

Transcript for FTA's TOD Pilot Program Webinar Conducted on October 14, 2020

[Note: the raw captioned text prepared during the 90-minute webinar was edited on October 15, 2020 for both clarity and brevity]

Slide 1 – 2020 Funding Opportunity: Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning

Dwayne Weeks: Welcome, everyone, to this webinar on FTA's 2020 Funding Opportunity for the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning. I am the Director of the Office of Planning, which is part of the Office of Planning and Environment located at FTA headquarters in Washington, D.C. Just as we did last year, as well as previous years, we are really looking forward to making funding available for Transit-Oriented Development planning around fixed-guideway transit projects that are in planning, design, or newly implemented. I will now hand the presentation over to Ken Cervenka, also in the FTA Office of Planning, who is FTA's Program Manager for the Pilot Program for TOD Planning.

Slide 2 – The contents of this document....

Ken Cervenka: I will start with this disclaimer, which notes that the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law, and is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding requirements of the TOD Pilot Program.

Slide 3 – Introduction – Pilot Program for TOD Planning

Ken: Before we get into the rest of the presentation, let's go over a few logistics. The webinar is being captioned and recorded, and we expect to have this posted on FTA's TOD Pilot Program website in the next few business days. The slides are available right now for downloading from your webinar screen, you'll find that in the file share section on the lower left-hand side. I will present the information found on the next 14 slides, and then hand it over to Walt Mokey, from the FTA Office of Program Management, to present information that is specific to applying in Grants.gov. I will then provide answers to some of the questions we have received in advance of this webinar, and then open this up to any questions you may have, that did not get fully addressed. You can type your questions into the chat box at any time, but we encourage you to wait until we finish with the formal part of this presentation, for some of your questions may get answered in the next 30 minutes.

Ken: The Pilot Program for TOD Planning was created under MAP-21, and continued into the FAST-Act, and provides grants for conducting comprehensive TOD planning at stations along new fixed guideway and core capacity improvement corridors. NOFO

stands for Notice of Funding Opportunity, so to save time in this presentation I will shorten this to NOFO. This is the fifth NOFO, where we have \$6.22 million available from the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations. The four previous NOFOs were released in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2019 and resulted in awards to 81 projects, totaling \$74 million. This fifth NOFO was released on September 25, with applications due October 26, so we hope that many of the people listening in right now have already started to put together their applications, and are wanting to make a final check that they are not missing anything important. Our plan right now is for awards to be announced in December 2020 or January 2021.

Slide 4 – Awards, 2016-2018: 57 Projects, \$51M

Ken: This shows the locations for the 57 awards that were made in response to the first three NOFOs, which totaled \$51 million of the \$74 million awarded so far. We had good coverage across the continental US, with the three states having the most awards being California, Florida, and Michigan.

Slide 5 – Awards, June 2020: 24 Projects, \$23M

Ken: This shows the locations for the 24 awards that were made in response to last year's NOFO, which totaled \$23 million of the \$74 million awarded so far. This also shows good geographic coverage, with three states, California, Florida, and Texas, each having three projects.

Slide 6 – Goals for the Program

Ken: The primary goal of the TOD pilot program is to encourage comprehensive TOD planning at transit station areas in corridors containing eligible projects, that goes beyond what local agencies would usually fund themselves. The application requirements encourage the formation of partnerships, which we see as an important part of not simply performing a comprehensive study, but in causing actual new TOD implementations to take place near transit stations.

Slide 7 – Transit Project Requirements

Ken: In last year's applications, we ran into some situations where the proposed comprehensive TOD planning studies in transit corridors were well thought out, but yet the transit projects in those corridors were not technically eligible. So please pay a lot of attention to exactly what is stated in the NOFO, as well as what is discussed during this webinar. The comprehensive TOD planning work must be associated with a new fixed guideway or core capacity improvement project, as defined in the NOFO. As was done for the TOD NOFOs released in 2018 and 2019, this does not need to be a transit

project that is currently, or for that matter ever, in FTA's Capital Investment Grants program. Also, as was done for the last two NOFOs, the word "new" for a fixed-guideway project includes projects that are still in the planning stage, already under construction, or recently opened to revenue service. For purposes of this NOFO, transit projects that have opened to revenue service for less than five years would be considered new. If you have a transit project that has been opened to revenue service for more than five years, but less than ten years, I suggest that you get in direct touch with me in the next few days, so that I can better understand your case-specific situation, and offer thoughts on how you might want to write this up in your application so that FTA can still consider the project as new. Core capacity improvement projects are also "new," regardless of when the fixed guideway service was first implemented, and we refer you to the NOFO for the definition of a capital investment that increases the capacity of the corridor by not less than 10 percent.

