

Local Government Participation in Federal Aid Highway Programs: FAUS Experience and Future Prospects

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This paper deals with local government participation in the existing Federal Aid Urban System (FAUS) highway program. The role of local elected officials in programming FAUS projects provides some guidance for a future highway program directed toward urban area highway needs. A description of the FAUS program in northeastern Illinois illustrates how local FAUS programs are generally administered in a major urban area. Data on FAUS programs in other large and small, growing and mature regions were gathered through a questionnaire distributed to selected Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Responses provided by MPO staff and the authors' experience with the northeastern Illinois FAUS program are the basis for an evaluation of the FAUS program. The evaluation includes a discussion of local FAUS program strengths and weaknesses and some recommendations for future federal legislation.

There is general agreement that the next major legislation for federal transportation funding will significantly change the organization, administration, and funding levels of federal aid highway programs. The next Surface Transportation Assistance Act will undoubtedly be far different from the act of 1987 (1), which made few changes on highway programs and continued program authorizations at near existing levels until 1991. Future legislation will have to consider that the largest single highway program, interstate construction, is expected to end by 1993.

Local government officials are speculating about postinterstate federal aid highway programs and anticipating effects on their highway improvement programs. Urbanized area governments are particularly anxious due to growing traffic congestion on suburban and urban arterial streets. Recent attempts to eliminate or change the funding levels of the FAUS program have further added to local government uncertainty about future highway funding levels.

It seems reasonable to expect a postinterstate federal aid highway program directed toward urbanized area highway needs. Determining the funding levels for an urban area highway program and the procedures for developing eligible projects and moving them to contract are perhaps

the biggest challenges facing the drafters of the next federal transportation legislation. One question this legislation will have to resolve is the role of local elected officials in a future urban area federal aid highway program.

This paper relates the experience of local officials with the programming of projects for the FAUS program. A brief description of the programming of FAUS projects in northeastern Illinois illustrates how the FAUS program generally functions in a major urban area. The program was evaluated through a questionnaire distributed to selected Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), which were asked to describe the FAUS program in their regions and to evaluate local FAUS project programming. Some implications for new urban area highway legislation are developed from the MPO responses and from the authors' experience with the northeastern Illinois FAUS program.

FEDERAL AID URBAN SYSTEM PROGRAM

The FAUS program is the newest of the four federal aid highway system programs; interstate, primary, and secondary are the previous three federal aid system programs. The FAUS program was established by the 1970 Highway Act (2), but became a major highway program only after passage of the 1973 Highway Act (3), which significantly increased the mileage in the FAU system and the level of federal funding. FAUS routes and programmed projects for federal cost sharing are selected with input from local elected officials in an urbanized area. Though the states are required to sign off on FAUS routes and improvements, the FAUS program, due to the number of local governments in urban areas, has more local government involvement than do the other federal aid highway system programs.

With its urban area focus and the involvement of local elected officials, the FAUS program was intended to accomplish three objectives (4):

- Obtain federal highway funds for highway needs not eligible for other federal funding participation,

- Provide for a more equitable allocation of federal aid highway funds between urban and rural areas,
- Base priorities for a portion of federal aid highway funding on highway needs of local governments.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FAUS PROGRAM IN NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

In northeastern Illinois, local FAUS program input is obtained through 11 suburban councils of mayors organizations, plus the city of Chicago. Mayors and their representatives are consulted through these 11 working councils, which are based on geographic and jurisdictional boundaries. A map of the council areas is shown in Figure 1.

The FAUS program in northeastern Illinois is administered through the region's MPO, the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), which also prepares the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (5). The major FAUS program responsibilities of CATS are to keep track of FAUS expenditures by each council and to advise the councils of the balances remaining in their FAUS accounts. The agency also assists in the paperwork required to get projects into the region's TIP and prepares reports containing summary statistics on the program's operation, types of FAUS projects programmed, and estimates of project and regional impacts.

