

Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

ACTION TRANSMITTAL

No. 2010-62

DATE: October 6, 2010
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: 2011 Regional Solicitation: Elevating Preservation as a Goal in STP
Regional Solicitation

MOTION: That the TAB adds criteria in the "A" Minor Augmenter category to measure the preservation value of proposed projects.

DISCUSSION: The need for preservation funding for "A" Minor Arterials is primarily a concern for cities and counties operating in the older built-out areas of the region (Augmenters and some Relievers). These areas have few opportunities for capacity expansion but many important routes with major preservation needs, while communities in the growing newly-populated areas of the region do not generally have as old of a system and need the STP funding to help address increased traffic from growth more than preserving the existing system. This proposal recognizes that the value of preservation is relatively larger in older communities than in newly-developed areas.

The TAC Funding & Programming Committee reached consensus to use the Augmenter system as a pilot to test a new funding priority - preservation projects that provide a long-term benefit. The committee recommended adding criteria that measure the preservation value of the project and reducing the points of some of the other criteria that Augmenters cannot usually accomplish such as access management and reducing congestion.

The committee also recommends that only Augmenters that are beyond their useful life should be eligible and that only total reconstructions and not mill and overlay projects be eligible. Staff will need to determine an appropriate measure for "useful life".

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Funding and Programming Committee	Review and Recommend	September 16, 2010
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	October 6, 2010
TAB Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	

Elevating Preservation as a Goal

The TAC Funding & Programming Committee had a lengthy discussion on this proposal. There was consensus on the committee to use the Augmenter system as a pilot to test a new funding priority.

Pros:

- There is a need for older communities to reconstruct important roadways that have not been reconstructed in over 50 years. The cost of doing so is quite expensive so communities like St Paul, Minneapolis and older suburbs make do with temporary solutions that are less than fully adequate at making these roads function as urban minor arterials. The federal funds would make it possible for these communities to make these improvements. These roads are usually located in areas that provide few, if any, opportunities for capacity expansion or access management improvements.
- Preservation is more in line with the priorities of the core communities of the region.

Cons:

- If we focus the Augmenter system toward preservation and away from Expansion, there will be less funding for expansion and we may miss out on expansion opportunities in the core. The selected project in 2009 was a new alignment in Minneapolis (Granary Road).

Issues to Consider:

- This issue is primarily a concern for cities and counties operating in the older built-out areas of the region (Augmenters and some Relievers). These areas have few opportunities for capacity expansion but many important routes with major preservation needs, while communities in the growing newly-populated areas of the region do not generally have as old of a system and need the STP funding to help address increased traffic from growth more than preserving the existing system.
- Preservation projects and Expansion projects do not lend themselves to “apples-to-apples” comparison since you cannot meet the goals of congestion mitigation, air quality improvement and safety improvements with a simple preservation project. Do we need separate criteria for these kinds of projects? Or do we lower the importance of those criteria and add new preservation criteria to fill out the evaluation.
- We should elevate safety in importance as a criterion on preservation projects. Congestion mitigation, air quality and access management could be lower in importance for these roadways.
- With the exception of crash reduction, the cost effectiveness criteria measure those aspects that would not be achieved on a preservation project (air quality, congestion reduction). How would we measure cost effectiveness of preservation projects. Our current cost-effectiveness criteria do not measure lifecycle or maintenance cost savings that preservation projects can incur.
- There was a concern that this would lead us to fund mill and overlay projects using federal funds. Any improvements should be long-term improvements.

The TAB adopted the Minor Arterial Study Report in September, 1990. The purpose of the study was to determine the role and a funding strategy for the region’s minor arterial system. The study concluded that maintaining regional mobility on minor arterials was a

critical funding need for the region, and the passage of ISTEA in 1991 created a funding stream to implement the study. Interestingly, the Minor Arterial Study did not include Augmenters as a category of "A" Minor Arterials, but they were included in the first "A" Minor Arterial System adopted by the Board and included in the first regional solicitation in 1993. Providing mobility is still the key reason for having and funding improvements on the "A" Minor Arterial System. The trick is how to kill two birds with one stone through the solicitation – provide mobility on Augmenters and provide greater emphasis on preservation.