Developing Enhancements Program in San Francisco Bay Area

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The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 requires states to spend 10 percent of the new Surface Transportation Program on transportation enhancement activities, projects that improve the quality of the journey by creating attractive settings near transportation facilities, by preserving scenic or historic transportation sites, or by expanding the range of travel options for bicyclists and pedestrians. In developing the San Francisco Bay Area's enhancements program, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) learned to look at transportation facilities in a new light and along the way forged valuable new partnerships with state and myriad local agencies, special districts, and community groups. MTC's experience is described, and some insights that other regional agencies may find useful in making the most of this challenging and innovative program are offered.

The landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) requires states and metropolitan areas to blaze new trails across the nation's transportation landscape. One notable example is the law's requirement that 10 percent of the new Surface Transportation Program—federal funds directed to states and metropolitan areas for flexible spending across modes—be dedicated to transportation enhancement activities (TEAs). Such enhancements, so named because they enhance the transportation system, require veering from the well-worn path of automobile and mass transit-related investments to consider an array of new options.

Lobbying, negotiation, and the cooperative efforts of various agencies contributed to the development of a statewide TEA program in California. The program allows metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to fund new and innovative projects.

During an initial phase of selecting enhancement projects the San Francisco Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) faced the challenge of whittling down 152 enhancement project applications totaling more than $94 million to meet a target of $18 million in anticipated funds for fiscal years 1992 and 1993. Over a span of 7 weeks MTC staff grappled with ways to evaluate and rank very different projects, from public art projects to bicycle and pedestrian trails to historic rail depot renovations. MTC learned to look at transportation facilities in a new light and forged valuable new partnerships with state and myriad local agencies, special districts, and community groups.

This paper describes MTC's experience and offers some insights that other regional agencies may find useful in making the most of this challenging and innovative program.

DEVELOPING CALIFORNIA'S ENHANCEMENTS PROGRAM

ISTEA defines TEAs in 10 divisions: bicycle and pedestrian facilities; acquisition of scenic or historic sites or easements; scenic

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or historic highway programs; landscaping and other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities; preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion for use as bikeways and walkways); control and removal of outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; and mitigation of water pollution resulting from highway runoff.

The federal requirement that 10 percent of all Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds be set aside for such activities has required new ways of doing business across the country. In California Senate Bill 1435 implemented ISTEA at the state level. Although Senate Bill 1435 established the rules for passing through STP and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to the MPOs, no similar rules were established for the enhancements program. Therefore the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) initially assumed that TEA funds would be used entirely for projects already in line for funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), California's 7-year master program for transportation projects.

Caltrans' Division of State and Local Project Development, Office of Landscape Architecture, was initially assigned the task of programming TEA funds to existing STIP projects. The responsibility was taken seriously and the job was begun with careful study of the TEA provisions and the entire ISTEA legislation. In approximately 20 meetings with the 12 Caltrans district offices and FHWA over 4 months, the Office of Landscape Architecture found few eligible TEA projects in the STIP—few projects that fit into any of the 10 TEA categories and that were not considered part of so-called normal activities.

Meanwhile, empowered by ISTEA and Senate Bill 1435, MPOs throughout California were asking Caltrans for a large role in the programming of other state-controlled funds, including the TEA program.

At the same time environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, pressed their local MPOs and the California Resources Agency to use enhancements program funds for non-STIP projects. These groups were convinced that funding for traditional highway projects already in the pipeline was at odds with ISTEA's intent to direct investments to a range of activities going well beyond traditional highway landscaping or other required mitigation projects. The MPOs and the California Resources Agency in turn convinced Caltrans that the state's TEA program must be entirely new and distinct.

Caltrans then convened a task force of MPOs (including MTC), bicycle advocacy groups, local parks and recreation departments, historic preservation groups, the California Coastal Commission, the California Resources Agency, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and FHWA.

The Enhancements Task Force began meeting in October 1992. Over several months the task force agreed on a number of items, including which Caltrans STIP projects would be "grandfathered" for 1992 funds, a statewide evaluation process and criteria, a statewide application form, and a schedule for developing the program.