Each council receives planning funds for a subregional planner who coordinates activities among council members. The subregional planner represents his council in meetings with CATS, the Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT), federal transportation agencies, and

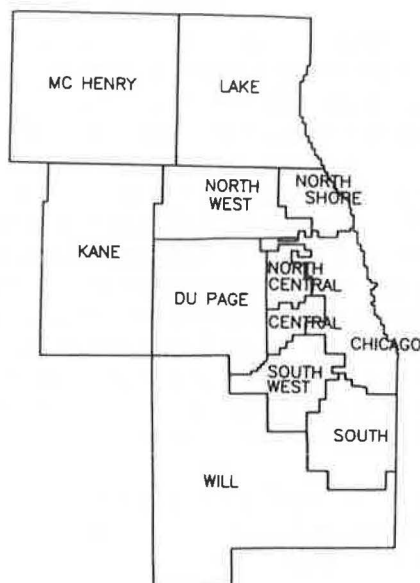


FIGURE 1 Map of council areas.

other regional transportation providers. Some council staff also perform small technical studies for their councils.

There is no real competition between councils for FAUS funds. The 11 suburban councils and Chicago share FAUS funds based on population. Reallocation of suburban FAUS funds does take place, however, whenever a council is unable to program enough projects to use up its FAUS funds. The shifting of FAUS funds between suburban councils is supervised by an executive committee elected from council members and staffed by CATS.

SURVEY OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

A questionnaire was mailed to MPOs around the country. These agencies were asked to describe the selection and programming of FAUS projects in their region. Some of the questions were open ended to allow further explanation of local procedures followed in the FAUS program. At the conclusion of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to critique their local FAUS programming process and to suggest changes in federal requirements. Any available documentation on their FAUS programs was also requested.

As outlined in the federal transportation planning regulations, the role of the MPO in a region's FAUS project programming is limited. The MPO has joint responsibility with providers of transportation services to prepare the TIP, which must include all FAUS-funded projects. A more direct relationship between MPOs and FAUS programs is the required endorsement by the MPO of the TIP's annual element, the section of the TIP that identifies projects to be funded in the next fiscal year. Within the existing legislation, this is evidence that local elected officials have been involved in selecting FAUS projects.

But most MPOs participate to a much greater extent in the programming of FAUS projects than the role outlined by the federal requirements for transportation planning. The MPOs are the principal recipients of federal funds for transportation planning. They are usually well-established planning agencies, and often the only agency with the resources to administer the local FAUS program. Organizations of elected officials that select FAUS projects are frequently affiliated with an MPO or are part of an MPO's organization, such as the MPO's policy-making board.

The MPO is a common denominator in the FAUS program from one region to another. Staff of MPOs are usually directly involved in the FAUS program, or at least knowledgeable about local procedures, and are a logical group to survey for an evaluation of the FAUS program across regions.

Selection of MPOs

Questionnaires were sent to 32 MPOs, all members of the National Association of Regional Councils' (NARC) MPO

TABLE 1 METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS THAT RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES

Metropolitan Planning Organization	MPO Provided FAUS Program Documentation
Middle Rio Grande COG: Albuquerque, New Mexico	Yes
North Central Texas COG: Arlington (Dallas-Ft. Worth), Texas	
Atlanta Regional Council: Atlanta, Georgia	Yes
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission: Columbus, Ohio	
Denver Regional COG: Denver, Colorado	Yes
Southeast Michigan COG: Detroit, Michigan	Yes
Capital Region COG: Hartford, Connecticut	
Mid-America Regional Council: Kansas City, Missouri	
METROPLAN: Little Rock, Arkansas	Yes
Southern California Association of Governments: Los Angeles, California	Yes
Wilmington Metropolitan Area Planning Coordinating Council: Newark (Wilmington), Delaware	
Regional Planning Commission for Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany Parishes: New Orleans, Louisiana	
Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	
Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission: Rock Island, Illinois	Yes
Sacramento Area Council of Governments: Sacramento, California	
East-West Gateway Coordinating Council: St. Louis, Missouri	
San Diego Association of Governments: San Diego, California	Yes
Pima Association of Governments: Tucson, Arizona	Yes

Transportation Advisory Committee. The 18 MPOs that returned completed questionnaires are listed in Table 1. Nine of these 18 MPOs also returned additional material describing FAUS project selection and programming for their regions. This documentation made it possible later to check answers on the questionnaire.

