

MEMORANDUM

To: MPO Technical Advisory Committee
From: Scott Bogle, Senior Transportation Planner
Date: March 19, 2021
RE: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Proposal Evaluation

Today is the deadline for submittal of proposals for the fourth funding round of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Four RPC communities submitted Letters of Interest for the TAP program last month. Our understanding is that two of these, Newington and Portsmouth, decided not to submit full proposals. We anticipate seeing copies of proposals from Rye and Salem later this afternoon when the towns submit to NHDOT.

Statewide 41 communities submitted TAP Letters of Interest requesting approximately \$29 in federal funding. There is typically some attrition between the LOI and full proposal stages as noted above and we don't yet know how many full proposals will be submitted. The notice of funding availability described a \$5.4 million pool available statewide for the two-year funding round. If divided equally among the nine planning regions, this would equate to approximately \$600,000 per region, though there is not an explicit criterion for geographic distribution in this funding round.

The Regional Planning Commission Directors have recommended to NHDOT that supplemental funding be added to this round in light of the fact that the Department has transferred 50% of the funding out of the TAP program for general road and bridge use in three of the past four years. The reasoning on this has been to avoid lapsing of funds, as projects are not moving through the steps of the LPA process in a timely fashion. Over \$6 million in TAP funding lapsed in Federal fiscal years 2016-2019 due to these delays. NHDOT has proposed measures to streamline this process and avoid future lapse of funds. With implementation of these measures the Directors have proposed restoring \$4 million to the TAP program, equivalent to the amount transferred out over the past four years. This would allow a funding pool of \$9.4 million for the funding round.

The timeline for regional review of projects in this TAP cycle is very short. Communities submitting their applications this week simultaneously to NHDOT and RPC will allow staff to review the applications between now and the March 25th TAC meeting. We will bring staff rankings to the meeting. While NHDOT has not announced the weighting system for statewide project scoring, the criteria will remain much the same as in the last round, summarized in the table below. At the state level NHDOT has proposed to drop the Equity criterion based on COVID related skewing of the school lunch enrollment data previously used to operationalize this criterion. At the regional level staff propose to keep the Equity criterion, though consider factors beyond school lunch enrollment in assigning points.

Category		Criterion	Weight
Potential for Success	37%	Project Readiness	13%
		Financial Readiness	17%
		Feasibility	7%
Safety	22%	Stress Analysis	13%
		Improve Safety Conditions	14%
Project Connectivity	18%	Project Connectivity	18%
Socioeconomic Benefits	12%	Access for Underrepresented Communities	12%
RPC/MPO Rankings	6%	RPC/MPO Rankings	6%
			100%

As with prior rounds of TAP and CMAQ funding, staff are preparing individual summary/scoring sheets for each project, including staff comments, information on projects' consistency with or listing in local and regional plans, and local support. A map for each project will accompany the summary sheet. We hope to be able to send these to TAC members by Tuesday so you have at least some opportunity to review in advance of the Thursday meetings

Because some of the proposals are very long (30+ pages) we are not making copies of full proposals for each TAC member. However, the original documents will be available for review on the MPO website by Tuesday 3/23 at: <http://www.therpc.org/transportation/transportation-alternatives>. If you have questions in advance of the TAC meeting please contact me at 603-512-4456 or sbogle@therpc.org.

Requested Action

Staff ask TAC members to review the project summary sheets and develop your own project rankings for discussion and adoption at the March 25th TAC meeting. TAC rankings will be brought to the April MPO meeting for adoption of final regional rankings, which in turn will be sent to NHDOT to incorporate in the Statewide ranking and project selection process.