Grandfathered Projects

The state initially proposed a set of projects that would absorb most of the enhancements program money available in the first funding cycle, $56 million for fiscal years 1991–1992 and 1992–1993. This was not acceptable to the other members of the task force, who argued that local and regional needs were not being addressed. Internal Caltrans discussions involved those who wanted earmarks for existing "normal" projects and those who wanted the TEA program called out separately. Caltrans management eventually agreed to limit the grandfathered projects to those previously programmed STIP projects that were clearly eligible— above and beyond a normal transportation activity and not a required mitigation—that would be obligated by September 30, 1994. Furthermore they agreed to open up the process and develop a new program for the balance of the TEA funds. With this Caltrans withdrew the other previously proposed projects.

Evaluation Process

The task force agreed to give each region the option of a bid target equal to twice its population share, or three projects, whichever was larger. Each region or MPO would solicit applications, evaluate project proposals, and submit a ranked list of projects to the bid limit. Each region would rank projects according to a set of statewide criteria. The state was given a bid target for statewide projects equal to 10 percent of the available funds.

If a region proposed a population-based bid list, Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) agreed to give each region its highest-priority projects. CTC, which has ultimate programming authority for TEA funds in California, would then select projects within the remaining portion of all regions' bid lists.

Evaluation Criteria

The task force was given the job of developing statewide evaluation criteria, a difficult assignment given the range of eligible enhancement program activities.

The task force first referred to ISTEA and FHWA for guidance on project eligibility. The group then determined the screening criteria, or basic eligibility requirements, for the TEA program in California. These were composed of the enhancements program activities in the act: 10 categories listed above and beyond-normal transportation activities or required mitigations and related to the transportation system by proximity, function, or impact. Other screening criteria were added, such as requirements that the project be well defined and supported by a valid financial plan.

The scoring criteria were harder to determine. The task force divided the benefits or measures of project merit into four areas:

1. Regional and community goals: How well does the project meet local goals? Does it implement community objectives? Does the project have a broad base of local support?
2. Cost-effectiveness: How much benefit does the project offer per dollar requested?
3. One-time opportunity: Will the opportunity to do the project be lost if funding is deferred from the current programming cycle?
4. Project-specific benefits: Projects were divided into four categories: (a) scenic aesthetic, (b) historic/archaeological, (c) bike/ pedestrian, and (d) water Runoff Purification.

The points that a project could receive in the project-specific category were derived from a combination of the demonstrated need (or opportunity) at the project site and the degree to which the proposed project would address that need (or opportunity). Caltrans made sure that its interests were served by insisting on statewide criteria that each region would use to rank projects, such as functionality, which favors bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The task force discussed the elements of the ranking criteria at length and after 3 months agreed to the final criteria. An application form was designed to be simple to complete and to directly correspond to the evaluation criteria. A variety of interests successfully argued for local flexibility to evaluate projects and to establish priorities. For instance a score of 90 in Ventura County does not necessarily equal a score of 90 in the Bay Area.

Timing

Some legislators wanted to earmark all enhancements program funds. By the time they communicated that, however, the task force had been formed and momentum and broad support for the programming principles had been established. By agreeing to speed up the statewide process with criterion elements that were satisfactory to the legislators, earmarking was forestalled.

Outreach to Potential Enhancements Project Sponsors

Using task force recommendations, Caltrans assembled an application packet that described the program and project eligibility. In cooperation with local agencies, Caltrans organized several public symposia on the enhancements program. In the San Francisco Bay Area, MTC participated in those state-sponsored forums and also introduced the program at separate meetings with cities, counties, transit operators, environmental groups, citizens' groups, and MTC citizens advisory committees—a broad cross-section of interests within the nine counties that make up the MTC region.

MTC prepared press releases on the enhancements program that were picked up by a number of area newspapers, and staff discussed the program on two radio talk shows.

MTC sent more than 600 applications with the Caltrans information packet to environmental groups, special water and park districts, public works officials, transit districts, community groups, and any others that MTC staff believed might be interested or eligible.

MTC PROJECT REVIEW EXPERIENCE

On the application due date, MTC received 152 applications requesting a total of $94 million. Although most of the projects

were imaginative and eligible, according to the state bid target constraint, the MTC region could submit only $18 million worth of projects.

Ranking of the projects was difficult and time-consuming— much more so than staff had anticipated. Interestingly, however, the quality of the proposals and the creativity of many of them energized the evaluation team.

Project Evaluation Teams

MTC's multimodal priority-setting process—set up in 1992 for ISTEA's STP and CMAQ funds—vividly demonstrated the value of inviting partners from various agencies to participate in the development of regional funding programs. The TEA program particularly lends itself to this sort of team approach, given the variety of eligible projects.