Slide 8 – Eligible Applicants

Ken: We think the NOFO makes it clear that we consider a good path towards a successful TOD implementation is for both the transit project sponsor and the land use authority, or authorities, for the corridor containing the transit project to work together on a TOD planning study. The first three bullets on this slide are noting the three situations that will occur, where, so long as the actual applicant is an FTA grantee, this can be the transit project sponsor, the land use authority, or in some cases the sponsor is also the land use authority. But only one application per transit project corridor, for it is a strong sign that appropriate coordination has not taken place locally, if there are two separate applications for the same corridor, in response to this specific NOFO. Multiple corridors in a region are allowed, but each corridor needs a separate application.

Slide 9 – Work Plans

Ken: The work plan is a required part of each application. While there is a lot of flexibility about the type of work that is eligible and can be performed, you should keep in mind that the proposed work addresses the six aspects shown on this slide, which are identified in the NOFO and come from the MAP-21 statute, that was carried over to the FAST-Act. I won't read what's on the slide, but do make sure your overall work plan addresses all six of these aspects, which focus on comprehensive station area TOD planning. Examples of final deliverables are identified in the NOFO, and include, but are not restricted to, comprehensive planning documents, corridor development policies, station development plans, zoning codes or resolutions, studies of financing strategies for TOD including value capture, and resolutions to implement plans, policies, or financing strategies.

Slide 10 – Ineligible Activities

Ken: The statute specifies these funds are only for TOD-focused planning, so it is important for you to avoid ineligible activities in your work plan. Given how important this is to your application, I will quote directly from the NOFO, and leave it up to you if you want to ask any clarifying questions during the Q&A period. Or you can get in touch with me by phone or email in the next few days, if you have a question that pertains to a very specific situation. The ineligible activities include: TOD planning work in a single transit capital project station area; transit project development activities that would be reimbursable under an FTA capital grant, such as project planning, the design and engineering of stations and other facilities, environmental analyses needed for the transit capital project, or costs associated with specific joint development activities; capital projects, such as land acquisition, construction, and utility relocation; and site- or parcel-specific planning, such as the design of individual structures.

Slide 11 – Grant Conditions

Ken: The anticipated minimum to maximum awards are \$250,000 to \$2,000,000, with a maximum 80 percent federal funding share. For information about the eligible sources for the non-federal share, please read the details in the NOFO. Using just one example, in-kind contributions are permitted, but transportation development credits, previously referred to as toll revenue credits, do not. Details regarding pre-award authority will be provided when FTA announces the funding selections. Metropolitan transportation planning requirements also apply, where one example is that the awarded grants will need to be included in the MPO's unified planning work program, or UPWP, before they receive FTA funding. This does not mean you must amend a UPWP right now before an application is submitted, instead this can be done after the awards are announced, but before FTA's funding for the award can be used.

Slide 12 - Submitting an Application

Ken: For your formal submission, we will not accept applications by email, you must apply through the grants.gov process. In just a few minutes, I will hand this over to Walt Mokey of FTA's Office of Program Management to provide some additional information about applying for FTA grant opportunities in Grants.gov, but the core message I want to offer right now is to please not wait until October 26! We are aware of situations in the past where applicants found out at the last minute that they could not apply, which puts an application at risk for us to even consider. There is a link on our TOD pilot program Notice of Funding web page that will take you straight to Grants.gov, for the grant opportunity with the ID number shown on this slide. There is an SF 424 mandatory form to fill out, as well as the attachments shown on this slide, which have a cumulative 15-page limit that includes the Applicant and Proposal Profile. Since this was asked last year, I will note that the 15-page limit applies to the attachments to the SF 424 form, but not the actual SF 424 form. For the Applicant and Proposal Profile, please make sure

you use the current 2020 form, and not what was available from any previous NOFO. The other attachments include: a map of the proposed study area; evidence of partnerships between the transit project sponsor and land use planning authority; and documentation of the local, meaning non-federal, funding commitments.