The responding MPOs represented regions in a range of different sizes. The regions fall naturally into four population groups (Table 2), based on their 1985 metropolitan area populations (6).

The 18 MPOs also are distributed geographically among growing urban areas in the west, south, and southwest, and mature areas in the east and midwest. Population growth rates from 1980 to 1985 were used to sort regions into high growth areas (growth rates greater than 10 per-

cent) and mature areas (growth rates roughly between plus and minus 5 percent) (Table 3).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was addressed to the MPO representative on the NARC MPO committee, who usually completed the questionnaire. With two exceptions, the respondent had been employed by the MPO for more than 5 yr.

The questionnaire's format was generally multiple choice or short answer. Space was provided for an explanation of local circumstances not matching and of the possible answers when the multiple choice format was used. This format was selected to make the questionnaire

TABLE 2 METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS—REGIONAL POPULATION

Population Group	Metropolitan Area	1985 Population
I	Rock Island	377,200
	Albuquerque	464,300
	Little Rock	498,500
	Wilmington	544,000
	Tucson	585,900
II	Hartford	1,035,000
	Sacramento	1,258,500
	Columbus	1,287,600
	New Orleans	1,324,400
	Kansas City	1,493,900
III	Denver	1,827,100
	San Diego	2,132,700
	Pittsburgh	2,337,400
	St. Louis	2,412,400
	Atlanta	2,471,700
IV	Dallas-Ft. Worth	3,511,600
	Detroit	4,581,200
	Los Angeles	12,738,200

less tedious to fill out and to focus responses. Unfortunately, the resulting questionnaire was lengthy because it was necessary to describe the alternative choices for many of the questions in detail.

The questionnaire included five subject areas: a profile of the MPO, origination of FAUS projects, characteristics of FAUS funding, development of FAUS project priorities, and local FAUS program evaluation. Within each of these sections, questions were asked in the form of an outline. Instructions, such as "select one of the following," were provided as needed. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the project report.

The questionnaire was tested by distributing it in advance to several members of the NARC MPO committee. Their comments were incorporated into a revised questionnaire with some additional instructions and slight rewording of several questions. After the completed ques-

tionnaires were received, the answers to multiple choice and yes/no questions were entered into a microcomputer file to simplify data manipulation.

INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS IN DEVELOPING FAUS PROJECTS

The MPO staff person was asked to describe the relationship between the organizations of elected officials consulted for programming FAUS projects and the MPO. Of five possible organizations identified on the questionnaire, only three were selected: (a) a direct relationship between the MPO and elected officials, whereby the organization of elected officials is also the MPO policy board; (b) an autonomous organization of elected officials with the MPO as a liaison between elected officials and transportation providers; and (c) assembly and endorsement by the MPO of the FAUS component of the TIP from lists of projects developed by an autonomous organization of elected officials. Table 4 presents these responses by size of region.

In smaller urban areas, the number of elected officials is so small that they can all be contacted through one regional organization of local elected officials. Such organizations normally number 10–20 members and tend to be organized as part of the MPO (Table 4).

For large metropolitan areas, a single working organization of elected officials for FAUS project development and endorsement is impractical due to the number of local governments. FAUS projects in the TIP are endorsed by the MPO policy board representing all local officials. Policy board membership is determined through elections or systematic rotation of membership. FAUS projects are either developed by smaller groups of elected officials, by state and regional service providers, or jointly by elected officials and providers.

Questionnaire responses indicated that local officials have an active role in FAUS project development. In only one instance did a returned questionnaire say that the principal role of local officials was to endorse projects originated by state or regional transportation providers. All others answered that local officials were either primarily responsible for FAUS project development or shared this responsibility with providers.

Local elected officials in most regions have a dual role in the FAUS programming process. They originate FAUS projects and also endorse the list of FAUS projects in the TIP, which includes projects they have put forth as well as projects reflecting priorities of state and regional transportation providers. This dual role was brought out by the fact that several questionnaires had multiple answers for the role of local officials in the process. Positive responses were given for endorsement of project lists by local elected officials and also for one of the choices indicating some responsibility on the part of local officials for initiating FAUS projects.