MTC formed an evaluation group composed of individuals familiar with each of the eligible activities, including artists, planners of bicycle facilities, landscape architects, and historic preservationists. Group members included MTC staff, staff from other regional agencies, and city and county staff.

The group was divided into three scoring teams on the basis of their areas of expertise: scenic/aesthetic, historic/archaeological, and bicycle/pedestrian. No water mitigation projects that met basic eligibility criteria were submitted to MTC.

Ranking the Projects

The TEA evaluation schedule in the San Francisco Bay region was driven by deadlines set by CTC. Once the scoring criteria were officially drafted in February, project sponsors had only 8 weeks to submit applications. California MPOs, including MTC, then had just 7 weeks from the time of receipt of the completed applications to evaluate them and develop a program proposal for CTC.

Immediately after TEA applications were due, the three activity-specific scoring teams met to sort the applications into the above-mentioned project categories and to share first impressions of the applications. Next each team briefly reviewed all the applications in their category and assigned a Good, Medium, Bad, or Ineligible rating to each, which came to be known as a "GuMBI" grade.

Before the GuMBI groupings were presented at the hearing, the ranking nomenclature was changed to High, Medium, Low, and Ineligible to avoid calling any project "bad." At the hearing project sponsors were limited to protesting their relative rating, because their scores were not available to challenge.

Scoring the Projects

Soon after the three teams began scoring the projects they reconvened to ensure that they were scoring projects consistently. Each of the three teams found the statewide criteria to be subjective in several places and difficult to apply to individual projects. Therefore the group made two types of adjustments to the guidelines.

First, in each of the scoring categories the statewide guidelines awarded a range of 0 to 20 points. Instead the scoring teams chose to award points on a consolidated scale of 0-4-8, 0-5-10, or 0-10-15-20. For instance if a project could receive a maximum of 10

points in a particular category according to the statewide criteria, it was given either 0, 5, or 10 points at MTC. This helped narrow the debate over project scores.

The second modification the scoring group made was to use a more detailed interpretation of various criteria. For example under the statewide guidelines a project could receive up to 8 points for demonstration of local support. The scoring teams standardized this as 4 points for support from any group, agency other than the project applicant, or legislator and 4 more points if the local match exceeded the minimum requirement. Another modification to the guidelines was in awarding cost-effectiveness points. Instead of using the capital recovery approach in the statewide guidelines, which proved to be inconsistent, a ratio of total project points per funding request was calculated. Each project's cost-effectiveness score was then normalized on a scale of from 0 to 10.

Each of the three scoring teams met an average of 20 hr over 3 weeks. A 2-page summary of the statewide scoring criteria was used to record the breakdown of project scores and any comments (Figure 1).

Developing the Program

As the draft program of projects was developed, MTC management assessed several options in response to public comments that cost-effectiveness was not considered highly enough and that several large projects absorbed too much of the regional bid pot. Finally political considerations required that at least one project be funded in each of the nine MTC counties that submitted applications.

When all of the projects were scored, four scenarios were evaluated:

1. Rank by score;
2. Rank by score, with cost-effectiveness weighted twice as much as the statewide criteria called for;
3. Rank by score, capping the TEA share of each project at $1 million. To accommodate the cap equitably, capped projects were rescored on the basis of the scaled-down project, and the project sponsors were contacted to ensure that they were willing to construct the smaller project or could provide the unfunded portion of the original project; and
4. Rank by score, capping the TEA share of each project at $1 million and guaranteeing each of the participating counties in the MTC region at least one project.

Interestingly, the only effect of doubling the weight of cost-effectiveness was to rearrange the relative ranking of the projects in the draft program, but it did not affect which projects would be proposed for funding. Capping the TEA share of each project to $1 million significantly increased, from 23 to 39, the number of projects that could be funded. The commission agreed that the small size of the Bay Area's TEA bid target relative to the demand for transportation enhancement projects required the unusual action of capping TEA funding for each project after applications had been received. This process led to a program of projects (Table 1) that included many good projects from each of the activity-specific TEA areas (scenic/aesthetic, historic/archaeological, and bicycle/pedestrian).

