



Corridors of Commerce Scoring and Prioritization Process - Update

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Public Input Received

- MnDOT received slightly more than 150 e-mails on the draft process with some still coming in.
- MnDOT also received about a two dozen letters and a few phone calls.
- MnSHIP, which guided funding investments many times greater in dollars than C of C, received about 300 total comments when it was out for public input.

Public Input Received

- MnDOT received both written and verbal comments from several legislators, mostly in Greater Minnesota about the draft.
- MnDOT gave a total of eighteen presentations on the draft process, with ATP-7 & ATP-8 taking top honors for having the most people in attendance.
- Discussions in both Greater Minnesota and the Metro got very heated at times regarding the Regional Balance criteria.

What Did We Hear?



Regional Balance

- How MnDOT applies the Regional Balance criteria was the most heated, divisive, and most commented on point of anything else in the draft process.
- Several legislators weighed in, including the Chairs of the Senate and House transportation committees.
- Small outstate businesses like “Dakota Doggy Daycare Hotel and Spa” sent passionate comments objecting to anything other than a soft 50/50 split.

Regional Balance

There clearly was a geographic tone to the comments.

- Comments from Greater Minnesota were generally focused on nothing less than a 50-50 split for regional balance.
- Comments from the Metro area were generally focused on something beyond a 50-50 split for regional balance.

Regional Balance MnDOT Response

Continue with the use of a soft 50-50 split of the funding between the Metro area and Greater Minnesota.

- A soft 50-50 split means the funding will be divided approximately 50% for each, but the actual split will be made at a logical break point.
- Metro area is defined as the eight counties covered by MnDOT's Metro District; Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Scott, Washington, Anoka, Carver, & Chisago.

Partial Funding of Projects

- Several local asked if there isn't enough funding to fully fund the next ranked project on the list that they be given time to try and find additional funding to fill the gap by "partially funding" the project before going down farther on the list?
- This issue was concentrated only to the metro area.

Partial Funding of Projects

MnDOT Response

- If the next project on the list needs more funds than is remaining within a region's soft split, MnDOT will partially fund the project initially.
- The submitter of the project will be notified that the project is only partially funded and they will be given 30-days to try to find funding to cover the gap.
- If they are unsuccessful, MnDOT will move to the next highest scoring project in the region and repeat if necessary.

Lengthen 4-year Construction Requirement

- Metro area local governments requested MnDOT lengthen the time construction must begin for projects from 4-years to 8-years.
- The concern is two projects may both be deliverable in the 4-year timeframe, but may cause traffic conflict if constructed at the same time.

Lengthen 4-year Construction Requirement

- If the construction time frame is lengthened, this would allow the projects to have staggered construction periods and thus limit impacts to the traveling public.
- The Corridors of Commerce law allows for a minimum of three years for construction to begin or a time longer “as determined by the Commissioner”.

Lengthen 4-year Construction Requirement MnDOT Response

- To the extent possible, MnDOT will try to use innovative delivery and construction methods to try to construct projects within a 4-year time frame.
- However if a selected project/s will cause conflicting traffic issues with other projects (whether that be other Corridors of Commerce projects or regular program projects), MnDOT will use the flexibility within the law to adjust the construction schedule so they do not conflict.

Weighting of ROI and Economic Impact

- We received several comments questioning the higher amount of weight given to the Return on Investment criteria and the lower weight given to the Economic Impact criteria for a program that is suppose to be Corridors of Commerce.

Weighting of ROI and Economic Impact MnDOT Response

- Adjust the point scoring for Return on Investment down from 140 points to 100-points.
- Adjust the Economic Impact point scoring up from 50 points to 100-points.
- Encourage the future study of other factors and approaches to score points in this criteria.

Planning Study Age

- We heard comments/concerns about how current do planning studies need to be in order to receive points in the Open Decision Making portion of the Policy Objective matrix?
- Some commenters have suggested the study should be 10-years old or newer to count.
- We have also received comments asking if the original work of the IRC Corridor Management Plans or some older planning study would count.

Planning Study Age MnDOT Response

- For the Metro area, most corridors and locations have had their planning studies re-set in the last ten years. Therefore, planning studies in the Metro area will need to be no older than 10-years to count.
- In Greater Minnesota, several of the corridors are still implementing components from the original IRC Corridor Management Plans. Therefore, planning studies in Greater Minnesota can be as old as 20-years to count.

Planning Study Endorsement

- A few commenters asked if a planning study needs to have been endorsed by MnDOT for it to receive Open Decision Making points?
- This appears to only be an issue in the Metro area.

Planning Study Endorsement MnDOT Response

- MnDOT must be involved and concur with the planning study recommendations in order for it to receive Open Decision Making points.
- MnDOT does not have to be a financial contributing partner to be considered involved in the study.

Scope and Cost Estimate

- Several local governments commented they would like the opportunity to review and tweak MnDOT's scope and cost estimate of a recommended project before they are scored and ranked.

Scope and Cost Estimate MnDOT Response

- MnDOT is utilizing a consultant to develop the scopes and cost estimates of recommended projects.
- The consultant will work with district staff where the projects are located to get their input and concurrence with the developed scope, which should help ensure issues are considered.
- MnDOT will involve the local partners on each project by either including them in with the consultant/district staff meetings or making an opportunity available for them to review and comment on the scope before scoring.

IRC Point Hierarchy

- We did receive comments around the Corridor Connections criteria matrix.
- Some commenters requested that there should not be any point difference in the Corridor Connections matrix between Interstate/Level 1 Trade Center IRC corridors and Regular IRC corridors.
- We also received comments that Non-NHS roadways in the Metro area should at least be equal in points to Regular IRC corridors, because of their high traffic volumes.

IRC Point Hierarchy

MnDOT Response

- The IRC network has been divided into different ranking hierarchies since it was originally conceived and adopted.
- The nature of the IRC network was to give a priority to those higher level connections over the other IRCs and to give IRC priority over non-IRC connections.
- The point differential in the Corridor Connections matrix is not a large difference, just ten points between the two IRC categories.

IRC Point Hierarchy

MnDOT Response

- The Corridor Connections matrix will continue to use the hierarchy divisions of;
 - Interstate/Level 1 Trade Center Connections
 - Regular IRC Connections
 - Supplemental IRC Connections
- Non-NHS routes in the metro will score lower the Regular IRC Connections in the matrix to account for the IRC roadways being of higher classification.

Policy Clarification Points

- Use of federal funds on a corridors of commerce projects is limited to only those projects which have previously been identified through MnDOT's planning process and have been developed to be eligible for federal funds (i.e. Federal NEPA process).
- MnDOT will veto any project from receiving funding if it does not comply with other federal and state laws.

Policy Clarification Points

- All projects are subject to the Cost Participation Policy, but are considered MnDOT initiated projects.
- Projects currently in the STIP that would require a formal STIP amendment to build the recommended project will be considered “not in the STIP” for eligibility purposes.
- For project eligibility, the eight counties mostly covered by the Metro District’s operational boundaries will be considered “metro”.

Schedule

- Recommendations on-line opened Thursday, January 18.
- Recommendations process will close Monday, February 5th
- Scoping, estimating, scoring, and ranking the projects will take two months.
- An announcement of the list should occur sometime in April.

Questions or Comments

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Corridors of Commerce Website

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/corridorsofcommerce/index.html>