

Transportation and Air Quality Committee (TAQC)

Lisa Cupid, Vice Chair

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

10:30AM - Noon

Online Meeting Notes

[illegible]

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1. Welcome; Acceptance of July 14, 2021, TAQC Meeting Summary

Lisa Cupid, Vice Chair, greeted the committee and welcomed them to the meeting. Cupid asked John Orr, ARC, for any written public comments. There were none.

2. 2022 Draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and 5303 Grant Application (First Read)

John Orr, ARC, explained the importance of the UPWP and provided highlights of policy changes since the passing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Some of the changes presented include tackling the climate crisis, the transition to clean energy, solar and other energy programs for state, local governments, and planning organizations. Another policy change is in the area of equity. The equity policy now requires that recipients of federal funds ensure about 40% of funding benefit underserved communities. While not all of the 40% need to be reserved, however, it should be the goal.

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update will be ready for action by TCC in January 2024. John mentioned that the committee will need to take another look at some of the planning emphasis areas such as the regional electrification and freight plans and be ready to make some critical policy and priority updates on the conclusion of these plans. Another item that we will be looking at is consulting contracts that may be persuaded in the next calendar year with the RTP and IIJA as we are still in discussions on precisely what that work will be.

It was noted that the three core programs we collectively been working on in the past year, the LCI, County Transportation Plan and the Freight Cluster Area Plan received significant feedback from TCC and are still a high priority for local governments. These programs help support and achieve regional objectives but also help provide a funding list for a lot of our TSP/OST programs in the region. Also, we are required (per federal requirements) to ensure that all locally federally funded planning projects, including local governments who applied with FHWA for its planning studies, that those projects must be reflected in the UPWP in order to get a contract for the study. Right now, we are working with local staff around the region to make sure we are accurately capturing these projects in the UPWP. The budget for the work program development is in progress and when we get public input for the proposed work program we will be back for planned action in December. All information, links and documents are on the ARC website.

John also noted what the implications to local governments will be. Pursuing discretionary grants will be a competitive environment and that we want to help our region align projects with the program category and ultimately be able to communicate the depths of these projects. TAQC and TCC will help give direction and set priorities with staff and we will be

in partnership with our federal delegation in our regular meetings to make sure elected officials understand the priorities in Washington.

David Haynes, ARC, shared information about the SMART Program, its application and why it makes sense to take a regional approach. Building partnership is a strong theme in this grant and federal officials are encouraging identify an issue and who could help address that challenge through a coalition and implement it. David reviewed some of the eligible activities but also mentioned that emphasis will be placed on how the proposed project is addressing safety, equity, climate change, workforce development, scalability, etc. Next steps that were discussed by the consortium are to think about what those opportunities are that could be good candidates for the applications. Ultimately, the consortium would like to figure out a collaborative approach so that we could be ready as a region to identify a specific project, get all the partnerships onboard and pull in all the applications in time for the deadline. However, a more realistic goal would be to come to a consensus on a regional SMART application for 2023. Hopefully, there will be some input and a consensus on what a 2023 application could look like. Also, if we can identify a target project that we can go after that would help inform and strengthen any locally lead application as well.

David also noted that a multi-jurisdiction and regional approach makes sense on this grant. Getting ideas for projects is very important. The next step for the consortium is to begin identifying a regional application that we can submit by November 18th. However, a more realistic goal would be to come to a consensus on a regional SMART application for 2023. Hopefully, there will be some input and a consensus on what a 2023 application could look like. Also, if we can identify a target project that we can go after that would help inform and strengthen any locally lead application as well.

In conclusion, David presented the timeline for the consortium. The consortium met on September 30, throughout October we will figure out how to approach the SMART pilot and in November see if we can identify a project for 2023.

3. Other Committee Introduced Items State of the Region

ARC Governance Committee meeting, Wednesday, October 12, 2022, following the TAQC meeting.

4. Announcements

John announced the ARC is busy preparing to welcome our board members, partners, elected officials, civic leaders, and the business community to our signature State of the Region event. This year, the breakfast will be held **Friday, October 28** at the Georgia World Congress Center and 100% in person.