EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

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MEMORANDUM

TO: **Transportation Planning Committee**

FROM: **East-West Gateway Staff**

DATE: **July 31, 2019**

SUBJECT: **Wednesday, August 7, 2019 meeting**

The next meeting of the joint Illinois/Missouri Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) is scheduled for Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. at East-West Gateway Council of Governments offices. (Reminder parking is available at Stadium-East Garage)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the enclosed materials or the upcoming meeting please contact EWGCOG. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Functional Classification, Brenden Giblin, EWG
3. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, Melissa Theiss, EWG
4. Great Streets Update, Paul Hubbman, EWG
5. Review of STP-S Scoring Criteria for Local Program Applications, Jason Lange, EWG – **ACTION ITEM**
6. Other Business
   - Next meeting scheduled for:
     - Illinois: Tentatively mid-September 2019 at IDOT
     - Missouri: Weds., September 4, 2019 at 2 PM at EWG

Gateway Tower
One Memorial Drive, Suite 1600
St. Louis, MO 63102-2451

314-421-4220
618-274-2750
Fax 314-231-6120

webmaster@ewgateway.org
www.ewgateway.org

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To: Transportation Planning Committee

From: East-West Gateway staff

Subject: Review of Scoring Criteria for Local Program Applications – Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Suballocated

Date: July 31, 2019

Federal legislation authorizes Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to coordinate the selection and funding of transportation projects in urbanized areas throughout the United States. East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) is the MPO for the St. Louis region. In 2018, the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Suballocated (STP-S) scoring criteria were updated to meet the federal requirements for performance management outlined in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, emphasizing a performance-driven, outcome-based, and transparent planning and programming process. The 10 guiding principles identified in the region's long-range transportation plan, *Connected2045*, serve as the framework for the STP-S evaluation and decision making.

STP-S provides flexible funding that may be used by local governments for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge project on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects. Federal transportation legislation states that procedures that distribute STP-S funds to individual jurisdictions or modes within the MPO by pre-determined percentages or formulas are inconsistent with the federal provisions that require the MPO to develop a prioritized and financially constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.326 (m)).

STP-S Scoring Criteria Development

Staff first conducted an internal review of project scoring criteria from other MPOs and national best practices. After developing draft STP-S scoring criteria, staff convened focus groups to review and provide feedback to EWG. The feedback was incorporated into the draft STP-S scoring criteria and then presented to the Missouri and Illinois Transportation Planning Committees (TPC) for review and comment. Staff then administered a test evaluation during the 2017 call for projects to determine if the evaluation was working as intended. Staff continued to work with the TPC after the test evaluation to incorporate additional feedback, and a final version was approved by the Board of Directors in January 2018, with the TPC's recommendation to monitor the evaluation process and assess the scoring criteria after two STP-S funding rounds. The STP-S scoring criteria can be accessed here: https://www.ewgateway.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/STPS-ScoringCriteria-CFP2019.pdf.

Gateway Tower
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Call for Projects Process
After the STP-S scoring criteria were approved by the Board of Directors, staff initiated the 2018 call for projects, which started on February 26, 2018 with applications due on June 14, 2018. This round was longer than a typical funding round because staff wanted to make sure sponsors had sufficient time to become familiar with the new application process and updated STP-S scoring criteria. In addition, this round was not on the normal STP-S cycle, which typically opens in November with applications due in mid-February to early-March. The 2019 call for projects started on November 29, 2018 with applications due on February 14, 2019.

During both rounds, staff hosted several project development workshops across the region to discuss program requirements and to explain the new application process and updated STP-S scoring criteria. Staff also hosted multiple project review workshops to provide feedback on specific projects and met with sponsors individually to discuss potential applications. An FAQ document was also developed to answer questions received during each funding round.

Performance Assessment Survey
Staff administered a survey after each application deadline to receive feedback about the application process and STP-S scoring criteria. Both the 2018 and 2019 surveys showed that sponsors felt that the project development workshops helped them gain a better understanding of the STP-S scoring criteria and application types. In addition, sponsors found benefit in presenting to and getting feedback from the panel at the project review workshops, and suggested that staff should provide additional time to review each project.

Sponsors provided input on the improvements made to the 2018 application process and updated STP-S scoring criteria, which included: the applications are more relevant to the project type, the scoring criteria are clearer and easier to follow, the applications are downloadable and easier to fill out, the focus of scoring is on quality rather than cost, and the process is more simplified. The survey also solicited feedback on ways that staff could enhance the application process. **Table 1** below shows suggested changes or concerns provided by sponsors and staff's response to the feedback.

