Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Development Process
How are we going to operate?

BE ACTIVE
- Come prepared to engage (you all volunteered!)

RESPECT OUR TIME
- Limit the side chatter, stay focused on topic

KEEP AN OPEN MIND
- Be considerate of others’ opinions

ALLOW FOR EVERYONE
- Don’t dominate the conversation

HAVE FUN
- This is an exciting topic, let your creative side loose!

USE TECHNOLOGY
- Use Webex tools and Mentimeter to communicate

OTHERS?

# Proposed Schedule

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What is the Regional Solicitation?

Regional process to allocate federal transportation funds to locally-initiated public projects that support regional transportation goals and objectives.

• Solicit and select $200 million worth of projects every two years for implementation four-to-five years into the future (e.g., 2020 Regional Solicitation will fund projects in 2024 and 2025)

• Use a transparent and technically-driven scoring system to select projects

• Federal awards pay up to 80% of total project cost or adopted maximum awards
Strong Linkage to Regional Policy

• Qualifying criteria ask applicants to document consistency with regional policy
• Geographic balance is a secondary lens
Past Funded Unique Projects

- 1990 – Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) ($50,000 FAU)
- 2008 – MPCA Diesel Retrofits ($500,000 CMAQ)
- 2010 – TBI $ (special federal ARRA funding)
- 2012 – MPCA Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
  - $500,000 CMAQ-additional federal funds became available
  - Part of local match provided by Xcel Energy
- 2014 – Transit On-Board Survey ($800,000 STP-additional federal funds became available)
- 2016 and 2018 – Regional Model/TBI ($2.7M STP in 2016, $850,000 in 2018)
- 2018 – St. Paul/Hourcar Mobility Hub Charging Stations ($4 M)
Unique Projects History

• Prior to 2014, unique projects funded on a case-by-case basis
• Unique projects application category suggested to be added during 2014 Regional Solicitation evaluation (for 2016 application)
• Interest from TAB in providing flexibility to respond to Unique project requests
  – Reviewing requests during Regional Solicitation timeline allows for consideration during creation of funding options
TAB Technical Advisory Committee
Feedback from 2016

• Unique projects are difficult to compare
• TAC does not have a technical recommendation for how to objectively differentiate projects
• Projects should meet the qualifying criteria, as appropriate
• Do not solicit for unique project applications - Unique projects requests should be sent directly to TAB for consideration
2018 Regional Solicitation Feedback

How do we accommodate the potential influx of interest related to technology and shared mobility?

• Unique Projects:
  – Formalize the category with a set-aside of funding?
  – How to score?
  – TAB directed staff to create a framework for Unique Projects

• Rethinking the Travel Demand Management category?

• Shared mobility / CAV / new technologies

• Policy-level input needed
Regional Solicitation Policymaker Work Group – Met throughout 2019

- TAB Chair and Vice Chair
- City of Minneapolis
- Transit and Bike-Ped reps
- Suburban provider rep
- Two Met Council Members
- Three county reps
Policymaker Work Group Recommendation

- Create a Unique Projects application category
- Set aside 2.5% of total funding in 2020 Solicitation for Unique projects
- Select Unique projects in the 2022 Solicitation
- Identify the Unique Projects criteria and evaluation process after the 2020 Solicitation
Approved Application Categories

**Regional Solicitation**

**Unique Projects** (2.5% of federal Funds; $4M to $5M)
Including the Regional Travel Behavior Inventory/Modeling Program

**MODAL CATEGORIES**

- Roadways Including Multimodal Elements
- Transit and Travel Demand Management (TDM) Projects
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

**APPLICATION CATEGORIES**

- Traffic Management Technologies
- Spot Mobility and Safety
- Strategic Capacity
- Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization
- Bridges
- Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project
- Transit Expansion
- Transit Modernization
- Travel Demand Management
  - Base Level
  - Innovative
- Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities
- Pedestrian Facilities
- Safe Routes to School (Infrastructure)
Unique Project Characteristics (from 2019)

• Projects that do not fit into other application categories
• Are difficult to score using existing measures – leads to need for more qualitative scoring
• Have a more immediate implementation timeline (< typical 4-to-5-year period to receive Regional Solicitation funds)
• Potentially innovative, demonstration type projects or data collection, surveying projects
• Have regional benefits
• Combine or cross modal categories
Approved Application Categories

- **Regional Solicitation**
  - **Unique Projects** (2.5% of federal funds; $4M to $5M) Including the Regional Travel Behavior Inventory/Modeling Program

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Innovative TDM Projects

• Innovative Travel Demand Management (TDM) projects category established 2014 in the Transit and TDM application category
• $1.2 M in funds available above $5.8 M on-going funding for Transportation Management Organizations (funded as part of one $7 M project)
• Funds available in next 2-3 year period as opposed to 4-5 year period for other Solicitation categories
• Minimum federal award $100,000, maximum federal award $500,000
Innovative TDM Project Characteristics

- TDM projects are federal high-priority for CMAQ funds
- Demonstrate air-quality/congestion-reduction benefits through single-occupant-vehicle travel reduction
- Introduce new TDM concepts to the region, expand to a new geographic area, serve populations previously unserved, or incorporate enhancements to an existing program
- Small in scale, not capital-intensive investments
- Scoring includes qualitative assessment of innovation
Unique Projects Development Recommendation

• Past solicitation for unique projects resulted in difficult to compare proposals, goals not well defined
• Difficult to know what technical questions to ask without specific program goals
• Considerations for the work group
  – Focus on 1-2 goals that will likely result in a narrow scope of projects that can be compared
  – What information is needed by TAB to make an adequate evaluation of the projects and how they achieve the unique project goals?
  – What projects are eligible? How to relate to existing categories?
  – What are the max and min award amounts, match requirements?
  – What is the role of technical committees in evaluating proposals?
  – Should TDM be combined with Unique Projects?
Unique Project Purpose and Goals Input

Approx. $4 million available for 2024-2025 projects

Round Table:
What is the purpose of funding Unique Projects, from your perspective?

Group Input:
• What goals/outcomes should be a priority for the work group to consider? Think about measurable change and how it impacts people’s lives

Examples:
– Mitigate climate change
– Reduce racial disparities
– Environmental justice
– COVID-19 opportunities or predictions
– Mode shift away from single-occupant vehicle travel

• What kinds of projects would you like to see come forward?
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Meeting Reflection

• What worked?
• What didn’t work?
• Any meeting rules to add or revisit for next time?
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