

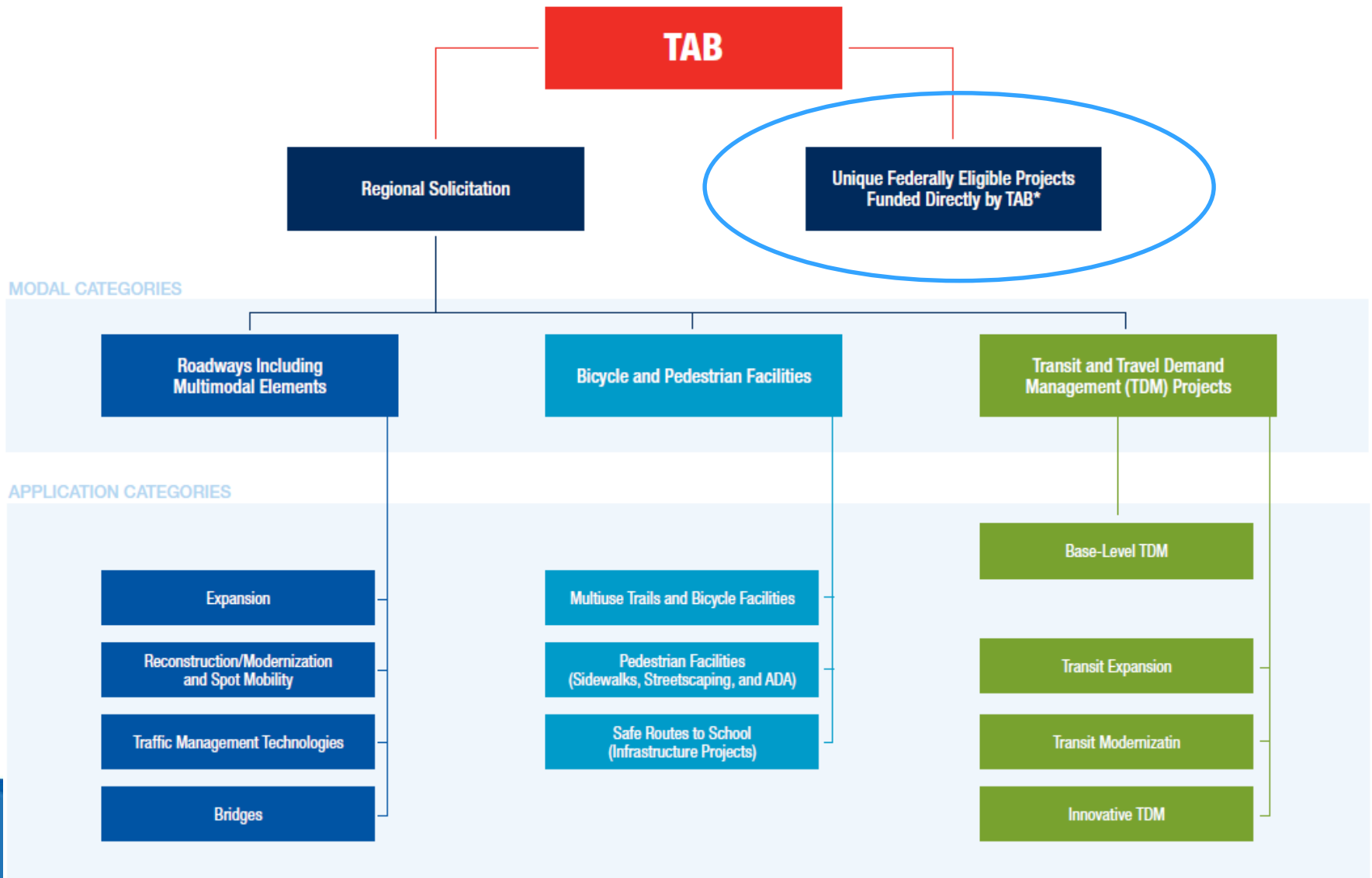
# Unique Projects in the Regional Solicitation

TAB Policy Work Group Meeting

July 22, 2019



# Approved Application Categories



\*Note: In some cases, there are unique projects that are federally eligible, but will not be included in the competitive process because they cannot be easily compared to other similar projects. These project types should request funding directly from TAB.