TABLE 3 METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS—
GROWING AND MATURE REGIONS

Type Region	Metropolitan Area	Percent Change 1980 to 1985 Population
Mature	Detroit	-3.6
	Pittsburgh	-3.5
	Rock Island	-2.0
	St. Louis	1.5
	Hartford	2.1
	Columbus	3.5
	Wilmington	4.0
	Kansas City	4.2
	Little Rock	5.1
New Orleans	5.4	
Growing	Tucson	10.2
	Albuquerque	10.5
	Los Angeles	10.8
	Denver	12.9
	Sacramento	14.4
	San Diego	14.5
	Atlanta	15.6
	Dallas-Ft. Worth	19.8

LOCAL FAUS MATCHING FUNDS

The local match for federal FAUS funds is provided by municipalities, counties, and states. The local matching source generally refers to the unit of government that controls the disbursement of funds, not the unit of government that collects the funds. In Illinois, a portion of state-collected gas taxes is distributed to municipalities for their use.

The bar graph in Figure 2 shows local matching fund sources for the different MPO population groups. Larger metropolitan areas depend more on state and county sources for their local FAUS match share than do smaller regions, where the local match is more likely to be municipal funds.

Figure 3 is a second bar graph showing the source of local FAUS matching funds for mature and growing regions. Municipalities in growing metropolitan areas tend

to provide a larger share of the local match than do municipalities in mature regions.

FAUS PROJECT PRIORITIES

To program FAUS projects, there must be some procedure to select projects for the Transportation Improvement Program and some means within the TIP to advance projects from the multiple year element to the annual element. In most metropolitan areas, FAUS funds are allocated to subareas or project categories before priorities are determined. Fifteen MPOs reported that FAUS funds are first distributed to local governments within the region. In larger urban areas, the most frequent allocation was to counties. Other regions distributed FAUS funds to municipalities over a certain population and to urban/urbanized areas.

TABLE 4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

MPO Population Group	Number of Positive Answers		
	Directly Related	Autonomous-MPO Liaison	Autonomous-MPO Minor Role
Group I (smallest)	4	2	0
Group II	4	0	1
Group III	4	1	1
Group IV (largest)	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total(a)	12	5	3

a. Two MPOs responded with two answers.