Slide 13 – Initial Application Screening Criteria

Ken: For the initial screening of all submissions, we are checking for eligibility of the applicant and the transit project, including evidence of a partnership. Plus, completeness of the overall application, where there are boxes on the Applicant and Proposal Profile form to fill out, that allow you to provide all of the information shown on this slide, as well as other items that will be helpful to the review process. I won't go over every word shown on this slide, or every box on the Profile form, beyond noting that the application describes the proposed work, schedule and budget, as well as the context for why this work will be useful towards TOD planning.

Slide 14 – Formal Application Evaluation Criteria

Ken: For those applications that pass the initial screening, we will have a team of reviewers who will evaluate each application according to these three criteria that are identified in greater detail in the NOFO: demonstrated need for TOD planning funds; strength of the work plan, schedule and process; and funding commitments for the TOD planning work. Each technical review results in an overall score of Highly Recommended, Recommended, Not Recommended, or Ineligible, which is then passed along to FTA leadership.

Slide 15 – Additional Considerations

Ken: Once the technical reviews are completed, FTA will be looking at consistency with these departmental objectives, where the NOFO provides more details: supporting economic vitality; leveraging Federal funding; using innovative approaches; reducing regulatory barriers; and holding grant recipients accountable.

Slide 16 – Other Factors

Ken: Other factors that may be used by FTA and DOT leadership to determine the final set of projects to award TOD Pilot Program funds include: geographic diversity; diversity in the size of the grantees receiving funding; projects located in or that support public transportation service in a qualified opportunity zone; support of the U.S. DOT R.O.U.T.E.S. initiative; applicant's receipt of other competitive awards; and prioritization of projects with a non-federal share that is higher than the minimum 20 percent.

Slide 17 – Applying for FTA Grant Opportunities in Grants.gov

Ken: I now want to hand this over to Walt Mokey of the FTA Office of Program Management, to provide more details about applying for FTA Grant Opportunities in Grants.gov.

Walt Mokey: This portion of the webinar is to provide an orientation on the resources available to applicant organizations on the FTA Website and the Grants.gov website, and also to provide more details about the application process.

Slide 18 – FTA Notice of Funding Opportunity

Walt: FTA Funding opportunities are published on the FTA website, the Federal Register, and on the Grants.gov website. We recommend applicants begin their search and application process on the FTA Funding Opportunities (NOFO) web page. Using the NOFO page as your start, this provides links to related information and links to websites and resources to assist with the application process. To locate the NOFO page, go to the FTA Home page, transit.dot.gov, and at the top of that webpage, click on “funding” and select “applying” and then click on “Notices of Funding” on the left side of the page. The “Notices of Funding” page provides links to all of the current or active FTA opportunities available. Click on the “Opportunity ID” which is hyperlinked to the FTA website NOFO summary page. If you Click on “Grant Program” this link brings you to the “Program” page which is sponsoring the discretionary funding and soliciting applicant. This slide also shows web links that can be directly used.

Slide 19 – FTA Notice of Funding Opportunity

Walt: This slide depicts an extract of the opportunity notice. The FTA NOFO page contains a summary of the opportunity announcement, important dates such as the application deadline, a brief explanation of eligibility requirements, and links to the Grants.gov site, highlighted in the yellow box. Additionally, it has the FTA Application and Proposal Profile supplemental form, Federal Register Notice, and other relevant information about FTA programs which may assist applicants in developing and submitting a successful proposal or “application.” The supplemental form is a fillable PDF form, which is an FTA product, and used to capture the key elements of the applicant’s proposal. This form contains fill-in boxes for information, which will be used by FTA to evaluate the proposed projects and funding requested. This form must be attached to the application in Grants.gov in order to receive consideration. Please do not use forms from prior years or attempt to create your own PDF form in lieu of the form that we have provided specifically for this opportunity. Do not attempt to attach images or scanned copies of the supplemental form or information. The PDF form must be completed with typed text and attached to the application in Grants.gov.