# Unique Project Characteristics

- Projects that do not qualify for, or fit in, 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 potential regional benefits
- Combine or cross modal categories

# 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)



# 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 project size \$75,000, maximum funding \$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

# Funded TDM Projects 2014-2018

<u>Reduce Car Use</u>	<u>Increase Bicycle Use</u>
U of M eWorkplace	Cycles for Change (3 projects)
U of M Smart Phone	Nice Ride (2 projects)
Car Free Life Neighbor Car	TLC Green Transportation Certificate
MOVE MN Colleges as Hubs	Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition
Parking FlexPass-ABC Ramps	
St. Paul Smart Trips Trip Planning	<u>Transportation Management Organization</u>
Fridley Northstar Station Service	<u>Outreach</u>
494 Telework	Carver County Outreach
	MVTA Outreach in Scott/Dakota Counties
	Scott County Outreach
	MOVE MN St. Paul Website

# Shared Mobility Project Characteristics

- Integrate modes including transit, bicycle, pedestrian
- Often have an on-demand component
- May be eligible in an existing category, but it is not clear
- May not score well in an existing category due emphasis not being on dominant scoring criteria, i.e lack of transit ridership emphasis
- May need planning funds to fully develop an untested concept



# Examples of Shared Mobility Projects

- Mobility hub planning, design, and construction
  - Wayfinding
  - Hub typologies
- Microtransit pilots and testing
- TDM/shared mobility integration pilot
  - At-capacity Park and Rides
- Mobility-as-a-Service integration and testing
  - Coordinated payments
  - Fare collection upgrades
  - Platform development/user interface

# 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

# 2016 Solicitation

- Allowed applicants to submit a letter of interest for Unique project funding
- Projects that do not fit in any application category and generate regional benefits
- Application submittal dates and letter/application contents:
  - Description of benefits to region
  - Demonstrate federal eligibility
  - Demonstrate why project is not competitive in other categories
  - Budget and preferred funding year
  - Limited to two pages

# 2016 Regional Solicitation Unique Project Requests

Project	Applicant	Federal Request	Comments	Funded?
<b>Electric Vehicle Charging Stations*</b>	University of MN	\$250,000	Meets qualifying requirements, does not fit in other categories	No
<b>Jackson Street Reconstruction</b>	Ramsey County	\$7,000,000	B-Minor Arterial, not eligible under Solicitation policies	No
<b>Regional Model/TBI</b>	Met Council	\$2,700,000	Meets qualifying requirements	Yes

*\*Project since completed by the University of MN with internal funding sources.*

*\*Withdrew consideration for funding in 2018.*

# 2016 Regional Solicitation

## Unique Project Requests (cont.)

Project	Applicant	Federal Request	Comments	Funded?
<b>Technician Training</b>	MPCA	\$40,000	Not federally eligible	No
<b>Diesel Retrofit</b>	MPCA	\$1,166,633	Federally eligible depending on vehicle ownership, does not fit in other categories, not unique to region, high air quality benefits	No
<b>Bike Corridor Slope Restoration</b>	Hennepin County	\$1,420,800	Emergency maintenance type project, facility maintenance not eligible under Solicitation policies	No

# TAC Feedback 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 (e.g. any roadways must be A-minor arterial or higher)
- Do not solicit for unique project applications - Unique projects requests should be sent directly to TAB for consideration

# 2018 Solicitation

- Solicitation allowed for submittal of Unique projects with following language:

*“In some cases there are unique projects that are federally eligible, but will not be included in the competitive process because they cannot easily be compared to other projects. These project types should request funding directly from TAB.”*

