



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Steering Committee
FROM: John Swanson, TPB Transportation Planner
Jaleel Reed, COG Regional Planner
SUBJECT: Substituting a TLC project for FY 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic
DATE: July 2, 2020

On April 15, 2020, the TPB approved 15 projects for funding in FY 2021 through the Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program. TPB staff has since learned that one of the funded projects, the Independence Avenue Transportation Assessment in D.C., cannot feasibly be conducted in the next fiscal year due to complications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff is recommending that the funding from this project be instead allocated to another FY 2021 application, which would develop a Public Space Materials and Equipment Implementation Playbook for D.C.

At the TPB Steering Committee meeting on July 10, TPB staff will seek approval of a motion to substitute funding for TLC applications, as described below.

REMOVE PROJECT: INDEPENDENCE AVENUE TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT (\$40,000)

Project applicants: District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)

This study would have assessed needs and options for improving multi-modal connectivity along Independence Avenue in the vicinity of the National Mall. The project would have been largely reliant on traffic counts, including data collection on pedestrian activity.

Given the uncertainties of the global pandemic and the likelihood that traffic conditions are not expected to return to normal in the foreseeable future, staff have determined that we cannot practically plan to conduct this project during the next fiscal year. Staff from DDOT and NCPC, which were the project applicants, have agreed that the removal of this project from the FY2021 roster is reasonable. TPB staff have informed both agencies that they are welcome to apply for the FY 2022 round of TLC funding.

ADD PROJECT: PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAYBOOK (\$40,000)

Project applicant: District of Columbia Office of Planning

The playbook developed through this project will support the District of Columbia's efforts to make public space activation more frequent and equitable across the city. Such use of public space might include "streeteries" for outdoor dining or "play streets" and "school streets" in which roads are temporarily blocked off for children. Public space activation might also include temporary or semi-permanent installations for markets and gatherings, as well as spaces for essential services including public health services.

The playbook will lay out a palette of materials and equipment that can be used for rapidly deploying projects and testing ideas in public space. The playbook will also inject predictability and efficiency to the application and permitting process.

The global pandemic has actually increased the relevance and need for this project. As cities like Washington plan for reopening, public space will be vital for dining, shopping, and gathering. The playbook will offer high-quality design and materials guidance, focusing on advancing street safety for citizens, business improvement districts and main street organizations, while directly supporting COVID-19 recovery and reopening efforts.

TPB staff is recommending the substitution of the public space project based on an assessment of all the applications that were not funded for FY 2021. This staff assessment found that several of the unfunded projects could not be accomplished with the amount of funding – \$40,000 – that has now been made available. Of the projects that were viable for the available funds, the public space project received the highest cumulative score from the TLC selection panel. Based on this comparative evaluation and the project’s heightened relevance for post-COVID recovery, we are recommending it for funding.

The original application for the public space project is attached to this memo, along with a scope of work that was recently updated to underscore the project’s timeliness. The original application requested \$60,000, but the new scope has been scaled back to \$40,000.



Office of the Director

March 9, 2020

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, New Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

RE: TLC Technical Assistance Program District of Columbia Public Space Activation Materials and Equipment Implementation Playbook

Dear National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Selection Panel,

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) is pleased to submit a proposal to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board for the Transportation Land Use Connections (TLC) Technical Assistance Program. The proposal aims to build the District's public space activation and placemaking program through the creation of a Public Space Activation Materials and Equipment Implementation Playbook.

A public space activation materials and equipment implementation playbook will support the District's efforts to make public space activation and placemaking more frequent and equitable citywide. As the District continues to grow, the government and our communities are rethinking how public space serves the increasing diversity of needs, from safe mobility to social space connections. The playbook will lay out a palette of materials and equipment that can be used for rapidly deploying projects and testing ideas in public space throughout the city. The project will emphasize public space locations in TPB's Equity Emphasis Areas that advance pedestrian and bicycle safety connections to transit and neighborhood quality of life.

With the assistance of the TLC Technical Assistance Program, DCOP proposes to work together with DDOT to develop the playbook to continue building the District's public space activation and placemaking program.

If you have any questions about our proposal, please feel free to contact me or Kristin Calkins of my staff at (202) 442-7600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Trueblood', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Trueblood

District of Columbia Public Space Materials and Equipment Implementation Playbook

FY 2021 TLC Technical Assistance Program Grant

Applicants: District of Columbia Office of Planning + District Department of Transportation

Type of Technical Assistance: Planning Project

Estimated Cost: \$60,000

Project Description and Requested Services

Purpose + Need

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) with support from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) propose developing a *public space materials and equipment implementation playbook* to support place-based public space activation and placemaking activities by community stakeholders. The playbook will specify a palette of materials and equipment that can be used by applicants to rapidly deploy projects and test ideas in public space throughout the city. The *playbook* will provide predictability and efficiency to the application and permit process for public space activation and placemaking projects. The *playbook* will also include guidance and best practices for implementation of public space activation projects to advance street safety and enhance placemaking efforts in both the short- and long-term.