Slide 20 – Download Application

Walt: When you click on the highlighted link to the grants.gov site, you'll be taken directly to the grants.gov synopsis page, which is highlighted at the top left of this screen. The Grants.gov “Grant Opportunity” page contains four tables: the Synopsis, Version History, Related Documents and PACKAGE. The synopsis tab provides similar information to what we published on the FTA website but also shows if any changes have been posted. Additionally, it provides key dates and related regulatory references. The Version History tab is just that, a history of any changes made since the original announcement. The Related Documents tab leads to a folder which contains documents related to the funding opportunity, and includes items such as the Federal Register Notice, the FTA supplemental form to be used for submitting the proposal or application, or other related documents. The “Package” tab is probably the most important to you, and contains the references and links to download and/or apply for this opportunity. Please note that anyone can download the application package, but only individuals who have been designated in Grants.gov as “authorized organizational representatives” can submit an application.

Slide 21 – Application Package

Walt: This slide shows the contents of the “Application Package” available in Grants.gov, which includes the mandatory SF-424, the Lobbying Form, and the Attachment Form that is used to attach supporting materials for the application. Please note that the “application package” is a Grants.gov product, and does not include the FTA supplemental form. The supplemental form is an FTA product, and must be included as one of the attachments.

Slide 22 – Application Package

Walt: This slide depicts a screen shot of the FTA Applicant and Proposal Profile supplemental form. Each opportunity has its own form. The supplemental form must be downloaded separately from the FTA site or from within the “related documents” tab. The supplemental form is to be attached to the application or the “Attachments” form. The “Attachments Form” is a way for applicants to include documents supporting their application. As noted earlier, the supplemental form is a fillable PDF used to capture the information FTA needs to evaluate the proposed project, and please do not attach “scanned copies” of the supplemental form. The PDF must be filled in with text, otherwise FTA will reject the application. Also...DO NOT submit forms from Prior Years or from other Programs.

Slide 23 – Grants.gov - Applicants

Walt: Applicants who have not previously applied on Grants.gov must visit Grants.gov and click the “Applicants” tab. Applicants who have previously applied are still encouraged to review the Applicants Tab in Grants.gov to make sure they have the latest information about the application process. The Applicants Tab will walk you through the process of registering on Grants.gov as well as help you check to make sure you have the correct or compatible version of Adobe Acrobat. This site will also provide you with training on use of Grants.gov. PLEASE NOTE that there is an “Adobe Compatibility” check on this site to ensure that applicants are using the correct version and software packages in order to submit their applications. This site also provides the option to download the software if needed. There are many instances where applicants frequently encounter “technical issues” with submitting their applications because they are using a different version of Adobe Acrobat from what is specified by Grants.gov.

Slide 24 – Applicant – Organization Registration

Walt: For new applicants to Grants.gov or federal funds, the Grants.gov site assists organizations with the registration process in the System for Award Management (SAM) and with obtaining DUNS registration. You must be registered in grants.gov, but to do so, you must also register in SAM.

Slide 25 – Workspace in Grants.gov

Walt: Registered Organizations can create a “workspace” in which “grant proposal teams” can collaborate in developing the application proposal and associated documents. This workspace eliminates the need for emailing documents between team members. Grants.gov has been enhanced to allow applicant organizations the “work space” in which assigned individuals can collaborate, share files, and perform varied tasks to develop the application. This is also the place from which the Authorized Organization Representative can submit the completed application to Grants.gov. Please review the “Workspace” information in Grants.gov and identify the type of “workspace” and team members who will prepare your application. Please review the Roles and Privileges and remember that only the Authorized Organization Representative can submit the application. FTA is accepting applications submitted via Grants.gov from “Organizations” and not “Individuals.” Such organizations must be registered in Grants.gov. All the information and pertinent links are available on the “APPLICANT” tab of the Grants.gov site.

Slide 26 – Web Addresses

Walt: This slide shows the principal web links for applicants to use. If you encounter any technical issues or problems while working on the application or submitting the

application, please address those concerns to Grants.gov, rather than to the FTA program representatives. I encourage you to use the email address support@grants.gov, and they generally respond quite quickly. Or, you can use the telephone number provided on this slide. For TOD Pilot Program issues, those should be addressed to the FTA program representatives.