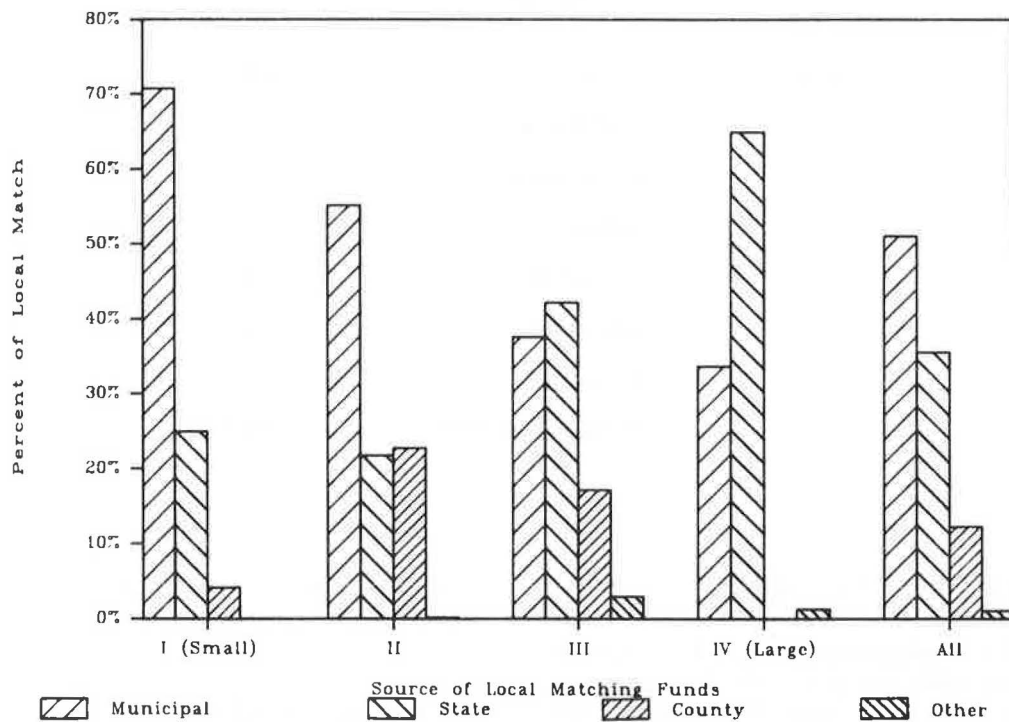


FIGURE 2 Sources of local matching FAUS funds by size of region.

Population is used to allocate funds in nearly all instances. The legislation itself prescribes a population-based allocation of FAUS funds between the central city and suburbs. Distributing FAUS funds in this manner spreads funds around a region in a politically acceptable manner and reduces the importance of project priorities.

Several other means of allocating FAUS funds were described on the questionnaires. Six MPOs said that FAUS funds were distributed to different categories of projects.

Several regions set aside a percentage of their FAUS funds for transit. In one metropolitan area, FAUS funds are divided among different functional classes of highways. In all cases, however, the allocation is the result of a negotiated policy agreement rather than an objective measure of need.

The questionnaire asked how projects are compared to set priorities. The bar chart in Figure 4 lists the number of positive responses for five different levels of project

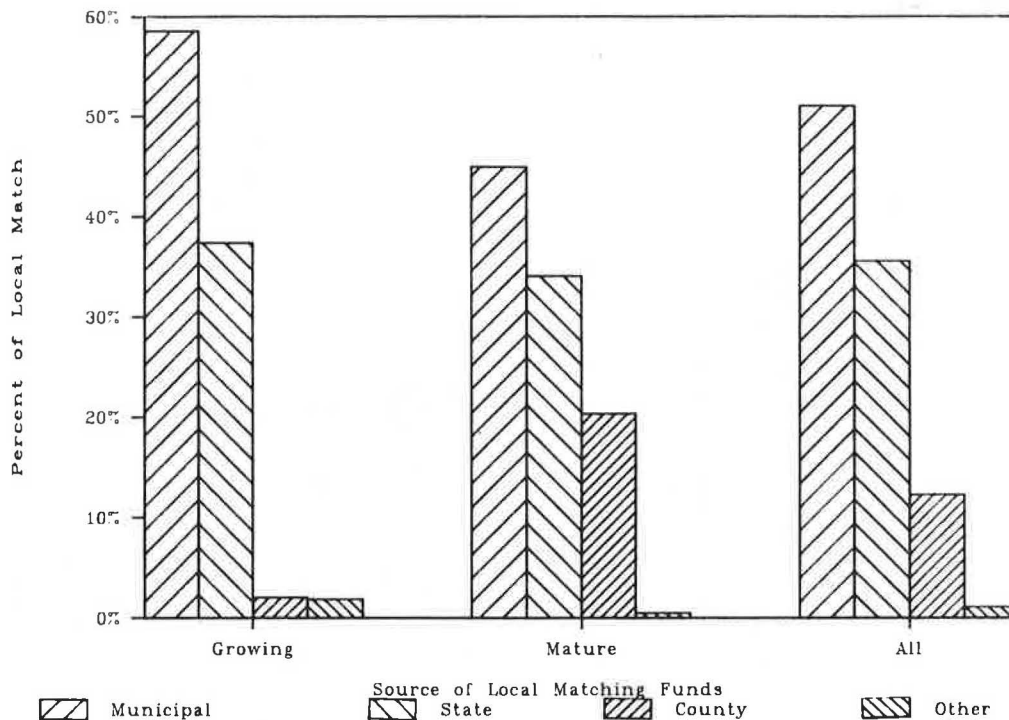


FIGURE 3 Sources of local matching FAUS funds for growing and mature regions.

evaluation and prioritizing: (a) purely subjective project priorities, (b) priorities for general FAUS project categories, (c) priorities based on technical studies without explicit ranking of projects, (d) formal ranking of projects, and (e) other methods for prioritizing FAUS projects.