As the District seeks to establish a more formal public space activation (e.g., tactical urbanism and placemaking) program, a *materials and equipment playbook* will aid stakeholders (e.g., citizen groups, business improvement districts (BIDs), main street organizations), in the implementation of public space activation projects.

Requested Service(s)

Anticipated Tasks and Products

The final product would consist of a 50 – 60 page print and electronic document that clearly defines the purpose and approach of the *playbook*, a suggested list of materials, equipment (e.g., pre-approved street furniture, paint, landscaping, etc.), and installation standards that can be used for the successful implementation of public space activation and placemaking projects. As part of the *playbook* the consultant will perform two technical assistance training workshops on public space activation best practices in neighborhoods located within a TPB Equity Emphasis Area (e.g., Benning Road, Congress Heights).

The consultant team would be expected to complete the following tasks:

- (1) project kick-off meeting;
- (2) coordination meetings with DDOT project engineers and planning team for input on acceptable material treatments and equipment;
- Bi-weekly project management calls with project management team;
- Research / case studies of best practices in public space materials and equipment applications;
- (2) project team meetings to develop a list of acceptable materials and equipment for program application;
- Coordinate and lead (2) technical assistance training workshops on best-practices in public space activation and materials applications in TPB's equity emphasis areas to aid in the rollout of the *playbook*;

- Develop a materials and equipment palette for 2 - 3 intersections, curb extensions or alleys
- Produce a graphic-oriented draft *playbook* (print and online);
- Produce a graphic-oriented final *playbook* (print and online);
- Facilitate an innovative public presentation/discussion to launch the *playbook* as a citywide resource

Previous related planning, including public involvement

The District has demonstrated there is a very strong demand to activate public space citywide from individuals, citizen groups, BID's and Main Street organizations and District government agencies who undertake public space initiatives (e.g., Office of Planning, District Department of Transportation, , Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, Department of Parks and Recreation)

The District has led several planning and public space activation projects that involved robust public involvement. In 2016, the District government implemented a creative placemaking initiative, Crossing the Street: Building DC's Inclusive Future through Creative Placemaking to test select temporary creative placemaking recommendations articulated in DCOP's neighborhood plans and DDOT's transit corridor and livability studies. At the same time, DCOP and DDOT engaged stakeholders in the Eckington and NoMa neighborhoods to develop a tactical urbanism project on North Capitol Street to improve pedestrian and cycling safety and reprogram public space. These efforts served to test public space programming activities.

In 2018 DCOP released the DC Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide (PSASG). The PSASG was an interagency effort to leverage multiple understandings of the regulation and use of public space. A "how-to" guide for activating public space, PSASG provided a foundation for understanding public space activation best practices and the District's regulatory structure.

Relevant Public Space and Placemaking Projects

- 2019 District Department of Transportation – Open Streets on Georgia Avenue
- 2019 DDOT Street Mural Traffic Calming in Bloomingdale
- 2019 Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy
- 2019 Draft Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element
- 2018 DC Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide (TLC Funded)
- 2016 – 2018 Crossing the Street: Building DC's Inclusive Future Through Creative Placemaking
- Public Life Studies:
 - 2020: Florida Avenue / New York Avenue Intersection (TLC Funded)
 - 2019: Congress Heights, K Street, Tenleytown
 - 2016: People on Penn, Crossing the Street: Wards 7 and 8 Superstops

Benefits to applicant's local community and to the region

The development of a *materials and equipment playbook* would address transportation and land use issues specific to local communities by increasing visibility and access to public space; contributing to the public's sense of safety, security, and cleanliness of space; and fostering greater physical activity, interest, and civic participation. As a result, enhanced uses, programming, and safety improvements would benefit pedestrians, bicyclist, and transit users. The creation of a *playbook* would also streamline

permitting for public space activation projects, which can be time consuming and costly depending on the scale of the project.

The *materials and equipment playbook* would focus on daylighting tools to encourage a more frequent and equitable process for public space activation in neighborhoods. A more predictable process would allow for testing new ideas and treatments in public space with less restriction thus resulting in the more geographically equitable involvement of neighborhood public space activation and placemaking.

The *materials and equipment playbook* will be most useful to neighborhoods such as Benning Road, Congress Heights, Anacostia and Ivy City, where historically physical treatments and safety improvements to public space have not been as easy to champion due to a lack of investment and no management structure in place to lead these types of projects.

Connections to regional policies identified in *Visualize 2045*

The project would advance the following TPB endorsed initiative:

- **Improve Walk and Bike Access to Transit** – public space activation and placemaking is closely integrated with several of the District’s transportation initiatives focused on pedestrian and bicycle safety and improving connection via non-motorized transportation (e.g., Vision Zero, Open Streets). The project would focus on public space locations where placemaking would result in physical improvements that create safer and more pedestrian and bicycle friendly connections to transit.

