TIP Application Process Revisions - An Overview

NOTE: Throughout this document "MIC" refers to the MIC Policy Board with understanding that individual tasks and recommendations may come from MIC staff as assigned and/or appropriate.

Given that:

- Projects in the TIP are to be consistent with the LRTP by meeting the goals and objectives in real, identifiable ways;
- Projects in the TIP are of three types:
    - Funded via the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
    - Funded via some other federal source
    - Funded via some other state, local, or other source but the project is deemed "regionally significant" to our regional transportation system;
- The MIC is only involved directly with one of these funding sources – passing through the STBG funding.
    - Distributed to state and local jurisdictions;
- The MIC can deny any requested or submitted project if it does not support/help meet the goals and objectives of the LRTP.
    - Thus, it is good to have a true evaluation process in place;
- Currently only local roadway authorities applying for STBG funds submit any type of application
    - The application provides the only real detail as to what the project is, what it is to achieve, and how it can be determined if it helps support/meet the LRTP goals and objectives
    - Approximately 25% of the projects in the TIP each year are funded through STBG dollars;
- Currently projects submitted to the MIC to be included in the TIP but not seeking STBG funding do not submit an application form.
    - Thus, the MIC gets insufficient information for determining if the project helps support/meet the LRTP goals and objectives and performance measures.
    - To summarize: approximately 75% of the projects in the TIP provide insufficient data or detail for determining if it helps support/meet the LRTP goals and objectives, or anyway to objectively determine if it should even be in the TIP (see first bullet point);
- It is not a requirement to include geographic equity in the TIP process;
- The MIC may or may not use criteria or scoring requirements in its TIP project selection process;
- The MIC is to provide updates on progress made in moving towards and/or meeting the federal/state performance measures and transit asset management targets, which are also two of the objectives listed in the LRTP; *and*
- The MIC desires to better track real progress made in meeting the goals and objectives of the LRTP both as an annual report and when updating the LRTP (as is required).

Special Note

A proposal was made by a jurisdiction at the August 31, 2020 LRTP Implementation Team Work Group meeting to remove the requirement for any criteria and scoring for individual projects to be included in the TIP (what was being proposed by the MIC), and instead the jurisdictions would agree to complete the same or similar form as the TIP Inclusion Request Form for all projects not in the TIP that demonstrate progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of the LRTP. The jurisdictions present (St Louis County, City of Duluth, and MnDOT) all agreed to this proposal.

The idea behind this proposal is that it provides better flexibility as some individual projects are good for the area-wide transportation system even if it does not meet multimodal or numerous LRTP goal requirements. It was agreed that the broader point is that we are more concerned with all the projects (as a whole) making progress towards meeting the multimodal and diverse goals and objectives of the LRTP than each individual project doing so.

This approach demonstrates good-faith effort by the MIC to use an approach that is not overly burdensome to the jurisdictions, and demonstrates a good-faith effort by the jurisdictions to consider projects that overall are helping to meet the goals and objectives of the LRTP <u>and</u> provide accurate information and data to help the MIC report on the progress towards implementing the LRTP (as required of them).

The MIC stressed that we can use this approach as a 3-year test before the next LRTP is due. We will learn how well it works, and whether or not some revisions, such as including required criteria, will be needed.

Basic Process

Given the above and based on the comments, discussion, and agreements from the July 21 and September 15, 2020 LRTP Implementation Team and August 31, 2020 LRTP Implementation Team Work Group meetings MIC staff suggest the following basic TIP application processes:

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Projects Applying for STBG Funding

1. All projects applying for STBG funding are to complete the "Duluth Area TIP Project STBG Application Form".
2. All jurisdictions eligible for federal transportation funding shall participate in a pre-application meeting with MIC staff to discuss and identify which project(s) are best suited for applying for the STBG funding for that year.
3. Timeline:
    - October – Pre-application Jurisdictional Meeting
    - December – Project applications due
    - February – MIC approves projects
    - April – Draft TIP is released with 30-day public comment period
    - June – Final TIP is presented for approval
4. When the project is completed, the jurisdiction completes a status report form verifying which modes, LRTP goals and objectives, and performance measures and TAM targets were achieved in the project.

Projects Requesting Inclusion into the TIP

1. All projects requesting to be included in the TIP are to complete the "Duluth Area TIP Inclusion Request Form". In lieu of completing the requested narrative in the form, the jurisdiction may instead submit the equivalent narrative from a funding application they have already submitted for the project.
2. Timeline: The completed form must be submitted to the MIC a minimum of one (1) month prior to the requested approval of that project by the MIC Policy Board.
3. When the project is completed, the jurisdiction completes a status report form verifying which modes, LRTP goals and objectives, and performance measures and TAM targets were achieved in the project.

Projects Not Included in the TIP that Demonstrate Progress Towards Implementation of LRTP Goals

1. All surface transportation projects (whether roadway, bikeway, sidewalk, trail, transit, or other) within the MIC area that demonstrate progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of the LRTP that are not included in the TIP are to complete the "Duluth Area Non-TIP Project Form".
2. The jurisdiction will complete the "Duluth Area Non-TIP Project Form" verifying basic project and mode information, as well as which LRTP goals, objectives, performance measures, and/or TAM targets were achieved in the project. In lieu of completing the requested narrative in the form, the jurisdiction may instead submit the equivalent narrative from a funding application they have already submitted for the project.
3. Timeline: The completed form must be submitted to the MIC no later than December 31 of the year construction of a project meeting "1" above is completed. The MIC will send a reminder request for submittal of the "Duluth Area Non-TIP Project Form" for applicable projects each November.