Slide 27 – Common Questions (1 of 4)

Ken Cervenka: Before we get into the interactive Q&A period, and offer answers to your questions, we have put together four slides that contain some of the questions we have already received before this webinar, by email or phone. So let's go through these first, while you think about other questions.

Ken: **When does FTA expect to release the next TOD NOFO?** The \$6.22 million in funding that is identified in the current 2020 TOD NOFO comes from the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations, so the amount and timing for the next TOD NOFO depends on TOD Pilot Program appropriations by Congress for Fiscal year 2021 and subsequent years, by means of Continuing Resolutions or a re-authorization of the surface transportation programs, as well as the successes we have in making awards in response to the current NOFO that has a closing date of October 26, 2020. Our best advice right now is that if you are contemplating a TOD planning application, you should try very hard to get it in by the October 26, 2020 deadline, and thereby avoid the uncertainties associated with the schedule for the next TOD NOFO.

Ken: **What is the maximum allowable period of performance, if we get a TOD planning award?** While there is not a specific not-to-exceed maximum number of months identified in the current NOFO, we are expecting most applicant's proposed start-to-finish timeframe to be in the 24 to 36-month period. If you believe a time frame longer than 36 months is needed, please make the reasons for this as clear as possible, in your application.

Slide 28 – Common Questions (2 of 4)

Ken: **If we get a TOD planning award, does this mean we must eventually pursue a Capital Investment Grants application?** No. Just as there is no requirement that your project be currently in the Capital Investment Grants program, this is not a condition for your TOD planning grant.

Ken: **We are still in the early planning stage, and have not yet nailed down the station locations, do we have a project that is eligible?** The funds available from this NOFO are not for conduct of what is commonly referred to as an initial feasibility study, or an analysis of transit alternatives. So we expect you to make it clear in your application that you have already done enough planning that has resulted in the identification of the transit mode, alignment, and at least preliminary station locations. If

the specific location of stations were to change as a result of performing the comprehensive TOD planning work, that's fine, but we do need your application to make it clear that you are not still focused heavily on conducting a general feasibility study or an analysis of different transit alternatives.

Slide 29 – Common Questions (3 of 4)

Ken: **We have a BRT service in operation that does not meet the fixed guideway BRT definition in the NOFO, but are considering a possible upgrade that will meet this definition. Will this project be eligible for consideration of an award?** The answer is probably yes, but you will need to explain this situation as clearly as possible in the Applicant and Proposal Profile form that you are required to submit. We ran into this problem with several applications last year, where the existing or proposed BRT service did not have the majority of the project operating in a separated right-of-way that is dedicated for public transportation use during peak periods, and nothing was identified in the application that suggested a plan to consider an upgrade.

Slide 30 – Common Questions (4 of 4)

Ken: **My agency received TOD Pilot Program funds under a previous funding opportunity. Are we eligible for consideration of another award?** Yes, you are eligible for consideration, even for the same corridor as a previous award. But if this is work to be performed in the same corridor as a previous award, you need to make it clear in your application as to how the proposed work plan differs from the previous work plan.

Ken: **Does the 15-page limit apply to attachments of cover pages and letters of support?** If these are included in your application to grants.gov, as an attachment to the SF-424 mandatory form, the 15-page limit applies. But as I mentioned earlier, the 15-page limit applies only to the attachments to the SF-424 form, but not the SF-424 form. The reason for including a page-limit restriction is that we hope this helps the applicants avoid the preparation of lots of information that they think may be of interest to the Technical Review Team, but goes beyond what is explicitly asked for in the NOFO.

Slide 31 – Open Session: Q &A

Ken: If you still have questions that we did not cover in this presentation, or perhaps not to the detail that you were hoping to see, here is your opportunity to type your question in the chat box. Dwayne Weeks and I are going to tag team on providing answers.

Question: Can an MPO be an eligible applicant? Are Regional Planning Commissions or MPOs eligible to apply?

Ken: The answer is yes, because when you look at the previous 81 winning applications, some of those have indeed included MPOs. But the important thing to keep in mind is that the MPO may not necessarily be a land use planning authority. So if an MPO is the applicant, the MPO is going to wind up with a better application if it is very clear in the application that the partnerships include the transit project sponsor in the corridor of interest as well as the land use authorities that would typically be cities and maybe counties in that corridor. Do keep in mind that if you are the MPO and you are submitting the application, and it is a winning application, then you will be working with an FTA Regional Office, to get the project executed in TraMS.

