Achieving Consensus in Developing the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization’s Discretionary Projects Policy

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Part 1: Why Develop a Policy Document?
- A growing MPO
- A growing portfolio of local projects
- CRTPO’s Project Oversight Committee

Part 2: Developing the Policy Document
- Rethinking our approach
- Forming a work group & hiring a facilitator
- Building consensus
- Approval and implementation
A Growing MPO

- CRTPO is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Charlotte Urbanized Area
- 24 jurisdictions, including 3 counties, are included within CRTPO
- The population within the CRTPO region is approximately 1.4 million
  - 15% of NC population
A Growing Portfolio of Locally Administered Discretionary Projects

- **CRTPO responsibility:**
  - Allocate STBG-DA, TAP-DA, CMAQ, and Bonus Allocation funds to member jurisdictions
  - Ensure that all funding has been obligated to avoid rescissions
  - Monitor approx. 100 active discretionary projects
    - Request updates at least quarterly

- **Prior CRTPO process:**
  - Separate, ad-hoc project calls for the STBG, TAP, CMAQ, and Bonus Allocation funds allocated directly to CRTPO
  - Time-consuming to repeat the same deliberation process each time
  - Process was confusing to outsiders
Current Annual Funding Levels

*Note: Based upon averages within the 2018-2027 Transportation Improvement Program. Funding amounts subject to change.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Amount (in millions of $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRTPO-Controlled Funds</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STBG-DA Funds</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAP-DA Funds</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMAQ Funds</td>
<td></td>
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**State-Controlled (STI) (highway only)**

In millions of $
Project Oversight Committee

- Subcommittee of CRTPO’s TCC(TCC), formed in 2015.
  - Reforms to State funding legislation (Strategic Transportation Investments law)
  - Bonus Allocation from I-77 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) project ($144 Million)

- Tasks identified in governing document:
  - Project selection methodologies
  - Consensus-based recommendations
  - Review/recommend requests for additional funding for active projects

- Late 2017: Discussed the need for documented policies
- Early 2018: Surveyed POC members regarding policy content
Project Oversight Committee

- Research policy guides from other NC MPOs, including meeting with staff from Raleigh area MPO (CAMPO).

- Initial policy development products:
  - Chapter outline
  - Annual unified funding schedule
  - Document adoption schedule

- Planned to make decisions with the full committee, topic by topic.....
Rethinking Our Approach

Fundamental areas to address before we could move forward:

1. How to reach agreement (and stay in agreement) with 15+ people at the table.

2. How to facilitate discussion and still have our point of view included in the discussion.

3. How to press pause on business-as-usual and make policy development the number-one priority of a busy committee.
Forming a Work Group & Hiring a Facilitator

- Recognized the need to have discussions in a smaller group or groups.
- CRTPO staff drafted a list of six members to serve on the Discretionary Policy Development Work Group.

- Presented a proposal to the POC to:
  - **form the Work Group to make policy recommendations, draft the document & annual schedule**;
  - **hire a professional facilitator to guide the policy-development process in an impartial manner**; and
  - **delay awarding FY-19 funds until after document complete and adopted**.
Building Consensus

- Four Work Group meetings, August through December

**What’s In Your Boat?: The 5 Policy Values**

1. Equitable process
2. Consistently applied
3. Cost-effective
4. Easily understood by potential applicants
5. Transparent

Next: Stakeholder interviews
- Testing the 5 Values
- Developing the Policy’s Guiding Principles
Building Consensus

**Guiding Principles of the Policy**

- Guide the development of the discretionary-projects policy
- Supported by the 5 Values and consistent with stakeholder input

1. Projects must be federal funds-eligible.
2. Must be an annual schedule for proposing, scoring and funding projects.
3. Project scoring must be consistent with the requirements of the funding sources.
4. Must include a process for addressing project funding shortfalls.
5. The process will be iterative (i.e. will evolve based on experience).
6. The policy must be transparent and easily understood by key stakeholders.

**Next: Focus Group**
Building Consensus

- **Focus Group Session: Are we on the right track?**
  - Engaging elected officials in the process
  - Reporting on the work completed to date
  - Testing the Guiding Principles and the 5 Values
  - Seeking feedback on proposed policy changes
  - Sharing results of research into specific policy topics
Building Consensus

- **Putting it in writing**
  - Work Group consensus on key policy recommendations
  - Delegating main writing tasks and timeline for edits
  - Work group approved draft December 4th

- **Constant communication**
  - Reporting to POC at each meeting
  - Reporting to TCC and Board at key points in process

- **Beginning the approval process**
  - Group presentation to POC December 13th
  - TCC-Board Workshop December 18th
Building Consensus - Approval Process

- **TCC-Board Workshop**
  - Work Group and facilitator conducted presentation together
  - Excellent discussion & overall agreement on policy recommendations
  - Some concerns raised which resulted in minor policy changes
  - Bridged the gap with approval process in January-February 2019
Approval & Implementation

- **Board action**
  - CRTPO’s Discretionary Projects Policy Document and annual schedule adopted February 2019

- **Implementation by staff & Project Oversight Committee**
  - Shortfall funding round March - April
  - Funding decisions under review May 2019

- **Next Steps**
  - Applicant training session webinar
  - Call for projects
  - Documenting potential policy revisions

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**Development Timeline**

- **Policy Document Development**
  - Work Group Meetings: Research & Discussion
    - Aug 29th, Oct 4th & 22nd
  - Focus Group
    - Oct 17th
  - Staff Edits
    - Nov 28th

- **Policy Document Review**
  - Work Group Meeting: Finalize Draft
    - Dec 4th
  - POC Workshop
    - Dec 13th

- **Policy Document Approval**
  - TCC & Board for Information
    - Jan 2019
  - TCC & CRTPO Board for Action
    - Feb 2019
Analysis & Closing Thoughts

- **Build relationships and utilize expertise**
  - Account for all of the skill sets and points of view relevant to the project
  - Delegate tasks carefully and appropriately, and acknowledge your limitations

- **Recognize team members’ contributions**
  - Verbal and/or monetary* appreciation for all contributors’ time and energy
  - *Includes snacks, lunch, dinner

- **Communicate**
  - Iron out problems, conflicts, and misunderstandings as early as possible, by design
  - Achieve consensus and build agreement in stages
  - Be flexible, but make decisions in the spirit of the agreed-upon core principles
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