No one form of FAUS project evaluation and prioritizing is dominant. Most agencies marked more than one choice, and it seems safe to say that FAUS project priorities are commonly based on some combination of technical evaluation and other considerations. Two agencies commented that project readiness for contract letting is a major consideration.

EVALUATION OF LOCAL FAUS PROGRAMS

MPOs were asked to indicate problems in programming FAUS projects from a list of expected problems. None of the MPOs indicated that it was difficult to develop suitable projects for FAUS funding, and several contended that they had a backlog of available projects. Six respondents reported a shortage of local matching funds in their regions. Eight MPO staff members noted disputes among local officials or between local and state officials over project priorities. Satisfying federal program requirements was cited as a problem by five MPOs.

Following is a summary of other identified problems in processing FAUS projects through local programs:

- Local governments are responsible for advancing FAUS projects through a local program, but some have

trouble following the procedures required to move FAUS projects to contract letting.

- Design standards required by federal participation are excessive and unnecessarily increase project costs.

- The staff in FHWA regional offices are inflexible in interpreting program procedures; for example, insisting on an exact federal-to-local funding split of 75:25 even when local governments are willing to increase their share to expedite projects. (This comment was made prior to the 1987 act.)

- It is difficult to reach a fair and politically acceptable allocation of FAUS funds in the region.

- There is uncertainty in annual federal funding due to federal program obligations and possible sanctions on federal funds due to a region's failure to meet air quality standards.

Strengths of Local FAUS Programs

One characteristic of local FAUS programs was repeatedly noted as a major program strength. Thirteen respondents said that coordination between local governments, the MPO, public transportation providers, and the state was a major program strength. There is a very positive local opinion that the FAUS programming process produces a coordinated regional program through the joint efforts of participants. One questionnaire contained the comment that the FAUS program "is the only example of regional capital improvement programming in our area."

The technical process itself, the evaluation of projects and development of priorities, was identified as a strength

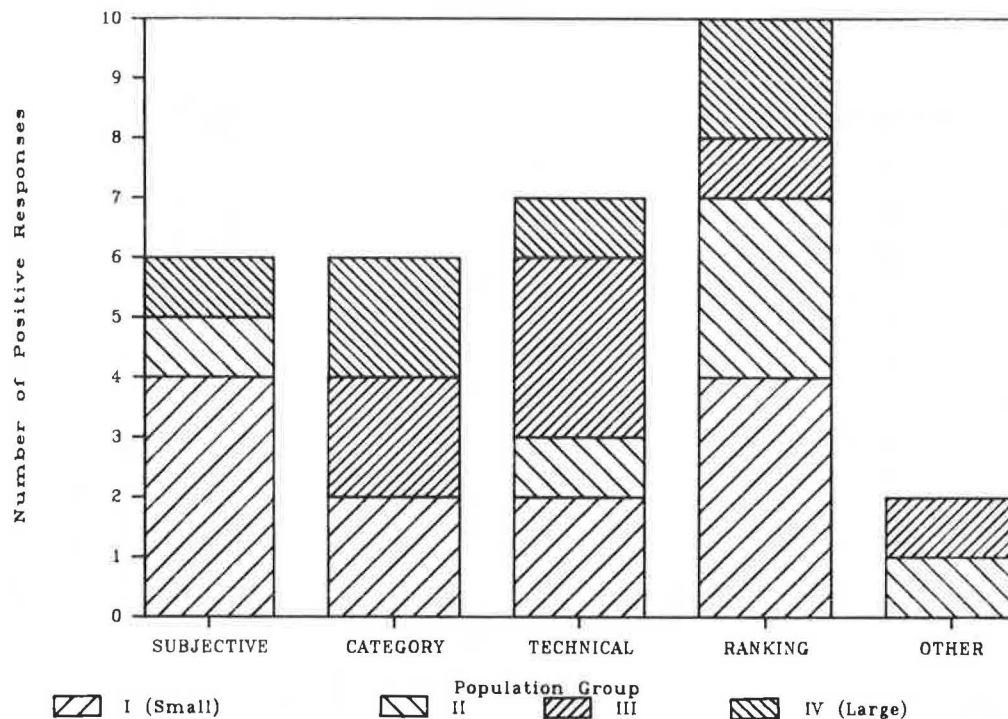


FIGURE 4 Type of FAUS project evaluation.

