



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*
DATE: February 24, 2015
SUBJECT: **Transportation Alternatives Program Process**

ATA GLANCE

RTC Board action is requested to accept the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) process as recommended by RTAC. Acceptance of this TAP process will allow the region to proceed with the regional selection of TAP projects for the 2017-2018 funding years.

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was authorized in 2012 under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) to provide for a variety of alternative transportation projects, including many that were previously eligible activities under the prior Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and Scenic Byways programs. Transportation Alternatives projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, viewing areas, community improvement activities, recreational trails, safe routes to school, and other improvements.

The Transportation Alternatives Program must conform to the applicable federal guidelines, while allowing each region to develop their process for selecting priority TAP projects. The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) has provided comments in refinement of this TAP process and recommended RTC Board acceptance at their February 20, 2015 general meeting.

TAP PROCESS

During years 2012-2013, RTC worked with member agencies to develop the process for the region's successful 2013 selection of TAP projects. Over the last several months RTC staff has reviewed the TAP Process with RTAC, who is recommending that RTC Board proceed with the TAP Process as outlined in the attached TAP Guide. The process has remained the same as the 2013 process with the following changes:

- Use \$200,000 per year of the regions CMAQ dollars to augment the TAP funding. With the condition that these funds must be spent on CMAQ qualified projects within the Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area boundary.
- Lower the required local match to 13.5%, the minimum federal required match.

TAP SELECTION PROCESS

A TAP Evaluation Team of five people has been formed to evaluate and rank projects. The evaluation team includes representatives from WSDOT, C-TRAN, RTC, Clark County Health Department, and Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Evaluation Team will evaluate and rank projects. This evaluation and ranking will then be taken to RTAC for a recommendation of which projects should be selected for funding by the RTC Board. The RTC Board will then make the final project selection. A local public involvement process will be conducted during the TAP process to inform the selection process.

TAP PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Area: TAP funding is allocated to the RTC three-County RTPPO region of Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties.

Applicants: Local Governments, Transit, resource agencies, school districts, and tribal governments are eligible applicants.

Eligible Activities: Each project must include at least one of the qualifying activities.

Funding: A Total of \$1.5 million would be available for the 2017-2018 program years. Approximately \$193,000 must be programmed in rural areas.

Project Selection Criteria: Projects will be evaluated based on Public Benefit, Connectivity, Accessibility/Equity, Safety, and Financial/Readiness (same criteria used in 2013).

Timeline: A call for projects will be issued on March 6th, with project application due to RTC on April 17. The RTC Board will select TAP projects on June 2, 2015.

ACTION

RTC Board action is requested to accept the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) process as outlined on the attached Guide and recommended by RTAC. Once approved, the Call for Projects will be extended to all eligible agencies. The schedule anticipates final RTC Board project selection at the June RTC Board meeting.

Draft 1-21-15

Transportation Alternatives Program Guide

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties

Introduction

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was authorized in 2012 under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) to provide for a variety of alternative transportation projects, including many that were previously eligible activities under the prior Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and Scenic Byways programs. The Program goals address expanding travel choices, strengthening the local economy, improving the quality of life, and protecting the environment. Transportation Alternatives projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, viewing areas, community improvement activities, environmental remediation, recreational trails, and safe routes to school. For more information on the Transportation Alternatives Program, please go to the Federal Highway Administration 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 process within federal guidelines. However, in order to give the proposed program a direction and focus the following regional 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 urban and rural areas. In addition, a portion of the funds are flexible and can be programmed within either the urban or rural areas. The attached map illustrates these areas.

The 2015 three-county RTC regional sub-allocation is just over a half a million dollars. The TAP funding estimate for years 2017-2018 is based on the assumption that funding allocation will remain consistent with the current allocation. The region also had approximately \$50,000 in rural TAP carry-over funds from the 2013 selection period. In addition, the region will add \$200,000 per year of federal CMAQ funds to the TAP selection process, with the condition that these funds must be spent on CMAQ qualified projects within the Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area boundary.

Estimated Transportation Alternatives Funding Sub-Allocation

Funding Source	Urban	Rural	Flexible	Total
2017-2018 TAP	\$557,000	\$193,000	\$395,000	\$1,145,000
2017-2018 CMAQ	\$400,000	-	-	\$400,000
Total	\$957,000	\$193,000	\$395,000	\$1,545,000

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 Program funds to conduct statewide Safe Routes to School and Recreational Trails programs. Safe Routes to School and Recreational Trail projects are encouraged to seek funding through the statewide programs prior to seeking regional TAP funds.

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 13.5% will be required for all Transportation Alternatives projects.
- Once the project is programmed in the regional TIP, 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.
- Projects must meet the RTC Project Delay Policy, which allows no delay for design phase and up to one-year delay for right of way and construction phases. To ensure project delivery, an agency may want to split a large project into segments or separate project development phases.

Screening Requirements

- Project must be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Project must contain at least one eligible Transportation Alternatives Category
- Projects 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

Project Selection

RTC staff will form a TAP Project Evaluation Team of five people to evaluate and rank projects. The evaluation team could be made up of staff and/or citizens drawn from RTC, WSDOT, C-TRAN, SW Washington Healthy Living Collaborative, Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, etc.

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 projects for selection by the RTC Board. The RTC Board will make final selection. A local public involvement process will be conducted to inform the selection process.

Project Application

A new 2015 TAP application is available for download from RTC website at <http://www.rtc.wa.gov/programs/tap/>.

Applicants must complete the application in the space provided and can provide up to five pages of additional attachments. Attachments should include a vicinity map, cross-section, plan page, and other information such as pictures and text which will assist in the evaluation of the project. All applications will be submitted electronically to RTC.

