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FFY 2013-2014

Transportation Alternatives Program Instructions and Application *For projects in the Oklahoma City Urbanized Area*

A Grant Program of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



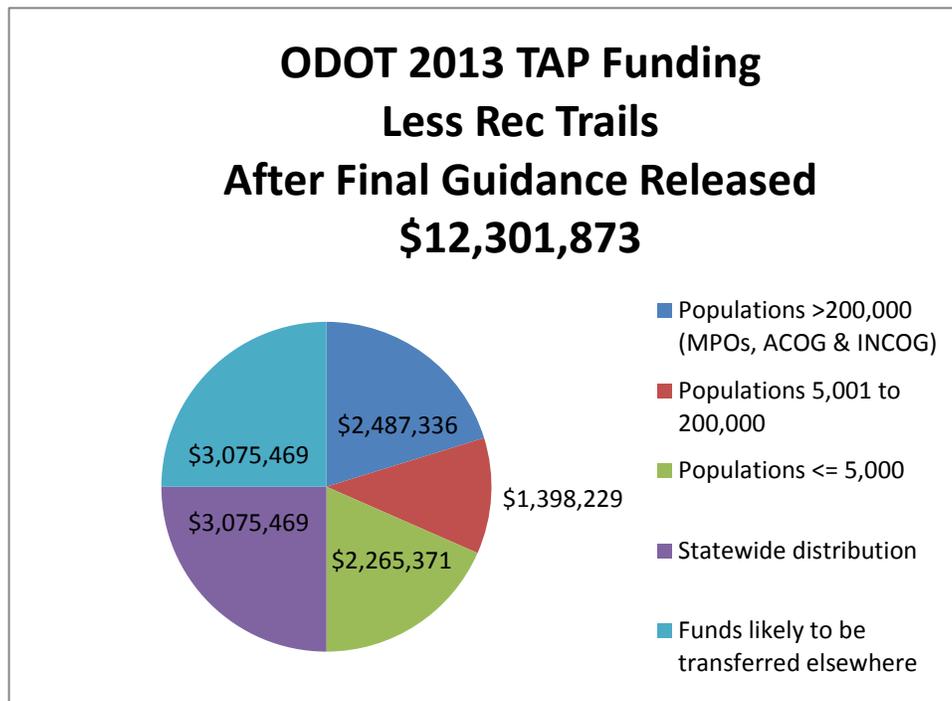
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APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS – DRAFT December 2013

Introduction

The Transportation Alternatives (TA) program is a new program under the MAP-21 legislation signed into law July 6, 2012. The program was effective October 1, 2012. The TA program allows for increased flexibility in projects and effectively combines project eligibility from the former Transportation Enhancements (TE), Recreational Trails Program and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs which were enacted under SAFETEA-LU.

For the first time the TA program calls for and funds independent competitive processes at several levels. The FY 2013 ODOT TA funding levels are illustrated below.



The right half of the chart represents the first round of funding; projects will compete against projects in other communities of similar population size. The funding for populations > 200,000 will be administered by the MPOs; ODOT will administer the process for two categories of smaller communities. Projects that fail to be selected in that first round of funding by population can then be resubmitted to ODOT for the \$3 million in funding to be distributed statewide. All projects will compete on equal footing for that funding, represented by the pie quarter in the lower left. ODOT will redistribute the funds represented by the upper left quarter, as permitted by the MAP-21 legislation.

To permit greater flexibility in funding, ACOG intends to fund TA projects biennially. For FFY 2013-2014, ACOG expects to have approximately \$2.8 million available for projects in the Oklahoma City Urbanized Area (UZA).

More detailed information about the Transportation Alternatives Program may be found here: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/tap.cfm>

Project Eligibility

To be eligible for the Transportation Alternatives program a project must meet the criteria found here: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>. The federal government permits local MPOs to further limit this list locally to address regional priorities. To that end, ACOG will accept applications for projects from this subset of eligible projects:

- 1) Transportation Alternatives Heading (Sec. 1122) and Title 23 U.S.C. Sec. 101 (29)
 - a. Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation.
 - b. Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
 - c. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users.

- 2) Safe Routes to School Program Heading (SAFETEA-LU Sec. 1404)
 - a. Planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.
 - b. Activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school, including public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders, traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools, student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment, and funding for training, volunteers, and managers of safe routes to school programs

Eligible Project Sponsors (Applicants)

The following is a list of eligible project sponsors under MAP-21. ACOG prefers that sponsors be familiar with the project delivery process under Title 23 USC, and that those sponsors have a working relationship with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

- Local governments (cities and counties);
- Regional transportation authorities;
- Transit agencies;
- Natural resource or public land agencies;
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools (note: ACOG prefers that school districts partner with local governments for project applications);
- Tribal governments; and
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a metropolitan planning organization or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of subsection (c) of section 213 of title 23.

