

MAP-21's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): Overview and Proposal for Project Selection in Our Region

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Some Basic Facts: The Transportation Alternatives Program

- A new formula program under MAP21.
- \$808 million in Federal FY13.
- Provides funding to projects considered “alternatives” to traditional highway construction.
- Eligible uses include ped/bike facilities, safe routes for non-drivers, environmental mitigation, and others.

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Transition from Previous Programs

- Combines three former programs:
 - Transportation Enhancements (TE)
 - Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)
 - Recreational Trails (RTP)
- Only has 2/3 the funding previously available.
- Largely maintains eligibility from the earlier programs with some changes, e.g., no longer allows acquisition of scenic easements, safety/education for pedestrians/bicyclists (except targeted programs for children), transportation museums.
- The Recreational Trails funds will be taken off the top of every state's allocation.
- FY13 is the first year for new TAP program requirements.

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Statewide and Metropolitan Components

- After the Recreational Trails funding is set aside by each state, TAP funds will be suballocated as follows:
 - 50% of funds suballocated to large urbanized areas (populations larger than 200,000).
 - 50% of funds for statewide project selection.

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Project Selection

- Large MPOs will play new role in project selection for the portion of program funds suballocated to large metropolitan regions:
 - In urbanized areas with an urbanized population of over 200,000, the metropolitan planning organization *“shall select projects carried out within the boundaries of the applicable metropolitan planning area, in consultation with the relevant state.”*
- States will select projects for the statewide portion of program funds.

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Anticipated Funding For Our Region

- For all three states combined, the suballocated portion of program funds for our region is expected to be around \$4-5 million annually.

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Opportunities for Our Region

- Fund regional priorities and goals
 - Promote transportation choices and options
 - Promote regional activity centers
- Complement regional planning activities
 - Regional Transportation Priorities Plan
 - Region Forward
 - TLC Program

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Interest in a Regional Program

- *“The CAC recommends that the TPB move forward expeditiously to develop a competitive regional program for implementing the new federal Transportation Alternatives Program, using a transparent project selection process and regional project selection criteria.”*
- Access for All Committee agreed with the CAC’s recommendation and suggested including criteria for projects affecting low-income and minority communities, and people with disabilities.

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Challenges in Our Region

- Coordinating with three state DOTs:
 - Applicants in our region will be eligible for both suballocated and statewide funds for DC, MD and VA.
 - Coordinating scheduling among the three states will be needed to provide a seamless application process.
 - Transitions from the previous programs:
 - Old funding, old rules (TE and SRTS): statewide, no suballocation to metro areas.
 - New funding, new rules (TAP): Eligibility changes, statewide funds as well as suballocation to large urbanized areas.

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TPB Staff Proposal

- Projects will be selected for the suballocated funds by the TPB using regional project selection criteria established by the TPB, and for the statewide funds by the three states.
- Applicants will fill out only one application issued by their respective states, making them eligible for project selection for both suballocated and statewide funds.
- Funds sub-allocated from each state will stay within that state.
- State transportation agencies will be responsible for managing project implementation.

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Proposed TPB Competitive Project Selection Process for Suballocated Funds

- State DOTs will screen all applications for eligibility.
- An impartial regional panel appointed by the TPB will select projects using regional project selection criteria developed to reflect agreed-upon regional goals.
- The regional project selection process will be coordinated with the state project selection process.
- Minimum 20% local match

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Moving Forward

- TPB staff in discussions with state DOTs:
 - MDOT: General agreement, including proposal to combine FY13 and FY14 in one joint solicitation
 - DDOT: Receptive; Clarifying details with FHWA
 - VDOT: Discussing transition issues, including how to handle projects currently in the TE pipeline.
- TPB staff will return with a progress report in December.

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