# 2018 Regional Solicitation Unique Project Requests

Project	Applicant	Federal Request	Comments	Funded?
<b>Regional Model/TBI</b>	Met Council	\$850,000	On-going program funded previously with understanding of future requests for funding, regional benefits and partners, not eligible in other categories	Yes
<b>Mobility Hub and Electric Vehicle Charging</b>	St. Paul	\$6,700,000 (awarded \$4,000,000)	Federally eligible, applied in transit expansion category but deemed not eligible, potentially eligible under Innovative TDM category, unique concept to region	Yes



# Issues in 2018 Solicitation

- Funding not specifically allocated to Unique projects category prior to application release, appeared to be reducing other modal category funding
- Charging station and car sharing projects not eligible in Transit Expansion, potentially eligible in Innovative TDM
- Innovative TDM maximum too low to accommodate large capital investments
- Emerging Shared Mobility options pose questions of where and how they fit in Solicitation
- Appears to be a desire to fund innovation and test new concepts, but difficult to determine level of innovation/uniqueness, level of regional benefits



# Policy Question: What Might be the Criteria for Unique Projects?

- Innovation
- Tests new concepts or services
- Integrates multiple modes
- Potential for large regional benefits or application
- Higher level of local match
- Public/private partnership
- Ability to test and implement in an identified timeframe
- Other?

# Policy Question: Should TAB Establish a Unique Project Category with a Designated Funding Range?

## Pros:

- Provides a path for projects that do not qualify in other categories
- Provides an indication of potential level of funding
- Encourages innovative projects/testing of concepts

## Cons:

- Competes for funding with long established project application categories
- Difficult to score or compare projects
- Projects may require planning/scope development; higher risk for scope change and implementation

# If No Unique Project Category, Then What?

- TBI Program funding continues (previously approved as a 10-year program)
- No Unique projects can submit (i.e. projects must qualify in application categories)
- Projects that are determined not to qualify in an existing category will not be funded as Unique projects

# What are the options for funding a Unique Projects category?

- Set aside funding for 2022 Solicitation (2024-2025 funding)
  - No Unique project selection in 2020
  - Allows for project selection 2-3 years in advance of funding
  - Promotes innovation
  - Innovative TDM category remains
- In 2020 Solicitation combine with Innovative TDM (\$1.2 M available); set aside funding for 2022 Solicitation
  - Requires revision of criteria and scoring measures; Establish project max-min amounts
  - Small projects due to limited funding
  - Innovative TDM projects may not compete well

# Options for Funding Unique Projects (continued)

- Identify range of funding and select Unique projects in 2020 Solicitation for 2024-2025 funding
  - Provides projects currently identified with a path to potential funding certainty
  - Selecting projects 4-5 years in advance may hinder innovation
  - Will continue the 4-5 year timeline into future solicitations
  - Requires identification of criteria and scoring measures and project min-max amounts by end of August
  - TDM category remains unchanged
  - Encourage Advance Construction?
- Under all options there is no guarantee that a Unique project will be selected for funding.

# Potential Qualifying Requirements:

1. Federally eligible project, requesting > \$100,000
2. The project is (clearly?) not eligible in any of the existing application categories
3. Federally eligible applicant
4. Applicant has supplied a detailed project budget and preferred funding year
5. Project is consistent with regional and local goals, policies and plans
6. Applicant has a completed ADA transition plan
7. Project is accessible and open to the general public

# Policy Question: How Should Unique Projects be Compared?

## Potential Process:

- TAB identify and provide weighting of criteria for Unique projects (i.e. innovation, potential regional benefits, etc..)
  - Will require a Qualitative evaluation against identified criteria
- Technical qualifying review by MTS staff
- Establish a qualitative scoring committee
  - Policymakers and/or technical staff?
  - Provide recommendation to who?
- Technical committee review and recommendation?
- Presentations to TAB by Unique project applicants
- TAB Decision