ACOG Program Framework

- 1) ACOG welcomes applications representing both large and small projects within the Oklahoma City Urbanized Zone (UZA—see Appendix XX for a map). All projects will be assessed based on how well they meet the published criteria. Projects may not request more than \$500,000 or less than \$20,000 in federal funds as defined below. There is no limit on overall project size.

	Category - Projects
Federal funding request maximum	\$500K
Federal funding request minimum	\$20K
Project budget maximum	Unlimited
Examples of projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use trail • Sidewalk connecting major pedestrian generators • Protected bicycle facilities, like buffered bicycle lanes or cycle track • Safe bicycle & pedestrian crossings • Design for project that would be eligible for funding in the future • Signals to increase pedestrian safety • On-street bikeways and bike lanes • [striping and signage]

- 2) Projects must have at least a 20% commitment of non-federal funds to the total project cost.

For example, if a project cost is \$100,000, the non-federal funding commitment must be at least \$20,000.

- 3) The local government must provide the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with a TA Programming Resolution (with original signatures or a certified copy), adopted at a public meeting of its governing body, which describes the location of the project, type of improvement, total project cost, and source(s) of funds (a sample format is available from ACOG). A project location map including street names, project limits, and north arrow should also be provided. The MPO will forward the resolution, map, and cost

estimate (described below), to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) for programming by the State. *See Appendix C for example.*

- 4) Projects must be located principally inside the Oklahoma City Urbanized Area (UZA) (see attached map, Appendix A). Note: Some ACOG member governments may have only portions of their corporate limits inside the UZA. If your project is outside the UZA, project sponsors may apply to ODOT in the statewide TA program.
- 5) All expenses for construction projects associated with right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation will be the responsibility of the local government(s) initiating such projects.
- 6) The federal share of all projects within the geographical boundary of a single entity shall not exceed 56 (fifty-six) percent of the total annual funds made available to the Oklahoma City Urbanized Area until all entities' projects have been considered to determine if the TA funds can be fully obligated. The initial threshold of 56 (fifty-six) percent described above may be exceeded if there are not sufficient projects ready for obligation by other entities.
- 7) The obligation of TA funds by the Federal Highway Administration is based on the ability of eligible entities to provide local match and is contingent upon compliance with federal requirements (i.e. for construction projects, environmental clearance, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations shall be in order, based on approved construction plans).
- 8) The requesting entity must provide the MPO with a preliminary cost estimate for each TA project, prepared by an appropriate professional for the type of project proposed. Preliminary cost estimates for construction projects must be prepared by a registered professional engineer licensed in the State of Oklahoma, and shall include information on materials, quantities, unit prices, etc. Cost estimates must be current within 6 months of the date of the programming resolution, and updated as needed to be current within 6 months of the date of submission for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- 9) It is the responsibility of the entities to remain informed of the status of all TA projects within their jurisdiction, and to contact their project engineer, ODOT, and the MPO as needed to ensure that plan submittals, plan reviews, and environmental or other clearances are occurring in a timely fashion. In addition, the MPO, in conjunction with ODOT, will provide the Technical and Policy Committees with a monthly report on the status of each programmed TA project.
- 10) Projects that cross city limits may be handled in two ways: they may be considered a single project, with one lead sponsor and a Memorandum of Understanding with the

other communities; or they may be considered two separate projects, with two applications and separate grading. It shall be the responsibility of the entities to notify the MPO of any joint projects involving more than one entity and any additional sources of funds that will be used for each TA project, other than TA funds and local match funds.

Application Cycle Timeline

Date	Action
Friday, April 4, 2014	Workshop; Application Cycle Opens
Friday, May 23	Applications Due to ACOG by 5:00pm
Wednesday, June 11	ACOG staff present project recommendations to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Thursday, June 12	ACOG staff present project recommendations to APTAC and ITTC
Thursday, June 26	ACOG staff present project recommendations to ITPC and ACOG Board of Directors
Thursday, June 26	ACOG Board of Directors approves project selection

Project Selection Criteria

Projects will be selected based on the criteria described below. ACOG staff will check projects for eligibility, then score and rank each project and submit a summary score for consideration and recommendation by the ACOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee. Projects will subsequently be approved by the ACOG Board of Directors before being forwarded to ODOT for project administration.

