarding:
 - How the meeting descriptions, participation numbers, checkboxes, and open-ended responses related to each other in terms of generating a score.
 - Whether the open-ended response is required. Some applicants did not fill it out, tying the scorers’ hands in terms downgrading checkboxes.

- Non-construction projects are exempt from the rest of the risk assessment. A decision is needed about whether they should be exempt from the public involvement element.

Scorer feedback identified that the measure was too focused on quantity of meetings and attendees as opposed to analyzing the impact of the engagement on selection of the project, the method that helped arrive at that point, whether the outreach/engagement changed the project, and effectiveness of the efforts.

2. Affordable Housing

Prior to 2020, housing was entirely scored with the Housing Performance Score (HPS). For 2020, 20% of the housing score was dedicated to a more project-specific qualitative element (connection to affordable housing).

Describe and map any affordable housing developments—planned, under construction or existing, within ½ mile of the proposed project. The applicant should note the development stage, number of units, number of bedrooms per unit, and level of affordability using 2019 affordability limits. Also note whether the affordability is guaranteed through funding restrictions (i.e. LIHTC, 4d) or is unsubsidized, if housing choice vouchers are/will be accepted, and if there is a fair housing marketing plan required or in place.

Describe how the proposed project will improve or impact access for residents of the affordable housing locations within ½ mile of the project. This should include a description of improved access by all modes, automobiles, transit, bicycle and pedestrian access. Since residents of affordable housing are more likely not to own a private vehicle, higher points will be provided to roadway projects that include other multimodal access improvements.

Applicants found it difficult to find all the information being requested. This is particularly true for transit projects that have several stops/stations. Similarly, this was difficult for TDM applicants, who tend not to be connected to housing data.

For the last several cycles, housing has been used as a “carrot” to entice applicants to improve affordable housing policy. Project-specific connection to affordable housing was a response to a more recent history of interest in trying to connect housing to project specifics. Ultimately TAB will need to determine which approach is preferred (or both; or neither). If the project-specific approach is included, the measure will have to be adjusted.