



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director
DATE: January 29, 2013
SUBJECT: **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Transportation Alternatives Program: Draft Process**

AT A GLANCE – DISCUSSION

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the RTC Board with an overview of the draft MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program and to receive their comment.

BACKGROUND

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a new federal transportation funding program for 2013 that was authorized in the federal transportation act titled, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The Transportation Alternatives Program builds upon the previous Transportation Enhancement Program by clarifying the program's goals. The goals address the following: 1) expanding travel choices, 2) strengthening the local economy, 3) improving the quality of life, and 4) protecting the environment.

The Transportation Alternatives Program allows each region and/or state to develop their implementation program within the overall federal guidelines. Hence it is important to give RTC's proposed program a direction and focus. The following goal statement is proposed. *“Transportation Alternative projects are federally-funded community-based projects that expand travel choices and improve the travel experience.”*

RTC BOARD COMMENT

RTC staff has worked with the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) to develop the draft Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) that describes the process by which TAP projects would be ranked and selected across the three-county RTC region. RTAC has spent two meetings and one workshop in developing the draft program that is attached for the Board's review and comment.

The TAP program's overall project selection process is similar to the long standing Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) process. It does however, differ because the TAP program carries specific project eligibility focused toward projects that expand travel choices and enhance the surface transportation system. It also stretches the project selection process across the three counties, Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties.

The full TAP program's project selection process is attached, and open for comment. However, RTC staff and RTAC members are particularly interested in the Board's comments regarding the *italicized* sections which include the following: 1) the goal statement (second paragraph), 2) the

proposed project evaluation team (under the heading Project Selection), and 3) the project ranking criteria (under the Evaluation Criteria heading). While MAP-21 establishes certain rules and project eligibility, it also leaves considerable discretion to how the competitive process is carried out and does not require equal funding across all project eligibilities.

The last section of the memo outlines a proposed schedule. This schedule would include RTC Board adoption of the program, criteria etc. at the March 5th meeting, TAP project applications due by April 26, and RTC Board TAP project selection at their July 2 meeting.

Attachments

MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties

Introduction

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a new federal transportation funding program for 2013 as authorized in the new federal transportation act titled, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The Transportation Alternatives Program builds upon the previous Transportation Enhancement Program by clarifying the program’s goals that address the following: expanding travel choices, strengthening the local economy, improving the quality of life, and protecting the environment. For more information, please go to the Federal Highway Administration Interim Guidance at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

The Transportation Alternatives Program allows each region and/or state to develop their implementation program within the guidelines of the program. However, in order to give the proposed program a direction and focus the following goal statement is proposed. *“Transportation Alternative projects are federally-funded community-based projects that expand travel choices and improve the travel experience.”*

Funding Levels

The Transportation Alternatives funding is suballocated to the RTC three-county Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) region based on population, with varying amounts being allocated to US Census defined urbanized and rural areas. In addition a portion of the funds are flexible and can be programmed within either the urbanized or rural areas. The attached map illustrates these areas.

The 2013 three-county RTC regional sub-allocation is \$553,803, of which approximately 52% must be spent in the Vancouver Urban area, 12% in rural areas, and 36% can be spent anywhere across the region. This percentage may change over time depending on the amount of population growth between the respective urbanized and rural areas. In addition to the 2013 allocation, the table below estimates the funding for the same 4-year period as the MTIP. This four year is an estimate and will depend upon the new federal transportation bill that follows MAP-21.

Estimated Transportation Alternatives Funding Sub-Allocation

Transportation Alternatives Program	Vancouver Urban Area	Rural <i>Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties</i>	Flexible <i>Any Area</i>	Total
2013 Funding	\$288,000	\$65,000	\$200,803	\$553,803
2013-16 Funding	\$1,152,000	\$260,000	\$803,212	\$2,215,212

Eligible Applicants

- Local Governments;
- Regional Transportation Authorities;
- Transit Agencies;
- Natural Resources or Public Land Agencies;

- School Districts, Local Education Agencies, or Schools;
- Tribal Governments; and
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than MPO's or State agency) that the State determines to be eligible (includes Ports if they own the facility and it is open to the public).

All projects must be administered by a certification acceptance (CA) agency. Non CA agencies can apply for TAP funds but must have a CA agency sponsor the project. The sponsorship must be in place prior to applying for funds.

Eligible Activities

The following is a summary of eligible activities authorized in the MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program. Projects will be selected by the RTC Board through a competitive process that will apply evaluation criteria to rank projects on their merit. Eligible projects must meet one or more of the eligible activities and relate to the surface transportation system (except for recreation trails). There is no requirement for equal distribution of funding among the various eligible activities. For a full explanation of eligible activities please review the Federal Highway Administration Interim Guidance at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.
- Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising.
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
- Vegetation management practices in transportation right-of-way.
- Archaeological activities relating to impacts for implementation of transportation projects eligible under this title.
- Any environmental mitigation activity related to highway construction due to highway runoff.