Project Name: _____   TOTAL RAW SCORE _____
Listing Number: _____   TOTAL FINAL SCORE _____
Project Type: _____

1. Regional and Community Enhancement

    a. Benefits to quality of life, community, environment. Examples might include provision
        of safe, aesthetic pedestrian facility at a rail station, removal of billboards, on a rural
        scenic highway, provision for wildlife corridors or mitigation areas.   0,1, 5, 10 _____
        COMMENTS:

    b. Increases access to activity centers, such as businesses, school, recreational areas
        and shopping areas. Connects transportation modes, has multimodal aspects.
        Reinforces, complements the regional transportation system, fills deficiency in the system.   0,1, 4, 8 _____
        COMMENTS:

    c. Implements goals in the regional transportation plan, or other adopted federal, state,
        or local plans. Examples might include water quality plans or elements of general plans.   0, 4, 8 _____
        COMMENTS:

    d. Increases availability, awareness, or protection of historic, community, visual, or
        natural resource.   0, 4, 8 _____
        COMMENTS:

    e. Degree of regional or community support. For example, letter of support from local
        interest groups and public bodies, additional match.   0, 4, 8 _____
        COMMENTS:

    f. Encompasses more than one of the activity-specific divisions. (Bike/Ped,
        Scenic/Aesthetic, Arch/Hist, Runoff: 1 = 0; 2-3 = 4; 4 = 8)   0, 4, 8 _____
        COMMENTS:

2. **Cost Effectiveness/Reasonable Cost:** {(Total Score *wo/ Cost Effectiveness*) * 100,000)/TEA Cost}. The natural log
    of this result is taken. The log results of all of the projects are normalized to 10 points.   0—10 _____

3. **Project Need/One-Time Opportunity:** A one-time opportunity exists to take advantage of this project. The proposed
    project is threatened. For example, there is an immediate need to do this project, or the opportunity will be lost, or
    postponing the project could result in substantial degradation of the resource. For example, a historic structure would
    deteriorate past the point of restoration in two years, or continuing water pollution due to highway runoff would cause
    irreversible damage to the environment.   0, 5 _____
    COMMENTS:

FIGURE 1   **Transportation enhancement activity scoring sheet, first cycle.** *(continued on next page)*

ISSUES AND LESSONS

Application Issues

One of the most interesting aspects of the TEA program was the opportunity to work with people whose backgrounds are not in transportation. Many project applicants apparently had a difficult time understanding the transportation context in which their scenic, historic, recreational, or other project could be framed. On the other end of the spectrum, some transportation planners and engineers accustomed to transportation grant applications had to be helped with the qualitative information requested.

Relationship to Transportation System

Early in the review process it became necessary to clarify the "function, proximity, or impact" relationship needed for a project to be eligible for the program according to ISTEA. When the evaluation process began, every project, by virtue of being somewhere near a roadway, appeared to qualify for TEA funds. However the goal of the program is enhancing the travel experience instead of enhancing a facility or structure per se. For the purposes of evaluating projects at MTC, therefore, proximity was defined as adjacent to or prominently visible from the transportation system in a way that significantly enhances transportation.

ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC SCORING

Bicycle, Pedestrian, Abandoned Rail Right-of-Way (including conversion to ped/bike trail)
Need for proposed facilities: shortage of bicycle or pedestrian facilities; missing link in connecting the intermodal system, importance of link; necessity of proposed facilities to serve the system.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Degree to which project meets needs or addresses opportunities for bicycle or pedestrian facilities.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Historic/Archeological Specific Divisions
Current recognized level of historic significance. *(Screening Notes: Cultural properties must be listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, or a locally-designated historic resource, based on locally-adopted, written criteria. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities, and historic sites for acquisition must be listed in the California Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Places or be eligible for the National Register. Historic highways must be a state or federally designated historic highway).*

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Degree to which project activity will enhance, preserve, or protect the historic/archeological resource.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Transportation Aesthetics and Scenic Values
Degree to which scenic or aesthetic resources are rare, unique, or significant; degree to which potential for enhancement exists for landscaping or scenic beautification; current degree of blight.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Degree to which project would preserve, rehabilitate or develop scenic or aesthetic resource.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Water Pollution Due to Highway Runoff
Magnitude of environmental problem.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

Degree to which activity solves problem.

COMMENTS: SCORE: _____

High	20
High-Medium	15
Medium	10
Low	5

FIGURE 1 *(Continued)*

Project Design Issues

The enormous pool of projects from which to choose vis-à-vis available funds enabled MTC staff to scrutinize the design of proposed projects to a much greater degree than typically occurs at a regional transportation planning agency. For instance one rails-to-trails project would have linked residential and commercial areas, an elementary school, and a planned multimodal transit facility. However one of its termini (the one nearest the transit station) was midblock on a four-lane arterial with no crossing provisions. Consequently this project did not score well and was not in the recommended program. This level of analysis may be extended into other funding exercises at MTC and elsewhere.