Question: If a city is applying as the land use authority. do they have to partner with an entity that operates the transit system?

Ken: Yes. I can't think of a single award in the past where a winning TOD Pilot Program application has not made it clear that the transit provider is a central part of the proposed study.

Question: In which Federal Register Notice was the NOFO originally announced?

Ken: The actual NOFO release was on September 25th. However, the Federal Register Notice got a little bit delayed, so the actual Federal Register Notice was on September 29.

Question: Is it possible to view the application to projects that were previously awarded in your state just for reference?

Ken: you can certainly see a list of all of the 81 previous awards on FTA's TOD Pilot Program website, but the individual applications, which include the supplemental forms and other attachments, are not publicly posted. When approached with this kind of question, what we say is that if you believe FTA has information that is useful, and should be available to you, you will need to send a FOIA request to FTA. The following link will help you make that request: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/foia/foia-requests>

Question: Is there a date limitation on previous MOUs between transit and land use authorities?

Ken: I am going to say no on that. But keep in mind that this is a competitive process, so if you have a memorandum of understanding that dates back a number of years and other applications have something much more current, then your application might not be favored as much. Please be aware that if you are moving forward with a desire to get TOD planning funding, we would like to see that there is something fairly current in terms of a clear interest among all partners.

Question: Do you anticipate another funding opportunity in 2021?

Ken: To add to what I said in the formal presentation, all we can really say is that if we do indeed get Fiscal Year 2021 funds for the TOD Pilot Program appropriated to FTA in a timely manner, then I would think it is likely that we will have a NOFO in 2021, but we cannot state with certainty whether that might be early or late in 2021.

Question: Can you provide any numbers on how many applications were received in the past compared to how many were funded?

Ken: For the Fiscal Year 2019 NOFO that was released last year, we had 32 applications requesting a total of \$32 million, and of those 32 applications, 24 resulted in awards for \$23 million. In some of the previous years, we actually had an under-subscription, which I think was partly because we do have some project eligibility restrictions that we really cannot avoid.

Question: Is there a minimum size or scale to be eligible?

Ken: I am going to say no. If you have a transit project and it has 20 stations, sure, you can propose a TOD planning study that includes all 20 stations. If you have a much smaller project that does have very many stations, or maybe it is a proposed extension, that is also okay. But we are not looking for TOD planning studies that are proposed to include just one station, since these funds are intended for corridor-level planning. If you are considering a TOD planning study that includes just two or three stations, I suggest that you contact us, so we can better understand your specific situation, and whether the project is likely to be deemed ineligible.

Question: Understanding that TOD planning for a single station is not eligible, would TOD planning along an adjacent corridor for a major expansion project be eligible?

Ken: Last year, we encouraged everyone to apply, so if you want to make a good case for TOD planning work in your application, go ahead and do that. But if you have an unusual situation and are concerned about spending a lot of time putting together an application, only to find out that we later had to deem your submission as ineligible, about the only thing I can really suggest is that you reach out to me or Dwayne Weeks, and tell us exactly what is your situation.

Question: Would a TOD planning project be eligible for an infill station along an existing fixed guideway? What if a longer stretch of a fixed guideway was studied?

Ken: if the proposed work is for one station, let's say a station that is not yet open but is being considered, that is falling outside of what we are wanting to call comprehensive TOD planning in a corridor, which is about planning for more than just one station. So as with the previous question, contact us so that we can better understand your specific situation, before we offer any more advice.

Question: Can private companies apply using county municipalities provided transportation planning studies?

Ken: I think what you are asking here is whether private companies can be identified as the applicant. A private company can certainly be involved as a partner in an application, but I don't know of any previous situation where a private company was the actual applicant.

Dwayne: Ideally, a private company would want to partner with a transit authority and an entity with land use planning authority in a project corridor. Partnerships are what

really make these programs work. You can be an MPO, a private sector entity, or some other entity. But it is imperative that you have the partnerships documented, and include the entity that is planning and implementing the transit service and the stations, as well as the entities with land use planning authority in the corridor.