Table 1: 2018 Survey Responses

Sponsor suggested changes or concerns:	Staff responses and modifications:
The 2018 timeline should be kept for future submissions (i.e., opened in February with applications due in June).	The February submittal deadline is necessary to align the schedule of the local program development with the schedule of the TIP and its public comment period.
Crash reports should not be required for non-safety projects.	The requirement to submit crash reports for non-safety projects, or those projects not including safety treatments, was removed.
Backup documentation for pavement rating should be clarified.	Staff developed a Road Condition Evaluation Form to help clarify the instructions to conduct the PASER evaluation.
The criteria are too complex for the planning stage of a project.	Projects should be at least in the conceptual stage to allow for an accurate estimate of cost as federal funds are limited to what is requested in the application. A poor estimate could result in significant cost overruns for a sponsor.

Sponsor responses from the 2019 call for projects were similar to the responses received from the previous survey: staff is accessible and provides support during the application process, the process is simplified and easy to understand, the application is straightforward, and the scoring criteria are objective. **Table 2** on the following page shows suggested changes or concerns provided by sponsors and staff's response to the feedback.

Table 2: 2019 Survey Responses

Sponsor suggested changes or concerns:	Staff responses and modifications:
Provide a longer application timeline.	The 2020 call for projects schedule is still being finalized, however, more time will be allotted to sponsors to develop the project applications.
Provide a summary of changes from the previous year's application (i.e., what is required to be submitted).	Changes to the application process are presented at the project development workshops; staff will also highlight changes made to the application process in the project development workbook.
Reduce duplicate pages for sponsors submitting multiple applications.	Staff is working on transitioning to an online application form that will help reduce duplications in data and information entry.
Remove the requirement for hard copies and original signatures.	Staff utilizes the hard copies during the evaluation process and follow-up meetings. The online application form may remove the need for original signatures.
Accept more recent crash reports.	Sponsors are requested to provide the official crash reports for a defined 5-year reporting period. There is often a lag in official crash data to account for late deaths not captured with preliminary reports and to process all crash reports throughout the state. The official crash reports are used to develop a total crash rate and a serious injury and fatal crash rate for each project. Using the same reporting period allows projects to be fairly evaluated against each other.
The Road Condition Evaluation Form is difficult to use.	The Road Condition Evaluation Form will be revisited to address the issues that sponsors experienced while entering in the information.
Reexamine the logical termini process for Illinois sponsors.	Staff is working with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to refine the logical termini process.

STP-S Scoring Criteria Adjustments

After the 2018 funding recommendations were made by the TPCs, staff reviewed the scoring criteria to see if any of the metrics needed to be adjusted. Staff made the following key modifications to the STP-S scoring criteria:

- Traffic Flow application: The improved mobility and congestion measure was adjusted to include peak hour volume to calculate total travel time improvement or total delay reduction. The previous measure evaluated change in speed or delay regardless of the traffic volumes at the project location.

- Safety application: The benefit/cost analysis (BCA) formula was adjusted to include comprehensive costs. The previous BCA formula incorporated economic costs. This change was made based on the National Safety Council's updated method used to measure the costs of motor-vehicle crashes. Economic costs include the following components: wage and productivity losses, medical and administrative expenses, motor-vehicle damage, and uninsured employer costs for crashes involving workers. Comprehensive costs include not only the economic cost components, but also a measure of the value of lost quality of life associated with deaths and injuries (i.e., what society is willing to pay to prevent them).

- Transit Asset Management and System Upgrades application: The preservation measure for transit system upgrades was better defined. The Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM)

scale was incorporated to evaluate asset condition and average weekday boardings on the affected route(s) was included to demonstrate project impact.

- Road, Bridge, Traffic Flow, and Freight/Economic Development applications: Minor point adjustments were made to the multimodal measure to better differentiate between low, medium, and high multimodal improvement types.

Staff is currently analyzing the scoring criteria used to evaluate the 2019 STP-S projects, and is examining the following key modifications:

- Bridge application: FHWA has established condition-based performance measures which includes classification and condition ratings of four key items: deck, superstructure, substructure, and culvert. Projects were assigned points under the safety measure if the bridge was classified as either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The safety measure will be adjusted based on FHWA's condition-based performance measures (i.e., poor, fair, good).

- Active Transportation application: The connectivity metric will be enhanced to better analyze sidewalk gaps. Rather than assigning points based on *only* whether or not the proposed project physically touches a similar facility, sidewalk projects will be evaluated based on the level of connectivity provided (for example: how well developed the sidewalk network is within a ¼ mile buffer of the facility).

- Road, Traffic Flow, Safety, and Freight/Economic Development applications: Instead of using quartiles to assign points for both the total crash rate and fatal and serious injury crash rate, projects will be grouped into tertiles (i.e., high, medium, low). This is to better differentiate between projects that are addressing crashes and those making preventive safety improvements.