Projects will be ranked on their relative competitiveness to other projects submitted in the current round. Each rating category has a maximum number of points based on the relative importance of each rating factor. Projects can score anywhere in that range. In other words, the rating factor is not an all-or-nothing rating. For example, a project may have some safety benefits that are ancillary to the primary purpose, and may score partial points for safety even if it is not “substantially” improving safety conditions.

Draft Criteria Questions

1. Improve safety **(15 points maximum)**

- a. Does the location of the project have a demonstrated history of crashes (see bike and pedestrian crash maps, HERE)? *(5 points)*
- b. Does the proposed project follow ACOG's design guidelines for appropriate facilities and appropriate engineering standards (see design guidelines, HERE)? *(10 points)*
- c. [narrative description of the safety improvements] (supporting/alternative for a & b)

2. Address network barriers **(10 points maximum)**

- a. Does the proposed project address barriers in the existing network in one of these 3 categories:
 - i. Overpass or underpass addressing a natural and artificial corridor such as interstates, railroads and rivers *(10 points)*;
 - ii. major arterial at-grade streets *(8 points)*;
 - iii. breaks in the street grid, or disconnections between neighborhoods *(5 points)*?

3. Improve connectivity within existing networks **(15 points maximum)**

- a. Does the proposed project expand or connect directly to existing bicycle or pedestrian facilities? Does the proposed project connect neighborhoods to multiuse paths, thereby improving the trails' potential use for transportation purposes? *(10 points)*
- b. How many activity centers/ employment centers exist within a quarter mile of the project (without an intervening barrier such as is addressed in #2) (see activity center map, HERE)? *(5 points)*

4. Improve connectivity between communities or between communities and tribal/federally owned land? **(10 points maximum)**

- a. Does the proposed project connect with existing or proposed network in an adjoining community?
[alt proposed question: Does the proposed project connect existing networks in two adjoining communities? *(10 points)* Does the proposed project connect an existing network in one community to a future planned network in an adjoining community? *(7 points)* Does the proposed project connect future planned networks in two adjoining communities? *(3 points)*

1. Funding **(15 points maximum)**
 - a. The extent to which applicants show proof of commitment to provide extra funding above the minimum 20% matching requirement (5 points)
 - b. The project includes a detailed, complete and realistic cost estimate (5 points)
 - c. Does the sponsor have a clear plan for future maintenance costs for the project? (5 points)

2. Planning & Design **(25 points maximum)**
 - a. Is the project consistent with local and regional comprehensive land use and transportation plans, such as the Regional Trails Master Plan or a local comprehensive or bicycle/ped plan? (10 points)
 - b. Has the project been conceptually designed, including clear and adequate project descriptions? (5 points)
 - c. Project schedule is detailed and realistic. (5 points)
 - d. Does the sponsor have control of the right-of-way, *and* has ROW acquisition been completed according to Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Acquisition Policies Act? (5 points)

3. Public Recognition **(10 points maximum)**
 - a. Project has the support of public not-for-profit organizations of national, regional, statewide, or local scope with expertise in the proposed project. (5 points)
 - b. Project creates a partnership at a local level (i.e. with a business association, foundation, etc. (5 points)

Procedures for Project Initiation After Selection

Note: The obligation of TA funds by the Federal Highway Administration is based on the ability of eligible entities to provide local match and is contingent upon compliance with federal requirements (i.e. for construction projects, environmental clearance, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations shall be in order, based on approved construction plans).

Sponsor must follow all ODOT requirements for consultant selection, right-of-way acquisition, environmental clearance, and project letting. Note: Under MAP-21, all projects under the Transportation Alternatives program are required to be administered under Title 23 as if they were on a federal-aid highway. Under SAFETEA-LU, project letting was done by local sponsors. Under MAP-21, project letting will be by ODOT, unless ODOT approves local sponsor letting.

- 1) ACOG notifies Sponsor and ODOT of selection

- 2) ODOT initiates contact with the Sponsor

- 3) Sponsor approves Project Agreement with ODOT Special Projects Branch or Local Government Division
- 4) ACOG amends the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the selected project
- 5) ODOT amends the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to include the project
- 6) ACOG, in conjunction with ODOT, will provide the Technical and Policy Committees with a monthly report on the status of each programmed TA project

Submission Instructions

Submit online application at [URL](#) (TBD) by May 23, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. Also submit an electronic version (PDF format preferred) to kbrady@acogok.org.

Please direct any questions about this process to Kate Brady at (405) 234-2264 or kbrady@acogok.org