Funding Issues

An issue specific to bicycle projects was the federal requirement of a 20 percent local match, whereas sponsors of scenic/aesthetic and historic/archaeological projects need only provide a 11.5 percent local match. MTC anticipates that this inequitable situation will be addressed in an ISTEA cleanup bill in 1993–1994.

Another funding issue was the FHWA "50 percent rule" requiring a minimum of 50 percent federal funding for each project. After some discussion FHWA agreed that this rule was inappropriate for the TEA program because many projects have substantial local backing.

TABLE 1   TEA's Program of Projects, Fiscal Year 1993–1994

Rnk	Cnty	Sponsor	Description	Cat	TEA Cost ($1,000s)	Total Cost ($1,000s)	Cumulative TEA Cost ($1,000s)
1	SF	San Francisco	Embarcadero Promenade Ribbon	Bike/Ped	$360	$708	$360
2	MAR	City of Larkspur	NWP RR ROW	Bike/Ped	$400	$500	$760
3	SF	Port of San Francisco	Pier 47A Scenic Vista	Scenic	$528	$600	$1,288
4	SCL	SClara Parks & Rec	Grant County Park	Scenic	$66	$75	$1,354
5	SCL	City of Mountain View	Stevens Creek	Bike/Ped	$1,000	$2,290	$2,354
6	SCL	Caltrans	Rt. 237 bike lane	Bike/Ped	$318	$398	$2,672
7	CC	EBRPD	Alvarado Park on I-80	Hist/Arch	$324	$433	$2,996
8	ALA	EBRPD	Niles Canyon Acquisition	Scenic	$950	$2,500	$3,946
9	SOL	Solano Cities	Lynch Canyon	Scenic	$1,000	$4,200	$4,946
10	CC	EBRPD	Antioch Regional Shoreline	Scenic	$300	$400	$5,246
11	ALA	City of Pleasanton	Arroyo De La Laguna Trail	Bike/Ped	$630	$870	$5,877
12	Multi	Peninsula JPB	350 bicycle lockers and racks	Bike/Ped	$350	$450	$6,227
13	CC	EBRPD	Ferry Point in Richmond	Hist/Arch	$376	$501	$6,602
14	SF	San Fran Parks & Rec	"Beach Chalet," GGPark Visitors' Center	Hist/Arch	$724	$823	$7,326
15	SCL	SClara Parks and Rec	Chitactac-Adams Heritage Park/Rest Stop	Hist/Arch	$721	$820	$8,048
16	SON	City of Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa Historic RR Depot Impr.	Hist/Arch	$400	$500	$8,448
17	SM	County of San Mateo	Bike trail from Island Park	Bike/Ped	$1,000	$2,500	$9,448
18	SCL	City of Santa Clara	Santa Clara Historic RR Complex Impr.	Hist/Arch	$36	$47	$9,483
19	SCL	SClara Transp Auth	Santa Clara County RR Museum Relocation	Hist/Arch	$1,000	$6,997	$10,483
20	SF	Port of San Francisco	Ferry Building Renovation	Hist/Arch	$1,000	$2,800	$11,483
21	SOL	Sol County Counsel	Western RR Museum - 3 SP Buildings	Hist/Arch	$1,000	$3,402	$12,483
22	MAR	City of Novato	Planting at Scottsdale Marsh	Scenic	$555	$631	$13,038
23	ALA	City of Berkeley	City of Berkeley Bicycle Parking	Bike/Ped	$80	$100	$13,118
24	SCL	City of San Jose	East Santa Clara Streetscape	Scenic	$63	$72	$13,182
25	CC	Martinez	Alhambra Ave. Undercrossing	Scenic	$12	$15	$13,194
26	SON	City of Petaluma	Lynch Creek Trail Undercrossing	Bike/Ped	$224	$280	$13,418
27	CC	EBRPD	Carquinez Strait acquisition	Scenic	$950	$2,620	$14,368
28	MAR	GGBHTD	Bicycle Racks at Bus Stops	Bike/Ped	$32	$40	$14,400
29	ALA	City of Livermore	1 bicycle/pedestrian bridge	Bike/Ped	$77	$87	$14,477
30	SCL	City of San Jose	Alum Rock Streetscape	Scenic	$141	$160	$14,617
31	ALA	Oakland Parks	Gateway Gardens Project	Bike/Ped	$160	$200	$14,777
32	Multi	BART	200 BART bicycle lockers	Bike/Ped	$335	$419	$15,112
33	SCL	City of San Jose	Roosevelt Park Streetscape	Scenic	$101	$115	$15,214
34	SCL	Town of Los Gatos	Bicycle detector loops	Bike/Ped	$54	$68	$15,268
35	SCL	City of San Jose	Historic Alameda	Scenic	$278	$316	$15,546
36	CC	City of Walnut Creek	Iron Horse Trail	Bike/Ped	$731	$1,432	$16,277
37	MAR	Town of Corte Madera	Paradise Drive Bay Trail Link	Bike/Ped	$426	$533	$16,704
38	ALA	City of Emeryville	I-80 undercrossing	Bike/Ped	$1,000	$1,226	$17,704
39	SF	SF Muni	Cable Car Museum, Amenity Improvements	Hist/Arch	$1,000	$2,247	$18,704

