



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director  
**DATE:** February 26, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** **MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program Process**

---

***AT A GLANCE – DISCUSSION***

*The purpose of this memorandum is to seek RTC Board approval of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) process. Adoption of this process provides for the selection of TAP eligible projects in accordance with the requirements of MAP-21.*

**BACKGROUND**

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a new federal transportation funding program for 2013 that was authorized by the bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21). The attached Transportation Alternatives Program provides for a project selection process that both meets the federal requirements and provides for the flexibility to meet the issues and characteristics of our region.

At the February Board meeting, staff provided an overview of the proposed Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) process. RTC staff has continued to work with member agencies to refine the proposed process for how projects will be selected across the three-county RTC region. At the March RTC Board meeting, staff will provide an overview of the TAP process and seek Board approval to move forward with the program as outlined in the attached MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program. The process is nearly the same as was outlined at the February meeting. The only refinements are to the selection criteria and development of a project application form.

Action by the RTC Board is being requested to approve the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Once the process is approved, the call for projects will be extended immediately, and the schedule anticipates final RTC Board project selection at the July RTC Board meeting.

Attachment

# MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program

## Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

### Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties

#### Introduction

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a new federal transportation funding program for 2013 as authorized in the new federal transportation act titled, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21). The Transportation Alternatives Program builds upon the previous Transportation Enhancement Program by clarifying the program’s goals that address the following: expanding travel choices, strengthening the local economy, improving the quality of life, and protecting the environment. For more information, please go to the Federal Highway Administration Interim Guidance at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

The Transportation Alternatives Program allows each region and/or state to develop their implementation program within the guidelines of the program. However, in order to give the proposed program a direction and focus the following goal statement is proposed. “Transportation Alternative projects are federally-funded community-based projects that expand travel choices and improve the travel experience.”

#### Funding Levels

The Transportation Alternatives funding is suballocated to the RTC three-county Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) region based on population, with varying amounts being allocated to US Census defined urbanized and rural areas. In addition a portion of the funds are flexible and can be programmed within either the urbanized or rural areas. The attached map illustrates these areas.

The 2013 three-county RTC regional sub-allocation is \$553,803, of which approximately 52% must be spent in the Vancouver Urban area, 12% in rural areas, and 36% can be spent anywhere across the region. This percentage may change over time depending on the amount of population growth between the respective urbanized and rural areas. In addition to the 2013 allocation, the table below estimates the funding for the same 4-year period as the MTIP. This four year is an estimate and will depend upon the new federal transportation bill that follows MAP-21.

**Estimated Transportation Alternatives Funding Sub-Allocation**

<b>Transportation Alternatives Program</b>	<b>Vancouver Urban Area</b>	<b>Rural</b> <i>Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties</i>	<b>Flexible</b> <i>Any Area</i>	<b>Total</b>
2013 Funding	\$288,000	\$65,000	\$200,803	\$553,803
2013-16 Funding	\$1,152,000	\$260,000	\$803,212	\$2,215,212

#### Eligible Applicants

- Local Governments;
- Regional Transportation Authorities;
- Transit Agencies;
- Natural Resources or Public Land Agencies;

- School Districts, Local Education Agencies, or Schools;
- Tribal Governments; and
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than MPO's or State agency) that the State determines to be eligible (includes Ports if they own the facility and it is open to the public).

All projects must be administered by a certification acceptance (CA) agency. Non CA agencies can apply for TAP funds but must have a CA agency sponsor the project. The sponsorship must be in place prior to applying for funds.

### **Eligible Activities**

The following is a summary of eligible activities authorized in the MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program. Projects will be selected by the RTC Board through a competitive process that will apply evaluation criteria to rank projects on their merit. Eligible projects must meet one or more of the eligible activities and relate to the surface transportation system (except for recreation trails). There is no requirement for equal distribution of funding among the various eligible activities. For a full explanation of eligible activities please review the Federal Highway Administration Interim Guidance at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.
- Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising.
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
- Vegetation management practices in transportation right-of-way.
- Archaeological activities relating to impacts for implementation of transportation projects eligible under this title.
- Any environmental mitigation activity related to highway construction due to highway runoff.