on four questionnaires. Another MPO felt that the allocation formula used in its region to distribute funds between major highway and local street improvements was an advantage. Two respondents concurred with the national objectives for the program in identifying local program strengths. In these two instances, local government ability to obtain federal funds and the use of FAUS funds to rebuild badly deteriorated urban facilities that could not otherwise be funded were identified as program strengths.

Weaknesses in Local FAUS Programs

The absence of the program strengths noted above was often felt to be a local program weakness. For example, a weak technical process for evaluating and prioritizing projects was reported as a weakness by two MPOs. Not surprisingly, six MPOs said that there was too little federal money. Several MPOs argued that the mileage in their region's FAUS highway system is not balanced with funding levels. There are so many FAUS route miles with deficiencies that current FAUS spending produces negligible impacts when measured on a regional system-wide basis. One MPO stated that limited FAUS funds restricted their use for nonhighway improvements, such as small transit projects and ridesharing programs.

Several regions said that problems meeting program requirements delayed contract letting. In some regions, delays in meeting program requirements have caused unobligated balances to accumulate in FAUS accounts. These unspent funds make it difficult to argue that the

FAUS program is needed to meet immediate highway needs or that it is efficient in meeting program objectives. Past inflation in highway construction costs also greatly reduced the purchasing power of these unspent FAUS dollars.

Three MPOs said a poor working relationship between local governments and the state transportation/highway department prevented their region from meeting program requirements. Project design revisions were also cited by one MPO as a reason for delays in processing FAUS projects.

Local Recommendations

The overwhelming suggestion for improving the program was to increase flexibility in the FAUS program requirements and their administration by FHWA regional offices. Three MPOs felt that block grants for local transportation improvements would improve the situation. Other suggestions made by MPOs to increase program flexibility include the following:

- Reduce the federal project approval role.
- Eliminate the requirement that FAUS funds be spent only on designated FAUS routes.
- Reduce program paperwork.
- Eliminate the required formula allocation between central city and suburbs.
- Permit more local discretion on the part of regional FHWA offices in project design and processing.

- Allow an implementing agency to set local match above minimum level, when desired.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LEGISLATION

In the following sections, some comments on the questionnaire answers and their implications for future urban highway programs are drawn from the authors' experience with the northeastern Illinois FAUS program.

Program Flexibility

Most local officials favor increased program flexibility, but there is little agreement on how to bring this about. Ultimate flexibility would be provided by local transportation block grants, but local government officials in northeastern Illinois have reservations about the block grant concept. Many feel it was proposed as a means to reduce funds to urban areas; others are concerned about state administration of a block grant program. Another unknown is whether transit projects would receive more or less funding through a block grant program.

Several steps toward increased FAUS program flexibility were included in the 1987 legislation. A new program provision allows local governments to set the local match above the 25 percent figure in the legislation. The five-state demonstration block grant program for FAUS and secondary highways will answer many of the questions raised about this approach.

Program Administrative Requirements

Many of questionnaire responses regarding administrative requirements had a familiar ring to them. However, FAUS program requirements have become less burdensome in northeastern Illinois as the local FAUS program has matured. Most importantly, the federal project approval time has been substantially reduced in this region over the past several years.

Two developments have contributed to this reduction in approval time. First, most communities now hire a consultant to manage the implementation of the project, including the approval process. In the early local history of the program, FAUS projects would get lost in the changing priorities of a community. Municipal staff would find themselves working on other projects and later discover that no progress had been made toward approval of their FAUS projects. A second factor was the initiation of meetings between communities and the FHWA by the local Illinois Department of Transportation office. The meetings have resulted in fewer delays, more flexibility in project design, and a greater willingness on the part of communities to use FAUS funds.

