

Memorandum

To: MPO Committee Members
From: Sandy Shackelford, Director of Planning & Transportation
Date: March 8, 2023
Reference: Smart Scale Round 6 Preparation Update

Purpose:

In 2020, the MPO implemented a new process to develop SMART SCALE project applications which included early identification of up to two MPO projects that may need additional engagement prior to submission. This process was implemented for the first time in preparation for SMART SCALE Round 5 applications. The Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing was identified as needing additional engagement, and MPO staff were able to facilitate an extensive public engagement effort that was used to inform the development of the final project application.

Project Background:

The MPO has worked through funding applications for all MPO-indicated projects included on the Constrained List of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. A summary of previously submitted, but unfunded projects is included at the end of this memo for review. Of the projects that remain a high priority, the roundabout at District Avenue, the 5th Street project, and the Rivanna River Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge could be evaluated for opportunities to submit in additional rounds.

Based on the Round 5 project scores, the roundabout at District Avenue stands the best chance of being funded in future SMART SCALE rounds (of the projects on the constrained list, not funded in previous rounds). This project remains a high priority for Albemarle County and should be considered for application by either the MPO or Albemarle County.

The MPO's 5th Street project application did not score particularly well due to a low benefit score, however improvements along the 5th Street corridor remain an important safety priority for Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. If the MPO wanted to consider reapplying for this project in Round 6, the scope of the project could be evaluated to determine adjustments that may yield a more competitive application.

Finally, the Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing remains a regional priority and it scored well in Round 5 with a high benefit score. However, additional work needs to be completed outside of the SMART SCALE application process in order for the project to be competitive for state funding. The TJPDC submitted a US Department of Transportation RAISE grant for funding to complete the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project. RAISE grant awards will be announced by the end of June, 2023. RAISE

is a highly competitive national program, so even if the project is unsuccessful in the first attempt, it may be beneficial to re-apply in subsequent application cycles.

In addition to the work of the MPO and the local governments to develop SMART SCALE project applications, VDOT is also initiating new pipeline projects to evaluate potential improvements along two different segments of Route 250 in Albemarle County. The first will be looking at the interchange of Route 250 and Barracks Road, and the second will be looking at a section of Ivy Road that includes the Route 250 interchange. These pipeline projects will be managed by VDOT for the purposes of identifying recommendations that could be submitted by the MPO, TJPDC, and/or Albemarle County as SMART SCALE applications in the upcoming application cycle.

The MPO has worked through submitting the high priority projects identified in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The projects referred to in this memo have either already been through a public planning process or will be undergoing a VDOT-driven public planning process as part of the pipeline studies. Therefore, the MPO staff capacity for SMART SCALE may be best directed towards supporting VDOT's pipeline studies and working to further develop previous project applications into more competitive projects rather than undertaking intensive engagement on an additional project. This would allow the MPO staff to have some flexibility to coordinate with the localities on specific project applications once the recommendations from the pipeline studies are developed.

Recommendation:

No formal action is requested at this time, however, staff is looking for feedback and general consensus from the policy board on this approach.

If there are any questions or comments, please contact Sandy Shackelford at sshackelford@tjpd.org.

Unfunded Projects from SMART SCALE Round 5					
ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL COST	BENEFIT SCORE	SMART SCALE SCORE	Notes
CA-MPO	District Avenue Roundabout (at Hydraulic Road)	\$20,051,997	9.22	4.6	Scored well; Barely missed being funded; Could be resubmitted
CA-MPO	Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing	\$42,115,788	13.35	3.17	High benefit score, but also high cost; Could be resubmitted if there are no other projects; Will know about RAISE Grant at end of June.
CA-MPO	Fifth Street Extended Multimodal Improvements	\$22,788,588	3.83	1.68	Low benefit score, but high community interest in improving 5th Street; Would need to adjust scope.
TJPDC	US250/Rolkin Road Pedestrian Improvements	\$11,927,213	4.66	3.91	
TJPDC	US250/Milton Road Intersection Improvements	\$9,757,582	1.6	1.64	Low benefit score
TJPDC	US250/Louisa Road (Route 22) Intersection Improvements	\$10,986,125	0.85	0.78	Low benefit score

Unfunded Projects from SMART SCALE Round 4					
ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL COST	BENEFIT SCORE	SMART SCALE SCORE	Notes
CA-MPO	Hillsdale South Extension	\$34,314,082	12.95	3.78	Part of 29 Solutions recommendations. On the Constrained Roadway List, but high cost. May be desirable to re-evaluate the broader area once other Hydraulic projects are implemented.
TJPDC	US29/ Frays Mill/ Burnley Station Intersection Improvements	\$11,076,070	1.13	1.02	Low benefit score