Collaboration with other agencies and/or jurisdictions

The project would be a partnership between DCOP and DDOT to further elevate public space activation citywide and support both agencies’ efforts to build a public space activation and placemaking practice. The process and technical outcomes of the *playbook* could be adapted to neighboring jurisdictions for similar projects.

Strategies to advance project recommendations, including future planning, funding, and implementation

A *materials and equipment playbook* will produce an accessible and user-friendly template to promote public space activation and placemaking citywide. Importantly, development of a *playbook* builds on DCOP’s TLC-funded Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide by moving from a public space “how to” guide to implementation by providing concise and predictable guidance on approved materials and equipment options for public space activation. The *playbook* will also promote and expand the reach of DDOT’s nascent street art program, which focuses on placemaking and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety through place-based public space activations of intersections and cart ways.

For applications requesting more than \$30,000: Concise description of whether and how the project might be scaled back if not fully funded

If the project is not fully funded at the \$60,000 level, the technical assistance workshops could be reduced to (1) or eliminated from the scope of work. The development of a materials and equipment palette for 2 -3 intersections, curb extensions or alleys could be reduced to 1 or eliminated from the scope of work. Other elements to reduce cost could include the length or printing of the *playbook* and/or reduction in the number of overall in-person meetings.

District of Columbia Public Space Materials and Equipment Implementation Playbook

TLC Program FY 2021 SCOPE OF WORK

Project Funding: \$40,000 (application requested \$60,000)

Task 1: Project Kick-off and Ongoing Management

- A. At the outset of the project, CONTRACTOR will schedule a call with District of Columbia and COG staff to obtain additional background information and to confirm objectives and priorities for the technical assistance project to develop a *public space materials and equipment implementation playbook* to support citizen-led demonstration, and city-led pilot and interim public space activation and placemaking activities. The *playbook* will offer high-quality design and materials guidance, focused on advancing street safety for citizens, business improvement districts and main street organizations, while directly supporting the District's COVID-19 recovery and re-opening efforts. During this call, CONTRACTOR will discuss a formal project kickoff meeting with District of Columbia staff, COG staff, and key stakeholders.
- B. CONTRACTOR will facilitate a kick-off meeting with District of Columbia staff, COG staff, and any other identified stakeholders. The meeting will provide the opportunity to clarify and confirm the project scope and schedule.
- C. CONTRACTOR will organize and conduct regular project coordination meetings or conference calls to review progress and submit regular progress reports that provide a summary of recent activities. These meetings and reports will be supplemented as needed with additional project management calls with District of Columbia and COG staff.

Deliverables:

- Agenda
- Meeting minutes with final scope and schedule
- Regular progress reports submitted via email to District of Columbia staff and COG staff

Task 2: Best Practices Research

- A. CONTRACTOR will conduct best-practices research on national and international innovative programs and/or initiatives focused on tactical urbanism and rapid prototyping of public space activation and placemaking to create an inventory of materials and equipment used for public space activation projects.

Task 3: Stakeholder Engagement

- A. CONTRACTOR will use the best-practices research (Task 2), to consult with relevant District government agencies, citizen-led organizations, business improvement districts and main street organizations to understand barriers to public space activation.
- B. Expand participating agency familiarity and comfort with planning and executing collaborative demonstration, pilot, and interim design projects
- C. Coordinate and lead (2) technical assistance training workshops on best-practices in materials applications in public space focused on TPB's equity emphasis areas

Task 4: Guide/Playbook Development

- A. Based on stakeholder engagement (Task 3), the CONTRACTOR will develop a list of materials and equipment that can be applied to public space activation and placemaking projects.
- B. Develop a graphic-oriented guide that will serve as a "how to" manual materials selection and application in the public right of way. The guide will provide concise and predictable guidance on approved materials and equipment options for public space activation.
- C. Develop a materials and equipment palette for up to 3 intersections or on-street parking spaces to be used by the city or stakeholders to conduct a rapid public space prototype.

Task 5: Final Report

- A. CONTRACTOR will compile the information included in the previous tasks into a review version of the final report.
- B. CONTRACTOR will circulate the review version of the final report for comment to District of Columbia staff, COG staff and other key stakeholders.
- C. Based upon comments and input received, CONTRACTOR will produce a final version of the final report.
- D. CONTRACTOR, as deemed necessary and appropriate, will develop and give a presentation/presentations on the findings of the study.

Deliverable:

- Final document in presentation in print and electronic format and an accompanying executive summary (one high-resolution file, and one web-friendly file no greater than 10Mb).
- All native (editable) files of the final report, inclusive of all maps and graphics.
- Final presentation.