Ability of Local Governments to Participate

In critiquing local government participation in the FAUS program, it should be remembered that the FAUS program is modeled after the earlier highway system programs that emphasize state participation. By structuring the FAUS program along the lines of earlier federal aid highway system programs, the expectation is that local governments will perform some of the functions that states carry out in federal aid highway programs.

The survey shows that some local governments cannot, nor are they inclined to, perform as states do in the other highway programs. State highway and transportation departments have been partners in major federal aid highway system programs for several decades and have a well-established bureaucracy in place to meet program requirements. State staff have good working relationships with FHWA regional personnel and have accumulated specialized knowledge of the federal aid highway programs as they have evolved.

Specific FAUS Program Problems

Two specific FAUS program problems cited on the questionnaire have generally not been an issue in northeastern Illinois: designation of FAUS routes and central city-suburb allocation of FAUS funds. Designation of FAUS routes is a nonissue in northeastern Illinois for an unfortunate reason. Inappropriate additions to the region's FAUS network over the past several years have produced a regional FAUS system that includes too much local street mileage without regional significance. When FAUS projects are approved on local streets, the improvements required by federal standards are excessive, given their traffic. The use of FAUS funds for local street improvements is concentrated in those communities least able to finance capital improvements, and it amounts to a very small portion of the total regional FAUS program.

The current allocation between the suburbs and the city of Chicago is 57:43. The city historically has carried a \$10–20-million unobligated balance, while the suburban area has maintained a far smaller \$1–3-million balance over the last 5 yr. Yet, there is little sentiment to eliminate the city-suburb allocation of funds based on population. This arrangement keeps volatile city-suburb issues from intruding on the FAUS program, and neither side is sure from year to year of its political ability to influence the allocation in its favor.

Sharing of Program Responsibilities

If local governments participate in a future federal highway program, they must also share in its maintenance. At the very least, local governments should document how local elected officials are involved in the selection of projects

and provide some minimal measures of the effectiveness of improvements built under the program.

The questionnaire asked each MPO to return documentation on its local TIP or FAUS program with the completed questionnaire. Half the responding MPOs returned some material, indicating that many regions have little or no documentation on the operation of their FAUS program.

Process documentation is useful for a variety of reasons. It can be used to brief newly elected local officials on how the program operates or to promote the FAUS program among local governments to increase their participation. This documentation is a first step toward introducing changes in local program administration. It also provides evidence of local officials' participation if the local program's legality is challenged.

Few regions appear to have measures of the impacts of FAUS projects other than their cost and the federal funds brought into the region. This lack of documentation on program impacts makes it all but impossible to demonstrate the benefits from FAUS projects or to compare the FAUS program with other federal aid highway programs. Project documentation does not have to be a detailed analysis of the benefits of each improvement, but need only include available data assembled during design and submission of the project for federal aid approval organized in an accessible format.

Project Priorities

The survey indicated that no single form of evaluation and priority setting dominates local FAUS programs. The northeastern Illinois experience is that technical evaluation of FAUS projects has become prevalent as more eligible projects are developed. This region has gone from one council performing a technical project evaluation to virtually all councils using some formal project analysis in the last 3 yr.

This situation is due to having more projects ready for approval than available funds. Formal project evaluation has forced harsh decisions to delay ready projects until more worthy projects are funded. In most project evaluation schemes, smaller less-costly projects tend to rank higher, spreading FAUS dollars among more projects and communities. Marginal projects are less likely to be proposed, and the 5-yr program in the TIP is more realistic, making it easier to move projects to the annual element of the TIP.

CONTINUING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION

The arguments for participation by local officials in a forthcoming federal aid urban highway program are stronger today than they were when the FAUS legislation was first enacted. Although the degree and effectiveness of local officials' involvement in the FAUS program varies from region to region, the FAUS program has achieved a reasonable level of success in meeting its objective of local participation in the regional programming of federal aid highway improvements. Original concerns that the FAUS program would not function due to the parochial interests of local officials have proved by and large to be groundless.

Increasing traffic congestion in urbanized areas is a national issue threatening the economic vitality of both growing and mature urban areas. Local officials' understanding of local highway needs, combined with their ability to influence land development, seems a necessary input into any federally supported urban highway program directed toward alleviating urban congestion.

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