STP-S Scoring Criteria Findings

Table 3 on the following page provides a comparison of some of the criteria used to evaluate STP-S projects. The projects submitted in 2016 and 2017 were evaluated using the *old* scoring criteria, and the projects submitted in 2018 and 2019 were evaluated using the updated scoring criteria approved by the Board of Directors in January 2018. This analysis shows the number and percentage, both submitted and funded, of roadway projects incorporating multimodal elements, *outside community* projects, and projects serving Environmental Justice populations for each funding round (2016 – 2019). Please note that this analysis does not include *all* criteria used to evaluate the projects. Staff is highlighting the following measures based on concerns that the TPC had during the development of the scoring criteria.

Table 3: Scoring Criteria Findings by Year

Illinois					Missouri				
	2016	2017	2018	2019		2016	2017	2018	2019
Total # of Projects Submitted	25	23	27	24	Total # of Projects Submitted	86	97	106	88
Total # of Projects Funded	13	13	14	15	Total # of Projects Funded	59	45	45	56
Total Federal Submitted	$11,418,345	$12,628,240	$12,887,542	$11,024,909	Total Federal Submitted	$86,626,933	$93,400,253	$122,296,953	$103,212,086
Total Federal Funded	$5,309,214	$5,329,816	$5,853,630	$6,234,243	Total Federal Funded	$45,659,455	$37,376,156	$50,134,564	$60,895,981
Avg. Federal Cost of Submitted Projects	$456,734	$549,054	$477,316	$459,371	Avg. Federal Cost of Submitted Projects	$1,007,290	$962,889	$1,153,745	$1,172,865
Avg. Federal Cost of Funded Projects	$408,401	$409,986	$418,116	$415,616	Avg. Federal Cost of Funded Projects	$773,889	$830,581	$1,114,101	$1,087,428
Roadway Projects with Multimodal Elements					***Roadway Projects with Multimodal Elements***				
# Submitted	21	22	21	17	# Submitted	34	48	39	30
# Funded	10	12	11	11	# Funded	21	18	21	22
% Submitted	84.00%	95.65%	77.78%	70.83%	% Submitted	39.53%	49.48%	36.79%	34.09%
% Funded	76.92%	92.31%	78.57%	73.33%	% Funded	35.59%	40.00%	46.67%	39.29%
Outside Community Projects					***Outside Community Projects***				
# Submitted	9	7	7	7	# Submitted	11	22	23	18
# Funded	4	5	3	6	# Funded	8	11	12	14
% Submitted	36.00%	30.43%	25.93%	29.17%	% Submitted	12.79%	22.68%	21.70%	20.45%
% Funded	30.77%	38.46%	21.43%	40.00%	% Funded	13.56%	24.44%	26.67%	25.00%
Projects Serving Environmental Justice Populations					***Projects Serving Environmental Justice Populations***				
# Submitted	5	3	6	9	# Submitted	18	36	33	26
# Funded	3	1	5	5	# Funded	15	20	15	17
% Submitted	20.00%	13.04%	22.22%	37.50%	% Submitted	20.93%	37.11%	31.13%	29.55%
% Funded	23.08%	7.69%	35.71%	33.33%	% Funded	25.42%	44.44%	33.33%	30.36%

Conclusion

The STP-S scoring criteria, developed in conjunction with the TPC, meets federal performance-based requirements and aligns with the 10 guiding principles identified in *Connected2045*. Over the last two years, staff has continued to reach out to sponsors via workshops and meetings to educate them on the criteria and application types. Sponsors have indicated the scoring criteria are straightforward, easy to understand, and objective. Staff will continue to monitor the evaluation process and streamline the application process.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the TPC's endorsement to continue evaluating STP-S projects using the updated scoring criteria.

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General Directions from Missouri to parking garages

From I-70

Exit at the new Tucker exit into downtown. Continue south on Tucker to Walnut St., turn left on Walnut to Broadway. Make a right on Broadway to the Stadium East Garage entrance on the left.

From I-64

Exit at 6th St., left on Gratiot, left on 4th St, north four blocks to Stadium East Garage on left.

From I-44

Exit at Memorial Dr. Turn left on Walnut up to Broadway. Turn left on Broadway to Stadium East Garage entrance.

From I-55

Merge to I-44 and continue on I-44 toward downtown. Exit at Memorial Dr. Turn left on Walnut up to Broadway. Turn left on Broadway to Stadium East Garage entrance.

General Directions from Illinois to parking garage

From I-64/55 (Poplar St. Bridge)

Exit at Memorial Dr. Turn left on Walnut up to Broadway. Turn left on Broadway to Stadium East Garage entrance.

From Eads Bridge

Exit I-64 at 3rd St. in East St. Louis. Follow the Casino Queen signs toward the riverfront to the ramps up to the bridge. On St. Louis side, continue west to Broadway. Turn left on Broadway for seven blocks to Stadium East Garage on left.