In addition, eligible Transportation Alternatives projects include any project eligible under the Recreational Trails Program, Safe Routes to School Program, and within the right-of-way of former interstate routes. Please note that Washington State is using a portion of Statewide Transportation Alternatives funds to conduct a statewide Safe Routes to School Program.

### **General Applicant Information**

- The Transportation Alternatives Program is a reimbursement grant program. Only after a Local Agency Agreement has been approved by WSDOT can project costs become eligible for reimbursement. This means project sponsors must incur the cost of the project prior to being repaid. Any work conducted prior to a signed Local Agency Agreement is not eligible for reimbursement.
- A local match of 20% is required for all Transportation Alternatives projects.

- Once the project is programmed in the MTIP, no cost increase or movement of funds between phases (PE, RW, and CN) will be allowed without RTC Board approval.
- All projects must follow federal and state regulations. Including environmental, right of way, ADA, and etc.
- To ensure project delivery an agency may want to split a large project into segments or separate project development phases. Each segment or phase needs to be deemed as a stand-alone project by RTC. For example, an agency could ask for only design funds and come back for construction funding in future. Also, an agency could break a 3 mile long path into two logical segments.

### **Screening Requirements**

- Project must be consistent with the MTP/RTP
- Project must contain at least one eligible Transportation Alternatives Category
- Must have a direct relationship to the surface transportation system (except trails)
- Funds cannot be used to supplement the construction of an existing project. For example, TAP funds cannot be used to pay for the sidewalk portion on an existing road project.
- Project must be open for public access

### **Project Selection**

RTC is proposing that a TAP Project Evaluation Team of five people be formed to evaluate and rank projects. The evaluation team could be made of staff or citizens drawn from RTC, WSDOT, C-TRAN, Healthy Community Coalition, Health Department, neighborhoods, Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, etc. RTC staff will form the committee.

Projects will be evaluated and ranked by the TAP Project Evaluation Team. The evaluation team ranking will then be taken to RTAC to recommend a list of project for selection by the RTC Board. The RTC Board will make final selection. Along with this selection process a local public involvement process will be included. This public involvement process will be developed to inform the selection process.

### **Project Application**

A project application is being developed.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

*The following is a general list of project evaluation criteria and points available.*

- Project helps to achieve an identified/planned need and has a public benefit (25 Points):
  - Describe how the project relates to an adopted plan such as the GMA plan, modal plan, neighborhood plan or other planning process. Describe how the project will improve the public travel experience and travel options.
- Multimodal, Intermodal Connectivity and Access to Jobs, and Services (20 Points).
  - Describe how the project provides a connection between modes, or improves transportation choices, or connects to land use services such as job locations, a civic center, library, grocery market, playground, retail center, medical office, school, and other.

- Accessibility/Equity (10 Points)
  - Describe to what extent the project will improve mobility for disadvantaged populations. For example is the project close to affordable housing, will the project improve low income access to transit, essential services, education opportunities, and others.
- Safety (20 Points)
  - Describe how the project improves public safety for transportation system users. For example, does the project address a specific safety issue, or does it address pedestrian or bike safety?
- Financial Support and Project Readiness (15 Points)
  - Describe how the project is funded, level of design, environmental approvals, and project schedule.
- Other (10 Points)
  - Describe the public involvement process, how project improves public health, and project amenities.

**Timeline**

As part of the application process, local agencies will be required to include a reasonable timeline for the implementation of preliminary engineering, right of way, and construction. It will be essential for agencies to obligate project phases on time according to the identified timeline.

**Proposed TAP Program Development Schedule**

The following is a proposed 2013 schedule for the regional TAP process:

March 5, 2013	RTC Board adopts TAP process
March 8, 2013	Call for TAP projects
April 26, 2013	TAP project applications due to RTC
April 29-30, 2013	RTC staff screens applications for eligibility
May 1-14, 2013	Public Comment Period
May 15-31, 2013	Review by Evaluation Team
June 6, 2013	Evaluation Team meets to rank projects
June 21, 2013	RTAC recommends ranking and selection of TAP projects to RTC Board
July 2, 2013	RTC Board selects TAP projects and amends MTIP
August 2013	TAP projects proceed to implementation