Bike/Ped = Bicycle, Pedestrian, Abandoned Rail Right-of-Way Project Categories
Scenic = Transportation Aesthetics, Scenic Values Project Categories
Hist/Arch = Historic Preservation of Cultural and Transportation Resources and Archaeological Planning and Research
                Project Categories

Challenges of Multidisciplinary, Multiagency Process

Despite the appropriateness and attractiveness of the multidisciplinary, multiagency approach to project evaluation that MTC employed, it had challenges. Probably the most conspicuous was the difficult task of recruiting scoring team members with both project evaluation experience and sufficient expertise in one or more enhancement program areas. This challenge is particularly vivid for the scenic/aesthetic team because the nature of aesthetics is, in many ways, the most difficult to quantify.

When recruiting staff from other agencies it becomes important for the MPO or lead agency to clearly state expectations. MTC invited staff from other agencies to score projects but did not make it clear that MTC would ultimately recommend the final program. As a result, by the end of the process, some outside

team members believed that MTC had asked for help with the tedious work without sharing the more interesting aspects of the task.

Finally caution should be exercised in enlisting project evaluation volunteers from other agencies, taking particular care to screen out project sponsors. Project sponsors should not be permitted to score projects in categories other than those in which their project belongs, because projects in all three categories ultimately compete with each other.

Lessons Learned from Time Constraint

At least two important lessons were learned from the short time frame in the first TEA funding cycle in the MTC region. First, as

soon as it is clear that the number of applications to be evaluated grossly exceeds expectations it is critical to resist the temptation to cut corners. Instead the TEA experience has taught MTC to take the time to rethink the entire process. One of MTC's biggest mistakes was to adhere to the public hearing date that had originally been set. Instead of postponing the hearing staff presented a ranking of projects in three general unranked groupings, only the highest of which were still in the running for TEA funds. Staff probably spent more time defending this qualitative ranking than would have been needed to score each project.

Second, MTC learned the importance of allowing project sponsors sufficient time to carefully scrutinize their draft scores before releasing a final program.

Workshop

After the conclusion of the first TEA cycle MTC held a workshop to get suggestions for improving the process for the next cycle and to help project sponsors improve their applications. The statewide guidelines were reviewed, focusing on the scoring distinctions made in the MTC region. The workshop was attended by more than 250 project sponsors and provided an open forum to establish more consistent and predictable scoring in the region for the next cycle.

CONCLUSIONS

Enhancements projects create attractive settings at or near transportation facilities, preserve scenic or historic sites or educational points of interest, and build new connecting facilities such as bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

By improving the quality of the journey itself and expanding the range of travel options, the enhancements program gives MPOs and states the opportunity to expand their transportation coalition to new and valuable partners. Every effort should be made to make the most of this innovative program.

Following are some recommendations for other areas developing enhancements programs:

1. Separate the program from other state transportation programs. The enhancements program has a unique purpose.

2. Publicize the program. Prepare a list of interested parties.

3. Involve interested parties in the development of project evaluation criteria and review of project rankings.

4. Carefully define the screening criteria, including the definition of the "transportation experience."

5. Include in the scoring team individuals familiar with each of the eligible project categories, such as artists, bicyclists, and historic preservationists.

6. Allow some time to iron out wrinkles. The enhancements program is different from other project review processes.

7. Enjoy it. The originality and beauty of the projects are energizing.

Like memorable public works projects of the past, today's transportation enhancements can enrich the experience of travelers—and leave something of beauty and imagination to future generations.