In addition, eligible Transportation Alternatives projects include any project eligible under the Recreational Trails Program, Safe Routes to School Program, and within the right-of-way of former interstate routes. Please note that Washington State is using a portion of Statewide Transportation Alternatives funds to conduct a statewide Safe Routes to School Program.

Screening Requirements

- Project must be consistent with the MTP/RTP
- Project must contain at least one eligible Transportation Alternatives Category
- Must have a direct relationship to the surface transportation system (except trails)
- Funds cannot be used to supplement the construction of an existing project. For example, TAP funds cannot be used to pay for the sidewalk portion on an existing road project.

- Project must be open for public access

General Applicant Information

- The Transportation Alternatives Program is a reimbursement grant program. Only after a Local Agency Agreement has been approved by WSDOT can project costs become eligible for reimbursement. This means project sponsors must incur the cost of the project prior to being repaid. Any work conducted prior to a signed Local Agency Agreement is not eligible for reimbursement.
- A local match of 20% is required for all Transportation Alternatives projects.
- Once the project is programmed in the MTIP, no cost increase or movement of funds between phases (PE, RW, and CN) will be allowed without RTC Board approval.
- All projects must follow federal and state regulations. Including environmental, right of way, ADA, and etc.
- To ensure project delivery an agency may want to split a large project into segments or separate project development phases. Each segment or phase needs to be deemed as a stand-alone project by RTC. For example, an agency could ask for only design funds and come back for construction funding in future. Also, an agency could break a 3 mile long path into two logical segments.

Project Selection

RTC is proposing that a TAP Project Evaluation Team of five people be formed to evaluate and rank projects. The evaluation team could be made of staff or citizens drawn from RTC, WSDOT, C-TRAN, Healthy Community Coalition, Health Department, neighborhoods, Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, etc. RTC staff will form the committee.

Projects will be evaluated and ranked by the TAP Project Evaluation Team. The evaluation team ranking will then be taken to RTAC to recommend a list of project for selection by the RTC Board. The RTC Board will make final selection. Along with this selection process a local public involvement process will be included. This public involvement process will be developed to inform the selection process.

Project Application

A project application will be developed once evaluation criteria are determined.

Evaluation Criteria

(The following is an initial list of potential project evaluation criteria for discussion. The criteria would be defined and have points assigned and then used for ranking Transportation Alternatives Program projects. RTC is looking for discussion and feedback on these or other criteria.)

- *Project helps to achieve an identified/planned need and has a public benefit:*
 - *Describe how the project relates to an adopted plan such as the GMA plan, modal plan, neighborhood plan or other planning process. Describe how the project will improve the public travel experience and travel options.*
- *Multimodal, Intermodal Connectivity and Access to Jobs, and Services.*

- *Describe how the project provides a connection between modes, or improves transportation choices, or connects to land use services such as job locations, a civic center, library, grocery market, playground, retail center, medical office, school, and other.*
- *Accessibility/Equity*
 - *Describe to what extent the project will improve mobility for disadvantaged populations. For example is the project close to affordable housing, will the project improve low income access to transit, essential services, education opportunities, and others.*
- *Safety*
 - *Describe how the project improves public safety for transportation system users. For example, does the project address a specific safety issue, or does it address pedestrian or bike safety?*
- *Financial Support and Project Readiness*
 - *Describe how the project is funded, level of design, environmental approvals, and project schedule.*

Timeline

As part of the application process, local agencies will be required to include a reasonable timeline for the implementation of preliminary engineering, right of way, and construction. It will be essential for agencies to obligate project phases on time according to the identified timeline.

Proposed TAP Program Development Schedule

The following is a proposed schedule for the development, selection, and programming of the regional TAP process:

December 21, 2012	RTAC subcommittee reviewed TAP process
January 18, 2013	RTAC reviewed draft TAP process
February 5, 2013	RTC Board overview of TAP process
February 15, 2013	RTAC recommends TAP process
March 5, 2013	RTC Board adopts TAP process
March 8, 2013	Call for TAP projects
April 26, 2013	TAP project applications due to RTC
April 29-30, 2013	RTC staff screens applications for eligibility
May 1-June 7, 2013	Evaluation Team ranks TAP projects and public involvement process is conducted
June 21, 2013	RTAC recommends ranking and selection of TAP projects to RTC Board
July 2, 2013	RTC Board selects TAP projects and amends MTIP
August 2013	TAP projects proceed to implementation

2010 Federal Urban Area Boundary

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- Clark County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Urban Area
- Rural Area

All of Skamania and Klickitat Counties are considered Rural Area.