Evaluation Criteria

The following is a general list of project evaluation criteria and points available. Detailed Transportation Alternative Program criteria can be downloaded from the RTC website at <http://www.rtc.wa.gov/programs/tap/>.

- Public Benefit (25 Points):
- Connectivity (20 Points).
- Accessibility/Equity (10 Points)
- Safety (20 Points)
- Financial Support and Project Readiness (15 Points)
- Other (10 Points)

Timeline

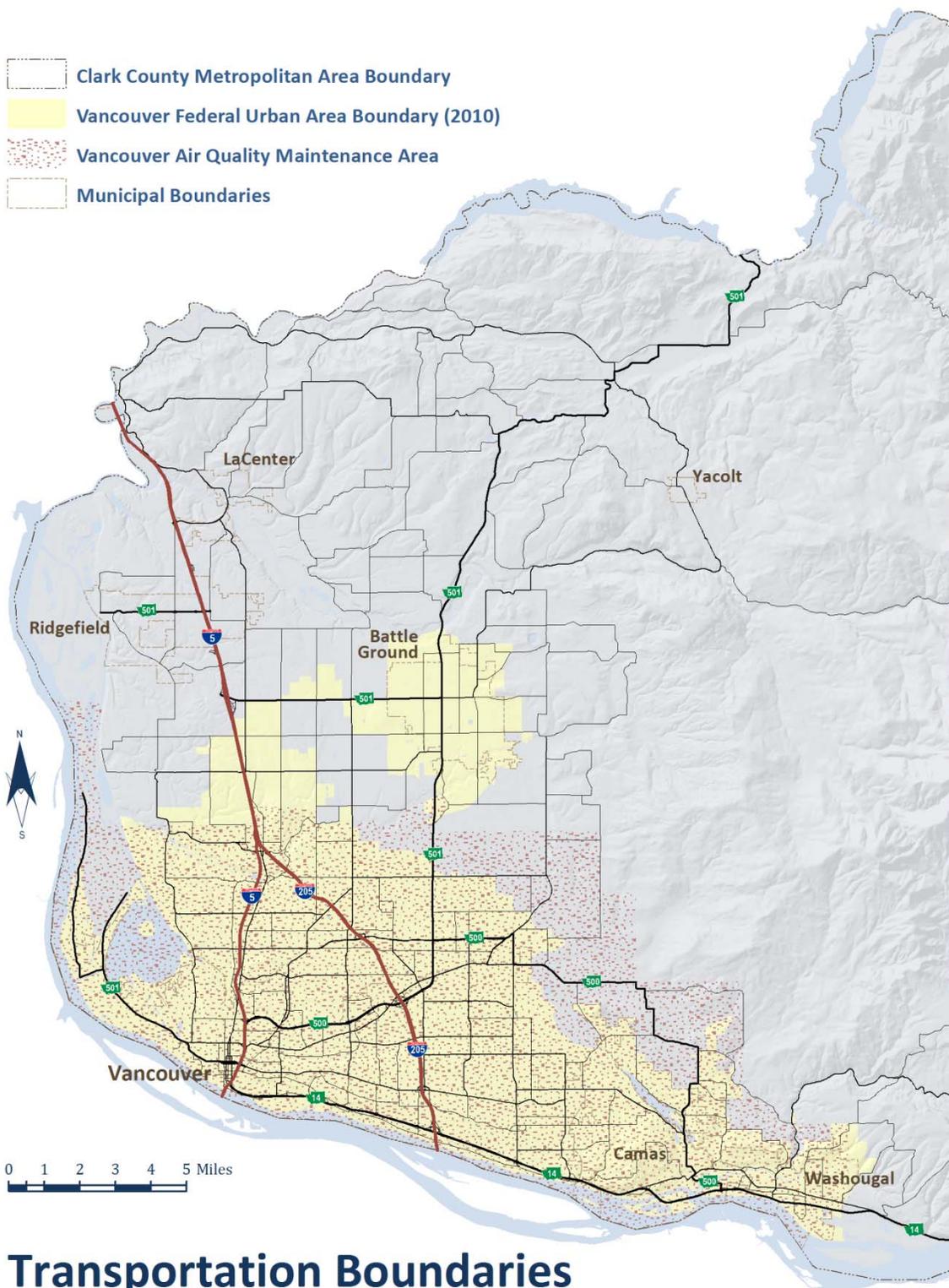
As part of the application process, local agencies will be required to include a reasonable timeline for the implementation of preliminary engineering, right of way, and construction. It will be essential for agencies to obligate project phases on time according to the identified timeline and RTC Project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

Proposed TAP Program Development Schedule

The following is a proposed 2015 schedule for the regional TAP process:

March 3, 2015	RTC Board adopts TAP process
March 6, 2015	Call for TAP projects
April 17, 2015	TAP project applications due to RTC
April 17-21, 2015	RTC staff screens applications for eligibility
April 22-May 5, 2015	Public Comment Period
April 22-May 12, 2015	Review by Evaluation Team
May 13, 2015	Evaluation Team meets to rank projects
May 15, 2015	RTAC recommends ranking and selection of TAP projects to RTC Board
June 2, 2015	RTC Board selects TAP projects and amends TIP
Mid-July 2015	Projects amended into STIP
Mid-July 2015	TAP projects proceed to implementation

-  Clark County Metropolitan Area Boundary
-  Vancouver Federal Urban Area Boundary (2010)
-  Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area
-  Municipal Boundaries



Transportation Boundaries

The map shows Clark County urban and rural areas for federal transportation purposes.

The Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area is where CMAQ funds can be spent.

All of Skamania and Klickitat Counties are classified as rural for federal transportation purposes.