Question: Can one application work towards more than one corridor?

Ken: Generally, the answer would be no. I can come up with a few examples from the 81 previous awards where the transit project could be easily seen as being in more than one corridor, and we accepted that. But in general, you should think in terms of an application for a corridor. But I don't want to just knock this down completely, for you may have a special situation. As I have said on some of the other responses, feel reach out to me or Dwayne about your specific situation, and we can offer some advice in terms of whether you should really submit one application for two (or more) corridors, or submit a separate application for each corridor.

Question: We are a local government, but we are not a direct recipient or a designated recipient of transit funding. We received transit funding from FTA as a sub recipient. Are we eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?

Ken: You can obviously be part of an application, the question here seems to be whether you will be the actual applicant, which means that if your application is indeed selected for an award, you would be the one that is working with the FTA Regional Office to get the project in TrAMS, and the expectation is that you would already have an FTA recipient ID. If you have not worked directly with FTA a lot, it would be easier for you to have the transit project sponsor as the actual applicant. In the previous 81 applications, we do have a number of cities and counties that were indeed able to move forward as winning applicants, in the TrAMS process.

Dwayne: It would be best for you to partner with the local transit provider that is a designated recipient, so that we have a way to actually process a grant in the event you are selected for an award.

Question: How does FTA define land use authority? Our agency has an advisory role in land use but cannot adopt zoning regulations, would we be eligible?

Ken: This is the same kind of question that comes up with MPOs, and the issue about zoning is a very good one. The way I am going to answer this is that in some of the previous awards, they have gone to MPOs that technically do not have the ability to change the zoning, but the applications were nevertheless good because it was very clear in the application that the MPO is partnering with not only the transit project provider, but also the cities or municipalities in the corridor of interest that do have this zoning regulation authority. I don't really want to overthink this, but you are technically not a land use planning authority if you are only in an advisory role, but we have accepted applications in the past that have included partnering with those who have the ability to change zoning.

Question: Does a fixed guideway or high capacity transit service need to be operating, or can we refer to a regionally planned improvement to be constructed in the future in which case this TOD grant can help facilitate TOD at a future BRT or light rail corridor?

Ken: A number of the previous winning applications have been for situations where there is a planned transit project where the mode and station locations have been identified, but it could still be a number of years before that project is actually opened to revenue service. There is even the possibility that something might go wrong, and the project is never built. Unless I'm misinterpreting this question, I would say no, this does not need to be a transit service that is already open to revenue operations, but the expectation here is that enough planning has been done where there is a pretty good idea of what is the mode, alignment, and preliminary station locations.

Question: Are there funding sources for a feasibility study or for non-fixed guideway BRT?

Ken: Through the MPO planning process, there are planning funds that go to the MPO that can be used for these types of studies. But the language in this NOFO for the TOD Pilot Program came from MAP-21 that was carried over into the FAST Act, and this particularly opportunity does not allow these TOD planning funds to be used for a feasibility study.

Dwayne: 5303, 5305, and 5307 funds can be used for project planning, as can CMAQ funds.

Question: What is the monitoring report system required by the FTA?

Ken: If you are the applicant and FTA gives you an award, then you will be working with the FTA Regional Office to get the project fully executed in TrAMS. And within that TrAMS process, there is a level of reporting.

Dwayne: You are required to do the federal financial reporting, or FRR, which is consistent with any grant, and have milestone progress reports in the TrAMS system. And any deliverables that are completed as part of the work are required to be provided to FTA. So, federal financial reports, milestone progress reports, and copies of the deliverables that have been identified in the Application.

Question: How is the grant money awarded?

Dwayne: the grant funds are awarded based on the available funding and the criteria that is in the NOFO. We are looking for meritorious projects with a good schedule and budget, documented partnerships, and with a work program that is looking at a corridor that has multiple transit stations for a fixed-guideway service. The project serves places that include opportunity zones, with strategies that encourage affordable housing, the R.O.U.T.E.S. initiative, and all the other things that are listed in the NOFO.

Question: Would a project expanding on electric vehicle travel-ability in rural areas be eligible?

Ken: Based on the way this question is written, I'm having a hard time seeing how this fits within the definitions for a fixed-guideway project, or whether this is part of planning that is connected to fixed-guideway stations, perhaps as a way to improve station

accessibility, as would also apply to good pedestrian planning and bicycle access planning. I suggest you contact me or Dwayne if you want some useful advice about your specific situation.

Dwayne: Yes, I suggest you reach out and give us a call. There definitely needs to be a fixed-guideway project with TOD planning performed around stations.

Question: Will an attachment be counted as more than one page?

Ken: What we are identifying in the NOFO is a limit of 15 pages, not 15 attachments. I will give the example of the Applicant and Proposal Profile form, which we call the supplemental form, which is going to be more than one page long: if that form is four pages long, that counts as four pages against the 15-page limit. This has come up in the past, so I will mention that if we count up all the pages and see that you have 16, we are not going to just throw the application out because of this. This is similar to what is done in other NOFOs, where we are trying to discourage applicants from providing lots of detail in their applications, and instead send us a concise application that addresses only what is asked for, in the NOFO. So please try to stay within the 15 pages. If you have multiple letters of support or financial commitment, do keep in mind that if you are running into problems with the page limit, you can have more than one letter on a page.

Question: So is a mixed-use project as single station eligible or not?

Ken: For all previous 81 winning applications, I can't think of a single case where we've had one station identified as a comprehensive TOD planning study. So I will say this is not eligible for the TOD Pilot Program funds, based on the original language provided in MAP-21 that was the foundation for what is described in the TOD NOFO. But I will still encourage you to reach out to us, if there is something unusual going on, such as a short extension to an existing fixed-guideway transit service that may, perhaps, include only one station.

Question: Can you repeat the page limit and attachments requirement? Does the 15-page limit include the length of the supplemental form?

Ken: the answer is yes, this includes the pages needed for the supplemental form, plus all other pages needed for the map, letters of support, and any other attachment to the SF-424 form. I really want you to think about preparing a concise proposal, and not put together an extensive application.

Question: What if the project is in the project development phase, but an operator has not been secured?

Ken: This idea of partnership matters a lot, and I am trying to think here about who is going to be the actual applicant.

Dwayne: The question is where exactly is the project in the planning process: are there stations identified, and can you demonstrate partnerships? If you don't feel like you can do that at the time of this application period, then I would seriously consider waiting until the cake is more baked, and you have a clear idea as to what your outcome is going to be in terms of the project, the station locations, and the transit operator.

Question: Please provide examples of fixed guideways.

Ken: The common examples include rail projects, plus BRT projects that meet the fixed-guideway definition that is described in the NOFO. The NOFO describes fixed guideways that also include fixed catenary systems and a passenger ferry system.

Question: What might be considered a core capacity improvement project, please?

Ken: An example would be a heavy rail system for which there are plans to make more peak period capacity available, because more capacity is needed to serve the passengers. Please take a look at not only what is written in the TOD NOFO about a core capacity project, but also the more robust descriptions contained in FTA's web pages for the Capital Investment Grants, or CIG, program, such as this web link: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grant-programs/capital-investments/about-program>.

Slide 32 – Thank You!

Ken Cervenka: if you have more questions, please contact either Dwayne or me, using the information shown on this slide: Dwayne Weeks, (202) 493-0316 (Dwayne.Weeks@dot.gov) or Ken Cervenka, (202) 493-0512 (Ken.Cervenka@dot.gov). If you contact us by email, you can put both of us on the email, and we will try to be as prompt as we can. If you're asking us something that has a clear answer, either one of us might send an email back to you. But if it is a question that makes us scratch our heads, then we may need to set up a call to help us better understand your specific situation.

Dwayne Weeks: I want to thank you all for dialing in and participating in the webinar, for the great discussion, and excellent questions that we received during this webinar activity, and I want to wish you all luck in your applications. Again, go back to the FTA website, read the notice of funding offering, the Federal Register Notice, look at the grants.gov information, familiarize yourself with all of this and good luck.

Ken Cervenka: I will say good luck, as well. Do keep in mind that if you want immediate access to the captions, in their raw form, please do that save right now so that you can read that later. But in the not too distance future we will have a cleaned-up script that we can make available. And with that we will all say good bye!